



1970

# The Golden Blade

# The Golden Blade

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Edited by Adam Bittleston

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U.S.A. Distributors: The Anthroposophic Press, 211 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

Douglas Jenwin

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editor's particular thanks are due to Miss Bosset, Librarian at Rudolf Steiner House, London, for patient help in finding an appropriate lecture by Rudolf Steiner for this issue.

The cover design is by Mr John Wilkes.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

WITH the great unspoken question 'Do I exist?' of which Mr Owen Barfield writes in his article, 'The Disappearing Trick', much else in this issue is concerned. Though it may not be apparent, this question has been sharpened by the events of 1969. Many people have spoken or written about the contrast between man's technical ability and his social failures. But it has not been seen clearly enough that the kind of thinking of which man is today such a master, and which has enabled him to step on the moon, is essentially concerned with *space*, and with time only as it is expressed in spâial movement; while the real understanding of human individuality has to leave space altogether, and is concerned with time in a different way. A widespread, not fully conscious feeling that this problem exists may well be at work in the profoundly ambivalent attitude of humanity to its latest achievement. (These notes have to be written before the November Apollo mission.)

In ordinary life, we understand other people and ourselves through the sequence of experience in time. A more far-reaching understanding depends upon finding our way back, at first in a very general and tentative way, into the kind of existence which preceded for each of us the taking on of an earthly body. Behind the world-wide student unrest, which Mlle Courtais describes as it affects France, an intense dissatisfaction with knowledge limited to spatial conceptions (even to a great extent in historical studies) is at work. For many young people, the only experience that does something to re-unite them with their pre-natal existence is found through music.

Again and again between 1900 and his death in 1925 Rudolf Steiner gave descriptions, made possible by his clear and disciplined initiate vision, of the experience which the human soul and spirit pass through between death and a new birth. He showed how difficult it is to describe this experience in human language; it could only be done by means of comparisons which are always in some way inadequate. But one of the best comparisons, which he uses in the lecture on 'The

Ear' here printed and elsewhere, is with the experience of music.

\* \* \*

The great achievements of medicine in our century are also based upon a spatial thinking. Indeed it would seem absurd to most people today for them to be based on anything else, for the physical body is incontestably a spatial thing. And it is taken for granted that illnesses are essentially mechanical failures, though in a machine even more complicated than man constructs himself. If 'psychological factors' are thought of only in terms of behaviour, as Mr John Davy describes, these can be seen as spatial too.

But where we get to know any particular human life at all closely, neither illnesses, nor peculiarities of behaviour, appear just as failures in the efficiency of a system. They are intimately concerned with the innermost being, the spaceless reality, which we are beginning to understand. If we know someone who suffers from a disability, it does not seem just an external or accidental fact about him; how the disability came about, how in practice he deals with it, how far he overcomes the limitations it imposes, what changes it brings in his whole bearing towards life – all these things appear as essential tokens of his individuality.

In the treatment of an illness or disability, such considerations can easily be ignored, both by the doctor and by the patient himself. All attention may be concentrated on getting the body back into good working order as quickly as possible. And very much, that is of immense value in human life, is done in this way. And yet there is always a certain incompleteness about it, which sometimes comes to be felt by the patient, and sometimes by the physician.

The art of healing inaugurated by Rudolf Steiner with Dr Ita Wegman is concerned with man in his entirety – looking back into the existence before birth, and looking onwards into the life after death. It seeks to understand an illness as having its place in what we may call the eternal biography of an individual, and also in the history of mankind. Through such an understanding not only will the doctor know better what he is doing, but the patient too can find a more far-reaching sense

that what he may have to endure has a meaning, both for others and for himself.

For fifty years now, as Dr Boie points out in this issue, much patient work has been devoted to putting Rudolf Steiner's indications about the treatment of cancer into practice. Many who turn to his article will do so with the urgent, and entirely justified question 'How far is this work succeeding?' And they may grow impatient with all he has to say about the place of mistletoe in the history of the earth and about the myth of Baldur. As the end of his article shows, those who use the mistletoe therapy are deeply concerned to express their results in a form which can interest researchers and practitioners in general. But in writing for general readers, or for students of anthroposophy who are not doctors, it would be onesided to be concerned only with measurable results. Though cancer as a disease appears to go far back into the past, it is in several ways a particularly characteristic disease of our time. There is much in technological civilisation which is demonstrably carcinogenic. And a complete therapy will aim at widening the consciousness of our civilisation so that it can include in wakeful awareness what was once expressed in the significant dreams handed down as mythology.

\* \* \*

It was during the surgical treatment of an illness that the young Heinz Müller experienced the backward vision through his life which aroused in him questions, for which he could find answers only from Rudolf Steiner. A number of instances of such backward vision have been recorded, particularly by people in danger of death by drowning or by a fall. One of the best is perhaps that by Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort:

Thus travelling backwards, every past incident of my life seemed to glance across my recollection in retrograde succession; Not in mere outline, but the picture filled up with every minute and collateral feature. . . . The whole period of my existence seemed to be placed before me in a sort of panoramic review, and each act of it seemed to be accompanied by a consciousness of right or wrong, or by some reflection on its cause or its consequences; indeed, many trifling events which had been long forgotten then crowded into my imagination, and with the character of recent familiarity.

Heinz Müller was born on Christmas Day 1899, in Thürin-

gia, and spent much of his boyhood with a grandfather who was a head forester, living close to the ruins of the Cistercian monastery, Paulinzella. His meeting with Rudolf Steiner in 1921 was decisive for his life. Rudolf Steiner recommended him as a teacher for the newly founded Waldorf School in Wandsbek, Hamburg; and he worked there from 1923 until the school was closed by the Nazi government in 1939, and took a leading part in its re-establishment after the war. In the winter of 1956-7 he was found to be suffering from cancer, and it was judged that he could only live for about six months. He contributed to his own therapy by concentrated work as a painter, particularly of landscapes. He was able to return fully to his work as a teacher until 1964, often with the liveliest activity in all the undertakings of the school. He died on 26th November 1968; his memoirs of Rudolf Steiner were written during his last illness, and not completed. Four parts were published in the *Mitteilungen aus der Anthroposophischen Arbeit in Deutschland*, and were very warmly received. In *The Golden Blade* we can only bring a considerably shortened version; and it is hard to reproduce in English the vividness of his style. What can be particularly impressive when we study his memories is the interweaving of times; we see in practice how events from the far past play in to the present, and encounter here the needs of the future.

\* \* \*

In the first three months of 1969 three outstanding human beings, who had in common their earnest pupilship in the work of Rudolf Steiner, and a strong concern for the needs of young people, passed through the gates of death: Maria Roeschl-Lehrs on 15th January, Alfred Heidenreich on 11th March, and George Brice on 24th March. (Deeply characteristic and lastingly valuable contributions by each of them can be found in earlier volumes of *The Golden Blade*.)

Maria Roeschl was born on 8th December 1890, in Lancut, a little town which is now in Poland and then belonged to Austria-Hungary. Her father was an Austrian civil servant and her mother belonged to the Polish country aristocracy. In her childhood she felt very strongly that in each human being there is a 'kernel', something quite different from their external

appearance, of widely varying strength and significance. She was much occupied too with riddles about sleep and dreams. Her dreams were often significant and very moving, and she had no-one to ask about them. When her family had moved to Vienna, and she attended the university there, nothing of real use in this direction could be found from academic sources. Nor was she satisfied with what Freud could say about dreams. But she found for herself in Goethe a harmonious relationship between the creative dream-element and conscious understanding. She took this as subject for her thesis for her doctorate. For five years she taught classics and German in a girls' school. But her Goethe studies led her to Rudolf Steiner, and to the recently founded Waldorf School in Stuttgart. She became one of the first teachers to be entrusted by Rudolf Steiner with the task of religious instruction there and held with Herbert Hahn the first school service for older children, the 'Offering Service', on Palm Sunday 1923.

Early in 1924, at the age of thirty-three, she was called by Rudolf Steiner to lead the newly-founded Youth Section of the School of Spiritual Science at Dornach. This was a position of critical importance, for between 1921 and 1923 considerable tension had developed between the younger and older generations of anthroposophists. Rudolf Steiner tried to awaken among the older people greater understanding for the directness and depth of earnestness with which the younger generation were looking for esoteric truths, though their outer bearing and way of speech was so different. He hoped to develop, with the active support of Dr Roeschl, a 'wisdom for youth' which would help to meet this longing. But he made clear that he believed that the whole of the esoteric content of the anthroposophical movement was in its essence and intention the right inspiration for young people in their active concern for the future of civilisation.

From the beginning of 1924 Rudolf Steiner had shown signs of dangerously depleted physical strength, but his work continued in abundance up to the end of September; then, until his death on 30th March 1925, illness confined him to his room in the Schreinerei, the one-storey wooden building close to the foundations of the burnt-out Goetheanum. His illness and death made a deep incision in many people's lives; for Maria

Roeschl they were particularly tragic, because she had begun to work closely with him only so short a time before. Very little of the work of the Youth Section had yet developed. All that she now endeavoured to bring about was endangered by the great tensions and uncertainties affecting the Anthroposophical Society as a whole. Calling many able people to her aid, she sought to put before young people spiritual truths in an atmosphere of clarity and tranquillity. But after seven years, she found that the circumstances made the continuation of this work impossible.

For the rest of her long life, she sought in many different environments to continue, consistently and without compromise, the work of esoteric leadership with which Rudolf Steiner and Dr Ita Wegman had entrusted her. Shortly before the Second World War, she married Dr Ernst Lehrs; they had in common much joyful and sorrowful experience, and great unity of aim. At the outbreak of war they were interned as aliens in separate camps, but after their release they could work together in Aberdeen, and later in England again. Their final place of work together was Eckwälden in South Germany, where they could help and inspire many groups of young people training for curative education, and hold a great sequence of Easter conferences for a wider and increasing circle.

\* \* \*

Alfred Heidenreich was born on 14th January 1898 in Regensburg. As a boy, he felt very strongly his allegiance to something new that was coming in the world, in great independence of old traditions – the facts of which he later became conscious, that the Michael Age had begun, and Kali Yuga, the great period of spiritual darkness, had ended. He became an active member of the Youth Movement, devoted to energetic wandering in the countryside and to music. From this, he was plunged into the grimmest experiences of war, as soldier and prisoner. Perhaps from this time, perhaps from even earlier, he carried a mantle of gravity and responsibility, though his youthful joy and energy were never quenched. After the war he quickly found his way to Rudolf Steiner, recognising in him the great teacher of a new age of freedom and spiritual light. (See *The Golden Blade*, 1959.) Almost at once he wrote a book



Alfred Heidenreich, with his son Michael Heidenreich, and a grand-daughter



George Brice

about Rudolf Steiner's significance for young people. It was evident that in one or another way he would serve the anthroposophical movement with all his power.

At this time he was by no means a theologian, nor was he religious or devout in any ordinary sense. But he found his place quite naturally among the group of people who saw that Rudolf Steiner could help them to inaugurate a Christian religious movement which really belonged to an age of freedom and light. From the first moment this was for Alfred Heidenreich something to be done, which would demand all his energy and enthusiasm, all his capacity for dealing with earthly problems and human needs. Not yet twenty-five, he became one of the leaders of the Christian Community at its foundation in September 1922, and was one of the seven who celebrated the Act of Consecration within the first Goetheanum, three months later to be destroyed by fire.

A conversation with Rudolf Steiner drew his attention to the spiritual needs of the West. It was not personal inclination, but the recognition of a historic necessity, which led him to bring the Christian Community first to England and Scotland and later to the United States and Canada, and to contribute very actively to its development in South Africa, where he died at the beginning of a visit. No adequate description of his work in the English-speaking world, from 1929 to 1969, can be given here. But it may be appropriate to emphasise here that one of his deepest and most urgent concerns was always the development of an atmosphere and practice of quite free mutual co-operation and understanding between the anthroposophical movement and the Christian Community.

Alfred Heidenreich was married to one of the woman founder priests of the Christian Community, Marta Heimeran, and their son Michael, born in 1932, is a priest in Berlin.

\* \* \*

George Brice was born on 17th October 1916. His father, who was English, he never knew. Soon after the end of the War his mother, who was of German origin, took him and his elder brother to Berlin. They were uncontrollable children and it was not a happy home. He went to a distinguished independent school, and there at one point he was faced with the alternative:

either to be expelled, or to take responsibility for looking after a very intelligent, abnormally difficult boy. He chose responsibility.

When he was seventeen, the school was taken over by the Nazis, and as a British subject he was told to leave Germany at once. He found his way to Fried Geuter and Clent Grove, and to the book which was to give him decisive illumination: Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. When in later years one heard him lecture on this book, it was evident how it opened up for him great vistas for the future of mankind – and also gave him hope that he could learn to master the intensely divergent elements in his own being. Through Fried Geuter, and the work of Rudolf Steiner, he found his vocation as a curative teacher.

His military service in the Second World War led him into a Japanese prison camp. He suffered from malaria, and was at one point left for dead. His experience outside his body can be compared with that of Heinz Müller<sup>1</sup>:

I do not know how long I had been lying there when sounds emerged again, the frantic high-pitched chirping of the cicadas, the deep raucous call of the bull-frogs. I heard it all without really listening, and looking down I saw that we were no longer in a heap but lying in a row, three bodies on each side of me. Vultures were circling, they looked like some eerie committee of professors, in dark frock coats, hands clasped on their backs, pronouncing our future. It was so funny, I wanted to laugh. Only then I realized that I could not, for my lips were cracked and I could not even swallow the wholesome, cool monsoon-water collected in my open mouth. Time and space slipped . . . when I awoke again, I was free, I was a vulture, sitting in the tree, looking down upon these strange bodies, taking it all in in an objective, interested sort of way. The three on either side seemed dead, but the one in the middle, I believe was not and then I knew I had a great love for this middle soldier, not that he looked any more appetising than the others!

I seemed incapable of making mental efforts, but could only watch and I was not at all surprised at being able to see in the dark. All night I was in my tree and I am ashamed to say that I was happy and carefree and loved every minute of it. I felt detached from everything. It was so light that now I not only saw very clearly that middle soldier but his life unfolded before me, long before he came to Malaya, as a very small boy; and the complex pattern of his being became clear. The next day I was still in my tree but a great commotion was going on below which at first annoyed and disturbed me. Figures appeared, noises increased and

<sup>1</sup> From notes written by him during the last year of his life. Printed by kind permission of Mrs H. M. Brice, to whom much of this information is due.

presently rough hands grabbed my arms and legs. As they did so, I was slowly pulled down from my tree and a closer and closer identification began with these arms and legs and the whole wretched body. A needle was produced and the moment it shot into my arm, I came crashing down to earth.

I heard them discussing where to bury the bodies and that I would not last long either but it all seemed far away though suddenly I had something urgent to say. I became so agitated that one moistened my lips with water and bent his head towards me. I whispered 'Send someone up this tree, at the very top, a special plant, growing in a hole in the fork . . . it is small and green and has red berries. I need it.'

They laughed but seeing my persistence, someone went up. Suddenly there was a shout and the plant was thrown down. 'How on earth did you know it grew up there in a hollow?' 'I know,' I whispered, 'and the little hollow was full of water, wasn't it?' The orderly stared at me, 'Have you got X-ray eyes or something?' 'Yes', I smiled happily, 'my vulture has and she told me.'

It is notable how much in this account resembles some of the out-of-the-body experiences collected and edited by Celia Green<sup>1</sup> – particularly in its general emotional detachment and even joyfulness. But it is exceptional, like that of Heinz Müller, and some others very near death, in passing over into a vision of his life as a whole; and very remarkable indeed in the degree of self-knowledge – 'the complex pattern of his being became clear'.

He knew that he would return to England, and that much work was waiting for him. This was at first, for ten years, at Elmfield School, the Rudolf Steiner school at Stourbridge, Worcestershire. In 1956 came the decisive deed of his life – the foundation of Potterspury Lodge, a residential school for maladjusted children, particularly boys. Here he was able to establish something, through his enthusiasm, determination, and devotion to detail (in which he resembled Alfred Heidenreich), which is often sought in our time in principle, but very difficult to realise in practice – a genuine therapeutic community. That he had once been himself an uncontrollable boy helped him very much. He and some of those near him became deeply concerned with the story of Parsifal – who had been violent and thoughtless, but was found worthy of the greatest spiritual responsibilities.

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> *Out-of-the-Body Experiences* (Oxford Institute of Psychophysical Research, 1968).

Such lives can only be understood if we recognise that these individualities brought with them, from beyond the world of space, the intention to fulfil the tasks to which they found their way so quickly and so decisively. With many lives this is not so evident; and yet careful observation will lead us again and again to that 'kernel' which Maria Roeschl saw in human beings when she was a child, and which in its strength works *against* the influences of heredity and environment, in the way which Mr John Davy describes here.

If this is not well enough understood, by a sufficient number, humanity will get into greater and greater difficulties with the problem of birth. It is estimated that today in several 'developed' countries abortions approach or exceed the number of live births. We understand very little the consequences of this, for the lives of all concerned; with all the frankness of our time, there is often silence about the most important things. And who would have words for them?

But the very first step is to develop reverence again before the mysteries of birth and death. These were summed up by Rudolf Steiner at Easter 1924, the last Easter of his life, in monumental words<sup>1</sup> – after he had written and spoken about these mysteries from countless different aspects for twenty-five years:

Stand in the porch at Man's life-entrance,  
Read thereon the World's writ sentence.

Dwell in the soul of Man within,  
Feel, in its pulsing, Worlds begin.

Think upon Man's earthly ending,  
Find therein the Spirit's wending.

Steh' vor des Menschen Lebensforte:  
Schau' an ihrer Stirne Weltenworte.

Leb' in des Menschen Seeleninnern:  
Fuhl' in seinem Kreise Weltbeginnen.

Denk' an des Menschen Erdenende:  
Find' bei ihm die Geisteswende.

<sup>1</sup> English version by George and Mary Adams.

## THE EAR

*A lecture given by RUDOLF STEINER in Stuttgart,  
9th December, 1922<sup>1</sup>*

ONCE before I spoke to you of certain spiritual facts concerning the relation of man to the supersensible worlds – or, as I might equally well express it, the relation of man's earthly life to his life between death and a new birth. For seen from a human point of view man's life between birth and death – interwoven as it is with the physical world of sense – may be held in the main to represent this physical world itself. While the life of man between death and a new birth, when he is altogether interwoven within the supersensible or spiritual world, represents – seen from a human standpoint once more – the supersensible world as such.

Today we will continue this line of thought for certain other facts and conclusions of great importance to human life.

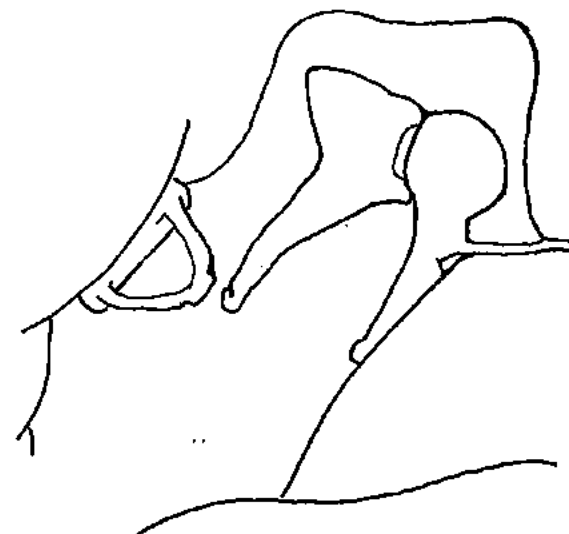
Through anthroposophical Spiritual Science we become aware, above all, that man as he stands before himself in the physical world represents – within this physical world – a true image of the Supersensible. Consider on the other hand a mineral object. We cannot say that, such as it is, it is an immediate image of the Supersensible. As to what the mineral nature is, you may read of this in my *Theosophy*. Of man, however, we must say that in many respects he cannot be understood at all on the basis of what we see around us in the world of the physical senses. On this basis we can understand why, for example, salt assumes a cubical form. True, these things are not yet entirely clear to science today, but from what is already clear it can be said that a crystal of common salt is intelligible on the foundation of what can be ascertained directly in the realm of the sense-perceptible. A human eye or ear on the other hand are not intelligible on the basis of what the physical senses can perceive. Nor can they arise within this domain. The form of the eye or of the ear – both the inward form and the outer

<sup>1</sup> From notes unrevised by the lecturer. Published by kind permission of the *Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung*, Dornach, Switzerland, and in agreement with the Rudolf Steiner Press.

configuration – this is a thing that man brings with him as a plan or tendency through birth. Nor does he even receive it through the forces that work, say, in the process of fertilisation or in the body of the mother.

True, it is customary to force all these things which are not understood under the general title of heredity; but in so doing we do but give ourselves up to an illusion. For the truth is that the inner form of the eye or of the ear is already planned and laid out as it were in advance. It is built up in the Spirit, in the pre-earthly life of man, in communion with higher spiritual Beings, with the sublime Beings of the Hierarchies. To a very large extent, man between death and a new birth builds up his own physical body in a spirit-form – as it were a spiritual seed or germ. This Spirit seed, having contracted it sufficiently (if we may use this image), he then sends down into the line of physical inheritance. The Spiritual is thus filled with physical, sense-perceptible material, and so becomes the physical seed, perceptible within the world of sense. But the whole form – the inner form for instance of an eye, or of an ear – is formed and moulded by the work man does between death and a new birth in co-operation with supersensible, spiritual Beings. Therefore, we may say: Observe a human eye! We cannot assert that it is intelligible like the salt crystal, on the basis of what we see around us with our senses; nor can we say this of the human ear. Rather must we say: To understand a human eye or human ear we must have recourse to those Mysteries which are only to be discovered in the supersensible world. We must realise that a human ear, for example, is formed and created out of the supersensible world; and only after it has thus been formed can it undertake its task as a sense-organ – the task of physically hearing the sounds and notes within the atmosphere, within the sphere of Earth. In these respects, we may truly say, man is an image of processes and realities of Being in the spiritual worlds.

Let us consider such a thing in detail. Observe the inner formation of the human ear. Passing inward through the auditory canal you come to the so-called tympanum or drum. Behind this you find a number of minute bones, or ossicles. External science calls them 'hammer', 'anvil' and 'stirrup' (*malleus*, *incus*, *stapes*). Behind these again, you come to the inner ear, of the configuration of which I shall not speak in



*The ossicles of the ear, enlarged*

detail. The names of these minute ossicles immediately behind the drum – the names, that is to say, which external science gives them – already show that this science is quite unaware of what they really are. For this is how it appears when illuminated with anthroposophical spiritual science. Passing now from within outward, that which adjoins the inward portion of the inner ear, and which science calls the *stapes* or *stirrup*, appears in the light of spiritual science as a metamorphosis of a human thigh-bone with its attachment to the hip. And the little bone which science calls the *incus* or *anvil*, appears as a transformed knee-cap. Finally, that which passes from the *incus* to the *tympanum* or drum appears as a metamorphosis of the lower part of the leg including the foot. But the 'foot' in this case rests not on the earthly ground but on the drum of the ear. Within your ear you actually have a human member – a transformed metamorphosed limb. You might also describe it thus: First, the upper arm (only that in the arm the 'knee-cap' is undeveloped, that is to say there is no anvil), and then the lower arm – the other ossicle which rests upon the drum. Just as you touch and feel the ground with your feet, so do you touch and feel the drum of the ear with the foot of this little ossicle. Only the foot with which you walk about is coarsely formed. Coarsely you

hammer

feel the ground with the sole of your foot, while with this hand or foot which is there within your ear you constantly touch and feel the delicate vibration of the drum.

Let us now go farther back, within the ear. We come to the so-called *cochlea* or 'snail-shell'. It is filled with a watery fluid, which is necessary for the act of hearing. What the 'foot' touches and feels upon the drum has to be transmitted back to this spiral *cochlea*, situated within the cavity of the ear. And now once more: Above the thigh we have the inner organs, the abdominal organs. The *cochlea* within the ear is none other than a beautiful, elaborate metamorphosis of these inner organs. And so you can imagine, there inside the ear there lies a human being, whose head is immersed in your own brain. Indeed, we bear within us a whole number of 'human beings', more or less metamorphosed or transformed, and this is one of them.

What does all this signify? If you study the origin and growth of man not only with the crude science of the senses; if you are aware that this human embryo as it develops in the mother's womb is the image of what went before it in the pre-earthly life; then you will also realise the following. In the first stages of development in embryonic life, it is above all the head that is planned and formed. The other organs are comparatively small appendages. Now – if it only depended on the inner potentialities inherent in the germ, within the mother's womb – these appendages, these little stumps which afterwards become the legs and feet, could equally become a kind of ear. They actually have the inner tendency, the potentiality to become an ear. That is to say, man might grow in such a way as to have an ear not only here, and here, but an ear downward too. I admit, this is a strange saying. Nevertheless, it is the truth. Man might become an ear downward too. Why does he not? Because at a certain stage of embryonic development he already comes into the domain of the earthly force of gravity. Gravity which causes the stone to fall to Earth – gravity, implying weight – weighs upon that which tends to become the ear, transforms it and re-shapes it. And so it becomes the lower man in his entirety. Under the influence of earthly gravity, the 'ear' which tends to grow downward is changed into the lower man. Why then does not the ear itself change in this way? Why do not its

ossicles change into fine small legs right and left? For the simple reason that through the whole position of the human embryo in the mother body, the ear is protected from entering into the domain of gravity, as happens with the little embryonic stumps that afterwards become the legs. The embryonic ear does not enter the domain of gravity. Hence it preserves the plan and tendency which it received in the spiritual world in the pre-earthly life. It is in fact a pure image of the spiritual worlds. Now what is there in the spiritual worlds? I have often spoken of it. The music of the spheres is a reality. As soon as we come into the spiritual world which lies beyond the soul-world, we are in a world which lives altogether in sound and song, in melody and harmony, and harmonies of spoken sound. Out of these inner relationships of sound the human ear is formed. Hence we may say that in our ear we have an actual recollection of our spiritual and pre-earthly existence. In our lower human organisation we have forgotten the pre-earthly life; we have adapted our organism to the earthly force of gravity and to all that comes from the principle of weight. Thus if we rightly understand how the form of man comes into being, we can always tell, of any system of organs, how its configuration reveals either its adaptation to the Earth or its continued adaptation to the pre-earthly life.

And now remember: even after we are born, we still continue what was planned and begun in the embryonic life. To walk upright, to enter fully into the forces of gravity, is a thing we only learn to do after our birth. Only then do we learn to orientate ourselves into the three dimensions of space. But the ear tears itself free from the three dimensions of space and preserves its membership of the spiritual world. We human beings are altogether formed in this way. Partly we are a living monument to what we did in unison with higher Beings between death and a new birth; while on the other hand we also bear witness to the fact that we have incorporated ourselves into this Earth existence, wherein the forces of gravity and weight hold sway.

These transformations, however, not only take their course in the direction I have described, but in the opposite direction too. With your legs you walk about on Earth. And – if you will forgive my saying so – you either walk to good deeds or to bad;

to better or to worse. Now as to the movements of your legs, on Earth, to begin with, it is no doubt a matter of indifference whether you walk to good deeds or to bad. But true as it is that the lower man is metamorphosed from the plan of an ear into that form wherewith he stands upon the Earth, it is also true that the moral effects which are brought about by your walking – whether you go out to do good deeds or bad – are all transformed after you pass through the gate of Death – not immediately but after a certain time – transformed into the sounds as of a heavenly speech and music.

Assume for instance that a man went out to do an evil deed. On Earth we can at most describe and register precisely how his legs were moving. But the evil deed clings to the movements of the legs when he passes through the gate of Death. Then, when he has laid aside his physical body and his etheric body, all that lay inherent in these movements of the legs is transformed into a harsh discord in the spiritual world. And the whole of the lower man is now transformed again into a head-organisation. The way you move here upon Earth – taking always the moral colouring, the moral quality of it – this is transformed into a head-system after your death. And with these ears you hear how you behaved morally down in this earthly world. Your morality becomes a beautiful, your immorality an ugly music. And the harmonious and dissonant sounds become the Words, uttered as it were by the Hierarchies, the judges of your deeds, whose Words you hear.

Thus you can see in the form of man himself, how the transformation from the Spiritual world into the world of sense, and from this world back again into the Spiritual, takes place by metamorphosis and metamorphosis again. Your head-system is exhausted in the present earthly incarnation. Here the head-system lives and thrives, in order to perceive the Spiritual within the realms of sense. But after death the head falls away. And the rest of the human being, with the exception of the head, is transformed again after death into a head-organisation in the Spirit, to become an actual head once more in the next earthly life. Thus the fact of repeated earthly lives is expressed in the very form and figure of man. No-one understands the human head, who does not regard it as the transformation of a human body – the body of the last earthly life.

No-one understands the present body who does not see in it the germ of a head, for the next earthly life. To understand man fully, all that we perceive about him with our senses needs to be penetrated with ideas about the Supersensible.

We may adduce many another concrete fact in this direction. Last time I spoke to you here, I told you how man between death and a new birth experiences a condition wherein he becomes altogether one in his inner being with the Beings of the Hierarchies. He actually forgets himself, he is the Hierarchies himself. Nor would he ever become aware of himself unless he were able, in turn, to extinguish this feeling of the Hierarchies within him. Then, as it were, he goes out of himself, but it is just in so doing that he finds himself. Here upon Earth we find ourselves by looking away from the outer world and concentrating upon our inner being. Between death and a new birth we find ourselves by looking away from what is within us – that is to say, from the Hierarchies within us. In this way we become aware of ourselves.

Now the forces which remain to us from this 'becoming aware of ourselves' are none other than the forces of Memory, while the forces which remain to us from our union with the other Beings – the Beings of the Hierarchies – are the moral forces of Love whereby we on Earth expand our being in love to other beings. Thus in the faculty of Love here upon Earth we have an echo of the living in unison with the Hierarchies. While in Memory we have an echo of that other condition which was ours between death and a new birth, wherein we freed ourselves from the Hierarchies and found ourselves. As I said last time, this is not unlike the breathing process. We have to breathe in to fill ourselves with life. Then in a manner of speaking we breathe out the air of death. For life is impossible in the air which we breathe out. Likewise we breathe, as it were, in the Spirit, in the world between death and a new birth. We unite ourselves with the Beings of the Hierarchies and go out of them again. Here on this Earth we have a kind of echo of that heavenly breathing. In that we can walk here upon Earth, we adapt ourselves to earthly gravity. It is the principle of weight. I spoke in this connection of a transformed, metamorphosed ear. In like manner – if only we are able to look at it in the right way – we can still feel that we possess in our apparatus of

speech and song a metamorphosis of what was planned in the spiritual World through which we passed in the pre-earthly life. It is only here on Earth that we adapt our organs of speech to human speech. In plan and tendency, between death and a new birth we receive unto ourselves the Logos – the Cosmic Word – the Cosmic speech. Out of this Cosmic speech our whole organ of speech and song is formed and created to begin with. Just as we transform this 'ear' that reaches downward, into the apparatus of walking and orientation in space, so do we transform the organ of speech and song. But in this case the metamorphosis is not so far-reaching. In the former case there remains behind, in the ear itself, a faithful image of what was formed in the pre-earthly life in spiritual worlds. With the organ of speech there is an intermediate position.

Not until we are here on Earth do we learn to speak. Yet this, in a deeper sense, is an illusion. In truth it is the Cosmic speech which forms our larynx and all our organs of speech and song. We only forget the Cosmic Logos, when we turn toward the Earth and pass through embryonic life. And we refresh once more what was impressed in our unconscious being, when in our early childhood we acquire human speech.

Nevertheless, in this human speech the earthly element is clearly perceptible, side by side with that which is formed out of the Spiritual. We could pronounce no consonants if we could not adapt ourselves to the things of the outer world. In the consonants we always have after-formations, imitations of what the outer world presents to us. Anyone who has a feeling for it will feel the one consonant reminiscent of something hard and angular, the other reminiscent of the quality of velvet. In the consonant we adapt ourselves to the forms and shapes of the outer world. In the vowels we give out our own inner being. He who says *Ah*, knows that in the *Ah* he expresses something that lives in his inner soul as a feeling of wonder or astonishment. Likewise in the *O* there is an inner quality. Every vowel expresses some element of the inner life.

In time to come there will be an interesting branch of knowledge, permeated with spiritual science. It will be found that in languages in which the consonants predominate, human beings can far less be called to account morally, because they are much less responsible for their deeds, than in those languages where

vowels predominate. For the vowels are an echo of our living together with the spiritual Hierarchies. This is a thing that we bring with us, we carry it down on to the Earth and it remains with us; it is our own revelation. While in the consonants we adapt ourselves to the outer world. The world of consonants is earthly; and if we could imagine a language containing only consonants, an initiate would say of such a language: 'It is for the earthly realm; and if you would possess the Heavenly, you must add the vowels to it. But have a care! for you will then become responsible to the Divine. You may not treat it so profanely then, as you can treat the consonants.'

The old Hebrews took this into account. Only the consonants are written out fully, the vowels only indicated. In our language in effect, the Heavenly and Earthly sound together. Here once again we see how we have in the middle man something that is ordered as it were in two directions, towards the Heavenly and towards the Earthly. The head is altogether related to the heavenly. The other pole of man is related to the earthly, but strives towards the Heavenly – strives in such a way that it becomes the Heavenly, when man has passed through the gate of death. The middle man, to whom the breathing belongs – and with the breathing the activity of speech and song – brings the Heavenly and the Earthly together. Hence the middle man contains above all the artistic faculty of man, the artistic tendency, which is always to unite the Heavenly with the Earthly.

