

The Golden Blade

NERVOUS CONDITIONS IN OUR TIME

Rudolf Steiner

THE MEANING OF INITIATION

A. C. Harwood

SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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WHERE IS FANCY BRED?

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❧ THE DOVE AS A SACRED BIRD

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THE DEWS OF MEMORY

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BOOK REVIEWS

Nutrition

Animals in Splendour

Human and Cosmic Thought

Marie Steiner von Sivers

Edited by Gerald Rowe and Adam Bittleston

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NERVOUS CONDITIONS IN OUR TIME	<i>Rudolf Steiner</i>	5
THE MEANING OF INITIATION	<i>A. C. Harwood</i>	14
SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS	<i>John Davy</i>	24
WHERE IS FANCY BRED?	<i>Owen Barfield</i>	41
THE DOVE AS A SACRED BIRD	<i>Karl König</i>	56
THE LEAP	<i>Carl Kovacs</i>	66
THE DEWS OF MEMORY	<i>Isabel Wyatt</i>	71
ST PAUL	<i>Arnold Freeman</i>	76
SPIRITUAL SCIENCE AND MYSTICISM	<i>Alan Howard</i>	83
THE GRAND ILLUSION	<i>Stanley Messenger</i>	97
TRAFFIC AND CHARACTER	<i>Adam Bittleston</i>	107

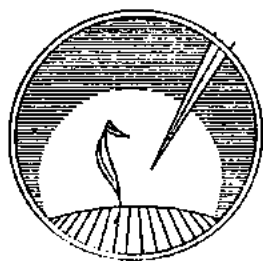
BOOK REVIEWS

<i>Nutrition</i>	124
<i>Animals in Splendour</i>	125
<i>Human and Cosmic Thought</i>	126
<i>Marie Steiner von Sivers</i>	128

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ANTHROPOSOPHY 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 in which an anthroposophical outlook is expressed, dealing with a wide variety of subjects; and some other writings too which touch upon the deepest spiritual impulses of mankind.

The title of this Annual is derived from a reference by Rudolf Steiner to an old Persian legend. 'Djemjdid 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.'

From 1949 to 1966 *The Golden Blade* was edited by Arnold Freeman and Charles Waterman. It is now edited by Gerald Rowe and Adam Bittleston. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

THIS year there are two main themes with which most of the articles are concerned, in different ways. One is the relationship between knowledge of the physical world and knowledge of spiritual reality. Sometimes the writers may seem to be going over the same ground; but this theme is of cardinal importance for the present time, and we think that the attentive reader may find it valuable to see it treated in such different ways. It may be observed that when 'science' and 'the scientist' are spoken of, writers have sometimes in mind particularly the developments of the last forty years or so, sometimes those of the last four centuries.

It is nearly three-quarters of a century since Rudolf Steiner wrote and published his *Philosophie der Freiheit*. Outside the circle of those familiar with Rudolf Steiner's teaching as a whole, not much attention has been paid to this book. But it is concerned with the central problems with which philosophers and psychologists are wrestling today, the nature of human knowledge and human action. These are not only theoretical problems, but eminently practical ones – in particular for those occupied with education, as so many of our contributors are.

The other main theme is concerned with a deepened understanding of the Deed of Christ – and, in particular, of those who immediately prepared for and followed the central event of history, the Incarnation. Here we have to try and put into practice what is described more generally in earlier articles, the activity of imaginative understanding.

We begin with a lecture by Rudolf Steiner which may seem to be concerned only with everyday matters, almost with trivialities. And yet in this lecture can be found not only the seeds of much that Rudolf Steiner was able later to bring into educational practice in a very beneficial way, but also starting-points for the most fundamental human self-knowledge.

The easy, colloquial style of this lecture can mask, from a reader not accustomed to Steiner's economy of language, the close-knit structure of it. Thoughtfully reviewed and reread, it will be seen to contain no fewer than ten systematic exercises for strengthening the will – a sufficient programme to reorganise the entire personality for the most practical needs of life.

* * *

The whole of the contents of this *Golden Blade*, including the editorial notes to this point, had been prepared for the press before the sudden death of Gerald Rowe on 3 October 1967 from a coronary thrombosis.

For nearly twenty years Gerald Rowe taught in the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School. He was one of the principal architects of the Upper School. He taught with patience and enthusiasm a wide range of subjects – giving the same full attention to the history of languages, or to biology, or to helping on those who found some basic subject particularly difficult. In the study of Rudolf Steiner's work he had long been deeply interested in the anthroposophical approach to social problems; of this his article on *Incomes Policy* in the previous *Golden Blade* gives evidence. In recent years he was increasingly concerned with all that Rudolf Steiner has to say about a right understanding of the relationship between those living on earth and those who have died, and with research into the historical events connected with the great medieval poems about the Holy Grail.

NERVOUS CONDITIONS IN OUR TIME

A lecture given by RUDOLF STEINER in Munich, 11th January 1912¹

THERE is much complaint nowadays of 'nervousness' and all that this word implies; and we can scarcely be surprised at the statement that there is no man or woman nowadays who is not nervous. We can well understand even this declaration. These conditions manifest themselves in life in various ways: most easily in this way, that the person becomes what we might call a 'psychological fidget' – that is to say, a man or woman who is unable to hold fast a single thought, but constantly jumps from one thought to another. This constant hurry of the inner life is one of the easiest forms of nervousness. There is also another form, where people do not know what to do with themselves – cannot make anything of themselves. Or again this: when they are called upon to make some decision, they never know what they shall do in the given situation. This latter nervousness can lead to still worse symptoms, till it expresses itself in manifold forms of disease, even imitating organic diseases – gastric disturbances, for instance – in a most deceptive way. Many another condition might be mentioned. Who does not know of these things in our time? We need not go so far as to speak of a 'political alcoholism' with regard to the great events of public life. Quite recently, there has been no little comment on public affairs in this direction. This very phrase was recently coined for the way the political affairs in Europe were conducted during recent months. People began to perceive how very unpleasantly the prevailing nervousness is making itself felt.

Now there can be no doubt that it will grow no better for mankind in the near future. The prospects are by no means hopeful; for there are many harmful factors and abuses, strongly influencing our present life, and passing like an epidemic from one man to another, so that others who are in good health generally, but who are weak, are as if infected by them. Among

¹ From notes unrevised by the lecturer. Published by kind permission of the Rudolf Steiner *Nachlassverwaltung*, Dornach, Switzerland, and in agreement with the Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company. Translation by George Adams (1929) with some emendations.

other things, it is extremely harmful for our time that many people who come into high and responsible positions have studied in the way one does. There are whole branches of scholarship, pursued in this way: For a whole year, the college student will spend his time and energy quite otherwise than really thinking what the professors are giving in their lectures. Then, when he has to know something for his examination, he will set to work and 'cram' for it during a few weeks; and the worst feature is that there is no real connection – no inner interest of the soul in the cramming, or rather, in the subject of the cramming. In our schools, the prevailing opinion of the pupils often is: 'If only I could soon forget what I have just had to learn!' What is the consequence? No doubt, in some respects, men are thus fitted to take a hand in public life. But they are not inwardly united with the thing that they are doing; they feel remote from it. Now there is nothing worse than to feel remote, in your heart, from the things that you are having to do with your head. It has a most adverse effect on the strength of the human ethereal body. The ethereal body becomes more and more enfeebled under such pursuits, precisely because of the very slight connection which then exists between the core of the man's soul and the activity that he engages in.

For one who takes it in a healthy way, Anthroposophy should have precisely the opposite effect. He will not merely learn that man consists of 'physical body, ethereal body, astral body and Ego'; he will behave in such a way that the several members unfold strongly and healthily. If a man makes a very simple experiment but repeats it with diligence, he will often find that the very slightest thing can work miracles. What I have just described is closely connected with the quick forgetfulness of many people. It is often said that such forgetfulness is a great nuisance in life. Anthroposophy says more than this; it shows that it is also harmful to health. Many things even bordering on very severe illnesses of human nature would be avoided if people were less forgetful. And who can claim to be exempt? Who has not to complain of forgetfulness in some respect? Assume, for instance, that a man begins to notice he can never find things where he put them. It may seem strange for us to be speaking of these things, but after all, they do occur in life; and there is a very good exercise for gradually curing such

forgetfulness. Suppose, for instance, that a lady is in the habit of putting her brooch down somewhere, and presently discovers that she can never find it again in the morning. No doubt, you will say, the best thing to do is always to put it in the same place; but we will speak of a far more effective cure. She should say to herself: 'Now, all the more, I will put it in different places; but as I do so, I will unfold the thought: I have put the thing there, and I will mark the surroundings well. And now I quietly go away; and I shall see, if I only do this once, I shall not always succeed in finding it again quickly; but if I do it often, I shall see that my forgetfulness by-and-by disappears.' The effect of this exercise is that the Ego is brought into connection with the fact, with the deed I do, and that a picture is developed. This bringing-together of the soul and spirit – the Ego, the kernel of our being, – and the pictorial image, can most effectively sharpen one's memory. And this can be very useful for life; one will forget far less. Still more, however, can be attained. Let us assume that it became a kind of habit for people to hold such thoughts when they take things off or when they put things aside. It would represent a strengthening of the ethereal body. For, as we know, the ethereal body is in a certain sense the bearer of memory. We need not therefore be surprised that this will strengthen the ethereal body. Assume, however, that you give someone this advice, not merely because he is forgetful but because he shows certain signs of nervousness. You will see that it is a very good cure; he will gradually put aside certain so-called nervous conditions. Life itself in such a case will prove that the things Anthroposophy teaches are correct.

In human nature, as you know, the physical body and the ethereal body are immediately connected. Now there is one thing observable in our time, which moves one with compassion if one bears a healthy soul in one's breast. Have you ever seen people who have to write much in their profession – Post Office workers, for example – and who make strange movements whenever they are about to write? It need not go so far as that, for when it has gone so far, it is already a pretty bad condition. It may be no more than this: that whenever they are writing, they have to give themselves a kind of jerk – a repeated jerk for every upward or every downward stroke. You can tell it

from the handwriting if it is written like that. Such a condition can only be understood by Spiritual Science. As to the relation of the two bodies, in a thoroughly healthy human being the ethereal body must always be absolutely able to enter into the physical; and the physical body must always be the other's servant. It is an unhealthy state of affairs if the physical body executes movements on its own account; it represents a preponderance of the physical over the ethereal. We are then faced with an inherent weakness of the ethereal body. This kind of relation between the physical and the ethereal body lies at the occult foundation of every kind of cramp or convulsion. In all such conditions, the physical body is dominant and performs all manner of movements on its own. Here again – provided these conditions have not got the upper hand too much – there is a way of helping. We must only reckon with the occult facts; we must believe in the existence and activity of the several members of man's being.

Suppose someone has got into such a condition that his fingers continually shake when he begins to write. It will certainly be good to advise: 'Take a holiday, write less for a time, and you will get over it!' But this is only half the necessary advice; one could do much more by adding: 'Without making too much effort, try every day – quarter or half an hour would do – to alter your writing, so that you have to attend, and not write mechanically, as in the past. For instance, while you used to write *f* in *this* way, do it now more upright, with a different form. Cultivate the habit of painting the letters.'

If spiritual knowledge became more widespread, the superiors of such an unfortunate man would not say, when he came back from his holiday: 'What a crazy fellow you are, you are writing quite differently.' People would realise that this is a healthy thing. The point is that when a man changes his handwriting, he is obliged to pay attention to what he is doing – that is, in other words, to bring the centre and core of his being into connection with the thing he does. To do so is to strengthen the ethereal body; thereby we become healthier human beings.

It would not be bad deliberately to work for this in school education. Anthroposophy must here give a piece of advice to the educational world, though doubtless it will not be followed for a long time yet. Suppose that when you first taught children

to write, you taught them a certain style of handwriting; then, after a few years, you saw to it that they assumed a different character of writing. This change – and the conscious attention it involves – would result in an untold strengthening of the ethereal body.

You see that we can do something in life to strengthen our ethereal body. Now this is of immense importance, for numerous morbid states are due to the weakness of the ethereal body. Nay, we may even assert that many forms of illness would take an entirely different course if the ethereal body were stronger. The course they actually take is due to the weakened ethereal body, which is characteristic of the man of today.

What we have here been indicating represents a definite way of working upon the ethereal body. When we do this, we apply an actual force to something – a force we could certainly not apply if we denied the existence of this 'something'. If, then, the effects of the force thus applied became apparent, surely it proves the existence of the 'something' – namely, in this case, the ethereal body.

Another thing to strengthen the ethereal body is to perform yet another exercise for the improvement of memory. It may already have been mentioned; let me repeat it nevertheless. We can do infinitely much to strengthen the ethereal body if we go through something that is familiar to us, not only in the way we know it, but in backward sequence. Say, for example, in school we have to learn by heart a sequence of Kings or the like; it is extremely good to learn them also in the opposite direction. If we do this in a comprehensive way, we do much to strengthen the ethereal body. To think through a whole play backwards, for instance, is highly effective in strengthening the ethereal body.

You will soon see that in ordinary modern life people do not do such things as would contribute to strengthen their ethereal bodies. They do not give themselves a chance in the restless bustle of modern life; they do not come to that inner quiet which is needful for such exercises. In the evening, people are generally too tired to harbour such thoughts. But when Anthroposophy begins to penetrate into their souls, people will see how many things that are done in the bustle of modern life could well be spared; then it would not be impossible to gain

the time for these strengthening and health-giving exercises. Moreover, people will quickly see the very good results that can be achieved if these things are already observed in education.

Another little exercise may now be mentioned. With certain things we do – no matter whether or no they are of such a nature as to leave a trace behind – it is a good exercise at the same time to look at the thing which we are doing. It is easy to do so, for instance, in writing. I am quite sure, many a person would soon wean himself of his hideous handwriting if he really contemplated the letters.

But there is another thing which it is quite good to do as an exercise, though it should not be prolonged. One should endeavour to watch oneself: how one walks, how one moves one's head, how one laughs, etc.; in short, one tries to get a clear notion of one's own movements and gestures. Very few people know what they look like from behind while they are walking. It is good to make this experiment; only it must not always be continued, for it would quickly lend itself to vanity. This exercise also tends to consolidate the ethereal body, and it works in such a way as to strengthen the control of the astral body over the ethereal body. You thus become able, if need be, to suppress certain actions or movements of your own free will. The point is, it is good to be able to do the things we habitually do, quite differently on occasion, so that we are not always obliged to do them in one way. One need not become a fanatical upholder of the indifferent use of the right and the left hand. But if a man is able now and then to do with the left hand what he commonly does with the right, he will strengthen the control of his astral body over his ethereal body.

The 'culture of the will', as we may call it, is notably important. I have already pointed out how often nervousness will take the form that people never know what they shall do; nay, they do not know what they shall desire, or even what they *want* to desire. They shrink from doing what they have resolved to do. We may regard it as a certain weakness of the will, but it is due to an insufficient command of the Ego over the astral body. Some people cannot bring themselves firmly to will what they should will. The way to strengthen one's will is not to carry out something one wishes, – provided, needless to say,

that it will do no harm to leave the wish unfulfilled. Examine yourself in life, and you will soon find countless things which it is very nice, no doubt, to satisfy, but equally possible to leave unsatisfied – when the fulfilment would give you pleasure, but you can quite well do without it. Set out in this way systematically, and every such restraint will signify an access of strength to the will; and that is, strength of the Ego over the astral body.

If we subject ourselves to this procedure in later life, we can still make good much that our education nowadays neglects. It is not easy, at this point, to find the right educational tact. If you are able to fulfil a pupil's wish and you deny it to him, you will awaken his antipathy; so, you might say, it seems doubtful if the non-fulfilment of wishes is a right principle in education, for you could easily call forth an all-too-great antipathy. What are you then to do? There is a way. Deny the wishes, not to your pupil but to yourself, so that the pupil perceives it; and as there is a strong imitative impulse, especially in the first seven years of life, you will soon see that the child will follow your example and deny wishes to himself.

A most important means of strengthening the control of the Ego over the astral body is to set forth what is to be said *for* and *against* one and the same thing. Look out into life, and you will see that people are constantly saying only the one thing. That is the usual state of affairs. But there is nothing in life which you can truly treat in this way; there are never no *pros* or *cons*. And it is good for all things if we acquire the habit of adducing the *pros* and the *cons* as well. Human vanity and egoism frequently favour what one is about to do; therefore it is also good to enlist the reasons *against*. The fact is this: Man would so like to be 'a good man'; and he is convinced often that he will be, if only he does what there are so many reasons in favour of his doing, and leaves undone what there are so many reasons against. It is an uncomfortable fact, but there are many possible objections to practically everything you do! Truth to tell, you are not nearly as good as you believe. This is an universal truth – a truism, no doubt; but it is an effective truth if you make it a practice, with all things that you do, clearly to put before you what you might also leave undone. What you thereby attain is this: – No doubt you have sometimes met people so weak in their will that they would sooner leave

others to run their affairs. They would far rather ask: What am I to do now? than find the reasons for their action in themselves. Let us assume that such a person, who is fond of asking others (what I am now saying, by the way, must also be conceived as having many *cons* as well as *pros*!) is confronted by two different people. One of them says: 'Do this!' the other says: 'Don't do it!' We shall see that the one counsellor gains the victory, namely, the one who has the stronger influence of will. This is a most significant phenomenon, for the Yes or the No is brought about by the will of an adviser, whose strength of will has gained the victory over the other's will. But now suppose that I stand quite alone, and in my own and inmost heart I face the Yes and the No, and then go and do the thing because I have given myself the answer Yes. This Yes will have unfolded a strong force within me. Thus when you place yourself in consciousness before a choice of alternatives, you let something that is strong overcome something that is weak. And that is important, for it greatly strengthens the control of the Ego over the astral body. You will do very much for the strength of your will, if you try to carry out what I am now describing. But there is also the shadow-side. For you will not strengthen your will, but only weaken it, if instead of acting under the influence of that which speaks for the one course or the other, out of mere slackness you do nothing. Seemingly you have then followed the No, while in reality you have merely been lax and easy-going. It will be good, not to attempt the choice when you feel limp and weary, but when you are inwardly strong and know that you can really follow what you place before your soul as the eventual *pro* or *con*. These things must be brought before the soul at the right time.

Another thing to strengthen the control of the I over the astral body is to dismiss from our souls everything that creates a barrier between us and our surroundings – not by withholding justified criticisms, but by distinguishing something that is to be blamed for its own sake from something that one finds exasperating because of its effect on oneself. The more one can make one's judgments, particularly about fellow-men, unaffected by their attitude to oneself, the better it is for the strengthening of the Ego in its control of the astral body. It is a good thing to practise this self-denial: not to consider bad in

our fellow-men the things we can only consider bad because they are bad for ourselves; and, in effect, only to apply our judgment where we ourselves are not in question. You will see how difficult this is in life. For instance, when a man has lied to you, it is not easy to restrain your antipathy. Nevertheless, one need not go at once to others, to complain of him; but we can observe from day to day how he acts and speaks, and let this form a basis for our judgment, rather than what he has done to us. It is important to let things speak for themselves and to understand a person in himself, not through one particular action, but from the consistent pattern of his behaviour. You will soon find that even with a man whom you consider an exceptional scoundrel, many of the things he does are quite out of keeping with his conduct in other respects. It is good for the strengthening of our Ego, to meditate upon the fact that in all cases we might very well refrain from nine-tenths of the judgments we pronounce. It would be ample for life if only one-tenth of them were to be formed in our minds; it would by no means impoverish our life.

What I have told you today are apparently small details, but it must also be our task, now and then, to dwell upon these things. For then we see how very differently we must take hold of life than we generally do. It is not the most important thing to say that when a man is ill you should send to the chemist's for a medicine. The important thing is to order life in such a way that illnesses will become less and less oppressive; and they *will* become less oppressive if by such practices we strengthen the influence of the Ego over the astral body, of the astral body over the ethereal, and of the ethereal body over the physical. Self-education, and an influence upon the education of children, can follow from our fundamental anthroposophical convictions.

THE MEANING OF INITIATION¹

A. C. HARWOOD

INITIATION is a word we have taken from the Latin. The Latin word *Initiatio* is connected with the idea of *beginning*. But if we look at the corresponding Greek word, we find: *τελετή*, connected with *τέλος*, which means *end*. *τελεστήριον* was the name for the Initiation Hall at Eleusis. Of course, a superficial interpretation of this contrast is possible. You can say that the Latin word refers to the *beginning* of a nexus of ceremonies, the Greek to the completion of them. You might even say the Roman is more modest – few achieve more than a beginning! But I believe there is a deeper meaning as well, the tradition of which has survived in sundry religious traditions and mythologies.

It is that the end of things is already immanent in the beginning, and it applies both to the individual and the world at large. You cannot know the beginning without the end. You cannot know the end without the beginning. It is the meaning concealed in the picture of the snake biting its tail. It is the meaning expressed in the saying 'I am the Alpha and Omega'.

Even in ordinary life we can see that if we do some action, if we start something, because we have an *end* in view we are immediately involved in an element which binds the two things together. And this element is *meaning*. If I fall into the water because someone pushes me, my fall has no meaning relative to me. If I jump in to try to save someone from drowning, my action has meaning. The first is what is called an *efficient* cause, the second is the *final* cause. Without a final cause no event can be said to have *meaning*. The evolution of the World and Man can only be said to have *meaning* if the end were present in the consciousness of some Being at the *beginning*. A blind urge simply will not do!

Since about the fifteenth century, however, a view of life has entered the Western World (and is now spreading over the entire globe) which deliberately shuts out all idea of a final cause, and concentrates purely on efficient causes. It, therefore,

by its very definition, cuts out all possibility of meaning. And this unnatural modern view of life has become so potent that it has arrogated to itself exclusively the ancient word for knowledge, Science; and a great many people, believing it to be the only possible knowledge, look to it also as the teacher of meaning and values, which it can never be. The forces of *heat* or *coagulation* or *pressure* which produce the stone cannot explain the *cathedral*.

You will notice also that from its very inception by the genius of such men as Descartes and Bacon, the new science cut out from its considerations all those secondary qualities, colour, form, tone, etc., which are the very ones which give value to the visible world, and concentrated only on those qualities to which it was pleased to give the name of primary, which can be numbered, measured and weighed, and can be dealt with from the point of view of efficient causes.

In contradistinction to this form of knowledge, Initiation may be called the *Science of Meaning* – Meaning in the Individual, and Meaning in the Universe. And because Meaning can only exist within some form of consciousness, Initiation must also ultimately involve a penetration to the Being or Beings for whom the Meaning was the primary force of action or creation.

There are not a few people today who are acutely conscious of the kind of thing I have been trying to say, and who concentrate on some means by which the individual can discover in himself something which gives meaning to personal life and the existence of the world. Such people often find a marvellous help in ancient traditional conceptions and exercises which enable them to penetrate into their own being and approach a state of Nirvana, or the Peace of God which passes understanding, or whatever may be the form in which they express the realisation of the Spirit within them. Sometimes the professed aim is the complete absorption into the Divine Being: on the lower level, it must be confessed, either overtly or covertly there often appears some appeal to man's egoism, in that by securing greater poise and confidence, the aspirant may be more successful in his daily life.

To Steiner, however, the problem presented itself in a different form. He was born at the time when Natural Science was making its greatest early triumphs, not perhaps so much in

¹ A Lecture given in Rudolf Steiner Hall.

technical achievements, as in a revolutionary interpretation of life. The new Geology had opened up vast vistas of time, the new Anthropology had linked man to the other kingdoms of nature through its evolutionary theory in a way hitherto unknown. Steiner himself, however, had certain visionary powers even as a boy, which made it impossible for him to accept the conclusions of the scientists of his age. He accepted the discoveries but not the interpretations. What he did accept, however, so wholeheartedly as to become an interpreter of, and protagonist for them, were some of the fundamental ideas such as *evolution*, the *unity of all creation* and so forth, with which the new scientists were working. But he saw very plainly that if man was integrated with the rest of nature, and nature was handed over to a materialistic interpretation – that is to efficient causes – then man himself would also become a fragment of a mechanism determined by outer causes – as, in fact, for most modern thinking, has actually happened. If man is one with the world, you cannot concentrate on the spiritual being of the individual, and hand over the rest of the world to Natural Science. If the individual has value and meaning, the world must have value and meaning as well.

What, then, is Steiner's view of the relation of the individual to the world? To answer this question we must first deal with the more general question: What is the relation of man in general to the world? Steiner saw plainly, what I think hardly anyone else in his time seemed to have noticed, that the new scientific thought had tacitly dropped overboard a conception of this relation which had prevailed perhaps since the beginning of recorded thinking. It is the idea that man is a miniature of the universe – in the Greek terminology, a microcosm of the macrocosm. The view of this micro-macrocosmic relation had become fairly static by the time of the Middle Ages in Europe. The outer frame of man was held to be in relation to the zodiacal fixed stars, the flexible life organs to the planets, the temperaments to the elements, and so on. Now Steiner saw that, while it may have been right to jettison, for the time being, this older more static picture, what was needed for the modern mind was a re-creation of it in terms of evolution. For evolution is in reality nothing else than the path from the Alpha to the Omega. Therefore, one of his earlier courses of

lectures – though you will find the same theme running through all his thoughts – was specifically entitled *Microcosm and Macrocosm*. In the lectures he deals with many themes of which I have only time to deal with two.

The first is that there are, and always have been *two* paths to attaining spiritual experience, first, the entry into the microcosm and, second, the entry into the macrocosm. He illustrates these two paths (as is his wont) in a wide variety of ways. In ordinary *modern* consciousness man is barred (for his own good) from the experience of either. Every night when he falls asleep he enters the macrocosm but is robbed of his consciousness. Every day when he wakes up, he enters the microcosm of his own physical and life bodies, where processes of infinite wisdom are perpetually taking place, but his consciousness is immediately turned outward through the senses, and he knows nothing of them.

Fundamentally, Initiation means to preserve consciousness in the sleep life, or to win the ability to turn it inward during waking life. It may pursue one path or the other. Egyptian Initiation, for instance, pre-eminently followed the inner path – Northern Initiation tended to follow the outer through the veil of nature: it sought, for instance, the path to the spiritual sunlight through the physical light. Similarly, at another level, there is the difference between Ecstasy (a going out of oneself) and Mysticism (a going inward).

A second main theme of these lectures (among many) deals with the fact that the relation of macrocosm and microcosm changes during the ages. Indeed Evolution is nothing other than the change in this relation, – and therefore the form of initiation proper to one age is not that proper to another.

It is at this point that we may fittingly make the transition from man in general to the individual. It lies within the meaning of evolution that man should attain individuality. In earlier ages, when the individual lived within a group consciousness, when he could hardly experience, or even utter, the words 'I am', initiation could be conferred on him from *without*, perhaps even in a kind of sleep, or through the influence of a Guru or Teacher who had already attained spiritual development and knew the road. The Initiation experience was given from without – he *submitted* to it. Now, however, precisely by being

cut off from the very idea, not to say the practice of initiation, precisely through the kind of thinking which has abandoned the idea of the relation of microcosm and macrocosm, man has achieved individuality and freedom.

But the very means by which he has achieved that individuality and freedom, the acceptance of a mechanistic interpretation of the universe without value, now constitutes his greatest danger. It lies with him whether he can recover through his own efforts a picture of the universe in which meaning and value again inhere, without which he will ultimately be unable to maintain himself as a free spiritual entelechy on the Earth.

Therefore, for Steiner the inward going path was not sufficient. It must be complemented by the path which attains a vision of the working of spiritual forces and beings behind the veil of nature, as well as behind the veil of man's experience of his own being. That he did not despise the inward path will be apparent to anyone who reads such an early book as his *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, though even here you will read that anyone who takes the inner path in the modern age must also press on to the outer as well. Indeed, there are great dangers if he does not.

