



1974

The Golden Blade

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TWENTY-SIXTH (1974) ISSUE

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Price 85p Published by the Rudolf Steiner Press, 35 Park Road,
London, NW1 6XT, for the Anthroposophical Society in Great
Britain

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EDITORIAL NOTES

OUR time is in general very unsuccessful when it tries to bring into being new social institutions. This lack of success was evident on a world scale, between the wars, in The League of Nations; and the United Nations does not inspire much enthusiasm or confidence, though it has been dignified by the heroic purposes of Dag Hammarskjöld. Where more limited institutions have been brought into being, for special purposes, or among groups of nations, they tend to linger on, without anyone being satisfied, because there is nothing to put in their place, or to change them would be too difficult—as with the two Germanies and Berlin. At best, perhaps, they are complex organisations which work, but are waiting for inspiration and for a soul; for example, the European Economic Community.

With regard to one of the greatest and most evident needs of the world, the acute poverty in large parts of Asia, Africa and South America, there is a terrible disparity between the need and the institutions which have been set up to meet it, or have begun to include relief of it among their duties. It has long been recognised that the under-developed countries need capital, on terms which would be acceptable to them politically and economically, and that private investment would be very far from satisfying this need. To provide loans of various kinds, but particularly those that seem likely to help developing countries most effectively, the World Bank, and associated with it the International Finance Corporation and the International Development Association, are at work.

But at Nairobi, in September, 1973, Mr. Robert MacMamara, president of the World Bank, made what has been described as “a passionate appeal for a huge increase in, and for a radical redirection of, the world's development effort.” He spoke of the 800 million people who live in “absolute poverty,” denied the basic necessities of life. Official development assistance from the better-off countries is “acutely inadequate,” being “only half the modest target of 0.7% of gross national product set for 1975 by the United Nations.” He circulated a table showing the percentage of gross

national product now being contributed by economically leading countries, from 1970 to 1976. Over this period the U.S contribution is shown as falling from 0.31 % to 0.21 %, and that of Britain as constant at about 0.4 %.

Though the developing nations, taken as a whole, are increasing their productivity, they are not doing so enough to lessen the gap between them and the "developed"—or should one say bluntly "rich"—nations; for the past twelve years the difference in average income per head has steadily widened. And there are considerable differences among the poorer countries; according to the *The Economist*, in 25 of the least-developed countries the GNP per head has not grown at all in the last five years. "Probably close to one billion people in the developing world have annual incomes of less than 100 dollars, and 300 million among them (130 million in India alone) have less than half that amount." This poverty is not only in rural districts; in India there is nearly as high a proportion of needy families in the towns.

To give one-two-hundred-and-fiftieth part of our production towards bettering this situation seems meagre indeed. (Of *their* small national product, the ancient Hebrews thought it right to give the Temple one-tenth). But at "the largest gathering of financial decision-makers the world has ever known" no considerable change in policy emerged; the best that could be offered was that in twenty-five years the gravest poverty might be overcome.

The rich countries, although they have been experiencing boom conditions, are tragically preoccupied with their own problems of inflation and fluctuating exchange rates—and the United States with hitherto unimagined strains on the Constitution. The World Bank—which they largely control—cannot really engage their attention.

Has the conscience of the world, which seemed to be stirring, fallen again into a perilous sleep?

* * *

From about the end of November 1973 to the middle of February 1974 we may be able to wonder at the spectacle of Comet Kohoutek—before sunrise until Christmas, and from the New Year after sunset. For a great many people this will be simply an interesting astronomical phenomenon—one of the countless comets, one that happens

to be bigger than most. Relatively few, perhaps, in any part of the world, will feel that behind the physical appearance there is a spiritual reality.

For Rudolf Steiner there was nothing physical which was not the expression of living spirit—as there was nothing spiritual which does not somewhere find its manifestation in the physical. When he spoke of the comets, it was to indicate that spirituality of the mightiest, most humanly significant kind lay behind the phenomena. In the lecture printed here, he makes the contrast evident between the moons in the solar system and the comets. Today the sense of desolation that the earth's Moon gives on its surface—and the merciful contrast of the earth's fertility—have come nearer to us all. Now it may be that we are called to look afresh at Comet Kohoutek, with its splendid transience, and ask what is to be read in this sign written across the heavens, among the constellations close to the northern hemisphere's winter sun.

Each year when new comets appear, a long and difficult work begins through which astronomers try to establish what their orbits are. This may take several years after their first appearance, though, even for the strongest telescopes, their visibility will be only a matter of months. From the visible positions the attempt is made to calculate a possible elliptical orbit, which might show that a comet could be expected to return in a number of years. Such an interval could range from three years or so to many thousands of years; it may suggest that the comet is the same as one recorded within historic times. But comets have in common—as is described in detail by Dr. Elizabeth Vreede in this issue—that they come from regions far from the sun, that they pass near to it and swing round it, so that their path in relation to it is close to a parabola.

In speaking of the spiritual nature of the Sun, Rudolf Steiner again and again correlated it with beings who, in the ancient Christian tradition which bears the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, are called Kyriotetes, Dynamis, and Exusiai. These are the beings of the central, Second Hierarchy; they are often named by Rudolf Steiner Spirits of Wisdom, of Movement, and of Form. The significance, the capacity for movement, and the characteristic underlying forms of very much in living nature around us, and in man himself, we owe to their work. But beyond them, as First Hierarchy, are the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones (who are also named

Spirits of Will). From many points of view Rudolf Steiner tried to lead towards an understanding of these exalted beings. In them distinctions between the moral and the material vanish; they are present in the ultimate underlying forces of the physical universe and in the innermost spiritual powers of man. They carry the eternal into the temporal, the temporal into the eternal.

