

AN APPROACH TO CONTEMPORARY QUESTIONS
IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOSOPHY

The Golden Blade

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RUDOLF STEINER

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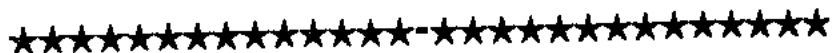
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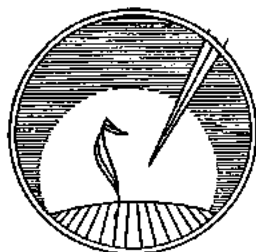
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Anthroposophy, a way of thought rather than a body of dogma, springs from the work and teaching of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). He spoke of it as "a path of knowledge, to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe."

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THE COSMIC WORD AND INDIVIDUAL MAN

RUDOLF STEINER

A Lecture given at Stuttgart on May 2, 1923¹

IN present-day anthroposophical life we must begin to develop an art which was one of the arts of the old Mysteries—those Mysteries which were based on a quite different kind of knowledge from that of to-day, and yet possessed in their customs, and in their whole way of conducting affairs, a great deal that has been lost, and must be renewed. The art I mean can be described, quite in accordance with the intentions of the old Mysteries, thus: *from words there must be drawn Spirit*. But when, in the old Mysteries, they spoke of *Word*, or *Logos*, they meant something very much more significant than is generally meant to-day. We have to learn to find again a deeper and deeper meaning in the objects and processes of the world—and in this sentence, once more: *Spirit must be drawn forth from words*.

To speak of the human being as consisting of physical body, etheric body, astral body, Ego, and so on, is really very abstract. For this reason we have tried on many occasions to describe what is really meant by these members of man's being. It is always possible to go further in such descriptions, and so to approach nearer to spiritual reality. To-day we shall consider the human etheric body, describing what is discovered by supersensible vision about the real being of this human etheric body. We should not stop at the vague conception conveyed by describing how the etheric body is related to the physical body, how it differs in substance, and so on. Such descriptions are only approximate, and only by developing these approximate descriptions very much further do we penetrate to reality.

¹From a shorthand report, unrevised by the lecturer. Published by kind permission of the Rudolf Steiner-Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, Switzerland, and in agreement with the Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company.

We know that when, under earthly conditions, the human being goes to sleep, the etheric body remains within the physical body, and that—as we have always described it—the astral body and the Ego leave this physical body and etheric body. The life of the astral body and Ego is still so weak, at the present stage of their cosmic development, that they are not capable of conscious experience between falling asleep and awakening. We have often discussed, up to a point, the subconscious experiences through which the astral body and the Ego pass during this time.

But to-day we shall look back at what is left behind in bed when a human being is asleep, and in particular at the etheric body. In this way we shall treat the term "etheric body" so as to draw out the Spirit from it, by that art of which I said just now that it was cultivated in the ancient Mysteries. Looking at this etheric body, we shall consider its real nature, as it is beheld supersensibly, when the human being is asleep.

We see the physical body grow still. We see the human being unable to move his limbs—unable also to pour his will through his bodily form, so as to make use of his senses. The relation of the external world to his senses does not change. But the relation of the senses to the external world changes, inasmuch as the human being becomes inwardly still. Just as externally his arms and legs are still, in his organs of perception his will is not active in the delicate movements of response to the external world which are necessary for sense-perception. But it is a complete mistake to believe that the sense-organs themselves, or more exactly the sites of the sense-organs, are not filled by any activity during sleep. Over its whole extent, the physical body rests—but the human etheric body becomes all the more active and inwardly mobile between falling asleep and awakening. This is a characteristic fact: in the same measure as the functions of the physical body come to rest, at and after the moment of falling asleep, a more and more lively activity of the etheric body begins.

This lively activity of the etheric body streams out, in particular, from the senses. If the supersensible gaze is directed upon the sleeping human being—that is to say upon the part of the human being present in the physical frame—then it is found that from those places where the sense-organs are located, a continual lively activity streams *inwards*. This is the life of the etheric body, or vital body, during sleep.

For example, from the moment of falling asleep there is a particular process which originates from the region of the human eyes. It is as if, through the influence of light during the waking period, the eye had stored up forces for an activity that develops only after sleep begins. And this is in fact an etheric activity. In the same measure as the influence of light and colour from outside upon the eye is darkened, the eyes themselves begin, like two phosphorescent suns, to irradiate the interior of the physical part of the sleeping human being. The interior space of the human being is illumined by a phosphorescent, glimmering light. It is not surprising that this light, which streams into the interior of the human being, cannot be seen in the ordinary way. External, physical eyes do not see what goes on in the interior of man; there is no organ within the physical body which could immediately perceive this phosphorescent glow.

One of the inner activities of the etheric body in the human being during sleep can be described in this way. Into this there flows a further process. What a man can still observe while he is going to sleep—a kind of humming and singing, a changing murmur within his organism—continues during sleep itself as a music, extraordinarily rich in melody and harmony, which also fills the whole interior of man during sleep. From falling asleep to awakening, this musical activity continues. And the Ego and astral body, which are outside the physical and etheric body, receive strong impressions from this—from what they have left behind, the resounding music in the etheric body. And while it resounds in music, the etheric body is at the same time radiant with light. But the impression made upon the Ego and the astral body remains unconscious.

In the same way, etheric streams of warmth flow into the interior of man from the whole surface of the skin. The result—with much else that is more remote from what we perceive in the external world as warmth, light, and sound, and is thus difficult to describe—is an immensely beautiful and impressive living and streaming activity of the human etheric body.

Distinct, like an island, there stand out from the general etheric life of the cosmos this particular music, and radiance, and flooding stream of warmth. They stand out for inner reasons—which are rooted in the very existence and being of man himself. They belong to man's individual etheric body. And this flooding warmth,

this phosphorescent glow, this resounding music—it is these that detach themselves, a few days after man's death, as etheric body from the astral body and Ego, and flow out into the general cosmic ether.

Many of you may have noticed how, after attending a concert the previous evening, one may wake up with the feeling that the soul has been listening again to the same music; as if the whole concert had been repeated for the soul during sleep. But this is a more complicated process than for the ordinary consciousness it appears to be. In reality the soul is emerging from the impressions of the cosmic music, which resounds in an individualised form in the human etheric body. But when the human being returns into the etheric body, all that I have described as going on in the etheric body is blotted out for consciousness by the perceptive activity of the physical body. And the human soul *translates* what is really individualised cosmic music into the recently-experienced earthly sounds. They are in a sense the clothing assumed by the cosmic music at the moment of awakening, because it has something in common with the stream of sound received at the concert. Because in the ordinary consciousness man cannot perceive the cosmic music, it is clothed in the sounds taken from earthly experience that are most nearly comparable to it. This is the real experience behind the phenomenon most of you may have met at some time.

You see what complex processes are embraced in the human etheric body. And if the attempt is made to penetrate further—using the methods with which penetration into such realms is possible—then it can be observed that in reality this flowing warmth, this gentle phosphorescent glow, this living music, are an outer revelation of cosmic beings. All that I have described is the external clothing, the revelation, the glory of mighty cosmic beings. And these beings disclose themselves as those we know from anthroposophical writings as the *Exusiai*. I have often named these *Exusiai Revelations*, because they live, in accordance with their inner nature, in the shining stream which during earthly sleep flows from the human sense-organs towards the interior of man. In this stream the weaving life of those beings we name *Exusiai* is revealed.

And now, with the same methods with which one observes these revelations of the human senses, so active in their etheric substance

during sleep, these streams can be followed further along their course into the interior of man's organism. If one is looking at some shining object, one can follow the line from the eye towards this object. It is to be found somewhere on this line that leads outwards, the visual line. In the same way you can follow *inwards* from the senses the streaming, flooding etheric radiance.

There is not so far to go; very soon something different is reached. The mild phosphorescent glow, proceeding from the eyes; the living music, which comes from the region of the organs of hearing; the streaming warmth, which goes inward from the whole surface of the skin—all these become an organically coherent etheric system. (When one observes the waking human being, one sees the etheric body in activity—the physical body of course as well—and this activity is somewhat different from that I have described for sleep; the activity then extends a little *outside* the physical body.) Now one sees how all that streams and flows and shines inwards, from the senses and from the whole skin, is formed into a shell-like copy of man, but *within* him, extending to a certain depth. From the eyes, one sees this phosphorescent glow, inwards, changing into something I will describe in a moment. The streaming warmth goes inwards from the skin, attains a certain thickness like a shell, and then forms a kind of etheric organism which is compounded of the living music, the glowing light, the streaming warmth, intermingled with one another. All these, and much else, flow through one another, influence one another mutually, and form an organism—the etheric organism of man. If one contemplates this etheric organism with spiritual vision, and begins to understand its phenomena, one is bound to describe it as consisting simply of the forms of thoughts, of *flowing thoughts*. What is flowing within it is everywhere Thought.

If one were to follow this inner activity of the etheric body during sleep, in its continual fluctuation, and then draw it at a particular moment, one would draw of course lines, or coloured forms. But to describe the substance of these lines or coloured forms one could only say: it is as if thoughts were starting to flow. What lives otherwise in the activity of thought becomes an ever-changing flood and flow. It is the thought-process of the Universe *individualised*. This individualised thought-process of the Universe reveals itself as *individualised Logos*. One cannot really say: this forming of thoughts, which streams and weaves within man,

connected with these movements shining in from the senses, is *only* thought. For it *speaks*. It speaks indeed a silent language, but one that can be perceived as belonging to the interior of man. It speaks indeed—as all things through the Logos speak to us—in an individual form, expressing in an inner Word, that can be perceived spiritually, the essential being of Man.

Thus when we proceed further inwards from the senses there appears to us : *the human speech that is directed inwards*. It can really be said : the Ego and astral body of man, which from falling asleep to awakening are outside the physical and etheric bodies, are unconscious, as far as the ordinary consciousness is concerned. But they do experience what is happening. And just as they experience the etheric activity of the senses during sleep, as an inward streaming and flowing, they experience too during sleep the etheric body as individualised Logos. Speech, which otherwise is directed outwards to the ears of our fellow men, is as if transformed, turned inwards etherically. It is as if we were to repeat inwards everything which we have said during the day, from waking to falling asleep—but in the opposite order, beginning with the evening and ending with the morning. In a silent language we repeat all that we have said from morning to evening—but in a way that reveals the whole nature of our soul. In so far as man's essential being is experienced in what is spoken, from morning to evening, this experience is manifested inwardly, from evening to morning, in the resounding, speaking, individualised Logos. And this resounding, speaking, individualised Logos brings to expression at the same time—writing, as it were, into the time-sequence of the etheric, in that gleaming, gently phosphorescent light—the *occult script* corresponding to everything that words inwardly during the night, as the other side of what is spoken during the day. (The same thing happens during every sleep, even during a daytime nap, but in a more fragmentary way.)

Looking at this still more closely, using the same methods through which the individualised Logos that weaves within man is revealed—seeking the ultimate reality, behind what is fundamentally only appearance—one finds all those hierarchical beings called in the anthroposophical writings *Dynamis*, who are above the *Exusiai*.

Thirdly—in this attempt to exercise the art of seeking the real being behind the words—we find the ultimate reality of what I

once described as a kind of *opposite vertebral column*. Perhaps some of you remember how I described the human etheric body many years ago. In the periodical, *Luzifer Gnosis*, it is described how the streams that compose the etheric body as a whole work together to form a structure that lies towards the front of man, just as in the physical body the bony structure of the vertebral column, and the vertebral canal, lie towards the back. In the physical body we have this vertebral column and vertebral canal, running vertically. And in the etheric body we have a confluence, a radiating together of what I have just described, into a kind of opposite vertebral column—lying in relation to the physical body towards the front. And just as the nerves proceed from the physical vertebral column, and also the rib-bones, for example—in the same way the rays and the streams in the etheric body flow together into this other column. They do not proceed *from* it, but flow together and work together, with all that they contain, here in the front of the human etheric body.

The result is an exceptionally beautiful and impressive etheric organ. Particularly during sleep, it is revealed in its gleaming and glowing, its resounding and its manifold effects of warmth, its inner language. And beholding it more closely, one can see that this organ permeates what I once described (because these things must be described in vivid pictures) as the various Lotus-flowers. Thus you can realize how through this organ—which develops in this confluence of the etheric body, and connects with the streams of the astral body, forming the Lotus-flowers—man finds his connection with the external astral and cosmic universe.

This, too, is a *manifestation*. This, too, can be described as an appearance, and its true inner reality must be sought. This reality is found in the Hierarchy which in anthroposophical writings I have called the *Kyriotetes*.

You have now drawn out from the word “etheric body” its ultimate reality. It is a working and flowing and weaving together of the *Exusiai*, *Dynamis*, and *Kyriotetes*, who individualize their streaming, flowing, resounding, speaking activity, and form the human etheric body.

When we contemplate all that *Kyriotetes*, *Dynamis*, and *Exusiai* have formed and made individual, which shines and warms and sounds and speaks into the human physical body as the individual

human etheric body—we have also reached man's *astral* body. For in this living activity of the Second Hierarchy, which streams from the Cosmos and is individualized in the human being, there is really contained the human astral body itself. This activity shows itself in the etheric body—it *exists* in the astral body.

Think of this whole activity, in which man is interwoven during sleep. For during sleep he is interwoven, unconsciously, with the activity of the Second Hierarchy. When he has gone through the gate of death, man needs this whole activity. For he must live on within it, when he has laid aside the etheric body as such; when after some days this sounding, this living music, this gently phosphorescent glow, these streams of warmth, have flowed away. When all this has flowed into the cosmic Universe, when one has observed the glow extending more and more widely, but growing fainter and fainter, and the music growing softer. . . . Really this should be described differently. When these regions are described it becomes natural to explain a thing by its polar opposite. It would correspond better to the perceptions of one who has died if I were to say : what is at first like a silent resounding—but one that is perceptible within man—becomes louder and louder, spreading outwards. But just because it grows louder this is perceived as a fading away of the inner etheric music; it can no more be perceived by the being of soul and spirit, who for the earth has died. For this being no longer has physical ears—and physical ears would be needed.

It is similar with the other experiences of man in the first days after death. Then he feels himself in his astral body. But again it is only the external side, a *word*, if one says : Man is now in the *Soul-World*. I have described it in this way in my book *Theosophy*, in accordance with the perceptions of the soul-organ most immediately accessible by man. But for the universal, cosmic intelligence, developed in cosmic realms, this region reveals itself as an interwoven activity of the beings of the Second Hierarchy.

Observe what sort of existence it is, at first, within the activity of the Second Hierarchy after death. Between birth and death the human being lives on earth, alternating between waking and sleeping. During waking, although his soul is woven into the activity of Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes, he is compelled to plunge down continually into the forms of the physical body. During

sleep he lives with the etheric body, but this, too, imposes an individual quality on the activity of the spiritual beings, in accordance with the forms of the physical body. Thus the work of the Second Hierarchy has to absorb what the human being is, morally—whether he is good or evil, devoted to error or to truth. The activities appropriate to the beings of the Second Hierarchy are individualised according to what man is, as good or evil earthly man, as earthly man living in truth or in error. But account must be taken of what these beings of the Second Hierarchy, according to their own essential nature, purpose to do for the being of man.

Let us assume that a human being has a relation to a particular Being belonging to the Hierarchy of the Dynamis. Through this is developed, with the help of an Archangel as intermediary, the faculty of *speech* in man's organism. But in the development of this faculty the work of the Dynamis is in a sense dislocated, and distorted into triviality. And when a human being uses his words to say something evil, something filled with hatred, this work of the Second Hierarchy is violently dislocated. And it must be restored again. The human being must not live on after death in those forms which he has given to all I have described through his moral or immoral being. He must strip them off, and find his way into the living work of the Second Hierarchy. This stripping off of the dislocations, of the trivializations—this stripping off of those uses of the work of the Second Hierarchy which distort it into its opposite—this is accomplished by all that I have described as the passage of man through the Soul-World. And then man has ascended to what I spoke of in *Theosophy* as the World of Spirits, when he can follow with his own Ego-being, with his innermost being of soul and spirit, those activities which correspond to the Being of the Dynamis and Kyriotetes.

You see—in this way, through the art that seeks out the reality in words, the *Being of Man* can be described once again. We get nearer and nearer to a real picture of this Being. Just as one might indicate on the blackboard the distribution of the figures in a picture by Raphael, say the Sistine Madonna, with a few characteristic strokes—the words physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego are only an indication. The reality is living activity, inwardly full and rich ; and in this activity the Beings of the Cosmos, in realms of body, soul, and spirit, are revealed. In the end one comes always to Beings.

If anything is described as if it were vaguely extended in Space or swimming in Time, or as a Physical World, Etheric World, and so on—it is the *manifestation* which is being described. It is like describing a swarm of gnats seen in the distance, so that the particular gnats cannot be distinguished, only a grey patch in the air. In the real world, what are at first called etheric body, astral body, are such grey patches. If one looks closely at these grey patches in the physical air, one discovers the particular existing gnats. If one looks closely at these spiritual grey patches, “etheric body”, “astral body”, one always discovers Beings.

To Beings one must come at last in all understanding of the world. For Beings alone are real. Anything comes into existence only through the co-operation of Beings—presenting then an unreal appearance to unclear vision. Just as in the unreal grey cloud the gnats are the real, particular beings—everywhere in the world it is particular Beings that are at work, and the rest is illusion, arising from the co-existence of Beings. Physical matter, too, is an illusion of this kind—something of the nature of a Being underlies everything. Men must understand this again, in order not to speak of something that is not really there : of Matter—or (which is no better) of Spirit in general—in order to learn to speak about Beings, individual Beings of the universe.

Once, in the old Mysteries, they knew how to speak about the Beings of the universe. They knew that realities could not be described by talking either of Matter or of what is called Spirit in the ordinary consciousness—a grey spirituality, conceived pantheistically as present in all things. They knew that if one wants realities, one must have particular Beings. But consciousness of these Beings has gradually been lost—to the same degree that in *Man himself* the quality of individual being has developed more and more. As I have often said, Man has become more and more intellectual ever since the first third of the fifteenth century. What he *knows* about himself becomes more and more abstract. But behind this abstract life there is a being living more and more *within itself*, increasingly rich in inner spirituality. Man lost the dreamy consciousness he once possessed of the Beings of the universe, in becoming a self-apprehending being himself. He must realize again that only when we can point to individual Beings in the universe do we grasp realities.

It was the necessary course of human evolution to see Being everywhere in ancient times, but in a dreamy consciousness. Then

the time came, when things were felt in the following way. The realities consist of all these Beings, living in the Cosmos : Kyriotetes, Dynamis, Exusiai, Archai, Archangeloi, Angeloi, human Egos, animal group-souls, the cosmic souls of the plants and so on. Not even the animals, as they live on earth, are realities; they too are illusion; the realities are the group-souls. The whole plant world on earth is no reality; the earth-soul is the reality. Plants are only as hair upon the earth organism, like the hair upon our own organism. Men knew that all these Beings I have named existed in the universe, and shine out, manifesting themselves, revealing themselves in speech. They knew that this expression in speech proceeded from their essential being. And that universal resounding, which arises from the confluence of what is spoken by the particular Beings in self-revelation, this is the *Logos*. But to begin with, the Logos was also only an *Appearance*. Only because Christ united this appearance, and made it concrete in His own Being, was through the Mystery of Golgotha the apparent Logos born upon earth as real Logos.

We must understand the connection of these things. Then the particular Beings can be described spiritually—how they shine, with gentle phosphorescence, and resound : how they spread streaming warmth, how they speak out their own essence. For each particular Being a full spiritual Form can be found in this way. And these full spiritual Forms are the only real things in the universe. In the old dreamy consciousness they knew a great deal about these realities. But this knowledge has shrunk more and more. Once it was known : Form shines out in *this* way from a certain Being who is reckoned among the Kyriotetes, in *this* way from human Egos, in *this* way from Angels, and so on. All this shrank, and contracted at last into a point, because the realities were seen less and less.

Originally they knew very well how the manifestations of the Exusiai, for example, differ from the manifestations of the human Egos, or these from the manifestations of the group-souls of the animals or of the plant Earth-soul. The differences were known, but gradually they fell into unconsciousness. A time came, when there was only the feeling : Yes, there are such realities, everything else is not real. . . . Space is not real, Time is not real, Matter is not real, Spirit in vague generality is not real—but *cosmic individualities* are real. But they could no longer be distinguished. And so they

were described with the uniform word *Monad*. Leibnitz and Giordano Bruno spoke of Monads in this way. These Monads were the Realities I have spoken of, shrivelled up small. And no distinction was made between one Monad and another—or at most by tacking on an attribute to the word: the Monads of the *Exusiai*, the Monads of men, the Monads of animals, and so on.

And at last men lost the power even to speak about the Monads—to which the great German thinker ascribed a conceptual faculty, because he felt that spirit did indeed live in what had shrunk to the Monad. We have not only to remember that the Monad is something living; if human civilization is not to fall into decay, but develop further, we must not only remember the Monads, but we must understand once more, and now with a clear, enhanced consciousness, that all true reality consists in living, ensouled spirit-beings. And what is sketched first with a few lines—physical body, etheric body, astral body—must be brought to life, in the way we have done today.

And so one reaches the point of seeing man's soul and spirit-nature interwoven with the Beings of the second Hierarchy. One observes how man goes from earthly life to earthly life, and how from life to life a compensating cosmic Justice, a Karma, is at work. And here, too, considering this power at work in the Cosmos, one need not stop at the abstractions "Karma", or "universal Justice", or "moral world order"—but can go on to the realities.

Beginning with the etheric body, a description can ascend to the second Hierarchy, and therewith describe the human astral body as well. Just in the same way, one can begin with the astral body, and take hold of Thinking, Feeling, and Willing in the astral body, as they fade away at the moment of falling asleep, and go out with the astral body. If one begins there, and looks for the realities, one finds the following.

In our human Thinking there lives the activity of the *Angels*. In our human speech, which springs from Feeling, there lives for man as he sleeps during the night the activity of the *Archangels*. And in what is revealed in waking life through human movement of the limbs, through all that is imbued with Willing—and which also goes on in the astral body—there lives during the night, when the astral body is outside, the world of the *Archai*.

But what lives outside in this way, these supersensible activities of *Archai*, *Archangels*, and *Angels*, which are reflected in the

waking human being in Willing, Feeling, and Thinking—these must be harmonized with the etheric and physical bodies. The physical body must be formed in such a way that it can become the organ of thought, of speech, and of movement. One sees then how the activity of the *Kyriotetes*, *Dynamis*, and *Exusiai* passes over into a still higher activity: that of the *Thrones*, who bring human Willing into accord with the physical human organism, the human metabolism and limbs. Then we come to the Hierarchy of *Cherubim*, who bring the human faculty of speech into accord with its physical basis. In all that serves speech or song in the organism, or anything similar to speech—the *Cherubim* bring the human life of Feeling into accord with the organs of speech. And now the faculty of Thought must also have its physical organ in the human nerves and senses. It is the *Seraphim* who bring Thinking into accord with the nerves and senses of man. Speech, and all that is connected with it, is brought into accord with Thinking and Feeling by the *Cherubim*.

Thus we see, when we have threefold Man before us:—

In the organism of nerves and senses, in the basis of Thinking, the creating *Seraphim*.

In all that is the rhythmic man, which must as physical organism be brought into harmony with the faculty of speech—in all this we see the creating *Cherubim*.

In all that is expressed in the movement of the human limbs, in all activities of Will, for which the inner structure of metabolism and limbs must be present in man, harmony is accomplished by the *Thrones*.

From this we see how the physical human form dissolves into appearance, and behind it there stand as realities: *Seraphim*, *Cherubim*, *Thrones*. We are always looking into the activity of the *Seraphim*, *Cherubim*, and *Thrones*, when the human Ego is interwoven with its inner activity, when man in waking life moves, speaks, feels, and thinks.

In this way we can find again a renewed Mystery wisdom for men; a Mystery wisdom which once more exercises the art of releasing Spirit from the word—of finding real Being in what is at first only sketched in a few lines as physical Man, etheric Man, astral Man. Real Being consists always in individual Spirits, who bear in experience within them what is of the nature of Soul, and who create what is outwardly manifest, the physical. Only

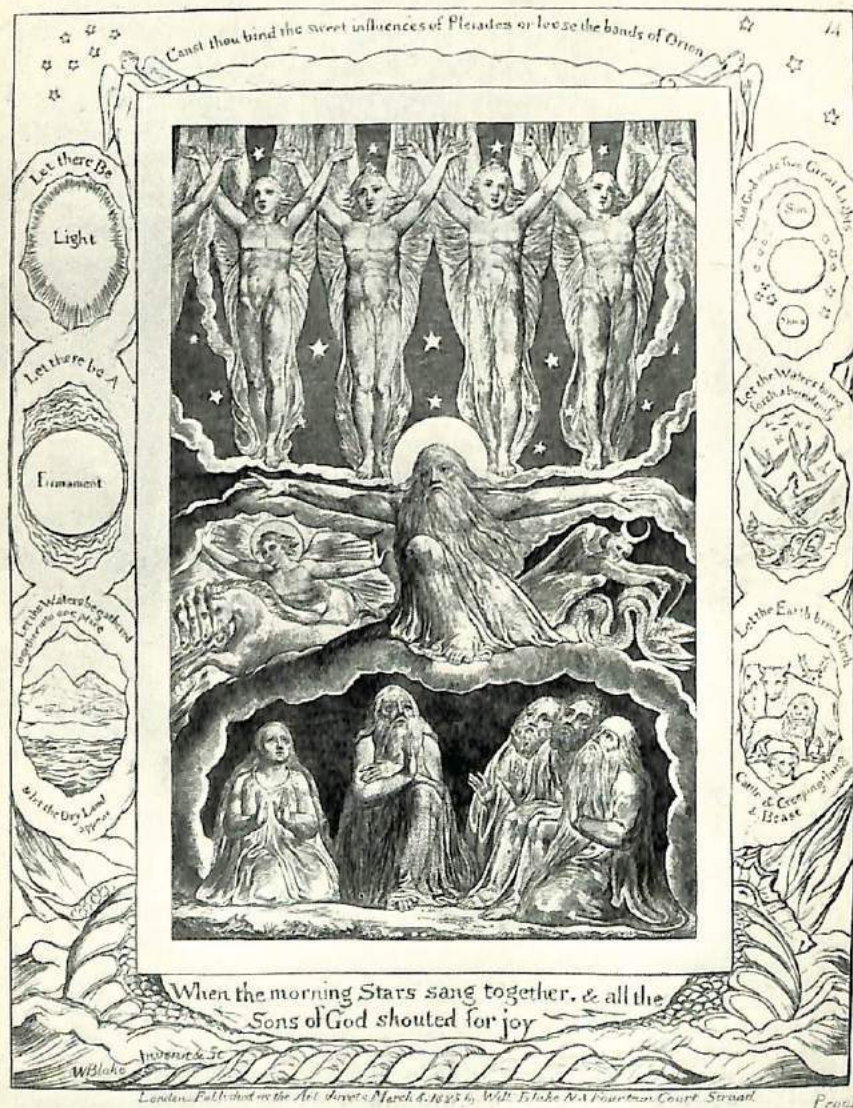
existent Spirit-individualities are real. Their expression as Soul comes about because these individual Spirits experience themselves inwardly, and each other in mutual stimulus. That a physical world exists is because these Spirits (who have been rendered abstract as Monads and then have disappeared altogether from human observation) reveal themselves in creation, according to their various stages of existence. We can go back from the created world, which is really nothing but the outer Glory of creating Beings, to the world of experience, of Soul—which is the self-experience of the world of individual Spirits. And when we go on to the true reality, we come to the individual Spirits themselves, of whom the Universe is the revelation and the life.