This last sentence will lead us to another and deeper aspect of the case. Many people today equate the word spiritual with the word good. They speak only of the 'Bliss' of spiritual experience and not of its dangers. But the deepest traditions of religious and spiritual life have always recognised that there are spiritual beings who oppose as well as those who further the evolution of man. 'The gates of Heaven are dreadful gates,' cries Chesterton – and some religious and occult organisations did indeed oppose Steiner because they deeply felt that he was revealing what the ordinary man ought not to know. This is why you may distrust all spiritual prophets who recommend easy ways of attaining spiritual experience without arduous preparation. It is also why all the true traditions – Vedanta, Buddhism and so on – all inculcate the prime necessity of practising the strictest virtues for those who wish to advance towards initiation. Steiner is no exception to this; indeed he lays it down as a necessity that three steps forward in morality should be taken for every step in initiation.

But he adds something of great importance. I have said that

most (not all) of the old practises of initiation took the *inward* path, and this path has its own adversary and its own dangers. The paramount temptation in this form is that of being lost in the bliss of knowledge. It is the temptation to pride and to all the vices which stem from it. Medieval thought considered pride to be the parent of all the seven deadly sins. It is, therefore, especially for those entering on this path that such virtues as humility were necessary. For man's earlier consciousness the outer world of nature did not present itself as the mechanism he sees in it today. The heavenly bodies, the elements, the life of the earth, were all the expression of concrete divine powers. By a kind of natural clairvoyance man penetrated the veil of nature and found the spiritual beings working behind it. The path to the outer revelation was still open to his dreamlike consciousness.

But this path, too, has its peculiar dangers no less than the inward path. To enter upon it one has first to overcome the temptation which, as we have seen, belongs especially to our age, to interpret the outer world in a purely mechanical way. This temptation is today very widely spread. There is a school of Christian theologians who claim that Natural Science has done the best service possible to religion by taking God out of the sphere of nature, where He never was, and placing Him in the sphere of personal relations, where He is alone to be found.

The tempter on the inward path has always been known as Lucifer. To the adversary of the modern age who wishes to keep man in the error of delusion with regard to outer Nature, Steiner has given the name, taken from Persian tradition, of Ahriman. Ahriman works in spreading the conviction that the analytical intellect is the only way of understanding the world, that knowledge is to be sought in the part, and not in the whole, in concepts and not in imaginations, in hypotheses and not in experience; that organisation, not the grasp of living processes, will solve the problems of the modern age. I think that any perceptive person will recognise a hundred ways in which this temptation is working in life today.

It is because he recognised the supreme importance of the outward path to the macrocosm for man today, that Steiner adds to many exercises of inner concentration and self-knowledge, many others which lead man into a new connection with

Nature and the forces which work behind Nature. It is a path fraught with great possibilities of error. Therefore, just as the dangers on the inner path have to be overcome by such virtues as humility, those of the outer path must be met by a capacity for healthy judgment and logical thinking. Without these no-one should endeavour to pierce the veil into the macrocosm. Merely to have some kind of clairvoyant vision is of little use, and may be of infinite harm. The true Initiate must recognise what he perceives in all its relations – and for this sound judgment is a necessary prerequisite.

Ordinary human life is the best training for a sound judgment, because it is in this life that we meet inevitably the consequence of faulty judgment, and are shown our errors. It is here that one may acquire judgment, balance, objectivity and discrimination, and, if these have not been gained in ordinary life, it is far better to spend a lifetime acquiring them than to endeavour to attain powers of perception beyond one's strength and capacity.

It may perhaps be asked why, if a form of spiritual knowledge is so desirable for man today, it should be so difficult of attainment?

The answer is to be found in the wisdom of the world and the evolution of man. Man in his earth life comprises many principles; he has a physical body, a life body, a body of consciousness, and a centre of experience in the ego. But these principles are not of equal age – or of equal wisdom. The physical body is the oldest, and into it, into the very structure of the bones, is built a wisdom far greater than anything which the puny wisdom of the ego can hope to attain. The ego is the child in man, which has to be protected from the mature forces of the world. It can only live in pictures – images of the real world. Therefore, Guardians have been appointed – to speak in spiritual terms – whose task is to prevent those who are still immature from crossing the threshold, both that within and that without. They stand at the gate of sleep and at the gate of waking, they bar the way leading to macrocosm and microcosm to those who would be destroyed by the experience if they should attain it unprepared.

Of course in all I have said there is far too great a simplification. I have spoken of the two paths as though they were

separate and distant. In actual practice they are intertwined and inseparable. Every true advance into macrocosmic experience produces also an advance in the experience of the microcosm. Both experiences advance the frontier, and deepen the experience of the Ego.

This subject of the Ego brings me back to the Time question – that of Alpha and Omega. It is here where Steiner's acceptance of the process of evolution brings out sharply a great difference between his view of the self or ego and that held by many modern psychologists. Jung, for example, draws a distinction between Ego and Self. He characterises the Ego as the centre of conscious experience, but holds that it is overwhelmed if it tries to embrace the Unconscious. But Jung's Self embraces the conscious 'with its hard-won values' and the unconscious 'with its vitality and power'. It unites all opposite elements, it holds all principles together – male-female; centre-circumference. Its symbol (appearing in dreams) is the Mandala-Circle or Square – with the Self in the centre.

But for Steiner the ego is not so much the uniting as the transforming element. Man experiences it as a point today – a mere centre of conscious experiences – because it is only by so centralising his experiences that man can be free. But originally he experienced this Self or Ego in the world around him. He looked at stars and planets, forests and rivers, and said 'I am that'. He participated in the common consciousness of race or tribe. These experiences have withdrawn from his conscious life, though it is quite correct to say that they still work in the unconscious. But these are forces working from the *past*. You will notice that all modern psychologists tend to determinism because they study only the forces coming from the *past*. Steiner, however, added a new Time dimension – to become aware of what is entering into our experience from the future. This is the Higher Ego, the Spirit Self (call it what you will) which is so much greater than Jung's 'Self' because it works as a transforming agent – and will so work in the future – on the entire microcosm and macrocosm.

It has already worked unconsciously 'with vitality and power' in raising the human form to the upright position, in endowing man with speech and the power of thought. It now lies within the freedom of man to develop it further himself.

But the necessary freedom must come through balancing the forces of the past with those of the future, through working with the Omega as well as the Alpha. This is no doubt difficult to *comprehend* and still more difficult to *do*. But you can reduce it to quite simple psychological terms – as a beginning – if you really understand the nature of the threefold man.

In the threefold man, the forces of thought and consciousness come from the past; the forces of will – normally unconscious – from the future. It is these latter (of which we are unconscious) that are the real formers of our lives – they bring us into situations from which we take the next vital step. They form our *karma*. Every time you bring Will into Thinking you are overcoming the *Past* with the *Future*. This is why so many of the early exercises suggested by Steiner on the path to Higher Knowledge, are exercises of the Will in relation to consciousness.

Indeed, this incarnating the future is one of the first things about which Rudolf Steiner wrote. You know how long philosophers have argued about Necessity and Freewill. Is man Free or is he not? How many arid discussions have taken place on this theme! It was like a thunderstorm clearing the air when Rudolf Steiner put the question in a new way: *How can man make himself free?* And the answer is: By dealing with every situation not from custom or precedent (that is from the past), but by seeing it as *unique*, calling for its own solution to meet it from out of the future – a new creation. That is the beginning of Initiation! It is the subject of Steiner's first book: *The Philosophy of Freedom*.

Initiation is an arduous path and probably not many people will yet be able to advance far along the road. But for the rest this does not mean that Initiate knowledge need remain a sealed book. For this knowledge is a creation, far more so than intellectual knowledge, and just as a man may appreciate music or pictures who can neither compose nor paint, so the ordinary healthy human intelligence can appreciate the creative work of the initiate mind, without himself reaching any high stage of Initiation. You are not asked to accept the Initiate's findings, you may treat them as hypotheses as long as you will; but by merely giving an unprejudiced hearing to them you escape from the imprisonment of the thinking of the age, you breathe a different air, you exercise new muscles of the soul –

and all this is, perhaps, the best preparation for undertaking new experiences yourself. For you will find that Initiate knowledge calls for other qualities of mind than those to which you have been accustomed. Just as modern physics calls for a mathematical mind (and in the case of many of us calls in vain), so Initiate knowledge begins by calling for an imaginative mind, a thinking not in concepts but in pictures. You find yourself, for instance, applying to Nature a type of thinking which hitherto you have reserved for the world of art. Colour and sound in Nature take on a meaning, you see the form of the living world like the faces of men through which a character shines. You begin to feel that the part will only be understood when you see it as a revelation of the whole. You will encounter some great surprises, some almost shattering reversals of modern belief – but in so doing you will realise on how many *unproved assumptions* the modern picture of the world is actually based. Man himself will no longer appear as the last inconvenient arrival on the surface of the earth, but as the origin of all things, who has descended from his macrocosmic to this microcosmic experience. The mineral earth will no longer be the foundation on which, later, life and consciousness have appeared, but the last stage of the reverse journey from consciousness through life to death. You will build in your imagination a world in which a free spiritual being can live and move; you bring it to the test of your total human experience, and in breathing its liberating air you begin to realise and develop your own free eternal being.

SCIENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

JOHN DAVY

SCIENCE is built on two ideals: To increase our understanding of the world; and to use this understanding for the benefit of all.

Today, neither of these ideals is being fulfilled. For most people, science is no longer a source of enlightenment but of mystification, while applied science is unleashing powerful and often frightening forces which we cannot confidently manage. How has this come about?

Science has become more remote from general understanding as it has become more abstract and mathematical. Yet increasing abstraction has brought increasing technological power. This reached a kind of culmination in the wartime Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb, which involved an intensive collaboration between academic scientists, working on the most mathematical and abstract frontiers of knowledge, with all the resources of industry and military power. It was a combination which has become familiar but was a novelty then. It is true that science had frequently contributed to industry and to military power before 1940. But academic physicists had never been so closely integrated with a major military and industrial effort. The association has left its mark. What one might call the industrialisation of science and its marriage with the State has gone ahead at a breathless pace. Almost three-quarters of American research and development is now Government-financed, a situation which recently prompted a leading business journal of free-enterprise America, *Fortune* magazine, to publish a long article entitled 'The Nationalisation of U.S. Science'.¹ The main driving forces have been the demands of defence and space activities – but their influence has spread far beyond their immediate requirements.

One result is that many modern laboratories are now more like small factories than anything else. They have managing directors, full-time administrative and accounting staffs, huge

power supplies, and the scientists work in ever larger teams. In one sense, this has made science enormously more 'productive'. Indeed, a senior official of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space programme recently argued that a principal justification for the whole space programme was its 'forcing function' on the rest of science and technology. It acts like a greenhouse, dramatically speeding up growth.

This runaway development has produced some useful new inventions and products, and is sometimes exhilarating, like a ride in a very fast car. But for many people, the exhilaration is short lived, and is replaced by deepening alarm and confusion. Quite apart from the apocalyptic military powers now in the hands of nuclear armed states, there is a widespread sense of forces getting out of hand, of new developments pouring over us before we have learned to manage their predecessors. An American professor of physics recently wrote: 'With all our mushrooming know-how and frenzied hurry to transform the world out of all recognition – if not indeed out of existence – we are increasingly helpless and confused in the face of the world we are creating.'¹

This process of industrialisation has taken hold, not only of applied science, but of pure science as well. It is not merely that the output of new 'knowledge' is accelerating, in a competitive atmosphere of 'publish or die'. But the actual character of knowledge itself has become, in subtle ways, industrialised. For the justification of modern physical theory is its predictive value, its power. It is essentially a collection of recipes for manipulating the world, a kind of intellectual tool-box from which the scientific artisan selects what he needs for his next experiment. These tools are now highly mathematical and their use a specialised skill. They are extremely powerful – but their effect has been to remove the conceptual side of science, scientific 'knowledge', into a realm remote from direct human experience.

As a result, the scientist has become for the layman a kind of sorcerer, in somewhat uncertain control of invisible forces which he has conjured up. His control depends on mathematical mysteries which are impenetrable except to a few. This is a far cry from science as part of the Enlightenment, as a bringer

¹ Paul R. Zilsel, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, April 1964, p. 28.

¹ *Fortune*, September 1964.

of light, of new and *public* understanding of the world. This experience of enlightenment may still come to individual scientists as they move in their mathematical worlds. They will speak of new 'insights', of the 'elegance' and 'beauty' of a mathematical procedure. But they have arrived in a situation curiously similar to that of many modern artists: their work is only accessible to a small group of initiates. Their remote concepts no longer function as 'knowledge' in the sense of something which brings new meaning into our experience of the world. Few people searching for meaning in their lives will find satisfaction in the equations of nuclear physics. And even to the physicist, these equations increasingly represent tools for guiding further experiments rather than descriptions of a 'real' world. For the nuclear world, like Kant's world of the 'things in themselves', is one which can never be 'known' directly, even if we acquire immense skill in manipulating it.

This present situation – a bombardment of society with unmanageable new forces, and a drying up of knowledge into conceptual abstractions – is the culmination of a process which began in the fifteenth century. At that time, men began to distinguish themselves in a quite new way from their environment. They ceased to feel embedded in a kind of womb-like universe, enclosed in concentric heavenly spheres. Instead, they began to see themselves alone on a sphere of dead rock, whirling through dark and empty space.

It was a deep change in what Butterfield calls 'men's feeling for things'.¹ It comes out strikingly in the struggle for a clear concept of motion. In real everyday experience, we seldom see a moving object without something or someone moving it, speeding it up or slowing it down: a horse pulling a cart, a wind blowing a leaf. The uniform motion in a straight line which is a foundation of Newtonian mechanics is something we never experience in our surroundings. In fact it is a motion which never actually occurs in the universe at all, since there can be no object which is not being acted on by forces of one kind or another.

Uniform motion is thus something which can be apprehended only in pure thinking – and the struggle to do so took a couple

¹ Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science*, p. 118. (G. Bell and Sons, London, 1958.)

of centuries, until Newton crystallised out the new ability to treat abstractions as realities and manipulate them mathematically. It was an enormous achievement which we find difficult to appreciate in retrospect, as it is now almost second nature. But without it, we should have had no theoretical science as we know it today.

The other great influence was the gradual emergence of the experimental method (first clearly stated by Bacon) and an appreciation of its power. This, too, depended on changes in men's 'feelings for things'. To subject nature to experimental manipulation, to measure and weigh her, to 'torture her secrets from her' as Bacon put it, presupposes a detachment from nature, a feeling of separateness, which was quite foreign to medieval man. The attempt to gain power over nature – to develop technology in fact – depends on feeling detached from her. It was a consequence of the emergence of the new 'onlooker consciousness'.¹

This abstraction of human experience from its earlier, much more intimate relation to the environment (a relation which Barfield calls 'original participation'²) gave birth to pure and applied science as we know them. But it also gave birth to something else. To the modern mind, the medieval world can easily seem claustrophobic, tightly shut both intellectually and socially.³ The structure of society echoed the structure of the universe; both were hierarchical, fixed, God-given. Galileo and Kepler can seem a tremendous liberation, a breaking open of the spheres into a universe of infinite free space. At the same time, the intimidating authorities of the past – notably Aristotle – began to be questioned. The widening of intellectual horizons was paralleled by a widening of geographical horizons. It was the time of the great navigators and explorers. And above all old hierarchical forms of society began to be broken down.

Out of these experiences, human beings could begin to feel their individuality in a quite new way. Thus, hand in hand with the development of science has emerged the concept of individual human rights. It is true that the citizen's rights before the law were recognised in ancient Rome. But the

¹ See Ernst Lehrs, *Man or Matter*, pp. 30ff. (Faber and Faber, 1951.)

² O. Barfield, *Saving The Appearances*, pp. 40ff. (Faber, 1957.)

³ See A. Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers*, p. 94. (Hutchinson, 1959.)

Roman citizen was a member of an elite, and he took slavery of the less privileged for granted.

The notion of a *universal* rule of law, attributing equal rights to all human beings, has emerged much more recently, and is still far from being recognised or practised in many parts of the world. Nevertheless, the social upheavals since the fifteenth century, the break-up of hierarchical societies, the removal of aristocratic privilege, are intimately related to men's new 'feeling for things'. There emerged a new freedom to think individual thoughts about the universe, to devise one's own experiments – and the right to such freedoms has become something most powerfully felt and fought for, particularly in those societies where pure and applied science have been pioneered.

In these societies, the 'rights of the individual', irrespective of class, race, wealth or intelligence, is now something deeply felt and shared by very many people, especially by the young. It is the basis of resistance to dictatorship and tyranny, of the rejection and horror of brainwashing techniques or other methods of manipulating the personality, and is the ultimate social assumption behind democratic institutions.

Yet this very fact underlines the dilemmas now being created by science and technology. What started five centuries ago as a liberation is today threatening to become a trap. For the abstractions of modern theoretical science provide no firm foundation for the concept of human rights; and many of the most modern scientific techniques, especially in biology and medicine, are beginning to pose the most urgent social questions in which human rights are central. Science has already brought far-reaching new powers of intervention in birth, life and death, but no help in judging how to use them. The churches, which once gave authoritative edicts on such matters, are losing not only their congregations but their doctrinal certainty. How do we manage contraception and abortion? Under what circumstances should medical technology be used to keep old people alive, perhaps leading a kind of vegetable existence? Should hallucinogenic drugs be banned? To what extent should drugs or brain surgery be used to treat criminals or the mentally disturbed?

These are already actual questions, but they are only a foretaste of what is to come. Quite soon it may become possible

to determine the sex of a child. It is already possible in principle to extend to man the artificial insemination techniques used for cattle, so that one genius (or maniac) could father vast numbers of children, even (by freezing his sperm) long after his death.

Before long, too, the transplantation of whole organs – kidneys, livers, perhaps even hearts – may be achieved. The demand for organs may well exceed supply. How is the 'market' to be organised, and what are the rights of individuals, both donors and recipients, in respect of their organs? What shall we mean by an 'individual' when his heart comes from one body, his kidneys from another?

Somewhat further ahead, but perhaps not so very far off, lie the possibilities of 'genetic engineering' – direct chemical or manipulative intervention in the material of the chromosomes in order to remove genetic defects or insert desirable genetic features. It may soon be possible to remove a human ovum from the ovary, treat it chemically or surgically, fertilise it in the laboratory and then replant it in the womb to mature. Such procedures might produce monsters, freaks, or beings with all kinds of queer features; the whole concept of 'human being' would lose its present meaning.

Exactly what form these powers will take is speculative. But how they are used – if at all – will depend quite centrally on what we mean by 'the rights of the individual'. For to say that the human individual has rights is really another way of saying that his life has an individual meaning. But this is just where science fails us.

The nearest attempt at a scientific answer comes from biological humanists, who argue that an individual's value lies in the genes he carries for the species. But what are the 'rights' of a collection of genes? The individual surely cannot claim a right to genes potentially deleterious to the species? This line of thought leads inevitably to the conclusion that it is the species as a whole which is the true 'individuality'; its survival and further evolution must then be the basis of all decisions on rights.

This is an entirely valid and logical conclusion if the individual is regarded as simply the product of an interaction between his genetic inheritance and his environment. But this neo-Darwinist view, like so much of the conceptual content of

modern science, bears very little relation to actual human experience. For the inner conviction that human individuals have 'rights' refers these not to the 'species', but to the person himself. Each individual is felt to be uniquely valuable *irrespective* of his race, sex, intelligence or genetic constitution.

The crucial problem lies in the yawning gap which now exists between this inner conviction and our abstract intellectual life. Not long ago, the value of the individual was adequately explained in religious terms – with an assertion, for example, that God is equally interested in the salvation of each and every soul. The neo-Darwinists have produced a variation, when they say that the *species* is interested in the *genes* of each and every person; the more 'variability' and different gene combinations exist, the better the species' chance of adapting to future circumstances. In both cases, the value of the individual is referred to something outside himself. This can masquerade as a kind of 'unselfish' ideal. But the religious concept ('God') is losing its authority for increasing numbers of people today, while the scientific concept ('the species') is a remote abstraction. It hardly enriches the meaning of life to be told that the ultimate value of one's individual existence is to be sought in gene combinations which may come in useful for survival in unspecified future circumstances.

Thus, if we are to manage the new biological and medical technologies, we shall need a far more concrete *understanding* of the individual. Human rights need a foundation in *knowledge* – a knowledge which gives meaning to each individual life.

The biggest obstacle to such knowledge is a deep-rooted habit, nurtured by the scientific age, which may be called the 'atomic hypothesis'. It has become a basic procedure of science to seek explanations of phenomena in terms of simpler phenomena. The ultimate aim is to describe the complexities of the whole universe in terms of the interactions of a few elementary forces and particles. This has proved highly effective for studying and manipulating the inanimate world. But it is becoming increasingly apparent that it is quite inadequate in the realm of life.

An atomistic analysis of living phenomena can take us a certain way. It may have nearly reached its limits in the current molecular analysis of chromosomes, proteins, etc. But it should be noted that the analysis depends on bringing the

living substances into the dead world; they must be crystallised, x-rayed, chemically analysed, etc. The resulting molecular models may suggest powerful methods of intervening in and manipulating living processes. But there is one central characteristic of living phenomena which so far defies a clear scientific understanding, namely 'organisation'.

There are two particularly characteristic features of living organisms, one related to space, the other to time. In the living organism, the parts have a relation to the whole which is not found in the inorganic world. It makes no great difference to a rock if you cut it in half. It makes a very great difference to a mouse (or a man); they die, and start to decompose. This leads to the other characteristic: living organisms have a *life cycle*; they are born, grow old and die. They develop and change throughout their lives, yet every phase of development is part of the organism. The whole of a crystal is visible at every moment; an organism presents only a part of itself to the observer at any one time. To see it whole, it must be watched from birth to death.

These characteristics now form the central problems of modern biology, namely 'differentiation' and 'organisation'. Each 'atom' or cell of an organism contains in its nucleus a complete genetic specification for the *whole* organism. Yet in a liver cell, for example, only those genes relating to the liver are activated; in a brain cell, those relating to the brain. In the language of molecular biology, the problem is how appropriate genes are 'switched on and off' in different parts of the organisms and at different stages of its development. How is the genetic information organised into a meaningful whole in space and time?

A curiously similar problem is also at the forefront of another line of modern research: how are memories and sense impressions organised in the cells of the brain? Here, too, new impressions are organised and related meaningfully to concepts and memories in ways which are still almost wholly mysterious.

The basic problem is an old one, and many attempts have been made to grapple with it, ranging from various kinds of Gestalt theories, to 'explanations' which in effect deny that the problem exists. The latter are particularly popular nowadays,

but when analysed they turn out in essence to be 'manipulative' theories of the type familiar in the physical sciences. They are 'models' whose validity resides in the fact that they work in certain experimental situations. They allow one to predict correctly the outcome of certain experiments. Such theories place one in the situation of a person who understands how to manage the controls of a car without necessarily knowing anything about its mechanism. One can become an extremely skilled driver and yet have virtually no insight into the principles of automobile engineering.¹

The incomplete nature of molecular explanations may be illustrated by an analogy. It is possible to describe a house in terms of its bricks, mortar and other materials, their relative positions, load-bearing properties, etc. A descriptive 'embryology' of a house could describe how the various parts arrive on site and are assembled, and some general laws of house development could be deduced. These would enable one to predict how future houses would grow, and to devise experiments to interfere with the process in some precisely controlled ways.

But such an approach would never reveal the function of the house, nor the real cause of the parts adopting their particular ordered relationship. We would not easily recognise the completed house as a 'whole'. No explanation, in fact, can be complete without some comprehension of the needs of the human beings who live in it, and of the part played by the mind of the architect. The source and cause of the house's 'wholeness', of the unified relationship of its parts and the ordered procedures of its construction, is to be sought in the architect's mind.

This emerges still more vividly in a work of art, for example a painting. The meaning of a work of art must somehow reside in the special relation of the parts to the whole. To put it rather crudely, if a whole painting is worth £10,000, half a painting is not worth £5,000, it is worth nothing. Art obeys some similar laws to organisms.

One may study the parts of a painting in great detail, measure the areas of blue and red, weigh and analyse the pigments, make statistical comparisons with hundreds of other paintings – but no amount of such atomic analysis will reveal the meaning of

¹ Barfield, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

a great work of art. Here again it is the artist's imagination which has organised the material parts to form a whole on the canvas – and no one part of the work can be removed without killing the entire organism.

It is not my intention to use this analogy as a simple-minded proof of the existence of a Divine Architect, or of Platonic archetypes informing living organisms. The 'argument from design' can carry no real conviction in the scientific age, and quite rightly. For an invisible Architect merely becomes another mental model or hypothetical construct, on much the same footing as mental models of atoms and molecules.

The real problem is to extend our knowledge, our actual experience, so that we may apprehend the 'wholeness' of organism more clearly, objectively and scientifically. We need insight into organism equivalent to the insight experienced by mathematicians in pure thinking. We need a method, a path of knowledge, which can lead us to new experience in relation to the living world, so that we go beyond the statement 'I can manipulate', and become able to exclaim 'I see!'

Most of all is this needed in relation to the nature of the human individual and the meaning of his life on earth. For it is already all too obvious that the atomic approach, the analysis in terms of parts and fragments, while giving many new powers, is obscuring or destroying the experience of *understanding*. It brings a kind of intellectual and emotional death to the human being.

The way forward is to be sought in the phenomena of organism and of art themselves. For they point to something within every person's experience which is, in its very nature, the antithesis of atomism. This is the faculty of imagination.

Recently, increasing numbers of scientists have begun to become interested in the imagination. One reason may be the very dust-and-ashes quality of the atomic view of the world, and a hunger for the life of the arts. But a more explicit reason is a growing recognition of the role imagination plays in science itself. Until quite recently, it was common to regard the imagination as the very opposite of science – subjective, untrustworthy, inaccessible to measurement. But it is increasingly realised that every scientific hypothesis is born out of the imagination, that every experiment must be imagined before

it can be performed, and that the source of scientific progress is the imagination, which conceives new theories, mental models and experimental possibilities. There is growing awareness that crucial advances often spring from ideas which pop into the conscious mind unbidden, unexpected, and from unknown sources.

Both our conceptual and our material world have been shaped by the human imagination to an extraordinary degree. Although science set out, as it thought, to investigate 'nature' as something quite separate from the scientist, it has arrived at a position where 'nature' is increasingly obscured by man-made objects and man-made concepts, a mirror, in which what we see is mainly the results of our own activity. When we look at a motor car or a city, we fairly easily recognise it as the product of our own imaginations, realised in metals, plastic, bricks and mortar. We less easily recognise the formative role we have played in our own view of the universe. We learn, almost from birth, that the earth revolves on its axis, orbits the sun, and moves through infinite and largely empty space. It takes an effort to realise that this is not the universe we *perceive*, it is the result of a strenuous use of the imagination. We see the sun passing overhead. We have to *imagine* the earth revolving on its axis as an explanation of the sun's motion. No star – even through the largest telescope – is more than a point of light. There is no way of telling if a point is infinitely far or very near. We have first to *imagine* that the stars are 'really' large sun-like bodies, very far away, and then devise experiments to check our hypothesis.

