

**THE
GOLDEN
BLADE
2006**

58th ISSUE

CHARTING THE FUTURE

RUDOLF STEINER LIBRARY



VYDZ023783

THE GOLDEN BLADE

CHARTING THE VOID

2006

58th ISSUE

Rudolf Steiner Library
65 Fern Hill Road
Ghent, NY 12075
(518) 672-7690
rsteinerlibrary@taconic.net



Anthroposophy springs from the work and teaching of Rudolf Steiner. He described it as a path of knowledge, to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.

The aim of this annual journal is to bring the outlook of anthroposophy to bear on questions and activities relevant to the present, in a way which may have lasting value. It was founded in 1949 by Charles Davy and Arnold Freeman, who were its first editors.

The title derives from an old Persian legend, according to which King Jamshid received from his god, Ahura Mazda, a golden blade with which to fulfil his mission on earth. It carried the heavenly forces of light into the darkness of earthly substance, thus allowing its transformation. The legend points to the possibility that humanity, through wise and compassionate work with the earth, can one day regain on a new level what was lost when the Age of Gold was supplanted by those of Silver, Bronze and Iron. Technology could serve this aim; instead of endangering our planet's life, it could help to make the earth a new sun.

CHARTING THE VOID

Edited by Simon Blaxland-de Lange, Jan Swann,
Warren Ashe and Andrew Wolpert

The Golden Blade

First published in 2005 by The Golden Blade
 © 2005 The Golden Blade
 All rights reserved. No part of this publication
 may be reproduced without prior permission of

The Editors
 c/o Wynstones Press
 Ruskin Glass Centre
 Wollaston Road
 Amblecote
 Stourbridge
 West Midlands
 DY8 4HF

ISBN 0-9531600-8-4
 ISSN 0967 6708
 £8

Typeset by DP Photosetting, Aylesbury, Bucks.
 Printed in Great Britain by Cromwell Press, Trowbridge, Wilts.

Contents

Editorial Notes	7
Problems of the Time: Lecture 1 <i>Rudolf Steiner</i>	13
Problems of the Time: Lecture 2 <i>Rudolf Steiner</i>	31
Special Spiritual Foundations for the Connection between England and the United States of America <i>Virginia Sease</i>	47
Shadows of Doubt <i>Terry Goodfellow</i>	65
True Columbia <i>Christopher Houghton Budd</i>	73
The Future of the English Language <i>Adam Bittleston</i>	85
Distinguish without Dividing <i>Terence Davies</i>	99
Book Reviews:	
<i>The Isles</i> by Norman Davies <i>Simon Blaxland-de Lange</i>	121
<i>Poems for the Path</i> by Sean Byrne <i>Margaret Jonas</i>	127
Notes on the Contributors	129

Charting the Void – Editorial Notes

To record a voyage never before undertaken is not to draw a map for those who might come after, it is to make the consciousness of the journeying an objective fact. Actually, here are no voids, just our inability at first to see what's there. And in a Michaelic venture we know our destination only by going there. In this sense, to make a chart is to bear witness, as St John says of the Baptism, "I saw and bare record".

Faced with the terrible, frightening and seemingly inexorable events of the world, whatever else we can or cannot do, accompanying the brutalities of war, starvation and natural disaster with presence of heart and openness of mind is a spiritual activity that depends at first only on our will to do so. The significance of such witnessing is immense. It may at first seem passive, ineffective, and even depressing, but we do not do this in a vacuum, we are not staring at these horrors in a void. Such presence is "in-formed" by everything that lives in us, and all the spiritual activity we have engaged in is ready to support our trust that the apparently gratuitous cruelty and wrongs are not meaningless. Even more, can we have faith that what lives in our wakeful "presence" actively contributes to what happens? Then we may begin to understand what Rudolf Steiner alludes to when he says in the second of the two lectures we have included here "What is to be grasped does not exist! We must be stirred with burning zeal for the understanding of what does not yet exist". The nature of our present consciousness is formative for the future.

The way Leonardo in *The Last Supper* depicts the fourth Evangelist, the other John (a figure now subject to the most specious notoriety in one sector of current sensationalist fiction) offers us an example of this creative present inner activity. Placed in the midst of the drama at the table, John, with his folded hands betokens the will for an inner, as yet unrealised, resolution to the outer conflict shown in the apparent antagonism between the right hand of Christ and the left hand of Judas. It is not that John's intimate connection allows him to relax knowing it will all be alright : his initiate status enables and impels him to will with burning love what does not yet exist. Rudolf Steiner's description of this individual as the raised Lazarus (who thus, alone

among the twelve, has been initiated) invites us to realise that such a figure has not been raised merely to know more, but actually out of that knowledge to do something that the others cannot. The figure at the centre of the table needs the utmost conscious, active, presence of the disciple on his right. It is this conscious participation in destiny that gives one level of meaning to the phrase "the disciple whom Jesus loved". Initiation brings added tasks, not privileges. We today can take up more tasks spiritually than we might dare think, at first maybe just in the quality of our presence, even without having been formally initiated.

If we further notice which other three disciples Leonardo paints closest to Christ we find in Peter Thomas and Judas the individuals whose destiny it was to manifest the all too human qualities of fear, doubt and hatred. There is something terrible and tremendous in the reality that among the twelve Christ chose, there were three who, in addition to whatever else they did, had the task of embodying these aspects of our human incompleteness most in need of redemption.

In the first of the lectures we have included here Rudolf Steiner refers to these three counter-evolutionary forces in the context of his time. He speaks about three pervasive attitudes discernible in the world and connects them with the contemporary political and social realities that his audience would have recognised. He speaks about a certain hatred of the Spirit that manifests in the ideology of what was to become the Soviet Union, and he calls it Bolshevism. He describes how particularly the Jesuits within the Catholic church have long striven to deny ordinary people the opportunity to understand the realities of the Spirit, and this doubting of the possibility of knowledge of the Spirit is what characterises Jesuitism. And it is fear of the Spirit that Rudolf Steiner ascribes particularly in the attitude to science to what he calls Americanism. He is at pains to point out that this does not refer to American individuals or that it only exists in America, but that there is an aspect of culture in America that seemed to favour this regressive way of thought.

Rudolf Steiner gave these lectures in Berlin in his 58th year during the last months of what was known as The Great War. American, Canadian, and Australian troops were part of the allied armies under General Foch when the decisive turning points occurred in overcoming the German armies during the late summer and autumn of 1918. It was a time when Rudolf Steiner was thought by some to be too pro-German. In his attempt to see and contribute to the forces of world destiny behind the outer events, he was concerned with the spiritual tasks of a people and not with their political and military fortunes. But the inner reality of the three-

fold human being became a basis for him to offer a paradigm for social renewal that has come to be known as the Threefold Social Order, an impulse that has not fared as fruitfully as many others that he was to give in the succeeding years. These lectures were given within days of anthroposophy having been the object of repeated printed attacks by Jesuits. It was a year in which Rudolf Steiner spent much of the time revising earlier published works for reprinting in new editions. The painting of the small cupola was in progress in Dornach, the building was in its fifth year of construction, and it was during this time that the original designation "Johannes-Bau" was formally replaced by the name Rudolf Steiner had begun increasingly to use, "The Goetheanum".

Today one might ask whether a reference to Bolshevism is still relevant or even intelligible to many readers, and the term Americanism seems strangely dated since more recent world events have cast other more obvious shadows over how the US is now perceived. But these lectures deal with realities that concern us no less today than when they were given. Rudolf Steiner's description in the second lecture of how the essential quality of the universally human transcends all nations makes it clear that the phenomenon that he calls Americanism cannot be countered with anything "anti-American". His more detailed differentiations of various European cultures in the first lecture are also not to be mistaken as a basis for categorising people. The events in the world and what was happening around Rudolf Steiner give these lectures a particular poignancy. What must it have been like to see so much, truly bear witness to these events, and know what the people around him were ready to hear? There is no trace of chauvinism or prejudice in the way he articulates his observations. A further responsibility arises for us today out of these considerations. Especially not in this Michaelic Age should we be tempted to regard someone's nationality, or race, or religion as a basis for understanding that individual. This is not to deny the realities of the differences in language, culture heritages and inherited features that have contributed to forming who we are and that we have even chosen for a purpose. But we are challenged to recognise that in each of us there is an ego, one of whose tasks it is to begin the momentous process of transforming these given, outer distinguishing features. Can we grasp the idea that while we have chosen certain characteristics in this incarnation because we need them and they serve our destiny, we also may have chosen others that need our ego forces and that are yearning to be transformed? The universally human is something we have to

achieve. And one area where we can practise is not to fall prey to the spectres of hatred that outer world events seduce us with.

We can recognise in our own inner life how very present the challenges mentioned in the first lecture are to our thinking, feeling and willing. It is a significant step to realise that doubt has the task of awakening a longing for practical experience. The answer to doubt is not to preach certainty, but to let experience refute the scepticism. The entrenched position of antipathy longs to be freed through the zeal for understanding. Enthusiasm is the antidote to hatred. And if our will is lamed by anxiety, it is a glorious moment when we know it is better to risk being wrong than refrain from acting out of fear. Courage involves risk. In these lectures we are also reminded how Lucifer and Ahriman work together, and we know them both in all three soul forces. It is in the second lecture that Rudolf Steiner characterises the great healing forces of the Christ who incarnated into the man Jesus. Now in each of us, striving for the universally human there are the forces of balance, waiting to be realised.

Also in the face of the world events we can endeavour to be spiritually present with active inner equilibrium. We cannot shirk the painful understanding of the political and economic forces that seem particularly visible in the English-speaking nations. A most insightful contribution to an understanding of all this in the modern American context has appeared in an article by Chris Schaefer in the latest edition of *LILIPOH*¹. In this issue of *The Golden Blade* Terry Goodfellow takes up these sobering themes in a broader modern world context, and concludes his article with a reference precisely to the "universally human", as the source of light that can dispel the shadows of doubt. In the same lecture Rudolf Steiner cautions us against the dangers of seeking causes without considering the longer time perspectives, and it is just such a rich historical context that Virginia Sease develops in her contribution. She shows in several different spheres and through the lives of prominent figures how the common foundations of Britain and America are of greater significance than the present divisions, and that these precious cultural links need our conscious nurturing, lest they be undermined by forces of hatred.

One of the features that Virginia Sease explores extensively is that

of our common language, and we felt it appropriate to include in this issue a reprinting of Adam Bittleston's article from the 1957 *Golden Blade*. In Rudolf Steiner's description of the role of the Celtic peoples we find another example of how the events of outer history do not necessarily give an obvious clue to deeper forces of change. Militarily the Celts were defeated and they declined, spiritually the Folk Soul of these peoples took on another task, and Bittleston sees the withdrawing of the "noble intermediary", as he calls the Celts, as a deed that allowed the uniting of the Germanic and Romance streams in our language. Modern scholarship is also engaged with this elusive nature of the Celtic elements, the recent book by Michael Morse² takes up the very open question and challenges some of the long-held assumptions about who the Celts were and where they came from.

There is an unmistakably positive tenor in this article and in the other three final contributions. Christopher Budd's counterfactual methodology might seem bizarre and naïve, but he invites us to recognise that the concepts that arise from this unorthodox historical approach have an unexpected compatibility with modern economic thinking. There is courage in postulating such ideas. Terence Davies's lambent article on the cultural connections between Britain and Europe is a cogent appraisal of Owen Barfield and his championing of Coleridge. The book review by Simon Blaxland de-Lange points to the dynamics and forces of progressive change in modern history, an optimistic view in what is easily seen only as a depressing reality.

We offer this edition to our readers with the wish that all these contributions will serve in strengthening the courage and good will for our journey into the future, an unknown and uncharted future, and yet one that depends as never before on what we make of it. We are most grateful to all those who have written for this issue and to Anne Stockton for her imaginative cover design. I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Editorial Team for having invited me to work with them on this issue.

Andrew Wolpert

¹ *LILIPOH*, 2005, Special issue: America; Lilipoh Publishing Inc., Phoenixville, PA, 19460; *The Will to Power and its Tragic Consequences for America and the World* by Christopher Schaefer, Ph.D. pages 19-24.

² *How The Celts Came To Britain* by Michael A. Morse, Tempus Paperback 07524 3339 3.

**Problems of the Time: Two lectures given by Rudolf Steiner in
Berlin on 30th July and 6th August 1918¹**

Lecture 1: 30th July 1918

Rudolf Steiner

Today we will go rather further in outlining the connections we have tried to understand in the course of our recent studies.

The present time, with its many diverse streams, spiritual and material, is extremely difficult to understand; and the effort ends only in perplexity unless we are truly willing to recognise the causes as lying far, far back in the womb of history. Let us look back, as students of spiritual science, at the so-called fourth post-Atlantean period.

This begins, as we know, somewhere around the year 747 before the Mystery of Golgotha, and ends with the beginning of the fifteenth century, around 1413 AD. (The dates are of course to be regarded as approximate, as always in matters of this kind.) Within this period, as we observe it, we can perceive certain forces, connected with and related to each other, but differing fundamentally from all others working in previous and subsequent epochs. This period, in which the development of the intellectual or mind-soul in man's being took place, can be divided into three smaller ones: the first begins around the year 747 BC (which is the real date of the founding of Rome) and ends around 27 BC; the second runs from 27 BC until about the end of the seventh century (693 AD); and the third and last from 693 to 1413 AD. Since this date, since about 1413, we have been at the point where the distinctive qualities of

¹ A lightly edited version of the unpublished translation contained in Cycle C50 (*A Sound Outlook for Today and a Genuine Hope for the Future*), available from The Library, Rudolf Steiner House, London. This typescript contains translations of the seven lectures given by Steiner between 25th June and 6th August 1918 under the overall title *Bewusstseins-Notwendigkeiten für Gegenwart und Zukunft* ("Making sense of the present and preparing rightly for the future"), included in GA 181. The title "Problems of the Time" derives from the 1954 revision of the English translation. The original lectures were untitled. The translation printed here appears by permission of the Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, Switzerland.

soul-forces familiar to us now are already to some extent apparent. Just as this fourth post-Atlantean epoch can be clearly distinguished from the three preceding ones (the ancient Indian, Persian and Egypto-Chaldean) and must also be sharply distinguished from what followed it and what is still to come, so within it there are certain factors characteristic for the cultural evolution of humanity which stand out, if we consider its progress through these shorter periods.

Between 747 and 27 BC the peoples inhabiting the region around the Mediterranean come chiefly into prominence. We see a distinct form of soul-life developing amongst them. History hardly mentions it, because history has no means of creating the ideas and concepts which would enable it to gain insight into what was characteristic about this soul-life. This epoch which I have identified can be characterised by saying that it is the time when, for inner reasons of human evolution, human souls are separated from their connection with the universal spiritual world. If we look back to Egyptian and Chaldean times, during the epoch of the sentient soul, we find in human consciousness a distinct sense of kinship on the part of the human soul with the cosmos. The sentient soul in human nature was then able to perceive that man is a member of the whole cosmos. We cannot rightly envisage what is characteristic of the Egyptian, Chaldean or Babylonian stages of evolution unless we take into account the fact that man at that time experienced a feeling of kinship with the spiritual cosmos. Just as the fingers on our hand feel themselves part of us, as it were, so the Egyptian or Chaldean felt himself to be a member of the spiritual cosmos. A crisis, a veritable catastrophe, overtook mankind in the eighth century before Christ, in respect of this feeling of kinship with the cosmos. Human souls had owed their former feeling of belonging to the cosmos to their atavistic, dream-like clairvoyance. They did not perceive as we do today. Although materialistic science ignorantly calls this "animism", in the act of sense-perception they also perceived the spiritual, the divine; and through this they felt themselves as being connected with the spirit of the cosmos.

This relationship disappeared. The consequences were, on the one hand, numerous phenomena of decadence, but, on the other, the whole marvellous culture of Greece, whose civilisation was founded on what man experiences when, as a human individual, he begins to stand alone in the universe. We owe this civilisation to the fact that man no longer felt himself to be a member of the cosmos but as a human *totality*, as a being complete in himself. He had in a sense taken his own place in the

cosmos, had began to live a life of his own. If Greek civilisation had retained the soul-constitution of, for instance, the ancient Indian period, with its sense of connection with the cosmos, it is impossible to imagine that this beautiful Greek civilisation could ever have arisen. All the splendour and glory displayed by Greek civilisation, unequalled elsewhere, developed in the time between the eighth and the first century before Christ. Humanity had withdrawn into the citadel of the soul, of the human soul in the true sense. This was the time when humanity began to approach the Mystery of Golgotha. We must not forget that there is always something about the Mystery of Golgotha which cannot entirely emerge into the light of human understanding, even supersensible understanding. There will always be something that is not comprehended. It is beyond the power of human concepts, human feelings, human experiences, fully to grasp what was achieved by the entry of the Christ into earthly evolution. Therefore this Mystery of Golgotha had, in a sense, so to take place that, while it was in progress, human civilisation was not ready fully to share in it; it had to take its course separately, alongside ordinary human experience. That is fairly evident, even from history. How much did human civilisation around the Mediterranean take note of what happened in the remote Jewish province of Palestine with regard to Christ Jesus? How little did it enter the awareness of civilised humanity, even that of Tacitus, who was writing only a century after the Mystery of Golgotha!

On the one hand we have the stream of human civilisation, and on the other the stream which brought with it the Mystery of Golgotha: the two run their course side by side. This could only happen because man – civilised humanity – was at the time of the Divine Event severed from the divine, was living a life which had no direct connection with the spiritual world. Thus on the Earth there took place a spiritual event which was happening alongside human civilisation. Such a juxtaposition between outer civilisation and a mystery-event is unthinkable in any earlier period. It had never happened before, because in earlier times human civilisation was aware of itself as having a relationship with events in the divine-spiritual realm. It is very distinctive, very remarkable, that the secular culture which ran parallel with the Mystery of Golgotha was remote from it: man had severed himself from it.

In the second period, which lasted from about 27 BC to 693 AD, mid-European civilisation was not in a position to enable the secular culture of that time to come to an understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. This may sound very strange, considering that Christianity

had made itself at home in this secular culture and had spread throughout mid-European civilisation; but its expansion took place in the way I have described. The Mystery of Golgotha was isolated, was alone. Certainly, it was accepted as outer dogma to this extent: Christ had come, had called Apostles, had accomplished this or that for humanity, had said this or that about man's relationship to the divine. All this was readily accepted in terms of external principles by secular culture, but this outer recognition does not alter the fact that in reality all those who accepted Christianity in these early centuries were far removed from an *inner* understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. With the help of the Gnosis, with the help of much preparation through all that had been carried over as treasures of wisdom from the ancient pagan world, they might have come near to facing the question: What really happened at the Mystery of Golgotha? They did not do so. They declared heresy anything that might have led to an understanding of it, and tried to express in trivial formulas what could never be thus confined, what can only be fathomed through the highest fruits of wisdom – the Mystery of Golgotha.

Hence the organisations fostered during the early Christian centuries were not such as to help people to unite themselves with the Mystery of Golgotha; their effect was to encourage in the human soul something very remote from a genuine inner understanding of, and participating in, it. The Church was, rather, an organisation for the *non*-understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. Anyone who follows up what the various councils, and more especially the intrigues of the Church, strove to accomplish will find that all these efforts went towards getting certain dogmatic ideas accepted; whereas all that had to do with the Mystery of Golgotha was to be thought of as having no real relationship to the life of the human soul. All this led up to a certain point, which can be described, somewhat radically, in the following way. Human beings tried to accommodate themselves, here on Earth, to certain ideas concerning the Mystery of Golgotha and its effects; but the most important thing was not the extent to which they could come to know about it and to absorb it into their souls. It was that they should be able to adopt this belief: "We grasp the fact that the Mystery of Golgotha was accomplished on its own account, independently of us, and Christ will take care that we are saved!" This tendency gained ground until the reality of spiritual events was relegated to a region quite outside the soul. Sacred, spiritual events were not to be thought of as connected with what took place in any human breast; the two were to be as widely

separated as possible. Within this tendency lay the germ of a purpose – unexpressed, of course, but active subconsciously – which emerged clearly for the first time at the Council of Constantinople in 869. The aim was to keep the human spirit away from any individual, personal concern with the spiritual – now focussed around the Mystery of Golgotha – and therefore from any inclination to understand the Mystery of Golgotha in terms of personal experience. It was to remain incomprehensible. So the Church was able to include more and more people of a purely secular frame of mind, who increasingly came to believe that one cannot think about supersensible realities, since the supersensible is beyond the range of the human soul, and that human thinking should confine itself to the objects and activities of the physical world. No forces were to be developed out of the human soul which could lead to an independent understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. In certain decrees of this eighth Council of Constantinople it is clearly stated that European humanity might not – because the forces of the human soul were not equal to it – reflect on the realm wherein the deeds associated with the Mystery of Golgotha were enacted.

In this middle period of the fourth post-Atlantean epoch, lasting from 27 BC to 693 AD, it came about that humanity was confirmed in the belief that all human knowledge and experience is adapted only for the sense-perceptible "this life"; the non sense-perceptible, supersensible realm, the "beyond", as it is called, must be withdrawn from human knowledge and experience and be inaccessible to direct perception. The entire history of these centuries can be understood only by keeping this in mind. The whole policy of the Catholic Church was directed to bringing human beings to the belief: Your faculties of knowledge are suited only for the things of this life; as regards the supersensible, you must approach this in a way that has nothing to do with your understanding, with your own faculties of knowledge. The effect of this was that after the end of this period, in the eighth and ninth centuries, a sort of obscurity descended on European humanity as regards this connection of the human soul with the supersensible. And such later phenomena, among which such a person as Bernard of Clairvaux is typical, can be explained only by the fact that such men remained in a sense beyond the physical, in the "other world", their souls absorbed in what is inaccessible to ordinary human understanding. This enthusiasm for something which lies beyond all human comprehension must be seen as belonging to the entire soul-disposition of a Bernard of Clairvaux, in so far as it can be understood. In his personality we find many traits

which are great and powerful in their effects, for what is capable of a somewhat distorted quality can equally manifest one that is beautiful, great and glorious. But Bernard had characteristics which clearly show him to be a product of that disposition of soul which developed in Western civilisation in the way that I have described, during these particular centuries. Many others like him could also be named – he is merely a typical figure, as exemplified by when he spoke to his followers (who were very numerous) about all that would be bestowed on humanity by the Crusade that he contemplated. Then came the failure of the whole enterprise. How did this devout man speak of the failure? Somewhat like this: “If everything, everything goes wrong, may the blame be on *me* alone, not on the divine, which must always be right.” Even when such a man was convinced of his connection with what he conceived of as the divine-spiritual power behind events, he separated the one from the other and said: “Lay the sin at my door; what is right is something that takes its own course in a realm beyond and apart from that of the human soul.”

Thus at the beginning of the third period of the fourth post-Atlantean cultural period something akin to a darkening came over humanity. The best way to express this is to say that mankind no longer had the concepts to recognise a connection with actual spiritual streams and impulses. In the philosophy of the centuries between the eighth and the fifteenth one always finds the same aim – that of proving that human ideas and concepts should by no means attempt to grasp the course of spiritual reality, on the grounds that this should be regarded as a matter of revelation (happily reduced to a mere formula) and left to the doctrinal authority of the Church.

This is how the power of the Church had been built up. For it did not derive purely from theological impulses, but from the fact that human beings were directed to relate their own cognitive and soul-forces only to the physical life of the senses and not to think in terms of knowledge of the supersensible. Hence there arose the concept of belief, which was not in existence in the early centuries (although it is sometimes ante-dated) but developed later. It took this form: Concerning the divine-spiritual only faith is possible – not knowledge. This division between the truth of belief, or faith, and the truth of knowledge arose out of a definite historical context, which is not only significant but can be discerned in such matters as I have described.

Since the fifteenth century and approximately since 1413, we have been living during a period (this will become evident in the third mil-

lennium) in which we are concerned in part with the heritage of all that has happened under such influences as I have described. On the one hand there are the legacies from those days; on the other we have to deal with something that is entirely new in this fifth post-Atlantean period. In the fourth period, when we look back at it, we see that there was a kind of severance of the human soul from the divine-spiritual, a banishment to purely external physical processes. That was what was new in the fourth period. It did not exist in the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, as I have already pointed out. We now likewise have to deal with something new in our own epoch, and humanity's task – for humanity has entered a time when self-consciousness must play an ever greater and greater part – is to distinguish between what is a legacy from a previous age and what is being newly added to it from our own time. Let us first look at the inheritance, the legacy.

We have seen that it consists in man feeling compelled to develop his soul-life apart from the supersensible. There is, moreover, another result of this, the more clearly to be seen the closer the events of history are surveyed; indeed, a searching review shows the fact to be unquestionable, admitting of no doubt whatever. For it becomes clearly apparent that man, confining his soul-forces to the sense-perceptible, was willing to be severed from the supersensible and finally – since the fifteenth century – arrived at rejecting the supersensible altogether. The eighth Council of Constantinople in 869 is characterised by the wish to keep man and the supersensible apart; and from this separation, sponsored deliberately by the Church, sprang the rejection of the supersensible. The belief arose that the supersensible might be only a matter of imagination and have no reality. If one investigates the genesis of modern materialism historically from a psychological point of view, the Church must be held responsible for it. Of course the Church is only the outer expression of deeper forces working in man's evolution, but to observe how one thing arises from another enables one to understand the course of human evolution. In the fourth post-Atlantean age, a person of orthodox views would say: “The human faculty of knowledge is suited only for understanding what is connected with the realm of the senses. The supersensible must be left to revelation, which may not be contested; to speak against revelation is heresy and can only lead to delusion.”

The modern Marxist, the modern Social Democrat, who is a true inheritor of this view, which is none other than the consequence of the Catholicism of earlier centuries, says: “All knowledge worthy of the

name is concerned only with sense-perceptible, physical events; there is no spiritual science because there is no such thing as spirit. Spiritual science is, at best, social science, the science of human communities." Of course this tendency manifests itself differently in various parts of the civilised world, but the differences are no more than nuances.

Hence from the ninth century onwards, in the central and western countries of Europe, it became necessary to ensure that human soul-life should occupy itself with the supersensible by believing in it, but should know of it only through revelation. The qualities of the races and peoples of central Europe were such that they had to be handled carefully; and so the above approach was not adequate on its own. To say to people: "Your human capacities must be limited to eating and drinking and the things of the outer world; the supersensible is beyond you" – that could not be done in Western Europe; but it was done in Eastern Europe, and that is the reason for the cleavage between the Eastern and Western Churches. In Eastern Europe people were really confined to the sense-world; that is where their capacities had to unfold. And in the heights of mystery-experience, quite untouched by anything to do with the senses, was to be developed what then led to the Orthodox religion. Thus there was a deep separation between what man brought forth out of his human nature and the true spiritual world, which lived only in the ritual that hovered loftily above mankind.

What was it that had to develop there? The point of view, the feeling that had to develop in varying nuances was that it is only the physical world of the senses that has reality or meaning. It could be said that unexercised forces towards which man adopts an attitude of repression do not develop but atrophy. If, then, humanity was restrained for centuries from spiritually grasping the supersensible, the power of doing so was bound in the end to disappear completely. This is what we find in the modern socialistic views of life, the misfortune of which consists not in their socialism but in the fact that they entirely reject the spiritually supersensible and are therefore obliged to confine themselves to a social structure which takes account only of the animal side of man's nature. Such a social structure was prepared for by the paralysing of man's supersensible forces. This has meant that human beings are forced to say to themselves: "Care for our salvation shall not in any way make us unite our soul's knowledge and experience with a self-perpetuating stream of life – the stream which includes the Mystery of Golgotha".