And so we may say: Regard the growing human being. He is born without orientation in the outer world. He cannot yet walk or stand. True, he has already the potentiality to enter into the ordering of earthly gravity. For he received this tendency already in the embryonic life before his birth, when – apart from the head – gravity took hold of him. An organ like the human eye or ear has in fact been wrested away from the incursions of gravity. The act of orientation in space now finds expression in the little child's learning to walk and to stand upright. We only finish learning this after our birth. For we are born not yet orientated for walking. If we retained the orientation we then have, we should at most perhaps be able to sleep on Earth. For in effect, the little bone in the ear, which represents the foot, is horizontally directed. We might at most

be able to sleep, but we could not walk. Similar things would need to be said about the human eye.

This, then, is one thing that we finish learning here on Earth. We adapt to the earthly forces of gravity what we acquired in the pre-earthly life. And when we learn to speak and sing, it is a second act of adaptation: we adapt ourselves to our environment in the surrounding sphere, in the horizon of the Earth. Lastly we learn to think. For we are born in truth unorientated for walking and standing, and we are born speechless, and even thoughtless. It cannot be said that the little baby is already able to think. These three things, we finish learning on the Earth. Nevertheless they are metamorphoses of other faculties which we possessed in the pre-earthly life. For each one of the three is a living monument of what was planned in us in a spiritual form in our pre-earthly life.

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Our Memory here on the Earth is the echo of our being-within-ourselves in the Spiritual World. And Love, in all its forms, is the echo of our being-poured-out into the world of the Hierarchies. We have, as we have seen, our bodily faculties: Walking, Speaking, Singing and Thinking (for it is only prejudice to imagine that thought on the earth is a spiritual faculty; our earthly thinking is essentially bound to the physical body, just as our walking is) – these outstanding faculties of the body are transformations, metamorphoses, of the spiritual. Then, in the soul, we have the outstanding faculties of soul: Memory and Love, once more as transformations out of the spiritual. And what have we spiritually on the Earth? It is our faculty of sense-perception. Our seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and so forth: all this is sense-perception; and the organs for this sense-perception, situated as they are at the outer periphery of our organism, are formed and built out of the highest Spiritual regions. Out of the harmony of the Spheres the ear is formed, so much so that it remains protected from the force of gravity. The whole way the ear is placed into this fluid, has the purpose of protecting it from the force of gravity. The ear is situated in the fluid in such a way that gravity cannot come near it. Truly the ear is no earthly citizen; in all its

organisation it is a citizen of the Spiritual world. Likewise the eye, and the other sense-organs too. Observe then the body in its Walking, Speaking, Singing, Thinking: we have the transformations of the spiritual from the pre-earthly life. Lastly the senses: they are the transformation of the highest Spiritual from the pre-earthly life.

Here it is that we with our anthroposophical spiritual science take our start on the one hand from Goetheanism, from what was already known to Goethe. We, of course, have to go farther, in a way entirely consistent with Goethe. I have often quoted Goethe's saying that 'the eye is formed in the Light and for the Light'. Yes, my dear friends, but not in the light or for the light that we see. Consider a human being, a human countenance: the high forehead, the prominent nose, the eyes, the physiognomy. We add to it the living gesture. If we merely registered the spatial forms by some kind of apparatus, we should still have the forms. But when we see a human being, we are not content merely to photograph the spatial forms as with an outward apparatus. We look through the spatial movement of the gestures to the soul that lies behind. Likewise the sunlight: it penetrates towards us. There is the outer sun, the sunlight comes to us. That is only the 'front' of it; behind it is the 'other side' of the sunlight – the soul, the Spirit of the sunlight, and in this soul and Spirit we ourselves indwell between death and a new birth. There the Light is something altogether different. When you speak of the 'look' of a man, you mean the life of soul that comes out to meet you through his eyes; you really mean what lies behind the eye, within the soul. And if I now speak of the Spiritual in the light, I too mean what lies 'behind', within the sun. That is the Spirit, the soul of the light. The finished eye sees the 'front' of the light, the physical aspect; but the eye itself was formed by the soul and Spirit of the light, by that which lies 'behind'. Thus having understood Goethe's saying, we should put it thus: 'The eye which sees the light is formed by the soul and Spirit of the light, ere ever it assumes physical existence here on Earth.'

In the whole human being we see transformed spiritual being, which is to be transformed back again. At death you give your physical sense-organs to the Earth, but that which is living in the physical sense-organs lights up between death and a new

birth, and becomes your inner being-together, your communion with the spiritual Being of the Hierarchies. Now we understand how the earthly world of sound is the physical reflection of the heavenly harmony of the Spheres, and how man is a product not of these earthly forces but of heavenly forces, who places himself into the midst of the earthly. Moreover, we see *how* he places himself into the midst of the earthly. He would become an ear downward; and if he remained in this state he certainly would not walk, but would assume another kind of movement; for he would have to move on the waves of cosmic Harmonies, even as the tiny image, the little bone in the ear, moves on the waves of the drum. With the ear we learn to hear; with the larynx and other organs that lie towards and within the mouth itself, we learn to speak and sing. You hear some word, for instance *Baum* or *Tree*. You yourself can speak the word *Tree*. In your ear, in organs formed and modelled after heavenly activities, as I described just now, there lives what you express in the simple word *Tree*. Again, you yourself can say the word. What does it signify that you can say the word *Tree*? By the larynx, by the organs of the mouth, etc., the earthly air is brought into such formations that the word *Tree* is expressed. There in reality you have a second ear, over against your hearing. And there is yet a third, which is only insufficiently perceived. When you hear the word *Tree*, you yourself with your etheric body – not with your physical but with your etheric body – speak the word *Tree* very quietly to yourself; and through the so-called Eustachian tube, which passes from the mouth into the ear, the word *Tree* sounds forth ethereally, going out to meet the word that comes to you from without; and the two meet, and thus you understand the word. Otherwise you would only hear it and it would be nothing in particular. You understand it by saying back through the Eustachian tube what comes towards you from outside. In that the vibrations from outside meet the vibrations from within, and interpenetrate, the inner man understands what comes to him from without.

You see how wonderfully all things work and weave into one another in the human organism. But that is not all; another thing too is connected with it. Suppose it is your intention to learn about the human being, the organisation of his ear, his eye, his nose and so forth. Good and well! You say to yourself:

science has made magnificent advances, and these advances of science – though they are a little expensive nowadays – still, you can buy them if you can obtain the necessary number of marks.<sup>1</sup> You buy a text-book of anatomy or physiology according as you want to learn about the forms or the functions. You go to a University and listen to what is said there about the eye or ear; or you read it for yourself. But I think your heart will still be left cold. Let outer physical science describe the ear to you; your heart is left cold, it is not really interested. The thing is objective enough in that sense! But if I describe it to you as I have done just now, if I show how your understanding of the word *Tree* comes about; and how the ear is an after-image of Heavenly activities: I should like to know the soul whose life of feeling would not be stirred by this, who would not feel the wonder of it, who would not really *feel* with such a description. True, the description has been given imperfectly today; it could be given more perfectly. Then it would appear still more strongly. But in very truth, one would have to be inwardly dried up if at such a description one did not feel wonder and reverence for the Universe and for the way in which Man himself is placed out of the spiritual world into the physical.

Such is the quality of anthroposophical Spiritual Science. It describes things no less objectively than ordinary science; for nothing at all subjective is mingled with it, when I describe how the ear is formed and shaped out of the Heavenly spheres. And yet the heart, the life of feeling is immediately called into play. The second member of the human life of soul, intimately connected as it is with the wholeness of our humanity, is called into play. Whatever the head acquires through such a science, the heart is immediately taken hold of by it. Thus, anthroposophical science goes to the heart of man. It is not a science of the head, it is a science that goes straight to the heart. It fills not only the head, it fills and fulfils the human being of the blood, the circulation, the heart.

Or again, take in real earnest what I said just now. When we move our legs . . . well, you can study the mechanism of the movements in the ordinary way. Take one of these text-books of Physiology; let the mechanism of the movements of the legs be explained to you. One thing will certainly not be kindled in

<sup>1</sup> Through the inflation of the mark.

you – the feeling of responsibility. But when you discover that the good or evil purpose to which your legs are moving rings out towards you after death from the Divine Worlds as harmony or dissonance; that the Divine Words of Judgment on all your actions sound towards you; the moment you discover this, your science is accompanied by a feeling of responsibility, and this will then accompany also the actions of your Will. Not only our life of Feeling but our life of Will is called into play by what we learn – to begin with, for our heads – just as objectively as in outer science. Yet it strikes down into the man of Feeling and into the man of Will. Anthroposophical science speaks to the whole man. Increasingly in modern time we have come to regard that alone as science which speaks only to the head; but speaking only to the head, it leaves the Feeling cold and does not in any way call forth the Will. This is the critical point at which we stand. It follows that the knowledge of supersensible worlds must be attained by the whole man. Already when we arise to Imaginative cognition we must come to it by inner activity. Ordinary learning is acquired in certain circles (which are indeed well suited to this purpose) – it is acquired by ‘swotting’. Acquired thus, it is incorporated in the memory. But let us suppose that by such exercises as are described in ‘Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment’, you reach Imaginative cognition. Or suppose you are so constituted that the world of spiritual concepts is already given to you as a native talent and predisposition of your life, as I described it in my book on ‘Goethe’s World-conception’. (For already then you are in the process of etheric cognition which is at the same time living inner experience.) Then you cannot give yourself thus passively to the world. Spiritual science cannot be ‘swotted’. That, maybe, is a bad joke, but after all, it is they who are only used to ‘swotting’ who chiefly look down on spiritual science. Spiritual science, as you are well aware, must be acquired with inner activity. We ourselves in our inner life must do something for it, we must be inwardly alert and quick. Even then, it will always happen that what we attain at first in spiritual Imagination is quickly lost. It is fleeting, it disappears quickly. It is not easily incorporated in our memory. After three days all that we have attained in this region – that is to say, only by the ordinary effort to bring it to Imagination – is certain to have disappeared.

It is for the same reason that the memory in the etheric body after death disappears after three days. For it is the same activity after death, when we remember through the etheric body for about three days. The period varies; you can read about this in my ‘Occult Science’, but we remember for approximately three days – that is to say, so long as we possess the etheric body. In the same manner he who has reached some discovery by etheric cognition knows that it will have flown away after three days, if he does not make every effort to bring it down into the ordinary concepts.

Formerly I always had recourse to the method of putting down at once, in writing or in little drawings, all that I attained in this way. For the head is called into play. It is not a question of mediumistic writing, nor does one write it down in order afterwards to read it. Indeed in my present way of life that would be immensely difficult. Recently when I was in Berlin I saw again what quantities of notebooks have accumulated there. If I wanted to read anything of it, I should not have it handy when I was in Stuttgart or in Dornach. No, it is not a question of reading it afterwards; the point is only to be engaged in this activity, which is an activity of the head. For then we unite the Imaginative thinking with the ordinary thinking. Then we can remember it, give lectures on it. If we did not make such efforts we could at most talk about it on the very next day. Afterwards it would have disappeared, just as the panorama of our life disappears three days after our death.

You see, therefore, that Imaginative thinking is already related to the whole human being. The whole human being must be living in Imaginative Knowledge. With the higher forms of Knowledge it is still more so. Therefore you need not wonder if the appeal of such knowledge is to the whole man. Then too we feel there is infinitely more in the world than is perceptible to the outer senses. And above all, we feel how it is possible to live in a world in which Space no longer has any meaning. Musical experience is already a foretaste, if I may so describe it, of the Non-spatial. For the spatial is outside of us; it is outwardly existent. But in the inner experience which is realised through music, the spatial element scarcely plays a part. There is at most an echo of it. And in Imaginative cognition, gradually, the spatial ceases altogether. All things become temporal. The

temporal signifies the same for the Imaginative realm as the spatial element for the physical. Moreover, this will lead us to yet another thing, namely, that the element of time is really permanent; it is a thing that remains. He who arises to Imaginative knowledge gradually learns to perceive at every point of his past Earth-existence (and this is only the beginning). He may be quite an old man; he now becomes eighteen years old again. He perceives his youth as vividly as he perceived it when he was eighteen years old. Suppose for instance that when you were eighteen years old you lost someone who was very dear to you. Think how vivid the experience was at that time. Think how faint it is in your memory after thirty years. There need not even be a lapse of thirty years; it very soon grows faint, even with those who are most rich in feeling; and in outer earthly life it must be so. But though in the subsequent 'present' it fades away, it nevertheless remains, as an essential part of the human being; and we can actually transplant ourselves into it again. Indeed, after our death we are thus transplanted. Then we experience the same thing again with the same intensity. Whatever a man has gone through belongs to him. It remains; it is only for his perception, for his vision, that it is past. Hence, too, it has its real significance.

If you were born at the age of seven – if you lived till your seventh year in some other state of existence, say as an embryo – if you were only born at the age of seven, yet so as to receive your second teeth at once, having had the first already in the former state; then you could never become a religious man or woman. For the predisposition to a religious nature could not work on into an earthly life which had begun in that way. All the religious tendency which you possess – you bear it within you because the first seven years of your life are present in you. You do not perceive them as a living present; nevertheless they are there in you as such. In the first seven years of life we are absolutely devoted to the outer world; truly that is a religious feeling. Only we afterwards transfer it to another realm. In our first seven years we have an impulse of imitation for all things that surround us. Afterwards we have the same sense of devotion to the things of soul and spirit.

And if we were born in the fourteenth year of our life – born in the state of puberty – we should never become moral men and

women. For the moral qualities must be acquired by the inner development of the rhythmic life between the seventh and the fourteenth year. Hence we can have so great an influence on the moral education of man, in the first or elementary period of school life.

All this we afterwards bear within us. Indeed we constantly bear everything within us. If you cut your toe, it is far removed from your head, but you still experience through the head the pain you feel there. If today you feel religious, there is active within you what you experienced in soul – only then it was in respect to the outer world – until your seventh year, until the change of teeth. Just as you experience the pain in the toe through the activity of your head, so what you experienced before your seventh year is still active in your fortieth year; it is still there.

There is an important consequence of this. Many people say, Anthroposophical spiritual science is all very well; it teaches us about the spiritual worlds. But why need we know all these things about the experiences between death and a new birth? When we die we shall go into those worlds in any case, we shall discover it all in good time. Why need we make an effort between birth and death? We shall go there, presumably, whatever happens.

It is not really so. For the life of time is a reality. As the spatial is a reality here in the physical, so is the temporal – indeed, even the super-temporal – a reality in the spiritual world. Here on Earth the child-like man is still within you in your later life. When you pass through the gate of death the whole of time is within you in a single moment. It belongs to you, it is part and parcel of you. As a man of the world of space you might say: What need have I of an eye? The light is there around me in any case. The eye is only there to see the light, and I have the light around me anyhow. It would be the same, in another realm, to say 'Why do we need a Spiritual Science here on Earth? When we enter the realm of Spirits the spiritual light will be around us anyhow.' It is no wiser than to say, 'The light is there in any case. Why should I need an eye?' For what a man learns through Anthroposophical spiritual science is not lost to him in the spiritual world after death. It is the eye through which he then perceives the

spiritual light. And if on Earth – this applies to the present stage of human evolution – he evolves no spiritual science, he has no eye through which he can see the spiritual world, and he is as if he were dazzled by what he experiences.

In ancient times people still had an instinctive clairvoyance as a late flower of their pre-earthly life. But this is past, it has died away. The old instinctive clairvoyance is no longer there. In the intervening stage of human evolution men have had to acquire the feeling of inner freedom. They have now entered once more upon the stage where they need an eye for the spiritual world into which they will enter after death. This eye they will not have if they do not acquire it here on Earth. As the physical eye must be acquired in the pre-earthly life, so must the eye, for the perception of the spiritual world, be acquired here on earth through spiritual science, active spiritual knowledge. I do not mean through clairvoyance – that is an individual affair – but through the understanding, with healthy intelligence, of what is discovered by clairvoyant research. It is simply untrue to say that one must see into the spiritual world oneself in order to believe what the clairvoyants see. It is not so. Use your healthy human understanding, and you will see that the ear is in truth an organ of Heaven. Such a fact can only be found by clairvoyant research. Once found it can be seen and recognised. We need only be prepared to think the thing out, and feel it through and through. It is this recognition by healthy human understanding, of what is given out of the spiritual world – it is not the clairvoyance, but the activity of knowledge – which provides us with spiritual eyes after death. The clairvoyant has to acquire this spiritual eye just the same as other men. For what we gain by Imaginative Cognition, what we perceive in seership, falls away and vanishes after a few days. It only does not do so if we bring it down to the standpoint of ordinary understanding, and in that case we are obliged to understand it in the very same way in which it is understood by those to whom we communicate it. In effect, clairvoyance as such is not the essential task of man on earth. Clairvoyance must only be there in order that the supersensible truths may be found. But the task of man on earth is to understand the supersensible truths with ordinary, healthy human understanding.

This is exceedingly important. Yet this is the very thing which many people – including some of the finer spirits – at the present day will not admit. A little while ago, in Berlin, I had been explaining this point in a public lecture. Someone then described it as a special sin to say that the truth of Spiritual Science was to be seen with healthy human understanding. For he declared, quite dogmatically, that the intellect if healthy sees nothing spiritual; and, conversely, an intellect that sees spiritual things cannot be said to be healthy. This objection was actually made. Such a thing is characteristic, for what it amounts to in the long run is that these people are saying to themselves, 'Anyone who asserts anything spiritual has a diseased mind.' No further wisdom beyond this is required! But such wisdom, unhappily, is widespread nowadays. You see from this how true it is – what I have always said – that the time has come again when mankind absolutely needs to receive the spiritual, to incarnate the spiritual, and live with it. Hence, my dear friends, we should not only acquire anthroposophical spiritual science theoretically. In all of us who acquire spiritual science, the consciousness should live, that we are the kernel of a humanity which will grow and grow, until it comes about once more that only he who is conscious of his connection with the spiritual is seen as having found his full humanity. Then there will come over mankind a powerful feeling, a feeling that it is above all important to put into effect in education, in teaching. Ordinary head-knowledge is morally neutral. But we find the spiritual sphere, as soon as we reach up to it, permeated everywhere by morality. You need only remember what I said: It is in being together with the higher Hierarchies that we develop Love. Morality on Earth is only an image of the experience in heavenly spheres. And how do we experience that which we call the Good? We experience it thus: Man is in truth not only a physical but a spiritual being. And if he truly lives his way into the spiritual world, he learns to receive – with the Spirit – the Good into himself.

That, too, is the essential thought of the Philosophy of Freedom, – of Spiritual Activity. Man learns to receive, with the Spirit, what is Good. And if he does not receive the Good into himself, he is not a full human being, but stunted and crippled. It is as though both his arms had been shot away. If

his arms are taken from him he is physically crippled; if the Good is lacking to him he is crippled in soul and spirit. Transform this thought, with all its influence on will and feeling, into a method of education. Educate in such a way that when the age of puberty arrives – for it must be developed by that time – man has the living feeling: 'If I am not good, I am not a whole man – I have not the right to call myself a man.' Then you will have good moral instruction, true moral teaching of mankind, as against which all emphasis on moral preaching and the like is worth nothing.

Educate the human being so that he feels the moral element within him as an essential part of his own human individuality, and feels himself crippled when he lacks it – feels that he is not a full human being when he does not possess it. Then, in fine, he will discover the moral life *entirely within himself*. Well may it be that all your philosophic pedants will call this a dreadful principle – un-German, or what you will. In truth it is the purest product of the German spirit.<sup>1</sup> It is the principle that brings the Spirit as near as possible to Man himself – and not alone to Man in general, but to the single human individual directly, for this is necessary in our time. During the present epoch only the single human being – the individual himself – reaches his full responsibility.

<sup>1</sup> To find within oneself the source of moral impulses is of course, as Rudolf Steiner indicated from his *Philosophy of Freedom* onwards, a general human task. But to those who attacked his 'ethical individualism' as un-German, Rudolf Steiner could show that such thoughts had deep roots in German spiritual life – in Schiller, Goethe and Fichte, for example. (Tr.)

## A STUDENT WITH RUDOLF STEINER

HEINZ MÜLLER

AFTER a series of visions of my past life, reaching back into the room where I was born, I looked in every possible kind of book for explanations of this phenomenon, which I could not understand at all. I was not yet nineteen. During my severe illness at the end of the First World War, my mother had taken over the greater part of the responsibility for nursing me in the hospital. I often discussed with her this backward vision of my life, which lasted for days; she too was amazed by it. Nearly two years later, fate brought my mother as midwife to Frau Haass-Berkow. She told her what her son had experienced, and Frau Haass-Berkow replied that there was only one man who could give comprehensive information about such phenomena: Rudolf Steiner. A few days later I was listening to Frau Haass-Berkow's descriptions of the great spiritual guide and teacher, which imparted to me her enthusiasm. I went home with an armful of Rudolf Steiner's fundamental writings. In the next few days I missed many lectures and read deep into the night; I was deeply moved. The question often arose in my mind: subconsciously, do I not remember some of these things? They seemed so familiar. With almost breathless tension I read with amazement one book after the other, asking myself: why does all this touch my heart so much? Similar questions had stirred me as a child of ten. I had finished early the entrance examination for the 'Gymnasium' (classical school), and had to sit, as there was nowhere else to put me, in a higher class to listen to a history lesson. I had never before heard anything about the events which were being described: the birth of Alexander the Great on that night, when the Temple of Ephesus was destroyed by fire. The teacher described this event in the most vivid words; how one of the seven wonders of the ancient world was lost. Although I listened attentively, I saw in spirit many things which differed from his description. For days I asked myself: 'How did these pictures appear to you, which seem as clear as memories?' In the dramatic sequence of events, which appeared before me, it was particularly vivid,

how the burning of the Temple was reflected in an inlet of the sea, and how the marble steps, brilliantly illuminated by the flames, rose directly from the beach. (In 1910 nothing was yet known of the fact that the Temple of Ephesus stood by an inlet which later silted up.) Years later, when the story of Alexander was taken in the normal course of the curriculum, the questions I had then faced returned; but there were still no answers for them.

After reading the first anthroposophical books, I thought I had understood them all. Rather too soon, I went off to Frau Haass-Berkow to get some more. I can still see the dark, astonished eyes of Frau Haass-Berkow. I began to realise that it was perhaps a little presumptuous to believe that one had grasped everything in writings like *Theosophy*, or *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, in one reading. Going through them a second time, I noticed how much had been completely missed. Now began systematic work on the fundamental anthroposophical facts. Very soon I had the need to discuss what I had read with others. For a long time Frau Haass-Berkow was the most patient partner in such discussions, always inspiring my enthusiasm afresh. Through her I heard of the existence of an anthroposophical society in Germany, and of a group in Jena. One day I felt so thoroughly prepared, that I went out to Jena-Zwätzen, to apply to the leader of the group, Oberstleutnant Seeböhm, for membership in the Society. The dignified, grey-haired gentleman with the bold, aristocratic nose greeted me in a friendly way. It was a good thing that I had appeared just now; I could take part in the introductory course beginning shortly. With some disappointment I assured him that I was already sufficiently introduced. Oberstleutnant Seeböhm led me into an impressive, pentagonal room, and held a regular examination. This seemed to satisfy him, for afterwards he went to the writing-table and took out an application form, which I had to fill out. In my presence, he put his own name as sponsor, and addressed the letter to the committee of the Society in Germany in Stuttgart. Though not yet accepted as a member, from now onwards I could take part in the work of the group.

There was astonishment when I appeared in the Group dressed in the normal attire of a member of the free youth move-

ment. I was a colourful figure, rather incongruous in the dignified circle, but made every endeavour to work hard; and many must have had friendly feelings towards me. For a few weeks later Oberstleutnant Seeböhm said to me: 'Every year we take as guest to the summer conference in Stuttgart a young member with slender means. This year we have chosen you. Perhaps you will have your membership card by then.'

As a happy, but entirely impecunious student – for my father had died early in my life – I set off for the public congress in Stuttgart which lasted from 29th August till 6th September 1921. Hardly had I arrived before I met Oberstleutnant Seeböhm, who gave me my membership card. Thus the same afternoon I could attend a members' lecture by Rudolf Steiner. The warm full voice of the lecturer, the vitality of every movement, the passages of humour; all this made such a great impression upon me that after the lecture I could hardly have reproduced any of its content. I shared to the full the enthusiasm at the end of the lecture. The hall slowly emptied, while Oberstleutnant Seeböhm was still in conversation. At last, seeing me leaning against a pillar, he came up to me. I could thank him from my heart for the possibility of having this experience as guest of the Jena group. We were now alone in the hall.

The door at the front opened and Rudolf Steiner entered, fresh and with rapid steps, without the slightest trace of weariness. He called out: 'That is splendid, Herr Oberstleutnant Seeböhm, that you are here again.' Conscious of my *Wandervogel* plumage, I wanted to take immediate flight, but Oberstleutnant Seeböhm grasped my wine-coloured tunic and whispered: 'I will introduce you to Dr Steiner.' The two men greeted one another heartily, though Rudolf Steiner's human warmth was more evident. The Oberstleutnant's stiff military manner was still more visible as he said: 'Herr Doktor, may I introduce to you the youngest member of the Fichte-Schiller group at Jena-Zwätzen: Herr Studiosus Heinz Müller.' But the object of this formal description was wonderfully received by Rudolf Steiner's warm and strong handshake, kindly light brown eyes, and interested question: 'How has it happened that you have become a member of the Anthroposophical Society so young?' My answer was something like this: 'At eighteen years

and eight months, I had to have five major operations. After the last, backward visions of my life started, reaching quite clearly into the room where I was born. This made me search until I found in your work the explanation for such phenomena.' Rudolf Steiner listened to these words most attentively and invited me for the following afternoon to his study at Landhausstrasse 70, in order, as he said, to discuss these things thoroughly.

At least ten minutes before the arranged time I was walking up and down the Landhausstrasse. All sorts of wonderful pictures filled my mind, for example my meeting with Ernst Haeckel some years before, and with other honoured personalities. In particular I remembered the passage in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* which begins with the words: 'Have you ever paused outside the door of some venerated person . . .' With these thoughts I went at last up the two flights of stairs, to put my hand on the handle of the door beyond which I would meet my revered teacher. He himself opened for me, led me into his study, and drew up a highbacked chair for me beside his writing-table. At this moment all my fine ideas had vanished, and I was disturbed by the silly thought: 'Now the spiritual seer will be able to observe all the members of your being and to find many horrible blemishes.' It was no use to reproach myself for such strange troubles; I could not calm myself. But Rudolf Steiner seemed to have no other task than to tidy up some things on the bookshelf behind him and on his desk. He did not turn his full attention to his visitor until my calm was restored. Then he asked me to give as thorough and detailed an account as possible. When I spoke of the operation, he asked if I had had a dream while it went on. This was indeed something grotesque enough. Before my illness I had read several books by Albert Einstein. And so I dreamt of a system of co-ordinates spread out into the universe; cosmic bodies of a sort welled out from the zero point and moved along the axes in the positive and negative directions. They filled space with a rattling clatter like cheap lead toys. From time to time two such forms collided and burst into nothing, like enormous soap bubbles. Then I heard on the left side behind me, as if mockingly from below, a disagreeable, creaking voice: 'That is your world, with that one can die!' Here Rudolf Steiner interrupted my account,

asking, 'Did it sound something like this?' and repeated my words, as if sideways into his cheek, with the character of the vowel 'ä'. To my astonished agreement he added: 'Yes, we know this gentleman. But how did you answer?' 'Then I must find a world, with which one can live,' was my reply. Rudolf Steiner's face reflected great satisfaction and interest, and with 'And?' he urged me to continue.

In the further course of the dream there sounded in a mighty voice my Christian name and surname. This woke me from the anaesthetic. I freed my right hand, on which the assistant was taking my pulse, seized a drainage tube which had been put in, tore it out and threw it into the operating theatre with the words: 'What, am I to have a tail, I don't want it!' Rudolf Steiner laughed loudly, but in the operating theatre there was some agitation. I assured Rudolf Steiner that I had certainly not been called by anyone in the operating theatre, which he confirmed with a smile. Then he added seriously: 'I will tell you something later about this call.'

When the last operation became necessary, there were no drugs available, and the surgeon did not dare to use local anaesthetics because of a threatening infection. So he decided to operate with full consciousness, hoping that I would faint. But I did not want to miss the opportunity to see the interior of my stomach. So I let my mouth and nose be covered, my head propped up and followed events with great interest. But the angle of vision was very awkward. However, to my greatest astonishment, I seemed in the course of the operation to be seeing gradually with the eyes of the surgeon. This loosening led to the consequence that for days I saw myself 'from outside', and had the experience of backward vision in intensive pictures. They began with the moment when I saw how the surgeon (a good friend of my late father, who was also a surgeon) and the head sister picked me up in the front garden of the hospital, where I had collapsed, and carried me into the examination room. I heard the words: 'There is not time to wash him. If anything can be done he must be put on the operating table at once.' Looking back I saw myself in sequence on the way to the hospital, often collapsing, dressing beside my bed in my room and standing before the military doctor, who had made a mistaken diagnosis. And there followed with shorter and

shorter intervals in pictures before my inner vision my youth and school-time, and my childhood.

After this backward vision into my early life, which was in itself very astonishing, the following picture left me almost hopelessly bewildered. It was as if my eye was high up, close to the ceiling, and I looked down at a little washing-basket in which a baby of a few days old, at the most, was lying. I knew the room well. When I began to ask my mother, who was helping to nurse me, about this, I could describe the tiled stove and the furniture in the room exactly. Much disturbed, as she thought I was delirious, she said that I could never have seen this room, since the house where I was born had been burned down in the first three months of my life, and there had never been any pictures of this interior. Rudolf Steiner listened to the description of this event with intensive participation, at first without interruption. After I had described for some time the pictures experienced in backward vision, he asked how these pictures appeared in comparison with other objects in space. He agreed entirely with the comparison with a rainbow in a landscape. When I described that I had looked at myself, both at the present moment and as a baby in the washing-basket, from above, as if my seeing eye was only a little below the ceiling, Rudolf Steiner said that this was the normal way in which the 'I', which had not yet fully incarnated, hovers above the body which it will enter. In rooms where there are newborn children the tension between above and below could be felt.

The conversation seemed to be at an end. Then Rudolf Steiner asked the surprising question – how did I know all this, which I had described, about my backward vision? At first this question was a shock to me. But then I realised that I had not replied to Rudolf Steiner even once directly from my memory, but that answers only arose when I remembered situations, in which I questioned my mother about this or that picture. Rudolf Steiner's surprising comment was: 'That shows me that all that you have described was a purely spiritual experience. These cannot be remembered directly. A bridge is needed, in order to reach them. I too can never remember directly what I have observed in the spiritual world. I form the bridge, which you have made through your conversations

with your mother, through putting short notes or signs and drawings in my notebook.'<sup>1</sup>

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In the Easter holidays in 1922, having just arrived from Jena, I met Rudolf Steiner again in the courtyard of the Waldorf School in Stuttgart. He asked how I had got on with my teaching practice. I said that the teaching had gone well and gave me great happiness. 'But probably I would not be able to become a teacher in the long run because my voice gave out completely after two hours at the most. Rudolf Steiner invited me to continue this conversation in his study. So I ventured to ask: 'Herr Doktor, some time ago you gave a series of speech exercises for the teachers of the Waldorf School; could you advise as well how one can correct one's own mistakes and limitations in speaking, and how one can work with speech in a healing and educational way?' Rudolf Steiner at once separated the second part of the question, saying that this would have to be answered over a period of time and in greater detail. Then he asked me what I thought myself should happen, if deficiencies in speaking were to be cured. Before he asked, I thought that I was entirely at a loss. But in Rudolf Steiner's presence ideas came. I remembered some events of my childhood. As children we had practised making echoes by whispering and calling in the halls and passages of the ruined monastery, Paulinzella, and in the still existing vaulted cellars under the great half-timbered building adjoining it. Further experiments could be made in a quarry and in a narrow, rocky valley. It was striking that the voice of the one who called, and particularly one's own, sounded quite differently in the echo. It was still more surprising if one spoke into a barrel, or through a pipe (with this some sounds did not come out at all) or tried to listen to one's own voice while covering one's ears. Other things were to be experienced if one could climb up where bells were being rung, and tried to talk amid the clanging and booming. All these memories passed through my mind with lightning rapidity, and from them some ideas took shape. To learn to hear oneself, and to listen to speech that can be heard outwardly or inwardly,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 27.

and to compare experimentally one's own speech with external sounds and noises; all this met with Rudolf Steiner's definite agreement. He asked me to continue my thoughts further. And so it struck me that one main fault in the use of my voice was that up to now I had used my vocal chords almost exclusively, and might relieve these by a greater activation of lips, tongue and throat. To this he agreed with special animation, still urging me to continue. So I reached the breath and the surrounding air, and ventured on a few hesitant sentences suggesting that one ought to try to call upon the help of these elements.

Rudolf Steiner beamed, and said that it was his intention to work out something in this direction. He would be glad if I could take part. 'Come in July for six weeks to Dornach. There we can see each other every day, and work on these problems.' I could not imagine anything better than this invitation; but it was impossible to accept it. A working student, who had to earn his entire living and the costs of study, which were still considerable in spite of the grant, could not afford a visit for six weeks in Switzerland during the inflation. But Rudolf Steiner replied: 'As a "Wandervogel" you can travel fourth class to Basel. Ask there for the bridge over the Rhine, and the Aeschenplatz, and from there keep on southwards. With your long legs you will hardly need two hours to reach Dornach. Then go to the first floor of the Haus Friedwart and ask for a letter which will be left for you there. You will not have to worry about anything, for you will be a guest of Haus Hansi for these six weeks.'