And here we come to the paradox of the comets. They are the most transient phenomena of the solar system in their actual manifestation; and yet they are the messengers of the highest hierarchies, in particular of the Seraphim and Cherubim; messengers of the eternal purity and goodness, from which not only the earth, but much in the solar system has fallen away. The comets encounter and carry away corrupted astrality from within the solar system; they are purifiers, bearers of catharsis, not simply for the souls of men, but for a multitude of beings. (Chinese and Japanese names for comets, calling them "broom" or "besom" stars, may not just refer to their appearance, but also to this cosmic task of sweeping away. The image of a broom is indeed more appropriate than "tail"; for the tail of a comet goes ahead of it, on the way out from perihelion, not behind).

What is it that darkens and corrupts the astrality of men, and other beings? In general, it is over-attachment to the temporal, to the point of rejecting the eternal. This is very evident in our civilization, and above all in its technology, everywhere adapted to short-term demands and satisfactions.

Though it is recognised that this technology is in many ways dangerous to the earth and destructive to the most precious qualities in human beings, the answer widely given is that we need *more* technology in order to master its ill-effects. It is little seen that a qualitatively different technology is needed; and where something of this kind is attempted, by Dr. Schumacher and others who think in a similar way, they are accused of trying to fob off the developing countries with something second-rate that these countries do not really want (even if it produces more jobs!).

The element of conscience, of recall to the eternal, is acutely needed in our social life, poisoned by old rancours, caught up in hardened prejudices. And this need not mean a turning away from technology—which the rancours so easily draw into their service, and in

which they can find no healing—but new sources of inspiration for it. For, after all, technology is meant to serve man, and to protect the life of the earth—and both earth and man have their origin in the great universe, in the world of eternity. To find his way back to the abiding sources, the technician has to join with the artist and with the healer.

* * *

Margarethe Kirchner-Bockholt, who died on April 9, 1973, was both artist and healer in a way that made a vital contribution to the development of a new healing art, curative Eurythmy.

She was born on 8th October, 1894, at Dülmer, Westphalia. Her family were Roman Catholic; her father had far-reaching interests in, and questions about, the development of Christianity in Europe. She was given a wide education, and from 1913 to 1919 studied medicine; after completing her training, she worked in the university psychiatric clinic at Rostock. After hearing a lecture by Dr. Eugen Kolisko in 1921, she set off at once for Dornach. Meeting Frau Marie Steiner in Stuttgart, she was invited to study Eurythmy at the Goetheanum; she accepted with enthusiasm. Erich Kirchner-Bockholt, who later became her husband, records that Frau Dr. Steiner said of her to the other eurythmists: "Look at this young doctor; she is in all her eurythmic movements cosmic." It was throughout her life one of her deepest interests to grow in understanding for the expression of planetary and zodiacal relationships in Eurythmy. This, with her medical training and vocation, made her the natural person to foster, under Rudolf Steiner's guidance, the development of eurythmy in a special therapeutic form. An early article by her on this subject is translated here.

From 1922 onwards—drawn back by an acute need for help in the growing Klinik at Arlesheim—she worked very closely with Dr. Ita Wegman, who became in 1923 the leader of the Medical Section at the Goetheanum. She shared with one or two other doctors the opportunity to observe from day to day how Dr. Steiner worked with Dr. Wegman to develop a new art of healing (as she has described in her contribution to "Rudolf Steiner by his Pupils"—soon to be published in a new edition).

All through Dr. Wegman's life, to her death in 1943, Margarethe Kirchner-Bockholt was a faithful and energetic fellow-worker with her—as was her husband in the field of administration, a complex

matter where a number of medical and curative institutions were involved. And after Dr. Wegman's death they continued steadily on the same course. In 1955, she was invited by Albert Steffen, and the other members of the Vorstand, to participate in the leadership of the Medical Section; and in 1963 she herself became a member of the Vorstand of the Society. In both capacities her great concern, as her husband writes, was to work in a way that would unite human beings, reconciling differences through mutual understanding, finding means for the spiritual, cosmic impulse of healing to be effective. And in this she had much success.

* * *

In recent years, it has often seemed almost useless to speak about Rudolf Steiner's conceptions of a healthy social life; it has looked as if there could be hardly any willingness, in the prevailing climate of opinion, to hear what could be said. Gradually, there is a change—particularly among young people. Existing forms and organizations are rejected, or regarded with a kind of despair; there is a great longing for forms of community inwardly related to the world of stars, to the great universe.

Perhaps, with such thoughts in mind, readers of this "Golden Blade" may find its contents, in their range from social problems to the starry heavens, from the mysteries of initiation to curative Eurythmy, more closely linked than they appear to be at first sight.

A.B.

MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE: COMETS AND THE MOON

RUDOLF STEINER

The approach of a brilliant new comet, expected to become visible in our skies during November, was announced last April. When Comet Kohoutek (named after its discoverer, Lubos Kohoutek, at the Hamburg Observatory) passes near the sun, it may be brighter than any comet previously recorded.

We are therefore printing here this lecture by Rudolf Steiner on comets (Stuttgart, March 5th, 1910)*, followed by a slightly shortened version of two of Dr. Vreede's Letters on Astronomy which deal with the same subject.