With what is this connected? With the fact that in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch the Luciferic forces were especially active. They severed

man from the cosmos, because their aim is invariably to isolate man in selfishness, to cut him off from the whole spiritual universe, as well as from the knowledge of his connection with the physical one. Hence when this severance was at its height, there were no natural sciences. That was Lucifer's doing. The activity which separated sense-knowledge from dogma regarding the supersensible was therefore a Luciferic one. Over and against it stands the Ahrimanic influence; and these two are the great adversaries of the human soul. The fact that the supersensible forces of humanity have been allowed to atrophy – leading to a purely animal form of socialism, now about to overwhelm humanity in a devastating and destructive way – is to be traced to Luciferic forces. The new influence, developing in our own age, is of a different nature, more Ahrimanic. The Luciferic element would isolate man, cut him off from the spiritually supersensible and lead him to experience the illusion of being a totality in himself. On the other hand, the Ahrimanic element inspires man with fear of the spiritual, keeps him away from it, fosters in him the illusion that the spiritual cannot be attained by mankind. The Luciferic keeping away of man from the supersensible might be described as of a more educational, cultural kind, whereas the Ahrimanic, founded on fear of the spiritual, is more nature-bound, arising as it does in an age which began with the fifteenth century. And as the Luciferic severance from the spiritual came especially to expression under the cover of the Orthodox Christianity of the East, so the Ahrimanic fear, the holding back from the spiritual, makes itself felt especially in the culture of the West, and particularly in the element of American culture.

Such truths may be unpalatable today, but they are truths nevertheless, and we get very little further by generalising – however mystically or theosophically – about the connection of the human with the divine, or however we may refer to this relationship. We can progress only by recognising the actual state of affairs as it is. We can reduce our chaos to order only if we recognise the true characteristics of the different streams running side by side. These various streams, springing locally from their various predispositions, then spread out, and everything becomes confused in the hotchpotch called modern civilisation.

What I am now referring to as "Americanism" (as a collective concept, not applying to individual Americans) is fear of the spiritual, the longing to live only in connection with the physical plane, or at most with what intrudes into that plane as coarse spiritualism and such-like, which is not in the real sense spiritual at all. The mark of Americanism is fear of the spiritual; it is by no means confined to America, but there it

lives as a social characteristic, not simply a human one. Above all it is predominant in all science. Science has in this period since the fifteenth century increasingly been giving rise to what one might call "fear of the spiritual". Nothing in science is called objective unless it excludes as far as possible living conceptions engendered in the inwardness of the soul. No idea, no conception that is engendered in the inner regions of the soul is permitted to intrude into the observation of nature. This is allowed to embrace only what is dead, not the living that is interwoven with spirit. If, in the manner of Hegel, Schelling or Goethe – those genuine representatives of Mid-European thought – anyone introduces the "concept" into observation of nature, he is at once thought to be on the road to uncertainty, for no objective reality is ever expected to be attained through spiritual understanding or experience. It is assumed that this means introducing personal bias, that an experiment ceases to be objective directly anything subjective enters into it. That is Ahrimanic. Science is universally "American" insofar as it clings to the fundamental maxim that everything subjective must be banished from an observation of nature. This is what, on a basic level, has arisen out of the earlier severance from the spiritual world in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch.

Thus a new element is added to this legacy – a new element which will make itself felt more and more as a destructive force alongside all that needs to develop fruitfully – consciously – in the future. It is essentially of an Ahrimanic nature, it is fear of the spiritual – and it brings havoc and disintegration into all human culture, which must be founded in the spiritual.

At the transition from the fourth to the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, and during the fifth epoch, these impulses become more and more noticeable. With the discovery of America, and the transplantation into America of European culture, fear of spiritual life appeared there too; but on the other hand there arose what might be called a tension in human souls, for the native forces of the peoples in Europe were such that they could not fail to some extent to be aware of their own connection with the spirituality of the universe. A tension arose at the transition from the fourth to the fifth post-Atlantean epoch of civilisation, during the centuries in which what is known as modern history takes shape – a tension caused by the suppressed spiritual element in the human heart. Certain people decided that a barrier had to be put up against it, partly because they understood very well what was left of the old inheritance, and partly because they had a very pertinent grasp of the

newly approaching Ahrimanic element. This was the source of that spiritual stream – a much more influential one than most people think, as I mentioned from a different point of view in my last lecture² – which tries to perpetuate this keeping of the human soul at a distance from the supersensible: in other words, Jesuitism. Its inner principle is to do everything possible in human evolution to keep man at a distance from any real, conscious connection with the supersensible. This was, of course, facilitated by presenting the supersensible dogmatically as a realm into which human knowledge could not penetrate. But the Jesuit movement knows very well how to reckon with the other aspect, and it wants an inner relationship with modern science that is akin to that between modern science and Americanism. In that respect Jesuitism is great: it recognises the importance of physical science and makes a deep study of it. Jesuits are great spirits in the realm of physical, material science, for Jesuitism reckons with this basic tendency of human nature – which must be overcome through guiding human nature towards the spiritual world – to have fear of the spirit. It counts, moreover, on being able to impose this fear on society by saying to people in so many words: "You cannot and shall not approach the spiritual world; we are trustees of it and we will purvey it to you in the appropriate way".

These two streams of thought, Americanism and Jesuitism, play into one another, as it were. This is not something to take casually; in all such matters we must look for the deeper impulses which are active in human evolution. If we try to identify the forces which have brought about the present catastrophe, we shall find a remarkable cooperation between Americanism – in the sense intended here – and Jesuitism. And from a wider point of view we see, on the one hand, how the inheritance from earlier times still influences our mental life, and on the other, the advent of something new. If we specify these two impulses as the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic, we describe precisely the opposition towards that true spiritual life which must be introduced into human evolution for the salvation of mankind. Anyone who approaches with inner sympathy such a figure as Bernard of Clairvaux, who in a certain sense inclines towards the Luciferic, will take account of the following attitude: "Human powers of cognition are directed only towards the sense-perceptible; so we shall direct the soul to seek the divine-spiritual in a mood of fervour, of elemental experience." This is what kindles enthusiasm in a temperament of that kind. We might say that what lives

² 23rd July 1918.

in human souls as a tendency towards the spiritual aspect lives on in our time, but there is also the other tendency – towards the dark and sombre aspect. The twelfth century had its Bernard of Clairvaux; ours has such figures as Lenin and Trotsky. As in former times there was an active inclination towards the supersensible, so in these figures we find hatred for it, even though expressed in different words and substance. That is the dark reverse aspect of those times: there the pouring of the human soul into the divine mould, here the pouring of man's being into an animal mould, on which alone a social structure is to be built.

These matters can be understood only if one has a clear grasp of one fact, which is remote from present-day understanding. Our time is credulous with respect to theories, taking the content of ideas and programmes for gospel, as I have often remarked. But it is reality that counts, not theories and programmes. The modern follower of Marx, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, before the world-war, would have said: "This is what Marx teaches, what Engels or Lassalle teaches; and that is all that one needs to strive towards". Such a person knows that this must be striven for if humanity is to be healed. It was simply a question of the content of programmes and ideas. But in reality it is never a question of that, for ideas are never implemented in life in accordance with their content, but by means of forces which are quite distinct from it. No-one understands the state of things unless he knows that ideas often have so little to do with reality that they come to manifestation independently of their content. A splendid programme can be devised, established on a sound scientific foundation, fervently longed for as the Marxists long for theirs, but all to no purpose. For an age as unspiritual as ours, this is playing with fire. People believe that they are working to implement the substance of their ideas, but anyone who knows how things happen in life knows that the reality is quite different. If ideas are not derived from spiritual knowledge they enter into cultural life as sheer monstrosities – and this applies to the ideas of Marx, which are intended to banish the spirit. However fine they may be, they become abortive creations. It is no use asking in the morning: "Why has it grown light through what has happened on the Earth?" One has to turn away from abstract ideas and say: "Daylight has come because the sun is shining". In going out beyond the Earth one sees the reason for the daylight. Similarly, if we want to understand what is going on now, we must look away from what is happening in the immediate present to what was taking place a long time ago. Bolshevism cannot be understood except by recognising it as an after-effect of the eighth

Ecumenical Council of 869. You cannot understand it except as a result of the atrophy of the forces which man once had for apprehending the supersensible world. In order really to understand the happenings of the outer world, in order to confront them, we must perceive this inner connection. For anyone observing the relations of events in history it is the most fearful thing to see how movements which set out to reform the world are concerned only with the conceptual content of ideas and have no concern about their effectiveness, which is an altogether different matter from whether or not the ideas themselves are beautiful. Suppose a child is born, a beautiful child; its mother is delighted with it. Mothers are sometimes delighted even when children are not beautiful! It becomes a good-for-nothing, a ne'er-do-well, perhaps even a criminal. Is it therefore untrue to say that it was a beautiful child? Had people no right to say that it was? Does its childish beauty contradict the unforeseen things in its life? In a similar way there have in certain circles of people been men with admirable ideas through which they wanted to reform the world, and these men were admired; yet the ideas became abortions! For ideas are in themselves dead things; they must be animated by being received into the vigorous life of the spirit.

In reading modern socialist publications one finds – if one disregards certain discrepancies – a great similarity between them and writings which express the standpoint of the Catholic Church, even though the latter are differently expressed and deal with different realms. For instance, I recently read to you out of a certain brochure.³ Notice the kind of thought in it, its thought-forms; compare what is said there with the rabid tendencies – whether cultured or not – which lead gradually to Bolshevism. Compare it with the beginning of a publication by Kautsky or Lenin; you will find the same thoughts. One is a development of the other. Nowhere does one get a stronger feeling of Catholicism than in reading certain dogmatic socialist utterances. But something which Catholicism forbids – philosophising about certain things – has become a passion, a principle: the principle of declaring that all learning comes from the bourgeoisie, and all spiritual development from the class-struggle. This principle is the effect of the Catholic principle. Bolshevism may, perhaps, in the form of its inception, have only a short existence; but all mankind will have to reckon long enough

³ In his earlier lecture on 23rd July Steiner had quoted from certain Catholic publications which, he claimed, indicated that the mood that had led to the Inquisition and the burning of heretics was alive and well in the nineteenth century.

with what stands behind it. Anyone who knows how it all hangs together will not be surprised that Bolshevism should have arisen in the place where this way of thinking, in all its bestial quality, proceeded under the cover of the liturgy of the Orthodox religion, so that the one stream was completely separate from the other.

We must fathom all these things if we want to be conscious of the necessity for approaching the spiritual life in the right way. Mystical talk about it is out of place today. What is needed now is to apply spiritual knowledge so as to look into reality and discover the connections belonging to it; because from such knowledge alone can a correct grasp of the world's events arise. It can never come from past legacies, or from fear, or from this elemental new thing I have described, which can but lead deeply into chaos. In this animalised socialism we see displayed one result of what developed in the fourth post-Atlantean epoch. It has a Luciferic element in it; the Luciferic "original sin" is within it. But what is now developing is the penalty for that general incapacity of human faculties for turning to the supersensible. These faculties have become truly impotent, and hatred and rejection of the supersensible arise in their place. There is not merely hatred and original sin, but punishment for the forsaking of the supersensible. This applies to much that is happening today.

The impulses active in human evolution take on various nuances, and events can be understood only in this light.

The peoples of the Italian and Spanish peninsulas came under the sway of Christianity in the course of its expansion, as well as the peoples of modern France and the British Isles. We know something of what has unfolded amongst them. We know that on the Spanish and Italian peninsulas the sentient soul has blossomed forth; on French soil the intellectual or mind soul; in the British regions the consciousness soul; here in Central Europe the ego; and in Eastern Europe in the same way a civilisation of the Spirit-Self is to be looked for, fulfilling its role only in the future and at present existing in germinal forms which are now entirely hidden. Could mankind but look at Western Europe and understand its riddles through spiritual science! For instance, the characteristics of Italian regions (not those of single individuals, which of course extend everywhere beyond the common norm) develop differently from those of French or British humanity. This latter is so constituted that the nature of the people has a special connection with the consciousness soul. I have characterised this extensively from certain standpoints. Through living in the consciousness soul man is driven

down to the physical plane, although not so strongly in the British Isles as in America. The result is that man, having been cut off from the supersensible by ecclesiastical developments, is again led back to union with the cosmos. But it is only to the outer cosmos that he is led by the consciousness soul. Therefore the British people, as Britons, actually find their union with the cosmos through economic principles. British thought is essentially economic, framed on economic lines. Anyone who grasps the connection of the consciousness soul with the physical world will see this necessity; also that the French national character (not that of individuals), having an affinity with the intellectual or mind soul, develops chiefly political thinking and sensibility; while the Italian and Spanish similarly have the animal-like sensuous nature, because the sentient soul is directly connected with the nature of the people. I can only outline this, but it gives an idea of what lies in the characters of the peoples themselves.

If we consider the German nature, developing as it has in the midst of such tragedy, we see that the ego dwells within it. The whole of German history becomes clear if we consider this fact, which is disclosed from the supersensible world. Man's ego is the principle that is least outwardly developed; it has remained man's most spiritual member. Thereby the German, inasmuch as he is connected through the ego with the spiritual world, is linked with it in the most spiritual way. He cannot achieve any connection with the cosmos economically, politically or sensuously; he can achieve it only insofar as it manifests in the soul-life of single individuals – as the ego invariably does – and is then extended throughout the people. It comes to expression most characteristically in what may be discerned as the essence of Goethe's genius, of Herder's and Lessing's, as something detached, a state higher than the sense-perceptible. This is the reason for the sense of estrangement with regard to the sense-perceptible, a feeling of not really belonging to matter, when the sense-perceptible alone is emphasised; and it is also why the great amount of Americanism – and of the elements which I prefer not to describe in detail – that has engulfed Germany during the last decades has alienated it from the original activity destined for its national soul.

In a still higher way will Eastern Europe be connected with the spiritual through its national characteristics – and will develop an even higher civilisation in a spiritual sense, as a reaction to what is now taking shape there. But this is something for the future; it is not yet in evidence and must first evolve out of the animal-like character in which it is still confined.

The Western countries of Europe are directly connected by lawful inheritance, so to speak, with the fourth post-Atlantean epoch. Something more recent, but opposed to Americanism, resides within the German nature: a certain relation to the spiritual world, sought within the spiritual itself. The German human being, when he follows his own distinctive nature, has no fear of the spiritual but, rather, an inclination towards it, as is to be found, albeit in a higher form, in Goetheanism.

This is plain speaking, of course; but you know that these things are brought forward from knowledge, not from chauvinism, nor said to please anyone here. You saw in the last lecture that I understand how not to speak flatteringly. One thing, however, must be said: within the German soul – though this is often forgotten in Central Europe – there is a relation of the human spirit to the supersensible world which must be cultivated, and which is the exact opposite of everything else now manifesting on the Earth. Could we but have recognised this, if only, alas, the last decades had not brought Americanism and Russianism to bear upon this sphere, how differently science would have been worked with in Central Europe. You know from my other lectures that a science of the spirit might have flowed from Goetheanism – but it remained a disregarded impulse. Has it really been grasped at all? Not yet – although within its depths lies the true being of Germany, which is, as you will have gathered, a stranger to the others, for they are still to a great extent animated by the legacy of the old, as well as by the new. In Central Europe alone has something developed which has more or less separated itself out from both the old and the new.

By many indications we see that Goetheanism is untouched by materialistic science. (Goethe is prized, of course, but an ex-Finance Minister, Kreuzwendedich, is made President of the Goethe Society!) What exists in the true, inner element of the German nature will be experienced in other realms as a continual reproach. The easiest way to protect oneself against what by its very nature one cannot acknowledge is to slander it. We must look frankly at this. The best way to relate to something towards which one has such a living reproach is to describe it as delinquency. This is a subjective way of escaping from the reproach. Here we touch upon an important psychological fact. The slander will spread further and further, rooted in the uncomfortable feeling that the special relationship of this ego to the spiritual does exist. It is necessary, however, to see clearly in these matters, not to shun a clear view of them, as is done today. Had we not so much conventionalism and Americanism amongst us, we should discern that German Goetheanism and

Americanism are two opposite poles, and we should know that to regard these two streams of the present day with an unprejudiced mind is the only correct attitude to maintain. We should reject all exaggerated patriotism and look facts fully in the face.

Then we should recoil from the exalting of Americanism in which we have so long indulged, and perceive that this particular element will become more and more active as a real, deep-seated evil, because fear of the spiritual is its main characteristic. Those who say otherwise are short-sighted, are not judging things in their actual context. Everything arising from the political attitude of the French, from the economic rigidity natural to the British, or from the elemental sensationalism – the so-called ‘holy egoism’ of the Italian people – all this, in view of the great events now playing their part, is but trivial compared to the truly evil element arising from Americanism.

There are three great streams which through their inner relationship have the greatest power of destruction in human evolution, owing to their having absorbed in various ways the legacy from the past and the new. First among them is what I call Americanism, which tends to produce greater and greater fear of the spirit, making the world a mere opportunity for living in it physically. It is quite different when Britain wants to make the world into a kind of commercial mart. Americanism would make it a physical dwelling equipped with all possible comfort, in which man can lead an agreeable and wealthy life. That is the political creed of Americanism, and whoever does not detect it is blind to the facts and merely shuts his eyes and ears. Man’s connection with the spiritual world is bound to die out under such an influence. In these forces of Americanism lies what must actually bring the Earth to an end, destruction dooming it ultimately to death, because the spirit will be shut out from it.

The second destructive element is not only that of Catholic Jesuitism but Jesuitism of any kind, which in essence is to all intents and purposes allied to Americanism. If the latter is the cultivation of the impulse to build up fear of the spirit, so the former seeks to awaken the belief that one should not seek contact with the spirit, which it deems impossible; it wishes spiritual blessings to be dispensed by those who are called to be priests of the Catholic Church. This influence seeks to atrophy the forces in human nature which incline to the supersensible.

The particular symptoms of the third stream can be seen arising in a terrible form in the East: a social state based on a purely animal,

physical socialism. Without plastering it with dogmas, we call it Bolshevism, and it will not easily be overcome by mankind.

These are the three distinctive elements in the modern development of humanity. To bring knowledge to bear upon them, so that the events of the present day may be met in the right way, is possible only through spiritual science.

Lecture 2: 6th August 1918

Rudolf Steiner

You will have seen in the last lecture that efforts were directed towards presenting certain ideas, which we can make our own out of spiritual science, in such a way that they can be of service to us in grasping what surrounds us, daily and hourly, in present-day civilisation. If today we seek to add something further to these considerations by way of a final footnote, this can only be sketched aphoristically. Certain significant characteristics of our present time will now be emphasised and brought into connection in various ways with what has sounded forth as the keynote of these studies.

If we determine to keep in mind what seems to stand out particularly in our time, we shall find that, of all the limiting factors today, the worst is that the mode of thought and understanding that has evolved during recent centuries leads people to have little foresight of forthcoming events. This is shown by the fact that most events come as a surprise, in the most curious way, and it is quite impossible to gain credence for anything that is foreseen. It is considered inevitable that really significant events should take people by surprise. If one speaks about what is to come, people are astonished – or they make ironical remarks about one's apparent longing for some sort of prophecy. Thus if, for example, someone sought to call attention – in accordance with what we have said here – to what now looms over the world from the Far East, he would at present encounter little understanding or belief, even though the portents of what is to come are already clearly apparent. Far too little need is felt for a clear insight into things. There is also a reluctance to admit truths which, within the limited circles open to them, point to future events.

Of course there is no question here of any kind of soothsaying or of any sort of prophecy in the negative sense, but always of an earnest, scientific method of thought and conviction derived from spiritual science. If we wish to ruminate upon the causes of the development of the trend that has just been referred to, we may perhaps have to go far

afield for them. People are as a rule absolutely unconscious how far the causes of a phenomenon lie from what appear to be its antecedents. They generally look for the causes much too near at hand.

If we are to look for causes of what has just been described, they must be sought in a tendency deeply ingrained in the human soul at the present time – a tendency towards dead concepts and ideas devoid of life and vigour. It should be possible to understand that to think of the future, the imminent, in the same manner as one does of the past, the already determined, is impossible; but at the present time value is attached only to what, in the current phrase, can be proved, and this question of proof is wedded to the particular kind of proof which is popular today. Anyone who rightly understands this kind of proof knows that it applies only to truths connected with things in the universe which are in process of dying. Therefore the only science or knowledge that we want in the present age is concerned with what is dying and perishing; and this is especially so in the case of those who claim to be most enlightened. They welcome only a will bent in that direction. Even though we are not conscious of this, we prefer – in the widest sense of the word – to deal only with what is passing away. We lack the courage to think in terms of growing and becoming, for what is growing refuses to be grasped with the narrow, limiting concepts that are capable of proof and which are suitable for what is passing away. So people protect themselves against the reproaches which are really implicit in what I have just pointed out.

To speak against these things, as one must do, involves the danger of incurring the reproach of being an utter dreamer, dilettante or something even worse. Concepts are sought which free people from the obligation of thinking about anything fruitful or endowed with seeds of life for the future. According to this view, there is one idea that needs to be inculcated in those who regard themselves as being the really intelligent leaders of thought: the idea of “the conservation of matter and energy” as understood at the present time. It is taken for granted today that anyone who does not accept that this indestructibility of force and matter is a truth underlying the whole of science must be a duffer. Yet it is a fact that if we truly immerse ourselves in contemplation of the universe, we find that what we call matter and energy are perishable and transitory; and all the science, all the knowledge that we can attain about matter and energy is a science of the transitory. Because it is insisted that science has to be concerned with that and that only, it is dogmatically asserted – in order that there might be something that is solid and

permanent – that matter, in spite of its being transitory, must be eternal or that energy must be so. This law of the conservation of matter and energy plays a great part even for those who are not disposed to engage in a dispute with science of this kind, to the extent that it clothes everything with mystery. Our scientific education is such that the after-effect of the idea of the conservation of matter and energy imbues the whole of popular literature and is regarded by the average person as something perfectly obvious.

We know through my book *Occult Science* of the periods of Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth evolution. Nothing of what is now called matter and energy will pass beyond the Venus evolution. Hence even the most lasting kind of matter, that which reaches Venus, will then come to an end. We have just passed the middle of world evolution, insofar as we are able to survey it, and are somewhat beyond the middle of the fifth period of Earth evolution. We are beyond the mid-point and are already in the period of decline, that is, when matter and energy have begun on a downward evolutionary process, have begun to pass away. The right view to take as we study physics and chemistry would be this – that the knowledge acquired through these sciences has a bearing only upon the transitory, which at the very latest will disappear from the universe with the Venus evolutionary period. In the entire domain of present-day science there is nothing which relates to what is permanent; for by means of the ideas and concepts that can be proved in the manner favoured today, it is possible to discover only what in this sense is transitory. Everything is transitory nowadays.

It is essential that a big change comes about in our ideas concerning this fundamental realm of thought, and those who consider themselves particularly scientific have the most to learn before they can replace their current notions with correct ones. But why am I saying this, seeing that the matter as a whole may not perhaps seem particularly important?

It is actually very important, because other concepts are formed in accordance with these notions which govern what people do, they give direction to their wills. Social and political ideas are engendered from this manner of thinking. They shape themselves in accordance with the characteristic way that these forces are made use of, with the result that the transitory dominates the realm of ideas and extends into attitudes of life. This crops up in a particularly striking way as we look at the main points of the programmes put forth by many who confidently regard themselves as having the very last word in advanced thought. For

instance, the schemes of many socialists, very much in the public eye nowadays, all more or less adopt the theory of Karl Marx as a starting-point. This theory is the calamity of Russia today, because – for reasons I explained last time – what is happening there out of historical predispositions is able to happen because of Marxism. This way of looking at things is an extreme form of the determination to deal only with the transitory. Anyone who familiarises himself with the ideas of this way of thinking knows that the fanatical adherents of Marxism imagine themselves to be possessed of the ideas of the future, whereas their ideas are actually related only to what is passing away. This is blatantly apparent in the so-called socialist world-view, for throughout it refuses to countenance ideas with a fruitful bearing on the future. It preaches the blessing of having none. One finds everywhere the formula: get rid of everything that exists at present; then quite out of itself, without there being any need to think about it, something will emerge from the unholy mess. This is stated unequivocally. But although those who express these radical sentiments have – as I said in last week's lecture – been well educated in centuries of Church doctrines and are merely manifesting the events of recent centuries from the Church's standpoint, one has to say the following. In truth this view refuses to entertain ideas with any shred of life in them; the only ones it acknowledges have to do with what is passing away; and the only possible effect of these ideas is to work destructively. People believe that their thoughts have a germinal power; but it is all to no purpose unless the concepts are rooted in reality. These ideas are useless for establishing anything new; all they can accomplish is to institutionalise destructiveness. Although this image relates to a bygone fashion, this socialism seems to me like a lady who cannot endure a crinoline. She hates the wide skirt and wants to alter it. But what does she do? She pads it out. So it looks outwardly just the same as before, but it is padded out with wadding. Similarly with these socialists: instead of fructifying what history has achieved with new ideas, they leave everything as it is – while putting themselves in place of the former rulers. They hang on to the crinoline, but stuff it out. Even the most extreme views represent a longing to enable what is perishing and dying to hold sway. To what is this due?

It is due to the fact that in the concepts of present-day science, concerned as they are merely with things of the senses, based on the intellect and taking account only of material perception, all that one can encounter is the transitory, not the living. Only what in nature is already dying can be understood. The living cannot be fathomed. Similarly with

regard to culture, the dying can be grasped but nothing that is seed-bearing or growing. For the germinating, growing element must be grasped as a bare minimum by Imagination, the first stage of higher knowledge as described for example in the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*. And to attain to still higher knowledge of what is becoming, one needs to develop Inspiration and Intuition. Those who approach such things with the sort of ideas held hitherto may talk as much as they wish – they are only talking of laws which apply to what is on the way to destruction, unless they allow themselves to acknowledge what supersensible knowledge alone can reveal as the realm of the becoming. Things today are on a razor's edge. It is impossible to know anything about certain things, and civilisation will fall into chaos if we are content to live within it without seeking to gain insight into the spiritual world.

What we need, and what is striven for through spiritual science, is a sort of revival of the Mysteries, in a form adapted to the modern mind. Unless we understand the meaning of the ancient Mysteries, we shall not fathom the meaning of the epoch which is intermediate between them and what must come as the new form of the Mysteries. All this must be understood. The most startling experience for the pupils of the old Mysteries was to be shown clearly how the old, atavistic, clairvoyant, hidden knowledge was doomed to extinction. This could not be grasped by observation; it had to be revealed in the Mysteries, where people were shown that something different from the old clairvoyant insight into the spiritual worlds was to come to mankind. There it was disclosed to the pupils of the Mysteries that this old capacity of the human soul, this vision of cosmic expanses in imaginations, was destined to die. This was made clear to them in somewhat the following way. What can be perceived by physical senses on Earth is not the content of the genuine Mysteries of Earth-existence; this is revealed only when the human soul ascends in clairvoyant contemplation to the mysteries of the cosmos, of the extra-terrestrial, when cosmic events beyond the sphere of the Earth light up within it. The ancient seers grasped all that, but not what happened on Earth. The pupils of the Mysteries were shown that knowledge of that type, an ascending into the cosmos in that way, would no longer be possible; and to those who were to penetrate into the Christ-Mystery, something further was revealed.

The following picture emerged. Although the ancient seers did not speak of the Christ, their inspirations derived from the world where Christ always was, for He is a cosmic Being. He dwells in everything cosmic and universal, in the whole content of man's atavistic clairvoy-

ance. But from the time when the Mystery of Golgotha was to come about, all this would no longer be accessible to human beings in the old way.

