

THE GOLDEN BLADE
2009



The Golden Blade

Time And Eternity

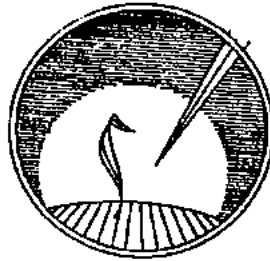
2009

61st Issue

Time And Eternity

Edited by William Forward, Simon Blaxland-de Lange
and Paul Breslaw

The Golden Blade



Anthroposophy springs from the work 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. 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.

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Editorial Notes

When I was an undergraduate in the late 1960s, a senior figure in the Department of History – he was a Reader specialising in the religious history of modern times, Donald Nicholl by name – declared in the course of one of his fascinating lectures: ‘I always have plenty of time, so if any of you want to come and talk to me about anything I say, you can be assured that you will be very welcome’. This remark has always left its impression in my mind, because of course Mr. Nicholl was in conventional terms at least as short of time as most other people, but as a man of deep Christian convictions with a far-ranging grasp of esoteric traditions in many other faiths, he had made the choice that he wished to do his best to live out of that dimension of eternity which pervaded his lectures and led to their immense popularity with the students.

Forty years later, the struggle to gain access to that realm where one has ‘plenty of time’ has for most people become an increasingly existential one; and there can be few among those who aspire to, shall we say, live in the eternity of the present moment (as Rudolf Steiner strikingly describes in the lecture included in this issue) who do not find themselves living a sort of double life, such is now the invasiveness of systems of intellectual and social conformity. Everywhere, it would seem, the outward power of regulation and institutionalisation is increasingly impinging upon the free unfolding of human individuality, whether the context be the international field of global forces, the national domain of state surveillance, the institutional realm of bureaucratic regulation or the individual sphere of unbridled consumerist marketing. Inevitably these same forces reach right into that inner realm where individuals, who are inspired by the conviction that the human ego is not ultimately a separate divisive entity, but has within it a universal, uniting spiritual power, engage in research and will-activity through which these seemingly all-powerful outward forces can be spiritually

transformed. Thus those seeking to form a chalice for spiritual-scientific research are themselves challenged by twin questions: how can we prepare a space where something holy can happen, and how can we order our lives so that we can achieve this aim? The present issue of *The Golden Blade* seeks to address specifically the latter aspect of this challenge, related as it is to the mystery of time. Can time be made holy through being shared?

Thus a common experience is that, on the one hand, one assesses the situation that one is in and attempts to find the most appropriate intuitive and socially responsible response; while on the other hand, one has to bear in mind other sets of externally imposed criteria which may require one to act differently. Alternatively, one may decide to undertake both courses of action, what one inwardly knows to be right and what one is required to do. Many people engaged in professional tasks for which some kind of government regulation is prescribed will be well familiar with the need to adopt a double life of this nature, where fortunately there is usually a fair amount of common ground.

However, it is – I would say – an increasingly common experience for that creative inner space, well epitomised in Andrew Wolpert's article, to be invaded to the point where one begins to feel inwardly frozen, gripped by a perpetual anxiety, tension or fear. When this happens it can become very difficult to maintain the balance described above between the fire of inner conviction and the chilling cold of outward regulation – because the fire is actually being extinguished. The precious qualities of trust, confidence, initiative and imagination are eroded, and replaced by a preoccupation with guilt, suspicion and even mutual assumptions of criminality.

Every age struggles to find its rightful relationship to time on the one hand and eternity on the other. The articles by Andrew Welburn, Brien Masters and Terence Davies each in a different way consider the theme of time from this 'evolution of consciousness' standpoint. In these introductory words it is worth considering in general terms whether, in this age of the consciousness soul, we are giving

ourselves a chance to find the appropriate balance for our time between what is individually willed and what is externally prescribed, or, in Andrew Wolpert's terms, an impulse emanating from the Son or one laid down by the Father.

Regulation is often thought to be an essential aspect of the modern age of self-conscious individualism. Up to a point this is true: it is important to be aware of why one does something and to be able to communicate this awareness to others. But this wholly appropriate endeavour has been diverted from truly serving the needs of the age we live in by the assumption – or, rather, the conviction – that human beings are inherently incapable of acting out of anything other than self-interest. Governments therefore take the view that social life would become a veritable jungle of irresponsible behaviour if they were not to exercise a considerable degree of external control. Latterly this fear of chaos has been hugely augmented by the further fear of terrorism, or of being sued, thus seemingly justifying the legislative entrenchment of the assumption that everyone is a potential terrorist or criminal of some sort unless proven not to be (and it is not difficult to demonstrate that the so-called 'proofs' arrived at out of such assumptions are relatively empty of meaning). But these developments give rise to a tragic distortion of the process ensuring individually responsible activity (i.e. regulation), which should – and could, if the assumptions mentioned above were stripped away – be accomplished through self-regulation.

Failure thus to distinguish what belongs to our age and what does not is likely to bring about an increasing erosion of trust as the basis for social relationships; and no social organism can survive for long without this quality. It is therefore not surprising that systems of control and surveillance which hearken back to former ages are becoming more and more omnipresent, and governments on the one hand enthusiastically encourage school-children to regard (information) technology – in God the Father terms – as a god, a curiously irrelevant sacred cow in an overtly secular age, and on the

other hand continue to adopt the out-dated approach to problem solving by dropping bombs on everyone from above, both in the domestic context and also in that of foreign affairs. Partly, of course, this is because the building of trust between self-conscious, separate individual egos – in a certain sense the core task of our time – is extremely difficult, and no one really knows how to do it. At such a juncture we can be grateful to be reminded – as does Brien Masters – not only of Beethoven's revolutionary, transforming spirit but also of his indomitable humour, qualities that are sorely needed also today as we try to scour away the dross that has no place in an age where the individual human will is to be awakened rather than crushed into oblivion. In this regard, another of the wise Mr. Nicholl's observations comes to mind: we already – and this was in the 1960s – have too much information; what is urgently needed is that we become better able to make what we know into a reality in our own lives, or – as he put it – that we live 'for real'.

When contemplating this forthcoming issue, the editors became aware that *The Golden Blade* was itself existentially involved in these dilemmas of our age, reflected as they are through the practical context out of which the existence of a journal of this kind is inherently possible. Out of the lengthy considerations that dominated our editorial board meetings came the conviction that a situation of this kind requires not – as envisaged over recent years – a gathering up of research that is already, as it were, 'out there', but an active deed seeking to generate something new. The result of arriving at and then sharing the theme of 'time in our time' – the awareness that we hear daily that no one has any time, that the world is running out of time (global economy) and that each individual has to struggle to 'find' or 'make' time in the infinitesimal space between the past and the future – was a remarkably rich harvest of articles which we are proud to publish. All except the first and the last articles – those by Rudolf Steiner and Terence Davies – were

specifically written out of these searching questions; although these two contributions would seem to anticipate much of the substance that lies between. The other articles have arisen out of the authors' activities in various professional fields, specifically literature, music, science, philosophy and economics – although there is a deeply personal element in each which the present writer is reluctant to attempt to summarise.

Particular thanks are due to Gertraud Goodwin for her black and white cover design, and for redeeming this issue from being exclusively the work of the male gender (not at all the intention), and also to Paul Breslaw, without whose computer skills and considerable expenditure of time there would have been no *Golden Blade* this year.

Simon Blaxland-de Lange, August 2008.

The Polarity between Eternity and Evolution in Human Life¹

Rudolf Steiner

Those who study the soul-spiritual² life of mankind cannot make use of many of the concepts which are commonplace in every-day life and in our current way of thinking. One such idea which cannot be used is that of evolution or development – the idea that one thing, or better said one condition, arises from another. Now I don't want to be misunderstood, so I should make it quite clear that I do not mean the concept of evolution is useless. Yesterday, for example, we made extensive use of it, when we needed the idea of evolution to speak about how soul-bodily life proceeds between birth and death. But we need quite different concepts if we want to talk about what soul-spiritual life really is.

As you know, our experience of soul-spiritual life within outer sensory reality takes place in thinking, feeling and willing. To understand what is really happening soul-spiritually within the processes of thinking, feeling and willing, we must bear in mind the following:-

If someone feels something and the feeling comes to expression via thinking, or if someone perceives something in the outer world and what is perceived comes to expression via thinking, or if someone does something so that the will is translated into action – in other words whenever someone lives in the soul-spiritual – then this must always be considered as relationships taking place between spiritual beings. Whenever we want to describe the soul-spiritual

¹ This previously untranslated lecture is the third in the series entitled *Die Polarität von Dauer und Entwicklung im Menschenleben* (GA184) given in Dornach on 15 September 1918. The translation is by Paul Breslaw.

² Dr Steiner uses the adjectives *geistig-seelisch* and *seelisch-leiblich* on many occasions throughout this lecture. We have chosen to translate them respectively as *soul-spiritual* and *soul-bodily*.

world within which the human soul exists, then we really can't avoid speaking about these relationships between spiritual beings.

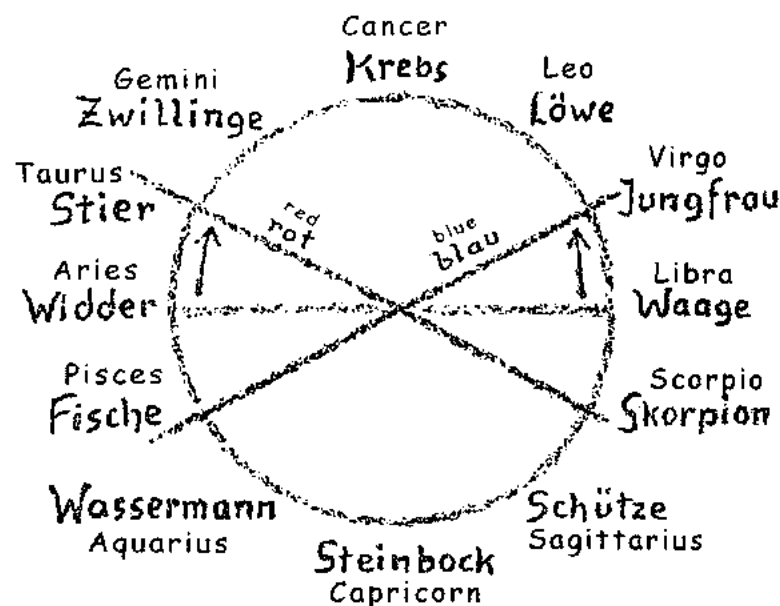
Suppose that the human being were more of a thinking type, although in reality it is never the case that the activities of thinking, feeling and willing are completely separate. While one is thinking and forming thoughts, the will is at work within the process of thinking, because one actually performs the thinking. And while one is doing something, performing some action, the will is also at work, executing the 'what-is-wanted'. When we think or contemplate, we do a little more thinking and less willing, and when we act or surrender ourselves to some feeling, we do more willing and less thinking.

But so far everything that I have touched upon is in fact only an outer characteristic of the matter. To grasp the reality of these things we must speak about them quite differently. For example, I might perceive something in the outer world which prompts me to form mental images of it; I don't do anything, but confine my will to direct my senses towards the outer world so that I can perceive and string thoughts together. I am therefore contemplating, actively perceiving. In reality this means that I shift myself into a spiritual region where ahimanicly inclined beings have the upper hand. Pictorially speaking, in a certain sense I stick my head into a region where ahimanic beings rule. While on the face of it I say "I am contemplating something", in reality I should say "I am busy in a spiritual region where certain beings have the upper hand, somewhat subduing other beings, and hold the balance which tends towards the ahimanic."

When we describe things this way, at first it all seems rather vague and indefinite, because they take place in the spiritual realm, and our language is made for sensory reality. One can however express them pictorially by removing the human being somewhat from the process and moving it more into the cosmos. For this reason a situation which could be characterised externally by saying "Something stimulates me and I ponder upon it", would be

expressed pictorially by initiation knowledge in something like the following way:-

The human being lives in and orients himself within the cosmos. As I have shown in the last few days, this is like a compass needle that points, cosmically speaking, north-south, its orientation not determined from within, but by the cosmos. This orientation varies so that it can follow the zodiac, alternating amongst Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. (See Figure). There is also at first a fundamental state, taking this orientation of the zodiac as a basis, in which the human being points upwards according to his head-nature and downwards according to his limb-nature. All this can then be viewed as a kind of balance beam which separates what is above from what is below.



Now what becomes of this human cosmic orientation if we were to look at someone who is neither thinking nor acting – I hope you are not doing this – someone who is casually given over to the feeling of being lulled by life, half asleep and half awake, neither active nor passive? Actually rather a lot happens to him, only he doesn't notice it. And if we want to picture this condition – as I said, one that I hope you are not in right now – then we would say that the balance beam rested horizontally.

But if we want to describe a state of mind which I hope you are now in – contemplative, stimulated and absorbing what I'm talking about – then we must picture the balance beam differently. We would say that all the souls sitting here – or at least some of the souls sitting here – are shifted into a region where certain spiritual beings raise one side of the balance beam. In the physical world, when a beam moves because of an imbalance, we say that it drops, but in the spiritual world we say that the beam rises. When someone is in a state of contemplation, he shifts to a different spiritual region, and ahrimanic beings there raise the beam away from Libra and towards Virgo (see 'blue' in Figure).

So when someone is contemplating, it means that he takes advantage of his situation as a human being in the entire cosmos, exploiting those forces within which he oscillates, in order to shift into a spiritual region where a condition of balance once again holds sway. You start to contemplate, and while you are actively doing this, your spiritual space – if I can call it that – shifts to a region where a battle takes place, and then subsides. The beings here on the left fight against the beings on the right, and vice versa. But once you have achieved a state of contemplation, the battle is over, and peace is restored. This peace signifies that certain ahrimanicly oriented beings have the upper hand, like when a tilted balance beam comes to rest, no longer oscillating because something is pulling at it. That would be the reality corresponding to contemplation, to thinking actively.

In normal sensory existence, what we call thinking is only maya,

an illusion. You have to describe cosmically what thinking really is, asking about the person's whole situation within the cosmos. And the answer you get about the person's cosmic situation reveals both what certain spiritual beings are doing and what contemplative thinking is. So you see that it is basically an illusion if we describe thinking as we do in normal life, because in reality we find ourselves in a certain region in which thoughts take place in our 'thinking space' through the fact that certain ahrimanicly inclined beings have tilted the balance beam to one side. That is what really happens.

Consider another event in human soul-spiritual life; we do something, not charging aimlessly around, but acting intentionally, an action filled with thought. How this is described in ordinary life is also a mere illusion, because when we are acting, we again shift into a specific cosmic region. But in this region there are certain luciferically inclined beings who raise the balance beam from its state of rest in the other direction, which we can picture with this arrow (see 'red' in Figure). So when we are acting intentionally, really willing our deeds, we are oriented in a region of the cosmos where the balance beam is held by certain luciferic beings. Now the state of rest is gone because we have shifted to a region where these luciferic beings begin to make the balance beam tremble, and we are transported into a kind of battle that takes place in the cosmos. Within our will the luciferic beings begin to fight against the ahrimanic beings, and this volatile situation expresses itself as the rocking of the balance beam. So what is called will in everyday language is also only maya, and is correctly described by saying that when we will something we are in a region where luciferic beings have raised the balance beam. We find exactly the region where the state of rest begins to change into rhythmical movement, and raising the beam takes place without our involvement.

I have mentioned in the first of my mystery dramas – of course in dramatic form – that when we think or feel soul-spiritually, we should not have the idea that this only happens within us, because

cosmic forces are also set in motion. This was expressed pictorially in a scene in which Capesius and Strader do something, and at the same time great cosmic events take place. They do not happen in the sensory world but in the super-sensible, so one can only make them perceivable in the sensory world in the way it is done in the drama. All the same, it is quite clearly expressed in the play that human action as we normally describe it, is only a reflection of reality, and when one thinks or wills the slightest thing in one's soul, significant events happen in the cosmos. We can never think or will something without shifting ourselves into regions where spiritual battles are taking place, or spiritual battles are subsiding, or spiritual battles have already been fought and we move into the outcome of these struggles, and so on.

What I have just described to you is present in the human soul-spiritual being, only it is hidden in the life we lead between birth and death; but it is the truth in the spiritual world. Recently I have spoken in other contexts about how modern man, behaving intellectually as is the custom today, really lives in hallucinations. Basically, the ideas we form about thinking, feeling and willing are hallucinations, and the reality that lies behind them is what we can illustrate pictorially in the way I have just done.

So what we have just described lies behind our soul-spiritual events, and reveals itself to us as a reflection, appearing as thinking, feeling and willing. And as soon as we consider the human being as he really is soul-spiritually, the concept of development, of evolution, becomes inapplicable.

For example, it would be complete nonsense to say that the human being becomes reasonable at a certain age, prior to which he is given over to a raging will, and that the one develops from the other. In spiritual regions nothing develops in this way; we can only say of the child that he thinks, feels and wills differently from an old man; that the child is shifted into a different spiritual region where the battles between the various beings take place in other ways. In spiritual regions, development, as we described it yesterday, does not take

place. There we understand the past as a picture of battles, of relationships, of the changing circumstances of the spiritual beings that we look for behind the higher hierarchies. When we speak about the present there is a different picture of the interplay of the hierarchies, and there is yet another picture when we talk about the future. As we regard the past, present and future, so accordingly do we see different pictures in the relationships between the various beings of the hierarchies. And it would be absurd to suggest that the picture of the future battles develops out the picture of the past battles. These things belonging to the region of the spirit are in a certain relationship of juxtaposition, not one after the other. For this reason we cannot speak of development, only of spiritual perspective, as I have already told you in respect of other matters. What we can say is that when we consider the human being as a soul-spiritual being, then it makes no sense to speak of him first as a child who goes through the change of teeth, then puberty, and so on. So what appears as evolution, as development, in the region of the soul-bodily, cannot be spoken of as evolution when it is to do with the soul-spiritual. Instead it should be understood as transition from one picture to another within the changing relationships of the beings of the higher hierarchies.

If you fail to bring into consideration the connections between what I explained yesterday and today then you will never really understand the relationship between the temporal and the eternal.

I have already explained how the human being, as a soul-bodily being, is placed in temporal development in such a way that he needs to become an old man before he can first begin to understand what happened to him as a child. This has everything to do with the concept of evolution. But as a soul-spiritual being, we must recognize that the human being is not placed within evolution, that the concept of time as we know it in outer sensory life is totally inapplicable there, and that we make a mistake when we speak of the human soul-spiritual being and bring time into the sphere of the higher hierarchies. There, everything is eternal and things do not

happen in time, only in perspectives within which we see battles and changing relationships. The concept of time is inapplicable to the changing relationships in the higher hierarchies, and if we do use it, then we are only using it to make an illustration of the essential being of these hierarchies. Hence you can follow in my *Outline of Occult Science* how carefully I suggest that what appears to be temporal must be presented in picture form. For example, where I speak about the stages of Old Saturn and Old Sun, I draw attention very clearly to the fact that the concept of time is only used pictorially to describe what preceded the Old Sun period and even into the first half of the Old Sun period itself. You can check all this in *Occult Science* where these apparently minor details in my book about spiritual science are of tremendous importance, because precisely in these details lies the basis for an understanding of the difference between what is temporal transitoriness and what endures eternally.

If you think about what I have just said, then you will see that yesterday I tried to describe the being of man purely in time. The concept of time played a really major role there, because it depends on time whether someone has gained a certain understanding by living through to old age, or not if he is still in childhood. Yesterday when we described what forms the basis of the soul-bodily being of mankind in the light of the spirit, it was based firmly on the concept of time. Today I have described what forms the basis of the soul-spiritual being which can only be portrayed by describing it in the sphere of eternity, in which – and this is rather difficult – the concept of time is completely inapplicable.

In this respect our being is indeed split in two, and insofar as we do develop through our lives, we do so on the one hand, by waiting calmly and patiently until we are mature enough in soul and body to understand something, while on the other hand we remain without development in the sphere of eternity, where to a certain extent we gaze simultaneously at our childhood in one region, and at our dotage in another. Here on earth, mankind lives in such a way that

what happens in the sphere of eternity rays down into what happens in the temporal sphere, and vice versa, both being mixed up with each other.

The task of initiation wisdom is to separate what is mixed up, because only by being held apart can it be understood. Initiation wisdom has always called what is in the sphere of eternity – Above, and what is in the sphere of transitoriness – Below. But as the human being lives here on earth, he views a mixture of Above and Below, and can never come to an understanding of his own being when he sees it mixed up in this way. He can only understand himself when he understands how to separate what is mixed up.

So you can appreciate why the point of view that ordinary life provides makes it impossible to grasp in normal consciousness how things are the way I described them yesterday and today. Someone basing things on normal consciousness might say: "Yesterday, you outlined something about mankind that we can't see, that isn't reality at all, because people don't develop the way you described; there are many people who are quite mature in their youth", and so on. But this is an objection based on a deception, since reality is as I described it, and people today slip into dualism because they do not see what is Below as mobile and fluid in the way I presented it yesterday. The normal view is to look at a person as he stands before us, while the initiate considers the course of events that take place between birth and death and sees the human being in flux, taking the rigidity of what is Below and bringing it into flowing movement.

On the other hand, when an initiate considers the fluidity of thinking, feeling and willing, he brings this movement to a halt, and what is bound to the physical body apparently happening in time, he views in the sphere of eternity, the region of spiritual juxtaposition.

People strive towards initiation wisdom, and openly admit that the perceivable environment is maya, a great deception, an illusion. But when it gets serious, then they don't accept it, and would rather describe the region Above with the same idea of maya that they use for the region Below. One should make beautiful schematic drawings

based on the ideas of maya, and move about the spiritual world with them, up or down, above or below consciousness. People say to me: "Yes, but you're not describing things so that I can understand". But behind this lies "You challenge me with ideas and thoughts that are different from the ones in maya; you challenge me to come to grips with ideas which are in the sphere of reality."

As another objection, someone might say: "Yes, but in the end, what concerns me in all this is what happens here below! If we just use the concept of time seriously in relation to human development, or we gaze out from life into the sphere of eternity, then one can get by quite well, thank you very much". You could say this if you remained in maya, and if you formed concepts from what is all mixed up; and yes, you can survive, you can of course continue to live albeit asleep by remaining only in the sphere of eternity.

But here my first point is this. If you form concepts like these, which are sharp and which can stand up to modern scholarship, then you can just about live with them, but really only just live. What you cannot do with concepts like these is die. Nobody can die with concepts like these. And as soon as one touches upon this mystery, the full import of spiritual scientific knowledge begins to dawn on one, because concepts which are formed without initiation knowledge lead after death into an unlawful ahrimanic region. And if you spurn forming concepts like those in initiation wisdom, then after death you will not arrive in the region of humanity to which you are really predestined.

In former times higher spiritual beings taught those people with an atavistic clairvoyant predisposition the concepts of initiation in supersensible ways. In those days, and essentially up until the year 333 after the Mystery of Golgotha, there was a kind of supersensible instruction available to people, which made them not only fit for life, but also fit for death. However, since that time the human being has had to prepare his soul, through his own effort here on earth, with concepts so that he can cross the threshold of death in the right way.

For initiation wisdom there is nothing more frivolous than the

comment: "Well, we can wait until we enter the region after death, then we'll see what's there". The answer to this is: "Whoever waits, sins against life", because you would be utterly terrified if, *per impossibile*, an initiate showed you what deformed creatures you would be if, throughout your life between death and rebirth, you had had the same attitude and said: "I'll wait until I'm born on earth to see what kind of being is clothed with flesh and blood". There, higher beings take care of you, and because of their benevolent influence, you cannot avoid preparing for yourself those forces which before your birth protect you from becoming a mis-begotten creature. And those beings that teach us say: "This spiritual life between death and new birth is not merely here for our region, it is also here in order for the region Below to be lawfully prepared so that finely formed people can come into being there, and not mis-begotten creatures."

Likewise life here on earth is not simply for the earth, but is here so that a person can die in the correct human way. And by adopting concepts from the higher region the human being can prepare his lower nature for this so that he does not enter an inappropriate ahrimanic region. There are of course appropriate ahrimanic regions, but those that are not in accordance with one's humanity would be inappropriate.

That is the first point. The second point is this. If you disregard the sphere of eternity, you can just about survive as an individual person – although in reality nobody can live in isolation – but you would not be able to live within the human social order which is led and directed by beings of the higher hierarchies. When you enter into even the most trivial relationship with another person – and our whole life consists of inter-personal relationships – and if what streams into this relationship does not flow from a consciousness of what lies in the spiritual sphere of eternity, then you ruin social integrity, and you contribute to catastrophic manifestations of destruction on the planet. In addition, any social or political point of view that does not stem from the spirit, will also work in this

destructive way. Only a point of view that reckons with the sphere of eternity, that is alive to what is becoming, can be effective in political, social, and especially in inter-personal life. This is the great serious truth which must increasingly confront humanity through initiation wisdom. And the signs of the times confirm this, that those days up to 333AD are long past, when higher beings supersensibly taught a humanity that did not need to participate consciously, because it could be educated mostly in sleep or in dimmed consciousness. But today people can only receive what they need so much by experiencing it person to person within humanity itself. People must simply put aside that arrogance which lets them say they can always form their own opinions. In the sphere of transitoriness we should recognise that the old have something to say to the young which only the old can tell them. If we understand this, then why should we not also understand that there is an initiation wisdom which we take in inter-personally? This is a kind of leaven of the social life which must develop in the future, so that at any moment – we are speaking of the sphere of time here – if someone cannot recognise what he needs, then he will receive it from others.

Yesterday I told you that our individual development in time makes it unnecessary for us to accept things merely by believing in authority; instead when we form an idea we can have it as a kind of conviction that flows from one's own inner being. I have emphasized in a number of my books that belief in authority has no place in spiritual science. But it also needs to be clearly understood by all who are really grounded in spiritual science that someone cannot be initiated at any time of life simply by blowing his own trumpet and following his own convictions as is the fashion today. If that were the case people could draw up all manner of programmes that they believed in, that could rule the world, but which could never deliver the kind of wisdom that really flows into the life and workings of the world which increasingly need initiation knowledge.

In past times initiation was a kind of thinking that was given to humanity. But in the future people must use their own willpower to

turn towards what comes into the world through initiation, even though this counters many subconscious desires. It is very difficult for people to find the right way to summon up the required degree of seriousness to engage with everything that I have been talking about.

It is becoming really hard to tell modern human beings how much goodwill they must have, because they often think that this goodwill is actually rather heartless. Whoever correctly penetrates the meaning of spiritual science knows that as we move towards the future, there is no alternative to the study of initiation wisdom for forming the soul substance that enables us to pass through the gate of death in the right manner, and which also allows us to stand properly within the social life of humanity. One can live into this, but then comes the contradictory thought: "Here's someone in whose life there are people whom he loves for one reason or another, but they do not want to know anything about this great requirement of our time to turn towards the spiritual life. When he wishes that these people should also attain salvation, it seems to him heartless if the whole truth is spelled out".

But whoever really has goodwill towards these things knows that it is not goodwill at all to close one's eyes and say: "Oh well, although they don't want to know anything about the spiritual life, they can attain salvation anyway". Instead one should say: "Every effort should be made to bring the spiritual life to the earth". It is not about giving in to the thought which is so closely connected with our own wishes for dealing with those who don't want to know anything about spiritual life. Rather we should positively strive towards dedicating ourselves with goodwill to the spiritual life, attempting to bring it into the world so that people can be – if I might use the expression – brought to blessedness.

Behind what is often called a loving attitude, lies hidden not only superficiality, but also a misjudgment of the whole situation. Today if someone speaks out of initiation wisdom, he does so not to teach people theoretical knowledge, but with a warm heart, out of love of humanity, because he knows how much the signs of the times

indicate that the next great task is to bring spiritual life to the soul, and to incorporate it into human life so that the spirit draws near to the soul. But it is also necessary to courageously face up to the challenge of humanity's development in time. The views from Above and from Below which must be brought into the open today and clearly understood, if at all possible also need to be incorporated in the human soul.

If life is looked at as it is today – in a prejudiced and illusionary way – then one is not speaking about the whole of life but only about a tiny part of it. I tested this in the following way. I know the various biographies of Goethe, which provide information about many of the things that Goethe did, what he was motivated by, considered, and thought about, between his birth and his death. But as soon as Goethe's soul passed through the gate of death, what is described in these biographies with their illusionary point of view, has not the slightest significance for the region which the soul enters after death, and constitutes another mixing up of the sphere of eternity with the sphere of transitoriness. It is indeed transitory when, through a new birth, the human being again steps into existence,

Everything that is recorded about life between birth and death in an illusionary biography based on an illusionary world view is of no use for the sphere which one enters through the gate of death. What matters is only the question: "How has the soul spoken to the cosmos?" Whatever somebody said to his neighbour, even if it was the most beautiful thing on earth, if it did not flow from spiritual knowledge, then it was not spoken to the cosmos.