ON a night when the stars are clear and we gaze at the expanse of the heavens, it is first a feeling of sublimity that flows through our souls as we let the innumerable wonders of the stars work upon us. This feeling of sublimity will be stronger in one person, less strong in another, according to his individual character. But when faced with the appearance of the starry heavens a man will soon be aware of a longing to understand something of these wonders of cosmic space. Least of all in regard to the starry heavens will he be deterred by the thought that this direct feeling of sublimity and grandeur might disappear if efforts are made to penetrate the mystery of the starry world with the intellect. We are justified in thinking that understanding and comprehension cannot here injure the direct feeling that arises in us. And just as in other fields it soon becomes evident in greater or less degree that spiritual-scientific knowledge enhances and strengthens our feelings and perceptions if only we keep a healthy mind, so will a man become more and more convinced that in regard to these great, sublime cosmic facts, his life of feeling will not wither in the slightest when he learns to grasp what it really is that is passing through space or, in appearance, remains at rest.

* From shorthand notes unrevised by the lecturer. Published by kind permission of the Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach, Switzerland, and in agreement with the Rudolf Steiner Press.

In any presentation it is, of course, possible to deal only with one tiny corner of the world, and we must take time to learn to grasp, step by step, the facts and phenomena of the world. To-day we will concern ourselves with a part, a small part, of the world of space in connection with the life of man. Even though a man may dimly divine it, he will learn with greater and greater certitude through Spiritual Science that he is born out of the totality of the universe, whose mysteries are connected with the mysteries of his own being. This becomes very evident when we enter with more exactitude into certain mysteries of existence.

A polarity is manifest in human life as it evolves on this Earth—a polarity to be found everywhere and at all times. It is the polarity, the contrast, of *Male* and *Female*. We know that this contrast in the human race has existed since the time of ancient Lemuria; we know, too, that it will last for a while in our earthly existence and ultimately resolve itself again into a higher unity.

If we recollect that all human life is born out of cosmic life, we may then ask: If it is indeed true that since the old Lemurian time the polarity of man and woman has been part of the Earth's evolution, can we find something in the universe which in a higher sense represents this polarity? Can we find in the Cosmos that which comes to expression in Male and Female on Earth?

In Spiritual Science we cannot proceed according to the maxims of a present-day materialist. A materialist can visualise nothing apart from his immediate environment and is therefore prone to seek for this contrast of Male and Female everywhere and at all times, whereas it now applies only to human and animal life on Earth. There is here a great error of our time. We must bear clearly in mind that the designations "Male" and "Female" in the human kingdom hold good in the strict sense only since the Lemurian epoch and up to a certain point of time in Earth evolution, and so far as animals and plants are concerned, only during the Old Moon evolution and the Earth evolution.

But the question remains: Are Male and Female as they exist on Earth born out of a higher, cosmic contrast? If we were able to find this contrast, a wonderful and, to begin with, a mysterious connection would emerge between this phenomenon and a phenomenon in the Cosmos. There are, of course, contrasts everywhere in the Cosmos, but one needs to know how to find them in the right

way. The first contrast that is significant for human life is between Sun and Earth. In our various studies of Earth evolution we have learnt how the Sun separated from the Earth, how both became independent bodies in space, but it may also be asked: How does the contrast of Sun and Earth in the macrocosm, in the great world, repeat itself in man, the microcosm? Is there in the human being himself a contrast which corresponds to the contrast of Sun and Earth in our planetary system? Yes, there is. In the human organism—considered in its totality—the contrast is both bodily and spiritual. It occurs between all that expresses itself externally in the organ of the head and all that expresses itself externally in the organs of movement, the hands and feet. This contrast between the head and the organs of movement corresponds to that contrast or polarity which in the Cosmos arises between Sun and Earth. We shall see how this fits in with the correspondence, or parallelism, between the Sun and the heart. The point here, however, is that in the human being the head is there on the one hand and on the other what we call the organs of movement.

You can readily understand that so far as his limbs were concerned, man was a quite different being during the Old Moon evolution. It was the Earth which made him into an upright being, one who uses hands and feet as he does to-day; again it was only on the Earth that his head was enabled to gaze out freely into cosmic space because the forces of the Sun raised him upright, whereas during the Moon evolution his spine was parallel with the surface of the Moon. We may say that the Earth is responsible for man being able to use his legs and feet as he does to-day. The Sun, working upon the Earth from outside and forming the contrast with the Earth, is responsible for the fact that the human head, with its countenance, has in a sense torn itself away from bondage to the Earth and is able to gaze out freely into space. Out there in the planetary system, polarity of Sun and Earth; within the human being, polarity of head and limbs. We find this contrast of head and limbs in every human being, whether man or woman, and we find, too, that here, in all essentials, men and women are alike. The contrast corresponding to that between Sun and Earth expresses itself in the same way in men and in women. The Earth works to the same extent upon woman as upon man; woman is bound to the Earth in the same way as man; and the Sun tears the head of woman and of man alike away from bondage to the Earth.

We shall be able to gauge the profundity of this contrast if we remember that those beings who, as it were, fell into dense matter too early—the mammals—were not able to attain free sight outwards into cosmic space; their countenance is bound to Earth existence. For the mammals, the contrast of Sun and Earth did not become, in the same sense, a contrast in their own being. For this reason we may not speak of a mammal as a microcosm, but we can call the human being a microcosm. And in the polaric contrast between head and limbs we have evidence of the microcosmic nature of man.