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A small group of younger and older people gathered in front of Haus Hansi, on the morning of 18th July 1922, and waited for nine o'clock to strike. Frau Marie Steiner welcomed us, and led us into Dr Steiner's study. She said that he had urgent work to finish, and would come later. But she knew what to practise with us. Then she began in her thorough way with the simplest known speech exercises. Appalling, how much one could go wrong! Many an exercise which one had often done before had to be repeated ten or fifteen times. I was in despair, when she tried to abolish some of my consonants altogether, saying that they did not belong to the German language at all; in

particular the w, of which she said that it sounded like the same letter in English. At such moments there followed the fiercest attacks on the Thuringian and Saxon dialects, as destroyers of any proper speech.

After about two hours Rudolf Steiner came in, greeting everyone present with his full name, and shaking hands. He asked everyone to repeat briefly what they had been practising, and began at once to consider some cardinal mistakes which he could hear. He pointed particularly to two difficulties in speaking. One came about when the speaker held back air in an anxious way; the other, when the stream of speech went to one side and became almost unrecognisably squashed in the left cheek. It was delightful to hear how Rudolf Steiner corrected these faults, with much humour and without any sharpness. On this first day he gave some further speech exercises. First he, and then Frau Marie Steiner demonstrated these; and he told each pupil how and when they should be practised, sometimes in a gentle, sometimes in a strong voice. In the next few days zealous students of speech could be heard everywhere; in the wood, in quarries and up in the ruins.<sup>1</sup> But after a few days we were all driven by him into small rooms in the Goetheanum and the 'Schreinererei'. He added with a faint smile that it was comprehensible if the peasants of Dornach when they heard the terrible words

Abrakadabra!

Radadakabra!

Bradakaraba!

Kadarabraba!

could only suppose that the evil anthroposophists were wanting to bewitch their cows at pasture. In our youthful bravado we could not resist trying occasionally our power of speech in the open air nevertheless. On these occasions it often happened that Rudolf Steiner met us round the next corner and reminded us of what he had said by a friendly, warning gesture.

It was amazing, in how many different ways Rudolf Steiner sought to remedy our defects in speaking. For example, he gave us this exercise to strengthen consciousness of the 'I' in the region of the tip of the tongue and of the teeth. He had a small bowl of fine sugar brought in, and put a few grains of sugar on the

<sup>1</sup> Of the medieval castle above Arlesheim. (Tr.)

tip of his tongue with a spoon. One line of the speech exercise followed and at the end of it he spat out the remaining grains of sugar. He pointed out that in this way the remainder of the breath stream which had been held back was used up. The next one, who had to repeat this exercise, had some inhibitions about it, particularly as Frau Marie Steiner did not seem enthusiastic. Rudolf Steiner said it would have to be practised in this way, but could be continued at home. In another case it was a question of increased consciousness in the region of the lips. With a narrowly pouting mouth a clear high *ü* was spoken, and then suddenly changed to a broad *ä*. To observe Rudolf Steiner's mimicry and movements during such exercises, and then to see these imitated by the students, often caused great explosions of laughter; it was evident how much Rudolf Steiner enjoyed constructing and carrying out such exercises. All these were worked over next day by Frau Marie Steiner with each student. Most of the pupils showed most definite progress in the course of six weeks, though a few did not manage much in spite of devoted efforts. The course was of such great assistance to me, that I had no more trouble with hoarseness through a long life as a teacher.

During these days I had a remarkable experience during a lecture by Rudolf Steiner in the 'Schreinerei'. Earlier he had confirmed my view that the calling out of my full name, which I heard during my first operation in 1918, certainly did not come from any person in the operating theatre. He had said that he would tell me something about this later. I now heard in the middle of a lecture the indication that every true anthroposophist, whether he observed it or not, was called at some point in his life from the spiritual world by his name. And that this call came from Christian Rosenkreutz. After the lecture I met Rudolf Steiner still in the 'Schreinerei', on his way to the studio. I said that I had understood the indication in his lecture about Christian Rosenkreutz, and his call from the spiritual world. He beamed and replied: 'It is good that you heard it.' When I wished to discuss this with friends, they said that there was no mention of this matter in the lecture concerned. My efforts to find in the stenographic notes what I had heard were also without result.

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I went into the Goetheanum for the first time on a brilliantly sunny summer day, at noon. I went alone, coming in through the south entrance. My eyes had to accustom themselves first to the dim light in the cool, concrete lower floor. Through the pillared passages one went on up the wide double staircase into the ante-room, built of beech wood. After a few steps, one met a rich red, that came from a great window over the west door. This filled the ante-room, with its broad carved forms of warm wood, producing a reverent mood, which was deepened by the mighty earnest countenance etched in the window.

The entrance to the great hall was under the organ. Those who never saw it can hardly imagine the miracle of colours one encountered. Everything in the space, the pillars, the chairs, the visitor himself, were all plunged into the coloured splendour of the mid-day sun shining in from the south through the windows, each divided into three parts. Overwhelmed, one stood in astonishment taking into consciousness the colours of the etched windows in their sequence: green, blue, lilac and rose. But one's astonishment grew. Where then did the orange, the red and the yellow appear from, with such power? During the few steps that led to the right-hand Saturn pillar, the one nearest the entrance, and on to the second, the Sun pillar, memories arose of the fortnight I had spent just before in the Goethe House at Weimar, where I worked particularly on the problem of coloured shadows, repeating Goethe's experiments with his own instruments. Here all the coloured lights and shadows lived and wove at once, and included one in their realm. Almost without thinking I stretched out my hand, to study the coloured phenomena upon its movements. I had turned now towards the hall as a whole. How the blue splendour shone on the back of my hand from the blue of the second window, and how there glowed a warm golden orange on the side that was in shadow! From the first window delicate green veils fell upon the inside of my still outstretched hand, and fine rose-coloured shadows played on its back. This impelled me to mount the few steps to the left, and close to the Saturn pillar to let myself be entirely absorbed in the play of complementary colours between green and red. And then I wished the colours and shadows of the second, third and fourth windows to work upon me in turn.

This was comparatively easy with the blue window and its orange shadows. But as one went down the steps towards the lilac and rose windows, all the windows were at a greater distance. Thus the colours coming from the first windows were superimposed upon the basic accords of lilac and yellow and of rose and lime green. The play of colours that now arose was richer in variety but less intense. After I had followed this play of colour for a long time, I went back again to the Sun pillar. Now with both hands I followed the interplay woven of light, and recognised that through feeling my way into the space I could take hold of the light that was flooding everywhere, at first invisibly. I began to feel: through these mighty harmonies of colour great gifts are bestowed upon the soul, upon the heart. The head's learning is given fire from the heart. 'The love of the world works' – the saying for the central part of the green group of windows approached me dimly at this moment; I knew it only much later. How different learning was, here in the Goetheanum, when the heart began to become the teacher of the head, from that in the university, where this kind of learning is completely rejected.

It was now my task to bring to consciousness the entire space of the great hall and the stage with the two domes as a unity, before turning again to particular details. If one chose a seat towards the south, in the full sunlight, the effect was quite different from that received in the shadow of a pillar. Particularly about noon, if one looked from the south, the great dimensions of the hall wakened feelings which can be compared to quiet longing. This impression was strongest from a place in the shadow rather than in the sunlight. But looking from the north, the southern part came nearer and seemed to fill the soul with peace. Feelings of devotion and humility arose when one looked from the west through the entire hall towards the stage, particularly if one looked up into the small cupola, where the Representative of Humanity strode victoriously between the two adversary powers. But if one went right across the stage and looked back towards the organ built in to the west wall, this aspect of the hall stirred the observer's will and fired his heart.

To test these feelings, and bring them to clarity one had to spend many hours in the Goetheanum, again and again. The experience of colour became ever richer. If one had contem-



plated one evening, in artificial light, the shades of colour of the wooden pillars, in daylight one found these hardly recognisable. The light grey of the hornbeam Saturn pillar had made such a noble contrast with the light sheen of the ash of the Sun pillar. The warm reddish-brown cherry wood of the Moon pillar, the severer greyish-brown of the oaken Mars pillar, and the elm wood Mercury pillar with its warm inner radiance made the light maple wood column of the Jupiter pillar appear as a majestic contrast, while the Venus column concluded the sequence of slender pillars with its birch wood, of a sheen that seemed almost unearthly, pointing into a distant future. But in daylight it was the colours produced by the windows that dominated once more.

Only after this, I felt definitely, might one look up at the paintings of the two cupolas. The first impression was that the blue shades seemed to come from a remoter level of the cupola, while the red colours seemed to stand out from the rest. A perspective of colours arose which I had not observed before. I wanted to examine this peculiar interweaving of colour more exactly. I regretted that I hardly ever had the opportunity to observe the gradual disappearance of the colours in the evening, because there were then lectures, eurhythmy performances and concerts. And on other evenings there were rehearsals. So one day I decided to sit in the hall next morning at sunrise, and to observe which of the colours would appear first as it grew light. So I crept out of my lodgings towards four o'clock, and was led into the building by the night watchman. I sat quietly in one of the middle rows, with my head back so that I could observe both domes. Slowly it grew lighter. Soon the first colour must surely appear from the light and darkness of the paintings! Astonishingly, it was a very light blue which was unmistakably the first to appear. Then suddenly, in the quietness of dawn I heard words something like this: 'Yes, it is remarkable, that this delicate blue is the first to be visible.' The young observer turned round; Rudolf Steiner was sitting two rows behind him, to the side. He went on to say how difficult it had been to bind the volatile dye-stuff taken from chicory blossom to the paint medium, and to prevent it from fading. This was successful at last, and this delicate colour had been worth all the trouble. It was not yet possible to use for all shades of colour juices taken

from blossoms. In order to represent Imaginations, a whole further series of ethereal colours of this kind were needed. Methods had to be worked out for preserving the juices of blossoms; for if root juices were used, as for instance with madder, something earthy crept in all too easily, bringing a tinge of brown into the red which made it too heavy.

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The day arranged for my visit to Rudolf Steiner in his studio had come. A quarter of an hour before the time, I walked up and down before the 'Schreinerei', looking at my watch again and again, trying to realise the great gift of destiny this encounter meant. I felt my heart beat more and more violently; it was difficult to preserve a balance in my feelings. At last I knocked at the studio door. Miss Maryon, a faithful worker at carving and painting in the old Goetheanum, opened the door, and Rudolf Steiner introduced me to her. This he did in his kind way, showing a regard for me as a young man, which at the same time excluded any danger that I could become the victim of vanity or over-valuation of myself. He seemed rather to turn towards a future picture of me, to which I began to feel a greater and greater responsibility. He told me that he still had some work to do, and I could look round unhurriedly at everything.

I looked for some time at the head of Ahriman. Bent stiffly back, the distorted face, with its morose and scornful expression and narrow slanting eyes, awakened both fear and compassion. He expressed cold mockery, and yet with all his negativity a definite will to make destructive attacks on the world and on humanity.

Presently Rudolf Steiner put his tool on one side and came to me. He spoke at first about the head of Ahriman. If lovelessness, philistinism and pedantry, as they are developing to-day more and more among human beings, were to become dominant, then men would lose their individual characteristics. In the detailed features of their faces, but also in the shapes of hands and feet, and finally of the whole form, they would come to resemble Ahriman more and more. Humanity must make efforts today to acquire clear pictures of the adversary spirits, and in this way to take away their power. Therefore he had

made great efforts to give as exact a representation as possible. He had made, as far as he could, faithful portraits. Since this obviously surprised me very much, he went on to describe how he had obliged both Ahriman and Lucifer to sit as models for him. This succeeded with Ahriman only after the exercise of a strong compulsion, while Lucifer reconciled himself to the situation relatively easily.

Now I went to the Lucifer form, already modelled in its full size, with its powerful, impressive surfaces. Besides the head and breast, arms and wing-like formations were represented. But the most striking thing for me was the enigmatic formation, through which the larynx of Lucifer is connected on one side with the ears and on the other with the strong wave-like curves which ascend from the breastbone. Rudolf Steiner caused me to put into words as exactly as I could what I observed. Then he said something like this: 'You see that a great deal of what you said at Easter about the connection of speech with hearing and with breathing, simply out of your own reflections, appears expressed in the bodily form of Lucifer. This need not shock you, for Lucifer has in an entirely justified way a relationship with all the arts.' A series of further descriptions of the connection of the speech and breath organisation followed. But these went so far into the medical field, that doctors would be better able to reproduce them than an aspiring teacher.

Further comments on the likeness of the portrait of Lucifer followed. Then Rudolf Steiner noticed how his hearer was attempting to imitate the gestures of Lucifer and Ahriman with his hands and fingers. So he picked up a coffee cup, held it delicately by the handle with his thumb and index finger, let both middle fingers drop a little and extended his little finger upwards and to the side with inimitable charm and coquetry. He asked me with a gleam in his eyes where and among whom this could be seen. I answered rather cheekily - 'Among many ladies in the canteen at Dornach.' Rudolf Steiner looked pleased, but said that he meant real coffee-gossipers who enjoy out-doing each other's criticisms about everything. That should be hard to find anywhere near the Goetheanum.

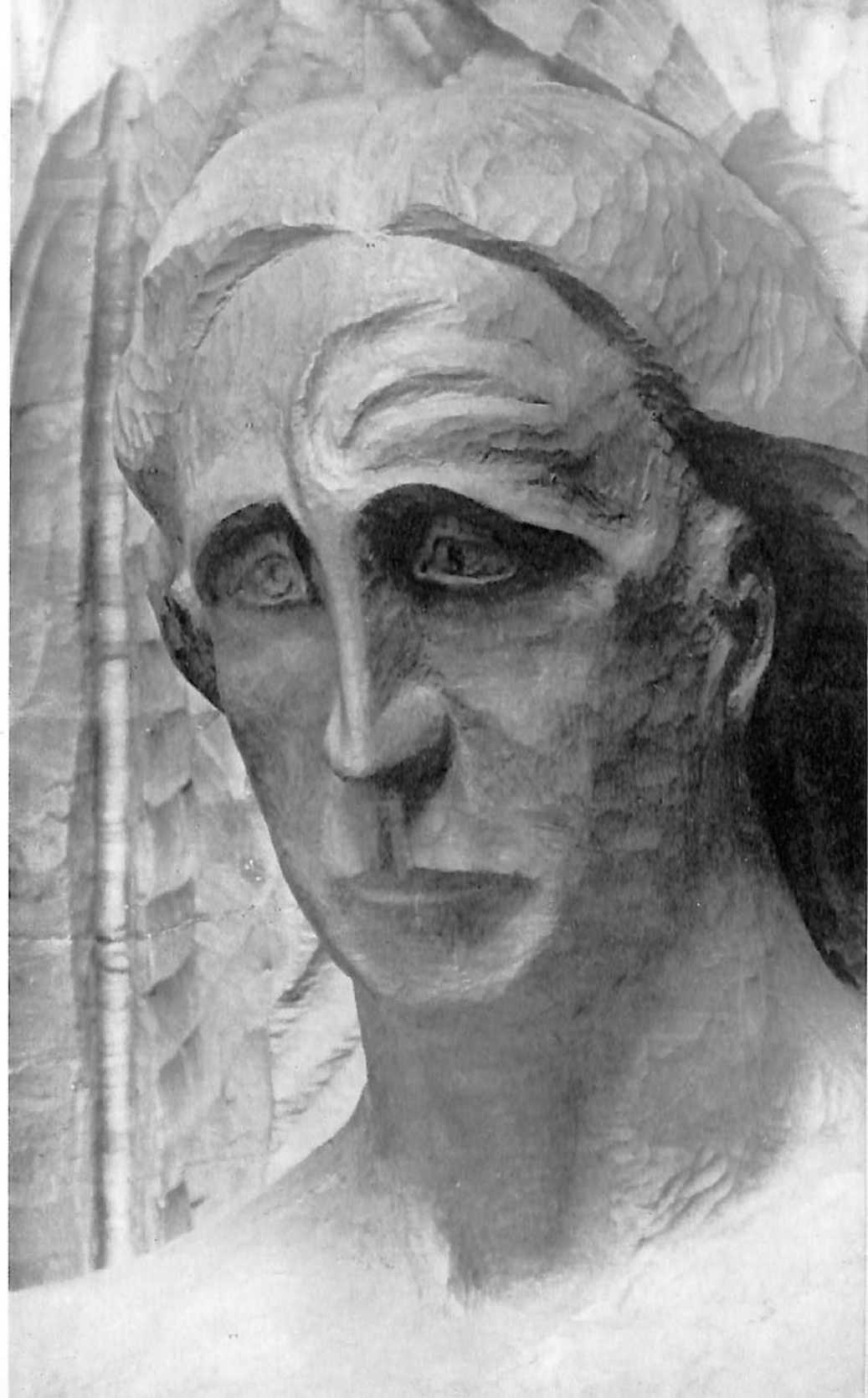
How different are the positions of the fingers on the gouty, hardened hands of Ahriman! Thumb and forefinger resemble open forceps, while the three other fingers are bent stiffly down-

wards. Rudolf Steiner explained that this position expressed a brutal force of will. In contrast, the position of the hand of the Representative of Humanity indicated a harmony of the three powers of the soul, thinking, feeling and willing. The extension of the index and middle finger vertically upwards, while the following two fingers extend forwards at right angles and the thumb points in the remaining direction of space, could lead to an understanding of how in the future the powers of thinking, feeling and willing should live independently and yet in mutual harmony. The gestures of the statue of the Representative of Humanity were consequences of the stream of love going out from the heart. One should not think that the fall of Lucifer came about through any warlike power in the Christ; and Ahriman chains himself through the egotistical destructive power which comes to birth in his own very intelligent but loveless being.

Then Rudolf Steiner spoke about the resemblance between his model and the face of Christ. If one met the Christ in the spiritual world, the first impression was that he changed with every thought, feeling and impulse of will in an astonishing way. One understood then how it was that his enemies were dependent on finding a betrayer in Judas Iscariot, who could resolve their uncertainty about whom they should arrest. For the disciples of Christ resembled him so much that they could be mistaken for him, particularly when they were permeated and fired from his being to words and action. Now that his being moves freely in ethereal heights, independent of the body of Jesus of Nazareth, this constant transformation of his countenance, indeed of his entire form, is still greater.

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The last day of 1922 had come. For the first time I experienced the presence of so many people in the Goetheanum that every place was occupied. I sat myself in my accustomed place, feeling my whole being streaming into the world of colours and forms, and sustained by the community of expectant people. From the afternoon I had not been able to free myself entirely from an inner restlessness and was astonished about myself, that I could not succeed in concentrating properly on the evening lecture. My gaze kept wandering from one of the mighty



Imaginations painted in the dome to the next. In between, my eyes followed up the noble pillars and through the forms of the capitals. Again and again I compelled myself to listen better, until at last the words of Rudolf Steiner drew me into full attention. He spoke of tremendous things: of the connection of the heavenly being of the fixed stars with the physical, mineral element in the human body and of the relation of the heavenly deeds of the wandering stars to the streams of fluids, to the ethereal in the human organism. The solemnity and penetrating power of his speech increased in the course of the lecture. We all, old and young, went out deeply moved into the clear starry Sylvester night.<sup>1</sup>

Only a few people lived as near by as I was doing in Haus Friedwart. I was sitting on my bed, pondering, when the telephone rang in the secretariat. Someone picked up the receiver, and at the same moment I heard the horrified cry, 'What, fire in the Goetheanum?' I seized my coat and cap, and rushed out and up the hill. The etched windows in their various colours still shone out into the quiet night. Coming up from the south side I heard the hurried steps of two men. Then I saw in the light of the lamps of the south door Rudolf Steiner coming from the east door. He called out that I should follow him to the heating house; he directed the two from the south to come as well. I think they were Dr Walter Johannes Stein and Dr Eugen Kolisko. Hurrying in front of us, he said that he needed witnesses. He went first to the thermometer which gave the temperature of the returning water. Rudolf Steiner handed me a pocket lamp and I read: 35°. The other two witnesses agreed. 'So it is quite normal,' said Rudolf Steiner, and as we hurried back up the hill he added: 'There could not be a fire from the heating being excessive. Now the electric wiring must be tested.' We went through the east door into the room under the stage in which were the big switchboards. He let us use all the switches, and we could observe that all the test lamps were burning; here too everything was in order. The whole building was lit up. We heard his voice beside us, lifeless and heavy: 'There is nothing wrong here either; it can only be arson!' The little group round him was deeply appalled at his words.

<sup>1</sup> New Year's Eve.

Only now did we go up the steps to the White Room, which we entered from the north. The night watchman had given the alarm because of the suspicious smoke observed there, which penetrated the clefts in the carved wall, particularly on the west side. Already on the stairs we noticed unusual heat, which met us more strongly as the door of the room was opened. We all realised that we were near the source of the fire. Rudolf Steiner directed me: 'Break open the window of the box and take the axe. But pull your sleeve over your fist, not to cut yourself!' And then he pointed to a place on the wall: 'Make a hole here!' I had the axe in my hand and struck into the Goetheanum wall. I do not know if it can be imagined what it meant, to strike into the beloved Goetheanum with an axe. 'Harder!' I heard from Rudolf Steiner. Finally a piece as large as a building stone broke through and fell inwards into the wall. At the same moment with a wailing note air was sucked in by the flames shooting up inside. We fell back and heard Rudolf Steiner's voice, with a suffocated sound, as if ash had fallen on it: 'To save it is impossible.'

He directed us to go out through the great south door on to the snow-covered terrace and continue our investigation. There we discovered under the roof a gleam of firelight; below lay an ordinary roof-worker's ladder. When we mounted this we found that parts of the outer wall had been broken through, making a hole about five times as large as the one I had had to break in the wall inside. Through this could be seen the complicated supporting beams glowing in the light of the fire. It was clear that the fire had been started here; remains of tow and straw and traces of petrol were still to be found. We all realised at once that Rudolf Steiner was right in saying that nothing could be saved, for the beams, which were thirty or forty centimetres thick, were in parts burned nearly half through.

Meanwhile other helpers had arrived. We heard horrified calls from the south door. It had been discovered that some fanatical lads from the village had been cutting hoses with their knives. A provisional guard was organised at once. Dr Gunther Wachsmuth, then and later, occupied himself with great energy about these things. I joined other groups of helpers who were trying to rescue what could be moved.

But one of the messengers came to us, who had been sent to

call the last of those who were inside to leave the building at once. Rudolf Steiner had said that there was great danger that it would fall in. The lights went out, and the first flames broke in from above. Wilhelm Rath, René Maikowski, Wolfgang Rudolf, and others rushed out with me. It was a few minutes before midnight. The heat outside was almost greater than in the auditorium. It had burned for a long time, before flames were visible from outside, but now the roof was almost entirely destroyed, and the side walls were glowing. We had to make a wide circle to the south, over the slope where cherry trees grew, to reach the Schreinerei. Now the domes fell in with terrible crashes. The pillars still stood, bent outwards by the heat. They looked like fiery lilies against the night sky.

Now the bells began to ring for the new year from the villages in the neighbourhood. Only one part of the Goetheanum still stood, that around the organ in the west, carved out of the hardest wood. Rudolf Steiner was standing with several people in front of the Schreinerei, watching the course of the fire attentively. I heard his words: 'Remember this moment!' Turning, I saw how the organ pipes were beginning to glow, adding all kinds of colours to the flames, particularly shades of blue and green. . . . In the grey morning the mighty columns were still burning. When the faint sun above the Gempen hill brought up New Year's Day, I went for a few hours back to my room.

When I went up to the Schreinerei again about noon, there was a notice on the door that all the meetings which had been arranged, the eurhythmy performances, the Three Kings play, and Rudolf Steiner's lecture, would be carried through according to the programme. An unbroken spirit was shown, before the desolate place where among the black ruins on the concrete foundations the stumps of the pillars were still burning. The rooms of the Schreinerei had been prepared hurriedly for the continuation of the conference. In order that everyone could take part, we crowded closely together. Rudolf Steiner with his consideration, his wide horizons, and his gentle kindness, gave strength and endurance to us all, and to the performers courage to make their appearance in spite of boundless pain at this tragedy. His face was marked in a way that moved us deeply; but the spiritual greatness with which he was pre-

pared to meet the continued demands of the conference, was an example and obligation for the future:

Made out of Nature's materials,  
The Goetheanum wanted to speak through its forms  
Of the Eternal to the eyes of men.  
The flames were able to consume the matter.  
Henceforward Anthroposophia –  
Her edifice formed of the spirit –  
Shall speak to the inner soul of man  
In words of fire, tempered by the flames –  
The flames of the spirit.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From one of Rudolf Steiner's notebooks, April 1923. Translation by George and Mary Adams, *Verses and Meditations*, page 121.

## THE DISAPPEARING TRICK<sup>1</sup>

OWEN BARFIELD

IN my opinion a great deal of what is going on around us today can be traced to the presence in very many minds of an unspoken question and an unspoken answer to it. For the most part both question and answer remain not merely unspoken; they are not even consciously formulated. The answer, if it *were* formulated, would be either 'No' or 'I don't know'. As to the question, in the ordinary life of society perhaps the nearest it usually comes to formulation occurs in early adult life in the shape of what is sometimes called 'the identity crisis'. In circles interested in philosophy or metaphysics however it is sometimes explicitly formulated and as explicitly answered in the negative. The question is 'Do I exist?'

In almost any modern American university one of the most popular and flourishing departments is likely to be the Department of Sociology; and if we look a little into what is meant by 'sociology', if we meet the Professors for example, and see the books on their shelves and on the shelves of the students' bookstore, we quickly learn that what is meant is 'behavioural' sociology. The label reminds us that, for the purposes of sociological study, human beings are normally taken to be simply their external behaviour. Should any student be inclined to wonder at all *why* human beings behave as they do, he is likely to seek the answer in the Department of Psychology; and when we have pursued the same line of investigation here, and this time have met not only the Professors but also the rats, with which they spend the bulk of their time experimenting, we shall realise that academic psychology is hardly less exclusively behavioural than academic sociology. Not only human beings in society, the student learns, but each single human being really *is* his physical behaviour.

Look for instance at the book *Walden Two*, which appeared

<sup>1</sup> From a public lecture given in Toronto and Montreal in May 1968 through the kind offices of the Anthroposophical Society in Canada; and in May 1969 at the University of Missouri (Columbia) under the auspices of the Department of English.

three or four years ago. It is a utopia on the lines of *Brave New World*, but, unlike *Brave New World*, it is not intended as a satire. Perhaps it is an extreme case, but its well-known author, Professor Skinner, is a leading Professor of Psychology at Harvard University and, if we read that book or hear him lecture or broadcast, we shall soon grasp that the basic assumption underlying all he thinks and says is, that the question 'Do I exist?' has already been definitively answered on everyone's behalf in the negative. If you actually asked him the question, he would tell you that you had 'missed the point'. Nobody doubts his senses; for the rest, there is response to stimulus, there is motivation, there is aversion, there is habit, and all this adds up to behaviour. To raise any question about 'I' or 'me' is to miss the point.

It follows of course that to raise the issue of 'responsibility' is also to miss the point; and, lest it should be thought I am tilting at American universities or unfairly singling out sociologists and psychologists, let me also mention a broadcast talk on Criminal Law, which was heard on the BBC a year or two ago. It was called 'Dispensing with Responsibility' and was summarised in the *Radio Times* as follows:

The most challenging and interesting critics of the law believe we should eliminate or by-pass the question of an individual's responsibility.

Reflect for a moment on all that that implies. No-one is likely to dispute that the question of responsibility is a difficult one. Justice, wisdom, psychology, human sympathy and understanding and the quality of mercy all enter into it. But, unless that other question has first been answered in the negative, a proposal to ignore responsibility altogether, though it may indeed be 'challenging', can hardly be described as 'interesting'.

Of course the root question is not always answered so emphatically in the negative. Uncertainty, anxiety about the proper answer are a much commoner condition. Psychiatrists are familiar with that uncertainty and the existential psychologists among them have already traced a good deal of anxiety to its source in the unanswered question (see for instance R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self*). Examples are all too easy to find. It is just a question of selection. In Canada one naturally thinks first of the startling *réclame* achieved by Marshall McLuhan

with his prophecies. Individuality, he assures us, was a by-product of the invention of printing and is now on its way out. And he, too, is rather fond of replying in advance to any reader who may be showing signs of disagreement, that he has 'missed the point'. But I put his answer, with some hesitation, among the 'Don't knows' rather than the 'No's', because, though he makes it quite clear that he knows where we are all going, and generally seems to welcome the prospect with enthusiasm, he does very occasionally speak as if we had some choice and even as though he intended a warning rather than a prophecy. At least he does so in *Understanding Media*.

After all this are there any indications that the question is being answered anywhere in the third possible way, that is, in the affirmative? Of course there are any number of individuals and small groups scattered about the world who do so answer it – who have no doubt that they exist and will continue to do so whether they like it or not. There are many such in the Churches, though it is not so with everyone who goes to church, and there are many others outside them. But my concern here is with general trends, movements of thought or of impulse (which is often potential thought) that are 'contemporary' in an easily recognisable sense (such as determine for instance the flavour of contemporary drama), trends which are as broadly tangible as those I have already chosen as examples in the other direction.

I believe there is one rather important indication, though perhaps it has not yet been very much noticed; and I refer to the marked increase during the last few decades in people's concern with history – and with the past of mankind in general – but also to a subtle change in the *nature* of that concern. Side by side (and they may even exist side by side in the same personality) with an almost aggressive tendency to reject the past as irrelevant, to deride it, to resent any sort of preoccupation with it as a clog on 'progress', one notices an enormous increase in the number of paperbacks and other books of a historical nature now being sold. It includes historical fiction, but it is not only that. Both in the New World and in Europe popular historical magazines appear and are successful. Young people, who have no intention of becoming archaeologists, spend their vacations joining in a dig somewhere, and so on. Other

examples could be added. I am convinced that what I am talking about is something real.

Moreover it has been observed, and I think with justice, that this modern concern with history is of a different nature from the older kind. You may be fond of history for antiquarian or nostalgic reasons, reasons of a sentimental nature; but what people are obscurely seeking today is something more like an existential encounter with the past, while still remaining in the present. It was summed up by the Dutch historian, Johan Huizinga, in the striking phrase: 'Today historical thinking has entered our very blood.'

At this point I have to digress for a while and interpose a few observations on a different topic altogether. If you want to observe what is going on in the general consciousness at a particular time – or at all events in a large section of it – it is sometimes a good thing to look carefully into a particular word that keeps on cropping up all over the place. Such vogue-words may often furnish a key to what is working, not so much on the surface where the ideas and slogans are bandied to and fro and back and forth, but a little below the surface. When I was a young man, one of these key words was 'functional'. One suddenly found every writer who was up-to-date, or wished to be thought so, edging it in at every possible opportunity, and without perhaps having a very clear idea of what he meant by it. I want for a moment to take a look at one such word which I keep on coming across today, and which shows signs of becoming one of those key words, if it has not done so already.

The word 'psychosomatic' is of course derived from two Greek words, one of which means 'soul' and the other 'body'. It was originally used by doctors to denote the kind of disorder that is both physical and mental in its origin. It marked a reaction against the typical nineteenth-century view of the body as a mechanism and of the soul or mind (if there is one) as quite separate from it, like a sort of ghost in a machine. If you want to understand such disorders, it was implied, you must accept the fact that the human being is a 'psychosomatic' organism. It began with medicine; but it has spread to wider circles; and it is evident that emphasis on the fact that man, as a whole, is a psychosomatic organism (in which it is impossible to distinguish between mind and body) gives some sort of

satisfaction to large numbers of writers and thinkers today.

That is why it is important to examine the word rather carefully. And as soon as we do so, we discover that what it necessarily implies is, not that mind and body – or soul and body – cannot be distinguished (though that is what it is generally taken to mean), but that they cannot be separated. If they could not even be distinguished, the word itself would have no meaning. It would not be there. For what it signifies is that the speaker's mind has united two components of the human being which the mind has first distinguished. Yet if you watch it carefully, if you pounce on it next time you come across it and consider it in its context, you are as likely as not to find that what it is *intended* to imply is that *psyche* cannot meaningfully be distinguished from *soma* at all.

One could add here that this confusion between distinguishing and dividing – the tacit assumption that we cannot distinguish what we cannot divide – is a weakness that has been growing increasingly prevalent in the thinking of the western world throughout the last three or four hundred years. We first decide that A cannot be separated from B; and then, especially if it happens that B is something we perceive with our senses or of which we can at least form a visual image with sharp outlines, we go on to the second stage, which is to suppose that A cannot be *distinguished* from B. From there the step is a short one to the third stage: the conviction that B is 'real' and A is 'unreal'. This, in spite of the fact that the whole function of what we call our reason, our thinking power, is to distinguish and then again unite what cannot be physically separated. The other we can do with our hands and our tools.

Now this fact has very much to do with the question whether I exist or not; and therefore the realisation of this fact has very much to do with the question whether I can feel convinced that I exist. If I am indeed indistinguishable from my senses and my muscles, whose sole business is to register and respond to external stimuli, I am clearly not responsible for my actions; or, to put it another way, I do not exist.

These considerations may seem a very long way removed from a popular concern with history. There is nevertheless a connection between them. For the study of history is, by its nature, a way out of just that paralysing inability to distinguish

what we cannot divide, in the particular case of the distinction between soul and body, between psyche and soma. Or, if not a way out, it is at least a step in the direction of the door marked EXIT.