What was happening? The Christ was descending from the cosmic world to the Earth. Because the cosmos was no longer accessible to human beings as in ancient times, because Christ was no longer to be found in the old way, because the kind of knowledge and state of soul out of which people had formerly looked at the world was dying out, the Christ had to come down to them. He came down to the Earth. Everything, therefore, which enlightened spirits had ever known of the spiritual world in ancient times through the pagan Mysteries and through pagan mystery-knowledge, was summed up in the Christ and could be beheld in Him. People needed to recognise the cosmic Being who in Christ descended to the Earth from the cosmos. That was the one thing.

The other was this. As I have already said, in the whole external world of natural, social and cultural circumstances the intellect and the senses can behold only what is transient, they can attain to a knowledge of the transitory in nature such as will not endure beyond the Venus stage of existence. But learned men, believing that their ideas point to the future, are very often immersed in what is passing away. In what the senses perceive and the intellect grasps there is no seed of the future; all of it is doomed to perish. If the only knowledge were concerned with that, there would be nothing but knowledge of death; for the reality that surrounds us is itself doomed to death. Where, then, shall we find what can endure? Where is the imperishable which shall outlive what outwardly exists but is doomed to die? Where is the truly permanent element amidst the atoms and forces to which materialistic superstition attributes permanence but which are actually impermanent and heading for destruction?

This can be found only in man himself. Amongst all the beings, animals, plants, minerals, air, water, in everything that perishes, there is but one thing which will outlast Earth evolution and the evolution to follow it – that which lives in man himself. Man alone on Earth bears within him an enduring element. One cannot speak of the permanence of atoms, matter or energy but only of the permanence of something in man. This, however, can be seen only through Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition. Everything else that is not perceived supersensibly is merely fleeting. Whereas the sense-perceptible is wholly transient, the supersensible – which outlives it – can be perceived only by supersensible

vision. In man, as he treads the Earth, lies all that will be saved from the whole of Earth existence. If we ask: "Where is the seed of something which will continue to grow on after the Earth, Jupiter and Venus evolutionary periods, which will reach beyond present-day culture into the culture of the future?", we must say: "Not in anything external to the Earth, only in man. In the part of his being that is accessible only to supersensible knowledge, man bears within himself the seed for the future." Only someone who has the will to grasp the supersensible is able to speak rightly of the future; for otherwise any talk of the future will lead to error. Thus the Christ, descending from worlds more and more inaccessible to human knowledge, had to unite Himself with man, had to take up His abode in Jesus and so become Christ Jesus; because only in a human body could there dwell that which bears within it the future of earthly evolution. So in the Christ we have the cosmic element which ancient knowledge alone was able to comprehend directly; and in the Jesus to whom the Christ came we have what will henceforth in human will alone bear the seed for the future. He cannot be understood purely as Christ or as Jesus. He cannot be understood if one merely speaks of the Christ; for the Christ of whom the old Docetists – one of the Gnostic sects – have spoken is beyond our power to grasp, in that he belongs to the old atavistic clairvoyance. Nor can Jesus be understood if one does not take into account the Christ who entered into him. Unless we give due weight to this fact of the Christ in Jesus, we cannot understand that the cosmic can be saved for the future only through the human seed on Earth.

To understand the extent to which Christ Jesus is a twofold Being is a great task. The problem is that many have taken pains to create obstacles to such an understanding. In modern times it has been a question of inducing forgetfulness of the indwelling of Christ in Jesus by all sorts of means. On the one hand there is the extreme theological teaching which only and always speaks of the "simple man of Nazareth", the human being of a physical nature rather than one who has within him the seed of the future. There is, moreover, the Society founded to combat the Christ, and with that aim to set up a false picture of Jesus: the Society of Jesus, which virtually aims at casting out the image of Christ from that of Christ Jesus and at presenting Jesus alone as in a certain sense the tyrant of developing humanity. All this needs to be viewed in its true context, for the different impulses referred to here are more influential in modern life than is supposed, and very intensely so. Without open eyes and a longing to understand the actual events

around one, it is impossible not to be taken by surprise by what happens; a clear view of such things as I have mentioned will be lacking. Our own time is in many respects too indolent to seek to achieve clarity. The concepts of spiritual science are far too hard to encompass, and are stigmatised as dilettante, unscientific, fantastic and the like. They are also, as I have indicated, condemned because of the determination to take no account of what is really significant for the future.

Thus we see around us this dreary waste in the midst of the chaos into which the old religious creeds and cultural streams have descended. Within this chaos, which people with curious naivety call war – whereas for some time there has been not war but something altogether different – we see an array of lifeless, barren thoughts and ideas, because fertile ones can come only from an understanding of the supersensible, the spiritual: people today have to choose between being preoccupied with what is dying and passing away and so becoming a pupil of Lenin, or taking into account the supersensible, which has within it what has to come in the future. I am not referring simply to the Lenin who works his mischief in Eastern Europe – I regard him more as a symbol, for we have many such Lenins in the whole environment of our daily life, in one domain or other. Yet people refuse to take in hand anything except what is dying.

Remember something I once pointed out here. The plant lives, I said; it can be described as a living being. But what does ordinary science describe as the plant? Not what lives within it, for that is supersensible; but the dead, mineral part of it which fills out the living element. In modern science we find nothing described other than the mineral padding of the living being, which brings death to it. Genuinely fruitful concepts regarding nature are consequently unattainable today. The concepts of present-day botany have no life. All that they describe is something filled out with a stony mineral substance which circulates inside. Something similar can be described in animals and in man. All three kingdoms become entirely different as soon as one gets away from this circulating mineral substance.

Take, for example, Herr von Uexküll, who has written an article on "The Controversy about the Animal Soul". He is possessed by masochistic cruelty as regards all knowledge of the soul, or anything that suggests it. I said "masochistic cruelty" because in this article he says that it is impossible to decide whether a soul exists or not; all that can be decided is that science cannot come to a conclusion about this. Anyone who is cruel in the ordinary way also kills; but anyone who is maso-

chistically cruel like this Herr von Uexküll merely experiments with killing and makes sneering remarks. That is thoroughly typical of modern science; but it is not noticed, because nobody wants to admit it. People refuse to break through the dividing wall between themselves and their environment; hence they cannot arrive at the ideas they really need in order to learn one more how to understand their environment.

We know from spiritual science that the essential being of man, the core of his being, descends from the spiritual worlds and unites itself with what surrounds him as a bodily-material sheath between birth and death, or rather between conception and death. The problems of conception, of birth, of embryology, are investigated today; but they cannot be truly investigated, because the research is directed only to the dead part of man, which is embedded in the living. This path will never lead to a grasp of what alone can make mankind comprehensible. When a human being descends in this way from the spiritual world, he is received by father and mother and goes through all the stages of his embryological development. Science today assumes that the parents give the child existence; and since the father and mother are the centre of the family and the family is the foundation of the community, communities – which are extended families – consider the human being concerned their own property. Thus a galling idea is brought into modern life – but it really is not true.

What, then, does the act of conception bestow upon man? What does he derive from it? As spiritual science shows, what he receives is the possibility of becoming a mortal being, of dying. If you consider what is to be found in my various books, you will see that it is the necessary consequence. With conception there is implanted in man what makes his death possible here on Earth. The whole of life from birth is a development towards death, and the seed of death is implanted at conception. What a human being is as man, as a living being, is not by any means engendered at conception; but the possibility of death is thereby grafted on to what would otherwise be immortal. Parents can only give death to a child. This is putting it strongly, but they simply give the possibility of bearing a mortal body here on the Earth. What lives in that body comes from the spiritual world. This is what makes the organism – the whole mechanism with which a human being is clothed and which was received by him with the seed of death at conception – capable of life. We must learn to recognise man in his most concrete manifestation as a part of spiritual world-development. Then we shall learn not to stand before the loftiest problems with cowardly fear, as

present-day science does, but to grasp them positively. If we shrink back from them, we shall fail to understand even our immediate environment.

Round about us today live the most varied peoples. Just think of the incorrect ideas which for example Woodrow Wilson has fashioned out of his conception of nations and peoples. We have often spoken about this. One has to be quite clear that one cannot understand this concept of a people unless one takes in the whole of earthly evolution. Whence derives the division of humanity into peoples?

We know from spiritual science that evolution proceeded in such a way that there was first a Saturn embodiment of the Earth, then that of the Sun, followed by the Moon incarnation and then the present Earth condition; and that afterwards will come a Jupiter embodiment and so on. The course of evolution, however, was not so straightforward that the old Saturn body simply changed into Sun, Moon and Earth; at one time a severance of the present Sun from the Earth took place, then a severance of the present Moon, so that we have a continuous evolution, and something which was separated off was again united, and once again separated. This element of separation which I have just now associated with cosmic evolution entered into the old clairvoyance. And there was in this clairvoyance a very unconscious – or “chthonic”, as it was called in old clairvoyant days – image of what the human seed of the future might be in the ongoing path of earthly evolution. For what comes from the universe was destined to decay; it was maintained only because it had come under the grip of the Luciferic power. In this way, out of the cosmos were formed the many variations in the nations and peoples, but the cosmic forces were impregnated with Luciferic forces. Over and against these diverse peoples stands something which was understood in a better time than this – universal humanity. It has a totally different origin. It may be discussed in the abstract, but can be truly spoken of only as one genuinely understands what the seed of the future in humanity is. It has no taint of nation or folk; for it is that which did not come down from the cosmos but that to which Christ came and with which He united Himself. The Christ, unlike the Jehovah deity, united Himself with no nation but with universal humanity. He was in the confraternity of those gods from whom the nations arose, but He left that realm when it was ready to pass away; He came to the Earth and took up His abode in the whole of humanity. When we say “Not I but Christ in me”, it is the greatest blasphemy against Christ Jesus to invoke Him for any need other than that of universal humanity.

Perceiving this is one of the most important insights for the

future. It is vital for the future that we perceive the relationship of Christ Jesus to humanity, and also how everything purely national lies outside the realm of Christ Jesus, for it is the ancient residue of what was ripe for extinction at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha. Yet as we see withered fruit in the orchards, so do all things linger on after their right time. So we were bound to get the science which is concerned only with knowledge of what is on the way to extinction and which – whether it be natural or social science – has to do with ideas that apply only to the transient, in nature or in cultural life.

Often in the history of civilisation one can see the conflict between the tendency to cling to what is passing away, and to present as important the dead, abstract ideas connected with it, and the wish to grasp that germinal essence of humanity which alone can engender something fruitful for the future. I have often referred to the significant conversation between Goethe and Schiller when they were both in Jena for a conference of the Natural History Society, at which Batsch, the botanist, had lectured on plants. As they left, Schiller said to Goethe: “The botanist’s outlook takes everything apart; it ignores the connecting links”. Goethe, in a few descriptive sentences, put before Schiller his picture of the metamorphosis of plants; but the latter said: “That is not an experience but an idea”. Schiller could not rise to the notion of man as one who bears the future within him, that he might then also be able to find once again seeds for the future in the world in the form of the supersensible. So he replied to Goethe: “That is not an experience or observation – it is an idea”. To which Goethe answered: “Then I see my ideas with my very eyes”. What he had been describing was visible to him, as real as something perceptible by physical senses. They confronted one another – Schiller, representative of a mind unable to look up to the spiritual, bemused by dead, abstract ideas; and Goethe, who wished to derive from knowledge of nature what is imperishable and vital for the future in man, in contrast to which all that is transient is merely a semblance. He wanted to unite the transient with the imperishable. He was not understood, for he looked on the supersensible, the imperishable, as he would look upon something perceptible to the senses. Thus the urgent need of our time is that Goethe’s teaching should be more widely developed and further elaborated in its own sphere. Then things will become clear, and we shall see that the particular creeds, including the Jewish, or more particularly the Catholic, are only the presuppositions of what is old and outworn, standing out in evolution as parched remnants, supported only from outside; and that

side by side with these, interpenetrating them, stands Americanism, which wishes to carry only the transient into the future. Therein lies the kinship between Americanism and Jesuitism, of which I spoke last time.

Standing in opposition to all this is Goetheanism. By this I do not mean anything dogmatically fixed, for we have to use names for things which far transcend them. By "Goetheanism" I do not mean what Goethe thought up to 1832, but what will perhaps be thought in the next millennium in the spirit of Goethe, what may develop out of Goethe's views, ideas and sentiments. It may be concluded, therefore, that in everything connected with Goetheanism outworn belief finds its particular enemy. The most extreme paradoxes are found in this sphere. It really is a paradox to find that the cleverest book about Goethe – whatever may be said to the contrary – has been written by a Jesuit, Father Baumgartner. It is a book which considers Goethe in every detail. The usual distinguishing mark of Jesuit work on the subject is hostility to Goethe; but this is a highly intelligent, painstaking book, not superficially written, presenting Goethe just as he was. Whereas Goethe has been described as an ordinary citizen of the eighteenth century, born in 1749 at Frankfurt am Main, who studied at Leipzig, was given a post in Weimar, travelled in Italy, lived to be very old and was incorrectly called "Johann Wolfgang Goethe"; this was how he was described in the work of a distinguished English gentleman, Lewes, which was much admired. A book about "Johann Wolfgang Goethe" that describes him as an ordinary eighteenth century citizen is no real book. A cultural paradox lies in the Jesuit's book on Goethe, because one can see from it how the opposing forces in modern times work and where the real ones are to be found.

In a small way it shows itself amongst us. So long as we were reckoned a "hidden sect", Anthroposophy was seldom attacked; but when it began to spread a little, virulent attacks began, especially from the Jesuits. The journal *Voices from Maria Laach*, now called *Voices of the Time*, is not content with one article but contains a whole series about what I have called Anthroposophy. I must warn you again and again, when attacks come from this quarter, not to believe that from the point of view of these writers it is for our good when they say that we speak of the Christ, or that we promote understanding of Christ. They forbid that very thing; it is exactly what must not be done. Outside the teaching of the Church, no-one should say anything about the Christ. People in our circles should not be so naïve to believe that by being a good Christian one can become reconciled with Catholicism. Just

because one is a good Christian and does all in one's power to advance Christianity, one makes Catholicism one's greatest enemy. It becomes more and more necessary to take care that naivety in these contemporary matters should disappear from amongst us. We must come to realise ever more clearly in our circles what is active in the forces around us, whether they be in the ascendant or are declining. We must get beyond the longing, present among us in so many forms, simply to penetrate a little way into an imaginative world. I have often said that we must get beyond this longing for a world that is a little bit imaginative. We must above all be able to place our spiritual science alongside modern concepts, and bring keen observation to bear on life as it is in the present age; because to gain insight into this is possible only from the standpoint of spiritual science.

How many people come to me and say: "I have seen this or that". Well, they may indeed have done so. Imaginations are not so remote from human development. "Was that the Guardian of the Threshold?", many then ask. A simple "yes" or "no" does not answer questions on such matters, because the answers involve the whole of human development. But the answers are given. I am now correcting my *Occult Science* for a new edition. I see that in it everything may be found for the answering of such questions. Every precaution, every limitation to be observed is precisely described; the feelings to be developed, the experiences to be undergone, are all set forth. To elaborate the whole content of spiritual science would have required thirty volumes. One must think carefully when reading this book, drawing the necessary conclusions – and it can be done. I do not like writing thick books. But it will be found that this book indicates clearly that anyone who is endeavouring to enter the spiritual world aspires to meet the Guardian of the Threshold; but meeting this Guardian of the Threshold is not so simple as having a dreamy imagination. Having such an imagination is of course the most comfortable way of entering the supersensible world. The encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold is fraught with tragedy; it is a struggle for existence as regards all cognitive concepts, all cognitive laws, all man's connections with the spiritual world and with Ahriman and Lucifer. This life-and-death struggle must be endured by one who would meet the Guardian of the Threshold. Should this experience come to a person merely as a dream-like imagination, it means that he wants to slip through comfortably so as to have a dream of the Guardian of the Threshold as a substitute – nowadays people are fond of substitutes – for the real thing.

We must think healthily about these matters. It will then become evident that healthy thinking can alone provide the basis of a remedy against all superstition, and against all the charges made by superficial opponents of spiritual science. Moreover, in this kind of thinking, in this raising oneself to experiencing the spiritual, lie all the necessary seeds for finding the real way out of the present world-catastrophe. What leads out of it must be grasped not on the Earth, not in the sense-perceptible realm alone, not in the institutions which are mismanaged and are sucking the life out of what exists. What is to be grasped does not exist! We must be stirred with burning zeal for the understanding of what does not yet exist. But what does not yet exist can only be understood according to the pattern of what can be grasped by supersensible knowledge. It cannot be grasped by looking into the past. Such men as Kautsky prefer to look back into the past, finding in anthropology the underlying plan of humanity. They try to study conditions at a time when man was hardly created in order to understand the social connections of today. These true sons of a misconceived Catholicism, such as Kautsky, want to have it so. But one cannot look back to the past, because in the past those things which have extended into the most recent present were created by means of atavistic forces, instinctively. In the future, nothing will be achieved instinctively; and if man merely holds on to what has derived from the age of instinct, he will never attain to what bears the future within it and can lead out of this catastrophe. An active, earnest understanding of the present depends entirely upon a right attitude to the spiritual world.

I should have to say much if, continuing in this strain, I were to speak to you about many things closely related to this present time. Yet if, in the weeks while we are separated, you will bring rightly before your souls what has been said in these lectures, and which should culminate in realising the necessity for knowledge of the twofold figure of Christ Jesus, you will go far this summer in meditative comprehension of the cosmic Christ and the earthly Jesus – remembering that the cosmic Christ descended from the spiritual worlds because those worlds were henceforth to be closed to man's view, and that man must apprehend what lies within him as the seed of the future. In the cosmic Christ and the earthly human Jesus, and their union, lies much of the solution to the riddle of the world – at least to the riddle of humanity. In man lies the seed of the future; but this seed must be fructified by Jesus. If it is not so fructified, it will assume an Ahrimanic form, and the Earth will end in chaos. In short, in connection with the Mystery of Christ Jesus we can

find the solution of many, many questions of today; but we must endeavour to seek these solutions in such a way that we are not lightly contented with what is so often taken for theosophy or mysticism or the like, with a "union with the spiritual", an "entire absorption in the All". Rather must we really visualise the true conditions surrounding us and try to permeate them with what we gain from spiritual science. We shall then say to ourselves over and over again, with regard to the answers to many questions: truly man today is seeking something very practical, not merely theoretical: he will find himself in a blind alley in which he can go no further if he does not take up a spiritual path. Everything which does not go forward with the spirit will wither away.

This is a weighty question for the future of mankind. Has man the will to journey with the spirit? I would want to impress this on your hearts today as the feeling which can arise from the reflections we have pursued.

We are probably meeting today for the last time in this room, which we have used so gladly for years as a place for our studies. It was one of the first to be arranged in keeping with our own taste, and one can only work according to the opportunities that exist. We fitted it up as we did because we were always convinced that endeavours on behalf of spiritual science ought not to be mere theory but should be expressed in every aspect of our meeting as human beings. The room is now to be taken from us and we must look for another. Obviously, under present conditions we shall not be able to fit it up as we did this room, but we must be content with it. This room has become dear to us, for we have come to regard it as impossible to speak elsewhere of our relations with the spiritual as we can in this place, where in many ways we have tried to do the same things that are being attempted in Dornach on a larger scale. In times gone by we had to try all sorts of arrangements. Perhaps there are still a few here who were present when we had to speak in a pub: I stood there, facing the audience, while behind me the landlord or landlady filled beer-mugs. Another time we were in a room like a stable; we had booked another, but that was what they gave us. In other towns I have lectured in places with no boards on the floor, and that too had to be put up with; but it is not exactly what could be wished for as an outcome of our movement, and it would be a misunderstanding if it were said that one could just as soon speak of spiritual things in *any* surroundings. The spirit's task is to permeate matter and to permeate it completely. That is the sense in which I have been speaking of social and scientific life today.

For all these reasons it will certainly be very hard to part in a few weeks from this room, which was fitted up so devotedly with the help of our anthroposophical friends; but we must look upon such a parting in the right way, as a symbol. People will be obliged to part from much in the course of the next few decades. They will be taken by surprise, although they do not believe it. But one thing will be deeply rooted in those who have grasped the deepest impulse of spiritual science. Whatever may be shaken, this cannot be shaken – and that is what we have grasped in the spirit, and what we have determined to do and accomplish in the spirit. No matter how chaotic everything looks, that will show itself to be the right thing.

So may leaving this place be a symbol for us. We must move into another, but we carry away with us something of which we know that it is not simply our own deepest inner being, but the deepest inner being of the world, on which man must build if he would build aright. Whoever stands within spiritual science is convinced that no-one can take away, either from us or from humanity, what we have accomplished through it, and that it must lead human affairs to a healthy condition; this he knows, to this he clings. We may not as yet be able to say how we shall accomplish many things, but we may be sure that we shall accomplish them rightly if we steep ourselves in the knowledge of what Goetheanism signifies for spiritual science, and if on the other hand we accept what has recently been mentioned here – that the world stigmatises and defames all that is connected with the Central European culture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and that we, bringing all this before our souls, can nevertheless take our stand on our sure convictions: whatever happens, this Central European culture will be fruitful for the future of mankind, which indeed depends on it. To save their own faces, because they have no wish for this future of mankind, the opponents of this particular culture defame it; but let us grasp it in the spirit, recognise its inner spiritual content, knowing that we can build upon it. Then we shall be sure that, though all devilish powers vow its destruction, yet it will not be destroyed! But only what is united with the genuine spirit can escape destruction.

Special Spiritual Foundations for the Connection between England and the United States of America

Virginia Sease

At the present time when relationships between countries and continents experience numerous overt and covert tensions we may feel called upon to step back from the power of current public opinion in order to assess what is actually at stake. This will require a willingness to focus on particular historical configurations which provided a foundation for present connections in an age which tends to favour a-historical evaluations. This approach is often met if not with outright resistance, then at least with lack of interest. In this regard, resistance and lack of interest represent the fruits of a modern kind of agnosticism which basically rejects the reality of development and metamorphosis. Yet development and metamorphosis form the two pillars of spiritual life which then support the other edifices of spiritual-cognitive, artistic and social growth. The results often become visible only considerably later. It is from this point of view that certain special relationships between England and America acquire unparalleled uniqueness.

The English Language

The most obvious supportive factor between England and America is the common language. Interesting studies have been published illustrating the effects on the English language through its transplantation to America, as well as to other countries which followed America in their pioneer settlements such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Language provides a deep level of inner and not merely outer communication possibilities and for the English language Rudolf Steiner mentions how this is indeed enhanced through a special circumstance which is essential in view of other considerations which will follow in this article. Two qualities are particularly important which Rudolf Steiner described in 1916 in connection with a comparison between English, German, French and the Slavic languages as well as in 1919 in

relationship to new developments in human evolution which will manifest first through the vehicle of the English language. In 1916 due to the First World War Rudolf Steiner saw the necessity to awaken in spiritually striving individuals an understanding for the differences between the ways in which thought and word interact in the major languages. Briefly summarized here, he describes how when in speaking French the thought is pressed into the words, which can even lead to a "self-intoxication" through the words themselves. In German the thought does not totally permeate the word but rather the thought is held within the thought-structure which naturally causes difficulties in translations. In the Slavic languages the word lies at quite a distance from the thought whereas in English the opposite is the case in that the thought permeates through the word and finds "reality beyond the word".¹

The "reality beyond the word" characterizes the second quality which Rudolf Steiner describes in special detail (1919) probably because he could foresee the consequences of the First World War which catapulted the Anglo-American world into a prominent leadership position:

"This language of the peoples who now enter into world leadership has the characteristic property that one cannot directly express what should be surveyed spiritually... This English language does not have the possibility to express itself in such a way that what is expressed completely coincides with the spirit. One must be able to observe this fact without becoming emotional, without changing it, for example, into hatred against England. Rather one has to regard it like a natural scientific fact, that just is so... But this characteristic of the future world language [1919!] is something which is extraordinarily beneficial for humanity. To a certain extent nothing can be better for modern humanity than when within the people who assume world domination, a language is formed which cannot coincide with the spirit... In the Anglo-American language the connection of the human soul with the element of language, as it was present in olden times, no longer lives. Indeed this language has separated itself from the human being, as a language it becomes abstract... This language allows the inner permeation with the quality of soul to die out. Thereby the opposite element, the opposite pole of the soul life is summoned forth; namely the necessity to come to an understanding beyond language... this is immensely important. In the future one will not be able to come to any understanding through the English language if one does not simultaneously develop something which is not in the language but signifies a

living, immediately elementary, feeling understanding from human being to human being, which only then will imbue language with life. This means, however, nothing less than the fact that the supersensible human being, the first supersensible human being in the historical existence of humanity must enter in. Formerly people only spoke out of their physical bodies, this dies, it expires with the English language; it will of course still be present but it will become ever more an abstract jingle-jangle. And human beings will have to enter socially into connection with each other through their etheric bodies so that while they are speaking they bring forth comprehension from thought to thought... Reading thoughts [mind reading], that is a challenge extending over the next centuries... [Speaking] will of course accompany the development of thoughts, but it will be a continual ringing out to the other person, and the actual understanding from human being to human being will have to arise from a much deeper soul element. This will happen in the development of humanity by force in that the ruling people of the future, the Anglo-American people, will expunge the soul in language as such and the necessity will arise to juxtapose the 'daemonium' [here one would substitute 'genius' in English] in the inner nature of one person with the 'daemonium' in the other person."²

The implications of both these descriptions – 1916 and 1919 – place a significant responsibility upon the English-speaking peoples – primarily in England and America. We all are familiar with the witty statement: the English and the Americans are divided by a common language! But in all seriousness it seems that in the often divisive political climate today it will be what unites both nations which will provide stepping stones into a future which at best seems fraught with new varieties of chaos.

England in the Seventeenth Century

In retrospect one aspect often remains in the background or at least hardly noticeable when historical accounts appear which trace the founding of the colony in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607 and then in 1620 the landing at Plymouth Rock of those people who later were designated as pilgrims or the Pilgrim Fathers of America. By the early 17th century England already enjoyed many centuries of exceptional spiritual-cultural history: To mention but a few highlights, we may think of the legacy of King Arthur, and of significant developments in exoteric and esoteric Christianity such as the Mystery Plays in Medieval times. The

cycle from York is the only remaining complete cycle encompassing 48 plays but all treat the same material. People lived in the pictures of the divine creation of the world and of humanity and with the problem of the conflict between good and evil which became exemplified through the life, death, the descent into hell to free the souls imprisoned there by Satan, followed by the resurrection of Christ Jesus. Later adventure-some poetic works like Christopher Marlowe's "The Tragedy of Doctor Faustus" made their appearance while the common person was still wrestling with the question of good and evil at a more basic level. We could increase this list practically ad infinitum!

The King James' Bible

By the time the first English settlers after 1620 made their way to the New World, the impact of the King James version of the Old and the New Testament had already commenced. The first printing was in 1611. In the translators' dedication to King James various aspects appear which are prophetic in their perception of the value of the great work itself:

"For when Your Highness had once, out of deep judgment, apprehended how convenient it was, that, out of the Original sacred tongues, together with comparing of the labours, both in our own [we may think here of the enormous accomplishment of William Tyndale whose translation of the New Testament from the Greek in 1526 formed the English language in such an accessible and pictorial manner that much of the King James' 'Authorized Version' rests upon Tyndale's words] and other foreign languages, of many worthy men who went before us, there should be one more exact translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English tongue; Your Majesty did never desist to urge and to excite those to whom it was commended, that the Work might be hastened . . ."³

One may venture to say that aside from personal family and friendship ties the most universal and important link between England and America for at least the first century after Plymouth Rock was the King James Holy Bible. The fact that despite the strong presence of especially German and to a lesser degree of French settlers in the Colonies the English language ultimately prevailed as the official language may be traced back to the important role which the Scriptures played in early Colonial life and to the King James version of the Bible which accompanied the settlers as a prized possession to the New World.

