

AN APPROACH TO CONTEMPORARY QUESTIONS  
IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

# *The Golden Blade*

THE OCCULT BASIS OF MUSIC

*Rudolf Steiner*

*A Lecture, hitherto untranslated,  
given at Cologne on December 3, 1906.*

A MUSICAL PILGRIMAGE

*Ferdinand Rauter*

EVOLUTION: THE HIDDEN THREAD

*John Waterman*

THE RAVENNA MOSAICS

*A. W. Mann*

BARBARA HEPWORTH'S SCULPTURE

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ART AND SCIENCE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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DRAMATIC POETRY AND A COSMIC SETTING

*Roy Walker*

*With a Note by Charles Waterman*

THE WEATHER IN 1066

*Isabel Wyatt*

AN IRISH YEW

*E. L. G. W.*

CHRISTMAS BY THE SEA

*Joy Mansfield*

Book Reviews by *Alfred Heidenreich, Adam Bittleston*

Poems by *Sylvia Eckersley and Alida Carey Gulick*  
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Edited by *Arnold Freeman and Charles Waterman*

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# The Golden Blade

## 1956

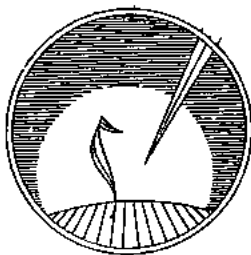
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Anthroposophy, a way of thought rather than a body of dogma, springs from the work and teaching of Rudolf Steiner (1861—1925). He spoke of it as “a path of knowledge, to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe”.

The aim of this Annual is to publish writings which bring the outlook of Anthroposophy to bear on questions and activities of the present time.

The title derives from a reference by Rudolf Steiner to an old Persian legend. “Djemdid was a king who led his people from the north towards Iran, and who received from the God, whom he called Ahura Mazdao, a golden dagger, by means of which he was to fulfil his mission on earth . . . . . It represents a force given to man whereby he can act upon and transform external nature”.

## THE OCCULT BASIS OF MUSIC

**Rudolf Steiner**

*A Lecture, hitherto untranslated, given at Cologne on December 3, 1906.\**

**F**OR those who think of music from the æsthetic point of view, there is something puzzling about it; for simple human feeling it is a direct experience which penetrates the soul; and for those who want to understand how it produces its effects, it is a rather difficult problem.

Compared with other arts—sculpture, painting, poetry—music has a special character. All the other arts have some kind of model in the external world. The sculptor works from a model, and if he creates a statue of Zeus or Apollo, it takes an idealised human form. It is the same with painting—and to-day the tendency is to give an exact impression of what the senses perceive. Poetry, similarly, tries to deal with some aspect of the real world. But if one tried to apply this theory to music, one would get nowhere—for how could one copy, for example, the song of birds!

What is the origin of musically-shaped sounds? How are they related to anything in the objective world?

It is precisely in connection with this art of music that Schopenhauer has advanced some interesting views; in a certain respect they are indeed clear and striking. He assigns to music a quite special place among the arts, and to art itself a quite special value in human life. His philosophy has a fundamental ground-note which may be expressed as follows:

Life is a sorry business, and through thinking I try to make it bearable. Pervading everything in the world is a blind, unconscious Will. It shapes the stone and then the plant—but always, in all its manifestations, with a restless yearning for something higher. The savage feels this less than does the genius, who experiences the painful cravings of the Will in the highest, most intense, degree.

Besides the activity of the Will—Schopenhauer continues—man has the faculty of forming mental images. These are like a *fata morgana*, like pictures in the mist, like the spray thrown up by the waves of the Will. The Will surges up to shape these illusory pictures. When in this way man perceives the working of the Will, he is less than ever satisfied; but a release from the blind driving-force of the Will comes to us through art. Art is something through which man can escape from the restless craving of the Will. How does this happen?

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When man creates a work of art, it springs from his image-forming faculty; but genuine art, Schopenhauer insists, is not merely a copy of external reality. A statue of Zeus, for example, is not produced by copying; the sculptor draws for his model on the characteristics of many men, and so he creates the archetypal image, which in nature is distributed among numerous separate individuals. So the artist surpasses nature. He extracts her archetypal essence, and this is what the true artist renders. By penetrating into the creative depths of nature, he creates something real and achieves a certain release for himself.

So it is with all the arts *except* music. All the other arts have to work through images and produce only pictures of the Will. But musical sound is a direct expression of the Will itself. The composer listens to the pulse-beat of the Will, and renders it in the sequence of musical sounds. Music is thus intimately related to the working of the Will in nature, to "things in themselves"; it penetrates into the elemental archetypal being of the cosmos and reflects the feeling of it; that is why music is so deeply satisfying.

Schopenhauer was no occultist, but in these matters he had an instinctive apprehension of the truth.

\* \* \*

Why does music speak so intimately to the heart, and so widely, and why is its influence so powerful, even in early childhood? For answers to these questions we must turn to the realm where the true models for music are to be found.

When a composer is at work, he has nothing to copy from; he has to draw his music from out of his own soul. Whence he derives it we shall find out if we turn our attention to the worlds which are not perceptible to the ordinary senses.

Human beings are so made that it is possible for them to release in themselves faculties which are normally asleep; in the same way that someone born blind may be given sight by an operation, so can a man's inner eyes be opened, enabling him to gain knowledge of higher worlds. When a man develops these slumbering faculties, through concentration, meditation and so on, he advances step by step. First of all he experiences a special configuration of his dream life. His dreams take on a much more orderly character; on waking, he feels as though he were rising from out of the waves of an ocean in which he had been submerged, a world of flowing light and colour. He knows that he has experienced something; that he has seen an ocean of which he had no previous knowledge. Increasingly his dream-experiences gain in clarity. He remembers that in this world of light and colour there were things and beings which differed from anything physical in being permeable, so that one can pass right through them without meeting any resistance. He comes to know beings whose element, whose bodies, the colours are.

Gradually he extends his consciousness over this world, and on waking he remembers that he has been active within it.

The next step occurs when he—as it were—carries this world back with him into waking life. Then he sees the astral bodies of other men and of much else, and he experiences a world which is much more real than the physical one—a world which in relation to the physical world appears as a densification, a crystallisation, from out of the astral world.

Now it is also possible to transform into a conscious condition the unconscious state of dreamless sleep. The disciple who attains to this stage learns to extend his consciousness over those parts of the night which are not filled with dreams, but are normally spent in complete unconsciousness. He then finds himself conscious in a world of which previously he knew nothing, a world which is not intrinsically one of light and colour; it first announces itself as a world of musical sound. The disciple acquires the capacity to hear spiritually; he hears sequences and combinations of sounds which are not audible to the physical ear.

This world is called the devachanic world (*Deva*=spirit, *chan*=home). One must not think that when a man enters this world and hears its tones resounding, he loses the world of light and colours. The world of tones is shot through with light and colours, but they belong to the astral world. The essential element of the devachanic world is the endlessly flowing and changing ocean of musical tones. When continuous consciousness extends to this world, its tones can be brought over, and it is then possible to hear also the ground-tones of the physical world. For every physical thing has its ground-note in the devachanic world, and in every countenance devachanic ground-notes are figured forth. It was on this account that Paracelsus said: "The kingdoms of nature are the letters of the alphabet, and Man is the word formed from them."

Whenever anyone falls asleep, his astral body goes out from his physical body; his soul then lives in the devachanic world. Its harmonies make an impression on his soul; they vibrate through it in waves of living sound, so that every morning he wakes from the music of the spheres, and out of this realm of harmony he passes into the everyday world. Just as the human soul has a sojourn in Devachan between incarnations, so we can say that during the night the soul rejoices in flowing tones of music: they are the very element out of which it is itself woven and they are its true home.

The composer translates into physical sounds the rhythms and harmonies which at night imprint themselves on his astral body. Unconsciously he takes his model from the spiritual world. He has in himself the harmonies which he translates into physical terms. That is the secret connection between the music which resounds in the physical world and the hearing of spiritual music during the

night. But the relation of physical music to this spiritual music is like that of a shadow to the object which casts it. So the music of instruments and voices in the physical world is like a shadow, a true shadow, of the far higher music of Devachan. The primal image, the archetype, of music is in Devachan; and having understood this, we can now examine the effect of music on human beings.

\* \* \*

Man has his physical body, and an etheric model for it, the ether-body. Connected with his ether-body is the sentient body, which is a step towards the astral. Inwardly bound up with him, as though membered into him, is the Sentient Soul. Just as a sword and its scabbard form a single whole, so do the Sentient Soul and the sentient body. Man has also the Intellectual Soul, and as a still higher member the Spiritual Soul, which is linked with the Spirit-self, or Manas. In completely dreamless sleep the higher members, and so also the Sentient Soul, are in the devachanic world. This is not like living in the physical realm, where everything we see and hear is outside ourselves. The beings of Devachan interpenetrate us, and we are within everything that exists there. In occult schools, accordingly, this devachanic-astral realm is called the world of interpenetrability. Man is played through by its music.

When he returns from this devachanic world, his Sentient Soul, his Intellectual Soul and his Spiritual Soul are permeated with its rhythms; he carries them down into his denser bodies. He is thus able to work from out of his Intellectual Soul and his Sentient Soul on to his ether-body, and to carry the rhythms into it. As a seal stamps itself on the wax, so the astral body imprints the devachanic rhythms on the ether-body, until the ether-body vibrates in harmony with them. Ether-body and astral body bear witness in their own being to the spiritual tones and rhythms. The ether-body is lower than the astral body, but in activity it is superior.

From out of his Ego man works on his bodies in so far as he transmutes the astral body into Manas, the ether-body into Buddhi, the physical body into Atma. Since the astral body is the most tenuous, the transmutation of it calls for the least strength. Man can work on his astral body with forces drawn from the astral world. But to work on his etheric body he has to call on forces from the devachanic world, and for working on his physical body he needs forces from the higher devachanic world. During the night he draws from the world of flowing tones the strength to carry them over into his sentient body and his etheric body. Although on waking in the morning he is not conscious of having absorbed this music of the night, yet on listening to music he has an inkling that these impressions of the spiritual world are within him.

When a man listens to music, the seer can observe how the

rhythms and colours flow into and lay hold of the firmer substance of the ether-body, causing it to vibrate in tune with them, and from the harmonious response of the ether-body comes the pleasure that is felt. The more strongly the astral body resounds, the more strongly do its tones echo in the ether-body, overcoming the ether-body's own natural rhythms, and this gives feelings of pleasure both to a listener and to a composer. In certain cases the harmonies of the astral body penetrate to some extent into the sentient body, and a conflict then arises between the sentient body and the ether-body. If the tones set up in the sentient body are so strong that they master the tones of the ether-body, the result is cheerful music in a major key. A minor key indicates that the ether-body has prevailed over the sentient body; and the painful feeling that ensues gives rise to the most serious melodies.

So, when someone lives in the experience of music, he is living in the image of his spiritual home. It naturally elevates the soul to feel this intimate relationship to its primal ground, and that is why the simplest souls are so receptive to music. A man then feels himself truly at home, and whenever he is lifted up through music he says to himself: "Yes, you come from other worlds, and in music you can experience your native place." It was an intuitive knowledge of this that led Schopenhauer to assign to music a central place among the arts, and to say that the composer discerns with his spiritual ear the pulse-beat of the Will.

In music, man feels the echo of the inmost life of things, a life related to his own. Because feelings are the most inward part of the soul, and because they are related to the spiritual world and are indwelt by musical sound—that is why man, when he listens to music, lives in the pleasure of feeling himself in harmony with its tones, and in touch with the true home of his spirit.

*Translated by Charles Waterman.*

# A MUSICAL PILGRIMAGE

Ferdinand Rauter

**M**Y father was a teacher of blind children. We lived above the school rooms and we could hear when the children sang or played an instrument. I remember some of our furniture and the view to the mountains through the window, and how sometimes the room seemed to change when the voices of the children came up and seemed to fill it with a kind of mist, which gave the impression of something moving in the room. I loved this changed picture and felt great happiness.

A year or two later, it may have been, I remember father coming up in the late afternoon and playing the piano in the other room. I went in to see him and to ask if I could sit with him. He was very kind and allowed it. Then he asked me, "Which sonata shall I play, the 6th or the 3rd?" Without understanding what it meant, I said, "The 6th, please." I watched his face as he looked into a big book on the stand, and I watched his fingers which moved in a queer way over the keyboard. Out of the piano came sounds which seemed to fill the dark room. I leant back in the chair and noticed the table, the pictures, the old clock. Somehow the moving music seemed to dissolve everything, and there was a wide clear space in which light figures seemed to move and converse with each other. I noticed landscapes of very strange appearance. I felt happy as in a beautiful dream, but I was aware that I was with my father in the room.

Another evening father again allowed me to sit with him and listen. I asked him if he would play No. 6 again. This time, however, he said he would play No. 3. I found the way to my dream-land much more quickly than the first time. The pictures which were revealed to me were somehow different, but I knew that the new landscape was not very far away from the country which No. 6 had shown me. Again I felt full of excitement and happiness.

I was allowed to listen, now, whenever father played, and always he took the well-known big book from the top of the shelf. I was allowed to choose among more than Nos. 3 and 6, and with each sonata new adventures were in front of my inner eye.

In the daytime I liked best to go into the garden, and to play either with the blind children or alone with pebbles or the leaves of the many shrubs which bordered the paths. Often during those sunny hours I began to think of the evenings with father, and to recall the landscapes of my music dreams. I knew that the trees and flowers in these dreams were made out of the sounds which father got from the piano, and looking at the bright flowering shrubs in the garden I wondered if one could hear the music out

of which these real plants were made. I often put my ear near the leaves, but I could hear only the humming of bees and flies.

Once, it was after lunch, I found myself suddenly thinking about the big book from which father always played. I realized that all these beautiful dreams must somehow be contained in that book. Although I was not allowed to play in the music room, I yielded to the urge and stole up there. In a dark corner stood piano and bookshelf. The book which father always used was right on top of the others and I could see the golden letters on the cover. For a long time I could not take my eyes from that book. It was different from other books and it seemed to move in itself and to gleam with a strange light.

At last I took the book and put it on the table. With awe and almost fear I opened the cover and started turning the pages. Everywhere I found the same lines and dots which I had seen when I glanced at the book while father played, and nothing secret or magic seemed to be anywhere. And yet I knew that these lines and dots were the music which father was able to transform into sound. These dots were certainly the people and plants, the animals and rocks of the music-land, only enchanted and turned into dots by a great magician. And when father played, he probably met a good fairy who gave him power to release the enchanted pictures.

It was a tremendous discovery, and from that moment the book became still more important and mysterious for me. And for the first time, too, I realized that the piano was a very special piece of furniture. I struck a key, and from the strings a sound was released which disappeared behind the clock, probably into my land of music. I plucked a string with my finger and again a sound came out. Like the book, the piano was added to the great mysteries. I kept them locked up in my heart and never spoke about them.

I began to wonder about the golden letters on the cover of my book of mystery. When father came up I asked him about it. He said it was the name of the man who had composed these sonatas. I did not know what all this meant. He said the name was Beethoven. This did not help me very much. Probably Beethoven was the magician who had enchanted the land of music into dots and lines. Or was he the man through whom father could free the enchanted figures?

One evening a friend of my parents visited us and father asked him to play. When I heard this I became very excited and wondered if he would play out of the big book. To my great astonishment he said something like "Mozart," whereupon father started digging for another book. Our visitor put it on the stand, and, just as father did, looked at the dots and his fingers started to move. Soon I found myself again behind the clock, but this time a quite different landscape greeted me. There seemed to me many children

playing, and green meadows, and a wide blue sky spread over the whole picture.

The man stopped and said he would play some Schubert. He did not want any music, as he could play it by heart. He closed his eyes and started. I wondered where he saw the dots, as there were none in front of him. His face changed, and I was sure that he himself had gone to the land which began to open to me and was telling us about it. This was a different land again. There were brooks, woods, flowers, and many happy and sad people, and all different from those I had encountered before. I felt that this country was much nearer to where I sat than the others, and I became aware of myself sitting in the corner and being happy and sad at the same time.

That evening gave me a lot to think about in the daytime, when I played amongst the shrubs of our garden, but I did not know how or, of whom I could ask the many questions which seemed to pour out of my heart. I had also a warning feeling that I should not speak about it, lest somebody might laugh at me.

All these great experiences of music led up to an evening which father announced to be a very special one. He told us that a very great musician would come to play to us. His name was Emmanuel and he played only Bach. *Bach* . . . it sounded strange. I thought of the brook which passed our school not far away, where I often sat and watched the water running down over the roots and stones, glittering like silver and always changing colour. O, it would be wonderful to hear the brook as music. (The German word *Bach* means "brook").

The evening came, and with it our visitor. He was dressed in a long kind of black frock-coat and seemed very tall. His face was kind and I loved him immediately.

Although his performance started late, I was allowed to sit in my corner for the first part of the evening. At last the plates were cleared away and Emmanuel sat down next to me. He did not start playing immediately but closed his eyes for a while, and then he began to speak about the sun and God and the Holy Bible, and in the end he said, "There shall be light." Only then did he start playing.

I watched the clock and waited until it disappeared. I was expecting a picture of a lovely brook as I knew it. But what really happened was quite different. The clock certainly dissolved soon, but instead of a landscape there was only an intensely blue sky and a glittering ladder which led up into it and disappeared.

Some very airy and light beautiful being took my hand and together we started to ascend the ladder. Very soon I looked back and saw the earth far below me. And we came to a brighter light where the sun seemed to be very near, and where, in spite of the

brightness, the stars became visible. Suddenly my angel stepped away from the ladder and I with him. We did not fall down but began to float and circle with the stars in indescribable joy and glee.

Suddenly it got dark and I heard my mother's voice: "I knew it would be too much for him." She took me in her arms and carried me to bed, where I soon went on dreaming.

\* \* \*

Time went on and I started to learn to play myself. This was very different from listening only. It was hard, and soon I did not like it at all. When I struggled with my fingers and the keyboard, all music seemed to disappear, and I felt like somebody who tears a beautiful picture book to pieces. I slowly began to recognize certain harmonies and even to guess composers' names when I heard their works. I was allowed to go to some concerts, and gradually I achieved more facility in playing myself.

In growing up, the old way of seeing music behind the clock changed into something else. It was as if the old pictures had slowly moved inside me, and remained there, even when I did not play or hear music in reality. I remember only one instance when it was different. My cousin, who was an organist, took me to a High Mass. At the end he played Bach's C Minor Passacaglia. First the chant of the priest, the intoxicating fragrance of the incense, the ritual on the altar and then the Passacaglia did something to me that wiped out the picture of the church in front of my eyes. The walls and ceiling seemed to open up and the whole universe seemed to pour in. From everywhere the words "holy", "God" and "Heaven" seemed to sound.

With puberty, a special love for the Romantic composers arose in me. An undefined yearning for something in a far distance never came to rest. I could not express in words what I felt, and nobody seemed to understand it when I tried to explain this longing. Only Schubert seemed to have known it as I did, and in his songs and pianoforte works the same longing was expressed. When I heard Schubert or played him myself, it was as if a mutual understanding was achieved, and the sharing of experience comforted my pain. But this consolation was only temporary, and, like a dark approaching shadow, I felt the onset of an unknown fearful event. I felt it most after a day's work at school, when so many questions about the world of our senses were answered and so much knowledge about everything seemed to fill my brain. When, after such a day, I sat at the piano and started to play, I felt as if I were leaving a safe place and coming into a realm where the support of myself began to shake. But this world of music was very real, too, and I felt it nearer to my heart than the world of sunshine in which

everything, even my thoughts, seemed so clear.

This experience found its outer expression in the discrepancy between our science teacher and the teacher of divinity. I often had long talks with one or other of them, but I soon realised that their two worlds had no connecting door, and that I stood between these worlds and must choose between them. My music and its world had no place in the scientific thought-picture of the outer world, which was clear and convincing in itself, and the world of music was my real evening home, full of peace and beauty. On the other hand, the thoughts about the outer world had the clearness which alone was satisfying in the search for truth.

Once I opened my heart to a dear friend of mine, who was much older than I was, and asked him if he understood my problem and if he could help me. He advised me to read Kant and Schopenhauer. I tried to understand them, but in spite of the greatness of their thoughts, they could not explain myself. Then for the first time I came to read "Faust". Here at last I found myself pictured in the great monologue. The prevention of suicide through the Easter bells was moving, but I felt it again an escape from facing truth. I intended to act more logically and truthfully.

With my decision I felt a great peace and something like hope. I once more went through the garden, and as from very far I saw myself playing with the leaves, and I went up to the music room where the piano and the music-shelf stood in the dark corner. On top of the shelf in golden letters I saw the Beethoven sonatas, and again, like a flash, the first days of childhood appeared. I took the volume and looked at the first sonatas, which I was able to play myself now, and a sudden thought struck me. Beethoven must surely have known what I had to suffer and he must have found a solution. This was surely to be found in his very last sonata. Driven by an irresistible impulse, I looked up the last sonata. I had never heard it and never thought to try it. Now, I just had to start on it and I did. In spite of the great technical difficulties the sonata became alive, and I lost myself in it.

Then something happened which later reminded me of my first experience of Beethoven. Only this time no landscape appeared in front of my inner eye, but a human-like figure stood behind me. I could see it as if there were eyes in the back of my head. The figure's hands seemed to touch my shoulders, and out of the music words seemed to form which he, who stood behind me, spoke. It was as if these words were absolute meaning and truth. They said: "You see the truth. There is truth, and you, too, can find it." The strangest and most staggering quality of these words was that from an inner world they sounded right through my consciousness into my clear reasoning, and I realised that a bridge existed between the outer and inner worlds.

These "Easter bells" I could accept, and I felt almost drunk afterwards. A new life started. I knew now that behind all created things a spirit worked whose language could be understood if one only could learn it. I felt certain that a teacher of this language existed somewhere, but I knew also that he could not be somebody known to the great world, as this secret language was much too intimate and holy to reveal itself in a world of error and terror. I knew that I had to wait, and waiting meant continuing to observe the world and think about it, but only when the light and warmth of Beethoven's last sonata were awake in my soul.

It happened that shortly after this resurrection I saw Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, for the first time. Florestan, who is an innocent political prisoner kept by the evil Pizarro in an underground cell, is saved through the true and enduring love of his wife, Fidelio. When Fidelio succeeds for the first time in entering this cell and is reunited with her husband, at the same moment the good governor of the country, who is a friend of Florestan, comes to inspect the prison. He discovers Florestan, who has already been released from his cell, and freedom and life are the result.

It was quite obvious that Florestan was the lonely Ego, imprisoned in the human body and unable to find its freedom alone. Through the sacrificing love of Fidelio, who seemed to be the "higher self" of Florestan, the reunion takes place and the door to freedom is open.

In Beethoven's symphonic testament, his 9th (choral) symphony, I soon afterwards heard the whole universe breaking out in the apotheosis of freedom.

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After these great events a light of hope began to shine within me, and philosophical discussions became more peaceful and hopeful. I felt as in a theatre, where the sudden lifting of the curtain is about to reveal a new world. More and more I became aware of my own thinking as an activity; I knew that if I succeeded in watching this activity I would begin to know what I was searching for. I realised that the pictures which appear in our minds when we think are quite different in quality from the act of thinking itself. But whenever I tried to catch this inner activity, in which alone I could find myself, it vanished leaving only a reflection which was already dead.

I knew, however, that there was a way to find oneself in one's own thinking, because in experiencing a great musical work, something like it actually happened. Though "only" musical, these thoughts were real, and when I succeeded in living with such a work of art, all the usual feeling for time and space gave way to a "seeing" of the creative process. In this merging of the thoughts

of the music with my own thoughts, a unique living understanding was achieved which made me understand the work as well as myself, because I was conscious of myself during the activity. It was as if my thinking became the sense-organ for recognising thinking. The thoughts no longer escaped, but my innermost conscious self moved within the stream of these united thoughts and became what one may call musical excitement.

Realising the very special position of music, I tried to find out why its effect on me was different from that of other sense-experiences, which did not give me entry to the sphere of creative reality. I thought about the "body" of music, which, as everybody knows, consists of melody, harmony and time. Then I tried to find out the qualitative difference between these components.

I started with the "melody", or line. To "understand" a line means, first of all, to remember it. After the notes have vanished from the ear, an inner activity retains something of them as a sounding form, existing outside the time in which the tune was played. To achieve this, an inner effort had to be made which I felt in my head. A kind of thinking and remembering was the condition of understanding the line.

Harmony affected me as it affects anybody else who is able to feel music. Although the fact is generally known, it remained very puzzling that the same tune created quite different moods in my soul when it was harmonised in different ways. There is the great division into major and minor triads. Each of them rests in itself, and when played does not create any desire to move away from it. Therefore they are always used to end a piece. (Except in many contemporary works, where harmony is no longer accepted in the old sense). All the "discords", however, create the wish to move on to a common chord, as the triads are called. They are like inner tensions of the feeling-soul which lead to some action in life and influence our thoughts and wishes. But whereas in the dream-like realm of feeling where consciousness is not fully awake, inner tensions do not appear with the clarity of thoughts, in the harmonic changes of music we are conscious to a high degree.

In this way one can understand two facts which otherwise remain dark: first, the reason why in the "Romantic" period of the last century the composers often had to suffer so much before they could write down their works. We can easily imagine that the effort to lift a subconscious "unit of feeling" up to full aural consciousness must be connected with a kind of pain which many composers compared with birth-pains. Secondly, we can understand the healing and consoling effect which music has on us. Very often some of our subconscious tensions reveal themselves in certain harmonic progressions, and we recognise, so to speak, our own inner soul-problems, which we then suddenly understand.

We all know that different emotions influence our breathing and even our heart-beats. As harmony works directly on these emotions, we can rightly say that it has corresponding bodily effects. Whereas we find our head active in understanding tunes, so the "rhythmic" system of our breathing and blood-circulation enters into consciousness through its response to the working of chords.