Of course it is only one way out. Another way is the way of intelligent reflection. But any such reflection is commonly, perhaps rightly, labelled 'philosophical', and not everyone is inclined for it. Not everyone is anxious, or even willing, to switch off the radio, sit still, and reflect that consciousness itself depends on two elements that must always remain distinguishable, though they are never divisible... the distinction between 'that-which-is-conscious' and 'that-of-which' it is conscious... or to reflect that this is a distinction which we re-affirm by the very act of denying it; or, putting it another way, that a theory about the brain, or about behaviour, can never (no matter what microscopic details it reduces to) perform the disappearing trick of vanishing into the brain, or into the behaviour, about which it is a theory.

It is one thing to realise such a crucial truth by reflecting on it; it is another to discover it for yourself when you are not even looking for it – to have it positively forced on your attention. But that is just what his concern with history may do to a man. As soon as he becomes really interested, not only in things as they are, but in how they came to be what they are, quite practical distinctions between inseparables are forced on him. Take language for instance. It is perfectly true to say that written or printed language cannot be separated from its meaning without ceasing to be language, and becoming mere ink shapes. Nevertheless the history of the alphabet is a different study from the history of meanings of words and cannot profitably be pursued until we have accepted that fact. Again, in a successful work of art, say a statue, the nature of the material, as is often pointed out, is inseparably fused with the form of the work and the quality of expression achieved. But the history of marble, or of that particular piece of marble, is widely divergent from the history of sculpture, or of that particular sculptor and his art. However far back you trace the history of sculpture, you will not find it emerging from the geological adventures of marble. So it is with the history of the psychosomatic organism called 'man'. If you wish to seek its

history, you must distinguish its components, because they have different histories and moreover different kinds of history.

Furthermore it is just a fact that history is all about the human psyche distinguished from the human soma. No doubt one may not improperly use the word 'history' in connection with marble, but the provenance of marble is not in fact history. It is geology. That is what made the well-known professor of history, J. R. Collingwood, go so far as to say that 'All real history is history of thought'. Whether or not one goes as far as that, or even if he does not trouble himself about the nature of history at all, the fact of the distinction is being forced all the time on anyone who is concerning himself seriously with the historic past.

Moreover – and this is particularly significant – the converse is equally true. It has been proved by experience that, if you start so to speak from the opposite end; if you are mainly interested in things as they are, so that your whole intention is to be a scientist rather than a historian; but if you have nevertheless chosen to focus your attention on the psychic rather than the somatic aspect of the human organism; then, you are simply driven into the past, you are driven into all manner of historical theory. That is what happened in the case of psycho-analysis, and particularly in the case of Sigmund Freud. Interesting himself, as he did, in certain disorders whose origin appeared to be predominantly psychic, he was forced, in the first place, to go back to a point in the individual's past life beyond the reach of memory. But then he found this was not far enough. He could not explain the disorders to his own satisfaction without going farther back still – back to experiences had before the patient's birth. These could not, as he believed, be experiences of the patient himself, since those could only have begun after his physical birth. Therefore they must have been the experiences of his ancestors, feelings of guilt, for instance, which each of us 'inherits' along with his physical heredity, by a kind of 'inherited memory', which is nevertheless unconscious memory.

As a good Darwinian Freud assumed as a matter of course that psychic symptoms originate in physical causes; but, as his investigations proceeded and his experience increased, he found himself driven further and further back into history in his attempts to reach a point at which the divergence could be

deemed to have first begun. Even the primordial guilt-feelings, which at one time he derived from crimes committed by primitive hordes against the father of the tribe, he later ascribed, not to any actual crimes but to a repressed *desire* to commit them. However far back he went, the distinction was already there – until he was reduced to talking about ‘hordes of wild cattle and horses, where conditions regularly lead to the killing of the father animal’.

Here is a very revealing example of a conflict between a motivated refusal to distinguish and a factual compulsion to do so. As a faithful observer and thinker he found himself more and more obliged to insist on the distinction. But as a good Darwinian he was obliged to assume that, if you go far enough back in history, you will reach the point at which psyche performs the disappearing trick of vanishing altogether into soma. The ultimate and effective cause of all mental phenomena must be physical! This is also the conviction, or the presupposition, which is sometimes taken as justifying the psychedelic movement, and is the tacit assumption that has given such alarming strength to it in our time.

What is perhaps especially remarkable is the way in which that slovenly concept of ‘inherited memory’ was allowed to slip in, and then to become the central pillar of his own theory, by one who frequently emphasised his loyal adherence to the Darwinian theory of evolution. For any idea that memories could be ‘inherited’ is in fact totally incompatible with the Darwinian theory. The biological theory of evolution is based, fairly and squarely, on the maxim that no qualities, not even physical ones, acquired by a single organism during its lifespan can be passed on by heredity. But this radical inconsistency is not peculiar to Freud, nor even to psycho-analysis. Even a biologist like Sir Julian Huxley is not above using the notion of inherited memory, when it is convenient for explaining something. As to popular science, and all kinds of current writing in journalism, fiction and so forth, how often we are told of obscure recollections arising in the man of today of the experiences of his ‘tree-climbing’ ancestors! And yet...if the ancestors really *were* tree-climbing animals, and *no more* (as Darwin for instance propounded), there can be no such thing as inherited, or ‘racial’ memories. It was because he was ab-

solutely convinced that there could be no such thing that Darwin invented the ‘tree-climbing’ theory.

But how else are we to explain the evolution of consciousness – particularly of our modern consciousness? How else are we to explain it, if we insist on assuming that there is no real distinction between mind and body – if we insist, not only that we are unable now to separate the two, but that we are unable to distinguish them, and that the mind comes into existence at birth as an attribute of the body? If the statue grew somehow out of the geological nature of the marble, from which it is now inseparable, and had no independent source?

I find all this very relevant to the unspoken question with which I began. You can say that ‘history has entered into our blood’ – or you can say that evolution has entered it. It is the evolution of modern consciousness that people are interested in, when they become concerned with history today; when they begin to make the existential encounter with it. How did we get to be where we are...and *what* we are? That is the question. Because evolution is in my blood, I shall feel convinced that I exist, when – and only when – I have some understanding of how I came to be what I am.

Many books have been written from different points of view to show that our modern consciousness (which can only be termed ‘self-consciousness’, whether or not we afterwards go on to claim that the ‘self’ is illusory) has gradually evolved from a less individualised consciousness – such as is manifested at the stage of mythical thought, or by tribal consciousness. The picture such books evoke is of our present, sharply-defined, isolated and isolating self-consciousness gradually, in the long course of pre-history and history, emerging from a dimmer and vaguer kind of consciousness, a consciousness shared by many human beings and extending over a wider area. It is a convincing picture for many different reasons; but on closer examination it proves to have one very serious flaw in it.

If self-consciousness can truly be said to have ‘evolved’, it must have increased gradually. But what does it mean to say that self-consciousness must have ‘increased’, or must have ‘emerged’ gradually from another kind of consciousness? If self-consciousness can accurately be said to have ‘grown’, or ‘evolved’, from what it was, say, in 10,000 B.C. to what it is,

say in A.D. 1970, then the *same* self must be assumed as present in both periods. The same self, though not the same organisms (bodies). What does 'evolving' mean? It makes sense to speak of the species horse 'evolving' through the ages, though individual horses have perished utterly; because there is something that has persisted through all those perishings, namely the species. But if it is individuality itself, selfhood itself, that is to be conceived as 'evolving', what then are we to say has persisted? It can only be the individuality. In other words something called individuality has taken the place of species in the process of evolving. In this case, then, it is not the same species but the same individual that must have persisted through those successive embodiments that reveal its evolution to an observer – becoming, in the process of transformation, gradually more recognisable as what it is today.

And this is something you do not find in the books to which I referred. Not yet.

It is quite extraordinary how many of these inconsistencies and inadequacies quietly disappear if we accept the fact of successive embodiments of an individual human spirit. No need now to play about with hopelessly unscientific fantasies of physically inherited memories in a psychic Unconscious – since the Unconscious brings its own past with it into embodiment. And in that individual spirit – in the Ego as the unconscious kernel of conscious personality, in the transbiographical Ego, which persists from life to life – we have a unity that is capable of actual, and not merely metaphorical, evolution.

There is of course no doubt that what we call 'personality' is psychosomatic. It is inextricably involved with the body and its functions, and particularly with the sense-organs. Men have been well aware of this ever since the study of psychology began. The Greek philosophers were well aware of it, and before them the Hindu sages, and others. What distinguishes our time is our overwhelming awareness of the contribution of the physical component; so that, if we were quite honest, we should be speaking, not of 'psychosomatic' but of 'somatopsychic'. The real issue today is the existence . . . or not . . . and the nature of that kernel of the personality of which we are normally unaware, and which persists through historical and biographical changes. If there is in truth no such kernel, then personality itself is a kind

of illusion; and it would really be better that it should perform the disappearing trick, for it can only be a kind of grit in the smooth machinery of life. So it is felt in many quarters, and with a good deal of justification. So it is argued by the behaviourists, so it is felt, by and large, by those who fall for such movements as the Hippy cult; so it is both felt and argued in a good deal of contemporary art and theory of art.

This acute awareness (which we all have, if we are honest) of the extent to which our consciousness is dependent on the brain and nerves and senses and other bodily functions, is making it particularly difficult for us to conceive of any element in the personality having existed before birth, and perhaps still more difficult to conceive of any persisting after death. Yet if we distinguish, or if we merely remember how we do constantly distinguish, between psyche and soma, the difficulty begins to disappear. For we do distinguish. If we converse with someone who is awake, and then afterwards see him asleep, we cannot help making the distinction. The psyche is still there; but it has ceased to manifest. Psyche and soma, we observe – or soul and body – are differently related at different times; so it is clear that, whatever the relation between the two is, it is not that of indistinguishableness; and it need not, and should not, be so very difficult to conceive of the converse happening in the case of death; or that, because the soma disappears, it does not follow that the psyche disappears with it.

The truth is that the human psychosomatic organism is one in which two elements are interrelated in an infinitely subtle way. In point of fact there are more than two, for we have already had to distinguish between the personality and the 'kernel' of the personality, but let us leave it now at two elements, which are related in a subtle way, and moreover in a way that varies rhythmically with the course of time. An adequate psychology of it would have to pursue the subtlety of that interrelation as far as possible into its physiological and psychological ramifications. It would have to pursue it by *everywhere* systematically distinguishing what cannot be divided. It would have to distinguish – and then to show the relation – between not only psyche and soma in general, but between their different interrelations with each other at different times; to show the different relations between the different parts or functions of the

one and the corresponding parts and functions and systems of the other, and, in doing so, to distinguish and relate those parts and functions and interpenetrating systems themselves, as they are within the one system (the physical body for instance) considered apart from the other. And I must say without hesitation that the only psychology I know which even begins to fulfill those exacting requirements is Rudolf Steiner's psychology and physiology of threefold man. To expound it would need a lecture to itself, or several lectures. Here I am merely stating my opinion that his is the only psychology and physiology, on the basis of which it is possible to understand in any detail the rhythmical variations in the complex interrelation between soul and body which manifest themselves in the sequences of sleeping and waking, of life and death – and indeed of other sequences also.

I regard it as a matter of great importance that we should never lose sight of the vast difference between the oriental concept of reincarnation and the occidental one. The occidental idea of successive embodiments of the individual human spirit is by no means the same as the oriental one of 'reincarnation', though unfortunately it is in the latter form that most people in the West are introduced to it. Whereas the oriental doctrine looks primarily towards the past, the occidental one looks primarily towards the future. This characteristic was clearly stamped on it from its first appearance in the speculative utterances of many western philosophers towards the end of the eighteenth century; but it remained almost wholly speculative until Steiner, by integrating it with his threefold psychology, transformed it into a firmly based interpretation of human existence.

Part and parcel of this integration are many features which markedly distinguish his treatment of repeated terrestrial lives, not only from oriental teaching but also from any other of which I at least have ever heard. As an instance of these, his alone pays as much attention to periods between death and rebirth as it does to periods of life in the body. And this appears to me to be, both psychologically and historically, significant. With the rise of depth-psychology there appeared for the first time in history an attempt, at least, to investigate the sleep-relation between soul and body, as well as their waking relation.

We very badly need a similar move towards focussing on the pre-natal and the post-mortem relation between the two – on the discarnate relation as well as the incarnate one. Indeed, I doubt if anything less than this can re-establish western man's confidence in his free will and the personal responsibility which that alone entails.

At the centre of all Steiner's teachings (or, as I prefer to say, 'findings') there stood what he always referred to as the Mystery of Golgotha; and it follows from almost everything he said that it is because the Being, whom Christians call the Christ and others have called by other names, united himself with the earth at a definite moment of time, and as a historical fact, that history may now be said to be 'in our blood' – or that evolution is in our blood. For Christ actually is the past, not dead, but living in the present and on into the future.

Just because of the heavy pressure technological civilisation is constantly exerting on us to identify with the present moment, that is, to identify with happenings to our senses, happenings of our bodily functions, and even with happenings in the world around us – and thus to disappear as responsible persons – it is essential that the Christ impulse should be increasingly realised in experience. Nor need we absolutely despair of this coming to pass. For what is it that sets us free for that realisation, for that existential encounter? If we look well into it, it is that very pressure of the present moment, of which I have just spoken.

That is the other, and less oppressive, way of looking at what is going on all round us. We are assailed . . . hammered and clamoured on all hands . . . by ever-multiplying sense-impressions and popgun impacts on our nervous systems. Thought perceptions, brief memories light up in us and as quickly vanish again. They are dependent on our brains and nerves and senses; and we are aware of this dependence as perhaps never before in the history of humanity. But it is just because of this *fleeting* nature of our thoughts and perceptions that, although our personalities may seem to consist of them, we are not *determined* by them – that we, in ourselves, are not determined by them – that we ourselves are free. But this freedom is rapidly becoming useless, and even menacing, to us; because, overtly or covertly, we draw from the fleeting nature of our conscious

experience the conclusion that we have, as individuals, no real being. But real being is precisely what is secured to us by our having already existed as units in the past. It is because of this that we are, whether we like it or not, not merely Spirit (as most, though not I believe quite all, of the Buddhist sects, for instance, maintain), but individual spirits. The sense of not-being from which we suffer in our present selves . . . and which gives rise to the anxious question: Do I exist? . . . is the indispensable foundation of our freedom. That this is so was first fully realised by an appreciable number of people only comparatively recently; and the discovery was called Existentialism.

But this freedom gives us no assurance of reality. That is because we should in fact have no reality – we should be mere bundles of stimulated behaviour – if the self had to rely on its present experience for its being. But it does not have to. It experiences its freedom in the fleeting present. It is a real Being because it has an immemorial past and has slowly evolved to be what it is. The moment we recognise and realise this, the rudderless and helplessly drifting 'Do I exist?' is converted into the very guarantee of our freedom and of our obligation to steer; we become, not the free Nothings of Sartrean Existentialism, but free spirits deep-rooted in the past, and responsible to it, growing thence towards the future and responsible for it. It was Rudolf Steiner's conviction, and it has long been mine, that much, if not everything, may depend on how soon the generality of mankind comes to a realisation of this fact. Much that has happened since his death and much that is happening today has contributed to reinforce that conviction.

## BIOGRAPHY AND BEHAVIOUR

JOHN DAVY

AMONG younger people today, it has become common to introduce strangers simply by their Christian names: 'This is David, this is Sue. I'm Geoff.' Older people may easily interpret this as part of a general collapse of customs and conventions that used to regulate orderly social behaviour. But I think there is something else involved. Surnames are inherited; they belong to a family. The Christian name belongs to the individual, and its use at first meeting can perhaps be a sign of a desire and an ability to go straight to meet the individuality of another, irrespective of family, colour, class or any other inherited circumstance.

It is striking that this practice should emerge so strongly at the same time as much talk of an 'identity crisis' and of the depersonalising effects of our technological environment. The individual is intensely aware of the individuality of himself and others, but it also haunted by the gulf between persons and the difficulty of bridging it.

As far as we know, animals never suffer from an identity crisis. Their social life is conservative and well-regulated by instinct; the young are firmly guided by the old, and each one knows his place. Perhaps it is this sense of a more orderly social life among animals which has led to a number of recent books on animal and human behaviour. Desmond Morris's book *The Naked Ape* is a resounding best-seller, and its emphasis is on the instinctual elements which still play into our everyday lives. Morris has an ingenious eye for such elements. He describes the 'grooming' behaviour of apes, a mutual combing and picking over of hair, which is a means by which they achieve togetherness on their own furry level. In man, Morris says, grooming is done with words: the soothing chatter of cocktail parties, the conventional remarks about the weather, all give a reassuring sense of contact through the exchange of small verbal currency.

What Morris does not emphasise is that while grooming is more or less the end of monkey social life, light human chat is only the beginning. Individual relationships may start at a

cocktail party, but their interest is their possibility of much further development. Animal relationships are essentially repetitive, and bound to a system of inherited group behaviour. That remarkable observer, Jane Goodall, has shown that there is indeed a degree of individuality in wild chimpanzee communities: each member of the groups in the Congo forest which she came to know had a recognisable 'character'. Yet she reports little that could legitimately be called a 'biography'. For each 'character' lived out a more or less recurring cycle of events each year, altered only by illness and death, or by changes in the environment (such as the arrival of Miss Goodall with a large supply of bananas). The 'personality' and behaviour of each chimpanzee is shaped by its heredity and its environment, which weave together to produce a complex and well-ordered tapestry. In so far as there is development in time, it is to be found more at the level of the group as a whole, in its relationship to other neighbouring groups and to the territories they inhabit.

Biographies of human beings are interesting just in so far as they are not repetitive, but reveal some development, either inward or outward, over a long span. Historically, our present vivid sense for individual personalities and their biographies appears to be quite new. Any librarian will tell you that there is today an immense appetite for biography, and for novels. Both are essentially concerned to explore the subtleties of developing human personalities and relationships.

But despite these obvious and intense modern feelings for the unique quality of each human life, received scientific opinion is that human individuality and behaviour are wholly shaped by the interaction of heredity and environment, precisely as in animals. The most influential schools of psychology and sociology differ mainly in the emphasis they put on one or the other, and in their vocabulary. Thus psychoanalytical thinking tends to stress the inherited biological drives, while behaviourists stress the learning processes brought about by the environment. Psychoanalysts tend to trace the disorders of behaviour and personality to damage inflicted by an environment which inhibits biological urges (notably sexual ones), while behaviourists hold that the environment has been inadequately arranged and so has produced 'inappropriate learning'.

Psychoanalysts have begun to explore common ground with ethology, the modern school of animal behaviour study which starts from observation of natural animal communities, so that the interaction of instinct and environment can be studied in their proper relationship. This has led to experimental work indicating, for example, similar crippling effects on later social and sexual behaviour in both monkeys and men, if infants are separated from their mothers.

Behaviourists, by contrast, are more interested in the possibilities of moulding behaviour by appropriate training. Perhaps the most influential living behaviourist is Professor B. F. Skinner, of Harvard. He has developed a powerful technique of moulding behaviour by 'operant conditioning'. Where the famous Russian physiologist, Pavlov, was concerned to condition *reflexes* – automatic movements elicited by the experimenter – Skinner makes use of 'spontaneous' movements, or 'responses', which are then moulded by a system of rewards. He has often demonstrated this technique in an elementary form at lectures. A pigeon in a cage is rewarded with a grain of wheat every time it lifts its head above a certain height. Soon it is lifting its head more often. Then the reward comes only when the head is lifted and turned to the right. Soon this movement is also more frequent. In a quite short space of time, the pigeon can be induced to perform a complicated ritual of movements to get each grain. The same basic procedure is built into the 'teaching machines' now being widely used in schools and colleges. Here the reward is not a grain of corn, but some sign from the machine that the student's response to a question was correct.

This points to the fact that for strict behaviourists like Skinner, the whole realm of an individual's inner life and experience (which is the main focus of interest for psychoanalysis) is obscure and irrelevant, since it is inaccessible to exact observation and measurement. External 'responses', on the other hand, can be counted and tabulated, and so comprise the only legitimate matter for a scientific psychology. On this view, education is not a matter of enriching experience, unfolding talents or even accumulating knowledge, but simply of conditioning appropriate responses in various situations. Even language, according to Skinner, should not be regarded

as a means by which a human being can enter into the inner world of another, but simply as an elaborate system of conditioned responses. The conditioning starts in infancy as the child begins to get rewarding smiles and hugs when it makes particular noises.

It should be said that people who have studied the extraordinary way in which language is born in small children do not accept this view. Behaviour of great complexity develops in a very short time – far too short to be accounted for without referring to some deep inner capacities of the human being which answer to the speech in their surroundings.

Nevertheless, for all its limitations, and what Dr John Beloff has called 'a certain unmistakable silliness',<sup>1</sup> the techniques and outlook of behaviourism have been, and continue to be, very influential. From this point of view, a person's biography is simply a chain of 'responses' he gives to various external situations. And the pain, suffering and disorder in human life are either fortuitous, or the outcome of 'inappropriate' responses, perhaps caused by inappropriate conditioning earlier on.

In 1948, Skinner published a novel, *Walden II*, in which he imagined a utopian community in a remote area of the United States, entirely regulated by social engineering based on behavioural psychology. The initiator and designer of this community, an irascible genius called Frazier, is continually challenged in the book by a visiting academic called Castle, a man full of reactionary concern about things like freedom. Towards the end, Castle and Frazier have a long debate about the fundamental basis of *Walden II*, in which Castle says that no society can be engineered without some *intention*. *Walden II*, he charged, in effect embodies the intentions of Frazier, who is simply a modern Machiavelli, manipulating the community's inhabitants by invisible threads. What about freedom, Castle asks? Who is to guarantee that Frazier's techniques are used for good and not for evil? And what principles are to guide the users?

To this, Frazier replies in two ways. First, he denies that man is free in any way (and adds revealingly that to admit freedom would mean abandoning any possibility of a *science*

<sup>1</sup> John Beloff, *The Existence of Mind*, 1962.

of human behaviour: 'You cannot have a science about a subject matter which hops capriciously about'). And secondly, he describes his ultimate ethic as a combination of common-sense and experiment. Most men, he argues, will agree that happiness is better than unhappiness, affluence better than poverty, pleasure better than pain, comfort better than discomfort, and so on. Social engineering has merely to steer experimentally in the right direction, adhering to whatever makes for contentment, abandoning all practices which produce discontent. What further ethic is needed? Finally, Frazier argues passionately that we already manipulate and are manipulated, that an effective science of behavioural engineering already exists, and that our problem is to use its techniques for the benefit of all. He adds that unlike previous dictatorships, which were based on fear and punishment, the new powers are based on *reward*. Frazier claims that Jesus was the first to discover 'the power of refusing to punish'. The principle of 'love your enemies' allows the weaker, in the long run, to control the behaviour of the stronger (assuming he understands the principle of 'reinforcing' desired responses).

Much of *Walden II* is naïve, and coloured with the same unmistakable 'silliness' of behaviourism itself. But there is nothing silly about the techniques it uses, nor about the temptations embodied in their use. An ethologist who is aware of the wonderful subtleties of pigeon communities in nature will recognise a bird's antics in a 'Skinner box' as a distorted caricature of its natural behaviour. But it is undeniable that the bird's behaviour has been very rapidly and efficiently moulded in accordance with the experimenter's intentions, exploiting not fear or pain, but simply the animal's appetite for grain. In human society, the 'ethic of contentment', of pleasure and happiness, is implicit in advertising, in the massive use of pills, and there is the greatest difficulty in coming to terms with pain, suffering and death. And despite the intense interest in individual relationships and biography, and the Christian name habit among the young, there is a great uncertainty about the source and nature of the essential humanity of each one, and about the meaning, if any, of what he goes through during life.

In *Walden II*, these questions are answered, in effect, by

denying any particular *personal* meaning to a biography, by planning for contentment while denying any reality to freedom, and by creating a pattern of life which has no particular future beyond ironing out any remaining flaws in the social machine.

In a less mechanical and extreme form, animal species may live a life not far from that of Walden II, although their society has been 'engineered' not by a human behaviourist but through a long period of evolutionary collaboration between inherited instinct and the natural environment. The 'biography' of an animal type follows a definite course. Where some new genetic and environmental possibilities open up, there will be a period of rapid evolution and change, often leading to the formation of new species, each growing into a closer relation with some 'environmental niche'. The trend is towards increasing specialisation – for example of feeding habits – until a relatively stable situation is reached, intimately adjusted to fine details of the particular environment. Many of the 'wonders of natural history' which find their way into books describe these very specialised, end-of-the-road biological situations, where a highly specialised species lives 'contentedly', often in some very curious way. (Think, for example, of a beetle called *Lomechusa* which feeds exclusively on ant larvae, and pays for its meals in the ants' nest by secreting a fluid which the ants lap up greedily.)

But the other characteristic of such situations is that they are extremely vulnerable to slight changes in the environment. The specialised species lives always on the brink of extinction. In terms of a biological biography, it has reached a kind of rigid old age, genetically sclerotic and unable to meet new circumstances. In this respect, the human species offers some remarkable contrasts. To begin with, man is physically the least specialised among his anatomical relatives, the higher vertebrates. He retains into adult life many features – notably his unspecialised hands – which animals lose before or soon after birth. Comparisons of the embryos and infant stages of man with vertebrate animals show dramatically how the latter, in their actual anatomy, grow away from a more human form into some kind of specialisation. At the same time, their lives become bound up with elaborate and inherited patterns of

instinctive behaviour, intimately connected with the organism, which may be elicited and shaped, but are not created, by the environment.

In man, by contrast, there are some infant reflexes (like sucking at the nipple) and some rather uncertain phenomena vaguely known as 'maternal instinct'. There is an instinctive element in sexual and other behaviour which is closely bound up with the physiological state of the organism. But in comparison with animals, man is born into the world with very little built-in behavioural equipment for everyday life. He has to learn it all, over and over again, with each generation.

But there is one remarkable feature of early childhood which is like the expression of an instinct – but an instinct which goes in a quite different direction to anything found in the animal kingdom. Within a few months, around the age of two, the child stands upright, begins to talk, and in his talk begins to reveal a dawning capacity to think. Researchers have been deeply impressed by the force with which these capacities emerge. They are obviously influenced by the environment. A child born weightless, in a spacecraft, would probably never learn to stand, since this skill is born out of a struggle with gravity. Children born completely deaf, do not speak; but it has been observed that if the merest fragments of language can reach a deaf child through some hearing aid, it will quickly learn the complexities of speech (even if its speech is imperfect). And children growing up in extreme deprivation – who perhaps hear little more than monosyllables for much of their infancy – nevertheless master the basic structure and use of their language. Thinking capacities awaken in all human beings with healthy bodies, although here again, the language and thinking habits of the adults around them greatly affect the full development of these capacities.

But what is remarkable is that all three capacities, although they are in a sense the particular 'specialisations' of the human species, work in the opposite direction to animal instincts: they enhance rather than limit freedom. Standing upright brings physical freedom to the upper part of the body, particularly to the hands and arms, with their extreme anatomical versatility. Thinking and reflective memory allow the inner life to be freed from the here and now, to roam space and time beyond the

immediate situation of the body in space and its experiences of the moment. And language mediates, allowing the memories and reflections of one man to be passed to another, novelty to flow into society not through genetic mutations but through innovations in thought, and accumulated experience to be passed on by word of mouth, thus broadening, not narrowing, the possibilities open to later generations.

Furthermore, if the development of the child is followed, we find that the assertion of free individuality often resists and transforms what it inherits in this non-biological, non-genetic, purely human environment. In adolescence, in particular, the individual struggles to find a *personal* relationship to surrounding society, and this often means throwing off the inherited family connections. During adult life, too, in making a place in the world, the individual is often as much engaged in *transforming* what he has inherited in the society around him as in working within it. These struggles are particularly characteristic of the modern age, even if they have been a crucial and transforming element for many centuries. In particular, they are linked with the dawn of the scientific age, when men began to insist on developing their *own* ideas, checked with their own experiments, rather than relying on the inherited authorities of the past.

Rudolf Steiner drew attention to these phenomena again and again, when he was trying to awaken an understanding of the present evolutionary situation of man. For out of his spiritual perceptions, it was for him not a theory but an observable fact that with each human being, we are in the presence of an individual entity, to which each person refers uniquely when he used the word 'I'. This 'I' or Ego is created neither out of the physical environment nor out of the biological heredity, but has an entirely individual history and destiny of its own. Steiner could perceive that this history and destiny develops through successive incarnations into earthly conditions, separated by intervals of purely spiritual existence, during which the fruits of one life are transformed into the seeds for another. In describing the spiritual laws of cause and effect which play from one life into the next, Steiner borrowed the Eastern term 'karma'. In Steiner's account of karma, it becomes apparent that in each human biography we can

learn to recognise a purely spiritual 'heredity' and a purely human 'environment' made up of other human individualities. These need an inherited biological organism and a sustaining physical environment to unfold, but develop by transforming them rather than by living bound to them, which is the essential situation of the animals.

It is just in the modern age, Steiner said, when the experience of, and struggle for, individuality are reaching a height of intensity, that these spiritual facts need to become known. For one thing, it will be virtually impossible to make a right use of the powers of social and psychological control which Skinner quite rightly says are emerging, without some comprehension of the meaning of individual human lives. For Walden II, if it were to be realised, could be a peculiarly powerful means of preventing the unfolding of any individual destiny, since it is just the transforming impulses of the incarnating Ego which would work most disruptively in a smoothly-working social machine, and which would have to be 'engineered' into a smooth conformism.

But beyond this it is only some understanding of the spiritual laws of cause and effect which manifest in individual biographies that can enable us to come to some comprehension of pain and suffering. Here, too, the tranquilliser and pain-killing ethos of Walden II could bring a radical interference with experiences which each individual needs, at a very deep level, for further evolution.

At this stage, I must describe, briefly and rather schematically, how Steiner describes the working of karma, and then ask if we can find any phenomena within our daily experience which meet his descriptions. In speaking of these matters, Steiner often referred to two familiar features of daily life, sleep, and forgetting. We pass one third of our lives unconscious of the world of waking life. Yet the eight-hour gaps in each twenty-four hours do not separate each day from the next. When we wake up in the morning, our memory allows us to take up where we left off the evening before, surrounded by all kinds of circumstances which we have ourselves played a part in creating. Similarly, when we 'wake up' at birth to a new physical life, Steiner says, we enter into the results of circumstances which we have ourselves created in previous lives. Why, though, do

we not remember these, as we remember the previous days in daily life?

During our lives, we learn a great many skills, and the learning involves a remarkable and mysterious transforming process, whereby the skill goes into the limbs. We forget the conscious and often painful learning process, and the skill becomes part of us. The great clown Grock used to have a hilarious act in which he suddenly became self-conscious about the physical act of playing the violin, and thus became a learner again, trying out various ways of holding the bow and the instrument in frustrated bewilderment. Those skills which are most our own are united with part of ourselves where we are, during the day, deeply asleep or unconscious, the realm of our will. It is perhaps for this reason that we often feel the need to 'sleep on' some important decision. The wide-awake thinking consciousness can survey and balance, weigh pros and cons, but it can also paralyse decision (Hamlet, the man who could not decide, was 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought'). To act, we must digest our reflections into the will, where the real decisions are made (Steiner says that to spiritual perception, the will is 'awake' at night while thinking sleeps).

This may help us to imagine the mysterious process Steiner describes whereby the harvest of one life's experiences is gathered up and transformed during the life between death and a new birth, to be implanted as a kind of body of decisions, working deep within the will in a new life. Thus when an individual is born, he brings with him a spiritual 'heredity' in the form of impulses and spiritual 'skills' which have grown out of previous lives. But he also brings decisions to find his 'spiritual environment', to meet those people with whom he has been previously connected, and to meet the consequences of past actions in which, with them, he had been involved. It is the working of this aspect of human destiny which we find particularly difficult to understand. We experience our actions as radiating out from ourselves, simply impinging on whoever we encounter. Yet Steiner describes how the 'decisions' taken before birth, and now built into our unconscious wills, carry us through life from encounter to encounter, meeting again those with whom we had something to do in previous lives. Each such encounter then has a twofold aspect: we bring something

to it out of the past; and we are presented with an opportunity to act into the future. It is the nature of these opportunities, according to Steiner, that they always offer the possibility to make good or balance out some past harm done to another, or to develop further some fruitful action. Yet at each moment of meeting, where the past culminates, the *future* is not determined: in each such moment, the individual can begin to be aware of the possibility of free action.

It is rare to become aware of these unconscious workings of the will. Perhaps some dim experience is expressed when people say 'I brought it on myself', or when a person, looking back, recognises that his life has brought him to face a particular type of situation again and again.

But to explore this meeting-point of past and future more closely, we should examine some features of any human encounter in more detail. Almost every meeting, if we observe ourselves honestly, is deeply coloured with some form of self-seeking – a mood, seldom fully conscious, of 'what's in this for me?'. The actions which spring from such a mood can swing to one of two extremes. One extreme takes the form of a desire to make an impression of some kind, to dazzle or cow the other so that he becomes an acolyte, a faithful follower content to bask in the glory of one's own shining personality. The other extreme is the desire to manipulate, to conquer by cunning or flattery, to take advantage of the other's weaknesses, invisible to himself but obvious to one's own superior intellect. (This is the egotism of which Castle accuses Frazier in *Walden II*, which tends to make the other not an acolyte but a puppet.)

Lucifer

Ahriman

One effect of either extreme is obvious: the freedom of the other is reduced or abolished. In most of our encounters we may avoid such extremes – but if there is any shadow of either in any human transaction, the possibility of freedom is darkened. There are few meetings wholly without such shadows – and their effect is to obscure the light which should shine in the will at each moment of free choice.