But the imagination which has taken deepest root in the modern age, which is both very abstract and very powerful, is the concept of the 'atom'. The whole of science is based on it – on a search for simple building bricks out of which to construct more complex entities. It is taken for granted that a useful theory must analyse a phenomenon into simpler elements. Thus biology is reduced to chemistry, chemistry to atoms, atoms to 'fundamental particles'. This procedure is powerful, even essential, for effective manipulation of the physical world. Indeed it has proved so effective that we have become hypnotised by the atomic hypothesis, so that we seldom notice a curious fact about it: For neither in outer nature, nor in our inner

conceptual life, are 'atoms' ever to be found as *primary* phenomena. They are always *the end of a process*.

'Particles' appear in nature as the result of disintegration: a rock is ground into sand; bones eventually fall apart into dust; radioactive elements throw off electrons as they decay into some other, more stable element. Something similar occurs inwardly when we *think* of an atom. It involves narrowing down the whole living, moving, changing life of imagination to a single point. Any further narrowing could only extinguish consciousness, producing darkness or death. It is thus very remarkable that we should have come to regard as the basis and beginning of all things something which *in actual experience* is, so to speak, the end of the line. The historical development of corpuscular theories of the universe, and of the impulse to account for the complex in terms of the simple, is well documented – but not thereby explained. But it is clearly connected, I suggest, with the emerging feeling of individuality, which has depended so strongly on the sharpening of independent critical faculties and the performance of precise experiments. If men had not practised, over and over again, a narrowing of their attention to the simplest phenomena, concentrating their consciousness to a tiny point, they would never, perhaps, have broken free of the all-embracing world organism in which medieval man felt himself to be embedded. Atomism was the basis for freedom.

Today, though, the process has gone far enough. It has separated man so far from nature, and led his intellect into such remote abstractions, that his life and self are in danger of becoming meaningless, while applied atomism is increasingly releasing destructive forces into society. If scientists are now showing a new interest in the faculty of imagination, therefore, it is a healthy instinct. For the nature of this faculty is the opposite of atomistic. Every imagination is born as a *whole*, as some kind of picture or concept; yet it is also an organic part of all the rest of our conscious life, intimately related to our memories and past experience. It has the same relation to our inner life as a part of an organism has to the whole. It can be studied as an independent entity – but if completely separated from its living context, it dies. Both in our consciousness and in living phenomena, organism and the whole are primary, parts and atoms are secondary. The living world, and our

imaginings, point to an aspect of the universe which cannot be explained in atomic terms, in which 'causes' are *more* complex than their effects, and death has its origin in life.

It is this which led Rudolf Steiner to stress the importance of Goethe for the future development of science.¹ Goethe began to heal the breach between the poetic and the scientific apprehension of the world. He began to forge a new faculty, a marriage of the artistic imagination with precise observation of nature. He allowed nature to shape imagination, and imagination to recreate and enliven the observations. He moved towards what he called 'exact sensory imagination' ('exakte sinnliche Phantasie') which could eventually grasp the realities expressed in the living world as precisely as the atomic imaginings can take hold of the dead world.

By holding strictly to the phenomena of nature themselves, and not allowing his imagination to project into them all kinds of concepts (like waves and atoms) foreign to what living processes actually displayed to his senses, Goethe began to apprehend and describe some of the laws of the organic world. But this practice began to extend his awareness of the living world so that his consciousness began to reach into a realm of which we are normally only indirectly aware. Most commentaries on Goethe's scientific work, when they come to his treatment of the 'Urpflanze', for example, take it for granted that Goethe was merely producing a botanical *theory*. He spoke of the Urpflanze as the archetypal reality lying behind all plant life; and we easily assume that he was speaking merely metaphorically. Schiller, on his first meeting with Goethe, thought so too. They walked to his study after a lecture, talking of plant development, and when they arrived, Goethe started making sketches to characterise his Urpflanze. 'But that', said Schiller, 'is not an experience, that is an idea.' Goethe replied: 'Then I am glad to have ideas without knowing it, and to see them with my very eyes.' The Urpflanze was for him not a hypothesis but a supersensible reality, which he had begun to

¹ Rudolf Steiner, *Introductions to Goethe's scientific works*; see Goethe's naturwissenschaftliche Schriften (Sonderausgabe sämtlicher Einleitungen aus Kürschners 'Deutscher National-Litteratur', Goethes Werke). Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, 1949.

Also: *Grundlinien einer Erkenntnistheorie der Goetheschen Weltanschauung*; Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, 1960 and *Goethes Weltanschauung*; Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, 1963.

perceive directly. Goethe had achieved an extension of consciousness.¹

It fell to Rudolf Steiner to point out the full significance of Goethe's method and experiences, and to put them in a historical and evolutionary perspective. One of the oddities of the present age is that, since Darwin, evolutionary concepts should have been brought to bear on many branches of science, from sociology to the development of chemical elements in stars. But they have not been explicitly extended to human consciousness. Indeed it is still a deep-rooted assumption that men in the past had precisely the same basic consciousness as we have today, the same kind of awareness of nature, but that this consciousness was merely filled with different (and mostly mistaken) ideas about the world. One only has to begin to question such an assumption to see what a wealth of evidence exists to suggest that it is not, in fact, true. Some of the most vivid evidence can be delved out of the evolving meanings and uses of words – for language is the most intimate instrument of consciousness.² But it is also very apparent in the struggle, already mentioned, to acquire a new experience of, and relation to, motion. Butterfield's 'new feeling for things' was the result of an actual evolutionary change in human consciousness.

It was a change which was essential to come to a fuller experience of individuality. But it was also a kind of death, which closed the doors on an earlier, more direct awareness of a spiritual world, a world where that which we experience in the phenomena of organism and imagination, and which Goethe began to perceive more clearly with the Urpflanze, are manifest as active spiritual beings. The doors were already closing in Plato's time. When Socrates speaks, in the dialogue with Meno, of 'recollection' as the way to knowledge of what virtue is, he was referring to an experience which was very concrete at the time, but is abstract to us. For 'recollection' meant looking back to the experiences of the soul before birth, to the general experience of mankind of earlier times, and to the revelations still transmitted by inspired priests and seers who still commanded faculties which most had lost. Such 'recollection' re-

¹ E. Lehrs, *op. cit.*, pp. 65ff.

² O. Barfield, *History in English Words*. (Faber, 1952; and Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1966); and also: *Poetic Diction*. (Faber.)

vealed a spiritual world; 'virtue' was to live harmoniously as an organic member of this world; 'sin' was to be sundered from it.

This sundering has allowed us to grow into a strong experience of our individual selves, an experience in which the conviction of the value and rights of the individual is rooted. But if we are sundered for too long, or too completely, from the world of spiritual realities, we shall know only death.

* * *

The physical sciences have entered the unseen world of atoms with the help of physical instruments, artificial sense organs for moving around in it. But the scientific instrument for entering into the unseen realities which express themselves in the living world can only be man himself. The urgent, almost desperate demands which are being made of man by modern science and technology are really demands for an extension of human consciousness – an extension into realms where we shall find the forces and the understanding necessary to balance and manage those released by the atom-based sciences.

Such a step is needed, above all, to manage those aspects of medical and biological technology which are pressing hardest on what we call individual rights. If these rights are to acquire concrete meaning, they must be rooted in real knowledge of the meanings of human lives. An atomistic analysis of a life, of a biography, can only make it meaningless. No *single* event in any person's life can make sense except in relation to all the others. To see the meaning of a life, it must be seen as a whole, as a work of art. And when it is so seen, it begins to speak to the imagination of forces working into it which we cannot study scientifically either with physical instruments or with our ordinary everyday consciousness.

Light is thrown on the realities behind these forces in Steiner's account of reincarnation and the workings of destiny.¹ His descriptions spring, essentially, from an extension of the Goethean method to human beings and human lives; he was able to study precisely how a human life is both the fruit of a past incarnation and the seed for a future one. Much of what

he says may be difficult for the modern mind to *believe*. But it is not particularly difficult to *understand*. For if one begins to see meaning in a human life, it is often apparent that the meaning is not complete. One is only seeing part of the work of art; it is a work which cannot have begun at birth, and will not end at death. One sees at most one movement in an unfolding symphony, whose true form will only emerge as new movements are added.

There are a number of special difficulties in discussing the idea of reincarnation and destiny in the present age. But a central problem lies in the Hamlet-like experience of modern people whereby they feel themselves separated and estranged from their environment. Just because this environment seems so separate, it is difficult to find a meaning in it which is related to the inner impulses and self-awareness of the individual. The scientist uncovers merely a series of impersonal and universal natural laws, which by their very nature cannot be related to what is experienced uniquely and personally within each human being.

Yet there seems to be at work in modern life a contrary, almost instinctive feeling, that the meaning of individual existence is only discoverable in relation to the lives of other individuals. A person may learn something about himself by introspection – but a deeper self knowledge can come only through his relationships during life with others. This theme preoccupies many modern novelists (for example Iris Murdoch).

Such writers sometimes seem to be saying that what happens to a person is as much a part of his individuality as what he consciously knows of himself and tries to achieve. The modern problem is to discover in such happenings – the events and people encountered without conscious decision – anything more than chance. But it is just to such events and encounters that Rudolf Steiner points as important phenomena in which quite different laws can be glimpsed – spiritual laws at work in personal human destinies and evolution. These laws are hidden because they work not in human thoughts but in human deeds, in that realm of the human being – the will – of which we are least conscious.

After some crucial personal encounter or event, one may look back and consider how many things could have happened

¹ Rudolf Steiner, see for example *Wiederverkörperung und Karma und ihre Bedeutung für die Kultur der Gegenwart*; Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, 1959.

to prevent it. Out of such a retrospect may be born some awareness that the individual's biography is far from being the result of chance – he has found his way, through countless other possibilities, to the encounters which are, in a sense, part of himself, the events which belong to him.

Just as a thought springs to full life only through the meeting of an inner concept with an outer percept, so the full meaning of an individual's biography unfolds in the interplay of inner impulse meeting outer event. But in both processes we are normally unconscious of the hidden wisdom in the will which orders these meetings. We do not know how we bring the proper concept to meet a particular percept (and sometimes we make mistakes and disorder results). Nor are we normally aware of how our feet have guided us to the encounters appropriate to ourselves.

A sense for the laws at work in this process may awaken in anyone who is alert and observant, although there are obviously the richest possibilities for illusion and self-deception. But to perceive spiritual laws clearly, we need a deeper but exact spiritual vision.

It can serve little purpose to debate whether reincarnation is a useful, or a convincing *theory*. The issue is whether it is a fact. If it is a fact, it is the central fact about the human individuality, and must place all the human problems now being generated by science and technology in a new light. And it is also obvious that such a fact can never be established by physical investigation or embraced by the atomic hypothesis. It cannot, in fact, be fully established without an extension of human consciousness into a realm where it can be perceived as a reality.

The problem is to see the way into this realm, and then to travel it. If it is to be a path to new knowledge, it must be travelled scientifically, carrying the objectivity and independence which the scientific age has brought. Steiner's life work was to indicate the way and offer help for the journey. This is why he spoke of a 'spiritual science' to help humanity find Anthroposophia, a wisdom of man.

WHERE IS FANCY BRED?

OWEN BARFIELD

DOWN to about a hundred and fifty years ago the thought, the cultural life, and the religion of the East and that of the West, flowed, in the main, in two separate streams. Anyone who looks at the previous history of the world from that point of view cannot fail to be struck by a remarkable phenomenon. From time to time, often for historical reasons not arising out of the cultural life itself, the two streams are seen to meet and touch one another for a moment; and when that happens, the consequences for the cultural life of the West are apt to be deep and far-reaching. Perhaps one could use an electrical metaphor and speak of East and West as two sources of potential energy and of the spark that unites, or the current that flows, as a result of their momentary juxtaposition. The older generation may recall the 'arc' lamp, once used for the brighter sort of street lighting, as a striking illustration.

The traditional visit of Pythagoras to India is one example. The eastern campaigns of Alexander the Great, who also reached India, and the resulting spiritual ferment in and around Alexandria a century or two later, is another. Much later still, there were the Crusades, which, it is now generally agreed, proved at least as significant because of what the West brought back from the East as for anything the West was striving to carry to, or to achieve in, the East.

One way of looking at the Romantic Movement is to see it as yet another such fruitful contact between East and West – the last, it may well be, since it looks now as if East and West are rapidly ceasing to be 'insulated' from one another to the extent required to produce the old cultural tension. We seem faced, instead, with such a close and constant interpenetration as may lead to something like a single homogeneous culture over the whole face of the globe – under the predominance no doubt (at least in its early stages) of Western tradition and Western impulse. If so, mere geographical location will no longer help us; and we shall have to look elsewhere for the spark of energy that keeps the spirit of man alive on Earth.

But that will only make all the more important the personal meetings and the interior polarities with which this article is mainly concerned.

* * *

As long ago as the sixteenth century some enterprising spirits from England founded a Company for carrying on trade with India. The story is a complicated one; but by the second half of the eighteenth century the British East India Company had established a virtual monopoly of the trade with India and the British Government, which had been helping itself liberally to the profits of the trade, stepped in to keep order and take control. The British Empire in India, in fact, was born. We are not now concerned with the social and political consequences, momentous as they were. But one of the side-consequences was, that among those going out from Britain to India there began to appear, in addition to the high-powered executives of the Company, a sprinkling of men of rather a different type. As well by the Company as by the Government, administrators were now required in growing numbers – District Commissioners, Judges and a host of other officials – and some of the Englishmen who went out to India, to help in these ways in the civil administration of the country, were very highly educated men. The names of Sir Charles Wilkins and Sir William Jones are probably the best remembered. Sir William Jones, a distinguished Oriental scholar, was appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court of Calcutta. We know now of course, because we have been told so often, that he must have been a ruthlessly exploiting imperialist, riding rough-shod over all the feelings and the traditions of the native population; but, somewhere or other, Sir William had picked up the quaint notion that the people living in a country are entitled to be governed by their own laws – and that a judge, who has to decide a dispute between one Indian and another, ought to be in a position to consult the Hindu legal authorities. With this object he began to study the Sanskrit language and, before he died at a fairly early age, he had published the first part of his *Institutes of Hindu Law and the Ordinances of Manu*. The first book of the *Ordinances of Manu* consists of an account of the Creation of the World and contains the substance of what Rudolf Steiner, at much

greater length and using a modern idiom, was later to disclose in his *Occult Science: an Outline*.

Thus, the contact between England and India led to a fresh and more intensive study of the Sanskrit language by British scholars. Jones and Wilkins were not the only ones; there was also Sir Alexander Hamilton (known to his Scottish friends as 'Sanskrit Hamilton'), who was already a Professor, in England, of Persian and other oriental languages, before he joined the Service of the East India Company.

It happened that, when the German romantic philosopher, Friedrich Schlegel, was residing in Paris between 1802 and 1804, Alexander Hamilton was interned there, through some crisis arising out of the Napoleonic Wars. The two men met and formed a friendship; and Schlegel began studying Sanskrit under Hamilton's guidance. It was this (as Schlegel himself says in his Introduction), which led to his writing and publishing a few years later his *Treatise Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Inder* – a work which is sometimes described in literary and philological circles as 'epoch-making'. In the same Introduction Schlegel also acknowledges his debt to the work of Wilkins and Jones.

Now Friedrich Schlegel, according to the *British Encyclopedia* (11th Edition),

was the real Founder of the Romantic School . . . to him more than any other member of the school we owe the revolutionary and germinating ideas which influenced so profoundly the development of German literature at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The whole link, especially in its early stages, between Romantic Philosophy and the historical study of language is a close and intimate one. Read, for example, von Humboldt's little *Treatise on the 'dual' number of the verb found in Greek and some other tongues, Über den Dualis*, and you find what begins as a philological – even a grammatical – Essay turning into a whole theory of the origin of self-consciousness in human beings. But in the historical study of language there has been no more important landmark than the new discovery (brought about by the study of Sanskrit) that the Indian and Persian languages are derived from the same common ancestor as German, French, English, Italian and the other Romance languages.

Hitherto it had been thought that the languages of the East were altogether different growths, with no common root in the past, or at all events no common root that could be actually perceived and felt. We are Europeans – yes, but in the mysterious depths of language, where the past lives on transformed as the present, we are also ‘Indo-Europeans’. We are Westerners; but we have our origin from the East – and we now begin to feel that that is so.

The discovery began with Language; but it did not end there. You cannot translate the *Laws of Manu* without reading them. A new picture began to arise in the mind of Europe of the whole relation between East and West, a picture of India as ‘Mother’ India, and not only of India, a picture of the East as a whole as the source from which the West had originally sprung, from which the spiritual substance of the West had originally been derived; and from which a stream of light and knowledge could be expected to flow again, as the secrets of the past should be progressively unsealed. To pursue the electrical metaphor (which admittedly has all the disadvantages of an attempt to illustrate the living by the dead), it came to be actively felt that the two opposite forces, which create the tension, or ‘dielectric strain’ between them, are nevertheless derived from a single generator. They came originally from one single source and the spark, or the current when it flows, is a partial restoration of that original unity.

Schlegel did not confine himself to language-studies. He delved also into the philosophy and religion of the East; and so, in his Treatise, *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, we find him pointing out that the very nature of human Speech, studied historically, reveals that it cannot have originated from the consciousness of a virtually mindless primitive man... and that the doctrine of an ascending ‘Evolution’ (which was already beginning to appeal strongly to the Western mind) requires supplementing by the older oriental doctrine of ‘Emanation’, or the descent of man from a purely spiritual world.¹ Whereas,

¹ Schlegel's treatise was published in 1808, Darwin's *Origin of Species* not till 1858; yet already, judging by the amount of space Schlegel devotes to refuting it, the doctrine that human consciousness originated as merely animal consciousness, was widely accepted. Had this not been the case, the interpretation placed by Darwin and his followers on the evidence he accumulated might well have been a very different one.

according to the theory of evolution, man has attained his present degree of self-consciousness by starting from nothing, and including more and more in his awareness as time went on; according to the doctrine of emanation he started from a kind of universal consciousness, in which he was still united with the spiritual world; and he owes his self-consciousness to a progressive exclusion from that world of the Spirit.

This concept of ‘self-consciousness by exclusion’ is in many ways very near the heart of the Romantic Movement and the Romantic Impulse. It would serve equally well as a rough and ready definition of what Steiner has presented from so many different aspects, in so many books and lectures, as the ‘Consciousness Soul’.²

* * *

At about the same time as the rather momentous meeting between a Briton and a German which we have been considering, two other meetings took place in Europe, leading in each case to a lifelong friendship. One of these was between two Germans, the other between two Englishmen. They arose more out of the gifts and inclinations of the two pairs of friends than from any outward historical circumstances, and we approach them by a different kind of route altogether.

In the last few months of his life Rudolf Steiner dictated a series of aphorisms (‘Leading Thoughts’) for members of the Anthroposophical Society, most of them preceded by explanatory ‘Letters’. These Letters were published after his death with the title of *The Michael Mystery*.³ One of the latest of them is called *Memory and Conscience*. In this Letter, which is by no means easy, Steiner gives a condensed account of contemporary man's twofold relation to the spiritual world. On the one hand we are all related to the spiritual world through our thoughts and sense-perceptions, which go on in the daytime, while we are awake. But this relation is not *only* a matter of thinking and perceiving. He takes as the central feature, or as a sort of generic term, for all this side of our nature – or better perhaps

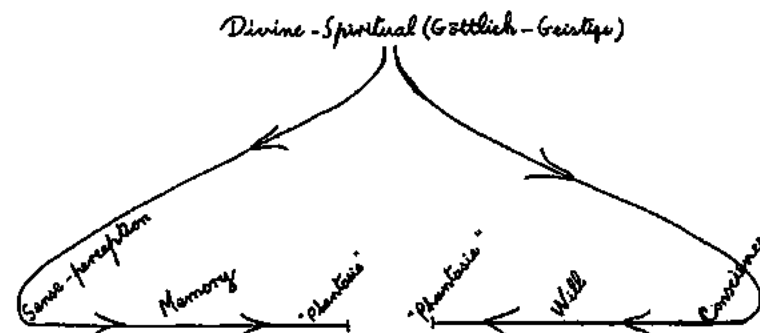
² This article reproduces, with some additions and one or two omissions, a lecture delivered by the author to the Stuttgart Branch of the German Anthroposophical Society during their English Weekend, 2nd-4th June, 1967, under the title: ‘The Consciousness Soul and the Romantic Movement.’ The consciousness soul (*Bewusstseinsseele*) is especially related on the one hand to the civilisation epoch in which we are now living and on the other to the English nation as its peculiar representative. ³ London: Rudolf Steiner Press. (Revised Edition), 1956.

say, for this direction of our relatedness to the spiritual world: *Memory*. Memory is at the centre: sense-perception is simply a modification of memory on one side of it; on the other side memory shades off into, or it becomes, something which Steiner here calls 'Phantasie'.

There is a great deal more in the Letter about 'Phantasie', for which the careful English translator has throughout used the English word 'fancy'. After a good deal of hesitation I have come to the conclusion that he was right to do so. The later forms *fantasy* and *phantasy* bring out more clearly, as does the German word, its derivation from the Greek *phantasia*, but they have been pre-empted by psycho-analysis. An alternative choice would have been 'imagination', which has also frequently been used to render both *phantasia* and 'Phantasie' but for reasons that will appear, this would have been at least equally misleading and probably more so, – though in a very different way. The difficulty about 'fancy' is the wide variety of irrelevant additional meanings it has acquired in the course of its long history as a proper English word, and the overtone of a sort of airy-fairy sprightliness which these tend to display. Romantic love-longing, the art of pugilism, the breeding of poultry, and the kind of little *je ne sais quoi* that chemists' and stationers' shops sell in addition to the staple articles of their trade – these are only some of them. Nevertheless, misleading as it unfortunately may be (especially to anyone with no knowledge at all of the history of English literary criticism), I believe it is the least misleading choice that could have been made.

The second of our two contrasted relations to the spiritual world is a very different one. It is that relation which we have in sleep, and also in that part of us which is always asleep, even in the daytime – our unconscious will. In the first relation our waking life is *presently* related to the spiritual world (though now it is the spiritual world disguised as the sense-world). But, in the second, we are (while we are physically awake) only indirectly related to the spiritual world, inasmuch as we have a kind of after-effect (*Nachwirkung*) of a direct relation with the Spirit undisguised – an actual union with the Spirit, which has been experienced during the previous night's sleep. In sleep we revert to that older, universal consciousness which, for contemporary and mundane purposes, is *unconsciousness*. For

every time we go to sleep, we travel back through all our previous incarnations, in order to resume, before we wake again, that merged union, or contained identity, with the Divine Spirit, which we had in our beginning, before we were excluded from it, before we began our long journey from the spiritual East into the spiritual (or unspiritual) West. This after-working from sleep, which we experience after we have awakened and during the day, is to be looked for (he says) in *conscience*. But again: not *only* in conscience. Again you have a gamut of manifestations, of which conscience is the keynote. Conscience – will – and again 'Phantasie'.



'Phantasie', therefore, is a manifestation which the human being can arrive at by two opposite routes. And towards the end of the Letter, which I have no doubt over-simplified, Rudolf Steiner, by way of rendering more concrete what he has so far described in abstract terms, points out that there are two different types of human being, organised in two different ways, one of which arrives at 'Phantasie' *predominantly* by the first route and the other predominantly by the second. Finally, to make it even more concrete, he gives an example of each type. And the examples he gives are the two poets, Goethe and Schiller.

The meeting between Goethe and Schiller had many and far-reaching consequences; but here we are concerned only with the significance of that meeting, and of all meetings and friendships between what we may now call (following Steiner) the 'Goethe-type' and the 'Schiller-type', for a proper understanding of all that may go on in the realm of 'Phantasie'. For the former, his 'Phantasie' is something which is 'so to speak' given to him without effort on his part, as part and parcel of his

– in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
 Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither.

And so the poet concludes:

We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind;
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be . . .

Whereas, for Coleridge, the exclusion from any immediate experience of the spirit that meets us, disguised as the face of nature, was more even than a tragedy. It was a lifelong agony. The *loss*, at an early age, of his 'shaping Spirit of Imagination', as he calls it, was a misery to which he refers again and again, both in his letters and in his poetry – notably in the *Ode to Dejection*. And out of this very agony it was born in on him that, in the present age, man can really only *receive* from Nature what he himself *brings* to her out of his own 'Phantasie':

We receive but what we give
 And in our life alone does Nature live.

But Coleridge had a very powerful mind: he had nourished it, almost from infancy, with a quite astounding depth and variety of reading, not only in the poets of all ages, but ranging from Greek, Neoplatonic and Scholastic Philosophy to modern Philosophy (especially German Philosophy) and modern Science. What he *longed* to be able to do was to write great poetry, out of that blissful sense of oneness with Nature, which he had found and which he continued all his life to admire – almost to adore – in his friend Wordsworth. One, though only one, of the causes of his resort to opium was his hankering after just this tranquillising unity.

This was denied to him. The joys of a happy, inborn gift of 'Phantasie' were very largely denied to him. But for that very reason, and out of that very lack, he turned his powerful philosophic mind to the whole *problem* of 'Phantasie' . . . so that he is generally accepted today as the greatest, and most creative, of English critics. No theory of poetry, or of the psychology of the poet, in England or America can avoid taking full account,



William Wordsworth
 (from a drawing at Dove Cottage, Grasmere)



Samuel Taylor Coleridge, by Peter Vandyke
(National Portrait Gallery)

to begin with, of Coleridge's doctrine of the poetic or 'creative' Imagination.

I have now used the word 'imagination', for which the German equivalent would be, not 'Phantasie' but *Einbildungskraft*. Could I equally well have said 'Phantasie'? Yes. And No. If a history of English criticism, which did not mention Coleridge, would be Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark, there is something that holds as central a place in Coleridge's theory of poetry as Coleridge himself does in the world of English literary criticism as a whole. Every English, or American, or Canadian, or Australian University student of English Literature, however poorly equipped, is bound to know *something* about Coleridge's famous distinction between 'Imagination' and 'Fancy'; at the very least (if he hopes to pass an examination) he must know that Coleridge did in fact make such a distinction. Very briefly it could be characterised as follows.

Coleridge insisted that what the Greeks called *phantasia* (German 'Phantasie') was not really only one thing, but two. It included, in loose association and confusion, two sharply distinguishable experiences, or faculties, of the human mind. He said, moreover, that in order to 'drive this home', so to speak, he himself would henceforth give to these two distinguishable faculties – which had hitherto been confused by using both words to convey both of them – two separate English names. Hitherto the words 'Fancy' and 'Imagination' had been used indifferently as synonyms – when what was meant was the overall content of *phantasia*. Now he quite deliberately appropriated one of the two words to the one faculty, and the other to the other. And so 'fancy' (as Coleridge uses the word) is that which is responsible for, that which produces, the kind of imagery, or combinations of images, that come into the mind ready-made and almost unbidden simply out of the impressions of the senses which the memory has stored and retained. Thus, he speaks of 'the law of the passive Fancy and the mechanical Memory'. Fancy is predominantly a *passive* thing and its productions (by contrast with those of the 'Imagination') are 'fixed and dead'.

Whereas the Imagination is essentially vital. The images begotten by Imagination are alive and creative, and have a sort

of germinating power of their own. When true Imagination is at work, the same Power is operating in man as operated, in the Beginning, in the creation of the World; only now it flows from an individual mind, and in association with what Coleridge calls the 'conscious will'. Fancy and Imagination are both needed for composing poetry (and, in a sense, Imagination must work by 'irradiating' Fancy); but the truly great poet is the poet of Imagination rather than the poet of mere Fancy. And the greatest of these was Shakespeare. Some of Coleridge's profoundest insights, both critical and philosophical, are to be found in his own *Lectures on Shakespeare*; and every student of the genesis of the Romantic Movement in Europe quickly discovers how intimately it was involved with a new and deeper appreciation of the universal significance, in precisely this respect, of the genius of Shakespeare. Moreover, that is as true, or truer, of German Romanticism than of English.