The third element in music is time, which appears as rhythm and as beat. Time orders the melodic line of music into phrases, and this makes it understandable, like words and sentences in language. Time, however, also gives to music a pulse which beats independently of the phrasing time. History shows that "beat" does not appear in very early music, and becomes stronger with the approach of our own epoch, so that nowadays it sometimes overshadows line and harmony. The more time becomes beat, the more do we feel the urge to move according to it. We can see in this fact the trend of development, penetrating more deeply into the physical, which leads from the ceremonial temple dances of ancient Greece to our present-day waltzes and fox-trots. We know that many people can scarcely sit still when one of these modern dances is played. The rhythm "goes into their limbs", bringing about an activity of the *will*.

Looked at from this point of view, the whole evolution of music became for me a picture of how the "Muse", the inspiring spirit of music, had first influenced man from spiritual heights, and had gradually descended to earth until it dwelt within man himself. My inner conviction was quite contrary to the usual view—that music had developed from the crude sounds of primitive people. For a full understanding of the reality, it was obviously necessary to take into account the spiritual as well as the material history of the subject.

Neither priests, philosophers nor scientists whom I consulted could answer my questions. Most of them did not even understand what I was asking. Yet I felt certain that there must be somebody alive who could give the answers. I knew that "spirit" was not a mere word, out of place in any materialistic discussion, but that the inner spiritual differentiation which I experienced in music was a reality and existed everywhere, not only in music. Yes, somebody must know about these hidden sides of nature and human creation. He would have to be able to go beyond the concepts of cell and electron which kept thought imprisoned, and to lead us into the realm where understanding becomes spiritual vision.

One day I met a quiet young man who talked to me about these problems in a way I had never before experienced. He spoke with authority and without the slightest vanity. His thoughts were clear and full of real life. For some time I had given up asking my old questions, but to him I opened my heart.

Through him I heard of Rudolf Steiner and the *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. The title alone (*Die Philosophie der Freiheit*) fascinated me, and I began to read. The curtain of the theatre rose and a new understanding began. This is not the moment to describe the path I could now follow, and I will confine myself to some thoughts about music which emerged from it. These thoughts became possible through the new idea of the spiritual history of man which at last took form in convincing pictures in my mind.

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One of the riddles of music, to which so far I had never found an answer, was the way in which it worked not only on the human mind but right into the body. There were physical as well as spiritual forces in music, and both seemed to work on us. The sound of a pure note is able to organise chaotic particles of sand or other fine powdery matter into beautiful patterns, as Chladni has shown in his well-known experiments. Moreover, these patterns change into the most beautiful forms of flowers and plants if the sound-medium is altered in a certain way. Under still other experimental conditions, the sound forms pictures which remind one of ribs and skeletons.

One of Rudolf Steiner's lectures lifted these manifestations of musical force into the human realm. He described how during the development of the human embryo, certain musical forces stream down from the head region and actually form the human skeleton. When all this organic building is fulfilled, then these forces are reborn within the human mind as creative artistic forces. One could say that the symphony of the skeleton may be transformed into a musical work, perhaps an actual symphony. Through his creative activity the composer comes to know the real being of these forces, and sometimes even their origin. Bach seems to have known that they come from heaven.

As this body-creating music forms the skeleton of the human being so great music can work from outside into our mind and body. Through it, divine and healing forces can enter into us, and we experience this when we feel better after a good concert, or when we apply music to the curative treatment of bodily or mentally sick people. This healing use of music becomes a conscious activity only through a true knowledge of the inner organisation of man, as Rudolf Steiner taught it.

A second thought at which I will hint concerns the period of counterpoint which developed from the 15th century onwards, especially in Holland.

Rudolf Steiner tells us that with the end of the Middle Ages man begins to form a new concept of the world through his growing awareness of his own Ego. Rudolf Steiner calls this new epoch

the age of the "Consciousness Soul". We arrived there after a long journey, leading from a paradisaic state of God-like universal consciousness to self-conscious man, whose aim it is to become God-like again, but through the inner freedom of his Ego. This freedom could be achieved only if man's separation from the Divine forces became absolute. Only then a free decision to strive towards a new paradise could be taken.

The beginning of the development of the Consciousness Soul marks this division from God. Man begins to experience himself within his thoughts, which are no longer connected with the Divine thoughts of the Creator. The thoughts lose their life the more they unite with the sense-world only. The organs which previously could recognize the Spirit directly become numb and blind.

In that time of danger God sends his angel down, and he rescues some of the dying thought-life and retains it in the realm of sound. Here the musician finds it and bears witness of it through his music. Though living with his ordinary thoughts in the darkness of his fellow-men, he can lift up his inner ear to the sphere where living thought still exists. Then he brings it down as musical thought, which manifests itself in the complicated tapestry of counterpoint. When these musical works resound to the congregation in church, the word from the altar is again lifted up to a sphere where the light appears as faith within the human heart. This rescuing help of music lasts until the young plant of the new soul is strong enough to survive. Thus, through Rudolf Steiner, music can again be understood in a new way.

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To conclude these examples of new aspects of music, I shall try to describe some thoughts which spring from the idea of incarnation.

We are told by Rudolf Steiner that long, long ago the human Ego still hovered above the other bodies of man, and worked on them from outside. Then a slow process of incarnation began. The many different manifestations of music, as they appear in history, can be understood as as a slow incarnation of the spirit of music in the human body.

When man was still near paradise, music must have surrounded him like a last memory of his divine origin. In the time of the early Greeks, music could still be heard as the divine circling of the spheres. Still later, music could be understood through initiation, and brought down to Apollo and Orpheus. Even in a relatively recent time music was still with the Hierarchies, if we believe Bach's words about his talking with God. With and in Bach, however, the spirit of music is born on earth. In Bach, the old and the new music meet. It is the end and perfection of counterpoint in the

form of the fugue, and it is the beginning of the "earthly" forms of music, for Bach's Inventions and other, instrumental works, out of which the sonata and symphony grew, are expressions of a new kind of world-outlook.

In the fugue, the relationship between theme and counterpoint is like the relationship between sun and planets; one is higher than the other. In the new music, the birth of music as a human being becomes evident in the idea of thesis and antithesis, which appear in the new forms as question and answer, or as first and second subject. Both these contrasting elements are on the same level; both human, though bearing an inner light of divine origin.

In Mozart and Haydn we can feel the innocence and youth of the young child of music, this happy lack of inner problems. Mozart's ability to compose is like the inventiveness of a child at play, and this purity and confidence still makes us happy today when we listen to his music. Only towards his end we discover in his music approaching shadows; especially in the late C minor works I can feel something like fear of death. Not fear of personal death, but the death of the old divine qualities of music which he still could feel.

And the old divinity died actually in Beethoven. The incarnation went right into the Ego and fused with the consciousness of music. Beethoven knew that his mission was to destroy within himself the old kind of inspiration, which seemed to come from outside himself, in order to resurrect it in the temple of his Self. In his last works, a new direction of music begins. Whereas before him, and even in his own earlier works, music was as though received from an outside source, Beethoven becomes a place of sacrifice from which the smoke as well as the light is offered back to the divine forces whence the blessing of the Muse had come.

The "romantic period" which follows Beethoven can be understood as an act of purification through love. The inner freedom of the composer has now become the root of his work. He can either look into his soul and compose what he finds there, or he can sublimate his feelings through moral imagination. At the beginning of this period stands Schubert. Virtually every unsophisticated musical person loves Schubert because of his songs and the song-like tunes in his instrumental music. Schubert said that many of these tunes, which often seem to come from a happy soul, were born from sorrow and pain. One could not understand these words if one did not feel how pure love sounds constantly from his works. Loving is giving. Those who receive love are happy; those who give it may suffer a great deal. Such a constant giving of love is Schubert's life and musical work. One can read his attitude towards life in his music and form it into the thought: "Even if nobody loves me, I still love man and the world." In Schubert, therefore, "ordinary"

love is transformed into selfless, creative love, which still reaches us when we listen to his music.

It would take me too far to write about all the other great composers of that period. I will just mention two more: Mahler and Brückner. Both reached a divination of the "ideal" love, which we may call Christian love. Whereas in Mahler the idea of this love remains in his belief and is not expressed in his music, in Brückner the real sun of love shines and makes us wonder what music will sound like, when at last in the future this greatest love will be recognised as the meaning of the whole earth.

# EVOLUTION: THE HIDDEN THREAD

John Waterman

ANYONE who studies Rudolf Steiner's teachings will soon realise that the descriptions he gives of the way man has evolved are not easy to reconcile with the descriptions given by modern science. The purpose of this article is to try and indicate how some of the difficulties may be resolved.

When Darwin was born, the *idea* of evolution was already percolating, so to speak, into men's minds. Darwin's great achievement was to put forward a theory to explain evolution, and to collect a vast number of facts to back it up. He suggested that evolution could be brought about by "natural selection." That is, any variations from the "normal" displayed by an animal would confer on it either an advantage or a disadvantage in the "struggle for existence." Animals with advantageous variations would be more likely to survive and to pass on their advantages to their offspring. They would, in other words, be "selected", and an accumulation of such advantageous characters, in the course of generations, would, Darwin supposed, eventually produce new species.

In Darwin's day, very little was known about the "fossil record", and Darwin thought that the present-day higher animals must have descended from animals very like the present-day lower ones. As palaeontology developed, however, it became clear that in the past many kinds of animals, now extinct, had flourished. Also, the fossil record seemed to confirm Darwin's suggestion, which caused such a furor at the time, that man is descended from the higher animals—for if the fossil record is traced back a point is reached where human remains no longer appear, while further back still there are no mammal, no reptile, no amphibian, and finally no fish remains.

## Genetics

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the work of Mendel was rediscovered, and the science of genetics began to develop. It became clear that variations could arise from genetic mutations—changes in the "genes" which are regarded as the bearers of inherited characteristics—and that these variations could be handed on intact to the descendants. For some years genetical theory proved not altogether easy to reconcile with the idea of gradual evolutionary change caused by natural selection. In 1930, however, R. A. Fisher published *The Genetical Theory of Natural Selection*. In its way, this book was almost as much of a milestone as Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Fisher showed how apparently insignificant mutations could confer a selective advantage if the "selection

pressure", even though very slight indeed, continued over long stretches of geological time. (Selection pressure is the term used to describe the "pressure" of the environment on the animal which produces natural selection). Such apparently insignificant selective advantages, he showed, were sufficient to account for the formation of new species, for the development of new sub-groups, and even for the most improbable adaptations such as are described in every "wonders of nature" book.

Fisher's work, which in recent years has been much supported and extended in great detail by such scientists as H. J. Mueller, J. B. S. Haldane, and Sewall Wright, involves a lot of difficult statistical mathematics. Indeed, the whole of modern genetical theory is so complex that it cannot be discussed here. Three points will be enough:

First, Fisher describes natural selection as "a mechanism for generating an exceedingly high degree of improbability." His theory thus effectively undermines the empirical argument that the odds against evolution having occurred "by chance" are almost inconceivably great.

Second, present-day ideas about the scale of geological time give ample scope for the slow speed of evolution demanded by Fisher's theory.

Finally, it is worth remembering that while the theory is extremely consistent and convincing—it has certainly convinced over 99% of the biologists who have studied it—it is, and must remain, a theory. Like a newly invented kind of mathematics, it *could* correspond to a reality, but it need not if there seems to be sufficient reason to look for an alternative.

The modern theory of evolution is thus a formidable and coherent structure, which is being continually backed up by work in many branches of science. Nevertheless, some of the adaptations and patterns of behaviour found in the animal kingdom are so extraordinary that non-scientists often feel that to explain their evolution merely through the action of natural selection on chance variations is far-fetched—and that there must therefore be something wrong with the theory. However, it is important to understand the scientist's attitude to this kind of objection. Hardly any scientists now doubt that modern evolutionary theory is broadly correct, and it would not normally occur to them to regard, for instance, the social organisation of the ants or the extraordinary nest-building behaviour of many birds as a challenge to the theory. Rather, such phenomena are regarded as a challenge to the ingenuity of the biologist in thinking of a way in which such phenomena could have evolved gradually, through variation and selection, during stretches of geological time measured in millions of years. Indeed, in more cases than the layman often realises, very plausible

evolutionary schemes for many "wonders of nature" have been worked out, and there seems to be *a priori* reason why similar schemes should not be worked out for others. The basic idea that even the most extraordinary specialised adaptations develop from an interaction between the organism and the environment is, I think, fundamentally sound—although, as some modern work in genetics and embryology is beginning to indicate, the interaction may not be quite as simple as the classical Darwinian picture has it.

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At this stage, one might reasonably ask why, if the generally accepted theory of evolution appears so convincing and watertight, one should need to take account of Rudolf Steiner's differing views?

There are two reasons. The first is simply that there are, nevertheless, certain aspects of the modern theory which present some fundamental difficulties. But the second reason is more important. Evolutionary theory is, in the last analysis, nothing more than a certain interpretation of the facts. With the help of Rudolf Steiner's work, one can interpret the same facts quite otherwise. Such an interpretation leaves room for man to be understood as something more than simply a higher animal, and for the evolutionary process to be understood as something more than the operation of chance. Let us now take a closer look at some of the facts.

The hardest facts, so to speak, of evolution, are the fossils of the fossil record. How are these fossils distributed through the strata? In the Palaeozoic strata, for instance, fish and plant remains of all kind abound. Reptile remains are particularly abundant in the Mesozoic. Mammals dominate the Tertiary strata. But what is especially characteristic is that well-defined groups of animals tend to appear comparatively suddenly in the record, to flourish for a while, developing in the process all kinds of variations and specialisations of their basic form, and then to die out.

For instance, the reptiles which begin to appear in the fossil record at the beginning of the Mesozoic, gradually become very abundant, and a process called "adaptive radiation" begins. That is, the "basic" reptile type splits up into more specialised types adapted to particular modes of life—crawling reptiles, running reptiles, swimming reptiles, flying reptiles, carnivorous reptiles. It is as though all kinds of complicated variations on a theme were being elaborated. At the end of the Mesozoic virtually the whole vast and varied group dies out, and mammal fossils begin to appear, gradually becoming in their turn the dominant group. This process repeats itself, on a larger or smaller scale, throughout the fossil record.

Here we meet a real difficulty in modern evolutionary theory. The later representatives of most groups of animals in the fossil record are extremely specialised. On the other hand, the early

representatives of a new group are generally relatively unspecialised. It is very difficult to see how the specialised animals of one group could have given rise to the unspecialised animals of the next group up the evolutionary scale. What is more, even the unspecialised early representatives of a group often seem, on closer examination, to be already too specialised to be direct ancestors of a higher group.

### Neoteny

This is a very real problem, and modern biology is well aware of it. It is not simply that real fossil "links" between most of the main groups of animals are lacking. A major obstacle is the difficulty of imagining how animals could get out of their specialised ruts, in order to give rise to higher animals. In a recent essay entitled "The Evolutionary Process"<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Julian Huxley writes: "Thus one result of specialised improvement is an eventual restriction of any further improvement. In addition, high specialisation for one mode of life restricts the possibilities of switching over to another. . . . Specialisation thus almost invariably forces organisms into a deepening evolutionary groove out of which it is increasingly impossible for them to climb."

One interesting suggestion for avoiding this dilemma is elaborated in an essay in the same volume, called "Escape from Specialisation", by A. C. Hardy. He summons to his aid a phenomenon called "neoteny." Neoteny is the process whereby a larval or embryonic form, which may itself undergo evolution and develop special features independent of the adult, becomes sexually mature and able to reproduce itself. The most often quoted example of neoteny is the Axolotl, which is found in Mexico, has external gills, and lives in the water. But it is also identical, except for its sexual maturity, with the larval stage of the North American Salamander, *Ambystoma tigrinum*, which lives on dry land and breathes with its lungs. What is more, the Axolotl can be experimentally induced to postpone sexual maturity, develop further, and become a North American Salamander.

This phenomenon makes it possible to conceive of an animal escaping from a specialised groove by means of a pre-adult stage; during this it would develop certain evolutionary novelties and then, after becoming sexually mature through neoteny, it would give rise to a new race, less specialised, and with new opportunities for adaptive radiation.

Dr. Hardy ends his essay thus: "However specialised a race of animals may have become in its typical adult condition, provided it has a less or differently specialised young or larval form (which

<sup>1</sup>Included in *Evolution as a Process*, a collection of essays by various authors (Allen & Unwin, 1954).

naturally will be well-adapted to its particular way of living), and has a gene-complex which may sooner or later produce neoteny, then, given sufficient time, it stands a chance of escape from its path to extinction. In the great majority of stocks the end must come before this rare opportunity can intervene, but in a very small minority, the chances come earlier, before it is too late, and such lines are switched to new pathways, with fresh possibilities of adaptive radiation. . . . Rare as they may be, these escapes from specialisation seem likely to have provided some of the more fundamental innovations in the course of evolution."

This picture of evolution is in many respects considerably different from Darwin's. The idea of natural selection, originally invoked as a process to explain the progressive evolution of more and more higher types of animals, now seems to be playing the opposite role of a process which tends to lead animals to extinction when they become too specialised. Invoking neoteny as a means of escape from this impasse makes it necessary to picture the actual ancestors of the major groups of animals, and presumably also of man, as having certain larval or embryo-like qualities.

Neoteny is thus now considered by many biologists to be the means by which evolutionary progress has ultimately been possible. But what is actually meant by "evolutionary progress?" For many years science has been groping for a clear answer to this question. Do the terms "higher" and "lower", as applied to animals, really mean anything? Mere complexity is no final criterion—is a man more less complex than a leopard or a beetle? There is no real answer.

Huxley, in the essay quoted above, considers this question, but reaches only a rather nebulous conclusion. "Biological progress," he says, "consists in biological improvements which permit or facilitate further improvements. . . . It is the process by which 'higher' types come into being, the process operating in the succession of dominant types, the process by which the upper level of improvement or biological achievement has been steadily raised during geological time."

#### *Emancipation*

But there is a particular characteristic of "biological progress" which has not yet been granted any fundamental evolutionary significance. This is that if, broadly speaking, the panorama of animals from the "lowest" to the "highest" types is considered, animals can be seen to have become progressively less dependent on their environment.

To take only the vertebrate group, the fish, for example, is dependent on a watery environment to bear it up, but reptiles and mammals can support themselves with their limbs by their own

efforts. Reptiles' bodies, however, remain at much the same temperature as that of their environment, whereas mammals can maintain an even body temperature, independent, within certain limits, of the temperature of their surroundings. Young mammals develop, to begin with, inside the bodies of their parents, thus becoming independent of the external environment during their early stages.

This process can be followed through the animal kingdom, even into anatomical details where it is reflected as a kind of individualisation and consolidation of organs. Here, again, this process is evident even within the vertebrate group where the basic structure is relatively similar in the various types.

Compare the circulatory system of the fish with its mammalian counterpart, where the heart is divided into four chambers, and the circulation to the lungs is independent of the circulation to the body. The fish's head is fused to its trunk, whereas in higher animals the head has much greater independence of movement, and the jaw is an independent grinding apparatus instead of simply a kind of door into the mouth. The eyes of the fish are more or less static "windows"—in the higher animals they are much more active and mobile. The fish's sense of hearing is spread out over its body in the lateral line system, and is barely distinguishable from a sense of touch or pressure. The bones of some of the gill arches of the fish are metamorphosed, in higher animals, into the ossicles of the highly independent and specialised organ, the ear.

The final and most dramatic effect of this process is man's upright posture. In this way, head, arms and hands achieve a certain emancipation from the environment. They are not forced to function in such close connection with the earth as are the front legs and snouts of animals. The head can, as it were, sit back and think. The hands are freed from the limited function of helping to move the body from place to place.

#### *\* \* \** *A Counter-force*

There is a clear connection between the ideas of emancipation from the environment and of neoteny, in that neoteny produces an animal which is less specialised, and hence able to live in a more generalised environment. Both a neotenus and an "emancipated" animal would be less dependent on a specialised environment for survival. The distinction between the two concepts is that while neoteny is assumed to have occurred repeatedly for many groups of animals, emancipation seems to have been a process operating steadily all the time. What the relationship between the two actually is will emerge in due course.

Emancipation clearly provides a kind of counter-force to natural selection. Then tendency of natural selection is to edge the

organism into an ever narrower and more specialised environment, to make it increasingly dependent on a special combination of external circumstances, to bind it more strongly to the earth. Emancipation works in the opposite direction.

Why, then, do adaptive radiation and specialisation play so important a role in modern evolutionary theory, while the polar concept of emancipation from the environment does not? There are two reasons. First, adaptation and selection can be observed actually happening—Darwin collected many examples—whereas emancipation, having occurred gradually throughout the course of evolution, is harder to define and identify.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, whereas a “natural” explanation for adaptive radiation is available in the idea of natural selection, there is no really satisfactory corresponding explanation for emancipation. The tendency therefore is to assume that it has not really occurred, at any rate in any consistent way. But one can find an explanation in Rudolf Steiner’s teachings.

It is curious that while science postulates all kind of unobservable entities to explain, in particular, atomic and sub-atomic phenomena, it shies away in alarm if asked to postulate supersensible spiritual entities to explain other phenomena. Yet Rudolf Steiner asks, to begin with, little more than science asks of itself—namely that his descriptions of events and beings in a spiritual world, not immediately accessible to the senses, should at first be neither accepted nor rejected, but *tried out*, by considering them side by side with natural phenomena to see if they are mutually illuminating. Accordingly, if we are prepared to examine some of the things Rudolf Steiner says about the spiritual aspect of the evolution of the world and man, the phenomenon of emancipation begins to fall into place, and the fossil record, the concept of neoteny, and the relation of man to the animal kingdom appear in a new light.

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the best-known example of natural selection in action to-day is “industrial melanism.” In the past hundred years, black or dark forms of several moths have spread and become increasingly common in manufacturing districts of England and Germany, while their “normal” varieties have become increasingly rare. All these moths have a habit of settling on exposed places such as the trunks of trees, so that the dark varieties are almost invisible on the soot-blackened tree-trunks in industrial areas. Moreover, they appear also to be generally tougher and better able to survive the dirty air and vegetation of their environment. The detailed genetics of industrial melanism is still a subject of discussion and experiment by entomologists, but there is no doubt that its rapid spread is correlated with the blackening and pollution of the landscape. In country areas, the dark varieties are still fairly rare. See E. B. Ford, *Moths* (Collins, New Naturalist Series, 1955.)

### *Descent into Matter*

What distinguishes man from animals, Dr. Steiner says, is his possession of Ego. This is a spiritual entity, man’s ultimate spiritual individuality, which lives in each human being. What we dimly experience as the central “personality” of a person is the reflection of his Ego. In order to live on earth, the Ego must have a suitable physical vehicle—the human body. This vehicle had to develop gradually, over a long period of time. Evolution is really the story of the gradual descent of the Ego into matter, and of the gradual development of a physical body capable of containing it. The only physical form in which the Ego can express itself freely, into which it can descend completely, is the human form.

What, therefore, is the connection between the animal forms preserved in the fossil record and the evolution of the human body? Modern science accepts that the majority of known fossils are already so specialised that they represent evolutionary dead-ends. At the origin of each major fossil group, therefore, an unspecialised neotenus form, which has left no fossil trace, has to be postulated.

This implies that neoteny must have occurred repeatedly—i.e., that each neotenus form is related to the next one up the scale only via a more specialised form which then at some stage undergoes neoteny. The problems involved in this rather unlikely-sounding process disappear if we turn the whole concept the other way round. That is, we consider the series of unspecialised forms, (which science postulates but which do not appear in the fossil record), *not* as the outcome of repeated neoteny, but as a *continuous evolutionary line*, from which the specialised fossil groups have developed by *branching off at various stages*.

This raises a fresh difficulty—that in order to remain unspecialised, this “embryonal” line must have somehow avoided being subject to “selection pressure” from the environment. At the same time, it must have remained constantly subject to the emancipation process described above, since new specialised fossil groups appear at a higher stage of emancipation than their predecessors.

This difficulty is resolved if we recognise that this line of embryonal forms really represents the *stages through which the human body has evolved*. In the emancipation process, cosmic spiritual forces can be seen at work preparing a vehicle for the human Ego, the principle of independent individuality.

A more dynamic picture of evolution here begins to emerge, with the Ego principle gradually wresting a suitable physical vehicle from out of the grip of earthly forces. Neoteny is no longer required to account for the avoidance of specialisation, and indeed it is evident that science has introduced this concept largely in order to be able to explain the existence of an “embryonal line” of

evolution—which the fossil facts themselves demand—without having to admit into its picture of evolution any guiding process other than natural selection.

However, it is not easy to imagine this process of the gradual incarnation of the Ego clearly unless one associates with it a conception which modern science must inevitably find very hard to accept. All modern theories of evolution are based on the assumption that physical conditions in the past were essentially the same as they are now, and that physical laws known to be true now can be extrapolated backwards indefinitely. According to Rudolf Steiner, this is not so. Both physical substances and the laws which govern them, have themselves undergone evolution.

We must imagine, Dr. Steiner says, that before the beginning of the earth's evolution, substance itself existed in a purely spiritual condition. The first "physical" manifestation was a kind of subtle interplay of states of warmth. Later, a gaseous, airy state was reached; then a vaporous, watery condition. Not until solid substance began to appear did geology begin, so to speak. But the particular characteristic of this process is that the earth must be imagined as a great *living organism*. All substance was more alive than it is today, and the "dead" minerals we are now familiar with should be imagined as having been deposited gradually within the living earth, in the same sort of way that mineral bone is deposited in the developing embryo. When solid substance first appeared, says Dr. Steiner, it assumed horny, waxy, colloidal and jelly-like forms.

This makes it easier to imagine the sort of conditions under which the "embryonal line", the human body-form, must have developed. They must have been in a certain way similar to the conditions under which embryos develop today; in the embryo, even bone, the most mineral part of the adult organism, is alive and cartilagenous.