From this point of view, we can perhaps begin to perceive what Steiner had to say about karma as a kind of social medicine, increasingly needed today as our human encounters occur, more and more, 'on Christian name terms'. In a society no longer supported by inherited custom and tradition, we

meet increasingly face to face, in naked individuality. We may come to each meeting seeing the other individual as a bundle of conditioned responses to be manipulated for our own contentment, or as a foil for our own self-realisation. Or we may come with some awareness of a profound question: 'Who am I meeting?'

If Steiner's account is followed through, there is a sense in which each person encounters, in each meeting, a part of himself in the other person, who is bringing to him consequences of his own past actions. And to each other person, the individual brings something through which that one can grow beyond his spiritual 'heredity', can transform the consequences of past actions into the seeds of future ones. Thus the wholeness of each biography is only created through the meeting of what one individual brings with that which others bring to him. And he brings part of their biography to each one whom he meets. Each is dependent on the readiness of the other to create a free space, so to speak, into which his own will can act into the future. And each is dependent on the capacity of the other to act unshadowed by the self-seeking which will block or cripple the will of the other.

If we were to become fully aware of this as a factual reality, it would clearly transform human relationships most deeply. We should become aware that every form of self-seeking and egotistical exercise of power can only obscure, distort or interrupt the spiritual 'exchange of gifts' which can occur in each meeting, and through which each can grow. It would also allow us to come to some understanding of pain and suffering. For many encounters, however much openness of heart is brought to them, may be painful. Steiner describes in detail how various forms of egotism in one life are offered an opportunity of cure through painful experiences in another. This does not mean that we should seek suffering, or tolerate it (these are particularly pernicious forms of egotism). But to receive sorrow caused by others without hate, or to inflict it out of some compelling circumstance in full awareness and compassion, are ideals which we may seldom achieve, but whose redemptive possibilities we can at least acknowledge and perhaps strive for.

It is one thing to understand these possibilities in a general way, if one is ready to follow Steiner's descriptions. It is

another to discover their manifestations in life, in some concrete form. For it is clear that all mere speculation about karma and destiny can lead into gross illusions, and a particularly potent form of egotism (a remarkable number of people who have become interested in their past lives seem to 'remember' that they were Mary, Queen of Scots, or Julius Caesar).

Steiner himself described various phenomena and exercises to help forward an awareness of our spiritual heredity and environment. I would like to describe one simple, common, but elusive experience, which is perhaps relevant. Our first encounter with anyone is usually as a physical appearance. We often make instant judgments, based on the shape of his nose, his smile, his voice, or other physical features. We may be right – but we can be appallingly wrong, and the consequences of such misjudgments and the processes of revising them may be painful. We meet more intimately in conversation, which allows us to exchange thoughts and memories, to build up a picture of the other which extends through space and time, beyond his immediate physical presence. Here, too, misjudgments may intervene; but we may also have to cope with strong feelings: various things about the other person get on one's nerves, or one may be so deeply impressed by some aspect of his character that one becomes blind to his faults. In a long-standing relationship, such veils of misunderstanding can often be gradually cleared away. But then, especially during a long and intimate association, there may grow up something deeper, an awareness of the essential essence and shape of the other's being, a kind of intuitive knowledge of what it is like to be him. It is here that the greatest rewards and the greatest problems arise. On the one hand, there may grow, in a successful marriage, a deep friendship, a long partnership, an intimacy in which the separateness of two individuals can join, so to speak, into a greater whole, without any loss of the individual capacities of each. But it may also happen that there is a dawning realisation that the deepest being of the other has a different life direction, that his sleeping will is moving in some diverging path, that a parting is inevitable. In such experiences, we perhaps come nearest to perceiving consciously the hidden 'decisions' and karmic relationships playing in from before birth and from previous lives. Such a recognition may not

minimise the pain – but it may fortify the spirit and enable the ‘decision’ to unfold in freedom.

Finally, Steiner’s descriptions of karma lead one step further. I have already mentioned the problem of comprehending how our personal wills, which we experience as centred within ourselves, can lead us through the world, perhaps across thousands of miles, to encounters which are part of our destiny. It seems clear that if this can happen, it must be because there is an aspect of our will which is not point-centred, but which lives, so to speak, spread out over the whole of mankind, and is aware of time and space in a quite different fashion. Our ordinary consciousness, which is itself point-like, and looks out from our skulls, can only comprehend such a possibility with the greatest difficulty. Some help may be found, as Steiner indicated, in certain aspects of projective geometry, in which a point-centred entity can be transformed, by a rigorous mathematical procedure, into an entity defined by infinite planes. Through such a transformation, something which is in one aspect in a particular physical place may in another aspect be everywhere in an encircling plane.

Perhaps this can help us imagine an aspect of our individual spiritual will which lives differently with space and time, aware in some way of all the other wills with which it is connected. But in this ‘peripheral’ aspect of our will, we encounter a further Will, in which the individual will is received by a Will which embraces the whole of mankind.

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned the verbal ‘grooming’ at cocktail parties. But such parties can also see the beginnings of many crucial human relationships. And here, one individual, the host, can play a crucial part. The good host is the person who can perceive something of the true individuality of each guest, and make introductions out of which deep relationships can flower. His task is to sense the whole constellation of guests he has invited, and the human possibilities they offer to each other. Through such wise guidance a party can become meaningful; without it, the human relationships may remain at the level of ‘grooming’.

Perhaps this small image may help in understanding the working of that mediating Will which Rudolf Steiner says is now to be found embracing the destiny of all mankind. He

expressed this in a few lines of the great central meditation of anthroposophy which he gave towards the end of his life. These lines, translated, say:

For the Christ-Will in the encircling Round holds sway  
In the Rhythms of the Worlds, blessing the Soul.

The working of karma, as described by Steiner, is a rhythmic process, reflected in daily life in waking and sleeping, experiencing and forgetting, and coming to full expression in the great rhythms of incarnation into the physical world and exarnation into the spiritual world. The healing of each man’s karma can only be found if his point-centred will can meet what his encircling will, embraced and guided by the Christ Will, brings to meet him (while he is himself embedded in the encircling will of all those others whom he will encounter). It is through the working of this encircling Will that each meeting, if encountered with openness of mind and heart, can be recognised as shining with a golden light of free spiritual opportunity, a blessing for the soul. In this light, a human biography shines out as far more than behaviour. It is a light which can give courage to find the meaning in suffering, rather than seeking the oblivion of Walden II; a light which is beginning to shine more strongly as individuals strive to meet truly on Christian name terms.

MISTLETOE THERAPY FOR CANCER<sup>1</sup>

DIETRICH BOIE

IN 1970 half a century will have passed since Rudolf Steiner described in his first course for physicians, *Spiritual Science and Medicine*, how anthroposophical spiritual science is able to give new impulses to medicine. These lectures contain detailed descriptions of the nature of cancer, and of mistletoe as the remedy for it. Bellmann and Daems have been able to show, in a medical-historical monograph, that Rudolf Steiner was the first to regard mistletoe as a remedy for cancer (*Sudhoff's Archiv* 49, 1965, Heft 4). In the life work of Rudolf Steiner this discovery, described at length for the first time in 1920, had been prepared from the beginning of the century. Of the nearly 6000 lectures held by Rudolf Steiner, 57 have been found up to now, containing descriptions of the mistletoe, of the nature of cancer, and of mistletoe therapy for it.

*Mistletoe – relic of an ancient condition of the earth*

It is described in these lectures that the mistletoe is a plant which has remained at a stage appropriate to an earlier condition of the evolution of the earth, before the solid, mineral earth had yet hardened. Rudolf Steiner, from his spiritual research, described this earlier condition of the earth as a planet which contained as its lowest kingdom of nature the 'Plant-minerals'. They stood at a stage of development between our present minerals and plants, and formed the viscous, living fundamental mass of the planet, upon which the next higher kingdom, the 'Animal-plants', lived. To these the mistletoe once belonged. But it did not evolve upon our present earth, as did the rest of the 'Animal-plants', into the full animal condition. It remained at its earlier stage of development. In order to live upon our earth, it went through a regressive process. It remained more a plant rather than becoming animal. But it could not grow roots in a mineralised ground, as do the plants of the earth. This ground had arisen through the separation of

a lifeless kingdom out of the realm of the 'Plant-minerals', while a living realm ascended into the plant condition. Thus mistletoe had to find a living ground on the trees, for which it became a parasite.

*The mistletoe in Norse mythology*

Norse mythology contains in the tragic history of the god Baldur indications that our ancestors knew about the history of the mistletoe. Rudolf Steiner showed through his spiritual-scientific exposition of the Baldur story how the modern practice of decorating rooms with mistletoe at Christmas is derived from our ancestors; his description throws light on part of the way followed by the development of the human consciousness.

Pliny (Lib. XVI, 95) records that the oak was sacred to the Druids, and that objects used in religious ritual were made from its wood. Particularly holy for the Druids was an oak which bore a mistletoe. Pliny derives the name of the 'Druids' from the Greek word for oak.

Rudolf Steiner says that the Druid priests were themselves called 'oaks'. This indicated that the priest had achieved through his initiation a level of consciousness that united him with the universe. The tree is related to that ancient condition of the earth which has been described; it embodies a 'living earth'. From this ancient condition of the earth is also inherited that consciousness, to which the Druid priest was led through his initiation: the ancient clairvoyance. But the oak was for the Druids a tree which expressed this old condition in a particular way. Rudolf Steiner called that part of the history of the earth, during which that ancient condition of our planet which has been described was still present in its effects, the 'Mars period' of the earth. But the oak represents the planetary influence of Mars upon the world of trees. When in addition mistletoe grew upon a tree this was regarded as a divine gift, because the mistletoe as a relic which had remained behind from the ancient planet, with its living ground, was at the same time for the Druids something embodying ancient clairvoyance. For it was in this pictorial consciousness that the forerunners of men had lived upon that ancient planet.

The Druids could only achieve the development of this old

<sup>1</sup> Based on work supported by the Rudolf Steiner Fund for Scientific Research and by the Society for Cancer Research, Arlesheim, Switzerland.

clairvoyance, which was already disappearing, through their initiation. Thus the mistletoe was sacred to them as embodying a condition of consciousness of a cosmic, paradisaic kind, through which they could look into the spiritual foundations of natural existence. 'The only book which existed was the universe itself' (Rudolf Steiner in a lecture, 10th September 1923, Collected Edition No. 228).

According to Rudolf Steiner's description, the 'Mars' period of the earth was followed by the 'Mercury' period. This began with the development of human thinking out of the dreamlike ancient pictorial consciousness, which became more and more difficult to achieve. One expression of this development was the appearance of written characters (runes).

A complete embodiment of the new element in the development of the human consciousness is Baldur, the son of the god Odin. (Odin = Wotan = Mercury.) Baldur embodies the clear, waking day consciousness. According to Rudolf Steiner the name of Baldur comes from 'bal day', bright day. With the twilight of the old clairvoyance the significance of mistletoe also changes. While earlier it had been sacred, because it reminded man of his cosmic past simply by its appearance, it now became a symbol for the forces of retrogression, even a physical weapon against progress. The god Loki, lord of parasites, who hates progress, gives the unknowing, blind brother of Baldur a spear made of a mistletoe branch to throw against Baldur. Since all creatures had sworn before the gods not to do Baldur any harm, the gods played a game with Baldur, throwing at him all kinds of weapons, knowing that these could do him no hurt. But the gods had forgotten to require the oath from the mistletoe, growing upon a tree, and thus the blind Hodur had to kill his brother with Loki's mistletoe spear.

This story indicates the tragedy accompanying the development of human thinking. Hodur embodies that thinking which has only been developed to the full in our time, and which achieves indeed great exactitude, but only grasps external sensory facts, and has become blind for the deeper connections in the world. Those great demands upon thinking which are made by the period of materialism were too much for the young power of thought that lived in Baldur and was just beginning to develop in humanity. Baldur had still too much that

belonged to the stage preceding this power of thought, the period of ancient vision. And so Baldur had to die through the representative of this ancient vision, the mistletoe.

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In this short study the significance of the mistletoe for the Christmas festival cannot be considered in detail. (See this writer's *Mistel und Krebs im Lebenswerk Rudolf Steiners*, Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart.) Here need only be said that the story of Baldur does not end with his death. The myth speaks of a time when after the twilight of the gods Baldur will return to a new world and with his brother Hodur will occupy the thrones of the gods in peace. And the re-awakener of Baldur is the divine child born at Christmas. Baldur too finds in him the overcoming of death, the achievement of resurrection. This indicates that human thinking must overcome the stage at which it is only a dead reflection of sensory phenomena, and through a new power grow so strong, that it can unite the sensory world and the spiritual world so as to gain knowledge of full reality.

Steiner's philosophical writings indicate a way towards such thinking through the spiritual power of the 'I'; for there is hidden in the higher self of man a spiritual power, which can develop through training. It reveals itself as the spiritual seed, which the awakener of Baldur has implanted in every man through his conquest of death.

Through this new thinking, mistletoe was discovered by Rudolf Steiner as a remedy for cancer. Thereby mistletoe, from its retarded place in nature, has been put in the service of a progressing evolution. It can be said that it has been redeemed from the curse of Loki; it may indeed, through the hand of the doctor, work as a redeemer.

#### *Cancer in the light of anthroposophy*

From this point of view, a human being who suffers from cancer is a Baldur, bearing death within him, in order to overcome it in life. For the man of the present day carries death in his consciousness, when this only reflects sensory perception. Cancer has become an illness of our time, because it extends

this death-process of consciousness, which has its positive significance in the realm of the head, through the body. This is not only the result of the fact that a 'blind thinking' has necessarily led to the industrial production of carcinogenic substances, which meet us everywhere. Cancer is also a symbol of the crisis in which the development of human consciousness is now standing.

In the lectures for physicians held by Rudolf Steiner, he described cancer as 'a sense organ in the wrong place'. The human sense organs, and in particular the eye and the ear, can be compared with a physical apparatus. To a considerable extent they are deprived of organic life, having little capacity for regeneration (which liver tissue, for example, has to such a high degree). Only in pathological conditions, through pain, are we conscious of our sense organs themselves. In health we experience through our sense organs the world, not our senses. This fact shows that the spirit and soul of man does not live in the sense organs within the physical body but outside it, in the world that is perceived. Man's spirit, his soul, and the formative forces of his body do not work *within* the sense organs, but they are here active outside the body, working, to use Rudolf Steiner's expression, in a body-free way. The resemblance of the sense organs to a purely physical apparatus is due to this fact; the physical body is here to a great extent independent – one might say that it is 'left alone'.

If a constitution of this kind, which is necessary in the sense organs, is transferred to other parts of the body, then part of an organ becomes too independent in relation to the formative forces that animate it and in relation to the subconscious and unconscious forces of the soul and spirit working in the body, which fill it with breath, put a limit to the activities of growth, and define the form. Such an independence in part of the physical body leads to a failure by this part to range itself within the whole. The physical body, where it has grown independent, begins an excessive growth, rebelling against the human form.

If we consider the relationship of man's physical body to the solid condition of the earth, it can be understood that Rudolf Steiner said that the human being, when a cancer is formed, becomes 'earth' to too great an extent, has over-powerful

earthly forces within him. For another reason as well, this comparison is appropriate. If a human being lives too strongly in his consciousness in the external sense-impressions, and is not able to assimilate them spiritually, they become oppressive to him. He loses his own true being, and becomes thereby too strongly nothing but 'earth'. The constitution of the sense organs extends beyond the region appropriate to them to the rest of man's being.

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From this point of view it becomes comprehensible that cancer can be called an illness of later life. With increasing age, the living formative forces, and those of the soul, are gradually withdrawn from the body, and begin to prepare man's 'body-free' existence. The danger of the physical body becoming partially independent is thus greater in later life than say in middle life. But we should note that a single point of view is not applicable in the same way for every person suffering from cancer, but that on the contrary the many possibilities for the origin of cancer must be examined, if the illness of a particular individual is to be understood.

For example, in apparent contradiction to the description 'illness of later life', leucaemia and cancer are those diseases which cause the greatest number of deaths among children in the first years of life, as examination of the statistics shows. In the civilised countries, the mortality statistics place accidents as the principal cause of death among children; as second cause there follow leucaemia and cancer.

From the point of view of anthroposophical medicine this can be understood, if we consider that the child's constitution in the first years of life is not yet so firmly established that the individual human formative forces can protect it against the harmful influences of an industrial environment, which are absorbed through food, water and air – if we take into account for the moment only one of the main causes of cancer and leucaemia during childhood. Here the physical body is in its entirety a sensitive 'sense-organ', possessing great potential forces of growth which can easily lose their form. Thus the mortality through leucaemia in childhood is noticeably higher in highly industrialised regions than in those with little industry. A

distribution of this kind has been shown statistically for England and Wales (Hevitt, D., *J. Prevent. Soc. Med.* 9, 1955, 81).

#### *Mistletoe as remedy for cancer*

Why mistletoe is the remedy for cancer can be shown to begin with from an evolutionary point of view. While in a human being who suffers from cancer parts of the organism develop too quickly, mistletoe is a plant that has remained behind in its evolution. Mistletoe has the power to hold back a development in the diseased parts of the body which is proceeding too quickly. And while a human being suffering from cancer becomes 'earth' to too great a degree, mistletoe is a plant which refuses to inhabit the mineralised earth. It holds back the tendency in man of becoming too strongly, too entirely an earthly being.

The healing influence of mistletoe upon cancer can be understood from a second point of view, if one thinks of cancer as a sense-organ developing in the wrong place. As we saw, the constitution of a sense-organ consists in a part of the physical body becoming independent, while consciousness and the processes of life connected with this organ are directed outwards. The roots of a plant can be compared with the human sense organs and brain. Spiritually, man is rooted in the outer world in his sense-perception and thought. The plant is rooted materially in the earthly soil. But mistletoe has no true roots, but peculiar 'suckers' which draw water and salts from the cambium of the host tree, and even within the dark wood preserve their brilliant green colour. This is one of many examples which show that mistletoe has no inclination to connect itself with the lifeless earth, and thus form dying organs itself. Instead it cultivates the condition of the young shoot, which is related to the human metabolic region. Thus mistletoe as a remedy draws the activities which give growth form, and permeate it with breath, into those parts of the human organism which have acquired in a pathological way a constitution comparable to that of the sense organs. The effect of mistletoe upon cancer consists in arousing the activity of individual forces of resistance in the human organism against the foreign element which seeks to develop within it. If this remedy is given in the right dosage, this process can show itself in a slight increase of bodily temperature, a return of metabolic processes

and sleep to a normal condition, as well as in the reduction of pain, which is itself an enhanced process of consciousness in the wrong place.

The effects of mistletoe have been investigated pharmacologically in recent years particularly by Dr F. Vester and his fellow-workers at the Max Planck Institute for Albumen and Leather Research, Munich. It was shown that some constituents of mistletoe have an effect inhibiting tumour growth, a 'cancerostatic' effect, even in much smaller quantities than had been known up to then with any cancerostatic agent. The investigation showed at the same time that these constituents of mistletoe are very sensitive to deterioration in their biological effect. Even very slight influences can remove this effect or make it toxic (*Hoppe-Seylers Z. Physiol. Chem. Bd.* 349, April 1968).

In anthroposophical cancer therapy the remedial influence of mistletoe was ascribed from the first not to particular constituent substances, but to qualities of the mistletoe plant as a whole. Thus the remedy was produced by a new procedure which Rudolf Steiner suggested. This procedure is very complicated, and a considerable number of anthroposophical physicians and scientists are working to improve it.

#### *The development and results of the therapy*

As early as 1908 M. Ritter approached Rudolf Steiner with the request for advice in preparing a remedy for carcinoma. Rudolf Steiner advised a preparation from the apple-tree mistletoe. In the winter of 1916-17 the Dutch physician, Dr Ita Wegman, working in Zürich, began to use at Rudolf Steiner's suggestion a mistletoe preparation as an injection in cancer therapy. It was during these months Rudolf Steiner indicated for the first time the therapeutical aspect of a treatment for cancer by means of the mistletoe. The first recorded example of such treatment was begun in 1917 by Dr Wegman and took a very successful course.

The course for physicians in 1920, already mentioned, caused Dr Wegman to move her practice from Zürich to Basel, and to found in 1921 the 'Klinisch-Therapeutische Institut' at Arlesheim, near Basel. From this institution the mistletoe therapy for cancer began to take its way into the world.

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The first machine for the production of the remedy was constructed by Dr C. Unger while Rudolf Steiner was still alive. After his death in 1925, it was Dr E. Schickler (1895-1963) and P. E. Schiller, who undertook to make an entirely new approach to the problem of production. Their machine was used up to 1932. Dr Schickler was the first to publish some thirty-three case histories. Dr W. Kaelin, who is still active in Arlesheim as physician and as president of the Society for Cancer Research, made the development of the cancer remedy and its therapeutic use his life task. He published in 1930 the first book on mistletoe therapy for cancer, and in 1933 a report with fourteen case histories of its successful use (*Hippokrates*, 10, 1933). He developed from 1930, on the basis of Dr Unger's and Dr Schickler's experience, a new machine for production, working with Mr Buchheim and with his colleague Dr G. Suchantke (1902-58). Their machine served up to 1945 for the production of the remedy, and brought a great advance in the therapy.

In 1934 Dr A. Leroi (1906-68) joined Kaelin as a fellow worker. He founded in 1949 the institute 'Hiscia', close to the Klinisch-Therapeutische Institut in Arlesheim. It is particularly due to his work in the years that followed that the mistletoe preparation, Iscador, became more widely known, from about 1950 onwards. Dr A. Leroi not only devoted his energies to the question of production, in which he could develop the experience gained by Dr Kaelin, but was also, like Dr Kaelin himself, a very active physician. He was deeply concerned to help on the publication of the results of therapy, in co-operation with many colleagues. Thus in 1958 he published, together with his wife Dr R. Leroi, a report on Iscador therapy for malignant tumours of the bladder in an academic medical periodical (*Z. Urol.* 9, 1958). The authors indeed report only fifteen patients suffering from cancer of the bladder. Among these patients there were nine who survived for three years after the determination of the diagnosis. Four patients lived for over five years, and two lived from the time of diagnosis up to the publication of the report for ten years. Such periods of survival are exceptional, since malignant tumours of the bladder are difficult to treat by operation, electro-coagulation or radiation; of patients treated in this way, only three per cent survive free of symptoms five years after the operation.

Dr A. Leroi endeavoured with success to have Iscador therapy tried in some large hospitals. One result of his endeavours was the investigation of Iscador by the Universitäts-Frauen-Klinik at Munich, on which its director, Professor Bickenbach, reported briefly in 1958. The results indicated by him (*Arch. f. Gynäkologie*, 1959, 240-41), have been investigated in detail by Dr C. Fellmer and Dr K. E. Fellmer and described in detail in 1966. These physicians treated 98 women patients suffering from carcinomas of the genital tract, post-operatively, by means of Iscador. Five years after the operation seventeen per cent of the patients treated with Iscador had died, compared with thirty per cent of the control group treated without Iscador.

The largest surgical clinic in Austria, in the Lainz district of Vienna, has made the longest and most intensive use of Iscador therapy after operations for cancer. The co-operation over many years of an outstanding surgeon, Professor G. Salzer, with a practising physician, Dr M. Günczler, is in itself a notable fact. Professor Salzer's courageous procedure is also exceptional; not only does he abstain from the use of radiation and hormone treatment, but he carries out for cancer of the breast glands a limited operation (according to Demmer), if this is at all possible. Of his patients, sixty per cent survived five years after the operation, compared with fifty per cent at the Radium Hemmet at Stockholm and fifty-three per cent at the Mayo Clinic, U.S.A. Since these results were published (*Krebsarzt* 17, 1962, 198) considerable improvements in Iscador therapy have been achieved as a result of Dr Günczler's developed methods. The publication of considerably greater success with Iscador therapy is in preparation. Professor Salzer and Dr Günczler reported in 1968 on a further field - their results over ten years with Iscador therapy after operations for cancer of the stomach. Of their patients treated with Iscador, thirty-six per cent more survived five years after the operation than of those who received no Iscador and were otherwise in a similar situation. In this report is also noteworthy that of those patients who had metastases of the lymphatic glands already at the time of the operation thirty-six per cent survived five years after the operation, compared with only ten per cent of those without Iscador treatment.

Dr Günczler, who has great experience in Iscador therapy for cancer, is preparing further publications. With Professor Salzer, she has been able to address several conferences of surgeons and the Medical Association of Vienna.

The clinics which use Iscador include one in Hungary. The Society for Cancer Research in Arlesheim maintains contact with a considerable number of practising physicians all over the world. This was a special concern of Dr A. Leroi. He also initiated the series of monographs 'Progress in the Treatment of Malignant Tumours by Iscador', of which six have appeared up to now: *Tumours of the Brain and Skin*, by Dr A. Leroi; *Gynaecological Tumours*, by Dr R. Leroi; *Tumours of the Digestive Tract*, by Dr A. Leroi; *Cancer of the Breast Glands*, by Dr M. Günczler; *Tumours of the Kidneys and Urinary Passages*, by Dr A. Leroi and Dr E. Wrede; *Leucaemia*, by Dr D. Boie.

Since 1963 there is at Arlesheim, as well as the Klinisch-Therapeutische Institut, the 'Lukasklinik'. Its medical superintendent, Dr R. Leroi, is connected with Iscador Therapy for cancer, as her publications and lectures show, both through her own wide experience and through her co-operation over many years with Dr A. Leroi in the administrative committee of the Society for Cancer Research. She is now extending the Lukasklinik to include the training of physicians in Iscador treatment.

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For this treatment the Lukasklinik offers ideal conditions. For side by side with medical therapy the patients can here be aroused to activity of an artistic kind as far as this is possible. An operation for cancer confronts patients with great inner demands. If it is possible for someone in this situation to be received into the sheltering care of the Lukasklinik it is generally possible to arouse his inner activity afresh through artistic therapy – courses in painting, curative eurhythm, and general eurhythm. This can help to overcome the shock of the operation, and that of being confronted with cancer.

For artistic activity as an element in life has a remedial effect upon cancer patients which should not be undervalued. As far as this can be achieved, artistic therapy is included in the

remedial programme of all anthroposophical clinics and also in the practice of anthroposophical physicians.

If one remembers that cancer, being a 'sense organ in the wrong place', extends the constitution of the head over the remainder of the body, one can see the great significance of this. Side by side with mistletoe therapy, through the strengthening of the capacities for artistic activity which lie dormant in everyone, a human being can be helped to rediscover the sources of his own inner creative power. Thus artistic therapy is one of the means through which the human being suffering from cancer can find himself anew and awaken to fresh courage for life.

## AGE AND DESTINY

ADAM BITTLESTON

*Right Conceptions (Saturday)*

Among the evidences of the suffering in the world, which caused the young prince who became Gautama Buddha to leave the shelter of his palace to seek wisdom, was the sight of an old man. In his teaching it was repeated again and again, '... old age is suffering ...'. In order that the cause of suffering, the craving for existence, should be overcome, the Buddha taught the Holy Eightfold Path.

The teaching of the Buddha, as it was given some five hundred years before the coming of Christ, was itself according to Rudolf Steiner something very mature, akin to old age. But in the great cycle of lectures he gave in Basel in September 1909 on St Luke's Gospel, he described how the spirit of Buddha was rejuvenated through being able to share from the spiritual world in the birth of the Child Jesus.

On the Eightfold Path itself Rudolf Steiner wrote early in his work as spiritual teacher in the articles afterwards published as *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*, in connection with the development of one of man's spiritual organs, the 'sixteen-petalled lotus-flower' in the region of the larynx. He gave the Path, in a slightly different form, related to the days of the week, to his pre-1914 esoteric school; in this form it has been published recently in *Anweisungen für eine esoterische Schulung*. And in the third lecture of the Luke series we find the Path described as a part of Buddha's teaching as a whole. All these descriptions are very brief. But they make clear that the Path is valid for the present time, and will be significant for man far into the future; indeed, that he will develop it more and more as part of his own innermost inclination.

In the teaching of the Buddha, the very beginning of the chain of downfall, which leads through the development of the thirst for existence into all kinds of suffering, is to be found in ignorance, *Avidya*. And thus the Path begins with right conceptions, through which ignorance is overcome. For the Buddhist, the great examples of such right conceptions are to be

found in the Four Holy Truths about the prevalence of suffering, the cause of suffering, the overcoming of the cause of suffering, and the Path itself. But *every* conception we have is to be tested in the light of the greatest truths we know – for the Christian, therefore, in relation to the Mystery of Golgotha.

Now we may ask of this, as of each of the steps of the Path, what significance it may have in particular for later life and old age. Later life will be regarded here as the period from the middle fifties onwards. By then we have adopted many conceptions as our own, and have grown used to them. Now two dangers in particular threaten us. Our opinions may become rigid, and we may be unable to grasp any new ideas. Or (and this is an eventual consequence of rigidity), it may happen that much of the understanding we seem to have won falls into uncertainty, even into oblivion. Confronted by new facts or opinions, we may be thrown into bewilderment and confusion, which we may or may not be able to disguise.

Where conceptions have become rigid, we may be quite unaware of them, taking them for granted. An elderly man once said that for the last twenty years nothing new had happened to him. The reality was that he had acquired no new concepts, and had not developed those he possessed. Again and again, it is good to look attentively at the conceptions we have, great or small, and ask ourselves about this development; in particular, where they have not grown.

To take great examples; all through life, we have thought about birth and death. At certain moments of our lives the fact of birth and the fact of death touched us very closely through particular personal events. Then, and at some other times, for instance year by year at the festivals of Christmas and Easter, we had the opportunity to deepen our understanding for birth and death in general, as mysteries of man's being. It is a significant part of our destiny, how these conceptions have matured in us.

Ripening comes about through work, and through patience. It may be necessary to wait for years before an idea can be complete in us. As a plant needs water, air, and warmth, our conceptions need to be nourished by qualities which may seem irrelevant to exact thought – though there is really no idea too abstract to be nourished in this way – qualities sometimes des-

cribed by Rudolf Steiner under the names of wonder, compassion, and conscience. It is fairly easy to see their relevance to the ideas of birth and death. But even such an apparently abstract idea as that of causality can become rich for us, if we see all that is calculable in the world as a loving sacrifice by free spiritual beings, given as the foundation of *our* freedom, and involving the patient endurance of elemental beings, enchanted within the kingdoms of nature. And the calculable is only one of the levels on which causality works. In human life we have indeed calculable effects, but we have also the working of destiny from beyond the calculable, from spiritual existence.

And this is the fundamental reason for our need of living, growing conceptions. Only with these can we begin to understand human destiny – whether another's or our own.

### *Right Resolves (Sunday)*

For the West one of the greatest difficulties and puzzles in Buddhism is the 'Anatta' doctrine, which appears to deny the immortality of the human soul, or separate self. (This problem is discussed with great care by Mr Christmas Humphreys in his *Buddhism*, pp. 85-89). If there is no real, lasting individuality in man, who is it that takes the Path, who is it that makes the right resolves? Buddhism itself has always been aware that there is a paradox, a mystery, in this. 'Self is the Lord of Self and the goal of self. What other Lord can there be?' (*Dhammapada* v. 379-80, quoted by Humphreys.)

This difficulty is not just a theoretical one. We can look back, in later life, upon the decisions we have made. And particularly of those we can regard as the best, the most fruitful in their effects for others and ourselves, it is not quite easy to say who made them. At such moments, it is as if a harmony came about between outer circumstances and something contained much more deeply within us than the 'I' of which we are ordinarily conscious. This everyday 'I' often shows itself in decisions where we are in some conflict with our environment, or with our own real capacities, decisions from which we may soon have to withdraw. But it is not only in the great, evidently abiding resolves of our lives that we can find this deeper power at work. In smaller things too we can sometimes feel that we



Death of the Virgin Mary

William Blake

have made a decision which calls forth something like an echo of assent from hidden depths within us.

The point is not that such decisions are unreasonable. But often they involve matters about which external rational calculation would not lead to a definite conclusion. When we marry we cannot calculate what the years will bring. In the decision to marry, or to take up a particular vocation, this deeper Self may well have spoken.

In the centuries that followed the life of Buddha, what has been called the everyday 'I' became strong in mankind. Its marks are aggressiveness, greed, and loneliness. Its development was necessary. Men did not only find it in themselves, but in their gods, or their God. Jealousy and anger are among the outstanding qualities of the Greek gods; and the Hebrews thought of their one God as angry, jealous and alone. The Buddhist doctrine of *Anatta* denied this kind of separateness, both in gods and men.

When Christ rose from the dead, He was able to call forth from the disciples a selfless will to serve, which transcended their anxious separateness. It is this of which St Paul speaks, when he says, 'I live, but not I, the Christ in me.' And the Christian can recognise this as the best power in his life — though it works in all men, unless they reject it utterly with their minds and hearts. And he can begin to see that human birth is not only a result of the craving for existence, but increasingly a manifestation of *this* power. We are born to serve the Christ. To this original great and complex resolve, in which the whole circumstances of our birth are included, the other true resolves are added as life goes on. And the last of these, necessarily coming nearly always from depths much greater than those to which our consciousness can reach, is death.

That living and imaginative thinking through which we can hope to grasp something of the workings of destiny will help to bridge the gulf between everyday calculation and our deepest resolves. In meditation, we hold back the restless eagerness of thought seeking a result, and give what is hidden in our will room to grow up towards the light of consciousness. We need not think, when we are old, that there is little left there now, few resolves still to make. Ever since the middle point of life was passed we have been making many decisions

not concerned with this life at all, but in preparation for a coming life, after we have passed through the intervening period in the spiritual world.

For the peace of old age, it will be significant whether the decisions made in consciousness are in harmony with the great resolves concerning a future life, which are made in dreamless sleep. This harmony will be there, the more human consciousness is turned towards the Light of the Resurrection.