Had it not been for Shakespeare, Coleridge suggests, we might have gone on resting content with the old notion that poetry is born in man out of the sense-perceptions of their own accord, that it is somehow engendered in the eyes by the mere act of gazing. But that is a mistake. If we accept only what the eye transmits to us, then we are under what he was fond of calling 'the Despotism of the Eye'. The senses alone are not a source of Imagination. They are now our tyrants. And it is the task of Imagination to rescue mankind from this very 'Despotism of the Eye'.

There is much more that could be said. Coleridge was a philosopher as well as a critic and indeed many other things as well. And the basis of his philosophy, whether of Imagination or of Nature, is 'the Law of Polarity'. It may be compared with the *Naturphilosophie* of Schelling and his followers, though there are important differences. Here however the point is that one seems to see Coleridge reaching out, so to speak, across the gap between what I will loosely call the old 'Phantasie' and the new, seizing hold of the 'Phantasie' which he found in such rich measure in Wordsworth, pondering deeply on it, taking long walks with Wordsworth and his sister, having long talks with Wordsworth, and – out of that intimate experience – excogitating and propounding what 'Phantasie' is, or ought to be, *now* in this age of the Consciousness Soul. And, here too,

of course, the intercourse was reciprocal; Wordsworth's poetry was immeasurably deepened by his contact with the mind and heart of Coleridge.

There is also much more that could be said about the two polarically contrasted types of humanity in general. Rudolf Steiner, for example, tells us in the Michael Letter referred to how deep is the origin of that contrast in the past histories of the individual souls concerned, the relation in which they stand to a prenatal experience of the spiritual world on the one hand and, on the other, to the individual's own previous earthly incarnations. One recalls Wordsworth's 'Trailing clouds of glory do we come From God, who is our home'. But we must not make it a doctrinaire distinction; or, because Steiner has said of the Goethe-type, that 'their soul-world appears like waking dreams', go about saying that Goethe in Germany, and Wordsworth in England, were poets of mere Fancy – a sort of survival from the past – while Schiller and Coleridge were poets and philosophers of Imagination and the future. It is the very last thing Coleridge himself would have said about Wordsworth, or Schiller (I imagine) about Goethe. In everything to do with polarity, we have to be able to distinguish – without crudely dividing.

Yet there remains a profound significance in the polarity – both that between the two types of genius, and that between Fancy and Imagination. The very history of language – the sort of thing that is always happening to the meanings of words – shows us how the images of fancy (of the 'Phantasie' that is 'given' by Nature, rather than willed by man; and that is what words are to start with . . . that is how language began), unless they are nourished by the creative Imagination of man, 'fade into the light of common day' and become mere ideas, notions, *Vorstellungen*.

We have been reminded in the course of this article of the intervention of Shakespeare's reawakened genius in the mystery of the birth of Romanticism. Perhaps therefore I may conclude it by returning to him for a few moments. One sometimes has an uncanny feeling that Shakespeare knew all about the birth of the Romantic Movement two hundred years or so before it happened! His 'prophetic mind' (to borrow Cecil Harwood's phrase) had a way of just *hinting*, with a feather-soft lightness of

touch, at some of the deepest issues that confront mankind in his evolution; and this is nowhere more evident than in the little songs that are scattered like dewdrops through his plays. I have in mind now the song from the *Merchant of Venice*, which is sung at that crucial juncture in the drama, when Bassanio is hesitating between the three caskets: whether to choose the glistening golden appearance that conceals (as the audience now knows) only a Death's Head behind its luminous glory, or the saturnine leaden box that coffins the radiant likeness of a living and breathing Portia. And I am tempted, at the risk of breaking a butterfly on a wheel, to expand as interpretation what Shakespeare was content to leave as hint:

Tell me where is Fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.
It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and Fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring Fancy's knell:
I'll begin it, – Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

What is the source from which Fancy springs – the head, or the heart? That is, from the nerves and senses alone, or more towards the other pole of the organism, where the breath meets the blood and the heart beats out of the blood into the future? How is it begotten and, when it has been begotten, how is it to be nourished?

There follows the short line that holds us in suspense while we await the all-important answers to both questions . . .

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed;

That is, in the sense-perceptions themselves. 'Engender'd' is only another word for 'begot', so the first question is answered. But how is it to be *nourished*? From what source? The poet does not say: he only tells us what happens when it is *not* nourished:

Fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.

It never attains the maturity which was designed for it.

And then (and how typical of Shakespeare this is!) – as though to remove all risk of our taking the whole thing too seriously (for after all we are only men and women) – he finishes with the little jingle:

Let us all ring Fancy's knell:
I'll begin it: Ding dong bell!

If we like, you see, we can still take it all at the 'airy fairy' level . . . and, if we do, it is still a very sweet and magical little song. But we can perhaps also take even the little jingle at a much deeper level, and with a happier result. 'Ding, dong, bell' has a merry rather than a doleful overtone in English ears . . . it makes us think more of nursery rhymes than of funerals . . . Yes, Fancy has to die . . . and it is well that she *should* die – in order to be reborn as Imagination . . . 'I'll begin it' . . . It is, after all, the entry of the Ego into the death experience of the consciousness soul, in order to be reborn as individual Spirit, as individual-universal Spirit, as Spirit Self, Life Spirit, Spirit Man, of which we are, knowingly or unknowingly, speaking, whenever we speak understandingly of a transition from Fancy to Imagination.

Should I add that, if the stage-direction is properly observed, the whole company finally joins in and takes up the doleful-merry refrain? At all events it is at once a salutary reflection for the temporary isolation in which the consciousness-soul of man has its being, and a fitting conclusion to these observations, to recall that the rebirth of the Ego through Imagination is a matter of vital concern, not only to the individual man in whom it occurs, whether he be of the Goethe-type or the Schiller-type, but to the whole vast Company of Heaven and Earth.

THE DOVE AS A SACRED BIRD¹

KARL KÖNIG

I

WHEREVER in human settlements there is an open space, in squares and streets, in yards and gardens, we find the realm of the pigeon. They coo and fly, hover and patter before San Marco in Venice just as they do round Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, in the Tuileries in Paris, or in the Rathausplatz in Vienna. Many a worthy farmhouse has its dovecot, and we find the same at the centre of many a little town or village, not only in Europe, but in Asia, Africa, and America as well — wherever human beings gather in permanent settlements. There are many kinds of domestic pigeon, and they appear to have been the companions of men for many thousands of years. Their existence is deeply rooted in the conceptions of mythology, and can be followed far back into the first beginnings of human history.

In the Old Testament the dove appears in connection with the end of the Flood. Noah, when the first mountain tops had appeared above the sinking waters, and the raven had flown to and fro, releases a dove. But she returned, for she 'found no rest for the sole of her foot'. Seven days later, when another dove had been sent, 'she came to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off'. But Noah still waited, and after seven days let another dove fly out, which did not return to the Ark. 'And Noah removed the covering of the Ark, and behold, the face of the ground was dry.'

Later the dove appears again in the *Song of Songs* and in the *Psalms*. 'Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast dove's eyes.' Later in the Song: 'O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is comely.' Here she appears as the intimate symbol of the World-Soul, uniting in marriage with the awakening human I as comprehension through knowledge. 'My dove, my perfect

one, is only one, the darling of her mother, flawless to her that bore her.' The Goddess Natura can be felt in the background of these words.

In the *Psalms* it is said: 'O, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away, and be at rest.' Or 'Though they stay among the sheepfolds (they gleam like) the wings of a dove covered with silver, its pinions with green gold.' Here it is the lifting up of the soul, which leads out of the trouble and distress of this earth.

In the prophets the dove appears once more. We read in *Isaiah*: 'Like a swallow or a crane I clamour, I moan like a dove. My eyes are weary with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; be thou my security!' (38.xiv). And Jeremiah says: 'Leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, O inhabitants of Moab! Be like the dove that nests in the sides of the mouth of a gorge' (48.xxviii). Here the dove appears as a fugitive, returning from the towns to the rocks of the coasts, from which it had once come to the human settlements.

In the religions of the Near East the dove was held sacred. The Goddess Ishtar in Babylon was specially connected with it, and doves were sacrificed to her. Doves were consecrated in the same way to Astarte. They drew the chariot of Aphrodite; Venus Anadyomene was hatched from an egg by a dove. At the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, in northern Greece, doves lived in the sacred oaks and gave the answer, as holy oracle, to the questions of the faithful. In the Phoenician language the same word was used for dove and for priest; in Hebrew the word for dove is the same as the Arabic word for priest. When Herodotus says that Phoenicians once brought a priestess from Thebes to Dodona, it could be either a priestess or a dove that is meant; the words are identical. (At Ephesus the priestesses were known as 'bees' and bees were honoured as sacred creatures.) It is known too that in the festivals of Adonis doves were burned in honour of the god; and Aeneas was led by doves to the Golden Bough.

From all these indications it can be seen that doves accompanied men in their migrations, that they were held sacred in connection with sacrificial ritual, and that they were attached not only to human habitations but also to Temples and places of the Mysteries.

¹ Translation from the German unrevised by the author.

II

All domestic pigeons are descended from one species, the rock-dove, *Columba livia*. This is distinguished from other species by its way of life. Wild pigeons in general belong to the woods, living in trees; they are to be found all over the earth where there are woods or regions rich in trees. In the far north, in tundra or steppe, there are no pigeons – nor in mountains beyond the tree limit. Everywhere else they are at home. More than five hundred species are known.

Only the rock-dove does not need woods. It lives on cliffs and rocks, and ruined buildings, as the prophet says. It is found in Europe on some northern islands. It is especially numerous in County Donegal in Ireland, and lives all along the West Coast of Scotland, the Hebrides, the Orkneys and Shetlands, the Faroes and the small rocky island of Rennesö near Stavanger in Norway. It dwells in rocks and cliffs round the Mediterranean; in Greece, Spain and Italy, France and North Africa. It is at home in Palestine and Syria, and lives all over Asia Minor and Persia, reaching as far as India in the Himalayan region. If one considers the distribution of the rock-dove, it looks as if this bird occupies the great paths of human migration. From India through Persia to Asia Minor, and then along the Mediterranean coasts, everywhere rock-doves are to be found. Through thousands of years the post-Atlantean civilisations moved in this way from East to West. These rock-doves found in these regions, are however often domestic pigeons, which withdrew from human settlements and took up again their freer life. Brehm wrote:

In Egypt I saw them on cliffs, particularly near rapids. In India they belong to the commonest birds, laying their eggs in holes and on ledges in rocks and cliffs, if possible near water. Here, as in Egypt, they are in a half-wild condition and occupy old, quiet buildings, city walls, pagodas, rock temples and such edifices.

From this description it can be seen that between the rock-dove and the domestic pigeon there is a gradual transition, and that the domestic birds can easily pass over into their wild or semi-wild condition. Certainly the main division among pigeons is not between those that are wild and those that are domesti-

cated, but between those which live in woods, and those which have their homes in the rocks and in human settlements.

Rudolf Steiner often indicated that the peoples who migrated eastwards after the decline of Atlantis crossed Europe and Asia by two great routes. Through this there later developed two distinct, widespread peoples; the Iranians to the South, the Turanians more to the North.

Thus arose the great and significant polarity, which belongs perhaps to the most significant acts of post-Atlantean development; the polarity between those more northerly peoples and the Iranian peoples. Among the Iranians there developed the longing to intervene in what went on around them, to become settled, and to achieve through work what can be owned by man and by humanity; in fact, to transform Nature through human spiritual powers. In this region, this was men's greatest impulse. Immediately to the north was that people, which saw into the spiritual world, which was so to speak on familiar terms with spiritual beings, but which did not like work, was not settled, and had no¹ interest at all in the progress of civilisation in the physical world.

Here there is a similar polarity to that described among the pigeons. The wild wood-pigeons are like the Turanians, and the rock-doves, which can become domestic pigeons, are like the Iranians. If we think of Noah's action in sending out the three doves at the end of the time of the Flood, there stands before us as in a picture the beginning of the migrations to the East; the differentiation into the northern and the southern groups is present too in the separation of the two main groups of pigeons. It can indeed be assumed that the wood-pigeons accompanied the Turanians, the rock-doves the Iranians, on their journey from West to East. Thus the rock-dove was tamed and domesticated, and made its home both in the sacred and the profane parts of the Iranian settlements when these became established. Doves have thus a close link with human existence.

III

That the Iranians became settled, developed in the domestic pigeons which accompanied them, and came to live with them, a peculiar characteristic; the capacity to find their accustomed

¹ Rudolf Steiner, *The Gospel of St Matthew*.

abode again over hundreds of miles. Many birds indeed have this capacity, but only when they are carrying out their long annual migrations. The pigeon can do this, with a little training, at any time of year. Thus carrier pigeons were used from antiquity; they were already known in Egypt. When Rameses III came to the throne, the news was sent all over Egypt by carrier pigeon. Besieged cities used carrier pigeons to communicate with the rest of the world, a method only rendered out of date by wireless telegraphy at the beginning of this century. As recently as the siege of Paris in the war of 1870-1, thousands of reports were brought to and from Paris by carrier pigeon.

This transmission of messages through a kind of homing instinct, which is so deeply rooted among pigeons that they can find the way back over great distances, even at night and through regions entirely unknown to them, is a very remarkable characteristic. Their peacefulness, gentleness, and the family sense which has so often been noticed, are related to this. It is hard to say, as the observations are not definite enough, whether it is really the fact that a pair of pigeons remains together inseparable over the years.

But one thing is certain; among all the birds, the various kinds of pigeon have a characteristic belonging to them alone. They feed their young with a milky juice, prepared for them within their own body, like most of the mammals, and man in particular, which feed their new-born with their own substance, milk, to begin with. Among the pigeons it is not only the mother which forms this substance, but both parents. No other bird has this characteristic. Many indeed have the organ, the so-called crop, in which dove-milk is developed – but only pigeons produce it. The crop is a widening, often considerable, of the alimentary canal, at about the point where the neck meets the breast. In other birds, and pigeons as well, it is used to mix food with saliva, and to begin the digestive process.

With pigeons, however, in the middle of the brood period the crop begins to swell, and to increase in size. Gradually the inner layers of the mucous membrane of the crop become so fat, that they desquamate, and the mass of cells is gradually dissolved in the cavity of the crop and becomes a kind of white broth, which is given to the young brood as food. This 'milk'



Rock-dove (*Columba livia*) by John Gould
from *Birds of Europe* (Methuen)

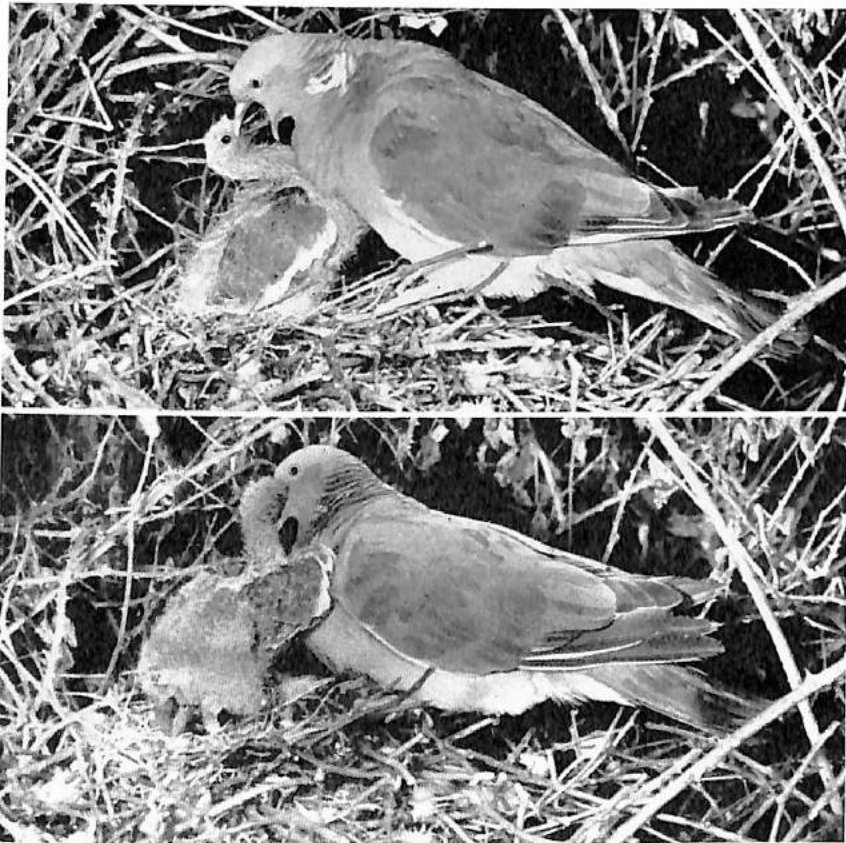
is rich in fats and proteins, and for about three weeks it is the only food of the young pigeons; only then can they begin to take grain.

It could easily be said that it is not a real milk, but only something popularly described as such. But there is a very significant fact on the other side. The milk of mammals and of man, which is formed in the breast glands, is definitely connected with a hormone produced in the pituitary gland. This hormone, called prolactin, stimulates milk production considerably; the supply of prolactin equips the milk glands for the production of milk. But the same substance can stimulate the pigeon's crop, so that dove-milk is formed; and this happens so definitely and regularly that this method is a quantitative test for prolactin.

Thus there can be no doubt that dove-milk is related to mammalian milk not only by its name, but belongs to the same group of substances and is a real 'milk'. It can be assumed that the close family relationship among the pigeons, their readiness to settle and their peacefulness are connected with this formation of milk. For the young pigeon receives a food-stuff peculiar to its kind, which attaches it much more strongly to the protection of the nest and to the family than is ever the case with other birds. A part of the bodily substance of the parents is given to the young brood over many weeks, and the blood-relationship with the whole species is thus deeply influenced. The milk is a living bond holding together through the generations doves as a species in the most intimate way. Thus the rock-dove can change so easily into the domestic pigeon, and back again.

IV

In antiquity doves were called 'the guests of the Gods'. They chose as their abodes temple buildings above all, and settled in the holy precincts of the Mysteries. Wherever in Asia, in Europe and in North Africa temples stood, they were continually encircled by the flight of doves. The rock-dove with its brilliant grey-blue and green feathers became gradually the white temple-dove, which was used as a sacrificial animal in the most varied civilisations. In the New Testament too we find references to this. Thus doves became not only the companions



Male wood-pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) feeding nestling with his milk
(R. K. Murton)

of men, but felt themselves drawn into the holiest rites which men can perform. In the groves of the Mysteries the doves settle, and make their homes around the holy buildings.

They were messengers, and brought over great distances what human beings wished to communicate; but this was only expected of them, because they were felt not only as guests, but also as messengers, of the Gods. And as they brought tidings from the Gods to men, men used them as messengers among themselves as well.

Rudolf Steiner once described the task of birds in general in the cosmos, showing that it is their vocation to spiritualise earthly matter. 'It will be possible to say, when one day the Earth has reached its end: this earthly matter has been spiritualised, and the birds were there, in the whole economy of earthly existence, in order to carry back spiritualised earthly matter into the land of spirits.'¹

If this is the work of the birds in general, then the particular species must surely have the task of transforming special kinds of earthly substance back into the spiritual. Could it not be that the doves have here a particular duty? They give to men's settlements their company, and are thus concerned with buildings and houses. They are connected with earthly substances used by men. For wood, stone, mortar and everything else used in building is altered by the work spent upon it. But all these buildings are permeated by the human word. In and around the houses and temples, the grave-monuments and the palaces, human speech is used, and unites with the walls. And the doves become the messengers, who release the human word, in its endless variety, from its enclosure in matter, and embody it again in the spiritual substance of the cosmos.

All that men have spoken, all the good and the bad that is clothed in words, is reunited with the cosmos through the function of the doves. Their work as messengers is only an earthly picture for their true cosmic task. They are bearers of the Word, and they are prepared for this in their infancy. The milk given by father and mother holds them to the work that is to be done. For the bird's crop is at the same place, where in man there is the larynx. In the larynx the word is produced, but in the pigeon's-crop milk.

¹ *Man as Symphony of the Creative Word.*

Mammalian milk has a definite task; it enables the newborn child to form bone substance in the right way. For milk is not just a general means of nutrition; it is specially prepared to form the material for the skeleton. Through receiving milk the human child becomes a citizen of earth; the mineral scaffolding of his bones is hardened by milk, and becomes the rock sustaining his existence.

The milk produced by doves has the task of anchoring their mission in the realm of the human word. The skeleton is intimately connected with speech; only the human race, with a skeleton which has become the image of the whole universe, can speak. Man's head is round like the universe above him; his ribs follow in their form the paths of sun and planets; his limbs are like pillars, permeated with the forces of the earth. This perfection of shape makes possible a larynx which can become the cradle of the sounding Word.

Human milk, arising in the breast glands, provides the material substance from which the bones, an image of the whole universe, can be shaped. It is a material which conforms to the cosmic forces, and serves them. This enables the sounding Word to speak in man.

Dove's milk, arising in the realm of the larynx, occupied by the bird's crop, helps towards the redemption of the spoken word, which has united with the matter shaped by human hands. From the grave of matter the dove liberates the human word.

Man and dove become companions, who have journeyed together into the land of earth, to become servants of the Word. Therefore are doves 'the guests of the Gods'. For this reason the words for 'dove' and 'priest' are almost identical in many languages. For this reason Noah sends the dove out of the Ark, to find out whether the earth has become as hard as bone again, so that it can be trodden by human feet. For this reason the dove is 'the darling of her mother, flawless to her that bore her' as the *Song of Songs* declares.

V

The dove appears too above the head of Jesus of Nazareth, when John baptises him in the Jordan. Rudolf Steiner says about this:

While at a physical incarnation a spiritual reality descends from higher worlds and unites with the physical, what in this case is sacrificed in order to receive the Christ-Spirit appears above the head of Jesus of Nazareth in the form of a white dove. A spiritual reality appears, as it detaches itself from the physical. It is far from right to say; that is meant only symbolically or allegorically. It is a real spiritual fact visible to clairvoyance, which exists on the astral plane. Just as at a physical birth something spiritual is drawn in, this birth was a sacrifice, a giving. It was thus possible that the Spirit, who 'brooded over the waters' at the beginning of the earth's development, could unite with the three-fold sheath of Jesus of Nazareth, and so fill it with strength and warmth, that it could have mastery over the body right down into the bony system.¹

The dove appears here as the result of the sacrifice, through which the Logos, the 'Spirit, who brooded over the waters' could draw into a human body. Thus here too the dove becomes a helper of the 'Word'. The Logos permeates the body right down into the bony system, into the earthly substance which is prepared by milk. At this holy place of human history, at the Baptism in Jordan, the true being of the Group-Soul of the doves is revealed. Through its sacrifice the place is prepared, which is to be filled by the cosmic Word itself. It has been up to now guest and messenger of the Gods; now it gives up this task, for the Logos itself has assumed it. Perhaps once, when men built the Tower of Babel, and their original language suffered the fate of fragmentation, the doves began to prepare to lead the divided, splintered human word back to the realm from which it once came. But then the Logos itself entered the earthly world, and the task of the doves was thereby completed, for the time; their priestly duty carried out, their mission fulfilled.

Today they have become commonplace. The Mystery Temples are ruined, and so pigeons live in squares and market-places, a picture of how the word is wasted and misused. As in the past, they pick up words, keep them and bring them back into the spiritual world. They have become messengers of men. In German they are called *Taube*. Etymology does not connect this, as might seem likely with *taub*, deaf, dull, 'dumb', but

¹ *St John's Gospel in Relation to the Other Three Gospels*, lecture 10.

regards it as imitative, representing the coo of doves. However this may be,¹ the pigeon today seems a stupid creature, because its true being and character cannot be recognised.

In the future however its light will shine again, and reveal its glory where sacrifice and ministering messenger-service count for more than powerful appearance. The saying of the cosmic Judge: 'I was naked, and you clothed me' applies to the doves. They gave back their function, their work in the service of the Word, to Him who came as Logos into His own; those who are called the Deaf received Him.

¹ Eric Partridge, *Origins*, says that 'dove' and 'deaf' are perhaps connected.

THE LEAP

CARL KOVACS

THE custom of celebrating a Midsummer festival has more or less died out in western civilisation. Only some peasant communities – in the Austrian Tyrol for instance – have retained certain forms of celebrating the summer solstice, forms which can only be regarded as remnants of ancient Midsummer festivals.

One of these customs is the lighting of bonfires on the hillside. It is also customary for young people to leap over the glowing embers when the fire dies down. In other places the peasants let burning wheels run downhill on Midsummer's day.

Such customs exist today only through the force of tradition; they survive but there is no longer any meaning, any significance in the performance. Yet, what established customs like these in a distant past was an instinctive wisdom that could rise to a feeling comprehension of the spiritual significance of Midsummer. The present age cannot expect such instinctive guidance. We have to try to reach a conscious understanding of the Spirit of Midsummer with the help of spiritual science.

It may help towards such an understanding if I mention a certain experience from my childhood. I remember a time in my early youth when I found great pleasure in throwing a stone as high as I could and then watched its fall. But what was for me of particular fascination was the moment, the fraction of a second when the stone I had thrown was neither rising nor falling but was hovering between ascent and descent. It was just for this short, breathless pause that I repeated the 'experiment' again and again.

There is an obvious similarity between the path of the stone I threw and the course of the sun through the year. The sun, too, rises higher and higher every day in one half of the year and in the other half the arc described by the sun becomes shorter and lower again. But at Midsummer the sun reaches at noon its highest point in the sky – this is the moment which corresponds to the hovering of the stone between ascent and descent.

Just as the stone I used to throw as a child was leaping upwards, then hovering, then falling, so the sun in its much slower, majestic way is 'leaping up' in the first half of the year, hovering at Midsummer and then descending again.

It was this great, cosmic leap of the sun which the ancient custom celebrated by the leap over the glowing embers of a bonfire. In their leap the people, like the sun, rise and hover and descend in microcosmic correspondence to the macrocosmic process.

But the bonfire itself is already an instance, an illustration of this principle of the 'leap'. When the fire is kindled it begins as a little flame; the flame spreads and rises to a climax and then dies down again. The fire, too, represents a kind of leap, similar to the leap of the great source of light and warmth, the sun.

Thus the ancient wisdom behind these customs seems to point to the 'leap' as something of great spiritual significance, as something that has a profound meaning.

Spiritual science can reveal to us this meaning. There is, in the totality of human existence, such a leap, there is a leap of immense spiritual significance for the human soul. *It is the leap from one incarnation to the next.* It is the leap which takes place between death and a new birth, the leap which every soul makes during life in the spiritual world.

After death the soul rises to ever higher spheres until the highest region of human spiritual existence is reached. From this culmination the soul descends again, sinks lower and lower to a new incarnation on earth. This is the great cosmic leap of the human soul, the leap that leads from one incarnation to the next. The culmination of this leap has a special name in the spiritual science of anthroposophy, it is called 'the Cosmic Midnight'.

In one of the coloured glass windows of the Goetheanum the Cosmic Midnight is represented in a picture. This picture shows the human soul as a being with two faces, one looking backwards, the other forwards. The face which looks backwards regards the past, the last incarnation, whilst the forward looking face gazes upon the future, the coming incarnation on earth. At the hour of the Cosmic Midnight, in that moment of hovering between ascent and descent, the soul has to face its own past and its own future.