Musical Heritage in America

An additional significant religious-cultural dimension which the emigrants took with them was the musical heritage of England. Today musicologists acknowledge that England enjoyed a very early art of part-singing. Scotus Erigena (810-877), famous as a theologian and philosopher, described in full detail two-part polyphonic music and he ascribed the description "organum" to it. It seems that this polyphonic music dating long before the developments on the Continent – such as by Léonin in France – was integral to Britain's folk music. Characteristic and unique to this polyphony is the system of intervals of thirds and sixths, often as descant. The musical development in England was by no means restricted to certain social classes but permeated all aspects of society. One song exemplifies this most convincingly and it has continued to live into our times: "... the most remarkable musical composition of the English 13th century, indeed one might almost say of Europe, is the isolated but splendid 'Sumer is icumen in' ... this is far and away the earliest example of six-part polyphonic writing since it seems unlikely that it was composed later than the year 1280 [probably at Reading Abbey]. This lyrical invocation to summer is in the form of a four-part round supported by the two lower voices performing a simple, four-bar repeating figure in the bass, also in canon."⁴ It cannot be our task here to describe the vast history of musical development in England, but rather to recognize that the many musical experiences – both secular and sacred – which accompanied the early settlers from England as a treasure in the soul realm lived also as a special language of connection to their homeland. One might raise the argument here that the early emigrants were of so-called Puritan persuasion, a movement which began to gain prominence under the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) and which sought to reform the church through removing all remaining papal elements, through introducing different principles in worship along "apostolic" lines and by enhancing piety and discipline both in the clergy and the laity, and would be disinclined to express themselves through music. Rather their main focus had to be on their covenant with God with no distractions. Gordon S. Wood sums the situation up succinctly: "The Puritan leaders [specifically in Boston and its environs] were not modern believers in religious freedom. They believed as firmly as did the Anglicans from whom they had fled that the church's beliefs must be orthodox and uniform and that the state had the obligation to support the church and its beliefs. Hence they punished

Quakers and other dissidents in their midst as harshly as the Anglicans in England had punished them."⁵ Music, however, with its melodies, rhythms and harmonies is no respecter of outer rules and ordinances and it could never be extinguished. Therefore we are not so surprised that by the second half of the 18th century choral singing had become popular in New England, choosing primarily religious songs from English composers. By the end of the 18th century people born in America – most notably William Billings with his collection "The New England Psalm Singer" – had produced many compositions of sacral vocal music which were printed and found a large circulation.⁶

The Impact of Quakerism

From a social-spiritual perspective, William Penn embodies significant early connections between England and America. His name stands synonymously with the state of Pennsylvania, meaning Penn's Woods⁷ and Quakerism. the role of the Society of Friends, as the Quakers called themselves, exerted a significant influence in England and in America right from its inception, and this extended through the 20th century with its banner of pacifism. In view of Rudolf Steiner's observation that Quakerism represents "filtered Mystery teachings"⁸ and that it belongs specifically to the Anglo-American world⁹ we may inquire what aspects stand out as significant at its inception.

George Fox (1624–1691) founded the Society of Friends in 1652. Born in Leicestershire and trained as a shoemaker he possessed deep religious fervour and a magnetic personality. He was known by his gaze which at once rayed out inner ecstasy and total sovereign serenity. In Hans Fantel's perceptive study, "William Penn: Apostle of Dissent", he describes George Fox in the context of church relationships of his time. At the basis of his teaching lay his own epiphany experience: "I had forsaken the priests . . . and the separate preachers also; . . . I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor tell me what to do. Then, oh then, I heard a voice which said, 'there is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition', and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy!"¹⁰ Fantel also perceives – without describing it as such – George Fox as a person standing in the early centuries of the consciousness soul age: "By abolishing the church's authority over the soul, Fox made the personal relation to God a truly private relation . . . just this elusive factor . . . gave the Quaker movement the stamina for survival. For in privatizing the relation with God, Fox got hold of a notion that was just then beginning

to emerge as a powerful force in modern history: the concept of the individual as a [separate] person."¹¹ Especially in the Anglo-American world the sense of individuality lives very strongly and affects the deepest core of moral-religious striving.

Rudolf Steiner's comment that Quakerism may be regarded as "filtered Mystery teachings" is indeed enigmatic. In this connotation he also mentions its sectarian evolution. What does "filtered" mean in this connotation? To which "Mystery teachings" must we look? Does "filtered" signify that it is a remnant that is diluted or is it a quintessence? Do we find a clue through the early Quakers' own description of themselves as "Children of Light"? Here a main motif which George Fox variously expressed indicates an approach to these questions, namely that Christ can be revealed in every human soul and this is in no way contrary to the revelation in the Gospels. William Penn called this "the inner Christ". Out of my work connected with these questions I can suggest as a possibility that the Mystery teaching is connected with Jakob Boehme and that it is filtered in a double sense: various themes especially in the works of George Fox and William Penn seem to coincide intimately with qualities conveyed in the comprehensive works of Jakob Boehme (1575–1624) whose death occurred in the year of Fox's birth. Secondly, it is an established fact that the translation of Boehme's works into English proceeded with astonishing acceleration for that time and that they were avidly read by many adherents to Quakerism as well as by people of other spiritual persuasions. The Quakers generally read them either for private inspiration or during regular family worship. Today we may even have a sense of deep gratitude that these translations circulated so early and so freely in England, as the great work of Jakob Boehme could have experienced a dramatic obscuration due to the widespread devastation in Germany and the surrounding countries during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648). The active engagement with these writings in England worked as an antidote which then reflected back to Central Europe in the 18th century.

Jakob Boehme

Of central importance in placing Jakob Boehme in connection with the Mystery history of humanity which is readily established by entering into his voluminous writings is Rudolf Steiner's indication that he was an initiate of the Sun who could experience the inner secrets of nature. He could blot out the sun and look into the darkness. In the darkness he

saw things as if mirrored and his soul-eye could perceive what was in them spiritually.¹² This led to his alchemical writings in which he would seek for the "Philosopher's Stone", the essence between the physical and etheric spheres as Rudolf Steiner describes it, which also represents the fourth step in the Rosicrucian-Christian path of initiation. Whereas the outer aspects of alchemy were not of great importance to the Quakers, the alchemy of the inner nature of the human being played a central role. One single quote selected from Boehme's immense work entitled "The Aurora, That Is, The Day Spring" can stand here for countless others which were absorbed by the Quakers and other spiritual seekers soon after it appeared in translation by John Sparrow in 1656. It is composed in seventy-seven chapters and each chapter is divided into verses.

From Chapter 12:

160. "Therefore, O Child of man! have a care, trust not too much upon *worldly* wisdom, it is blind, and is born blind; but when the flash of light is generated *therein*, then it is no more blind, but seeth.

161. For Christ saith, 'You must be born anew, or else you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

162. Truly it must be generated in such a manner in the Holy Ghost: which riseth up in the sweet spring or fountain-water of the heart, in the flash.

163. Therefore hath Christ ordained or instituted the Baptism or New Birth or Regeneration of the Holy Ghost in the water, because *the birth of the light* [underline V.S.] riseth up in the sweet water in the heart.

164. Which is a very great Mystery, and hath been also kept *secret* from all men since the beginning of the world till *now*; which it will demonstrate and describe plainly in its due place."¹³

William Penn's "Holy Experiment"

In 1682 William Penn as an avowed Quaker and a highly educated Oxford scholar and lawyer left England with the blessing of George Fox for Philadelphia. His goal was to bring about a "Holy Experiment". As both an exceedingly practical man as well as a deeply spiritual individual he was eminently prepared to carry out such a plan as a refuge to the persecuted Quakers, as violence against them as well as against others who wished to live in peace had taken on severe dimensions. This

intention also extended to the native Indian population which quickly perceived that William Penn was like no other white man. He was a welcome guest in their dwellings and highly respected for his fairness. He for his part saw that the Indians believed in "God and immortality without the help of Metaphysicks".¹⁴

Basically the "Holy Experiment" can be seen as the attempt to realize the interpenetration of Spirit and Matter from a practical social application. Penn's plan meant no less than establishing a community of human beings who are connected with one another not through any outer force but solely through moral consensus. We may regard this stance as a harbinger to Rudolf Steiner's "Philosophy of Freedom", as only free human beings can form a way of life including self-governance at all levels who are free of physical, moral and institutional bondage. This quality shines through a poem by Penn from 1693 which incorporates his deeper beliefs on the immortality of the individual. This belief continued long after William Penn to determine the affairs of the colonies and deeply influenced the creation of the United States of America.

*The truest end of life, is to know the Life that never ends.
He that makes this his Care, will find it his Crown at last.
And he that lives to live ever, never fears dying:
nor can the means be terrible to him
that heartily believes the end.*

*For though Death be a Dark passage, it leads to Immortality,
And that's Recompence enough for Suffering of it.
And yet Faith lights us even through the Grave,
being Evidence of Things not seen.*

*And this is the Comfort of the Good,
that the Grave cannot hold them.
and that they live as soon as they die.
For Death is no more
than a turning of us over from time to eternity.
Death, then, being the way and condition of Life,
we cannot love to live,
if we cannot bear to die.*

*They that love beyond the World, cannot be separated by it.
Death cannot kill what never dies.
Nor can Spirits ever be divided*

*that love and live in the same Divine Principle,
the Root and Record of their Friendship.
If Absence be not Death, neither is theirs.*

*Death is but Crossing the World, as Friends do the Seas;
they live in one another still.
For they must needs be present,
that love and live in that which is Omnipresent.
In this Divine Glass, they see Face to Face;
and their Converse is Free, as well as Pure.*

William Penn

Incarnation Streams

Thus far in our considerations we have focused on the connections streaming from England to the New World in the 17th century and how these connections formed significant aspects for a spiritual adaptation in the new circumstances. By the 18th century significant personalities appeared on the world scene who were born in America and they established relationships to England which became decisive on various fronts. As an exemplary figure Benjamin Franklin stands out as a special phenomenon. His date of birth in 1706 places him only one century after the first group of settlers in Jamestown (1607) and but eight decades from the landing at Plymouth Rock. Before we take up one major aspect in regard to Benjamin Franklin it can be helpful to summarize Rudolf Steiner's insights into places and time periods of the previous incarnation of certain groups of people. This provides a background especially when we confront the obvious question: how could it happen that so many outstanding individualities began to incarnate almost immediately after the early emigrants in the New World? This question contains many puzzling dimensions when we realize how many centuries of earthly time are necessary when a person is living between death and a next incarnation even to arrange with the help of the spiritual world the generational hereditary stream which he or she requires in order to have the appropriate basis for the karma connected with a new life on the earth.

When Europeans first came to North America they encountered the indigenous peoples designated then as Indians. In a lecture dealing with great incarnation streams¹⁵ Rudolf Steiner stresses that it would be totally incorrect to look down upon the First Peoples, the American

Indians, as barbarians. Rather we should respect the fact that they had strong pantheistic views and revered a Great Spirit, namely the Tao of the Orient, who presided in all evolving life. They possessed a deep faith in this all-pervading Great Spirit and due to this intensive feeling, these souls had only a short time in the spiritual world between death and their next incarnation. The fact that they were annihilated by the Europeans had a powerful effect upon them after death. They began to plan their next incarnation which also necessitated arranging bloodline. The bloodline extended back to the European Middle Ages and these souls began then to incarnate in the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe. This signifies that for a major portion of the European population extending over to Russia the bodily configuration is European but the souls lived in their previous incarnation in the various American Indian peoples. These former American Indian souls living now in a European context and absorbing European education experience now a first encounter in some manner with Christianity. They mix in social life with another group of souls who are, however, in the minority.

This second group of Europeans as of the 19th century and somewhat before already had an incarnation in the earlier Christian centuries in Europe. These souls then brought with them into their new incarnation a strong I-consciousness together with a selflessness for Christianity. It is from this group that significant friendships arose between Europeans and certain Americans as of the 18th century – such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Herman Grimm – however this American stream is significantly smaller than the bulk of the North American population which we will regard first.

The majority of people born in North America, whose bloodline also extends back for some generations in North America – and I believe that this comprises both white and black ethnic backgrounds as does the afore-mentioned smaller stream – were living at the time just before, or during, or after the Mystery of Golgatha in the Near East. They, however, took on nothing from this great event. Whereas they experienced and indeed formed highly spiritual cultures, they generally disregarded and disdained the physical world. These souls sojourned for a long time in the spiritual world and as of the 19th century they began to incarnate in North America. Rudolf Steiner describes how these souls experience difficulties in entering properly into their physical bodies and therefore they relate to their bodies more from the outside towards the inside. This leads to a basically external, extroverted view of life which is necessary since the soul was accustomed to being in the supersensible

sphere and needs assistance in establishing a proper relationship with the body. This is their first Christian incarnation which they enter into basically through outer tradition and education.

As mentioned above there is the much smaller stream of individualities who have chosen North America as their place of incarnation. From Rudolf Steiner's explicit descriptions of the two past incarnations of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)¹⁶ it is clear that this smaller group had a significant and strong Christian incarnation in the Middle Ages in Central Europe which in this connotation may also include England. Their destiny then leads them to the New World for the tasks which they need to assume for the progress and development of modern civilization.

Benjamin Franklin

In view of the basic theme of this contribution and in the light of our present spiritual, social and political world situation it would be possible to investigate the legacy of numerous Americans from the 18th and 19th centuries with paramount examples culminating in Benjamin Franklin and Ralph Waldo Emerson. As a consideration of both would exceed the limitations provided here, I will focus on Benjamin Franklin as a basic inspirer of impulses which resulted in the formation of the United States of America.

Benjamin Franklin gives us excellent insights into his life up to the fifty-first year in his "Autobiography". He was born in Boston and learned there the trade of printer, however, he was from earliest youth an avid student of many disciplines. When he was 17 years old he left Boston and came via New York City to Philadelphia¹⁷. The spiritual atmosphere in Philadelphia was imbued not only with qualities arising from Quakerism but also of equal importance with the aura of esoteric Rosicrucianism transported by German emigrants such as Johannes Kelpius and his community and a bit later by Conrad Beissel¹⁸.

The trinitarian principle which the early Rosicrucians experienced as fundamental to all life and which Christian Rosenkreutz in his long life – 1378 to 1484 – expressed in words whose signature is: EDN (From God we are Born), ICM (In Christ we die); Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus (In the Holy Spirit we resurrect):

*Ex Deo Nascimur – In Christo Morimur –
Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus*

was fundamental for Benjamin Franklin's philosophy of life which simultaneously was his uniquely personal religion. The impulses which initially arose through Rosicrucianism in the Middle Ages and continued in the next centuries lived on in the development of Freemasonry as of the 18th century. In this context Benjamin Franklin played a unique role which then became the keystone for the emergence of the United States of America. At the age of 18 Benjamin Franklin in his capacity as a printer sailed to England and landed there on Christmas Eve 1724. It was the London of Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope and Daniel Defoe to mention just a few distinguished people who contributed to a highly defined social structure. The young Franklin met many people from various walks of life and also met the institution of Freemasonry which became a determining factor in his life.

The Influence of Freemasonry

The history of Freemasonry still provides many interpretations as well as disputes concerning its age and its place of origin. Due to many legends and traditions it is often still difficult to distinguish what is authentic from fanciful conjecture. Today there is general agreement that the craft guilds of the British Isles and especially of England during the latter part of the Middle Ages formed the basis for Freemasonry. They were associations of operative stonemasons which "... not only provided for the better regulation of their members and ensured the perpetuation of a high degree of technical skill, but also offered a sense of comradeship and mutual support. Trade secrets were passed on among the most highly skilled members ... by word of the mouth."¹⁹ A very significant moment in the history of English Freemasonry began in 1717 when Dr. James Anderson (1684–1739) and Dr. John Theophilus Desaguliers (1683–1743) who were both members of the Presbyterian clergy as well as the Royal Society realized that by giving a more defined form to Freemasonry a vessel could be created which could beneficially further a symbiosis of religious precepts and ideals nascent in the Enlightenment with developments emerging from the scientific revolution. On June 24, 1717 – the Day of St. John the Baptist – the Grand Lodge of England was established and a Grand Master chosen. In 1723 James Anderson published "The Constitutions of the Free-Masons Containing the History, Charges, Regulations etc. of that most Ancient and Right Worshipful Fraternity. For the Use of the Lodges." This publication caused quite a stir in London which of course interested the

young Benjamin Franklin, who investigated all aspects of London life with enormous verve and penetration. Several years after Franklin returned to America he established the "Pennsylvania Gazette" and as editor announced in December 1730: "As there are several Lodges of Free-Masons erected in this Province, and People have lately been much amus'd with Conjectures concerning them; we think the following account of Free-Masonry from London will not be unacceptable to our Readers."²⁰ Soon thereafter Benjamin Franklin, then 25 years old, became a Freemason and quickly rose to positions of responsibility. In 1734 he published the first Freemasonry book in North America, the "Constitutions" by Anderson. In the same year he was the Provincial Grand-Master, the highest post in the brotherhood. These few but significant details may indicate that, despite the difficulties which arose politically as the Colonies strove to achieve their own identity which eventually led to the War of Independence, as it is called in the United States or the American Revolution, its English description, and to the "Declaration of Independence", nevertheless deeply spiritual and social connections between people on both sides of the Atlantic were at work. These connections formed a fabric which long outlived the war. The philosophical-religious insights in the Declaration were and are universal in nature as they spring not merely from political dissention but from the deepest source of humanity and express a task for civilization now and in coming ages. But this task and these insights cannot and should not be superimposed upon other peoples which would be a gross contradiction of their very source of freedom. Of the 56 signers of the Declaration 53 were Freemasons and the echo of trinitarian sensibility – wisdom, beauty, strength – sounds through the formulation. The well-known words are:

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal;

that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights;

that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...

Who would ever dare to assert that these truths have ever been effecuated by the United States or by any other nation even to a small degree in the two centuries since their inception? Are they not an example of how the thought permeates through the word and finds "reality beyond the word"?²¹ But this very quality frees them from the bondage of time and place so that they become mutual possessions for every nation but

especially for the two English-speaking nations who each in its own historical role was responsible for their inception. The separation 230 years ago could not establish a lasting abyss between England and the United States of America because their mutual foundations would not permit this to occur.

The World Situation Today

If we now change our focus and look at the current world situation in which together both countries receive much praise and even more condemnation from within and without their own boundaries we are met with gigantic complexities. Only after considerable time has elapsed will a retrospect perhaps reveal the really essential factors and distinguish them from irrelevancies. One prominent factor, however, can exert a deleterious effect for decades to come and that is the anti-American / anti-Anglo hatred which has been ignited in many places around the world. To what degree the hatred is justified future generations will decide, but its effect results in a seduction away from the values which the West has tried – most assuredly insufficiently and imperfectly – to realize in regard to the sanctity of each individual human being, to the sense that the Divine, indeed the Christ, dwells in every person.

Rudolf Steiner has called the fifth Post-atlantean Age extending from 1413 to 3573 A.D. the Anglo-American-Germanic Age – Germanic referring to Central European not only to Germany. It is the age which has the task of gaining an ever deeper understanding as well as personal experience of the Christ Being in His present situation 2,000 years after the Mystery of Golgatha. Now He waits for human beings, not physically on the earth, but in the surrounding ether sphere of the earth. It is the same sphere that we live in unconsciously when we read the thoughts of others, when the words do not fully convey their meaning. The more consciously we can enter this sphere, the greater our contribution will be to lead ourselves and perhaps others out of the abyss of submaterialistic life to the realm where the boundaries between nations, social structures and religious persuasions dissolve as the individual realizes that his I is in total identification with the Christ, with the I Am as is each human I. The few examples described briefly in this article seem to me to be fundamental in this regard and to underline the inherent spiritual relationship between England and the United States of America which must be further nurtured despite the efforts from various corners to usurp the spiritual connection for militaristic aims and to sow

seeds of dissension where harmony should and can prevail. Yet here our responsibility extends far beyond even such a desirable harmony if we take the following words seriously: "... even as the human being must wrest himself out of materialism to attain freedom and spirituality, so must he wrest himself out of everything nationalistic in whatsoever form it may appear to attain universal humaness. Without this there can be no progress."²²

References

- 1 See Rudolf Steiner, Lecture of December 18, 1916 in Dornach, Collected Works (GA) 173, Dornach 1978.
- 2 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture of July 13, 1919 in Stuttgart, Collected Works 192, Dornach 1964, pp. 287-291 (transl. V.S.).
- 3 The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments. Translated out of the original tongues and with the former translations diligently compared and revised By His Majesty's Special Command, London and New York. 1957, The Dedication.
- 4 Larousse Encyclopedia of Music, New York 1981, pp. 140-141.
- 5 Gordon S. Wood, Founding a Nation 1786-1787, in The Almanac of American History, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., New York 1993, p. 17.
- 6 See Michael Winship, "Reflections on Early Sacred Music of New England" in The Riddle of America, ed. John Wulsin, Fair Oaks, California 2001.
- 7 See Virginia Sease and Manfred Schmidt-Brabant, Paths of the Christian Mysteries: From Compostela to the New World, Forest Row 2003, Chapter 11.
- 8 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture of December 15, 1919 in Dornach, Collected Works 194, Dornach 1994, p. 230.
- 9 See Rudolf Steiner, Lecture of June 14, 1921 in Stuttgart, Collected Works 342, Dornach 1993.
- 10 Hans Fantel, William Penn: Apostle of Dissent, New York 1974, p. 81.
- 11 Ibid. p. 84.
- 12 See Rudolf Steiner, Lecture of September 15, 1923 in Stuttgart, Collected Works 228, Dornach 2002.
- 13 Jacob Boehme, Aurora, That Is The Day-Spring, transl. by John Sparrow and ed. by C.J. Barker and D.S. Hehner. Number 389 of a Special Limited Edition of One Thousand Hand Numbered Copies, Sure Fire Press, Edmonds, Wa. 1992, p. 306-307.
- 14 Cited in Hans Fantel, fn. 10, p. 189.
- 15 See Rudolf Steiner, Lecture of December 12, 1920 in Bern, Collected Works 202, Dornach 1980.

- 16 See Rudolf Steiner, Lecture of April 23, 1924 in Dornach, Collected Works 236, Dornach 1977.
- 17 See fn. 7, p. 184 f.
- 18 Ibid., Chapter 11.
- 19 Wayne A. Huss, The Master Builders: A History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania. Volume I: 1731-1873, Philadelphia 1986, p. 1.
- 20 Ibid. p. 17.
- 21 See fn. 1.
- 22 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture of October 23, 1919 in Dornach, Collected Works 191, Dornach 1983, p. 191 (transl. V.S.).

Shadows of Doubt

Terry Goodfellow

Those of us who live in what is generally referred to as the Western World, even though geographically it may include areas of the globe which are not in the West at all, live in a uniquely favoured time. We enjoy freedoms and personal comforts which would have been unimaginable for our relatively recent forebears: travel is easy and cheap, disease and hunger no longer stalk the land, we can buy food from all over the world in any supermarket and we no longer suffer from cold.

In many other parts of the world, and in Africa in particular, this is not so. There, millions of people are undernourished, have no access to clean drinking water and live in societies which are ravaged by internecine war.

A visitor from Mars might find this state of affairs rather strange. Indeed, he or she might conclude that different species of *Homo Sapiens* inhabited different parts of the earth, a conclusion which, incidentally, was favoured by some of our nineteenth century predecessors. This notional visitor might also have noticed that the dominant creed of the Western World was Christianity, a creed which enjoined people to love their neighbours and to consider all people equal in the eye of God. So our visitor might reasonably ask: What went wrong?

Dispensing with our notional visitor, we can see that to ask such a question is to assume that such a situation is wrong in the first place. We could argue, borrowing from the ideas of social Darwinism, Karl Marx and others, that this state of affairs is the inevitable result of an evolutionary process, the impersonal advance of historical events. Alternatively, we could argue that we live in a world of our own creating; it is not a world which has been shaped by blind historical forces, but one which has been created by a myriad human decisions over long aeons of time. And the fact that we can observe this world in the way that we do now is in itself the outcome of a long process of inner development.

As any student of Rudolf Steiner's work will know, he referred to

our epoch as the fifth post Atlantean epoch, an epoch which, amongst other things, would see the development of the consciousness soul in humanity at the beginning of the fifteenth century. One of the distinguishing features of the consciousness soul is the gradual development by humanity of a way of seeing and experiencing the world, or nature, as we would now say, which is quite different to the way in which earlier humans saw and experienced their world. It is sometimes referred to as a "spectator consciousness" in which we view the world as "out there", separated from us and getting on with its own affairs, matters in which we have no part. Its corollary is that we become more aware of ourselves as individuals, as someone with a distinct identity. Earlier epochs did not perceive their world in this way; for them, the world and nature was part of a whole sea of being in which they also swam with the forces and spiritual powers which inhabited it.

It is not co-incidental that the development of this spectator consciousness led also in time to the perceptions which have made the world in which we find ourselves, and which continue to dominate our perception of it to this day. For once the earth is perceived as something "out there" and independent of ourselves, it can also be perceived as something which can be investigated and exploited. From this perception, many, many developments flow. Of these, I propose briefly to highlight three: The development of science and technology, the rise of materialism, and the appearance and strengthening of nationalism.

Science and Technology

The Royal Society, doyen of the scientific world, was founded in 1660, although its actual origin precedes its official foundation and lies in an "invisible college" of natural philosophers who began meeting in the mid-1640s to discuss the ideas of Francis Bacon. At its official foundation, it was described as "a Colledge for the Promoting of Physico-Mathematicall Experimentall Learning", and its founding group included Sir Christopher Wren and Robert Boyle. It would be tempting to say that the rest is history; but this will not quite do. We can observe that the informal group of natural philosophers were meeting to discuss the ideas of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) whose active life reached into the previous century, and that the origins of natural science itself reach back through the Arabic world to ancient Greece. But the founding of the Royal Society marks a step change: one could almost say that the investigation of the material world had come of age and that from now

on the earth was doomed to be dissected. As investigation of the natural world proceeded apace, so too did the development and refinement of technology. The industrial revolution of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century marked another step change in this accelerating process, as did the investigation of the atomic and sub-atomic world in the twentieth century. Technology, of one sort or another, is now so much a part of to-day's world, that we take it for granted. We don't usually think of Michael Faraday's work when we switch on the light: we accept electricity as a given, as we do the myriad other pieces of technology on which we rely. In fact, our world is now so complex and inter-related, technologically speaking, that the failure of one part, could seriously imbalance the rest. But this is not something which we think about much, thanks to a spectator consciousness which perceives such things as "out there", and entirely separate from ourselves.