One can therefore picture the animal kingdom as having arisen through a kind of series of premature births of the living form which eventually developed into the present human body. An Ego which did not resist the pull of the physical forces of the earth for long enough, so to speak, would find its half-formed physical vehicle becoming bound too tightly to the physical environment, developing specialised forms and becoming irretrievably mineralised and rigid. Such an Ego would have lost the chance of fashioning a physical vehicle into which it could descend completely. The result would be an animal form.

Thus, when fossil fish appear in the fossil record, this is indeed a sign that the human germ was at that time passing through a "fish-like" stage. But an idea of what this germ was actually like can be formed only by imagining what the *embryo* of the fossil fish

must have been like. The adult is already too specialised and hardened in a particular direction.

#### *Haeckel's Law*

Modern science has recognised this indirectly in the way it now interprets Haeckel's famous "biogenetic law." Haeckel suggested that "ontogeny repeats phylogeny"—i.e. that in its embryological development an animal repeats, in a modified and condensed form, its evolutionary history. This used to be taken to mean that the fish-like stage in human embryology, for instance, when the embryo possesses gill-pouches, represents a "repetition" of an *adult* fish ancestor. Modern embryology, however, has realised that this stage of the human embryo is really comparable only to an *embryonic stage* of a fish, not to the adult stage. In an excellent critique of the "biogenetic law," Professor G. de Beer writes in this connection: "All that can be said is that the fish preserves and elaborates its gill-slits, while reptiles, birds and mammals do not preserve them as such, but convert them into other structures such as the eustachian tube, tonsils, and the thymus glands."<sup>1</sup>

However, in the light of Dr. Steiner's teachings we can take Haeckel's law almost literally. For the embryonic development of man really does reveal his evolutionary history much more accurately than does the line of fossil animals, for in it is reflected the "embryonal line" of evolution which *gave rise* to the animal fossils.

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#### *The Other Thread*

Seen in the light of Rudolf Steiner's teachings, therefore, it becomes clear that modern biology has so far confined itself to studying only one of the two threads of evolution—that thread which is visible in the process of adaptive radiation, and in the development of specialisations. The forces of the environment which give rise to natural selection, and the forces of genetics which bind the organism to the earth and maintain a physical continuity from generation to generation, represent forces of the earth. But modern evolutionary theory is coming to need more and more an understanding of the cosmic, heavenly, forces which have worked down into substance to fashion a vehicle for the Ego of man.

As it stands at present, the theory is really half a theory, since it can explain man only as the highest of the animals. Rudolf Steiner's work makes it possible to make the theory whole, and to begin to understand man as a being who is, at the same time, the "lowest of

<sup>1</sup> *Embryos and Ancestors* (Oxford University Press, 1952).

the Angels." Darwin's book, *The Descent of Man*, although what it is really concerned with is the *ascent* of man's body, is well-named, since the story of the evolution of man is the story of the descent of a spiritual being on to the earth. The animals represent beings which have descended too soon and too far—and perhaps the most tragic of all animals are the apes and monkeys, which descended just too soon to become men.

Among the multitude of spiritual beings which comprise the spiritual worlds, Rudolf Steiner sometimes described the human Ego as a Spirit of Freedom. Man, he also once said, is not *yet* free, but he is *on the way to freedom*. The first task of the human Ego was to evolve a body in which freedom could be achieved—and this is what lies behind the process of emancipation, which from the physical point of view culminates in the form of the human body, as described earlier in this article.

It is interesting to find that modern biologists have realised something of the same kind—that man is in a unique position on the earth. He has reached a position in which he is not the passive subject of external forces, but in which he can take his future in his own hands, and mould his own environment. In the essay already cited, Julian Huxley writes: "The present situation represents a . . . highly remarkable point in the development of our planet—the critical point in which the evolutionary process, as now embodied in man, has for the first time become aware of itself. . . and has a dawning realisation of the possibilities of its future guidance or control. In other words, evolution is on the verge of becoming internalised, conscious, and self-directing."

The "highly remarkable point" mentioned by Huxley is surprisingly similar to that often described by Rudolf Steiner from many different points of view—namely, that the human Ego is now beginning to be able to exercise control over evolution, working in full consciousness within the body.

The future course of evolution will thus be directly affected by the ideas man holds about his own nature and about the evolutionary process. If he remains conscious only of one of the two threads of evolution, if he persists in seeing himself as primarily a higher animal, he will shape his life and his society accordingly. But if he allows his ideas to be fructified by Anthroposophy, so that he becomes conscious of the other, cosmic-spiritual aspect of evolution and of his own nature, he will understand that his task is to carry the spirit into matter and transform it.

## THE RAVENNA MOSAICS AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

A. W. Mann

**F**ROM the Egyptian age to our own time there seems to be an almost unbroken chain in the creation of visual art. Only at one point in Western history is there an apparent gap, roughly between the 4th and 13th centuries. To put it very briefly, it seems as if after about 333 A.D. an imaginative element stemming from pre-Christian times faded away, and into this void there flowed a contemplative yet unpictorial life which led later to the founding of the religious orders.

Within these orders the contemplative life awakened the imaginative faculties anew, and the extensive and wonderful art of illuminated manuscripts was the result. Naturally, this form of monastic art, however diligently practised, did not penetrate into the life of the man in the street, and for him the centuries after 333 were still comparatively void of art.

The one great artistic impact of this time came through the art of the mosaics, which appeared on the interior walls of basilicas, mortuary chapels and baptistries as early as 450 A.D.

Fairly often in history a condition of war and persecution has been the stimulant to enhanced creative activity: it was so in Greece, and again in Rome among the early Christians. In Ravenna, too, whither not only the Roman Emperor Honorius but also the Church had fled in 404, the impending danger of being overrun by the Germanic tribes from the North seems to have promoted the wonderfully rich and colourful art which we call Mosaic.

The first example known to us is the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, sister of Honorius, who had undergone a fearful destiny—captured, treated as a slave, banished and ill-treated in every way. Yet this most beautiful shrine, built in the form of a cross, with its dim golden light and walls covered with mosaic, is a triumphant testimony to the life to come, as it had inspired the early Christians in the catacombs.

One of the pictures records the martyrdom of St. Lawrence. The scene depicts an iron grid, with tongues of flame shooting up all round and inside it. St. Lawrence is on the right, and bearing a cross, with garments fluttering in the wind, he hastens joyfully towards his death.

The technique of mosaic, which requires particle after particle of glazed clay or glass to be placed into the soft matrix, seems to be little suited to a theme with such strong movement, and yet to our astonishment we find the whole scene throbbing with the immediacy

of the situation, even to the eager flickering of the flames, impatient to consume St. Lawrence's garment and himself as well.

This picture of martyrdom leads us back to the art of the catacombs, and it will be useful for our further considerations to bring to mind what the characteristics of this art were.

Among the early Christians there were men and women who had been eye-witnesses of the events in Palestine, or who had experienced the personality of John the Evangelist, who lived to be over 90 years old. Thus a living tradition was carried throughout those years of persecution, outwardly so dark, yet so alive with the mood of the Resurrection.

It is therefore not so hard to understand the choice of pictures which adorned the walls of the catacombs. Apart from pictures of the departed, the themes taken from the Gospels are mainly miracles, such as the multiplication of bread, or the changing of water into wine. Scenes from the Passion are almost entirely absent, except for the Last Supper—but again it is depicted more in the sense of the bestowing of a gift on humanity than in the sense of the part Judas played in it.

An important type of scene is drawn from episodes where death and resurrection occur in the Bible. From the Old Testament the scenes chosen are Noah alone in the ark—in one instance he is even winged—then Daniel in the lion's den, the three men in the fiery furnace, and Jonah and the whale. This last occurs more than once and seems to be a favourite, which one would understand from the reference to it in the Gospels. The scene of the raising of Lazarus, from the Gospel of St. John, completes the series.

The art of Ravenna is directly based on these catacomb subjects, but the mosaics pick out the raising of Lazarus as the most significant of the last series. The Old Testament themes, also, are found as relief work on sarcophagi.

There remains one all-important subject, and that is the picture of Christ. The catacomb artists are reticent, and to begin with a sign or symbol, geometrical or animal, is all that is needed to call forth the most vivid imaginations. When it comes to the finding of features which are to express what the early Christians felt with regard to the being of Christ, they are at a loss. For plainly no human features could convey what they felt should be expressed.

The Greek Gods and even heroes were what they turned to—Helios, Orpheus, Hermes, and above all, Apollo. Apollo is always depicted as a young, impersonal, divine type of being and therefore well suited to represent the Divine aspect of Christ. But there was also another aspect of Christ to be considered—that of healer, of divine messenger, of shepherd. This aspect could be portrayed more suitably by the figure of Hermes, with his slightly narrower face and more human features.



THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA



PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD

Reproduced from Ernst Uehli's book, *Die Mosaiken von Ravenna*, by kind permission of the author and the publishers, Benno Schwabe & Co., Basle.



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS



PETER'S DENIAL

In the catacombs these two types scarcely differ from one another, but in their original difference in Greek sculpture lies what later became the two extreme opposites of the cosmic and earthly representations of Christ.

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The subject-matter of the earliest mosaics is not indetical with that of the catacombs, but is contained in it, and can be understood as a continuation of the mood of the early Christians into the time when Christianity had become the State religion. The art of mosaic owes its use during this time also to the prevailing architecture. Constantine had commanded that buildings known as basilicas (large halls) were to be widened and heightened for use as churches. As a result, wall-space was made available. At the same time men experienced that the Kingdom of Heaven had come nigh to them—indeed, that a spiritual power had come to in-dwell them—and the adorning of the inner spaces of the basilica is an acknowledgement of this fact.

The arch, a Roman invention, which was the most outspoken architectural document testifying to the individual powers which had come to the men of that time, was widely used. But in early Christian architecture it meant much more. Especially in the apse, which was domed in plan and elevation, the arch was the symbol of the cosmos which had deigned to come down, bringing out of its golden, sun-like world the Divine Being of the Sun.

In order to give a true, untarnishable rendering of this golden world, no pigment would have done, and so the hardest possible material, glass, was used, and the gold that had been melted into it was there for all time. If, however, the light is to shine into the darkness of our earth, there must also be a colour to represent this, and the mosaicists turned to a deep blue—deep as the blue of the Aegean sea can appear, when the sun is behind you. This blue forms a first background-colour, and is to be seen in its greatest profundity in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia.

Born out of the mixture of these two extremes is the green. Of all the mosaic colours, this is the one that delights the eye most, mainly because of its variability. Sometimes it turns towards the yellow side, sometimes towards the blue. Never is it stable, and as nature's green delights us because it is not uniform and yet so soothing to the eye, so in the mosaics the green can be deep and rich as the ocean, or filled with light as the first virgin green of the apple or lime.

Beyond these three fundamental colours one finds purple, a fiery red, and pure white, as well as other shades.

We can now turn to the mosaics of one particular church—the Church of San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna. This church was built first during the time of Theodoric the Great and dedicated in

500 A.D. The church was then dedicated to Christ, but Theodoric was an Arian, and when this belief was pronounced heretical, the Church was re-dedicated to the saint whose name it now bears.

St. Apollinaris was a pupil of St. Peter, who died the death of a martyr at Classe, a few miles from Ravenna, where a particularly beautiful basilica has been left to us. The remains of St. Apollinaris were brought to Remagen on the Rhine at the same time as remains of the three Magi were brought to Cologne, where they are said to be interred under the Cathedral.

In all probability some, if not most, of the mosaics were destroyed with the re-dedication of the church. The topmost area, above the windows, was saved from this fate, and it is to these upper mosaics that we will now turn.

There are twice thirteen panels, each measuring roughly 4ft. by 3, on the longitudinal walls. They are placed just under the ceiling, between 35 and 40 feet above the ground. Hence it is not easy to see them very clearly, especially as the light from the windows just below tends to dazzle the eye. On closer examination, however, this double series proves to be one of the most interesting known sequences of pictures, both from the point of view of the individual theme, its relationship to the adjoining picture or the one on the opposite wall, and also from the point of view of its own simplicity and power of expression. Let us first enumerate the scenes:

#### NORTH WALL

1. Marriage at Cana.
2. Feeding of the Five Thousand.
3. Calling of Peter and Andrew.
4. Healing of the Blind.
5. Woman taken in adultery.
6. Woman of Samaria.
7. Raising of Lazarus.
8. Pharisee and Publican.
9. The Widow's Mite.
10. Last Judgment: Sheep and Goats.
11. Sick of the Palsy.
12. The Legion of Devils.
13. Sick of the Palsy.

#### SOUTH WALL

- Last Supper.
- Prayer in Gethsemane.
- Judas's Kiss.
- Christ made prisoner.
- Christ before the Sanhedrin.
- Peter's denial foretold.
- Peter's denial.
- Repentance of Judas.
- Christ before Pilate.
- Bearing of the Cross.
- The Women at the Empty Grave.
- The Walk to Emmaus.
- Unbelieving Thomas.

The first fact that must strike one, when glancing over these two series of pictures, is that, particularly on the North Wall, there seems to be no evidence of a chronological order. Even on the South Wall there are discrepancies, though the order is mainly the one given in the events of the Passion.

In his book, *Die Mosaiken von Ravenna*, Ernest Uehli has examined these pictures very carefully, and I owed to him not only my first introduction to these amazing documents of early Chris-

tianity but also the stimulus to penetrate ever more deeply into their mysteries.

For, as the Gospels themselves invite us to a meditative approach, so also do these pictures, and we have in them a most living example of the interplay of art and religion. The pictures are not to be thought of merely as illustrations of the Gospel stories; they contain something which the words do not express, and so can give us understanding of a deeper order.

Let us turn to the North Wall. From its position in the Church it must receive most light. At midday the sun shines on this wall through the windows on the south. The golden background needs the sun's light to bring out its lustre and the figures seem almost to step out towards us as we look at them.

The sequence is evidently meant to start from the altar and to proceed westwards, but on the North Wall there are discrepancies. The calling of Peter and Andrew should not have come as the third picture if the sequence was to follow the Gospel narrative.

We must obviously seek some further key. As Uehli very rightly points out, the number 13 offers a way to the solution. Let us examine the middle picture (No. 7) of each series. (*See illustration*). On the North Wall, it is the raising of Lazarus; on the South Wall, Peter's denial.

At first sight, the raising of Lazarus seems to be in the right place as the crown of all the miracles that were performed by Christ. In the catacombs the resurrection of Lazarus was made the culminating point of similar scenes. Should it not here stand for a new beginning—an example of the complete in-dwelling of Christ in Man—the birth of the child in Man (see Rudolf Steiner's *Christianity as Mystical Fact*)? The re-birth of man, the birth of the higher Self, has always been the greatest miracle on earth. With this flame within him, all things are possible.

Let us now turn to the sequence on the North Wall with the help of this key. It begins with the Marriage at Cana and ends with the healing of the man sick of the Palsy.

It is possible to see in the changing of water into wine an act by which the individual powers of man were to be strengthened. Dionysus was the Greek God who taught the people the cultivation of the vine, and he is always depicted as a self-willed person, be longing to this earth and far removed from the Apolline type. In the turning of water into wine, Christ hallows the personality.

What will be the last part of man to respond to the powers of of the higher Self? It can only be the physical body, and in the end picture towards the west we see the man sick of the palsy responding to the call, "Take up thy bed and walk."

In each of these two pictures there are three figures. In the first, there is Christ, a white figure, and a servant. In the last (always

from left to right) the man sick of the palsy, Christ, and again a white figure. The white figure appears nine times on the North Wall and once only on the South Wall. Wherever there is a miracle, or even a prophecy, the figure is there, echoing Christ's gesture or merely acknowledging the event by the posture of his body. Thus the whole series seems as if under the spell of a figure—one might say a witness—from the world of the spirit. Moreover, the principle that is involved in the raising of Lazarus is to be the new power in man, corresponding to the initiation principle of the ancients. He who does as Lazarus does in this picture—out of the imprisonment of the physical body (depicted in the bandages) inclines towards Christ—is the man in whom the words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John, III, 3), have become reality.

The corresponding picture on the South Wall—i.e. the seventh—should to our minds perhaps be the Judas kiss, or the Last Supper. To our surprise, however, it is Peter's denial of Christ, and to enhance the importance of this event the previous one shows Christ foretelling the denial, and in this scene there is again the white figure. In other words, a scene is here singled out that to our minds is merely an example of the weakness of man in being unable to stand up for his convictions when his own safety is threatened.

Further light is thrown on this choice of subject by the words accompanying the scene. In the Gospel of St. John the "damsel that kept the door" says, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?"

Peter replies, "I am not."

Do we not hear ringing in our ears the words so often spoken, I AM, as far back as in the story of the burning bush? So all that these 1,350 years of preparation have led to is that a man should say "I am not"—and still he goes on saying it and acting according to it. Of the Judas act we can see the historic necessity; of Peter's denial we can perceive only the baneful abuse of man's freedom of decision.

The mosaic of Peter's denial is a vivid illustration of the "I am not." The maid coming out of the door of the High Priest's palace leans far forward towards Peter, holding her right hand in the gesture mainly reserved for Christ when he says, "Verily I say unto you." She is plainly convinced of the truth of her statement. Peter reacts with the most violent attitude of pushing away something. (We are reminded of his attitude on first hearing Christ's mention of His impending Passion). The movement is so powerful that it almost seems to cause Peter to lose his balance.

On the opposite wall we see Lazarus, out of a death-like condition, leaning forward to meet Christ.

This, then, is the key-note of each series. The powerful contrast

between the seventh picture on the North Wall, the Raising of Lazarus, and the seventh picture on the South Wall, Peter's denial suggests the possibility that in each pair of mosaics there may be this contrast of two opposite attitudes in relation to Christ. Closer examination brings this out.

#### NORTH WALL

##### 1. The Marriage at Cana.

#### SOUTH WALL

##### The Last Supper.

In the Cana Mosaic, Christ dominates the scene. Youthful, un-bearded, with Apolline features, He puts forward both hands over the "six water-pots of stone"—in this case six baskets probably containing jars which a servant in the attitude of eager devotion has just brought in. (Uehli suggests that during a later restoration the jars were mistakenly turned into baskets. Knowing the Italian straw-covered wine containers, I offer my explanation as an alternative.) The centre of the mosaic is occupied by the very striking figure of a man in white raiment, his right hand held up so as to reveal the whole palm.

After very extensive observation, I am of the opinion that the gesture of the hand, held at right angles to the forearm and with palm facing away, is the attitude of a person becoming aware of a supersensible event. For instance, the gesture is frequently to be found in Annunciation pictures.

The Last Supper, on the South Wall, is one of the very early representations of this scene. Christ and His disciples are seated round the arc of a semi-circular table. Seven golden loaves in the shape of pyramids are disposed round the arc, with two fishes in the middle.

Christ has His legs facing away from the centre of the temple. His countenance is turned slightly inwards; love and understanding can be read in it. His right hand is raised in the attitude, "Verily I say unto you." In this picture He is older, more human, with a narrow face and a short pointed beard.

Judas's position is the exact opposite of Christ's, with the difference that both arms and hands are concealed and he faces Christ defiantly, thus appearing to the onlooker in direct profile. The disciples' heads and bodies are so close together that they overlap, but they nevertheless reflect the facial expressions and directions of Christ and Judas. The disciples nearer Christ look at Him in astonishment, with a question in their faces. The remaining seven look accusingly at Judas.

The connection and contrast between these two pictures is obvious. From the wedding-meal at Cana there flows to man the power of individuality. In the Last Supper this new power of the

individual is abused through a betrayal of the very Giver of these new faculties.

In the Cana picture, Christ gives enhanced life; He carries the nature-forces of growth and ripening a stage further. At the Last Supper He gives himself as giver of life, and whosoever partakes of this gift is endowed with new life. It is the new life of the soul which alone for man carries within it the seed of transformation.

It would be overstepping the framework of this article to give a detailed description of each pair of pictures, but the outstanding features can be brought out.

#### NORTH WALL

#### 2. Feeding of the Five Thousand.

#### SOUTH WALL

#### Prayer in Gethsemane.

In both pictures Christ occupies the centre; on the North Wall two disciples stand on either side. Christ, in Apolline attitude, spreads out His arms, blessing the bread and fishes.

On the South Wall, there are six disciples on one side and five on the other, all sitting despondently and full of questions. The figure of Christ is as if it had shrunk; arms and hands are in the *orantes* (praying) gesture, and are not outspread, but held in to the body tightly. We could say that expansion and contraction are the chief characteristics of this pair.

#### NORTH WALL

#### 3. Calling of Peter and Andrew.

#### SOUTH WALL

#### Judas's Kiss.

On the North Wall, Christ, accompanied by the white figure, beckons to Peter and Andrew, who are in a boat drawing in a net of brightly sparkling fishes. They willingly respond to his gesture.

On the South Wall, Judas, with a strong forward movement, approaches and kisses Christ. He regards Christ as a King with human desires, but divine powers for putting them into practice. By touching Christ (their garments touch from top to bottom), Judas gives the impression of understanding, but this is just what he lacks.

On the North Wall, Peter looks up at Christ in awe and wonder. The seed is being laid in him for the words which he will utter later, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

#### NORTH WALL

#### 4. Healing of the Blind.

#### SOUTH WALL

#### Christ made prisoner.

These two subjects seem to have little in common. But seeing them face to face, we at once recognize that we have to do with blindness in both cases.

On the North Wall, we see two blind men leaning on their sticks; Christ comes towards them and heals them by placing His finger on the eye of the man nearest to him. These men not only regain the use of their eyes, but in that first great moment, perhaps

the greatest in their lives, their opened eyes light first on Christ. A kind of spiritual awakening accompanies the physical event.

On the South Wall, the Jews are leading away Christ captive. Their eyes are all wide open, but spiritually they must be quite blind.

#### NORTH WALL

#### 5. Woman taken in adultery.

#### SOUTH WALL

#### Christ before the Sanhedrin.

Again the treatment of the subject leads us to understanding. In the first picture, Christ points to the adulteress kneeling before him: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

On the opposite wall, Christ, who is sinless, is accused by the Jews and finally condemned.

#### NORTH WALL

#### 6. Woman of Samaria.

#### SOUTH WALL

#### Peter's denial foretold.

This pair is in an important position, as it adjoins the centre and key of the whole series. (*See illustration.*)

Both pictures are rather severely divided into a left and a right-hand portion. On the North Wall we see the woman of Samaria on the left; she leans forward, her hands on the rope with which she has just brought the bucket to the top of the well. The shimmering quality of light on water is realistically brought out by blue-green mosaic, and the woman pausing in her task listens with astonishment to the words of Christ. Christ is seated majestically, like one of the old Byzantine *Pancreator* (Creator of all) figures. He lifts up His hands to her, and behind Him stands the figure in white.

The prophetic utterance of Christ respecting the woman's past brings about a change of consciousness in her. Suddenly she realizes who is the Being confronting her.

On the opposite wall the picture is divided by a pillar. On it stands the cock, symbol of awakener of consciousness. Peter makes a gesture with his right finger, pointing to his head as if indicating that he understands with his head what Christ is foretelling. Christ stands on the left, the opposite side from his position in the picture on the North Wall. His gesture is similar to the one on the North Wall, but seems to have more emphasis.

Recognition and failure to know oneself and to know Christ are the themes of these two pictures. Both enhance and emphasize the central pictures to which they lead up. The recognition of everlasting life, leading to the raising of Lazarus, which, as Rudolf Steiner has explained, is an initiation scene on a Christian level. "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

Perception and knowledge of the divine has to be born as a new

quality in man, and all the pictures on the North Wall bear witness to this fact. The subjects and treatment of the pictures on the South Wall are in extreme contrast to this.

The scene chosen to represent the opposite of renewal of life—the opposite of initiation-recognition of the divine principle in man—is not the betrayal, but, as a necessary stage, the denial. I AM and I AM NOT are here set in opposition; and the seventh picture in each series—the Raising of Lazarus and Peter's Denial, already discussed—is the culmination of this double theme.

From the eighth pair of pictures onwards, while the pictures on the North Wall progress in the way they have begun, there seems to have been a crisis in the series on the South Wall. Peter's denial and his subsequent awakening to self-knowledge have brought about a change, and all the ensuing pictures of this series carry an element of redemption.

#### NORTH WALL

##### 8. Pharisee and Publican.

The parable picture is particularly impressive. The centre is taken up by an open doorway to a temple, with the curtain in front of it looped up in a knot. On the left is the publican beating his breast; on the right the pharisee in the *orantes* gesture.

The gesture towards the heart made by the publican contrasts with the gesture towards the head by Peter. Seen in their whole connection, these two attitudes alone stand for life and death.

The *orantes* gesture of the pharisee is particularly interesting at this point. It is, as has been mentioned, the attitude of beholding the spirit, but in this particular case it is a thing of the past, almost a pose, as if to say, "I have Abraham for my father—this is all that concerns me, a pharisee."

Already in the eighth picture of the South Wall there is a redemption motif in the repentance of Judas; the hard-hearted priest who will not accept the thirty pieces of silver remains unmoved in the centre of a temple entrance.

#### NORTH WALL

##### 9. The Widow's mite.

The widow is placing her mite in an offertory box. Christ, on the right, accompanied by the white figure, commends her deed with an unmistakable gesture.

On the South Wall, Christ stands to the left, a dominant and tragic figure, accompanied by four or five Jews. His gesture is one of resignation; He points to the earth. Between Him and Pilate's throne, on the right, there is a space. Pilate is attended by four servants, the foremost of whom holds out a bowl. Pilate turns to his left, away from Christ, and washes his hands.

#### SOUTH WALL

##### Repentance of Judas.

#### NORTH WALL

##### 10. Last Judgment: Sheep and Goats.

#### SOUTH WALL

##### Bearing of the Cross.

From the point of view of colour, this pair is perhaps the most beautiful. There is even a correspondence between the colours of the two pictures.

On the North Wall, Christ is seated in the centre of the picture. On the left is a red-winged Angel; on the right, a blue Angel with dark wings. In front of the red Angel are the sheep; in front of the blue one, the goats.