However, what Goethe lived through was spoken to the cosmos, when one considers his life described in seven-year periods. How Goethe changed from one seven year period to the next! How remarkable was that great change in his life which happened at the end of a seven-year period when he went to Italy, or at least decided to go there! Whatever happens from one seven-year period to the next, beneath the sphere which forms normal biographies, this is what speaks to the cosmos; and something can be done with this

once the human soul has passed through the gate of death. What Goethe said that was influenced by beings of the sphere of eternity, described as I have been doing today, this too has a connection to the sphere that one enters after death. Picture to yourselves Goethe's life from the point of view of yesterday's consideration of successive seven-year periods – what he felt when he wrote maxims above particular chapters of his works, such as "What youth desires, age receives in abundance". Looking at Goethe's life from the point of view of transitoriness, of evolution, if you run across words like these used as a motto above that one chapter, and you meet these words with knowledge of spiritual science, then to a certain extent you will have encountered the eternal Goethe. And if again with a spiritual scientific attitude, you come across something that Goethe said, resounding with what flows from the sphere of eternity where the hierarchies have their interplay, there too is the eternal Goethe. By accepting initiation wisdom, the task that accrues to humanity from now onwards is to get to know not just what is temporal in the world but also what is eternal; this can only be learned by turning to spiritual science. What in former times was freely offered, must be seen by modern humanity in the light of what approaches us from modern initiation wisdom.

Within the Catholic church today there is something that acts like a red rag to a certain kind of being. When the type of Catholic, who these days might often consider himself to be true-blue, chooses some world-view to twit, it is the doctrine of emanation. Any interpretation of the universe based on emanation is condemned – perhaps for himself personally a little less so – but certainly for those faithful little lambs to whom he is speaking or writing. All that's needed is to be able to attach the description "emanating" to any philosophy! According to dyed-in-the-wool Catholics, the doctrine of emanation is opposed to creationism, the philosophy of creation out of nothing. So here we have, in a kind of dualistic way, on one side the philosophy of emanation acting like a red rag, and on the other side creationism, the philosophy of creation from nothing.

Creationism is accepted and the philosophy of emanation is rejected.

Now the doctrine of emanation became known in Western culture indirectly through the Gnosis. However, the manner in which it became known in the West – the underlying literature has been largely destroyed – means that the doctrine of emanation has become distorted, because within Catholicism only its distortion is known, which gives rise to great misunderstanding. Because what one knows as the doctrine of emanation – the outcome of one eon from another, where the less perfect always stems from the more perfect, which is usually described exoterically as the Gnosis – is in fact already a distortion. It points back to a completely different world view, particularly to ancient times when it was possible for spiritual teachers to instruct mankind directly out of the supersensible. The doctrine of emanation – although a corruption – points back to a wisdom that in its old form referred to the sphere of eternity, to what is Above. As such, one can to a certain extent defend emanation, not in the corrupt form that we know, but in the form where only a perspective within time is described and not from the point of view of true evolution. But if it cannot speak about real evolution, then neither can it speak about creation from nothing, because that too is a kind of evolution, albeit an extreme case. The idea that something stems from something else – as we have discussed today – is inappropriate for describing the sphere of eternity which consists of interrelationships between spiritual beings.

However, if we turn again to the sphere of transitoriness, then we can indeed speak about evolution, even about this extreme case, which basically has been implicit in much of what I have been speaking about these past few days. For when we say that present-day ideals are the seed of the future, and that present-day realities are the fruit of the past, isn't that a continuous coming into being from what does not exist in the world? Rightly understood, this leads us to true, uncorrupted, creationism. The demand that goes out to humanity today is this: To understand in the correct light what was meant by the doctrine of emanation, and to apply it to the soul-

spiritual world; and to rightly understand what is meant by true, uncorrupted, creationism, applying it, not to the creator, but to the created, to the soul-bodily. The salvation and resolution of this philosophy lies not in the nebulous confusion of dualism, but in recognising the duality and seeing through it, and by viewing correctly the spheres of eternity and of transitoriness, and being able to separate them. Then we will be able to say that in beholding reality as it exists before us, we see both a reflection and at the same time an effect; a reflection because it belongs to the sphere of transitoriness and is ruled by evolution, and an effect because it belongs to the sphere of eternity and is ruled by what we acquire when we comprehend the soul-spiritual life as described today. It is not correct to say that creationism is right and emanation is wrong, nor that emanation is right and creationism wrong, but that both are necessary factors for a true understanding of the totality of life. Overcoming dualism cannot be brought about theoretically, only by life itself. If you seek a resolution of what is Above with what is Below, of the sphere of transitoriness with the sphere of eternity, and look for it theoretically in concepts, thoughts, and ideas, then you will never manage it, you will arrive at a confused philosophy, because you would be seeking with the intellect what should really be sought in life itself.

In life one can look for the truth only when one knows that one has to set one's gaze both in the sphere of eternity, to recognise there what does not otherwise appear in outer reality, and then to consider all human and other beings in the sphere of transitoriness, in a way that actually contradicts outer reality. Armed with both of these, when one comes upon something real, it begins to flow as one experiences reality as alive, as living seeing, arising from the combination of effect in the sphere of eternity and reflection in the sphere of transitoriness. This is the way to grasp reality, if one does not want to hold a theoretical worldview that only lives in concepts and ideas. One can grasp it if one is willing to adopt two worldviews, one for the realm of the soul-spiritual and the other for

the realm of the soul-bodily, and in the living interplay of the two, not in a theory, one will have something that nourishes and stimulates life. Only in this way can we escape from dualism.

This is the challenge that faces humanity today. It has nothing to do with founders of religions appearing and teaching humanity about spiritualism; nor does it depend on founders of learned sects appearing and teaching humanity about materialism. But it does depend on us viewing matter as the material of evolution, that spirit is not matter and should be understood spiritually in the sphere of eternity, and that reality should be viewed as both of these. What must flow into a future world view is matter illuminated by the spirit, and the spirit substantiated by matter. It does not depend on philosophers appearing who offer mankind definitions of truth, or who offer definitions that in theory create a so-called monadic consistency, as the academics teach. But it does depend on recognising the duality between truth and knowledge, and actively looking for the relationship between these two in life itself, leading to a living epistemology, not a theoretical one.

It is not truth or knowledge, but truth and knowledge – knowledge borne by the significance of truth, itself illuminated by the light of knowledge – recognising the human being himself as a duality in the world who, in his life and in his becoming, can only surmount what as duality must be surmounted. The future task of humanity is not Kantianism which believes that appearances in the outer world are not the “thing-in-itself”, but should be to achieve truth and knowledge in the intellectual sphere too; and that means recognising that what surrounds us is indeed maya; but it is maya because of the way we are placed in the world, and as long as we appear this way, we are a duality. We create maya by our being placed in this way, and we overcome it, not in some idea or theory, but in life itself by bringing our own selves to life.

This is of course contained in my booklet *Truth and Knowledge*. It also appears in my book *The Philosophy of Freedom*, which in a few days' time will appear in a new edition that you can get here. I have

made some additions to it, not altering the original text, but considerably enlarging many of the notes.

In conclusion therefore, what is important is to understand the signs of the times, and from them to nurture the spiritual life in the various areas of human endeavour.

Time and *Humboldt's Gift*

Andrew Welburn

A Jewish Lord Byron Meets the Gangsters of Chicago

It is not every day that a Nobel Prize-winning novelist writes a book in which the hero is striving to find his way, amid the ups-and-downs of his private life and all the scramble of a modern big city, to an understanding of Anthroposophy. Saul Bellow came late in life to the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, and doubtless (as is perhaps the general rule) won the coveted international prize for *Humboldt's Gift* (1975)¹ as much on the strength of what preceded it as on its special anthroposophical theme. Already by then he had produced a whole series of brilliantly written novels which, while tinged with deeper shades, essentially highlighted the chaos, comedy and sheer human resilience of modern city life. The character of these works, combined with other unusual features, such as that very few books which mention Anthroposophy have had advance extracts featured in *Playboy*, may probably have contributed to a fairly widespread impression that Steiner's role in the novel is somewhat incidental to the vivacious presences of gangsters, impresarios, predatory ladies, lawyers and bankrupts that make up the usual world of a Bellow extravaganza. But closer reading reveals that the truth is just the reverse, that the impact of Anthroposophy has actually enabled Bellow to push forward his imaginative development in profound new ways, and is integral to the whole design of the book. Above all, it enabled him to reach a deeper understanding of the modern situation in relation to time and new potential in the time-of-a-novel, or narrative-artistic technique.

The inner brilliance, the sense of on-looker helplessness and the funds of self-deception which characterise modern Western

¹ References are to page-numbers of the Penguin edition (Harmondsworth 1976).

consciousness (its splendid and suspended isolation, or "crow's nest from which the modern autonomous person keeps watch", p.169) had naturally been explored in earlier Bellow novels. Indeed in *Herzog* (1964), the hero seems on the brink of inner breakdown as he struggles to be conscious of all the issues that face the world, and takes to dramatising in his head the hysterical stream of letters, of concern, protest and outrage, that would be necessary even to set about putting it all to rights. The sheer pressure of it reaches existential proportions, seeming to call in question his very identity, his existence as a real force in the world. Despite the shrill comedy, Bellow does not mean us to shirk this: the retreat from it into the country of the similarly Jewish genius Humboldt in the later novel leads only to a sort of imploding, destructive to himself and others. One of Bellow's great challenges is to show that this otherwise suppressed but all-too-widespread hysteria can actually be resolved and become a rite of passage, leading ... well, somewhere – while acknowledging that we all too easily dig ourselves into what another character in the book will ironically call our "right to an identity-problem" (p.368). *Where* we go beyond that is, of course, the matter of our freedom that we cannot, alas, prudently know in advance. That is why most people persuade themselves not to go further.

Bellow is a richly appreciative insider to all the intense brilliance especially of the Jewish-intellectual culture in America in which such issues (and poses) loom large (and where, as an insider, he can also smile at the bizarreness of names like Kermit Bloomgarden while people "couldn't even remember a simple name like Crawley": pp.342; 214).² There certainly the crisis of modern consciousness and modern identity is played out in its most crucial form in his novels. The question comes increasingly to be formulated as that of the mere ideas, abstractions by which we try to live but have no force of reality behind them. In modern life even art, he observes, is

² Bellow was actually born in Québec in 1915, of immigrant Russian Jewish parents. He died in April 2005.

conceptual, not a winged Victory but a few indicative metal struts, "only a token, a reminder, only the *idea* of a work of art" (p.214). Another of his heroes, in *The Dean's December* (1982), is mocked by the press for (supposedly) saying that poetry might make a difference to the inner cities. But Bellow sees that poetry once bridged the material world and our own creative resources, was once a real power just as are Boeing jets or IBM computers now – perhaps, interestingly, that meant the material world has changed as well as the mental. Now, however, poetry cannot assume reality – now it is only the agony of the artist (p.154). From his earliest work, such as *Henderson the Rain King* (1959) he had portrayed the search for that original, for that in the widest sense "poetic"-creative power and directness, as when its central character returns home from Africa clutching a lion cub straight from the jungle. But Bellow's gauche pig-farming American throwing himself, in his hunger for the old magic of empathy, at native African royalty, served less as a realistic bridge than to highlight the incongruities in modern man's persistent need to lunge into that existential gap which opens on the hither side of the contemporary all-too-conscious world. It is a brilliant gesture: but Bellow would go on to seek deeper answers than the "riven" vision of humanity dangling, in one of his great metaphors, between the contradictions of modern life.

These issues of primal need *versus* modern self-estrangement are of course central strains in Romantic poetry and art – as originally expressed in the return-to-nature of Wordsworth or Thoreau, the bursting visions of a Blake or Shelley (cf. "to burst from the fatal sufficiency of consciousness", p.403), or Coleridge's philosophy denouncing the solipsistic "passive mind". The Yale professor Harold Bloom, at once the *doyen* and the *bête-noire* of modern American literary criticism, had long emphasised the continuity between the great Romantic poets and the voices of a Wallace Stevens or a Hart Crane, with their successors in more recent times

in the USA.³ The Romantics had urged that every individual could be a force – everyone, that is, if they could be put in touch with authentic nature either of the human or landscape variety, if they could shake off the “lethargy of custom”, the “mind forg’d manacles”, or the assumptions of passive onlooker-consciousness. Twentieth-century America once again represented a culture that believed-and-hoped something for all individuals (a view long compromised in Europe and England). Yet the Romantic remedies faced massive new challenges in the form of material success and cynicism; to these people desperately cling, hesitant to take risks so as to find out what they really want from life, yet feel at the end of it all short-changed. As a result humanity seems to “dangle”, or lurches grotesquely between extremes, trying to kidnap the answer to its dilemma from the enchanted jungle, yet perhaps determinedly looking anywhere but where the answer lies: our hollow safety is purchased at the price of being “trained to resist what everyone is born knowing” (p.91).

In this situation Bellow must have keenly felt the relevance of Owen Barfield’s *Romanticism Comes of Age*,⁴ and it is perhaps also

³ Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company* (Cornell and London 1971) – still perhaps the best single critical reading of the Romantics; see e.g. pp.xxv, 462-3, and the many American poetic quotations at chapter heads; also many passages in Bloom’s later work: see especially perhaps *The Ringers in the Tower*. There may be specific connections: Bloom’s later writings refer often to “Prophets of Sensibility”, and Bellow associates the term with Humboldt: “He was a pioneer in the use of this word. Sensibility later made it big ...” (p.5). Bloom in turn edited a volume on *Saul Bellow: Modern Judgments* (1986).

⁴ (London 1944; rev. ed. 1966). *Humboldt’s Gift* is peppered with phrases which seem designed to hint to the reader at Bellow’s direct debt to Barfield, who is perhaps present in the disguise of Dick Durnwald, the cultured friend of the narrator “whom I admired and even adored ... the only man [in Chicago] with whom I exchanged ideas” (p.62). Barfieldian expressions are for instance “portmanteau meaning” (id.), or the (originally Blakean) allusion to opposition as true friendship (p.64), both drawn from Barfield’s *Poetic Diction*. The story makes Durnwald’s introducing of Charlie to Rudolf Steiner a joke suggestion (p.109), perhaps to avoid too close an autobiographical correspondence?

why Barfield’s argument in general has made, relatively speaking, so deep an impact in America. The issue is current in creative life. Barfield offers an overwhelmingly positive evaluation of the Romantic urge, while at the same time he does not hold back from outspoken criticism of Romanticism’s failures and shortcomings – especially its lack, as he sees it, of historical understanding. Awaken individuals, many Romantics had naively assumed, and revolutionary change would simply come about of itself. He also puts a powerful case for the inner affinity between Romanticism and Anthroposophy, with the proviso that Steiner’s thought had “come of age” – specifically, it had developed a far deeper insight into the significance of history, of development, of time.⁵

Barfield took up Rudolf Steiner’s idea of the evolution of consciousness in precisely this context. We cannot solve the problems of today by going back to archaic ways, to a mythic Africa or an ancient East. What we can do is realise our human connection with something that lives there, even though we have inwardly moved on, developing other aspects and faculties of mind. In fact, we do not need to go to “far away” or far back (even if time-travel were possible or “darkest Africa” were really a place on a map) for the very reason that we can place ourselves imaginatively on a sort of inner trajectory. It must be imagined that it includes our own mental attitudes and viewpoint, located at a point somewhere between the archaic, less individualised consciousness from which ours evolved, and the potential for enriching and developing ours which we can conceive and project for the future. (We can also estimate more realistically the nature of those other stages, instead of forcing them into the frame of what we need them to be as compensation for our present discontents.) Rudolf Steiner goes to considerable lengths to help us estimate our place within an understanding of the evolution of consciousness, with the very

⁵ See especially the chapter on “The Time-Philosophy of Rudolf Steiner”: pp.184 - 204 in the 1966 edition.

purpose of freeing us from the kind of conflicts and contradictions which we otherwise find within ourselves. Lack of such knowledge paralyses so much of modern effort. Rather than making us feel the need to escape from our all-too-demanding position in the unfolding of things, it enables us to give it meaning, both in what it can give us and what it requires we leave behind; instead of making the magical affinity with the deeper substrate of things seem tantalisingly out-of-reach, we find it within us still as a spiritual deposit, an inner kinship, which we can receive in our understanding as an enriching gift from the past, without feeling that we have somehow to go back on modern life.

Having thus come by a rather abstract and esoteric route to the notion of a gift from the past, it may be time to explain (at least in a summary fashion) that *Humboldt's Gift* is about the creative relationship that existed between the older poet Von Humboldt Fleisher and the story's teller, Charlie Citrine, himself a playwright (of sorts). Its title springs from the "gift" which the now dead poet has bequeathed to him after a long period of estrangement and his own mental deterioration, in the form of an outline sketch for a work which he deludedly believes will without question make Charlie's fortune. Complicating this plot is another imaginative sketch which the two writers concocted between them in their youth, while still "blood brothers", and which it turns out has been plagiarised to make a highly successful (money-making) film. Complicating it far more are the tangled personal and social relationships of the narrator's life, by turns sad, ridiculous and quirky, which fill the bulk of the book: the gangster he has offended, but who might relent in exchange for help with his wife's Ph.D. on Humboldt; the piously profound, damnation-fearing and pill-swallowing Demmie Vonghel whom he loved, but who died far away in a plane-crash, perhaps the deepest shock of Charlie's life; the beautiful, amused and scheming Renata who is a distraction or possibly a temptation; the friends, true and false, who intervene in his life, and of course the on-going litigation with Denise, the mother of his two little girls, which will

eventually lose him all his money and Renata with it; and many, many more.

But the "gift" actually is central: literally, in that we first really get to understand it at more-or-less dead-centre of the novel (p.234 out of 475 pp.), though we only find out what nonsense it is at the very end; but metaphorically in that Charlie must struggle to understand what it means to receive a gift from the past, in the valid, creative sense. This means understanding his relationship to Humboldt, and to the poetry that was truly great, though it was the Romanticism that had not "come of age" in Barfield's sense. Charlie's initial adoring response to *Harlequin Ballads* and to Humboldt personally is no good at all on this level. For Humboldt is up against that world of materialism and cynicism which has snatched reality from poetry and made of it the sole preserve of money, computers and jet-planes that pick you up in Chicago and drop you in New York, while all that there is beyond is the poet's agony and the idea of art. What could Humboldt do?

He threw himself into weakness and became a hero of wretchedness. He consented to the monopoly of power and interest held by money, politics, law, rationality, technology, because he couldn't find the next thing, the new thing, the necessary thing for poets to do. Instead he did a former thing ...

He exhibited himself as the idea of the artist:

Instead of being a poet he was merely the figure of a poet. He was enacting 'The Agony of the American Artist' (p.154).

He consumed himself in passionate jealousies, destroying his relationship to his wife Katherine, unleashing the drama on his friends, notably Citrine; he held court as prophetic madman, as if to

say, Look what "normal life" has done to "this poor kook" (id.).

Despite the Americanisms, we recognise here the grand Romantic impulse turned back on itself. Indeed, Humboldt is all but explicitly a new Lord Byron, albeit ironically put into very American clothing. Byron had already taken up the Romantic aspirations of his age while knowing their impotence to grapple with "reality"; he had instead portrayed them as the wanton illusions of those who would rather stay in their chains and dream of the far-off liberation; he too had done a former thing, evoking the aristocratic superiority of his stance while simultaneously dramatising himself as a lonely, burnt-out hero who had lived and suffered, who had transgressed every taboo, destroyed what he most loved, borne the guilt and risked lonely madness in his intense pursuit of ... of what? – well, meantime he presented himself in the role very effectively in every fashionable salon of Europe to great applause.⁶ Byron is an obvious link to the Jewish-American genius, and not only because his *Hebrew Melodies* (1815) had treated biblical themes in collaboration with a Jewish composer. Byron brilliantly updated and personalised the Bible's theme of exile. Moreover the huge success of Humboldt's *Ballads* echoes that of Byron's early poetic tales, soon followed by scandals; and Charlie's typically adoring response to the personality of Humboldt evokes the cult that still sways Byron's readers and biographers today, unrelentingly fascinated by his sex and psychology as much as by his poetry, a cult begun with complete calculation by the poet himself. Also Byronic is his destructive relationship with his wife Katherine which the novel traces, while often swaggering in his role of great lover: "I loved her, and destroyed her" (Byron, *Manfred*) is the line that once thrilled

⁶ Philip W. Martin, *Byron: A Poet before his Public* (Cambridge 1982) well exposes many of these sleights. He is a little too inclined to see in them a sort of fraud, whereas by dramatising them so transparently Byron is rather seeking to show what Romanticism is. His deep feeling for Romantic feeling and style is utterly authentic, as is his conviction that these will not carry forward the hopes with which others (the detested Wordsworth, for instance) have invested them.

generations of girls more used to novels that steered them prudently into the arms of a landed Mr. Knightley, and urged recoil from the very idea of a lover who in Jane Austen's words "had nothing to recommend him but himself" (American style: p.119). Byron constantly hints that he himself avenged the destruction he brought on his beloveds in duels (though it brought him little peace), etc., travestied in Humboldt's gun-waving pursuits. And a compliment to Byron is also surely the gruesomely humorous story of shipwreck and cannibalism which in the novel is plagiarised from Humboldt and Charlie to great box-office success, which cannot fail to remind Romantic readers of the famous cannibalistic episode in the shipwreck section (Canto II) of Byron's colossally ambivalent last masterpiece (finished or unfinished, Romantic or anti-Romantic?), *Don Juan*, told in a very similar spider-in-the-cup tone.

So in treating of Charlie's relation to his god of literature, Bellow is presenting, in a thoroughly contemporary American context, the question of where the Romantic urge can take us beyond the self-destructive, though brilliantly effective Byronic pose – the "former thing" into which Humboldt plunges. He is asking it in the way he learned from Barfield, a way which opens up the possibility that Romanticism need not reach an ambivalent dead-end, but instead can "come of age". Here then we have our first time-loop in the novel: post-Byronic Romanticism given a second chance to make sense in modern-day America, if only Charlie can clear his head, sort out his love-life and listen to Durnwald enough to ask the right question about Humboldt's (or any other) gift from the past. But that questioning, both in itself and *à propos* of the novel's implied answer, which naturally depends upon it, projects us into a larger, still more significant time-loop.

A "Man of Little Faith" in Search of the Grail

First, however, I have to tell you something about Charlie Citrine, the narrator. The name must be another little joke, for never was

there a narrator with less *citrus*, sharpness or tang, than he. Charlie "Saccharine" might be unfair as an alternative, but "Anodyne" would come to mind as fairly appropriate. If Humboldt persecuted him for playing the very game Humboldt started, Charlie will admit that "he had grounds, perhaps" (p.7); even when Renata absconds to run off with an undertaker, his anger dies within him as he takes a meditative walk, and soon he is thinking:

by brushing me off like this she had probably done me a service ... I should have married her long ago. I was a man of little faith, my hesitancy was insulting, and it was quite right that I should be left (p.413).

When Denise's lawyers are pressing legal advantage, he is smiling to himself at a thought about his life and the way that he has been "set straight" by these very experiences (p.218). Though oddly unworldly, he is far from unwilling to learn, and constantly recognises the mistakes he has made in life. Perhaps that is in the end why he can ask the right question, and receive Humboldt's real gift – the very opposite of the poet's ridiculous script, which is about (of all things) a repetition of a journey. The real gift is the Anthroposophy that is the "future thing" Humboldt could not reach, but is nevertheless the coming-of-age of what he lived and wrote.

Now there is a well-known older story that turns upon a man who goes naively through life, a little short on guiding faith and even "simplicity's companion", realising eventually that he has made many mistakes in life, and at the most crucial moment needing to ask the right question. That story was told most fully in the Grail-romance by Wolfram, the mediaeval German poet, but is also set by Wagner in his opera *Parsifal*, and takes numerous other forms. The pattern is recreated here, however, without doubt because Bellow learned from Steiner's basic books that as modern esoteric knowledge, Anthroposophy:-

can be characterised in terms belonging to a well-known symbol, and called the knowledge of the Grail. We read about the Grail in mediaeval romances and legends, and as we begin to understand its deeper significance we discover that it is a profound representation of the very kernel of meaning behind the new initiation-knowledge, founded upon the Mystery of Christ. The initiates of the new age may well be called "Grail-initiates": for the path to spiritual worlds whose first stages were described in a foregoing chapter of this book culminates in a "science of the Grail".⁷

Moreover, Parzival's naive, often misguided but ultimately educative path, Steiner explains, is the very model for modern man's spiritual quest. As modern individuals we have to be prepared to make mistakes, learn, and not expect to be given all the answers in advance – though we can and need to ask help on the way.

I will mention explicitly only a few of the themes and correspondences which suggest that Bellow had Steiner's Grail-interpretation in mind. Citrine's initial adoration of his poet-hero may be a transposition of Parzival's youthful bedazzlement by the shining knights who ride by, though for him to follow knighthood truly is as difficult to learn as is the way of creative life today; his aping of Humboldt's style and use of his character in his own play recall the theme of the Red Knight's armour in which Parzival fights ("the gift, from which subsequently was to come grief", *Parz.* III,150). Humboldt's abusive relationship with Katherine partly blamed on Charlie might resemble that of Jeschute by her husband after Parzival's thoughtless visit. The general shape of the novel, so markedly episodic, follows the same broad pattern of wide-ranging encounters with a succession of women, and with more combative villains/gangsters, etc. Despite his naivety, Parzival is brave enough

⁷ See Steiner, *Occult Science* (London 1962) p.305.

— and Charlie, certainly errant if not exactly a knight,⁸ stands for a life in the city with its confrontations and even violence (at least toward his much-prized car). “I’m a city boy”, he explains (p.475). However, on the whole litigation has become the approved form of jousting. When he was in Oxford in the early 1980’s, Saul Bellow exalted the quarrelsome abrasiveness of life in Chicago as the better alternative to the mere nostalgia he found so strong in literature from “old England”. And he was no friend to academic seclusion.⁹ It was crucial to him that the inner life should co-exist with a full-blooded involvement in the rough-and-tumble of humanity’s current predicaments and challenges.

Humboldt’s Romantic agony takes on a further dimension. This flashes out in occasional phrases. Humboldt is once “an anointed head”, in his poetic mad phase led away in chains almost a Christ-figure (p.153), elsewhere a sort of sacred relic, and the wasteland blooms around him (pp.5; 474-5). We may take him as the *roi pecheur*¹⁰ or wounded Anfortas, whose healing is only brought about through Parzival’s finding of the Grail. Charlie gradually takes hold of his equivalent mission: “[Humboldt’s] talent had gone bad. And

⁸ But of course he *is* — as a columnist misspells him, he is “a Chevrolet” [i.e. *chevalier*] of the French *légion d’honneur*! — p.252; like any true knight, he carries his ribbon with him (p.261).

⁹ Charlie says for instance: “I couldn’t see that Princeton was such a big deal as Humboldt made out ... it was a sanctuary, a zoo, a spa, with its own choochoo and elms and lovely green cages. It resembled another place I was later to visit as a tourist — a Serbian watering-place called Vrnatchka Banja. But maybe what Princeton was not counted for more ... it was not the routine job-world. If you could arrange to avoid that routine job-world, you were an intellectual or an artist. Too restless, tremorous, agitated, too mad to sit at a desk eight hours a day, you needed an institution — a higher institution” (pp.132-3).

¹⁰ The king who “fishes”, or who “bears sins”? Not literal fishing anyway (*Parz.* IX,491). Cf. L. Olschki, *The Grail Castle and its Mysteries* (Manchester 1966) pp.36-8. Anfortas when “in youth and power brought grief to all around him, [by] his desire for love beyond all restraint or bounds” (*Parz.* IX,472; and for hints of the story XII,616-9). This imbalance is symbolised in his subsequent wound in the groin, and dominance of Scorpio.

now I had to think what to do about talent in this day, in this age. How to prevent the leprosy of souls. Somehow it appeared to be up to me (p.135).” For Barfield’s understanding of Romanticism is a special instance of the perspective expressed by Steiner about the whole history of human consciousness. In primal ages, humanity still belonged to the spiritual-physical wholeness of things, and experienced the meaning of a situation, its spiritual dimension, instinctively. The world was then the “garment” of the divine; human beings lived and acted with a sense of being moved by greater forces, and in their less individualised state of consciousness it was still the cosmic intention, the *logos* of the whole, that came to expression. People lived in archaic times in the great rhythms of the cosmos and allowed them to shape their lives.

But the long-drawn-out process of individualisation, of grasping the ego, led inevitably to the suppression of that larger, cosmic awareness. Over millennia, humanity learned more and more to focus on their own perspective and their own intentions, treating the world increasingly as merely external, as material to be manipulated and controlled. It was not all loss: it would be wrong simply to think of humanity becoming more and more peripheral and isolated, though that is one side, for on another level each individual became an intimation of the God-like whole. Christianity, on the level of conscious evolution, had grasped the astonishing truth that God had ceased to be conceivable only in the cosmic terms, but that he had come to dwell in individuals, had himself taken the form of a man on earth and could be found in human beings (if they chose) as their highest self. If they did not so choose, of course, what remained was the experience of increasing separateness, mere materialism and “outness” (in Coleridge’s term) — along with almost unbelievable external power, scientific, technological, economic. Whether humanity can survive its acquisition of such God-like power without the openness to God which Christianity seeks to put back at the core of man’s spiritual and moral being perhaps remains to be seen. On that point Rudolf Steiner, moreover, has a further perspective to offer.