Here we have an example which shows how infinitely important it is not to become one-sided in our studies. The bones of man and the bones of the higher mammals can be counted, also the muscles of man and of the mammals, and in certain modern views of the world this connection has led to man being placed in closest proximity to the higher mammals. The fact that this can happen shows that people have yet to learn through Spiritual Science how important it is not merely to have truths, but to add something to them. Realise quite clearly, my dear friends, that here something of great significance is being said—something which the Anthroposophist should inscribe in his memory and in his heart: Many things are true, but to know that a thing is true is not enough! For example, what modern science says about the kinship of man with the apes is undoubtedly true. But with a truth the point is not merely to possess it as a truth, but to know the importance of it in the explanation of existence as a whole. A truth that is seemingly quite ordinary may fail to be regarded as decisive only because its importance is not observed.

There is a certain familiar truth, known to everyone, which if taken in its real importance becomes deeply, deeply significant for the whole doctrine of evolution. It is the truth that man is the only being on Earth who can direct his countenance with real freedom out into cosmic space. If we compare the human being in this respect with the apes who stand near to him, we must say: Although the ape has tried to raise himself into the upright posture, he has somehow made a hash of it . . . and that is the point. What matters is to have insight into the importance of a truth! We must *feel* the importance of the fact that man has this advantage, and then we shall also be able to connect it with the other cosmic fact just mentioned. It is not the Earth alone, but the Sun in polaric con-

trast to the Earth—something beyond the earth—that makes man a citizen of heavenly space and tears him away from earthly existence. In a sense we may say: This whole cosmic adjustment which we know as the polarity of Sun and Earth had to be made in order that man might be given this place of precedence in our world. This constellation of Sun and Earth had to be brought about for the sake of man, that he might be raised from the posture of the animals. So in the human being, on the one hand, we have the same contrast that we see, on the other hand, when we look out into heavenly space and behold the Sun with its counterpart, the Earth.

And now comes the question: Can we discover in the Cosmos the other polarity that exists on Earth—between Male and Female? Is there perhaps something in our solar system which brings about, as a kind of mirror-image on Earth, the polarity between man and woman? Yes, this higher polarity can be designated as the polarity between the cometary and lunar natures, between comets and the Moon. Just as the polarity Sun-Earth is reflected in our head and limbs, so in Female and Male is reflected polarity Comet-Moon.

This leads us into certain deep cosmic mysteries. Strange as it may sound, it is true that the different members of the human, physical body are in different degrees an expression of the Spiritual behind them. In physical man, it is the head, and in a certain other sense the limbs, which correspond most closely in outer form to their underlying, inner, spiritual forces. Let us be clear about this. Everything that confronts us externally in the physical world is an image of the Spiritual; the Spiritual has shaped it. If now the Spiritual is shaping something physical, it can shape it in such a way that at a certain stage of evolution this physical form is either more similar or less similar to it, or is more dissimilar or less dissimilar from it. It is only head and limbs as external structures that resemble their spiritual counterparts. The rest of the human body does not at all resemble the spiritual picture. The outer structure of man, with the exception of head and limbs, is deceptive. And those whose clairvoyant sight is trained always see the human being in such a way that it is really only head and limbs that given an impression of truth. Head and limbs give a clairvoyant the feeling that they are true; they do not deceive. With regard to the rest of the human body, however, clairvoyant consciousness has the feeling: that is untrue form, that is something deceptive; it does not at all

resemble the Spiritual behind it. Moreover, everything that is female appears to clairvoyant consciousness as if it had not advanced to the present stage of evolution, but had remained behind. If it will not be misunderstood, we can say: The female body, as it is to-day, has remained behind at a more spiritual stage; in its form it has not descended so deeply into matter as to be in accord with the average stage of evolution. The male body, however, has advanced *beyond* the average stage—apart from head and limbs. As male body, therefore, it is deceptive because it is more material than its spiritual prototype; because it has descended more deeply into the material than is called for by the average stage of evolution to-day. Thus in the female body we have something that has, so to speak, remained behind normal evolution, and in the male body something that has descended more deeply into the material than the head and limbs have done.

This same contrast is to be found in our solar cosmos. If we take our Earth and the Sun as representing normal evolutionary stages, the comet has not advanced to this normal stage. It corresponds in our cosmos to the Female. Hence we have to see cometary existence as the cosmic prototype of the female organism. Lunar existence is the counterpart of Male existence. This will be clear to you from what has been said before. We know that the Moon is a piece of the Earth that had to be separated off. If it had remained in the Earth, the Earth could not have gone forward in its evolution. The Moon had to be separated off on account of its density. The polarity of Comet and Moon, out there in the cosmos, is therefore the prototype of Female and Male in man.

This matter is exceedingly interesting because it shows us that whether we are considering an earthly being such as man, or the whole universe, we must not simply think of one member side by side with others as they appear to us in the world of space, for if we do this we give ourselves up to a dreadful illusion. The various members of a human organism are, of course, one beside the other, and the materialistic anatomist will regard them as having an equal standing in space. But for a true view there are differences, inasmuch as one thing has reached a certain point of evolution, another has not—although it has made some progress—and another has passed beyond this point. A time will come when the whole human organism will be studied along these lines; and only then will

an occult anatomy in the real sense exist. As I have told you, things that lie side by side are at different stages of evolution, and the organs in the human body are only to be understood when it is known that each of them has reached a quite different stage of evolution.

If you bear in mind that the Old Moon evolution preceded that of our Earth, you will realise from what has just been said that although the present Moon is a part of the Old Moon evolution, it is not at the stage of that evolution and does not represent it. The Moon has not only advanced to the Earth stage but has even gone beyond this normal stage; it was not able to wait until the Earth becomes a Jupiter and it has therefore fallen into torpor, as far as its material side is concerned—not, of course, in its spiritual connections.