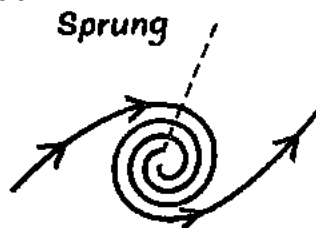
There is, however, an imitation, a miniature of this cosmic leap of the soul in every sleep. At night when we are asleep the soul goes unconsciously through experiences which in a sense anticipate and are similar to the ascent and descent that take place between death and a new birth. One could say that true Cosmic Midnight is the sum total, the essence of all the earthly midnights when we were in deep sleep.

In the summer *the earth* is asleep and it is at this time of earth-sleep that the sun reaches the culmination of its own cosmic leap. One can recognise in the sun's great leap a sense-perceptible picture, a symbol and image, of the cosmic leap made by every human soul between death and a new birth. And 'Midsummer Night' – the night when the bonfires glow on the hills in Tyrol and Styria, the night whose special mood shines through Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Wagner's *Mastersingers* – it is the physical counterpart of the Cosmic Midnight when the soul has to face the past and the future.

There is still something else that has to be considered in order to approach the spiritual significance of Midsummer. According to the ancient lore of astrology the sun enters at Midsummer the sign (not the constellation) of Cancer. Rudolf Steiner spoke of this sign of Cancer in his lectures on the Matthew Gospel. He referred to the traditional symbol for this sign



but then he drew a different version



which consists of two spirals, one in-going, one out-going.

If one thinks of the burning wheels rolling downhill on

Midsummer night, if one visualises the fiery spirals described by them, one can see how an ancient wisdom brought these spirals of Cancer to human consciousness. Spirals are also the dominant feature in the picture for Cancer used in the first edition of Rudolf Steiner's *Calendar of the Soul*.

But in the symbol for the sign of Cancer which Rudolf Steiner drew in the eleventh lecture on the Gospel of Matthew there is a little gap between the in-going and the out-going spiral. Strangely enough, Rudolf Steiner in his lecture called this gap 'the leap'. He pointed out that there is a law which rules all evolutionary processes, a law which makes it necessary that there is a gap, a nothing, between the impulse that is coming to an end and the new impulse that is beginning.

Following this indication one could say: between that which belongs to the past and that which belongs to the future there is no smooth continuity, there is no bridge, there is a gap. It is through this gap that the new spiritual impulse enters, it is over this gap that the soul must 'leap' to live with the new impulse.

There is, according to this lecture, still another symbol for this gap, for this discontinuity between the old and the new. It is the she-ass and her foal. We understand this imagination if we realise that there is, necessarily, a gap between parent and offspring, otherwise there would be no genuine evolution but merely the eternal repetition of the past. There is a gap between the generations, there is a leap – and the symbol for this is the she-ass and her foal.

It is then not surprising that the symbol for the sign of Cancer, the sign in which the sun reaches culmination and, as it hovers, 'leaps' from ascent to descent, is sometimes also shown as the she-ass and her foal. Nor is it surprising that a star in the constellation Cancer is called 'the she-ass' and a smaller star 'the foal'.

Writing in English one is obliged to speak alternatively of the 'gap' and the 'leap' – but Rudolf Steiner, speaking in German, used in this lecture the word *Sprung* which means a crack (in a cup for instance) as well as a leap.

The gap or leap appears at the culmination; for the soul at the moment of the Cosmic Midnight when man has to turn from the past to the future; for the sun at Midsummer in the sign of Cancer when it turns from ascent to descent; for the

Christ-Being at the moment when His earthly career reached its highest point and He rode into Jerusalem on the she-ass. It was then that the crowds hailed Him with the words 'Hosanna in the heights!' Yet this culmination was followed by descent, the descent into Christ's Passion and Crucifixion.

There is a gap, a break, between that which comes from the past and that which is about to begin and it needs strength to make the leap from one to the other. What we see around us as the marvellous technical and scientific achievements of our time is the culmination of forces from the past. Anthroposophy, so small and insignificant in its outward aspect, carries nevertheless the promise of the future. Between the two there is the 'gap' and it is the destiny of anthroposophists to 'leap' across this gap at every moment, to be men of the twentieth century and true to spiritual science. But there is also such a *Sprung* in our individual lives. At any given moment we are in one way or another fulfilling a destiny that comes from the past, but there is also, at any given moment, a new karma, a new orientation, a new relationship open to us. There is no connection between the two, there is a gap; and we must have the courage to leap or we become prisoners of the past.

The teacher, in particular, has to learn to live with this problem of the gap. He stands with a lifetime's experience before children whose life lies still open before them. This is the situation which makes every moment of a lesson a leap over the gap between the teacher's past and the children's future. The teacher will, therefore, perhaps feel with particular poignancy what lies in the words of John the Baptist, the words spoken with reference to Christ, 'I must decrease but He will increase.'

It is not accidental that the day of John the Baptist falls near Midsummer's day; for in these words there is the dialogue between past and future, there is the leap that the soul must make to *have* a future, there is the true spirit of Midsummer.

THE DEWS OF MEMORY

A REVERIE ON A FIFTEENTH CENTURY CAROL

ISABEL WYATT

*The fields, the caves, the dews of memory cannot be counted;
their fulness cannot be counted, nor the kinds of things
counted that fill them. I force my way in amidst them, even
as far as my power reaches; and nowhere find an end.*

THE aged monk standing at the high scrivener's desk lovingly shaped the last letter; then quill fell silent on parchment as his eye ran appraisingly over the page of transcription.

'It is a thousand years since the Blessed Augustine wrote these words,' he said to himself, 'yet they rise as from my own heart. It is but two score since the end of the Hundred Years' War; yet already the young men speak a language of the soul farther removed from that of us who are old than ours from the Early Fathers!'

The fields, the caves, the dews of memory . . . The words wove shining about him, and a picture grew out of their weaving; for after a long lifetime of pictorial meditation, pictures came easily now of themselves when his heart was moved.

He was high in a golden sky, out of which dew was falling – the dew of early April, filled with the strong life-forces of the spring full-moon. With the April dew, streams of souls were descending to earthly incarnation, borne in the golden arms of the Vanen, the Gods of Dream.

He looked below, and saw land amid water, and knew it for South Jutland. Over it, wherever the dew fell, he saw the Birth-Goddess Nerthus go in her golden wain, drawn by two white oxen. There was joy in each hut she entered with her annunciation; in this tribe of the Ingaevonen the earthly side of conception was still hidden from consciousness; it was Nerthus who brought the tidings of the soul descending now with the April dew, to be born into earthly life at the winter solstice.

April dew changed to December snow, spring landscape into winter, before the watcher's eyes. He knew that the Night of

the Mothers had come, the longest night of the year, the first of the Thirteen Nights of Yule. He knew that among the Ingaevonen all children were born within the span of those Thirteen Nights; and that the first man-child born on the Night of the Mothers each third year was consecrated from birth to be the Ing, the leader of his people.

He saw an Ing born; in the dim brightness of the rushlights he saw him given gold to eat, to make him a being of the Earth. He saw his life unfold and flow in a swift and misty stream, from which moment after significant moment flashed out clear. He saw him taken early by the priests, to be trained for his high destiny; he saw him initiated step by step till he was thirty years of age, and then for three years rule his people by the light of spiritual wisdom; and then he saw him suffer a Baldur-death, plunging out of the radiance of spiritual intercourse into the darkness of a wholly earthly consciousness.

On that darkness the watcher now saw written a passage from the *Inglingasaga* which had most mysteriously moved him when long ago he had transcribed it:

The land in Asia was called Asaland, where Odin had great possessions. When Odin looked into the future, he knew that his offspring would dwell in the northern parts of the Earth. He therefore went away, and won kingdoms far over Saxland; and Odin set in the land the laws of the Asa-folks.

The Asa-folks – the aged monk saw them coming north to Jutland, led by Odin on his eight-legged horse, and by choleric Thor, his red beard jutting as he waded rivers of blood. With the sacrifice of Odin's eye, he saw the dreamy consciousness of the Vana-gods give place to the waking consciousness of the Asa-gods. He saw this bring to the Ingaevonen a kind of Fall.

He saw how the unconscious dream-experience confined to the April dewfall became conscious, and so was drawn into the sphere of passion, so that birth no longer belonged to the Thirteen Nights of Yule, but was scattered over the whole year. He saw how the Birth-Goddess Nerthus appeared no more in joyful annunciation, for her holy incarnation-secret was no longer either holy or a secret – it had become an earthly process.

Again a black-letter page lay open before him, and on it that ancient Anglo-Saxon rune in an archaic script itself half-rune

over which he, like other medieval scholars, had pondered in perplexity as he translated and transcribed it:

*Ing was first amid the East-Danes
Seen of men, till, after, he went East,
Over the wave; and the wain followed.*

Now he saw the wakened Ingaevonen cut down the sacred grove of Nerthus on her isle in a secret lake. He saw her rise in her golden wain, and journey over the waves of the clouds towards the East, till, over the Holy Land, the Birth-Goddess Nerthus vanished, and where she had been he saw the Birth-Angel Gabriel descend to Earth with the early April dewfall and stand before Mary with his Annunciation.

He saw how Mary received the April dew as the women of the Ingaevonen had received it before the coming of the Asa-gods. And he said in his heart, using an Anglo-Saxon term still vigorous in the Middle-English of his day:

'Well do we call her the Virgin Mary! For see, she is makeles!' (That is, pure, unspotted.)

Mary was reclining in a bower of fruit-blossom; and the watcher saw how the grass and the boughs and the blossom were themselves a picture of the threefold dwelling-place she was preparing for the being silently descending to her with the dew. For the fresh green grass shared the nature of the plant-like sheath of life-forces; the boughs, with their thickening of earth, had kinship with the physical sheath, made dense with mineral matter; and over the blossom there hovered, in bee and butterfly, a soul element as innocent as that of the soul-sheath she wove for her child. And on grass and bough and blossom the April dew descended as softly as he to his bodies of grass and bough and blossom.

Spring landscape changed again to winter landscape; and on the Night of the Mothers, Mary's son was born. And the watcher, looking along the path of the child's destiny, saw that an Ing had indeed been born, who for thirty years must prepare for three years' exalted mission, and after those three years must suffer death.

As the watcher gazed upon the child in the crib, a diaphanous picture of the Abbey altar with the Bread and Wine upon it began to dawn and interpenetrate the candle-lit scene. The

words of the Transubstantiation wove about it, and the small sun-round wafers on the ghostly paten began to shine.

'Well do we call her Our Lady!' he cried in his heart. 'For this crib is in Bethlehem, the House of Bread; this child in it will house the Bread of Life; and *Lady* means *loaf-giver*, she who gives bread to her household.'

And again a page he had transcribed lay open before him, written on the air, and he read from the Christmas sermon of St John Chrysostomos:

This Table takes the place of the manger, for here, too, the Body of the Lord will rest, not clad in swaddling clothes but bright with the radiance of the Holy Spirit. Those who are initiated know whereof I speak. Picture to yourselves the Sun that has come down from Heaven to dwell on Earth, letting his radiance shine out from this place over all men! But if the light that is visible cannot shine without arousing wonder in the hearts of all who behold it, only consider what it signifies to see the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness streaming forth from our own flesh, and sending light into the soul!

The page dissolved into another picture – the Son of Mary, thirty years old and on the threshold of his three years' mission, stood in a river in a cleft of the Earth, and was baptised by his cousin, John the Preparer; and Heaven opened, and the Spirit of the Sun came down to dwell in the temple of his flesh.

'Mary has the Sun Himself to her Son, the King of all kings!' the old monk cried in his heart.

Again there unrolled before him, in the exquisite tenth-century characters he had copied with such joy, the Hymn to the Virgin, written by Fulbertus, Bishop of Chartres:

*She who is to give birth to the greatest King,
The Sun of Righteousness,
Maria, Star of the Sea, approaches her rising today.
Rejoice, ye faithful, and behold the Light divine!*

The scene of the Descent of God into Man came before his inner sight again; but now with Mary as the central figure. And it seemed to him that, as the Source of all Light had descended into her Son, so into her at the same moment had descended celestial dew, restoring her physical body to such



The Annunciation (from the Great Book of Hours of the Duke of Berry, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris). Gabriel brings Mary a basket of loaves.



Mary and the child Jesus, with a Benedictine monk presenting a chant
(from an Antiphonal, about 1190, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

paradisa! perfection that again the old monk's heart cried out, glimpsing deep beyond deep of the Mystery of the Virgin Birth: 'None but Our Lady has ever been mother and maiden! Well may such a lady be the Mother of God!'

With an effort of will he wiped out the picture, leaving only his wonder and worship to reverberate on in his soul till wings bore him upward and a luminous cloud received him. Through a world bright and warm he passed, to a world cool, lucid and transparent, where he entered the Temple of Archetypes, and laid his wonder and his worship on its altar.

When presently he came to himself, standing at the high scrivener's desk, he laid the unfinished *Confessions of St Augustine* carefully aside, and set a fair, fresh piece of parchment before him, and took up his quill. Then, in his lovingly shaped black-letter script, he set down what his heart had brought back from that Temple – set it down in words of dew, for the refreshing of that parched and dried-up age, our own, then dawning:

*I syng of a Mayden
That is makeles;
Kyng of all kynges
To her Sone che ches.*

*He cam al so stylle
Where his moder was,
As dewe in Aprylle
That fallyt on the gras.*

*He cam al so stylle
To his moder's bowr,
As dewe in Aprylle
That fallyt on the flour.*

*He cam al so stylle
Where his moder lay,
As dewe in Aprylle
That fallyt on the spray.*

*Moder and Maydyn
Was never non but che;
Wel may swych a lady
Godes moder be.*

ST PAUL

ARNOLD FREEMAN

I: THE GOSPELS

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness apprehendeth it not. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
(The Gospel of St John)

THE Creator willed to bring into existence us human beings – creatures made ‘in His own image’ – entities having the power and responsibility of saying ‘I’ to themselves. The implementation of this cosmic project was entrusted by God ‘the Father’ to ‘His Son’. ‘The Word’ became the underlying agent of a vast evolutionary process which had man as its objective.

This enterprise threw down an unavoidable shadow. As he gained inner freedom, man became enabled to assert his own egohood and to disregard his divine origins. He found excitement in enjoying the sense of his own private, personal self. He gave ear to the Serpent; he bit the apple; he disobeyed God; he took into himself sin-sickness; he became the victim of materiality and mortality.

To clear from the universe this cloud of darkness; to counteract the Fall of man: ‘to reanimate the dying earth-existence’; to reveal to us human beings our miracle-working potentialities – for this Christ Jesus entered our earth-evolution; ‘the Word became flesh’.

The Gospels are concerned to tell us what took place ‘at the turning-point of time’. They tell us, as well as they can, the observed facts – what occurred on this earth when the Divine Being for a unique moment appeared upon it. They are historical documents.

II: ST PAUL

*Whoso hath felt the spirit of the highest
Cannot confound nor doubt him nor deny;
Yea, with one voice, O world! though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.*

(F. W. H. Myers: *St Paul*)

Christ Jesus in the flesh entrusted the Gospel to twelve chosen disciples. To the Twelve he gave special instructions. The Twelve seem to have been cosmically ordained to be the vehicle of the new impulse that had entered earth-evolution. So essential was the necessity felt for this Twelve-ness that almost the first deed of the Disciples, after the Death and Resurrection, was the restoration of their Twelve-ness by the appointing of Matthias to take the place of the traitor, Judas.

And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, ‘Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom Thou hast chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away that he might go to his own place.’ And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.

Paul apparently showed scant respect for this divinely appointed symmetry. He seems hardly to have asked the existing Twelve if he might become one of them. He thrust himself in among them. He became as it were an irrational and asymmetrical thirteenth. Not only did he insert himself in the original group: he almost at once took the lead among them.

The book that follows the Four Gospels in the New Testament is called ‘The Acts of the Apostles’. In reality, from Chapter XIII onwards, it is almost exclusively a record of the acts of one particular apostle – and this is not one of the original Twelve. St Paul is now, so to speak, the ‘hero’. He holds the centre of the stage.

That most scholarly (Positivist) *New Calendar of Great Men* comments upon Paul’s life-work as follows:

What St Paul founded was a Church. He established a community wider than the family or the country, accepting and con-

firming the closer and narrower ties, but uniting families and nations under the common headship of Christ. The vague benevolence that would ignore the claims of relationship has no place in his teaching. He dwells often on the mutual duties of parents, children, and servants. For his own nation he had a passionate affection. He held the law of Rome in profound respect. His teaching was real, human, genial. His picture of the loving, charitable temper, upheld by him as the highest spiritual gift, is perhaps the noblest ideal ever presented to man. And with all this he knew how to exercise stern spiritual authority when need was. It is important to notice that, though Catholic dogma was to undergo much further development in succeeding centuries, the central institution of Catholicism, the Eucharist, was brought by him into full prominence.

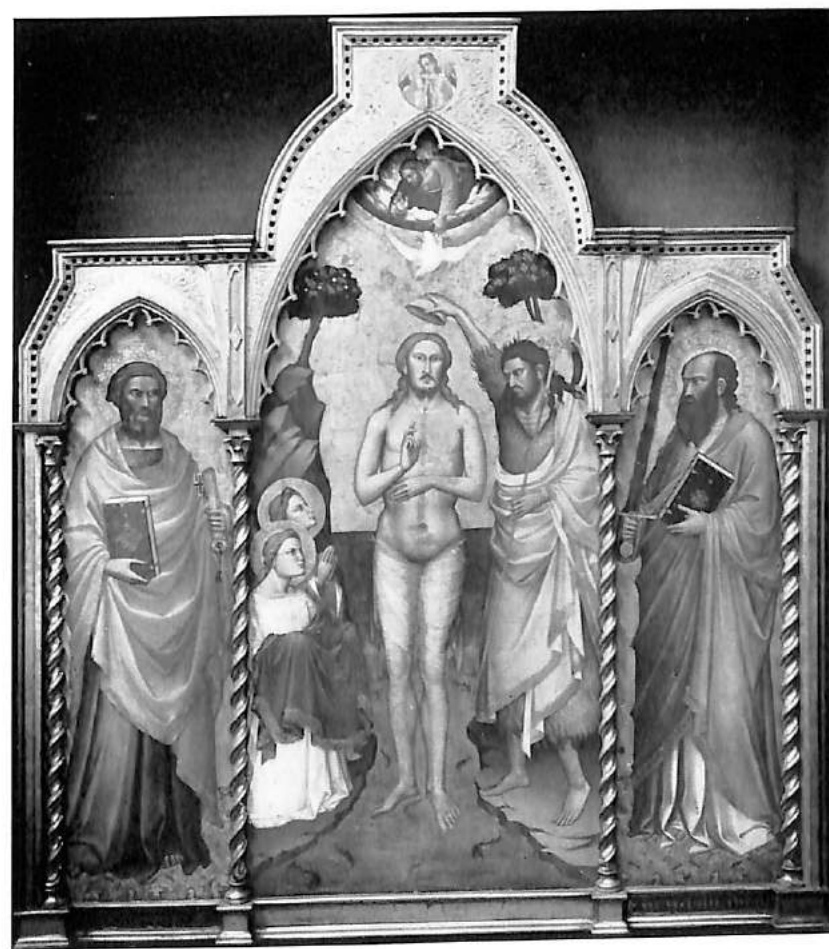
Coleridge (than whom there could hardly be a more highly qualified critic) says of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians that it is 'the divinest composition of man'; he says of the Epistle to the Romans that it is 'the most profound work in existence'.

Solitary; in a certain real sense, single-handed; unquenchable; unconquerable – this man hurled himself against the culture of Greece and the power of Rome. 'For the love of Christ, I hunger and thirst; I am naked; I am buffeted; I have no certain dwelling-place; I labour, working with my hands; reviled, I bless; persecuted, I suffer it; defamed, I entreat; I am made as the filth of the world, as the off-scouring of all things'; '... in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings oft, in hunger and thirst, in fastings oft, in cold and nakedness, in prisons oft.'

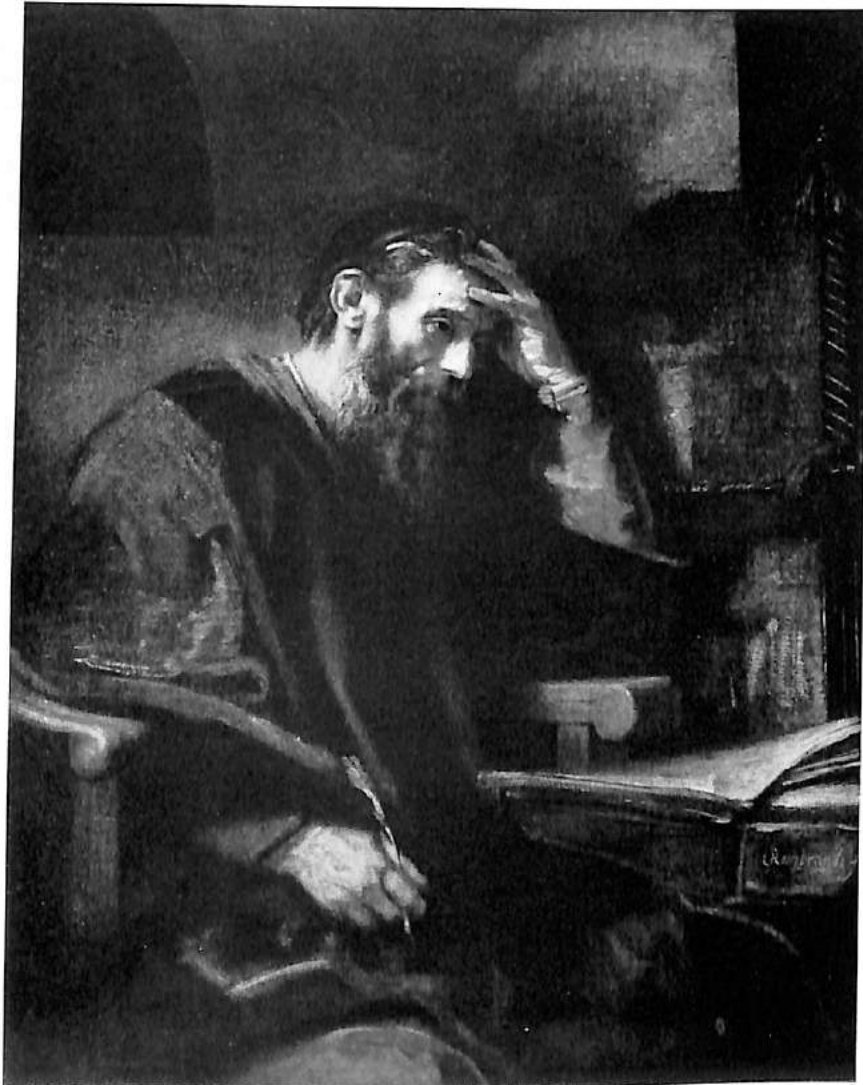
He wins the battle. He carries the new faith from Asia into Europe. He lays the foundations of all that is greatest in our Western Civilisation, in World Civilisation. He presents us with the values of which at this present moment we stand desperately in need.

* * *

Paul boasted: 'To me to live is Christ.' Perhaps more than any other person who has existed on this earth, this was what he did. . . . We feel ourselves compelled to ask how this came about. What is the explanation of Paul's unique life-course?



The Baptism in Jordan: St Peter with keys, St Paul with sword
Niccolo di Pietro Gerini, c. 1400 (National Gallery, London)



The Apostle Paul, by Rembrandt
(Washington, National Gallery of Art)

What force propelled this terrific missile into human affairs? What to this effect (we ask ourselves) was the commensurate cause?

Unlike any of the Twelve, Paul derived nothing from Christ Jesus in the flesh. He had no documents in his hands. The meagre references in his Epistles to what took place in Palestine indicate that the events recorded in the Gospels were of quite subordinate interest to him and had virtually no influence upon him.

We are looking for a sufficient cause for Paul's extraordinary ministry. . . . Direct reference is made to it in five several places in the New Testament. Here I will indicate two of them.

The writer of the Acts of the Apostles describes the cause of Paul's activities thus:

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the High Priest and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues that if he found any of this Way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus. And suddenly there shined round about him a Light from Heaven and he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' And he said, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' and the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' And he trembling and astonished said, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' And the Lord said unto him, 'Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.'

At Caesarea, in the presence of King Herod, on trial before the Roman Governor, Festus, Paul gives us his own account of what took place at the Gates of Damascus:

Whereupon (he says), I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests. At midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me and saying in the Hebrew tongue: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' And I said, 'Who art thou, Lord?' And He said: 'I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a

minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in Me.'

Unless we are meanly resolved to force Paul's experience into some petty, little, materialistic present-day scheme of things; if we look at the facts with open eyes; if we set ourselves to find a commensurate cause to the fully known consequences; we find ourselves compelled to accept Paul's own characterisation and explanation of what had happened to him.

He begins his letter to the church in Galatia with the words: 'Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God, the Father).' He goes on again at verse eleven: 'For I make known unto you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after men. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.'

Paul's view of what happened to him at the Gates of Damascus is that he was spoken to by Christ Jesus out of the Supersensible World. That this was fact for him and for mankind shines out in every word he wrote, in every deed he did. That no other explanation of St Paul is practicable becomes the conviction of every person who takes all the known facts into his consciousness.

* * *

The essential function of the Gospels is to narrate for us what took place on this earth when the God-Being descended into earth-evolution; the Evangelists are concerned – more or less exclusively – with 'the Word made Flesh'. Paul is concerned with something totally different. He points to a Christ not accessible to physical eyes and ears but accessible to man's spiritual faculties.

III: RUDOLF STEINER

Why do we occupy ourselves with Spiritual Science? It is as though we are learning the vocabulary of the language through which we can approach the Christ. If we take the trouble to

learn to think the thoughts of Spiritual Science and make the mental effort necessary for an understanding of the Cosmic secrets taught by Spiritual Science, then out of the dim, dark foundations of the Cosmic Mysteries will come forth the figure of Christ Jesus, which will give us the strength and force with which we live.

(Lecture by Rudolf Steiner at Berlin, 1917)

The twentieth century is a battle-field. A terrific battle is being fought the world over in every human being. The new versus the old; the future versus the past; enlightenment versus opacity; life versus death. We can be aware of it in ourselves; we can observe it in others. A grim unmistakable evolutionary upheaval.

Evolution is at work. In every human being there lurks today a protest against the conceptions that still authoritatively emanate all about us from the centres of learning. Deep down we are each of us struggling to negate the lie that we are merely clods of matter, cognitively limited to what our five physical senses can do for us.

Euphorion is coming to birth within us. We are struggling desperately for our rights as human beings. We begin to feel as a reality the emergence of new cognitive faculties. We sense the coming of higher evolutionary possibilities. We are stretching out our hands to the supersensible. We are yearning for that spiritual awareness of the Christ which Paul prototypally exemplified.

Socrates quaintly asserted that he was the midwife of souls coming to birth in fifth-century Athens. Rudolf Steiner is the midwife of souls coming to birth in our own twentieth century.

In the world picture which Steiner offers us we can see ourselves – with the totality of our being; in the highest sense of the word 'science' – to be in the presence of the Supersensible Christ. . . . Steiner's epistemological works argue beyond controversy that our cognitive faculties are equal to the task of finding this Christ in the Spiritual World. . . . Steiner presents us with the technique of this greater kind of knowledge-getting – the exercises, the meditations, the counsel of which we are in need. . . . In the 'Act of Consecration of Man', as celebrated by the Christian Community, the etheric substances of the

bread and the wine become permeated with the etheric substance of Christ. In so far as there is receptivity, the super-sensible Christ Forces are made accessible and available.

* * *

The function of the Gospels is to tell us what happened on this earth of ours when the Christ-Being incarnated Himself upon it; they are historical documents.