The kind of archaic larger consciousness of the spiritual in things is essentially suppressed, not destroyed, by the evolution of the ego. It often re-surfaces, in somewhat pathological ("atavistic") forms, out-of-step with modern self-consciousness and self-determination;¹¹ or, if we are prepared to renounce our ego-development through certain disciplines, we can still rekindle the old cosmic consciousness, at least in some degree. But, says Steiner, there is a much more important possibility for the future. The special contribution of Anthroposophy indeed consists in this: according to its teachings it will be possible for human beings gradually to develop their consciousness further, without losing their self-determination, so as to regain the larger spiritual immediacy that for a time had to be suppressed.¹² To do so prematurely endangers our selfhood, and leads to all sorts of temptations (and falls); but the Christ-mystery of the spiritual *cor cordium* within us will, as we develop, be able to open our perception once more directly to the spiritual worlds. This very modern path is what Steiner saw anticipated already in the imaginative symbolism of the stories of the Grail. And following Steiner's hint, the repertoire of narrative and situation from the Grail-story is what Bellow allowed to inspire him for his presentation of modern spiritual life in *Humboldt's Gift*.

The Grail is therefore not to be understood as the Christian mystery itself. All the Grail-stories centre on life strikingly outside the bounds of the Church, and indeed are riddled with the pagan symbolism that had once expressed an older, pre-conscious spiritual life – not only Celtic mythology, but also oriental (e.g. Zoroastrian) and magical-Hermetic motifs.¹³ Just as Romanticism could flunk the

¹¹ Note that Anfortas' wound, i.e. a result of forces out of proportion to humanity's development, is elaborately described as divinatory, responsive to the cosmos rather than earthly conditions (*Parz.* IX, 483; 489-90).

¹² For Anfortas as inner forces once harmonious but under changing conditions of man's evolution becoming distorted and pathological, see R. Steiner, *Mysteries of the East and Christianity* (London 1972) pp. 74-7.

¹³ See the collection of Steiner's lecture-material in *The Holy Grail: The Quest for the Renewal of the Mysteries* (London 2001). He stresses in particular the re-

challenge and turn instead to do a "former thing", so each of these sources could become a regressive and pathological force, the Grail-Castle turn into the strangely similar but destructive magic of Chastel Mervaille; but if the right question is asked of it, each can also become a sign of the future potential of humanity's spiritual evolution. All of which assumes, of course, that by Christianity we do not mean simply one more religion and dogma, but a new orientation and spiritual "impulse" within earthly history. Attaining one's own individual salvation is not the only horizon of such a Parzival-Christianity: and there is now abundant evidence that in original Christianity the attaining of spiritual autonomy was conceived in a much wider way, as a step toward participating in the greater, cosmic redemption-process that crucially needed our role as God's agents and ministers in transforming nature here below.¹⁴

All this may seem far from the wonderfully rough-and-tumble world of Bellow's Chicago. But what it means in terms of the novel is crucial to Bellow's imagination and relates its raw life directly to Charlie's anthroposophical musings.¹⁵ It is the justification of the narrator's openness, his willingness to see his mistakes, and to remain the "city boy" in the heart of modern life, that in all these things are the seeds of the future deepening and expanding of man's consciousness. The very temptations they represent, by exposing the "former thing" that destroys the talents of a Humboldt, are also part of the way forward, and the time-perspective which Charlie gains from his progressive understanding of Steiner is the true gift which

surfacing of ancient Egyptian wisdom (pp. 41-62). Extensive Hermetic initiation-themes in Wolfram were traced by H. Kahane and R. Kahane, *The Krater and the Grail: Hermetic Sources of the 'Parzival'* (Urbana 1965).

¹⁴ See the section "Ecological Christianity" in Welburn, *Mani, the Angel and the Column of Glory* (Edinburgh 1998) pp. 36-41.

¹⁵ Bellow actually gives a more technical account – Charlie's thoughts involve cosmic evolution (pp. 256ff), backward Exousiai (pp. 285ff), the stages of clairvoyance (pp. 383ff) and more. On these subjects the lecture-cycle *The Driving Force of Spiritual Powers* (Toronto 1972) seems to have affected Bellow profoundly.

can liberate us from the ironic repeated journey, the entrapment in suffering that is the literal, atavistic inheritance from the Humboldt-Anfortas of the past.

Of course, by the same token it would be the defeat of Bellow's own remarkable talent, if the novel became for one moment a "modern retelling of the Grail-saga". Himself a Grail-seeker like his Parzival, he has to question everything for its relevance to the way-forward, and shape his tale out of authentic modern life alone. Only in that totally free way can the Grail-motifs, just like those of Humboldt's Romanticism, be put to the test: to reveal imaginatively whether they justify Steiner's view of their significance for our contemporary, and indeed our future spiritual path. What belongs to former things will then fall away. And that is what, in his remarkable masterpiece, Bellow achieves.

We can somewhat playfully recognise many thematic and character-links easily enough. Kondwiramurs in Wolfram is Parzival's first amorous conquest – her name spells *conduire amour* because she introduces him to love, and she reappears at the end of the poem. However, by then love has moved on, a point strongly insisted on by Rudolf Steiner; only the longing for love remains.¹⁶ (Ah, perhaps if we could have the insight we gain from life already when we meet our first love ... ; that is a Grail theme, of course, since in the same way the Grail-wisdom can hardly be grasped except the retrospect of a life spent searching, as happens with Parzival.) Is it accidental that her equivalent (American style: Naomi Lutz, Charlie's first love) appears late in the novel to make an oddly similar point? Demmie Vonghel is of course not Charlie's mother, but a previous relationship. Yet her heart-sorrow and piety, and the

¹⁶ Steiner's comments are according to Walter Johannes Stein, *The Ninth Century: World History in the light of the Holy Grail* (latest ed. London 1991) p.267. Like many anthroposophists Saul Bellow, I suspect, read Walter Johannes Stein's extremely helpful book before he tackled the original Grail-poem, and would have been specially interested by this comment. It certainly suits Charlie and Naomi's tender but far-separated emotions.

news of her death far away, bring home to Charlie the existential pain she dramatises just as poignantly as does the news of Herzeloide's death (cf. the pun on "heart sorrow", *Herzeleide*, especially in Wagner). Possibly the idea of a mother-figure in the American-Jewish setting of the novel would have come loaded with too many elements of quite other and irrelevant mythologies. Dr. Scheldt is equivalent to Wagner's Gurnemanz or Grail-instructor, and his daughter Doris Scheldt to the Grail-bearer of the legend; George Swiebel a holistic Trevrizent (cf. *Parz.* IX,485); Pierre Thaxter a sort of Gawan or fellow-traveller in *The Ark* (magazine) of their spiritual adventure, and farer to other remote locales.

But the fullest realisation of a Grail-theme is to be found in the story of Kundrie/Renata, the woman who fascinatingly functions as both temptation and a stage in Charlie's understanding. It is through her that the time-dimension so central to the Grail-concept reaches out into Charlie's life, even beyond the concern for creativity and the healing of future souls which draw him to Anthroposophy. Renata is a beautiful and lovable woman, and her charms are certainly not lost on Charlie. But by now he is in the process of asking the type of "Grail"-question which brings into his most intimate life the time-dimension we have delineated. And it occurs to him that her beauty is not the specific kind of beauty of the present time. In older times indeed "classical" beauty was at home. Nowadays, however, beauty is something that emerges more from within, individually and uniquely. Perhaps because she identifies so closely with her beauty, she is hardly able to understand Charlie's thoughts along these lines, but like Humboldt, she actually enables him to grasp the very transformation that needs to take place in modern consciousness. In the end she leaves him because he has ideas like this. Charlie realises too that it is her ambivalence that drew him ("This glowing person ... wonderful to me because she was in the Biblical sense unclean, had made my life richer with the thrills of deviation and broken laws", p.420). Yet to go where temptation lies is the very Parzival-path to the future. In the wonderful show-down where

Renata vanishes and returns having married the undertaker, Flonzaley, the issue becomes literally one of life and death. "As a beautiful woman and still young," she says, rounding on Citrine: "You never asked me ... but I have my own beliefs. I believe in nature. When you're dead you're dead, and that's that. And that's what Flonzaley stands for. Dead is dead, and the man's trade is with stiffs, and I'm his wife now" (p.419). Renata is indeed nature in its transient and superb beauty, trying with all her many resources to live nature's amoral but immediate drives – of course, such a life must indeed marry Dr. Death! As Charlie distastefully divines, it is Flonzaley's deathly associations that give her a strange thrilling satisfaction. (But also to her, "Some of your ideas are spookier than his business".)

Bellow could easily have known the popular Grail scholarship of R.S. Loomis, who well shows how the ambiguous Kundrie *la sorcière* evolved from the personification of nature, now lushly beautiful, now wintry and dead. In Wagner she is an enchantress who somehow serves the Grail but is yet in league with Klingsor, able to appear as a beautiful seductress but liable finally to reveal the "loathly woman" underneath.¹⁷ Once indeed nature could be a path to the spirit, but now we must draw it from deeper within ourselves if we are to escape from the bondage of natural vision and death. The old external "magic" has dwindled into the self-evasion that lies even behind the apparent frankness of Renata's affirmation of death. "Plutonian" Flonzaley makes his living not so much from death as from our willingness to pay to have the burden of our mortality discretely lifted from us (the discretion, naturally, is listed as an extra

¹⁷ Loomis, *The Grail* (London 1963) pp.49-52. In the "Grail" context further thoughts suggest themselves. Is Renata's obscure linguistic and family background (her mother the "Senora" who seems oddly East-European, her "lost" father) a quizzical version of Kondrie's description in Wolfram as naturally knowing all languages Latin and barbarian (*Parz.* VI,312)? Renata *la sorcière* has quite literally conjured her identity out of her dubiously international background!

charge). His mortuary art of dressing the stiffs is Bellow's brilliant contemporary magic of Klingsor that permits us, in the illusion of modernity, to evade death's ravages. We should not underestimate the forces ranged behind him. Such magic or self-evasion is big business and a driving force in modern civilisation, the necessary complement to Renata's naturalism ("In a way it's like my personal situation," she admits, p.420). Key to it is the keeping of mental life in its separate compartments, because otherwise the enmity behind people's gratitude still shows through. What she cannot cope with is Charlie's anthroposophical way of trying to put everything together (p.354) – in so doing, however, the asking of the "Grail-question" essentially consists.

The Time of Meditation and the Time of Ennui

Thus although it is not a retelling of the Grail-story, the symbols, characters and situations of the legend cast significant light on the novel's deeper meaning, and especially on its artistic construction. For we may note that in the legends the Grail cannot be found in ordinary time and space. The Grail-castle ceases to be such if we are not at the right stage of development to grasp its potential, so that our inner time-line must meet outer circumstances to find it. The quest is a journey in time therefore, as well as space – space and time thereby cease to be their usual separate selves, so that as Wagner's Gurnemanz serenely remarks: "Here time becomes space (*die Zeit wird hier zum Raum*)."

Saul Bellow's novel likewise creates its "Grail-dimension" by opening up our understanding of narrative to a sort of anthroposophical space-time. Its sophisticated narrative may actually be the most important technical-artistic achievement of the book.

Mere successive time cannot bring us to the Grail. What we encounter from moment to moment can only be external events in meaningless profusion, devoid of inner significance. Charlie's ambition to write a history of boredom does not impress Renata, but

it certainly pinpoints one central aspect of the modern malaise. A world-picture based on outer impressions alone lacks the human centre, and fails to engage with human values. The huge edifice of scientific thought has made a humanly meaningless universe:

The history of the universe would be very boring if one tried to think of it in the ordinary way of human experience. All that time without events! ... The tardiness of evolution is so irritating to contemplate ... The educated speak of the disenchanted (a boring) world. But it is not the world, it is my own head that is disenchanted. The world *cannot* be disenchanted ... (pp.198-9)

It is really we who have cut ourselves off from the world. Romantic themes again: one may recall the Keats of the *Hyperion* poems contemplating the vast succession of natural forces, of which his Titans are a metaphor: in their presence he can only be appalled at the inhuman vastness and agonising tedium of their actions, and the empty blank in the space, the "aching spot where beats the human heart". Or there is Baudelaire's blessed mission of the poet, which is to irrupt into this boring world (*dans ce monde ennuyé*) with his irrepressible power of celebration ("Bénédiction", in the *Fleurs du mal*). The immediate inspiration for Bellow was probably, however, Steiner's discussion of "apathy" in contrast to the "blessed life" (*salde*) in Wolfram.¹⁸

Coming at the world in the outer way we find only our disconnected selves or, aesthetically, the agony of the poet. It is Parzival after his failure, awakening to find himself alone and the unredeemed wasteland all around. But Steiner provides a complementary account that explains the inner dynamic of our own separation and potential for reuniting with the world. For the world as such cannot be disenchanted, as Baudelaire proclaimed and

¹⁸ Steiner, *Mysteries of the East and Christianity* pp.73-4.

Steiner elucidates: "For in spirit, says Steiner, a man can step out of himself and let things speak to him about themselves, to speak about what has meaning not for him alone but also for them" (p.199). "Anthroposophy" restores the human dimension, still in a thoroughly scientific way, by defining the evolutionary trajectory on which we withdraw into our selves, only to rediscover our connection with the universe. And the ability to relate ourselves imaginatively to the time-aspect of this process – to understand our place in evolution – is once again central. Nor do the insights belong only to cosmic evolution: they are bound up with our whole relationship to our lives and to other people.

Many anthroposophists are familiar with an exercise Steiner gave for spiritual development which consists in looking back over the day's events and living through them briefly in reverse order (*Rückschau*). The exercise operates on many levels. It is a potent force for inner change. Passing moral judgments on oneself can be a very negative affair, leading to despair rather than progress. But to look consistently back upon what we have done is an immeasurably more effective means of ensuring that we change what we do not want to see over and again before our inner eye. Moreover, the counter-natural order of reviewing events has an extraordinary way of liberating us from the sense of "it just happened": we see imaginatively into the possibilities of things in a surprising new way. The free "space" of the time-dimension in which we are then starting to move is yet another aspect, perhaps, of that time-and-space of the Grail. In order to probe Charlie's inner transformation, which is also his changing perspective on the events of the book, Saul Bellow took the bold step of breaking up the narrative and dislocating the sequence of events. Instead, what matters is the way events start to reveal their inner shape to Charlie in his meditations, his retrospects on the critical days (and longer periods) of his life past and present (p.111; and esp. p.117; etc. etc.). The technique for this sophisticated narrative-treatment is derived straight from Bellow's practice and understanding of this technique of meditation.

The time of the novel is therefore itself a metamorphic time. In the early stages Charlie's sense of his poet-friend's importance is no more far-seeing than Humboldt himself, who could not find the path to a "Romanticism come of age". Instead, Charlie is struggling with the many contradictory feelings he had about Humboldt. Especially he is haunted by a moment he saw the declining poet on the street – his last sight of him, in fact, before his tragic end. He returns to narrate this event more than once, one cannot say obsessively because that implies an overriding of the logic of actual events, whereas here the narrative actually leads again and again to this impasse: a meeting that did not take place, a human failure, a mantle of succession that as yet could not be handed on. The novel's narrative subtly expresses Charlie's perspective in which as yet there is no way forward from that point, because he has not yet begun to realise that the problem is in his own head, not in a disenchanted world. So as yet there is only a recurring dead-end.

On an artistic level, the challenge of the novel is to lever us out from this kind of time into a time of meditation in which essential relationships reveal themselves, and this Bellow achieves, not only in the passages which formally constitute Charlie's meditative life, but often with very beautiful effect. I think especially of the visit to Coney Island to receive Humboldt's gift – a visit therefore to Munsalvasche,¹⁹ in which indeed the characters are in a strangely "glorious condition", Charlie because he has come to think of death not as the ultimate fearful-boring state, but as involving a "metaphysically ... more spacious" viewpoint (pp.320-1), and Uncle Waldemar and Menasha are found as "miracles almost" who link directly to semi-legendary happy times and Humboldt's great poetry. In a totally down-to-earth way these scenes create a magic of Grail

¹⁹ Steiner notes that the modern, or Grail-wisdom is progressively freed from literal location (*Mysteries of the East* p.65). Archaic Mysteries always belonged to a specific place but the demands of the Grail-quest, and the way the Grail-domain can only be found by one in the right inner state, shows this emancipation beginning.

time-and-space in which the poet's literal gift (the ironic-journey script) can be the stepping-stone to his real gift of imaginative revitalisation, taking root within Charlie's new view of life. They include much of the poignancy of death and passing time. But the amazed Charlie also enters in the fullest way an imaginative realm in which he is at the same time expected and movingly recognised:

At another time I might have been astonished by what happened next. But now that the world was being reconstituted and the old structure, death and all, was no more solid than a Japanese lantern, human matters came over me with the greatest vividness, naturalness, even with gaiety – I musn't leave out the gaiety. The saddest of sights might have it. Anyway, we were indeed expected (p.321).

Here in spite of death it is impossible not to feel part of a greater life, making one's present existence but one in a series. Meeting old Menasha for instance definitely conveys the sense of "permanent membership in some larger, more extended human outfit". And going beyond their shared love of operatic music, the meeting seems touched by a sort of heavenly music. Uncle Waldemar steps out of Humboldt's poetry to help fulfil Charlie's Grail-mission in a way that seems to reach beyond death itself. Now Charlie knows at least something of the mystery – knows at least that it is a great mystery:

I, too, in spite of lethargy and weakness, was here for a big reason. Just what this was, I would consider later, when I looked back on my life in the twentieth century. Calendars would disintegrate under the gaze of the spirit ... In my reflective purgatory I would see it all from a different perspective and know, perhaps, how all these peculiarities added up (pp.324-5).

The ultimate retrospect is the one we shall all conduct after death (the basis of "purgatory" as popularly understood). But Charlie has discovered that if we overcome our separateness sufficiently to include death as well as life in our purview, something of that spiritual purification can touch us in life too. So infectiously inclusive is the vision that even life-loving Renata, in her stylish long white gloves, is happily playful among the wheelchairs.

All in all, Saul Bellow has pulled off a remarkable achievement: a novel that is thoroughly, even abrasively modern, while leading us to a delicate spiritual perception of the eternal in human life, the essential truth which is rightly called Anthroposophy or the Holy Grail. And it is an exuberant imagination of how to bring that awareness into our lives.

About Time Too Beethoven and the Scherzo: A Symptom of the Consciousness Soul¹

Brien Masters

The article on the Scherzo in Grove's *Dictionary*² written by Hugh MacDonald gives prominence to the fact that Haydn's string quartets op.33 (1781) are the works which proclaim the "scherzo's decisive admission to the canon of movements in regular Classical usage"; and in the same breath adds the intriguing fact that the scherzo in no.3 is "decidedly serious, even sombre, in colour". Looking at what followed, we could easily take Haydn's placing the scherzo on the musical map as something of a Marco Polo gesture and Beethoven's voyaging round the entire scherzo-globe as a Magellan gesture.

At the same time, if we note that, alongside the Haydnesque sombre, serious nuances, the scherzo in Beethoven's 5th Symphony has something of a macabre character (other unusual or even bizarre examples may come to the reader's mind), we have no alternative but to assume that in this remarkable Classical phenomenon there is more than superficial playfulness (*scherzare* = to jest). Here, I am enquiring into what that 'more than superficial playfulness' might be. Why the *third* movement of the symphony and of so many other Classically designed works? Why preceded by the *minuet* (after all, sarabandes, gigue, gavottes and half a dozen other dance forms were there in the ubiquitous Baroque suites, still the bread and butter of musicians in Haydn's boyhood)? Why – if we see 'papa' Haydn as setting the precedent – did he single out *scherzo* as the title for a movement which (may I rub in) *could be sombre in his hands* when,

¹ The substance of this article is based on a lecture, 'given' by the author on the same theme, to the Anglo-German Club of Abingdon nr. Oxford, in June 2008.

² *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, London: Macmillan, 1980 edition.

at the mere tilt of a wig, he could romp into exquisitely playful musical jesting – almost anywhere, but most exuberantly in his last movements – as no other composer had (or has?) succeeded in doing? Why...? Why...? Why...?

Let us jump! In what is often published as the first of the Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, there appears near the beginning of the tale a frog – no less. The princess has dropped her golden ball into a well and the frog retrieves it for her *with certain conditions*. Fast-forwarding through agenda that Freud would no doubt have imputed as being in the frog's mind, I have observed, in telling the tale countless times, that, at the point in the story where the frog appears, children invariably find him amusingly attractive, an attitude which remains throughout the story – increases in fact, when he is heard hopping slip-slop up the palace steps where the princess lives, and when he causes her distress and provokes considerable disgust as he eats off her dinner plate etc.

His transformation into the shining prince (interpreted as humanity's future state; the emergence of the Ego's higher nature) seems to be telling us that our present 'amphibious' ugliness – the wanton destruction of Amazonian forests, the plastering of urban square mileage with inhuman living quarters, the alarming increase in knife crime and child suicides, and so on – is hideously *incongruent with our ultimate human potential*. At the same time, we have to acknowledge that incongruity is the spice of humour – at all levels. 'Seeing the funny side' of humanity's amphibian nature – slimed with materialism, culturally slobbering and ground-hugging, sunk in wells close to despair, yet ready to be flung against the threshold of transformation – is surely the only way, so to say, that the gods can cling with positivity to the place they saw for man in their cosmic design. Indeed, their *ideal*.

That potential lies in the *will*. In the will there is hope. In the

Oberufer Paradise Play,³ which depicts the triumph of Lucifer in bringing about the 'Fall of Man', the angelic being who acts on God's command, reflects at the end of the play: "Blame not our will but our lack of wit." Ostensibly it is a comment on the actors (and they were amateurs all, ordinary villagers) and any shortcomings their performance may have disclosed. Seen in the context of evolution, however, it is the lack of wit – latterly over the last millennium: the one-sidedness of wit, wit fed by insatiable greed, the advance of wit at the expense of ethics etc. – that brings about the continuing 'Fall of Man'. The answer lies in the will – the will to set things right, the will to learn from self-knowledge, the will that is the sincere response to the feeling of retribution-pricked conscience, the will that wants to nail its colours to a resurgence of culture. 'Blame not our will ...'

So in what way does human will relate to music? Below we shall glance at earlier styles, though here our sights are directed towards the second half of the 18th century, the hinterland of the port from which Beethoven embarked. If the first movement of the Classical symphony addresses the thinking capacity within the soul (often through a wonderfully sonata-form-structured interplay of themes and motifs),⁴ and the second movement emphasises the soul's feeling quality, then the third movement evokes that soul element in which redemption lies: the will. We are most human there – not only when we succeed and triumph but also when we succumb to our fallibility (where we are 'only too human'). Hence the perfect niche for the scherzo.

The tempo of the scherzo originated as three beats in a bar – simply, it would seem, following the pattern of the minuet its predecessor in symphonic design. On the other hand, the *speed*

³ See *Christmas Plays from Oberufer*, Translated by A.C. Harwood, Sophia Books, 2007 pp.19-41.

⁴ See Masters, B., 2006 *Mozart: his musical style and his role in the development of human consciousness*, Forest Row: Temple Lodge, pp.61, 85-97 for thoughts on sonata form, related to the present context.

usually exceeds that of most minuets, denying any feeling of triple time – the lift, carry, place of the eurythmist's threefold walk. In fact, the speed of the scherzo calls for a decisive *one* beat in a bar.⁵ The (frog-legged!) effort that goes into the first beat of the bar provides the lift that carries right through the other two beats. Thus one could say, underlying man's macabre or sombre moods (both adjectives ending in ... *re*!) or, for that matter, underlying his over-the-top jollity, there is the lifting drive, the first-beat-in-the-bar aspiration – which provides the momentum – which the gods perceive as the *hope* in the spectacle of hideous or humorous, helpless or harrowing, hindering or hallucinating, human incongruity and the whole shambles and hullabaloo that we have made of Creation.

In Greek mythology it was at the bottom of Pandora's box that hope remained, something that would glimmer encouragingly in the future provided, surely, humanity was vested in unbound energy, pure will, determined drive and creative confidence to change for the better. These are qualities that are vested endemically in the scherzo. But what about the gods perceiving hope? This is something that can be read between the lines of evolution, and at this point it will further my case if I turn to look at some musical milestones in the evolution of human consciousness more specifically in relation to *time*.

The musical ingredients which we find in compositions can of course be enumerated at great length. Here we shall stop short at what the layman could be expected to be at ease with: melody, rhythm and harmony. The earliest plainsong that has come down to us from the 4th century AD has no harmony and no rhythm, certainly no beat. To see the priest in a Russian orthodox church service standing reverently in front of the reredos conducting the congregational chanting is to realise that his function is one of

⁵ In Beethoven's 9th Symphony the composer deliberately jests by swinging from phrases of four bars (what audiences would have found conventional) to phrases of three bars, and is explicit about it: *ritmo di tre battute* etc.

ensuring that the musical part of the service serves the divine-communal or communally-divine, so that it is in keeping with the mystical enactment of the sacrament. His use of the gently outstretched hand to beat time is as far away from Lully's use of his time-beating stick (the French must have had a word for it!) as Saturn is removed from the Moon – his death was caused by the thump which he gave on the first beat of a certain bar, which landed not on the podium as intended, but tragically on his foot, causing gangrene to set in! In ancient plainsong the musical experience is one in which the soul is 'lifted' into divine heights. Podium striking, or the baton wagging of the modern conductor are altogether on another planet.

However, when this experience – of music being essentially beyond the confines of measured time, and human consciousness being transcendently heightened as a result – when this experience became increasingly difficult for humanity to access, as the incarnating spirit became more deeply embedded in *physical* existence, one final attempt to cheat matter of this triumph, so to speak, is to be found in Gothic style. The barrel vault of the Romanesque basilica was raised. Rose windows appeared in north and south transepts and at the west end, where the added height of the roof permitted. Other features, too, all of which enabled the church-going worshipper entering the building to 'take heaven by storm'.

Notwithstanding, the *human element* had already made its incursion into music by this time – Chartres cathedral, in which Gothic first fully flowered, was (re-)built in 1196-1221.⁶ We know this human element as the added second voice in *parallel organum* and, still more independent, as the second voice in *free organum*, these two developments occurring in the 9th and 11th centuries respectively.⁷

⁶ Grodecki, L., 1963 *Chartres*, Paris: Draeger, pp.44ff.

⁷ See Davidson, T.D. and Apel, W., 1950, *Historical Anthology of Music: Oriental, Medieval and Renaissance Music*, London: Oxford University Press,

Nevertheless, the free flow of the music – essentially with little concern for any tonal centre (musical perspective, so to say) or any rhythmical shape to the melodic contour (short and long notes) – still prevailed. Herein was manifest the *eternal*. When a child, ensconced in her 'den' under a shady bush in the garden one sunny day in June is 'as happy as the day is long', she is oblivious of time – needs to be called out of her dream world for tea. It is a state of mind similar to the opening phrase 'Once upon a time – when was it, when was it not?' of the fairy tale. The three sets of circumstances bear a certain resemblance. No wonder that those who experienced being lifted into eternity by the plainchant regarded the composers as saints: St Ambrose (c.339-397), St John Chrysostom (c.347-407), St Gregory the Great (c.540-604). The preservation by religious denominations of plainsong chanting and similar over so many centuries bears witness to their spiritual origin. Similarly: in the cloisters, the copyist had the same attitude towards them as towards the gospels.

The *human* element brought rhythm into this early (musically-induced, if you like) quasi-paradisaic state of mind. Eternity 'fell' into time. Greater self-consciousness entered the process of composition. Note lengths started seeping into the seemingly endless and beginningless 'once-upon-a time' drift of the plainchant. Through the Middle Ages, through the Renaissance, the seeping continued as the human element gradually overrode the divine. The scales of planetary origin were superseded by the diatonic scale. Bar lines crept into music as performers lost their innate ability to sing and play out of a kind of rhythmically united, dream-like super-consciousness which was the guarantee, one might say, for cohesion.

Meanwhile we continued to distance ourselves from our divine origin. The cosmos is full of rhythm but humans do not have an arithmetic to express it exactly. We bumble along contentedly enough with our calendar adjustments every leap year and so on –

but only by supplanting consciousness of cosmic rhythm with measured time. Cosmic memory once possessed by humans has helter-skeltered, albeit via sundials and sandglasses, into Swiss railway timetables, itemised phone bills and Wisden-recorded record-breaking. The carrier pigeon has fallen lifeless into the latest speed of broadband.