On the opposite wall Christ, as an earthly suffering person, is walking towards Golgotha; a red figure is on the left, and a blue figure on the right, corresponding exactly with the Angel figures opposite. As one would expect, the figure in red carries the Cross and can therefore be identified as Simon of Cyrene.

It would be beyond the scope of this article to enter into a lengthy discourse on this interesting theme. Suffice it to say that, as in several instances in the Gospels — Christ between Pilate and Caiaphas, Christ between the evildoer who did penance and was saved and the malignant one who mocked Christ—so also in these two pictures we see Christ as the balance between two extremes.

#### NORTH WALL

##### 11. Sick of the Palsy.

#### SOUTH WALL

##### Women at the Empty Grave.

The healing of the sick of the palsy occurs in two versions; it is therefore to be considered as of great importance. Indeed, the forgiveness of sin, or healing of the soul, here works so deeply as to have an immediate effect on the body.

In the eleventh picture, Christ stands on the left. Behind Him is the white figure. On the right is a house with windows and lean-to roof. Standing on the eaves, two men are lowering a bed by ropes. The bed has four legs, and a fish as part of the frame. On the bed lies the sick man, stretching out his arms eagerly towards Christ as if he were in no doubt of what is in store for him.

On the South Wall, the centre of the picture is taken up by a domed temple with four pillars. The door to it, set diagonally across the opening, is only partly visible.

On the left, an Angel in white is seated; he has large wings and supports a staff with his left hand. His right hand is in the attitude of "Verily, I say unto you." On the right are the women, both with the open palm of the right hand extended downwards and with grief on their faces. The words of the Angel are: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

By contrast, the picture on the North Wall is an instance of the abundance of Christ's life-forces, unassailable by death.

#### NORTH WALL

12. Casting out of the legion of devils into the herd of swine.

#### SOUTH WALL

- The Walk to Emmaus.

On the North Wall, the Apolline Christ stands between the familiar white figure and the man who was possessed, and is now kneeling at the feet of Christ in front of a cave. In the right background three creatures like wild boars are swimming in the water. All three are moving in the same direction.

On the opposite wall, three figures are moving to the left, towards a castle on a rock symbolising the town of Emmaus. Christ is the central figure and is speaking, as the gesture of His right hand shows. The disciples on either side of Him show that they do not understand and cannot see.

What more powerful contrast could be imagined? The possessed man who, in spite of his condition, acknowledges Christ, and the disciples, who from all that has happened should know who their companion is, but neither see nor hear.

#### NORTH WALL

13. Sick of the Palsy.

#### SOUTH WALL

- Unbelieving Thomas.

Again, Christ, with Apolline features, stands between the white figure and a man who is already healed and has been commanded to take up his bed and walk. The emphasis here is on the gesture of Christ. The word is spoken and the flesh can arise.

On the opposite wall Christ stands in the centre, with four disciples on either side. On the right, and in front of the others, is Thomas in a beautiful attitude of devotion. He is convinced, and need not look up to the wound, to which Christ points. In this early version the wound is in Christ's left side, below the uplifted left arm.

Belief and unbelief are contrasted—the Divine aspect of Christ together with the quality of belief; the earthly, and in this case deeply tragic, figure of Christ, together with unbelief.

In a sense this, too, is a key picture, pointing out of the past into the future. For is not the incredulity and lack of understanding towards the problem of bodily resurrection one of the main problems confronting the Christian of to-day?

Man is asked to understand the resurrection of Christ as a super-sensible event; only when this has been accomplished can he hope to achieve that state of higher consciousness which alone is the safeguard of the future of humanity.

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In yet another sense this series of pictures embodies a deep truth. In the year 1919 (November 21-30) Dr. Steiner gave a short course of lectures in Dornach, "The Mission of Michael." In these lectures he refers particularly to the duality between the head and the rest of man's organism. The head is the seat of intelligence and has developed under the particular guidance of Lucifer. The rest of the body is the result of higher beings working through the will and contending against Ahriman.

If we take only two pictures—the prophecy of Peter's denial and the raising of Lazarus—the contrast of head and body is clearly indicated. Peter points to his head; Lazarus responds to Christ's call with his whole body.

But it would be one-sided to have less regard for the sequence on the South Wall, which again and again stresses human weakness. For one thing, we know these events to have been necessary for the further evolution of man. Moreover, as was said before, towards the end they bear in themselves a redemptive power. Let us again look at the three last themes:

11. The Women at the Grave.
12. The Walk to Emmaus.
13. Unbelieving Thomas, or the incredulity of Thomas.

Rudolf Steiner has pointed out that on the path to higher knowledge there are three gateways—three states of consciousness opening up spheres of experience of higher worlds. The first is Imagination; the second, Inspiration; and the third, Intuition.

The women at the grave are shocked by what they see, the empty grave; but just this shock causes Mary Magdalene to have her inner imaginative eye opened, and with this she beholds the gardener.

The disciples are at a loss to know what is the inner substance of the word which they hear as they walk to Emmaus. But in the breaking of the bread, which is the renewed sacrament of the Last Supper, they become aware of the Word that became flesh.

And finally, the experiences which the disciples have with the Risen Christ, and which border on the intuitive, are in no way shared by Thomas, until Christ leads him to a directly intuitive experience. It was this experience that was so deeply felt by St. Francis that he became one with it, and the wounds became his wounds.

In conclusion, one can but stand in awe and wonder before this remarkable token of the creative human spirit and of its timeless quality.

With the help of the new Christology which Rudolf Steiner has opened up for us, we can value in an intensified way the message of early Christianity, which in these wonderful mosaics puts before us the balance of the cosmic and the earthly Christ, as it can appear in the striving human being.

# BARBARA HEPWORTH'S SCULPTURE AND ITS LANGUAGE

David Lewis

**B**ARBARA Hepworth was born in 1903 at Wakefield in Yorkshire. This fact is particularly worth remembering when we hear her sculptures talked about—as they often are—as *abstract*, cold and intellectual. For when we think of the Yorkshire landscape of her childhood, what it really is, stripped and in essence—an undulating ice-smoothed landscape with rounded hills and deep valleys and winding rivers—we can begin to see that many of her carvings develop from a fine sense of the continuous curving spiralling rhythms of the country of her childhood, and result in being keenly poetic.

Besides Yorkshire, Cornwall is another source of Barbara Hepworth's poetry. From these two sources develop the forms of her sculptures—their formal "sense"—the rhythmic organisation of their curving surfaces and gouged hollows and tunnels, their colours and strings. She has lived in south-west Cornwall since 1939, and that is where all her recent sculptures have been carved. Yorkshire and Cornwall resemble each other in many ways—bareness and their continuous unfolding rhythms—but in Cornwall there is to be noted one particular difference; there is always the inescapable presence of the sea, even when one is not within sight of it, the sharp horizontal of the horizon that gives everything that stands a simple monumentality, the sea's endless incoming movement, the sea's borders, its pebbles and shells, its reflections of light.

About the period of her work from 1939 to 1946 Barbara Hepworth wrote, "I used colour and strings in many of the carvings of this time. The colour in the concavities plunged me into the depth of water, caves, or shadows deeper than the carved concavities themselves. The strings were the tension I felt between myself and the sea, the wind or the hills. The barbaric and magical countryside of rocky hills, fertile valleys, and dynamic coastline of West Penwith provided me with a background and a soil which compare in strength with those of my childhood in the West Riding."

Here we have to make a distinction—whilst acknowledging her indebtedness to the forms of landscape, *we must take the greatest care not to confuse with forms in nature* the forms which a sculptor such as Barbara Hepworth develops from them. Hills and water-worn pebbles are nature's carving in a universal rhythmic process of erosion and resistance and change. On the other hand, *carving by human sculptors is human language*. Everything is meaningful

in human terms. Let us see how this works out in the case of Barbara Hepworth's sculptures.

Barbara Hepworth is primarily a carver of wood and stone: she is also a draughtswoman. Her drawings, like her carvings, are to be distinguished from those of nearly all other sculptors by their continuity of line and rhythm and their extraordinary clarity. She is by deliberate choice not a modeller in clay, and very little of her work exists in metal.

Carved sculpture is one of the very oldest of human languages and is an art of solid form. It is the art of physically cutting into, and revealing with sharp implements, a core of form within the rough block of wood or stone. Besides the obvious general difference between wood and stone, every individual piece of wood and stone is different and particular, each having its own characteristics of surface, grain, colour, and resistance. By all modern carvers this inherent vitality of woods and stones is recognised as an essential part of sculptural language. In Barbara Hepworth's sculptures this recognition takes the form of active collaboration: usually she starts carving a rough block of wood or stone with only the nucleus of an idea for a sculpture, and then, through the process, the narrative, of carving this idea grows clearer and clearer, until in the end it reaches its utmost clarity of sculptural meaning in the final form. As we shall see, this question of forming a *working* collaboration with her material is important in the final meanings of her sculptures as language.

Now, sculpture, as well as being an art of solid form, is also an art of light and shadow. Light and shadow are as important to sculpture as form itself. Usually people who have never given much thought to it think of light as being the simple complementary of form. This of course is not true. Light is a potent force of illumination, flowing steadily from a single source. If we take a nature-worn pebble of what we think to be a good form and turn it slowly in our hands in the light by the window, we will find that light and shadow make certain forms and patterns on its surfaces which are completely independent of the solid form of the pebble and are sometimes surprisingly unbeautiful, uncontinuous.

Barbara Hepworth fully recognises the potent, independent force of light and shadow and uses them in a particular way. Some sculptors, who also recognise the independent potency of light and shadow, use light and shadow against the run and rhythm of the form, creating a tension between them and a dramatic effect. Barbara Hepworth's use of them is the opposite of this. She uses them as a component part of the wholeness which she tries to create in sculpture. When she carves, cutting down from the rough bole of wood or the rough block of quarried stone into its

core, revealing more and more clearly a flow of rhythms belonging to the form, she is also simultaneously dealing with the way light and shadow respond to these rhythms, and she uses light and shadow to flow generously and sympathetically with them, to *increase by collaboration* that flowingness.

If with this in mind we look closely at the illustrations in this article and visualise these sculptures turning slowly on a sculptor's turn-table, we shall be able to visualise the form creating one set of rhythms, and light and shadow creating another, independent set of rhythms, and although these two sets are not in any way complementary, they work together beautifully and dramatically.

The question now is, how do we read these things as sculptural language? In most of her carvings Barbara Hepworth's effort is towards creating harmony. As I have pointed out in relation to light, there are sculptors who use the elements of sculpture to run against and conflict with each other, light against rhythm, surface rhythm against formal thrust, etc., in order to create in our minds and emotions, feelings and notions of conflict and anguish in a dramatic form. Anyone who has seen the intensely dramatic equestrian sculptures of the Italian sculptor, Marino Marini, or the sculptures in wood, stone and bronze of that other great modern sculptor from Yorkshire, Henry Moore, will know that in our time of conflict and anguish of body and spirit these works have tremendous reality and potency.

Instead of this, Barbara Hepworth uses the elements of sculpture not to conflict with each other, but to collaborate with each other: the material (wood or stone), its grain, its form, its rhythm, the space which surrounds it, light, shadow, colour, etc.—all these elements, without ever losing their independent identities, are brought together to form one continuous harmonious interchange. How does this interchange relate to the conflict and anguish of our time—as the Marini's and the Henry Moore's do? To that let us reply that this language of harmony has also been developed and is being used in a time of conflict and anguish, but, instead of being a reflection of it, represents an answer to it.

In our time Barbara Hepworth speaks through carving a language of harmonious interchange. In carving, she creates a wholeness and a unity out of elements which are usually independent and even in opposition. She uses rhythms and images of landscapes and seascapes, hills and pebbles; she uses geometry; she uses the inherent characteristics of wood and stone, grain, colour, and structure; she uses taut strings, and applied colour; she uses light and shadow; from these she makes a single living rhythmic wholeness.

I remarked earlier in this article that we must take the greatest care not to confuse with forms in nature the forms which a sculp-

tor develops from them, because carving is human language and is therefore directed towards human beings and human life. Nothing is registered without you or me being there to register it; when we stand in front of a Barbara Hepworth sculpture and walk round it, we are not only involved in its meanings mentally, but we are physically involved in its rhythms—physically involved in this language of concord, of mutual and harmonious interchange. The carved object is therefore very clear language in our time.

To end up with, the following are two or three quotations from Barbara Hepworth about her work:

"There is an inside and an outside to every form. When they are in special accord, as for instance a nut in its shell or a child in the womb, or in the structure of shells or crystals, or when one senses the architecture of bones in the human figure, then I am most drawn to the effect of light. Every shadow cast by the sun from an ever-varying angle reveals the harmony of the inside to the outside. Light gives full play to our tactile perceptions through the experience of our eyes, and the vitality of forms is revealed by the interplay between space and volume."

"Nothing happens until the living human encounters the image. Then the magic occurs—the magic of scale and weight, form and texture, colour and movement; the encircling interplay and dance occurs between the object and the human sensibilities."

"In opposition to 'social realism', I believe that meanings in sculpture emerge more powerfully when they are carried through sculpture's own silent language; and that if the sculptor himself can find *personal* integration with his surroundings and his community, his work will stand a greater chance of developing the poetry which is his free and affirmative contribution to society."

"I have never understood why the word 'feminine' is considered to be a compliment to one's sex if one is a woman, but has a derogatory meaning when applied to anything else. The feminine point of view is complementary to the masculine. Perhaps in the visual arts many women have been intimidated by the false idea of competing with the masculine. There is no question of competition. The woman's approach presents a different emphasis."

"I think that women will contribute a great deal to this understanding through the visual arts, and perhaps especially in sculpture, for there is a whole range of formal perception belonging to feminine experience. So many ideas spring from an inside response to form; for example, if I see a woman carrying a child in her arms, it is not so much what I see that affects me, but what I feel within my own body. There is an immediate transference of sensation, a response within to the rhythm of weight, balance and tension of the large and small form making an interior organic whole. The transmutation of experience is, therefore, organically controlled and

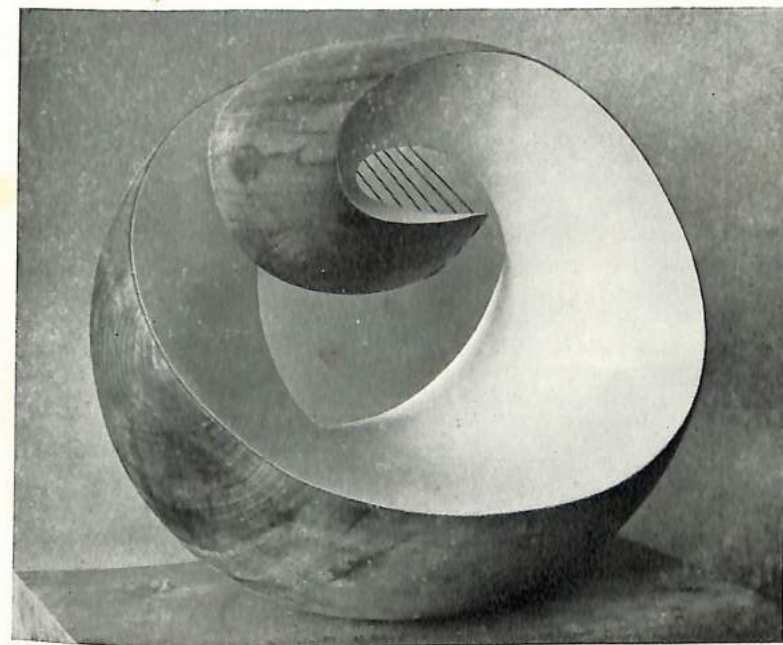
contains new emphasis of forms. It may be that the *sensation* of being a woman presents yet another facet of the sculptural idea. In some respects it is a form of 'being' rather than observing, which in sculpture should provide its own emotional and logical development of form."

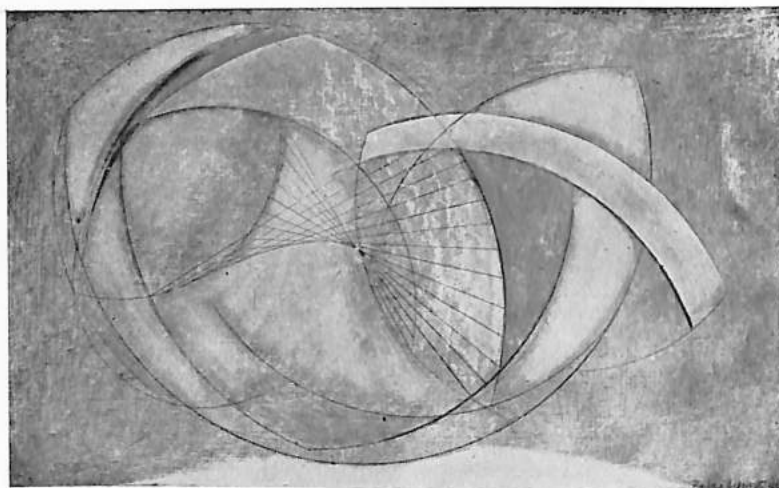
The quotations are from Barbara Hepworth's notes on her own work, published in *Barbara Hepworth: Carvings and Drawings*, with an introduction by Herbert Read (Lund Humphries, London, 1952).



*Above* : Pendour, 1947-8. Plane wood with colour. Length : 28 ins.  
Collection : the artist.

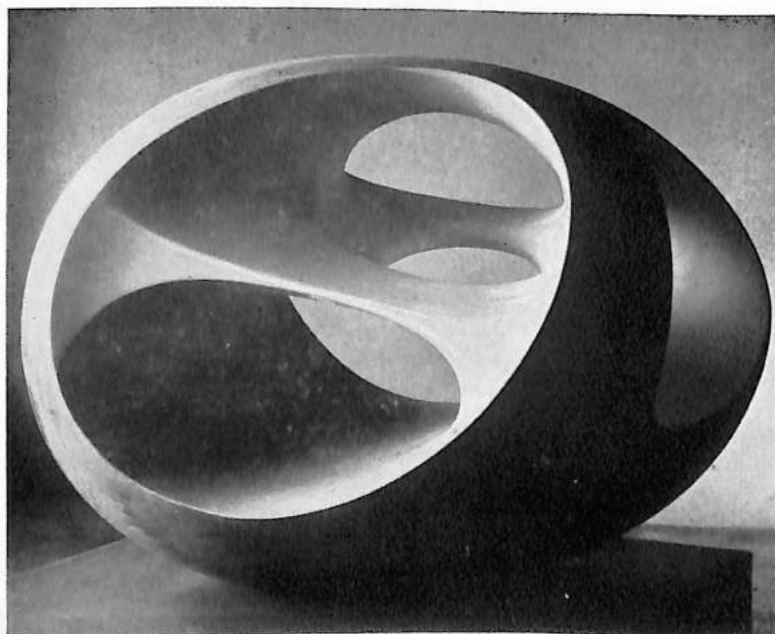
*Below* : Pelagos, 1946. Wood with colour and strings. Height : 16 ins.  
Collection : Mrs. Elizabeth Macdonald.





Above: Drawing for sculpture (Patmos). 1955. Oil and pencil on board.  
Collection: the artist.

Below: Oval sculpture, 1943. Plane wood concavities painted white.  
Height: 16 ins. Collection: Margaret Gardiner.



## ART AND SCIENCE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

George Adams

**M**ANKIND in the 20th century is moving on into new forms of experience and of expression. It is not always easy to see at first how the different phases of this movement are coordinated. There is a hidden integration. The tendency of the time is away from the old kind of materialism in Science, naturalism in Art, formal dogmatism in Religion.

The artistic naturalism of the 18th and 19th centuries went with a scientific outlook wherein man was the mere intellectual observer, recording and systematizing what he saw (or imagined to be *conceivably* though not actually visible on a minute atomic scale) in a supposedly 'objective', spatially material world. To-day the imagined reality of this kind of 'matter' has been dissolved away by the very discoveries and thoughts of Science. Its place is taken by a network of mutually sustaining relations, the inner harmony and integrity of which appears the only real background of the stability of the material world around us. And this goes hand in hand with new kinds of technical invention. Aerial movement leads to quite new experiences of the Earth, the Cosmos and of Space as such. Electronic devices, far from exemplifying, as did the older machinery, the massive impenetrability of matter and the conventional barriers of space and time, exploit the versatility and power of all-pervading forces and radiations.

Similar developments have taken place in biological science—the knowledge, for example, of the 'chemical messengers' or hormones, with their pervasive physiological and psychological effects. The modern biologist also becomes more aware that the relation is between himself as a living being and the living creatures he examines. In the words of a well-known physiologist<sup>1</sup>, life alone can have cognition of life, life alone can make researches into life; the relation is mutual and bilateral,—the examining subject may not be left out of the scientific picture.

At the stage now reached, an essential new advance is possible and necessary. The scientist is needing to become aware of how the formative and creative forces to which the things of the outer world

<sup>1</sup> See list of references at the end.

are due are working in his own nature too, endowing him with the inner mental sympathy to recognize them in the world around him. The fulfilment of this need will be one of the great contributions of anthroposophical or spiritual science, with its perception of the *etheral body* and other higher organizing principles in Man and Nature. Science will recognize that the interweaving relations which it discovers in natural phenomena are no mere intellectual shadow-forms, but spiritual realities. But it must first be understood how the sensory and mental faculties of Man himself arise out of Nature's creative process, whereby through embryonic life and childhood the individual human spirit is brought into incarnation in the well-formed body, to which not only the brain but the architectural and dynamic harmony of skeleton and muscles, also the weaving rhythm of the blood and breathing, are essential as organs of sound perception, mental discernment, æsthetic judgment.

Meanwhile the artist of our time is seeing not only the finished beauty of the things of Nature and the human form, but the formative elements which comprise them. He thus arrives at his creations of pure, 'abstract' form. Keenly and growingly aware of the æsthetic elements whose endless interplay is there in Nature's forms, he enhances and individualizes them in his creations and thus quickens them for our experience. Subject though it may be to dangers and exaggerations, the cult of 'abstract' form in Art is germane to the real movement of our time.

In her relation to her materials and themes, the work of Barbara Hepworth appears to me a remarkable example of what Rudolf Steiner pointed out nearly seventy years ago in his well-known lecture on Aesthetics<sup>2</sup>. The form of any outer object, says Dr. Steiner in effect, is due not only to the *essential* Idea which underlies it, but to the many other, accessory and complicating factors which impinge on it in the external world. "Had the thing been able to develop freely, uninfluenced by other objects, it would have expressed purely its own inherent Idea. Fundamental as it is, yet in its full and free development somehow overlaid and obscured in the external world, this—the essential Idea in the thing—the artist will perceive and unfold to greater fulness. . . In every detailed object Nature falls short of her intention; no single thing brings the full Idea into concrete life. The artist reaches down to Nature's inmost tendency which he beholds. . . His striving is to excel Nature in her own intentions — to realize what *can* be realized with her materials and laws, yet in a higher measure than she herself can. Therefore the object which the artist puts before us is more perfect than in its natural existence, yet the perfection it contains is none other than its own. In this enhancement of the object beyond itself, remaining true, however, to its own hidden content, lives the sheer

essence of beauty. Beauty is never unnatural, and Goethe can justly say: 'The beautiful is a manifestation of hidden laws of Nature—laws which, without it, would remain concealed for ever.'

The inner harmony between such Art—non-naturalistic, yet in a deeper sense true to Nature—and the new phase in Science is brought out in another branch of thought, of which too little is yet known in the world at large. I refer to the modern school of geometry, variously known as Projective Geometry, modern Synthetic Geometry, or 'the Geometry of Position'. In this the integrating and in the literal sense 'providential', fore-seeing action of the Spirit of the Time has been at work. For at the birth of the new geometry, about a century and a half ago, its inner relation to Natural Science and other realms of life could not yet be perceived. Science as a whole—Art too for the most part—was not yet ready to take the epoch-making steps which this new science of pure Space would imply. Mostly unknown to this day, save among pure mathematicians, in the work of modern artists—prominent among whom is Barbara Hepworth—the spirit of it is none the less discernible to those who know it. It is indeed at last beginning to seep through into the prevailing consciousness of the time.

This new geometry, as I have shewn elsewhere<sup>3</sup>, opens out the way to a scientific and at once imaginative understanding of the *etheral* aspect of Space and of living Nature. In reality all Space and all spatial form is at once physical and ethereal: one might also say, 'earthly and celestial', for the sundering of Earth and Heaven, light and darkness, heights and depths, of which the Bible and other sacred writings tell, lies at the very foundation of the external, spatial world in which we live. The new geometry begins by revealing Space in both these aspects, whereas geometry as generally known—the ancient classical geometry of Euclid—stresses one-sidedly the earthly aspect, so much so that the other is obscured and forgotten. The very name is an indication of this, and is inadequate to the wider, more imaginative and artistic knowledge of spatial form which the new science opens out. For the word *geometrical* means measurement of Earth and earthly things. The measurements in question are necessarily rigid; their instruments and objects belong to the relatively lifeless mineral world. But that is only one half of the reality of Space; the other may more aptly be named: *helio-plastic*. For it belongs to the creative and life-giving realm of the Sun—to the celestial spaces of Sun and Stars altogether. In formative activity moreover it is plastic rather than sharply metrical. (It does not lack number and measure, but in its ordering is rather musical, as in the 'measures' of prosody). It takes its start, not like the old earthly geometry from the point, but from the plane; not from the centre but from the all-embracing

periphery. It creates forms, not masonically, as it were, stone by stone, girder by girder from within outward, but plastically, sculpturally, from without inward. If embryologists find that the differentiated form of a living organism nearly always appears first on the surface rather than in the interior of the ovum, it is an elementary sign of this other formative principle in Nature. Rudolf Steiner<sup>1</sup> pointed out that this other kind of Space, planar and enveloping rather than sharply pointwise, peripheral rather than centric, must always be present—however unconsciously—in heart and hand and imagination of the sculptor, the plastic artist. The 'helioplastic' space, as I have here ventured to call it, belongs as essentially to sculpture as does the physical—in the narrower sense 'geometrical'—to architecture and engineering. The new geometry (as I have shewn, it deserves a wider name) comprises *both* these aspects.