Paul was, as he himself tells us, 'born out of due time'. He was, he says, 'a mystery-spectacle to angels and to men'. He is a declaration from the Cosmos of what is fundamentally required of human beings now that, as a result of the Incarnation, the Christ Being ensouls the earth.

Rudolf Steiner is urging us not to lag behind in evolution. To use an old-fashioned term, he is at this moment in history *sent* to us. His is the authentic voice of the twentieth century. And his message in the great unfolding of things is: 'Take into your minds and into your hearts what St Paul had to say, and – in response to what the twentieth century is saying to mankind – *develop it!*'

SPIRITUAL SCIENCE AND MYSTICISM

ALAN HOWARD

NO two activities of the human mind could seem more incompatible at first sight than natural science and mysticism.

To put it quite concretely, if somewhat crudely: Suppose one were invited out to meet a great mystic. The chances are one would be somewhat apprehensive; wondering all the time just what sort of person one was going to meet, and imagining someone 'above' or 'beyond' one's ordinary human level, someone 'other-worldly'.

But suppose one were invited out to meet a great scientist. One might still be a little overawed at the thought of his greatness, but hardly apprehensive. On the contrary one would probably be somewhat flattered, and might even get up a few intelligent questions on his subject, just to show that though a layman one was not entirely out of touch with what he did.

The scientist is an essential part of our modern world. Everybody nowadays knows something about science. It is 'big business', involving thousands upon thousands of people in its toils; and even though the greatness of a really great scientist might still put him far above our own intellectual level, he would probably be 'just as human as we are', with the same foibles and weaknesses as ourselves.

But a mystic! – and a great, outstanding mystic at that; one who might claim if he would that he has 'walked with God' – that would be another matter altogether!

This disparity of attitude no doubt arises from the fact that great mystics are not indigenous to our western world – or certainly not in recent times; and what vague conception of a mystic we might have, stemming as it probably does either from the remote east or the distant past, does not altogether fit our modern background. We live in a technical, scientific age; we have probably had an overloaded scientific education; we are constantly being bombarded with the glories and achievements of science; and we have come to find indispensable the enjoyment and use of those things that science has made possible. Mysticism hardly comes into such a picture at all.

None the less it must come eventually; and there are already signs that this is happening. Mysticism is 'coming back'; and if one is to be really 'with it' in the future, it may be as necessary to have an idea of the mystic's approach to life as the scientist's. For mysticism is itself a science; and official science must somewhere come to terms with it if only on this level; and when Rudolf Steiner introduced his dynamic concept of a *spiritual science* into the stream of modern thought, he not only showed that this was possible, but indicated quite clearly what form such a science would have to take, and what procedures it must follow.

A mystic is someone who devotes his whole life and talents to a search for God; a scientist, one who does the same for Truth or Knowledge. We can ignore the unworthy criticism that the God the mystic seeks is nothing more than some anthropomorphic figment of his imagination, just as we can that the Truth or Knowledge pursued by the scientist is no more than what is contained between the covers of a popular book on physics; and, putting the goal of each on the highest level of human endeavour, concede that in those supernal regions where both move and work, the mystic's God and the scientist's Truth may have much more in common than we can imagine. In any case, as far as their seeking goes, there is no reason at all why the one should be any the less devoted, scrupulous, honest, persistent, objective and – yes – intelligent than the other. If they differ at all, that difference must be sought in their aims and methods, and not in their moral and intellectual integrity or judgment.

It is necessary to emphasise this, because although we are living in an age which fosters and venerates the expert – particularly the scientific variety – we tend to overlook the fact that the spiritual life has its experts, too; and single-minded devotion and ability in one field deserves as much respect and deference as it does in another – irrespective of whether our personal predilection favours this field rather than that. It is just not so that science has put mysticism out of court, just because it is the most modern aspect of human culture; any more than that mysticism is far superior to science because of its venerable antiquity. Both have contributed infinitely much to human progress; and we must be equally open-minded about St Paul

and George Fox, say, as about Aristotle and Isaac Newton, if we are going to estimate their contribution aright.

But to return to aims and methods.

Are they so vastly different after all? What does the mystic mean by God? the scientist, by Truth?

Here we come up against a very real difficulty; for while there is no evidence to suggest that either would withhold this information, the only means of communicating it to us that they have – ordinary human language – is often inadequate for both. Both are obliged in the end to use a language of their own: the mystic speaking in images, negations, paradox, which outrun our common logic; and the scientist in mathematics which demands years of study. One has to be much more than 'something of a mystic', or 'something of a scientist', to move really understandingly in their fields.

As laymen we come nearest to both of them, perhaps, when we consider their point of departure; for this is common ground to all who ever seriously 'think about things'. It is that dissatisfaction with life and the world as it appears, and that desire to know it as it really is. The scientist rejects the naïve conception of the world, and asks, 'What is its real meaning?' The mystic rejects the naïve conception of himself, and asks, 'Who really am I?' Both are driven to their fundamental question because both have an innate feeling that somewhere there is an answer to it: that the world is a cosmos and not a chaos; or, that the separate being of man is fulfilled in the unified being of God. But that innate feeling, which is often enough for us, is not enough for them. It is objective reality they want, the irrefutable testimony of their own experience. This is what impels their quest; impelling it to such a degree, that while neither would say he ever comes to an 'end' of it, both find none the less in the seeking as such the growing confirmation of what they seek. The scientist finds a 'meaningfulness', the mystic a 'beingfulness' far beyond anything we can experience on any lesser level.

And here for the moment the similarity between them comes to rest; for the scientist will not accept 'being', except in terms of impersonal 'meaning'; nor the mystic, 'meaning', except in terms of 'being'. The one fears the adulteration of his impersonal Truth with something anthropomorphic; the other, of

having to admit that there could ultimately be anything else than, or apart from, God.

These two, the great scientist and the great mystic, are rare spirits adventuring in realms far beyond our diurnal horizons; but, sharing our humanity as they do, they give none the less the result of their experience into our keeping. The real result of that experience should of course be the incentive to follow their lead. Too often it is simply what they say; and not always that, but what we think they have said. This, being repeated by us, often ad nauseam and in their name, all too often becomes a dogma inhibiting the further progress that should follow from their example; for there is a fatal tendency in the mass of humanity strenuously to resist anything that imposes on them the necessity to *know*, rather than just to accept what others have known.

This is nowhere so apparent as in the demand for 'Proof' whenever any new idea appears; as though proof could ever be anything but that personal, spiritual activity of knowing, whereby the new is won; for we must all somehow become mystics and scientists if we would really enter into the heritage of their striving. Otherwise all knowledge becomes dogmatism and definition; and human beings mere 'Yes-men' to intellectual or spiritual authority. Even such a straightforward thing as the fact that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides is a dogma, if we will not acquire sufficient geometry to follow Pythagoras in its discovery; for although Pythagoras was no doubt the first to prove this, he did not prove it *for us*. He *showed the way* by which we could prove it *for ourselves*. Granted, he made that proving much easier, just as a man who beats out a path through new territory makes it easier for those who follow; but *they* must still follow. The onus of proof is always on the one who would know, not on him who knows; and if any man does not want to know, or wants to know by some method which is not knowing, then there is no hope for him.

We mention this because it is essential to emphasise that the greatest contribution of the mystic and the scientist to human development is the inspiration of their striving, rather than the results gained; and also because it helps us to pin-point a subtle difference in their otherwise similar striving, without which it

is impossible to distinguish their separate fields of endeavour. It is easier to accept as proven the work of the scientist, because being wholly demonstrable to our common reason, it does not affect us personally. It makes no demands upon us, save that of following with our reason; and even that we can avoid if sufficient other 'reasonable' people follow it, and we are willing to accept their confirmation. But this cannot happen in the case of the mystic. We can if we will accept what he says about God and the spiritual world, but that has no significance whatsoever unless we are prepared to enter *personally* into his knowledge of God. For his knowledge is not wholly demonstrable by reason; it must be completed by love: that accompaniment and intensification of the act of knowing, whereby everything else is excluded – even the knower himself – in the activity of knowing. And *that* does affect us personally.

But this must be so when we wish to know a being, as distinct from a thing.

I may discover by observation and intellect everything that can possibly be known about another human being, but until I can also begin to love him, I shall never enter into that special sphere of knowledge which only can and should obtain between beings. Such knowledge does not repudiate that which may be known by observation and intellect, but it as much transcends it, as the latter does my ignorance of him before I had ever seen him.

It is exactly the same for the mystic. If he only sought to know *about* God, he might possibly be a theologian but no mystic; but because he seeks to know God as being, he knows that he must love what he seeks, for there is no entry into such knowledge save by love.

And this of course is not just importing a feeling into knowledge where it could be argued it does not properly belong; for the scientist also can and does love Truth, without any prejudice to the knowledge of it. It shows rather that love is not only the motive power behind all knowledge, but where the object of that knowledge is a being and not an abstraction, love must somewhere become more and more the instrument of knowing itself.

This makes it all the more remarkable when we realise that both the scientist and the mystic fulfil all the essential first

prerequisites of love as a means to knowledge: selflessness; the utter eradication of everything that stems from the personal wishes of the individual self. The scientist knows that if he really wants to understand what is happening in any given circumstances, he must put all his personal wishes in the matter entirely to one side; and with his whole being centred solely on the event, be content just to watch what happens. If anything of himself comes between this simple, concentrated attentiveness and what he attends to, then his results will be a distortion of the facts. He has, as it were, to dehumanise himself, in order to carry out his researches properly; to become nothing but an observing instrument.

In just the same way the mystic in his search for God must allow nothing of himself to come between himself and God. He must not only close his senses to all around him, but even his consciousness to those memories, feelings and ideas which remain over in it from the former habit of the senses. He must become an empty vessel, 'like to a shell dishabited', if the objective Divine he seeks is going to reveal itself in him.

This is perhaps the most striking point of similarity between the two – this 'love for the object' as Steiner himself so often calls it. But it does not stop there; for neither the mystic nor the scientist can *command* what is to happen next. Indeed, it is just this utter inability in any way to influence what transpires, which is the guarantee that what does happen is objective. At this point all that either of them can do is to wait; and both know that if they wait with sufficient attentive and selfless energy, somewhere, sometime, what they seek must reveal itself to them. They are both sustained by an unshakeable inner confidence that what could happen may happen; that even though what they seek should persist unknown indefinitely, it is only unknown to them. They have not to create something, but to receive something; and they must be at continual pains to ensure that the vessel of its reception – themselves – is sufficiently pure to receive it.

In short, the activity of both is as much a moral discipline as an intellectual one; and if only this were more generally known there could not be half the stupid arguments about the relative merits of science and mysticism that arise in those quarters where the disputants have not the first conception of either; and

a work like that of Steiner's would be welcomed with paeans of joy wherever anyone was faithfully and selflessly seeking to extend the frontiers of human knowledge – in whatsoever direction. But we live in a 'faithless and an adulterous generation'. We are unable to see that knowing of itself is a mystical (spiritual) as well as a scientific activity; and we look in vain for something else, for 'a sign'. 'But there shall no sign be given unto it' save the sign of the act of knowing itself.

It is this moral discipline, this waiting upon the event, so faithfully persevered in throughout the ages, that has yielded all that man knows of God or the world; and the fact that the revelations of knowledge when they do come, often come unbidden, does nothing to undo the necessity of this discipline. It was because Archimedes was a true scientist that he discovered the principle of specific gravity, and not because he happened to take a bath one day in an over-full tub; and it was because Jacob Boehme was a true mystic that 'it seemed to him as if he could now look into the principles and deepest foundations of things', and not because 'his eyes fell upon a burnished pewter dish'. Thousands of people have taken baths and looked at burnished pewter without ever advancing the knowledge of God or the world by one scruple.

What then are the scientist and the mystic really doing when they thus integrate and concentrate their selfless devoted attention upon the object of their quest?

The word 'quest' suggests the answer; for they are both indeed 'questing'; but as they are moving in esoteric rather than exoteric spheres that questing is *questioning*. They are both asking a question. 'What', asks the scientist, 'is really happening there?' 'How may I know Thee, thou Being of my being?' asks the mystic. And just because they are what they are, they are able to create the conditions in which that question can be answered, and have made themselves into instruments to detect it if and when it comes.

The fact that we call the mystic's question a 'prayer' and not a question, has nothing to do with the case. Indeed, to pray is to ask; and in a politer age than ours it was as customary to preface the most trivial questions of human intercourse with this word 'Pray', as in our more literary age it is to end them with a question mark.

Indeed, it is just such a trivial circumstance as this that can give us the clue not only to the fundamental difference between the mystic and the scientist, but lead us directly to the heart of spiritual science which overcomes their opposites: *for one cannot ask questions, praying questions or scientific questions, in a Being-less environment; and if answers come, as the work of science and mysticism abundantly testifies, then Someone is answering.*

It is by disregarding this simple fact that the scientist has brought himself into a most unscientific position; for it is surely the acme of science, as it is of common sense, that if one established fact points unmistakably to another not yet established, then the next step must surely be to set about establishing that. But this the scientist will not do. He is content with the answers, and considers the possibility of an answerer outside his province. There can, however, be nothing fundamentally unscientific in looking for an answerer when a question is answered; but it is precisely at this point that the scientist stops short, and the mystic goes on ahead of him.

That the question is without doubt the basis of all scientific research, and the ability to ask the right question the hall-mark of the scientist, goes without saying; but is not the answer just as significant a factor, and may not the incidence of answers point as much to an answering being as the question does to a questioning one? Or do we really believe that one and the same being both asks and answers his own questions?

It sometimes happens that we human beings talk to ourselves; and though it is unlikely to be something we make a habit of, the practice is common enough, and we probably all do it at some time or another, particularly under pressure of circumstances. Let us imagine someone, then, with an extremely pressing problem on his mind which hinges on one very important question; and let us imagine him walking up and down an empty room turning it over and over, and every now and then asking his question aloud. Let us also imagine that unknown to him there is hidden in the room someone who happens to know the solution to his problem, and has the answer at his finger tips. For a long time, wishing to remain concealed, he says nothing; but at length unable to bear it any longer, the question being once more repeated, he blurts out the answer.

One can imagine the look that will come over the face of the

questioner as he realises what he has just heard; but can we really also suppose that he will just dash off with no other thought than that he has found his answer? Is he not bound to turn and find out where the answer came from?

No one could doubt that he is.

Is this then so very different from what happens when we deal with our problems by the more normal method of silent cogitation?

Our thinking is after all nothing more or less than putting questions to the universe and receiving answers. We do not create those answers, however. They simply come; but we are so sure that we ask our questions in the 'empty room' of a being-less universe, that we do not give a thought to the possibility of 'someone' *hidden* answering. (What might happen if we did; and what *has* happened in the case of those – often more naïve – souls who have acted on this assumption, as in the case of so-called 'answers to prayer' etc., is a tempting subsidiary aspect of this theme, but one which cannot be pursued now.)

Everyone is familiar with this pattern of the thinking process. One does not have to have been a great scientist to have seen it at work, for it is the same pattern we follow in our most everyday, as in our most recondite, researches. Why must we necessarily conclude that because questions and answer appear in the same field – our mind, and in the same form – the conceptual, that question and answer arise from the same source – ourselves? Can there not just as much be *two* to a process of knowledge as there are to a conversation? Why should I be satisfied any more than the man in the room that the answer just comes, without once considering whence and from whom it may be coming? This, of course, does not prove that our answers come from answering beings; but it does give good – and scientific – ground for following up the possibility; and it is just because of this that the mystic is always one jump ahead of the scientist, and perhaps why his results are always so much more satisfying for the whole human desire for knowledge than those of the scientist. When *his* questions are answered he acknowledges the answerer and love and gratitude – as they must – growing with that acknowledgment, he presses forward to what he knows is there: that Being who is the ultimate 'answer' to the 'question' of his own being.

We must learn to look again, not only with the eye of the scientist but also with the eye of the mystic, at what is at the base of all human questions and answers – Thinking. We have to pay far more attention to our thinking activity; and as we have nothing wherewith to do this but Thinking itself, that means we have to learn to ‘think about Thinking’; without any preconceptions as to its being a function of something else which we call a brain, but as it is given to us directly in consciousness. It was because Rudolf Steiner was able to do this, and able to teach others the technique, that he was also able to exhibit Thinking, and indeed to use it, as an *organ of communication* between man and the spiritual world, and thus lay the foundations of a research which can indeed be called a ‘spiritual science’.

It was in pursuit of this that he published in 1894 that book which must surely one day be universally recognised as the epistemological classic of the new spiritual research: *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. Before that he had already obtained his doctorate of Philosophy with a thesis on the same theme called: *Truth and Science*; and even earlier than both, and as the result of his work on Goethe’s scientific researches, he had published in 1885 his – *Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe’s World Conception*.

In each of these books he is concerned with the nature of knowledge and the human being as knower, showing clearly that the operative factor in both is – Thinking. Our observation and perception are given to us. Born as we are with eyes and ears and all the other senses, we cannot help perceiving the world around us; but we could never come to knowledge of it if we did not also think about it. It could be argued of course that our thinking is also given to us like our senses, and indeed it is; for it occurs in experience just like the senses; but it is only in Thinking that we feel such an intimate connection with the activity itself that the activity is also ourselves, I; and it is from that consciously directed activity of the I in Thinking that our questions arise, the mystic’s no less than the scientist’s.

It is just this, however, which we and they all take for granted in asking our questions; but it is precisely this that Steiner makes the object of his question in those books referred to above. ‘What is Thinking?’ he virtually asks, and proceeds to show how by Thinking we can find the answer.

It might seem at first that asking such a question as this is nothing more than making a verbal construction which has the form of a question, but is in fact no question at all. But that would be to mistake words for the reality to which they point. We explain everything else in the world by means of Thinking, why should we make an exception of the explanation of Thinking itself? If Thinking means anything at all, it can only do so because Thinking gives it that meaning; only we are usually so prone to look for the meaning of Thinking in anything else but Thinking, that we entirely overlook its unique nature. If, however, we refuse to seek for the explanation of Thinking anywhere else than where it properly belongs – in Thinking itself, then we shall find that in Thinking and by means of Thinking, we are wholly within an activity which can not only explain and sustain everything else that we know, but can explain and sustain the knowledge of itself. And this is Reality. Of no other activity of the human mind can this be said; and to no other is this accessible. It satisfies the criteria of Reality that it shall be something that explains itself by itself and no other. What the mystic seeks only in what he calls God, and the scientist in what he calls Truth, the spiritual scientist finds in Thinking itself; and so doing harmonises both these other activities which, for all their divergences, start none the less in that very activity.

But thinking about Thinking is not thinking about ourselves. Here we have to be just as selfless as the mystic and the scientist. Granted, *I* think; but in thinking *that*, I have already adopted a position which is outside what I normally call ‘I’. I have given up my separate, thinking ‘I-ness’, to identify myself with that which thinks I in me. And this is a fundamentally mystical standpoint.

But let us look at it also from the more scientific (logical) viewpoint.

The products of Thinking are concepts and ideas; and the act of knowledge consists in establishing a relationship in concepts between I, as subject, and That, as object, which comes into the field of my attention. The relationship is what we call the meaning of the object in reference to the rest of the world and to me. ‘I know that’ is the pattern formula for all the separate acts of knowledge. ‘I know that’ means that I have

discovered by Thinking the conceptual counterpart of something that had presented itself to me in experience. It has become part of me; it has been explained; it has meaning; and it is this meaning that the concept contributes to the experience.

But 'subject' and 'object' are themselves also concepts arrived at by Thinking; and I as subject am not an absolutely uncaused beginning as I so often naïvely imagine myself to be. I, too, am the result of Thinking – a Thinking which is antecedent but identical with that which I subsequently call my own. I am the explanation, the meaning, of a phenomenon that pre-existed the *I that now knows itself* as the meaning of that phenomenon.

Who then, what then, really am I? Who is thinking me, when I so naïvely say, 'I think'?

Here the mystic's problem meets us again, but now in the process of a scientific enquiry into the nature of Thinking, where all our problems of knowledge arise; and because we are not looking for an answer in some imaginary Beyond utterly outside our realm of experience, we can find that answer in the Being of Thinking which is the very essence of our own thinking: *I am a concept thought by Thinking.*

But – let us hasten to add – that entirely unique concept: *a concept that thinks.*

This is the real character of I as concept. This is where Thinking and Being really meet. I, indeed, know myself as a being as a result of Thinking; but that Thinking which gives me the power to think myself, first thought me into being. I am indeed a part of a whole, but a part which bears actually and potentially the character of the whole, a part which, as Steiner puts it, makes of us 'in so far as we think . . . the All One Being that pervades everything'. In thinking I find the concept of myself, which is also the representation of the universal concept of God, 'great enough to be God, intimate enough to be me' (Récéjac). I am as God thinks me. In so far as I think I can never be separated from God, for in Thinking I am God and I use God. There is no need for me to seek for a God beyond knowledge, for I cannot exhaust the knowledge of God nor escape from Him in all I can think or know; and even though I often become so immersed in some part of His creation which He enables me to know that I neglect to acknowledge the source of my knowing in Him, it is none the less He who

sustains me. Thereby Thinking in its final analysis is also Love, than which there could be no greater than this which gives itself to me in knowing, and yet leaves me free to know where I will. To grasp this, if only for a moment, in its full import, is to be able to say of Thinking what St Paul said of Christ: I think; yet not I, for Thou (Thinking) thinketh in me; for Thinking is the incarnation in human consciousness of that Logos which the Christ was and is.

In saying this we have gone far beyond the naïve conception of thinking which moves only along the edge of our instinctive needs and everyday experience, and we have caught a glimpse of that broad ocean of Thinking which ceaselessly washes the remotest shores of human consciousness; but because we are so much the creatures of the shallow backwaters of our daily life, we so often fail to realise that this ocean is none other than that which also fills the poor, separate pool of our individual consciousness.

But this is the whole mystery of the creation and incarnation. Only by a deepening of the same Thinking by which we apprehend this mystery, shall we ever advance to an understanding of its meaning; for that meaning is the whole future evolution of man. Just as the whole of past evolution has brought us to the point where we can think 'I am', and on that basis gain knowledge of the world; so that same Thinking must carry us to the far distant time when we can also see 'Thou art', and thus enter into the full companionship of God. For Thinking, and what Steiner later describes as spiritual perception, are related as darkness and light. Just as the concept illuminates for us the percept which would otherwise remain in the darkness of ignorance, so our thinking will one day be illumined by the perception of those spheres of reality which at present we can only conceive in the darkness of thought. Just as the blind man can only touch what we can also see, but touches the same reality; so thought, ere it has transformed itself into that future sight, already grasps (how appropriate is the German word 'Begriff', here!) the reality that it will later behold.

This is the light that 'shines' in darkness; the light that makes the mystic an organ of seeing so that the no thing of his being becomes the light-illumined realm of the indescribable being of God. But it is also the same light which floods the scientist

when, absorbed in the phenomenon with selfless devotion it suddenly yields its conceptual secret, and he exclaims aloud in joy 'I see!'

The only real difference between the scientist and the mystic is that the former starting out from the perceptible (the phenomenon) achieves his goal in the imperceptible (thought); while the latter starting out from the imperceptible (Thinking) finds his in a higher perceptible.

Thinking is thus the mediator between two worlds of perception. What is the goal for the scientist is the starting point for the mystic; what is the explanation for the one is the problem for the other. The world of phenomena of the scientist is the activity of being of the mystic; and the world of human thinking is where phenomena and being meet in knowledge. By investigating Thinking by Thinking – which is at once a scientific and mystical activity – we bring real life into the world of phenomena, and find being in the world of knowledge.

By these two separate paths has man come to the cross-roads of modern times. By the one he has found knowledge of God, by the other knowledge of the world. If he continues to pursue them separately, however, he stands in danger of losing the world from his knowledge of God and God from his knowledge of the world. To be fully human he must find God in the world and the world in God; but this can only happen when that which lives in both the scientist and the mystic as essentially the same – the eternal questing spirit of man – becomes the starting point of a science that is mystical, and a mysticism that is scientific, in short, a spiritual science which Rudolf Steiner has also called 'Anthroposophy'.

THE GRAND ILLUSION

STANLEY MESSENGER

SCHOOLBOY magic is not what it was. At one time Maskelyne and Devant's rivalled the pantomime as the crowning event of the Christmas holiday. You can still buy beginner's conjuring sets at toy shops, or hire a 'magician' for a children's party. But the Magic Circle nowadays flirts with the Society for Psychical Research, speculating on the elusive hinterland between illusionism and magic. Some of them are a long way from 'nothing up my sleeve' and 'the quickness of the hand deceives the eye'.

So many wonders have accumulated since Steiner wrote *The Philosophy of Freedom* that the very Naïve Realism whose sinister partnership with Critical Idealism that book overthrew has shifted its ground. To appreciate conjuring you need a solid world of tables and chairs as a safe normality to be restored at the end of the performance, a world where top-hats no longer pour forth rabbits. But nowadays the cabinet in which the lady is sawn in half is no more of a marvel than the television cabinet where you might well be observing the phenomenon, indeed much less so. When people are naïve, it is more likely to be in their ability to absorb the wonderful without astonishment. What are a few unexplained mice and rabbits in a world of lasers and Venus-probes? Modern man, face to face with a healing at Lourdes or the Indian rope-trick, drily observes that a Hollywood version would be better presented. When the entire experienceable universe is manifestly some sort of trick, it is invidious to single out one illusory phenomenon from others as the flaw which gives us a clue to the underlying reality. 'The world is my mental picture', says Schopenhauer. 'So I must be crazy', concludes modern man.

Nevertheless, at a crucial point of history *The Philosophy of Freedom* was written, and is very much with us today. If anthroposophy possessed its own version of the Screwtape Letters, the fiend might have observed that the book gave him some very nasty moments.

'Those of us', he might have said, 'who had concerned our-

selves from the beginning with diverting mankind through his insatiable curiosity have been obliged to keep a constant eye on his unfortunate tendency to drift from mere inquisitiveness into open-mouthed astonishment, than which nothing draws him so swiftly towards the treacherous realm of heavenly wonder which threatens us all.

'The scientific revolution appeared to be solidly based on the righteous scepticism of Kant. You younger fiends would do well to remember that, while it is excellent to find occasion for pride in a human being, it can be even better to find a spurious reason for humility. Kant convinced scientists that it was impossible to reach a real world of "things-in-themselves". Metaphysics, their ludicrous name for this ingenious half-truth, has proved as effective a sword as Gabriel's for keeping man unaware of his imminent reprieve from the Dark Ages. It made an irresistible appeal to the puritan self-lacerating spirit of the West. Since Calvinism and witch-burning were now denied them, they embraced pragmatic science with avidity. Darwinism, Freudianism, and all manner of later psychological hair-shirts followed thick and fast.

'Wonderful stuff for us, you would have thought; every wonder accounted for in terms of something ingenious but banal, every flicker of revelation neatly doused by some clever but monumentally boring explanation. But unlike Kant, trotting dutifully about Königsberg, these dedicated metaphysical pragmatists had to stick their inquisitive noses into the real world of natural phenomena, where their humble, mortified minds revealed a whole new world of wonders. Sure enough their silly mouths dropped open, and wonder and astonishment filled their naïve little souls, and even turned to reverence in some of them (Darwin was a most reverent man).

'Before we knew where we were, half of them would have reached wisdom-filled identification with the laws of the universe, and even submission to the course of karmic evolution, and anthroposophy would have been upon us.

'It was in this sensitive period of history that Rudolf Steiner appeared with his *Philosophy of Freedom*. Surely science in its youthful upsurge would have the acuity, filled as it was with a growing wonder at the natural world, to perceive that human thinking was the crowning wonder among all wonders, and

that in the astonished, wonder-filled and reverent observation of their own thinking as phenomenon among phenomena, that very naïveté rightly distrusted by Kant in connection with other observations would here find its justification and sanction.