As long as man stands upon Earth, he lives among the revelations of the individual Spirits. Between death and a new birth he must behold and pass through in full reality the individual Spirits in their own immediate forms. And in order to complete his development he must achieve the passage from the beholding of the spiritual realities in their true form to the order of Earth, in which he does not behold the individual Spirits, but in which they show themselves as it were only from outside, in their outer garments.

But if earthly life is not to fall into complete decay, man must learn once more to behold, and to know, and to understand, through the outer garment, the individual Spirits belonging to a higher world. Then man will see how his whole life consists in a struggle and effort among all that is outer garment of the Divine, and in a life *within* the Being of the Divine. But he can achieve a right existence within the Being of the Divine only if he develops himself more and more in the true beholding of the outer garment. He must learn to penetrate to the Being through the outer garment. He must not stop at the outer description, but press on to the inner life.

When once this is attempted by a considerable number of human beings, there will be the dawn of a future Earth-evolution, and of the metamorphosis of earthly being into the forms of Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan. The Anthroposophical Society must unite human beings who feel themselves today as the nucleus of what must spread to wider and wider circles in human civilisation, that progress in the evolution of mankind may really come about, and that earthly life may not fall into decay.

Translated by Adam Bittleston



From William Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job.

THE HEAVENLY HIERARCHIES

ADAM BITTLESTON

This article and the following one on Etheric Forces are meant to be read in conjunction with the preceding lecture by Dr. Steiner.

WHEN John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, counsellor and friend of Sir Thomas More and of Erasmus, wrote his *Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchies of Dionysius the Areopagite*, many things were beginning to happen which were to make his subject unfashionable. A physics and an astronomy were about to develop, stimulated by his contemporary Copernicus, which in their maturity seemed to leave no place for Angels. Within Christian theology, the Reformation was to emphasize the direct relationship between God and Man, and discourage any talk of Mediators other than Jesus Christ. The great mystics were following far more strongly the negative element in Dionysius—*Docta Ignorantia*, the wise recognition that God can be in no way pictured or described in earthly terms—than the positive descriptions of spiritual beings given in the *Celestial Hierarchies*. And finally Erasmus was about to take up, and make popular, the arguments of Laurentius Valla against the authenticity of the Dionysian writings, which meant that Colet's beloved teacher was to lose a great part of the authority he had enjoyed in Christendom for more than eight hundred years.

From the middle of the seventh century we find these writings—*The Celestial Hierarchies*, *The Terrestrial Hierarchies*, *The Names of God*, *The Mystical Theology*, and some letters—quoted with confidence by Christian authors. The great mediaeval thinkers, from John Scotus Erigena (who translated them into Latin) to Thomas Aquinas, drew upon them frequently, and regarded them as written by the Athenian pupil of St. Paul, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Today it seems likely that they were written down about 500 A.D. But this by no means renders them valueless. Colet himself is said to have been convinced by Grocyn that they were not first-century writings, without his sense of their significance being disturbed. What matters is the help or hindrance they offer for a right understanding of Christianity.

On this we find strong disagreement among orthodox Christians. It is said against these writings, for example, that they show no understanding of the Incarnation; that they make God utterly unapproachable by man, and that the description of the Hierarchies is only fantasy and word-spinning. On the other hand, there are Christians to-day who find Dionysius an invaluable guide.

In the work of Rudolf Steiner we find Dionysius taken very seriously—together with a description of the Hierarchies which, while very much richer and more detailed, is in wonderful harmony with that of Dionysius, or that of Colet in his Commentary, which sometimes amplifies Dionysius in a remarkable way. What Rudolf Steiner gave was always based on his own immediate experience of spiritual reality, tested over and over again by patient, conscientious spiritual research. But he maintained that an esoteric tradition had always existed, in which comparable results had been achieved. In "Dionysius" he saw a representative of an esoteric school traceable to St. Paul; someone, therefore, who could in this sense be regarded as the Apostle's pupil.

A vision of the Hierarchies has been, and can be once more, infinitely fruitful for human civilization. Speaking of Dante, Dorothy Sayers has well described this vision, in its medieval form :

As medieval man stood upon the surface of his central earth, and gazed beyond it towards that august Infinitude by Whom, and in Whom, and for Whom all things exist, his spiritual eye beheld, imaged by the concentric circlings of the heavenly spheres, the nine-fold order, rank above rank, of the celestial Intelligences, his absolute superiors.

Such a vision has very definite effects. The thought of these varied Spirits helps man to understand Nature's boundless variety. For Nature does not really present the appearance of a work by a single Artist. It resembles much more a region shared—as a city is—by the works of makers varying greatly in ability and purpose. And where human destiny and the historical process are considered as fabrics at which powers other than human have been at work, very much the same can be said. It is as if greater and lesser purposes, greater and lesser patterns, in their interplay were continually frustrating or fulfilling each other.

The experience both of nature and of history thus confirms the great traditional picture of manifold spiritual beings. But this helps also in two ways that are still more fundamental. From a knowledge of the Hierarchies man can learn exactly where he belongs himself,

in the whole cosmic household—thus coming to what Dorothy Sayers calls "the security of his proper status"; which is a defence against illusion, and also against despair. And above all he can learn about God. His mind need not pass in a single leap from the visible world, burdened with every kind of limitation, to the Almighty and Infinite. His gaze can be led by stages, resting on beings far wiser, more loving, and more powerful than men, and yet still the servants of the servants of God, until it reaches God's nearest neighbours, the first-fruits of creation, His worthiest companions. Among men, we know others and ourselves, in a way that reaches real depths of the heart, through studying the friends and neighbours each has chosen. So also for knowledge of God, we need knowledge of the spirits that are nearest to Him. Wilful ignorance of this realm will mean that something is false in our very relationship to the Divine.

The objection is often made that human thought and language are quite unsuited for such matters. This difficulty is realized far more intensely by those from whom true descriptions of the spiritual originate than it can be by anyone else. And yet the visible world is essentially a "likeness" of the invisible which brought it into being. Each object, each word, is waiting to be used for this very purpose. And as Dionysius points out, the inappropriateness that is also present in every comparison has its positive usefulness. What seems to fit perfectly deceives us; what is clearly inadequate, sets our own spirit in motion. Speaking of such pictures as those of the four winged Beasts in the Apocalypse, Dionysius says : "Possibly we ourselves might not have begun to search into the Mysteries which lead us to the Heights through the careful examinations of the holy Word, had not the ugliness of the imagery of the Angels startled us."

The description given by Dionysius begins with the first and greatest Hierarchy, which is continually in the immediate presence of God. The three ranks of this Hierarchy are named Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. These are "near the All-Holy without any shadow of turning." The name of the Seraphim means kindling or burning; of the Cherubim, "stream of wisdom." The Thrones in their steadfastness "bear God."

In his commentary, Colet finds remarkable words to describe this Hierarchy. The Cherubim "may be called loving Wisdoms,

as those first (the Seraphim) may be called wise Loves." In the Thrones there dwells God's "fixed and settled resolution and unchangeableness of purpose." And to sum up the working of this Hierarchy for man, beginning now with the Thrones, he says: "Power cleanses, clear truth makes serene, finished love makes perfect."

To the middle Hierarchy belong Dominions (Kyriotetes, in Latin *Dominaciones*), Might (Dynamis, in Latin *Virtutes*), and Powers (Exusiai, in Latin *Potestates*). The Greek names here are all taken from words that can mean human power or authority, and are diversely translated. In describing these Spirits, Dionysius speaks of qualities which should be present in human authority: for the Kyriotetes, freedom, and the imparting of freedom; for the Dynamis, courage; and for the Exusiai, "beautiful and unconfused good order." When Colet comes to write of them, wishing that we should not have too proud a picture of these Beings, he remembers how Christ has revealed the deepest sense of dominion in free obedience, and of strength in His "weakness unto death." And the Exusiai "summon all things to a majesty productive of power, fertile and fruitful in God"—that the order they bring may not be a desert, but a sharing of creative power.

What the Second Hierarchy receives from the First, it imparts to the Hierarchy nearest to man, that of the Principalities (Archai), Archangels, and Angels. In Colet's words: "The First shining and dazzling Hierarchy irradiates the Second and next beneath it, that it being enlightened may illuminate the Third; that the Third in order may beautifully colour darksome men, and cause them in some measure to imitate and to reproduce the beauty of God."

Like the Beings of the second Hierarchy, the Archai have a name reminiscent of human authority; it can be rendered Princes, as well as Beginnings. Theirs, Colet says, is a loving Princedom. Of the lowest of these beings, the Angels, he says cheerfully: "As their nature is more akin to our human minds, and more nearly connected with them, so is their life more familiar to us."

Both Dionysius and Colet here tackle the problem of the Spirits who lead the nations. "For the most High established the bounds of the nations according to the number of the Angels of God." Each nation has its own leading angelic Spirit, as the book of Daniel speaks of Michael leading the Jewish people, and of other Spirits appointed over the Greeks and Babylonians. Thus for every nation,

however bad its behaviour, a good leadership exists, though often rejected by the perversity of men. While Dionysius here speaks of Angels (a term of which he says that it can be used of every rank), Colet definitely describes the leadership of nations as the task of Archangels, and says of the Angels specifically: "Each man has his own angel as his guardian and preserver, and also as his constant monitor and instigator to what is good; otherwise weak men would neither be able to persist in the good, nor to oppose the evil."

Rudolf Steiner also speaks of three Hierarchies, each embracing three ranks of Beings; and he often uses the same names as Dionysius. But it should be remembered that his own immediate spiritual encounter with such Beings is primary for him. When he came to know some realm of the spiritual world, and wished to describe it in human language, he looked for existing terms that he could take from Christian or other esoteric traditions—or, after very careful consideration, he formed new terms. Thus we find a number of alternative names used by him for the ranks of the Hierarchies. We also find an immeasurably rich description of their activities. When in any passage of his writings we meet an account, say, of the work of the Archangels, we should never suppose this to be the whole of their work. Towards all beings of the world, each rank of Spirits has the most varied tasks, as men have. It is as if a visitor from another planet, on his return, were to begin his description of mankind with a few essentials, and say: "They pick and share fruit among themselves as food." His hearers would have to keep on correcting their first impressions as he went further. We have to do the same with the descriptions of the Hierarchies.

For the Hierarchy nearest to man—Angels, Archangels, and Archai—Rudolf Steiner used, in his early, basic book *The Outline of Occult Science*, various alternative names. The Archai (in German often *Urbeginne*) are also called "Spirits of Personality". The Archangels are called "Fire-Spirits". The Angels are called "Sons of Twilight" or "Sons of Life". (These names for the Angels and Archangels are found comparatively seldom elsewhere in his work).

Like Dionysius, Steiner speaks of the Angels as guardians of individual men, each Angel protecting the soul in his care through repeated lives on earth, bringing to it again and again gentle reminders of the eternal purposes for which man was created. And like Colet, he regards the Archangels as leaders of great human communities or nations.

The Archai have a still wider leadership; each has under his care the progress of particular periods of time. What we know as the birth and decline of a civilization or a nation has behind it in spiritual reality the gradual entry into activity, and later the gradual withdrawal, of members of the Archai and the Archangels.

As a whole, this Third Hierarchy has to do with what we may call the inner education of man; its members are "Spirits of Soul". Through their activity alone, there would be nothing of a physical or etheric nature in the world, only processes of consciousness.

For a living picture of these beings, however, we need their *history*—just as we need a sharing of memories, if we are to be intimate with another human being. In order to achieve this, Rudolf Steiner asks of the modern mind a tremendous leap into the otherwise unimagined. He describes three great periods of cosmic evolution, *before* anything of our present physical environment existed. The present physical world had a beginning. But this beginning already implied other periods of cosmic evolution, not physically connected with it—just as a particular human life is connected with the other earthly lives of the same spiritual individuality, but not by a sequence of visible causes and effects.

These other periods of evolution were referred to by Rudolf Steiner under names chosen to suggest something of their predominant character, and their relation to phenomena in our present cosmos: Old Saturn, Old Sun, Old Moon. In lectures given in Vienna, not long after the publication of *Occult Science*, he described in another, very significant way the atmosphere of these great periods. Old Saturn can be compared with a cosmic Spring, Old Sun with Summer, Old Moon with Autumn, and our present cosmos with Winter. It is as if the earth were to disappear and re-appear again, during the passage from one season to another. Our present cosmos is like a Winter in that it is dominated by fixed, finished, calculable forms—and man is no longer aware of the inrush of fresh Creation. In this winter he has to enkindle his own inner fire.

During the preceding great periods, other Spirits went through stages of development comparable to that through which man is now passing—with the great difference that these periods were not winterlike in this sense, but revealed in their Nature and their historic development Divine creative power far more immediately.

Yet in these periods the Spirits older than man went through a stage of consciousness, an awakening from dream to objective perception and responsibility, similar to that of man on earth. The Archai had this experience in the fresh Spring of Old Saturn, the Archangels in the full Summer of Old Sun, the Angels in the Autumn of old Moon.

At first sight, all this may seem of interest only to some cosmic super-antiquarian. But the past, even this immensely remote past by ordinary human standards, is not in reality lost and gone. The Angels, Archangels, and Archai are near neighbours of man's soul. And they bring into the present time the living effects of these earlier periods. As in a human life the experiences of childhood or youth can work as support or hindrance in later years—so the moods, the deeds, and the relationships of these earlier worlds work into our present existence. To wish to know nothing of them would be like living with people whose motives and interests we refuse to understand.

The Angels have the particular relationship to man that they "came of age" in a world where separation, decay and evil had already a considerable share. (Through this, the name given to the Angels, "Spirits of Twilight", can be approached, from one side.) On the Old Moon, the elementary conditions, Warmth, Air and Water already existed, but nothing solid, no Earth. And there was nothing in the flow of events—in which man shared with a dreaming consciousness—corresponding entirely to what we know in our present world as death. But longing for the Eternal, and a sense of resignation, of acceptance of estrangement from God, were present during this cosmic Autumn.

On the Old Sun, there was nothing more material than our present air. The Archangels achieved the human stage when the outer physical world was only air, warmth and light. The atmosphere of this period we can approach by feeling—just as we can feel the mood of a colour or a sound—all that is implied in the scent of a rose. Goodness, that gives itself, warming and enkindling life—this was the experience of the Archangels in this summer of the world. When we as human beings try to achieve community, we are really looking for this Sun-level of consciousness. Nationalism in our time is the appallingly distorted caricature of the experience of community which should come to us through the Archangels.

Upon Old Saturn there was only varying warmth, as an outward phenomenon: but warmth like that surrounding all living things in their beginnings, infinitely differentiated, pregnant with all that is to come. The mood of Old Saturn is glowing enthusiasm, devoted sacrifice, offered that worlds may come into being. It is here that Time has its source. And from the beginning the Archai are bearers of the Time-element. It was natural for ancient man to see in the name of a period of time—as with the Greek “Aeon”—also the name of a God. The Hebrew word in Genesis translated “Day”, originally meant, according to Rudolf Steiner, a spiritual being belonging to the realm of the Archai. The seven “Days of Creation” are seven Archai, who lead the first ages of evolution.

When a human being really feels himself as belonging to his time, this is a source of creative action. But just as the relationship with the Archangel can be distorted into fanatical nationalism, the relationship with the Time-Spirit can become one-sided. Then, again, it is no longer the true Time-Spirit that is served. A narrowness of soul develops, a contempt for the past that wrenches the present away from the whole course and purpose of history. Wherever, both in East and West, we see technical considerations dominating over human standards, this tendency can be recognized.

There is a particular work of the Archangels which should be considered here. It is they who are the fashioners of human language. The rich and complex original language of mankind, of which traces can be found in all existing languages, was the united work of the choir of Archangels. In the particular languages of nations, the character of the leading Archangel of each is expressed. But in this work the Archangels look for guidance to the Beings above them. And for the original, universal language they drew their impulses from the whole of the Second Hierarchy, the Exusiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes.

For these Beings of the Second Hierarchy, Rudolf Steiner has alternative names which are a great deal used in his writings. He speaks of the Exusiai as “Spirits of Form”, the Dynamis as “Spirits of Movement”, and the Kyriotetes as “Spirits of Wisdom”: names which are in accord with the feeling of the Greek names, and which can lead us very far into the mysteries of the world. The Second Hierarchy as a whole he called, in the Foundation Meditation given at Christmas, 1923, “Spirits of Light”. While processes of

consciousness, and nothing more, would come about through the work of the Third Hierarchy alone, the Second Hierarchy create life-processes—all that Rudolf Steiner calls the “etheric”. They are the great fashioners, quickeners, and guides of outer Nature, and of the human organism; active in everything on which the Sun shines.

Both Nature and man to-day have a quality which is so familiar to us that we take it for granted—a certain finished completeness. Dramatic processes of organic evolution are no longer taking place; man, if he is to go on evolving, must do something about it himself. This quality of completeness is due to the Spirits of Form. The “Winter” of cosmic evolution, our present world, bears predominantly their imprint, just as the Spirits of Movement predominated in Old Moon, and the Spirits of Wisdom in Old Sun. In the great Hebrew description of the creation of the world, Genesis, the Spirits of Form are referred to by the plural word “Elohim” (in the Authorised Version translated “God”) and a particular Spirit of Form by the word “Jahve” (sometimes translated “Lord God”).

Before our present world, man had not yet received an individual Self—that “master of the house” of which as yet he knows only the remote shadow when he ordinarily says “I am.” The true individual Self—not what appears in ordinary consciousness—comes to man through the Spirits of Form. Hence Jahve can announce Himself to Moses with the words: “I AM the I AM.”

The Self or Ego is the youngest element in the being of man. On Old Sun, the human etheric body already existed, as the work of the Spirits of Wisdom; on Old Moon man received the astral body, through which the dreaming consciousness was enkindled in him, from the Spirits of Movement. On Old Sun, man’s condition resembled that of the plants to-day. And we can approach the Spirits of Wisdom through the contemplation of all that is plant-like.

In the lecture preceding this article, Rudolf Steiner speaks of the “Plant-soul”. On a number of occasions, but particularly clearly in the great cycle of lectures at Helsinki in 1912, he showed that the plants have also their soul and spirit natures—not united with the physical body and the forces of life, as in man, but in realms withdrawn from our immediate observation. Seven great groups of plants are spread over the earth, each like a single organism; and what stands as Ego to such a group is offspring of the Spirits of

Wisdom. Similarly, the Egos of great families of animals—which in their so-called “instincts” reveal that they belong together—are offspring of the Spirits of Movement.

In this complex and intimate way man is related to surrounding Nature. And spiritual development consists to a great extent in bringing what is akin to the animal in man into harmony with the pure and peaceful element that is akin to the plant. The “Lotus-flowers”, of which Rudolf Steiner speaks in the foregoing lecture, come to a right development through this harmony. The Spirits of Wisdom have left in us a heavenly plant, or tree, not yet fully grown, which is intended to have as intense a degree of awakesness, when it comes to completion, as the plants of earth are deeply asleep.

Fairy stories and myths contain many descriptions of this “tree”. One organ of it, as it were the upright stem, is described in the foregoing lecture as the “opposite vertebral column”. If we read Goethe’s *Märchen* of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily from this point of view, we may see the final “Bridge”, into which the Green Snake transforms herself, as another imaginative picture of this etheric spine, viewed horizontally, as when man is asleep. It is this Bridge which makes possible a steady, undisturbed coming and going between the banks of the River which divides the world of sense and the world of spirit. We can understand that in speaking of the Kyriotetes, Dionysius described them as givers of freedom. For real human freedom depends on a spiritual development which brings about harmony between the earthly and the heavenly elements in man.

In this same lecture, Steiner speaks of the Dynamis, the Spirits of Movement, as present within the Word which sounds in man during sleep. Just as the “opposite vertebral column” is a further development of something implanted in man during Old Sun, this “inner resounding” is like something that occupied man’s consciousness on “Old Moon”. For what we have now as hearing existed then in a much more exalted form. Man lived in the tremendous waves of the heavenly music, and was transformed by the power of the cosmic Word.

When poets describe this music or this speech, in connection with the sun and stars, they are describing a reality that we have lost the power to hear: a world in which indeed the voices of many spirits are to be heard, but which is particularly the world of the Spirits of Movement. To bear the impact of this world, man needs

great courage—the quality of which Dionysius says that it is imparted to man by the Dynamis.

The Spirits of Form are active in that part of the etheric body which corresponds to the physical sense-organs. It is through these organs that we are related to the finished, calculable world around us. But the senses do not act as they would have done, if the creative work of the Spirits of Form had suffered no distortion. What is described in Genesis as the opening of man’s eyes through the Tempter means that we have come to perceive a world of *things*, and fail to see through them into their divine origin. The “Revealers” nevertheless bear into us the holy reality of the sense-world, and all that we fail to experience in consciousness begins to unfold during sleep. In this realm the winter world of natural law, of finished order, reveals itself as containing the seeds of the future, which must be made fertile by man.

How the physical world *appears to us* is largely conditioned by the Fall of Man. That the physical world *exists*, we owe to the first and strongest Hierarchy. The second and third Hierarchies do indeed work into the physical in manifold ways; but they alone could not bring it into being. A search for the real origin of the physical leads to those Spirits called by Dionysius the Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. Rudolf Steiner generally uses the same names; but in *Occult Science*, and occasionally elsewhere, he speaks of the Thrones as “Spirits of Will,” the Cherubim as “Spirits of Harmonies”, and the Seraphim as “Spirits of Love”.

Through the Thrones the first great step was taken into physical being—the origin of warmth or fire during the vernal world-period, Old Saturn. All temporal existence is founded on their initial deed of sacrifice. Such world-creating deeds mark a second great decisive stage in the evolution of spiritual beings, following after many ages the critical stage of “manhood”, of self-consciousness. At this remote beginning of things, when the Spirits of Will fulfilled their creative offering of their own being, the Cherubim and Seraphim were already beyond this stage. What they do for the temporal world is as it were sheer Grace, no longer any part of their own development.

In the Helsinki lectures mentioned above, Rudolf Steiner compares the impression gained by the spiritual researcher who approaches the realm of the Cherubim and Seraphim with our

feeling for old people who can express in a few words, or even by their very presence, a whole lifetime rich in experience transformed into wisdom. Later, in 1924, he spoke of the effects of the three Hierarchies in a full human life. In childhood and youth we find particularly the manifestation of the Third Hierarchy. In adult life the Second Hierarchy is at work in characteristics of a universally human kind. In maturity there *should* be found what comes about through the influence of the First Hierarchy, though in our present world this is often not fulfilled, since we fail to realise the purposes of the later part of life.

Thus it is not only a superficial comparison, if the Cherubim and Seraphim are likened to old people, worthy of reverence. In such old people, moral qualities and physical experience have fructified one another. By the Cherubim and Seraphim, moral reality is carried into actual physical being.

The work of the First Hierarchy is to be found in the mightiest cosmic processes, and in the most intimate experiences of man: in the movement and relationships of whole starry systems, in the disturbing comet, in thunder and lightning, in the powers of the depths of the earth—but also in the voice of conscience. From the Cherubim comes the Guardian, who stands with flaming sword before the gate of Paradise; and it is one of the Seraphim who purifies with living coal the mouth of Isaiah. The first Hierarchy fulfil, right into physical being, the patient justice of God.

It might be objected that the world we know does not by any means confirm the presence of such all-powerful goodness. It seems much more as if in our wintry universe any kind of Divine intervention had ceased, if it were ever there. Now Rudolf Steiner's description of the world is essentially realistic and empirical. It stands or falls by its conformity with experience; and where it claims that our initial impressions of the world are illusory, it is always concerned to show how the illusion arose. Thus we should expect from it, not a theoretical explanation of the existence of evil, but a great deal about the actual workings of evil in the world.

We find in fact, as an essential part of Rudolf Steiner's account of the Hierarchies, his description of Beings who have not developed in the same harmony with the whole order of the universe as the others, but have become in some way revolutionaries, carrying into a particular age of the world activities that belong to an earlier or

a later time. What the medieval theologian spoke of as the Fall of the Angels is described by Rudolf Steiner in a much more complex way: as a process, not a single dramatic incident, though it includes critical turning-points. Again and again, Beings advancing towards the stage of creative self-sacrifice have in some way turned aside, become as it were specialists in this or that, and left incomplete a development for which the world was asking. On one level of vision, this is a profound disturbance of the plan of the universe; and this disturbance is *real*. And yet on another level, for the fulfilment of purposes still more far-reaching, it is necessary that such variations from harmonious development should occur.

From an early period of the Earth, human evolution has gone on under the influence of great battles in the heavens. Man's disharmony with himself, and the divisions in his social life, reflected the conflicts of the Gods. It is not only in the visible world that a time can be out of joint, and man be called to set it right. The riddle of the Bhagavad Gita—how a man who has absolute peace within himself can fight in battle—has its most urgent application not on earth, but in the spirit.

Man would, however, have no hope of successful intervention in the war of the Gods, and could himself only be torn in pieces by it, but for the event of which Rudolf Steiner spoke again and again as the Mystery of Golgotha. For the understanding of this event human intelligence is inadequate—and yet the attempt should be made to reach towards it from every possible side, and with all the powers of mind and heart. This is one approach: to see how through the Christ we are given the pattern and the power of right intervention in the battle of the Gods. What is fallen in man, and distorted from the divine image, is patiently borne and redeemed by Christ, so that the activity of tempting spirits may be led back into accord with the original purposes of God.

In this the Hierarchic Beings who have *not* strayed have a double concern. On the one hand, Angels are constantly described in the New Testament as having a much clearer knowledge than earthly men of what is happening—for example at the Nativity, the Temptation, at Gethsemane, and at the Resurrection and Ascension. On the other hand, they look down on what is happening in the mighty process of Incarnation as *learners*, for whom the answers to infinitely pressing questions are being won. What can

be experienced on Earth, in the world-winter of the finished, frozen Divine work, brings something essentially new to the heavenly world. But ordinary human consciousness is too weak for the task. First the Christ must with full consciousness taste death, and encounter evil, in the forms these can take within the earthly world from which the manifest presence of God has withdrawn. Then Christian men in community can bring the harvest of the earth to the heavenly Hierarchies: "that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places (the Archai and Exusiai), might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." (Ephesians, iii, 10.)

The Incarnation is prepared by spirits of the Hierarchies through the guidance of particular nations and civilizations, and through the shaping of the body of man. But they help too in a more intimate way. There are passages in Rudolf Steiner's work where he seems at first to be saying that Christ Himself belongs to this or that hierarchical rank of beings, particularly in the Second Hierarchy. But elsewhere he says quite definitely that the Divine Trinity is *beyond* the Hierarchies.

The criticism can indeed be made, as it has been made against Dionysius, that in the world-picture offered by Rudolf Steiner the Godhead becomes infinitely remote. But the real practical result of his work is to make the nearness of God intelligible. Like Dionysius, he sees the spirits of the Hierarchies as giving to man, according to his capacities, the vision and the presence of God.