Materialism

The growth and expansion of science and technology was accompanied and paralleled by a rising materialism. Materialism has different meanings. Philosophically, it holds that physical matter is the only reality and that everything can be explained in terms of matter and physical phenomena. More generally, it denotes that physical well-being and worldly possessions constitute the greatest good. Whilst science was developing knowledge of the physical world, and a technology which could make use of that knowledge, that materialism which saw the greatest good in the acquisition of possessions, both personal and public, was symbolised, in the West, and in Great Britain in particular, by an expanding and accelerating shift from an agricultural to an industrial society. Britain, with its long tradition of trade, used this wealth and expertise to acquire yet more possessions, in the form of an empire, which at its apogee, "owned" about a quarter of the globe. It is easy to forget how recent this empire was: it was only in the aftermath of the Second World War, following the establishment of Indian independence, that Britain, bankrupted by two world wars, ceded her colonial possessions. The Suez crisis of 1956 was one of the more visible signs of a dwindling imperium. Yet the effects of colonialism are far from spent and it is difficult to understand the contemporary situation of many countries without reference to their colonial past. Nor is the urge to empire diminished either, although the nature of that empire may be different. Much is written now about the new "American

Imperium" and it is well established that the dominant world role which Britain enjoyed before the Second World War was ceded to America at the end of it. But this is a different sort of empire. It has less to do with ruling subject peoples, and more to do with spreading a particular brand of culture and commercial opportunity. The current situation in Iraq is a possible example of this new type of empire in action, where the intention is to establish a free market economy, where much of the reconstruction work is to be carried out by American contractors, and where the culture of democracy is to be the method of government. In much the same way that the British justified their colonial acquisitions by emphasising their mission of bringing civilisation to various of their subjects, so too does the new "Pax Americana" claim to be bringing freedom to a benighted region of the globe. In fact from a certain perspective, and remembering that the boundaries of present day Iraq were established in the 1920's by the British, it is possible to see the whole affair of Iraq as another colonial adventure.

Nationalism

It is generally agreed that the principle of the sovereignty of nation states was first formally established at the Treaty of Westphalia in 1646, which concluded the Thirty Years War in Europe. This principle has been the backbone of international law ever since. As the power of the church, religion and dynastic rulers declined, so too did the idea of nationalism – an idea which would have been unknown to former generations – begin to take root. It was an idea which was greatly assisted by the development of the printed word, and by the decline of the official language of Latin in Europe in favour of the vernacular. Burgeoning nation states, and ailing dynasties alike were quick to harness this nationalism to their own ends. And whilst there are now no royal dynasties left which wield their former power and influence, it is nevertheless surprising to learn that in 1914 dynastic states made up the majority of the world system of governance. Most national anthems celebrate, in one way or another, the glory of their country. For example: "Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation" (U.S.A.) or "Amour sacré de la Patrie" (France), and in Britain until 1946, the ruling monarch was described on our coinage as Emperor or Empress of India. A more recent example of the way in which nationalism can be used to re-enforce a particular point of view was the way in which, during the build up to the invasion of Iraq in

2003, the French were described in America as "cheese eating monkeys" and "French Fries" were renamed "Freedom Fries".

The writer Benedict Anderson has described the nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign"¹ We might reasonably ask how a community can be imagined. But on reflection we soon realise that most communities are essentially imagined since we can never know or meet all of the people who compose them. Yet although we may never meet nor hear of all the members of our community, even so, in the minds of each of us lives the image of that "communion". And it is a powerful image which, as any student of history will know, has been, and is, manipulated to harness popular support for any manner of national adventures. Because the nation and nationalism come to be seen as something that always was, a given of our lives like the weather or the sea, they also come to be seen as something which is neutral; something which does not represent the interest of a particular group of people, as for example the road building lobby. In this sense it is perceived as "interestless". But its very neutrality can make it a powerful lever in the hands of ruling elites who may have specific agendas. How else to explain the millions who have sacrificed their lives in the name of their country?

WYSIWYG

Surveying our contemporary world, we can also note its interconnectedness. Of course the world has always been interconnected to a certain extent through trade and the effects of various empires. But modern advances in communications technology now enable us to communicate with others anywhere, which is why we now often hear the phrase "the global village". Yet beneath the surface of this homely phrase, the same powerful forces are still at work, which is why, amongst other things, as mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this article, millions of people are starving in Africa, and why the imbalance between the world's richest and poorest continues to grow.

But there are signs that its foundations are not that secure. They are threatened by global warming and climate change; by the incipient end to unlimited supplies of oil; by terrorism, which is in itself partly a product of the dominant western culture. It is not at all clear how the

¹ Imagined Communities – Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. Verso 1991.

future will proceed; for this culture has the seeds of self destruction within it. The story of the development of oil can be seen as symptomatic of this. From the early beginnings of its first discovery and commercial exploitation in the 1860's, it has become the principal fuel of our industrial and technological societies. In the course of its development it has brought great benefits as well as great destruction. Before too long, this ready supply of oil will "peak". We shall have reached the maximum volume of supply, after which, that supply will start to decline. Experts argue about how soon this will be – estimates vary between 10–40 years – but few dispute that this supply is finite. And few now dispute that the burning of fossil fuels, in particular oil, is the principal cause of global warming.

In computer terminology, the acronym WYSIWIG stands for "what you see is what you get" – in this case, what you see on the screen is what will be printed on the page. Returning to the remarks about the consciousness soul, mentioned earlier, we can see that our civilisation is the result come of that spectator consciousness which was one of its outcomes. And although there are signs that the dominant culture is being challenged, by the anti-globalisation movement or the environmental movement for example, it is still the dominant culture and although one could also argue, as Rudolf Steiner frequently did, that any trend will arouse its opposite, nevertheless, that opposition is in many ways using the same materialistic paradigms as the culture it is opposing.

We know from Rudolf Steiner's "Philosophy of Freedom" and from Owen Barfield's elegant elaboration of some of the central insights of that book, that what we see, or perceive, is largely determined by what concepts we bring to bear on a given object – the "unrepresented" as Barfield calls it.² We know also that it is possible to perceive phenomena in different ways, and that it is also possible to construct different and effective technologies from such perceptions. So if we ask why is the world as it is, we have to conclude that this is the world that we have created.

As students of Rudolf Steiner's work, we know that he hoped to bring concepts which would change our perceptions. The consciousness soul should be able to grasp not only the world "out there", but the inner world and the world of spiritual beings and forces which lie behind it. From this perception, quite different practical arrangements flow.

² Saving the Appearances – Owen Barfield. Harcourt, Brace and World, inc. 1975.

Studying these, both in his thinking and in actuality where they have taken root in our societies, in biodynamic farms, Waldorf Schools, curative and medical centres for example, one can come to a very different picture.

In Steiner's time, those forces that dominate our world were also active. He could see that the driving forces behind the materialism of the commercial world were essentially so arranged to benefit the few; that science and technology was delving deeper and deeper into what he called "sub-nature", without any corresponding understanding of the spiritual world, and that nationalism was a scourge which should be "eradicated". In his words: "The one and only reality befitting the present age would be to overcome and eradicate nationalism, and for the people to be stirred by the impulse of the universally human."³

Returning now to our putative visitor from Mars, or to someone of a future epoch, what would they make of our present civilisation, assuming, of course, that it still existed? For this in itself is not a foregone conclusion, since, as has been already noted, our civilisation is inherently unstable and is based on premises that are inherently self-destructive. These self-destructive tendencies have been amply demonstrated in the history of two world wars in the twentieth century, and in the violent beginnings of the 21st century. So it is not surprising that the future president of The Royal Society, Sir Martin Rees, is pessimistic about our future. According to him, humanity has a 50:50 chance of surviving the 21st century, and that nuclear war, biological terrorism, ecological mayhem or asteroid collisions could destroy us in less than 100 years. Rudolf Steiner was pessimistic about the future too. For unless our civilisation was able to incorporate awareness of spiritual realities into its materialistic paradigms, a reality which, in the era of the consciousness soul it was capable of apprehending, it too was doomed to destruction in an Armageddon which he called "the war of all against all".

Our visitors might note all this. They would see a civilisation that was predominantly driven by a materialistic and mechanistic view of the world and humanity. They might also note signs of a growing awareness of the possibilities of a different sort of civilisation in the activity of the United Nations, the ecological movement, the European Union, and a growing awareness in some sectors of society of the destructive and

³ Rudolf Steiner: Festivals and their Meaning, lecture of 3rd April 1920. Rudolf Steiner Press 1996.

inhuman tendencies at work in our world. Even so, I think they would probably agree with the third god in Brecht's play "The Good Person of Szechwan" when he says: "There must, there must, there has to be a way, to help good men arrive at happy ends".

Such an outcome though, does require a different picture of the nature of the human being. Are we mere stuff, which is governed and organised in accordance with materialistic and mechanistic principles, or are we, to borrow Shakespeare's phrase, "such stuff as dreams are made of", with body, soul and spirit and a foot in the spiritual world? For it is only from this picture of the human being that the possibility of a civilisation based on "the universally human" might arise.

True Columbia

Pondering the special relationship between Britain and the USA

Christopher Houghton Budd

With the passing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1918, Rudolf Steiner made the following observation: "Anglo-Americanism is destined for world dominion ... [but] will there be found ... a sufficiently great number of people who feel the responsibility, so that onto this external, materialistic dominion ... may be transplanted the impulses of the spiritual life? [P]eople need to realise that way down at the bottom, on the ground I might say, crawls the economic life managed by Anglo-American habits of thought. It will be able to climb up only when it works in harmony with the whole world, with that for which others also are qualified and for which others also are gifted. Otherwise the gaining of world dominion will become fatal ... If the effort is not made to bring about the permeation of economic life by the independent spiritual life and the independent political life ... [Anglo-American dominion] will pour out cultural death and cultural illness over the whole earth."¹

Events since appear to have borne Steiner out. Today there is an unseemly assertion on the part of the Anglo-American peoples (or rather some powerful sections within their communities) that they have both the right and, worse, the moral duty to tell the world how to behave. In this connection, much is made of the "special relationship" between Britain and the United States of America (USA).

Sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O Union ... strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of ... future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!

¹ *The Mysteries of Light, Space and of the Earth*, 15.12.1919.

Thus, citing Longfellow, did President Roosevelt herald the relationship when he met Winston Churchill secretly at Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, in August 1941. Secretly, because the USA was not at war and because exception would have been taken by the substantial German-speaking part of her population. The special relationship underlies most of post WW2 Anglo-American dominated arrangements – NATO, the IMF, World Bank and WTO, and even the UN. In addition, it refers to the often-close human ties between the US president and the British prime minister, not to mention the alignment of business and economic philosophy between Britain and the US.

The belief – and reactions to it – that the Anglo-Saxon peoples should run the world is behind most of today's events. If not as convenient shorthand for a geopolitical strategy to make the world subservient to Anglo-American dominion and as justification for "a new kind of imperialism,"² how else can we understand the special relationship?

One way is to respond politically – that is, to see it as conscious, even malign intent on the part of particular human beings. But these people have then to be identified, the case against them proved, and another way of "doing business" instituted instead. And all without the new people falling prey to power and the other pitfalls that await human beings in this area.

The approach taken here is different. As a way of lifting oneself above the level of mere politics, it shares a spiritual image of how otherwise things might have been or could become – what historians call counterfactual methodology. It aims to be symptomatological³ in its understanding of history in order better to understand the deeper issues at work.

The image has two important aspects. It first questions whether Columbia is not a "truer" name for America, meaning the area now called the USA. It then wonders what really is Columbia and what is its true extent. The aim is not to explain today's events, so much as to shift one's point of observation to one that rings inwardly more true. The assumption is made that history proceeds from spiritual events, not political ones, and that spiritual events are susceptible to change for the

² In March 2002, in a controversial pamphlet entitled *Reordering the World*, Robert Cooper, a key advisor of Tony Blair, spoke of "a new kind of imperialism" as a key policy in "a world in which the efficient and well-governed export stability and liberty."

³ In the sense that Rudolf Steiner spoke of history as symptomatology. See *From Symptom to Reality in Modern History*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1976.

good if only human beings can locate themselves within them and become representative of them.

Although the western hemisphere is named after Amerigo Vespucci, the "discovery" of the area now occupied by the USA and Canada is generally attributed to Christopher Columbus.⁴ To this day, many places in the US bear his name – Columbus, Ohio, and the District of Columbia being two obvious examples. But Canada's British Columbia should also be mentioned. Indeed, in this domain one has to proceed very carefully. In much the same way that the European Union is lazily and inaccurately referred to as Europe, so the USA is often referred to as "America". South of the USA, America is referred to as North America, of course, but even this is a great inaccuracy, for Canada and the USA as they are understood today can hardly be read as one place. Canada should not be subsumed within the USA. Not only are their histories very different, but Canada is also characterised by the (still debated) relationship between her English and French speakers.

Moreover, much of the population of the USA is Spanish speaking or of African descent and holds different values to those of its Anglo-Saxon fellow citizens. And before them, of course, are the peoples, today called the First Nations, who lived in this part of the world before the "white" man arrived. Finally, in Britain also the term "Anglo" by no means embraces all who live there. When we speak of a special relationship between the Anglo-American peoples, therefore, we need to be precise in what we mean.

In fact, both the USA and Britain (or the UK, as "Americans" prefer to call it) can be understood as concepts distinct from the many peoples who make up their populations. In the case of the USA, the inhabitants may share an over-arching "American Dream", but how real is this dream and is it really universally held as an ideal? Suffice it to say that political terminology is inapt when it comes to "capturing"

⁴ According to the Houston scholar, John Lienhard, the reason for choosing America is as follows. Vespucci, like Columbus, was an Italian navigator. He sailed twice to the western hemisphere, in 1499 and 1502 – that is, 7 years after Columbus – but to the southern part. On his second trip he realised he was not in India, but in a "new" continent. A few years later, Vespucci gave his name to the new world through the fact that an amateur German geographer, Waldseemüller, wrote an introduction to a cosmology in which he saw "no reason why anyone should object to calling ... America after Amerigo Vespucci." Waldseemüller was thinking of the southern continent, but America became the name for both North and South. Columbus found the new world, therefore, but Vespucci recognised it was new.

spiritual or folk soul phenomena. We must look deeper (or is that higher?) to match inner history, to see what underlies outer events.

*

I have iterated these considerations in order to challenge the bias that inevitably inhabits an Anglo-Saxon mind, such as mine. As self-conscious beings we all too often forget to observe ourselves properly, thinking that we are somehow the norm and thus representative of what others should aspire to. As a consequence, we readily assume Anglo-centrality in all we say and do.

In Rudolf Steiner's terms, the English-speaking peoples, to use another way of referring to the Anglo-Americans, can be understood as bearers of the consciousness soul. They are not alone in this, of course, but they are especially challenged by it. For as much as the consciousness soul carries a universally human element within it, one should be wary of thinking that bearers of this soul are synonymous with it. There is much dross alongside the consciousness soul. Assumptions of superiority – from which world dominion “naturally” proceeds – belong to that dross.

As if an aid to guard against this circumstance, a genre exists that envisages a world in which “ideal” social conditions obtain. Generally referred to as utopias, they include Plato's *Republic*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, and Rene Daumal's *Mount Analogue*. One can debate the ideals such works portray, but insofar as utopian language is not about what is, but about what could or should be, this literary device has the potential to serve as an antidote to the ever-present temptation of supremacism that seems to accompany the consciousness soul. How so? Because thereby we can make an image to ourselves of what lives deep in our souls. The image can then be modified where it is found wanting and the revised image used as a reference and guide for our behaviour. In other words, it can portray a future yet to be enacted.

*

It is in this sprit that this article is written. It imagines that America is not the true name of the area covered by the USA and Canada, but that Columbia is. In doing so, a clear reference is made to the dove of peace. Not the dive-bombing dove that T. S. Eliot made famous in the fourth of his *Four Quartets*, *Little Gidding*, but the dove that needs to take wing if the hawk-ruled conditions of today are to be overcome. It is this dove that we need to celebrate and encourage.

To the air now, oh, Dove.
'Tis now or never.
Lest the wellsprings of freedom
are tainted forever.
Dark Night is descending;
'Twill envelope us all;
Unless Thou ascending
Free us from our thrall.

This poem, called the *Hymn to Columbia*, comes from *Rare Albion – The Further Adventures of the Wizard from Oz*.⁵ It occurs in a scene in which gold is replaced by consciousness as the balancer of economic life and speaks of the challenge before us to see through the enchantment by which we are kept only partially conscious of modern history. It calls on the dove to prevail and for hawkishness to be set aside, both as regards our soul life and our external affairs. For we live in a time where the one is but a reflection of the other.

Peace will not come from pious utterings. It will come through deeds done in freedom and out of love. Thus we must write into the world our knowledge of peace. Columbia needs to become the true name of North America. But more than this, the principle of uniting states centrally needs to give way to confederation. Each needs to recognise and respect the others and no one should take the high ground. Moreover, this principle should not only operate *within* sovereign countries, that is, between their provinces. It should also operate *between* sovereign nations. It is not the consciousness soul that would create a centralised world polity of the kind that many representatives of the Anglo-American peoples have in mind. That is an enterprise of the shadow of the consciousness soul. To be the centre of the world, as each bearer of the consciousness soul has to become, entails the challenge of not, from that point, seeking to dominate the world, but of asking what one's unique contribution to it is. Megalomania arises where this question is not asked, where, that is, power is not stilled. It comes out when the I of man becomes slave to self-interest to such an extent that nobler springs of action are “crowded out”, to use a term beloved of economists.

Instead of the United States of America, then, the Confederate States of Columbia. But can the USA overcome its centrism? Can the I-

⁵ *Rare Albion, the Further Adventures of the Wizard from Oz – A Monetary Allegory*, Christopher Houghton Budd. New Economy Publications, Canterbury 2005. (New Economy Publications are available from cfae.biz/publications.)

being of its citizens be lifted heavenwards or are the forces of egoism too strong? In going "west", has humanity encountered a phenomenon it cannot master?

As an image, the Confederated States of Columbia has both internal and external aspects. Internally, the provinces within the single polity of the USA are meant. But externally Columbia can be understood as the entirety of Britain, Canada and the USA. Self-consciousness does not need to become synonymous with self-interest and narrowness of vision and purpose. Without self-interest, of course, self-consciousness cannot develop. But nor can it rest there. By way of enlarged egoism, it has to be led over into interest in the other, seeing humanity as one's family. In this matter, the saying that without vision the people perish was never more apt and prescient.

*

If Britain, Ireland, Canada and the USA were seen as one "place", greater meaning could be given to the name "Columbia". For Anglo-American dominion will not be overcome by external force. That is but a pathway to protracted warfare, however subtle its forms. More precisely, it is the road to non-freedom and conditional action.

The ancient Columban monks – whose name links them and what they represented to the Columbia story – were free and unconditioned in their relationship to the Christ Event, without which the idea of peace is meaningless. They did not depend on external authority for their truth. It was born of direct experience. Indeed, external authority can be seen as the aggregated refusal to become responsible for one's own actions and one's own destiny.

The West is saturated with concepts of centralised authority and dominion over others. Adversarial relationships are considered the norm. There has to be a victorious party and a vanquished one. Ancient traditions live on in this. Yet this can never be the promise of Columbia, nor can it transform the special relationship from a tool of supremacy to the means for building a new community out of humanity's separateness. Dominion over others is but a device for imposing unwarranted will power on alienated human beings. It marks and measures our distance from freedom.

Something new has to appear in the hearts and souls of human beings everywhere. The uniqueness of everyone's spirit has to be called forth and enabled to express itself. In truth, this is what "the West" should invest its money in. This is the true destination of today's global

capital. We should capitalise unfolding destiny, not land. We should pass beyond the garnering of "financial assets" to create instruments that, in their effects, enable the human spirit to realise itself, both at the level of the individual and of peoples. Investment in Columbia would have this character to it. Its sign would be the triple one of a worldwide choir of cultures, sovereign national politics, and a single but shared global economy.

*

Is this all fanciful notion? Is this Columbia yet another utopia, an idle dream that leaves the world untouched? Or is it a real event that occurs wherever the human spirit is truly capitalised, enabled thereby to ray into, effect and order our affairs?

The answer to this question has to be "it depends." It depends on one's point of view. Looked at in so-called pragmatic terms, the idea of Columbia is at best bizarre. In the realm of the imagination, however, it should not be dismissed. For modern economic life is governed by ideas, not pragmatism. What is "the invisible hand" if not an idea? What "the market" or "market forces"? Ideas are the stuff of economics. Get the ideas wrong and social life itself will become disfigured. As Rudolf Steiner once remarked: "Grievances often arise in a way which is right, but are remedied under the influence of false concepts. In every detail people evolve these false ideas and carry them over into their whole conception of the economic process, resulting in havoc."⁶

Conversely, get the ideas right and insight can be born, light can be shed on practical affairs – even though the insights may still strike one as bizarre and somewhat hanging in the air. Here is an example, offered in all seriousness.

The special relationship is nowadays seen as an asymmetrical affair between two brothers, with the bigger of them, the US, bossing about his littler sibling – "poodle Britain", in the image of detractors. But is the power of the USA born of itself or because of a failure on the part of Britain to fulfil its moral tasks in our times? A truer picture might be that of an artful lad setting up his older brother. After all, it is British economic philosophy that governs economics today, not American. And Adam Smith was Scots, not American. If one is looking for a first

⁶ *Economics – The World as One Economy*, New Economy Publications, Canterbury 1996, Lecture 8, p. 110.

glimpse of Columbia, therefore, one should arguably look to Britain, the Anglo half of the special relationship.

But for this, a start has to be made in London, where new financial instruments need to be developed that in *their effects* and *over time* write down the value of real estate and write up the value of personal credit, enabling capital to escape the vagaries of the market and become the expression, instead, of the unfolding human spirit. In the spring of 2005, Barclays Capital, a branch of Barclays Bank, described its activities as "blue sky thinking in the capital markets". Asked what was meant, their communications department said, "outside the box, able to think laterally, and open to new ideas."

This can, of course, be no more than marketing speak. Might it not, however, also be an opening point? For all its self-serving and megalomaniac intent, and albeit in financial guise, might the special relationship not yet provide a vehicle for something new, spiritual and humanity-wide?

*

What, concretely, do I mean by "new financial instruments"? As regards its understanding of economic life, the anthroposophical movement is perhaps universally influenced by Rudolf Steiner's idea of "gift money", which, also almost universally, is regarded as synonymous with donations. But for our understanding of modern economic life, this can create three problems. The first is that, while donations may be an example of gift money, this was not quite Rudolf Steiner's meaning.⁷ He spoke of three kinds of money, the particular quality of which is given by the economic function they play. Not by the human relationship that accompanies it, but by our ability to base our transactions on a consciousness of the nature of economic life rather than our personal intentions in regard to it. Thus, in today's economic life "three distinct domains arise, so far as money is concerned, those of loan money, purchase money and gift money... Moreover, each kind of money only becomes what it is at the moment when it is actually entering into the economic process or passing over from one form of economic process to another. It actually happens that in the economic process money undergoes metamorphoses, acquiring different qualities as it becomes loan money or gift money." As regards gift money, although Steiner

⁷ All references in this paragraph are from *Economics – The World as One Economy*, Lecture 12, op. cit.

says, "Fundamentally speaking, gift money is all that is spent on education, all that is spent on endowments and the like," he qualifies this remark in two specific and technical ways. Firstly, gift money has "the effect of preventing the damming up of capital in land, which is so ruinous for the economic life." Secondly, "... in a true economic sense, ... for free gifts, you will use old money – money that loses its value as soon as possible after the gift is made; provided that the person who enjoys the benefit of the gift has just enough time to make his purchases with it."

Though important in terms of social relationships, it is not the act of giving that is of interest, so much as its economic effects. Only if a donation has the effect of gift money can it be said to be an example of gift money. Some donations do not have this effect. If the gift is made from borrowed money, for example. On the other hand, certain non-gifts can represent gift money, such as investments that get written off.

A second problem is that we tend to assume gift money is the form of finance for cultural life, which, thirdly, we further assume to be a realm of society apart from other economic activities. Thus we look to donations to fund cultural activities, forgetting that Rudolf Steiner did not define cultural life in this way. To say that spiritual life is "all that unfolds from the individual human being as talents and skills, both physical and spiritual,"⁸ is not to equate spiritual life with the cultural sphere of society. Every human being is in all three spheres – cultural, political and economic. One can no more belong to the cultural sphere but not the economic than one can think but not have a metabolism.

This lack of analytical rigour on our part often has the further consequence that we become donation dependent, that we under-value our contribution to society, and that we are stinted in our readiness to remunerate "spiritual workers". To make matters worse, lack of money is often said to be the cause of unviable activities when in fact it is often a lack of understanding of the nature of modern money.

But a greater problem is that in "naively" linking gift money to the "cultural sphere" we fail to recognise the many other ways that spiritual life becomes economically manifest today, especially in the field of finance. As a result, we tend to misread today's more telling financial phenomena.

⁸ To say that spiritual life is "everything that is based on the natural aptitudes, spiritual as well as physical, of each individual" (*Threefold Social Order*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London 1976) is not to equate spiritual life with the cultural sphere of society. [Alternative rendering by the author.]

Modern finance is shot through with what are essentially spiritual references. Although seldom seen as such, they nevertheless place brain-based economics in a quandary. Many are the commentators who observe that modern finance does not obey natural laws or even the concept of supply and demand.⁹

Here are some examples: Leverage – a physical image for an invisible process. Growth – an etheric phenomenon mistransposed to physical production. Blue-sky thinking – the opposite of “anchoring”, a much-used image in currency matters. Bond finance, where the investment is against income stream (that is, the need for something) rather than the assets required to provide it. Leasing rather than directly owning physical assets, an important aspect of division of labour, itself a profoundly spiritual principle on which the entirety of modern economic life rests. The fact that one cannot own a company, only the capital in it. Or that modern credit creation requires no capital. Fractional reserve lending – not, as many regard it, a trick of bankers, but the result of the human spirit working its way into material existence. The importance of deriving income from core activity rather than “asset inflation”, a basic part of healthy business practice. The term “speculation”, which really means making an image for oneself, mirroring in oneself a possible scenario. Sensing the future, in other words. Finally, the recognition that modern economic life is increasingly “weightless”, meaning that value inheres in consumption not production. Weightless economics! How much closer can one get to Steiner’s observation that to understand economics we need to “think with that which flies away from the earth.”?¹⁰

In speaking of new financial instruments, therefore, I have in mind further developments in the field of finance where many phenomena of a spiritual kind already exist. In particular, investments in real estate that allow the asset to act as store of value, but the use of the asset to be “given” to the user. For example, a pension fund could own real estate as part of a portfolio and strategy designed to provide school infrastructure. Or the averaging of investment returns by systematically giving away (writing off) the “froth” element of gains made in volatile markets so that the beneficiary is another party. Or using share companies to invest in small, fledgling and new businesses, instead of merely lending them money.

⁹ A famous example is the financier, George Soros. Less spectacular but equally interesting are the *Dissent in Science* seminars regularly held at the London School of Economics where mainstream economists debate the limits of rationalism.

¹⁰ *Economics – The World as One Economy*, Lecture 1, op. cit.

In the end, these may not be new financial instruments at all but the use of traditional arrangements in a new context. One that is underpinned by cooperative rather than selfish mores and that does not see economic life and social health resulting from everyone looking after himself by extracting value from the economy and marking it to his “own” account, but recognising that true economic and social health rests on circulation, not possession – the circulation of capital, the circulation of the means of production, and the circulation of money.

All this may seem remote from my starting point – the special relationship between Britain and the USA. But what else, if not the condoning of apathy or some form of political upheaval, is our response to be? Modern finance needs to be understood as a threshold phenomenon. That means, as the “external” medium in which the limits of self-interest as a social principle are met. Then we will see the metamorphosis of finance as a vehicle for change, especially for the development of enlarged egoism. After all, it is from this that, shadow-like, the new imperialism derives. The Anglo-Saxons especially become megalomaniac when they fail to make this step. As a result, the special relationship becomes an instrument of global economic dominance, and through that of spiritual enslavement also.