For the ethereal, the content of Space is in a way the inside-out of what it is for the physical. The formative entities and substances which it conveys pour inward from the vast circumference, the infinite expanse of planes. The point, the central region towards which they tend, is rather like a receptive seed, a waiting emptiness within, a womb of receptivity. For the ethereal the real content of a sphere—to take the simplest instance—is not inside but all around it, whereas the 'infinite empty space' is not outside but within the surface. We need also to conceive this other idea of what a point can be, namely an 'infinitude within', which means in effect a potential seed. Even the physical seed—the seed or 'eye' of a plant, the germ-cell of the animal—is important for life not by virtue of the matter it contains but because this matter is capable of resignation, self-effacement. For the ethereal space, from which the formative Archetype of the living species is working inward, the innermost seed-point is not minute, but on the contrary it is infinite, even as the surrounding Heavens are infinite for our physical and earthly spatial feeling.

Moreover, as Olive Whicher and I have pointed out in our books on the living plant, this quality of vital and receptive centre is present not only in the visible material seed but in the seemingly empty space enveloped by the delicate unfolding leaves at the head of any growing shoot, or by the petals in the opening chalice of the flower. It is a 'seed of light'. A kind of microcosmic Sun is there on Earth in every green leaf-bearing shoot. It comes to fuller manifestation in the flower; only in final culmination does it give rise to the material seed in which the formative potentiality of the plant will remain latent through the winter.

Space is the evident realm of experience of souls—souls of the creature world, both animal and human. In spatial forms they find

their physiognomical expression, in spatial movement their dynamic action. But there is also the complementary truth: even where no creature souls are visible—in the mineral and plant kingdoms and in the forming of cosmic Space as such—the creative souls of the World, the Divine artists, manifest their potent Thoughts in the forms of Nature. The time, I think, is drawing near when men will feel secure in saying this on scientific, not only on philosophical or religious, grounds. In the realm of atoms and electrons—remote in kind from the living forms which surround us—it dawns upon the modern physicist that the reality of the outer world is one of pure Thought-forms. This will be seen in a far more vital and realistic way—nearer to life, nearer to simple Nature—when the Ethereal is taken hold of by the scientific mind. For it is in this other kind of Space, quite obviously, that the creative process of living forms takes its start; one only fails to see it so long as one is unaware that this other kind of Space exists.

Hence in a living form the play of spaces filled and empty, the subtle variations of convex and concave, are the more in evidence, the more delicate and manifold the life of soul which creates it, or which is destined—as in animal and man—to indwell it. Also the more articulate will be the response of soul which it evokes when as an outward form it is seen and felt by another. The crudest forms of life are merely convex in their physical appearance. In a highly developed organism the physiognomically more expressive portions are those in which the forms are also hollowed out and concave. Compare the back and front of the human body. Where the soul finds evident expression there are concavities, from the obvious hollowings of the organs of sensation—ears, eyes, nose and mouth—to the most delicate modelling of feature. Of the latter we expect the more, the more articulate, the more rich in experience the soul.

Seen in its purely spatial, formal aspect, the play of convex and concave is far more subtle and varied than a naïve and crude geometry would imagine. It is not merely like the outside and inside of a cup. There are types of surface in which concave and convex are so closely interwoven that one cannot part them, from whichever aspect the surface is looked at<sup>2</sup>. Awareness of the significance of hollow forms is one of the most evident features of modern sculpture; it finds beautiful expression in many of Barbara Hepworth's works.

In the work of such a sculptor may be seen another sign of the imminent awakening of mankind to the creative realm of the Ethereal and Spiritual. It will be an awakening from the prolonged sleep of materialism, which when fulfilled will enable us to re-form our social life in the clear light of the Sun, not in the stuffy acquisitiveness of an opaque and earthy spatial feeling which only wants

to capitalize and fill its garner, ignorant that life is from the Heavens. Consciousness of the delicate formative forces to which the bodily life of each one of us is due will bring us nearer to the realm of childhood—to the true origins of mankind and Nature. In this direction scientific insight, artistic creation and religious feeling will find a common language.

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## THE TWO FACES OF MODERN ART

Richard Kroth

THE field of contemporary art presents a unique spectacle of deterioration in the cultural life of the present. This is reflected in the lack of understanding and comprehension on the part of the critic and the public alike. Up to the middle of the last century painting occupied a relatively sound position, firmly rooted in the concepts developed during the Renaissance. Overnight, so it seems, these concepts have been swept away—engulfed as in a great flood. One needs only to read current essays on art and reviews of exhibitions (such as the Biennale in Venice) to be reminded of the utter confusion of ideas on the part of the artist. In the realm of art, man has arrived at a state of chaos similar to the present condition of the world at large in the field of international relationships.

The critic is struck forcibly by the absence of a central point of view. He is confronted with works of art that range from the poetic to the fantastic—from the ludicrous to the demoniacal. The reviewer fails utterly in his efforts to explain the artist's message in clear, concise concepts. There are not adequate words to describe the kaleidoscopic imagery. The public, in general uninitiated and often frankly puzzled, may give up trying to understand the meaning of modern art. Some people fear their reactions will make them appear ignorant; while others begin to show signs of rebellion, refusing to be dragged into a further state of mystification. Many, because of their inability to judge, have looked to the critic for help. Failing this and without any knowledge, they largely trust their own inner reactions. In this present state of affairs one thing is certain; painting has reached a period marked by the absolute individualizing of personal experience. The situation is unique. It is a phenomenon which has never before appeared in the history of culture.

Art, as Rudolf Steiner expressed it, is the intangible made tangible. Throughout the ages art has always been the mirror of man's inner life. Man's artistic creations have reflected his inner experience of the physical and spiritual worlds.

Before the Renaissance, man's art largely reflected his connection with the Gods. Often this connection was of greater importance to him than his physical existence. With the Renaissance, human consciousness was drawn to the world of physical objects in a special way, by the introduction of perspective. Rigid, logical, mathematical concepts tore man out of an imaginative, two-dimensional, dream-like experience of nature, into a world of individual objects in space and time. He established himself as an individual among individual objects. This made it possible for him to view nature in light and

shade, and to experience inwardly the specific weight and gravity of objects.

All this was mirrored in art, culminating in the nineteenth century in realism. The world of outer nature, which man had previously experienced as qualitative in character (Gods, Angels, Demons, etc.), was gradually relegated to the realm of subjective inner experience; that which was experienced by the senses was seen through the structure of the cube. The cube was the basis of Renaissance art. The works of Leonardo, Dürer and Raphael show this clearly. Through perspective, man frees himself from the coercive qualities in nature and relegates them to a shadowy inner existence.

The division of subjective inner world and objective outer existence led to the mere copying of nature. Realism finally sounded the death knell of the art of the 18th and early 19th century academic painting. Structure based on three dimensions of perspective had come to serve as a hat-rack on which to hang a few colours. Painting was reduced to an imitation of the round, on a flat surface.

The revolution was to begin in the nineteenth century. Turner in England, having studied Goethe's *Farbenlehre*, began the search for a new experience of form, through the qualities of colour. Cézanne experimented with moving planes of colour. The Pointillists broke colour into its component parts, creating their delicate jigsaw puzzles. The urge to dissolve three-dimensional perspective into patterns of colour heralded the later so-called Cubists. Dürer had built his world out of the cube, culminating in the engraving, "Melancholia." Men such as Duchamp, Juan Gris and others were to destroy the cube in order to make way for new impulses. Creation was now in man's hands—no longer was he guided by mystery wisdom as in previous epochs. He stood alone, an individual seeing the world from his own particular inner experience. His view of nature in a three-dimensional aspect could lead only to solid form and death. Away with this imitation of nature! Let us re-create nature out of inner experience.

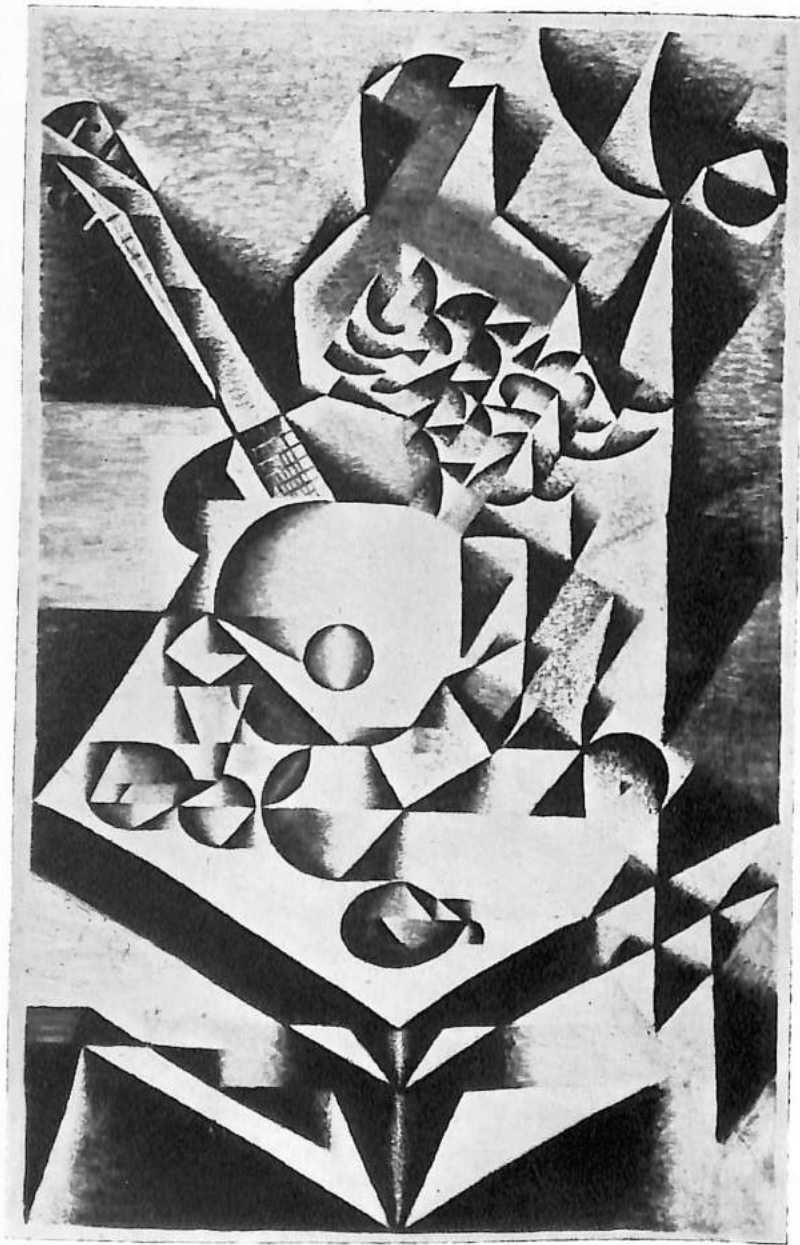
The subjective life offered vast and limitless material out of which new worlds could be created. The analytical schools of Freud and Jung were called to the aid of art. This led to a dual concept of man—the conscious and the unconscious.

Two distinct streams evolved after the turn of the century. First, the Cubists, who reordered their world on the basis of thought and mathematics. Secondly, the Surrealists, who pictured the world of dreams out of the unconscious.

The birth of Cubism occurred during the first world war and is directly traceable to the intellectual climate of France and Spain. This was fed by Mohammedan Aristotelianism, which in earlier epochs had produced the scientific atmosphere of Western Europe.



GIRL BEFORE MIRROR: Pablo Picasso  
Courtesy of Modern Museum of Art, New York.  
Gift of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim.



GUITAR AND FRUIT: Juan Gris

*Courtesy of Modern Museum of Art, New York,  
Anne Erickson Levene Bequest.*

Gertrude Stein, in her book on Picasso, characterises it well: "One can say that Cubism has a triple foundation. First. The nineteenth century having exhausted its need of having a model, because the truth that the things seen with the eyes are the only real things, had lost its significance." This keen observation echoes what Goethe had said earlier—that through sense-perception objects appear separately. Of course, Goethe added that reason and thought would re-establish the totality.

Again I quote Gertrude Stein: "Painting in the nineteenth century was done only in France and by Frenchmen. In the twentieth century it was done in France, but by Spaniards. For Picasso, a Spaniard, writing (calligraphy) is an art. Spaniards and Russians are a little oriental." It is here that Gertrude Stein sees very clearly the influx of Arabic culture into France through the Spanish intellectual soul stream. Calligraphy has in the Mohammedan culture a particular character and position. It serves first as a means of communication of ideas in symbols; secondly, as a means of expressing feelings in connection with these symbols through their beauty of form.

In Mohammedan religion it is forbidden to make images of Gods or nature. The soul-faculty of imagination is kept within the limits of abstract geometric decoration (arabesques) and calligraphic symbols. Naturalism through outer perception was never fostered in Arabic art. This led man away from an image-making experience of the outer world and made him a stranger in the world of nature.

Western art has always remained within the forms of nature. In Greek and Renaissance art even the Gods took on the image of man. Sensible and supersensible worlds were experienced in the forms of the world about us—whether in two dimensions or in imitation of the solid form. A connection with nature is the basis of all Christian art. In abstract art man gradually alienates himself from nature, from a qualitative experience of the outer world, and turns to the inner activity of thought and mathematics. Let me quote from the writings of Juan Gris: "The architectural side of painting is mathematics, that is abstraction—this I want to humanize. Cubism is not a technique, but an æsthetic principle; one can discover a technique by itself, but one does not discover out of nothing a way to æsthetic principles. It must be inspired by a time-spirit." This reveals much that lies in the duality of the Spanish nature. First abstraction, a pure thought activity, which if carried to its ultimate in art would lead to a dead-end of colourless form. A striking example of this is the work of the Dutch painter, Piet Mondrian.

But Juan Gris, a Spaniard, wished instinctively to imbue his work with feeling, with the quality of human love. This is the other side of Spanish soul-life. This duality may be seen as a

modern problem of man's soul-life in the West as a whole. Since mathematical abstraction produces a cold picture, Juan Gris tried to add warmth and love to his works, in order to make them aesthetically palatable.

In Surrealism we have the other tendency of soul, namely, to deny logical thought. André Breton, the spokesman for this movement, first characterized its aims in his *Manifeste du Surréalisme: Poisson Soluble* (Paris, Simon Kra, 1924).<sup>1</sup> The intention was to restore meaning to words and objects through new associations, springing from the unconscious mind. The Surrealists create out of their visionary dream-worlds, in self-induced states of mediumship, without consciousness or responsibility. Sometimes the images they release are pure personal biography; these images cannot be understood and are of no importance to anyone but themselves. Breton tells us that Greece and Rome had not undergone the moral repression brought about by Christianity. They knew, he says, the marvellous in the form of exceptional beauty, force and incest. Through Christian morality, the marvellous had become evil.

Joan Miro, another Spaniard, one of the exponents of Surrealism who worked in Paris and developed a calligraphic style, had this to say of his creation: "It is difficult for me to talk about my own painting. It is always conceived in a state of hallucination created by a shock—either subjective or objective—for which I am utterly irresponsible."

Salvador Dali, the Catalan who paints objective expansion in the third dimension, says: "These ideas, delirious at the time they are produced, present themselves as already systematized." Both these painters use the products of the dream as material for their images.

The Surrealists create out of what the metabolism dreams about the head. The abstract painters create out of what the head-organisation dreams about the metabolism.

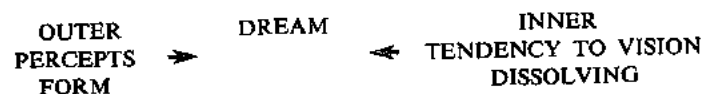
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As long ago as 1916 Rudolf Steiner gave warning of this situation in the arts and pointed to its cause and consequences. What man needs is not only a knowledge of his physical nature, but of his soul-spiritual nature as well. Man is not twofold. He is threefold—body, soul and spirit. Steiner pointed to the fact that historically we speak of original sin, but in art we may speak of two sins. One is the desire to paint the world as we see it, through our senses. This leads to illustration and not art. The other sin is to paint the

spiritual world. The former reproduces that which is already given by nature; the other leads to imagery that estranges man from this world, into the world of abstraction.

And yet man lives in two worlds, alternating between the physical quantitative measurable world of the senses and the world of the qualitative imponderable spirit. This alternation is accompanied by three states of consciousness: 1, The waking state; 2, the picture-consciousness of dreams; 3, the state of unconscious deep sleep. During man's waking day his consciousness is separated from the world of spirit; at night, in deep sleep, his consciousness is separated from the world of physical things and is extinguished. The dream-life is that semi-conscious state between quantitative physical and qualitative spiritual worlds, pictorially experienced in sympathy and antipathy. This dream-world appears most often disordered and chaotic. Into this world of art, man must bring his waking consciousness. This is a problem for modern art, as well as for men in general. The lack of self-consciousness in the soul-life of the artist of to-day is evident in the contents of our contemporary galleries and museums. The tremendous depths of our soul-life are as yet little understood.

The impulse to visions lies in the depths of the soul. A healthy soul-life, however, does not allow these visions to arise; otherwise man would live in continuous hallucinations. What happens normally is that the vision tendency from below meets the percepts from outside, so that the pictorial form is given from the outer world. This is one foundation for artistic creation.



There is yet another path to artistic experience—namely, the experience of death—that is, of a lower member dying in order that a higher member may be born. Goethe was aware of this process in nature, and in his theory of metamorphosis it is the underlying principle. Goethe saw the complete plant growth from seed to seed as a leafing process of expansion and contraction, in which the limiting power of each successive leaf made room for the next—culminating in the highest form of leaf and flower. If this tendency of death or limiting did not act upon the leafing or growth process in nature, if the growth process went on unheeded, chaos would reign in the plant world. A lower form must die in nature before a higher one can come to birth. This is the secret of things appearing separated in nature.

If we look at the threefold human being from this standpoint, it may help us to understand something of the riddle of man and art. If we carefully observe the human head-organisation which is the

<sup>1</sup> See Breton's pamphlet, *What is Surrealism?*, published in English by Faber in 1936.

seat of man's nerve-sense activity, we must come to the realisation that the concept-forming process is a limiting, enclosing activity, bringing an image to consciousness. This is aided by the soul-activity of antipathy. Here we have the intellectual, non-coercive thinking. This thought-activity is part of the death-process in man. If it were allowed its own unhindered activity, man would ossify inwardly. In art, this one-sided approach tends to abstraction and leads ultimately to pure decorative, geometric symbols.

At the opposite pole from the head-activity man has his metabolic limb-system, whose function is the changing of substances into life-forces. This region is the centre of man's unconscious will-life, out of which the forces and tendencies of coercive visions continually arise. This is a dissolving force and would lead men out of normal physical life into dissolution. But—as has been already indicated—these visionary forces are normally met by percepts in the soul-life, through the action of our self-consciousness (the ego); thus the balance between inner subjective and outer objective world is maintained.

If, through hypnosis, illness or the use of drugs the ego is weakened or dimmed, then the dissolving visionary forces rise out of the deeper layers of the will-life as coercive living images and penetrate the normally quiescent sense-perceptions of man. The senses then take on the character of metabolic processes in the visual field. Man is then led to hallucinations and madness. The results of these hallucinations fill our galleries and museums.

The public, in seeking nourishment for the inner soul-life, has little choice and alternative. People are exposed to these images of soul-illness, without the ability to protect themselves. The solution lies with the artist. He is morally obliged to educate his soul and spiritual life to a state in which he may become the conscious speech-organ for the spirit of his time. Steiner spoke of this need of our time. It is necessary to practise a modern Goetheanism, a knowledge of which will lead man to an awareness of the qualitative dynamics in the world of colour. This is the world of the painter.

Rudolf Steiner asks man to give heed to the needs of his time—namely, to develop higher faculties of self-consciousness above the normal twelve senses—the faculties of Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition. Then the danger of the soul-life falling apart will be lessened, and man will be able to create artistically out of his experience of nature.

## REFORMING THE CALENDAR— AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Walter Bühler

THE way in which whole ages and peoples have looked upon man and sought to give him his true place in the universe has always been reflected in their chronologies. In fact we can trace the development of consciousness in humanity itself through the various calendar reforms. Thus the repeated demand in our own time for changes in the calendar points to a new step in human consciousness. It is a step characteristic of this new age, with its intensified awareness of the sense-world and its conquest of matter in the spheres of natural science and technics. At the same time, the triumphant possibilities of the control of nature have given man, as a personality, far greater independence than he had in earlier times. This development has arisen primarily in the Western world and is definitely to be welcomed.

Yet it must not be overlooked that a heavy price has been paid—the loss of a wisdom-filled instinctive connection with the rhythms of nature, and the consciousness of the reality of the spiritual world, its beings and forces. These cannot be grasped by microscope, telescope or experiment, or by the intellect bound to the senses.

Nevertheless this modern thinking is now endeavouring to improve the calendar, which in a certain respect is undoubtedly in need of reform. The reformers imagine that they are concerned merely with the familiar inorganic, supposedly lifeless world of space and time, in which their way of thought has secured such undreamt-of triumphs. In reality, however, their calendar project is an encroachment upon the world of rhythms, the world of life itself, a fact which will become increasingly manifest in the course of future researches. This is still a young field of research, though its significance is already being recognised—through, for instance, the recent foundation of the International Society for Rhythm Research.

For some years now a plan for a reformed World Calendar has been very actively promoted and publicised by the World Calendar Association, with headquarters in New York and branches in many countries. The plan is expected to come before the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations during 1956.<sup>1</sup> It proposes

<sup>1</sup> The address of the World Calendar Association is International Building, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York 20, N.Y., U.S.A. Discussion of the plan was postponed at the meeting of the Economic and Social Council in May, 1955, because India, sponsor of the plan before the United Nations, reported that out of 80 Governments invited to submit their observations on it, only 30 had replied.

a fresh adjustment of the inter-related rhythms of day, week, month and year. It is fully justified in aiming at a greater equality in the length of the months and quarters, for here there are many deficiencies determined purely by chance, though explicable historically. Yet, at the same time, through an artificial standardisation, the position of each week is to be so placed in the year's course that for all future time the year, and every quarter of 91 days (=13 weeks), would begin on a Sunday, and—for example—the 10th of May would always fall on a Friday. This is a striking simplification which would certainly benefit commercial transactions, statistics, etc., but would break up and set aside the onward flow of the year's course, with its septenary rhythm of the week that gives each year an individual note.

Moreover, since 365, the number of the days in the year, is not exactly divisible by seven, a day would be left over every year, and this extra day would no longer be looked upon as a day of the week. Nothing could be more characteristic of the kind of thinking that ventures on such world problems than the way it extricates itself from this dilemma. This extra day, which would fall out of the rigid scheme and be artificially divorced afresh each year from the weekly rhythm that has endured for thousands of years—this day is to be made into a World Holiday, an international holiday! It would follow the last day of the year.

Such an arrangement cannot but deeply offend the Christian outlook; any religious feeling regards the true festivals of the year as necessarily rooted in spiritual realities. They cannot be created abstractly and arbitrarily. It is true that much conventionality has crept into our annual festivals, and as Christians we are open to reproach from those of other faiths. All the more, then, should we be awake to the spiritual substance that is present in the annual celebration of our Christian feasts and is authoritative for the cultural religious basis of the Christian world. All adventitious creating of new festivals, not based on spiritual reality, must tend to de-value the existing festivals. This applies of course equally well to those of other religious bodies, and leads us to hope that we may unite with their representatives in the most energetic rejection of this aspect of calendar reform. It is obvious that such a type of thought can have no understanding for the moveability of the Christian festivals, based as they are on the factors determining the date of Easter, with its spiritual background of cosmic rhythms.

Yet it must be recognised that in a humanity torn by dissension there lies a deep and justified longing for harmony, unity and friendliness among all peoples and individuals. A World Holiday certainly appears to meet such a longing, but in a deceptive way. Only those who fail to see through the deception can believe that any true

living force of unification can be found in the spirit of an abstract 365th accidental day of nullity, an artificially created vacuum which will certainly be replete with all manner of well-phrased proclamations and grandiose programmes on television and radio. Unity can be found only in the concrete Spirit. To strive for this Spirit cognitively, to find it in all present-day problems, will be one of the most urgent and outstanding future tasks of mankind.

The Christian, however, without wishing to be intolerant or dogmatic, looks towards the Risen One as precisely this sought-for Genius of humanity. And so no-one can demand that by an apparently tolerant acquiescence in the creation of new festivals, which a superficial intellect thinks it so simple to create, the Western Christian should himself renounce the branch through which flows the mainstream of our religious substance. This is in any case in danger of disappearing.

The situation becomes still more grotesque in the case of Leap Years. It is well-known that there is not an exact number of days in the length of the year (365.2424 days). There is a remainder of about 6 hours left over every year. This makes it necessary to lengthen every fourth year by the insertion of a day, which seems to be absorbed naturally by the weekly rhythms. It is only in a period of 33 years that the two rhythms—day and year—are contained with practically no remainder. Thus after 33 years the precise beginning of Spring occurs almost exactly at the same hour and minute of the equinox. With the new calendar, a second day would fall out of the week's rhythm in every leap-year. We cannot glean much comfort from the beautifully abstract intention of placing this day symmetrically at midsummer, so as not to disturb the equal quarters. We should not be surprised if the reformers announced it as a Super-World-Holiday, to be reserved in future as an inter-planetary festival for our awaited intercourse with the inhabitants of other planets. But enough of abstractions!

The draft of the calendar reform plan, upon which much thought and toil have certainly been expended for many years, has been submitted to all interested Governments. Most of these will consult with the representatives or institutions of commercial, cultural and religious life. Anyone competent to judge will feel that it is less a matter of the separate items—however important they may be—than of the *kind of thinking* upon which the reform is based.