We do not complain of seeing the face of a friend, instead of the inside of his brain: for it is a face's part to show, not to disguise, the soul's life. In the same way a spiritual being, by utter devotion, withholding any manifestation of his own nature in other ways, may become the manifestation, the countenance, of a greater being. Thus Michael was spoken of in ancient times as the Countenance of Jahve. Such descriptions render spiritual facts much more adequately than the definitions over which there have been so many struggles in Christian history. And if we can conceive that a spiritual being may become the vessel and instrument of a power greater than his own, we have taken one step that can help to make intelligible the process by which a man could become the vessel of God. The event of the coming of Christ in Jesus has its parallels in the realms of the Hierarchies—and these comparable events serve the greatest, the unique event. Particular Hierarchies, and among them particular Beings, who have through practice in

selflessness, as it were, made themselves ready to be in special measure bearers of the Word of God, can serve the descent of the Word into the world *below* all Hierarchies—the world of illusion and death. Through this, the Spirits of the Hierarchies, as is indicated in the foregoing lecture, are themselves given a new kind of unity, and the several Words of their natures a new common meaning. The Revelation of St. John describes this as the new heavenly Song.

The culmination of human knowledge is the finding of the Divine Trinity in nature, in man, and in the spiritual world. But such knowledge is real only if it is of slow ripening, involving all man's powers. We find Colet, at the end of his Commentary on Dionysius, noting endless threefoldnesses in the world—and though for himself there may have been genuine experience in the background, for the reader the result is unsatisfactory. (Colet was writing, most probably, for only a few people—and these last notes, perhaps, only for himself.) It was healthy for Europe that a strictly empirical science, which disregarded any spiritual significance in number, developed on a wide basis of observation first—leaving such knowledge to the quiet circles of the true Rosicrucians. In our day, Rudolf Steiner worked for half a life-time before he felt that his knowledge of the threefold nature of man was ripe to be passed on to others. And then he made clear that this was no matter of intellectual classification or the like, by describing the three members of man from such varying aspects that the student has either to raise his thinking at last to living, imaginative contemplation—or to despair of reconciling the different accounts.

A great picture of the working of the Hierarchies in the threefold nature of man is given in the foregoing lecture. In another picture, given by Rudolf Steiner on several occasions, the system of head and nerves is described as the field of action of the whole Third Hierarchy, the rhythmic system as that of the Second, the limbs and metabolic system as that of the First. Through this picture we can look directly at the manifestation of the Divine Trinity. For the limbs are the Temple of the Father, the heart and rhythmic system the Temple of the Son, the head and nerves the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The Father is served by the First Hierarchy, in the foundations of all being. The Son is served by the Second Hierarchy, bearers of self-bestowing goodness. The Third

Hierarchy serve the Holy Spirit, awakening in man knowledge of the Eternal.

The Spirits of the Hierarchies, in the service of God, have formed man, fitted him to work on earth, and enabled him to develop conscious relationships with his fellow-men. But he must learn, through self-knowledge, to continue this development. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" St. Paul asks the Corinthians. The Christian will have to discern in what way he is called to meet this or that particular Spirit.

In our ordinary consciousness we are altogether unready for such meetings. Rilke has rightly described even the Angels, though nearest to us, as in a sense terrible for man. We have to develop new qualities—or rather, to let the Spirits of the Hierarchies themselves develop within us, with our active participation, the qualities that will enable us to face them and to form right relationships with them. For all human souls, something like this happens after death. The Mystery Schools bring such preparation to individuals who seek it during their lifetime. Today it is necessary that many should attempt to prepare themselves, in such ways as those described by Rudolf Steiner in his *How to Attain Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, and other writings.

The way of life there described has a meaning, however, apart from the achievement of direct vision of the spiritual during this life. Both knowledge about the Hierarchies, and the cultivation of those qualities of soul which prepare us for spiritual existence, are healthy for ordinary life on earth. The tensions and conflicts within the individual soul, and in society, can be resolved only when human beings are able to lift their eyes from the immediate tangle before them and see that they are surrounded by a much greater company.

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ETHERIC FORCES

LAWRENCE EDWARDS and
CHARLES WATERMAN

DESCARTES, the father of modern materialism, started his philosophy from the principle of Doubt:— the moment I begin to think, I doubt! But when Descartes had fought his way through his doubts he came to a view of truth, of a world pursuing its endless course of change, of growth and decay, only through the mechanical movement of its various parts and particles; let us examine every substantial part of our world, its mass and its movement and the laws governing it, and we shall have found the truth.

The philosophers of the ancient world, in the centuries before Christ, would have answered very differently. They looked at the beings and creatures of their world and the wisdom that was woven into the texture of all things, and they said, "Within and behind the tapestry of this world there is Mind, active living intelligence; from this, and from this alone, come the beauty and the splendour; this speaks to us out of all things; this is Logos; this is truth."

But let us return to Descartes and the Age of Doubt. It is hard for us, with three hundred years of materialistic culture behind us, to realise just how revolutionary and incredible his teaching seemed. When he said that if one were able to gain a thorough knowledge of all the parts of a seed, one would be able to deduce with mathematical certainty all the qualities of the living organism that was to grow from it, he was orienting humanity to a completely new direction of thought¹. That one should hold in one's hand a seed, insignificant and shrivelled dry, and yet should find within the substance of this shrunken piece of matter the forces and the wisdom which would produce the final glory of the blossom—this surely ranks among the most astonishing statements that the world has heard.

Let us not argue for the moment whether it is true or false; let us just see it in this light, that it is fantastic. It is a statement that

bids fair to rank with the strangest incidents of ancient mythology or the most extravagant aspects of Einstein's world. It is the kind of thing that the White Queen used to believe each morning before breakfast. Small wonder, then, that so many of Descartes' contemporaries were shocked into opposition.

It shows how strongly human destiny was leaning in this direction that, in spite of this, such ideas gained ground. Slowly but surely the Western world was swayed into belief, and a new era in human development had begun. The physical world was to be explained through itself alone; nothing that could not be weighed or measured would be admitted as partaking of objective reality; out of the nature of substance itself should be found the causes for the complexity and glory of all nature. It is strange to observe with what ardour of materialism the quest was started; progressively finer and more selective became the experiments of the scientists; if only one could reach the smallest and simplest pieces of matter possible and understand them, one would possess a key to the whole natural world! The search for the atom had begun. Within only a few years even the nature of light, that most ethereal of all physical phenomena, reluctant though it showed itself to submit to any form of accurate measurement, had been forced into the common corporeality.

But this was too much, even for so materialistic a time. The corpuscular theory, which regarded a ray of light as consisting of a stream of minute particles, had soon to be dropped and a theory of wave motion put in its place. Even this caused as many difficulties as it solved, for if light were a series of waves, there must be some universal medium in which they could travel, and so the ether had to be invented. The word "ether" was indeed not new, but the concepts attached to it were completely so and arose simply out of the needs of the theories of that day¹. True to the spirit of the time, the ether was conceived of quite materialistically, with mechanical and physical properties like other substances; the only reason it could not be perceived by the senses was its extreme rarefaction.

And so we see the start of man's first, and possibly also his last, great adventure into materialism. With what high hopes the road was taken; the way was still far to seek, and many years must elapse before the goal was reached, but surely, surely as the sun

¹Later in this article some account will be given of Rudolf Steiner's quite different use of the word—a revival of an older conception of the ether in new forms.

¹See Descartes, *Oeuvres*, iv, 494.

must rise and set, man was on the right track; he would go on and on—nothing could stop him now—and one day he would arrive; one day he would understand each smallest atom, and then the secrets of physical nature would be laid open to him.

And how have we fared, after three hundred years on the road? Well, progress has not been steady as our fathers expected, it has continued with ever-increasing acceleration, until to-day we are presented with one of the most astounding pictures of the world that the mind of man has ever conceived. One has but to dip into any popular account of modern physics to feel, for the moment, that one is delving into the very secrets of existence; the inner nature of substance itself seems to be dissected and conveniently laid out for one's inspection. Here they all are: the neat little diagrams showing the structure of a crystal, with all the atoms standing accurately in their ranks and files, like an army of soldiers in formation; the pictures of the more complex molecules composed of so many atoms each, all holding hands in such beautiful patterns and in so friendly a manner. And then there are those minute solar systems, the atoms themselves, with their circling electron worlds, and protons and positrons and neutrons, and abstruse mathematical equations—the processes and the inhabitants of the atomic world increase too quickly for the common man to keep up with them.

But we seek to pursue our enquiries further still; we ask of a physicist just what all this amounts to; what *are* these whirling specks of worlds? And now the answers carry us farther and farther away from any ordinary realm of understanding. We might hear talk of wave packets or energy states or electrical densities and similar occult terms, and if we then complain, "But I don't understand. What is a wave packet, and how can I imagine one packet of waves revolving round another?" One can almost hear the answer coming back, a little impatiently now, perhaps: "But you really must not be so naïve. You must not imagine that these little pictures are *real*; no-one supposes that atoms would really look like that, even if it were possible to see one; all the truth that we have discovered lies in the mathematical equation itself; the pictures and the diagrams are only crutches, necessary because the human mind requires them."

What then are these nuclei and electrons? It seems that it does not matter a great deal what we call them, waves, energy, electrical density, all such concepts are nothing but a crude

substitute for the reality, which is a purely mathematical one. So far have we travelled from the naïve atom of Sir Isaac Newton, ". . . solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, movable particles . . . so very hard as never to wear or break to pieces; no ordinary power being able to divide what God himself made one in the first creation." So far have we travelled that the mind of man can now handle these most abstruse calculations with superb confidence; all is understood, every process of calculation, all but the final result—this remains the enigma. The world has been reduced to a series of mathematical equations of which the terms are no longer quantitatively unknown—but their significance has become unknowable.

So far have we travelled that a noted scientist could recently announce over the wireless that physics to-day has relinquished its centuries-old ideal of discovering the nature of things. Science has become a science of correlation and prediction alone; given a certain set of circumstances we can calculate with mathematical accuracy the probability that a certain effect will follow; beyond this we do not seek to go.

That the equations of modern physics, in their own cold way, represent a reality—this one can hardly doubt; and they can be interpreted with disastrous accuracy. The vast mushroom of smoke that rose over Hiroshima came as a dramatic vindication of a great predictive science; but the eternal question of the nature of things remains unanswered. One can only stand in amazed contemplation of a science which has developed such power, such complexity and such consistency, and yet can be so empty of any real inner content.

So we see the end of a great search drawing near—the search for pure substance, matter untouched by any sort of spiritual element. Stage by stage, solid substance has melted away between our fingers; irresistibly the trend has been away always from the tangibly material; and these equations, these end-results, with such tenuous concepts hesitatingly applied to them, no longer represent any sort of sense-perceptible reality; they are things of the mind, to be grasped only by the mind. We began with matter, and we have been driven to something very much like spirit, a spirit barren and devoid of real content perhaps, but still spirit.

And now we have to ask ourselves whether we have not, these last few centuries, been marching down a wrong road. Did we perhaps start with a completely wrong premise in the first place

when we thought that matter could ever be conceived of *per se*? Have we not seen that such an investigation is doomed to ultimate failure, whatever by-products of advantage and disaster it may bring in its train? And how should we start anew?

We have tried beginning with matter alone, and our results appear to be cancelling one another out, so let us begin with matter and spirit. We must use our terms accurately; for the moment we mean by matter all that which is sense-perceptible, and by spirit all that of the world which by its essential nature requires to be grasped by other means. Let us not argue for the moment whether matter and spirit are separate, or interpenetrate one another, or are in fact two polar aspects of one reality. Our consciousness divides them thus, and thus let us begin.

Let us consider a plant; let us see it in its entirety, in time as well as in space, in root and leaf and petal, in seed and in sprouting, in blossom and decay. Let us see it in its beauty as well as its wisdom; let us notice how the phases of its growth support one another, how we cannot conceive of the seed without the blossom which is to proceed from it, how we cannot understand the blossom unless we know of the seed which is to be formed within it. Now let us bow to the dictates of an analytic science; let us pull it to pieces, carefully, carefully, so that not one speck of matter shall be lost. There!—we have done it; all is there, all—except the living being of the plant itself; that, the most important thing, is irretrievably lost. If some denizen of another world were to come, we could show him all the parts, we could explain most carefully how each fitted to each, but never in a hundred years could he, from this alone, build up even an idea of the living organism that we call a plant. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts; as soon as we come to the realm of life the primary axioms of Euclidean space are affronted!

Where then was the reality of the plant? Was it there in the bright-hued blossom before we pulled it to pieces? Were not the seed-time and sprouting-time also of significance? Must we not say that the reality, "Plant," includes all the phases of its growth? How can we possibly select one point in its development and say, "This is the whole; this is the reality"? But this wholeness is beyond the sense-realm; never can it be fully present in physical existence at any moment; never can we see it with our eyes or feel

it with our hands; it is of the nature of spirit. This it is which clothes itself with matter, first in one phase of its being and then in another; it is indestructible and unbound by the normal laws of space; it can manifest in two or a thousand places simultaneously; this it is which reappears year by year; the vestments change but the essential reality remains.

It is this reality which makes possible any description of a plant by which it could be recognised in succeeding years; if it did not exist each individual specimen of a species would have to be described by and for itself. If it were to be urged that because this reality cannot be weighed and measured, it is not in fact real, then all our text-books of biology are full of phantom unrealities and the subject were better not studied.

From this point of view—having recognised that a living plant cannot be understood in terms only of its sense-perceptible parts—we can now approach Rudolf Steiner's use of such terms as "etheric forces", "etheric body" and "etheric world". He spoke of etheric forces also as "formative forces" and "life-forces"; they are active in form-giving and life-building processes throughout the kingdoms of nature, but their influence is particularly evident in the growth of living organisms, and it is here, perhaps, that science comes most nearly into touch with them.

The extraordinary development of a living creature from a fertilised cell has been studied intensively for many years; a great deal has been learnt about its details and very much remains unknown. One of the most difficult questions concerns the means whereby the various organs, as they grow, assume not only their characteristic forms but their proper disposition in space, so as to accord with the shape and structure of the whole¹. They behave as though they were being shaped and guided in conformity with a pre-existent pattern. A few biologists, in seeking to account for this process of harmonious ordering, are inclining to talk tentatively of "fields", somewhat akin to magnetic or electrical fields, whereby space is as it were impregnated with energy-patterns of varying potential which enfold and act upon the multiplying cells.

¹"The methods of the chemist are rough and his reagents powerful. They will put together the parts of a complicated molecule in the correct order, but no way has been found—unless it occurs by the natural process of crystallisation—of fitting molecules together into a structure highly organised in space." Dr. J. A. V. Butler, *Man is a Microcosm* (Macmillan, 1950), p.19.

Here, perhaps, in this conception of enfolding energy-fields, science can be seen feeling its way towards the necessity of postulating forces which we might regard as a reflection in physical terms of the real "formative forces"—the etheric forces which play into the midst of a growing organism from out of its cosmic environment.

By the time an organism has reached maturity, its etheric forces are organised into an "etheric body", interpenetrating and surrounding the physical body. Plants and animals and men are all clothed upon with this life-body; to it is added, in animals, the astral body, the vehicle of feeling; and in men the astral body and the ego-organisation, the vehicle of the 'I'.

It need not seem very strange, from the point of view of modern science, to think of the etheric body as a body of forces; science nowadays is accustomed to think of organised force-patterns as the foundation of solid matter. The etheric body may be conceived as being woven from force-currents on a different level of existence, a level closed to ordinary sense-perception but open to clairvoyant sight.

A vividly detailed description of how the etheric body, in certain of its aspects and functions, appears to clairvoyant sight is given by Dr. Steiner in the foregoing lecture. But he emphasises—and this is the lecture's central purpose—that in much the same way as we cannot begin to understand the nature of matter, whether dead or alive, without penetrating behind it to the formative forces which organise it, so we cannot understand the etheric body without penetrating behind it into yet other realms. Just as the physical body is *maya*, illusion, not what it seems, to ordinary sight, so is the etheric body *maya* to clairvoyant sight. The clairvoyant, if his vision is able to penetrate so far, finds that flowing into the human etheric body, from out of the cosmic ether-ocean, are streams of—as it were—warmth and light and music; and these again are found to be manifestations of Beings, the Spirits of Form, the *Exusiai*. Behind the forms of nature are the formative forces; behind the formative forces are the creative thoughts of the Second Hierarchy.

In other lectures Dr. Steiner speaks of the etheric forces, and the etheric world, from many different points of view. Thus we are told that in the surroundings of the earth the world-ether is differentiated into four conditions, corresponding to the four states

of matter known to science. The highest and finest of these, called by Dr. Steiner the life-ether, is reflected in the densest state of matter, the solid; the chemical ether (or sound-ether) is reflected in the liquid state (hence the effect of moisture in facilitating chemical reactions); the light-ether is reflected in the gaseous state; and the lowest ether, the warmth-ether, is closely reflected in, and bound up with, its physical counterpart, heat.¹

Hence the etheric forces are not concerned only with living organisms; they work as shapers and activators also in the mineral realm. Here the typical form is the crystal, in all its mathematically precise varieties. The crystal, too, is shaped by etheric forces: not, however, from inside, as with the plant, but from outside. Within the crystal there is no surge of life to keep its forms mobile; it is fixed and stable; and when it "grows" it does so from outside, by accretion. The etheric forces stream formatively inwards to the crystal's very edge, and there they cease; the space occupied by the physical substance is etherically empty. These crystal-shaping forces come from the farthest heavens; and the mathematical ordering of the stars in their courses gives us a picture, or parable, of the crystal realm.

To enter with our thinking into this varied and complex world of etheric forces is obviously no easy task, but we can hold before us a simple starting-point. If we try to imagine *what it is* that shapes the manifold forms of matter, and enters formatively into growing and living organisms, we shall be orienting our thinking in the right direction. That is the first step. And Rudolf Steiner has indicated the ways whereby those with the necessary endowment and perseverance can so strengthen their thinking that it becomes, not merely a means of forming more or less inadequate concepts of the etheric, but an organ, an eye of the imagination, for directly perceiving it.

Moreover, for those who are not destined to reach this stage, there are ways in which the mobile thought-forms which belong to the etheric world can be valuably exercised. Much, for example, can be gained from the study of projective geometry, in which Dr. Steiner saw the seeds of a true etheric geometry, capable of fulfilling for etheric space the same kind of function that is performed by Euclidean geometry (and its variants) for physical space.

¹Cf. Dr. G. Wachsmuth, *The Etheric Formative Forces in Cosmos, Earth and Man* (Anthroposophical Publishing Company, 1932).

The history of projective geometry may indeed be viewed as pointing to a providential working of destiny in the affairs of men. Three centuries ago, while Descartes was creating his system of Cartesian geometrical analysis, which was later to give modern materialistic science so powerful a tool, in the minds of some other men, notably Desargues and Pascal, a new geometry, instinct with a new vision, was arising. Quietly and unobtrusively this new way of thinking entered the world; few practical applications were found for it; and few people, outside a small circle of mathematicians, even heard of it. Yet through the centuries projective geometry grew and developed—and in due time it was ready for Rudolf Steiner to point to it as the geometry of the realms of life, and to show that through its thought-forms we may draw near to a mental grasping of the etheric forces at work.

It is no wonder that a purely quantitative science should have found scant use for a geometry which pays so little heed to the metrical. Whereas the fundamental facts and propositions of Euclidean space are nearly all concerned with measurement, the equality of lines and angles, congruence of triangles, etc., in projective geometry one moves into a much freer and more mobile region of thought. Here one meets the three basic elements of space—plane, point and line—but not in the fixed form of an ordinary geometrical diagram. One meets them in interweaving intercourse with one another, point and plane as a polarity, with the line mediating between them; and generating from their intercourse an ever-changing series of curves and surfaces. Here, instead of dealing with forces proceeding from points and drawing material substance inwards towards a centre, one gains insight into the mode of working of planar forces which play in from the infinite periphery and act on material substance by expanding it and drawing it outwards. (So one may think of etheric forces “sucking” a plant from the earth.) But as the subject of projective geometry, particularly in relation to the growth of plants, was expertly treated in the two preceding issues of this Annual,¹ it will be enough merely to indicate here its relevance to any study of the etheric world.

In conclusion, however, one further aspect of the relation of projective to Euclidean-Cartesian geometry may be tentatively

suggested: it will lead us back to Dr. Steiner's lecture. Both geometries must be regarded ultimately as manifestations of Beings; as the thought-imprints of the Spirits of Form, the Exusiai, but with an important difference between them. In Euclidean-Cartesian geometry we seem to encounter the “finished work” of the Exusiai; the fixed result of their creative labours in shaping the realms of nature during a far-distant past. In projective geometry we encounter a manifestation of the living activity of the members of the Second Hierarchy, as through the medium of the etheric forces they shape and guide the activities of living nature, the coming into physical existence, the growth and ceaseless metamorphosis and the passing away of her myriad forms, from fragile petal to long-lasting bone.

In the days of Descartes it took courage for men to set aside traditional wisdom and rely on their own conscious thinking for the attempt to understand nature and master her powers. We are now at the beginning of another and equally necessary era in human thought; one of its keynotes is that the way has been opened for developing a science of life which will balance and rectify the often dangerous achievements of physical science in the realm of the lifeless, and will prove to have far-reaching practical applications in many fields, particularly at first those of medicine and agriculture. Once more we need courage—the courage this time to open the inner eyes of our thinking, so that in clear consciousness we may penetrate beyond the scientist's self-imposed limits of knowledge into those regions of active being where the outer manifestations of nature have their source.

¹See “Goethe's ‘Light and Darkness’ and the Science of the Future,” by George Adams, in *The Golden Blade*, 1949; and “Plant Growth and Forms of Space,” by George Adams and Olive Whicher, in *The Golden Blade*, 1950.

JÖTUNS

Rooted, bound down under the mould of earth ground,
Guard the growth curled close in the whirling world womb,
Powers—age-old, keepers of form and fusion—
Work you your good will.

Burst through earth crust, break from your rightful dwelling,
Scatter sharp hoar, freeze to destruction, batter
Blade, and wilt frail shoot in your harsh erupting—
Giants of Frost.

Stem and leaf, true home of the flowing ichor,
Swell of sap, fill full to the frond unfurling,
Powers—life-tide high in the plant uprising—
Work you your good will.

Leave your leaf-bound place of the gods' appointing,
Sweep in mist, loose rain-tipped arrows of anger,
Hail and wind-rage clattering clouds in thunder—
Giants of Flood.

Kindle sun-warmth stored in the folded calyx,
Brood in bud, bring birth to the fruit and blossom,
Powers—flush rose petal and flame the lily—
Work you your good will.

Flare the grasslands, leap with your lance of lightning,
You in split pent particle cracked asunder,
Spread the huge death tree of your desolation—
Giants of Fire.

Andrew Keith

EVOLUTION AND CREATION

E. L. GRANT WATSON

WHEN, in 1859, Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published, the new conception of the world of living things which it introduced, and which was soon to become the accepted view of orthodox biology, was welcomed by a large number of educated people as a step forward into what they considered a wider and more realistic valuation of phenomena than that offered by orthodox religion. To an age which was so largely interested in material things, and whose energies were so much devoted to the competitive development of natural resources, the theory of evolution which Darwin postulated was a natural expression of its own dominating activities. And the imposing array of facts which Darwin set forth presented an argument which the contemporary critics were not able easily to put aside.

These facts Darwin classified under seven different heads: facts concerning the morphological resemblance of organs, the geographical distribution of species, the geological record, embryological development, variations under domestication, mutations and the presence of vestigial or rudimentary organs. This marshalling of facts, in support of the theory of organic evolution, gave to contemporary biology a unifying impulse, and the materialism of the newly orientated science of biology was, for some of its disciples, so inspiring as to partake of the nature of a dogmatic religion.

For many years this almost religious attitude adopted by many orthodox biologists has received little criticism; until comparatively recently it has hardly been challenged, and indeed the Darwinian theory of evolution has received little progressive criticism of its fundamental assumptions in the years which lie between 1859 and the present day. True, there have always been critics. As contemporaries of Darwin's, Nageli, Alfred Russell Wallace, Romanes and Fabre should not be forgotten. There have been, of course, many others, but the surprising fact remains that this theory, which has never been proved, should at the present day exist so near to its

original form, when so many facts have since come to light which cannot be made to fit into the essential framework.

When I talk to modern biologists and draw their attention to life-histories of animals and the behaviour-patterns which refuse to be accounted for by any possible stretching of the theory of evolution, they either remain silent or laugh, and say: "That unfortunately is one of the cases which does not fit in," or else they say: "Well, it doesn't matter anyway about the theory of evolution. No one bothers about *that* in these days but the old stagers who don't count; the interest has shifted to bio-chemistry. The theory is good enough as a working hypothesis, and there is no other to be had without making unjustifiable assumptions."

In the course of this paper I shall hope to hint at some possible assumptions which may not appear too unjustified; but first it is with facts which refuse to fit in with the claims made by the classical theories of evolution that I want to deal.

Before coming to these facts, I will state in the briefest way possible the essential postulates of the theory of evolution. They are as follows. The species, as they are found living upon the earth to-day, have assumed their present forms as the result of variations through many generations. These variations, either small or large, have occurred by chance in all directions. Through the action of the natural selection by the survival of the fittest, those individuals best fitted to their environment have survived, and in the process of time the existing forms have been derived from common ancestral forms, many of which are now extinct.

As a variant to the above, the neo-Lamarckians say that the variations, which constitute the material by which evolution proceeds, are not entirely determined by chance, but, to a certain extent, are the result of the influence of environment on either the soma or the germ-plasm of the parents, this influence being recorded in resulting variations, which adapt the creature to the changing conditions of the environment.

With all evolutionists, the essential theory is the same: that ancestral forms have given rise, through countless variations, through countless generations, to the existing species as we know them to-day.

After this preliminary statement, which I think is necessary, I come to some of the facts which in my opinion cannot be made, by any stretching of coincidence, to fit into these comparatively simple concepts.

Sea slugs are brighter coloured and more fantastic in form than those which live upon land. They are to be found in shallow pools when the tide is low. Many of them have brilliantly coloured papillae or appendages growing from their backs, and in these are found groups of curiously formed stinging-cells, which are believed to function as defensive weapons against attacks from fishes.

The stinging-cells, or nematocysts, are explosive cells which, in their discharged condition, are usually of a long whip-like shape. In its undischarged condition the nematocyst is folded within itself, and, at the least touch, the turgor produced by the tension of the cell-wall will cause the enfolded nettle-lash to fly out and sting any foreign body which is in the near neighbourhood. Many sea-anemones and jellyfish are provided with these protective cells, and when nematocysts were first discovered to be present in the papillae of sea slugs they suggested a close affinity between the *Mollusca* and the *Coelenterata*. It was only later discovered that the nematocysts which lie, in an unexploded condition, in the papillae of the sea slugs, and which are used by them as a defensive mechanism have their origin in the coelenterates on which the sea slugs feed.

The facts of the relation between the coelenterates and the sea slugs, and the part that the stinging-cells play in these happenings, have been carefully worked out by marine biologists. It has been found that certain species of the sea slugs have the power of overcoming and using for their own purposes the defensive mechanism of the polyps. In these cases, several questions present themselves. How is it that the nematocysts, which explode at the least touch, are not exploded by the sea slug in the process of being devoured? How is it that the harsh, saw-like radula of the slug, with which it tears its food, does not break the thin capsule of the nettle-cell? It has been suggested that the slug, in eating, exudes mucus, which prevents the discharge of the nematocysts, but is this sufficient explanation? Why are not the defensive cells discharged on the approach of the slug? They are discharged in some cases but not in all. Why not? And how is it that the slug is immune from the

poison? Mr. O. C. Glaser writes: "It is truly remarkable that these apparently helpless creatures should have selected such a dangerous prey, but since they have, it must be because the danger does not apply to them. Why it does not, I do not know, but it may well be for the same reason the nematocyst does not discharge while being eaten."