The incongruity of the human state was experienced as a poignant climax by the 17th century metaphysical poets, with its most pivotal symbol being the birth of the Jesus child. William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585-1649) expressed several dimensions of the contrast in his sonnet *The Angels for the Nativity of Our Lord*: "A saviour there is born more old than years, / Amidst heaven's rolling heights this earth who stayed;" and the spatial equivalent of this temporal contrast: "There is he, poorly swaddled, in a manger laid, / To whom too narrow swaddlings are our spheres." There is also Richard Crashaw's (c.1613-1649) well-known Chorus from *The Flowering Heart*: "Welcome all wonders in one sight! / Eternity shut in a span." The last lines of the first stanza are even more pertinent to our present argument: "Great little one! whose all-embracing birth / Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth." Finally, let me cite a complete stanza from George Herbert's (1593-1633) *Easter-Wings* (the format is his).

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
 Though foolishly he lost the same,
 Decaying more and more,
 Till he became
 Most poore:
 With thee
 O let me rise
 As larks, harmoniously,
 And sing this day thy victories:
 Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

Even Herbert's rhythmic pattern is indicative of the loss of something higher than the prosaic – where, within five lines, the iambic pentameter of line one dwindles into the thud-thud of a single spondee (Most poore) – followed, through reversing the rhythmic sequence, by the regaining of that 'something higher' through divinely-derived *yet human* forces.

If Beethoven's mimicry of Maelzel, the inventor of the metronome, is anything to go by – the former wrote a round in which he clearly scorned the metronomic slavery into which musical time could only too readily subside – he despised (rather than regretted) the loss of eternity. That is certainly in keeping with the choler that is deeply bound up with his nature. Yet (another incongruity, already alluded to) despite this he nearly always chose a one-beat-in-a-bar tempo for his expression of the liberty-restoring potential of the human will in his scherzi. What, we might ask, is therefore his antidote to 'beat-slavery' that he incorporates in his style?

One antidote is the use of *sforzandi* in places where the tyranny of the beat at the beginning of each bar is denied. This device, however, is by no means confined to his scherzi. How could it be? *All* his music celebrates the Schillerian freedom of the human spirit. It is thus a musical ingredient which crops up throughout his oeuvre, also in various guises, the more obvious of which are as follows.

- An accentuated note in a bar other than the first note.
- An accentuated first note in a bar where the conventional phrasing would suggest otherwise.
- Irregularly accentuated notes (in the above sense) in a passage where the melodic element has been minimised in favour of allowing the harmony to be the main vehicle for the rhythm.
- In the overall design of a movement the insertion of a section of music which is unanticipated, i.e. unlike the *cadenza* in a concerto, but is thrust upon the listener contrary to the expectations aroused by the composer through the course of the music. In terms of design

this would be the equivalent to a so-called interrupted cadence⁸ – not, in some ways, unlike the punch line in a good joke.

– The positioning of the scherzo prominently as the second movement, as in the 9th symphony, instead of the traditional third (taken up by Bruckner) – cf. *The Frog Prince* where the incongruity is brought close to the beginning of the story so that the remainder of the story can deal with how the problem is resolved of transforming amphibious man – who looks so comic when viewed from the eternal plane of divine beings – into his higher nature.

– There is also the melodic feature which provides not so much an *outer* dynamic but an *inner* impression on the listener for its effect. This is through an unexpected note or harmony. The C sharp of the opening theme of the *Eroica Symphony* (bar 7) or the A natural on the second beat of bar 7 in the slow movement of the '*Pathétique*' *Piano Sonata* are examples.

The other antidote I would like to bring here lies in his musical humour. If Mozart, through using the fortepiano, heralded the human ensoulment of music, Beethoven – instant monarch of the pianoforte⁹ – surely embodied the descent of spirit into matter in his masterly strokes of (musically humorous yet *still aesthetically satisfying*) incongruity.

Beethoven *Piano Sonatas* Op. 2 nos. 1 2 & 3.

The three sonatas¹⁰ which Beethoven published as opus 2 (1795)

⁸ The Penguin *A New Dictionary of Music*, 1958, defines a cadence as "a progression of chords (usually two) giving an effect of closing a 'sentence' of music", and points out that the interrupted cadence is unique amongst the different types of cadence in that it leads away from the expected progression – rather than bringing the musical sentence to a close.

⁹ See Masters, B., op. cit. p.107 for further background to this phenomenon.

¹⁰ A personal note. Having in mind the death last year of an old colleague, Nancy Hummel, who studied music in Edinburgh with Sir Donald Tovey, I am venturing in the following analyses to emulate his style of popular analysis,

were dedicated to Haydn. All of them have four movements. In op. 2/1 the third movement is marked Menuetto and has little to indicate the scherzo nature of things to come at this point in the sonata (and symphony etc.), though in bars 9-10 the music suddenly steps out of its lyrical and rather tranquil *piano* with *forte* repeated notes (a) and the up-beat of the last phrase before the double bar is marked *sforzando* (b), pointing, as it were, to the future.



In op. 2/2 the third movement no longer subscribes to the Classical minuet tradition. It is not only entitled Scherzo, its theme and the handling of it show signs of maturing skittishness. The basic building block consists of a zig-zaggy rising motif (c) anchored by a dense chord in the bass (d), the two together paying lip service to sobriety.



albeit without his vast spectrum of erudition. This is in the hope that the layman will be able to gain something which will help to substantiate the argument pursued in the article.

But this is thrown completely to the winds when the roles of right and left hands are reversed (e). With the dense chords – now marked *forte* and exploding into *fortissimo* – far from anchoring the gaiety, they generate mounting excitement. Added to all is the slapstick-like four-beat effect (instead of three, the tempo in the time signature) of the final cadence, galumphing through bars 43-44 (f).

Beethoven's wit begins subtly in the scherzo of op. 2/3 with an unaccompanied phrase which already combines opposites in miniature – the upward-going surge of the first four notes (g) and the downward-retreating scale of bars 2-4 (h).



The composer then quietly makes merry with the theme by developing it into 3-voiced polyphony (3-7), with a half close in bars 8-9 (i). There then follow six bars where the two motifs (g and h) that were wedded at the opening, go their own ways: one ever downward for 18 notes (j) and the other ever more flightingly upward over a 6-fold sequence (k). Beethoven peppers the disputing pair with sharps and flats before reaching the dominant key in bar 17.

Beethoven *Piano Sonata Op. 14 no. 2.*

The above three scherzi written during the years of the composer's Sentient Soul phase (1791-98) demonstrate how the journey begins. In his op. 14/2 he gains self-confidence in several respects. The second movement is an original theme with variations. Even within the theme, the last four bars display Beethoven's fiery defiance of beat-tyranny with four *sforzandi* (l), the first three of which are on weak beats (the second and fourth beats of the bar in quadruple time). They culminate harmonically in the fourth *sforzando* which is a long held note (m), in which the composer seems to enjoy the rhythmic confusion caused. Then, to cap it all, after this chord dies away, the last six chords end in an immaculately conventional cadence, as if 'butter wouldn't melt' (n). However, the rests between the very last (three) chords, do carry with them a hint of veiled cockiness (o). Needless to say, whenever this part of the theme comes out of the wings in the succeeding variations, there is an abundance of musical clowning to go with it.



The third movement of the sonata is marked Scherzo, though the ear doesn't need to see the indication. The first theme consists of three rhythmically identical motifs written across the beat (p, q, r). The tempo could easily be taken as being three medium (crochet) beats – which would be the traditional third movement tempo. But by bar 3 the theme sits on a long note (s) which at the same time impishly discloses that the time signature is actually three quick (quaver) beats to a bar. The farce continues, which I shall leave listeners to enjoy for themselves when they get a chance to hear it. However, the

climax of the hilarity comes *after* the last bar's squiggle has fluttered out of the air at the end of the movement. Beethoven isolates the three notes in bar 7 for this purpose (t) – whereupon the audience is waiting for the fourth movement to follow ... when the pianist stands up, bows and exits, with the audience realising that the scherzo, highly successful *as* a scherzo, was, in fact, the finale. Even if the suspicion that this might be the case may have dawned in the discerning listener's mind – on realising that the structure of the movement is rondo (rather than scherzo and trio) – the anomaly is still entertainingly enjoyable.



Beethoven *Piano Sonata Op. 28, Scherzo: Allegro vivace.*

The second example from this phase of the composer's life (the Rational Soul, 1798-1805) occurs in the more orthodox 4-movement op. 28. The movement (in traditional third place) opens with a motif which dive-bombs into the bass clef through four octaves on F-sharp (bars 1-4), a note which, however, proves *not* to be the keynote but the major 3rd, as the sharp-nosed busy-bodies of bars 5-8 are at nit-picking pains to point out. Beethoven hardly even listens to them with his second dive-bombing, now on the note A (9-12), which leads still not to the home key but to the dominant (16). The third and fourth sorties – which are emphatic *fortes* – state (like a pedant pulpit-thumping while denouncing an innocent joke and thus making a laughingstock of himself) the relationship between the two keys by adding (i) the tonic (17-20) and (ii) the mediant (25-28). After the double bar, the composer uses the descending octave motif to lead through a delightfully playful sequence of modulations (33-48).

Allegro vivace

A musical score for a piano piece titled 'The Golden Blade'. The tempo is marked 'Allegro vivace'. The score is written for piano (p) and consists of 69 measures. The notation is in 2/4 time and features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The score is divided into systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-11) starts with a piano (p) dynamic. The second system (measures 12-21) continues the melody. The third system (measures 22-31) includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The fourth system (measures 32-41) includes a piano (p) marking. The fifth system (measures 42-51) includes a decrescendo (decresc.) marking. The sixth system (measures 52-61) includes a piano (p) marking. The seventh system (measures 62-69) includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking.

The motif returns without accents (49-52), as though this irregular behaviour is perfectly normal, only to be overtaken with positively crashing triads in 1st inversion (57-60) with the left hand entering impetuously before it is due, which elicits a prolonging of the, by now, almost farcical spectacle of the nit-picking commentators to double its original length (61-69).

Beethoven *Symphony No. 3 Op. 55, Scherzo: Allegro vivace.*

The third symphony contains a scherzo and trio as the third movement on the fullest Beethovenian scale, impelled throughout by his inimitable drive and humour. Some of the main landmarks are as follows. The first theme consists of strings (without double basses) busying themselves like a shoal of hungry trout darting hither and thither after mayflies on the surface of a lake, but otherwise getting nowhere – until the oboe enters after *an odd 6 bars* with a light-hearted theme, cheekily (seeing it is so near the beginning) in the dominant key. Its thematic material provides Beethoven with valuable motifs for juggling with later.

Allegro vivace

A musical score for the Scherzo from Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 Op. 55. The tempo is marked 'Allegro vivace'. The score is written for piano (pp) and consists of 14 measures. The notation is in 2/4 time and features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The score is divided into two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-8) starts with a piano (pp) dynamic. The second system (measures 9-14) continues the melody. The score includes markings for 'pp sempre pianissimo e stacc.' and 'fz'.

The process is repeated, though with the double basses pedantically pointing out that the key *is actually* the dominant and not the home key, and with the oboe counteracting their solemnity by jumping the gun still earlier than the first time (entering on the equivalent of the last note of bar 4). It is joined for its last bars by flute and bassoon who are clearly hooked by all the jollity. A chromatic passage follows in which the flute, far from being called to heel by the

double basses' harmonic gravity, flies off the harmonic handle still further, with the theme *in the dominant of the dominant* – and this after only 40 bars! The whole orchestra now gleefully toss their shabby academic gowns around with a fugato based on motifs (w + x), (x) being subtly and simply changed, with an accent appearing where there was none before. The passage cuts into the mesmerising, fish-flashing fussiness like a pike's dorsal fin slicing a sheet of calm water, but disappears as quickly as it came – though having impelled the shoal into the key of the minor mediant. The violas try their hand at further distractive play, with a repeated D, having also the impudence to shift the tempo into a three-bar beat, not specifically indicated by Beethoven as in his 9th Symphony's Scherzo, but there nevertheless. The cellos and basses will have nothing to do with this escapade and come in again with anchored pedantry, not yet however in the home key until, at bar 93, the heavyweights (trumpets, timpani and French horns) are called in to restore harmonic order, which they do blazingly successfully for more than 20 bars. The strings, not to be outwitted, pull out a new trump card, a theme which throws the listener, through its three sforzandi on the *second* beat of each bar, completely off the rhythmic scent (115-117).

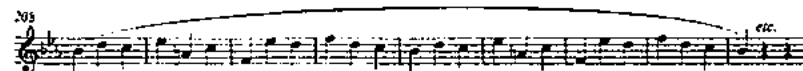


This happens twice, setting the wind and strings off with (u), gossiping as if somewhat scandalized at a cocktail party by what has happened (119-130). At this point, Beethoven brings the result of his carefully crafted rollercoaster to a climax with a theme, suspiciously resembling the bars that had accompanied motifs (w) and (x), though now lacking every vestige of modesty. It carries the music with maintained momentum over 23 bars to reach its final cadence.

The Trio, which follows after a repeat, begins with a bravura-like theme for three French horns (166-173), like a nobly, if rather pompously mounted hunt appearing from a forest onto a stretch of open country, their prancing hunting pink delighting all onlookers.



The wind and strings respond by chirping like a flock of excited sparrows hopping about in a hedgerow, inquisitive to know what the chase is all about, while the horses prance onward. Beethoven doesn't let on.



But if the object of the hunt is a fox, it leads them all a merry dance (199-216), leaving the hunting party high and dry on a somewhat bemused flattened 7th in the home key, before disappearing over a distant hill with their minds no doubt on the forthcoming noggin of whiskey rather than the ignominious chase. The Scherzo repeats, but Beethoven still has two white rabbits left in his topper. The first is at bar 381 when, instead of the repeat (y) there is a hilariously reprimanding change of tempo.



But it seems to have little effect on those of the party who are talking nineteen to the dozen, who continue as before. Finally we arrive at the Coda, just 18 bars long and ushered in by the kettle drums, who appear softly on the scene like a dark-clad piper. At first, no-one appears to take the slightest bit of notice – bizarrely the harmony just doesn't tally with what the drums are doing – until the French horns call the rest of the orchestra to order, all exuberantly joining in the festive alternating of tonic and dominant (431 et seq.) to fatten the concluding crescendo.



There follows a final bar's absolute silence – marked by Beethoven with a pause – which gives us cause to pause and reflect (inwardly smiling with the composer) on the rich funfair of life 'up with which' we have been caught. The Finale banishes any superficial comedy that may be in the air, with its first note (D – the note of the scale most foreign to the tonic chord we have just heard thundering) at which we are plunged into the Promethean-like, quasi-passacaglia that raises the funfair of life to the fanfare of higher life which is the ultimate task of the 4th movement of the symphony.

But in the end, it is not these kinds of devices that offer the modern Ego the antidote to materialism, which only Beethoven can provide in such rich measure, despite their importance and significance as a feature of his musical style: it is the *genius of Beethoven* itself. Through being saturated in what his spirit embodies in the music, he brings to the Ego which has incarnated in the Consciousness Soul Age, not only the immersion in matter – and the pain of the experienced discordance that absolute opposites have to endure: spirit in matter¹¹ – he also brings that which can enable

¹¹ The pianoforte with its iron frame, so germinal in Beethoven's musical

the spirit to rise above being nailed to the cross of metronomic time to a state – *without losing our necessary earthly focus* – which is every human listener's birthright, a state which exists on the plane of eternity.¹²

How other composers have followed this is another story – but at this point in history I would suggest that it is a matter of their following rather than superseding him. The outburst of applause after a Beethoven symphony – or after performances of his other major works – is surely testimony enough.¹³

In his *Songs of Experience*, the Romantic poet William Blake (1757-1827) stood (presumably metaphorically speaking?) before the tiger, and being precipitated – certainly metaphorically – into "the forests of the night" was awestruck by what he saw. At one point he can do no other than sink to his knees: "Did he who made the lamb make thee?" and "What immortal hand or eye dare frame thy fearful symmetry?" Today, much of the music that is in the air – mostly in the electronic air – leads us, like lambs to the slaughter, to the despotic dominance of the beat. It is in the 'burning bright' Beethoven, particularly in the scherzi and their significance in the symphonic re-shaping of Classicism, that through his *immortal ear* we ordinary mortals of the Consciousness Soul Age can be reminded that our incongruity, though it often has its funny side, is actually no laughing matter. Increasingly so, in fact. It is as though, when his spirit lives in a performance of his music, each one present receives a rope ladder dangled down from the musical heights of his

development, is itself an instrument that depends, so to speak, upon the performer to imbue its tone with soul cf. the *quality* of sound when the oboe gives the A for the orchestra to tune to and (as is the case when the item is a piano concerto) when the A for tuning up is played on the piano.

¹² This vital aspect of the Consciousness Soul Age is discussed by Steiner in lectures published under the title *From Buddha to Christ*, 1978 Anthroposophic Press.

¹³ Whenever it is possible, to experience this fully it is worth actually *going* there. Being in the same space as that in which the music is re-created by the striving will of conscious human performers, unbamboozled by discographic obsession.

or her nobler self, up which the listener is not elevated to eternity – as in Gregorian plainsong – but for climbing which we are given new strength to follow the master *in the 4th movement* (the finale) towards that plane of eternity, whence the music flows, by ascending the ladder, even if we can only manage a rung or two to begin with.

Just as Beethoven himself dived ever anew into his material (q.v. for instance the difference that is discernable when one compares his original notebook jotting of a theme with how it transpires in the published opus)¹⁴ and, as if in a royal mint, imprinted it with his eternal being, so can the performer and listener alike feel the continual piercing-into-eternity that vibrantly informs his style of composition, dissolving the *mechanical tick of the clock* into the ‘magical’ touch of the Cosmos. Or as Crashaw so succinctly and eloquently put it: ‘eternity shut in a span’.

If, as we learn from Greek mythology, Prometheus ‘once upon a time’ stole the fire of the Gods for humanity’s sake (a jest on a cosmic scale?), the fire surely did not all meet its irrevocable and irrecoverable destiny in the blast furnaces of the 20th century and the rising price of a barrel of oil today. Some of it surely continues to burn with Beethovenian brightness – sweeping away accreditation paranoia to make room for creativity, disdaining surveillance culture that eclipses human trust and inspired initiative, and *cremating time towards eternity*.

¹⁴ See Miles, P., undated, *Beethoven’s Sketches – An Analysis of his Style Based on a Study of his Sketch Books*, Dover Publications, passim.

What is Time?

Howard Smith

Our experience of time is a fundamental factor in our life, which raises many questions. Why does time appear to accelerate as we get older? If we can predict the future, does that mean the future already exists? In which case, is our future already decided so we have no free will? Does time flow in one direction like a river, or can it go backwards, or in cycles? Why is the pace of life increasing for many people today? Why do we never seem to have enough of it?

We might begin by enquiring whether time is *real*, as everyday experience suggests, or illusory, as some philosophies claim. Modern science recognises just seven basic quantities underlying the richness of the sense-world, and one of these is time (the others being length, mass, electric current, temperature, amount of substance, and luminous intensity). Other measurements, involve various combinations of these seven (e.g. velocity involves both time and length). Time is therefore accepted as one of the essential irreducible elements of our experience.

But what exactly is time? We talk of perceiving time, yet it is invisible. Our ‘perception’ mysteriously arises from the attempt of our reason to connect events in a particular order, but common experience teaches us that we can easily misjudge time. We can even create false memories. Ultimately, time is a great mystery; we can only make a beginning in approaching its true nature.

To help us in this task, we can look at the manifestations of time throughout the kingdoms of Nature: mineral, plant, animal and human. We can observe distinct differences in each kingdom, and by following this metamorphosis, we can arrive at the threshold of what can be revealed to us through contemplation of earthly phenomena. Beyond this, we need recourse to spiritual knowledge. Let us begin with time as it manifests in the mineral kingdom.

Mineral Time and Cosmic Time

Many physical processes in the mineral kingdom produce oscillations which are regular and conform to definite laws. For example, strings on a musical instrument vibrate at a rate which depends on the length and thickness of the string. Here we see a time-process (an oscillation) which is fixed and rigid. Without this reliability, it would be impossible to know in advance which note the instrument would produce. Wind instruments work by producing a definite vibration which causes the whole body of the instrument to resonate in a predictable way. Such conformity to natural law is harnessed in clocks to measure time. Think of a grandfather clock, with its pendulum moving slowly to and fro under the influence of gravity, and you have a picture of regular "mineral time". In a modern quartz watch or clock, this principle of resonance is applied to a quartz crystal, which vibrates at a fixed rate when an electric current is applied to it. Instead of an oscillating pendulum, the whole crystal vibrates extremely rapidly. So regular is this vibration, that one manufacturer advertises that their clock is accurate to one second in a million years! Even the body of the earth itself, as a great mineral mass, vibrates at its own (extremely low) rate. We can characterise the manifestation of time in the mineral kingdom as being "fixed" in its regularity, with scarcely any flexibility in the rhythm.

This regular, fixed measure of time has its archetype in the heavens, in the predictable movement of the planets and other heavenly bodies. That is why events such as eclipses or moon phases can be calculated thousands of years in the past or future. However, "heavenly time" has an important characteristic, mentioned by Rudolf Steiner: the periods of revolution of the various planets do not form simple ratios. The ratios are "incommensurable", meaning they cannot be expressed as a ratio of two whole numbers such as $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ etc. Because of this, every moment in the life of the cosmos is unique. Each eclipse or other event will always be against a different

cosmic backdrop, and in this residual incalculability lies the life of the cosmos, as against a purely machine-like apparatus such as a clock.¹ It is as if the cosmos, when reflecting itself in the mineral kingdom, loses this living aspect of time.

Biological Time

As soon as we look at living organisms, whether plants, animals or human (each of which possess an etheric or life-body in addition to the physical body), time-relationships take on a different character. The etheric body possessed by all life forms is described as a body of formative forces which shapes and moulds the physical form. But it can also be described as a "time-body", since these shaping and regulating activities unfold in time. It is a matter of simple observation that all living creatures have a definite life-cycle, in which processes of organ formation, growth, reproduction and eventual decay unfold in an ordered timely way. However, the time-scale is sensitive to environmental factors to a much greater extent than in the mineral kingdom. Maturation can be accelerated or delayed. Here we are dealing with a more flexible manifestation of time. Rather than measuring biological time in minutes or hours or days, we would have to speak of developmental stages.

Within the human organism there are many rhythmical processes. It is now known that within the hypothalamus (behind the eyes) resides the mechanism of the circadian "clock", which turns genes on and off in a series of timed reactions over a 24 hour period, regulating such functions as blood pressure, sleeping/waking, and body temperature. We know the unpleasant effects of disturbing this inbuilt clock, for example by long-distance flights, which cause "jet-lag".

There are also the well-known cardiac and respiratory rhythms, and many less well-known rhythms such as rhythmic neuronal and nerve impulses, and resonance of the basilar membrane in the

¹ See for example, Rudolf Steiner, *The Astronomy Course*, Lecture 8.

hearing apparatus. All of these time-processes are sensitive, susceptible – vulnerable one could say – to surrounding conditions.

Conscious Time

As humans we have within us physical and mineral processes, and also life-processes. In addition we have consciousness conferred by an astral body, and here time manifests in an even more flexible way than before.

Consider a simple phenomenon which is occasionally observed if one is sufficiently attentive. You are in a room with a continuous background sound, perhaps a ticking clock or the distant sound of a machine. You have become so habituated to the sound that you are actually no longer conscious of it. Then the sound suddenly stops, but *just before* it does, you become aware of it, and are conscious of the moment of its stopping. How is that possible? Do we psychically foretell that the sound is about to stop? A more reasonable explanation is that we remain unconscious of the sound until it stops. Then we subconsciously paste a little section of sound over the preceding second or two of our memory, so we feel we have suddenly become aware of it. In other words, in a small way, we mistake the present for the past.

Such an interpretation is consistent with the conclusions of Dr. David Eagleman of the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. In a remarkable series of experiments on time perception, he investigated whether time really does run in slow motion as reported by people in car crashes or other accidents. Other researchers had already suggested that adrenaline released as a result of fear alters our perception of time. Eagleman dropped volunteers 150 feet, and studied their reaction in free-fall, before they hit the safety-net. He found that, although in retrospect the volunteers described the usual slow-motion experience, there was no evidence of changed perception *actually during* the fall. He concluded that during terrifying events groups of neurons called amygdalae becomes more

active, adding extra memories that accompany those normally dealt with by other parts of the brain. The richness and density of memories of an event lead to the feeling that the event took longer than it actually did, so it is remembered in slow-motion.² In essence, it seems that time perception is connected with *memory*, a conclusion reached by St. Augustine in the fourth Century!³

Here we are in a realm where time may expand or contract. This is clearly seen in dreams, where for instance we have a long dream of a fire breaking out, and the fire-engines rushing to the scene. The sequence of events in the dream may appear to be quite lengthy. Then we wake up and realise that the “fire engine” is the alarm clock. We know it could not have been ringing for as long as the dream seemed to last. Perhaps it rang for just a few seconds, stimulating the dream, yet our dream-time experience is considerably longer.

To the area of time-perception belong such questions as why time appears to accelerate with age. Stephen Hawking believes time is perceived as a *ratio*, so for example a single day when you are 70 is only a tiny proportion of your total days lived, whereas when you are 7, one day feels longer because it is a greater proportion of your life. However, other factors are probably involved, such as the child's deeper experience of the rhythms in the etheric- or time-body.

Eternity and the “I”

We have considered the manifestation of time in the mineral kingdom, where it is rigid; in living organisms, where it shows responsiveness and flexibility; through to the conscious mind, where it works with even greater elasticity and begins to take on a creative character through the memory.

We now turn to the realm of the spirit, in which the higher ego or “I” dwells. It is a common experience of those who try to raise their

² See for example neuro.bcm.edu/eagleman/time.html.

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consciousness above the earthly and transient, that they become more aware of qualities which are unchanging, which are unaffected by the normal stream of time. This realm is referred to as the realm of duration or eternity. It has been characterised poetically by Kahlil Gibran:

You would measure time the measureless and the immeasurable.

You would adjust your conduct and even direct the course of your spirit according to hours and seasons.

Of time you would make a stream upon whose bank you would sit and watch its flowing.

Yet the timeless in you is aware of life's timelessness, and knows that yesterday is but today's memory and tomorrow is today's dream.

And that which sings and contemplates in you is still dwelling within the bounds of that first moment which scattered the stars into space.

Who among you does not feel that his power to love is boundless?

And yet who does not feel that very love, though boundless, encompassed within the centre of his being, and moving not from love thought to love thought, nor from love deed to other love deeds?

And is not time even as love is, undivided and paceless?⁴

⁴ Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*.

In a similar vein Rudolf Steiner speaks of the relation between the world of time and the timeless:

Eternity; we need only touch on this idea to feel resounding in us something connected with the deepest longings of man's soul and with the highest aims of his endeavour. The passing moment always brings before us all that surrounds us in life, that reminds us of the necessity to search in this passing moment of our lives for what is able to give us a view into the land of our desire, into eternity.⁵

This "land of our desire" or eternity, to which we aspire, is the spiritual world itself, which we reach through spiritual development and the process of initiation.

In his book *Theosophy*, Rudolf Steiner describes how, through allowing the qualities of the True and the Good to live in his soul, the human being kindles an "imperishable light" within him.

In so far as the soul lives in this light, it is a participant in the eternal and unites its existence with it.⁶

This is elaborated in Chapter 2, where part of the higher self – the spirit self – is described as that member which accrues eternal values, through its links with the eternal spirit:

The soul receives from the spirit the gift of living within the good and the true, and thereby of bringing the spirit itself to expression within its own life, within its tendencies, impulses and passions. From the world of the spirit, the spirit self brings to the "I" the eternal laws of the true and the good. These link themselves through the

⁵ Rudolf Steiner, *Initiation, Eternity and the Passing Moment*, Lecture 2.

⁶ Rudolf Steiner, *Theosophy*, Chapter 1.

consciousness soul with the experiences of the soul's own life. These experiences themselves pass away, but their fruits remain. The spirit self receives an abiding impression by having been linked with them. When the human spirit encounters an experience similar to one to which it has already been linked, it sees therein something familiar, and is able to take up an attitude towards it quite different from what would be the case were the spirit facing it for the first time. This is the basis of all learning. The fruits of learning are acquired capacities. The fruits of the transitory life are in this way graven on the eternal spirit.

However, there is a difference between that part of the spirit which is connected with the planets, and the higher reaches of the spiritual world, which is mirrored in the zodiac. The former is still largely in the realm of time, whilst the latter belongs more to the realm of eternity or duration.⁷

The Origin of Time

To speak of time having an "origin" is almost nonsensical, and points to the inadequacies of our language. We can only speak of a "beginning" of time, and the conditions "preceding" time, by using language which itself is steeped in concepts of time. Nonetheless Rudolf Steiner does indicate that there was indeed a point at which all was in the timelessness which can be called "duration", and from which time developed. This occurred in the primal state of the Earth's evolution, described in detail in his *Occult Science* and referred to as the Saturn state. In this first rudimentary beginning of the Earth, all was differentiated heat or warmth; there was no matter of any kind.