Now the Comets represent the relationship of the Old Moon to the Sun which prevailed at a certain time in the Old Moon evolution. The Comet has remained at this stage, but now it has to express this somewhat differently. The Comet has not advanced to the point of normal Earth existence. In the present Moon we have a portion of a later Jupiter which was born much too early and is therefore torpid, incapable of life, and in our Comets we have a portion of the Old Moon existence projecting into our present Earth evolution.

In parenthesis, I would like to mention here briefly a noteworthy point, through which our spiritual-scientific ways of thinking have won a little triumph. Those who were present at the lectures I gave in Paris in the year 1906 (18 lectures on Cosmogony) will remember that I spoke then of certain things which were not touched upon in the book, *Occult Science*. In Paris I developed a point bearing more upon the material, chemical aspect of the subject. I said that the Old Moon evolution—which projects itself in present cometary existence because the Comet has remained at this stage and, as far as present conditions allow, expresses those old relationships in its laws—I said that this Old Moon evolution differs from the Earth in that nitrogen and certain nitrogen compounds—cyanide, prussic acid compounds—were as necessary to the beings on the Old Moon as oxygen is necessary to the beings of our present Earth. Cyanide and similar substances are compounds which are deadly to the life of higher beings. But compounds of carbon and nitrogen, compounds of prussic acid and the like, play an entirely similar role.

These matters were developed at that time in Paris out of the whole scope of Spiritual Science, and those who inscribed them in their memories will have had to say to themselves through the intervening years: If that is true, there must be proof of something like compounds of carbon and nitrogen in the comets. You may remember (the information was brought to me during the lecture-course on St. John and the other three Gospels in Stockholm) how the newspapers have now been saying that the existence of cyanide compounds has actually been proved in the spectrum of the comet. This is a brilliant confirmation of what spiritual research was able to say first, and it has at last been confirmed by physical science. As proofs of this kind are always being demanded of us, it is quoted here. When such a striking case is available, it is important for Anthroposophists to point it out and—let us say it without pride—to remind ourselves of this little triumph won by Spiritual Science.

So you see, we can truly say that the polarity of Male and Female has its cosmic archetype in the polarity of Comet and Moon. And if, starting from this—it is not, of course, possible to go into all the ramifications—we could describe the whole activity of the Moon on the one hand and of the comets on the other, you would realise how grand and splendid it is for the soul—as indeed are all feelings of sublimity—to realise: Here on the Earth we see something mirrored and this, in its functioning, is an exact expression of the polarity of Comet and Moon in the cosmos. It is possible to indicate only a few of these matters. Some of them are of great importance and of these we will speak.

We must have a clear conception of how the contrast expressed in Comet and Moon works upon the human being. We must not think that this contrast expresses itself *only* in what constitutes Man and Woman in humanity, for we must be clear that male characteristics exist in every woman and female characteristics in every man. We know too, that the etheric body of man is female and that of woman, male, and this at once makes the matter extremely complicated. We must realise that the male-female polarity is thus reversed for the etheric bodies of man and woman, and so are the cometary and lunar effects. These effects are present also in relation to the astral body and the Ego. Hence the polarity of Comet and Moon is of deep, incisive significance for the evolution of humanity on Earth. The fact that the Moon evolution has a

mysterious connection with the relation of the sexes, a connection that eludes exoteric ways of thinking, expresses itself, among other ways, in something that might seem accidental, namely that the product of the union of male and female, the child, needs ten lunar months for its development from conception to birth. Even modern science reckons not with solar but with lunar months, because there the relation between the Moon, representing male in the Cosmos and the Earth, and the cometary nature representing the female in the Cosmos, is decisive, reflecting itself in the product of the sexes.

Another important consequence for the evolution of humanity is connected with comets. The cometary nature is as though feminine, and in the movements of the comets, in the whole style of their appearance from time to time, we have a kind of projection of the archetype of the Feminine in the Cosmos. It is something that really gives the effect of having come to a halt before reaching the normal, average stage of evolution. This cosmic Feminine—the term is not quite apt, but suitable terms do not exist—shoots in from time to time like something that stirs up our existence from the depths of a nature existing before the dawn of history. In the mode of its appearance a comet resembles the feminine. As what is done by a woman more out of passion, feeling, is related to the dry, matter-of-fact judgement of the male, so is the regular sober course of the Moon related to the cometary phenomenon which projects irregularly into our existence. This is the peculiarity of feminine spiritual life. Mark well—I am not speaking of the spiritual life of woman, but of the feminine spiritual life. There is a difference. The spiritual life of a woman naturally includes male characteristics.

Feminine spiritual life, whether in a man or a woman, projects into our existence something of a primitive elemental nature. And that is what a comet does. Wherever we see this contrast in man and woman, it expresses itself with uncommon clarity.

People who judge everything by externals criticise Spiritual Science because many women come to it at the present time. They do not realise that this is quite understandable, simply because the average brain of a man has overstepped a certain average point of evolution; it has become drier, more wooden, and therefore holds on more rigidly to concepts that have been handed down to it; it cannot get free of its prejudices. Someone who is studying Spiritual Science may feel it hard that in this incarnation he has to use a

male brain! For the male brain is stiff, resistant, and more difficult to manipulate than the female brain, which can get over certain obstacles which the male brain, with its density, sets up. Hence the female brain can more readily follow the new ideas that go with our way of looking at the world. In so far as in the structure of the human brain the Male and the Female principles come to expression, it can even be said that for our present time it is most inconvenient and unpleasant to be obliged to use a male brain. The male brain must be trained much more carefully, much more radically, than a female brain. So it is not really at all extraordinary that women to-day find their bearings more easily in something as eminently new as Spiritual Science.