Its true promise, however, is to act as a catalyst for global economic partnership between all the peoples of the world, and thereby to provide an opportunity to discover true freedom.

The Future of the English Language

Adam Bittleston

There is an old story, which in different countries takes different forms. Told by Geoffrey of Monmouth and others as an historical event, it became the theme of *King Lear*. As a fairy story it appears in Germany as *The Princess at the Well*; in England, in one of its forms, as *Cap O' Rushes*.

Three daughters of a kingly father are asked to express their love for him. The first two do so in extravagant terms; the third will only say, in Shakespeare's words:

"Good my Lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me; I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you."

Or, in the fairy story:

"I love you *like salt*."

The father drives his third daughter away with bitter anger; to him her words mean nothing.

In this story part of the mysterious tragedy of human speech is contained. Not only do we fail to understand other languages than our own; within the same language, we fail to receive each other's meaning, to recognise the full human reality behind the other's words. This failure is deeply interwoven with human history; but we can see it happening in a particularly critical sense at the present time.

Far into the past it was already a problem how to find words by which some part of the wisdom of the Mysteries could be told outside, to help human beings to find their way through life. There has always been the risk of arousing anger by saying something that would not be understood; and yet sometimes this risk had to be faced. The third princess, in the fairy-story version, uses Mystery language, speaking of Salt as it was understood by the Rosicrucians; and she meets what is

described in the Sermon on the Mount: "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they turn and rend you." Those fully satisfied with the earthly consciousness, looking only for what will help the earthly mind to fulfil its own aims, may well reject with intense irritation a spiritual knowledge that is born of suffering. And so the princess must go into loneliness. In the Grimm story she is described as weeping tears that turn into pearls. But she was not wrong to have made the attempt, for eventually she is understood.

Cordelia uses ordinary human words to express the personal mystery of her own feelings; and is just as violently rejected. What we want from another human being we can understand without leaving the comfortable familiarity of our own minds; but to understand what the *other* really thinks and feels we have to venture out into the cold, into the storm – and Lear is not yet ready to do this. For each of us, another human mind is a supersensible reality. And as human minds, with developing individuality, are coming to be less and less only the products of a particular status and environment, each human being will present us more and more often with the problem of listening to a mystery, which we have still to learn.

In all this, the development of human language plays a significant part. For language is not simply a convenient code, which we may or may not be able to decipher. It had from the beginning an *inner* relation to all that it described. To pronounce the name of a person or thing was at the same time to possess something of their innermost being. Language was a ladder that led directly back to heaven. Only through many ages, and many changes, did language come to be regarded as if it were a trivial formula for the appearances of things, and no true revelation of their Divine meaning.

Plato has described in his dialogue *Cratylus* how it is possible to dispute between these two ways of regarding language: those who still see its ancient divine wonder on the one hand, those concerned only with its practical, conventional, apparently arbitrary usefulness on the other. The last claim that language is arbitrary, since apparently any sequence of sounds can be chosen for any meaning. The first say that there is always heavenly wisdom behind the choice of particular sounds. Both can bring forward powerful examples. But for good reasons the argument is inconclusive. It is just as when two people discuss a man they know, and one continually brings out his faults and weaknesses, while the other only remembers the good fundamental purposes of his life.

Earthly language, like earthly man, lives in the tension between

reality and illusion. When Cordelia speaks to Lear, or a poet to his readers, or an Apostle to the struggling, uncertain soul, language is both a miraculous help and a baffling hindrance.

We can try to look at particular languages from this point of view. And in the English language today we meet problems more acute in this respect than there have ever been before. Rudolf Steiner, out of his profound, intimate insight into the history of language, sometimes expressed this drastically. If such remarks seem indigestible, we should not turn and rend him. They are never meant to *finish* the subject – but to call our attention to some part or other of a problem deeply rooted in man's history, which we can only gradually hope to grasp.

For example, in a course of lectures on social and educational problems (Stuttgart, 13 July, 1919) Rudolf Steiner said that the terms of the Versailles Treaty were unclear because the operative text was not in the former diplomatic language, French, but in English. And he goes on to say that English has the peculiarity "that in it everything which should be comprehended spiritually cannot be expressed immediately, as is given, if one takes the language only as it is there today." And later: "In the Anglo-American language there is no longer that living relationship of the human soul with the element of language which existed in ancient times. Language has separated itself from the human being; it becomes, as language, abstract. If one hears English spoken, certain turns of speech, particularly sentence-endings, always give the impression of a tree in which the outermost shoots and twigs of the branches have withered. The language allows the soul element which filled it to die away."

Our first reaction to such statements may be an indignant protest that modern English is in fact one of the richest and subtlest means of human communication that have ever existed. But further thought may show that this does not really contradict what Rudolf Steiner says. Just because its *own* life as language has ebbed, modern English may be amenable to extraordinarily varied, subtle, and individual uses. If we take as an outstanding example the English poetry of the last forty years, we can see how violently the normal habits of the spoken or written language are transformed in order to provide an instrument for each poet. "If one takes the language only as it is there today" – poetry could not be written at all. Certainly poetry has always used something grander and richer than ordinary everyday speech. But what it has used has been recognisably close to the source from which the general life of the language flowed. Now it is as if the poet had to breathe a quite

individual, characteristic life into something that would otherwise be empty.

Or we can take a single example from another field. Recent tests showed that very few average young people to day, even including those who have made active efforts to understand what Christianity is, can find in the word "Grace" any definite meaning. With many other words that were central in Christian teaching, it has become like a piece of empty nutshell, an indication that a kernel once existed.

In ordinary life we can observe how many things we say do not mean much. Perhaps we are only giving reassuring signs that we are going to behave normally, however strange our inner weather may have become. Or when we do want to make a signal from our innermost selves, only quite conventional and apparently irrelevant words may come to our lips.

And here we are approaching the heart of what Rudolf Steiner has to say about the English language. He does not regard the process of "withering", of which he speaks, as a misfortune for the world; on the contrary, it is very necessary that English, which tends to become the nearest we have to a world language, should be in this condition. In the same lecture, he says that this is a thoroughly healthy thing for humanity. "In the future, it will not be possible to reach mutual understanding in English without developing an immediate, elemental, intimately felt understanding between man and man, which does not itself live in what is spoken, but will give to language a new life". Something like a true thought reading must be achieved; what is *said* must be regarded only as a signal, calling us to attend to the other's thoughts, which he can't fully express. This will call for a new attentiveness to the other's invisible being; it will be healthy that we have to make the effort to meet him on a higher level than that of spoken words. This effort is something that all mankind should learn to make; the need to do so will be particularly evident wherever English is spoken.

*

We may be able to deepen our understanding for this if we consider the mysterious place that English has in the history of languages. A general picture of those language groups belonging to the Indo-European family, which were significant for Europe in the first millennium B.C., can be drawn somewhat as in the first diagram.

Through the defeat and submergence of the Celtic-speaking peoples, who had reached far across Europe (and indeed into Asia

Minor), a far wider contact between the Teutonic languages and the other language groups took place than would have occurred otherwise. What happened can be pictured in the second diagram.

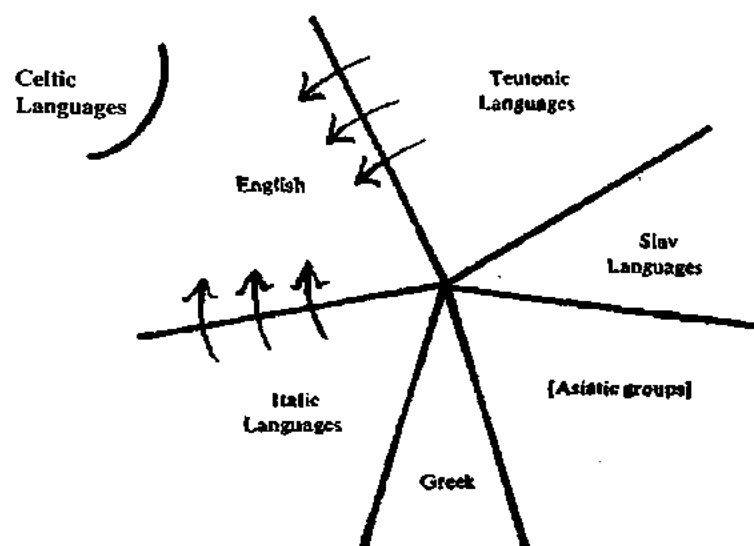
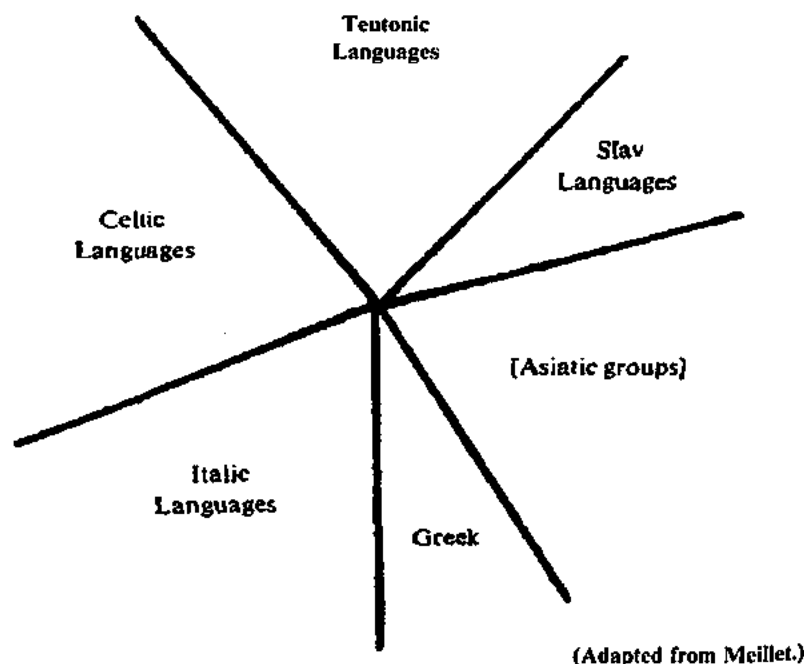
English developed in the space left by the retreat of Celtic languages, itself built up almost entirely from Teutonic and Latin elements – a meeting of languages in character and history very different from one another, the noble intermediary having withdrawn.

We may regard this simply as one of the accidents of which history seems to be made—or ask for reasons. Why did the Celtic nations go under? It is not an easily answered question on any level. Much fascinating work has been done on the rise and decline of civilisations, and their relationship to one another; but in the end there does not seem to be any tangible answer to such questions as this. Why could not the Celtic peoples have adopted what was useful in Roman civilisation for purposes of organisation and defence, and retained their own languages and traditions? To a considerable degree the Teutonic peoples were able to do this.

So long as our vision is limited to the external world, we cannot find real answers. Just as the unity of a man's life is truly to be found only in a supersensible being, so the unity of a nation or a civilisation can be found only in the Spirit that inspires it. And such Spirits, like human individualities, go through processes comparable to incarnation, and the withdrawal from incarnation; entering, and withdrawing from, the organism of a nation or civilisation, just as we put on and lay aside the earthly physical body.

When he spoke particularly of this, in his lectures at Oslo in 1910, Rudolf Steiner especially directed our attention to two such Spirits: one inspiring the Greek civilisation, and one standing behind the Celtic peoples. Both these Beings, he says, went through a great transformation of the way in which they worked, in order to serve the deed of Christ.

The Spirit of Greece ceased to work directly through the Greek nation and the civilisation depending on Greece; this Spirit became instead the guiding Being of exoteric Christianity. The Christianity which spread widely through the world – using at first indeed mainly the Greek language – and which established itself firmly in Europe, received inspiration from this Spirit, who served Christ by giving form to the thinking and the life of the Christian Church through the centuries. Greece itself declined in political and cultural influence because its guiding Spirit had taken so wide a task – which continued long after the



Greek language ceased to be used in Western Christendom, though every age found fresh understanding through the Greek New Testament.

Meanwhile the Celtic Spirit had gone through what we may regard as a still more drastic change in the manner of his work. At a time when Greece had already flowered, the Celtic peoples seem still young, with great dormant potentialities. But at this stage the Celtic Spirit, who had given them their ultimate unity, undertook a new task. He became the guiding Spirit of *esoteric* Christianity, working not through wide masses of people but among little scattered groups, to deepen among them knowledge and experience of Christ in ways that could not be those of the Church in general – groups thought of as heretical, or those who inspired the tradition of the Holy Grail, or the true Rosicrucians.

The Gospels transcend the distinction between exoteric and esoteric; and they themselves indicate the kinds of knowledge which belonged to the esoteric realm by describing little groups of people to whom it was entrusted. The Star-knowledge possessed by the Magi; the knowledge about destiny and reincarnation given to those disciples who share in the Transfiguration; the knowledge about the future of the world given to a similar group of disciples early in Holy Week – all these are esoteric, even if some words about them are there for all to read. And the Spirit who was formerly the leader of the Celtic peoples now comes to be the protector of little groups, which can rightly value and preserve such knowledge, or find it anew when it has been lost.

This is a most wonderful key to European history. It helps us to understand the defeat of the Celtic peoples, first by Rome, then by the Saxons and their successors. It illumines the flowering and the apparent failure of what Toynbee calls the "abortive North-Western civilisation," the Christianity of Ireland and Iona. It explains the fundamental continuity, through the Middle Ages and on into modern times, of movements widely scattered in time and space, which can often do little to make their purposes comprehensible or acceptable to the world around them.

Without the deed of the Celtic Spirit, sacrificing an evident historic mission for the sake of a more hidden one in the service of Christ, there would have been no English language as we know it to-day. If we take this thought with full weight, we may begin to see certain consequences following from it.

English results from the fusion of languages that were at a different stage of development, and had been subject to very different influences. Linguistically, Anglo-Saxon has gone through a further

development, the first consonant-shift, which Latin and Greek have not made. But culturally Greek and Latin are of course infinitely richer. And the origins of their culture lie in Mysteries, which were for the most part outside Europe itself. When speaking to Waldorf School teachers about the history of language, Rudolf Steiner said of Greek and Latin: "Through all sorts of foreign influences, which have worked in another way than in Europe – influences from Egypt, from Asia – these languages have simply become the external clothing for a culture brought to them, largely a Mystery culture. The Mysteries of Africa and Asia were brought to the Greeks, and to a certain extent to the Romans, and the power was found to clothe the Mysteries of Asia and the Mysteries of Egypt in the language of the Greeks and Romans. Thus these languages became external clothing for the spiritual content that was poured into them. This was a process through which the languages of Middle and Northern Europe have *not* passed..." (Stuttgart, 29 December, 1919).

The Anglo-Saxon language had qualities of soul, a certain warm maturity; the words of Latin origin that streamed in, becoming a flood in the sixteenth century, brought with them echoes of Egyptian Mysteries, and a long history of legal and ecclesiastical organisation in the Roman Empire. Was there any power that could ensoul this mixture completely, and make it a clear medium for spiritual truths?

We come here to great riddles. Looking back, we see this language developing in the space once occupied by the influence of the Celtic Spirit. If it is to be fully ensouled, the help of this Spirit is needed. But he is at work in a realm *beyond* that of ordinary human language, in the guidance of esoteric Christianity. He is guarding a knowledge which cannot be fully expressed in ordinary speech – particularly at the time of which we are now thinking, the sixteenth century.

But there is a great teacher, concerned with the life of esoteric Christianity, who incarnates more frequently than ordinary individualities, Christian Rosenkreuz. Directly and indirectly, during the second half of the sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth, he inspires qualities of soul in the English language, through which the diverse elements can be fused into a transparent instrument for the spirit.

In the polemical religious writing of the time language was misused to whip up indignation, and if possible to stun the opponent by sheer weight of invective. Each writer tended to become the prophet of his own self-righteousness; and the element of tranquil, genuine observation was in danger of being trampled to death among the sects. Those

influenced by Christian Rosenkreuz were concerned to rescue this element, by transcending in one way or another the religious divisions of Europe. Thus in Shakespeare's work a world of strongly-marked, widely varied human beings appeared, not constructed to fit neatly into the categories of 'righteous' and 'sinful,' and whose author did not seem to be arguing any kind of a case. And the Authorized Version of the Bible rendered the Hebrew and Greek originals scrupulously in a form which did not serve any sectarian purpose, but sought to narrow as little as possible the fullness of their meaning. Behind the Version stood men who shared Richard Hooker's profound desire that Christianity should not be thought of as imposing a single pattern of mind and conduct on man, but as including and sheltering a wonderful diversity.

Hooker himself had written, on subjects usually treated in the most arid polemical style, in generous, humane English, which illustrates in yet another way how the language received a new inspiration at the time. As his work is in comparison so little known, a brief example may be given. Hooker is here defending the use of music in churches:

Touching musical harmony, whether by instrument or by voice, it being but high and low in sounds of a due proportionable disposition, such notwithstanding is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have been thereby induced to think that the soul itself by nature is or hath in it harmony. A thing which delighteth all ages and beseemeth all states; a thing as seasonable in grief as in joy; as decent being added unto actions of greatest weight and solemnity, as being used when men most sequester themselves from action. . . . In harmony the very image and character even of virtue and vice is perceived, the mind delighted with their resemblances, and brought by having them often iterated into a love of the things themselves. For which cause there is nothing more contagious and pestilent than some kinds of harmony; than some nothing more strong and potent unto good. (*Ecclesiastical Polity*, V, xxxviii, 1.)

In the eighteenth century the danger to the language came no longer from religious narrow-mindedness but from a prosaic formalism, which had Hooker's dignity without his heart. And a second time it was defended and enriched. This was done by men who felt their kinship with the Bible and with Shakespeare – but also with those of their contemporaries all over Europe who tried to serve true Imagination. Men

who saw that real knowledge is a creative activity, using all the powers man has, not only his sense-perception and his reason, became something like an informal European society, with manifold shared enthusiasms and energetic dissensions – a movement much too practical, earnest, and conscientious to be described simply as “Romantic.” Through Goethe, Schiller, Novalis and many others, the German language achieved its first great flowering, comparable to that in Shakespearean England. And, often in close contact with German idealism, though in reaction against its more ponderous products, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats made English the instrument for music of a new subtlety and complexity, even when they intended to be simple.

While in general the traditional religious life on the one hand, and rational understanding of the visible world on the other, had fewer and fewer positive, living mutual contacts, these men did all they could to build their thoughts into a golden bridge between earth and the spirit. There streamed into them inspirations from a realm where, as Rudolf Steiner has described it, heavenly powers were making great preparations, so that spiritual knowledge should be achieved on earth, during the age that was approaching, in abundance and daylight clarity.

Thus Rudolf Steiner, as the first great teacher of this spiritual knowledge in the twentieth century, could link his work with Goethe's, and use much of the German Idealist vocabulary, with increased precision and simpler construction. Speaking and writing with a characteristic austerity and selflessness, he could make German a wonderful means of expression for Christian spiritual knowledge. Very much that had been esoteric he could make public, guarded by the language he chose so carefully against misunderstanding and misuse. Nevertheless he had to meet bitter ridicule and every kind of hostility from those whom Blake called “the ignorant hirelings at court and university.”

If we read Rudolf Steiner's work in English translations we are generally made aware, in spite of all the conscientious work that has gone into these, that the clothes do not fit. Of course the German does not fit altogether either; but a master hand has been at work with the material he received from masters.

May it not be that English still waits for the full use that can be made of it, until towards the end of this century another great wave of spiritual teaching pours into the world? Once English was threatened by a fanatical religiosity, and later by a pedantic rationalism; now the dangers are greater still. Innumerable anonymous voices, in every continent, use English for commercial and political purposes. Behind such

words there may be no discoverable person who means what he says; only someone who knows what effect he is paid to produce. Where the transmission of genuine meaning is intended, as in scientific periodicals, there may be an attempt to deprive language of any human character for the sake of appearing objective; the kind of formulation is sought for (and this may develop further in the near future) which could be fed with the minimum of alteration into an electronic “brain.” On the other hand, an extreme of subjectivity can be let loose in the arts, where instincts can express themselves without any necessity of conveying a definite meaning at all.

Such tendencies all drag language into sub-human realms; and very great impulses are needed to counter them. They are indeed held in check by human common sense; but all the time they are exhausting words, knocking them about, reducing them to worth-lessness. Those with insight today already point out that we are entering the most critical period in the history of the English language, in which the heritage of the past can be lost, and, for the great majority of those who speak English, communication on the deeper levels may break down. But to turn back, and deepen our appreciation of the past, though this is necessary, is not enough.

The first great step into the future is to strengthen, through the many disappointments that must come, a mutual understanding *beyond* the level of language, as Rudolf Steiner has described it. We have to accept the immense, the awe-inspiring differences between our minds. We need to build up an atmosphere of unhurried reverence for and interest in one another and in the matter that is being considered, restraining ourselves as far as possible from immediate assent or dissent. What matters first is to see each other's thought, free of any words. A half-born imaginative picture, a swift clear dream, moves in the other's mind; sharing it with him, we weave in spiritual light, from which words receive real meaning.

The attempt to do this is a training in selflessness, which prepares man for the realm of Christ. There is the temptation, for all who speak or write often, to fall too much in love with their own thought-processes. And these then hinder us. The patient and active listener has more freedom to feel, wherever a real meeting of minds is going on, the great presence of Christ. And it is through His presence that language can be redeemed.

Wherever real Christian sacraments are celebrated, with selfless speaking and hearing, something of this redemption happens. Those concerned with the sacraments given through Rudolf Steiner's spirit-

illuminated power to the Christian Community know this, with whatever language they are dealing; though the problems of translation may here be at their most acute. But what lives at such special moments must work into all the regions where human mutual understanding is needed.

Interwoven with human history, there work the souls who have shared deeply in the development of Platonism, both in its original and in its Christian forms. They are among the greatest lovers of thought, and artists in thought. If we look on the one hand at the development of the modern world, and consider on the other hand the picture of human history given by Rudolf Steiner, we may be led to think that some of these souls, within the coming century, may be concerned, with others more Aristotelian in character, in a renewed consecration of the English language – through which even trivial words will receive a flame that fits them to be bearers of a new revelation of Christ.

Externally our language may indeed appear, by the end of this century, a dry, brittle tree. Words may seem at best capable only of describing external facts; when they attempt to express inner things, this may only seem to open up fathomless uncertainties. But there will be those who can observe the flames that glow along branch and twig, a fire that does not destroy, but gives the dry words infinite fresh life.

No genuine word is too external or too trivial to receive this power of redemption. Perhaps a very strange-seeming example may be ventured. Even such apparently neutral, colourless words as the conjunctions once had qualities of soul, warmth and cold, about them. And when language is used in the future in the Christian sense here meant, they will begin to acquire these qualities again. We may take the simple word "and." There are worlds of difference where it is used in the sense of dead accumulation, thing upon thing without sense:

"To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow . . ."

in the mouth of Macbeth or of a cynical modern – or if we hear with our whole being the word of Christ:

"I am the Alpha and the Omega."

In *all* its uses, the word "and" can convey something of the faith that the people and events of the world complete one another, that there is harmony and meaning in bringing them together – *or* that the whole business, by which we are linked in time and space, has no real sense. Every word, and words in their relationships to one another, can be consecrated.

Perhaps we who try in our different ways, with something of spiritual knowledge alive in our minds, to speak or write English today, might compare ourselves to charwomen in a palace that has been left almost empty, beginning to sweep and dust in preparation for the Court that is soon to come, of which the Ruler asks that He be loved "like salt."

Distinguish without Dividing Coleridge's Challenge to the West

By Terence Davies

Most people will have had the experience of embarking on a project that they hope to complete within a given time, only to discover that their original plans are frustrated by subsequent unforeseen events. On the individual level it could be a commentary on a book that takes more time to complete than had been envisaged. On the domestic level it could be the refurbishing of a room the cost of which had been underestimated. The same process can also occur at the corporate or public level, for example, the Scottish parliament building. In all these cases the completion of a project has to be postponed to a future date. This article is concerned with a similar process taking place on a much larger scale. It will draw attention to what seems to me to be an historic postponement in the progress of the spiritual life of the West, which lasted rather longer in England than it did in Germany. I say spiritual to distinguish it from the political and economic developments which were taking place at the same time.

The last two thirds of the 19th century saw the expansion of rail transport throughout the West and beyond. This can be seen as a culminating point in the development of the industrial revolution that had begun in the early part of the previous century. It changed the world irrevocably; motor and air transport that followed are merely an extension of the process the railways began. If this is correct, it follows that the period immediately prior to the age of rail has a special significance. Consider for example the fact that people who died between 1820 and 1840 spent a large part of their adult lives without experiencing the rapid transport that the railways made possible. A few, who were spared the arduous labour required to furnish the necessities of life, were able to develop their full humanity at a leisurely pace, in harmony with the natural rhythms which prevailed before the widespread use of machines replaced horse power as the main source of non-human transport. Notwithstanding the immense benefits that industrial tech-

nology has brought, and is still bringing to people's outer welfare, it exacts a price on the inner level. It was as if Providence, anticipating this, put forth a special flowering of what humanity could be in its fullness to counteract the inevitable dehumanisation that the indiscriminate use of machines would bring. Consider just a few famous names and the contribution their work still makes to human inner well being: Byron died in 1824; Beethoven, Blake and Constable in 1827; Schubert in 1828; Davy in 1829; Goethe and Hegel in 1832 and Coleridge in 1834.

Even before the advent of rail transport the increasing application of empirical science to the production of material goods meant that entrepreneurs, who had sufficient determination and energy, were able to amass large amounts of surplus capital over and above that needed to sustain and expand their businesses. In the hands of enlightened patrons this wealth could be given to support the free spiritual life. Without this sort of financial backing it would have been impossible for Coleridge to acquire the instruments of thought that enabled him to formulate his challenge to the West. It is remarkable that at the very outset of his career he benefited from a principle that is not yet fully recognised even in the 21st century. It is this: surplus capital amassed through the increasing efficiency of industrial production needs to be directly channelled to those people whose talents render them capable of satisfying the inner, spiritual needs of humanity. If it is directly channelled from individual to individual, personal intelligence and judgment can freely operate. These talents then escape enervating bureaucratic surveillance, which is a condition usually imposed when spiritual work is funded through general taxation, as is generally the case today. Coleridge's genius was recognised and given financial backing in the form of "an annuity of £150 for life legally secured to (him), *no condition whatsoever being annexed*," by the Wedgwood brothers, inheritors of the fortune their father Josiah had made through his world famous pottery products. (EV 178)¹ Looking back on his good fortune many years later Coleridge wrote,

... by a gracious providence for which I can never be sufficiently grateful, the generous and munificent patronage of Mr Josiah and Mr Thomas Wedgwood enabled me to finish my education in Germany. Instead of troubling others with my own crude notions and juvenile compositions I was thenceforward better employed in attempting to store my own head with the wisdom of others. I made the best use of my time and means; and there is therefore no

time of my life on which I can look back with such unmingled satisfaction.

BL V.1 205.²

Among these juvenile compositions was the *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, now recognised as one of the finest poems in the language. Our concern, however, is not with Coleridge the poet but with his lesser known role as philosopher. Because it was so important for his development as a thinker, let us now briefly describe his visit to Germany.