'As you know, however, to our vast relief, metaphysics proved a strong enough barrier to prevent so cataclysmic an advance in human awareness. The fire was neatly doused in oceans of brain physiology, and the direct observation – *seelische Beobachtung* – that Steiner had made possible was for the time being diverted. Nobody of importance took any notice of Steiner, and we soon had plenty of opportunities to see that his enemies, and sometimes his supporters, sufficiently misrepresented him.

'In case you are inclined to be complacent, however, I would remind you that our victory was by no means final. The moment passed, but it could have been a very near thing. Steiner failed to shift the barrier established in the midstream of human cognitive advance. Nothing could stop the current of human evolution. But metaphysics has at least ensured for the time being that knowledge remains a closed system rather than an open-ended one. You may object that this operation in the human mind was rather like damming a raging torrent, and that however far in the future we have postponed its re-emergence, the time must come when it bursts its bonds. This is no doubt so, but there will certainly be further pickings for us in that very fact, and the longer it is delayed the more we shall retrieve. If the advances of the enemy are inevitable, always ensure that they are cataclysmic rather than organic. Hell thrives on crises.

'What, Wormwood? Speak up! Yes, there are certainly still anthroposophists. Their numbers are small. They are like holes in the dam. So long as that is all they are, they can even help in a minor way to postpone the crisis we rely on, which is to our advantage. But I have already pointed out many times that an illusion, to be effective, must be complete. A very small flaw can in some circumstances collapse the entire structure. Meanwhile, as you know, we have succeeded in creating on the basis of metaphysics and materialism the biggest diversionary circus of all time.

'You could do worse, Wormwood, than study a well-established fighting technique among men, called Judo, based on

the principle "if you can't beat it, join it". After all, if each of the myriad wonders man is now uncovering in the natural world and beneath it has resulted from experiments based on a sense perception whose ability to reach a real world is denied, and on a thinking chiefly devised to eliminate its presumably subjective bias, we can rely on a growing bias in thinking itself against observation as a principle. Observation then tends to be undertaken by scientists *faute de mieux*. And we are fairly safe from the, to us, dangerous results of scientists observing the thinking itself, so long as productive results continue to be possible without doing so. This has already established itself as a psychological block throughout western mankind, which provides us with a sort of built-in Judo.

'From now on, the more wonders in this field the better. We can rely upon the simple power of association to ensure that the more insistent and overwhelming and space-wide the sensation of a science-fiction universe "there" outside him becomes for man, the deeper will grow his scepticism to match it.

'If it's corny, it's phoney, and the cornier the phonier.'

* * *

So much for Screwtape, designed brilliantly by C. S. Lewis as an entertaining companion on the path of self-debunking. We have used the method to show how modern consciousness has advanced along a path of debunking a naïve view of the world, and built up scepticism as an instrument not of knowledge of the world (which in the naïve sense is unknowable) but of knowledge of some kind of thinkable reality whose results can be applied to that unknowable world with practical effect.

What Steiner has done in his earliest work is to demonstrate that this truly heroic process of disillusionment with the world leaves virtually untouched a further layer of misapprehensions so close to the most intimate processes of observation and thinking as to escape notice altogether in the sheer vigour of our cognitive activity. He unseats not the theories of the world but the very axioms upon which the theories are based, things not previously thought to be open to question, or even susceptible to treatment by thinking at all. He points out that the unknowable world of things-in-themselves which the heroic disciplined sceptic tilts at with his metaphysical thinking is thought of and also pictured with precisely the same innocent naïveté as the

simple man's world which has been discarded for it. But this is to fall victim to a deeper illusion. What if reality is after all not something in relation to which I stand on the receiving end?

The scientist stands before the fact of an illusory world, and counters it with sceptical thinking cast into the unknowable world like the line of a fly-fisherman. He judges scientific correctness by its actual ability to pull out a technical fish. The sense world meanwhile makes its incessant and formidable claim to be real, in defiance of all our intelligence and understanding. But, points out Steiner, the association between our intuition that there is such a thing as reality and the fairly limited range of perceptions available to our senses, to which we do stand in a passive relation, is a fortuitous one. We generalise from what is increasingly seen to be a special instance as we advance beyond purely sense-observation into the much wider fields of perception which take in thinking itself. It then becomes apparent that in an expanded consciousness of which sense-perception forms only a particular and rather atypical part, perception is something you do and not something done to you. At a later stage active perception can be carried even into the realm accessible to the senses. The element in that realm which gives us our normal conviction that the sense-world is outside us, acting upon us, then separates out from the knowable sense-realities as a non-human conscious agency, actually alien and irrelevant to those realities. It is this agency which Steiner refers to as Ahriman.

Increasing familiarity with these thoughts has the effect of gradually weaning our attention from the aggressive claim of the sense world to be the whole reality our intuition seeks, and focussing it upon the fact that this claim is made in defiance of our understanding that it is illusory. The scientist replies that this is precisely what his metaphysical constructs do. But this loses its force once we have so activated our thinking and perception that passively received 'convictions' no longer take us aback. Reality is then no longer that which, in spite of myself, has succeeded in overcoming my scepticism, nor are facts described as things 'you cannot get away from'. I no longer seek to be 'convinced' or conquered by reality, but so to alter my being by active entry into perception and thinking that I become gradually identical with the realities I seek. At this point

Steiner shows how more fundamental grounds for experiencing one's own being also reveal themselves.

* * *

Provided we do not relax the eternal vigilance which is the price of becoming aware of Ahriman, we may leave Screwtape and his minions to their plotting. We sometimes hear it said among churchmen that God does not allow man to be tempted beyond his capacity. This is no arbitrary limit set upon devilish activities. Like all his pupils, the greatest of all conjurors depends entirely upon a compliant audience to maintain his illusions. Ahriman too has nothing up his sleeve. The raw material of his bag of tricks is the world itself. Every confidence trickster knows that at each moment of genuine self-realisation on the part of his victim the very facts upon which he relied to deceive are those which reveal the truth. No lies are necessary beyond those that the victim has already told himself.

By the mere fact of entering it, Ahriman causes the real glory of the earth to appear in such a way that the nature of its reality is entirely misapprehended, but this false emphasis only works as a deception if man is in a certain soul condition. We may describe this condition as one of isolation, but the soul elements which effect this isolation are themselves as real in the soul world as are the sense-perceived elements in the realm susceptible to Ahriman. Pride, courage, *amour-propre*, duty, nobility, righteousness, knowing what is best for the young and the weak, serious-minded sense of purpose, character, the whole tapestry of soul characteristics which are quintessential for a human being if he is to come into existence as a willed spiritual entity – all this is the raw material for the activity of Lucifer within the human soul. Each of these characteristics isolates a man, distinguishes him from everything else in life which in their absence results in his being a nothing, blown away like thistle-down on the wind of impermanence.

In this necessary isolation the ego receives a false emphasis. It becomes the only yardstick for reality-sense. For the soul in this condition, truth is synonymous with the understanding I have attained, love is only possible for what can be drawn into my own sphere of aesthetic sympathies, right and wrong clearly distinguish themselves in the world in the light of my own moral judgments. No other elements are necessary for this monstrous

inward lie told by Lucifer in the depths of the soul than the real elements which the spirit uses to engage itself as will upon the real human tasks. The isolation is inevitable and necessary if I am to be I, indeed, if I am to be anything other than a mere series of results, reactions, end-products of non-human activity. But for all that it is a lie. It is not true that I am alone and separate. If I exist at all, I am 'of' the cosmos, a spiritual phenomenon (or *noumenon* as the Greeks called it), a fact of spiritual existence among other spiritual facts. So I am driven into a corner. I feel I have the choice only of false existence or non-existence. The false Luciferic existence is thus the one I choose. It is the only one I know. And it is this soul condition which is the necessary precondition for Ahriman's sleight of hand. Believing with Lucifer that I am alone, I am ripe to be convinced by Ahriman that the world is as it appears to be.

In the first instance, this exposition is no more than a tissue of intellectually understood thoughts derived from reading anthroposophy. But it leads directly to what is the normal situation of daily waking consciousness. Here am I, alone; there is the world, real. It is all I normally know. Into this situation enter the thoughts derived from anthroposophy, which are at first abstract, intellectual, mere suggestions derived from Rudolf Steiner. But in the light of this description of the activities of two kinds of alien beings, operating in the respective spheres of the processes which lead to our self-realisation and to our knowledge of the world, the thoughts can begin to make some kind of sense. We are in the midst of convincing experiences and at the same time can know we are being effectively deceived by them. A solemn excitement can take hold of us. We are confronted by a vast awe-inspiring illusion in front of our very eyes and in the intimacy of well-known inward experiences. We begin to sense that in coming to grips with this and in penetrating to the reality which it contains we shall find the real meaning of our existence.

This grand illusion unrolls before our inward eye like some vast jigsaw puzzle or problem in detection. Something in us insists 'you are in possession of all the necessary facts'. Beyond and behind the surface challenge we sense that if we roused ourselves sufficiently a deeper confrontation would await, challenging us with the terrible thunder of the mystery drama: 'O

man, know thou thyself.' Lacking the gathered strength of this final confrontation, we can still clearly perceive that we are in sight of, and at times in the actual process of, a cognitive revolution, even an actual conversion or series of minor conversions in the sphere of the knowing process.

Many anthroposophists find it hard to approach spiritual science 'from this end'. 'If one is not a philosophical type . . .' they explain, and go on to proclaim the virtues of *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, *Theosophy*, or *Occult Science*, leaving *Truth and Science* and *The Philosophy of Freedom* to those whose particular path they seem to be. All one-sided approaches to spiritual science have characteristic dangers, which Steiner himself pointed out. Not least are the dietary deficiencies and actual toxicities which paralyse the will striving to engage itself in the metamorphosis of thinking and inner visualisation. The danger of not entering the field of epistemology – the study of the nature of the knowing process – is that one inevitably achieves an experience of 'understanding' some of the factual content of the vast field of Rudolf Steiner's books and lectures without knowing what 'understanding' itself actually is. Undoubtedly the prolonged study of the later anthroposophy and the meditative life associated with it leads to a slow transformation of the quality of our understanding, and so gradually it becomes less dualistic and less subject to the kind of illusion we have been describing. But it is astonishing how far we can go in factual knowledge and sympathy for spiritual science and yet describe it in a language which demonstrates that we still visualise the spiritual world in naïve-real pictures which stand by themselves 'over against' the observer, like the knockabout hard-edged conjuring-trick objects of our daily 'old curiosity shop' world.

Without specific hard uncomfortable training our most fondly held cognitive prejudices are viciously resistant to the kind of metamorphosis that the whole of anthroposophy gently and wonderfully indicates. Each flight of imagination at an evening meeting finds us in the cold light of dawn flat on our backs with the same old materialist heresies. We are cognitive recidivists, revisionists fit to be liquidated in our own purge. This reversion to type after each effort we make to cultivate ourselves and produce a new strain in mankind plays havoc with the general position of anthroposophy in the world, no less than with our

common experience of it within the movement. We tend to fall back on a common experience of anthroposophy which tends to become as popular in its own way as the popular view of the world held by mankind in general.

The truth is that each several anthroposophist, indeed each several human being, has to hold up his own purged and purified and hardly-won knowledge of himself and the world on his own shoulders, each man his own Atlas, consciously bearing his own known world and responsible for it. Falling back on a common world view, especially one enlivened by anthroposophical ideas, leads to the increasingly weak condoning of the increasingly weak. Responsibility for one's own knowledge of the spiritual leads to the strong loving the strong. These astringent thoughts are not meant to frighten away the weak, since it is we ourselves who are also the weak. Only out of strength and responsibility in knowledge can we love that which in weak people is strong – the seed which can grow to independence. An anthroposophy that is not subjected to the purgative and purifying fire of its own earliest epistemological origins is especially vulnerable to the weakening effect of a kind of popularisation.

However, we can follow the path of knowledge, teasing out the threads which have been crossed and confused, ridding ourselves of the fears and confusions of materialistic philosophy – the bogey of the 'subjective' experience, the fear of the so-called 'limits of knowledge', the illusory spectre of metaphysics, the will-o-the-wisp called 'the thing-in-itself', the loss of the real in the objective – and restoring confidence in the naïve together with an equal confidence in the moral creativity of clear critical thinking. We can become more and more sure-footed in all these realms until we start to be able to put our weight on them. This action itself is what produces our first real confidence in the reality of thinking. And then gradually we find that all those qualities by which Lucifer enables us to become serious and responsible spiritual aristocrats are the very ones we need to master the spiritual activity of freedom. It is this experience to which Steiner refers in his whole doctrine of Michael.

C. S. Lewis, in his original *Screwtape*, made a considerable start on describing some of the more pungent ways in which

spiritual growth can perpetuate evil. The essence of Michael is that he retreats before all attempts to absorb him. But seriousness and responsibility are formidable anywhere, and there is only a hair's breadth between these qualities in Lucifer's hands and in Michael's. It is sometimes said that the presiding winged head above the representative of mankind in Steiner's sculpture reveals the essence of humour. There is certainly no defence better than a sense of humour against the persistence of the spiritual mandarin, who always appears to be someone else but usually turns out to have been provoked by something in ourselves. In fact there are very few who are not tempted by some insecurity to weaken someone else by being more or less consciously intimidating. It is no good quoting even Michael to the damnation of people who really still need power. We can at most deal with the aristocrat in ourselves. The Luciferic illusion needs different methods from the Ahrimanic one. Here humour, the art of pointing contrasts with love, could show how the Luciferic stance in the soul Establishment differs – so slightly but with what consequence – from the stance of Michael in the battle with illusion.

Only Michael can replace Lucifer, and so reach Ahriman with knowledge; just as only Christ can replace Ahriman and so confront Lucifer with love.

TRAFFIC AND CHARACTER

ADAM BITTLESTON

IT is a steep hill on a main road going northwards towards open moorland country, but with trees close to the road on both sides. On this October afternoon there have been heavy sudden showers of rain. The traffic is light, very mixed; local people going short distances in their cars, a school bus taking children home, a long-distance coach and a few drivers who have been at the wheel all day, some delivery vans and a few heavy lorries, one or two motor-cyclists and cyclists. There are some sharp bends on the hill.

All may pass safely; but within seconds a situation may develop which leads to a serious accident. For many years, the consequences may be deeply felt. And several people may look back with a grievous question: 'Did I cause that accident?'

In this example, it can be seen that many factors may be involved – suddenly altered visibility, the condition of the road surface, the bends, the state of tyres and brakes on the vehicles, and the experience, skill, health and mood of more than one driver. It may not be at all easy to assess blame, or even to state the primary cause of the accident.

In the statistics of accidents, relevant circumstances of many kinds necessarily disappear; some of them will have appeared on the very full report made by the police on each injury accident, some of them will not have been told or even noticed. But important decisions will be influenced by the statistics; the roads are altered and the surface improved at dangerous points, vehicles will be redesigned, and new legislation enforced. It will often be possible to say that there has been a definite reduction in accidents because of the measures taken.

And yet we all know that we should not leave the matter to Ministers of Transport, road engineers, and the manufacturers of vehicles. Everyone who walks, rides or drives on the roads, from about the age of three onwards, has to do *some* thinking about it. For the most part, we think as much as our own safety seems to demand. And yet – this is a matter on which everyone has relevant experience, and on which we can hope to draw

some reasonable impressions from the statistics without being experts. Might it not help, if more people had a balanced general picture of how accidents happen and how they can be avoided?

Almost at once however we discover that this is not so simple as it sounds. While there is a good deal of certainty about environmental factors in road safety, and about vehicles (with rather more controversy here) – there is very considerable uncertainty about the human factors. We may look first at the distribution of accidents among road users, and see how far this leads to decisive conclusions.

II

In 1965, the last year for which a full analysis had been published at the time of writing (the figures so far for 1966 and 1967 do not appear very different) there were nearly 8,000 people killed on the roads in Britain and nearly 100,000 seriously injured. We can imagine much better what this means, if we know how these figures are made up. Pedestrian deaths were 3,000, serious injuries 23,000; pedal cyclist deaths 500, serious injuries 7,000; of users of two-wheeled motor vehicles (mopeds, scooters, and motor-cyclists) about 1,200 died and 23,000 were seriously injured. The remaining 3,000 deaths and 43,000 serious injuries were among drivers and passengers of cars, public service vehicles, and commercial vehicles.

The rate of injuries to pedestrians is increasing. (They include of course people who have been not long before in buses and cars.) The most vulnerable are children, particularly about the age of six, and elderly people. Over 90 per cent of all pedestrian casualties happen in built-up areas; in about two cases out of three, the pedestrian is simply trying to cross the road, sometimes masked by a stationary vehicle, often a bus. Old people are particularly liable to be hit by motor-cycles or bicycles; children by light goods vehicles, which have to start and stop so often in streets where children play.

This makes evident the great importance of pedestrian crossings – and their right observance; and the need of playgrounds. Towns in Scotland seem to have particularly high casualty rates among children.

Bicycles are a diminishing element in British traffic, perhaps

partly because so little special provision is made for them. It is about six times as hazardous to ride a bicycle as to drive a car. Bicycle casualties show a peak at the age of fourteen, but with high rates all the way from seven to nineteen; and rise again for men over forty. Many men cycle back from work in congested traffic; winter and summer, cycling accidents reach a peak between five and six p.m. on weekdays. Three-quarters are in built-up areas; more than half through collisions with cars or light goods vehicles. Right turns at road junctions (whether light-controlled or not) present special dangers for cyclists.

Though the use of two-wheeled motor vehicles is also diminishing, in total mileage covered, they present the acutest road safety problem of all. 'Mile for mile, twenty riders of motor-cycles or scooters are killed or seriously hurt for every car driver. Mile for mile, motor-cycles or motor-scooters are involved almost four times as often as cars in accidents in which pedestrians are fatally or seriously injured.' ('Road Safety', the Ministry of Transport White Paper, 1967.) The peak age for casualties to motor-cyclists and their passengers is about eighteen, but accidents are heavy from the age of sixteen to twenty-four. (The proportion of men to women dying as motor-cyclists, including passengers, is more than 12 to 1.)

Faced with such figures, it is important to realise that each year the great majority of motor-cyclists, perhaps about nineteen out of twenty, are never involved in any injury accident at all – and may be very safe and skilful drivers. And yet, considering the 2,500 motor-cycle drivers (not passengers) *aged sixteen* killed or seriously injured in a year, if we think of them as individuals, we can well understand the Minister's decision to raise the age limit for driving most motor cycles and scooters to seventeen. 'It makes no sense to allow them to drive the most dangerous vehicles on the road before they may drive any other.' And an attempt will be made to develop a national motor-cycle training scheme for teaching learners, financed by the Government and local authorities.

The characteristic accidents for motor-cyclists are collisions with cars and light goods vehicles – but in nearly a quarter of all, no other vehicle or pedestrian is involved; there is a skid, or loss of control in other ways. The most dangerous times for them are Saturday and Sunday afternoons in summer.

In proportion to mileage, heavy goods vehicles (over $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons) appear to be the safest. Their drivers are professionals, responsible for loads of great value commercially, covering a large mileage principally on motorways and trunk roads. But when they do have accidents, these often involve three or more vehicles. Light goods vehicles have more accidents per mile than ordinary cars; they are used predominantly in built-up areas, and there is probably a less careful selection of drivers. There is often pressure to complete deliveries to many places in a limited time, under difficult traffic conditions.

The drivers of public service vehicles have been the object of a great deal of statistical study. The conditions faced by those responsible for long-distance coaches, or routes in rural areas, are radically different from those in town and city transport. The casualty figures for PSVs generally include those hurt when boarding or leaving buses, who are particularly people in late middle age. But bus drivers have other special problems; their vehicles may fit badly into narrow streets and sharp corners, and they too may be pressed to conform to a time-table.

Taking drivers of PSVs and all goods vehicles together, the casualties are highest in the 20-24 age group. It is generally agreed that for these drivers experience is the essential factor, though opinions seem to differ considerably about the length of time generally needed for a driver to achieve his best standards. In an enquiry in Northern Ireland, the bus-drivers themselves attributed their accidents mainly to worry and bad temper; they said a driver needed to be 'phlegmatic but attentive, with happy domestic circumstances and more pay'.

The remainder of the casualties – about 2,500 killed, 33,700 seriously injured – were drivers and passengers in ordinary cars and taxis; about a third of all deaths and injuries on the roads. Private cars are the most rapidly increasing element in traffic; and no-one can tell how accident figures will move as the density of traffic grows greater. More than a third of all the deaths and serious injuries to car users were to drivers and passengers between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five; once more the special danger to young people is present. In relation to deaths from all causes at this age, including illnesses, and accidents in the home and at work, road accidents generally represent about a quarter – while for those between forty-five and fifty-

four road accidents probably cause less than one-fiftieth of all deaths.

Nearly 60 per cent of car accidents occur outside built-up areas, with high rates on main roads near large towns. The drivers of cars vary immensely – far more, in many of the relevant ways, than the other road users we have thought about. They have the widest range of choice about how and when and where they will drive. Generalisations about car drivers are the least likely to be sound, and the most likely to be found offensive! But if there is to be progress in dealing with the human factor in road accidents, some have to be made.

III

Are some drivers more likely to have accidents than others, apart from considerations of age and experience? Common sense would suggest that this is so. Most of us know people whose friends and relations show reluctance to be driven by them, and who are thought of as – though seldom told that they are – dangers to others and to themselves. But over the last fifty years there has been much discussion about the idea of 'accident proneness', particularly among drivers; and it seems to have remained inconclusive, though some strong views are held. A conclusion which has had a wide influence was that of two American researchers, Tillman and Hobbs, that 'a man drives as he lives'. They related liability to accident with excess aggression in childhood, truancy and disciplinary problems, offences against the law in adult life, sexual promiscuity, and exceptional consciousness of good physique. They claimed that a far higher proportion of a group who had had four or more road accidents had had records in other ways with various social agencies than were found in a comparable group without accidents. In this country, Professor Eysenck and others have asserted that accident-prone drivers are likely to be extraverted, emotionally unstable personalities – corresponding, in their view, to the 'choleric' in the old doctrine of the temperaments. Others have been inclined to regard this whole view as 'folklore', and have denied that the evidence sustains it. Choleric temperaments were perhaps represented on both sides. The view has also been put forward that drivers have 'spells', periods during which they are more liable to accident than otherwise,

but that permanently accident prone drivers are a very small proportion or non-existent. (Cresswell and Froggatt, 1963; but it is probably important that their study was among bus-drivers.)

The Road Research Laboratory at Crowthorne, Berks, has recently been responsible for a remarkable study of driving behaviour, directed by Mr S. W. Quenault. Fifty drivers who had been convicted of careless driving not long before, and fifty drivers selected at random were accompanied over a twelve-mile course by two observers making detailed records. The observers did not know at the time to which group a particular driver belonged. The drivers were then tentatively classified in four 'sub-groups' - Safe, Injudicious, Dissociated Active, Dissociated Passive. While the numbers of the Random group in each sub-group were 36, 3, 3, and 8, in the group all of whom had been convicted of careless driving (and who had been involved in three times as many accidents as the others) the figures were 18, 6, 8, and 18. In the 'Careless' group there were thus only half the number of 'Safe' drivers found in the control group, selected at random, according to the evidence of the test drive.

In this study, 'Injudicious' meant drivers 'fully aware of the relevant presented information as they drive' but who occasionally draw wrong conclusions and make the wrong decision. 'Dissociated Active' are those 'not fully aware of, or who neglect part of the relevant information', who are unpredictable, and overtake a great deal. 'Dissociated Passive' have a similar unawareness of the information presented, but are much overtaken, and are predictable; their rigidity of behaviour makes them unable to cope with situations into which they come. All but the 'Safe' sub-group 'cause near-accidents and carry out unusual manoeuvres'.

When a large number of drivers were tested (300) the proportions were found: Safe 73 per cent, Injudicious 3 per cent, DA 11 per cent, DP 13 per cent - proportions similar to those in the original random group, though with fewer Injudicious and more Dissociated Active.

In the original study (with the two groups of fifty drivers) an important finding was that drivers appeared to remain consistent in their general driving behaviour; and that it did not appear possible to predict into which sub-group they would fall

from the 'pencil and paper' tests that were also applied. 'It is only when they get behind a steering wheel that this pattern emerges.' This may seem to contradict flatly the assertion of Tillman and Hobbs that a man drives as he lives. But it should be realised that the Crowthorne researchers had no intimate or long-term knowledge of the people concerned - they had no access, for instance, to their school records!

Nevertheless, their work has the great and rare quality of being based on detailed observation *in the car*, not on bare figures and descriptions of accidents. They saw near accidents and accidents in their genesis. Mr Quenault's description of 'dissociated' drivers seems particularly important. 'Their lack of full awareness of the situation and of the consequences of their own actions often lead them into near-accident or accident situations from which they are extricated by the skill and anticipation of other drivers. When near-accidents do occur, the dissociated driver appears to be far less emotionally affected by the event than the observers (assessed as S drivers).' The detailed results show, as marks of the dissociated driver, limited awareness of what is approaching him from right and left, and frequent failure to look in the rear mirror. 'They tend to look steadily and rigidly to the front.'

The 'dissociated active' driver conforms more to the general picture that has been developed of the 'accident-prone' driver; but many people with road experience will probably recognise the 'dissociated passive' driver just as clearly. It is perhaps surprising to read of such a high proportion of DPs; if the percentage found in the 300 is representative for drivers in general, more than one in eight are DP. Mr Quenault does not seem to suggest that these are drivers with lower annual mileages than others; in fact the C group, in which DPs form more than a third, drive as a whole twice the annual mileage of the R group.

Though the injuries may be less serious, because of the lower speed, there seems to be little doubt that the DP pattern of driving does lead to actual accidents. This is confirmed by another study carried out by the Road Research Laboratory, in which the speeds of many vehicles were observed, and their registration numbers compared with those involved in accidents. It was found that those with speeds considerably faster or

slower than that of the general stream of traffic on the road concerned were more often in accidents than those with speeds close to the average.

Crowthorne researchers should now attempt (perhaps already attempting) similar studies while sitting beside delivery van drivers, and the bravest of them on pillions. They say that if the suggested typology is substantiated in further research 'the problem of whether I, DA, and DP drivers can be retrained to become S drivers is to be investigated'.

IV

Is it possible to enrich our study of what is happening on the roads by taking into account conceptions of the human being contained in Rudolf Steiner's spiritual-scientific work? He himself said very little about the problems of road traffic directly, though these were showing themselves plainly during the later years of his life. But his account of the being of man is relevant to every human activity, though we may have to use it very tentatively at first.

Rudolf Steiner had a very positive conception of the human Ego, as Mr Harwood describes earlier in this *Golden Blade*. It is the true 'Master of the House', restoring harmony among the members of man's being. The right conscious direction of human movement comes from the Ego, the impulse towards movement from the 'astral body', the bearer of wishes and emotions, which can achieve of itself only a dreaming consciousness. The 'life-body' or 'etheral body' carries our basic temperament and habits, and is of itself asleep within us.

What we learn as adults we take up at first into the Ego and astral body, and impart by repetition to the etheral body, where it becomes an accustomed skill, carried out to a great extent unconsciously, using the physical body as the instrument. The physical body of man has a universality which makes the greatest variety of movement possible; but it is limited in ways that the astral body is not. At the behest of the astral body, the Ego constructs tools, which are extensions and specialisations of the limbs and organs of the physical body.