This type of thinking is of course fully justified in the realms of the inorganic and of external organisation. In these realms we are indebted to it for all the progress of our civilisation. But in the shaping of social life it can work only destructively—unless it is transformed and developed further. In this realm its standards fall short. One often hears that mankind's moral progress has not

kept pace with technical advance. What needs to be recognised even more clearly, however, is that all the catastrophes of the present time are connected with the fact that the spirit-empty intellect is not qualified to deal with the organic, or with matters concerning the life of soul and spirit. Yet this very intellect deems itself qualified—or apparently even considers itself called upon—to solve all the problems arising in these spheres.

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In view of the complexity of the questions that can be asked, it may be useful to acquaint ourselves with the course of time and the rhythms of the cosmos on the one hand, and with those of the realms of life on the other.

In the human organism the heart counts as the centre of life. It is an organ living entirely in rhythm and creating out of rhythm, and it gives impulse and regularity to the circulation of the blood. With this the slower rhythm of the breath is inseparably connected, not rigidly with each pulse-beat, but in a flexible relationship. By now speeding up its rhythm and now slowing it down, the heart adjusts itself to action or to rest, to an outbreak of anger or an access of fear, to the alternating conditions of the life of body or soul. This power of expanding its rhythm shows the elasticity of the heart and expresses its sensitive relation to the whole, its vitality and health. To spare the heart the "inconvenience" of such an accommodating function and create a permanent norm for the length of a heart-beat—a fixed number of pulse beats per minute—would do this organ an ill service. It would debase the heart to a machine—though this has been done in any case by the type of thought which sees in the heart a mere pump.

In fact, if the heart suffers from cramp or calcifying of the heart-vessels, as in the so-called "executive's disease," it is in a condition of relative rigidity; its power of accommodation is diminished and it may be fatally endangered. On the other hand, if it misses a beat or beats too rapidly or too slowly, it is likewise ill. The doctor speaks of extra-systoles and has to clear up the cause of the disorder.

The fixing of the weekly rhythm in a rigid system of four equal quarters, while at the same time a day is abruptly withdrawn from the weekly rhythm and left by itself to be hung round with the garlands of an abstractly-devised festival—this procedure, judged in organic terms, is likewise equivalent to a disease-process. It springs from interference with the world of rhythms and would be possible only for a purely intellectual thinking, blind to the qualitative reality inherent in time, and to the rhythms of time which determine the conditions of the universe.

Seen from a higher level, it is by no means a matter of indifference that for thousands of years the social and spiritual organism

of humanity has swung in the seven-rhythm of the week, seeking harmony with the natural rhythm of the year and the cosmos. It is true that much spiritual work will be needed to raise into modern consciousness the underlying, more instinctive wisdom that prevails here.<sup>1</sup> Much, too, will be required to create a new understanding of the necessary moveability of the Easter festival and of the qualitative-archetypal element inherent in the nature of the cardinal numbers — an understanding which could still be fostered, for instance, in the Pythagorean schools. Only a completely materialistic thinking could straight away denounce every attempt of this kind as "mysticism" and "false occultism."

For Christian feeling, the days of the week reached a kind of archetypal fulfilment through the events of the Holy Week, and from this standpoint it is important that they should continue in unbroken sequence from the Sunday of the Resurrection. This continuity is an actuality in the spiritual sense and lends to each week-day, and more especially to Feast-Days, a real atmosphere. The genius of the Russian language reveals this mystery in calling Sunday *Woskresenje*, which means literally "Day of Resurrection." There is a deep meaning in the fact that the Resurrection did not occur on a Saturday, the Jews' Sabbath, or on, say a Tuesday. By what right may we remove one day of the year (in Leap-year, two) from the qualitative rhythm of the week? In so doing, we disturb or deny the reality of the week itself.

Modern intellect, schooled as it is in the dead world of matter, is in any case only capable of mechanising the calendar. It is convinced that it has found a really practical solution and has no idea that this is not merely unsuited to profound spheres of life and the world, but intervenes in them destructively.

A deeper knowledge of life recognises that what is justifiable, practical and good in one realm works destructively when extended to another. The regulating of time has a universal character. It must necessarily include all classes of mankind, all levels of life, and its reform demands a corresponding type of thought. If the human soul-life were merely the product of brain-chemistry and the organism were a complicated chemical-physical mechanism, then the proposed reform of the calendar would be in place.

To make the duration of consecutive rhythms absolutely equal, and to fix different rhythms reciprocally, resembles a death-process, and is indeed possible only in the realm of the lifeless. It is justifiable and necessary to mechanise a machine to the uniformity of clockwork, and one can of course interrupt the continuous action

<sup>1</sup> See also the author's article in the *Kalendar*, 1956, of the Mathematical-Astronomical Section of the Goetheanum, Dornach (Switzerland), *Kalenderreform und Wochenrhythmus*.

of a vacuum cleaner, a pump, or motor-bicycle at any time and for any length of time. But neither in the human organism nor in the planetary system is this possible.

In fact, such mechanising exists nowhere in the cosmos, even if at first all phenomena seem to admit of mechanical interpretations. The machine is an earthly phenomenon, an invention of man, and is a genuinely new creation in the universe. All planetary rhythms are elastic, mutually incommensurable, and flow past one another. Through their ever-varying encounter they create a continuously metamorphosing web of time.

For instance, the January full moon falls on a different day of the month every year, for the synodical moon-cycle is not contained exactly twelve times in the course of the year. Only after 19 years does the full moon occur again on the same day in *almost* exactly the same spot in the constellation of Gemini. Thus a distinctive 19 years' rhythm is woven into the course of the year, and this substantially affects the fixing of the date of Easter. The Greek, Meton, discovered this and used it for reforming the lengths of the months.

Nor does the sun stand at every midday (12 o'clock local time) exactly in the south, as the layman might expect; it does so only four times in the year. Yet its daily varying modifications, its "gaining and losing", which can amount to a quarter-of-an-hour, point to a deeper law. The 365 sun-positions at noon — photographed as it were on a plate — do not give the picture of an ascending-descending direct line, but of a lemniscate, as is still shown on old sundials. Hence our clocks, measured by the daily encounter of sun and earth, are all wrong! They are certainly exact, but as dead mechanism they are not elastic enough to reproduce the true interplay of sun and earth as the apparently primitive sundial alone can do.

Nor are the seasons all of the same length: they expand in the summer half of the year, which is seven days longer, and contract in the winter half. Thus a hidden elasticity of acceleration and retardation breathes through every rhythm.

Natural scientists, especially astronomers and physicists, have made the startling and magnificent discovery that in the structure of both macrocosm and microcosm irrational numbers and ratios belong to the very groundwork of the universe. In fact, many decisive technical achievements of the age would not have been possible without the mathematical mastery of irrational numbers. For this reason the modern natural scientist, if he thinks in terms of the universe, should least of all agree to a standardisation of the calendar. For he knows that one of the most important phenomena of cosmic rhythm is that in no single case are the ratios of the basic rhythms mutually commensurable, as they would be in some standardised arrangement. Precisely through this irrationality a wealth

of new conjunction-rhythms (the so-called rhythms of precession) arise in the cosmos, which lend to celestial phenomena the character of activity and life. At the same time each separate rhythm—e.g., a day or a year—in its interplay with the others gains a fresh individual character of its own. We must wait, for instance, for our 19th or 33rd birthday in order to see our birth-constellation in the sky, with the moon or sun more or less exactly where they were, respectively, at the hour of our birth.

The modern calendar-reformer who confronts the cosmos must inevitably consider it—judged by his standards—as working with quite excessive complexity, and in particular need of reform. If he were given full powers, he would first fix the exact length of the year, so that leap-years would be superfluous. He would consider it unimportant, or perhaps even desirable, that the 33-year reciprocal rhythm between sun and earth — mentioned above — would disappear. He would deal similarly with the revolution of the moon—that is, he would so regularise it that the full moon fell always on the same day of the month or at the same place in the heavens. The 19-year and many other moon-periods would drop out, and the trouble of making new calculations would be avoided for evermore. In his cosmic "spring-cleaning" the reformer would certainly determine the revolutions of Jupiter and Mars in such a way that the conjunctions and oppositions of the two planets would always take place at the same time in the Jupiter year or at the same spot in the heavens. How would the planetary system react to this simplification, this "improved, practical re-organisation", which astronomically would mean setting aside the incommensurability of the rhythms? The system would fall to pieces in chaos.

The heavens themselves provide the proof. Astronomers have discovered many thousands of planetoids between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. On closer investigation it soon appeared that in the great swarm there were peculiar gaps which at first were inexplicable. These gaps lie from time to time on the spot where the revolution-period of the planetoids forms exactly one-half, one-third or one-quarter of Jupiter's period of revolution. An intellect bent on schematising the rhythms, and wishing to dispose the planetoids as clearly as possible in the Jupiter revolution period and bring them in to a mathematical picture, would have to shift them precisely into these vacant places. This way of thinking, however, would come into blatant contradiction with the actual conditions! Oswald Thomas, for example, writes (the words in square brackets are my own comments):

If a planetoid at—for instance—every second, third or fourth revolution, synchronises with the half, third or fourth part of Jupiter's revolution period, and comes between Sun and Jupiter [just as the earth at full moon stands between Sun and Moon, heightening under certain circumstances the

ordinary tide to spring tide], and repeats this same position throughout very long periods, then even the slightest disturbing influence of the major planet [which in fact exists every time] can gradually accumulate in such a way as to throw the planetoid out of its orbit.<sup>1</sup>

The result would be the same as in the case of a bridge under the mechanically regulated marching-in-step of a troop of soldiers: the vibrations of the bridge may be so intensified that it breaks up.

Who does not shudder to realise that the very type of thought that now wants to reorganise the time-rhythm of the calendar—which after all means mankind's relations with the cosmos—would plunge the planetary system into chaos if it could intervene there? Can we entrust ourselves to a reform whose bad effects would similarly "accumulate" through long stretches of time in the organism of humanity?

Mankind is embedded in a wonderful framework of flexible cosmic rhythms which Kepler still experienced as *harmonices mundi*. If men are inclined to accept the new calendar, they should at least be conscious that with this new regulation of time they will be setting themselves in opposition to all that shines down to them archetypally from the rhythms of the planetary-cosmic periphery. Men have the choice of a calendar that deludes them with the image of a dead world-mechanism, or one that seeks an arrangement of time in accord with a cosmos still able to bring forth from itself living beings, ensouled and spiritually conscious.

The pulsation of earthly life follows the rhythms of cosmic time. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that man, as the crown of creation, owes his independence and his consciousness of freedom precisely to being released from the rhythms of nature. This separation-process is stronger in him than in any other being and is what enables him to attain to egohood and personality. Yet the acceptance of this isolation, the last consequence of which is death, should not lead us to aggravate it.

With the lighting-up of the ego-consciousness and its concentration in independent thought, man's former faculties had to fade away, and with them the light of the spiritual world—as the stars fade by day. But in our age the spiritual nature of the cosmos must gradually be grasped again if the evolution of mankind is not to suffer untold harm. In fact, the calendar reform is an important touchstone on this path. The particular way in which it is dealt with will become a landmark in evolution for centuries, perhaps millennia, to come. *The regulation of time is an element of social-cultural life from which no one can exclude himself*; it continuously influences the thought and feeling of individuals and nations, consciously and unconsciously penetrating into the forming of the will.

<sup>1</sup> Oswald Thomas, *Astronomie*, 3rd ed., p. 265.

If men continue to deny or reject the Spirit, they are in danger of losing the most precious fruit of human evolution—the maturity of ego-conscious creative individuality. Levelling, standardising, centralising and mechanising in various spheres of life threaten to carry still further the driving out of the ego. Persons in responsible positions should therefore consider the calendar-reform plan against the whole spiritual background of the age. They will then recognise that the more or less unconscious influence which would be exercised by the mechanising of the time-rhythms would contribute in its own way to the *de-souling of man and civilisation*—that is, it would serve the opposing-spirit of the age. It now depends upon us all whether we are to accept this calendar-reform plan—a veritable writing-on-the-wall—as an ever-active additional element in the downfall of our civilisation.

It is assuredly a magnificent, if somewhat horrifying, spectacle to observe how the same western civilisation which regards circulatory disturbance—an illness of the rhythmic system—as the foremost illness of our time, can yet in the sphere of music split up the septenary rhythms of the octave into atonality, and dissolve the sevenfold colour of the rainbow into the meaningless grey of dead wave-lengths. The same age, through the artificial splitting of the atom, intervenes disturbingly in the septenary rhythms of the periodic system of the elements—a system brought into order, as though by the influence of the harmony of the spheres, to serve as the spatial-material foundation of the world. Must not one expect that this same age will also, as an "iron consequence of progress", disturb the septenary rhythms of time? Who does not recognise here the evil genius of the age, rising from the abyss as the negating spirit of chaos itself, with the device: Everything that comes into being deserves to be destroyed!

No-one who is alive to this situation and rejects the proposed reform should be afraid of being considered behind the times, naïve, or bound by tradition. In fact, all who view the future evolution of mankind with conscious responsibility must feel obliged to reject the mechanisation of the year and the fixing of moveable feasts.

In spite of the continued momentum of materialism, the real age of a merely quantitative materialistic world-outlook, dominated by logical analysis, is over. The present age is pressing forward into virgin territory in every sphere, and not only in the world-conception of physics. It is striving to find the path to a grasp of the qualitative and a concrete experience of the Spirit. Biology is advancing towards dynamic interpretations based on the *whole*. Medicine, which fifty years ago thought that all illnesses could be explained externally and looked on the human being as a machine, is developing psychosomatic diagnosis and psychotherapeutical

methods of healing. Social life in every continent is looking for new forms.

In view of all these progressive tendencies of the age, a calendar-reform that would mechanise the course of the year can only be called retrograde. It would be a hindrance to all healthy progress. It belongs to a type of thought sprung from the past, a kind of one-sided thinking that, in spite of its greatness, must be overcome from now on. *This calendar-reform is not in keeping with the true spirit of the age.* Mankind grows and develops, and the spirit of the age summons us to the transformation of our consciousness, to new forms of thought.

Those who understand the signs of the times must demand a calendar-reform based on a new thinking, one that grasps the life and spirit of the cosmos. Only such a thinking can produce a more living calendar which will take into account the entire human being, and not be one-sidedly directed to the fields of industry and commerce. The calendar of the future must find the golden mean between catering for the needs of independent earthly life and inclining to a unison with the rhythms of the surrounding universe. Only a calendar that mirrors the totality of the cosmos will be truly practical, because it will be founded on reality.

*Translated by Mabel Cotterell.*

## DRAMATIC POETRY AND A COSMIC SETTING

Roy Walker

**P**OETRY is like a needle that constantly flickers towards a magnetic north that I will name, for want of a better word, peace. It is searching for or celebrating creative harmony at many levels, and proclaiming the interdependence of those different levels of harmony. I sometimes talk about a three-fold harmony: peace of mind, peace with mankind, peace with nature. In our own time the first two of these three terms mean something to most people, and the last does not. A few years ago I wrote and compiled a book called *The Golden Feast*, in which I tried to show what peace with nature had meant to most of the great poets in the Western tradition from Orpheus to Rilke, and how inseparable it seemed to them, at their moments of inspiration, from the two other sorts of peace.

I am inclined to think now that my three-fold harmony was still a worm's-eye view; or at any rate that the notion of peace with nature should be vastly expanded to include not only earth but the heavens. I first became aware of this extra dimension in writing and lecturing about Shakespeare and listening to his plays in the theatre. For the 1955 *Shakespeare Survey* I wrote an essay on "The Celestial Plane in Shakespeare," which explains my general notion. But once I began to move in this dimension of Shakespearian poetry, I soon became aware that the same thing was present in the other great poets of the past and also, to some extent, in those of our own time. So I am hoping to complete a book to be called *Star of Poets*, which will be mainly but not solely a study of Shakespeare. It will try to do for the poets' sense of harmony with heaven what *The Golden Feast* tried to do in the way of presenting the poets' intuitive vision of harmony on earth, harmony with nature. But under the conditions of modern civilization it is harder, I think, to make the celestial poetry real to the reader than it is to do the same for the terrestrial poetry.

In this essay I want to begin from where we are now. I think Simone Weil gives me the right starting-point in her book, *The Need for Roots*:

A lot of people think that a little peasant boy of the present day who goes to primary school knows more than Pythagoras did, simply because he can repeat that the earth moves round the sun. In actual fact, he no longer looks up at the heavens. This sun about which they talk to him in class hasn't for him the slightest connection with the one he can see. He is severed from the universe surrounding him.

Even—or even more—if he is a little city boy, who grows up and goes to a university and learns about the modern scientific conception of the universe and the possibilities of inter-planetary travel in the not too distant future, he is still severed from the universe, or at any rate from the universe of direct experience and poetic intuition.

It would be childish, in the bad sense, to question the accuracy of the scientific picture of the universe merely because it is alien and incomprehensible to us. But it is a picture we cannot live with, and without a picture we cannot live. Arnold Toynbee, in an article in *The Observer* (6th March, 1955) put the point very clearly:

The concept of the will of 'God' is a controversial one: people brought up on Indian or Chinese religions and philosophies would formulate the same concept in terms different from Judaism's, Christianity's and Islam's. But they would agree that we cannot fight our moral battle without seeing it in a cosmic setting. This is not simply a question of its being convenient for us to fabricate a cosmic setting for ourselves because this will help us to be rather better than, without it, we could manage to be. A picture of the cosmos, inspiring a feeling about the cosmos as we see it, is, in one word, religion: and we cannot help having a religion, even if we do not want to have one. Without a religion, it is not possible to be a live human being, any more than this is possible without muscles and bones and arteries. . . . Fanaticism is a singularly inappropriate and unfortunate spirit to fall into when we are making our indispensable picture of the cosmos, and forming the feelings that we are bound to have about this picture when we have made it. For the picture, though our lives hang upon it, is a gossamer web suspended in Infinity.

I hope the preceding quotations fairly and acceptably indicate our own position, and the predicament that faces modern poets who may be visited by intuitions of cosmic harmony. The remarkable thing is that some of the poets remain undaunted. But before we turn to our contemporaries, let us look back briefly, by way of contrast, to the Elizabethan period—the last period in our history when both poets and their audiences took for granted the relevance of a cosmic setting to human actions and historical events. It is a significant period also because we find in it both a general acceptance of this relevance and the beginnings of a scepticism which later, as the new scientific outlook took shape, was to become itself general and dominant.

The Elizabethan background has been much studied in the last two decades and there are several notable books about it. The Americans were first in the field with Hardin Craig's *The Enchanted Glass* and A. O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* in

the middle thirties, followed in 1942 by Theodore Spencer's more specifically Shakespearian study, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man*. After these came a much shorter study, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, by E. M. W. Tillyard, of Cambridge, and there has recently been a special study of *The Star-Crossed Renaissance* by D. C. Allen. From Tillyard we can extract three fundamental ideas which I will try to outline.

These are the notions of Order, of the Great Chain of Being, and of the Corresponding Planes. They are really three different aspects of the same idea. There is order in the universe, order in human society and order in the individual. This order is hierarchical; it can be seen as one continuous ascending scale from the humblest object in Nature up to the Godhead, forming a single great chain of being. But different sections of this chain may also be seen as corresponding planes: the true order in the individual is the pattern of the true order of society and both correspond to the order of the universe. This is the aspect of the Elizabethan outlook that is essential to our present discussion. For a disturbance on one of the corresponding planes coincides with a disturbance of the same kind upon the others; it is simultaneously a disturbance of the soul, of society and among the stars. The great storm in the heavens is the equivalent of the great storm in the mind of Lear, and also of the chaos that has followed his abdication of the royal function of maintaining true order in his realm. But the most famous and comprehensive Shakespearian exposition of this concept is in Ulysses' great speech on order in "*Troilus and Cressida*":

The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre,  
Observe degree, priority and place,  
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,  
Office and custom, in all line of order;  
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol  
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered  
Amidst the other; whose medicinable eye  
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,  
And posts like the commandment of a king.  
Sans check to good and bad; but when the planets  
In evil mixture to disorder wander,  
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,  
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,  
Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors,  
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate  
The unity and married calm of states  
Quite from their fixure! O, when degree is shaken,  
Which is the ladder of all high designs,  
The enterprise is sick!

Now once we have grasped this conception of order and the

corresponding planes, two things become reasonably obvious, although there is still little enough evidence that they have been fully realised by academic Shakespearian commentators. The first is that, in cases where the terrestrial action of a Shakespearian play may seem to a modern mind to be open to more than one possible interpretation, if we read aright the signs in the heavens we shall probably be no longer in doubt as to how Shakespeare's audience received, and were meant to receive, these passages. The celestial imagery works in Shakespeare's plays, which are a small model of the universe, even if a modern audience cannot bring itself to believe that thunderstorms and eclipses have any human significance outside the theatre. The book I hope to complete will apply this test to all the plays in turn, and I believe that the quantity of such celestial imagery in Shakespeare may surprise even those who are familiar with the card-index cataloguing by Caroline Spurgeon, the image-cluster psychology of Armstrong, the dominant-image criticisms and the freer imaginative methods of Wilson Knight.

The second general deduction we can safely make is that the imagery in Shakespeare is often far more systematically integrated than most modern readers are likely to guess. A particular earthly image will be used because it corresponds to a particular image in the heavens, and this is sometimes taken to the point where an earthly character is exalted after death to his rightful place among the stars of the heavens, just as in Dante's *Paradiso*.

To test the first point, we will look at "Julius Caesar." This is a play that our own recent political experiences and dislike of dictatorship make us particularly prone to misinterpret. Following the example of Orson Welles, London has had productions in which Caesar is a dictator who dies at the hands of Blackshirts. Even Dover Wilson finds that "the play's theme is the single one, Liberty versus Tyranny", and he works in a dishonourable mention of Napoleon, the Fuehrer, and the General Secretary of the Communist Party. For Dover Wilson, this is a play about a Bad Dictator and Good Liberators, which is unfortunate because the play indubitably shows the ultimate triumph of Tyranny!

To show you just how far his judgment has been influenced by current events, we may contrast this reading of "Julius Caesar" with that of MacCallum, some forty years earlier, in the only full-length study of the three major Roman plays. "Shakespeare makes it abundantly clear," MacCallum wrote, "that the rule of the single master-mind is the only admissible solution for the problem of the time." Which view is right? Let us look briefly at some of the early scenes from our own special point of view.

In the second scene, where Cassius is trying to incite Brutus against Caesar, he speaks the two famous lines:

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

These are universally regarded as a glorious affirmation of creative free-will, and that, no doubt, is more or less what Cassius meant; he is the sceptic in this context. Yet it is precisely in ignoring the stars that Cassius and Brutus bring disaster upon Rome and on themselves. The next scene opens with *Thunder and lightning*, and the heavens dropping fire. The earth shakes. Casca, who has been moved to join in the plot to assassinate Caesar, is terrified:

Either there is a civil strife in heaven,  
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,  
Incenses them to send destruction.

Soon Cassius comes in, with his fatal defiance of the heavens:

For my part, I have walk'd about the streets,  
Submitting me unto the perilous night,  
And thus unbraced, Casca, as you see,  
Have bared my bosom to the thunder-stone;  
And when the cross-blue lightning seem'd to open  
The breast of heaven, I did present myself  
Even in the aim and very flash of it.

Casca exclaims what every Elizabethan would feel at that speech:

But wherefore did you so much tempt the heavens?

In Shakespeare, no-one—hero or villain, Romeo or Edmund—defies the heavens and survives the play! Caesar himself, after first correctly interpreting the convulsions in the skies as threatening himself, is lured by a deliberately false construction on these phenomena to go to the Capitol, and his doom.

Even so brief an examination surely disposes us to say, as Casca does in the storm scene already quoted:

When these prodigies  
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say  
"These are their reasons; they are natural;"  
For, I believe, they are portentous things  
Unto the climate that they point upon.

And that Shakespeare meant them to be so is further proven by Horatio's speech in "Hamlet," probably the next play Shakespeare wrote, about the signs in the heavens before Caesar's fall and the similar omens that now foreshadow like disaster in Denmark. Moreover, this note is struck at the very beginning of the play. No audience today feels what Shakespeare's audience felt in the first scene when Bernardo says:

Last night of all,  
When yond same star that's westward from the pole  
Had made its course to illumine that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one—

and breaks off as, their eyes turning back to earth, they see the Ghost again before them. And in the same scene Horatio's speech about the celestial omens in Cæsar's Rome, and now again in Elsinore, is the cue for the second entrance of the Ghost:

As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:  
And even the like precursor of fierce events,  
As harbingers preceding still the fates  
And prologue to the omen coming on,  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climates and countrymen.

*Re-enter GHOST*

The image of the ominous sign in the heavens recurs in Hamlet's speech which is the cue to his first encounter with the Ghost,

Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,

and when he has heard the Ghost's terrible revelation, his first cry is

O all you host of heaven!

For a moment the stars are transfigured for him into the shining presence of the spirits who look down on earth and condemn the foul crime against order.

So far we have mainly seen the correspondence between the signs of disorder in the heavens and the signs of disorder in society when a king or emperor has been assassinated. I could go on to give examples—but there is no room for them here—of correspondences between disorder in the heavens and disorder in the souls of men, most notably Macbeth. Shakespeare himself is of course ever-present and ever-elusive in the plays. Even in the Sonnets, where we might have hoped to catch him in true character, we may take our own choice between the sentiments of two succeeding poems:

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck;  
And yet methinks I have astronomy,  
But not to tell of good or evil luck,  
Of plagues, of dearths, or season's quality:  
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,

Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind.  
Or say with princes if it shall go well,  
By oft predict that I in heaven find . . .

whereas in the very next sonnet he can write:

That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows  
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment.