### *Right Speech (Monday)*

What has been achieved through the forming of right conceptions and the making of right resolves should guide, in the third part of the Eightfold Path, all our speaking. The Buddhist sees here four temptations to be overcome; lying, abuse, slander, and idle talk. Lying includes all inaccuracy, all inclination to convey to the hearer a picture different from the reality; abuse includes every impulse to hurt another by our words. Slander may take the form of criticism of another person, where perhaps for the sake of effect or out of resentment their defects are exaggerated. We talk idly – in all conventional and casual conversation.

In later life special difficulties increase. We become less able to follow in conversation any unfamiliar paths, and repeat our accustomed opinions and reminiscences. It is harder for us to observe what is relevant to the situation, the hearer, and the moment, and what is not. Having become lonely, we increase our loneliness by talking in a way that estranges the listener, because he feels that we have forgotten who he is, and what interests him. Or we may invade his privacy by asking questions which he regards as crude or out of place. Discouraged by failure to communicate, we may in later life retreat, and abandon attempts at genuine meeting in conversation, except with a few special friends. Between us and younger people abysses of misunderstanding open; but our contemporaries too may have made for themselves special languages which are hard to understand.

The third part of the Eightfold Path brings the resolve not to accept defeat in any of these forms. If we take care to keep our conceptions open to development, we can hope to go on

learning new languages, whether of the young or of the old. But we must practise silence – not the defeated silence that gives up the attempt to hear others or to reach them ourselves, but a fertile willingness to listen and to wait. The opportunities to speak will come; questions calling for our answers, sorrows to be comforted, advice to be given – more perhaps than we can meet.

Destructiveness in speech becomes more and more out of place, as we grow older. Rudolf Steiner wrote once of the temptation to which we can succumb, of finding common ground with younger people by joining in their criticisms. But in the end the young will tire of the 'old boys' – 'for their voices are too rough, and criticism in youthful voices has more life in it' (*Newssheet*, 9th March 1924).

It will not help much if we refrain from speaking out criticism, while continuing to practise it vigorously in our minds. We have to see how arbitrary and superficial our criticisms generally are. We only approach the reality of some failing in another person, if we begin to take it seriously as part of his whole destiny. And this we cannot achieve without living, imaginative, active thought. And if we criticise impersonal trends in our civilisation, we are ineffective – and again unreal – without detailed positive initiatives to put in their place. In thought and in speech, the reality of the spiritual can enter us and sustain us when we are positive.

That such positivity is so difficult to achieve is not just a personal matter; it is part of the destiny of language in our time. Words have lost their fullness of meaning – and quite particularly the positive words. It is as with the repetition of 'honest' in *Othello*; at last there seems no honesty at all in the world. But where living ideas shine into our words, and right resolves sustain them, conversation begins to be healed, and to carry healing.

### *Right Action (Tuesday)*

According to Buddhist teaching, the fourth part of the Eightfold Path calls positively for kindness and compassion; and negatively for abstention from actions springing from the illusion of separate selfhood – injury to other living things,

grasping what is not ours, and all kinds of excess. It would seem natural to think that such abstention is much easier for the old than for the young.

But we do not overcome the illusion of separateness, or over-attachment to earthly things, as a matter of course as we grow older. Some kinds of attachment may even become more insistent; to security and comfort, for example. The intense attachments of old age can be very diverse and unexpected, and they lead quickly to conflicts. The older person may have to struggle very hard with himself to reduce difficulties over small objects and actions to their right proportions. He may astonish himself by the violence of his feeling about something that others regard very differently. For him it has come to matter.

Two great tragedies – *King Lear* and the *Oedipus at Colonus* of Sophocles – are concerned with the disparity between old age as we think it ought to be and as it really is. There is very much to be learned from them – whether we identify ourselves at first with Lear and Oedipus, or with Cordelia and Antigone. Lear is not really so foolish an old man as others think, and as he even comes to think himself. What he cares for, does matter. And Oedipus is clamouring, beyond all his resentment with the Thebans, for an answer from the gods to the riddle of his destiny; an answer not in theory but in concrete fact.

For the resolution of this conflict, it is important to see that both Buddhism and Christianity teach a Middle Way. They do not ask us to abandon all attachments, but to look continually for the essential and the enduring in them. Buddhism does indeed preach the eventual overcoming of all attachment; but its method is not through asceticism but through moderation and the development of insight. And Christianity is concerned with the growth in us of the greatest love, rather than with the rejection of the lesser ones. For in reality they do not allow themselves simply to be dismissed. They rule us even while we reject them, unless their place is taken by something that is stronger.

In later life there are two attachments which bring special perils; to power, and to money. It is not pleasant to recognise them in ourselves; but even if we see them, and know what harm they can do to others and to our own soul's peace, they are by no means overcome. All that we can win from the first

three elements of the Path may be needed, to hold them in check.

Wherever our attachments appear too strong, affecting our lives to a degree beyond what is natural and reasonable, consequences of our earlier incarnations are at work. In ways we no longer know, we have been influenced by the proud spirit Lucifer and by coldly hating Ahriman. They precipitate us again into conflict. If we let this happen, we are the prisoners of the past. We need a true present; and it is a fundamental task of later life, to learn to accept the present as it is and to live with it thankfully.

### *Right Livelihood (Wednesday)*

Old age has long been connected with retirement from active work. This connection in our time is not quite simple. There are people who can continue their calling far into their seventies or eighties, and die without leaving it. There are some too who only find the most important tasks of their lives at an age when others are retiring. The relationship between a human being's condition of health, his occupation, and his state of mind is often today a very complex one. Generalisations about this may be very misleading; and the advice given to a particular person by those close to him is often proved wrong by the course of events.

Right Livelihood, the fifth element in the Path, calls for our own careful judgment of what we should receive from the world and what we should do to supply the needs of others, at each stage of our lives. It includes the care of our own physical health; and watchful attention to the effects of what we do upon the health of others.

Physical disabilities are generally thought of as accompanying old age quite inevitably. But in medicine today there is a valuable reaction against this assumption. It is found again and again, for example, that confusion of mind, which could be put down to senility, has specific causes, which may be remedied fairly easily. Very often old people do not ask for the medical help that could be given because they think of their troubles as 'just old age'. It belongs to 'right livelihood' to seek the best help that can be given, not just for one's own sake,

but as a duty to the whole world in which we live. As Buddhism teaches quite specifically, our bodies are not our own.

There are diseases too that may not be overcome. They can show themselves at any stage of life; but are most likely to be encountered in later years. They too should receive every possible treatment. But it is important not to regard them trivially, as unfortunate faults in the machine. The achievements of Rudolf Steiner's spiritual research are specially important here. He could indicate how in our illnesses the past may be revealing its consequences, but also how the future may be prepared. He described their specific results for our life after death.

During the first period after death we bring to consciousness, in a way more vivid and intense than our earthly experience has been, what the life we have just completed meant for others. During this period we learn to leave behind the attachments that bound us too strongly to earthly conditions. This happens in the spiritual region which is called the Moon Sphere, for which our desert satellite is something like a marking-stone. Beyond it, we grow into what is called the Mercury-Sphere, where spiritual beings are able to transform the disabilities and illnesses of earth into positive capacities.

To think in this way is not just to accept a vague, comforting hope. If we live closely with the disability of another, or observe our own with some detachment, we can see that the first delicate beginnings of such a transformation are happening all the time. Even where there is great physical suffering, a victorious spirit may show itself in ways we could not have foreseen.

What we may suffer on earth is not only our own affair, or the expression of our own destiny. And what we may achieve through overcoming suffering is also not for ourselves alone; it works to bring about communities which are not dependent on nationality or race, but on free activities of heart and mind.

In every economic organisation there is a potential community, though this is often very much hindered in its development by internal tensions and rivalries. Today, when a man retires from an economic organisation because of age, his effective connection with it usually ceases. It could benefit many industries and businesses very greatly if such connections

were kept up more strongly – even to the point of forming friendly advisory bodies of retired people. Much in our economic life is gravely sick. The influence of older people, exercised in a selfless and compassionate way, and matured through the encounter with their own sufferings, could do much to heal it.

#### *Right Endeavour (Thursday)*

As we go on into later life, there is a very strong temptation to let our horizons become narrower, and not to ask much of ourselves. The world that really seems to matter may become limited to two or three people, a house and garden or even one room, the needs of one body. And it may seem useless to expect more of oneself than a little patience.

The sixth element in the Eightfold Path is in the most evident contrast to this. 'To look beyond the everyday and the momentary, and to set oneself aims (ideals) which are related to the highest tasks of the human being.' This is to extend our horizon, not to accept its limitation; and if we look at our experience attentively enough there is much that will help us in this. For the further we go in life, the less are we involved in what is personal in our destiny. We have either accomplished the tasks we have set for ourselves for this life, arising out of actions from earlier incarnations – or these tasks have to wait for a subsequent life, because in this one we have failed to complete them. In general, what we shall meet as the years go on will be more and more an expression of the destiny of a whole community to which we belong, of a nation, or of our age. The stage on which we are called to act is really becoming a greater one, though our part on it may seem exceedingly humble.

It is a very recent thing that so many human beings have the opportunity to regard the whole world as a single scene. With all the limitations of the media which bring the events of the world to us, we are nevertheless given the opportunity to share the troubles and sometimes the joys of people everywhere.

But our sharing is on the whole passive. Television, radio, newspapers all by their very nature tend to induce passivity. They are of particular use to elderly people. But we need not be content to remain passive. It belongs to the nature of our age that every single human being has opportunities to affect

the course of world events. These opportunities can arise in the most surprising ways.

We can also respond to the needs of the world in ways that may show hardly at all outwardly. It belongs to the sixth part of the Eightfold Path, not only to form great ideas but to develop new, positive habits of life. These may respond directly or indirectly to what we learn about the world. An older man or woman may hear something of what is happening in a distant country; and then set to work to learn more about people there, find ways of helping them, enter into correspondence and give some time to this for the rest of his or her life. Or, as an example of quite a different kind, we may notice how badly people in the western world, including ourselves, walk and move; and we may decide, even far on in later life, to enter quite practically into the mysteries of movement, the discoveries about man's relationship to Space opened up by Rudolf Steiner through the inauguration of Eurhythmy.

Such things have a far-reaching significance for human life. For what does growing old really mean? From the physical body, the ethereal and astral bodies and the individuality are beginning to detach themselves, growing towards the worlds which will receive them after death. Through their withdrawal, the physical body is in danger of hardening, becoming too earthly, too heavy. Yet the ethereal body itself is not growing old. It is younger and fresher than it was; as in so many respects, it is the opposite of the physical body. But just as the living thoughts that have their place in the ethereal body may not be reflected adequately by the physical brain, so the fresh ethereal body as a whole may not shine through the physical body effectively, being too much detached from it. When new habits are acquired in a selfless, Christian sense, they strengthen the hold of the ethereal body on the physical body, benefiting not only the person himself but his whole environment.

The new habits need not be as notable as Dr Johnson's, when at an advanced age he set out to learn Dutch. They may indeed be concerned with what seems the limited sphere of house and garden, or one's own room. What matters is the consciousness with which we try to achieve them. If we can make harmonious order out of disorder anywhere, we are relating afresh a bit of earth to the starry heavens. If we do some-

thing in this way with a right mood, we are bringing encouragement and comfort to the host of elemental beings who are always round us.

### *Right Recollection (Friday)*

Here Rudolf Steiner's indication seems to differ from what we generally encounter in Buddhist writings. We are called to observe here how we can learn from everything that happens to us in life; how in every present situation it can be useful to draw from the treasures of memory.

It is considered natural that people in later life should do a good deal of remembering. But it does not always happen. Indeed, it may be that an old person only remembers when he is following in conversation one of the well-worn tracks of reminiscence – a danger to right speech that has been considered. On the one hand, the present moment in an external sense may be too emphatic; on the other, the past may seem too encumbered with shame and regret. Without fully realising it, we may be reluctant to look back seriously. The problem is not just a superficial one; there is a real danger for mankind that personal memory becomes a realm haunted by devils.

Yet if we can achieve a certain tranquillity in looking back, great wonders will unfold. Many of the people we knew in childhood and youth reveal themselves as indescribable benefactors. Some of the places in which we have lived, or which we have visited, speak to us afresh, of mystery upon mystery. Springs of youth flow again into our innermost being.

Much indeed has to be faced with courage. We see how certain weaknesses have accompanied us closely from early childhood onwards. Opportunities have been tragically missed. Grief was caused by actions and words we now wish undone and unsaid. It may be particularly hard to acknowledge that at moments we made fools of ourselves in ways that still cause us to shudder. All this has to be seen; but behind the joys and sorrows and the grotesque blunders, something else, grander and more enduring, begins to show itself. It is the world of creative beings, which work in the forming of destiny.

In the last long course of lectures which he gave in England<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation* (new edition, 1969, re-translated. Rudolf Steiner Press.)

and also in Karma lectures given at Dornach, Rudolf Steiner showed that the periods of life can become transparent for the initiate consciousness, so that different realms of spiritual being are discovered behind them. These are the spheres of being through which our souls can pass after death. Behind the first seven years of childhood the beings of the Moon Sphere are at work; behind the second, from seven to fourteen, spirits of the Mercury-Sphere provide sources of health and moral intuition which can be drawn upon through our whole lives. From fourteen to twenty-one beings of the Venus Sphere awaken a sense of beauty and a power of love which reach out beyond the limits of the childhood environment. (All these beings of course continue to be concerned with man at every stage; but these periods are as it were special organs for them, as our ears are for hearing.)

For the whole period from twenty-one to forty-two the light of the Sun Sphere shines for us, making us citizens of the whole earth, members of humanity. Then from forty-two to forty-nine we are under the influence of the Mars-Sphere, where in recent centuries the spirit of Gautama Buddha has sought to overcome with endless compassion the demons of fruitless conflict. From forty-nine to fifty-six Jupiter's wisdom has its special place, inspiring clear and fertile judgment.

From the point of view of this article, the entry into later life is the threshold from Jupiter to Saturn. Between fifty-six and sixty-three the light of the great cosmic Rememberer works into our souls. All this is not only something for the Initiate – or Rudolf Steiner would not have described it for us. It can enrich our remembering, at whatever age we stand, by linking it with cosmic realities, which we shall encounter in another way after death. It can help to build the bridge between personal memory and spirit-recollection.

#### *Right Contemplation*

The last element of the Eightfold Path can be thought of as including all the rest – and as reaching out to a contemplation of the infinite and the eternal, in which all illusion is extinguished.

Here we may think of a difficulty in the meditative life, which may seem relatively simple. Whenever we try to meditate, we

seek as a matter of course to be as tranquil as possible. We hope for a mood like that we feel before the fixed stars, in their still solemnity. We try to feel our place in the history of man, that stretches in unbroken development from the far past into a distant future.

And yet very often it is called to our mind that the world as it is does not give us reason for tranquillity. Not only are there 'wars and rumours of wars', and all sorts of tension and hatred between groups and classes; but man is approaching a crisis that involves his existence, as never before.

When as older people we look at those who are young, or at children, we may be inclined to ask, 'Will they not live on into a time when cosmic decisions are made beyond our imagining, when the future of man is decided?' With our feelings involved as they necessarily are, in the personal events of each day, how can we begin to feel at all adequately about events of such dimensions? And what can the young take with them, that would arm them for such times?

On our inner journeys, we may find that *both* impressions seem to grow in significance. Looking back in time, we see more and more how the great teachers and artists form a wise pattern, like that of the stars. It is indeed good in later life to rediscover great writings which we perhaps knew as children – and to discover some of which we have long known the names but for which there never seemed to be time. Their authors will now shine for us, as if emerging from the clouds. And we feel with blessing that mankind has been given an education wonderfully rich and complete, reaching up into our time, and which promises to continue.

And yet has the pupil really learned? There opens a great abyss; will not everything that has been learned be lost in forgetfulness, and a series of decisions made which will end in destruction? Have not some of these decisions been made already?

Looking forward beyond our coming death, we should not feel that this will take us away from the scene of decision. We shall be able to look upon it, and its cosmic implications, all the more clearly. We should prepare ourselves for this. And part of the preparation may consist in this, that we try to accept both the feeling of protection and the feeling of crisis as en-

tirely justified, and not to be reconciled by the subordination of either. Nor can we find a real solution by means of thought. We must be on our way to those spiritual beings in their reality, who are themselves the answer: to Christ, from whose substance all the rightful teachers and artists of humanity have drawn, and to Michael, who arms for the crisis of the world. And Michael is the countenance of the Christ.

## BEETHOVEN'S TWO WORLDS

CHARLES WATERMAN

*The bicentenary of Beethoven's birth falls in December 1970.*

SOME time in the thirties I saw a film about Beethoven – not a bad film, in my recollection, but not outstanding. I remember a scene in the countryside near Vienna when Beethoven, unable to hear the piping of a shepherd, is first convinced of his oncoming deafness. It struck me that the film might have continued in a way that would have mirrored Beethoven's experience as his deafness increased. The sounds of the outer world would have grown gradually fainter, until – while the story continued to be told in pictures – the sound-track was finally giving us nothing but Beethoven's music, the unimpeded utterance of his inner world.

Beethoven did, of course, feel bitterly his loss of hearing. In his well-known Heiligenstadt Testament, written at the age of thirty-two and addressed to his brothers, he wrote:

Only consider that for six years I have been suffering an incurable affliction, aggravated by imprudent physicians. . . . Born with a fiery, impulsive temperament, sensible, even, to the distractions of social life, I was yet compelled early in my life to isolate myself, to spend my life in solitude. . . . Oh, how could I possibly admit to being defective in the very sense which should have been more highly developed in me than in other men, a sense which I once possessed in its most perfect form, a form as perfect as few in my profession, surely, know or have known in the past. . . . Recreation in human society, refined conversation, mutual effusions of thought are denied to me. Almost quite alone, I may commit myself to social life only as far as the most urgent needs demand. . . . I might easily have put an end to my life. Only one thing, Art, held me back. Oh, it seemed to me impossible to leave this world before I had produced all that I felt capable of producing.

Nowhere in the Testament does Beethoven show the least anxiety over the effect of his deafness on his future as a composer. He had no fear that he would be any less the master of his own inner world. And in the following year he wrote his third symphony, the Eroica.

The Eroica may owe its inception partly to the early career of Napoleon (before he proclaimed himself Emperor), but probably

we can see in it, as several writers on Beethoven have done, a more intimate connection with the Testament. It seems to express, among other things, Beethoven's resolve not, after all, to be beaten down by his affliction; not to be ashamed of his deafness and so not to turn away altogether from social life. And in fact, with the aid of ear-trumpets and conversation books, for talk through writing, he tried to keep this resolve.

All the same, his deafness did tend unavoidably to shut him off from the outer world, and probably it aggravated the contrast, so often noted, between his work as a composer and his behaviour as a man. But the contrast would surely have been there anyway: it arose from his character and temperament, from the conjunction in him of extraordinary gifts with particular human limitations, and from the insistent need he felt to compel the aristocratic society of Vienna to accept him as an equal, in spite of his humble birth.<sup>1</sup>

The full extent of this contrast was obscured by romantic myths until Alexander Wheelock Thayer, an American whose ancestors had emigrated from England in 1636, devoted himself to collecting authentic material from Beethoven's surviving contemporaries and from documentary sources all over the place, and even then it came to be accepted only reluctantly and by degrees.<sup>2</sup> Philip Toynbee, reviewing in the *Observer* (29th Dec. 1968) a new edition of Ernest Newman's *The Unconscious Beethoven*, looked back at Thayer's indefatigable labours:

Thayer was no trivial debunker but an honest man and a patient scholar whose sole ambition was to tell the truth. The truth which emerged, though it continued to be disregarded, was a very strange one indeed. Thayer's Beethoven was certainly no less of a musical genius than the hero of earlier and more romantic biographies; but he was also an almost desperately *human* individual – egotistical, arrogant, hypo-

<sup>1</sup> On one occasion, when he thought he had been humiliated in the presence of some French officers at the house of his friend and patron, Prince Lichnowsky, he immediately left the house and is said (by the grandson of Prince Lichnowsky's house-physician at the time) to have written to his patron: 'Prince, what you are, you are by accident of birth; what I am, I am through myself. There have been and will be thousands of princes; there is only one Beethoven.'

<sup>2</sup> The first three volumes of Thayer's biography of Beethoven were published in 1866, 1872 and 1879. Thayer planned but never wrote a fourth volume. He was hampered by ill-health, but also, perhaps, by reluctance to describe in detail Beethoven's tormented relationship with his nephew, Karl, which overshadowed the closing years of Beethoven's life. Thayer died in 1897, aged eighty. The notes and papers he left passed through various hands and some were lost. Eventually the work was completed by Hugo Riemann, who brought out volumes IV and V in 1907-8.

chondriacal, self-righteous, dishonest and malicious. Above all, Thayer's Beethoven is a clumsy man, and without humour; a great pathetic, rather stupid bear of a man; and it is, indeed, a creature of this kind who appears in all the genuine portraits, for the real Beethoven bore almost no resemblance to the familiar plaster-cast of the genius.

For most of the items in this catalogue of defects there is good evidence, but a few are misleading. Beethoven had a good deal of unobtrusive humour, sometimes rough, sometimes sardonic. The most reliable portrait of him, the bronze bust made by Franz Klein from the life-mask taken for this purpose by Klein in 1812, when Beethoven was forty-two, does not show 'a creature of this kind'. As for 'rather stupid', it seems to be true (as Toynbee notes elsewhere in his review) that Beethoven could never master elementary arithmetic, but at his death his library contained about 200 books, and Paul Bekker's biography<sup>1</sup> (which draws on Thayer and other good sources) shows that *in his own way* – and this qualification should be added to almost everything written about him – Beethoven had an actively enquiring mind:

Beethoven was an ardent book-lover, not because he wanted superficial entertainment, but because he had a keen desire for education. When he was offered Scott's novels as a diversion during illness, he rejected them contemptuously because 'the fellow only wrote for money'. He was specially fond of the classical historians. *Plutarch* and *Xenophon* always inspired and delighted him afresh; *Ovid*, *Horace*, *Homer*, *Plato* and *Aristotle* were always to his hand. He read them of course in translation, for he knew so little of the humanities that he had to have even the *Mass* rendered into German for his composition.

His interests, however, were not confined to the ancients. He wanted to keep in touch with the spirit of the age. Goethe and Schiller, as well as Klopstock, Seume, Tiedge and Matthison, were his constant companions. He asked Breitkopf and Härtel to forward their newest publications. 'So far none of the treatises has been beyond me. Without making the least claim to scholarship, I have endeavoured since childhood to steep myself in the spirit of the best and wisest of every age. Shame to the artist who does not consider it his duty to achieve at least so much.'

However, although this passage from Bekker is useful as a corrective to the impression one might get from Toynbee that Beethoven, outside his music, was a mere dullard, it could itself be almost equally misleading in another way. For Beethoven was not at all an 'intellectual' in the usual sense. Music

<sup>1</sup> For details of books mentioned, see list of references at the end.

was his natural language; he wrote German awkwardly, with grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. And his response to the written word was equally limited. J. W. N. Sullivan brings this out:

Vague and lofty phrases had a better chance of securing Beethoven's attention than had the exquisite and perfect expression of some small idea or unimportant experience, simply because the very vagueness of such phrases enabled him to attribute his own meaning to them. . . . He could absorb nothing, in fact he could understand nothing, that he could not make a living, organic part of himself. Amongst the lofty sentiments of the ancients and of Goethe he found some that he could interpret as principles in which he believed, and he was never tired of reading them. But his way of regarding literature was utterly different from that of the ordinary educated man or literary connoisseur. He lacked the necessary detachment. . . . Similarly, his interest in Newton's picture of the solar system is due to his exultant realisation of the existence of a tremendous and universal force in Nature. In some vague way he felt that this was another embodiment of a quality he so greatly prized in mankind. The fact that the force varies as the inverse square of the distance was not of the slightest interest to him, and it is doubtful if he would ever have understood it.

What are we to make of these contrasting aspects of Beethoven's life and work and character? The essential points that I find most helpful to keep in mind are that Beethoven lived in two worlds, outer and inner, much more sharply separate and conflicting than they are for most people, and that with him the inner world was by far the more valid and authoritative of the two. Through the outer, public world he stumbled awkwardly, constantly hampered and irritated by deafness, but in his own inner world he was supremely self-confident, productive, and free.

In his dealings with the outer world Beethoven's main concern was somehow to get along; to earn a living without forfeiting his freedom and independence as a composer. In July 1823 he wrote to von Konneritz: 'Look upon me kindly and not unfavourably. I live only for my art and to fulfil my duties as man; but alas it cannot always be done without the help of the subterrestrial powers.'

This slightly cryptic remark seems to bear on the well-known fact that Beethoven not only drove hard bargains with publishers but could be dishonest in dealing with them. I think he felt that in this field he was operating in enemy

country where he was under no obligation to observe strict standards of honesty, since they were habitually not respected there, whatever lip-service they might receive.

He was always tight-fisted with money – defensive action against the enemy – and became more so as he grew older, but he was generous to good causes he believed in and to friends in need, for here the morality of his own world applied. To his pupil Ries he once said angrily, 'Why do you hide your poverty from me? None of my friends shall starve while I have anything.'

The friends he trusted were few, and for mankind generally he had little use. 'Never show to men the contempt they deserve; one never knows to what use one may want to put them', he wrote in his diary (1814). An excellent precept for a secret agent in enemy country, but it comes oddly from a man who professed ardent admiration for the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity, and chose for the choral finale of his Ninth Symphony the text of Schiller's Ode to Joy – *Seid umschlungen, Millionen* – while showing no inclination to embrace the masses himself.

In all these ways Beethoven is open to obvious charges of hypocrisy and double-talk, but I think hypocrisy is not the right word. Beethoven meant everything he said; it simply was that he regarded the outer social world as entirely distinct from his own, and responsibility to his own world was the only final responsibility he recognised. Where its standards were directly concerned, he could be uncompromising, at whatever cost. He was occasionally prepared to write unimportant music for money, but when in 1816 a General Kyd offered him a profitable commission for a symphony, provided it was written in his earlier style, he violently rejected the proposal and spoke of it as a great insult.

As a young man, before his deafness came on, Beethoven had enjoyed social life and tavern parties, though probably he always felt himself to be a different kind of being from most of his companions; he made use of them for relaxation and for indulging his crudely boisterous humour. But once he had come painfully to accept the relative isolation of deafness, he felt that that the outer social world could provide nothing he needed except subsistence and audiences, and that he owed nothing to it. In his own way he was deeply religious, but he

belonged to no church and felt no need to attend religious observances. Sullivan writes:

Amongst the elements constitutive of Beethoven's personality we must include his lack of malleability. This quality made him almost immune from purely external influences. Thus he was impervious to criticism; his manners were atrocious, he ignored social conventions; he was permanently subject to no social passions, not even sexual love. . . . He accepted none of the schemes of thought or conduct current in his time; it is doubtful whether he was ever fully aware of their existence. He remained utterly faithful to his own experience. It is for this reason that his affirmative utterances, as in the Credo of the Mass in D, have such unexampled weight. Such utterances spring solely from his own personal and tested experience.

But there was one outside influence he always needed, the influence of nature and the countryside, and he continually sought it out. For nature not only offered him rest and refreshment; it spoke directly to his own inner world. At Kahlenberg in 1812 he wrote in his diary: 'Almighty - in the woods I am blessed - happy in the woods - every tree has a voice - through Thee, O God, what glory - in such a woodland region - in the hills is rest - peace to serve Thee.'

Beethoven needed the peace that nature could give, and not only as a refuge from the world of men. Louis Schlösser, a musician from Darmstadt who visited him in 1823, while the Ninth Symphony was being written, reports him as saying:

You may ask me where I obtain my ideas. I cannot answer this with any certainty: they come unevoked, spontaneously or unspontaneously; I could grasp them with my hands in the open air, in the woods, while walking, in the stillness of the night, at early morning, stimulated by those moods which the poets turn into words, with me into tones, which resound, roar and rage until at last they stand before me in the form of notes.

Schindler describes how on an August afternoon he called at the house in Mödling where Beethoven was living at the time. His cook and his maidservant had run away after a midnight row:

In his drawing-room, behind a locked door, we heard the Master singing, howling and stamping over the fugue for the Credo (of the Mass in D). After listening to this almost gruesome sound for some time we were just about to leave when the door opened and Beethoven stood before us, a wild look on his face which was almost terrifying. . . . I tried to soothe him and helped him to dress.

Here Beethoven appears in a role that was soon to become familiar in cultural history - the role of the romantic artist, whose life is disordered by the merciless demands of his art, who scorns social conventions and seeks solace in the countryside, where his inner feelings and aspirations find a response that society fails to provide. Very little of all this is apparent in the lives of Mozart and Haydn, although they were still living and working while Beethoven was a young man. They both conformed to the social conventions of the time; Mozart suffered from them repeatedly in terms of rebuffs and frustrations, but we can hardly imagine him striding defiantly through them, as Beethoven (we are told on the not always reliable authority of Bettina von Arnim) strode through the midst of the Austrian royal family when he encountered them during a walk with Goethe, who politely doffed his hat and stood aside.

There is no doubt, at least, that Beethoven and Goethe did meet at Teplitz in 1812; afterwards Goethe wrote to Zelter: 'His talents amazed me; unfortunately he is an utterly untamed personality, who is not altogether wrong in finding the world detestable, but surely he does not make it any more enjoyable for himself or others by his attitude. On the other hand, he deserves to be both excused and pitied, for his hearing is leaving him, which perhaps does less harm to the musical side of his character than to the social. He is laconic by nature and will become doubly so because of this lack.'

As regards musical conventions, the contrast between Beethoven and his immediate predecessors is less striking, for in *this* respect Beethoven was not a revolutionary innovator. One might perhaps say that while Mozart used the accepted musical forms of this time and transcended them, Beethoven used them and expanded them enormously, forcing them to carry a much greater weight of personal searching and affirmation. Does this make Beethoven a 'greater' composer than Mozart? A futile question; there is no competition. But we can say that with Beethoven the evolution of music crossed a divide: the divide that leads away from the orderly classicism of the eighteenth century towards the romantic individualism of the nineteenth.

This change in the character of music was of course part of a much wider process of change which had already been manifest

for a century or more in some other Western European fields. I think we need to see it as a reflection of the evolution of human consciousness; a change in the relation of the perceiving and interpreting human mind to the world perceived. In Rudolf Steiner's terminology, it marked the gradual transition from the epoch of the Intellectual Soul, with its emphasis on logical thinking and harmonious proportions, to the epoch of the Consciousness Soul, with its emphasis on the self-conscious loneliness of the individual Ego and its separation from the external world, which the Ego now comes to observe as a spectator, without readily participating in it. Hence it has also been called the epoch of the onlooker consciousness, and it is this attitude of detachment, for which the outer world exists as a merely material environment to be explored and exploited, that has made possible the rise of modern science. Inwardly, the influence of the Consciousness Soul leads to introspection, agnosticism, a sense of being alone in an unfriendly universe.<sup>1</sup> The Consciousness Soul, it has been said, makes Hamlets of us all – but not, in some obvious respects, of Beethoven.

As a young man Beethoven was supremely self-confident, outward looking, bent on forcing the world to recognise his powers: he made his name first as a virtuoso pianist. The hero, seen as a man of action, was his early ideal.<sup>2</sup> But then his deafness came on. It is almost as though the Consciousness Soul laid a hand on him and silenced his outer hearing, forcing him into isolation, compelling him to experience this characteristic of the new epoch, to give it expression in his music and to come to terms with it. So, in the *Eroica*, the second ('funeral march of a hero') movement leads on to the vigorous affirmation of the scherzo and the Prometheus theme of the finale. This positive response continues (I am of course putting it very briefly) through Beethoven's 'second period', after which come a few relatively unfruitful years, and then the much written about 'third period', the period of the Ninth Symphony, the last piano sonatas and the last string quartets.

<sup>1</sup> For more on this many-sided subject, see Ernst Lehrs, *Man or Matter* (revised edition, Faber, 1958); Owen Barfield, *Romanticism Comes of Age* (augmented edition, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1966); Charles Davy, *Towards a Third Culture* (Faber, 1961).

<sup>2</sup> In October, 1806, when his friend Krumpholtz told him that Napoleon had won a decisive victory over the Prussians at Jena, Beethoven retorted: 'It's a pity I don't understand the art of war as well as I understand the art of music – I would beat him!'

It is in Beethoven's second period, beginning near the onset of his deafness, that the 'Promethean' side of his character as a composer comes out most strongly; and here I would recommend a remarkable study by the late Dr Eugen Kolisko in his *Reincarnation and Other Essays*, a small volume published in 1940. Kolisko shows how various connections between Beethoven and the legendary figure of Prometheus (who may have had a real progenitor) can be traced: chained to the rock of his deafness and suffering from a chronic liver ailment, Beethoven laid hold of the heavenly fire of the sun and brought it down to earth. Kolisko adds: 'I was deeply impressed when, some time ago, I heard from a very well-known musician that, in a personal conversation he had with Rudolf Steiner, the latter said: "Beethoven is Prometheus."'

The works of Beethoven's 'second period' have always been the most widely popular and influential part of his output, and it is chiefly these which have led some people to regard him as having initiated and promoted the ruin of music. They mean that he opened the way to the romantic exploitation in music of all-too-human emotions, rather as in his life he prefigured in his own way the *poète maudit*, the artist who consciously severs himself from society and takes pride in his rejection of respectable bourgeois values and standards of conduct. These critics say that Beethoven taught music to rant and rage and groan and moan, with the result that some of his nineteenth-century successors came to luxuriate in chromatic baths of personal feeling until finally the tonal system broke down under the strain. By contrast, the classical composers before him had been content to make music speak through its own well-ordered patterns. Whatever personal feelings may have helped to inspire their music, these were subsumed in the pattern, not thrust nakedly on the listener, and it was not of them, but of something transcending them, that music spoke.