⁷ See for example Rudolf Steiner, *The Influence of Spiritual Beings on Man*, Lecture 2.

With the appearance of the Saturn heat, our evolution for the first time passes over from a purely spiritual, inner existence into one manifesting externally. It will be especially difficult for the present-day consciousness to accept the statement that with the Saturn state of heat what is called "time" first makes its appearance, for the preceding states are not at all temporal. They belong to the region that in spiritual science may be called "duration". For this reason it must be understood that in all that is said in this work about such states in the "region of duration", expressions referring to temporal relationships are only used by way of comparison and explanation. What precedes "time", as it were, can only be characterized in human language by expressions containing the idea of time, for we must also be conscious of the fact that although the first, second, and third states of Saturn did not take place one after the other in the present sense of the word, we cannot do otherwise than describe them one after the other. Indeed, in spite of their duration or simultaneity, they are so inter-dependent that this dependence may be compared with a sequence in time.⁸

It is interesting to compare this description with some modern cosmological theories which assume the present universe has evolved from a state in which matter and energy, and even time, were not present in a form we would recognise. For example, Stephen Hawking postulates that time began about 15 billion years ago with a unique event known as the Big Bang. There is, he says, no point in discussing what conditions may have been like before, since events would be part of a different time-frame and indeed a different universe outside the scope of the theory. One can perhaps equate this different time-frame with Steiner's concept of duration. Expressed

⁸ Rudolf Steiner, *Occult Science*; chapter 4, part 3.

more poetically, the Big Bang is *that first moment which scattered the stars into space.*⁹

The Being of Time

How did time actually arise in the ancient Saturn-stage of the Earth? If we stick to intellectual speculation, it is difficult to approach this question. Rather, we need to approach the nature of *being*. In answer to a question on time after a lecture in 1909, Rudolf Steiner said:

No time would exist if all beings were at the same level of development. Time arises through the interaction between a number of higher beings and a number of lower beings. In timelessness, various levels of development are possible, but their interaction makes time possible.¹⁰

We can go on to ask which hierarchical beings in particular produced time through their interaction? In the ancient Saturn stage of existence, the primal warmth came into existence as a result of beings of the First Hierarchy known as Thrones. These beings poured out their substance into the timeless void, forming a body of warmth which later developed through many metamorphoses into the Earth. This sacrifice they made as a result of their interaction with other beings of the First Hierarchy – the Cherubim. The Thrones sacrificed themselves to the Cherubim. And as a result of this interaction, other beings arose which we would today describe as beings of the Third Hierarchy, known as Archai. These beings consist of time.

From the sacrifice brought by the Spirits of Will [Thrones] to the Cherubim, time is born. But this time is not abstract time as we usually speak of it; it is an

⁹ See Kahlil Gibran, *op cit*, and a lecture by Stephen Hawking www.hawking.org.uk/lecture/bot.html.

¹⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *The Fourth Dimension*, p91.

independent being. Only at this point can we speak of something beginning. Time initially is a time being, a being made up entirely of time. Beings are born, who consist only of time.¹¹

The Archai (also known as the Time-Spirits) order the cultural epochs on earth, and are responsible for the particular character of each. The present time-regent is the Archangel Michael (an Archangel who functions as an Archai when he takes on this role).

In addition to the Archai, Steiner speaks of the "Spirits of Rotation of Time", created by the First Hierarchy. These beings perform the will of the First Hierarchy in ordering the cosmos. For example, they drive the earth round the sun, they are responsible for day and night, and they order the seasons. In addition, they are the beings behind all rhythmical events in nature, such as the growth of plants in the spring and their death in winter, and the life cycles of animals.¹²

The Future

When we see time as the work of *beings*, indeed beings who consist of time, we begin to break free of the fixed concept of time as a linear process. The relation of consciousness with time becomes clearer, since time-beings certainly have consciousness. When we see *time* as imbued with *being*, we can approach one of the most difficult questions in everyday life – that of prophesy, or foretelling the future. Does prophesy imply that the future is already determined?

By way of analogy, we can compare this process with building a house. Imagine we have the intention to build a new house, and

¹¹ Rudolf Steiner, *The Spiritual Hierarchies and the Physical World; Reality and Evolution*. Lecture of 31 October 1911.

¹² Rudolf Steiner, *Spiritual Beings in the Heavenly Bodies and in the Kingdoms of Nature*, Lecture 5.

employ an architect to draw up plans for us. Eventually the builders do their work, and the house stands completed. Someone observing this process might well look at the original plans and see them as a "premonition", one which in fact comes true. Even before the plans are drawn up, he might hear from us that we wish to build a house, and take that as a forecast. However, all he is dealing with is intentions, wishes, plans. The future house is not determined. Many factors could intervene.

An initiate experiences in advance the path which humanity is treading through the laws of evolution. He experiences the intentions and impulses of the hierarchies, as "laws", so he can say what consequences will follow from these impulses. That is, he can "predict" the future in general terms. However, humanity interacts with the hierarchies. Individual freedom to act within cosmic laws is always preserved, and indeed major outcomes can be changed. Rudolf Steiner gives many instances of new initiatives, by human beings and by the hierarchies, which guide the course of evolution. The essential nature of the cosmos is *being*. One could also say consciousness. To see *time* as part of this being can help us to approach its many mysteries.

Lead us not into Temptation ...

Andrew Wolpert

What can it possibly mean that we ask God not to lead us into temptation? Firstly it seems blasphemous even to suppose He would do so. But if on further consideration we realize that temptation gives us the opportunity to develop a new strength, then it might seem more appropriate, not to ask to be spared that experience, but rather to be helped when we face it. Of the four petitions in The Lord's Prayer, this one is the hardest to understand.

In two lectures Rudolf Steiner gave in 1907¹ on The Lord's Prayer he describes how the structure of the prayer relates to the seven-fold human being. In this context "temptation" is related to an aspect of the astral body. Six years later at the laying of the Foundation Stone of the First Goetheanum² and in his subsequent lectures on The Fifth Gospel³, Rudolf Steiner spoke the words of what has come to be known as the Macrocosmic Lord's Prayer. He describes the shattering impact of these cosmic words on Jesus of Nazareth, and how then after the Baptism, Jesus Christ transforms what had been heard from above into words that can be spoken by human beings on earth as the Lord's Prayer which we find in the New Testament⁴. These descriptions widen and deepen the context in which we can find our own relationship to these words.

In this article, I would like to describe another approach. When we remember that Christ speaks this prayer to His Father and invites us to use the same words if we want to pray, we can then enter into a mood in which the Son addresses the Father. One way of doing this is to endeavour to immerse oneself in the Christ, Who speaks these

¹ Berlin 28th January 1907 and Karlsruhe, 4th February, 1907.

² Dornach, 20th September, 1913.

³ Oslo, 5th October 1913; Oslo 6th October 1913; and Cologne, 17th December, 1913.

⁴ St Matthew, Chapter 6; St Luke, Chapter 11.

words, and be carried by The One Who speaks to The One Who has spoken, and Who now listens, The Father God. This is a gesture of knowing-trust, of faith, of loving, selfless submission to a mighty reality, a reality beyond me. But there is also another way, an inner way. With no less humility and reverence, I can recognize in this prayer that the Christ in me addresses the Father in me. Within me the voice of the Becoming addresses the Created World. What I am not yet, approaches what I already am. The Future encounters the Past within me. That encounter is the Present, and I can know it with presence of mind. Intuitively.

This approach may help us with the enigma of the third petition. What is the sin a father can commit? A man who is a father may make many mistakes, but as a father there is only one error: to deny the child. The only un-fatherly act is to assert paternity in such a way as to suppress the child, to claim paternal rights and privileges that disable the child, to affirm a self-omnipotence that prevents the child from growing up and fulfilling its role.

There is, of course, no suggestion that God the Father is liable to succumb to this temptation. But which of us is free from it? The Father principle in my little soul sometimes prefers things to stay as they are, better the devil you know, the comfort of the familiar, habits, prudence, Health and Safety, don't rock the boat, let sleeping dogs lie. Can we recognize in these all too human soul gestures a preference for the status quo and a denial of what the future might be offering? The hallowed doctrine of precedent is the institutionalization of this calcifying attitude. And nowhere do we more clearly see how pernicious it is than when fear of setting a precedent inhibits us from doing what is obviously right in a particular case. If the Mystery of Golgotha has one consequence it is that the future does not have to be like the past.

When I utter the words "Lead us not into temptation" I sense that I am admonishing the old order in my soul not to deny what it has itself given birth to, the beginning of a new direction. When the Son in me speaks these words to the Father in me I remember that the

role of the father is to nourish, nurture, support and set free what comes to birth through me, to trust it, not to hang on to it and not to try and control its destiny. This impulse to acknowledge the Christ within is described by St Paul in verse 20 of the second chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians.

After his visit to Cornwall in August 1924, Rudolf Steiner characterized an aspect of King Arthur that is both a surprise and at once a certain relief. Apart from the episodes of his youth and early kingship (when Merlin is always present and in charge) Arthur appears in all the tales as weak, and marginalized by more compelling individuals. Curiously this blatant lack of sovereignty has done little to diminish the affection he is popularly held in. Unexpectedly perhaps, Rudolf Steiner invites us to think of the original Arthur as a pre-Christian Priest-King whose Sun task was to prepare, with his 12 representatives of the Zodiac, for the coming Incarnation⁵, a microcosmic reflection on earth of the heavenly order. When the Sun-Being came to earth, the Arthurian company had fulfilled its task, and so no longer reflected the now changed cosmos. We can then understand the mood of sadness and purposelessness around Arthur in all the tales that place him in a medieval time. In the first of these lectures Rudolf Steiner makes a brief remark that suggests King Arthur even tried to resist the impending change that in truth his whole task had been a preparation for, but it was also a change which would then make him redundant in the part he had hitherto played. We are allowed to glimpse here also something of the overweening Father principle. It is then in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* that Arthur, so much lost in a fading memory of his past greatness, is given the opportunity to serve something that belongs to the future. In the conciliatory role he is asked to play between Itonje, Gawan, Gramoflanz, and Orgeluse, we can recognize the wisdom of not consigning an old hero to history, but inviting him also to serve the future, even in a

⁵ Torquay, 21st August, 1924; and London, 27th August, 1924.

modest and unspectacular way. This is a gift from the Grail that Parzival at this stage unconsciously makes possible.

If we are permitted to suppose that Arthur was susceptible to the temptation of not wanting a change, then we can understand the weakness in the "residual", legendary Arthur and acknowledge the true, original Arthur, though he has been lost to all but clairvoyant sight. There is, however, in our modern literature that aims to satisfy the increasing appetite for spiritual substance a more disturbing celebration of the exclusive sovereignty of the Father.

On a first reading of Paulo Coelho's hugely popular "The Alchemist"⁶, it might seem indeed gratifying that the theme of a quest, with the wisdom that belongs to such an inner and outer path, is so beautifully described without needing to be religiously specific. Indeed, the story manages to embrace more than one faith in an apparently universal, humanistic gesture. More careful attention to the mood and the details reveals something else.

"The Alchemist" is full of wisdom, but it is almost all the wisdom that belongs to what we can discover in the already created world, not about the world we have to create. The path in "The Alchemist" is the path God has written for us, our walking the path enables us to discover what already exists, we are not creators, we are uncoverers. In the end the great treasure the boy finds is physical gold. This is such a giveaway! Old Sun-substance, already fashioned, spent, saved, hoarded, buried, and of predictable value. By its very form and substance this "treasure" confirms the earthly realm where human beings in the end may get to know the existing furniture, but then can merely rearrange it a little in the illusion of freedom that money gives. The most alluring "truths" in this book are based on the principle that there is the Great Unknown. The notion that a remote God has prepared a path for us and that all is already written is seductive because in the end everything is as it is, there are things we can't know, and the wise man accepts that.

⁶ Republished by HarperCollins, London, 2002.

Where in this "alchemical" quest are the consequences or opportunities that flow from the Mystery of Golgotha? Is it not necessary that these redemptive possibilities are immediately connected with the name of Christ. (Parzival never hears this name but nevertheless awakens to the reality of this Being most effectively.) But if there is no sense of the creative, transforming and initiative-taking human spirit, then we can discern the gesture of a Father who claims exclusive rights over his children's lives, and sometimes allows them the illusion of freedom. An essential aspect of Christ is that we find and recognize Him within us, not outside, and that He endows us with the experience that each one of us has the power to change ourselves and the world, through His power. He has given His power so selflessly that we experience it within us, as ours. This understanding of the human potential and of Christ does not deny the great God Himself, but recognizes that our next step in our growing relationship to Him begins within us and with His power that we recognize as part of ourselves. This is not in this book. This book is more a revelation of the unfathomable Greatness of God in a striving human being, rather than an affirmation of our free, conscious, creative and transformative potential.

Shakespeare's last and greatest hero, Prospero, is an alchemist of our time. The vindictive, manipulative, self-deluding aspects of this man are undeniable, but, much more significantly, he begins to transform himself. If he was the perfect magus some take him for he would be anachronistic. His alchemy is in his beginning to realize his potential to change himself. Miranda's absolute preparedness for what she suddenly encounters when she is fifteen unmistakably attests to the paternal capacities Prospero must have evolved to meet his growing child's needs. We cannot imagine his ducal life in Milan prepared him to be father, mother, cook, dressmaker, nurse, companion and teacher of a child. We can sense how Miranda's changing needs called forth the corresponding abilities and metamorphosis in her father in the significantly cosmic period of twelve years. All this he must have evolved for her unconsciously,

out of a kind of sensitive parental versatility that he was obviously predisposed to. Outwardly he is a tyrant, possessed of the illusion that he is the architect of the liaison between Miranda and Ferdinand, and slightly obsessed with a mission for chastity that is obviously superfluous in the innocent encounter of this young couple, whose destiny it is that Prospero has indeed served, but not designed.

But all this unevolved stuff is not all Prospero is made of. Ariel reflects to him Prospero's own innate, hitherto unrecognized, capacity for change. Something is born within him that enables him to let go of what he had held on to, to dissolve what he had clung to, and to acknowledge what he had denied. He frees Ariel, he forgives his brother without knowing what that will mean, and acknowledges Caliban as part of himself. And he relinquishes his old magic arts, without knowing how he will manage without them. This wonderful change in Prospero leads in the first instance, not to an enlightened Father, but to a forgiving Brother. And we can sense how the Child unconsciously took her Father through the rhythmic processes of metamorphosis that prepared him for this great change. There are not so many father-son relationships in Shakespeare's plays, but the several father-daughter relationships culminate in this last play in a dynamic which shows how the child Prospero had begotten then prepared him to give birth to a new and renewing step. Prospero becomes a "Father" again at the end of the play by generating something new.

How many opportunities do we lose by preferring what we already know and not realizing that the future is asking something else of us? The principle of prudence is very often a pretext for not taking a risk. If we trust someone on the basis of their track-record, an essentially backward-looking perspective, it is more mathematical probability than trust. True trust in the future is based on faith in the unpredictable capacity of a person to be better than he so far has been. And maybe that potential transformation needs the loving sunlight of someone else's "imprudent" trust in what seems to be a

highly improbable future!

No doubt there are other theological and spiritual interpretations of this petition not to be led into temptation, and perhaps they also find their source in the all-renewing divine inner presence. And maybe they too affirm that the greatest fulfillment of The Father lives in the recognizing of the Son.

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Physics and Time

Nick Thomas

Time is a topical subject as the Large Hadron Collider (or LHC for short) in Europe is to be switched on this year, possibly ushering in – it is claimed – time travel. The LHC is a particle accelerator that will cause protons to collide at such an enormous speed that mini-black holes and wormholes, amongst other exotic entities, may be produced. It has been surmised that if tiny wormholes are produced they will enable people from the future to travel back to our time. A bold claim indeed, which has even led to the suggestion that facilities should be provided for the time travellers when they arrive!

This whole scenario challenges the philosophy lying behind our current conception of time, and particularly the way time is thought of in the science of physics. Essentially time is supposed to be a dimension alongside the three dimensions of space such that in principle we could travel back and forth in it as in H G Wells' novel *The Time Machine*. Wormholes are "tunnels" across space and time which, it is thought, could enable this to happen. Hence the interest in the possibility that the LHC could produce tiny wormholes, as they would provide a kind of leverage for future more technically advanced civilisations to get back to our time.

Our direct experience of time is, though, quite unlike the concept of a "uniform flowing time" as in physics. When we are enjoying ourselves time goes by in a flash, while if we are bored or in pain it veritably crawls. We may dream a long and complex sequence of events in a fraction of a second, as when a bang wakes us up, preceded by an apparently long dream leading to our being shot. Here time would appear to be reversed as well as highly compressed. Clearly, then, our *experience* of time depends upon our consciousness, for the examples cited all relate to differing states – joy, pain, dreaming. The idea of objects going backwards in time is

entertained also in physics, for particles called positrons are thought to be electrons going backwards in time, for example.

Before Einstein, time was thought to flow uniformly and to be absolute, that is the same for all observers anywhere in the universe. This was measured by the rotation of the Earth which was also, quite reasonably, supposed to be uniform and steady due to its enormous mass. So-called Universal Time was used by astronomers to date events based on that. However when atomic clocks were invented it was found in the middle of the last century that the Earth's rotation is not after all absolutely steady, so corrections had to be made to Universal Time, and then Ephemeris Time was invented which is supposed to be ideally uniform. The slight variations in the rate of rotation of the Earth are probably caused by large masses falling inwards in the molten regions of its interior, just as a skater's rotation will speed up if he lowers his arms.

However, despite this concept of uniformly flowing time, scientists also think that when an object is moving very fast, time slows down for it. Clocks on a spaceship travelling near the speed of light will tick very slowly compared with other clocks. All processes are slowed down, including biological processes and the beating of the human heart. Moreover there is strong experimental evidence to support this idea. Einstein's equations predict this phenomenon, and experimental evidence accords well with his equations. What the evidence demonstrates is that *processes slow down on rapidly moving objects*, indeed on all moving objects, but the effect is tiny unless the speed is very great. Einstein went further and said not only that processes slow down, but also that time itself slows down for rapidly moving objects. The author has taken issue with this.¹ Einstein also treated time as a dimension, so that the world view arising from his theories is of a static four-dimensional universe, where one dimension appears to us to be different due to our consciousness, and becomes a reference that makes it seem that

¹ See the "Volatile" page on www.nct.anth.org.uk.

changes occur in space.

Thus we arrive at consciousness in relation to time by another route, one theoretical and the other experiential. However we regard time, then, it seems that it cannot be divorced from consciousness. But consciousness is one of the great unknowns for science and indeed has been described as the Holy Grail of psychology and physiology. We will now approach the subject from this direction.

Rudolf Steiner extended the concept of evolution beyond that of the physical body to embrace our more subtle aspects including consciousness itself.² Indeed the highest level of evolution accessible to us is that of consciousness, and we can distinguish several types or layers of it: our everyday consciousness which is objective, dream consciousness which is imaginative and often chaotic, deep sleep in which we appear not to be conscious at all, and even below that the trance state as in hypnotism. Steiner found that our consciousness has evolved from the latter machine-like stage through the other two up to our current wide-awake objective consciousness. Furthermore we are destined in the future to attain three higher states. That the dream state is a different kind of consciousness can be appreciated by noting that while dreaming the often illogical structure of events *does not seem so at the time*, but only when reviewed after we have awoken. The trance state differs because a hypnotised person, if left alone, will pass into the deep sleep state. A foreshadowing of the next stage of consciousness occurs in the phenomenon of lucid dreaming, where psychologists have found that people can "wake up" while still dreaming. Steiner describes how this can also arise as an outcome of spiritual training, often being the first result of that training. In the future a kind of alchemy of consciousness will endow the creative richness of the dream with objectivity, leading to what he calls Imaginative consciousness.

Now we come to time. When our evolution began Steiner found through his spiritual research that time also began i.e. just when we

² Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Esoteric Science*.

started out with the trance consciousness. To say that "time began" seems itself somewhat paradoxical! In that case how could anything have gone before, as implied by the word "began"? One way of approaching the whole affair is to view time as a kind of relationship. What does "four o'clock" mean practically speaking? It is – for example – when the train leaves, when the guard, the driver, the signalman, the passengers and so forth enter into a definite relationship. The Sun and Earth too. We usually turn this on its head and say time exists and all those people relate to each other through it. But we could equally well say that all the beings involved have established a relationship which is "four o'clock". Time arises, on this view, *from* the relationships of beings. This is a less abstract and perhaps more spiritual view of the matter. It immediately throws light on the subjective aspects of time e.g. enjoyment arises from relationships – with others or some engaging occupation. Furthermore, we note that the more we are "lost" in enjoyment the faster time flies, whereas in boredom and pain we are present egotistically to a high degree – "unenjoying" the whole experience! Joy approaches the dream state while the opposite enters rather too fully into the prosaic objective consciousness. In deep sleep we are unaware of the passage of time, as although we are dimly aware of time having elapsed when we awake, our estimate is highly unreliable e.g. when we awake after an hour's sleep and think it must be morning already. We have no *conscious* relationships with beings in deep sleep, so the experience of time is absent.

So it seems that the perceived passage of time depends on how our self or ego is related to its environment, constant awareness of self in a process slowing down that passage, forgetfulness of self speeding it up, while absence of self as in deep sleep does not relate to it at all. Presumably that applies *a fortiori* to trance. Thus the four major stages in the evolution of consciousness are intimately related to the experience of time. Now time was a new kind of relationship established when our evolution began, so we can after all legitimately speak of what preceded that, as then there were other

relationships but not that we call time. No longer do we regard time as some kind of "dimension", but rather the highly complex result of all the relationships of a special kind existing between beings. But surely all change takes time, a fact so obvious that it seems impossible to think of any process or change without time being involved. We must now look at this more critically.

Essentially time is a pure concept. We do not have any percept with time as its content. We perceive that change has occurred in what we call the passage of time, but that so-called passage is a judgement based on the concept. We do not perceive that passage either. We only perceive change. Likewise space is a pure concept as again we do not perceive space but rather objects which we say are in it because we have that concept. In lectures on science Steiner suggested that velocity is real while space and time are abstractions derived from it, which accords well with the above observation. For a concept is abstract if it has no directly corresponding percept. We perceive an aircraft moving across the sky, and based on those concepts we then judge that it has moved in space and has taken time to do so. What we have perceived is movement. It is change that is primary: *must* we invoke the concepts of time and space for any and every perceived change? Now we *do* experience timeless change, namely when we have a new idea. Like a flash of lightning the idea arises. It does not creep slowly above some kind of mental horizon. We may have an intimation of an idea before grasping it, but the whole point is we do *not* have it until we do grasp it. We change, as suddenly we have a new idea and thus become a different being (perhaps ever so slightly, perhaps drastically). As space and time are invoked by the act of thinking, so thinking must be prior to those concepts, indeed outside them. We can, then, approach the idea of change without time even in our own inner experience. Thinking does not take place in space, but inwardly, and its most important acts are timeless. That is not to say that no preparation has been involved, but the final act is timeless. Thus time is not after all essential for *all* change. Essentially the spiritual is timeless, and

thinking (as an activity) is the first directly spiritual experience available to us at present. But the world of space and matter does involve time, as understood above. Even then it is secondary as an epiphenomenon of relationships.

So far we have considered thinking and feeling in relation to time, but what of the will? Perhaps the first observation here is to contrast people able to be on time with those who are usually late. This requires rather intimate observation, but it can be seen that whether or not one is on time is related to the will to be so. People who are normally late usually have no real will to be punctual. It may seem obvious when thus stated, but a deeper aspect comes to light when one has the will to be on time but faces obstructions. If the will is sufficiently strong the genuine magic of the will becomes apparent, for in many cases those obstructions serve in the end only to prevent one being early. The author has often experienced arriving exactly on time in such a case, when the situation otherwise seemed hopeless. Of course there are exceptions! But a relationship between will and time can be perceived in this way. Exceptions can also appear beneficial in hindsight, where other relationships were active which were more important than the egoistic will of the individual. None of this is really surprising as relationships are ultimately based on will. The deeper spiritual reason lies in the fact that the beings who created our first beginnings when time began were none other than the spirits of will. Will causes change, which we are claiming is prior to time rather than the reverse. Rudolf Steiner pointed out that the laws of the spiritual realms are quite different from those in the everyday world, and he singled out cause and effect as an important example of laws we are used to here but which are quite different in higher worlds. We should not extrapolate the laws of this world into a higher one, or we will be misled. The preconception that all change involves time is an example, based as it is on the notion of cause and effect. In higher worlds we are concerned with "eternity", where the relationships between beings lack that relationship called "time". But change occurs nevertheless, albeit of a different kind

from spatial change. We can now perhaps envisage a group of beings undergoing evolution without time. They would never be conscious of a "before" and "after", only of what stage they were at. They would not be able to say "earlier we were less perfect, but now we are more perfect", only "we are at a certain level of perfection".

The examples in physics we started out with all concern a world based on a consciousness rooted in time. The current scientific paradigm excludes the ideas of "being", "thinking as a spiritual activity" and "will", and moreover cannot handle consciousness. The ideas of wormholes and time travel are based on beautiful mathematical abstractions which exclude the very spiritual relationships that underpin time. We are left, however, with a question over universally shared time. The watches worn by a partygoer and a bored person remain in agreement despite their different experiences of time. The watches have no higher consciousness, and nor does any other "objective" measure of time. The relationship they share as time goes back to the trance-like start of things when time began, but is nevertheless mediated by the very high beings who created time itself. Presumably they mediate the objective relationship as the "ground" of all others.

We conclude, then, that time is not a "dimension" that can be travelled through, but a relationship between spiritual beings that depends upon consciousness.

Time and Music

Gregers Brinch

I have a piano student who started learning the instrument a few years back at the end of his A-level studies. In the space of a year he reached a considerable fluency and capacity for expression on the piano. At the age of 18 the time was right for him to discover some gold nuggets in the form of masterpieces he could technically manage, if not quite master yet ... and this made him an easy student to teach. He had been fired up by the works of composers, whose time for living was long past, but whose works can be forever resurrected, like the rubbing of the lamp that brings forth the genie within, again and again. His discovery was exciting and he encountered subtle differences and nuances in the use of the basic musical elements of rhythm and harmony and melody that set the music of one composer apart from that of another.

We stand to gain deep insights, that can hardly be put into words, when we immerse ourselves in the musical language of different composers, especially of course that of the great masters such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner, Mahler, and Schoenberg to name some obvious ones. It takes time before we can absorb and genuinely experience the nuances that separate one composer from another. And even when we have come to recognize their different 'styles', it is altogether a different matter to come to an imaginative understanding of their music, as each piece in turn has a unique journey to offer the listener.

Just recently my student (who has resumed lessons after taking a couple of years to do business studies) came across a piece by Chopin on the internet site Youtube – a short video of Wladimir Horowitz playing the Valse Brillante (Opus 34 no.1) live to a distinguished audience at the White House on Feb 26 1978. The

playing is superior and the music leaves the audience spellbound. The piece is by no means a tour de force of virtuoso bravura. Horowitz, aged 79, who could have played it in his sleep, steps back from the role of world famous performer and allows the power of the music to render the audience as equals. The music is intimate in its restless melancholy, simple and yet forceful, containing an almost naïve expression of mourning the loss of an age gone by, an age of classical beauty and immaculate proportion vanished, forfeited for ever to make way to an age of corruption and selfishness (1831). Perhaps in some ways poignant to the historical moment in 1978 ... the era of Kennedy, Luther King and Hammerskjöld surely gone for good!

Some masters seem to have been able to tune into the mood of their time to such a degree that they are able to lend the 'world soul' a voice, with which to lament or otherwise express itself. But, although the historical dates may more or less coincide, for a Beethoven, at the end of his chaotic life and frenzied career, the experience of that *Weltschmerz* is different, to the experience of a Chopin at the beginning of his career. The combination of this empathy with the 'world soul', the artist's own biographical moment, and the actual historical period, gives rise to a particular musical expression. This is then later classified as a style, a label given by musicologists – keen to bring order their subject. 'Styles', however, very often overlap and are really the mutual influences of striving individuals, who recognize and benefit from each others' achievements at their common workface, music. The emergence of a new style is always an intense moment of creativity in an individual, where leaps are performed. And yet the metamorphosis from an older mode of expression can be clearly perceived. What is it that enables the individual to make these leaps, but an intimate working with the mystery of time ... ?

My student is now keenly learning the notes of the Valse Brillante and has to grapple with the combination of musical-technical challenges that a piece such as this poses. This is where we

truly have a chance to learn about the nature of time.

Music is a vessel for the experience of time. It sculpts feelings within the human soul through the medium of the outer acoustic phenomena we call sound. It moulds time through apparent special qualities such as pitch (i.e. high and low), contraction and expansion, slow and fast, and light and dark, none of which are truly acoustic phenomena. Music takes us through journeys that simulate the pure feeling content of a situation without giving us a reference to any specific context. It is elevated above the actual and brings us into a realm of the archetypal, thus being at the same time universal and intimate in its adaptability to every life situation of every listener who devotes their attention to it. Music becomes a kind of time/culture machine ... we become time and culture travelers when we perform and listen to music with utmost attention.