So we may leave the Elizabethan age with this characteristic example of its mingled attitudes—the traditional acceptance of a cosmic setting and the new scepticism side by side. To-day we have something like the reverse: the scepticism has become traditional and any challenge to it ranks as eccentric. Yet there is some evidence that modern poets, while they are mostly unable to believe in the relevance of a cosmic setting to human affairs, still feel a need to use its language, however doubtful it may be whether their audience will respond. Before proceeding to a few examples, I should say that I am taking these only from dramatic poets who have written for the stage. The whole field of modern poetry would certainly yield more and better examples, but it is too wide a realm for me to explore here.

In T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, the enigmatic psychiatrist chants:

Let them build the hearth  
Under the protection of the stars

and one of his helpers adds:

May the holy ones watch over the roof,  
May the Moon herself influence the bed.

One may well ask what these lines mean to the poet himself, and what they are expected to convey to an audience, except perhaps for a few scattered students of esotericism.

Christopher Fry's *Venus Observed* is lightly explicit, though here again we are made to ask how seriously or in what sense the poet wishes to be taken. Reedbeck says admiringly of the heroine, his daughter Perpetua:

She really makes me  
Respectful of astrology; it must  
Have been the arrangement of stars she was born under.  
It couldn't have been all me and her mother. Why,  
I couldn't even dream so beautifully,  
Let alone propagate. It must have been  
The state of the zodiac when she was conceived.  
But even so, I was there, and that in itself  
Is remarkable.

Claudel's *Partage de Midi* relies for its climax on a combination of celestial symbols. The action moves to China, and for the hero's

last long soliloquy the back-drop of the Confucian temple is raised to reveal a star-studded sky. Hero and heroine stand with raised hands, fingers outspread in star pattern and, as the programme tells us, "the curtain falls on these two souls henceforward intertwined like a two-fold star."

None of these modern poets grapples directly with the modern scientific view of the universe. Perhaps it is because the American dramatist Maxwell Anderson did so, at the end of his impressive play *Winterset*, that his affirmation is in many ways the most moving:

On this star,  
in this hard star adventure, knowing not  
what the fires mean to right and left, nor whether  
a meaning was intended or presumed,  
man can stand up, and look out blind, and say;  
in all these turning lights I find no clue,  
only a masterless night, and in my blood  
no certain answer, yet is my mind my own,  
yet is my heart a cry towards something dim  
in distance, which is higher than I am  
and makes me emperor of the endless dark  
even in seeking!

All I wish to suggest here is that these few passages I have brought together bear out Arnold Toynbee's contention that a "picture of the cosmos" is "indispensable"—to the poets of all ages, anyway—and that he is also right in saying that we are bound to have feelings about that picture. I also think that as our vision becomes more accustomed to seeing that picture in the different colours and shapes in which the poets paint it for us from age to age, we shall come to recognize that it is a picture of the same reality, of a harmony to which human harmonies are somehow akin.

The dominance of scientific concepts and terminology in our own century has greatly damaged our ability to share these poetic intuitions, and has thereby impoverished our experience of poetry at all levels. To appreciate Shakespeare, for instance, we need to make ourselves aware of the omnipresent celestial plane, and of its infinite inter-relations with all the other planes of the poetry. In doing so we shall, I believe, be made aware not of any crudely deterministic astrology but of spiritual forces simultaneously at work on all levels, which find their primal expressions in the great range of images of the darkness and the light. We shall understand why, in Calderon's *The Great Theatre of the World*, which is being acted again in our time, the stars are woven in the cloak of God.

## A NOTE ON MR. WALKER'S ARTICLE

Charles Waterman

SINCE Mr. Walker (who is not an anthroposophist) has kindly asked me to comment quite freely on his article, I will say that it seems to me to illustrate something a little different from what was perhaps his purpose. How rich was the Elizabethan age in the cosmic setting of its poetry; how poor is our own! No doubt one could collect some other examples of cosmic and stellar imagery and allusions in contemporary dramatic poets; and if the lyric poets were included, a good many further examples might be found. It could be shown how one great poet, Yeats, was impelled to work out a most elaborate cosmic setting (expounded in that recondite prose volume, *A Vision*) for his later poetry, so that such famous poems as *Sailing to Byzantium* or *The Second Coming* are not fully intelligible unless one knows roughly what he means by "gyre." But I think it remains true that nearly all modern poets take for granted the ordinary scientific conception of the stars and the "heavens" as utterly remote and impersonal, having no connection with human feelings and actions. Of the three "fundamental ideas" mentioned by Mr. Walker—Order, the Great Chain of Being, and the Corresponding Planes—only that of Order remains:

He reached a middle height, and at the stars,  
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank;  
Around the ancient track marched rank on rank  
The army of unalterable law.

And even the spectacle of this Order, which daunted Meredith's Lucifer, is more liable to chill than to inspire the heart of modern man. He usually takes it to be part of the vast general impersonality—Housman's "heartless, witless nature"—which surrounds the trivial episode, or accident, of human life on earth.

Hence I feel that what Mr. Walker's article chiefly illustrates is not how much remains of the old conceptions, but how much has been lost. And it has been lost because of the change in human consciousness since Elizabethan times—that narrowing, and sharpening, of the focus which has produced the modern scientific outlook. The change is of course not generally described in these terms; what is usually supposed to have happened is that man has emancipated himself at last from old superstitions and vaguely mythical ways of thought, and has acquired for the first time a capacity to see and investigate the world as it objectively is. Hence the change is generally thought to be sheer gain (and in some ways it is a gain and a necessary one). But by poets it is very often *felt* as a loss, an impoverishment, though they may not always recognise this quite

consciously and may strive to adapt their poetry to the demands of a scientific-technological epoch.

Some poets, however, do recognise it consciously—most notably, perhaps, Walter de la Mare. A recurrent theme in his poetry is this haunting feeling of banishment from a state of consciousness (often related to that of a child) which gave entry to a world of imaginative apprehensions through a door now all but closed. While reflecting on Mr. Walker's article I was reminded of de la Mare's curious short poem, *Maerchen*:<sup>1</sup>

Soundless the moth-flit, crisp the death-watch tick;  
Crazed in her shaken harbour bird did sing;  
Slow wreathed the grease adown from soot-clogged wick:  
The Cat looked long and softly at the King.  
  
Mouse frisked and scampered, leapt, gnawed, squeaked;  
Small at the window looped cowed bat a-wing;  
The dim-lit rafters with the night-mist reeked:  
The Cat looked long and softly at the King.  
  
O wondrous robe enstarred, in night dyed deep;  
O air scarce stirred with the Court's far junketing:  
O stagnant Royalty—A-swoon? Asleep?  
The Cat looked long and softly at the King.

I do not know what all the phrases in these stanzas mean, but the poem gives me a vivid impression of something that might be described (though rather too definitely) as "how the cosmos looks to the Consciousness Soul." Here we have a run-down, unattended dwelling, and, outside, the starry heavens, the "cosmic setting"—but the Divine Presences have left it and are now very far away. Only an image of Royalty remains, and at this the sharp intelligence of the Cat gazes questioningly, calculatingly.

This encounter seems to me to suggest the condition of the Consciousness Soul, the state reached by man when his ego has come to the deepest point of incarnation and he looks at nature as at a riddle, no longer aware of a spiritual world within it and wondering whether *anything* lies behind the semblance he perceives. He wishes to turn nature to his own advantage; and perhaps there is nothing to stop him.

Equally, the poem suggests to me that corresponding state of the cosmos which Rudolf Steiner called the state of "accomplished work", when "in the outwardly apparent universe no longer the Divine itself is there, but only the forms of the Divine." (*Leading Thoughts*, XXXVIII). In the accompanying *Letter to the Members* (English edition, no. VI) Dr. Steiner expanded this:

Man, during his life now in the physical sphere between birth and death, has all round him a world which is no longer directly the workings of Divine Spirit, but only something left behind from those workings—what one can only call the *accomplished work* of Divine Spirit. In its forms, this accomplished work is altogether of a divinely spiritual kind. The Divinity manifests itself to human perception in the forms, the natural processes, of this divinely wrought world. But Divinity is no longer within it as a living presence.

These words may well seem very puzzling, for we are also given to understand that Beings of the Hierarchies are constantly active in nature and in the human organism. One might wonder whether throughout this passage Dr. Steiner is describing the world, not as it truly is, but as it "manifests itself to human perception" in the Consciousness Soul epoch; but this interpretation is hard to reconcile with the last sentence—"Divinity (*das Göttliche*) is no longer within it as a living presence."

I cannot solve the puzzle; but we should observe how in this same *Letter* Dr. Steiner emphasises that the connection of nature with its divine origin now lies through man, and that one of the tasks of the archangelic Power called Michael has been, and is, to preserve this link. The impression I receive is that nature is no longer directly nourished, as it were, from the divine source of things, and is gradually falling away from it. The falling away could go so far that the earth would end as dust. But man, though he too has fallen away from the divine source, has had a connection with it restored to him through the life and death of Christ. He can still draw on that source, and it is by his endeavours, now and in the future, that nature must be nourished. This will not prevent the earth from dying, but it can ensure that the earth dies, not into dust, but into seed.

If now we return to the original subject of this brief commentary, we may feel that the loss of a relation to the "cosmic setting" is a necessary phase in human evolution, but a phase which it is a human responsibility to overcome. Anthroposophical activities, however feeble and faulty, are essentially efforts in this direction; the aim is that after the winter of the Consciousness Soul, there should be a renewal of spring. Then, and perhaps only then, will poetry be once more able to relate itself naturally to a cosmic setting, with a new and more penetrating understanding of what this means.

<sup>1</sup> From *Collected Poems* (Faber, 1942). Quoted here by kind permission of the author and publishers.

## THE WEATHER IN 1066

Isabel Wyatt

"WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR—1066" is perhaps the most familiar milestone in English history. By how fine a hair's-breadth the milestone failed to read "Harald Hardrada—1066" is less generally recognised; yet the story of that hair's-breadth is a matter of some moment, concerned as it is with one of the earlier of a sequence of crossroads, at each of which England was in danger of deviating from her destiny.

When this happens in a human life, the strong incision of some extraneous event or circumstance often directs the eccentric impulse back into its appointed channel; and as with individual men, so also with nations. With each nation the gods would seem to have a different favourite instrument for averting these aberrations. In England's case it would seem to be the elements; over and over again she is blown or buffeted past wrong turnings by wind and weather. In 1066 it was by a heat-wave in Northumbria and a change of wind along the Somme that she was extricated from a Norse Conquest which would have been a cul-de-sac, and was plunged into a Norman one in alignment with her future.

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For more than half a century before that date, traces are apparent of an eccentric impulse that would have deflected England's development towards the north. Serving this impulse, Sweyn Fork-beard the Dane had dreamt of uniting England, Denmark and Norway in one great Scandinavian Empire, and for one short year he had achieved his dream. For seven years his son, Canute the Mighty, had achieved it, also; but at his death in 1035 the empire once more fell apart—England to his son, Harold Harefoot; Denmark to his son, Hardicanute; Norway to Magnus, the eleven-year-old son of St. Olav, its earlier Norse king. But after five years, Harold Harefoot's death again united England and Denmark under Hardicanute, until Hardicanute's death two years later. Then, honouring a pact made between Hardicanute and Magnus, Denmark joined Norway under the latter's rule; but England, flouting privy promises, recalled the English heir, Edward the Confessor, from his grandfather's Norman court.

Snorre Sturlason, the twelfth-thirteenth century Norse historian, tells in his *Heimskringla* of how the eccentric impulse now met a new, mysterious repulse:

"King Magnus sent letters to King Edward in England; and the letters ran: 'You must have heard of the agreement which Hardicanute and I made between us, that if one died without son, the other should take his lands and subjects. Therefore have I taken

Denmark in succession to Hardicanute. At his death he had England no less than Denmark, and I will that you give up the kingdom to me; otherwise I shall seek it with forces from both Denmark and Norway.'

"And when King Edward had read the letter he answered thus: 'It is known of all men in this land that my father, Ethelred, was born to the inheritance of this kingdom both from old time and from new. Then my brother Edmund took the rule and kingship; thereat I was well pleased. But after him my stepfather Canute took the realm, and after him my brother Harold. And when he died, my brother Hardicanute ruled over Denmark, and the only sharing between brothers that seemed right to him was that he should be king over both England and Denmark, and I had nothing to rule over. Then he died, and it was the counsel of all the men of the land to take me as king in England. Now I have here taken the consecration as king and the name of king as fully as my father had before me, and I will not give this name up as long as I live. But if King Magnus comes here with his army, I will not gather a host against him and he will be able to possess himself of England, but before that he must take my life.'

"And when the messengers came to King Magnus and told him this message, the king was slow in answering, and then he spoke thus: 'I think it is most right and fitting for me to let Edward have his realm in peace, and to hold fast to the kingdoms which God has let me win.'

So, spared by the eighteen-year-old Magnus, England again slipped the leash of the Scandinavian Empire, and continued growing in her own direction during the long breathing-space of Edward's reign (1042–1066).

But when, during the Thirteen Holy Nights, Edward died, the last of his line, and was succeeded by his wife's brother, Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex, envy of his brother drew Earl Tosti into the orbit of the impulse which sought to bind up England's future with that of the Northlands. Sailing to Norway, and seeking out Harald Hardrada, St. Olav's brother, now king following his nephew Magnus's death, Tosti offered him half the kingdom of England in return for aid in winning it; and rumours of the Scandinavian Empire echo again in the overtones of his persuasion:

"'Is it true, as I have heard men say in England,' Tosti the Jarl asked the king, 'that thy kinsman, King Magnus, sent men to King Edward and it was said in his message that King Magnus owned England with the same right as Denmark, taken by inheritance after Hardicanute, even as their oaths stood?' The king answered: 'Why did he not have it if he owned it?' Then said the jarl: 'If thou wilt not tell me, I will tell thee. King Magnus took Denmark because all the chiefs of the land helped him, but thou didst not get it

because all the country was against thee. King Magnus did not fight to win England because all the folk would have Edward as their king. If thou wilt win England, then I can make it so that most of the chiefs in England will be thy friends and helpers. Against my brother Harold I am short of nothing but the name of king. All men know that there never was such a warrior born in the Northlands as thou; and it seems strange to me that thou wilt fight fifteen years to get Denmark but wilt not have England, which is now lying free for thee.

"The king thought carefully on what the jarl had said; he perceived that there was truth in much of it, and at the same time he had a wish to win that kingdom. After this the king and the jarl talked long and often together, and they took up the plan of going to England in the summer and winning the land. The king sent bidding through all Norway, and called out a levy on half the people. . . . So great a force of men did the king gather together that it is the tale of men that he had nearly two hundred and forty ships, besides supply ships and small ships."

Aided by a "fair wind," Harald Hardrada landed in mid-September on the hilly coast of Yorkshire. "He harried and subdued the district; he was not withstood. Scarborough submitted to him. He subdued the land wherever he went. It now befell even as Tosti had told him, that a great number of men would come to him in England. They were Tosti's kinsmen and friends, and the troop was a great strength to the king." Earl Morcar and Edwin Earl of Chester came against him, but he defeated them on September 20, at Fulford, outside York. "Thereafter, the folk of York were afraid, and had no hope of withstanding him; they all promised him obedience, and as hostages they gave him the sons of their foremost men.

"In the evening the king went to his ships after this easy victory, and was very happy. But that same evening, after sunset, King Harold Godwinson came from the south to the town with a mighty army; and men were set at all the town gates and on all the highways, so that the news thereof should not come to the Norsemen."

The next day, Monday, September 25, was the morning of Northumbria's heat-wave: "When the Norse landing signal was blown, the sun was so hot that the men left their brynies (coats of mail) behind, and went with only their shields, helmets, spears, and swords girded; some had bows and arrows, also; and they were very merry. But when they came near the town, a great army rode out against them, and they saw the smoke from the horses, and fair shields, and white brynies. And the army grew greater the nearer it came; and it all looked like a sheet of ice when the weapons glistened."

Each king drew up his army. King Harald Hardrada, fifty

years old, tall, handsome, dignified, with fair hair, fair beard, a long moustache, and one eyebrow somewhat higher than the other, "rode through his lines; he sat on a black blazed horse; the steed fell under him, and the king fell forward; he stood up quickly and said: 'A fall is good luck on a journey.' Then said Harold, King of the Englishmen, to the Norsemen who were with him, 'Do ye know the big man that fell off the horse there, the man with the blue kirtle and the fine helmet?' They answered, 'It is the king himself.' Then said the English king: 'A big man he is, and powerful to look upon, but now it is likely that he will be without good luck.'

"Twenty riders rode forth from the Thingmen troop towards the Norse lines; they were all brynied, and so were their steeds." One of them brought greetings from Harold of England, with his offer of a third of his kingdom to his brother, Earl Tosti, and to King Harald Hardrada "seven feet of ground, or as much more as he is taller than other men." When Earl Tosti had rejected the offer, and the riders had returned, the Norse king asked: "Who was that well-spoken man?" "That was King Harold Godwinson," said Tosti. "A little man he was," said the King of Norway, "but he stood fast in his stirrups."

So, in blue kirtle and fine helmet, lacking his brynne Emma, "which was so long that it stretched half down his legs, and so strong that a weapon had never fastened on to it," King Harald Hardrada set up the Land-Waster, his white standard bearing a black raven, and rode, an unarmoured and heroic figure, into battle. Thus, early in the morning, the Battle of Stamford Bridge began, and raged all day till nightfall. For though the Norsemen were without their armour, they fought like the great warriors they were, performing deeds of incredible hardihood—for a time one held the bridge alone, preventing the whole English army from crossing it, and killing more than forty men with his battle-axe.

At a fantastic disadvantage though the armourless Norsemen were, even the English chroniclers agree that this was one of the fiercest battles ever fought in England; and Ordericus Vitalis, writing his *Ecclesiastical History* nearly three quarters of a century later, says: "The field of this battle may be easily discovered by travellers, as great heaps of the bones of the slain lie there, to this day, memorials to the prodigious numbers who fell on both sides."

Earl Tosti was slain; King Harald Hardrada fell with a fatal arrow-wound in the throat; but the brynneless Norsemen rallied again and again, till "almost all the great men among them had fallen; it grew dark in the evening before all the man-slaying was at an end."

Harold Godwinson and his English Thingmen had won the victory. But so hardly was it won, and at so terrible a cost, that

we cannot doubt that, but for the sun being hot that fatal and unseasonable morning, the tide of battle would have turned the other way, and the Norse Conquest been established.

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Earl Tosti had not been alone in his anger at Harold Godwinson's accession to the throne of England. Duke William of Normandy, by virtue of his father's cousinship with King Edward, regarded his own blood-claim as the greater. His reception of the news of Harold's accession is vividly reminiscent of Homer's description of Achilles sulking in his tent, the young ego coming to self-consciousness in anger. He was in his park at Rouen, "in his hands a bow ready strung, for he was going hunting," when the tidings came. Such was his wrath that "he crossed over the Seine in a boat, and went to his hall, and sat down on a bench; and he covered his face with his mantle, and there he abode, turning about restlessly for one hour after another."

But his decision once taken, he was tireless in implementing it. "Calling together his barons, he told them of his will to win his right and conquer England; then he showed the matter to his lord the King of France; he sent to Rome clerks that were skilled in speech, so that the Pope sent him a standard and a very precious ring; and there was no knight in all the land, nor any good sergeant, nor archer, nor peasant of good courage of age to fight, whom the Duke did not summon to go with him to England."

Robert Wace, the rhyming chronicler, whose father was an eyewitness, gives us, in his *Roman de Rou*, a stirring glimpse of the building of William's fleet:

"Then the Duke called together carpenters and ship-builders, and in all the ports of Normandy there was sawing of wood and carrying of planks, spreading of sails, and cutting up of masts, with great labour and industry. Thus all the summer long and through the month of August they made ready the fleet and assembled the men; and when the ships were ready, they were anchored in the Somme, at St. Valéry; and there came men to the Duke from many parts. I have heard my father say (I remember it well, though I was but a boy) that there were seven hundred ships save four when they left St. Valéry—ships and boats and little skiffs."

But before they left St. Valéry, the Duke's patience was most sorely tried; to him it seemed that the elements would undo all his plans. For a contrary wind kept him chafing in port. Wace tells the story:

"At St. Valéry they tarried long for a favourable wind, and the barons grew weary with waiting; till at last they prayed those of the convent to bring out to the camp the shrine of St. Valéry. And they all came to it, kneeling and praying that they might cross the sea; and they offered gold till all the holy body was covered with it.

And the same day there sprang up a favourable wind. Then the Duke put a lantern on the mast of his ship, that the other ships might see it and keep their course near, and an ensign of gilded copper on the top; and at the head of the ship, which mariners call the prow, there was a child made of copper, holding a bow and arrow, and he had his face towards England and seemed about to shoot."

They had left port by a miracle; and now, as the little armada neared England, it seemed to the startled invaders that miracle was being added to miracle. For they had naturally expected to be met by the smoke of horses and fair shields and white brynies which Harald Hardrada had been surprised to encounter three days earlier on the road to York. But it was a deserted shore they saw before them. "The good sailors and sergeants and esquires sprang out, and cast the anchors, and fastened the ships with ropes; and the archers were the first to come to land, every one with his bow bent and his quiver and arrows at his side, all shaven and dressed in short tunics, of good courage, and ready for battle. And they searched all the beach; but no armed man could they find."

Rejoicing in this inexplicable good fortune, the knights with their war-horses, the barons with their standards, the carpenters with their axes in their hands and their tools girded, followed the still vigilantly questing archers on to the empty strand. "And they brought wood from the ships, and fastened it together with bolts and bars; and before the evening was well come, they had made themselves a strong fort. And they lighted fires and cooked food, and the Duke and his barons and knights sat down to eat; and they all ate and drank plentifully, and rejoiced that they were come so propitiously to land."

But had Duke William sailed when he was ready, had St. Valéry's wind not been withheld till the ripe moment, their landing would have been less propitious. Then it would have been against weapons glistening "like a sheet of ice," on a shore bristling with barbed greetings, at the cost of heavy losses in men and gear and ships, that they would have attempted to fight their way in. For during all those summer months, while the Duke's fleet was building, King Harold Godwinson had been guarding the southern coasts of his realm, his formidable hus-carles—those Thingmen of whom even the war-hardened Norsemen said that one of them was better than two of their own best men—reinforced by the immense Land-Fyrd, the general levy of fighting men drawn from every farm and village to meet this rumoured peril.

But the Land-Fyrd was an emergency army, and could not be kept conscripted in idleness indefinitely while the land went untilled and the crops rotted. When, at last, September brought ripened corn-harvest but no Duke William, the levy was sent home to its

more urgent husbandry, leaving King Harold and his Thingmen to continue to keep watch and ward along the southern coast.

There the heavy tidings had reached them of Harald Hardrada's invasion in the north; and the south had perforce to be left unguarded while Harold and his Thingmen made their forced march to York. Thus it came to pass that when, St. Valéry's embargo having been lifted, the tardy invader's shaven archers leaped ashore at Pevensey, ready for battle, though they searched all the beach, no armed man could they find.

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The dovetailed chronology of those few fateful days is as if reflected down from some celestial chess-board. That "fair wind" which had bowled the Norse ships merrily down the coast of Scotland had padlocked William in the Somme till the news of the defeat of the English Earls at Fulford on September 20 had sent Harold Godwinson and his Thingmen hotfoot to the north. Because on September 25 the Northumbrian sun was hot, the Norse Invasion was crushed at Stamford Bridge that day. While Harold Godwinson and his surviving Thingmen were still in the north, scarcely yet recovered from that fiercest among English battles, Norse fair wind veered into Norman fair wind, bringing Duke William to land unchallenged at Pevensey on September 28.

Destiny was, in fact, able to take the workings of the counter impulse and turn them in the opposite direction, using Harald Hardrada's invasion to aid and abet William's. The Somme wind changed at precisely the moment that allowed William to profit by the Battle of Stamford Bridge, both as regards Harald Hardrada's defeat and death and as regards Harold Godwinson's absence from the south and the heavy price he had paid for his northern victory.

For when William's harryings brought Harold hotfoot south again, to close with William in the Battle of Senlac on October 14, it was with an army maimed and shrunken, fatigued still from the long, fierce ordeal of Stamford Bridge, doubly fatigued by a double forced march up and down the whole length of England, and with the hastily re-summoned Land-Fyrd scarcely yet reassembled. As Fate's dice had been heavily loaded at Stamford Bridge against the brynieless Norsemen, so was it loaded at Senlac against the worn and weary English. As, nineteen days earlier, Harald Hardrada had died under the Land-Waster with an arrow in his throat, now Harold Godwinson, beneath his standard bearing the red dragon of Wessex, was slain by an arrow piercing his left eye, just as the sun went down; and on the spot where Harold fell, says the chronicler, the victorious William pitched his tent, and sat down in the torch-lit darkness to eat and drink among the dead.

On the Thirteenth Day of Christmas, 1066, Harold Godwinson had been crowned King of England. On the First Day of Christmas

in that same year, Duke William was crowned in his stead.

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Musing on this strange, closely woven pattern of strong interventions, we ask ourselves: What large issue was at stake to make it an historical necessity that Harald Hardrada should have failed to take England, thus opening the way for Duke William to succeed? For to the English temper a Norse invasion would have been infinitely more congenial than a Norman. The Norsemen were dear enemies of long standing; Kings of Norway had been Earls of Northumbria, and there were blood-ties, particularly in the north; Norse and English understood with ease each other's cousinly language; most fundamental of all, they shared the same Old Germanic culture.

But in this very fact lay the impediment to their fusion. For this shared culture was the held-back culture of the Sentient Soul, that Will-culture whose elaboration had belonged to the previous epoch, and out of which the more southerly parts of Europe, more in harmony with the demands of the present epoch, had already passed, to work now at the elaboration of the Intellectual Soul, with its cultivation of the life of feeling. It was to be the mission of England to prepare the ground for a yet further development—the birth, in the fifteenth century, of the Consciousness Soul, with its working-over of the life of thought. Thus, for England to unite herself more firmly with the familiar north would have been to entrench herself so deeply in their common culture of the will as to fail in fitting herself for her allotted task; whereas to unite herself with the culture of the Intellectual Soul, alien though this soul then was, was to go forward to meet the future.