There is some truth in this line of criticism, but I think it applies not so much specially to Beethoven as to the course of development that music has followed, inevitably reflecting the evolution of human consciousness, since early times. John Davy, writing on 'The Evolution of Music' in the *Golden Blade* for 1952, said of Beethoven that 'with him, there enters into music a new element of drama; the experiences and adventures

of an individual human Ego seem to be portrayed in music for the first time. Music has ceased to be a medium for, one might say, the incarnation and expression of universal spiritual verities, but has become a stage, a theatre, for the human spirit.' And he went on:

In the history of the musicians' gallery it is perhaps possible to see a picture of this changing relationship. At first music came to the listeners from high among the rafters, as a direct gift from the heavens. In the course of time the gallery became a platform, and the audience shared in the music on equal terms. Nowadays the audience soars in banked tiers of seats above the orchestra, which may even be relegated to a 'pit'; and the conductor, who used to lead the playing from his seat at the harpsichord or piano, now dominates the orchestra from his rostrum and has become something of a virtuoso in his own right.

This evolutionary process, whereby music comes down to earth, entering into closer relationship with the subjective experiences of the human soul, is connected with the onset of the Consciousness Soul; and, like most evolutionary transitions in the history of mankind, it was compound of gain and loss. The expressive possibilities of music were greatly widened, while at the same time it moved further from its heavenly origin. But even today we are still at an early stage of the Consciousness Soul epoch. The music which will express some essential attributes of the Consciousness Soul has yet to be written; some of it was perhaps adumbrated in Beethoven's late string quartets. But it was the music of Beethoven's second period which had most influence on nineteenth-century music, and this music was expressive not so much of the Consciousness Soul itself as of the Romantic movement – a protest reaction *against* the onlooker, scientific side of the new epoch, its cold analysis of the external world and its tendency to devalue human feelings.

Beethoven's third period is usually dated from about 1815, when Beethoven was forty-five, up to his death in 1827. During this period the contrast between the inner world of his music and the world of his social behaviour widened into an apparently immeasurable gulf. Of the music I will say only that it has been taken to suggest a realisation that the affirma-

tions of the second period pass over some of the realities of the human situation, and a searching beyond them for an acceptance which would be free from self-pity and from defiance. Certainly it is music which often seems remote from everyday human cares; yet while he was writing it Beethoven was passing through the most agitated, anguished period of his entire life. He was wrestling with the situation he had himself created by the obsessive-possessive love he showered on his nephew Karl.

Before coming to this painful episode, we must look back at some aspects of Beethoven's personal life, and especially at his relations with women and his attitude towards sex.

The testimony of his friends makes it clear that in his younger days Beethoven was strongly attracted by pretty, elegant women and at different times had various 'flames', but these attractions seem to have been mostly superficial and they seldom lasted long. It may have been different with the 'immortal beloved' to whom he wrote three letters (two on the same evening and one next morning), but exhaustive research has failed to establish who she was or when the letters were written: they were found, dated simply 'Monday 6 July' and apparently unposted, in a secret drawer of his desk after his death. They are impassioned letters, but anxious, and in the third a note of renunciation can be heard. During most of his life Beethoven was torn by conflicts not only between sexual desire and his moral standards – 'sensual enjoyment without spiritual affinity', he wrote in a notebook, 'is and remains bestial: after it one is left with no trace of noble emotion but rather with remorse' – but also between his craving for someone to love, a woman who would assuage his loneliness and give him a home, and his equally strong reluctance to give up his independence, his absolute commitment to his own inner world.

Here, however, we must reckon with the probability that as a young man he contracted a venereal disease, which could have been partly responsible for his later ill-health and perhaps also – though this has been medically disputed – for his gradual loss of hearing. Ernest Newman, in his *The Unconscious Beethoven*, recalls that Sir George Grove, in the first (1879) edition of his *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, says in a footnote to his article on Beethoven that this diagnosis is confirmed by two prescriptions of which he had been told by Thayer, who had learnt of

them from Dr Bertolini, Beethoven's friend and physician for some ten years after 1806. Thayer himself mentions that when Dr Bertolini fell ill with cholera in 1831, he gave instructions for all the letters he had received from Beethoven to be burnt, because 'a few were not of a nature to be risked in careless hands'. In another passage, after dwelling on the lax morals that prevailed in Beethoven's Vienna, where a cardinal could have children without disgrace and where 'the moderate gratification of the sexual was no more discountenanced than the satisfying of any other natural appetite', Thayer says:

It is nonsense to suppose that, under such circumstances, Beethoven could have puritanic scruples on that point. Those who have had occasion and opportunity to ascertain the facts know that he had not, and are also aware that he did not always escape the common penalties of transgressing the laws of strict purity.

On the other hand, there is good evidence that in 1795, when Beethoven was twenty-five, he made a rejected proposal of marriage to Magdalena Willman, a beautiful and gifted opera singer, and in 1810 he appears to have thought seriously of proposing to Therese von Malfatti, his doctor's daughter, also beautiful and aged only nineteen. Later still, in 1817, he wrote in his journal: 'Love alone – yes, only love can possibly give me a happier life – O God, let me – let me finally find the one – who will strengthen me in virtue – who will *lawfully* be mine.'

It may seem unlikely that Beethoven would have cherished these various hopes of marriage if he had known himself to be suffering from venereal disease, but in 1795 he might not yet have incurred it and later on he could have imagined himself cured. On some of these points there can be no certainty; but if he was aware that he had done himself irretrievable harm through sexual indulgence, this would help to explain the sternly censorious attitude towards any such laxity that he adopted in later life. Dr Aloys Weissenbach, who met him in 1814, wrote that 'he is so hot on moral rectitude that he can no longer be friendly with anyone in whom he has once perceived a moral taint'. It would also account for the well-nigh fanatical hatred of 'bad women' that he had begun to display at a considerably earlier date.

When the younger of his two brothers, Johann, was coming to



Beethoven in 1812  
Bust by Franz Klein, from a life-mask. Vienna, Historical Museum

live in Vienna in 1796, Beethoven wrote to him: 'I hope you will be more and more pleased with your sojourn in Vienna, but beware of the whole tribe of bad women.' Johann eventually became a prosperous apothecary in Linz, where he made a lot of money from selling medicaments to the French army. In 1812, when Johann was thirty-five, Beethoven learnt that his brother had taken on a young woman, Therese Obermeyer, as his housekeeper and mistress. Beethoven hurried to Linz and, when Johann refused to get rid of Therese, made extraordinary endeavours to separate the couple. He went to the Bishop; he went to the civil authorities, and finally he obtained a police order for the banishment of Therese from Linz if she was still there after a certain date. Johann's retort was to marry her. The marriage turned out badly, Therese proving unfaithful, and Johann always declared that his brother had driven him into it.

This was the background to the situation that arose a few years later, when Karl came into Beethoven's life. Karl was the only child of Beethoven's other brother, also named Karl. This Karl had been treated by Beethoven almost as a child, although he was younger by only four years. Beethoven encouraged Karl's slight musical talent, found him employment in Vienna and looked after him with anxious, almost maternal solicitude – until Karl married an upholsterer's daughter, Johanna, with whom he was already intimate. Five months later their child, Karl, was born.

From the first, Beethoven strongly disapproved of Johanna. The brother on whom he had bestowed so much care and affection had been taken from him, and by a woman of obviously loose character – it was hard to bear. From then on Beethoven saw little of Karl, who earned a quiet living as a minor civil servant until he died of tuberculosis in 1815.

In his will, Karl had appointed Beethoven and Johanna joint guardians of the boy, Karl, then nine years old. In a codicil, completed two days before his death, he wrote: 'I have found it necessary to add to my will that I absolutely do not wish that my son Karl be taken away from his mother, but that always, in so far as his future career shall permit, he shall remain

with his mother, to which end she and my brother are to exercise the guardianship of my son.'

In spite of this direct injunction from a dying man, Beethoven promptly appealed to the courts to make him sole guardian, apparently on the ground, mainly, that Johanna had once been charged with embezzling money from her husband. The appeal – possibly supported by some of Beethoven's influential patrons – was granted, and Beethoven wrote to his friend Ries: 'You will hardly have had as much vexation as this death has brought me, yet I have the sweet consolation of having rescued a poor innocent child from the hands of an unworthy mother.'

That is how Beethoven must certainly have seen it. Johanna was in his category of 'bad women': clearly, he had an inescapable duty to save Karl from her. And at the same time he had at last gained someone he could love, virtually a son; someone who would not be taken from him by a temptress, or at least not for a long time; and all this without the surrender of his own freedom to a wife. Not surprisingly, his pent-up affections broke forth. But in all this, and throughout his dealings with Karl, Beethoven showed his almost total incapacity for entering into the feelings of other people and seeing things from their point of view. He obeyed the promptings of his own inner nature, which seemed to him unquestionably right, and it could only be Karl's obstinacy, or the malign influence of his mother, that prevented the boy from seeing them in the same light. Beethoven could thus easily convince himself that he was fully justified – notwithstanding the codicil – in sparing no effort to keep Karl away from his mother, even to the point of preventing her from visiting him occasionally at his boarding school.

Karl seems to have been an intelligent, good-looking boy, generally well liked, with no outstanding gifts, though his uncle was determined that he must have them and should be pressed to achieve eminence as a scholar or an artist.

Almost all the extant information on Johanna comes from Beethoven's letters, where she is portrayed as a thoroughly bad mother with a poisonous influence on her son. He called her the 'Queen of the Night' and even suspected her of having actually poisoned her husband. She seems to have been an incompetent manager and not always honest with money, and later she had

an illegitimate child, but Karl was fond of her and there is no good evidence to justify Beethoven's extreme accusations.

Now and then Beethoven had Karl to live with him, but his own domestic affairs were so chaotic that this arrangement never lasted long. Karl attended various schools, sometimes lodging with friends, but he was expected to visit his uncle as often as he could. On one occasion he ran away to his mother and remained hidden there until Beethoven, discovering his whereabouts, had him fetched back by the police. Johanna brought law-suits in the hope of recovering her share of the guardianship, and once she succeeded, but before very long Beethoven got the decision reversed. The story of Karl's adolescent years is one of endless legal wrangling and interminable letter-writing by Beethoven, with the boy torn to and from between uncle and mother: no need to pursue it in detail here.

By 1825, however, events were moving gradually towards a crisis. Karl, now nineteen, left the university to take an exacting new course of commercial studies at the Polytechnic. By now Beethoven had begun to make use of him as a general factotum, loading him with errands and small requests. Karl is on record as complaining repeatedly that he was not left with enough time for his studies. He had also to endure his uncle's continual reproaches and suspicions, expressed in frequent letters while Beethoven was away in Baden, or verbally when uncle and nephew were together. He was accused of contriving secretly to see his mother, of wasting his allowance on frivolous pursuits, once even of making excuses for Beethoven's elderly housekeeper because he took an erotic interest in her. This moved even the faithful Schindler to protest. 'I do not believe it,' he wrote in the conversation book, 'and I am firmly convinced that you misunderstand Karl at such a person's expense. The woman is old.'

The surviving conversation books (a good many were destroyed by Schindler) give a painful impression of these domestic conflicts; yet Beethoven remained in full command of his inner world. In 1825 he wrote or completed his string quartets Op. 132 and Op. 130, and the *Grosse Fuge*, Op. 133.

On 30th July, 1826, Karl made a carefully planned attempt to kill himself. He pawned his watch to buy pistols, went into the country near Baden, and took two shots at his head. The first

missed, the second bullet lodged under the skin against the skull. A passing carter found him and carried him to his mother's house; a week later he was moved by police order into hospital.

Attempted suicide ranked as a serious offence. At the subsequent court enquiry Karl was asked why he had done it. He replied: 'Because my uncle harassed me so' (*Weil mein Onkel mich so sekkiert hat*). He also said: 'I grew worse because my uncle wanted me to be better.'

On his recovery it was clear that Karl's attitude towards his uncle had changed, as though by his suicide attempt he had asserted his independence. He refused to listen to further aspersions on his mother, and against his uncle's wishes he quietly affirmed his resolve to join the army as soon as a place for him as an officer-cadet could be found.

In the autumn, soon after completing his quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131, Beethoven accepted an invitation to stay with his brother Johann, now the owner of a large estate at Gneixendorf, and Karl went with him. It was not a happy time; Beethoven was morose and suspicious; he had suffered an inner wound from Karl's attempted suicide. But in October he completed his last quartet, Op. 135. On the way back from Gneixendorf he caught a chill which led on to his last illness.

During the rest of that year, while Beethoven was intermittently in bed, suffering from dropsy and other ailments, Karl helped to nurse him, until in January 1827 he was called to join his regiment at Iglau. From there he wrote sympathetically, but he was not told in time how gravely ill his uncle was. On 26th March Beethoven died. His will named Karl as his sole heir.

It used to be customary to lay all the blame for this tormented relationship on Karl and his mother. Karl was depicted as selfish and frivolous, altogether failing in gratitude toward the devoted uncle who was doing so much for him. But it is not hard to imagine the strain thrust upon Karl when he found his formidable deaf uncle treating him suddenly as a beloved son, cutting him off from his mother, insisting that he must grow up into a brilliant man, and – perhaps worst of all – expecting this overwhelming affection to be repaid in kind. It was as though a young plant were being crushed out of shape, denied its natural flowering.

Probably Karl gave his uncle cause at times to regard him as negligent, light-minded, casual with money, but generally he seems to have treated his uncle with patience and respect, and in later years I think he may have come to feel some genuine affection for this ailing, irascible, elderly relative, who in his own way had the welfare of his adopted son so desperately at heart.

Beethoven treated his nephew with alternating severity and indulgence; a letter full of injunctions and reproaches would be followed by one that poured out affection in an all-is-forgiven strain. This is a well-known recipe for promoting neurosis in a child, but up to the time of his suicide attempt Karl seems to have stood it uncommonly well. The attempt must have been seriously intended on the conscious level – would anyone planning a mere gesture put a bullet so close to his brain? – but an unconscious will to live may well have spoilt his aim.

After his uncle's death Karl did well as an army officer; in 1832 he married, left the army to take a civilian post, and some years later, on the death of his uncle Johann, found he could afford to retire. He settled in Vienna with his wife and children, and died there at the age of fifty-two. He was a good husband and father and is said to have improvised beautifully at the piano.

Beethoven's treatment of his nephew was not something entirely new in his relations with other human beings; a rather similar attitude, without the intense emotional aura that was later to be projected on to Karl, had often been shown itself in his treatment of his friends. A few friendships dating from his early years in Bonn – especially with Wegeler and the Breuning family – continued relatively untroubled down the years; but generally his friends had to adapt themselves entirely – even subserviently – to him, and still put up with his outbursts of bad temper and the chronic suspiciousness which went with his deafness.

This may be the chief reason why he wrote only one opera, though he would certainly have liked to write others and at various times toyed with suggestions and ideas. Near the end of his life he said to Ludwig Rellstab, a Viennese novelist and music critic who wanted to write a libretto for him: 'It must be something I could take up with sincerity and love. I could not

compose operas like *Don Juan* and *Figaro* – I feel an aversion for them. I could never have chosen such subjects – they're too frivolous for me.'

Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, is in line with these words. It is a musical allegory in which the real characters are ideas. The persons in the story are not much more than types – Leonore a type of a wife's heroic loyalty; Florestan a type of innocence betrayed; Pizarro is a stage villain; the prisoners typify humanity oppressed, 'born free but everywhere in chains'. Simple, fundamental ideas of this kind, with praise of freedom as their keynote, could inspire Beethoven; they belonged to his own inner world. He could never have gone out from that world to write music for characters and situations which belonged to the outer world he despised. Had he tried to do so, he would have felt that he was betraying the source of his inspiration and turning away from God.

One of Beethoven's 'marked characteristics', Schindler says, was that 'he never discussed religious subjects or the dogmas of the various Christian churches. We can, however, say almost certainly that his religious views were not so much based on church doctrines as on a sort of deism.' One of his favourite books was a heavily marked copy of Christian Sturm's *Betrachtungen der Werke Gottes in der Natur* (Contemplations of the Works of God in Nature), from which he copied out – probably at the time when his deafness was becoming serious – the following passage:

I must acknowledge Thy goodness, for Thou has tried every means of bringing me unto Thee. Sometimes thou madest me to feel the heavy hand of Thy anger; Thou hast, by various chastisement, humbled my proud heart. Sickness and other misfortunes hast Thou inflicted upon me so that I might realise my transgressions. . . . I have but one prayer, O God: do not cease to work to make me better. Let me be fruitful only in the good works that Thou wouldst have me do.

Beethoven felt that in his own way he had a close personal relationship to God and a continuous, arduous responsibility towards Him. He believed that God spoke to him in two ways – inwardly through the music that came to him, and outwardly through the realms of nature and the starry sky. Probably he never tried to formulate his religious beliefs, even to himself; the verbal language of creeds and doctrines was foreign to his

capacities and needs. On his desk he kept a copy in his own handwriting, framed under glass, of three sentences from inscriptions found in the temple of the goddess Neith at Sais in Lower Egypt:

I am that which is.

I am everything that is, that was, and that will be. No mortal man has raised my veil.

He is of himself alone, and it is to this aloneness that all things owe their being.

Perhaps one can imagine that Beethoven cherished these sentences because they were somehow in tune with his feelings that God is everywhere, but not to be spoken of except in gnomic phrases. He had been brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, but it seems doubtful whether in adult life he could be called a Christian. In his letters and journals God is often addressed and invoked, but not Christ. On his deathbed, however, he agreed to the request of friends that he should receive the last Sacrament, and he is reported to have said to the priest: 'I thank you, ghostly Sir. You have brought me comfort.'

Beethoven's religion belonged essentially to his private world; in the outer world he found it reflected in the realms of nature, not among ordinary people. Out there, in domestic and social life, he was not only deaf but altogether insensitive, like a powerful engine with no steering control. Ries, who knew him well for many years, wrote of him

Beethoven was very clumsy and awkward in his movements. . . . He seldom took up anything without dropping or breaking it. Thus he repeatedly threw his inkwell into the piano that stood next to his writing-desk. No piece of furniture was safe with him, least of all a valuable one. . . . It is difficult to understand how he succeeded in shaving himself, even without taking into account the frequent cuts on his cheeks. He could never learn to dance in time.

How will such a man try to deal with human relationships? Either he will tend to treat them brusquely, almost contemptuously, as belonging entirely to the outer world, or he may try to apply to them the uncompromising values of his own inner world. This will rule out marriage and will generally have destructive results, for no person will be found able to meet such demands.

If we say that there were two Beethovens, the disparate

inhabitants of his two worlds, this may be more than a figure of speech. The rare cases of outright dual or triple personality (when Miss A claims to know nothing of Miss B, etc., although they both use the same body) may be extreme, pathological examples of a condition affecting everyone, more or less. Most of us have the experience of being one person under certain circumstances and a different person under others. One person – or at least one persona – takes the stage, while others wait in the wings. But with Beethoven most people saw with their eyes only one person, the eccentric figure well known in the streets of Vienna; the other Beethoven had to be heard.

I think there was also a third Beethoven, who occasionally stood aside from the other two and viewed them both with a kind of sardonic humour. In his earlier days, when he improvised in public, he would sometimes, after moving his hearers to tears, break off and laugh harshly. A similar note can be heard in some of his scherzos, and perhaps also in the well-known words, 'Plaudite, amici, comœdia finita est', spoken three days before his death to Schindler and Councillor von Breuning when the doctors were leaving after a long consultation.

But the end was more characteristic. The story has been doubted, but the Vienna weather records for March, 1827, show that Beethoven did die during a violent thunderstorm which (unusually for the time of year) broke over the city at four o'clock in the afternoon. Only two persons were then present in the sickroom; one was Anselm Hüttenbrenner, an amateur musician who had known Beethoven for about twelve years. Much later, in 1860, Thayer visited Hüttenbrenner and recorded briefly, in a still extant notebook, Hüttenbrenner's account of the scene. 'At this startling, awful peal of thunder, the dying man suddenly raised his head from Hüttenbrenner's arm, stretched out his own right arm majestically – "like a general giving orders to an army". This was but for an instant; the arm sunk back, he fell back; Beethoven was dead.'

I have heard people say they wished we knew as little about Beethoven as we know about Shakespeare: then we should have his music without the disturbing incongruities of his life. I think this wish arises partly from a feeling that the existence of such

incongruities is somehow an offence against the moral order; a feeling that sublime music and a lofty character *ought* to be inseparable. But in human history there are many examples of artists who have produced good work in spite of moral defects in their lives: I think we have to accept their work on its merits and to be grateful for it, without reckoning to pass final judgment on their lives. In the relation between an artist's work and his life there is always something mysterious, unknowable: if X had been a better man, would he have done better work, or worse work, or no work? We cannot tell; and for us it is the finished work that counts, not the untraceable processes that led up to it.

But would it not be better, in that case, to leave Beethoven's life alone? Why drag it all out and write about it? This is an understandable point of view; I can say only that I find it of absorbing interest to read about the lives of men of genius in any field; through their gifts and achievements they give one a glimpse into the wonderfully varied and far-ranging potentialities of human nature. And if one finds that as persons living in society they were all too human, this need not diminish respect for the work they accomplished. On the contrary; while reading about them I have sometimes been reminded of the passage in Auden's *New Year Letter*<sup>1</sup> which begins:

Great masters who have shown mankind  
An order it has yet to find,  
What if all pedants say of you  
As personalities be true?  
All the more honour to you then  
If, weaker than some other men,  
You had the courage which survives  
Soiled, shabby, egotistic lives. . . .

So if we read of Beethoven in his daily life, we can marvel all the more at the prodigious wealth of music he conceived and wrestled with and brought down for us to hear. And obviously it is the music, not the life, that matters now. Beethoven's outer world, where he was deaf and bad-tempered and overbearing and all the rest of it, has long passed away; but his inner world, where he enjoyed freedom and mastery and perfect hearing, is untouched, and from it his voice speaks to us in his own language.

<sup>1</sup> Faber, 1941.

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THE SITUATION OF UNIVERSITIES  
IN FRANCE

COLETTE COURTAIS

IT is owing to their very nature that universities everywhere find themselves in a complex situation between Past and Future, between institutionalised forms of life and creative thinking. While imparting knowledge to the younger generations, they must at the same time answer the needs of our society – a society which speaks above all the language of facts – and create new values as a source of human progress.

This difficult task has never really been fulfilled and in France today the universities are under violent criticism both for their relationship to society and for their internal structure. The situation at universities appears at one moment to be a mere instance of the present crisis of civilisation, and at another its origin. 'Society must be changed,' say some, 'We must start with the universities,' say others.

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It might help us to understand how the situation has arisen if we consider the changes that have occurred in thinking since the end of the last century, and how our lives have been influenced by them.

Our age can be characterised by its will for precision, for scientific truth. On account of the assumption that the physical world is the only reality, the new concept of scientific method has been insufficiently clarified. Applied principally to matter, it became more or less restricted to the kind of precision that can be found in the world of 'facts', in physical laws, identified with quantity, with measure. And the realms of life, of human consciousness, governed as they are by purely qualitative laws, have been explored with the same kind of thinking. The desire to express the laws of these realms in numbers, in formulae, is still very widespread. This means, in fact, that we live in ignorance of their specific character, but continue to act as if this were not the case.

In France especially, new qualities have developed such as

intellectual self-assurance and precision. They have helped to build up a kind of critical mind, very useful in the sphere of quantitative laws but seldom aware of its limitations in other fields. The effects are particularly noticeable in human relationships, which have hardened as a result of the denial of the subtle part of the human being. In traditional world conceptions spiritual values have faded away. There has arisen a new mentality which has deeply permeated society, forging structures based upon materialism which is then made the foundation of a modern ethic.

On the thinking level, a special concept of objectivity has led to the divorce of subject and object. The rational and the irrational have become strangers; they have become exclusive, as distinct from mutually respectful! Thus for those of a more 'literary' turn of mind rigour is considered synonymous with rigidity; to the more 'scientific', fancy or imagination have become synonymous with disorder, unreality. Science, Art, Psychoanalysis . . . each single field of research has followed its own separate line of development, thereby losing its connection with all the others and tending rather to express the division of the world than its unity.

Thus, bound by the laws 'Du Dieu de l'Utile, implacable et serein', to use Baudelaire's expression, or else surrendering to the impulses of instinct, to the seemingly unreal dreams of the poet soon rejected by his own society or to an idealism practically considered obsolete, the modern consciousness has been divided and torn, pulled in opposite directions by the overwhelming increase of a knowledge fragmentary from the start. It is this same knowledge that the universities blindly continue to teach within their walls.

Encountered in thinking, in education, in daily life and in social conditions, this situation is felt, more or less vaguely, and is lived through or undergone without being clearly identified. However, it may happen that consciousness finds the strength to emerge from the degrading reality and free itself, and by a slow process it builds up the new idea that something else is possible. There dawns the hope of fulfilment. The intuition of a new freedom awakens.

If we are to crack the tough crust of rationalism, it will be necessary to approach living reality, to discover it in its novelty,

and recognising its laws and needs, to respond to these in a free and open dialogue. On whatever level we may stand, it is necessary for us to overcome sclerotic intellectualism, of which the hierarchy of authority is simply an institutional manifestation. We must learn to recognise a situation in its objectivity, to acquire that discipline of openness, that freshness of outlook which gives to knowledge, through a profound sympathy of the subject for the object, the character of a rebirth in the sphere of consciousness.

If the awakening of consciousness to freedom is to advance beyond the stage of a mere reaction and become really constructive, impulses on the level of feeling and intuition have to be fertilised by thinking. To this end the first thing needed in the present situation at universities is a radical transformation of knowledge, providing a true concept of Man and the World and of their relationship, and nourishing consciousness through the building up of a new and dynamic faith in life and in destiny. Such a knowledge is needed as can transform human relationships, too often based upon the opposition between possession and non-possession of knowledge: the notion of prefabricated knowledge, passively given and passively received, has to be replaced by that of conscious experience, by the recognition of the real experience of each one at its true value; and the acceptance of it as a contribution to the evolution of the community in which the individual is engaged.

Is this a philosophical problem or a political one? It is a vast problem which can only be considered in dialectical terms: the point is less to find a final solution than, in seeking, to develop awareness of the situation and to create adequate conditions for a free search for solutions. A constant dialogue between the needs of living reality and our responses to them – this dialogue through which alone freedom can develop – presupposes a faith in human freedom, a faith in something that is not actually observed yet is experienced in a real knowledge, in a true concept of Man. To create institutions based not merely upon an intellectual representation of human nature and upon its deficiencies as found in the past, but giving a full opening to progress in the future is a real revolution. And it is a revolution of thinking, of consciousness.

In May 1968 a number of French universities approved a manifesto for free universities in which this idea was the basis for the new institutions. But its greatness was not really appreciated either by the teachers or by the students themselves, blinded as they often were by political ideologies, unrealistic idealism or more simply by the difficulty of thinking clearly and of acting accordingly.

This illustrates the difficulty of the struggle, for the Adversary shows quite different faces. He is not only of the kind that can be easily recognised as such, but when a new attitude dawns and begins to develop, it is he who filters in, rigidifies the structures or dissolves them, distorts in outward conduct the more noble aspirations or adorns the more vile ones with seductive appearances – thus giving points to those who oppose all innovations. All these contrary forces play in greater or less degree into each group, into each individual.

Faced with a society which is all too often a hungry beast demanding vile servants to answer its growing needs, facing a load of consequences from the past, and a present filled with tasks, confronted with a Youth in whom the best can be marred by an arbitrary, hesitant or over-confident education, the French universities are suffering from an extreme division of their forces which are unable to find their unity around a true knowledge of man and of the world, around that knowledge which becomes the source of a dynamic faith in destiny and a basis for right action in the adventure of Mankind.

## THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED IN OUR MIDST

NORMAN DAVIDSON

IN the opening scenes of a recent film, a youth appears playing with a ball in the grounds of a large residential building. His figure is inclining to fatness and he walks rather heavily and clumsily. He has a short, thick neck and a generally squat stature. He throws the ball without deftness, like a child. If we could see his face he would have round features, slanting eyes and a rather flattened nose.

The boy is, in fact, what is generally called a 'mongol' – or, as some prefer to say, someone suffering from 'Down's Syndrome' or 'Trisomy 21' out of consideration for members of the Mongol race in Asia. Mongolism is a form of severe mental subnormality or mental handicap. But it is not a mental illness. Although a mentally handicapped person may be deficient in intelligence, the remaining intelligence is not necessarily morbid. Mentally handicapped people can be very positive and even mentally robust, but have a limited horizon.

The film mentioned was a kind of thriller with the common enough theme of murder and mental derangement. But it was uncommon, and caused controversy, in that it also related mongolism to the theme. The making of such a connection almost inevitably arises in a society which often lays more stress on microscopes and half-understood particles of matter than on directly human understanding of life's problems. For underlying the theme of this film, made in Britain, and shown widely for general public viewing, was the idea that heredity is something one cannot overcome and is contained in microscopic particles in the body cells of human beings. These particles are known as chromosomes, and in the case of many mongols there is an irregularity in their composition.

The mongol in the film had a younger brother who became psychopathic and began to kill people. The suggestion made was that the mother had brought up the younger brother with anxiety and guilt because of the mongol in the family, and contributed to his mental derangement. Also, it was implied that

because a mongol had been born with chromosomal abnormalities, any other child of these parents would stand a chance of being abnormal in some way too.

Whatever the details of the implications, the general result was that the mongol appeared as an undesirable, unwanted element in life whose appearance meant trouble and had a certain doom about it. In having this on the screen the film was unusual, but as an attitude to mental handicap it was all too familiar. It is from this observation of mental handicap or subnormality being experienced as something embarrassing and undesirable and which must be eliminated, that this article is developed.

On the part of all those who are brought to care or provide for mentally handicapped persons, and today that includes society in general, there usually exists an element of inconvenience or pain, even if temporary. This pain is a challenge. The exact nature of the challenge is often not realised or is avoided.

It can be said that the urge to work with and further the mentally handicapped has taken a great leap forward in the last decade or so. The number of mentally handicapped persons living amongst us has increased, and society has stepped up its provisions to cope with the situation. Of great significance is the fact that the official, governmental side of this impulse has come largely through industrial society. The field of work is rapidly becoming populated with persons who formerly were connected with industry. Ideas which have followed upon industrial life over the last hundred years, for instance the socialistic view of society and its consequences, have been brought to bear on the problem of mental handicap. Alongside this stream of activity there have emerged various psychologists and 'specialists' in the field who have knitted together such concepts as industrial activity, social life, and the self-help of the individual, and applied them to the training of the mentally handicapped.

This trend is widespread. In 1966 there was an International Symposium on Sheltered Employment for the Moderately and Severely Mentally Retarded, held at Frankfurt. One of its recommendations was that a sheltered workshop should have an industrial atmosphere, the management should primarily



have industrial skills, and working methods and equipment should be up-to-date.

The impulse in general has to be applauded. Never before have public and governments been so conscious or active regarding mental handicap. There is a great urge to do something about those amongst us whose development of mind is, by legal definition in this country, considered arrested or incomplete – those who were once called idiots, imbeciles and feeble-minded. But in what direction does this action really go? The urge to do something is very genuine and creative amongst many working in the field. But the way things have been turned by the exaggeration of certain attitudes towards life's meaning by those with influence, is another matter.

One of the main attitudes standing behind the 'psychology of mental subnormality' which I have encountered is that Man is a social animal. That the difference between Man and animal centres around the fact that Man can live in a social condition.

It can be seen that an attitude like this contains truth. But it is only one aspect of truth seen from a certain approach. One is also told that the reason why Man is social is because of self-preservation, or a desire to make life easier, or a desire for power over his environment, and so on.

These attitudes arise from the wave of materialism which has brought industrialisation on the one hand and an increased intellectualism on the other. In anthroposophical terms this can be described as an Ahrimanic influence in life. Both industry and intellect are based on a special concentration on physical aspects of life. They have a common origin. Intellectualism is a kind of mechanisation or industrialisation of thinking. Not that this is a wrong or unnecessary phase of development. It is a question of how far it goes and whether other realities are excluded.

When one meets a mentally handicapped individual, one of the first things one notices is that he is lacking in just those attributes mentioned. There is a marked absence of intellectual activity. There is an absence of calculation. The laws of weight, size and number of the physical world have not been penetrated. The individual holds back, or is held back, from grasping and controlling such everyday, down-to-earth realities.

Take away or impair the intellectual, calculating or worldly-



wise activity of a human being and you are not left with nothing. There remains, at the least, heart and soul. And it is the capacity for revealing, or acting from out of, heart and soul that so often characterises the mentally handicapped. They are frequently easily upset and have not the acumen to adapt readily to life's changing situations. They are often wilful and bound by naïve emotion and daily routines. But such a condition is less dangerous in society, and indirectly more fruitful, than the opposite type of condition which is growing apace and is not always considered abnormal – the one in which a person has full possession of the intellectual, calculating and worldly-wise attributes, but is deficient in heart and soul.

The mentally handicapped can at moments reveal sides of human nature which are without much guile and which are refreshing in an age of self-seeking techniques. They also go towards refuting the idea that without civilised intellect, Man is aggressive and anti-social. He can be aggressive. But without controlling intellect he can also be, in fact, very communal-minded. Sometimes he can be healthier in his feelings than is the 'normal' person. The mongol for instance is a person who is officially often described as emotionally immature, being unable to discriminate or control his impulses. But it is not noticed often enough that these impulses are frequently of a kind which seek to give something in a warm way to other human beings, be it something as simple as a chocolate or an embrace, irrespective of the recipient's social or other standing in life. A man is considered simply as a man, worthy of equal affection whether he be a Lord Mayor (they see a few of these in their time) or the milkman. Outgoing, uncontrolled – yes; but what it is that lacks being controlled is not necessarily negative in itself. Mongols are optimistic by nature and laugh easily. They often show talents for dressing up and acting, and for music.