These matters are of the greatest importance in the history of culture, but they can hardly be discussed anywhere to-day outside Anthroposophy. Except in our circles, who will take seriously the fact that to have a male brain is not so comfortable as to have a female brain? This, naturally, does not by any means imply that many a brain in a woman's body has not thoroughly masculine traits. These things are not as simple as our modern notions suppose.

The cometary nature is something elemental; it stirs things up and in a certain sense is necessary in order that the advancing course of evolution may be supported from the Cosmos. Men have always had a premonition that this cometary nature is connected in some way with Earth-existence. It is only in our day that they reject any such idea. Only think what a face an average scholar of to-day would make if the same thing happened to him as happened between Professor Bode and Hegel. Hegel once stated bluntly to an orthodox German professor that good wine-years followed comets and he tried to prove this by pointing to the years 1811 and 1819, good wine-years which were preceded by comets. This made a fine commotion! But Hegel said that his statement was as well-founded as many calculations concerning the courses of stars; that it was an empirical matter which was verified in these two cases. But even apart from such comical episodes it is true to say that people have always conjectured something in this connection. It is not possible to enter into details, for that would be an endless task, but we will throw some light on one main influence related to human evolution.

The comets appear at great intervals of time. And now let us ask: When they appear, is their relation to human evolution as a whole such that they stimulate, as it were, the female principle in human nature to something or other? There is, for example, Halley's Comet, which now again has a certain actuality.* The same could be said of many other comets. Halley's Comet has a quite definite task, and everything else that it brings with it is definitely related to this task.

Halley's Comet—we are speaking here of its spiritual aspect—has the task of impressing human nature as a whole in such a way that human beings take a further step in the development of the Ego when the Comet comes near the Earth. It is a step which leads out the Ego to concepts connected with the physical plane. To begin with, the Comet has its special influence on the two lower members of man's being, on what is male and female; there it joins company with the workings of the Moon. When the Comet is not there, the workings of the Moon are one-sided; the workings change when the Comet is present.

That is how the working of the Comet expresses itself. When the human Ego takes a step forward, then, in order that the *whole* man may advance, the physical and etheric bodies must be correspondingly transformed. If the Ego is to think differently in the 19th century from its way of thinking in the 18th century, there must also be something that changes the outer expression of the Ego in the physical and etheric bodies—and this something is the Comet! The Comet works upon the physical and etheric or life-body of man in such a way that they actually create organs, delicate organs which are suitable for the further development of the Ego—the Consciousness-Ego as it has developed especially since the coming of the Christ Impulse to the Earth. Since that time the significance of the Comet is that the Ego, as it develops from stage to stage, receives physical and etheric organs it can use. Just think of it—strange as it may sound and crazy as our contemporaries will consider it—it is none the less true that if the Ego of a Büchner,* of a

* Halley's Comet returned in 1759, 1835 and late in 1909. It was at its best in the spring months of 1910, at the time of this lecture. Its next return is due around 1985.

* Friedrich Karl Christian Ludwig Büchner (1824-1899), physician and philosopher, exponent of materialism. His book, *Kraft und Stoff* ("Force and Matter") came out in 1855.

Moleschott and of other materialists had not possessed, around the years 1850/60, suitable physical and etheric brains, their thinking would not have been as materialistic as it was. The worthy Büchner might perhaps have made a good average clergyman. For him to be able to come through with the thoughts expressed in his *Kraft und Stoff*, it was necessary not only for his Ego to evolve in this way, but for the corresponding organisation to be present in his physical and etheric bodies. If we are searching for the development of the Ego itself, we have only to look round at the spiritual-cultural life of the period. But if we want to know how it was that these people of the 19th century had a physical brain and an etheric body suitable for materialistic thinking—then the answer is: Halley's Comet, which appeared in the year 1835. In the 18th century there was the so-called Enlightenment, which was also a certain stage in the development of the Ego. In the second half of the 18th century the average human being had in his brain this spiritual configuration that is called "Enlightenment." What made Goethe so angry was that a few ideas were thrown out and people declared themselves satisfied. What was it that created the brain for this "Age of Enlightenment"? It was Halley's Comet of the year 1760. That was one of its central workings.

Every cometary body has a definite task. Human spiritual life takes its course with a certain cosmic regularity—a bourgeois regularity one might almost say. Just as a man embarks upon certain activities day by day, eats lunch and dinner at regular hours, so does human spiritual life take its course with cosmic regularity. Into this regularity there come other events, events which in ordinary life, too, are unlike those of every day and through which a certain advance occurs. So it is, for example, when a child is born into a family. The cosmic regularity manifesting in the whole of human evolution takes its course under the influence of the Moon, the lunar body. On the other hand, there are events which always cause a step forward to be taken. These events occur under the influence of the comets, and so are naturally distributed over wider spans of time. The various Comets have here their different tasks. And when a comet has served its purpose it splits up, disperses. Thus we find that from a certain point of time onwards, some comets appear as two, and then split up. They dissolve when they have completed their tasks. Regularity, all that belongs to the common round, is

connected with lunar influence; the coming in of an elemental impulse, always involving something new, is connected with the influence of Comets. So we see that these apparently erratic wanderers in the heavens have their rightful place and significance in the whole make-up of our cosmos.