It was, in fact, essential at just this point of time that England's further evolution should be safeguarded by the breaking into her existing culture of a (to her) quite new impulse. For the super-sensible red dragon of Wessex to be replaced by Odin's raven-wisdom would simply have been to exchange one aspect for another of a state of consciousness gloriously valid in its own era, but now belonging to the past. But the child looking towards England and about to shoot brought her the seed of her true future, imaging forth the coming of that young ego which in the Intellectual Soul makes itself felt for the first time as an independent inner member of man.

To unite with the Intellectual Soul in its already elaborated Romanz form would probably have been beyond Anglo-Saxon powers of adaptation. But Fate had prepared a compromise which, though repugnant and resented in the beginning, proved nevertheless to be within the limits of acceptance in time. For the Normans were themselves transplanted Norsemen—their very name meant "Northmen."

Less than two hundred years before William sailed from St. Valéry, a Norse giant, Rolf the Ganger ("he was grown so big that no steed could bear him and he therefore walked everywhere; therefore was he called the Ganger"), was exiled from Norway by King Harald Hairfair, and, sailing up the Seine, "harried in France and possessed himself of a great jarldom there." By the third generation, pagan pirates preying on the French had accepted Christian baptism and become feudal nobles, loyal vassals of the French crown whose barbaric blood was fast absorbing the French culture, and who were even already fashioning their own *Rou* variant of the French language.

By the time Duke William was born (Rolf was his great-great-grandfather), the Normans had become so French that Bayeux was the only place in the Duchy where Norse was still preserved, and thither the young dukes had to be sent to learn their original mother-tongue; Normandy had succeeded in bringing the northern Sentient Soul into connection with the southern Intellectual Soul, and so was quite specially equipped to mediate the latter to the held-back Sentient Soul of Anglo-Saxondom.

So in the Norman Conquest was consummated that end for which Rolf and his fellow vikings had been separated out from Norway five generations earlier. Already, at that time, King Alfred the Great would seem to have had some partial and imperfect intimation of Rolf's destiny as a stream bound up with England's; for when, in 878, Rolf came from his newly established pirate's nest at Rouen to aid him in subduing rebels, re-establishing Alfred on his throne, the latter offered him the recompense of half his kingdom. But—so the chronicler, John Wallingford tells us—Rolf refused Alfred's offer, preferring his old life of sea-raiding. His refusal was, indeed, more in accord than Alfred's offer with the demands of destiny; for before the Normans could play their appointed part in helping to shape England, they had themselves first to become acclimatised to the Intellectual Soul.

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Those interventions in 1066—Northumbrian heat-wave and Somme wind—unite to give us a deep impression of higher forces taking part in directing a nation's destiny; for without those interventions England's historical development would have taken a quite different course, leading, not towards her mission, but away from it. Behind that hot September sun, behind St. Valéry's wind, we may sense the working of beings whose deeds stream down from higher worlds into our own. And if we would ask in whose service work these ministers of wind and fire, it may not be irrelevant to recall that the patron saint of Normandy was Michael—Michael, who is himself the Regent of the Sun, and who is portrayed in Russian ikons as Lord of Moving Air.

## AN IRISH YEW

**B**EYOND the lawn grows an Irish Yew of many years maturing, with upreaching, spire-shaped, commingling branches, always in movement, sometimes awake, tossed by high winds, sometimes but faintly stirring. Its branches form a mighty cup, as of some close-grown sponge—waking or asleep in its sea of air. Sunlight touches the terminations of bunched leaflets, dark-green or golden, emerging from shadow.

Each day I look at this ancient yew; wonderingly I try to read its secret, and often let my eyes rest on it almost unseeing, as I raise them to look through my window. On such occasions the tree seems to speak, awakening my attention. It suddenly becomes present, and I lose myself in its movements under the invisible wind. Time, within those branches, appears strangely to be expressing itself in space.

One day a vision came to me out of the tree, and I saw the tree as a focus of influences received from the great circle of the heavens. Nothing less than the whole cosmos could have been sufficient to produce this tree. The mysteries of the vast and the unknown collected there and grew: time was indeed speaking in space, and giving answer to some question I had not formed, and could not form—only surmise that a veil had slightly trembled.

Why is it that a tree can so often mean so much to men? A flower can shine both afar and within, yet it lacks the wood, the architecture of the stem, that bears ten thousand, thousand leaves. An animal is more deeply, mysteriously contained by the confusion of blood, its strangeness more obscure. A bark of a fox sounding over snow in the high alps, at night, has come as a message of ineffable wonder; the voice of a cow comes from a yet stranger region; the talk of cats, when singing to their loves, can daunt the human heart, voicing the enormity of the uncomprehended.

Men and women are yet more difficult for our senses to apprehend than plants and animals. Their foliage, their utterance, are become too familiar. Once or twice maybe in a life-time a human being sees his fellow in some measure of his fullness. The poet guesses at

. . . eyelids stored with arrows ready drawn,  
Where a thousand fighting men in ambush lie.  
Or an eye of gifts and graces, showering fruit and coined gold.

Perhaps the apprehension of a tree is the most natural to reveal the heavenly light. Did not the man who was born blind, whom Christ healed of his blindness, see, at his first awakening, men as trees walking?

E.L.G.W.

# CHRISTMAS BY THE SEA

Joy Mansfield

IT is not easy to create the mood of Christmas on the very edge of the sea, where there are no cliffs, no rocks with caves, no shelter to be had, but only the bare, pebbled beach rising a few feet to the roadway where tall houses stand.

Even a hundred yards or so inland the sea can fairly easily be held at bay, wiped from the mind, and in its place conjured from afar the stillness of the fir-woods deep in snow, the shining peace of the manger, the radiance of Mary. But right upon the front the ceaseless noises of the waves insist that they are not forgotten, and whenever the eyes are raised the wide spaces of the ocean, ever moving, seize upon the gaze with compelling force.

How can the mood of holy calm be captured in such a place? How can the bright glory of mother and child shine out undisturbed in the midst of such wild restlessness?

In the windows along the edge of the sea the little Christmas trees stood, with the curtains left undrawn so that passers-by might stop and admire. On them glowed the pretty coloured electric bulbs, but the effect was more forlorn than gay. The waves roared and hissed over the pebbles, ever and again—ever and again. . . . What had these bright little lights to do with their mighty speech? And suppose some old-fashioned person, risking the chance of fire, had lit real candles on his tree and let them burn there at the feet of the sea—what then? Even so I feared they would appear puny, ineffectual, their message all but drowned by the huge proximity of another element.

The next morning I went and sat on the pebbly beach, and in my mind I sought for Christmas. I remembered, though indistinctly, a picture of a Madonna and child I had once seen; the artist I did not know. They had been seated on a sandy shore with a calm, rippling sea behind them and shells at their feet. . . . a summer sea, warm, yellow sands, soft wavelets curved with snowy foam . . . . Yes, in such a mood of peace, mother and babe belonged to the ocean, seemed as if born out of its depths.

But this rough, winter sea, the breakers hurling and crashing one after the other, glinting purple and green as dark rain clouds covered and uncovered the cold, far December sun. . . . these hard pebbles, salty if I let my tongue lick over the smooth surface. . . . this ceaseless sounding of the waves, this restless, ever-changing mass of water. . . . how from this scene could come the mood of Christmas?

Intently I sought it. Where lay stillness here? Where safety and radiance?

And then I seemed to find it, though only to lose it again at once and find myself waiting, watching, till again it came. . . .

As each great wave drew near, reared up high, there was a moment when the underside was curved and shining, hollowed out—and for an instant time seemed to cease. Then chaos followed as the waters crashed foaming forward. . . . then sucking backwards. . . . again rearing up, higher and higher. . . . and again there it came, that perfect smooth bright curve of seeming stillness of a colour indescribable. . . . then gone once more. . . .

I picked up a shell from among the pebbles; it was like a little hollow vessel, but shining with the miraculous mother-of-pearl. Another curved in and inward in a delicate spiral. Yes, if I would find the crib right on this barren, open shore, I must seek it here, right within the heart of the shell, and in the midst of the leaping waves themselves.

Sad are our times, as cold and ever-changing and relentless as the sea itself. And from the midst of them a great longing goes up to find the true spirit of Christmas. Must we not seek it boldly in the very heart of the present as it arises, falls away and arises yet again? Must we not learn to find and lose, and wait and find again, to have faith not only in that which is clearly manifest, but in that which is ever re-forming, never to be grasped?

My hand fell upon a piece of drift wood, white and smooth, dry as a bone—it would blaze readily on the fire. It seemed to me like wood purified by the wide ocean, washed clean of all pollution. And as I held it the thought came to me that this, undecked except by the power of fantasy, was the true Christmas Tree for the bare sea-shore.

## PALETTE

Sylvia Eckersley

I dip my brush in time and space  
And in the well of night,  
I dip it in the gleaming place  
Where darkness touches light.

I make it wet with waves of sound  
And then with salt and sweet,  
With every odour underground,  
With cold and melting heat.

I dip it in the midday sun  
And in the open moon,  
So may I paint Endymion  
Sleeping still at noon.

## BETWEEN THE BELLS

Alida Carey Gulick

As I drove quiet down the quiet street,  
the church bells starting to clang out the noon,  
I saw ahead the village simpleton  
there on a grassy corner pause inert.

*Arcan arcan arcan . . .* the bell tolled out,  
I slowing down to make an easy turn  
and pass the gentle, softly-witted man  
so passive in the sun with mind remote.

Watching the curb, I marked the grassy space,  
and then looked up in time to spend a nod . . .  
a depth of wisdom used those eyes and showered  
upon me, in a glance, deep-reaching grace!

The clock still paying out with clanking chain,  
loosed four more links, I somehow floating by,  
then there was silence, while the inner eye,  
already dim, glazed over once again.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### LIFE-WORK

**The Life and Work of Rudolf Steiner.** By Guenther Wachsmuth.  
(Philosophical-Anthroposophical Publishing Company, Dornach, £3 12s.).

THIS book will be known already to many readers and does not call for review in the ordinary sense, but we should like to express the gratitude that is due to the author, to the translators (Olin D. Wannamaker and R. E. Raab), and to all who have made possible this long-awaited English edition. Dr. Wachsmuth first met Rudolf Steiner in 1919 and thereafter accompanied him on all his lecture tours, helping him with his correspondence and in many practical ways. In 1923 he was chosen by Dr. Steiner as a member of the Executive of the General Anthroposophical Society and appointed leader of the Natural Science Section at the Goetheanum. He is thus exceptionally well qualified to tell the story of these later years, taking it up from the time, about 1900, where Dr. Steiner's autobiography stops.

The volume is excellently produced, except for an unsatisfactory form of index, and includes numerous photographs. It is packed with information and will be invaluable both as a record of Rudolf Steiner's manifold activities and for its intimate account of them at close range. It is too detailed a chronicle to serve as a biography of Rudolf Steiner for the general public, but future biographers, and generations of students, will find it indispensable. C.W.

### "THREE YEARS"

**The Three Years.** By Emil Bock. (Christian Community Press, 18s.).

OVER the years Emil Bock has emerged as the foremost exponent of Biblical studies in the Rudolf Steiner movement. Of his "Spiritual History of Humanity", in which most of his Biblical research is concentrated, eight volumes have so far appeared in German and more than 50,000 copies have been sold in the last twenty years. "The Three Years" is the sixth volume in the series and deals with the life of Christ from Baptism to Ascension.

Perhaps it has been somewhat risky to single out volume VI, and not volume I, for the first English publication. But a successive

publication of the whole series could not be contemplated for economic reasons, and volume VI, a key volume, can stand by itself.

The reader cannot help being struck by the wealth of original ideas and by the comprehensiveness of this approach to a truly modern Christology. Bock never lets the reader forget that he is dealing with the greatest event of all history; and this he accomplishes also by a curious blending of the tentative and the emphatic in his style.

This "Life of Christ" makes it plain that anything after the manner of a human "biography" is out of the question where Christ is concerned. It is thus a challenge to all writers of a "Life of Jesus" in the past.

It is a matter of general regret that most books which are worth possessing are becoming more and more expensive. But the price of the 288 pages of "The Three Years" represents money well spent, for one will wish to return to this book time and again.

Alfred Heidenreich.

## A PAINTER'S SEARCH

**Die grüne Schlange.** By Margarita Woloschin. (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, DM. 14.80.)

ABOVE the altar, in some of the churches which the Christian Community—the religious movement inaugurated under Rudolf Steiner's guidance in 1922—has been able to build or transform in recent years, for example in Stuttgart and Amsterdam, hang pictures austere in line, lovingly brilliant in colour, painted by Margarita Woloschin. It is a searching test for any representation of Christ, thus to be made part of the fulfilment of a sacrament which has the purpose of awakening new ears and eyes for spiritual reality. Only through rare maturity could pictures have been painted which take their place in their whole setting both with such selflessness and with such warmth.

Now through Frau Woloschin's autobiography, *Die grüne Schlange*, we can trace part of the development of this maturity. We can study in it the whole problem of artistic creation in an age intensely self-conscious, historically educated, critical, and spiritually uncertain—a problem that is by no means directly solved, though far-reaching prospects are opened up for its solution, by the knowledge of Rudolf Steiner's spiritual-scientific teaching.

But although from adolescence onwards she was intensely concerned with the painter's task, she has really never for a moment

been left alone with it. As an eighteen-year-old girl, she asked Tolstoy, "How can I serve mankind through my painting?" However theoretical the question then was, in the years that followed human and social calamities became known to her with an intimacy that drove away all theory. She was to see at their bleakest the needs of men.

She was born in Moscow in 1882, the daughter of a well-connected middle-class family, intensely enjoying the colours of the city and of a house full of strange and rare things. (The hall had the form of an Egyptian temple, with the startling inclusion of a large stuffed wolf.) At ten years old came journeys to Switzerland, France and Italy. "In all his works Michelangelo put me into a remarkable condition, as if a storm gripped my soul, as if there were about these works the character of a seed, urgent for incarnation." Back in Russia, she went to a new home in the country for summer holidays. Rarely has the Russian countryside been so richly described as in these sixty-year-old memories. "I felt I ought to listen for something the earth wanted to tell me. I did not want to read or study anything, for fear of being distracted from the most important thing of all . . ."

But at eighteen an intense depression came over her. The teachers of painting offered only a barren naturalism; the scientific teachers only disconnected facts, which rattled like dried peas. The one hero, who believed in the future, was—Tolstoy.

"Nowadays I generally do not give advice," he began, "because people misunderstand me. But I believe that yours is a really serious question, and I will answer. You must give up your way of life, the way of life of a well-to-do girl. Art is the fruit of love; it is born from love, as a human being is born from love and brings something new into life that transforms it. You must give up your money, live with the people, and work like any peasant woman."

In the course of the conversation she came to speak of a painting of Christ walking on the sea, a subject which she herself was to paint very much later. Tolstoy grew angry. Everything mystical or miraculous in the Gospels he wished to discard utterly. And what he said on this subject satisfied her not at all. "I looked into Tolstoy's eyes, which shone through his eyebrows like Pan's eyes through a thicket, wise as Nature herself. I felt the greatness of his personality, the power of truth which worked in him. But the words I heard from him at this moment I felt as naïve; in fact, stupid. For an eighteen-year-old girl this contradiction was incomprehensible and unbearable."

All that Tolstoy said left acute conflict in her mind. Comfort, and some hope of progress towards solutions, came from various sources—Plato, the Bhagavad Gita, and the singing of Chaliapin, of whom she says: "His art was evidence for me that man has a

divine origin, that the human realm too is a divine hierarchy." A less august treatment for trials of the soul she received on medical advice—buckets of cold water thrown over her, which in retrospect she considers were of some use!

And now a grim warning of the tensions in Russia touched her family. Her beloved younger brother was arrested for his share in a subversive students' meeting, and sentenced first to death and then to life imprisonment. After some months he received a pardon, but had to continue his studies outside Russia.

During this time Margarita Sabaschnikow was staying in a little country house, and in the late spring fell into a peculiar sleep. "For eight days I slept day and night, only appearing at meals as a dreaming figure. This sleep was like diving down into a living sea of extraordinarily refreshing pictures. During the dreams someone instructed me in painting. A few words I still remember. When the condition passed I began painting industriously, and made quite unexpected progress."

Five years after the meeting with Tolstoy, in September, 1905, she was in Zürich with her brother. Rudolf Steiner, whose name she did not know, was to lecture, and rather doubtfully they followed a friend's recommendation to attend. "An elderly gentleman with a white beard, a venerable figure, stood by the rostrum. That must be Steiner, I thought. Then . . . I saw a slightly built man come in, in a black frock-coat. Jet-black hair lay across the finely arched brow, above deep-set eyes. What was it that took hold of me, at the sight of this figure? It was the force of uprightness, working through his whole form. As he crossed the auditorium with springy steps, his head remained quite still. His throat leaned back a little, like an eagle's. How can anyone be so astonishingly like an eagle, I thought."

But the question she put to him, at the first opportunity, had nothing directly to do with painting: "How can one come to a knowledge of the spiritual world with full mastery of the waking consciousness, without losing the ground under one's feet?" And Rudolf Steiner gave an extensive, satisfying answer.

In Berlin and in Paris other opportunities were found of hearing Rudolf Steiner. In Paris she was able to introduce to him Mereschkowski and other Russians, many of whom eagerly attended his lectures. One evening, when the discussion was at times violent, the poet Minsky asked Rudolf Steiner about the smile of the Sphinx. "'The Sphinx,' he said, 'is gazing into a remote future, where the tragic has been overcome.' Only later I understood what he meant."

After the first lecture of the St. John course at Hamburg, Rudolf Steiner came up to her and asked: "'Could you dance that?' I was not astonished at the question, because from childhood I had felt

the need to dance every deep experience." Four years later, when in response to a request Dr. Steiner outlined the beginnings of Eurhythm, she realised that the opportunity for a question had been given to her at that moment.

It was in Norway that a detailed conversation on her painting came about. Rudolf Steiner spoke of the technique of the old ikons, which was based on genuine spiritual vision. A grasp of spiritual knowledge that remained intellectual would do nothing for artistic creativity. Such knowledge must not remain on that level. In creation one must deepen a particular mood. "I, too, when I have a lecture to give, do not fix beforehand what I am going to say, but dwell in a particular mood, from which I speak."

But it was only after a very long time, and much endurance, that Margarita Woloschin was reborn as an artist. At first the touch of spiritual knowledge was paralysing, as was the Lily's touch for the young prince in Goethe's story of the Green Snake—a story in which she came to recognise much that illumined her destiny. She shared at times in the life of the circle round Rudolf Steiner; at other times in the life of Moscow, particularly among intellectuals and artists, a number of whom she could help to find the bridge from the rich and profound world of Solovioff's thought to Rudolf Steiner's concrete spiritual knowledge. But, as she relates with searching honesty, she could not integrate her own being. And the brilliant paintings of her twenties, which had found places in leading galleries and museums, remained almost without successors.

One day she sought out a holy man in the far Urals, whom she found in a hut among his hens, standing with upraised arms, "as if his hands were listening to the flow of invisible forces . . . The deep furrows on his face spoke of cares that were not for himself."

She said, "I have been allowed to learn much about spiritual things. But lately my heart is as if it was dead; everything remains dead, I no longer love anything."

When he heard that she was a painter, he glowed with joy. "Christ will give His picture. He is come to give His picture and not take away. . . . We Christians must know that since He lived on earth, everything—stone, cloud, flower—is His picture." He spoke of St. Luke, and of St. Veronica. He gave her the picture. "You too must hold out your soul. . . . One must thirst, work, and have patience. Get up at night and pray that God may recognise His picture in your pictures, and count your work as part of His work . . . How should we sinners be without times of darkness? Even in the time when Christ lived on earth, the Angel came down to stir the water only once a year."

When later she spoke with Rudolf Steiner about this conversation, he said, "He answered you from the heart. I answer you from the cosmos. And you stand in between, and cannot yet unite

the two answers." He advised her to meditate more intensively.

At Easter, 1912, a number of Russians came to Helsinki to hear Rudolf Steiner's lectures on the Hierarchies, and he spoke to them separately about the Russian folk-soul—which he described as too young to reveal itself fully, but which would inspire in men the deepest questions, and the right warmth and depth of soul to bring to spiritual knowledge. But two great temptations would threaten Russia—materialistic ideas from the West, that have nothing to do with the Russian folk-soul, and a second spiritual temptation from the East, which would offer only a renewal of the past. A great responsibility lay on Russians for the future of Christianity.

After sharing in the foundation of the Russian Anthroposophical Society in Moscow, Margarita Woloschin came to Dornach, where on the same day the Foundation-stone of the first Goetheanum had been laid. Soon she was sharing in the work of wood-carving. Rudolf Steiner came and asked how she liked the new forms.

"Always, when he greeted one, and one met his positive gaze, it was as if this moment were the anticipation of a future time. One felt—the person he is greeting, and who answers him, is not yet really there. One replied inwardly with the promise to become the person he saw in one. His gaze, in which lived the greatest spiritual victory, spoke at the same time of the whole seriousness of a world tragedy, indeed a world disaster. The love which one met in his eyes was akin to death; it judged, and at the same time raised one up."

With clear, often witty, often moving observation the group of people who worked at the Goetheanum is described, among whom Margarita Woloschin remained during the first years of the 1914–1918 war, helping to paint the small cupola. Then, for reasons she afterwards felt to be superficial, she returned to Russia—in a sealed train through Germany, similar to the one which carried Lenin, almost at the same time. Thus she shared in the bewilderment, hope, and fearful misery of the Revolution.

In the description of the tragedy of Russia, and of many individual lives caught up in these events, her writing achieves its greatest intensity. As many of the leading progressive intellectuals, some of whom attempted at first to work with the Bolsheviks, were her close friends, it is an extraordinary and terrible chapter of history. But it was at the same time the "Fire-trial," in which the essentials of human existence were burned free for her from all uncertainty. After heroic sharing in the attempts to save the homeless children, the political prisoners, and the masterpieces of art, she lay for months near death from hunger, typhus, and tuberculosis.

At last the other half of her life called her back. Through the influence of Trotsky's wife, permission for her to go abroad for treatment was granted. She said good-bye to the circles of anthro-

posophists in Moscow and Leningrad—whose hard destiny, deep sincerity, and brilliant individual qualities (she gives some picture, for example, of the poet Andrej Biely) this book enables us to appreciate and remember. In 1922 she found her way to Holland, and met there Rudolf Steiner and Marie Steiner. Only on January 2, 1923, was she permitted to re-enter Switzerland—to find that the Goetheanum was burnt to the ground.

Very gradually a new personal life was to take shape for her. In these pages its character is only suggested, for the book ends with the tidings of Rudolf Steiner's death in the spring of 1925. "For me, conscious work began after my teacher's death." Having been given so generous a share in her life to this point, it comes hard to be told no more. "I conclude the narrative at a time that now lies thirty years in the past, not because the following years were less rich in experience, but because in the second half of life a person's deeds should speak, more than the destiny that forms him." Some of these deeds we encounter, if we stand before the devoted, loving earnestness of her pictures.

Adam Bittleston.

## DISTORTING MIRROR

*The Greek Myths.* By Robert Graves. (Penguin, 2 vols., 3/6 each.)

THESE two Penguins must by now be on the bookshelves of most students and lovers of classical mythology. They seek to replace the standard "Dictionary of Classical Mythology" compiled by Dr. Smith over a century ago. Robert Graves has collected all the stories of Greek mythology, combining the various versions of each tale into one story and pointing out the discrepancies as the story unfolds. At the end of each account he has added a series of extremely well-informed notes and comments.

But much as one admires the scholarship and industry connected with such a work, one is tempted to pause and wonder how much real advance has been made in an understanding of the ancient myths during the century spanning the appearances of Smith's and Graves's works. The author of the new "mythological dictionary" is quite explicit about his purpose. "My method," he says at the end of the introduction, "has been to assemble in harmonious narrative all the scattered elements of each myth, supported by little-known variants which may help to determine the meaning, and to answer all questions that arise, as best I can, in anthropological or historical terms."

The myth is to be explained, then, as mirroring either primitive cult and fetish or actual historical events; that is, in both cases,

actual external happenings in the physical world. The author resolutely turns his back on any suggestion that myths are the expression of inner or spiritual events. "The historical and anthropological approach is the only reasonable one," he writes. "The theory that Chimaera, Sphinx, Gorgon, Centaurs, Satyrs and the like are blind impulses of the Jungian collective unconscious, to which no precise meaning had ever, or could ever, have been attached, is demonstrably unsound."

The dangers of the book lie in the fact that its many readers, justifiably impressed by Graves's immense (though often unorthodox) scholarship, will take his interpretation as being wise and balanced. In fact, it is grossly and perversely one-sided. There is no evidence whatever to suggest that to seek an external explanation for myth is any sounder than to rely on a psychological one. The beautiful tale of Eros and Psyche, or the wanderings of Demeter in search of her lost daughter Persephone, are patently stories on a level with the Prodigal Son in portraying the great sweep of human development away from the spirit and then back again. To link such tales *only* with historical events or primitive fetish (such links are no doubt there, too) is to ignore the essential in favour of the merely incidental. History has sometimes mirrored great events of the spirit in a remarkable way, and no doubt primitive cult has also reflected the great mutations of the human spirit; but myth springs essentially not from these, but from the central spiritual events and deeds which influence human evolution, and, springing from them, mirrors them directly in imaginative form.

Mr. Graves does not believe in the spirit as a world from which all the sense world springs, so he cannot understand that the myth provides us with windows into that world. He deals with those phenomena of human culture which spring most directly from a spiritual source—but with no understanding for spiritual events, or for the very gods about whom he writes so indefatigably. We are grateful to him for his fine collection of myths, but fear that his comments on them will in time become a quaint survival of an industrious but myopic age.

*H. L. Hetherington.*

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