Those reasons, whatever they are, remain obscure, and there are other questions we must ask. How is it that the unexploded, and only the unexploded, nematocysts are gathered together from out of the stomach of the slug into narrow ciliated channels, and are swept by the working of the cilia up into pouches which lie near the periphery of the brightly coloured appendages, and how is it that they are there neatly arranged the right way up, and in such a manner that they can be discharged against any creature which threatens the sea slug? How is such a complicated and highly specialised sequence of events to be accounted for?

Is it possible to imagine that this elaborate and complicated pattern of improbable events has come into existence through chance variations or mutations? Let us try. We must suppose that the kinds of sea slugs which can swallow the nematocysts with impunity are derived from some ancestral form, resembling the majority of sea slugs, which have not this power, and are warned off those coelenterates which are armed with nematocysts. In the first place a number of co-ordinated variations must have occurred which enabled the slugs to approach the polyps without exploding the stinging cells. Other variations must have been necessary to allow the slugs to swallow the nematocysts; and yet others, of subtle and complicated nature, to govern the mechanism which sweeps the nematocysts into the ciliated channels and up into the pouches near the periphery of the brightly coloured appendages; other variations there must have been, all composed of unit characters, which govern the arranging of the nematocysts the right way up. All these combinations of variations, must, according to the theory, be the outcome of chance.

If these suppositions seem reasonable, then we can still remain upholders of the belief that these sea slugs have been evolved from ancestral types through the process of natural selection.

Is it not simpler and also more reasonable to suppose that this complicated pattern of events is the result of some guiding principle,

or *entelechy*? The pattern exists as a whole, and as a whole it must have come into existence, for separate parts of the pattern would not function without all parts being present. These complicated, interlocked arrangements must, I submit, exist in their entirety, and in this connection I should like to tell of an incident from my student days at Cambridge, when Adam Sedgwick was Professor of Zoology. On one occasion, when I was turning over the pages of a zoological text-book, he paused and stood behind me when I chanced to have turned up a picture of *Archaeopteryx*, the winged and feathered reptile of the Triassic period. "Precipitated!" he said with a characteristic sniff. I was then in my second year, and a convinced Evolutionist. I turned to him with what might well have been an inquiring look. "Precipitated," he repeated. "We don't say created in our days, it's not the fashion."

It would need as wise a man to make the same comment after investigating the case of the sea slug.

There are a multitude of cases as remarkable, and as challenging to facile explanations—for example, that of a small crab which frequents coral reefs.

This crab is provided with claws or chelipeds of very small size, which are of little use for attack or defence. The fingers of these claws are armed with recurved teeth, enabling them to take firm hold on the slippery bodies of small anemones. With their claws, carefully and without injury, the crabs detach the anemones from their hold on the rocks. They then clasp the anemones, one in each claw, and hold them in close proximity to their mouths. The anemones do not appear to suffer from this rough treatment, and continue to spread their tentacles, and to capture any small creatures that are wafted to them in the water. With his first pair of walking legs the crab removes any tit-bit that he fancies from the tentacles of the anemone, and eats it himself. In this way, life is made easy for him through the functioning of a completely different species. He is seldom met without one or more anemones in his claws, and this association is developed in the species, and not only in individual crabs.

Such a behaviour pattern as the above embraces a great number of tendencies. Are we to assume that they have come together through chance mutations, which conveniently correspond with other chance physical modifications? Or are we to assume that the

chance modification of the chelipeds prompted some ancestral crab to detach, for the mere fun of the thing, an anemone, and by chance hold it near his mouth? Again, we must suppose that by chance some creature was caught in the tentacles, and that the crab was not slow to take advantage of such good luck, and so retained its hold on the anemone; and, if we follow such line of reasoning, we must assume that the crab passed on to its offspring a tendency to use their chelipeds in a like manner, and so, through the action of natural selection, we have the present-day crabs and their close association with sea-anemones. Such assumptions can hardly, I think, recommend themselves to our reason.

Cases as the above are by no means exceptional. Amongst the lower animals, the insects and crustacea, they are typical, and, in the opinion of any unprejudiced observer, will not find a satisfactory explanation in such simple concepts as those put forward by the upholders of the classical theories of evolution.

Much as I would like to give further examples of these fascinating behaviour-patterns and life-histories, space will not allow me to do so, and I will turn to a different aspect of my subject. I will ask you to consider the behaviour of the caterpillar at the time when it changes into a pupa, and the events which then occur. The metamorphosis which takes place in the life-cycle of insects, and especially that complete series of transformations within the life history of the lepidoptera, has been taken as a significant expression of the transformative processes of life. It is here that we may find most clearly-marked pointers to a better understanding of the formative forces which govern the development of living things.

The essential differences in form, size and habit which separate the early phases of the larva from the perfect insect cannot fail to capture the attention of any observer, and to evoke the question: How can the transformation from larva to pupa, to imago, be reconciled with the concept of continuous modification by innumerable, slow variations, or with the concept of uninterrupted evolution by gradual functional changes; and further, how can the phenomenon of histolysis in the chrysalis, or late caterpillar stage, by which most of the organs are reduced to an amorphous emulsion, preparatory to the coming metamorphosis, be brought about by purely mechanistic, physico-chemical reactions? Is there not here revealed a testimony, which declares that neither the changes in the

larva nor the mysterious solution of the tissues in the chrysalis lead up to, or in any obvious way anticipate, the future morphology of the perfect insect; and, is not the conclusion unavoidable that this testimony reveals the existence of an ideal, proper to, and working within (and perhaps without), the organism in question? This ideal or final cause being the determining factor which governs the transformations.

The process of such transformations can be observed in any butterfly or moth. Let us consider *Papilio Machaon*, the English swallow-tail butterfly.

After thirty days from the emergence from the egg, the caterpillar is fully fed, and is ready for the change into the pupa stage. This readiness for change is announced by a restlessness and an impulse to walk, which results in the distribution of the individual larvae over wide areas, far from the place where the parent insect deposited the eggs.

The caterpillar's first act is to spin on a reed-stem a firm mat, on which to fix its hind-claspers. In an upright position, with the hind-claspers fixed on the mat, the larva spins the semi-circular band which is to hold the pupa in an upright position. From side to side the head moves, while the fore-feet guide and fasten the thread as far down the supporting stem as they can reach. When this task is completed, the caterpillar is circled round the back by a strong silk cord. It now rests, and during this period the body becomes noticeably smaller, and towards the later part of the time all the claspers are loosed but the last pair; and the creature leans on the band of silk in a shape which is already suggestive of the pupa.

At the appointed time, usually after about fifty hours of quiescence, rhythmical movements are to be observed. These swell from the posterior to the anterior end, becoming at last sufficiently violent to break the thin larval skin, which splits down the back, while a green, tender body seems to push itself through the widening gap, and at the same time the skin, as though pulled back by some invisible instrument, slips farther and farther towards the tail. It passes the silk cord, which one would expect to entangle it, and, by the most extraordinary dexterity of wriggling, the now naked pupa works the skin down to the region of the hind claspers. As a penultimate act, it releases its hold on the silk mat, draws up the tail and lifts clear of the skin, pushing it aside, and finally fastens

itself again on the mat, making, as a seal of its accomplishment, a few quick turns to secure its hold. In this final stage the insect seems to be supported by levitational forces.

The empty skin falls, and the pupa occupies the place of the larva, but it has not yet assumed its pupal form. The posterior end is much rounder than it will soon become, and the part where the eyes and the head are to be is still soft and snub. This condition changes within twenty minutes; the chrysalis takes its final shape, and the outer integument hardens.

I want to draw particular attention to the following fact: the shape and position of the organs of the future butterfly are at this stage already stamped on the pupa. These marks are on the *outside*, and there is nothing yet formed inside to correspond with them. This is a significant fact, and one which, when its significance is grasped, will modify the accepted idea that development takes place always and only from a centre outwards. Invisible forces outside the insect have stamped upon it the shape corresponding to that final-cause which is inherent in its being.

I want to stress the idea that this final-cause, which I describe as inherent in its being, is not necessarily contained within its material body. At this stage, when the larva turns into a pupa, the governing ideal declares itself. Although there is within the creature nothing but the old body of the larva, which is in process of breaking down, there is on the outside of the pupa the pattern of the perfect insect, with wings, legs, antennae, etc., which are later to be occupied by the as-yet unformed organs. This mould is waiting to be filled by organs not yet made, but already determined.

The changes which go on within are not less wonderful than those which have been visible from the outside. A breaking down of tissues is taking place. Cells which are comparable to white blood-corpuscles are generated in large numbers at this time, and these devour most of the organs which have functioned in the caterpillar, reducing these to a kind of non-cellular mush. These changes remain, even in their physical aspect, much of a mystery, but it is maintained that the tissues, which are reduced by the phagocytes, comprise the hypodermic cells of the first four segments, the breathing tubes, the muscles, the fatty bodies and the peripheral nerves. While this change is taking place, the cells of the middle intestine assemble into a central mass, and later a new generation of tissue is formed, partly from this central intestinal magma and partly

from the proliferation of special corpuscles called image-bearing discs. Thus it is that the newly formed portions seem to have no direct filiation with the destroyed parts of the larval organism. The creature has in fact died, in so far as it has lost its form, its organs and its habits, and is now experiencing a new orientation towards a quite different form, which is to find expression in a different mode of life.

In this process of metamorphosis we are, I believe, in the presence of the working of a concrete, creative idea upon plastic material. What we have witnessed is the working of a centralising and directive force, which determines the chemical and physical reactions of the organic medium. This principle, which makes itself so clearly manifest in the above instance, is—and there can be no doubt about this—the principle which determines the development of all life. Similar, though less patent metamorphoses occur in all embryological development.

When we recognise this fact, the physical forms and the outward behaviour of animals can no longer be considered as constituting their whole being; we become aware of the presence of invisible forces, as yet ungauged and unknown, which lie behind the visible phenomena of life, and we realise that Nature expresses invisible values in visible forms. Then it follows that many biological and psychological theories, in so far as they try to explain the phenomena of their sciences entirely in terms of physical matter, are trying to do what is impossible; and are in the same position a mathematician would be in if he attempted to express, by an equation which involved only three arbitrary constants, a type of curve passing through five arbitrary points. More terms have to be put into the ideas before they can fit the facts.

The facts which refuse to be fitted into the old theories are numerous; I have been able to give only a few. There are many other cases which I might equally well have described, and which would have fitted my arguments just as well.

If we now turn to look at some of the assumptions which have been made to support the classical theories of evolution, we shall find that they are not so much in accord with those theories as at variance. Evolutionists often use the simile of a tree to indicate the relation of the species to each other and the extinct forms, and to the forms which are assumed to be ancestral forms. They say:

Consider the existing species as the terminal twigs of such a tree of life; then the smaller branches would represent the ancestral forms connecting the adjacent twigs; the larger branches would represent earlier ancestral forms of a more general and primitive type; the stem and the root would stand for those ancestors of ours, the most primitive and first developed creatures on the earth.

In their earliest use of this picture of a tree, men placed some of the existing species and genera as leading one into another. True, they recognised that there were many links absent. These absences in the hypothetical sequence they called missing links. This was but an early conception; soon they admitted that few of the existing or extinct species could be placed *on* the connecting branches, but that most occupied the position of terminal twigs. And now, with a more careful study of morphology, it is admitted that *all* existing and extinct species must be regarded as terminal twigs, and at some little distance from the connecting branches and stems. The branches and stems which are supposed to connect one species with another are in fact entirely hypothetical; and further, the tree, as it was first conceived, no longer exists as an adequate simile, but there has taken its place a hypothetical growth more like a tuft of rushes than a tree, and the existing species are the terminals of that out-branching growth.

Now the facts to which I wish to draw attention are these: the existing species or the extinct fossil species cannot be placed anywhere on the connecting branches, but must all be regarded as terminals; the vast trunk of the tree of evolution is entirely imaginary, and no material creatures have been found to correspond to it. And yet—and this cannot be contested—there is little doubt that, in the process of time, more complicated animals, and animals with a higher development of consciousness, have appeared on the earth than those previously upon it. There is an apparent evolution in time, and the idea of evolution is not by any means to be thrown lightly aside. All those classes of facts which Darwin collected are to a large extent still valid, though contradicted by other facts. How are we going to get out of this dilemma?

By putting, as I have suggested, more terms into our ideas. If we postulate an invisible but *definitely objective* environment—and from many different departments of science inferences are being made which strongly support this postulate—then we shall have opened out to our consciousness a new field for investigation. This invisible,

objective environment may well be called, if we so please, a spiritual world. In it exist those invisible values which find physical expression on our earth.

In this invisible region, of whose existence science is only just becoming aware, there may well exist, and I believe do exist, the missing portions of the tree of evolution. These portions are represented, not by existing species, or extinct fossil species, or hypothetical ancestral species, but by a more plastic material than that material that is incarnated on our earth. It is in this invisible environment, which is already coming within the region of our investigations, that we must work for activating concrete ideas, centralising and directive forces, as witnessed in the formation of pupa and imago, and in the life-histories already described. These forces determine the chemical and physical reactions of the organic medium. It is they which govern the process of evolution, not in material forms, all manifested in a chain of successive lives upon the earth, but in the spiritual universe. Science is becoming increasingly aware of this invisible background which lies behind, and is responsible for, phenomena apprehended by the senses.

In this respect the physicists have made the most striking declarations, for they have been most aware of the arbitrary nature of the space-time universe. The late Professor A. S. Eddington, in *Space, Time and Gravitation*, wrote:

The theory of relativity has passed in review the whole subject-matter of physics. It has unified the great laws, which by the precision of their formulation and the exactness of their applications have won the proud place in human knowledge which physical science holds to-day. And yet, in regard to the nature of things, this knowledge is only an empty shell—a form of symbols. It is knowledge of structural form, and not knowledge of content. All through the physical world runs that unknown content, which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspects deep within the world of physics, and yet unattainable by the methods of physics. And, moreover, we have found that where science has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from nature that which the mind has put into nature.

We have found a strange foot-print on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the foot-print. And Lo! it is our own.

Physiologists support such declarations from their own angle of approach. Among the most striking statements are those of Professor Charles Sherrington and Professor V. H. Mottram in

their books *Man on His Nature*, and *The Physical Basis of Personality*. In a sombre and magnificent passage, Sherrington imagines Nature thus speaking to Man, her child:

'You are my child. Do you expect me to love you. How can I love—I who am blind necessity? I cannot love, neither can I hate. But now that I have brought forth you and your kind, remember you are a new world unto yourselves, a world which contains, in virtue of you, love and hate, and reason and madness, the moral and immoral, and good and evil. It is for you to love where love can be felt. That is, to love one another.

Bethink you, too, that perhaps in knowing me you do but know—the instrument of a Purpose, the tool of a Hand too large for your sight as now to compass. Try then to teach your sight to grow.'

Among biologists, Kohler in his *Gestalt* psychology points a way from experiments in physical phenomena to demonstrate a *Gestalt* pattern in the invisible spiritual. Many other biologists, of whom I would mention Wood Jones, Roux, Bertalanffy and Woodger, are discovering not only the known physical but the unknown spiritual environment. Indeed, many of the ways indicated by modern research tally in a surprising manner with ancient intuitive wisdom. The Sankhya philosophy, which is an essential part of the Vedic religion, and of very early date, postulates the coexistence of a spiritual principle making itself manifest through material forms. This approach comes near to Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*,¹ and these are not far from the deep meanings that are to be discovered in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. Of these ideas I will attempt to give a rough and much abbreviated résumé.

The WORD, which was in the beginning, becomes incarnate in varying degrees. All created things derive from the Word, but differ in so far as they are manifest to sense-perception in the degree of their incarnation.

A mineral, such as a crystal or a stone, is distinguished, so far as it is perceived, by its durability, its inertness and its desirelessness.

A plant has a physical body, but something else is also evident. A plant has life; it has something that the mineral lacks, and in exchange for this extra something it forfeits its durability and its inertness. In Steiner's terminology it has an *etheric* body. Now it

¹In my book *But to What Purpose*, published in 1946, I made certain un-perceiving statements about the work of Rudolf Steiner, which I now have reason to regret, and would like to take this opportunity of withdrawing.

is only rational, if we believe that all things derive from the Logos, to believe that the mineral has also pertaining to it this principle of life, but that this principle is not incarnate, not manifest to our senses.

An animal has a physical body, an etheric body and something extra. We see from the shape and behaviour of animals that they are formed for the satisfaction of desires. This desire-body has been called the *astral* body, and is that extra which is incarnate in animals.

Scholars of the Vedantic schools could, by training, cultivate clairvoyant vision able to perceive the etheric and the astral. The Logos is in everything, and we perceive it with our sense-perception in different degrees in different things. And in such a way we can, if we choose, look at the evolutionary tree. We then see the terminal twigs of the branches, each representing a living species. These are, of course, perceived by the senses. They may be assumed, if our hypothesis is valid, to be related to each other by the more universal communal properties of the *etheric* and *astral*.

And now the question before us is: how do the existing species derive from these universal properties? We can now see the evolutionary tree of the Darwinians in a somewhat different light. The invisible unmanifested tree, which has been rightly postulated, exists in the spiritual world, and from the spiritual substance of this tree archetypal forms are precipitated or created; from these devolve, through natural or artificial selection, the various life-forms with which we are familiar. There is no question that devolution occurs. Bergson invented his famous rocket simile. The exploding head of the rocket is compared with the archetypal forms, and from these the sparks descend, the sparks being the existing species as we know them.

The postulate of an invisible yet discoverable environment, which is no subjective fancy, will, I believe, be of great value in the further study of the behaviour of animals; and if we take such a postulate as part of a working theory, then that theory will enable us to look at life and Nature in such a way as to perceive that the lives of animals and plants are of a different *quality* and *quantity* from the lives of human beings.

About the lives of human beings I cannot say much, for there is enough material in the subject for very many papers as long as this. Indeed, a vast literature about the ego-function in human beings exists in both ancient and modern writings. That a man is not contained between his hat and his boots is a conviction shared by

most of us. The Vedantic literature of the Upanishads and the Gnosis of the Gnostics finds contemporary expression in such writers as Rudolf Steiner, Ouspensky, Albert Schweitzer and Dean Inge. Such writers are all in harmony with the Christian ethos, and would release Christian teaching from the bonds of institutionalism. They are, I believe, also in harmony with the true progress of modern science; their teaching must inevitably enlarge the all-too-simple conceptions that are still the common exchange between many scientists of to-day.

I have touched on great subjects; I have tried only to indicate certain peripheral ideas. I have had space for no more. As a field naturalist who tries to look at the life in Nature with a mind which I hope is not prejudiced or complaisant, I find that the vision of things, so far as I am permitted to attain, grows ever richer, as I conceive of a spiritual reality determining and transcending the sense-perceived phenomena.

WOULD IT WERE ALWAYS APRIL

Oh ! that 'twere always April,
for oh ! in April, I
fared early out of mornings
when ploughs began to ply.
In many a Hampshire hundred
the ribboned teams would neigh;
the share bit earth : in splendour
the ploughs began the day.

Would it were always April,
and I behind my plough :
moist-soft the furrows falling,
mist-green in holts the bough;
my team like centaurs turning,
to wheel with trampling thuds
on headlands where the hawthorn
lies white in beds of buds.

The great airs of the uplands
oared through the skies to sweep
cloudlets that flocked a-clutter,
and urged them on like sheep.
So now we sheared through sunlight,
and then we shore through shade,
and wended mid the chequers
that wind and morning made.

It showered, and my plough-team
tossed topazes from manes :
shook brilliants from their bridles :
wrenched diamonds from their reins.
Smoke-wrapped, towards a rainbow,
they trampled as gods march :
as if reared in *their* honour
rose that triumphal arch.

But when the sun stood highest,
I propped against a hedge
to watch my tall team champing,
and eat my noonday wedge;
and lazed till Crofton steeple
struck one : and rose, and then,
with shirr of earth on mouldboard,
the ploughshare moved again.

Softly the stilts would tremble;
the soil the coulter cut
flowed back a silver ribbon,
blue-lacquered at the butt.
The turned earth breathed tanged sweetness;
on air soft as a flower
the year's first cuckoo fluted :
and crowned earth and the hour.

At eve, when I my acre
 had furrowed; quiet all;
 'twas then I'd quit my ploughstilts
 and lead my team to stall.
 And leant against the lintel
 to watch the first star shine,
 wished it forever April,
 and Man's lot always mine.

But April glides to summer :
 summer to autumn wears;
 the young corn bends in ripeness,
 and Man grows bowed with cares.
 In hedges rust the harrows,
 and the green holts grow hoar :
 to fields he tilled so often
 the ploughman comes no more.

The stranger wends tomorrow :
 once more the ploughs will ply;
 moist-soft the earth fall, silken
 the sound, and half a sigh ;
 the thrush on hawthorned headlands
 as old, sing heavenly-clear :
 . . . but 'twill not be my heaven,
 nor I at hand to hear.

H. E. Brading

ON BEING AN AMERICAN

VIRGINIA MOORE

IN the world of today materialism is a tremendous issue. Shall we or shall we not consider the facts of the universe sufficiently explained by the existence and nature of matter? The East—or at least the “typical” East of India—is little tempted by such an explanation of things, but the West is strongly tempted; indeed, consciously or unconsciously, avowedly or tacitly, it has all but capitulated.

One reason is not far to seek. The authority of that natural science which relies upon sense-evidence and matter-bound habits of thought towers before us like a mighty mountain. How surmount or skirt it? How get beyond? Though our souls cry for something different and better, how prove that a spiritual world satisfying our deepest needs exists?

The philosophers have offered little help. Kant paralyzed spiritual investigation by denying that we can know anything at all about things-in-themselves, meaning the realities behind sense-appearance; and his most influential successors went a step further in frustration by declaring that there are no things-in-themselves to know. Thus millions of Westerners have given up the fight for the spirit. Many who avoid the extreme materialism which explains man as a haphazard collocation of atoms have taken up some intermediate position which leaves out of account higher realms. If these agnostics or downright disbelievers still cling with their emotional natures to old grandeurs of the spirit, they do so surreptitiously, concealing as best they can from their rational selves the shameful fact of divided allegiance.

By common consent America represents materialism at its densest. Indeed, the indictment is more sweeping. It says that America is the source from which much of the world's materialism has spread, in consequence of which that country bears, in the modern world, an incalculable moral responsibility. Oh, Americans

possess some redeeming characteristics, concede foreign and native critics; for instance, such sturdy "pioneer" virtues as strong will, hardihood and courage. Moreover, from the beginning they have passionately loved freedom and independence; and have mixed with an almost fanatic devotion to the past ("faith of our fathers") a singular openness to the future; as well as mixed with a certain coldness in business a warmth of heart, generosity of spirit, and an obstinate longing to be better and do better. But none of this changes the fact of a basic, colossal and death-laden materialism, say the critics—and as an American, I agree.

American technical and engineering brilliance is an expression of the materialistic viewpoint which has contributed a great deal to the health, comfort and convenience of mankind. Americans like large physical problems requiring systemizations of sense-data and applications of mathematical formulae; they take pleasure in bending to their purpose the physical world. This proclivity is not, in itself, something for which to apologize. The mineral world must be explored and brought into the service of humanity, and to do this is evidently part of the American mission. That the challenge of matter should be met high-spiritedly, and with the sense of adventure which made possible the conquering of a vast continent, is all to the good. The lamentable thing is disproportion: imagining that the secrets of the earth are the only secrets; failing to realize that, besides quantitative values, there are qualitative ones, which slip through mathematics like water through a sieve, leaving no trace. All too widely, Americans ignore Stephen Spender's warning:

*Never to allow gradually the traffic to smother
With noise and fog the flowering of the spirit.*

There are other obscurants than matter, of course. If taken the wrong way, even hard-won and beautiful freedoms can become such. Freedom! How we love it—yet misunderstand it. Men are not free when anything coerces. They are not free when they follow custom blindly. They are not free when they knuckle to authority, whether of Church, State or Labour Union. Nor when they listen to "arbiters of taste" instead of to the artist deep within. Nor—least of all—when driven by their senses. In other words, human beings are free only through a matter-emancipated thinking, a thinking in which concepts do not lean upon sense-percepts but, on the contrary, are an intuitive experiencing of ideas in their self-

sustaining spiritual essence, a conceptualizing in the very act of which the self touches eternal realities.

By this test Americans have won tremendous freedoms, such as equal political rights, religious tolerance, and untrammelled enterprise, without throwing off the worst tyranny of all: the tyranny of matter. The widespread materialism of America—too easily verified by outer and inner observation to be disavowed—is in the last analysis just that: slavery. If genuine freedoms make us complacent about *this* shackle, they are hinderers of a very subtle kind.

But no battle is over until the last shot has been fired, and immense forces fight on the side of spiritual emancipation. The more prevalent is falsehood, the more aroused, truth. Thus an increasing number of Americans are rising up to shift the emphasis from objects to moral values, to decry haste and superficiality, and to renounce the hard, sterile, matter-bound intellectuality which would separate intelligence from both the cosmos without and the heart within.

But we must delve deeper. The real gold of the situation must be mined, if at all, in veins hidden far below the surface. We might start with the question: *Why* do the inhabitants of North America, more powerfully than other peoples, feel themselves drawn toward the earth and their own bodies?

If the earth were a burnt-out coal, it would signify little where we were born or to which region we migrated. North, South, East and West: it would be all the same. But the earth-forces working upon human beings are demonstrably different in different parts of the earth; and it would seem that the ancients were right in describing the earth as a living organism. Plutarch says the Egyptians called Egypt the world's heart. And Plato speaks of the body of the world on which as on a cross—witness the East-West and North-South mountain chains, like the human body built cruciformly—the soul of the world is slain. Certainly the earth as organism explains much that is mysterious in the different soul-tendencies displayed by different peoples.

The influences stemming from such an "etheric" or "spiritual" geography do not affect the deepest part of man, the ego. The ego is free—no question about that. But since, here on earth, the ego must use man's lower principles as vehicles and instruments, must

function through his feeling organization, vital organization and physical body, geography has real importance for *lives*. It can actually modify men, thus accounting wholly or in part for racial characteristics.

There is no space here for differentiating in detail the various regions of the earth according to the forces, whether earthly or planetary, there prevailing; but perhaps we can on this basis describe three large land-masses: the East, the Middle, and the West. As Rudolf Steiner has pointed out, in each of these regions human beings exhibit a characteristic tendency. The people as a whole possess by nature certain qualities, and, as a whole, instinctively strive after certain other qualities. Thus a kind of cosmic man stretches around the earth: legs and entrails in Asia, heart in Central Europe, and head in America. That is to put it into physical terms, but such an analogy would seem justifiable, wise men having always associated the lower organs belonging to man's metabolic system with his willing, the heart belonging to his rhythmic system with his feeling, and the head or brain belonging to his sensory-nervous system with his thinking.

But each special proclivity carries with it not only a special advantage, but a special danger. Great gain entails great risk.