You can well imagine that when something new, like a product of the cosmic Feminine breaks into the evolution of humanity, it can cause tumults which are obvious enough, but people prefer not to notice them! However, it is possible to make people realise how certain events of Earth existence *are* connected with the comets. Just as something new, a gift from the woman, may enter into the everyday life of the family, so is it with the comets. As when a new offspring is born, so is it when, through the return of a comet, something quite new is produced. But we must remember that with certain comets the Ego is always driven out more and more into the physical world, and thus is something we have to resist. For if the influence of Halley's Comet were to continue a new appearance of it might bring about a great enhancement of Büchnerian thought, and that would be a misfortune. A reappearance of Halley's Comet should therefore give us warning that it might prove to be an evil guest if we were simply to give ourselves up to it, if we were not to resist its influence. It is a question of holding fast to higher, more significant workings and influences of the Cosmos than those of Halley's Comet. It is very necessary that men should regard this comet as an omen; they should realise that things are not as they were in earlier times, when in a sense it was fruitful for humanity that these influences should come down to them. This influence is fruitful no longer. Human beings must now unite themselves with different powers in order to meet on equal terms this dangerous influence from Halley's Comet. When it is said that Halley's Comet can be a warning; that its influence, working alone, might make men superficial and lead out the Ego more and more on to the physical plane, and that precisely in our days this must be resisted—this is truly not said for the sake of reviving an old superstition. The resistance can occur only through a spiritual view of the world, such as that of Anthroposophy, replacing the evolutionary trend caused by Halley's Comet.

It could be said that once again the Lord is displaying his rod out there in the heavens in order to say to men through this very omen:

Now is the time to kindle the spiritual life! Nor is it surprising that cometary existence takes hold of the depths of life, including the animal and plant life that is related to the human life. Those who pay close enough attention would observe how there is actually something different in the blossoming of flowers. These things are there, but they are easily overlooked—just as people so often overlook the Spirit, do not want to see the Spirit.

And now we may ask: Is there something in the Cosmos which corresponds to the ascent to a spiritual life that has just been indicated? We have seen that head and limbs, and male and female, have polarities in the Cosmos. Is there something in the Cosmos which corresponds to this welling up of spiritual life, to this ascent of man above himself, from the lower to the higher Ego?

We will ask ourselves this question to-morrow in connection with the greatest tasks of spiritual life in our time. To-day I wanted in a larger connection to give the preliminaries, in order that to-morrow we may better understand an important question of the present time. Much that has been said to-day is admittedly remote—but we are living in a cometary year. It is therefore good to say something about the mysterious connection of cometary existence with our Earth existence. In this connection we will speak to-morrow about the great spiritual facts of our time.*

* The lecture mentioned here is included in the booklet, *The True Nature of the Second Coming* (Anthroposophical Publishing Company, 1961).

PASSING A POND

*Snow ships asleep
white birds on the white water
as I passed, passed,
and the dissolving grey sky
falling in gentle waves
over the pond
as I passed, passed,
and the willows
milky green
bending in soft cascades
encircling curtains
around the water's edge
as I passed, passed.*

Allyn Moss.

COMETS IN THE LIGHT OF SPIRITUAL SCIENCE

ELISABETH VREEDE

At the Christmas Foundation Meeting, 1923, Dr. Elisabeth Vreede was appointed by Rudolf Steiner as a member of the first Vorstand and as leader of the Mathematical-Astronomical Section at the Goetheanum. In 1927 she began issuing a series of monthly Letters on Astronomy and continued them regularly for the next three years. She died on 31 August, 1943.

An English translation of these Letters is available in two bound volumes in the library at Rudolf Steiner House.

We are printing here, by permission, a slightly shortened version of the two Letters, dated June and July, 1929, which deal especially with comets, their movements and their significance.

ALTHOUGH comets belong to a domain in Astronomy which has received great attention, yet they are least of all to be approached with the ordinary materialistic concepts. In the history of humanity they have been viewed with a certain contemplation and feeling which point to a connection between the comets and the divine spiritual world, and to a moral element which they must embody in a special way.

In the Middle Ages comets were feared as the "Scourge of God," as omens of every kind of evil. There has certainly been much superstition linked with this conception, but in a deeper sense it pointed to reality more than the modern scientific concept does, which seeks to include the comets as far as possible in the framework of ordinary planetary laws. It is precisely a special quality of comets that they do not follow the laws of the rest of the solar system, least of all in the form given by the Newtonian theory of gravitation. We must therefore approach the nature of comets in the light of Spiritual Science.

In the very first of these Letters we spoke of the exceptional position of comets in the solar system, and of the apparent contradiction that they—actually a backward element in evolution—are yet governed by the beings of the highest Hierarchy, the Seraphim and Cherubim. (See the lecture cycle, "Spiritual Beings in the Heavenly Bodies and in the Kingdoms of Nature," Helsingfors, 1912).

Our solar system has a long and complicated past, and its elements are at different stages of evolution or of "staying behind." The comets are still at the stage of the ancient Moon existence, and so cannot fully adapt themselves to the laws of the planetary system of to-day. In 1906 Dr. Steiner pointed out that nitrogen and nitrogen compounds, such as cyanide, must play a part for the comets corresponding to the role which fell to the share of nitrogen on the Old Moon. When in 1910 Halley's Comet could be observed by the spectroscope, this fact of Spiritual Science was confirmed, inasmuch as prussic acid—cyanide—was proved to be in the spectrum of the comet.

Now comets are polaric opposites of the present Moon. The Moon has gone too far ahead in its evolution, has entered too soon into a hardening, while the comets have remained fugitive, elemental, spiritual certainly, but not with a corporality corresponding to the other conditions of the Cosmos.