A vehicle of any kind – a boat, for instance – is made at first to serve the longing of the astral nature to move beyond the limits the physical body imposes. With its help, a man begins to be

able to range as widely as the birds and fishes do. But the Ego must learn to take the helm. For we are inclined to move as in dreams, or in very early childhood – regardless of what may be in the way, or of actual spatial relationships.

When we learn to ride a bicycle, or drive a car, a wonderful co-operation of our members is going on. But, as in every learning, the process is incomplete; there are failures both by the conscious and the unconscious parts of our being. We are very unwilling to let the real Ego awaken us to the full; and both children and adults are often taught in such a way that it is not difficult for them (and the teacher) to go on sleeping.

In the most varied ways, the interplay of waking, dreaming and sleeping affects our lives continually. We do not always achieve a waking awareness of each other, as free and conscious souls. Such awareness may be more present in one activity than in another – a man might be very little aware of the other people in his office, for example, but awake towards the other members of a discussion group he meets in the evening. It is at any given moment more present in one direction than in another.

As the driver of a vehicle, it is plainly easier to be awake forwards, than to the right or left, or to the rear. We may dream what is beside us, sleep what is behind. And this may be disastrous. Mr Quenault makes the interesting observation that some dissociated drivers slow down quite unnecessarily when they see approaching traffic (on its own side of the road), while a response that may be *needed*, which takes account of traffic at right angles or behind them, may be entirely lacking.

It would not conform to experience to suggest that unsatisfactory driving must be due to a general lack of awareness towards other people. A man can be, for example, an outstanding violin teacher, deeply conscious of his pupil's needs – but have difficulty in finding the right wakefulness as a driver; that wakefulness which would impress into his etheral body the right habits of response. The hindrances can surely be of many different kinds; and a man or woman who has good driving habits may under some circumstances fail badly. The more we look at the task of the driver, the more evident it becomes that a kind of continual training is called for, of a very comprehensive kind.

V

The essence of such a training has long been present in the world, and it was expressed anew not long after cars began to nose their way, cautiously at first, along the roads. It is the holy eightfold path of the Buddha, described afresh by Rudolf Steiner in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* and elsewhere – relevant indeed to *all* the ways in which the astral body needs to be brought into a renewed right balance between heaven and earth, and to all the technological developments of our time, but very immediately and evidently to the tasks of the road.

The eight requirements of the Path were related by Rudolf Steiner to the days of the week – the eighth summing up the whole. The astral body passes in the course of a week through a rhythm which can be compared – though we are only aware of it in quite a different way – with the rhythm of the Ego, between sleeping and waking, in twenty-four hours. Outwardly this is expressed in the need for change and leisure at the week-end; it was more inwardly expressed by the hallowing of Saturday, Sunday and Friday through religious traditions.

The first element of the eightfold path has to do with the development of right conceptions. They are not to be amassed in a haphazard way, but by careful attention to their significance and their truth. The pupil should try consistently to put aside any ideas that are incorrect; his ideas should help him towards an accurate and complete picture of his environment.

On the roads, this is our first need; to see and to understand what is going on. The 'relevant information' is of very varied kinds, and much of it is easily ignored, or misinterpreted. A recent enquiry, for example, produced astonishingly varied interpretations of the new road signs; and drivers sometimes succeed in going for miles, unaware and unharmed, down the wrong side of a motorway. Even for the most experienced drivers it is difficult to go on seeing everything that matters after many hours at the wheel, because of the monotony of impressions, particularly on main roads. It is important to stop, and have some opportunity for quiet observation and thought, every two or three hours on a long drive.

This first part of the path Rudolf Steiner suggested for special attention on Saturday, the ancient day of rest. The second

element has to do with right decisions. 'To come to a resolve only out of well-founded, full consideration, even in the most insignificant matter. . . . Once one has become convinced of the rightness of a resolve, it should be held to with inner perseverance.' Before any journey, before even crossing the road, a resolve has to be made; and we can try to make sure that it is truly made by the 'I', and is not only the expression of the wishes or emotions in the astral body. Every journey gives an opportunity for the fulfilment of destiny; it should not be undertaken carelessly. If we are under the impression of some great joy or sorrow it may be better not to drive ourselves; such states may not leave the astral body free enough for the work it has to do on the road, assessing speeds and relative movements in a way of which we realise only the effects. And anyone nursing anger is not in a fit state for the roads. The decision to take a journey should be made with confidence in destiny and confidence in the earth.

The next requirement is right speech. Conversation just as a means of passing the time is to be avoided; everything that is said is to be the result of careful thought. Neither too few nor too many words are to be used. This part of the Path, which sounds so simple, has a most far-reaching significance; and we are given ample opportunity on the roads to experience its difficulty. To begin with, there is a kind of conversation special to vehicles – through horns, bells, and signals. Horns are fairly often used as an abusive comment on someone else's behaviour. But signals are a most necessary means of communication. A large group of English long-distance coach-drivers put failure to make the right signals at the right time first among the dangerous faults they met on the road. Within the car it is easy to talk too much and in the wrong way; to involve the driver too intensely or emotionally in argument, for instance. Such things may seem trivial or exaggerated – and statistics say nothing about arguments in cars! But they are not really so unimportant; and in the encounters on the road when speech becomes possible or necessary, perhaps after an accident or when a dispute arises – much indeed may depend on right speech.

The fourth part is concerned with external action – not the resolve which goes before it, but the carrying out of what we do in its effects for others. 'The pupil seeks to order his actions in

such a way that they are in accord with the actions of his fellow men, and with all that is going on in his environment. He avoids actions which are disturbing for others, or contradict what is happening around him. . . . This is the task allotted by Rudolf Steiner to Tuesday, the day of Mars. By this control of actions, the aggressive impulse in man is restrained and transformed. This is fundamental for good driving; a car should never be used as a weapon, or to impose one's will. And yet passivity can also often be wrong. The three critical decisions – to enter a major road, to turn right at a junction, to draw out to overtake – constantly require a balance between action and waiting, in which seconds make the difference between right and wrong. A driver may indeed be able to rely on habit; but there must be many who would do well to give their habits a questioning look.

The fifth requirement is perhaps the most exacting of all from the driver's point of view. 'The pupil seeks to live in accordance with nature and with the spirit. He does not hurry over anything, but is not sluggish. Excessive activity and idleness are for him equally remote. He regards life as a means to work, and arranges what he does accordingly. He takes care about health, habits and so on in such a way that a harmonious life is the consequence.'

In a recent study on driving and health, two anthroposophical doctors, Dr Bühler and Dr Peipers, indicate that hurry is a cardinal fault of the driver, both from the point of view of safety, and of health in general. For the circulation, cornering fast is directly harmful, as are abrupt changes of speed. But in general, to travel a great deal by car has a bad effect on the heart and circulation, as Rudolf Steiner pointed out in 1920, because of the very nature of the activity (and inactivities) involved. Dr Bühler and Dr Peipers show how the system of nerves and senses is overburdened by quickly changing impressions, while the activity of the limbs is inadequate; between them the rhythmic system suffers pressures and abrupt strains, which it is not given means to absorb.

The driver has a many-sided task. It will ease the strain on his body, and will also be safest, if his speed conforms with that of the traffic stream and the character of the road, neither considerably faster or slower. But he can be careful too with

food and drink. There is no real doubt now that even a small dose of alcohol diminishes a driver's skill and judgment. (The accident peaks on Friday and Saturday evenings surely speak with painful clarity.) But Dr Bühler and Dr Peipers say that there is evidence that wrong eating too has considerable effects, both on the driver's ability and on his health. Comparatively little, at shorter intervals, is very much better than a heavy meal, with excessive sugar and starch. Real coffee, in moderation, and fruit are recommended! (It seems likely that professional drivers are more sensible than many car drivers about meals.)

Women drivers may have special problems, in taking physiological conditions into account. A study by a London hospital of women drivers involved in road accidents, reported in the A.A. magazine 'Drive' (Summer 1967), showed that 52 per cent of accidents occurred during menstruation – double the proportion normally expected. This may be related to the unexpected recent finding by the Road Research Laboratory that women in proportion to their mileage have over 60% more accidents than men; a finding which should be taken with caution, because the mileage driven by women is very difficult to compute with accuracy – while it is certain that women are far more law-abiding on the roads, and have far fewer convictions for careless driving, than men. The figures may also be affected by women driving proportionately more than men in the neighbourhood of towns, or at dangerous hours. It may also be that women are more drastically affected by emotional states, which are known to influence male drivers.

What a man does with 'his own body' is never really just his private affair. To wear a safety belt is very far from selfish. (Rudolf Steiner spoke of the deep unconscious presumption underlying the use, by a human being, of the expression 'my body'.) When a man goes out on the roads, and particularly if he takes charge of a vehicle, his health is quite plainly a public concern. Obviously a driver cannot always be in perfect health; but there is the obligation to consider most seriously the effect of any special condition. The duty not to drive after consuming alcohol should be regarded as absolute. Looked at from the spiritual-scientific point of view, alcohol builds up a kind of unreal, artificial Ego. But there are many borderline physiologi-

cal conditions; and it may sometimes be enough to resolve on a more leisurely timing, including rest intervals, when the body is not at its best. With increasing age it may be important to avoid some traffic conditions, and certainly to shorten the mileage to be covered in a day. (A doctor advising the A.A. suggests a self-imposed limit of 250 miles in a day for all those who do not habitually drive long distances; for many over fifty this may be too much.)

This fifth exercise of the eightfold path is related to Wednesday, the day of Mercury, planet of healing. The sixth is connected with Thursday, the day of Jupiter; it is concerned with the endeavour to grow in capacity and wisdom – and to make all the foregoing exercises part of one's habit of life. In so far as this comes about, the human being becomes aware that he possesses other organs of perception than the familiar senses, organs which have to be developed slowly and patiently through his own efforts. They can indeed be related to his physical body, but are themselves organs of his supersensory being. Particularly important organs of this kind are in the neighbourhood of the physical brow, throat and heart. To follow the eightfold path helps in particular to develop the second of these.

Machinery in general has the peculiar subconscious effect on man, that it persuades him of the non-existence of his supersensory being, his soul and spirit. It even distorts his own image of his physical being, for it can never be as universal as this. However useful and well designed a machine may be, it makes a continual rediscovery of our humanity necessary. Unconsciously this is recognised in the effort to use cars to get away from cars, to stream or sea or mountain. It is even more effective if we can find and use meditations which express in their formulation the wholeness of man – for example the seven Rhythms from Rudolf Steiner's Foundation Meditation, to which Dr Zeylmans van Emmichoven has provided an exceedingly helpful introduction. But at this point *all* of Rudolf Steiner's work is relevant; all of it had the purpose of raising man as far above Nature into a knowledge of spiritual reality beyond the earth, as in technical knowledge and practice he necessarily descends below the level of Nature – as Rudolf Steiner described in one of the very last of his writings.

The seventh exercise is 'the endeavour to learn as much as

possible from life'; it is summed up as 'right memory'. No day passes without bringing some experience which can help us for the rest of our lives; but we may not be attentive enough to notice it. This applies to driving, as it does to all real learning. We can look back on the events of the road and draw new conclusions from them. And this can be extended into another dimension of being.

Remembering over a few years, we recall those who have died. They are still near us; and they are far more aware than we are of the potentialities of the immediate future. Souls after death have indeed grown away from the world of *things*; but they have a much richer understanding for movement and relationship than we have. They feel, as Rudolf Steiner often described, the great cloud of possibilities surrounding us, what *could* happen. And often they seek to guide earthly men away from possible events which would hinder them in the fulfilment of the tasks for which they have entered bodily existence.

Can injury through accident ever be a *positive* event in destiny? It is as with illness; what every effort must be made to avoid, can be given a truly positive sense when it comes. Looking back at an accident that happened years ago, it can still be an acute grief; but much good may have been achieved through the effort to overcome its consequences. If through it a young human being died, he may have deepened the lives of those who knew him, and guided them into courses they would not have otherwise taken, from which many have received benefit. The whole group of people with whom he was concerned may have altered and grown in character. And perhaps on the one who was most responsible for the accident it has had the effect of awakening the most scrupulous care for others.

Finally, the eighth exercise of the path, which in a sense includes all the others, calls for an inner life that leads to genuine self-knowledge. This can seldom be achieved directly, simply by looking at ourselves; objective standards, and a lively understanding of our environment, are needed first. From these, we can glance back towards ourselves. However S we may feel ourselves to be, we may recall faintly I, DA, or DP traits in ourselves as we reflect on the fact that there are such drivers. And self-knowledge as a driver is worth much, both in itself, and in relation to self-knowledge in general.

VI

It could easily be objected, 'Most people learn to drive well enough without troubling about any eightfold path'. But in reality the Path is not just something a few people read about; that it was once taught by the Buddha is part of the destiny of all mankind, and the longing to follow it is present in the depths of countless human souls. The events of life constantly challenge us to bring its requirements to our consciousness.

In the years of adolescence, up to about the age of twenty-eight, the astral body in man goes through a kind of awakening and liberation, gradually finding an enduring relationship to the ethereal and physical on the one hand, and the Ego on the other. The astral body brings with it from before birth a wealth of impulses transcending earthly space and time; among them, the longing for peace and for compassion inspired by the Buddha. If the soul finds too little comprehension for this longing in its environment, it can suffer from a restlessness and dissatisfaction that may become tragic.

During this period, many young people are overburdened with a mass of technical knowledge, great in its exactitude and its complexity, but little related to the innermost in the human being. Great enthusiasm has rightly been felt for technical development; but it can also bring about a weariness of mind, like that after too long a journey. We need a further powerful and lasting enthusiasm which will unite technical knowledge and practice with understanding for the human spirit, and for the universality of his soul.

NOTES. Accident statistics, etc., are obtainable from Research on Road Safety, HMSO 1963; 'Road Accidents 1965', HMSO 1967; 'Road Safety, a Fresh Approach', HMSO 1967; The Registrar General's Quarterly Return for England and Wales.

Discussion of Accident Causation and Prevention: *Accident Prevention and Life Saving*, ed. John H. Hunt, Edinburgh, 1965; *Criminal on the Road*, T. C. Willett, London 1964; *Fact and Fiction in Psychology*, Chapter 6, H. J. Eysenck, London 1965; *The Causation of Bus-Driver Accidents*, Cresswell and Froggatt, London 1963; *Driver Behaviour - Safe and Unsafe Drivers*, S. W. Quenault, Road Research Laboratory, Crowthorne, 1967.

Road Safety: Articles by John Davy, *The Observer Week-end Review*, 10th April and 17th April 1966.

Considerations from Anthroposophical Spiritual Science:

Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment by Rudolf Steiner (London, several editions). *The Gospel of St Luke*, Rudolf Steiner, London 1946. *Toi et ta Voiture*, W. Bühler and B. Peipers, 'Triades', Paris, Spring 1967; originally published in German at Unterlen-genhardt, Schwarzwald.

BOOK REVIEWS

Nutrition, by Rudolf Hauschka (Stuart and Watkins, 55s.)

IN these days when cans, polythene-packs, deep-freeze and the 'oven-ready chicken' dominate our food markets, a book of this kind seems to come from another world – as indeed it does in many respects. But even in this supermarket world there are small reassuring signs that the book will not speak to an entirely ignorant or indifferent audience. The steady increase in the lifeless processes of food-standardisation has been paralleled (the dates run very close) by an equally steady, if less conspicuous increase in the demand for 'real' food. Even a word such as 'compost', which was practically unknown twenty-five years ago except among a few pioneer groups, is now in everyday use.

The aim and character of the book cannot be better indicated than in the author's own words. It is an attempt to present 'a new view of the physiology of digestion, and of the ponderable and imponderable qualities of foodstuffs'. It specifically avoids advocating some particular diet or some particular set of nutritional practices. In too many of these, true insight has been sacrificed to some kind of fad or theory. The quantitative outlook, too, with its emphasis on calories, a 'balanced diet' and so on, is replaced here by an imaginative study of man's whole relation, visible and invisible, to the animal, plant and mineral, and an analysis of food-substances in their endlessly subtle, qualitative aspects.

Our sense-perceptions, says the author, digest the outer world and transform it into concepts; our bodies digest the world through nutrition, and transform the substance. But the processes are not isolated; they interact. In this context all food, its nature, the manner of its production, the way it is cooked, and even the cooking vessels are found to be a good deal more important than the food-chemist allows. Not many of us can cook in a gold pan on wood fires, of course, alluring as the idea is; but at least it is usually possible to avoid aluminium and electricity, the opposite poles.

Herbs and spices, those subtle enliveners of food, are dealt with in relation to appetite and temperaments. They are probably insufficiently appreciated in the kitchens of this country, as compared with the Mediterranean and the East, with their bouillabaisse and curry. The average English restaurant, indeed, is apt to transfer responsibility from the kitchen to the dining-room by putting a whole battery of flavouring substances on the table – salt, mustard,

pepper, Worcester sauce, tomato ketchup. . . . A Continental cook sometimes regards it as a slur on his skill if a client even asks for salt.

Separate chapters deal with protein, fats, carbohydrate, bread and other important food-groups. In the chapter on carbohydrates the author gives figures for sugar-consumption (England and America are at the top of the list) and relates it to 'strongly developed individualism and intellectuality'. One would perhaps have expected to find here some comment on the incidence of dental caries in different national groups. The inhabitants of Tristan da Cunha, for instance, apparently had little or none until they made contact with the high carbohydrate diets of 'advanced' countries.

Vitamins, those sacred cows of the modern dietician, now increasingly distributed in bottles, take on a new and more living pattern in Dr Hauschka's analysis, which relates them to warmth, order, light and form, to the parts of the plant which reflect these, and to the particular physical functions they support. 'The chemical structure of a vitamin is of far less account than the energy that forms and uses the substance.'

It is not possible in a brief review to deal with all the ground covered by this book. Those who have read its predecessor, *The Nature of Substance* (Stuart and Watkins, 1966) will know something of the author's enlivening approach to subjects which have too long been ossified by quantitative science. This book continues the exploration.

D. E. E.

Animals in Splendour, by E. L. Grant Watson (Stuart and Watkins, 30s.)

NOWADAYS most of us seldom encounter animals under conditions where they can give us a glimpse of their 'splendour' – their archetypal character and power. Various countries have national parks and reserves where wild animals can be studied at close range, but a lion bored with motor-cars is not quite the same creature as a lion in its primal habitat. The persons seeing most of the true nature of animals have often been the hunters who go out to kill them; and it is true, if paradoxical, that hunters and shooters often have genuine affection and understanding for the beasts they pursue. However, it is the imaginative insight of the peacefully observing naturalist, typified by Mr Grant Watson, that we must invoke and try to emulate if the relationship of man to the animal creation is ever to be freed from the various perversions which afflict it today.

One of these, of course, is factory farming. Here the battery hen, prevented from running and scratching and pecking here and there,

is no longer a hen; the same applies to veal calves reared on slatted floors in narrow pens. Factory farming turns animals into food-producing machines and must surely tend also to have a dehumanising effect on the operators.

Hence there is a special need today for reminders of what animals are really like when given scope to be themselves, and one merit of Grant Watson's approach is that he shows us the most familiar animals in a revealingly unfamiliar light. He brings out their distinctive characteristics and life-styles, and goes on to tell us what they have meant for man in myths and dreams and fables down the ages. Many animal myths, though they may often have suffered from all sorts of distortions and accretions in the course of transmission, are not arbitrary fancies; they derive from an early time when something of the archetypal nature of an animal could disclose itself to dream-like inner vision; as it did in a much later epoch to William Blake:

Tyger, tyger, burning bright
In the forests of the night. . .

Grant Watson's book is, perhaps unavoidably, a rather discursive medley of observations, comments and historical lore, but there is a great deal to be learnt from it about living creatures, ranging from horses, dogs and cats to crabs, earthworms and snails, and how to see in them some trace at least of their archetypal origins.

The volume includes twenty-one pen-and-wash drawings by Sven Berlin; these have an attractive vigour and freedom of handling, but to me they often seem to be in a rather different key from that of the text.

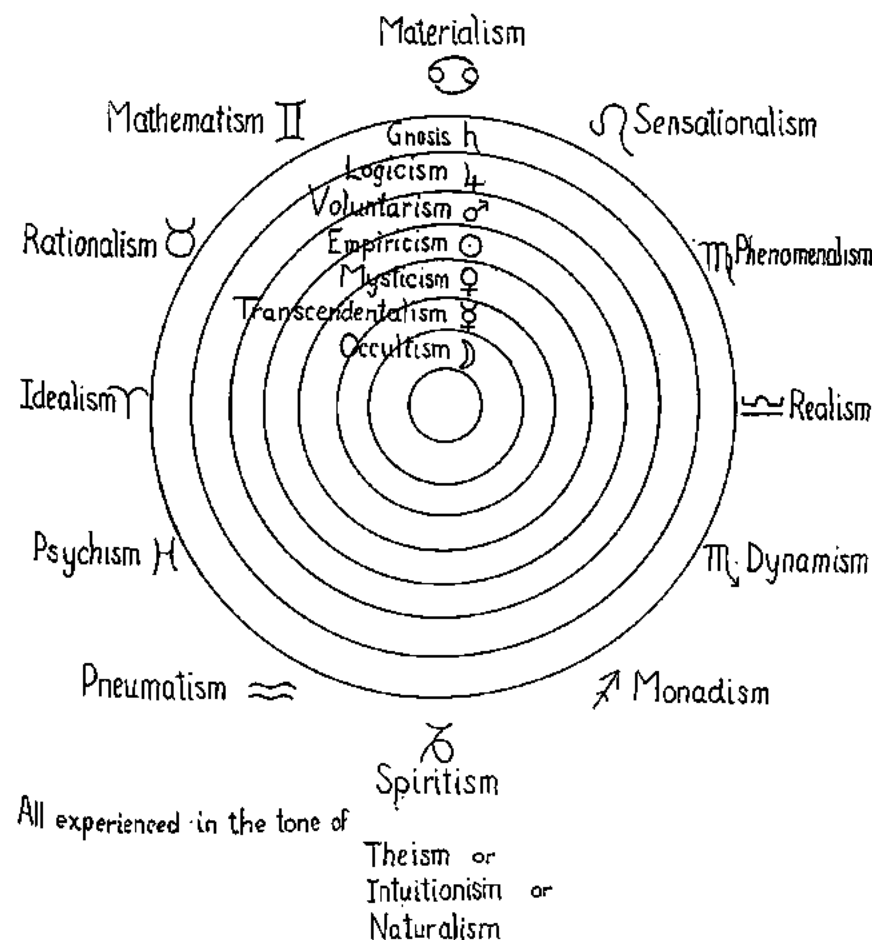
C. D.

Human and Cosmic Thought. Four lectures by Rudolf Steiner given in Berlin from 20th-23rd January 1914. (Rudolf Steiner Press, 12s. 6d.)

THESE lectures on philosophy – in particular upon the modes of man's outlook upon the universe – are reviewed now because of their publication in a translation revised by Charles Davy.

They are prefaced by the customary warning that a proper appreciation of them depends on the reader's having studied (as the original audiences had done) the leading principles of Anthroposophy: but this book could well be put into the hands of anyone interested in the relationship between different philosophical outlooks.

An academic philosopher (or, let us say, a brand-new graduate in



philosophy) might perhaps find these lectures elementary: they are as easy to read as they must have been to hear. They are so smoothly interwoven, they demand so little grounding in philosophy, they explain every term that is used: they could, indeed, be recommended to any beginner, to a person who wants to know what philosophy is about. Yet their analytical power, their range and depth are nothing less than staggering. Let the reader look at the diagram reproduced here. It shows a circle of twelve world-outlooks, each of which can be approached in seven moods. Every one of the combinations given thereby may be experienced in three tones. Moreover, a man can combine in his philosophy more than one such approach. The circular, zodiacal scheme is highly systematic; out-

looks shown diametrically opposite are, as theories, thus opposed; adjacent outlooks approach one another.

All this is encompassed within the first three lectures; the third also, in one paragraph, indicates a form of meditative exercise upon the seven moods. Thus the first three lectures – it is astounding when one considers what was achieved in so short a time – supply a key to human thought. The fourth lecture (and here, indeed, anthroposophical preparation is essential) relates human thought to the thinking of the Hierarchies. Just as the brain is, for Steiner's understanding, not the generator of thoughts but the physical mirror which enables us to be conscious of what *we*, as spiritual beings, think – so the thinking of mankind mirrors the mighty thoughts of the Spiritual Hierarchies.

The four lectures are rich in examples. It is stressed that the horoscopic scheme is not bound to the 'nativity'. It is shown how Fichte changed his 'constellation'; in these terms, too, can be expressed those profound inner changes which may sometimes (as for Nietzsche) be more than a man can endure.

G. R.

Marie Steiner von Sivers, Fellow Worker with Rudolf Steiner, by Marie Savitch, translated by Juliet Compton-Burnett. (Rudolf Steiner Press, 21s.)

MANY readers of *The Golden Blade* will have seen the very full and helpful review of this book in *Anthroposophical Quarterly*, Spring 1967, by Mr J. H. Jeffree. It is a centenary tribute to one of Rudolf Steiner's closest fellow-workers, who brought to the anthroposophical movement quite exceptional qualities of character and artistic ability.

When we read Rudolf Steiner's own life story, which he did not live to complete, we can see how from childhood onwards he deeply enjoyed the friendship of men and women with strongly marked characters and opinions. He was very far from valuing only those whose attitude to life resembled his own; in Vienna he moved in circles strongly opposed to one another, free-thinking and traditionally religious, liberally optimistic and profoundly pessimistic, conventional and eccentric. He sought out indeed those who had ideas, and held to them with earnestness and sincerity; but they could be ideas of every colouring. Though he himself was open and loved discussion, it is evident that his friends often understood him very little; this did not spoil his joy in them.

From the turn of the century, when Rudolf Steiner began to work as an independent spiritual teacher, the situation changed. A great

part of his life was necessarily spent with those who wanted him as a teacher, and who were eager to accept what he could tell about the spiritual worlds and their relation to Nature and human history. But from the very first he gave his teaching a form which would encourage those people who were prepared to work at it actively and go on using their own judgment to the full. Within the movement that was now developing round him, he sought for people of strong character – whether they approved of each other or not. He sought more than anything to avoid a situation in which he would appear as the only creative personality in the movement. And when we look back, perhaps with the help of Dr Wachsmuth's book on the last twenty-five years of Rudolf Steiner's life, we may begin to see how far-reaching he succeeded.

Marie von Sivers, who was to become his wife, was one of the strongest of the personalities who were able to bring all their capacities, all the insight and powers of judgment that they could themselves develop, into the work inaugurated by Rudolf Steiner. Her own personal background was as different from his as could be imagined. Frau Marie Savitch, herself an outstanding personality in the development of eurhythm, has given us glimpses of Marie von Sivers' childhood and youth in Russia, which make one wish to learn more. But the greater part of the book is concerned with the years from 1900 to his death in 1925, when she worked closely with Rudolf Steiner. It would probably be difficult to understand these chapters without knowing a good deal, from his own work and from other sources, of what happened in these years. With such a background, it can be deeply moving to feel through the words of this book the boundless labour and devotion given by Marie von Sivers both to the practical affairs of the movement and to the beginnings of artistic work connected with Rudolf Steiner's teaching, particularly in the realm of drama and eurhythm.

Frau Savitch is able to show that the beginnings of the work inaugurated in this way were most intimately related to the ancient Mysteries, and in particular to those of Eleusis. There are most valuable and far-reaching discussions in this book of how Eleusis and Ephesus were connected with one another, and with elements in the work of Rudolf Steiner; and she gives some details about the fifth Mystery Play which Rudolf Steiner intended to write, part of which would have been concerned with Delphi. Her book is thus not simply a record of things past, but often points to great tasks which are to be fulfilled.

A. B.

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