Thus in Asia men have by birth—along with their traditional spirituality—a certain deep, dreaming, unconscious ability to live within the forces of their own metabolism; which ability carries with it the danger of letting those forces remain unconscious, and never lifting them, as they can be lifted, up to the level of the ego. Therefore what Orientals long for, strive for, is precisely what Middle Europeans possess by birth: a mastership of the rhythmic system as exemplified by Yoga, a balancing of lung and heart forces.

What, then, is the danger peculiar to Middle Europeans? If they misinterpret and pervert their mission, it is the danger of brutality; of dragging feeling down to the level of the beasts. Therefore what Middle Europeans long for, strive for—as a stabilizer—is precisely what Westerners, and Americans are the most Western of Westerners, possess by birth: a strong head life, thinking life, conceptual life.

What, then, is the danger peculiar to Americans? If they use thinking wrongly, if they let thinking, so to speak, fall from heaven to earth, it is the danger of going over entirely to materialistic

thinking, body-bound thinking, dead thinking, abstractionism. The danger of becoming just brains walking around on legs.

The head! In a way the physical head itself pictures forth this danger. More than any other part of us, it has gone over to hardness, rigidity. What is the skull but thick encasing bone?

But there are higher possibilities inherent in these head-people. If in a manner of speaking Orientals represent the metabolic system, and long to express the rhythmic system; if Middle Europeans represent the rhythmic system, and long to express the sensory-nervous system; what do Westerners, Americans especially, who represent that crown of the sensory-nervous system, that head, with all their being long to express? Do they complete a fatal circle by longing only for what Orientals possess by birth? No, not unless perversely and by mistake. For that would make of the whole thing only an endless, thwarting game of geographical tag, and preclude, for mankind, hope of development.

No, however submerged, America's deepest longing is to break out of geography altogether, and live in that immortal part of every man, the ego, which (as we said) is quite free of all that comes to him by way of spatial position. It is a longing for spirit-man: the true man, the whole man, the cosmic man. Universality can be attained by any human being in any part of the world, when the limitations of that part are overcome and its possibilities fully developed; in a sense and degree, Aristotle attained it in Greece, Dante in Italy, Shakespeare in England, Goethe in Germany, and Emerson in the United States. But Westerners, by reason of their strong head proclivities, find themselves pressed against the problem in a special and very crucial way. Solve it they must, or go down to that abstractionism which is death.

But how strange, you may remark at this point, to couple, as it were, the lowest with the highest; to speak of the possibility of so noble a spirituality in connection with a people admittedly the most materialistic in the world. But that is one of America's many paradoxes.

Actually, this half-blind fumbling after infinity explains many enigmas in America's way of life.

For instance, her already-mentioned impulse toward freedom. At its most misconceived, licence; at its most characteristic, political democracy and religious emancipation; at its purest, that spiritual

activity (St. Paul preached a Christ "whose service is perfect freedom") which begins only after the compulsions of sense, instinct, habit, custom and external authority have been thrown off.

And it explains American "idealism". At its most misconceived, sentimentality and sanctimonious national egotism; at its purest, selflessness; high feeling and high thinking united in high willing—and by high willing is meant the will acting not as blind energy, but consciously, for the sake of high goals.

But before going further into America's possibilities we must plumb to the bottom her darker truths.

For none of the above denies that Americans are powerfully pulled toward matter. They are so pulled. The fact has a kind of natural-scientific support, in that one of the magnetic poles—a measurable thing—is just off Baffin Island in Canada. This extra-strong earth-drag North Americans experience more or less consciously from within. It is as if the earth were a lodestone, and they the iron filings. In America conscious seekers after the spirit sometimes feel as if their bodies were the most recalcitrant of mediums, weights and obstacles to be overcome, enemies to be fought. All about them—however rich, varied, bright and energetic the prospect from a physical standpoint—lies an Eliot-like "wasteland". The American emphasis is so overwhelmingly on things—on money, gadgets, time and energy-savers, sense titillators, and physical means for acquiring physical health and security. All too often, body-comfort is an ideal and mania: a perfection to be aimed at.

Of course to note the earth-drag is not to prove that it fulfils a necessary purpose. Yet only the possibility of making it fruitful can give meaning to American experience. And this consideration involves the nature and purpose of man.

The original Christian view of man was threefold. It envisaged a being of body, soul and spirit, whose life was not a mechanism threatened at every point by chance, but a continual, meaningful metamorphosis, "normally" tending always toward the ultimate goal of an attainable perfection. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect", said Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. The spirit is immortal, but needs the lessons of earthly experience. It seems hardly reasonable to suppose that these lessons can all be learned in one life; hence the widespread ancient doctrine of repeated earth-lives, which—although orthodox

Christian theology has never embraced it—is in no way alien to the essentials of Christian teaching. If one life is passed in America, well, that too, in a meaningful rather than materialistic universe, is not without profound reasons. During higher consciousness, in the term between two lives, says Rudolf Steiner, Americans chose out of an entirely free determination to be Americans, and did so because they realized that their particular stage of development asked in all equity for a particular kind of experience best procured in America. Since overcoming makes for strength, the special American difficulties may have seemed desirable disciplines; the very one-sidedness of influences forever pressing people towards abstraction, an opportunity.

Any terrain can have an educative function, particularly one so prone to extremes. From this standpoint an American body is neither accidental nor barren of advantage.

Or put it this way. In a meaningful universe, man's descent into matter could only be for a purpose, and that purpose, if described in terms of his highest achievements to date, must be self-consciousness, individuality and true freedom. In this descent, matter acts as a mirror for the unconscious self, bringing it to consciousness first on a low level, and then—with the help of Christ—on a higher. Thus matter has an important function in the evolution of man; and materialism, that full descent into matter, really that *getting lost* in matter, had to be; it was historically necessary. In other words, human beings fight both with and against matter. It is vital to enter it, but vital also to go through it and come out on the other side. The tragedy comes when people make it the be-all and do-all, the end and goal. It should be not master but servant. Well, the servant has finished a servant's work. Henceforth the paradox: a turning back alone represents a going forward. A turning back, that is, toward the spiritual world.

Of course, here in America the pull of the earth is not the whole story. In a mysterious way, the American atmosphere has been modified by earlier inhabitants: by the Red Indians who according to one explanation immigrated from Atlantis, and by white and Negro settlers immigrating from other continents. But since the feelings, thoughts and deeds of this threefold population were strongly influenced by the geographical forces discussed, the *ultimate* responsibility would seem to be largely the American continent's.

In any human being the life forces, soul forces, and intellectual forces vary according to his age. This is not a matter of theory but observation. Now Rudolf Steiner has drawn an analogy between the individual's powers as spread out in time and humanity's powers as spread out in space—and this truth, also, is or can be a matter of observation. The forces working upon man in Africa are those strongest in childhood; in Asia, those strongest in youth; in Europe, the prime of life; and, continuing Westward, to the Far West of America, ever increasingly the forces of old age; the very forces the ancients blamed upon the zodiacal constellation of Capricorn ruled by the planet Saturn, which Jacob Boehme describes as "bitter", the "great astringent"; Saturn which, working chiefly through the glands, tends to dry everything up, turn it to bone, killing all creative and productive elements, and then life itself. For are not old age and death (like natural science) a reduction of organisms to their mineral elements? A kind of atomization?

This is a view of America which not only fits the observable fact of heightened magnetic force, but also the experience and intuitions of generations of human beings. A glance at history may bear out my statement.

Long before Columbus and perhaps long before Christ, men had pushed Westward over the Atlantic. First we have the legends of many countries about the secret land of the West. For instance, does not Plutarch speak of a far Western land where the Saturnian "Mysteries of Chronos" were celebrated? And is not Ireland full of tales about a Western land called the "magnetic mountain" where the sixth-century "sailor monk", St. Brendan, by the help of the "secret of the Quaternary" (fourness being associated with matter), arrived at last, but from whence he was driven; its great magnetic power pulling iron nails out of his ship, and drawing to itself four of his ship's bulls by their iron chains?

Leaving these legends (cited because they harmonize with documentary evidence), let us consider some historical confirmations of pre-Columbian Westward immigrations. In Labrador, Irish bells of a very early date have been dug up. The eleventh-century scholastic Albertus Magnus says in his *Geographica* that the reason the Westland is so little known is not so much the vast, salt and hindering sea as the earth forces which "work upon the body as a magnet upon iron".

Then the Norse *Flateyar-bok*, compiled about 1387 by Jon Thordharnson, quotes the much older "Saga of Eric the Red" as to the discovery of "Markland" and "Vinland" in North America by Leif Ericsson, and subsequent settlements by Leif's brothers Thorwald and Thorstein and his sister Freydis (who would gain the bloody distinction of tricking and murdering some threescore fellow-colonists); as well as by a stalwart trader named Thorfinn Karlsefni, who took a cargo of wood, grapes, and Indian-bartered fur pelts back to Norway. Vinland is generally identified with land around Massachusetts Bay; and people who have never examined the documents which speak of it would be amazed at the wealth of factual detail.

There is reason to believe that the Viking voyages were brought to an end by some sort of Papal ban, perhaps because of a knowledge that Europeans of that time were not ripe to encounter the strong earth-forces of the American continent. Certainly the Scandinavians were converted to Christianity under King Olaf Tryggvason about the year 1,000 A.D., at precisely the time when the Norse voyages were beginning. King Olaf "expounded the faith" to Leif himself, who was baptized, together with all his shipmates. Such conversions meant coming under the papal edicts, and soon commerce between Europe and America stopped.

When the age of materialism set in, the interdicts were removed, and Christopher Columbus turned the prows of the little *Santa Maria*, *Niña* and *Pinta* toward the setting sun. During the voyage, his crews were frightened by the Westward veerings of the magnetic compass. At last a berry-loaded branch floating in the sea! On San Salvador (Watling Island) roved people the strange colour of iron rust, who bore on their high-cheeked faces, so to speak, Saturn's own signature.

Consider those Red Indians. The most typical gave the impression of running all to bone. Many white Americans have the same look—Abraham Lincoln, for instance, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Indeed, that composite of Americans, Uncle Sam, is Indianlike, eaglelike. First to bone and then to dust. It was not the white man only, says Dr. Steiner, who was responsible for the decline and disappearance of the Indians—they bore within themselves a propensity for death.

Sometimes one can best understand a quality by deliberately exaggerating it. Stripping away America's virtues, then, picture

her future if materialism were allowed to grow and grow by feeding upon itself. In that hypothetical America (which, please God, will never be), externalities thrive and the spirit withers; citizens devote themselves exclusively to things physical, mechanical, naturalistic-technical, industrial, utilitarian, chemical and, in the outer sense, astronomical; nervous diseases increase; the chemically-treated land shrivels to desert; and its civilization grows increasingly senile, arthritic, moribund. The end is death and *rigor mortis*.

In the light of this danger, one can comprehend better, perhaps, the shipping into Colonial America of Gold Coast Negroes, those representatives of the forces of childhood which, with America's tendency toward apathetic old age, set up a kind of equilibrium. The red, black and white races which have played such important roles on the American continent bear to each other a kind of "scale" relation. The Red Indians as "pure" Western death-bearers and the later-arriving Negroes as "pure" exuberant life-bearers (in the sense that children are life-bearers) are polaric opposites. Between, stand white Americans; they are the middle term; and as such would seem to be asked by destiny to reconcile extremes, not allowing themselves to be pulled in either direction, but striking a balance. Can it be said that America's racial problem, far from lying on the surface, has deep, swift under-currents?

Certainly Americans feel drawn towards both the childlike black people and youthful South-Asiatics. Witness their passion for Negro dances and Negro music, and frequent turning toward Oriental religious sources. How could it be otherwise? Those who are dry *must* seek out such refreshment until they realize that Christ is the only true source of life. Consciously or unconsciously, being parched, they are saying again, but with new urgency and emphasis, the words graven on a thin gold Orphic tablet found near Sybaris: "I am dying of thirst. Give me to drink of the waters of memory"—meaning memory of the spiritual world.

So now we may ask another question: Because of an inveterate materialism, in the return to spirit will America lag behind, bring up the rear, perhaps lose out altogether?

No. Strangely and wonderfully, no. Or at least the answer is no, provided Americans can muster the courage and strength to realize the best possibilities inherent in their situation. "The worst turns the best to the brave, the black minute's at end . . ."

First, to put the advantage-in-disadvantage of extreme physicality into general terms, the physical is always and everywhere an expression of the spirit; even in the realm of matter, spirit is the real activator. Matter is coagulated smoke, says Jacob Boehme; matter is woven light, says Rudolf Steiner; in other words, matter is something which arises, along with the warmth of love, from the fire of the spirit. Well, if our business is to unravel this woven thing, so that the light may be set free to penetrate the whole man, then we have in materiality itself pure opportunity. The present historically right way is not to reject matter but, rather, accepting it in fearlessness and love, to transform it into the moral.

But one can put the advantage-in-disadvantage into more specific terms. It constitutes what Rudolf Steiner has called the Mystery of the West.

Because the Anglo-American world has gone so far in the direction of externalities, he says, from a spiritual standpoint it is a vacuum. But a vacuum invites. What does the Western Vacuum invite? That which "has nothing to do with old things"; as far as this world goes an entirely new phenomenon: the spirit. It comes to many people as the sun to the sky. But for others the precondition is a complete surrender to "phrasifying", by which I mean the bandying about of words out of which the last drop of life has been squeezed; and by analogy, of course, the expression stands for all things hollow, dead and done for—shells—husks. Historically, this represents the third stage in a downward movement, the first being spirit at first hand; the second, spirit "once removed", present only by sign and symbol; the third, absence of spirit or total vacuum. The third stage is now far advanced; in America it has in some ways gone further than anywhere else.

Therefore this very American hollowness may, in days to come, offer special opportunities for a renewal of the life of the spirit.

Indeed, this renewal is on the way. In the Western world, materialistic influences were at their densest towards the middle of the 19th Century. Several more decades, and there came a turning-point. This was the time when, according to Eastern tradition, the Kali Yuga or "dark age" was due to end. And the life-work of Rudolf Steiner was one of the signs of a new epoch; it meant the opening of new channels through which the spiritual world would speak again to human beings.

But, if the new utterance is to be received, the first necessity

is a recognition that Western civilization has been almost entirely shorn of reality. Admission of bankruptcy is in the realm of knowledge what conviction of sin is in the realm of morality: the indispensable first step of reform. In both cases the old is dying, and the ground is being prepared for an actuality not from the world of the senses but from the world behind those senses.

But if people confess that the old is rotten, what is there to stand on? Will they not be left hanging in mid-air? Only a realization that the life of the spirit is *solid* can prevent an instinctive clutching after matter. But most people have not yet experienced that solidity. They have not experienced it largely because they have failed to declare in full consciousness: "This life of the senses—of the stomach, and of the economics which pander to it—is a nothingness, and I myself, as *homo economicus*, am a cipher. Man has been given the power of reason, yes, but how has he used it? To take care of his physical needs. But animals take care of those same needs without benefit of reason. What are all our rational efforts, therefore, but the prostitution of reason, the employment of a high faculty for an inferior purpose? To be human beings we must set a spiritual reality alongside the physical reality—otherwise evolution stops." Such an admission would bring, first, shame, then the will to reform, then reform itself.

In America such personal revolutions are rare. A certain emptiness and poverty attends the American way of life; also great energy, rich possibilities both good and bad, intense interests, and many distractions. But the spirit will come. The new dispensation has to come; a new knowledge of man and the universe; new insights, new developments. The self-consciousness gained through contact with matter, and pre-eminently exemplified by the English-speaking peoples, is but a way-station on the road to higher regions. The divine in every man, the ego, has yet to work down, down, down through man's various lower members, transforming them one by one. The last and "toughest" is the physical body—and that is what America is grappling with.

Gazing at Ezekiel's valley of bones one asks in fear and doubt: "O Lord, can these bones live?" But the answer, as of old, rings out: "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into them, and they shall live."

The situation exemplifies Emerson's "law of compensation".

Saturn destroys in order to build up; and if certain physical and etheric forces in America are especially difficult to overcome, the overcoming is especially blessed. If its earth-forces hamper, there is such a thing as striving to be worthy of a handicap. In a race it is the swiftest who deserve the extra hurdle, the extra lap.

Of course, the thing is not only to accept Western difficulties, but to give thanks for them. Geographical place in a life being one expression of karma or self-made destiny, that destiny is fully solved and our own particular tasks are well done only when we can meet all circumstances with a "yes" as deep as the sea and as wide as the sky, a Whitmanlike "yes" without reservation or stint.

Speaking of the karma of geography, Rudolf Steiner says, "It is precisely when we come to know and inwardly to master a terrain that we can in a special measure love not only it, but the tasks there set for us."

Such love brings joy. Not the Luciferic joy which glories in its own strength, but the quiet Christian joy which knows that "we can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth us". It is a kind of spiritual warrant.

Sustained thus, Americans can go all the way through America and come out on the other side. They can transcend race and place, folk and class—all the false divisions—and become, in the old Mystery sense, "homeless men". No one region is home, now, because the whole wide universe is consciously their home. They possess a cosmic citizenship. Having grasped the great laws of humanity, they can no longer be influenced by the forces—terrestrial, planetary or anything else—which come to them by reason of geographical location. America (as Blake said) is a "portion of the infinite."

The infinite! It is towards infinity, we said, that Americans as a whole—whether they know it or not—are for ever yearning and hasting.

"*She's* she," says Alice in Wonderland of her friend Mabel, for like all Westerners Alice has a strong sense of individuality, and feels profoundly differences of identity, "and *I'm* I." But Alice enjoys enlarging her world indefinitely and living, by means of loving imagination, in everybody else. Her story is a kind of symbol of the submerged longing of Americans to break free of the body, and the geography which is the earth's body, and to identify themselves with and live in and function out of the entire cosmos.

However mistaken the means, that is the obscure urge working deep within. When Americans use the wrong means, they worship physical size and go over to abstractions. When they discover the right means, they retain their unabstract human character as microcosm while expanding mentally into the macrocosm, and touch what Emily Dickinson has called "colossal substance". Vision of immensity!—but the real immensity, now, not the imitation one of corporations and skyscrapers. The real frontier: that of the spirit.

CAROL OF THE CARTOGRAPHERS

Paradise, Heavenly Park, is named that garden
Where Eve the apple plucked with seeds of stone
That stilled Earth's song, Earth's fire, bade her snows harden,
And froze Eve's ethers into flesh and bone.

Bethlehem, House of Bread, is named that village
Which bore the babe Seth had seen brightly bend
Eve's apple-boughs, blessing with grain grief's tillage,
Comforting Adam at his ancient end.

Jordan, Stream of Descent, is named that river
Where Bethlehem's child, grown into manhood, stood,
Heard shaken firmament the Word deliver;
And Christ was shrouded in a human hood.

Golgotha, Place of Skulls, is named that mountain
Where, from the rood of apple-wood, there flows
Into dead Adam's mouth a living fountain
That brings back song and fire to Earth's iron snows.

Zion, New Jerusalem, is named that city
Builded of floating gems whose holy power
Shall lift Earth's bones to light through Adam's pity,
Shall sift Eve's body to a phantom flower.

Isabel Wyatt

According to an old legend, Adam, dying, sends Seth to ask the Guardian of Paradise if there is no hope of man's redemption, and Seth is shown a Child cradled in the high branches of the Tree of Knowledge. Adam, told of this, dies in peace.

V. S. SOLOVIEV: A SEEKER OF SOPHIA

1853-1900

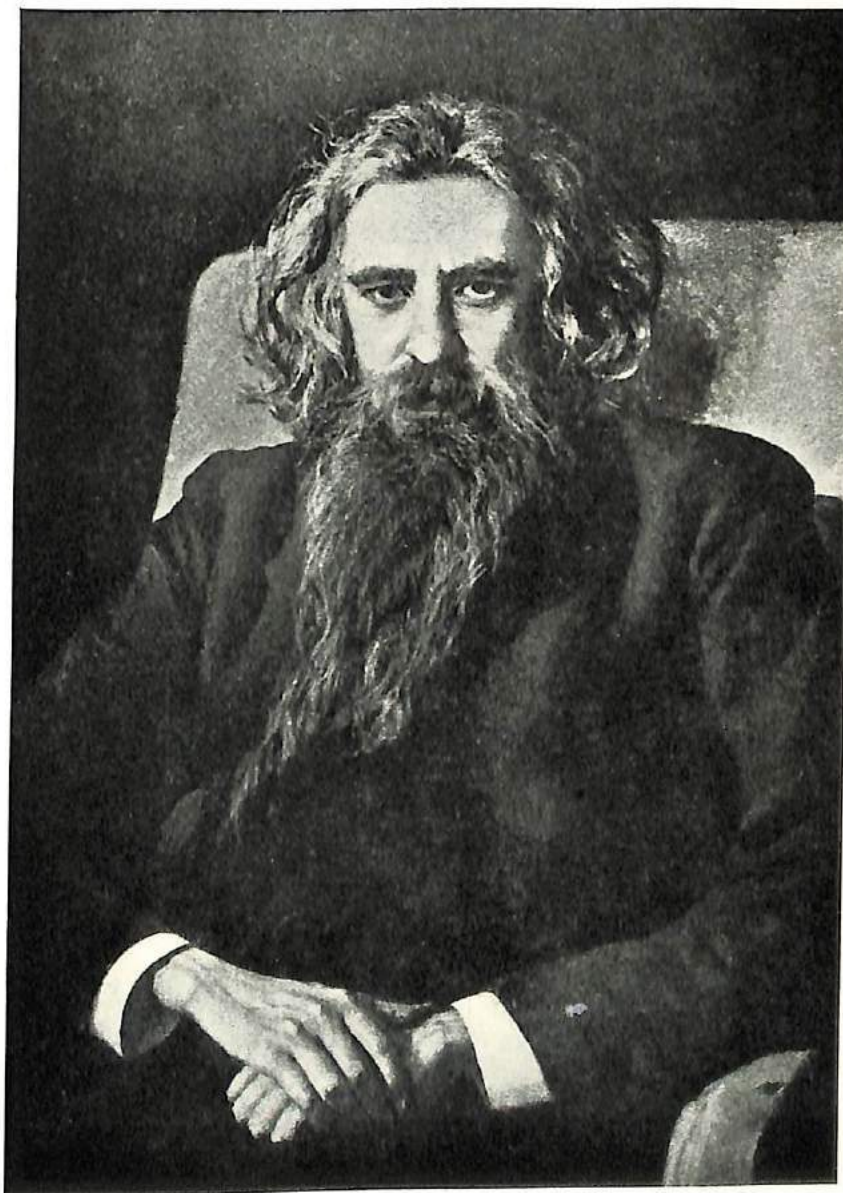
VIOLET PLINCKE

MEN are turning to Soloviev today. Abroad, the translations from his works, as well as the books written about him, attain impressive proportions. English translations appear all too slowly. Nevertheless, the interest in Soloviev is real, and growing steadily. There is a recognition that Soloviev's thought never fails to kindle insight which gives satisfying understanding, to quicken feelings which are ever waiting to be awakened, and to reveal the light of distant aims, firm as fixed stars, which may rouse the deepest impulses of men.

In varying degrees of dimness or clarity men are looking for all this in Soloviev's works. His books do not make easy reading. Perhaps it is good to recall Leonardo's words: "Thou, Lord, sellest thy secrets for the price of toil".

All those who try to sum up and crystallize their impressions of Soloviev—even his closest friends—never fail to arrive at the word "elusive" or its equivalent, for they feel that the description of all Soloviev's many-sided gifts and achievements leaves *something* unexplained. Certain Russian writers (N. Zernov in particular, in his clear and comprehensive exposition of Soloviev's work in *Three Russian Prophets*) rightly point out that Soloviev's entire work is fed by the spiritual source of his threefold experience of Sophia, which he describes in his long autobiographical poem "Three Encounters", written less than two years before his death. Our insight into the spiritual basis of Soloviev's entire life can be greatly enhanced if we allow the light provided by this poem (printed near the end of his volume of poems) to shine backwards, as it were, over the rest of his poems and realize how *many* of them are filled with the apprehension of Sophia's nearness, or of her approach, her glance or even her words. All his life—and therefore his work—bears the stamp of this determining fact. These poems can become a most valuable guide into the deeper recesses of his soul.

We shall therefore begin with a brief indication of the events described in "Three Encounters". At the outset Soloviev supplies the details of places and dates: Moscow (1862), London (1875), Egypt (1876).



Vladimir Soloviev

On Ascension-day, 1862, Volodya Soloviev, accompanied by his German nurse, attends the service in the chapel of Moscow University. His thoughts are wandering, his heart is in turmoil, for "she" (the little girl with whom he is in love) was silent when he confessed his love to her. "A rival? Then it's a duel, a duel..." Dimly he hears the priest's invocation: "Let us put away—all earthly—cares..." The altar is opened. But where is the priest now, the deacon, the crowd of worshippers? All is peace—all is azure around the boy—and within him. Penetrated through and through by golden azure, holding a flower from unknown lands, arises She, with radiant smiles, nods and vanishes in a mist.

The childish love was blotted out, and to all earthly cares his soul was blind.

As a child Soloviev had been deeply devout, and his reading of the lives of saints impelled him to make an attempt to follow in their footsteps. With the age of puberty there set in an equally fervent phase of negation, which made him embrace the philosophy of materialism. Science, he was sure, could not fail to provide answers to all problems. He entered the faculty of science at the university. Two years later he abandoned it because he found that his own questions remained unanswered, and turned to the study of philosophy, taking his degree in 1853 and defending his thesis, *Critique of Western Philosophy*, a year later. This work culminates in the conclusion that Western philosophy, having become dominated in the course of its development by rationalism on the one hand and empiricism on the other, had arrived at an impasse, out of which only a resolute step, uniting it once again with the data of religion (mystical experience), could restore it to its rightful place and power.

The lecturing activity on which Soloviev had started could not hold him for any length of time. He applied for a scholarship to go abroad for the study of oriental, gnostic and mystic thought¹. As he mentions in his poems, it was the British Museum which

¹In later life Soloviev was offered the task of editing the philosophical and theological parts of a Cyclopædia. He contributed himself 55 articles—24 on philosophical subjects and 31 on the history of philosophy. This work is a vivid illustration of his vast erudition. Prominent among these contributions are those dealing with the various currents of early Christian thought (the heresies); the Gnostics and Neo-platonists; and aspects of Eastern wisdom. For a "spiritual biography" these articles offer rich material.

was the goal of his hopes—and his high anticipations did not fail to find fulfilment. It was as if a mysterious influence always helped him to come upon the books he needed. Above all else he endeavoured to discover seekers who had had the same experience as was given to him: Boehme, Paracelsus and Swedenborg—they headed the list, of course. But there were others as well: John Pordage, Georg Gichtel and Gottfried Arnold, too, belonged to what Soloviev called “real people”.

Greater by far, however, than the satisfaction of experiencing the spiritual fellowship with all those men of the past was the unstilled yearning for a renewal of his pristine encounter with the Heavenly Being.

One bleak autumn day, when he was in the Reading Room of the British Museum, he discerned Her presence, although invisible, and prayed that She might reveal Herself once more. Then suddenly—golden azure filled all space, and Her countenance shone forth again and a voice was felt within: “Go forth to Egypt”. He obeyed implicitly, broke off his studies in the British Museum and set out for Egypt.