At the age of 25, accompanied by his friends William and Dorothy Wordsworth, he left his native country for the first time, sailing from Yarmouth on the 16th September 1798. During the voyage the Wordsworths were sea sick and retired to their cabins; but he, displaying that delightful sociability which was such an important part of his nature, was soon on convivial terms with the other passengers. One Danish traveller, under the influence of his own brandy and the young poet's charm was soon declaring that they had "Un Philosophe" in their midst. "Vat imagination! vat language! vat fast science! vat eyes – vat a milk vite forehead! – O my Heafen! You are a God!" (We have only Coleridge's word for this eulogy, but independent accounts of his effect on people leave little doubt about its veracity.) The following evening the ship anchored in the Cuxhaven estuary and they disembarked at Hamburg on the 19th September. Within days Coleridge had secured an invitation to visit the poet Klopstock whom he regarded as the venerable father of German poetry. He was moved to tears by this meeting and promised to translate some of his host's Odes into English. Since the Wordsworths were seeking complete seclusion, while Coleridge wanted a more social existence where he could practise the German language and study its culture, they decided to go their separate ways: the Wordsworths to Goslar, Coleridge to Ratzeburg where he lodged with a friendly pastor. This stay turned out to be the most effective way of learning German, as he was later to recall in the *Biographia Literaria*.

It was a regular part of my morning studies for the first six weeks of my residence ... to accompany the good and kind old pastor, with whom I lived, from the cellar to the roof, through gardens, farm yard &c. and to call every, the minutest, thing by its German name. Advertisements, farces, jest books, and the conversation of children while I was at play with them, contributed their share to

a more home-like acquaintance with the language, than I could have acquired through the works of polite literature or even from polite society.

BL V. 1 206.

By January 1799, as a result of working at nothing but German "from morning to night", he was able to report, "I now read German as English... On very trivial and on metaphysical Subjects I can talk *tolerably* – so so! – but in that conversation, which is between both, I bungle ridiculously." Next month he and his friend Chester headed by coach for Göttingen where he later enrolled at the university. There followed a period of intense study where he said that he now worked harder "than I trust in God Almighty I shall ever have occasion to work again." During this time at Göttingen he was stimulated by all the academic luminaries attracted to its university; he had a sense of sharing in the intellectual life of Europe, of belonging to a broad community of world famous scholars. As we shall see later, it was this European dimension which gave weight, power and depth to his subsequent critical and philosophical writing. There are several incidents that give a foretaste of his future expertise in challenging erroneous assumptions that everyone believes without question to be true. An English friend reported how with "natural good-humoured effrontery" Coleridge challenged the opinions of those around him, making them think in new ways. Another English friend, Parry was impressed by the way Coleridge got the better of the argument in philosophical disputes with the German academics. This friend made particular reference to J. G. Eichhorn, a principal German theologian at Göttingen, who seemed to be doing his utmost to discredit the evidence on which the truths of Christianity is based. "Coleridge" Parry wrote, "an able vindicator of these important truths, is well acquainted with Eichhorn, but the latter is a coward, who dreads his argument and his presence." His studies with J. F. Blumenbach (1752–1840) on natural history and anthropology provided Coleridge with material that he was to use in the future to make the important distinction, which we will consider later, between reason and understanding. Amongst the host of German scholars and literati with whom he came in contact, either personally or through studying their writings, the most important for him at this time were probably, Lessing (1729–1781), Schiller (1759–1805), Goethe (1749–1832), Jacobi (1743–1819) and Kant (1724–1804). Regarding the latter, another friend, Carlyon, recalled the party, which Blumenbach gave on the eve of

Coleridge's departure in June 1799, where the young poet dazzled the company with his brilliant talk. Carlyon remembered "something inexpressibly comic in the manner in which he dashed on, with fluent diction but the very worst German accent imaginable, through the thick and thin of his subject." This could have been the occasion when, after holding forth on the writings of Immanuel Kant he was much amused "by a young lady's expressing her surprise that he, not being a German, could possibly understand Kant's philosophical writings, which were not even intelligible *to her!*" (EV 205–237)³

Coleridge's profound study of German philosophy continued throughout his life and included important writers we have not yet mentioned. It was Kant, however, who provided him, not with a philosophical orientation, but with the instruments of thought which enabled him to fashion his own system, some key elements of which we will now consider.

"What are my metaphysics?" he asks in *The Friend* – "merely referring the mind to its own consciousness for truths indispensable to its own happiness." The word *merely* is something of an understatement. If the mind is to profit from referring to its own consciousness it has to learn to attend in an unusual way. He was very aware of this and made every effort to help the reader achieve it. In the *Friend* and also in the *Aids to Reflection* "the aim of every sentence is to solicit, nay tease the reader to ask himself whether he actually does, or does not, understand distinctly." (W 7)⁴ We have had a foretaste of this challenge to a heightened awareness in his conversations and disputes with German academics. With characteristic psychological acumen he pointed to two different ways in which the mind can function: it can make the *effort of attention*, or it can rouse the *energy of thought*. If we are to gain access to the latent power that animates his best work, we need a picture from the world of the senses to set these elusive inner processes in a clearer light. Consider, for example, the difference between the physical activity involved in a tug of war and in a game of table tennis. The former is a contest in which each of two groups of persons holding the same rope tries to pull the other across a line marked between them; it requires a concentrated, steady and prolonged effort involving very little movement. The game of table tennis involves alert anticipation and swift bursts of agile, responsive energy. The inner *effort of attention* is like that needed for a tug of war – firm and sustained; the inner activity required to rouse the *energy of thought* is similar to that needed in table tennis – swiftly moving and responsive. Modern spiritual activity, which Cole-

ridge is trying to stimulate, seeks not merely to understand these inner workings but actually to *experience* them.

If we cultivate this experience it can help us gain access to another key element in Coleridge's thought: the universal law of polarity. This is simultaneously a law of thinking *and* a law of life: a single power manifesting itself through a generative interpenetration of two polar opposites that are not abstract but dynamic. We can start to grasp its true nature by visualising a magnet with its north and south poles. But this is only a beginning, because a magnet, which does indeed consist of a unitary power generating two opposite forces, is an inanimate phenomenon. We need to supplement this inadequate analogy with one that has a living content. We need a picture of a *living* unitary power manifesting through two opposing forces. Imagine a person cutting paper with a pair of scissors. The power that cuts the paper comes from a single living source; it operates, however, through two opposing forces caused by the movements of the blades. Moreover, as they move against each other to make the cut, the friction thus produced gradually wears them out. Of course this takes a long time, but eventually the blades will have to be sharpened. This illustrates the fact that polar opposites exist by virtue of each other *as well as* at the expense of each other. Each blade exists *qua* scissor blade by virtue of being attached to the other. Separated from each other they lose their status as scissor blades and become an imperfect sort of knife. But, as long as they remain a pair, they gradually wear each other out: they exist at the expense of each other. Provided we look upon the game of table tennis as a single power manifesting through the energy of two players we can gain a further insight into this relationship. Each person is responding with alacrity to the forceful and ingenious strategy of the other. Their ingenuity is increased *by virtue* of each other's tactics, as well as *at each other's expense* when they lose a point. (W 36) We can grasp the true nature of polarity if we first: realise what is inadequate in an analogy, for instance that scissor blades wear out whereas the forces they symbolise are regenerative. And secondly: allow the mind to hover over the pictures in the analogies without letting it settle permanently on any single image. When it succeeds in grasping the *meaning* the images are trying to convey, by wavering between them, it is exercising what Coleridge calls *imagination*, which is the basic act for apprehending polarity. Through it the mind and to some extent the will, driven by passion for knowledge, can actually participate in the antecedent unity which is constantly generating polarities. That antecedent unity is the source, not only of the

polarities of thought, but also of the polarities of life. Coleridge calls it reason. By thus experiencing two interpenetrating poles as a unity we can *distinguish* the one from the other, without *dividing* them into two separate items. We shall return to this later when we describe the circumstances and content of the English poet's thought interacting with his German colleagues, notably J. C. F. Schelling (1775–1854).

Someone may wish to raise a reasonable objection at this point by asking, "How is all this related to real life? It seems to be very remote from the practical problems most people have to face" Obviously within a short article only a limited answer can be given to this question. But let me develop something I have already mentioned as a striking example of several collective endeavours that are causing many inner and outer difficulties and are likely to cause more in the future. Consider the enterprise that began with the introduction of rail in the 1830s. It progressed to motor transport at the turn of the century, then developed air travel during the 20th century and ended when Concorde was decommissioned early this century. Space travel is excluded because it was never available to the general public. This enterprise of emancipating transport from its dependence on horse-power lasted about 170 years, and involved the genius, industry and co-operation of vast numbers of people over several generations. The improvements in mechanical efficiency, which brought it about, have been achieved by concentrating more and more on the outside world and ignoring the inner being of man. The harmful effects of further expansion of this perfected travel facility are becoming increasingly apparent. Predominant concentration on the outside world is in urgent need of correction by directing attentive energy to the inner life. In other words, by trying to discover the purpose of air travel in relation to the general well being of humanity as it moves into the future. A similar problem is becoming apparent in the field of information technology. The astonishing facility with which data can be flashed across the world is accompanied by a regrettable deterioration in the quality of attention needed to distinguish what is trivial from what is significant. This means that what could be a blessing to promote the life of the spirit is in danger of turning into a curse, which if not counteracted, will seriously impede its progress. Coleridge called the age in which he lived the "epoch of the understanding and the senses". These two examples, chosen from many, suggest that this epoch in which we are still living is now reaching a crisis point. When viewed historically these difficulties are merely teething problems, which the sustained attention that the study of his system demands can help us to overcome.

We can then, in a small way, begin to make the transition to what I might venture to call the epoch of imagination and reason. "The imagination" he said "is the distinguishing characteristic of man as a progressive being." (W 217) In other words if we want to make progress on the inner level to counteract the desolation which is increasingly found there, we have to learn to free the mind from its bondage to the sense world by letting it hover between images in the way previously described. These words *understanding*, *senses*, and *reason* are all key terms in his system, which we have not yet explained. Let us examine them in turn, starting with understanding.

Remember we are trying to *distinguish* the understanding as a faculty within the field of consciousness without *dividing or separating* it from the unity in which it subsists. An analogy may perhaps help us to do this. When looking at a great picture, say, the *Mona Lisa*, we can choose to focus our rapt attention on her eyes so that we are hardly aware of the rest of the picture at all. As soon as we dissolve this special attention, however, we immediately become aware of the whole picture again. It is like that when we try to grasp the meaning of the word understanding. The faculty, which the word represents, is part of a totality that includes sense, imagination and reason. For the moment we are leaving the last three in the background in order to focus our attentive energy on the understanding. Unlike the background of the picture, however, sense, imagination and reason interpenetrate and modify the understanding in manifold ways. This means that we have already had to mention these background items before we have focused on them individually. Any difficulties that may arise from this will, I trust, be resolved when the unexplained item is put centre stage.

Considered as an organ of human intelligence, understanding is, according to Coleridge, "the faculty by which we reflect and generalize." (A 149)⁵ What does this mean? Imagine, when staying by the sea, you look out across the water to the horizon. Obviously you are using your sense of sight to do this. On clear days you are quite certain where the sea ends and the sky begins. On other days, when horizontal cloud formations are present near the horizon, it is not possible to judge immediately where the sea ends and the clouds begin. Sometimes what you thought was the horizon turns out to be the conjunction of a horizontal cloud formation with clear sky above it. You are obliged to *reflect* in order to decide whether or not it is the horizon. You are trying to *name* the phenomenon presented through your senses. You have seen the meeting of sky with earth or water in many different circumstances and have

generalised these diverse observations into one class of phenomena by the word horizon. There is no such single word for the boundary formed by the meeting of horizontal cloud formations and clear sky. Anyone who wished to make a special study of these phenomena would have to find some term under which to classify them, such as, say, horizontal cloud line. If you look closer out to sea you will probably be able to judge which name is correct for this particular situation. When you are doing all this you are using your *understanding*. Let us sum up our account of this faculty in Coleridge's own words:

if the proper functions of the Understanding be that of generalizing the notices received from the senses in order to begin the construction of names: of referring particular notices (that is, impressions or sensations) to their proper names; and, *vice versa*, names to their correspondent class or kind of notices – then it follows of necessity, the Understanding is truly and accurately defined in the words of Leighton and Kant, as a "faculty judging according to sense." (A 153)

It is obvious from the above quotation that the senses are closely allied to the understanding. The normal senses of sight, hearing, touch etc. need no explanation, but in order to grasp what Coleridge means by the word *sense* we need to make a special effort. If you take your eyes off this page and look at, say, the door of your room, you receive an impression from the outside world. If you now close your eyes and picture the door, you are still receiving an impression, but it is not as definite as when you had your eyes open. *Sense*, according to Coleridge, is that quality of our psyche that receives remembered impressions originally coming from our outer senses, even as those senses (of sight in this case) receive actual impressions from objects in the room around us. He explains it like this:

Under the term sense, I comprise whatever is passive in our being, without any reference to the questions of materialism or immaterialism; all that man is in common with animals, in kind at least – his sensations and impressions, whether of his outward senses, or the inner sense of imagination. This (is the) recipient property of the soul, from the original constitution of which we perceive and imagine all things under the forms of space and time. (F 118)⁶

The important thing to notice about the "epoch of the understanding and the senses" in which we are still living, is that the mind's

activity is only stimulated by what it receives through the senses. It is enthralled by the outside world. Coleridge calls this the "despotism of the eye". The reason why so much modern discourse is dull and uninteresting is that people's minds are enslaved to what is already there, as fixed habit, in the outside world. Coleridge calls this "the lethargy of custom." If we have found any of the Coleridge quotations hard to grasp, it is probably because we haven't been able to overcome this enslavement by rousing the mind to contemplate its own activity uninfluenced by anything received directly through the senses. Every time we "understand distinctly" what he is trying to convey (in my case usually only after the second or third reading) our minds are strengthened. What was at first a mere jumble of words becomes a source of energy and power. This is because our humanity is being truly exercised and is thereby gaining access to its source, which is also, as we shall shortly see the source of the outside world. This brings us to what Coleridge considered to be the most important truth he had to get over to his contemporaries: the distinction between *understanding* and *reason*. As a preface to my own attempt to explain this, let me quote from Owen Barfield's book, *What Coleridge Thought*, which over 30 years ago introduced me to the English poet's philosophy.

The distinction between understanding and reason is, for the comprehension of Coleridge, an all-important one, and its importance is a matter about which he never had any doubt. Moreover he was deeply convinced that the failure of most people in his time to grasp the distinction was the very sleeping sickness of the age... He said in the *Friend* that, once his readers had grasped that distinction they would have little difficulty in comprehending anything else. The habit of using reason and understanding as virtual synonyms has however not ceased; so that any reader acquainted neither with Kant nor with Coleridge finds the dice loaded against him. He starts off on the wrong foot, because in many modern contexts the vaguer connotations of the two words are actually the opposite of those implicit in Coleridge's use of them. *Reason*, with its derivatives and parallels, *reasoning*, *reasonable*, *ratiocination*, often sounds to us the shallower of the two; *understanding* the deeper because more sympathetic. The first thing to do therefore, while we are reading Coleridge, is to jettison these more familiar associations. (*W* 94)

Bearing this in mind and recalling what has already been said about understanding, we will approach the distinction between it and reason by the same route that its author took in the *Friend* (*F* 101). Early in the explanation, he draws attention to the fact that animals possess a rudimentary form of understanding, recalling the remarkable behaviour of Blumenbach's dog, which he had noticed years ago during his stay in Germany. He found the German professor had trained his pet poodle, "not only to hatch the eggs of the hen with all the mother's care and patience, but to attend the chickens afterwards, and find the food for them." In the *Aids to Reflection* (*A* 145-6) detailed observations of the intelligent behaviour of ants are cited as further evidence to convince the reader that this behaviour is a rudimentary form of the understanding. These are only two examples of what Bertrand Russell calls "animal inference". If we recall that when operating through the faculty of understanding, the mind's activity is only stimulated by what it receives through the outer senses, the following quotation will begin to put the nature of reason in a clearer light:

The understanding of the higher brutes has only organs of outward sense, and consequently material objects only; but man's understanding has (in addition) an organ of inward sense, and therefore the power of acquainting itself with invisible realities or spiritual objects. This organ is his reason... It bears the same relation to spiritual objects, the universal, the eternal, and the necessary, as the eye bears to material and contingent phenomena. (*F* 102)

By choosing to start with animal inference Coleridge gives us a picture which emphasises the radical difference between understanding and reason. We see before us a dog and a man. Although they share many characteristics, each is a totally different *kind* of being. You may be able to train a dog to fetch named objects to help a disabled person (as was recently widely reported in the UK) but you will never be able to teach it to apply multiplication tables, or to swear on oath in a court of law. The fact that dog and man obviously differ in *kind* is easily made clear through a picture from the outside world. The certainty that understanding and reason also differ in *kind*, however, can only be won by prolonged attentive energy. Why did Barfield draw attention to the fact that the failure to grasp this distinction was "the very sleeping sickness of the age"? Because there are signs all around us that men and women are considered to be merely highly developed animals. Fortunately, individual moral responsibility, which is a truth of reason, is still the

foundation of law in most developed countries. But once we move to the personal and domestic level of behaviour where legislation is inappropriate, we find the sleeping sickness begetting increasing uncertainty, leading to inevitable moral decline. "But why," someone may ask, "can grasping this arcane and hair splitting distinction make any difference to what is admittedly a worrying situation?" The answer is clear. Moral impulses do not come from the world of the outer senses which, as we have seen, is accessed through the organ of the understanding. These life-enhancing impulses are received through an organ facing towards the spirit: "the universal, the necessary, the eternal." This organ is reason. Let us sum up this difference in kind between understanding and reason in Coleridge's own words.

all the organs of sense are framed for a corresponding world of sense... All the organs of spirit are framed for a correspondent world of spirit; tho' the latter organs are not developed in all alike. But they exist in all, and their first appearance discloses itself in the *moral* being. (*BL* V. 1 242)

Coleridge often speaks of reason as irradiating all the other faculties of the mind. This is made clear in the following:

Without being the sense, the understanding, or the imagination, it (reason) contains all three within itself, even as the mind contains its thoughts, and is present in and through them all; or as the expression pervades the different features of an intelligent countenance. (*W* 94-5)

Another important fact, which this comparison between animal and human consciousness reveals, is that animal consciousness is *not* irradiated by reason. This clearly shows that the understanding may exist without reason. However, even in the most highly developed wide-awake consciousness of any human being

reason cannot exist without understanding; nor does it or can it manifest itself but in and through the understanding, which in our elder writers (Hooker, Bacon and Hobbes) is often called discourse, or the discursive faculty... In short, the human understanding possesses two distinct organs, the outward sense, and "the mind's eye" which is reason: wherever we use that phrase (the mind's eye) in its proper sense, and not as a mere synonym of the memory or the fancy...

It must be added, that it is an organ identical with its appropriate objects. Thus God, the soul, eternal truth, etc., are the objects of reason; but they are themselves reason. We name God the Supreme Reason; and Milton says, "whence the soul reason receives, and reason is her being." Whatever is conscious self-knowledge is reason; and in this sense it may be safely defined the organ of the supersensuous. (*F* 102)

Before we can conclude this brief survey of some of the most important aspects of Coleridge's thought we need to try to surmount a difficulty implied in the above quotation. This will bring us to the very heart of Coleridge's challenge to the West. The organ of reason is identical with its objects; one of its "objects" is God; therefore, reason is God. (This is what I had in mind when I said earlier that the source of our humanity is also the source of the outside world.) It would be a brave man, however, who would attempt to define God. And yet if such a definition could be given, would it not inevitably contain contradictions? This is precisely what we find in the doctrine of the Trinity: that God is one and also three. The understanding, precisely because it is the organ of the outer senses,

is bound to judge inexorably "*either* one God *or* more than one (three for instance); you can't have it both ways." The Trinity, which is reason, cannot appear in the understanding except in the form of contradictories – in this case the contradiction between tri-theism on the one hand and unitarianism on the other. (*W* 146)

To overcome this difficulty we need to be able to distinguish without dividing; and that very ability is itself reason. (*W* 116) It is a test of a truth of reason

that it can come forth out of the moulds of the understanding only in the disguise of two contradictory conceptions, each of which is partially true, and the conjunction of both conceptions becomes the representative or *expression* of a truth beyond conception and inexpressible. (*A* 154)

Let us now retrace our steps to the point where it was stated that "sense, imagination and reason interpenetrate and modify the understanding in manifold ways." (Paragraph 17) Having given some explanation of these four mental faculties, we can now expand Coleridge's remarks about the

mind hovering between images, and thus reveal the relationship between imagination and understanding. In his lectures on Shakespeare he speaks of

an effort of the mind, when it would describe what it cannot satisfy itself with the description of, to reconcile opposites and qualify contradictions, leaving a middle state of mind more strictly appropriate to the imagination than any other, when it is, as it were, hovering between images. As soon as it is fixed on one image, it becomes understanding; but while it is unfixed and wavering between them, attaching itself permanently to none, it is imagination.⁷

Let us conclude this survey with a terse imagination from Owen Barfield. If we read it carefully, heeding Coleridge's remarks just quoted about not fixing the understanding on a single image, we can gain direct access to the essence of Coleridge's thought.

... understanding points us back behind itself to reason, to reason as at once the source of living opposites and the lightning-flash that arrests them at the entrance to the understanding and reveals them as a stony landscape of logical contradictions bounded by its horizon. (*W* 116)

Such, in the barest outline – apart from one item that will be touched on later – is the essence of Coleridge's system, which I have tried to distil from many sources. He would be the first to acknowledge that the interaction of his thought with the German philosophers, notably Kant, Fichte and Schelling, helped him to acquire the instruments that enabled him to express it. Let us now recount what could arguably be called the dramatic climax of that interaction.

It occurred in the Wiltshire market town of Calne during the autumn of 1815. His German books were on the shelves in his study, part of the lodgings he was sharing with the family of John Morgan to whom he had dictated about two thirds of the book that would eventually be published as the *Biographia Literaria*. At the end of July he thought this two thirds was a complete book, which would shortly be ready to be sent to the printers to meet an already overrun deadline. But he began to have second thoughts. Let his biographer, Richard Holmes take up the story.

Did the book have some sort of theoretical hole in its middle? Did his concept of the Imagination need a philosophic and spiritual

grounding, as well as a critical one? And would he trace his own "circuitous" journey to these intuitive truths of the "Reason" as revealed by the German philosophers?

What Coleridge now set out to dictate, which was to run from Chapters 5 to 13, was a detailed account of a philosophical and spiritual conversion. Over twenty years, he had gradually moved from the materialist views of the British empiricists (notably Locke and David Hartley), to the new "dynamic" German philosophy of Kant and Schelling. The essential change was from a reductive concept of the human mind as a *tabula rasa*, "a mirror or canvas" which passively registered physical experience. In place of this (or rather, subsuming it) was a transcendental idea of the mind, with its own mysterious and intuitive faculties, which actively shaped experience and had access to spiritual dimensions beyond rational "Understanding". (*DR* 393)⁸

As what he at first thought would take only a few sheets began to expand alarmingly to reach eventually 45000 words, he started to feel the *Biographia* would prove more important than his collected poems. He began to see it as the "Pioneer to the great Work on the *Logos*, Divine and Human, on which I have set my heart." But, with the deadline only a few days away, how could he possibly expound the intractable complexities of dynamic post Kantian thought, expressed by Schelling and Fichte, to his empirically minded English audience? Spurred on by the approaching deadline he boldly translated and modified many passages mainly from the above German thinkers, welding them together into a concise exposition of his own dynamic philosophy. This exposition, which occurs in Chapter 12, consists of two postulates and ten theses. Several passages in it are direct unacknowledged translations of Schelling. Possibly foreseeing the difficulties this might cause, Coleridge mounted a pre-emptive defence, in Chapter 9, against the charge of plagiarism by saying that "all the main and fundamental ideas, were born and matured in my mind before I had seen a single page of the German philosopher." (*BL* V.1 161–4) Towards the end of his life he said that this exposition of his dynamic philosophy

is unformed and immature; it contains fragments of truth, but it is not fully thought out. It is wonderful to myself to think how infinitely more profound my views now are, and yet how much clearer they are withal. The circle is completing; the idea is coming round to, and to be, the common sense." (*TT* 28 June 1834)⁹

However, Owen Barfield, having access to these later more profound and clearer views, has said that Chapter 12:

is the place where, more than anywhere else, the dynamic philosophy is brought together in epitome.

And that the content of Chapter 12

should be allowed to transpire from this book (i.e. Barfield's *What Coleridge Thought*) taken as a whole. (*W* 63)

Richard Holmes, concluding his account of Chapter 12, says that the two postulates and ten theses "have never attracted serious philosophic commentary". (*DR* 408) This may have been true before the publication of Barfield's *What Coleridge Thought* in 1972, but after that event serious philosophic commentary did become available. The real climax of Coleridge's interaction with German dynamic philosophy comes, however, not in Chapter 12, but in the one that follows.

Coleridge was finding it increasingly difficult to finish this chapter. Even when he had modified the German thinkers' one-sidedness from out of his own vast learning which predated Descartes, he knew his English readers believed that the French philosopher's separation of mind from matter was a self-evident fact. Moreover, he was acutely aware that the truths he had to convey "were directly the reverse" of all that his readers "had ever been accustomed to consider as truth." The penultimate paragraph before the now famous break in the manuscript (the cause of which we will explain in a moment) is an attempt to help the reader to contemplate intuitively

one power with its two inherent indestructible yet counteracting forces, and the results or generations to which their interpenetration gives existence, in the living principle and in the process of our own self-consciousness. (*BL* V.I, 299)

We have tried to stimulate the imagination to gain access to this one power manifesting as a polarity in the process of our own self-consciousness through simple and admittedly inadequate analogies from the sense world. This means we have to a certain extent overcome the lethargy of custom which blots out any comprehension of spiritual truths. Coleridge knew that most of his readers were almost totally unprepared to receive what he was trying to convey. At the end of the previous chapter he had said he would "proceed to the nature and genesis of the imagination" but with the deadline looming he knew there

would not be enough time to do this in an orderly way that might possibly convince an unprepared readership. And so the manuscript breaks off towards the end of Chapter 13 with the following sentence:

Now this tertium aliquid (finite generation) can be no other than an inter-penetration of the counteracting powers, partaking of both.

After a series of asterisks Coleridge says he has just received a letter from a friend to whom he had recently sent the manuscript. He had a great respect for this friend's judgement and had asked for his opinion concerning the Chapter on the imagination, and also what impression his friend thought it might make on the reading public. The letter advised him to withdraw the Chapter and to publish it later as part of a full-scale work on the Constructive Philosophy, which Coleridge had promised and announced. Later, in 1817, Coleridge admitted that he himself had written the letter. As no one knew this at the time, he is able to say he is completely convinced by the letter and that he will be content to state the main result of the Chapter. And so the first part of the *Biographia Literaria* ends with what has become one of the most famous distinctions in English literature:

The IMAGINATION then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association. (*BL* V. 1, 306)

Fancy is the only faculty we have not yet discussed. We will give one analogy that Coleridge could not possibly have used, which may perhaps help some people to distinguish it from imagination. Recall that moment at the beginning of a flight when the rumbling of the plane's wheels on the runway suddenly stops and we have a buoyant sense of flying freely above ground. Imagination lifts us above the sense world in a similar way. Fancy remains earth bound; it is like a plane that can never take off.