The performer, as well as the composer of music is up against the enigma of time almost constantly, as the nature of his inner dialogue with the music has a direct effect on the way the music unfolds, as well as the way he is able to perform and indeed compose. I should add the middle realm that lies between and connects these two activities, which often separate composers from musicians ... the act of 'playing' – of improvising! Improvising is indeed the ultimate confrontation with time and its properties for both the composer and the musician.

Time we normally perceive in its threefold dimensions of past, present and future. We prefer to understand time in terms of a linear progression, as we move from a present that soon belongs to the past and is thereby set in stone and irreversible, into a present in the future, which is still open and subservient to our will and choosing. Music has the uncanny knack of teaching us that the very opposite is true. Through music we must learn that the future wishes to determine the present. It guides our listening to such an extent, that we learn to inwardly anticipate, even create the future event before it has become audible, and indeed, what comes into the present out of the future, has the possibility of changing the quality and meaning

even of what was in the past. So the performing of music in such a mode must be an event, a happening that is unfolding before the listener as if for the first time. This challenges the performer to play the music in an improvisatory way. Experiences of such 'free' performances are indeed rare and to be cherished.

The performers who practice this way of music-making learn to step into the very centre of the moment, where the streams of time past and future are concurrent. They are indeed capable of creating time to such an extent that we, as listeners, feel ourselves transported into a state where time is no longer relevant as a means of measurement; time becomes more like a space. In this situation our soul is taken through a process, so real that it can indeed heal itself of traumas and imbalances. This in turn has a beneficial effect on the whole physical/spiritual organism of the human being.

The act of singing in particular can give the singer a profound experience of creating time and losing the ability to think, as that which thinks is wholly bound up with the act of singing. One loses an aspect of self and yet all the faculties that enable the selfless functioning of the individual are activated. In producing the sound that carries a song or co-creates a harmony, the singer is indeed touched by something of a spiritual nature, in another time dimension. On ending the activity of singing there is often a certain feeling of embarrassment or even shame, which is best held in silence. This feeling can also give rise to laughter or frivolity. As a result, one quite easily goes from the sublime to the ridiculous in music.

Usually professional performers do not allow themselves to attempt such a free and intuitive mode of performing outlined above, as the risks encountered are too great. The danger is that the music starts to manifest a 'will of its own' to such an extent that the performer feels impelled to follow this will, this intention in the music. Thus the performer would need to relinquish their set and rehearsed interpretation of music. Taking such risks puts the performer under a great deal of strain, as the temptation is to

evaluate what they are doing. Experiencing the music as a living being with its own intentionality provokes an excitement, which then easily prompts a retreat into a brain-bound reflection. This sets off the self-evaluation by the performer of his performing, the result of which is that the music starts to fall apart like a house of cards! In addition the concert hall is hardly an intimate enough space, in which to include the audience in such a sacred journey, and the pressures of the touring schedule of regular performers is too great to attempt such freshness night after night.

When performers know exactly how they will perform, the tension created by the presence of an audience is challenge enough; to absorb the 'true being' of the music as well, is an almost superhuman task. Those who manage to accomplish this mode of music-making are often drawn to improvisation, since there the player has the freedom to control the music even if it is starting to unfold a life of its own. Improvising musicians can balance their following of the music as it unfolds, with their bringing changes in mood, tempo, harmonic and melodic patterns etc. Jazz, as well as Indian classical music, teaches the musician to deal with this experience of the music as a being.

Paradoxically, performers in the recording studio often experience the greatest freedom to access the music in a spontaneous and intuitive way. They can play around more as the 'takes' are saved and can be edited later. When the right atmosphere is engendered by those present a new and deeper interpretation can at times be facilitated. Tension usually comes about when the technique starts to unravel, as the performer is in danger of losing concentration as a result of stopping and starting continuously. If, however, the concentration can be sustained, and the individuals present are sensitive to the creative process unfolding before them, a truly remarkable union of performer with work of art can occur.

The experience of time as outlined above is hard to achieve, let alone manage when achieved. It makes a master of the performer. Anyone of a lesser proficiency cannot handle the tension and energy

generated, cannot create the inner vessel out of utmost attention, coupled with ease and tranquility – even at the most exciting passages – to contain the music in all its otherness. They will either lose themselves in anticipation of the future, or see the future slip out of their reach as they dwell on the sweetness of the present a moment ago!

A composer draws on different forces with which to sculpt time. His challenge is to know time as it passes for the listener with such precision that he can gauge how much time is needed for an element to find its target, ie, the deeper soul of the listener. Yet he must craft the musical material in such a refined way that it does not become tedious or over-repetitive, or indeed so changeable that the listener cannot follow and get a sense of the form of the music at all.

The difficulty with composing is that in exploring a theme or figure or a passage of a particular mood or quality the composer goes through a process lasting sometimes days or weeks – yielding eventually 15 seconds of music. The difference in time of the process experienced by the composer to the final experience offered to the listener, or indeed the performer, is so extreme that it is a miracle the music can ever be performed as the composer imagines it. The composed piece of music is so highly compromised and condensed, so full of tension and experience, that it can take many years for the performer or listener to come to an understanding of the music in spite of becoming familiar with it and/or the technical hurdles being long since tackled.

The composer is also up against the experience of time if he starts to experience that the piece has a life of its own and is indeed inspired, rather than merely constructed. If the composer starts to recognize that there is a being indwelling the already composed music, despite its incompleteness, he has the choice whether or not he will adhere to the nature and intentionality of that being. It may indeed demand passages that render the music more familiar to the listener, hence robbing the composer of his originality. Because the composer has the ultimate degree of control in a musical process,

(the improvising performer knows he has to please the audience at least to a certain extent, and give them what they anticipate, so as not to lose them altogether) he is thereby tempted to hold on to that control at all costs. The temptation offers a sense of supreme originality, with the possibility of never giving in to an impulse to craft a turn of phrase that is reminiscent of any other work. The composer is free to craft his music in such a manner, that it is indeed like nothing anyone has ever heard!

In the past century this freedom has been exercised in music to an unprecedented extent, so much so that the audience in some cases has shrunk to a very few, and the premiere heard in the concert hall is more often performed in lip-service to the genre rather than by popular demand of the audience. We will suffer yet another onslaught of cacophonous shocks by a contemporary composer whom we don't know and may soon forget once the concert is over if the conductor is great and the classical or romantic masterpiece which follows is one of our favourites. Has the composer lost the audience to his own peril? If no-one will listen, who will perform and what, in the end, is the purpose of composing at all?

Well, some of us just have to do it! The question is too burning: What is music and what are the beings we encounter through it? Beings who can bring the qualities of another culture or time so poignantly into our experience? How is it that music can seemingly be so universal and yet touch us so personally at the same time?

If the stress which we all experience so strongly affecting our daily lives, is as bound up with our experience of time as we claim it is, surely music and the practice of it could contribute to a cure for our ailment.

In the Grip of Time

John B. Thomson

*Time is like eternity and eternity like time
so long as you don't make a difference.*

Angelus Silesius

Memories, habits, longings, anticipations and predictions bind us to time. Our yesterdays have shaped us, our tomorrows beckon and promise. The present moment as it balances between past and future may expand into both or contract to a point that is already past. The threefoldness of time – past, present and future belongs to the I, bearer of consciousness. Can there be time without there being consciousness? As I look to the past all seems necessary, determined, settled, in place. I may change my perspective of a past event but I cannot change the event. "It could have been different" is an empty phrase expressive only of regret, blame or vanished hope. I am surrounded by the consequences of past deeds, my own and others'. From the past I can find a base to move forward or uncertain ground that threatens present and future.

When I turn to the future I face possibilities, probabilities, openness bringing the wind of freedom. I can act wilfully into the future, accept what approaches or be carried by events. Expectation, curiosity, not-knowing, apprehension, avoidance are on offer. Things from the past I may want to forget; things in the future I may want to secure. Both are strong tendencies in us, escape routes from the present.

Describing the present and being present is like describing God. The negative way is to say what God is not. Let us now say what the present is not, which means what being present is not. There is no baggage, no fear or anxiety, no bargaining, no reward, no achievement or accumulation, no sorrow or remorse. As companion

to being present there is always light and compassion. Being present is both a source and a vision. The present is in time but it also harbours the timeless. It is not met on the narrow road of time when we are burdened with the past or wrapped in fantasies. Then time uses us.

According to Thomas Aquinas, Boethius defined eternity as *the instantaneously whole and complete possession of endless life*. Aquinas then comments:

Time is successively actualized in a present instant which is never complete. So to deny that eternity is time Boethius called it *instantaneously whole* and to deny temporal instantaneity he called it *complete*. Just as the notion of time starts from the notion of the present moment that passes so the notion of eternity starts from the idea of an instant that abides.

In Wittengestein we find,

If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.

In recent years many books have been published and workshops convened offering guidance on living in the present, in the Now. This is no mere reaction against the feverish, pressured, time-bound lives of people today. We say that illness, misfortune, debt or just things are chronic meaning incurable, permanent, or bad and can't be got rid of. They are in the grip of time. In many other areas of living we may feel we are in the grip of time – work, home, school can be ruled by the next thing that has to be done. Our cars, computers and mobiles open the flood-gates to more and more mental and soul stuff pouring through the same narrow river banks that it is not surprising the levees burst at times. To suppose that it is

technology that threatens is a case of mistaken identity; for technology is the creation of human beings. What lives as aspiration in humanity gets projected into our technology. It offers many comforts as well as dangers, and it obliges us to find a deeper insight into the nature of time. The techniques of modern civilisation engage us in a framework of time-spans, either propelling us forward so that each moment is lost in succeeding ones, or holding us in a trap with no exit. A hidden prompting in the soul of our society insists on faster trains and planes, faster communications, faster marketing, instant decisions in public affairs. Distances once measured by the pace of a man or a horse or the wind speed of a boat have shrunk. Paris and Rome or London and New York once several weeks apart are now separated by a few hours.

The technology already under way in the 18th century has radically transformed the human environment. The city child grows up in a fabricated nature of electronic pictures and voices which rivals nature itself. As the space has been transformed so also has time. The rhythmic processes of seasons, sun and moon no longer rule us. In spite of many anxious voices humanity has generally embraced the world of its creation. Honoured habits from the past and its ways of seeing and of being are disappearing among the vast populations of India and China.

The feverish haste that time has assumed is linked to the almost universal longing to fulfil desires in this life-time which not long ago were undreamed of. The scientific revolution has not only provided a cornucopia of material blessings but also a cosmology of compelling logic. But unlike its material gifts this promises no comfort, for this cosmos is indifferent and hostile to a transient humanity distracted by its toys.

The profound nature of this contradiction is increasingly impressed on the modern psyche, engaged as it is, simultaneously, in saving the planet, in economic growth and in coping with radical conflicts of needs, attitudes and beliefs.

Perhaps one of the most decisive tests for people today is in the

encounter with these contradictions. In the challenge they pose, a new understanding of the human situation is proffered. Theodor Adorno, a leading member of the Frankfurt School, escaped with colleagues from Nazi Germany to America. As a philosopher and sociologist he was forced to reflect on the horrendous events he lived through. Among his 'Reflections on an Injured Life' is a short piece on Time. This was prompted by sleepless nights, painful hours spent with no end in sight as the dawn receded in his futile attempt to forget the empty passage of time.

Unable to calm his thoughts he wastes the healing source that night provides and even if he were able with closed eyes not to see anything, he knows it is too late and morning will soon startle him. Like a convict condemned to die he wastes his last moments unused. What appears in such a contraction of time is the counter-image of fulfilled time (erfüllten Zeit). If in the latter the power of experience can break the spell of time gathering past and future into the present then in these hurried sleepless nights time produces unbearable horror. Life becomes the moment not when it dissolves time but when it falls into Nothingness aware of its futility faced with the dreary endlessness of time. In the too-loud ticking of the clock the aeons can be heard mocking the tiny human lifespan. The hours already gone in seconds before we have grasped them, when we have been carried away by them as they vanish, announce that we, together with all our memories, are doomed to be forgotten in the cosmic night. People today have become powerfully aware of this. In a state of complete helplessness the time still left to the individual seems just a brief reprieve.

Such pessimism can be excused by the sleepless nights or a world under fascism or after Hiroshima. But it is worth looking carefully at

this statement for its peculiar logic and characteristic omissions and assumptions. It is nevertheless representative of a widespread view today. The cosmology which has emerged from the progress of science underlies Adorno's thinking. It must seem presumptuous for a layman to challenge any aspect of the intricate web of thought resting on the researches of modern astronomy; but anyone searching for meaning is obliged to examine disparities, contradictions and blind assumptions presented by contemporary pundits. In fact the challenge to assumptions of the mechanistic view of the universe is coming now from the scientific community itself.

Adorno knows of the virtue of sleep and of the healing power of night, but the turmoil and futility of things dominate the stage and become the normal. The abnormal is taken to be the normal. As a creative writer Adorno knew about fulfilled time but chooses to ground his world view on the unbearable horror induced by sleeplessness. In different ways sleeplessness can be seen as a typical modern condition; the huge consumption of sleeping pills, the 24-hour wakefulness of the market, the media and the internet and the view that sleep is a waste of time.

Adorno's cosmic night, presumably, is when there is no human consciousness to bring light. Who or what are the aeons that mock? This is the Hamlet gesture, the defiant response to an unheeding universe. There is a difference. Hamlet knew he didn't know. Now we know we know, for the progress of science can assure us. It has established the whole history of time from the singularity of the big bang to the final unavoidable heat death of the universe. In the singularity the laws of physics do not apply, we are told. An instant later they are established for ever. To deal with gaps and contradictions new hypotheses are proposed. In one of his interesting talks Martin Rees, astronomer royal, described the cosmos as a multiverse, that is a sequence of interpenetrating universes. The one we inhabit is the one we know. The others are by definition unknowable but their existence serves to explain the existence of the known one. Although theories of the universe have changed since

Adorno wrote (he died in 1969) nevertheless they retain a persisting message. Humanity is a transitory passenger of no consequence to the prescribed destiny of the universe. 'Destiny' seems inappropriate as we are referring to a process similar to what might take place in a retort or a cloud chamber.

By what means have the two worlds of the cosmos and man, the construct of science and the realm of the moral split apart so absolutely? What has compelled us to make a prison for human beings of a cosmos which as far as we can ascertain we are the only ones to know? For Aristotle the beginning of knowledge is wonder, for contemporaries the end of knowledge is despair and, according to the physicist, Steven Weinberg, meaninglessness. Fortunately human beings continue to search for meaning in spite of the assertions of cosmologists. The biologist Elisabet Sahtouris writes,

It seems to me more reasonable to project our life onto the entire universe than to project onto it mechanomorphism, our non-living machinery, the product of anthropos and therefore a truly *emerging* phenomenon rather than a fundamental one.

In the will perhaps more than in the head lives the impulse to awaken the self to a destiny, to meet and know the other in meaningful relationship, to dwell with nature in conscious understanding. Is this naïve defiance in the face of the cosmic night? Supposing Adorno had pursued his reflections on the nature of sleep and the healing power of night, would that have led him to the same place? The Adorno who wrote so well about lyrical poetry and about the culture industry is both present and absent in his thoughts on time. Present in the sense that an individual, a conscious self reveals his true being as he is capable, and absent in the sense that he has dismissed himself from the world he presumes to hold like an object. Presence and absence at the same time!

Adorno like many today has burdened his thoughts with

unexamined assumptions. Can we assume that the laws of physics are so permanent that we can confidently reckon backwards and forwards to big bang and big crunch? The immaterial thinking of the scientists provides the substance which holds and coheres their picture of the universe. No picture can be complete without including this immateriality. Strangely enough, the material world is conceived more and more to consist of resonances and vibrations rather than discrete particles. As science appears to dematerialise the physical world, it materialises thinking.

Yet this physical world seems finally a graveyard. Thanatos not Eros rules. Is this a choice which the human being can make? Is there an alternative? On what basis might it rest? It could be on the basis that there is no sure knowledge which does not embrace both man and the universe. To distort or diminish one is to falsify knowledge of the other. The scientific knowledge of the human cannot be a matter of measurement and experiment, rather of experience and the immeasurable. So they appear to stand irreconcilably apart. The science of the outer is objective, the inner is merely subjective. However, the quest for the present rests on the intuition that the outside also has an inside. Intuitions of feeling and thinking perceive the inside of the world, while we perceive the outside through the senses. In the inner being of man is reflected the whole universe in whose vast complexity nothing has been found to exist more complex than the human brain. In ancient spiritual tradition the microcosm mirrors the macrocosm. Some contemporary thinkers conceive consciousness not matter as the ground principle of the universe. Then in the consciousness of the enlightened self can be gathered all the laws and structures of the universe, its evolutionary paths and creative deeds to make a material homeland interpenetrated with consciousness so that humanity can have a destiny.

Especially in our time we become acutely aware of the intimate and inescapable bond between humanity and the universe. The new realisation that the future of humanity depends on how it relates to

the world expresses that awareness. The bond is there on the material level, but also on the levels of consciousness and living spirit. It is in the engagement with the world that the self discovers its own being. The one who goes beyond the role of observer to fully understand his role as a prime actor comes eventually to know the world and the self. In his scientific studies Goethe wrote:

Man knows himself only to the extent that he knows the world; he becomes aware of himself only within the world, and aware of the world only within himself. Every object well contemplated opens up a new organ within us.

To undertake this path of knowing self and world is to transform time. The strict linear measurement of time doesn't comprehend the lived experience or processes of enfolding and unfolding which are revealed in nature. The 18th century vision of the universe as a vast clockwork finally rejected the human being as a participant in the world he studies. In the hospital garden where I sit waiting for a friend the sun shines on a sun-dial making a shadow-line across a scale. Large cumulus clouds drift across a blue sky and from time to time the shadow fades as cloud crosses the sun. I note that the dial is half-an-hour slow, not accurately orientated, I suppose. My shadow also moves and fades and we share the same warmth and slight breeze – a little example of a participation in nature that has been sacrificed. My wrist watch is battery powered, more accurate, but I am not in the process.

Nature processes are rhythmic – from the infinitely slow 26 thousand year cycle of the stars to yearly, seasonal and daily recurrences. Everywhere we find inbreathing and outbreathing rhythms in earth, plant, animal and human. There are slow rhythms in the metabolism, rapid ones in nerve and brain and a balanced pace in heart and lung. Growth and decay, birth and death, creation and destruction form the landscape of time's geography. The Greek god Chronos (time) devours his offspring and the mother Rhea (flowing

one?) saves Zeus who creates a new Olympus. The god Krishna declares in the Bhagavad-gita, "I am time, the destroyer of worlds", and builds a new world in the heart of Arjuna. Time is change and change is time. Change can be mere substitution, one stone for another, one species for another. But the essence of time is unfolding and enfolding, evolution and involution, metamorphosis, changing forms as leaf forms become flower forms in which there is transformation within identity.

Being present is opening a door into this essence, intuiting the interconnectedness that embraces all the specifics of the great universe and all the specifics of man. Being present is an act of consciousness on the human plane, but it is also an event on the world stage. The extraordinary magnitude of the scientific statement has to be met with the introspective depth and power of the author of the statement, the individual self. In the current cultural climate the self has little credibility in spite of the obvious fact that all knowledge is human knowledge and human minds form the ideas and beliefs out of which we act. The same self that embraces the knowledge of science, essentially the knowledge of matter today, is able to be open to the present.

Being present is being centred, that is, free from distraction and ego-drives. Intuitions are like perceptions but acknowledged as gifts; it is as if the hidden interweavings in the background of events become momentarily visible. It is not a specialist activity as in the science of matter. All necessary research instruments are at hand. Yet there are conditions which have to do with the inner development of the researcher. In the modern view-point science has nothing to do with morality; in the act of being present, everything. I am not referring to a morality founded on rules that have to be followed but rather on intuitive ethical perceptions the nature of which Rudolf Steiner described in his *Philosophy of Freedom*. The truest form of moral act is one disburdened by the objectives of the ego and which intuitively grasps what the situation needs.

Also in our everyday meeting with people or nature our

consciousness slides, loses its attention. An experience may simply leave its trace without being penetrated by our own understanding. But it is only after we have understood, fully grasped the meaning of it that we can call the experience real; otherwise, it remains dreamlike. Bringing an experience into full consciousness doesn't substitute for the experience or change it, it grants it reality. In describing the problem of knowledge Rudolf Steiner wrote the following,

Our daily experience becomes a real factor in our spiritual-psychic development and it proceeds out of what we call knowledge. Just as a magnet works on a group of iron filings, forming them into patterns which we recognise as the result of the action of the magnet on the filings, so that which is reflected in us as knowledge is at the same time a formative principle in us, working upon us, and enabling us to recognise the immortal, the eternal in ourselves.

Steiner seems to maintain that the research field in the area of soul-spirit is our everyday experience made real by the depth of our understanding and also that there is a force working behind these separate events uniting and combining them into coherent patterns so that the fullness of spirit reality is gradually revealed.

The practice of meditation which in different forms has become widespread in western societies can be defined as the activity of being present. It helps us to find balance in our life and bring order into our relation to time, to counter the too loud ticking of the clock and cool our feverish haste. It is also a path of discovery where a healthy understanding of the human situation in this world can be found. In addition to meditation there is another exploration much demanded in our time, that is the search for dialogue. This is the uncovering of relationship between I and You which dwells on the possibility of being present. I found this quote of Buber in a paper

by Otto Scharmer on Leadership. Buber writes,

Free is the man that wills without caprice. He believes in the actual, which is to say: he believes in the duality of the real duality, I and You. He believes in destiny and also that it needs him. It does not lead him, it waits for him. He must proceed toward it without knowing where it waits for him. He must go forth with his whole being: that he knows. It will not turn out the way his resolve intended it; but what he wants to come will come only if he resolves to do that which he can will. He must sacrifice his little will, which is unfree and ruled by things and drives, for his great will that moves away from being determined to find destiny. Now he no longer interferes, nor does he merely allow things to happen. He listens to what grows, to the way of Being in the world, not in order to be carried along by it but rather in order to actualise it in the manner in which it, needing him, wants to be actualised by him – with human spirit and human deed, with human life and human death. He believes, I said; but this implies: he encounters.

Buber seems to write: to believe in the actual is to encounter the actual, not a construct of our own. Belief is not meant as a special attitude, rather as a mode of relating, a way of standing on the ground we share with the other. Buber's You is the other person, but also nature and the divine.

Meditation and the search for dialogue belong to a new science in modern life. They enable us to transform our experience of time, not just the present but also the past and future. Turning to the past we find original and prior forms in anthropology and earth history which trace an evolving human consciousness that now awakens at an extraordinary moment in a long trajectory. In the cultivation of the present, the future, loaded as it seems with dangers and difficulties,

is no longer alien, no longer under a spell, it approaches us as collaborator in our deepest purposes.

Space, Time and Consciousness Money as Mirror of Human Experience

Arthur Edwards

In a self-contained [global] economic realm – which ... is not like a national economy bordering on others, where exports and imports can be carried on – three distinct domains arise, so far as money is concerned, those of loan money, purchase money and gift money ... In the social organism 'money as such' does not exist, there are only the three kinds of money ... it is with money that we master the economic process nowadays.¹

A new conception is needed, one which realises that the balancing of financial budgets in an economic body which has no neighbours – that is in a world without frontiers – can only be created by balancing the past, present and future of the economic body. The modern economy can no longer be based on economic systems which consider economic processes only in terms of space:- export and import, exchange of currency – transactions between separate nations. We have to change the terms of reference of present economic theory from space into time.²

... different kinds of money can differ from one another in more than one dimension ... in two distinct although not wholly unrelated dimensions: acceptability (or liquidity) and the expected behaviour (stability or variability) of its value.³

The Matter of Money

That money is not an object in itself, the most cursory enquiry

¹ Rudolf Steiner, *Economics, The World As One Economy* 1922.

² W J Stein, *The Economic Battlefield* 1933.

³ Hayek, *The Denationalisation of Money* 1976.

reveals. "What then is money?" one naturally asks; the answer requires space and time to elaborate. For if money is not an external phenomenon (though it may appear as such) nor the merely technical arrangements by which we conduct economic transactions, it must be linked in some way to human experience and the nature of the human being.

Money, of course, is a fact of life, and yet at the heart of its nature lies a conundrum that has puzzled and divided generations of economists, sociologists and moral philosophers. Among those puzzled, the Swedish chancellor Axel Oxenstierna spent his life trying to understand the nature of money only to admit as an old man that he knew as little about it as when he began; Gladstone declared in Parliament that not even love has made so many fools of men as pondering on the nature of money; Schumpeter⁴ admits that he was never able "to get his ideas on money straightened out to his own satisfaction".

As will soon become evident, observing monetary phenomena involves reconciling two positions that appear to exclude one another, although neither can be given up. The observer is brought into a tension that takes the intellect to its limit. This polarity can be felt in the description that Owen Barfield gives of Steiner's monetary economics:-

Money – materially speaking – is a commodity, but there is something which distinguishes it from all other commodities and that is, the universally accepted fiction that it does not wear out. ... Now it is characteristic of a commodity that it can be collected and stored, but ... in due course the commodity relapses into Nature. But an idea ... cannot be stored. For it does not exist in space and time at all. ... There is thus something self-contradictory

⁴ Schumpeter (1883-1950) Moravian economist and author of *History of Economic Analysis*.

in the very nature of money as it is conceived today. Nature and Spirit, inharmoniously combined, are perpetually striving asunder within it. Now as long as the money is passing freely from hand to hand and operating merely as a medium of exchange; as long as the money is being used as purchase-money – the evil effects of this self-contradiction are constantly being corrected. For on each purchase for consumption there is a destruction of economic values. But as soon as money begins to be stored, that is to say, as soon as it begins to take, by investment, the form of 'capital,' the self-contradiction begins to be effective and needs to be consciously controlled. For out of this self-contradictory element in the nature of money there arises the all-important principle which Steiner has called the tendency of capital to preserve itself. If the rate at which economic values are being created is out of proportion to the rate at which they are being destroyed, great masses of unassimilated capital collect and work havoc in the economic system, by blocking the circulation and exchange of commodities.⁵

Precise Thinking

While there may be no consensus as to the reference of the term, money's existence is not in dispute. There are even economists such as John Hicks and Wesley C. Mitchell for whom the study of money offers a reality check of a most instructive kind. Hicks says the following:-

Monetary theory is less abstract than most theory; it cannot avoid a relation to reality, which in other economic

⁵ Owen Barfield, *The Relation Between the Economics of C. H. Douglas and Those of Rudolf Steiner*. In *Anthroposophy*, A Quarterly Review of Spiritual Science. No. 3, Michaelmas 1933/ Vol. 8.

theory is sometimes missing.⁶

Mitchell hailed:-

The development of money as one of the greatest institutional advances of mankind. He found in it the basis of economic rationality. Money directed our attention away from a subjective to an objective realm of thought. He judged the case of money to be one of the great rationalising habits slowly evolved by society and painfully learned by the individual.⁷

For Rudolf Steiner too, it is a matter of reasoning the thing out:-

Various people (eg The English finance theorist Hartley Withers in his treatise "Money and Credit") have expressed the opinion that all questions concerning money are so complicated that they are almost impossible to grasp in clear, precise thought. A similar view can be taken regarding many questions of modern social life. At the same time, we should consider the consequences that must follow if we allow our social dealings to be guided by impulses rooted in imprecise thoughts, or at any rate in thoughts that are very hard to define. Such thoughts do not merely signify a lack of insight and a confusion in theory; they are potent forces in actual life. Their vagueness lives on in the institutions they inspire; these, in turn, result in impossible social conditions.

If such rigour were consistently applied, little space would be left for the spiritually disingenuous illusion that "money is energy".

⁶ Hicks, J. (1967: p. 156), *Critical Essays in Monetary Theory*, Oxford.

⁷ Frankel, S.H. (1977), *Money: Two Philosophies*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Everyday Money

Reference to the term 'money' is of course perennial; few words enjoy such wide circulation and apparent lack of ambiguity. As economic historian Hingston Quiggin⁸ ironically noted: "Everyone, except an economist, knows what 'money' means and even an economist can describe it in the course of a chapter or so".

In our everyday life we depend on our ability to refer to money and to be understood. We are so accustomed to thinking of money as an object, that we assume a certain consensus about its nature to be able to operate – at least in our everyday consciousness. For those who would remain within the realm of that consciousness, no question arises.

For anyone who would penetrate the surface of things to a scientific conception of the phenomenon, the tendency to treat money as a tangible known, learned through the experience of handling notes and coins, must be confronted head-on, that is if one is to come any nearer to unveiling the true nature of money.