There follow exquisitely humorous descriptions of his journey and stay in Cairo—these grotesque intermezzi helped the author to spread something like a veil between himself and the reader. In Cairo he must have spent some months when at last, in the stillness of the night, like a cool breath of air, the words were wafted: “I am in the desert—follow me there”. Once again in instant obedience he followed Her command. He hastened into the desert. Arab brigands fell upon him, but quickly in their turn were seized with terror at the weird appearance of their victim, mistaking him for the devil himself. They held a council, trying to decide what to do with him. Then they tied his hands, led him away into the distance, set him free again—and withdrew.

The night was cold and the stars glistened with merciless brightness. He lay down, trying in vain to sleep. What followed, his own words may tell¹:

*Long lay I in uneasy slumbering—
A sudden waft of air—“My friend, be stilled!”
I slept; and as I wakened trembling,
With breath of roses heaven and earth were filled.*

¹These verses were done into English by my friend Andrew Keith from a verbatim prose translation of the original. The rendering is both faithful and beautiful and I am very grateful for it.—V.P.

*And in celestial radiance, crimson-bright,
Eyes filled with azure fire, Thou dost gaze,
Like to the brilliance of primeval light
Of empyreal and creative days.*

*What was, what is, and what shall be for ever,
All was embraced by one unmoving glance—
Deeply below me, distant wood, sea, river,
And snow-clad peaks stretched out in blue expanse.*

*In image of pure Beauty Womanly,
The All beheld I and the All was One—
No limit bounded its infinity,
Before me and within me—Thou alone.*

*O shining One! Thou hast not failed me!
All, all of Thee I saw in desert gloom;
And now where'er life's billows carry me,
Those roses in my soul will ever bloom.*

The All—both the world of space as well as the course of time—thus experienced by Soloviev in a moment of Grace, formed the immutable basis of that “positive integrality” which he intended his own philosophy to express. On whatever subject Soloviev turned his gaze, his thought invariably moved in an all-embracing rhythm of three (sometimes, all too simply, it would seem, interpreted as a repercussion of Hegel's method of thesis, antithesis, synthesis), because the undercurrent of his thought always included, first, an awareness of the pristine state of the world when it was entirely held and determined by divine powers; secondly the phase when evil, disruption and struggle came into the world; and finally the third phase, beckoning to man out of the future, when after all the stages of travail and pain, the universe would be healed, illumined and brought back to peace—the ἀποκατάστασις τῶν πάντων of which Origen (one of Soloviev's favourite thinkers) spoke so powerfully.

But this “restitution of all things” is a cosmic goal, and cannot be separated from God-manhood. It stands at the apex of human evolution. The threefold rhythm of evolution must be grasped and clearly defined, first in the sphere of thought.

In his inaugural lecture at the St. Petersburg University, on *The Historical Deeds of Philosophy* (November 20, 1880), Soloviev traces the stages of the search for Truth, beginning with the

Upanishads, through Buddhism and Platonism to Christianity. What Christ, Incarnate, gave to men could not be made their own at once, but had to undergo manifold stages of development.

First the dispensation of truth through the authority of the Catholic Church; followed by the period of mystic experience, founded in the heart of the individual alone, and succeeded in its turn again by the supreme rule of reason, as can be observed in the philosophical systems from Descartes to Hegel :

All this philosophical development from Descartes to Hegel, liberating the intelligence of man, rendered a great service to Christian truth. The principle of true Christianity is Godmanhood, i.e., an inner union and interaction of God and Man, the inner birth of the Deity in man. The divine content man must make his own *out of himself*, consciously and freely. . . . What then has philosophy achieved? It liberated the human personality from external compulsion, and gave it an inner content it makes man truly man.

The entire lecture is filled with that spiritual fire which invariably stirred Soloviev's listeners, so that he could command the closest attention on the part of the largest audiences even when he dealt with the most difficult of theological and philosophical problems. His *Lectures on Godmanhood* (of which two English translations are now available) can illustrate this well. The work plainly shows Soloviev's philosophical "ancestry"—the gnostic thinker Valentine, whom he considered to be one of the greatest philosophers of all times; Origen, Scotus Erigena, Schelling, Hegel—and yet the flow of this powerful philosophical speculation has a character and a glow all its own. Soloviev brushes aside the prejudice of modern thought, which imputes arrogance and futility to every attempt to approach the mystery of the Trinity and the fountain-head of evolution by means of thought.

In Lecture VI we find the following passage :

When we turn aside from the phenomenal, clearly defined content of our outer and inner life—not only from our impressions, but also from our feelings and thoughts and will-impulses, and we gather all our forces in a single centre of our direct spiritual existence, in the positive power of which are contained all the deeds of our spirit and which determines the whole circumference of our life; when we plunge into that silent and immutable depth whence the turbid stream of our day-to-day reality springs forth, not disturbing its purity and rest—in this primeval fountain-head of our own spiritual life, we inwardly contact the primeval source of universal life, we, in essence know God as our primordial origin and substance of all, we know God the Father.

Lecture VIII includes a passage of great importance to every student of Soloviev :

When we speak of man, we have neither a need nor a right to limit him to his visible reality—we speak of the ideal man, no less essential and real, in fact, immeasurably more real than the visible manifestations of human beings. Within us an infinite wealth of content and forces is stored hidden behind the threshold of our present consciousness, which is only gradually crossed by a definite portion of this content and these forces, never exhausting the Whole. Within us, the ancient poet declares—within us and not in the starry heavens or in the depths of the Tartarus—dwell the eternal powers of the Cosmos¹.

Soloviev does not tire in renewing his endeavours to encourage men to divine in meditative thought the Absolute (God the Father), Who out of His potential creativity in timeless procession manifests Himself in the active outpouring of the Logos, and at last returns into Himself, holding His manifestation, as the Holy Spirit. The substance (*ousia*) in the Three remains Sophia-Wisdom.

But the Creative Ground of the world did not will that divinely-bound necessity alone should prevail. Some of the potential creative power was left undetermined by God's will, so that it might act in free choice. This creative substance used its freedom in the adverse sense. "Chaos", is the word used by Soloviev to describe it :

But God loves Chaos in its nothingness and desires that it should exist, for He will restore to Unity this rebel existence, He will fill the boundless Void with His abundant life. God gives life to Chaos, He abstains from acting against it in His Omnipotence, in the first act of the Divine Being, in the element of the Father and makes the world come forth out of its nothingness.²

The soul of this world can find no rest within herself—it errs and groans, seeking to be united with its divine source. In gradual stages its being, full of distractions and turmoil, is drawn together : in the force of gravitation, light, warmth, chemical affinity, organic life, until, at last, it appears in the consciousness of man which can compass all in its comprehension. It is in man's Christ-determined intelligence that lies the promise of this process of unification; the Christ-light that flows transforming and healing man's rebellious, self-assertive thought, feeling and will.

¹The translations are mine throughout.—V.P.

²*La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle.*

When Soloviev quotes Wisdom's saying (Proverbs, viii—23, 31) "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was", he stresses the concluding words, "and my delights were with the sons of men". For cosmic evolution depends on the awakening of man to his cosmic responsibility. And, in the end, Christ-filled Humanity will *be* Sophia.

At this moment it is not without significance to realise both the background as well as the subsequent fruits of Soloviev's experience of, and meditations on, Sophia.

In contrast to Western Christianity, where hardly any place is offered to Sophia, the Church of the East, from its earliest times, reached out to Her in frequent and varied prayers, hymns and doxologies. In Byzantium, Sophia was worshipped in close association with the Logos, but in the Orthodox Church this changed—symptomatically enough—and religious experience and insight brought Her into closest connection with the Mother. Hence all the great Feasts of the Virgin, the Birth, Presentation in the Temple, the Annunciation and the Dormition, became occasions of the worship of Sophia. However, in the office of Sophia alone, her connection with Christ and with the Mother are equally stressed.

Throughout the ages the devout heart of the Eastern Christian did not only turn to Sophia in prayers and hymns, but also through the instrument of his hand: in the painting of icons. The student who approaches this iconographic material remains amazed and awestruck. It is unique in so far as it offers a direct expression of spiritual experiences, and the symbolism at times is so profound and intricate that the modern mind can barely touch its fringe. Sometimes, however, the language of these pictures is entirely transparent, and Soloviev himself describes the icon in the Sophia-Cathedral of Novgorod. It represents the Virgin and John the Baptist standing in an attitude of prayer at either side of a throne on which Sophia, in the form of a fiery Angel, is seated. Above Sophia, in a medallion, is the picture of Christ; further above is the Book; and further still, a host of Angels. Beyond this—God the Father. But the Mother does not only supplicate for sinful men at the throne of Divine Wisdom, the Heavenly Humanity—She Herself, for the consciousness of the devout Eastern Christian, is the embodiment of Sophia in the created world.

This is not the place for any attempt at indicating the ramifications of religious thought opening here. Suffice it to say that it is just Soloviev's work which has given the stimulus to a number of thinkers of the Orthodox Church to dwell ever more and ever more deeply on the being of Sophia, endeavouring to raise to the comprehension of the *thinking* heart that which in earlier ages had been the outpouring of the heart glowing in prayer, and in the beholding of visions.

When Rudolf Steiner spoke of the connection between the Mother and Sophia, and then, on other occasions, of the pictures of the Madonna and Child, he said that even Raphael and the painters of the icons were not aware of the full reality of what they were portraying: "It still awaits understanding". For these images, familiar to the simplest of hearts, are charged with all the mystery of man's divine origin, his inner birth and the fulness of his attainment. No man is a stranger to the path leading to this goal.

The urgency of the task of serving Sophia with every breath of his being, in helping forward the reintegration of all things, compelled Soloviev to meet courageously a fundamental cleavage in humanity, the Christian Church in its Eastern and Western manifestations. In his earlier days Soloviev shared the views of the older Slavophiles, that the Greek Orthodox Church had maintained a greater purity than the Western Church, although this was bought at the price of an inadequate leavening of the body social and its activities on earth. In the course of his profound and far-reaching study of the relations between Rome and Byzantium, in the first millenium of our Era, Soloviev came to the conclusion that the separatistic tendencies emanated from Byzantium. Not only did the Caesaro-papism of the Emperors undermine the strength of the Eastern Church, but owing to the support given by them to the various heresies (Soloviev speaks of them so vividly that the remoteness with which we are accustomed to view these things is utterly dispelled) the early Christian efforts to comprehend the mystery of the Incarnation were clouded and confused.

Soloviev came to be dominated by the thought that only the rightful successors of Peter, to whom Christ said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it", can truly direct the spiritual life of

Christendom'. Unceasing labour over a number of years in the direction of bringing about an understanding between Eastern and Western Christianity found expression in a series of works, hardly any of which are available to the Western reader. Soloviev firmly believed that the undoing of the separation between the Christian East and West would also act beneficently on the gathering together of the various parts of the Slav world. He found a great supporter in the Croat Bishop, I. G. Strossmayer, who was fired by the same ideals as Soloviev. When the two men met they found that they spoke the same language, like two old friends who at last were united again, after a long separation. After Soloviev's departure, Mgr. Strossmayer described him as *anima candida, pia ac vere sancta*. Soloviev, wrote to him: "*Après vous avoir quitté en réalité, je n'ai pas cessé de vous voir en rêve chaque nuit*".

In this connection it may be mentioned that Soloviev had an extremely vivid dream-life. To his friend, Prince E. N. Trubetskoi, he once said: "Sleep is, as it were, a window into another world". In his dreams Soloviev met the departed and spoke with them. Many of his dreams were full of portents of the future, and Soloviev took them very seriously. Sometimes on awakening he brought with him an image which became the spring of a poem or a philosophical work.

Gradually the course of events shook Soloviev's hopes of an early solution of the East-West problem of the Christian world. The Eastern hierarchy showed no interest at all in Soloviev's ideas, and the authoritative representatives of the Western Church were quite immovable. Soloviev was entirely misunderstood by both parties. In his earlier conceptions of Theocracy, that structure of society which he believed was the only true and worthy one for mankind striving to realize Godmanhood, Soloviev identified the High Priest, supreme channel for the spiritual inspiration of the community, with the Pope. He ceased to do so in his most

¹In this connection it is essential to remind oneself of the decisive light thrown on these words by Rudolf Steiner, who pointed out that Christ gave His charge to Peter inasmuch as the power of the "Father in Heaven" enabled him to acknowledge the Christ. Peter was ahead of other men in being the bearer of the Father-force, filling him with the revelation and thus providing him with that "rock" on which all future working of the Christ-impulse depends. "What is present in Peter is present in all men". The whole development of mankind since the mystery of Golgotha has witnessed the gradual awakening of that "Father-force" in man. "Therefore said I unto you that no man can come unto Me except it were given unto him of My Father" (John, vi, 65).

mature work, *The Justification of the Good*. Events had compelled him to draw conclusions. But the ideal of the organism of humanity being built on the pattern of the Old Testament, Priest—King—Prophets, still remained with him, the place of the prophets, being taken in the modern world by those men who through spiritual discipline had risen to an exceptionally high degree of moral and spiritual strength.

Soloviev's approach to the structure of the moral world could be outlined somewhat as follows. Threefold is man's relation to the world: to that which is above him, to that which is around him, and that which is below him. This leads to the recognition of three fundamental attitudes which man finds within himself as ethical being: devotion and reverence for the Divine; pity and compassion for all that is man's equal; and shame in relation to that which is below him, primarily his own bodily nature rooted in matter. The latter calls for explanation: Soloviev believed that man awakens to the fact of his humanity by differentiating himself from his bodily nature, instinctive and unconscious, burdened by passions and desires, and that his spiritual sovereignty is purchased at the price of a firm subjection of his bodily nature to the spirit. This fact signals the birth of *conscience* as such.

Does Soloviev advocate asceticism for asceticism's sake? Not at all. This becomes clear when Soloviev speaks of man's activity in the economic sphere, be it in industry or in agriculture. Soloviev found that the economists of his time had quite convinced men of the *absolute* right that a human being had over the resources of nature, which he was entirely justified in making unconditionally serviceable to himself, satisfying desires and creating new ones. These, in their turn, stimulated further initiative and will in the domain of economic activity.

Soloviev fully recognised the inevitability of this phase in evolution, which made man revel in forcing the stamp of his creative genius on nature. But an entirely new attitude had to be grasped and cultivated if we were in earnest in our determination to perfect nature's being, to quicken that which was dead in her, and to spiritualise matter. This new attitude could come only from the birth of fresh powers of cognition in man, as a direct outcome of strict control and purification of his desires, turning *inward* the powers he largely expended *outwardly* when engaged

on the subjugation of the forces of nature. Workers who learn to realize the spiritualisation of matter as the ultimate goal of their toil find that their life receives an entirely new orientation, and are thereby led to make a different use of their leisure—in the direction of calling forth and cultivating within themselves new spiritual powers.

The Christian State, which is in Soloviev's eyes nothing else but organised compassion and pity, should have for its outer task the guaranteeing, to the utmost possible extent, of external conditions favourable to a worthy existence and the perfecting of men :

The Christian State within the limits of its means (not interfering with the priestly sphere) acts in the royal spirit of Christ, pitying the hungry and sick, teaching the ignorant, curbing evil-doers (casting the merchants and money-changers out of the temple).

The mention of evil-doers brings us to Soloviev's thoughts on criminal law. He felt strongly and deeply the onesidedness of the law, preoccupied with considerations of protecting the community from those who through their nature or owing to circumstances become transgressors. Compassion, he believed, should not go out to the victim alone but in an equal measure to the wrong-doer himself. Punishment should be freed from the element of retaliation, and should above all consider the ways and means best suited to bring about a regeneration of the offender.

Institutions where such tasks should be tackled would, obviously, have to be staffed by men of the highest moral and spiritual strength. Soloviev was firmly convinced that the very magnitude of the task would attract men of this character, and that the practical results of such work would be incomparably greater than anything achieved by the law known so far.

Ever new paths for the "gathering together of the Universe" (*sobiraniye vseleennyi*) were discovered by Soloviev in the course of his later years. Starting with Dostoevsky's thought that "beauty will save the world", Soloviev wrote two essays on "Beauty in Nature" and the "Meaning of Art", which, though separated in time, form one whole. He traces various stages in evolution, and notes the steps marking the activity of Light and Life in overcoming the darkness and impenetrability of matter. He speaks of the "Cosmic Architect" restraining from outside, and transforming

from within, the wild forces of Chaos. But this work must be continued by man himself—and, indeed, has been continued throughout the ages, in Art. Man can so transform the various aspects of material existence that they become an enhanced revelation of the spiritual forces working within it. But he can go further : in pure poetry and in music he can give direct utterance to his immediate contact with the deepest spiritual foundations of the Cosmos.

It was Soloviev's belief that such Art is a direct attack on the forces of death and disintegration, and a stage-by-stage victory over them. He was firmly convinced, too, that in the future man will not exercise the old arts alone, but that he will create entirely new ones. It seems as if Soloviev's anticipations touched the threshold of Eurhythmy, which enables the human body to make visible, in movement, the cosmic foundations of music and speech.

But man's supreme power—most immediately within his reach although hardly yet realised—for working towards the restitution of all things, arises from his capacity for love. For the human being, now divided into male and female aspects, can be restored to wholeness only by means of love.

Soloviev maintains that it is a fallacy to interpret marriage as a means for the propagation of the human race—the new realisation of the nature of love between the sexes lies in the direction of recognising that love enables man and woman to behold the image of God in each other, and then by dint of faithful, sustained moral effort to bring it to birth with increasing fullness. *Amor ascendens*—recognising, flash-like, the divine image—and *Amor descendens* bringing it down and wedding it to the human being in his (or her) phenomenal existence, in ever renewed endeavours—this is how Soloviev would interpret love. And *this* love—in its dual manifestation of ascending and descending—can gradually widen its domain, and with the same strength and penetration attach itself to a social sphere, a nation, to mankind—nay, even to Nature herself. Living and abiding reflections of absolute Humanity will thus begin to enter the work of the Cosmos.

The latter part of Soloviev's life was marked by his book : *Three Conversations* which in its two English translations is called *War, Progress and Christianity*, and *War, Christianity and the Antichrist*. He was prompted to write it by his desire to make clear, to bring

within the reach of everyman, the nature of evil, and the fact that evil can never be truly met unless man seeks and maintains his basis in a world other than the familiar earthly one. The vision of the Antichrist reveals nakedly those forces of darkness from the facing of which we largely shrink in our day-to-day life, and their play and working is revealed in a way that bears direct witness to the fact that Soloviev writes from immediate spiritual experience. No other man had spoken with such uncompromising clarity of the imminence of Evil, and of the utter tragic blindness of men in relation to it.

It is not the isolated facts occurring in the description of the Antichrist and his activity that can stir one so deeply to-day, but the *mood* of prophecy, the urgency of the decisions to be made, the breath of the threshold. Soloviev was in no doubt whatsoever that he brought on his own end by speaking openly and without fear of the Evil which always seeks to attack man when his consciousness is not alert, but heavy with sleep.

The story of the Antichrist ends with two great visions: the first is that of the Woman clothed with the Sun, with the moon under her feet, and twelve stars shining around her head. This occurs when the three representatives of historical Christianity, Pope Peter II, the aged Bishop John, and Professor Ernst Pauli, are united at last in a true recognition of one another. The second vision is beheld by the opened eyes of men, when the Jews, having witnessed the destruction of Antichrist and all his host, flee in fear and tremor towards Jerusalem calling on the God of their forefathers to save them: the heaven is rent by a great lightning and Christ appears in His Glory, revealing the wounds in His outstretched arms. Within us echoes St. Paul's saying: "And so all Israel shall be saved".

For many years Soloviev seemed to have knit the destiny of the Jews to the very core of his being. A short time before his death, while periods of consciousness were alternating with others when consciousness was blotted out, Soloviev said: "Do not let me fall asleep; make me pray for the Jewish people; it is necessary that I pray for them," and he began to recite a psalm in Hebrew.

When Soloviev died, the funeral ritual was celebrated in the same chapel where Sophia had appeared to him in his childhood. A few days later a Roman Catholic picture of the Madonna was

found on his grave; and on the opposite side a Greek icon of the Christ with the still legible words, *καὶ ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν* ("and He rose again from the dead") had been placed by an unknown hand. A symbol which is beyond comment.

After his death the impulse that filled his life and work began to spread in weight and significance for all those who were seekers of the spirit. Even today in Soviet Russia, in a network of small nuclei spread over the entire country, there are men and women working together, taking Soloviev's thought for their basis and guidance, cherishing it and feeding on it. Herein lies hope which we dare not pass by. When dwelling on Soloviev, Rudolf Steiner gave the highest appreciation of his thought in the words: "No other philosophy is so permeated by the Christ-idea".

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FORM IN ART AND IN SOCIETY

OWEN BARFIELD

A WORK of art is generally distinguished from other products of human labour by the fact that we recognise an intrinsic value in its *shape* or *form*. Most works of art have other values too, and many objects and parts of objects, which we do not think of as works of art at all, have this value in some degree. A thing is a work of art, however, only in so far as it has this value.

Can anything useful be said about the nature of 'form'? In appreciating, let us say, a great picture, the consciousness oscillates between, on the one hand, a delighted observation of—and a *dwelling* on—detail, and, on the other, apprehension of the whole as such. One may forget about the whole in concentrating for a space on the perfection—yes, and even self-sufficiency—of the part; and then one returns to the contemplation of the whole, and the part is seen to possess an even greater perfection because of the way in which it is articulated into, and somehow re-expresses, that whole. Indeed, this peculiar relation to the whole is an essential element in the perfection of the part.

It is possible to forget this—there is even a necessary tendency for the artist himself to do so, a tendency inherent in the very nature of his activity; for the richer and more powerful the art, that is, the more perfect its form, the more independent life of their own will these parts or details try to possess. Anyone who has dabbled in lyric poetry knows how easy it is to become engrossed in the improvement of, say, a single line, forgetting all else. At last it seems perfect—and then he looks again at the rest of the poem and he sees that it is not perfect at all; because it has ceased to be a true part of its whole. In another poem it *might* be perfect, but, alas, not in that one, and it must accordingly be scrapped—not without heart-burnings.

The "part" of Barnardine in *Measure for Measure* is an example, I think, of a part which has life of its own but has it at the expense of its "partness" and therefore at the expense of the whole, rather

than as a contribution to it. Perhaps the last two acts of that play are in the same category. *Hamlet*, on the other hand, or *Bleak House*, or—to skip rather nimbly sideways—Chartres Cathedral are all composed of a variety of entities, each with an independent value and even life of its own, yet each stamped with the peculiar quality that renders it indisputably a part of that particular whole and no other. In the case of *Hamlet* not only the characters, but many much smaller units of expression—the metaphors for example—bear the same unmistakable stamp. The play is hall-marked *Hamlet* in every link.

But, just as a distinct part may have a life of its own without fitting in to the whole, so another may fit in without having any life of its own. When this happens (as in a picture which is well-designed and no more, or a plot that is cleverly constructed but is operated by mere lay-figures), there is adequate structure and unity, but inadequate form. Artistic form, then, may be resolved into a peculiar relation of part to whole, and of whole to part.

The next question is, whether it be possible to expound still further the nature of this relation. I have spoken of the part being 'articulated into' the whole, but of what kind is the articulation? Clearly, much more is required than articulation in a serial or spatial sense, and I was prompted to attempt this essay by the curious experience of finding in a book not concerned with art at all one of the best expositions of just this ideally 'formal' relation of part to whole which I have ever come across. I refer to *The Meaning of Love*,¹ by Vladimir Soloviev, and, in particular, to the author's conception of "organic solidarity." This principle, he says, is to be found first in the world of nature, which it builds up by stages leading from gravitation to the animal organism, and subsequently in human consciousness. Gravity is "the general power of attraction, by which parts of the material world do not expel one another, but, on the contrary, aspire mutually to include one another, and to mingle with each other."² Aspire—but, as yet, without success. For Soloviev propounds, as the essential characteristics of *material* existence, what he calls "a twofold impenetrability."

Perhaps this sounds complicated, but we find that he is merely

¹Translated from the Russian by Jane Marshall. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1945.

²*Ibid*, p. 73.

referring to the commonest experience of all, namely, the limitations imposed by time and space on ordinary human consciousness, and a moment's reflection convinces us that he is obviously right. Let us have this "two-fold impenetrability" in his own words:—

1. Impenetrability in *Time*, in virtue of which every successive moment of existence does not preserve the preceding one within itself, but excludes it or, by itself, dislodges it from existence, so that each new thing in the sphere of matter originates at the expense of, or to the detriment of, what preceded it.

2. Impenetrability in *Space*, in virtue of which two parts of matter (two bodies) cannot at the same time occupy one and the same place, i.e. one and the same part of space, but of necessity dislodge one another.

In this way that which lies at the basis of our world is Being in a state of disintegration. Being dismembered into parts and moments which exclude one another. . . . To overcome this two-fold impenetrability of bodies and phenomena, to make the actual external medium conformable to the inward all-one idea—there is the problem of the process of the world. . .¹

This "inward all-one idea," which finds active and more outward expression as "organic solidarity," seems to me to throw light on the true nature of artistic form. Soloviev begins by pointing out how the overcoming of impenetrability is accomplished, and the "all-one idea" gradually realised, in the world of nature. In the first place, he says, the unity of the world of matter is itself not a material unity. Or rather, there is no such thing as material unity. That is a contradiction in terms. For if nothing but matter existed, the universe would be made up of mutually impenetrable objects, doomed to perpetual isolation from one another. But in nature the all-one idea attains to a partial manifestation, "in a spiritual-corporeal fashion," by means of the world-wide force of gravity, and by means of light and other kindred phenomena, which serve to knit material objects together and to establish some sort of communication between them. *Yet, the fullness of the idea demands that the greatest possible unity of the whole should be realised in the greatest possible independence and freedom of the particular and single elements.* And it is in pursuance of this tendency that the cosmic process, as it reaches the organic, attains to the creation of animal life—to that unity of the living body, wherein is realised "a complete solidarity and reciprocity of all the particular organs and elements."

Now the imagination or *mens creatrix*, the faculty to which we impute the provenance of art, has also frequently been spoken of as

'organic,' and indeed this quality is in some degree implied by the very use of such an adjective as 'creative.' But if 'organic' in this connection is to signify anything more than a loose analogy with the mysterious ways of 'nature,' we need to have a clearer idea of the general principle underlying 'organic' processes. In short, we must know what 'organic' means.

And it is here that Soloviev comes to our aid, building up, through his concept of 'organic solidarity,' the image of a special relation between part and whole, which is neither serial nor spatial nor—as we shall see—hierarchical; the kind of relation, in fact, which the imagination, and only the imagination, detects between the parts and whole of a living organism, and both creates and detects between the parts and whole of a work of art. For imagination is, precisely, that which experiences form.

Thus the body of a single animal—when regarded as a whole—manifests the principle of organic solidarity. But Nature goes farther than this. Though each body is in itself a whole, yet each animal, regarded as a unit of consciousness, is only a part. As such, it is a part of the *race*; and it experiences, says Soloviev, the unity of the race in its full force at the moment of sexual impulse, when the inward unity or community with the 'other,' with the 'all,' receives its concrete embodiment in the relation to a single being of the other sex, which represents this complementary 'all' in one.