Let us now return to Germany at the end of the 19th century where the historic postponement mentioned at the start of this article was beginning to draw to a close. In 1892 a young Austrian scholar published his doctoral thesis, *Wahrheit und Wissenschaft*. Commenting on the work of the philosophers that followed Kant, namely Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, he writes:

Because they did not understand the significance of the sphere of pure ideas and its relationship to the realm of sense-perceptions, they added mistake to mistake, one-sidedness to one-sidedness. It is no wonder that their all too daring systems could not withstand the fierce opposition of an epoch so ill-disposed toward philosophy; consequently, along with the errors much of real value in their thought was mercilessly swept away.¹⁰

We have already mentioned this period, which was so ill-disposed toward philosophy; it is none other than Coleridge's epoch of the understanding and the senses. However, after Coleridge's daughter Sara had published her annotated edition of the *Biographia Literaria* in 1847, what was mercilessly swept away in the realm of philosophy in Germany has remained in print in England and America. This means that the book's philosophical chapters stand, like a Trojan horse, at the very centre of English literary studies. Moreover, in my view, Coleridge has preserved what is of real value in their thought by detecting and correcting the errors of the German philosophers; he is therefore confident that his system can withstand the fiercest critical analysis, as the following passage shows:

You may not understand my system, or any given part of it; or by a determined act of wilfulness, you may, even though perceiving a ray of light, reject it in anger and disgust; but this I will say, that if you once master it, or any part of it, you cannot hesitate to acknowledge it as the truth. You cannot be sceptical about it. (TT 28,6,1834)

"Scepticism," said the now mature Austrian scholar, Rudolf Steiner, when he had built his own monumental system on the same foundation as Coleridge, "is merely the march of spiritual life from East to West, and it must be countered with a different spiritual stream flowing from West to East."¹¹ This stream seeks to establish an independent cultural, spiritual life that is in no way dependent on the past. Steiner describes it as follows:

In Central Europe there has always been . . . a kind of opposition against the cultural life of Greece on the one hand and the Roman Catholic life of rights on the other. Philosophy in Central Europe is one example of this rebellion. *In England there is virtually no understanding of Central European philosophy . . . German philosophy is thought of as something typically German, with which sensible people can have no truck.* And yet in German philosophy we have a late flowering of this rebellion, especially in Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. Even earlier in Goethe, we find the search for an independent cultural, spiritual life . . . (my italics)

People would do well to recognise that the likes of Goethe (and the philosophers mentioned above) represent possible beginnings, and that they ignore at their peril what lives in German evolution as a whole, which must be developed. (I 46-8)¹²

This rebellion, which is part of the impulse in continental Europe to establish a cultural life untrammelled by political and economic influences, seems to lose momentum around the middle of the 19th century.¹³ If one had to choose a starting date for the historic postponement, as it occurred in Germany, the death of Schelling in 1854 would immediately spring to mind. The postponement ends on the continent when the impulse is given a firm philosophical foundation by the publication of Steiner's *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* in 1894.¹⁴

If we now look at the situation on this side of the channel, it is astonishing to find that what remained unfinished on the continent for nearly half a century was, in a certain sense, completed by Coleridge in England before his death in 1834. However, because of the difficulties in his own life, he was unable to present his philosophy in a unified coherent form. This meant that, in spite of his system having a profound effect on the more thoughtful members of the generation that followed him, a further development of the drive towards a free spiritual life was also postponed in the English-speaking world. John Stuart Mill perhaps had an inkling of this when he affirmed in his essay on Coleridge in 1840

that "the class of thinkers has scarcely yet arisen by whom he is to be judged." By the very nature of the case it is impossible to determine exactly when the postponement ended in England. But it is certain that by the close of the 20th century, as a result of the publication of an increasing number of books on all aspects of Coleridge's work, the impulse to a free spiritual life is again gathering momentum.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the relevance of his work to 21st century issues when it is considered in the light of the following remarks made by Steiner in 1919:

People today must be shown how the economic life introduced by Anglo-American habits of thought is creeping along the ground, and that it will only be able to climb its way upwards if it works in harmony with those things, which people in other spheres are capable of doing, and for which they (i.e. the Germans) have talents. If this does not happen, Anglo-American world dominance by the economic life will be a catastrophe. (*I* 49)

It is as if Coleridge had a fore warning of the peril of ignoring what lives in German spiritual evolution and strove to pre-empt future ignorance of it by rendering German philosophy intelligible to his countrymen. (*BL* V. I, 163) Barfield has described the circumstances and means by which Coleridge did this in the following passage:

Speaking, as he had to do, to his already empirically minded English contemporaries, he had, so to speak, to lay down his track as he went along, and caterpillar wheels are slow compared with ordinary wheeled traction. But then they can go into much cruder places. If the German thinkers could count on at least a second-class road of understanding into the minds of their readers, Coleridge tried to penetrate where there was no longer a road at all; to awaken to active thought minds for which "the conceivable" had already been "reduced within the bounds of the picturable." (*W* 43)

In the wake of these caterpillar tracks, which Coleridge laid down so laboriously, others who were born after him have begun to construct a road. It opens up what is for most English speakers uncharted territory. Because their traditional empiricism ties them to the physical world, their thinking is too weak to explore this unknown region. Coleridge's challenge to all individual Westerners is to strengthen their thinking so that they can gain access to this region, where two interpenetrating re-

ebullient forces of one inexhaustible power are constantly bringing the phenomenal world into being.

NOTES

- 1 Richard Holmes, *Coleridge Early Visions (EV)*, Penguin 1990 p178.
- 2 S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria (BL)*, edited by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, Princeton University Press 1983 Vol. 1 p205.
- 3 See *EV* Chap. 9 p205 for full account of Coleridge's visit to Germany.
- 4 Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought (W)*, Oxford UP 1972, p7.
- 5 S. T. Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection (A)*, Bohn's Library, London 1893.
- 6 S. T. Coleridge, *The Friend (F)*, Bohn's Library, London 1906, p118.
- 7 S. T. Coleridge, *Shakespearean Criticism*, Everyman's Library, London 1960, Vol. 2 p103.
- 8 Richard Holmes, *Coleridge Darker Reflections (DR)*, Harper Collins, London 1998, p393.
- 9 S. T. Coleridge, *Table Talk and Omniana (TT)*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1917 p311.
- 10 Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity and Truth and Knowledge*, trans. by Rita Stebbing AP New York 1963, pp296-7.
- 11 Rudolf Steiner, *The Boundaries of Natural Science*, Anthroposophic Press, New York 1983 p98.
- 12 *Ideas for a New Europe (I)*, RSP Sussex 1992, pp 46-8.
- 13 See also Rudolf Steiner, *The Riddle of Humanity*, RSP London 1990, pp123-4.
- 14 See also Rudolf Steiner, *Rosicrucianism & Modern Initiation*, RSP London 1965, p76.

Book Review
***The Isles: A History* by Norman Davies, Macmillan 1999:**
An Appraisal

Simon Blaxland-de Lange

Three years before the first appearance of the book under consideration, there were glowing reviews about an earlier, and even longer, book by Professor Davies which made me determined to acquire a copy of it. What was especially highlighted in these reviews of *Europe: A History* (OUP 1996) was that the author had the strong conviction that Eastern Europe – including that part of Russia that lies east of the Ural Mountains – deserves just as much consideration as Western Europe. Nor was I disappointed when I came to read the book. The story of Europe's history, beginning with the myth of the birth of Europa, marking the passing of the thread of cultural evolution from Near Eastern Sumer and Egypt via Crete to European Greece (or – in spiritual-scientific terms – from the third post-Atlantean cultural epoch to the fourth), is told with the conviction that, far from being at an end, this journey needs now to embark upon a new phase. Now that the colonial empires which the Western European nations – Spain, Portugal, Holland, Belgium, France, Britain and to a lesser extent Germany – acquired from the 16th century onwards have in the course of the 20th century to all intents and purposes disappeared, albeit amidst probably the most militarily turbulent period in the whole of human history (1914–1945), the way now lies open for a new phase of development, oriented no longer around the principle of cultural and social dominance or egocentricity but around that of the encounter with, knowledge of, the other.

Much is said about internationalism and, even, of globalisation these days; but the history of Europe, as told by Norman Davies, makes it clear that humanity needs a fairly lengthy transitional period between the nation-state era of the last few centuries and one where nation (and language) cease to matter and, indeed, defer entirely to the integrity of the individual human spirit. Davies's analysis of especially the tragic dénouement in the 20th century of the European imperialist ventures –

now, arguably, being extended through the imperialist policies of Republican America – opens up a vista of a new phase of cultural development, dominated neither by Anglo-American economic imperialism nor by the Roman Catholic Church, centred around the notion of being a European, a member of the European family of nations. Davies is, however, not blind to the fact that this notion is as yet a potential that has – in Britain, at any rate – not even begun to be realised. It is, of course, very convenient to use the illusion of the “new American century” to justify a perpetuation of monoculturalism and confinement within a narrowly English linguistic heritage. But through his book one can indeed glimpse the possibilities inherent in the incredible linguistic, cultural and social diversity within Europe for practising the art of getting to know the other, of acknowledging and meeting the other individualities and individual othernesses around me.

One can therefore well understand why, as a first exploration of these practical possibilities, Norman Davies felt inspired – and possibly also obliged – to write a further thousand-page book on Britain itself. For just as the European family of nations could be thought of as a very helpful practice-ground for learning to know the other, so is it well-nigh impossible for Britain, at any rate, fruitfully to explore these possibilities for as long as the notion of “Britain” itself has not been de-mystified, taken apart and (possibly) re-assembled in a different form. A wish, or a preparedness, to get to know the other entails a commitment to an exercise in self-knowledge. Not least for the English themselves, *The Isles: A History* represents national self-knowledge (as distinct from self-preoccupation) on a fairly grand scale.

Davies's thesis, in a nutshell, is that the current notion of “Britain” (as in, for example, British subject, British Broadcasting Corporation, British Empire and, even, British Isles) is either a myth or is the fruit of imprecise or confused thinking. The crux of the issue is that the terms “Britain” or “United Kingdom” are in many people's minds (and in library classifications as emanating from the Library of Congress) synonymous with “England”, the clear implication of which is that England has become to an overwhelming degree a culturally and politically dominant force with respect to the other nations of the Isles.

The intensely complex issues of nomenclature are analysed in the book's lengthy introduction, which needs to be read if justice is to be done to the complexities. As a historian, Davies is preoccupied more with political than with geographical designations. He is therefore at pains to emphasise that there have only been two periods when the term

“Britain” has currency, one ancient (Celts-Roman) and one modern (the relatively brief period since 1707 of the lifetime of the united Kingdom of Great Britain, with which Ireland has been – and is – in varying degrees associated). In this respect, he gives a helpful summary of the states that have subsisted over the centuries in the Isles associated with the epithet “British”, which is perhaps the most concise way of illustrating how complex this whole subject is:

- The High Kingship of Ireland, to AD 1169
- The Ancient British tribal principalities, to c. AD 70
- Independent “Pictland”, to the ninth century AD
- Roman Britannia, 43–c. 410 AD
- The independent British/Welsh principalities, from the fifth century to 1283, including Cornwall, Cumbria, and Strathclyde
- The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, from the fifth to the tenth centuries
- The Kingdom of the Scots, from the ninth century to 1651, and 1660–1707
- The Kingdom of England, from the tenth century to 1536, together with its dependencies including the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, the Welsh March, and English-occupied Wales and Ireland
- The Kingdom of England and Wales, 1536–1649, 1660–1707
- The Kingdom of Ireland, 1541–1649, 1660–1800
- The Commonwealth and Free State of England, Wales, and Ireland, 1649–1654
- The Commonwealth of Great Britain and Ireland, alias the ‘First British Republic’, 1654–1660
- The united Kingdom of Great Britain, 1707–1800
- The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 1801–1922
- The Irish Free State (later Éire, then the Republic of Ireland), since 1922
- The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, since 1922.”

The geographical picture offers somewhat more scope and flexibility for referring to Britain. According to Davies, who draws in his turn on the attestation of an intrepid fourth century BC Greek sailor, Pytheas of Massilia, *Pretaniké* was the (Celtic) name for the Isles as a

whole; while of the two main islands, the smaller, western isle was called Ierne and the larger, eastern one Nesos Albionon. Pretaniké was latinised as Britannia, and is equivalent to the Welsh Prydain (hence "Britain"). Thus although the proper geographical name of the larger island containing England, Wales and Scotland is now (Great) Britain and that of the smaller one Ireland, there could be some justification for associating the geographical designation of "Britain" with the totality of the Isles (of which more later).

To do so at this stage would, however, cut against Davies's immediate purpose, the importance of which is beyond question. This is to achieve – through a meticulous tracing of the history played out especially since the 14th century in these islands – recognition of the fact that during this time one nation, namely England, has increasingly become predominant, with the distinctive cultural and linguistic gifts of the other countries (to say nothing of regional divergences from the dominant south-eastern mould within England itself) being largely sidelined and tolerated as little more than quaint relics of an earlier age. Davies's view is that the future resides in each of the four major national groups within the Isles becoming individual members of the European Union – a "sovereign Scotland", an "English Republic", a "consolidated Wales" and "an Ireland at peace with itself":

"Perhaps the main source of optimism lies in the existence of the European Union. Unfortunately, the most positive aspect of the EU is rarely noticed. It is obscured by the misplaced obsession with purely economic considerations. But it is this: it gives a place in the sun to Europe's smaller and middle-sized nations. Economics were never at the top of the agenda of the fathers of the European movement. It was always a means to a higher end. It was the means of forging a prosperous community in which all member states, both large and small, could live in peace. For this reason, the European ideal is despised by those who wish to hang on to the vestiges of a superior status and of national domination. In the old European jungle of sovereign states, an independent Scotland, or an independent Wales, or even an independent England would have been vulnerable creatures living precariously among larger predators. But this jungle has been banished. Under the umbrella of the European Union, a 'Scotland-in-Europe', a 'Wales-in-Europe' and an 'England-in-Europe' have every chance of doing as well as an 'Ireland-in-Europe'."

Davies himself is, in the most constructive way possible, conscious of his Welsh ancestry. His book on Europe concludes with a moving evocation of his marital partnership with his Polish wife, Myszka. There remains, at the conclusion of what is intended as a thoroughly positive appraisal of his scholarly precision, balanced judgement and humour, to ask whether Rudolf Steiner's indications about, respectively, the Celtic British nations and the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe (Poland could of course also be associated with Central Europe) can suggest that something new and dynamic might emerge from these peoples that is sufficiently powerful to transform the current prejudices and assumptions underpinning the modern world.

In the European context, there is the indication¹ that the cultural epoch following the present fifth post-Atlantean epoch will be one where the impulse of brotherhood and community-building that is characteristic of the Slavic peoples to varying degrees (and most of all of Russia) will come into its own in the sixth cultural epoch, whose beginning he placed around 3573 AD. For present purposes, however, we need to focus on what, if anything, might flow from the very different attitude of England towards the other nations of the Isles which Davies posits as both just and – in our time – realistic. For without something new entering into this situation, it is hard to see how what he envisages in the passage quoted above will be sustainable in a world where the Anglo-American march towards world-domination tends to exert a decisive influence on all other cultural and social impulses. The crucial point here is Steiner's indication that, "soon after the Christian impulse had been bestowed on mankind", the Celtic Folk-Spirit sacrificed his mission (and therefore in a sense also the traditional cultural identity of the Celtic peoples) in order to become the guardian of esoteric Christianity.²

Two main conclusions follow from this. First, it will become increasingly clear that any kind of resurgence of Celtic nationalism will be at least as irrelevant to the future development of humanity as the continuation of English (or Anglo-American) domination which Davies rightly deplores. On the other hand, it is my own conviction that, in addition to the intensity of the Christian impulse that surged out of – especially – Ireland in the early Christian centuries, there continues to live in the Celtic British nations a propensity for an appraisal of esoteric

¹ See *The Mission of Folk-Souls*, English translation published by Rudolf Steiner Press 1970, lecture 10 (16th June 1910). See also the lecture given on 15th June 1915, *Preparing for the Sixth Epoch*.

² *Ibid.*, lecture 7 (12th June 1910).

Christianity which could become manifest to the extent that these peoples are able to make a sacrifice of a comparable nature to that made by the Celtic Archangel. (This is an admittedly vague statement, but this is not the place to amplify it more fully.) Second, and following on from the first, one can envisage that such a Christianisation of the ancient pagan Celtic wisdom, and its acknowledgement and receiving into the materialistic "mainstream" of the Anglo-Saxon regions of Britain through a comparable quest for self-knowledge within Albion – England – itself, could lead to the re-identification of Britain as a cultural entity, comprising the totality of Celtic Pretaniké, for the first time since the beginning of the Christian era. Indeed, it could be that only in this way would Britain be able to play its true spiritual role within the European family of nations.³

These comments suggested by a consideration of Steiner's indications do not, in my view, take anything away from the validity of Norman Davies's analysis and its conclusions. All that I hope I have done is to add something which is in harmony with, and is largely supportive of the implementation of, these conclusions. Whether or not Professor Davies would appreciate a wholly positive endorsement from such a quarter is at this point an open question.

³ For further research from a spiritual-scientific perspective, see, for example, *Europa: A Spiritual Biography* by Richard Seddon, Temple Lodge 1995 and *Europe: A Cosmic Picture* by Maria Schindler, New Knowledge Books 1975. In the latter, Britain is depicted as one of twelve members of a European star-circle, with a complex journey of development – under the guidance of its inspiring constellation – from the Eagle of its visionary past through the Scorpion of its present nature to a possible Dove quality in the future.

Book Review

Poems for the Path by Sean Byrne. Age-Old Books,
1 Martello Terrace, Holywood, Co. Down, BT18 9BE, 2005.
Paperback, 83pp.

Margaret Jonas

Writing spiritual or religious poetry is one of the hardest creative acts, as it can so easily sound trite, sentimental, didactic or evangelical. Sean Byrne, however, has had the courage to attempt to put mystical experiences into poetic poem and has not succumbed to these pitfalls. He is a lyrical poet, a true heir of the Irish tradition of Yeats, and more especially the Theosophical mystical writer A.E. (George Russell). In his work, echoes of Christian romantic mystical writing, older religious or metaphysical verse mingle with nicely understated and hinted at concepts of spiritual science.

The poems are quiet, meditative, simply constructed with each word carefully chosen for its position, sometimes as a single line, e.g. in "Rapha-el 2": *Being / you / Rapha-el. / I want / I wait, / Hoped in whit whiteness / For the healing / Tinkle tingle / Of the bell-spirit / Birdsong / Crossing / You / With the plumed plucked Branch, / Strength / Of the pilgrim feet....*

Or with more traditional use of rhyme or half-rhyme – from "The Door 1": *Be / The Christ / In me! / Root / In my soul's blood / The slow strength / Of a tree....*

The reader should not be misled by such apparent simplicity and economy. It is a mark of a true poet when he or she knows when to let go of words, avoid unnecessary padding. If one allows the words to sound silently and contemplatively within, there are after-echoes like clear bell tones.

The unusual imagery of "What is a tree?" – *It is a skeleton / Of boxed, bracketed / And trellised light / A place of enchanted faces ...* may place him firmly in the Celtic "faery" tradition, but it also shows a visionary way of seeing, of looking at the world. There are echoes of Rilke: *Lord / I want to make you my business / I want to make a business*

of you! ("Prayer of a Capitalist"); or of Sufi poets: *It is because You are here / Shining invisibly like a sun-centre / Around which all these fragments orbit / Filling me out beyond my narrow self...* ("Periphery and Centre").

Many poems include the I AM, the name for the Christ-principle of man ... *I AM / Echoed and mirrored / In the passing day...* A recollection of the Gnostic writings, whose authors had retained the sense of Creator and Word being revealed in both the natural world and Man as Beings of whom it is possible to have direct experience.

The book itself is nicely produced in clear well set-out type with a pleasing cover. It was given to me to review before a performance at the recent Cambridge *Music of the Heart* Conference, which seemed an aptly synchronous gesture, speaking of Venus as planet of both the arts and of mysticism. Sean Byrne describes himself as a writer, publisher and editor. This is his first published book of poems – his own voice in spite of the rich poetic traditions he inherits. May he find time to continue his contemplative inner work to produce more poems for the path.

Notes on the Contributors

Virginia Sease is a member of the Executive Council of the General Anthroposophical Society in Dornach, Switzerland.

Terry Goodfellow read History at the University of Cambridge and, after working as a teacher and director of a small community arts centre in London, has been the manager/co-ordinator at Rudolf Steiner House, London, since 1990.

Christopher Houghton Budd is an economic historian with a special interest in modern finance and Rudolf Steiner's contribution to economics.

Adam Bittleston (1911–1989) was ordained priest of the Christian Community in 1935. From 1970 he taught at the training centre of the Christian Community in Forest Row and at Emerson College. For many years he was an editor of the *Golden Blade*.

Terence Davies is a retired professional musician. His articles have appeared in a variety of anthroposophical publications for more than twenty years.

Simon Blaxland-de Lange is the Administrator and Registered Manager of Philpots Manor School.

Margaret Jonas is the Librarian at Rudolf Steiner House, London.

THE GOLDEN BLADE 57
2005

Language: Symptom and Servant of Culture

Amidst a political climate regarded by increasing numbers of people as socially dysfunctional and marginal to their needs and aspirations, there is a tendency today for semi-autonomous cultures to emerge. Language, however, represents a common cultural thread that both illumines our present situation and enables us to transform it. The articles assembled in the present volume examine our modern cultural predicament from the standpoint of Rudolf Steiner's research on the evolution of human consciousness.

Goethe and the Evolution of Consciousness

Rudolf Steiner

Crisis of Cognition as a Language Crisis

Martina Maria Sam

Awareness of the Time as a Perception of Reality

Christiane Haid

Owen Barfield: Harbinger of the 21st Century

Simon Blaxland-de Lange

'O, for a Muse of Fire': The Imaginative Language of W.B. Yeats

Sean Byrne

Emily Dickinson and the Living Word

Coralee Schmandt

An Improvisation on the theme of Educational Intuition

Martyn Rawson

Icons

Martin Schmandt

Poetry and Poetics

Paul Matthews

Thinking around the Mother Tongue

Emilie Salvesen

Notes on Translation, with special reference to the Works of Rudolf Steiner

Anna Meuss

Words and their many Guises – a Brief Sketch of Comparative Languages

Rene Querido

This and all the following back-issues are available from Wynstones Press (address at the beginning of the book), either directly or via a stockist of anthroposophical books.

THE GOLDEN BLADE 56
2004

Together at the Table of Brotherhood

The emergence of an increasingly global economy presents challenges to the rights of individuals and social groups within nation states. Commercial interests in cultural sectors like education, health provision etc. raise fundamental issues about entitlement, distribution and indeed the freedom of the human being. This issue of *The Golden Blade* draws contributions together on the question of how to reconcile the freedom of the individual with social responsibility.

Brotherhood and the Struggle for Existence

Rudolf Steiner

Three Laws

Michael Luxford

Clash of Civilisations, Iron Necessity, 530 Billion Imaginary Workers: Current Events through the Lens of Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual-Scientific Discoveries

Stephen Usher

The Iraqi War and the Threefold Nature of Human Society

Michael Spence

The Karma of Money

Cornelius Pietzner

Ethical Financialism: A Fast-Track to Changing the Way the World is Financed

Christopher Houghton Budd

The Human Being between Globalisation and Genetic Engineering?

Nicanor Perlas

Threefolding or Global Governance?

Christoph Strawe

"Com-panis", Economics and the Company

Lawrence Keen

Delegation and Collegial Leadership, as exemplified in the Self-Regulation of Waldorf Schools

Udo Herrmannstorfer

Solovyov's Vision of World Brotherhood

Elizabeth Carmack

THE GOLDEN BLADE 55
2003

Stillness in the Storm

Life and Death

Rudolf Steiner

Meditation

Karla Kiniger

Self-Discipline, a Prerequisite for the Practice of Meditation

Baruch Urieli

Prayer

Adam Bittleston

Meditation and Some of its Practical Results

Ron Jarman

The Eightfold Path

Avishay Gershony

Reflections of an Artist

John Salter

Sustaining Purpose and Progress

Steve Briault

Work as a Spiritual Path

Shirley Routledge

Meditative Practice in Counselling

Tessa Lovemore

The Inner Work of a Biodynamic Farmer Today

Richard Smith

Jonael Schickler

Nicholas Green

Conservation, Causality and Chaos

Harlan Gilbert

THE GOLDEN BLADE 54
2002

Kindling Spirit

- The Human Being's Responsibility for the Evolution of the World
Rudolf Steiner
Rhythm, Turbulence and Stasis: The Spirit-Matter Problem Revisited
Harlan Gilbert
Flow through the Heart
Philip Kilner
The Globalisation of Steiner's Impulse for a Renewal of Agriculture
Taldeu Caldas
The Saturn Path
Nick Thomas
Star Children and Difficult Children
Georg Kühlewind
The Prospects for Social Threefolding Today
Nicanor Perlas
The Ramapo Salamander and Esoteric America
David Adams
Claude Lorrain: Journey into Inner Light
Vivien Law

THE GOLDEN BLADE 53
2001

Trumpet to the Morn

- Clairvoyance and Thinking
Corinna Gleide
The Mysteries of the Pleroma
Rudolf Steiner
Bolshevism as an Initiation-Principle of Evil
Sergei Prokofieff
Computers and Intelligence
Harlan Gilbert
Death and Life in Modern Thinking
Jonael Schickler
Awakening to the History of the Anthroposophical Movement and the Society
Bodo von Plato
Renewing Seed and Human Culture
Bernard Jarman
Anthroposophy and Psychiatry
James Dyson
Ready! Aye, Ready!
Alex Naylor

THE GOLDEN BLADE 52
2000

Light on Life

- Glimmers of Truth
Dorit Winter
Archetypes in Biography
Henning Köhler
A Reluctant Autobiographer
Doré Deverell
Telling Encounters
Matthias Wais
Coleridge: A Life Illumined
Coralee Schmandt
A Biographical Fragment
Nick Thomas
Childhood Illnesses
Bob Dudney
Verifying Karma Research
Enge, Smit and Schage

THE GOLDEN BLADE 51
1999

Together on Earth

- Being Born into a Brave New World
John Alexandra
The Biodynamic Farm: An Embryo for the Threefold Social Order in our Time
Manfred Klett
The Meeting of Karmic Streams in the Communications Age
Simon Blaxland-de Lange
Our Communion with the Dead
William Forward
Why on earth are we here?
Andrew Wolpert
The Karmic Community of Samuel Hartlib, John Dury and Johann Amos Comenius
Ken Gibson
Japan and my Destiny
Fumiko Chikami
Come Alive!
Sibylle Eichstaedt

Working with Destiny II

Rudolf Steiner Library
65 Fern Hill Road
Ghent, NY 12075
(518) 672-7690
rsteinerlibrary@taconic.net

copy 2

DATE DUE	
MAY 29 2006	
DEC 28 2006	
GAYLORD	PRINTED IN U.S.A.

THE GOLDEN BLADE 2006

CHARTING THE VOID

How can we make sense of what is going on in our modern world? And how can we prepare rightly and responsibly for the future? In a world where there are few, if any, guidelines for development (as opposed to more of the same), the 2006 issue of the Golden Blade considers mankind's present predicament in the light of some of the most challenging things Rudolf Steiner said about the dominant cultural trends of modern times.

Problems of the Time

Rudolf Steiner

Special Spiritual Foundations for the Connection between
England and the United States of America

Virginia Sease

Shadows of Doubt

Terry Goodfellow

True Columbia

Christopher Houghton Budd

The Future of the English Language

Adam Bittleston

Distinguish without Dividing

Terence Davies

Book Reviews:

The Isles by Norman Davies

Simon Blaxland-de Lange

Poems for the Path by Sean Byrne

Margaret Jonas

Cover Design:

Anne Stockton

ISBN 0-9531600-8-4

ISSN 0967-6708