Rudolf Steiner's Analysis

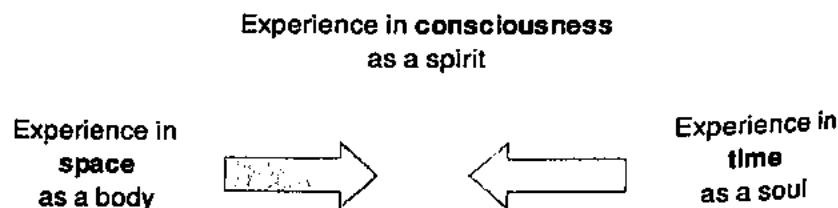
In Steiner's analysis it becomes apparent that if one would know something about the nature of money, one can only do so in the context of its role within the economic process. Simply to ask what money is in the abstract would be like wanting to know what the head is without considering its relation to the whole human being. In dismissing the idea of 'money' as such, Steiner introduces the conception of three kinds of money, which he calls *purchase money*, *loan money* and *gift money*.

The intention of this essay is not to offer an overall examination of Steiner's conception of three kinds of money⁹ (indeed some

⁸ Quiggin, A.H. (1963), *A Survey of Primitive Money: The Beginning of Currency*, London, Methuen.

⁹ A good overall account of Steiner's idea of three kinds of money is available in *A Human Response to Globalisation* by Marc Desautels (Associative Economics

familiarity with Steiner's writing must be assumed), but to follow-up the intuition that the nature of money is fundamentally linked to the structure of human experience in that, not only is money threefold, but in its articulation it is linked to time and space.



Human experience takes place through the dimensions of time and space. Consciousness is conditioned by the way in which experience is linked to space and time, as two *separate* dimensions. It is interesting to note in passing, that the neat division holding bodies separate in space and time was overcome at the turn of the 20th century and with it the idea of a unified dimension, space-time, was born. That this idea found currency when it did, indicates something about the shift that began to take place then in human consciousness. If money somehow represents economic consciousness, one would expect to discover this change also in the realm of money. Is this structure replicated in Steiner's three kinds of money?

Space – Purchase Money

The singular characteristic quality of space is physical extensibility or tangibility. The most orthodox¹⁰ account of the nature of money

Institute 2003) or *The Metamorphosis of Capitalism* by Christopher Houghton Budd (Associative Economics Institute 2003).

¹⁰ There two schools of thought on the nature of money, which I have described as orthodox and heterodox respectively (Steiner calls them metallist and nominalist). The former tend to see money as the equivalent of a good, the latter see it as a relationship of credit / debt.

identifies it with this realm, either in the form of a tangible good (such as wheat) or commodity (such as gold) or as a virtual proxy. Rudolf Steiner characterises *purchase money* in relation to the exchange of goods at a market. He makes clear that on the other side of purchase money one finds the physical reality of the product. He also specifies that it relates only to the immediacy of on-the-spot payment thereby excluding the dimension of time.

If this were the end of the story, the monetary realm could be comprehended in a more straightforward manner in terms of object-backing of the money (for which it stands proxy). Money would be issued by the purchase of a good, against which it was envalued. Thereby it would be linked to a particular place at a particular moment; just as a good is.

An example of the above can be found in a LETS system, where trading takes place always on a specific instance basis (unrelated to previous and future transactions). Purchase money becomes visible in the trading account, which records transactions as income and expenditure – flows of value. This gives rise to the following correspondences:-

space / good / exchange / income and expenditure / flow / purchase money

Time – Loan Money

Just as the dimension of space exists, one can also refer to the entirely different reality of the dimension of time. So too Rudolf Steiner refers to loan money as an altogether different fact that simply exists and does not interfere with the concept of purchase money. There is analogy here to the heterodox school of monetary thought that identifies money as a claim and places it within the realm of creditary relationships.

As soon as a link through time is made, whereby goods are not simply exchanged, but held over a period, the second aspect of money appears, which allows value to be stored. Loan money is

manifest in the duration of time. Steiner gives the example of one month's trade credit:-

After a month I no longer pay for this suit of clothes alone. In that moment I am paying for something quite different. I am paying for something which circumstances, by raising or lowering prices, may have made quite different. I am paying for an ideal element in addition.

Steiner also describes how in this realm the value does not derive from the good but from the intelligence of the person in whom it is invested. This ideal element is made visible by the balance sheet, which shows how values are held over time (but always at an instant in time) appreciating and depreciating. In this sense the balance sheet exists in time recording the stock values of the entity, both tangible (as in physical stocks) and intangible (as in productive capacity). This gives rise to the following correspondences:-

time / capacity / investment / the balance sheet / stock / loan money

Consciousness – Gift Money

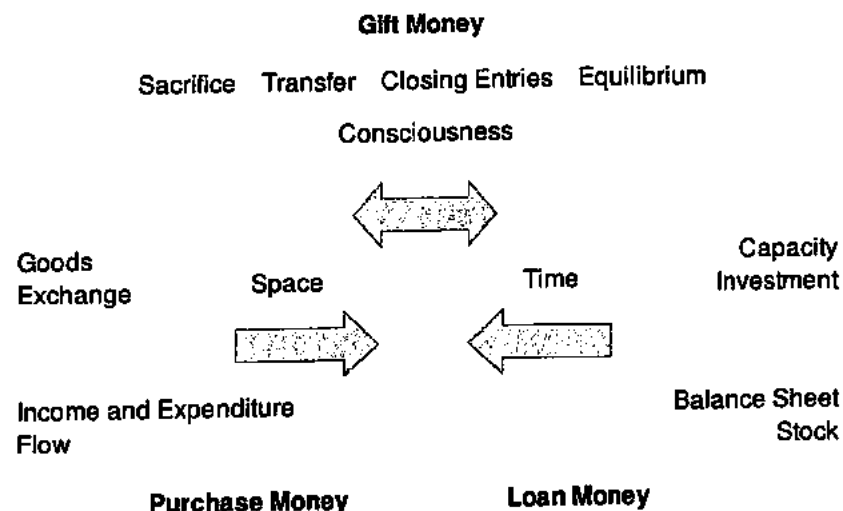
Rudolf Steiner also gives the example of a third kind of money which he describes as gift money: "as a general rule these days, gift money is not taken into account and yet it plays the greatest imaginable part in the economic process". This has no clear correspondence in other schools of thought (though one can find analogies in ideas such as 'jubilee'¹¹). The key feature that Steiner ascribes to gift money is "of preventing the damming up of capital in land, which is so ruinous for the economic life" – a feat that is to be accomplished by an associative mode of economic conduct which recognises the need to write-down surplus capital by "losing it" in education and research.

¹¹ Jubilee refers to the biblical Hebrew tradition of regular debt forgiveness.

Gift money effects the transformation of loan money into purchase money – so that surplus (or fictitious) capital values become income once more. Gift money is related to the conscious manifestation of the human will in the economic process because it arises through allocation decisions born of free individual judgement.

Consciousness is born of a death process, in the sense that death in the physical is birth in the spiritual. As a pregnant image Rudolf Steiner refers to the idea of money in a life process, growing old, dying and rejuvenating the economic process as gift money.

Gift money effectively bridges *purchase money* and *loan money* just as *consciousness* bridges *space* and *time*. Steiner describes gift money as the opposite of purchase money, in the sense that whereas purchase money is envaluing, gift money is devaluing. One can see gift money as negative purchase money and by analogy as negative space. In art, this constitutes the space around the subject which informs the context in which the subject is to be understood; so too gift money operates from the other side of the threshold.



Past Present Future – Is Time Money?

A further aspect of the link of time to money can be seen in relation to past present and future in connection with purchase money, loan money and gift money. Purchase money represents the closure of a transaction – money down for a good that has been completed – in this sense it is linked to the past. Loan money represents an ongoing relationship between two parties in the form of an investment, linking it to the present and the ever changing picture of the financing of the means of production. Gift money represents the not yet manifest potential that is released when the link is freely severed between an asset and the entity in which it was held, linking it to the future and the destiny of the recipient who will depend upon it for his living.

Steiner puts the relation of consumption and production in the context of the past and future, distinguishing material and intellectual production and describing how intelligent activity (ie spiritual or 'freed') is linked to future productivity:-

Now here it is especially important to distinguish between the past and the future. For if you consider, if you reflect statistically on the past only, with respect to the past and to all that is only the unbroken continuation of the past, you will be able to prove that freed activity is unproductive. From the past into the future within the material sphere, only purely material work and its effects can be held to be productive in the economic process. It is quite a different matter, however, when you turn your eye to the future ... As soon as you take into account the future from any given moment onward – towards the future – you can no longer call intelligence unproductive. In relation to the past, those human beings whose work is freed activity are consumers only. In relation to the future they are decidedly productive, indeed they are the

producers, for they transform the whole process of production and make it pronouncedly different for the economic life.



An Intellectual Threshold

A common theme in monetary writing concerns the way in which the idea of money arises in order to facilitate the settlement of payments across time – bridging the gap between what each person consumes and produces. In this respect money functions as a dynamic bookkeeping system that keeps track of what has taken place, who is owing and who is owed.

The way in which the idea of money is related to the dimensions of time and space opens the subject to a wider sphere. The tension between these different dimensions may give rise to a certain cognitive dissonance in the person trying to grasp and hold the phenomenon within the scope of the intellect. Money, like economics, cannot be treated in the abstract but is likely to bring one to a threshold in one's own experience. An example of such a threshold is intellectual, where one finds oneself unable to grasp the phenomenon of money with one's habitual fixed thoughts. For some this experience may be unsettling because it represents a new awareness of what one does not know.

Ignorance of the subject, however, is no bar to having an opinion. Milton Friedman put the matter elegantly in a famous paper on methodology from 1953:-

The subject matter of economics is regarded by almost

everyone as vitally important to himself and within the range of his own experience and competence; it is the source of continuous and extensive controversy and the occasion for frequent legislation. Self-proclaimed "experts" speak with many voices and can hardly all be regarded as disinterested; in any event, on questions that matter so much, "expert" opinion could hardly be accepted solely on faith even if the "experts" were nearly unanimous and clearly disinterested.¹²

So far the subject remains nicely academic, one can imagine that it is remote from everyday concerns. Why does money matter? What is one to make of Rudolf Steiner's statements on the subject, indicating that our thoughts, whether confused or precise, are potent social forces? How might one go from the realm of faith to experience? An observation that anybody can make is that when the subject of money is mentioned, not just in the abstract but in relation to the circumstances of those present, the temperature changes, the pulse receives a keen stimulus and the senses sharpen. What difference it would make if through the clear picture that we have from Rudolf Steiner of the nature of *purchase money*, *loan money* and *gift money*, financial matters could be handled in a clear open and consistent way that has its foundation not in opinion and self-interest (however vehemently or subtly introduced) but in the pure logic of economic thinking. For if Steiner's approach to economics calls for one thing, it is that one learns to think differently about economic categories. When in the question and answer session following his Economics Course, Steiner was asked the following: "What do present economic necessities demand of those who believe a new economics must be founded?" His response was this:-

¹² Friedman, Milton, (1953) *Essays in Positive Economics*, University of Chicago Press.

In my lectures I'm endeavouring to give partial answers to this question. The important thing to understand is the transition to world economy from the national economy that has been so effective in the last fifty years or more; that one understands that the old economic categories are no longer valid and that a new economics needs to be created and that this can only be created out of thinking.¹³

What would such a new economics look like, how would it be taken up, and what consequences would it have? An understanding founded on Steiner's idea of three kinds of money would certainly be brought into connection with accounting, the real world language of business. This would need to become a core element in an upper-school curriculum which offered financial literacy as a way to come to grips with the contemporary world, a need which externally required examinations do not address. In consequence, young people would leave school with skills for life, enabling them to set out on the path of their vocation rather than fall prey to the pressures of the job market or any other of modern life's many distractions.

¹³ Rudolf Steiner, *op. cit.*, p216.

**T. S. Eliot and Owen Barfield
Contrast or Convergence?**

Terence Davies

*Our age has been obliged to entangle itself in a mass of errors
so that, through having to disentangle ourselves from them, we
may become independent persons.¹*

In *The Dry Salvages*, which is the third poem in the collection called *Four Quartets*, T. S. Eliot speaks of

... music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts.² (214-6)

The *Four Quartets*, first published in 1943, is generally considered to be his finest achievement. I have chosen this quotation because the amount of time and trouble which certain people are prepared to take to experience what it describes, suggests that they believe it is one of the most valuable experiences they can have. However sceptical, cynical, despondent or ironic they may be about other aspects of life, when the pressure of work is lifted this experience remains untainted. Of course it is not confined to listening to music or poetry, or participating in any of the other arts. Given the necessary sustained attention, in rare moments you are the shaft of sunlight, you are the cool green of crowded summer trees and – rarest of all – you are the other person in all the strangeness of their unique individuality; provided of course you can leave behind the incessant demands of your own subjectivity.

¹ Steiner, Rudolf *Study of Man*, London, Rudolf Steiner Press 1961, p35.

² All Eliot's poems can be found in *Complete Poems and Plays of T.S.Eliot*, Faber & Faber 1969; references are to lines.

This relationship between man and the world, inner and outer, subject and object, I and thou, preoccupied Eliot throughout his adult life. It began with his early studies at Harvard, where he wrote his thesis on F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, and continued until his last years when, during the preparation of that youthful philosophical work for publication, he confessed to his wife that he did not understand a word of it.³ This remark illustrates a characteristic feature of Eliot's personality, which expresses itself in a reluctance to establish and consistently apply a coherent, self-sustaining theory of knowledge.⁴ In my view it also sheds light on why the willing suspension of disbelief, which is appropriate when contemplating other acknowledged master works is, in the case of his early serious poems, problematic. It is generally agreed that in order to appreciate any work of genius you have to surrender to it; you have to let it, as it were, cast its spell over you. You then receive nourishment that the surface intellect cannot provide. Through the sound and rhythm, the feelings are purified and enriched; through the form, the will is strengthened and made firm. Sustained self-observation shows that feeling and will are respectively semiconscious and subconscious, and that they are much stronger than the intellect. Just as wholesome food, if tainted, gradually weakens the body, cultural nourishment, similarly tainted, weakens the spirit.⁵ It is the view of many informed commentators that

³ Ackroyd, Peter, *T.S. Eliot*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1984, p333. (Abbreviated in the text as Ack.) This was not just a private domestic remark. In the preface to *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*, p10 (Abbr. KE) Eliot said that he could no longer "pretend to understand" its terminology.

⁴ "Eliot's antithetical reasoning was 'so difficult,' he admitted that he was unsure he could follow it himself 'except in flashes' ". See Perl, Jeffrey M. *Skepticism and Modern Enmity: Before and After Eliot*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, p 38. (Abbr. SME)

⁵ Eliot himself uses this analogy: '... everything we eat ... affects us during the process of assimilation and digestion; and I believe that exactly the same is true of anything we read ... I am not sure that I have not had some pernicious influence myself'. See "Religion and Literature" in *Selected Essays*, Faber and

spiritual progress, if it occurs at all, takes place at first in the very recesses of our consciousness. Eliot (1888-1965) strove throughout his adult life to give genuine expression to those recesses; but, as he himself acknowledged, he worked under conditions that seemed unpropitious.⁶ It is precisely for these two reasons of genuine expression under unpropitious conditions that the study of his writing is valuable. This is especially the case if what I have called the problematic aspects of his literary output are supplemented and clarified by the work of his younger contemporary, Owen Barfield (1898-1997).

Let us now try to shed more light on this problem of man and the world by examining three passages from the *Four Quartets* which point to the fact that this relationship between inner and outer, subject and object, consciousness and matter changes over time. In a word, that there is an historical dimension to the problem. In the first poem, *Burnt Norton*, we find the following lines which delicately suggest a reciprocal relationship between even the physical body of man and the stars which can be experienced by modern consciousness.

The dance along the artery
The circulation of the lymph
Are figured in the drift of stars
Ascend to summer in the tree
We move above the moving tree
In light upon the figured leaf
And hear upon the sodden floor
Below, the boarhound and the boar
Pursue their pattern as before
But reconciled among the stars. (54-63)

Faber 1972, p394 & p397. (Abbr. SE)

⁶ *East Coker* (EC) L 189-90. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets (P&P)* Faber and Faber, 1957, p51.

The next example takes us back several hundred years. It occurs in the second poem *East Coker*, where the poet is so engrossed by his imaginative vision of Elizabethan communal life that he feels compelled to adopt their spelling. This capacity of his to, as it were, soak up not only the mood of a situation, but also the deeper sources of that mood in the subconscious is very important and problematic, and we shall return to it later. In this instance it again celebrates the harmonious relationship between man and the cosmos, this time as experienced by Elizabethan consciousness.

The association of man and woman (29)
 In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie -
 A dignified and commodious sacrament.
 ... Keeping the rhythm in their dancing (41)
 As in their living in the living seasons
 The time of the seasons and the constellations
 The time of milking and the time of harvest
 The time of coupling of man and woman
 And that of beasts.

Later in the poem, when the Elizabethan dancers "are all gone under the hill", again exercising his astonishing capacity for assimilation he expresses the despairing depths of modern consciousness, which experiences, not nature reconciled among the stars, but vacant interstellar spaces.

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark.
 The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
 The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,
 The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,
 Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees
 Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark
 ... (102-7)

The contrast between the Elizabethan experience of man harmoniously related to the cosmos and the stark split between industrial man and vacant interstellar spaces is further emphasised by the modern imagery that follows: the lights going out in the theatre, the tube train ominously stopping between stations.

The Elizabethan experience grew out of the medieval worldview in which the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm pervaded all aspects of life. Shakespeare has given us the most comprehensive expression of the Elizabethan view; Dante of the medieval. Eliot was thoroughly conversant with, and deeply influenced by, both. He was also poignantly aware that the times in which they lived *were* propitious for writing poetry. But the backward sweep of his interest in the evolution of the human spirit did not stop at Dante. His early studies at Harvard in Sanskrit and Indian philosophy (*Ack* p147) made a lasting impression – witness the reference to Krishna in *The Dry Salvages* (126) and to the Upanishads at the end of *The Waste Land*. The extraordinary width of his education and interests would enable him, as we shall see later, to be sympathetic to the idea that human consciousness has evolved, that the relation between subject and object has changed over time. Should he come across an exposition which showed that ancient man was united to Nature in a way that is incomprehensible to us, and that a slow shift occurred during which this union that rendered man unfree was gradually loosened, leaving the individual independent and autonomous, he would have welcomed and accepted it. Furthermore this would especially be the case if such an exposition was based on a clearly demonstrated, self-sustaining theory of knowledge. There is evidence to show that he did in fact welcome two such expositions, which deal with different aspects of this process, as we shall see later. For the moment, however, let us try to bring to the surface the unconscious assumptions regarding the relationship between inner and outer which were prevalent during the first decades of the 20th century when he was writing his early poetry.

Light can be thrown on these assumptions if we examine his theory of the 'objective correlative', which first appeared in his essay on "Hamlet" in 1919. (SE p145.) This now famous theory is connected to another equally famous, namely 'the dissociation of sensibility'. The key to understanding what Eliot meant by these two phrases can be found in the word 'dissociate'. It means what was formerly connected is now disconnected: inner is severed from outer. Inner, for Eliot, meant primarily personal feelings; outer meant objects and events in the external world. Indeed these are the generally accepted meanings of the two words, subjective and objective: feelings are subjective, facts are objective. In a short article one example of an 'objective correlative' must suffice, although the issues involved deserve a fuller treatment. It will help us to appreciate the full import of this example if we first quote from the essay on 'Hamlet'.

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given the emotion is immediately evoked. If you examine any of Shakespeare's more successful tragedies, you will find this exact equivalence; you will find that the state of mind of Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep has been communicated to you by a skilful accumulation of imagined sensory impressions ... The artistic 'inevitability' lies in this complete adequacy of the external to the emotion ... (SE p145)

The chain of events that lead to the climax, on which we will focus in a moment, is as follows. Lady Macbeth's doctor tells her woman servant that he has watched his patient for two nights without seeing what the servant has reported. The servant then describes how her

mistress rises from bed, writes and seals a letter, then returns to bed, all the time remaining fast asleep. Immediately after the servant has refused, in spite of his earnest entreaties, to tell the doctor what Lady Macbeth has said on previous nights, she appears carrying a taper.

Doct. You see her eyes are open.

Serv. Aye, but their sense is shut.

Doct. What is it she does now? Look how she rubs her hands.

Serv. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus *washing her hands*: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour. (my italics)

This chain of events culminating in the climax of Lady Macbeth going through the motions of washing her hands is the 'objective correlative' of a complex series of strong emotions caused by her involvement in the murder of the king. If this interpretation of Eliot's theory is correct, this seeming washing of her hands sums up, in a way that is artistically inevitable, the preceding chain of events. This compulsive action of the Queen is the fact in the external world, which is the objective correlative to the inner emotions clustering around feelings of guilt and remorse. Before we turn to the second theory, the important thing to notice here is the separation between external facts and inner feelings, and the poet's correlation of these two realms by "a skilful accumulation of imagined sensory impressions".

Eliot only briefly expounded the second theory, 'the dissociation of sensibility' – too briefly "perhaps," he suggested, "to carry conviction". (SE p288) Nevertheless, because of the lavish academic attention, begun by I. A. Richards in the early 1920s, which Eliot's work has received, this theory has become as famous as the first. And not without reason, for this brief statement could be seen as the harbinger of a new academic discipline which is implicit in Eliot's

criticism, namely, the systematic study of the evolution of consciousness; it also points to the need for a clearly formulated, self-sustaining epistemology. From the two paragraphs in his essay, "The Metaphysical Poets" (SE p287-8) where the theory first appeared in 1921, let us examine the essential parts. He begins by noticing that something happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne (1572-1631) and the time of Tennyson (1809-1902) which is connected with the way thought modifies sensibility. After giving several examples he makes the central assertion: "In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered ...". He then outlines how this dissociation was aggravated by the work of the poets that followed, notably Milton (1608-1674) and Dryden (1631-1700). At the end of the theory he makes two pregnant observations. First, that "the sentimental age began early in the eighteenth century, and continued. The poets revolted against the ratiocinative ...". Secondly, that in one or two passages of Shelley (1792-1822) and Keats (1795-1821) "there are traces of a struggle towards unification of sensibility. But Keats and Shelley died and Tennyson and Browning (1812-1889) ruminated". Eliot does not give the dates, but when they are shown it is easy to see that he has briefly sketched one aspect of an evolution of consciousness from about the middle of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth.

Let us now take a look at what happened to the mind of England, outside the realm of poetry, between the time of Donne and Tennyson. The onset of the scientific revolution was beginning to affect the sensibilities of the more articulate members of society, which meant that what Eliot called the ratiocinative was gradually becoming the dominant mode of thought. This increasing dominance played not a small part in bringing about the dissociation of sensibility from which "we have never recovered". Used in conjunction with carefully controlled experiments based on accurate observations, ratiocinative thought gradually brought about what now pervades all aspects of modern life, namely, the scientific

revolution. Eliot, unlike Barfield, shows very little interest in science or its history, which is strange considering his view that:

The great poet, in writing himself, writes his time. Thus Dante, hardly knowing it, became the voice of the thirteenth century; Shakespeare, hardly knowing it, becomes the representative of the end of the sixteenth century, of a turning point of history. But you can hardly say that Dante believed, or did not believe, the Thomist philosophy; you can hardly say that Shakespeare believed, or did not believe, the mixed and muddled scepticism of the Renaissance. If Shakespeare had written according to a better philosophy, he would have written worse poetry; it was his business to express the greatest emotional intensity of his time whatever his time happened to think. (SE p137)

The essay from which this extract is taken, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca", was published in 1927, the year in which Eliot was received into the Anglican Church. When he announced his conversion the following year, it came as a revelation to those who did not know him well, and who still thought of him as the iconoclastic author of *The Waste Land*. People then began to ask, "What does Eliot believe?" When asked this question directly he always replied that he believed exactly what he was obliged to believe - the Creed, the Scriptures, the Sacraments and so on. He gave his intellectual assent to the propositions of the faith as interpreted by the Church of England. In spite of this, however, he affirmed that his beliefs were "held with a scepticism which I never even hope to be rid of". Also, when asked whether his Christian faith meant that he had abandoned poetry, he replied, that as far as that activity is concerned, "I am absolutely unconverted". (Ack p163) It is obvious from the final words of the above quotation that Eliot remained convinced that it was the poet's duty to try to express the

greatest emotional intensity of his time whatever his time happens to think. Moreover, it is clear that the fulfilment of this duty was one of the chief forces driving his will at that time. Through his extraordinary capacity for assimilation he *felt* the deleterious effects of science on the inner life of the human being. Part of his intellectual response to these effects was to formulate the two theories we have just outlined, which together attempt to give a critical framework in which to trace the genesis of the desolate feelings that his poetry up to *The Hollow Men* expressed. That early poetry evokes a mood of painful separation between one person and another, living in a joyless external world of which they are merely passive observers. One of his responses to the bleakness, which this situation engendered, was to accept the authority of the Anglican tradition. Richard Wollheim believes he has detected in Eliot a certain fear of the intellect as "something having the power to damage or dement those who use it in a literal manner".⁷ This penetrating insight not only reveals an unusual feature of the newly converted Anglican poet's disposition, but also throws light on why he only *felt* this split between the external world and those observing it, but was unable, at this time in his life, to uncover its epistemological root. Since the unconscious assumptions, which obscure this root, are considered to be self-evident truth by even the most adventurous thinkers of the present and previous centuries, let us now turn from poetry to science to illustrate, from a different perspective, the tenacious hold they have on the Western mind.

The vacant interstellar spaces to which Eliot (in the passage quoted earlier from *Burnt Norton*) consigned most of the members of the British establishment are the subject matter of the branch of science called astrophysics. It is well known that modern science, unlike poetry, is not concerned with feelings; indeed, because it considers them to be subjective, it strives assiduously to exclude

⁷ "Eliot and F. H. Bradley: an account." In *Eliot in Perspective*, edited by G. Martin, London, p190.

them from its experimental procedures. An objective world exists out there, completely independent of the consciousness that observes it, which scientists through their rigorous methods investigate and, where possible, manipulate. This fundamental division between the conscious 'I' of the scientist and the external world can be traced back to the philosophy of Descartes (1596-1650). The influence of this Cartesian division on human thought in the centuries following his death can hardly be over estimated. The mechanics of Newton (1642-1727) which explained the workings of that part of interstellar space known as the solar system take it for granted, as do all other parts of classical physics. Indeed, until the early decades of the twentieth century, the Cartesian split was a necessary condition of natural science in general. The split was located not solely between the feelings and outer world through the dissociation of sensibility, but between the whole field of human consciousness including thinking (which was assumed to be situated inside the subject's head) and the outside world. This inner world of consciousness, Descartes called *res cogitans*; the outer world separated from it he called *res extensa*. In short, consciousness and matter are two heterogeneous realms. This was the case, and still is for the vast majority of distinguished scientists, until 1927, the very year in which Eliot joined the Anglican Church. During that year an event occurred in the branch of science which studies, not the vast world of interstellar spaces, but the minute sub-atomic world. At the Solvay conference in Brussels, what later became known as the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum theory received its crucial test. This is how the co-founder of the theory, Werner Heisenberg describes it:

Those experiments which had always led to the worst paradoxes were again and again discussed in all details, especially by Einstein. New ideal experiments were invented to trace any possible inconsistency of the theory, but the theory was shown to be consistent and seemed to

fit the experiments as far as one could see ...

It has taken more than a quarter of a century to get ... to a real understanding of the quantum theoretical laws. This indicates the great change that had to take place in the fundamental concepts concerning reality before one could understand the new situation.⁸

It would take us too far afield to attempt to explain, even in lay terms, the Copenhagen theory.⁹ What is important here is to emphasise the fact that natural science is formed by men; that they are not simply passive observers of a process that goes on by itself. Heisenberg puts it like this:

Natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is a part of the interplay between nature and ourselves; it describes nature as exposed to our method of questioning. This was a possibility of which Descartes could not have thought, but it makes the sharp separation between the world and the I impossible. If one follows the great difficulty which even eminent scientists like Einstein had in understanding and accepting the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum theory, one can trace the roots of the difficulty to the Cartesian partition. This partition has penetrated deeply into the human mind during the three centuries following Descartes and it will take a long time for it to be replaced by a really different attitude toward the problem of reality. (*Ph & Ph* p43)

Eliot and Einstein were world famous practitioners in their respective fields, both having been awarded Nobel prizes. The fact that the former tried to make a connection between two dissevered

⁸ Heisenberg, Werner *Physics and Philosophy*, (*Ph & Ph*) Penguin, 1989, p13.

⁹ Compare, Davies, Terence, "The Hovering Mind – The Wider Significance of the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Theory", *New View*, Summer 2003.

worlds through the theory of the objective correlative; and that the latter had great difficulty in accepting a scientific advance which overcame that severance shows how deeply the Cartesian partition is rooted in the Western psyche.