But since the process of individualisation is carried furthest of all in the human being, it follows that it is in human society that the all-one idea can be most fully realised. For man, too, that inward unity or community receives its concrete embodiment in the relation to a single person of the other sex; but the unity which he thus experiences, or ought to experience, is the unity, not merely of the physical race, but of the social organism. The social organism "is produced by that same creative life-force of love, which gives birth also to physical organisms." The love between two human beings (and this strangely packed little book is primarily a disquisition on human love) is true to its own essence only if it functions as a sort of biological cell, with the potentiality of expanding to the entire social organism. We may suppose that Soloviev would have approved the words of Thomas Traherne:—

That violence whereby sometimes a man doteth upon one creature is but a little spark of that love, even towards all, which lurketh in his nature. When we dote upon the perfections and beauties of some one creature, we do not love that too much, but other things too little. Never was anything

¹*Ibid*, p. 72.

in this world loved too much, but many things have been loved in a false way, and all in too short a measure.

Of course it is, in a way, characteristic of human experience that it can *not* be divided up into parts at all, and this is the discovery of the 'association-stream' school of writers and painters, who strive to represent the flux, and call it art. Nevertheless, experience is imaginal (a better word, I think, than 'imaginative' for this purpose) precisely to the extent that it is organic in the sense already given. Certainly its parts are virtually inseparable in space and time—everything slides into everything else. But it is characteristic of imaginal, or aesthetic, experience (they are the same thing), as distinct from reverie or doodling, that its parts are *spiritually* separable in a way in which the parts of non-aesthetic experience are not. And it is just this separableness which constitutes their 'organic' quality. It is this which draws them from the living but unorganised stream of consciousness, as it is this which draws the vegetable or animal 'organism' from the primeval ocean. Admittedly the parts of an organism are also inseparable, but it is precisely this paradox, or tension between two opposite states, which makes a thing an 'organism'. Its parts are inseparable, inasmuch as it is not dead; they are (at least, notionally) separable, inasmuch as it is not *merely* living, but something more.

A work of art, then, is characterised, not by the absence of distinct parts but, on the contrary, by the greatest possible distinctness and self-sufficiency of its parts—provided only that we do not think of them as mutually impenetrable. It is equally clear that this relation of mutual penetrability is something which the parts possess, not as mere objects, but precisely as being (a) wholes in themselves and (b) 'parts' of the same whole. They interpenetrate and are *pro tanto* inseparable, not because the whole is a formless waste, but because the whole has form, and that form enters into each of them. Can we therefore go farther and affirm that the ideal organic relation of part to whole is a sort of *identity* of the one with the other? That, in musical terms, ideal counterpoint is fugue—where the whole melody is found again in each part?¹ Now, according to Soloviev, this is or ought to be true of

¹This is intended as an illustration of my meaning, not as a musical judgment, for which I am not competent. It may be that there is a *mechanical* element of identity in the fugal form, which mars its perfection as an 'organism'. I do not know. There has at all events been a persistent notion to the effect I have indicated; and for my own ear the fugue possesses a spiritual quality, like that of light itself.

human society—that whole of which individual men are the 'parts'. Not only man in general, but each individual man 'may become all' (he says), as he lives and learns to do away with that inward boundary which severs him from the rest.

And again: the ideal "person, or embodiment of the idea, is only an individualization of the all-oneness, which is indivisibly present in each of its individualizations."¹ Thus, in the 'all-one idea' realised, the part is the whole, not by merger, but on the contrary by intensive development of its true individuality or part-ness. Or rather the whole is the part; for, whereas when we think abstractly *about* being, as in the processes of logic and classification, the whole is predicated of the part, so that we say 'a horse is a quadruped' in the actual *process* of being, the order is reversed, and the race or archetype is the species or individual—because it gives it being.

If it is important to know as much as possible of what we mean when we call art 'organic', there are other common epithets which would repay as close an inspection. It has, for instance, long been the fashion to speak of art as 'creative'. Anyone who follows that fashion would do well to ask himself which of three things he means. He may use the term, meaning simply that an artist makes something, without implying anything at all about the manner in which he does so. If so, 'creative' is not much more than a complimentary endearment. Or, secondly, he may mean that the maker of a work of art works in the same *way* as does the process of natural creation. One might hold this view and still conceive of art as being primarily mimetic. Or thirdly—and this is the notion to which Romantic theory of art has always tended—one may mean that the *same* process (denoting thereby not similarity but identity) is at work in the artist as in nature. It was in the development of this theory that the word 'creative' first came to be applied to human, as distinct from divine, activity, and, unless this theory is accepted, it is really a solecism. The name by which English writers have usually designated such a supposed 'creative' faculty is Imagination.

Now the most distinctive feature of Soloviev's book is that it propounds an adequate conception of Christian love, without at

¹*Ibid.*, p. 61.

the same time setting this over against nature and the natural. On the contrary, by applying his concept of 'organic solidarity', he reveals the same spiritual principle at work, on the one hand in nature and on the other in man and society. The aim and object of this principle is everywhere the same—the establishment of an 'organic' relation between part and whole—and, when the 'whole' in question is human society, the principle is usually called love. Such a conception of love, not as the fruit of 'grace' supervening on 'nature' from a contrasted source, but rather as the normal extension of the natural process itself, carries far-reaching implications; and it is my whole contention that these implications may be profitably considered and better understood in connection with a similar theory of Imagination.

At the present juncture of affairs the establishment of a true relation (by which I mean one that will satisfy the deepest needs of human beings) between part and whole in society is a problem of great practical urgency. Indeed it is a truism that civilisation is threatening to break down because of man's failure to solve it.

In the period that ended, we will say, with the French Revolution, this problem was solved for Europeans by a wide acceptance of the spiritual principle of hierarchy, and its social expression, feudalism. The feudal structure endured and withstood shocks, because hierarchy is also 'organic' in another—perhaps commoner—sense of the word; though it is not organic in the sense intended by Soloviev in his phrase 'organic solidarity'. Now if that principle of hierarchy is a permanently valid one, it follows that the abandonment of feudalism in society has been an aberration and the way back to health and sanity lies through its restoration, however difficult that may be.

For my own part I would not too lightly dismiss such a view: too many people have rendered themselves incapable of discerning the healthy principle of hierarchy at all, by keeping their eyes narrowly glued on its disease, exploitation. An excellent and very sympathetic account of the true principle and of its value not only for society but also for the individual human soul may be found in Dr. C. S. Lewis's *Preface to Paradise Lost*.¹ In a community based on that principle, where 'Degree' (as Ulysses calls it in the

well-known speech in *Troilus and Cressida*) is accepted as of course and felt as divinely ordained, no individual human 'part' would dream of thinking himself from any point of view commensurate with the whole or the equal of every other 'part'. But neither, on the other hand, would he feel isolated or insultingly inferior.

Yet, when all this has been well considered, the question still remains, whether the principle of hierarchy is in fact paramount; beyond the reach of historical development; a permanent and necessary element in human consciousness and therefore in the form of human society; or not. We must not turn a blind eye upon a truth, merely because it happens to lie in a direction in which many shallow-minded, many short-sighted and many ignorant people are pointing; and I cannot avoid a conviction in my bones that the fall of the Bastille did betoken much more than the bursting of a temporary imposthume of exploitation on the healthy body of feudalism. I believe it did mark the fact, though not necessarily the moment, of transition to a period in which the old principle would no longer serve.

Either there has been such a real change or there has not. We must make up our minds which we believe. I think that the change (place it in the "unconscious", if you prefer) was greater, not less, than is supposed by the philosophy of the Left. Moreover, the eradication of feudalism and, indeed, of all notion of 'degree' from the structure of society, is accelerating as it approaches completion. Is the present chaos partly due to the fact that our thinking has not kept pace with it? Is our thinking—not merely its product (ideas) but its very form and structure—still too hierarchic in a world whose underlying spiritual form demands an egalitarian social structure?

The structure of feudal Europe was based on two parallel hierarchical systems, the secular and the spiritual. And in feudal Europe the form of thought which was pursued by the learned with enthusiasm, worked out, developed, and all its possibilities investigated, was logic. Now hierarchy in society is logical classification realised—allegiance being substituted for predication. Thus, hierarchy in the social structure was not a thing to argue about; it was a principle as self-evident as that of classification is in thought. May it not be that a valid and enduring new form of society will take shape only as and when the principle of its structure is generally felt to be self-evident in the same way?

¹Oxford University Press, 1942.

If this be so, and if the new principle is to be something like Soloviev's 'organic solidarity', we may see a new significance in the fact that the form of thought which began to be pursued with enthusiasm, worked out, developed, and its possibilities investigated in the present period (which I have for convenience taken as beginning with the French Revolution) was Imagination. Should *imagination*, as the Romantics tried to expound it, take as firm a hold of the minds of the intelligentsia (or clerisy, as I prefer to call them) as *judgment* did in feudal Europe, it would furnish the necessary mental foundation for a viable democracy. Necessary, because the existing foundation of Newtonian, atomic thought, can only be realised either in *laissez faire* or in the totalitarian reaction from it.

We need not trouble ourselves here with supposing the various channels by which such a prevalent thought-form could overflow from the clerisy into the minds of the masses; as, in the Middle Ages, the forms of hierarchy and judgment were soon there for all in pageants, mystery plays, in ubiquitous frescoes of the Last Judgment and otherwise. This part of the process can be left to take care of itself, once the thought is made clear, established and accepted.

The demand for social 'solidarity' and the conviction of its necessity are to-day realities; they cannot be denied. If the attempt is made to deny them, they revenge themselves by attacking the denier—man or nation—in the rear; confusing his mind, weakening his will and reducing him to a condition of impotent *malaise*. But the demand for individual liberty, spiritual as well as political, is no less real. Unfortunately it appears all too evident to most people that individualism is incompatible with collectivism and 'fellowship', and that to propound as a good the unlimited expansion of individualism in any sphere would be to preach moral egoism and social anarchy.

Herein lies both the moral and the sociological importance of Soloviev's doctrine of organic solidarity. If this doctrine be true, it is not for the individualist to go cap in hand, apologetically, to the collectivist, saying: after all, you must leave something to the individual! Life will not be worth living if you don't! Nor should he merely argue: society is only the means; the individual is the end for which it exists! Rather he should proclaim with all his might: you cannot *have* an enduring society *at all*, unless

you provide for the free spiritual expansion of the individual. So far from individualism leading to social anarchy, the solidarity of your society will vary directly with the extent to which the individuals composing it become and remain individuals. If you are aiming at collective unity, you *must* also be aiming at individual liberty!

This is exactly what Rudolf Steiner sought to drive home from so many different points of view in his book, *The Threefold Commonwealth*; and I am sure that this book has met with so little understanding principally because the ideas it expounds need, in order to grasp them, the kind of thinking and perception which is normally reserved today for the appreciation of works of art. Yet if—as I believe to be the case—a modern social structure must, if it is to be healthy and durable, be somehow *artistically* right, this is exactly what we should expect. For such a structure will have to transcend the impenetrabilities of which Soloviev wrote.

If our thinking accepts the impenetrabilities, we shall conceive of the State as something put together by aggregating units—pyramidally or otherwise. Or we may arrive at it by adding together the three Estates, each Estate being composed of a separate collection of human beings. Perhaps, allowing imagination to creep in at one point, we may allow one man at the head to feel and to say: *l'état c'est moi*. But in Steiner's democracy each man is at the same time a member of all three estates; since his deeply threefold nature, as it becomes increasingly self-conscious, will be satisfied with no less.

It follows that men dare not destroy, but should rather amplify, the touch of imagination with which they have hitherto clothed the institution of monarchy. The characteristic of a true democracy will be, not the absence of one king, but the presence of many, the fact that every member of it will feel, howsoever dimly, *l'état c'est moi*. Politically and economically, at all events, each, in Soloviev's phrase, will have 'become all'; although—or rather *because*—the foundation of the whole structure is the liberty of the individual human spirit. For Soloviev the Christian concept of a Mystical Body implied that the spirit of man is in fact 'organic', after the same principle as the world of nature, from which he derives his physical body. Steiner pointed out that in future, even for practical purposes, no social structure stands a chance of surviving unless it takes full account of this fact.

What I am particularly suggesting here is, that the establishment of such a society seems rather to presuppose a mental climate, wherein the function of imagination in thought will be as self-evident to the effective mass of minds as the function of judgment has been since the epoch of Scholasticism. It is inherent in the nature of judgment that the judge is separate from and set over against the judged. It is characteristic of judgmental thought that the thinking subject is set over against the object of thought. Over here the thinking mind, over there the laws of nature. This is the form of thought which was sown, perhaps, when the Jews were forbidden to make graven images, and which culminated in the theological doctrine of nature and grace and in the mechanistic view of nature achieved by Western science at about the close of the 18th century. Since then, however, something has been strongly pulling the Western mind towards a view of man, not as contrasted with nature but as part and parcel with her. It is at this point that judgmental thought broke down. In biology it could produce nothing better than the Darwinian theory—which is nonsense to anyone who looks, with an imagination that has not been atrophied, at such a phenomenon as a colony of bees. In philosophy and psychology the breakdown was a far more pitiful affair, as may be seen from the strange contortions of the Behaviourists or the verbal morass of Korzybski's 'non-Aristotelian' system of science.

Both Soloviev's 'all-one idea', and the principle underlying Steiner's Threefold Commonwealth, require for their comprehension a kind of thinking in which imagination—the image-making faculty (which is hardly distinguishable from the image-apprehending faculty)—plays as great a part as judgment. That is why it is easier to detect in its aesthetic than in its ethical or sociological manifestation. For in appreciating works of art we are still obliged to think imaginatively, even if we do so nowhere else. We have seen how, for Soloviev, it involved also a conception of the organic in nature, based on the same principles of mutual penetrability, of a dependence which is at the same time independence, and a separableness that is inseparable—tensions or polarities which are head-splitting paradoxes to judgmental thought, but child's-play to the imagination. Provided, of course, that it is an imagination which is accustomed to sharing, at least in contemplation, the life of art or nature.

Kant defined judgment as "the faculty of thinking the particular

as contained under the universal". Imaginal thought substitutes those same tensions or polarities for the 'universals' of judgmental thought. In the judgment we affirm our own existence as a subject separate and distinct from the object thought about (and therein lies its true function), but in the same moment we exclude from our consciousness the life of the object. We "murder to dissect", as Wordsworth observed. Both ways of thinking are apprehensions of unity in multiplicity, but whereas, in the mind, a universal is a static abstraction from the object apprehended—a fish which died in the moment of entering the net of our subjectivity—a polarity is (like Goethe's *Urphänomen*) a dynamic participation in the process of actual life as it manifests itself in the production of nature's ordered multiplicity.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to speculate on the probable effect of the development of imaginal thinking on the natural sciences, or to consider the effect which it has actually had in the small area over which it has already begun to take effect. My object has been to stress the relation between form in art and form in human society; I could not achieve that object without seeking to penetrate to the underlying unity from which that relation springs; and, at that level, as Soloviev's little book suggests and I have tried to show, the true principle of form in nature is also relevant.

Note: For the final form of this article I am deeply indebted to the judicious criticism and wise suggestions of Mr. Charles Waterman.—O.B.

A FAIR REWARD FOR WORK

BRIAN STOCKWELL

IT is 33 years since Rudolf Steiner first outlined, in 1917, his proposals for social reform. In 1919 he published them in a small book, *Die Kernpunkte der sozialen Frage* (called in its English translation *The Threefold Commonwealth*). After a few months of hope that the post-war German leaders would turn to them during the reconstruction period, Steiner's ideas, in this as in other fields, were pushed aside. The opportunity was lost, and Germany followed a path which led to Hitler and the second World War. Events in these 33 years have abundantly justified Dr. Steiner's analysis of the social conflict.

The failure to reconcile economic planning with liberty, to end the class struggle by safeguarding the workers' rights from private economic power and freeing his spiritual-cultural life from control either by economic interests or by the State, is now reflected on a world level. The democracies, while maintaining some of the fundamental rights and liberties which are essential for progress towards the Threefold Commonwealth, lack the vision of the "whole man" which in a threefold social order would lead to the satisfaction of the workers' real and justified demands. Thus they find themselves challenged by the Marxist philosophy, which dominates large parts of Europe and is extending its influence in Asia. Marxism promises the worker freedom from the power of the property-owner at the price of forfeiting his spiritual-cultural freedom—a prospect which worries him little, for he tends to regard the culture of the past as the preserve of the bourgeoisie, and its religion as a mere "ideology". So the nations align themselves to defend or attack a democratic form of society which contains the seeds of development but has so far obstinately refused to cultivate them.

The world crisis can be solved only by healing the sick body of society within each community. Although this has become almost a truism, little has been done to achieve it. A threefold form of society has not yet been tried. To-day the opportunity which was offered to Germany in 1917 may yet be open to Britain.

Rudolf Steiner said that his proposals were based on the forces actually at work within man and society. It recognised them and provided outlets which would lead them to harmonious development. If such a form of society did not arise by direct volition following a clear understanding of these forces, then, he gave warning, it would still come eventually, but through chaos and despair. We see this threatening on all sides to-day. But also there are not lacking signs that some of the threefold social ideas are finding their way independently into men's minds. Speeches, lectures and books during and since the last war have thrown out many proposals which would find their proper setting in a threefold commonwealth.

A recent and highly topical book of this kind is *Industrial Peace in Our Time*¹, by Hubert Somervell, who has had experience of industrial management in both Britain and America and is now engaged in research as an industrial psychologist. His book deals in detail with the status and remuneration of the worker, and throws light on a problem which raises more questions than any other in discussions of Dr. Steiner's proposals.

Mr. Somervell begins from what is one of the basic concepts of the threefold commonwealth, that under the present system labour is treated as a commodity to be bought and sold, as if it could be separated from the human being who gives it. Steiner shows that this is an illusion, and that from it springs much of the conflict between capitalist and worker which threatens the fabric of society. Round the economic circuit travel the commodities man produces, values being added at each stage from the origin of a commodity as raw material up to its final sale over the counter. It is pure fancy to imagine that human labour could travel round the circuit; yet this illusion is part of the present system. The whole man, with his feelings and human rights and the needs of his spirit, goes to work, and to treat his labour as though it were a detachable tool, convenient for the employer's purposes and nothing more, is a crippling operation which differs in degree but not in kind from the marketing of entire men and women in the days of slavery.

In these terms Rudolf Steiner often spoke of it. "This," he said in 1918, "is the next and necessary stage after the overcoming of

¹Allen and Unwin, 15/-.

slavery. It must be made impossible for any man's labour to be a commodity. This is the true salient point of the social question, and it is this which will set free the new Christianity. . . . In future men will buy and sell only commodities . . . things separate from man himself."

In economic practice, labour is treated as a cost of production, and in the absence of State intervention or trade unions, wages would be little more than a subsistence payment. But organised trade unions rise to fight the employers, and the State begins to intervene to protect such rights as it recognises. The result is an inextricable confusion in which one thing at least is clear—the struggle between man and man becomes more important than the teamwork which is, technically, the essence of the modern industrial process, with its highly specialised division of labour. The system encourages man's anti-social rather than his social qualities.

Put briefly, Mr. Somervell's solution is this. He declares that ownership of the *finished product* is more important than ownership of the *means of production*, which Socialists have always regarded as the key point for reform. The industrial process is and must be, he says, a co-operation between labour, management and the provider of capital. But at present the latter claims ownership of the finished product, and it is from the price received for it that all concerned are paid. Hence the capitalist controls the income that should rightly belong to all, and pays labour on the same basis as he pays for raw materials, as a *cost of production*. The worker (except in so far as he may receive an output bonus) has no direct interest in higher productivity, and he is seldom able to take any personal pride in the finished product.

To end all this, Mr. Somervell urges equal partnership of labour, management and shareholders, with a fixed percentage of the value of the finished product going to each. He argues from figures of British, American and Canadian industry that over a period of years average wage-rates do in fact always show the same percentage of the final prices received. He further deduces from this that much of the industrial struggle is in the end futile, for either side. But by giving labour, as a matter of right, its due share of the values produced, incentive to greater production, direct interest in the product, and steady remuneration combined with guaranteed employment, could all be obtained.

Obviously, rights and obligations, which democracies feel should be based on an equal voice for all and majority decisions, are

deeply involved in economic life. It is widely demanded as of right that reward for work should be based on principles generally recognised as fair. Yet to-day the whole wages question is left largely to collective bargaining between employers and workers, who face one another as opponents. Might, not right, settles the issue. This opposition leads almost inevitably to acceptance by the workers of some version of Marxism as their only salvation.

Mr. Somervell, like Dr. Steiner, would drop the term "wage" altogether, as being tied to the commodity concept of labour. Out of the pool allocated to labour, individual workers would get their share according to the quality and quantity of the work they put in. In the assessment of individual shares he suggests that the trade unions, decentralised and sharing some of the functions at present reserved to managements, would have a strong say. The interest of the worker in his local factory organisation would then increase enormously, ending the present extremes of apathy among the rank and file, and of unofficial revolts against distant leaders who are out of touch with local problems.

He claims that this system would at one blow establish the status of the worker as partner, instead of wage-slave, in industry; restore the personal connection with the product of his work which was lost when the craftsmen's guilds broke down; kill the worst aspects of the private profit system; build up incentives and foster the fraternal co-operation which the economic process demands. He is able to point to the successful working of a system of this kind by an American firm, the Nunn-Bush Shoe Company, since 1935. The result there, he says, has been prosperity for the firm, a high reputation for its product, steady employment for its workers with higher average earnings than those of other workers in the trade, and a flourishing system of joint consultation between labour and management, "rooted in an identity of economic interest on a background of security."

Normal profit-sharing schemes he regards as merely a palliative. Usually, the partnership relation is vitiated because labour is still hired as a commodity and the worker does not really share responsibility :

The wage payment and the profit share are based upon conflicting principles. The relative proportion of the worker's income paid out of profits is too small to act as an incentive. The system of unguaranteed

employment contradicts the partnership relation, as does also the inability to devise means by which workers may share losses as well as profits.¹

Further, Mr. Somervell says, such schemes are often based on either expediency or paternalism on the part of employers, and not, as a proper partnership relationship should be, on the right of labour to its proper share of both production and responsibility.

The book's scope is deliberately limited to wage questions, and it assumes the framework of the present capitalist system. But Mr. Somervell's proposals could be adapted equally to private-enterprise industries or to publicly owned ones. Wherever men are employed in an economic enterprise, the question of how they are to receive payment will arise, and the principle of remunerating them out of a share of the product, and not by hiring their labour, can be applied. The great value of Mr. Somervell's book is that it sets this principle in the forefront and shows how it could be put into practice, and it is here that he comes nearest to a threefold commonwealth outlook.

Mr. Somervell is aware of the threefold commonwealth ideas (in one chapter he makes an acknowledgment to Charles Waterman's *Three Spheres of Society*), but it was no part of his purpose to discuss his proposals in a threefold social setting. In the present article, however, this is just what ought to be briefly attempted. How far, in a threefold social order, would the remuneration of economic workers follow Mr. Somervell's proposals, and how far would it depart from them?

An essential feature of Rudolf Steiner's treatment of this subject is his insistence that remuneration should be based primarily on the *needs* of the worker, and not on the work he does. This sounds strange, and it is most certainly a difficult conception to follow out in detail. But the idea that a man should at least receive "needs-payments" in addition to his earnings—though not as a complete substitute for them—is familiar nowadays. It is the whole basis of social security, as developed in the Welfare State. The principle is that a man, whatever work he does, or even if he is not working at all, has a *right* to such things as subsistence for himself and his family, health care, old age pensions and education for his children. And the actual amounts he receives are related strictly to his needs, not to his capacities or to the value of whatever he produces.

¹*Ibid*, p. 64.

Here, in passing, we may notice that needs-payments can be made in different ways. The State may either give a man so much money, or it may, having collected the necessary funds through taxation, provide him with a certain range of goods and services "free". In this country we have a mixture of the two ways. Some needs-payments (unemployment pay, family allowances, old age pensions) are made in money, while health care and education are provided "free". Mr. Somervell seems to approve of this system, but in a threefold social order the general rule would probably be to give all such payments in money, leaving the recipient to make his own arrangements for meeting his needs. Moreover, the payments would usually not be given by the State directly, but would be included in the pay packet; this would be a question for Parliament to decide at the time.

The point is that it is important for spiritual freedom that a man should be able to arrange for the medical treatment (orthodox or unorthodox) of his choice, and to choose the kind of school he prefers for his children. In the educational field, therefore, the principle would be to give educational allowances to parents and let them pay the schools (which would be supervised by the State in rights matters, but not controlled or administered by any political authority).

We must now return to Dr. Steiner's basic contention that "labour must lie quite outside the economic circuit"², and be remunerated in terms, not of output, but of needs. The formula he suggests is that a man should receive, "as counter-value for the product he has made, sufficient to enable him to satisfy the *whole* of his needs, including of course the needs of his dependants, until he will again have completed a like product."²

It is not hard to apply this formula to basic subsistence needs, embracing health and family welfare; but how are we to interpret "the *whole* of his needs"? It seems impossible for any adjudicating body to determine a man's spiritual needs—his needs for such things as books, travel, recreation—and impertinent for it even to try. But we should try to recognise what kind of outlook lies behind Dr. Steiner's proposal. In inquiring what the worker should receive, he looks on him not as a producer but as a human being, asking

¹*The Social Future*, p. 67.

²*World Economy*, p. 107. See also *The Threefold Commonwealth*, p. 118, footnote.

not what he does but what he is. This is at the opposite pole from the quite inhuman—even anti-human—outlook which regards the worker simply as a useful tool, to be valued solely in terms of the number of hours it is in use and of the goods it turns out.

Let us, then, at least agree with Mr. Somervell that the first essential is to remunerate the worker, not by hiring his labour, but by entitling him, as a matter of right, to a share in the total value of the product which he and his associates have turned out. Two questions then arise :

1. How is the total product to be shared, in the first instance, between the different categories of persons engaged—the providers of capital, the managers, and the workers of all kinds ?
2. How, within each category, is the share (the personal remuneration) of the individual to be determined ?

As regards 1, Mr. Somervell would leave it to be decided largely by collective bargaining, very much as now. He does not follow out the implications of his partnership proposals to the extent of placing decisions on rights and obligations altogether outside the economic sphere. From a threefold commonwealth point of view we should, first, put the capital-providers (or investors) on a different footing from the other participants. They would be regarded, not as proprietors, but simply as lenders of capital, with a right to a fair rate of return on their investments; the general rules governing rates of interest would be laid down by Parliament. The conditions of ownership, or management, require detailed discussion; it is enough to say here that "owners" would become, in effect, salaried managers, paid on a contractual basis—with due allowance for improvements in production brought about through their inventive or organising ability—by the Associations, or administrative bodies, of the industries concerned.

At this point something should be said about this term, Association. In a threefold social order the administration of economic life would be in the hands neither of the State nor of privately owned trusts and corporations, but of Associations, embracing representatives of managers, workers and consumers. Modern economic life depends throughout on the working together of men of the most varied talents, strengths and skills; and the Associations would give

practical embodiment to the principle of "fraternity" which should be the keynote of the economic sphere. Each industry would have its Association, and there would no doubt be larger Associations to look after the affairs of groups of industries¹. Representing the Associations themselves would be a central Association, or Economic Council, to deal with larger questions affecting the economic life of the community as a whole.

In the single firm, chief authority and responsibility would reside in an individual manager, appointed by the relevant Association; but he would be expected to work in close touch with a joint production council; and the "fraternity" principle would be expressed also in the method of remunerating all concerned through a share in the product, and not through the hiring of labour-power.