The occurrence of mongolism is high among the mentally handicapped, but there are those who incline in a kind of complementary direction. Where the mongol is outstreaming and warm, other handicaps incline the person to being withdrawn and apprehensive. But fundamentally refreshing characteristics already mentioned are also present. Once a boy of this second category went on a visit to a house where the

children in the family were not handicapped. The boy, unlike a mongol, was thin in body and as if caught up inside thoughts in his head. He observed sharply, but would only express one or two words in broken order to convey a whole sequence of ideas in his mind. Such a child often has an amount of brain damage. At the house he was visiting he filled his pockets with the other children's toys before leaving. He was asked to empty his pockets again, which he did except for one toy. He was asked to give this up too, which he did, putting it in the children's toy box. Superficially this could be seen as stealing. If a normal person did it, it would be. But the boy was acting greatly out of a communal spirit. He could not grasp the idea that things were possessed by different people. For him, the things of the world belonged to everybody. The toy which the boy almost kept but gave up without complaint along with the others when asked to, was later found to have been his 'own' which he had brought with him.

Industrialised and intellectualised society is faced with something which stands over and against its own values and assumptions when it is confronted by a mentally handicapped person. The effect which this has on 'normal' society, the effect of the mentally subnormal on us, and not only our effect on him, is a major issue which is often overlooked.

There was the day when monks considered that an imbecile was someone whose mind remained in heaven. Today, of course, the emphasis in his treatment is on the earth where the mind is not. He is seen in terms of what is not there and approached accordingly. This can result in two lines of action – first to keep such a person out of human life either by taking his life as a child, or shutting him up in an asylum or something similar; or second, to make every effort to make the person fit 'normal' society and act and react like ordinary people.

The second course is the one most commonly adhered to nowadays and often is a reaction against the first. Into the field, as indicated, have moved people influenced by industrial life and associated attitudes. The great virtues have become the socialisation of the mentally handicapped in which he is encouraged towards independence in using public transport, shops, etc.; and industrialisation where he is brought into industrial-type work activity. There are other aspects, but the

emphasis is in these directions. The mentally handicapped learns these things usually in a day Training Centre. Junior Centres train the child up to the age of 16. Adult Centres provide work conditions for those who cannot work elsewhere, and also training programmes for those who it feels may be brought to working and living in open society. The highest goal is working and living independently in open society, which is 'normal'.

There are many good-hearted, understanding people from industry and related fields who are doing excellent work in the Centres. They are usually the craftsmen and tradesmen who have given up a career in, say, joinery and have become wood-work instructors for mentally handicapped adolescents or adults. They have warm, individual relationships with their trainees and a creative, humane approach as to how they can be advanced and made at home in the world and brought to enjoy their lives. In the Junior Centres there are many women, often mothers, who are doing much creative work with the children and handling them with remarkable patience and devotion.

But the emphasis among those influencing the field of operation is nevertheless towards coaxing the trainees into average conditions and ways of life. Usually average conditions of industrial life. One link between mental subnormality and industry which is given and which has a justifiable basis is that simple, routine methods of assembly and suchlike at a work bench, with each individual doing one part of the process, are within the capabilities of someone with little intelligence or skill. This is true and valuable to know. But this basis has been taken far beyond that.

The mentally handicapped should be brought into a work situation. But often they also have to take on the characteristics of average industrial and city-type life in their whole living situation. Many Adult Training Centres are intentionally placed in or near industrial, urban areas. The trainee is often paid on piece-work scales, with earnings related to his output, behaviour, etc.

Urban and industrial life are the most common forms of existence today. They are certainly average. Average has been equated with normal. Therefore if someone termed men-

tally subnormal is to be helped or furthered, he must be brought to coping with machines and streets – on his own if possible.

This last point regarding self-help is much emphasised in official circles. It is noticed that one of the characteristics of mental handicap is that the individual leans on influence outside himself rather than takes his own initiative. One of the prides of modern life is that the individual can make his own decisions and determine his own life. Therefore there is much effort to have the mentally handicapped operate without help. It is a laudable impulse to wish this. But to insist on its happening in a dogmatic way without due consideration of why it does not happen naturally, is to understand our own needs and characteristics more than those of the people we are trying to help.

Much time and effort is spent in bringing the mentally handicapped into our normal way of life, in bringing him to understand us. This must be involved in any attempt to educate him. But, as already suggested, less thought is given to how he affects us. How has he changed us and how can he continue to do so? What does the presence of mental handicap bring about?

Firstly, it brings about a very large question, which is – if this human being is not normal, then what is it that makes a human being normal? This leads on to other questions connected with what human life is; with what we are. We are obliged to take stock of fundamental principles in order to unravel why something is not developing as it should. The presence of mentally handicapped individuals in our schools, hospitals, Centres, homes, etc., makes us look again at first principles of existence. The mentally handicapped stimulate us to be conscious of the purpose and content of life, which we may otherwise have neglected. The drive to socialise and industrialise them is partly a result of this. Certain areas of life have become more aware of their own aims and motives through being faced with something unusual and have consequently applied them to solving it.

Then again, in the field of education the prevalence of out-of-the-run children has sometimes led to a re-thinking of first principles. An authoritative publication on special education says it has been discovered that study of a child's learning difficulties often sheds light on conditions necessary for normal

learning, such conditions often being taken for granted until they are absent – as in the case of handicap.

This type of effect of the mentally handicapped on us can lead either to the clarification and intensifying of our own previous attitude, or to feeling the need for a new one. Yet often the intensification of an attitude, say in education, leads to a realisation of any limits it may have.

A deeper question, which arises from those persons in our midst who seem less fortunate, is a moral one, and one which is less readily responded to. It involves the matter of how well we can penetrate with understanding the experience and personality of the mentally handicapped, and how our own personalities can be transformed through coping with them and accommodating them in our understanding.

On this personal, direct level, the mentally handicapped put forth a challenge to those who would care for them. The challenge inwardly takes the form – ‘if you are to understand them, you must overcome yourself.’ Impulsiveness and emotion for instance cannot understand or properly handle impulses and emotions. These things can only be coped with adequately by something over and above them. A mentally handicapped person is usually one who continues to live in a subjective world. We must cultivate something over and above our subjective feelings if we are to succeed in working positively with those who are submerged in them.

This means that they have to be offered an affection which is beyond mere sentiment and involuntary emotions. They must be offered something above that. And for this we must develop ourselves.

In other words, to handle the mentally handicapped effectively one must bring something to bear which is over and above one's own ‘natural’ personality. This is the challenge. It involves compassion. It involves sacrifice. It involves a form of love which is higher than that engendered by family, nation or race.

It has to be considered that the mentally handicapped person is as far from ordinary thinking as ordinary Man's thinking is from the consciousness of some higher entity. In a sense we must treat the mentally handicapped with the toleration and understanding we would expect ourselves from a person or

being with a consciousness developed far beyond our own. In doing this we have taken steps ourselves along the path of higher development. The mentally handicapped can help people to walk this path by presenting problems which can only be satisfactorily solved by walking it. In a lecture on maladjusted children an entirely materialistic thinker recently said that in handling such children one ‘may feel antagonistic to them because of their conflicts with you, but this is wrong. You have to be neutral. You have to have the patience of a Saint.’

One has to be inwardly active and work upon oneself, towards taking in hand anger, impatience, disappointment, the desire to impose something upon another person, and so on. Much is done with the mentally handicapped in the name of training and instruction on how to behave, etc., and the motive behind it is simply to make life easier for the supervisor. Of course trainees must be brought to perform certain conventional things, but the motives and attitudes behind the instruction are important and affect the result.

How much of society's urgent desire to bring the mentally handicapped into average ways is based on society's convenience? How much of current policy based on care within the ‘community’ is economic expediency? How far is there a genuine unadulterated desire to accommodate the mentally handicapped in our midst?

It is useful to look at trends in this other way, from a more inner point of view, from the standpoint of unexpressed motive. If one feels the quality of certain steps taken, of certain attitudes adhered to, one can discover essential elements not normally taken into account or realised. For instance, one notices that an overdone desire to bring the mentally handicapped to independence in society is, in essence, equivalent to the old idea of locking them up in an institution. Both are based on the same kind of attitude and understanding. The excessive desire to socialise the mentally handicapped is based on the desire to abolish mental handicap. To wish it did not exist. One socialises overmuch because the mentally handicapped are an embarrassment when they are not socialised, and it gets them off one's hands. If they can look after themselves, one does not need to look after them. It should be repeated that this applies

to excessive efforts in the direction towards 'making them just like us'. And, if seen in its essential, this effort is fundamentally the same as wishing to get rid of handicap rather than confronting it and creating something to accommodate it.

The present emphasis is towards making 'them' fit our ways rather than us understanding theirs. For average thinking and practice are markedly foreign to the mentally handicapped. This should not be an excuse to leave them as they are. They must be educated and given as much opportunity as possible to be active in the world. But they must be understood in their own terms as well, and seen as being valuable for what they are, rather than just seeing the particular handicaps as something far short of average and therefore undesirable. As already suggested, they often bring into life certain unblemished qualities of heart which may not have been there otherwise, and which can teach us something about human nature which we had forgotten. They can, in fact, teach us to be human. One discovers, after experience with a child or adult in need of special care, that one is capable of developing a particularly rich feeling of love towards them and they towards us, to an extent greater than is usually the case between many so-called normal people. And the need for warmth of heart and genuineness of feeling to be cultivated in this technical age need not be stressed.

But often technical attitudes kill the life of true human feeling and only concentrate on what is materially expedient. There are various ways of killing it. One has been mentioned, based on an over-enthusiasm to make the mentally handicapped fit average standards, which reveals as much fear and distaste as the old attitude of shutting people up. Then there is the 'drown them at birth' approach which many hope is a thing of the past. But this has its up-to-date equivalent among medical/scientific circles which attempt to work out ways of physically preventing the birth of a mentally handicapped child. This is the same attitude to the problem as held by those who are dominated by fear and distaste and would rather get rid of the problem than relate with it. A process is being developed in Britain, known as *amniocentesis*, in which the cellular life of the growing foetus in the mother is sampled and analysed. If there are abnormalities, and therefore a chance of a child being

born as, say, a mongol, then the pregnancy can be terminated legally.

\* \* \*

In a talk on the problem of handicapped children living at home with their parents, the representative of a very active Society in the field of mental handicap has said that the first thing which parents hope with a handicapped child is that it will be acceptable to other people. Therefore, he said, there should be an early emphasis on teaching social habits and graces. Such a point is worth making and the sentiments behind it are extremely understandable. But one hears less on how the responsible adult can change himself in his attitude towards handicap. Thinking about what others will think is not an adequate motive for teaching something. In any case, can the 'others' not be brought to think differently? The indication is that the introduction of mentally handicapped adults into 'normal' society has gone further than the education of the general public to mental handicap. One answer would be the mixing of mentally handicapped with normal children from a young age. Of great importance in such a situation would be the results on the personalities and lives of the normal children. Humanitarian principles could then become practice.

This brings up another point which is seldom considered and is mentioned with regret. That is, the question not as to whether the mentally handicapped are suitable for society, but whether society is suitable for the mentally handicapped people. Society ought to be suitable. But it is not always so. Average life is not necessarily balanced life; or rather, average social conditions do not necessarily engender healthy living. It is possible for a person to live in a city of several million people and be isolated and lonely; to lead a completely self-contained existence. In fact this is not looked upon as unusual, but is a natural outcome of many principles behind our culture. Success is often equated with the notion of setting oneself over and against others, carving out as much as one can for oneself, and holding on to it. These elements are certainly part of life as it is and have to be taken into account. But they are not necessarily the mainspring of healthy human nature.

Self-help is a supreme part of human activity. Yet it has many forms and levels. The height of its level depends on whether it is accompanied by other qualities, such as the ability to receive properly, or the ability to give something to others. The all-round development of the personality in conjunction with people, in other words true sociability, does not necessarily take place naturally in everyday society. But it is possible for an organised body of people to live 'in community' and connected in terms of work, organisation and cultural activities, and accordingly be highly social in terms of genuine human relations. Some industrial complexes have approached this kind of condition, where workers at the same company have been housed together and have consequently formed out of that various social and recreational activities. The industrialist Andrew Carnegie brought into practice many ideas which went against the notion of big business, and of workers and cultural life being unrelated things. One investigator in this field in America has said that some day factory managers are going to realise that workers are not governed primarily by economic motives. He claims that underneath the stop-watches and bonus plans of the efficiency experts, the worker is driven by a desperate inner urge to find an environment where he can take root, where he belongs and has a function; where he sees the purpose of his work and feels important in achieving it.

Then there are communities integrated from the start such as subnormality hospitals. Other communities often form round special education activities, and so on. Provided a certain community of people are consciously organised and active in all sides of life and not separate from general society, then life in such circumstances can reach a valuable degree of true sociability. This can be of advantage to a mentally handicapped individual taking part.

There are also communities on the other hand which do not attempt to develop the opportunities of communal life. One mental subnormality hospital is formed of groups of patients living and working together, but the aim is to organise things in terms of non-communal life, to make activities and attitudes reflect the lives of independent citizens in general society. The original aim was thus to school the inmates to eventually be-

coming independent citizens themselves. But only about one or two per cent are able to achieve this. The policy however remains and is applied to the remaining majority who will never attain general society, yet are subjected to its demands. For instance, the helping of one mentally handicapped person by another, being an important part of community life therapeutically and morally, is discouraged. Ordinary citizens are independent people, therefore the inmates are encouraged not to help others so much as themselves. The emphasis is away from co-operation and consequently towards separation between individuals. At the same hospital a large area of farm land within the grounds has been let out to farmers. There is a small piece of land left, and having inmates work on it is not particularly encouraged. It is not considered whether working on the land is suitable for the mentally handicapped. The main thing is that it is average, or normal, not to. It is a great triumph, and much to be commended, when the one or two per cent can be brought into ordinary social life. If they are able to do it satisfactorily, they should. But for the rest, special workshop and other conditions centred on their needs and happiness have to be provided. Average standards do not always apply.

The case for Training Centres remains a good one. It is a valuable thing if a child can stay with parents who want him and attend a Centre just as other people attend school or work. One leading voice in the study of mental handicap says however that living at home often fails to encourage self-reliance, confidence and a moderate degree of independence, because many will tend to over-protect the mentally handicapped child. Training Centres, he adds, with attached hostels, working a five-day week, may be the solution to the problem of encouraging social maturity.

And there is also the case for fully residential homes, containing school or workshop. They are for those trainees without parents or proper influence and are as much a necessary part of average society as Training Centres or schools or factories. A balance is achieved if the Training Centre does not concentrate too exclusively on the utilitarian externals of life; and if the residential community is part of, and related to, the social life and society within which it is set.

Training Centres for juniors seem to have come away to a great extent from the idea of education in an inner sense. That is, away from the development of a strong individual quality of creative initiative in relation to the world. The direction taken is external in the name of social competence and work and preparing the trainee for a job. But preparation for a job also needs psychological building, which finds its strength in creative, personal activity in the younger years. The two aspects, outer and inner, belong together. Ideas stemming from the industrial/intellectual stream of thinking are now being brought to bear intensely in the field of education.

One side of modern education is firmly set in the mechanical world of intelligence tests, television and radio, and machine teaching aids. In an intelligence test a child was once asked what was the similarity between a cat and a mouse. The child replied that the cat chased the mouse. This was scored as wrong. From one point of view it is. And yet from another, more imaginative point of view, it is quite right. The fundamental nature of similarity is relationship. If two things are related, they have a common connection. The connection between the cat and the mouse is the chase. The child was seeing their relation from a living, active, inner standpoint. The questioner was seeing it from a purely external, physical standpoint, seeing connections in the number of legs and ears and so forth. It is interesting to note that this difference in standpoint and sense of reality between a young child and those older, has been observed in detail and its development charted by the Swiss researcher Piaget. His findings on this are not out of keeping with what spiritual science has to say about child development.

But actual methods of educating the child today are becoming increasingly mechanical, with a heavy reliance on external apparatus and data, as in the case of teaching machines or the educational psychologist's tests. Regarding the latter I have heard it taught that even the psycho-analytical approach is not so popular now because Freud's concepts of the psyche involving ego and id, etc., are not so tangible as the results of tests of intelligence and personality. By tangible is also meant 'fixed' in terms of external data and not requiring creative, perceptive thinking on the part of the examiner. But data are only mean-

ingful if they are interpreted. Critics of personality tests complain that the interpretation of results is too dependent on the examiner's own personality. So the wish to depend on externals and data betrays a lack of trust or belief in Man being capable of non-subjective discrimination. A lack of trust in fact in the very forces which lie behind the concept Man. Forces of initiative which require inner effort rather than reliance on exterior facets.

As for the influence of teaching machines, I was told by the headmaster of a school for educationally subnormal children that his voice-recording apparatus to help children to learn to speak properly had an advantage over a live teacher because it did not get annoyed at having to answer too many questions or the same questions over and over again. The machine avoided difficulties which could arise through human emotions coming between teacher and pupil, he explained.

A further result of this process is mechanical-type schemes for learning. Behind the lessons there are many words and concepts like programming, structuring, strategy and, most important of all, problem solving. This last phrase is regarded by some as the very root of the educational process. It has been emphasised in certain quarters that 'a child must understand something before he memorises it'. In other words, a child must be able first to understand something in his thinking after meeting it. This is achieved by having to solve problems in relation to it. This approach was applied to normal and mentally handicapped children alike. Seen from a deeper point of view, this would seem to be the opposite of the historical evolution of knowledge. But it arises fundamentally through investigators believing that mankind first learned about life through trial and error experience. Man has come away from the idea of being taught from authority, then later making it his own. The result is that children today, from the start, are often encouraged into teaching themselves through structured learning situations. The protective spirit in the initial stage of teaching is dying out. Man has forgotten how really to give knowledge. He has also forgotten how to receive knowledge.

This is the situation into which the subnormal in this country are now coming. It is said with enthusiasm in many quarters

that the change of governmental responsibility for the mentally handicapped from Health to Education is long overdue. It is claimed that the medical profession has nothing to do with bringing the mentally handicapped to normality. This is, unfortunately, usually true. The concept of real 'therapy' has been lost. People have lost the human, personality, soul aspect of the mentally handicapped which it is possible to reach through imaginative medicine. Yet education and medicine can work together on the problem if they are developed in an artistic way.

Apart from the actual direction of today's trends, it still remains a unique feature of the mentally handicapped that they make people think again concerning their assumptions about human development and even about evolution. They make us re-assess and clarify our ideas about the everyday lives we live, just because they do not easily fit our everyday world. In trying to explain our basic principles to their impaired understanding, we explain the principles to ourselves.

In addition to this, mentally handicapped people encourage us to be idealists. There is little on a short-term basis to derive from contact with them. A cynic would be unlikely to devote himself to their interests. They teach us to look beyond physical, immediate results and returns in life. We may expect those things of them, but if that is all we expect, then we would soon tire and succumb to frustration. So relationships have to lean more to the other side of the human being, the side of the living individuality, which stands over and above the erring bodily organism, and this individuality one learns to know.

Mentally handicapped individuals are not in our midst by chance. They are part of us and belong to us. They are our legacy. Human society, which is all of us, brought them about. There is a meaning and reason in the fact that they confront us personally. We can as little do without them as we can do without pain or illness. Pain and illness are great teachers. We cannot really do without the inconvenience of the mentally handicapped in our midst. They give us the opportunity to be moral when otherwise we may have lived more thoughtless lives.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*William Blake, Painter, Poet, Visionary: An attempt at an Introduction to his Life and Work*, by Kaethe Wolf-Gumpold, translated from the German by Ernest Rathgeber in collaboration with Peter Button. (Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 25s.)

THE author of this book was among the large number of talented refugees who left Germany with the rise of Hitler and settled in Britain. Here she worked for the greater part of her remaining years as a priest of the Christian Community. It was thus that she 'discovered' William Blake. Her recognition of his unique importance was immediate. Realising the greatness of his contribution to world literature, his significance as a guide to the deeper spiritual understanding of life, and the direct relevance of his thought to the problems of the present day, she resolved to devote herself henceforward to the study of his life and work. William Blake has been but comparatively little known on the continent of Europe outside Britain, even in literary circles, and it was in an endeavour to rectify this that she assumed the task of writing this book, and in particular in order to make his name and achievements more widely known among the German speaking peoples. The book was originally published in German and has now been posthumously translated into English.

William Blake has had to wait for a long time for interpreters adequate to his genius. For too long he has suffered grave misunderstanding and neglect, has been regarded almost as a freak and dismissed as one of the curiosities of literature. The reason for this is clear. William Blake was a prophet, a man before his time. Even now, in spite of the devoted labour of interpretation done by many able scholars it is safe to say that it will still be many decades before he comes fully into his own and the world is completely at home with him. The interpreter of Blake requires resources of an uncommon order, a wide knowledge and understanding of the human psyche, lively powers of imaginative insight and deep spirituality. It is only in recent times that scholars of this calibre have attempted the task. In this connection the names of Geoffrey Keynes, David Erdman, Joseph Wicksteed and most recently Kathleen Raine, among others, come to mind. Thanks to their painstaking efforts William Blake now seems well on his way to being securely established in his rightful place in English thought and literature. Indeed, it is already clear that of all the great poets of the Romantic

Revival, Wordsworth, Coleridge, etc, it is Blake's significance alone that has gone on increasing.

Aware of the magnitude of her task, the author has purposely confined herself within very modest limits. She entitles her book, 'An attempt at an Introduction to the Life and Work of William Blake'. Thus it is not intended as a definitive work of scholarship but as a guide to his life and achievements. She was well equipped for this task, for she was by virtue of her training and experience in her chosen vocation spiritually 'far ben', a life-long student of the Spiritual Science of Rudolf Steiner and a trained and practising artist. The book is written with warmth and enthusiasm and a total sympathy with the aims and strivings of William Blake. She enables us to see him as he really was, and introduces us one by one to his major works, so that we can appreciate them in all the splendour of their imagery, the energy of their power, and the profundity of their revelation. The book is enriched, through the generous initiative of Mr John Fletcher, by the inclusion of six reproductions in colour of some of Blake's most celebrated paintings and engravings. She enables us to realise the magnitude of his achievements, not only as a poet, but also as an artist, whose final works are among the grandest feats of sustained imagination in the history of art, and so to realise how rich and manifold was his world of thought and imagination, how penetrating and formidable his intellect, and how apocalyptic his visions.

Living in an era of change and revolution, he was no recluse from the strife of his time, but identified himself intimately with the deeper impulses behind these forward-looking movements of his day. We see him as a champion of human freedom and social justice, devoting his powers in 'mental fight' to the ideals of true liberation and human responsibility. He was a true Christian revolutionary motivated by compassion and spiritually enlightened understanding, a demolisher of idolatries and illusions, and one in whose outlook many of the younger generation today can find much that is akin to their best thought and feeling. He believed most intensely in the primacy of the Spirit and in the latent divinity in man, and strove valiantly towards the objective of the ultimate redemption of the world, not in terms of 'pie in the sky when you die' but rather that here and now there might be 'built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land'. What impresses the reader as much as the scale of his achievements is the extraordinary balance of this man whose mind could move so surely and serenely in such lofty regions of the imagination and wrestle with such elemental powers, and yet remain so firmly and solidly 'earthed', so that all who knew him were impressed by the order, simplicity, and discipline of his private

life, with his excellent sense of practical affairs, his outstanding moral and physical courage, his tireless industry, his scrupulous honour and his noble character, consistently maintained throughout years of poverty, neglect and discouragement. Indeed he stands unique among great artists in that the tenor of his life completely accords with the sublimity of his work.

The book has a discerning introduction by Mr A. C. Harwood and the author has included a valuable bibliography. It is a book to be welcomed as a further attempt to make William Blake's genius and achievements more widely known and understood.

DUNCAN MACNEILL

### THE WILLIAM BLAKE TRUST FACSIMILES

It was in 1953 that the first facsimile was published by the Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust. This was *Jerusalem, The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, completed by Blake in 1818. For forty years Blake had been making illuminated books, and *Jerusalem* was the culmination of his genius. The illuminations are the most magnificent and the poetry excels that of all his other books.

Since 1953 the William Blake Trust have completed and the Trianon Press published seven more facsimiles at intervals of two to three years. In August 1969 *Europe. A Prophecy* was completed and published. With *America. A Prophecy* (which was published in 1963) it prefigures in many ways events of today.

Geoffrey Keynes is his Introduction to *Europe* . . . says: 'Spiritual freedom should have come with the Christian era, but Enitharmon's sway made this impossible (she established her rule over the world with the imposition of the false ideals of repressive religion and law). So Urizen, the author of the false religion of the Druids in Albion dominated man's spirit with his reasoning powers and materialism, later typified by Sir Isaac Newton. Finally Orc, the terrible adolescent and Spirit of Revolt, arose from his sleep, 'And in the vineyards of red France appeared the light of his fury.' *The Prophecy* concluded with Los calling his sons to strife and bloodshed in the land of Albion.'

Blake had received the contents of *Jerusalem* direct from the spiritual world, the contents of *Europe* he received from a Fairy, 'seated on a streaked tulip'. Blake caught the Fairy in his hat and was told how to write his poem.

I took him home in my warm bosom: as we went along  
Wild flowers I gather'd, and he show'd me each eternal flower.  
He laughed aloud to see them whimper because they were plucked.  
They hover'd round me like a cloud of incense: when I came  
Into my parlour and sat down and took my pen to write,  
My Fairy sat upon the table and dictated EUROPE.

The frontispiece is the celebrated 'The Ancient of Days', or 'God Creating the Universe', but Blake intended it to represent Urizen, the tyrannical author of the material world. The figure is stooped upon a bright crimson orb with his golden compasses stretched over the earth below, which is surrounded by dark clouds. There are sixteen other coloured plates. The title-page shows the great coiling Serpent of Materialism rearing its head among the words of the title - *Europe. A Prophecy*. The final plate is dominated by the fires of war. A young man is rescuing his wife and child from the flames of revolution. He rests his right foot on the pediment of a ruined classical pillar, a remnant of the old order based on reason and materialism.

The edition consists of 526 copies, printed on Arches pure rag paper made to match the paper used by Blake. Each leaf is water-marked with Blake's monogram. (Price £54 12s.)

*The Times Literary Supplement* describes this great work of the William Blake Trust:

'Books as Blake conceived them, poetry, painting and craftsmanship combined in a way unattempted since the Middle Ages. . . . The reproduction is beyond praise. . . . A degree of skill, knowledge and devotion has been brought to bear upon the production of this series that it would be idle to look for again. Nothing like these books is ever likely to appear again, and they will in the future be the treasure of libraries.'

JOHN FLETCHER

*Russia, Past, Present and Future*, edited by John Fletcher. (New Knowledge Books, London, 45s.)

THIS book consisting of the writings of seven people, students of Rudolf Steiner's work, has been compiled by an artist, and seems true in content and form: stillnesses reflecting, and streams. Gradually as one reads it, that which lies 'deep below the level of consciousness in the Russian soul' begins to be illumined for 'the souls in the West who are awake to Russian conditions'.

The short foreword gives the ideas that are needed for grasping the purpose of this book, which opens with the image of Russia's true being, trustful and beautiful, beyond history.

'Historical continuity has never found favour in the eyes of the Russian people,' writes Violet Plincke - polarities surge in its stream, building up the enigma that stands 'like an inner command to draw away the thick dark veil hiding Russia's countenance of the future, when she will become the bearer of a civilisation based on brotherhood'. This impulse of brotherhood is expressed by Russia's great thinkers and writers, amongst them Vladimir Soloviev. Three times in his life the Holy Sophia appeared to him and in her light he

worked. Of his thinking Rudolf Steiner says, 'No other philosophy is so permeated by the Christ idea.' In a short essay Violet Plincke has said infinitely much.

'I have a feeling that an epoch with absolutely new tasks, both of the heart and human dignity – a silent epoch which will never be proclaimed or promulgated in a loud voice – has come to birth and grows day by day without our being aware of it,' Boris Pasternak wrote to an editor in Uruguay. His novel *Dr Zhivago* reveals this, and Violet Plincke has turned the light of this work on to the life of Russia.

Then comes the central and most difficult article, 'The Child as Creator of a New Epoch'. Here it is helpful to know that the writer has followed carefully a line of thought alien to the Russian, the line of scientific thought that evolved the Hiroshima bomb. Strange as it may seem this consideration is relevant and brings the writing to life. So the book leads upwards again, and from a peaceful place, in a steady light, surveys the mystery of Russia.

'The Angel of Death' is a legend from the soul of a people 'that dreams no insignificant dreams, but is led through great darkness in the indestructible certainty of a coming dawn'. Given in full, it is immensely powerful, bringing new meaning to the song at the beginning of the book, 'O Mother Earth, of all creatures thou art most in pain . . . have patience yet a little while until I come again . . .' and to the words of Pasternak at Zhivago's death, 'only the flowers took the place of the singing and the psalms'.

*Russia, Past, Present and Future* ends with a great breath of hope. Tamara Clark and John Fletcher have travelled in the Russia of today and write of the people and the architecture. Thanks to the Russian feeling for art, their churches and monasteries are energetically preserved, and in many photographs, lovely in their play of light, John Fletcher brings out something of their living forms and of the earth and distances of Russia. He also writes about them, describing 'Russia's most important building', as Laurens van der Post has called St Basil's Church in Moscow. 'At first glance one can read a splendid distortion of reality in the . . . Church of St Basil . . . all the varied influences that have ever impinged on Russian life are present . . . though this building possesses no immediate symmetry, it implies with passion a profound and organic meaning . . . a symbol so vivid that it could awaken the sleeper from his dream.'

Included in the illustrations are icons and what might be called their modern counterpart, fairy tales of Russia in Palekh lacquer work, extremely beautiful.

The final pictures are of the old and new Goetheanum buildings



Opposite: Russian Church

and Rudolf Steiner's painting of the Russian Man. He is bearing a blue cross surrounded with seven red stars, and overshadowing and inspiring him is his great angel.

After reading this book, one is left with a feeling of thankfulness and of enrichment, and with a strong wish that many people may read and enjoy it.

MARY BRETT

*Stave Churches in Norway*, by Dan Lindholm, photographs by Walther Roggenkamp. (Rudolf Steiner Press, quarto, linen, 70s.)

THE ancient wooden churches of Norway with their mounting gables and dragon-head ornament are variously likened in English books to a Viking ship, a Chinese pagoda, a scaly monster or a stack of hats, and are commonly accorded a passing paragraph of description and no interpretation. Dan Lindholm says of a similar lack in Norwegian literature that a blend of pagan mythology and Christianity is foreign to the modern mind. His book shows that it can in fact be illuminating; integrating contrast and conflict in a pattern of evolving human experience, he guides the reader continually between keen attention to externals and an imaginative mood for inner perceptions. A really thorough-going care for book production supports his purpose. It is easy to linger over the clear, well-spaced pages with their meticulous drawings and over the harmony and variety of the photographs that follow.

*Stave* may mean mast, or vertically placed timber, but the churches are older than the name. Legend tells of invisible hands helping to build them. The structure itself reveals kinship with the Viking 'dragon-prows', built with surpassing skill and still wondered at today. During the coming of Christianity to a reluctant Norway this skill found a new direction; but out of seven or eight hundred churches only some twenty remain, and much of the extant wood ornament and wall painting has to be seen in museums.

The first part of the book describes the churches in their settings and considers their design, constructional detail, and the architectural and artistic influences that appear. Later, with a pause before the wrought-iron door mountings, we come to a study of the Norse theme of the ornament – the Saga of Sigurd and the Heroes striving to overcome the Dragon – and an interpretation that gives it relevance to Christianity and our time. Through Norwegian eyes, we then glance briefly at the shaping influences, partly concealed, partly enforced by militant, missionary kings.

In step with the text, photographs of churches among the mountains move in towards nave and chancel. In manifold ways they indicate the 'structural language' of masts, arches and rafters. They rest upon carved scenes from the Saga, animal forms, strange human

heads, or they peer into shadow, and let us feel distinctions of place and atmosphere. Early in the book the drawings and diagrams become absorbing; plans, elevations and cross-sections ensure clarity for the least accustomed of readers, and then he, too, sets about exploring the treasury of wood engraving and intricate wrought-iron design.

Mr Lindholm unites all this that the eye sees with what he brings from history, folk-tale and other sources, to present the building as an outer mirror of inner stress and endeavour. This was lived through during man's transition from awareness of the activities in nature and his own body as creative beings and powers, to the finding of his separate identity. And as he shared this life of nature in soul-experience rather than in understanding, so Christianity was not at first sought with the understanding but was grasped effectually, in the ritual.

An Appendix with drawings of the churches points out their particular features. A wider list of related reading in English could have been helpful for there is much here to prompt further study. The directness and simplicity achieved in translating a work both technical and imaginative must have an acknowledged share in making this a lucid and beautiful book.

CATHERINE DE BRUYNE

#### *Note*

The illustration 'Russian Man' (from *Russia, Past, Present and Future*) is from a painting by Frau Boos-Hamburger, representing part of Rudolf Steiner's painting in the small dome of the first Goetheanum. For technical reasons the colour reproduction must be regarded as imperfect, but as intending to convey something of the 'colour perspective' described by Heinz Müller.

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