We have now begun to uncover some of the reasons why, in the case of Eliot's early poems, the willing suspension of disbelief which is necessary if we are to receive the nourishment that true art can give, is problematic. To my feeling, in these early works the American born poet seems to be inviting his readers to adopt a critical stance. This critical mode of consciousness is, of course, inimical to the poetic mode which we illustrated at the beginning through the lines about listening to music. In the poetic mode, given favourable conditions, subject and object can momentarily become a united whole; in contrast to this, if a critical mode is established, this union is not possible and the sense of separation is emphasised. To pursue these issues, which are central to an understanding of modern consciousness, we need to consider the various functions of poetry.

From a wide range of opinions on this subject, let us begin with the one that seems to be generally agreed, namely, that one function of poetry is to give pleasure. But, as Eliot himself has observed, "if it is only pleasure, the pleasure itself could not be of the highest kind". ("The Social Function of Poetry", *P&P* p18.) This highest kind of pleasure arises when poetry fulfils what are arguably the two most important functions it has to perform. The first is concerned with, to quote Eliot again, "frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meanings still exist".¹⁰ From these frontiers the true poet, by exercising this first most difficult function, brings forth new meanings. If he succeeds in this making of meaning, he gives life to language and makes new knowledge possible. But he only succeeds in so far as his poetry is a vehicle of imagination. Let us call this first function, the making of meaning. The second function of poetry is to mirror, in the most sensitive and nuanced way, the

¹⁰ "The Music of Poetry," *P&P*, p30.

underlying mental habits and moods of the age in which it is written. Let us call this second function, mirroring the times. We have already come across this function in the quotation where Eliot affirmed that the great poet in writing himself writes his time. His mastery of rhythm and sound enables Eliot to fulfil this second, easier function in an exemplary fashion. In the earlier poems up to *The Hollow Men* (1925) he holds up a mirror which reflects a feeble world falling apart in dissolution¹¹ – “a heap of broken images ... fragments I have shored against my ruins ...” (*The Waste Land* 22 & 430). The emotions – cynical, caustic, supercilious or despairing – which such a spectacle almost inevitably evokes are also powerfully conveyed. His handling of the first, more difficult function, the making of meaning through the use of imagination, can lead us to the heart of our modern predicament if we can satisfy an important preliminary condition. This is to shed light from several directions on the faculty of imagination. Our guide in attempting to fulfil this condition will be Eliot’s younger contemporary, Owen Barfield.

In 1956 the author of *The Waste Land*, now a British citizen and acclaimed playwright, gave a lecture before 14000 people at the baseball stadium of the University of Minnesota on *The Frontiers of Criticism*. “I felt”, he said, “like a very small bull walking into an enormous arena.” (*Ack* p317) He spoke of the transformation of literary criticism over the past thirty years, acknowledging the lasting influence of Coleridge on this process. Comparing two critical masterpieces, Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets* and Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*, he says the difference between them:

... is due to the scope and variety of the interests which Coleridge had brought to bear on his discussion of poetry. He established the relevance of philosophy, aesthetics and psychology; and once Coleridge had introduced these disciplines into literary criticism future critics could

¹¹ Rostrever Hamilton, G., *The Tell-tale Article*, Heinemann, 1949, p57.

ignore them only at their own risk. To appreciate Johnson an effort of historical imagination is needed; a modern critic can find much in common with Coleridge. The criticism of today, indeed, may be said to be in direct descent from Coleridge, who would, I am sure, were he alive now, take the same interest in the social sciences and in the study of language and semantics, that he took in the sciences available to him. (“The Frontiers of Criticism,” *P & P*, p104)

“Interest in the theory of imagination,” wrote Professor Kathleen Coburn, in her introduction to Coleridge’s *Notebooks*, “has now become almost synonymous with interest in Coleridge.”¹² The crowning achievement of Owen Barfield’s lifelong study of Coleridge’s work came with the publication in 1972 (about seven years after Eliot’s death) of his book *What Coleridge Thought*.¹³ The outstanding feature of this book for our present purposes is the recurring theme of the Cartesian dichotomy. In the notes in particular, Barfield shows that the unconscious entrenchment of this dichotomy in the contemporary mind is the principal obstacle which must be overcome if we are to grasp the true nature of imagination.

To make an attempt to begin to overcome this obstacle let us now look at several aphorisms from Barfield and Coleridge and link them to ideas which have already been presented in this article.

Imagination is the marriage of spirit and sense.
(Barfield)¹⁴

Here again we have the idea of twofoldness, inner and outer, man

¹² Barfield, Owen, *The Rediscovery of Meaning*, Wesleyan University Press, 1977, p125.

¹³ Barfield, Owen, *What Coleridge Thought*, (WCT) Oxford University Press, 1972, p24.

¹⁴ Barfield, Owen, *Romanticism Comes of Age*, Rudolf Steiner Press 1966, p97.

and the world, subject and object which was introduced at the beginning. In this quotation, inner becomes spirit; outer, the world of the senses – houses, trees, sun, moon etc. Another earlier version we gave was consciousness and matter. Due to the Cartesian influence the former is, in Coleridge's words, "a lazy onlooker" in relation to the latter. Once the word spirit is introduced it becomes possible to transform passive consciousness into active spirit. To do this, however, we have to make a special inner effort – one which Coleridge himself was constantly making in areas of mental activity often remote from poetry. The connection between mathematics and imagination is not one that comes readily to the contemporary mind. Drawn from that apparently remote source the next aphorism, together with the explanation that follows has been found to be specially effective in bringing to light elusive mental operations of which we are not normally aware.

Mathematical lines, points and surfaces [are] acts of the imagination that are one with the product of those acts. (Coleridge)¹⁵

If we wish to experience the active spirit referred to here, we have to strengthen our inner consciousness. If we choose, we can do this by pausing, closing our eyes and visualising in the ensuing darkness two points, one above the other; holding them still for a moment and then connecting them by a line. At the same time we need to be acutely aware that mathematical points and lines have no breadth or depth. Of course, if we were to draw them on paper they would have breadth, no matter how sharp the pencil may be; the depth would also be there, caused by the minute deposit of graphite on the paper. This drawing is therefore only a crude, imperfect representation in the sense world of the *ideal*, but none the less *real*, points and lines of the mathematician. (The apparent contradiction between the two

¹⁵ Coleridge, *Logic*, Princetown University Press. 1981, p75.

italicised words is there because both are infected by Cartesianism.) If we wish to prepare ourselves for Coleridge's next comment on this process of connecting these two points, we can do so by calling up a picture from the sense world which is apparently remote from what has gone before, but which in fact provides a useful, if imperfect, analogy. Think of a thief snatching a woman's handbag in a crowded airport lounge. The action takes place very quickly: before she knows what has happened, the woman has lost her bag: it has been *snatched*. Anyone who has been patient enough to go through the strengthening process just described will be aware of a pair of intimately related, inseparable items, imperfectly analogous to the lady and her bag, namely, the inner act of constructing, and the product of that act. This inner act, says Barfield commenting on this passage, "is normally performed unconsciously", though the *product* of the act is part of everyday consciousness. (WCT p14) It is easy to recognise lines and points when we see them on paper, but only by summoning up an inner effort can the insight be gained that imagination is:

a self-conscious act *snatched* away as it were from the product of that act. (Coleridge, *Logic*, p74 my italics)

In the second paragraph of this article we distinguished three modes of consciousness: intellect, feeling and will. It is important to realise that all three are always present; and when we distinguish one from the other two what we are really saying is at that moment, it is the predominating influence within a threefold unity. In the above example, and the following one, the meaning can only be grasped if the will is energised in such a way that it predominates over thinking and feeling. In order to help us to assimilate the next example let us again call up a picture from the sense world. We try to bring before our minds' eye an occasion when, having walked for many hours through hot dusty lanes in high summer, we are seized by an overpowering thirst. When we eventually reach the next village and

see an open shop, the anticipation of the relief we will feel, if we can buy a drink there, is meagre compared to what we actually experience when, a little later, we put the bottle to our lips and *quench* our thirst. Coleridge uses the word *quenched* in the next aphorism in the same precise way that he used the word *snatched* in the previous one. The purpose of the picture of the summer walk is to heighten our awareness of the significance of the word *quench* by vividly imagining the actual experience it denotes. The lines and points of the mathematician are not alive, although re-enacting their genesis in the mind can awaken the living power of imagination. The feeling of thirst, however, occurs in a living organism and can therefore help us to understand what Coleridge calls the productive power in nature. Although this power is not accessible to the outer senses, they can easily perceive its products, which are conspicuous in April in the form of, for example, early daffodils or budding chestnut trees. The distinction between these outer forms and the invisible life that produces them resembles in quality that distinction between the inner act of constructing and its product the line, which we tried to experience a moment ago. If we can recall, or better still, go through that inner act again, and succeed in using it to help us conceive the power that brings forth the fresh green leaves in Spring, we will experience the productive power in nature

suspended and, as it were *quenched* in the product.
(Coleridge, quoted by Barfield in *WCT* p24)

We will also have been participating in the inner active psychology of what Coleridge calls the primary imagination,

... the living power ... of all human perception ... a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation ...¹⁶

¹⁶ Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, (BL) Princetown University Press, 1983, Vol. 1 p304.

The outside world is not simply *there* fixed and formed, it is perpetually coming into being, becoming, and then dying away. Our consciousness is that special culminating phase of this evolutionary process which, unlike the chestnut tree, is becoming more and more aware of itself. Coleridge walked up and down the room whilst dictating the *Biographia Literaria*, and I believe Goethe did the same when composing the second part of *Faust*. This is because they instinctively wanted to get in touch with the least conscious, but most creative part of their being, namely the will, which finds its most conspicuous outer expression in the limbs. The activity of walking intensified the two poets' oneness with the productive power of nature, of which we are not normally aware. We gradually become aware of it through the feelings which, when they are infused with the same elemental force that brings nature into being, give birth to:

... a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths of which they are the conductors. (Coleridge in *WCT* p112)

The passage from which these words are taken is the second half of an extract that has been described as Coleridge's most specific definition of the poetic or secondary imagination. When a great poet exercises this secondary imagination successfully he gives birth to such a system of symbols. Moreover, in doing this, he enables us to *experience*, "however slightly, the ultimate homogeneity of mind and world".¹⁷

As an example of such a system of symbols, let us conclude this brief survey of imagination by taking a look at a famous line from Shelley in whose work, as we mentioned earlier, Eliot noticed

¹⁷ Barfield, Owen, *Poetic Diction*, (PD), Faber and Faber 1962; Wesleyan paperback, 1973, p225. Also see, Steiner, Rudolf, *The Christmas Conference for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society*, 1923/1924, New York, p35.

"traces of a struggle towards unification of sensibility". In order to bring this line to life, let us again conjure up an experience from the sense world. We think of a forest in late autumn, and vividly recall the occasion a few months earlier when, before we entered the forest, we were spellbound by the massing of mature green foliage viewed against a blue-white sky. Awareness of the slow rhythm, which has transformed these once burgeoning leaves into withered relics, leads us to reflect on the much slower rhythm stretching back over centuries during which these oaks gradually reached maturity. We are roused from the reverie on our own mortality by the strengthening wind, which reminds us that the ancients were convinced that wind *was* spirit. Our thought grows clearer; man uses his breath to sing; he has his own creations; he makes musical instruments, writes poetry, has an impulse to care for others. The insistent question: what am I here for? what must I do? demands an answer; and then with what unutterable relief is the overpowering thirst for meaning quenched in the famous line addressed to the West wind:

Make me thy lyre, ev'n as the forest is.¹⁸

People who have woven the substance of these words into the fabric of their being begin to see winds, forests, lyres and ancient culture in a different light. These symbols and many similar ones, which illuminate entirely different aspects of experience, can become an inexhaustible source of inner initiative in fields of endeavour apparently remote from poetry. They can also help us to appreciate the full import of our final aphorism:

The imagination is the distinguishing characteristic of man as a progressive being ... (Coleridge in *WCT* p217)

¹⁸ Shelley, *Ode to the West Wind*, V L1. To appreciate how prophetic this is see Steiner, Rudolf, *Anthroposophy: An Introduction*, Rudolf Steiner Press 1983, pp 67-8.

We can now return to the two functions of poetry. In the example just given Shelley fulfils with consummate skill the first function, the making of meaning, but he was working under very different conditions from Eliot. Although there was much social suffering, which Shelley, Coleridge and others strove to ameliorate, it was only the beginning of a much wider range of degradation which blighted society as industrialisation spread into many more areas of life. What these acutely aware, responsible social thinkers had to deal with at the beginning of the 19th century was bad enough, but the horror of the combined passivity and violence of trench warfare in the early 20th century is something they could scarcely have envisaged. It is against this background that Eliot's early poetry was written. We have already recognised his masterly fulfilment of the second function of holding a mirror to the habits and moods which form the characteristic response of the age. But we have yet to explore the dilemma in which any true and sensitive poet will find himself today when he tries to fulfil the first function of his art, namely, the making of meaning. Samuel Beckett summed up this dilemma in the title of a short prose work: *Imagination Dead Imagine*.¹⁹ The characteristic response of our age is to deny the validity of imagination altogether. As we affirmed at the outset Eliot strove to give genuine expression to the inner recesses of modern consciousness. We have gradually uncovered the hidden presumption at the root of that consciousness and identified its source as Descartes' total separation of mind from matter: *res cogitans* cut off from *res extensa*. We can now say regarding the two functions as fulfilled by the modern poet: the measure of the success he has in mirroring the times will be the extent to which he has given up trying to make meaning. In short: the measure of the success with which the second function is fulfilled is the extent to which the first has been let go. (see *PD* p36) What is it that has been

¹⁹ Beckett, Samuel, *Collected Shorter Prose (1945-1980)* London, John Calder, 1985, pp145-147.

let go? It is the Coleridgean imagination. The distinguished scholar, Northrop Frye has noticed with regret that a curious feature of Eliot's literary critical theory is his avoidance of the term 'imagination' except in the phrase 'auditory imagination'.²⁰ The latter can be exercised by means of sound and rhythm; it has less need of symbolic images such as Shelley's wind, forest and lyre, through which the sense world is married to active spirit. Barfield in his *Poetic Diction*, (which was published in several editions by Eliot's firm Faber and Faber) calls these symbolic images "true, imaginative metaphors". They make new meaning by expressing and communicating "participant knowledge". Commenting on Eliot's use of language, which is what Frye has identified as the "auditory imagination", Barfield says that there is a different

type of metaphor with which modern poets have had most success ... (which) seeks to convey vividly, and with a certain effect of *frisson*, the disjointed impressions made by the surface of life upon the senses and the surface of the mind. The passion, if any, that imparts a precarious unity is a passion of withdrawal and detachment, of disillusionment, or, as in Eliot's case, a deep experience of personal or vicarious repentance. Eliot, in fact, solves the problem by using metaphor as sparingly as possible. He prefers the average word – which is a dead metaphor. Well, a dead metaphor is at least not stale and detachment is better than a show of participation based on borrowed plumes. (*PD* p37)

The 'auditory imagination' in conjunction with such sparingly used regressive metaphors as, for example, *withered stumps of time* or *husks of meaning* (*TWL* 104 & *Little Gidding*, 32) is very effective in evoking the mood which prevailed between the two world wars.

²⁰ Frye, Northrop, *T. S. Eliot*, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964, p48.

Eliot described this in 1939 as "a depression of spirits so different from any other expression of fifty years as to be a new emotion" (*Ack* p247). This tragic modern predicament, which we have been trying to describe, was summed up long ago by a saying attributed to the French poet Boileau. "I have often heard Boileau say", wrote one of his compatriots in 1715, "that Descartes' philosophy had cut poetry's throat".²¹

If we were to end here, the question posed in our sub-title would receive an answer which tended to favour the contrast between the thought of Eliot and Barfield rather than recognise any convergence. This, however, would be premature, for three reasons. First, Eliot was not only a poet, playwright and critic, but was also a businessman and publisher with a hands on experience of banking. Secondly, he was convinced that old men ought to be explorers and was therefore ready to retract some of his former dogmatic statements; and, thirdly, he was generous in his recognition and promotion of younger talented writers.

Taken together these three aspects of his destiny enabled him to achieve something which may prove to be not without importance in the evolution of consciousness. He was able to read, welcome and publish the two expositions we referred to near the beginning of this article. Eliot described the effect the first of these had on him in an address delivered at Hamburg University in 1955 as follows:

... For most of my life I had taken it for granted that Goethe's scientific theories – his speculations about the plant-type, about mineralogy and about colour – were no more than the amiable eccentricities of a man of abounding curiosity who had strayed into regions for which he was not equipped ... It was, first, that the unanimity of ridicule and the ease with which the learned

²¹ Maritain, Jacques, *Three Reformers, Luther-Descartes-Rousseau*, London, Kennikat Press, 1970, p89.

in these matters appear to dismiss Goethe's views, impelled me to wonder whether Goethe may not have been right ... Then, only a few years ago, I came on a book in which Goethe's views were actually defended: *Man or Matter*, by Dr Ernst Lehrs.²² It is true that Dr Lehrs is a disciple of Rudolf Steiner, and I believe that Rudolf Steiner's science is considered very unorthodox; that is not my affair. What Dr Lehrs did for me was to suggest that Goethe's scientific views somehow fitted with his imaginative work, that the same insight was struggling for expression in both, and that it is not reasonable to dismiss as utter nonsense in the field of scientific enquiry, what we accept as inspired wisdom in poetry ... ("Goethe as Sage", *P&P* p214-15)

... After reading Dr Lehrs book ... and then re-reading certain passages of Faust, it came to me that 'Nature' to Wordsworth and to Goethe meant much the same thing, that it meant something which they had experienced – and which I had not experienced – and that they were both trying to express something that, even for men so exceptionally endowed with the gift of speech, was ultimately ineffable ...

You see that I cannot get away from the Farbenlehre and the Ur-Pflanze. Is it simply a question of who was right, Goethe or the scientists? ... Is it not possible that Goethe, without wholly knowing what he was doing, was to assert the claims of a different type of consciousness from that which was to dominate the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? If so, then Goethe is about as unrepresentative of his Age as a man of genius can be. And perhaps the

²² Lehrs, Ernst, *Man or Matter*, Faber & Faber 1951; Rudolf Steiner Press, 1985.

time has come when we can say that there is something in favour of being able to see the universe as Goethe saw it, rather than as the scientists have seen it: now that the "living garment of God" has become somewhat tattered from the results of scientific manipulation. (Ibid. p 218-9)

It was against the background of this "somewhat tattered" face of nature that Eliot's early poetry was written. In the opening chapters of *Man or Matter* Dr Lehrs describes the birth of the onlooker consciousness in man and shows, with particular reference to Descartes and Hume, how the confusion which arises as the result of this birth, leads us into a "country which is not ours". (1985, R.S.P. edition, p 49)

If it were the settled conviction of the author of *The Waste Land* that poets should persist in acting on the belief that the paramount purpose of their art is to mirror this alien world, then the mind of Barfield would stand in sharp contrast to that of Eliot. This is not to say that Barfield thought that any depiction of that world was worthless. It is the *persistence* in that type of depiction that he thought was regressive, as the following letter, written in 1924 declining Eliot's invitation to repeat his (Barfield's) one work in this vein, shows:

... I think that the rhythm that you noticed in "Dope" was really something adapted to that particular sketch ... and was an expression of the sort of passivity with which undeveloped 20th century minds (as far as I can see) watch a mechanical world clicking past their limited field of vision. To repeat the rhythm it would be necessary to repeat the subject, and I believe at present it is (a) waste of energy to record an expression of that sort more than once. I am a little tired of literature that can do nothing but point out ironically that there is nothing much going

on but disintegration and decay ...²³

It is because Barfield, at a comparatively young age, took this stance of going beyond the preliminary stage of describing the ills of the world to the more productive one of seriously investigating the unconscious assumptions which were causing those ills, that he was able to write, some thirty years later, *Saving the Appearances*,²⁴ which many critics consider to be his finest work. This book, which was originally conceived to try to remove one of the principal obstacles to the contemporary appreciation of Rudolf Steiner's teaching, is the second of the two expositions mentioned at the beginning of this article. We know that, as a director of Faber and Faber, Eliot was sufficiently interested in the book to publish it, but do we know what his personal response to it was? We will answer that question shortly; here we will merely note that its publication in 1957 marked, not indeed the convergence of Barfield's thought with Eliot's, but at least a point where they begin to meet.

One of the most significant meeting points is the recognition by both men of the supreme importance of the Incarnation of Christ. Here again in *Saving the Appearances* we find Barfield is able to bring clear insights to bear on issues which Eliot was only able to apprehend through his feelings. We have already noted the scepticism with which Eliot held his Christian beliefs. This helps us to understand why he argued that Christianity "will probably continue to modify itself, as in the past, into something that can be believed in". (*SME* p110) It is well known that one of the main differences between Eastern religion and traditional Christianity, is that the latter rejects re-incarnation of the individual human spirit, whereas the former recognises it. Bearing in mind Eliot's early studies in Sanskrit, imagine the effect which the following remarks

²³ Blaxland-de Lange, Simon, *Owen Barfield, Romanticism Come of Age*, Temple Lodge, 2006, pp 331-2. (RCA)

²⁴ Barfield, Owen, *Saving the Appearances, A Study in Idolatry*, Faber and Faber 1957, Wesleyan paperback, 1988.

of Barfield would probably have had on him.

... The recognition of individual prenatal existence – or rather existences ... seems to have been common to most men before the West emerged from the East ... A renewal of this lost insight will almost certainly be one of the first steps to be taken by religion through the rebirth in her of that cosmic wisdom, which is the source not only of the world of appearances, but also of man's changing relation to them.

It will not be easy for [the Church to accept that the] revelation of the mystery of the kingdom was not turned off at the tap when the New Testament canon was closed, but is the work of an earth-time ... In the end, if the Christ infuses my whole man, mind as well as heart, the cosmos of wisdom, with all its forgotten truths, will dwell in me ... for Christ is the cosmic wisdom on its way from original to final participation. (p184-5)

Participation is the extra-sensory link between man and the phenomena. Original participation enabled primitive man to perceive spirit, in an undivided unity with the phenomena, without making any special individual effort. In contrast modern man can only gain access to spirit by a special exertion of his will. Anyone who has recreated the genesis of the Coleridgean imagination, by strengthening their consciousness, will actually have *experienced* final participation. Starting from a modern theory of knowledge (which, as we have tried to show, Eliot was unable to establish and consistently apply) Barfield in *Saving the Appearances* traces the transition from original to final participation demonstrating that the Incarnation is the point in history where the former gradually turned into the latter.

The introductory chapter sets out what the book is trying to

achieve by drawing attention to the gulf that exists between the atomic physical structure of nature as investigated by scientists, and the familiar world of appearances. Everyone knows that the former is complex (as we saw in the section on quantum theory), but Barfield points out that to understand the latter, one must go beyond the naïve view that the familiar world is simply *there*, fixed and formed, which “the lazy onlooker” then observes. Most post-Kantian philosophy, Barfield says has “heavily emphasised the participation of man’s own mind in the creation and evocation” of the appearances of the familiar world. In other words: *thinking*, which Eliot showed such reluctance to exercise systematically, plays a considerable part in evoking the familiar world of trees, houses, sky etc. out of the undifferentiated somewhat that impinges on our senses from outside. In a later chapter, the book explicitly connects this final modern form of thinking participation which, because it is mainly unconscious, is called *figuration*, with the inner exertion which we described earlier in the section on the Coleridgean imagination.

... Participation, as an actual *experience*, is only won for our islanded consciousness of today by special exertion. It is a matter, not of theorising, but of ‘imagination’ in the genial or creative sense of the word, and therefore our first glimpse of it is commonly an aesthetic experience of some sort, derived from poetry or painting ... (p89)

There are thus two contrasting conceptions of the relation between man and nature: one held by philosophers, the other by classical physicists. On the one hand philosophers maintain that the undifferentiated somewhat that impinges on our senses, mentioned above, cannot be defined and only emerges out of its potential status to become actual reality when it is represented by the mind of man. Barfield therefore calls this impingement *the unrepresented*. On the other hand, classical physicists under the influence of Descartes, maintain that this impingement exists independently of

consciousness in the form of sub-atomic reality in which the mind of man plays no part. The yawning gulf between these two conceptions is usually ignored, but Barfield invites us to take it seriously and see what effect this *sustained* attention has on our knowledge of the evolution of nature and man. In order to do this we have to challenge an entrenched assumption that the relation between man’s consciousness and what impinges on it, “is the same now as it was when men first appeared on earth”. (p12) Eliot has already challenged this assumption out of his poetic feeling when he contrasted the Elizabethan view with the modern one in the passages quoted earlier from the *Four Quartets*. In a large part of *Saving the Appearances* Barfield shows how the assumption arose through clearly traceable historical causes, and affirms that “the evidence is in favour of regarding it as illusory”.

What then is reality? Or, to put the question another way, using the example Barfield chooses to shed light on this question: how can we be sure that the rainbow is real? We gain this certainty by grasping the fact that, whatever may be said or thought about the sub-atomic aspect of reality, the rainbow *per se* is a *representation* of a phenomenon which every normal person can recognise. Because it is universally recognised, Barfield calls it a *collective representation*. If we forget the participation of mind in its evocation, it then becomes what Barfield calls an idol, in other words something believed to be real which is actually unreal.²⁵ The reality of the familiar world, which is studied in all disciplines apart from physics, can only accurately be described as a series of interconnected *collective representations*, which are the correlative of consciousness. This view bears a certain resemblance to the one Eliot had developed in his early philosophical papers. “Reality”, he had argued, “is a convention”. (*SME* p87) “Wait a minute,” someone may say, “conventions change; if we accept them as reality, what

²⁵ See Martina Maria Sam, “Crisis of Cognition as a Language Crisis” in *The Golden Blade* 2005, where, in a footnote to p27, idols are described as “false notions that have taken possession of men’s minds.”

happens to the concept of truth?" It would be disproportionate, at this stage, even to try to answer this very reasonable objection in detail; what will help here is to refer to another of Eliot's illuminating insights. Because he distrusted any absolute claim to atemporal truth, having seen how such rival claims lead to conflict and ultimately to war, he believed that truth could only claim significance within a valid framework. In my judgment, the evolution of consciousness, which is the subject of *Saving the Appearances*, provides such a framework. Within it, the collective representations of, for example, such different cultures as those which produced the world of the Bhagavad Gita, the medieval world of Dante, the Elizabethan world and the modern scientific world, if studied in depth, using the insights gained through experiencing the relation between the primary and secondary imagination and thereby avoiding treating their very different collective representations as idols, show how the primeval union of man and Nature gradually fragments over time to become the islanded consciousness of today cut off from its surroundings. If this is accepted, the question posed earlier of what happens to the concept of truth, and others of equal weight and significance, are placed in a setting where the answers they receive (which, if given outside the framework, might be open to challenge) mutually support each other in a way which is analogous to the movements of the planets round the sun.

Finally there remains the question of what Eliot personally thought about this remarkable book. In a letter to Barfield, dated 25 March 1960, he wrote:

... I must take this opportunity of telling you my very high opinion of your last book that we published, *Saving the Appearances*. It is one of those books which make me proud to be a director of the firm which publishes them ...
(RCA p332)

Notes on the Contributors

Gregers Brinch is a Danish-born composer who lives in Sussex. For ten years he worked in Waldorf teacher training both in Hamburg and later at Emerson College. He is now self-employed composing, teaching music to people of all ages, and lecturing internationally.

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Brien Masters began his professional career as a musician but then devoted his life to Waldorf education, first as a class teacher and latterly as leader of the London Waldorf Teacher Training initiative.

Howard Smith became acquainted with Anthroposophy at the age of 21, through Tintagel House in Sheffield. With a PhD in chemistry, he has worked as a research scientist, then as a science teacher for 25 years. He now runs a piano business as well as talking and writing on a variety of anthroposophical themes.

Nick Thomas is an electrical engineer by training. He was for many years the General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain. He now works as a researcher into the science of the spirit as illuminated by the methods of modern projective geometry, and has published *Science between Space and Counterspace*.

John Thomson began teaching at Emerson College in 1981 after 25 years as a teacher at Elmfield Waldorf School in Stourbridge. He is still involved in Emerson College as lecturer and trustee in its present period of transformation.

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TIME AND ETERNITY

The mystery of time lies at the heart of modern life, gnawing destructively at its entrails if not recognised and brought clearly to consciousness. The articles in this issue of *The Golden Blade* demonstrate that such an endeavour leads to the forming or strengthening of relationships, which are themselves the keynote of the quest for the eternity of the present moment.

The Polarity between Eternity and Evolution in Human Life
Rudolf Steiner

Time and *Humboldt's Gift*
Andrew Welburn

About Time Too: Beethoven and the Scherzo: A Symptom of the
Consciousness Soul
Brien Masters

What is Time?
Howard Smith

Lead us not into Temptation ...
Andrew Wolpert

Physics and Time
Nick Thomas

Time and Music
Gregers Brinch

In the Grip of Time
John B Thomson

Space, Time and Consciousness: Money as Mirror of Human Experience
Arthur Edwards

T S Eliot and Owen Barfield: Contrast or Convergence?
Terence Davies

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