In time, the provision of capital might come to be undertaken largely by the Associations, from collective savings, and there would be less need for issuing shares to the public. Private profits, as understood to-day, would go by the board; and it would be a basic principle that interest payments should not continue after a means of production built with the aid of the money lent had ceased to be productive.

Now let us turn to the second of the two questions noted above : the sharing out of the proceeds of an enterprise among the individuals concerned. Here, again, we may expect that some very general rights-principles would be laid down by Parliament. It is almost certain that the community would want ability and hard work to be rewarded over and above the needs basis, at any rate until the full results of the new system were felt. There might also be special rewards for dangerous or particularly arduous forms of work, such as mining. Beyond this, the sharing out would be handled by the factory council, or a similar body; and here some of Mr. Somervell's ideas on the role of trade unions, where he suggests that local branches would work closely with managements in all questions affecting workers' rights, might prove very relevant.

No-one would pretend that Parliament could decide the particular income of John Smith, or that a body of civil servants should be set up to give rulings. Here the trade unions might provide the

¹In a letter to the Conservative candidate at the North-East Leicester by-election (September, 1950), Mr. Winston Churchill wrote : "There is nothing whatever to prevent the steel industry being governed by an independent board composed of representatives of management, labour and consumers."

link between rights and economics. Within the factory, the ultimate test whether Smith or Jones is getting his proper share is—do the workers in that factory, or department, feel that all are being treated fairly, taking into account the type and responsibility of work, and family needs?

The agreed sharing out of a total pool of remuneration among a group of persons is not quite as difficult as it sounds. Hyacinthe Dubreuil, in his book *A Chance for Everybody*, remarks that under the collective contract system, whereby a group of workers contract to do a certain job and distribute the total payment among themselves, the sharing out usually goes quite easily. Most persons have a fairly accurate idea of what their work is worth to an enterprise, in relation to the work of others; and within a small unit the family or other special needs of each individual could be taken into account.

The assessment of needs, naturally, must be related to an agreed standard of life which is technically possible. Parliament, advised by the central economic body, would therefore decide what hours the community as a whole needs to work in order to achieve the standard of living generally desired. Then the organs of the economic sphere would have to pay out the money and decide how individual workers fit into the scale.

A further point to be remembered—though it cannot be developed here—is that fair levels of reward as between different industries cannot be ensured without a price system based on the amount of physical and spiritual labour put into each product. Such a price system would be necessary to enable each industry to distribute remuneration on the principles we have outlined. Prices used to be left to settle themselves in the market, mainly in accordance with supply and demand, but lately we have seen all sorts of efforts to control prices by degree, to create artificially low or high prices by subsidies or purchase tax, and so on. This tendency towards a conscious management of prices is partly a necessary accompaniment of economic planning by the political State, but it reflects also a justified desire that prices should be “fair”, and not left to be manipulated by profit-seekers, using some form of power or pressure to get more than their fair share of the common pool.

In a threefold social order this tendency towards price management would continue; but the aim would be, not to fix prices by State decree, but to estimate needs and to calculate remuneration, working hours and total production in such a way that fair prices

emerged. (It is indeed in direct connection with “true price” that Dr. Steiner gives his formula for calculating the remuneration of individuals.) If a price that served to equate supply with demand were found to be lower than the “true price”, this would mean that too much labour was going into the production of the commodity in question, so that an excess of it was turned out—and *vice versa*. The difficult problem of moving labour from one industry to another, with respect for the human rights and needs and wishes of the workers affected, would then arise, as it must in any economy where demands and tastes change, and technical development is not stagnant. On this point, too, Mr. Somervell makes proposals which are well in accord with the spirit of the threefold commonwealth; he suggests that the trade unions should be largely responsible for arranging labour transfers, and that local branches could take over much of the work now done by Labour Exchanges :

In a free society no system of controlling labour direction either by legal compulsion or by economic sanctions can be tolerated. The only reasonable basis is a system of organised self-direction.¹

To maintain a true price system it would be necessary to control the issue of money so as to avoid price fluctuations due to one-sided changes in money values. The control might well be carried out by the Associations themselves. The general principle here would be that money, as a medium of exchange, must move into and out of circulation at the same rate as the commodities it represents.

This is all that can be said here on the complex question of pricing². We must always remember that when Dr. Steiner spoke and wrote on the details of the general principles he set out, his intention was simply to indicate ways in which a given principle *might* be put into effect; he often added that other ways might be found preferable when the time for action came. The idea of the threefold social order, as Steiner so often emphasised, is non-dogmatic. It is not a blue-print or a Utopia. It leaves details to be decided by the men on the spot at the time, particularly in industry, where its guiding principle is “association” between those at work. Any other kind of plan for social healing is bound to be impractical, a theoretical abstraction which will lead to fresh conflicts.

¹*Ibid.*, p. 161.

²See *Peace and the Threefold Commonwealth*, by T. Gordon Jones (Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company, 1943) for a valuable study of the price problem and other economic questions.

We have not been able to treat here the threefold social conception as a whole, with a free spiritual (or cultural) life at one pole, economic co-operation (or "fraternity") at the other, and the realm of Parliament and social justice in the centre, providing a framework for the whole. It is only in this setting that Dr. Steiner's proposals for economic reform can be truly judged; and yet it may well be that it is in this economic field, and particularly in that of work and wages and management, that the most hopeful chance of immediate progress in the direction of a threefold social order may reside.

Often an unprejudiced listener will, after careful examination particularly of the economics of the threefold social commonwealth, agree that it seems to offer the right solution, but he will go on to add that it is hopeless to try to persuade the general public to take an active interest in it. This apathy is one of the tragedies of to-day. National leaders try to banish it by exhortation, but in the long run only real food for the faculties of spiritual understanding in man will rouse him, through the medium of his feelings, to strongly willed action. So that when people say, "Yes, we agree with the principles of the threefold social order, but what hope is there of ever achieving it?" the question arises whether it is in fact any use talking about a better society until a far wider and deeper extension of Dr. Steiner's other work has been achieved. It may well be that our own failure in the past 25 years to develop these economic and social proposals is partly responsible for the gloomy outlook. But in this very reflection the answer lies.

It is no use asking for a change of heart before attempting to renew cultural life and change the economic system, because the present economic and cultural conditions are themselves acting against the finer qualities of the heart. It may be, paradoxically, that Rudolf Steiner's work cannot flourish as it should except in a threefold commonwealth; while a new social order is unlikely to be achieved without a strengthening of the spiritual in man. But in the idea of the threefold commonwealth itself, as in Dr. Steiner's other work, there is a power which can fire the imagination and stir the will, once it is deeply grasped. The chances of early success must not affect the will to strive for the right outcome. They can make no difference to our course of action, which must be to prepare the ground assiduously in people's minds and hearts.

There is no early prospect, in any country, of the fundamental ideas of the threefold commonwealth being taken up and gaining

widespread influence on their own account; and we might indeed feel some anxiety if there were any sign of this happening, under present conditions. For if these ideas were adopted as any kind of programme by a political party, it is fairly certain that they would be distorted and misunderstood. This is partly why the movement for the threefold commonwealth has always been non-political, in the sense of keeping outside party politics. A sectarian and dogmatic attitude, often necessary in party advocacy, would kill the threefold commonwealth. But there seems to be no reason why individuals who support various parties from a short-term point of view should not try to influence their party's outlook in the right direction.

In the close-knit world economy of to-day, and inside the straight-jacket of the modern one-fold State, it would be impossible for any single business or group of businesses to comply with all the principles of a threefold social order. But similar economic ideas are coming forward in many different guises, and finding increasing support. Such proposals as Mr. Somervell makes for changing the status of labour and offering better incentives to work are an example. While in a threefold social order they would be carried much further and modified in various ways, they would certainly bring great benefits if put into practice at once. They strike at the root of the fundamental misconception that labour is a commodity.

A closer study of Dr. Steiner's lectures on economics is badly needed. Much has been done: some of the work on price problems has been referred to here. But these lectures contain a wealth of hints which still await investigation. And in this country, where there is still freedom for controversy and no single political doctrine dominates the scene, economics is the centre of the problem. It may be that, with a deeper vision which could bring even the dry domain of economics to life, we could make some of that progress towards a threefold social order which Germany failed to make in 1918.

AMBER

Beyond the Northwind,
Before the Flood,
A star-kindled conifer
Wept gold blood.

No gem save amber
Flowed from a tree,
Fragrant of gardens
Under the sea,

With wild swans singing
In whorls of light,
All heaven golden,
All earth white.

In this rare resin
Richly runs
The sleeping splendour
Of ancient suns.

But dust has married it—
Blasts have blown—
Ice has harried it
Into stone.

Isabel Wyatt

THE CHESS-GAZING BOY

CHARLES WATERMAN

IN an essay by Mallarmé, called *Crise de Vers*, there is a curious passage in which he says that one of the aims of modern poetry is to "establish a precise relationship between images, so that a third aspect, fusible and clear, emerges from the relationship and is revealed to divination."¹

When I came upon these puzzling words they seemed to remind me of something, and presently they took me back to an unexpected place and time—a housemaster's garden on a Sunday afternoon in summer. I was watching two other boys play chess; one of them, F, was the school champion. Having just come under the influence of modern psychology, I had been urging F to see how far his unconscious, if he did his best to leave it free, would prompt the right moves. Usually he resisted this, saying he couldn't trust a sudden idea until he had worked it out. He was a cautious type, not fond of acting on impulse. However, my urging may have led him to think more about his own mental processes. On this Sunday afternoon he began to talk about the pieces in an unusual way; and this was the beginning of a queer story.

If the story were concerned only with chess, or could be followed only by chess players, it would not be worth telling here. I believe it throws some new light on the powers and processes of the human mind, particularly on those connected with aesthetic perception and the use of words. And all that need be known about chess is the sort of game it is, played on a draughts-board with variously shaped pieces, from formidable queen to humble pawn, endowed by the rules with varying powers of move.

F began to talk of the pieces as though they had lashing tails. The queen had a long tail, lashing out widely over the board; the pawns had very short tails; the knight had a crooked tail (he has a curious sideways move), and so on. It became clear that F was mentally visualising a piece as a force acting along the line of its move. He saw it inwardly as a dynamic entity extending its in-

¹From the collection of essays called *Divagations*.

fluence (its "tail") over whatever squares it commanded at the moment.

That was the first stage. In the second stage, F began to talk of a pattern of forces—or, more strictly, of a pattern of relations between forces. Imagine all the pieces as forces acting along the lines of their moves. In a given position they will form a network of force-relations. Now forces can be pictured, as lines or rays or "tails"; but a *relation* between forces is a purely abstract conception. It can be conceived but not pictured, in any normal sense. Yet F insisted that what he had before his mind, in sharp detail, was this purely abstract pattern of force-relations. In order to "see" it, he had to lose sight entirely of the board. The visible set-up was replaced by its abstract counterpart; and by some peculiar, self-hypnotic act of inward concentration F held this pattern before his attention, and was able to contemplate it at leisure.

Further, the pattern revealed to him the state of the game, from his own point of view. If he had a strong position, the relation-pattern had a look, one might say, of dominance: the weight and pressure of force were on his side. The question he had to study was how to modify the pattern so as to enhance this dominance. Or, if the relation-pattern looked weak, with the dominance against him, how to reverse it, or at least how to restore the balance. Having perceived the change required he was at once able—by a process he could never exactly describe—to regain sight of the board and see the corresponding move. He would then wait for his opponent to move, and proceed to scrutinise the new relation-pattern by a further act of inner vision.

Very often, some particular change in the pattern stood out clearly as desirable; it left him in no doubt of the best move. But sometimes several possible changes all looked good, and it was hard to choose. To take a simple example, we asked F which of the two commonest opening moves, P—K4 or P—Q4, seemed to him preferable, judged in force-relation terms. He replied that he could see no preference: the resulting patterns were equally satisfactory from the opening player's point of view.

In the course of one game there was an odd episode when, as soon as F gained sight of the pattern of a certain position, he remarked that only a section of the game was in view. To his inner vision it was as though he were looking at a relatively small arena, with blankness where the rest of the pattern would normally have been. This seemed to mean that the point of the game, in

that particular position, was concentrated in a part of it; the other pieces were for the moment irrelevant, outside the active pattern of attack and defence.

I doubt if anyone would have inferred this from an ordinary study of the position. He would have seen that the interest lay chiefly in a certain part of the board, but it would not have been apparent that the other pieces had no bearing on the immediate prospects of the game; and it would probably have been difficult to establish this even by detailed analysis. In this case, of course, we could not prove that F's statement was justified. But it was some evidence, perhaps, that he was not inventing or embroidering his inner visions. This disappearance of part of the pattern was too sudden and unexpected.

We tried setting up positions from master games, when some player had made a particularly brilliant move, to see whether F could find the right move solely by contemplating the pattern, with no preliminary knowledge or study of the position. Several times he succeeded (and the moves were not easy to find); then we gave him a position which left him in doubt. "I can see two moves," he said. "One is very strong and solid, obviously good. But I like the other better—it would make the pattern so beautifully fragile, just as strong but not so massive."

The first of these moves was the correct master move. The second looked absurd; but without telling F this we made it, and the obvious reply. He studied the new pattern and gave us a further move, which again pleased him; he said the pattern was still very attractive, in the same fragile, fine-drawn way. This move again looked hopeless; we made it, and once more the obvious reply. And now, directly F gained vision of the new pattern, he exclaimed that it had broken down; now it indicated nothing but a lost game.

What had gone wrong? How could bad moves have looked so promising?

On reflection, F said that probably the pattern created by the first of his apparently absurd moves, when it looked so beautifully tenuous, must have had somewhere in it a tiny flaw, a loose link in the force-relation-network, which he had failed to spot. And after his second absurd move, and our reply, the flaw had spread, like a ladder in a stocking. It had become grossly obvious, and the pattern of his game was seen to be suddenly in ruins.

Out flew the web and floated wide,

The mirror cracked from side to side. . . .

From the point of view of his opponent, I suppose, the pattern would have assumed at that same moment a look of overwhelming dominance.

Our experiments ended abruptly. While studying relation-patterns F liked to stand up, so as to get a bird's-eye view of the board. One day, standing at his shoulder, I saw him sway slightly; next moment he fell back into my arms. He struggled up immediately, crying "I see the move"—and reached for the board to make it (it was the right master-move); but when he realised what had happened the experience was a shock; it unnerved him. So much so that for a long time he refused not only to play chess but even to look at a chess position; he was afraid it might entrance him against his will.

His own account of the final episode was that he had been drawn into more than usually intense concentration on the pattern—drawn ever more deeply into the pattern, out of himself. He seemed to fear that if this happened again he might be drawn in still further and be unable to "get back".

So our experiments were cut short; but they made a strong impression on me, and on the two other boys who helped with them. I came to believe that anyone able to stand the strain of using regularly this method of inner vision should be able to play perfect chess. He would have to be careful not to overlook tiny flaws in the patterns; granted that, he would always be able to find the best move in any position, without reckoning ahead. It would be directly revealed by the required change in the pattern. If two players both used the method, their games would end always in a draw. Further, it might be possible to use the method for determining the best line in any opening, and the best replies, without having to work out innumerable variations. Played in this way, chess would become a strict science—and would perish as a game.¹

¹It has been suggested that an electronic calculating-machine might be designed to play "perfect chess", but an article by Dr. C. E. Shannon on "Programming a Computer for Playing Chess", published in the *Philosophical Magazine* (March, 1950), is not encouraging. In principle, Dr. Shannon says, it is possible to construct a machine to play a perfect game, but even with the high speeds of modern electronic calculators it is not a practicable proposition, for there would be 10^{120} variations to be calculated from the initial position. To calculate the first move alone, on this basis, would take about 10^{90} years.

But there is more to it than that. These experiments, it seems to me, bear closely on some other workings of the mind, on Mallarmé's view of poetry, and perhaps even on certain questions of philosophy.

It seems unlikely that F's inner vision was totally distinct from the mental processes used normally by good chess players. I think the difference was that he brought into consciousness a process which is normally unconscious or half-conscious.

A player is faced all the time with a dynamic situation on the board—a pattern of pieces—which he tries to alter to his own advantage whenever it is his turn to move. Translated into mental terms, the situation becomes a pattern of tensions—of force-relations—and probably he is more or less obscurely aware of this pattern somewhere in the background of his mind. This half-conscious awareness will enter as a guiding influence into his conscious judgments, indicating the general direction his game should take, and the sort of move which looks most promising. A sign of this guidance is that he will often reach a judgment, or feel drawn to a certain move, before he proceeds to analyse or calculate in any detail. And the greater is his innate capacity for seizing and using the suggestions that spring from his half-conscious perception of the relation-pattern, the more accurate will be his estimate of a position and the more likely will he be to discern the best move.

- If this is what makes a gifted chess player, it is merely an example of the general principle that ability to harvest the fruits of the unconscious without distorting them is a main secret of unusual talent in any mental sphere. F went one stage further by transferring his conscious attention, his "waking sight", into what is normally a dark (unconscious) or twilight realm.

Let us now turn to the use of words. If I say a word silently to myself, I am usually aware—as I suppose most people are—of a kind of essence, an essential quality, which the word evokes. It seems to derive largely from the word's sound (for one can have the experience in a vaguer form by saying over a meaningless word), and partly from the word's meaning and associations. It is an image of a sort, though not a pictorial image in the sense of representing anything recognisable in the outer world. It is more like the experience of a tenuous mobile shape—a sound-shape but with colours

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mingling in it. It seems to be evoked somewhere behind the middle of the forehead.

If now you connect words into sentences, you are building up a pattern of essences. Suppose you are trying to find a word to go into a sentence. If the sentence is strictly utilitarian, you will be concerned mainly to find a word which has the right meaning and a sufficiently euphonious sound. But if you are aiming at any sort of aesthetic effect, you will have to go beyond meaning and sound. You will have to call up the word's inner essence and see how this is related to the inner essences of the other words: for an aesthetic effect emerges from the pattern of essences which belongs to the sentence (or the line of poetry or the verse) as a whole.

Of course, you must have some idea of the effect you want to capture. Hence you must have in your mind an impression, however faint, of the pattern as a whole. The missing word will be represented by a gap in the pattern. And you are therefore not compelled, in searching for the right word, to proceed merely by trial and error. If you can apprehend the pattern strongly enough, and concentrate your perception on it, you may gain an intuition of the essence of the word required to fill the gap. There is a feeling of bringing two poles into tension, and out of the tension, like a spark between the poles, the right word may emerge:

*. . . . and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation, and a name.*

I think this must be very like F's way of finding the right move. With him, after his opponent's move, there was not exactly a gap in the pattern, but there was a distortion, a lack of effective arrangement, from his point of view. He then had to gain an intuition of the pattern he required to establish in order to give his position a maximum of dynamic strength; and out of this intuition he perceived the right move.

With me, in the use of words, perceptions of relation-patterns are faint and uncertain, very far removed from the clarity of F's inner vision in chess. But I think the two processes are similar. And I believe that some capacity for apprehending the essences of words, and the patterns of essence-relations in combination, is necessary not only for any skill in handling words, but for appreciating their aesthetic effects. It is a mistake to suppose that anyone who can read can *ipso facto* appreciate poetry. To a person with no gift at

all for apprehending verbal essences and their relationships, poetry as such will be strictly meaningless. The words will convey their ordinary meanings, of course, but the poetic significance, which resides in the essence-pattern, will not be seized. With many people who say they like poetry, and do sincerely like some poetry, it is not really poetry they like, but the expression of familiar or edifying sentiments in verse.

A critic, also, needs this capacity; he must be able to use F's method to some extent. If, let us say, he judges a verse to be sentimental, he may be really recording a half-conscious apprehension of a loose link, or a weak, soft link, in the verbal pattern—the same kind of weakness that F failed to notice on the occasion when he preferred the apparently brilliant to the solidly good move. The two consecutive moves he liked so much, which made the pattern so attractively fragile, were in a real sense sentimental—superficially seductive but “unsound”. They failed to take full account of the facts: they were dream moves.

It is the same with a gift for music, or for mathematics; the same to some extent with any pursuit that calls for specialised mental operations. In all these fields the first essential is the ability to perceive and handle mentally the appropriate images and their relationships. Moreover, these talents are highly specific: Yeats, for example, had a fine ear for words and was almost tone-deaf to music. And we must distinguish clearly between technical gifts and creative ones.

Consider music. A musician's first need is for a “good ear”; that is, he must be able to hear notes and chords and sequences clearly in his head. Yet someone may have an excellent musical ear, even “perfect pitch”, without much gift for handling music expressively. For interpreting music he needs some capacity for perceiving the patterns of musical relations; and for composing he must also be able to “find the right move”—that is, to apprehend an aesthetic effect and compel it to enshrine itself into a pattern. Then, when his music is played, the effect will emerge from the pattern.

This is what Mallarmé meant, I think, when he spoke of a “third aspect” which in poetry emerges from a relationship between images and is “revealed to divination”. It is something distinct from the ordinary meaning of the words, but not independent of them; otherwise one could make poetry out of nonsense-syllables. Poetry can be made out of nonsensical events, as it was sometimes

by Edward Lear; and verses which include some nonsense-words can touch the borders of poetry, as in "Jabberwocky"; but poetry, I would say, cannot be made entirely out of nonsense-words—entirely, that is, out of verbal sounds. Music, on the other hand, is made out of nonsense-sounds, for that is what the individual notes are; taken singly, they are *musically* meaningless.

Various elements, of-course, enter into the experience of poetry: the rhythm, and the associative echoes which the words call up. Rhythm, the most primitive element in poetry, has a lulling effect on the conscious mind and an activating effect on the unconscious. This is rather like the role played by the black and white squares of the chessboard (an alternating visual rhythm) in putting F into his trance. A bad but common mistake in reading poetry aloud is to sacrifice the rhythm to the pursuit of grammatical meaning by running a line on into the next. This comes partly from a slight contempt for the primitive character of rhythm; partly from a certain shyness at surrendering to the emotional influence of rhythm; and partly (this is the good side of it) from a resolve to avoid a monotonous, mindless singsong. But the result of reading poetry with overriding emphasis on its intellectual meaning is to enhance the dominance of the conscious and to keep the unconscious imprisoned.

Mallarmé uses the curious word *fusible*; I am not sure what he intends by it. In English, the same word means "capable of being fused or annealed". I would guess that Mallarmé used it to suggest a quality of an aesthetic effect which is the reverse of fixed or static. One cannot pin down an aesthetic effect; one can only experience it. And this experience is of something mobile, active; one might almost say, living. In music one experiences this quality directly, as a pure activity; in poetry it is partially caught and entangled in the meshes of ordinary meaning; in the graphic arts it is stilled, frozen into form; yet in experiencing it one is always aware of an activity behind the stillness.¹

To me, it seems hard to understand how anyone familiar with these effects of words can go far with the Logical Positivists. He

can sympathise with their efforts to free philosophy from high-sounding vagueness and their insistence on the importance of defining your terms in debate. But he will feel that poetry has a kind of meaning quite different from the various forms of meaning which they usually discuss. It is a meaning which does often bear on the external world in the sense of illuminating it; it enables the reader, while his imagination is kindled, to see much more in the external world than he usually does. But it is not a meaning to which the usual logical positivist tests can be applied. It is no use asking for the truth of what poetry "says" to be tested by experiment. Yet what it "says" is not tautological; on the contrary, an essential mark of poetry is that it reveals something new and unguessed at, not implicit in its verbal premises.

It is impossible also for anyone who responds to poetry to feel that words are nothing but conventional signs, mere abstract labels we attach to things. To-day, certainly, words often are used and experienced only in this dry, abstract way. But this is because language has undergone an evolution, consequent on that evolution of human consciousness which Rudolf Steiner spoke about so often, and with so much illuminating detail.

Language has not evolved from simple "roots" into complex forms, as the early philologists thought, but the other way round. Early language, Jespersen says, consisted chiefly of "very long words, full of difficult sounds, and sung rather than spoken". It was not at all conveniently efficient for everyday use—at least we should not find it so—for it had scarcely any general or abstract terms; it was peculiarly unsuitable for analysis or categorising. Thus it would have no general word for "tree", but a multitude of words for different species of trees, and even for different varieties and forms of the same species. But it was a language powerfully experienced; words were felt to be highly charged, and capable of magical effects. In fact, the ordinary use of language gave the kind of experience which we derive—and then usually in a weakened form—from poetry.

This early stage in the history of language corresponds with a stage in the evolution of consciousness when conscious and unconscious were less sharply differentiated than they are to-day. There was less distinction between subjective and objective; people felt themselves much more closely united than we do with their community and with the life of nature around them. Since

¹Hence, perhaps, Schopenhauer's well known remark, grandiloquent but with something to it, that whereas the other arts exhibit representations of the Will, music expresses the activity of the Will itself.

then, evolution has given us our sharp, bright, intellectual consciousness : a wonderful instrument for scientific investigation and technical invention, but perilously cut off, very often, from its unconscious springs.

Language has followed a parallel course. Words have become tools, convenient for precision use, but with a loss of evocative power. They are crystallised deposits of a once intense experience.

It is in this evolutionary perspective that philosophies, also, have to be viewed. Logical Positivism descends from Nominalism, and Nominalism triumphed over Realism not because it was a demonstrably superior philosophy, but because it reflected the dawning of the new phase of consciousness which marks our modern scientific age. Men were losing the capacity to feel the presence of active creative powers ("universals") behind words; words were on the way to becoming, in everyday use and experience, mere labels for things. Yet when the modern consciousness is kindled by the rhythms and patterns of words, the powers behind the words can still be felt. Poetry restores to language something of its youth. But this is difficult to-day; and it is not surprising that a good deal of modern poetry should give an impression of intricate and strenuous toil.

We have come a long way from the chessboard; it will seem that too much has been built on a few schoolboy experiments, attested only by myself. I have lost touch with F, and obviously I cannot prove that the experiences he so vividly described were not make-believe. But they would have been a strange invention, not easy to carry through as convincingly as he did. And he certainly experienced something which made him afraid of a chessboard for a long time. I believe he spoke the truth, and that these experiments gave some indications which would be worth following up.

Probably we all have, buried somewhere in our minds, F's capacity for perceiving, behind a visible (or audible) pattern, the tension of its relationships; and if F was able to bring these perceptions up into the field of his conscious attention, others might learn how to do the same. They might then discover, in various fields, new capacities for exact judgment and evaluation, similar to F's capacity for "playing perfect chess". It may be that the "calculating boys", who are able to perform prodigies of high-speed mental arithmetic, make use of some such capacity in a

crude form. One can imagine that this kind of mental vision, developed and controlled, would be valuable in helping mathematicians, for example, to see at a glance the essence of complicated mathematical expressions, and how these should be adjusted to yield a desired result.

When the latent powers of the human mind manifest in "para-normal" forms, in telepathy and the like, we are apt to regard them as mysterious and slightly uncanny. I would say, rather, that to-day they are normally unconscious, but that among earlier races they were probably familiar, and can be revived. The modern scientific intellect does indeed need this fertilising extension of its powers if we are to bridge the gulf which at present separates the inner world of human values and aspirations from the "heartless, witless nature" which is all that the scientific intellect can know. The latent powers of the mind require to be brought under a conscious discipline which their earlier manifestations lacked; and we should recognise this possibility (as Goethe did) before we speak of the "boundaries of knowledge," or of the inherently foreign character of nature's ways. We have to go down into the unconscious to rescue the Eurydice of imaginative perception, and bring her gifts into the light.

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