One can point to the period of time when the comets remained behind in the evolution of the planetary system.

Our solar system received the laws which hold good to-day only in the middle of the Atlantean epoch. Then, at a celestial council of Spiritual Beings, it was decided that in future the planets should move in definite paths, according to special periods of revolution. Their orbits were henceforth to be in charge of the 'Spirits of the Revolution of Time,' descendants of the Seraphim and Cherubim. And so since that time we have a calculable planetary system. Only the comets were excepted. They were to describe no definite orbits in definite periods of time. They were despatched directly by the Seraphim and Cherubim into the physical world in order to give effect to a particular impulse. 'Something of an elemental nature, something which stirs up and in a certain sense is necessary in order to maintain in the Cosmos the progress of evolution in the right way—that is the nature of the comets' [See the lecture that precedes this article]. Dr. Steiner therefore compares the appearance of a comet with the entry of a newborn infant into a family; it is the new, the incalculable, which breaks through the course of everyday routine and even calls forth in the family new conditions which at first cannot be envisaged. So have the comets, likewise, definite tasks to perform.

The eclipses of the Sun and Moon, also, have special tasks with regard to the Earth. In eclipses of the Sun evil is released from the Earth into the Universe, while comets have the task of working in the planetary system, purifying the astral. They are "an outer sign of an inner law," said Dr. Steiner. Only, unlike the eclipses, they do not follow a strict rhythmic law. They arise quite unexpectedly, first as purely spiritual centres of force, draw the bad astrality around themselves, and after fulfilling their journey they unload, as it were, these bad forces into the far spaces of the universe.

For this purpose this goal they must be sent forth into the solar system by the highest Spirits, the Seraphim and Cherubim, who are able to work directly into physical matter. Although only a few comets attain to outer visibility, especially for the naked eye, we know since the time of Kepler—and present-day possibilities of observation have fully borne out the statement—that comets are as numerous as fish in the sea. A thorough provision is thus made for purifying the astral atmosphere.

When we speak of this general mission of the comets, we are referring mainly to the non-periodic comets, which appear once only. They may appear at any time and may make their first entry at any point of the heavens. The periodic comets, again, have different tasks; their reappearance can often be specified with more or less—but never with complete—exactness. It will be well to speak shortly first about the orbits, the outer forms and the peculiarities of comets before anything is said about the mission and history of individual comets.

It is well known that comets move in the path of a conic section round the Sun, which stands in one of the foci. Modern Astronomy since Kepler assumes an elliptical path for the planets, too, but it differs only slightly from a circular form, while the cometary ellipses have a much more oval form, in some cases extraordinarily extended. The ellipse applies only to the periodic comets, which always—apparently—traverse the same path.

We must recollect here that a comet can be seen physically for only a quite small portion of its path, where it is in the neighbourhood of the Earth. Then the Sun with its brilliance quickly renders invisible that part of the path in its own neighbourhood—the Perihelion. The extent actually observable is so small that from the calculations founded upon it is difficult to distinguish whether the

orbit is elliptic (Periodic) or parabolic (Non-Periodic). This is shown in Diagram I, where AB represents the part of the path actually observed.

The teachings of Dr. Steiner shed another light on this question. He often stated that a comet *always* dissolves when it disappears from physical sight (See lecture 7 in the Helsingfors cycle, mentioned above). If a comet returns again apparently on the same path, then it has built itself up anew. In the interval (corresponding to the dotted line of the orbit) it is not present in our three-dimensional world. It arises renewed as a centre of spiritual force 'on the other side.' In this way we can easily picture to ourselves that a comet which has disappeared into 'Nothing' (but this Nothing is the spiritual world) along a parabolic path, later renews its existence along another parabolic path, so that an identity of the two comets

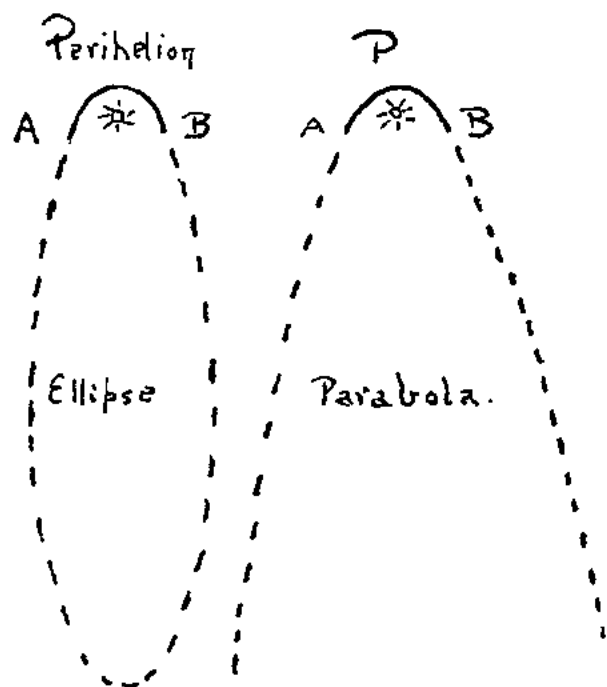


Diagram I

can no more be established than, let us say, an identity can be established by purely external means between the individuality of Raphael and that of Novalis. The underlying unity is a spiritual impulse in the super sensible world. From this point of view there is then no such important distinction between elliptic and parabolic cometary orbits. If one looks at such an orbit as Halley's Comet must have, according to calculation, one sees that it would stretch out beyond the orbit of Neptune, and it has therefore actually

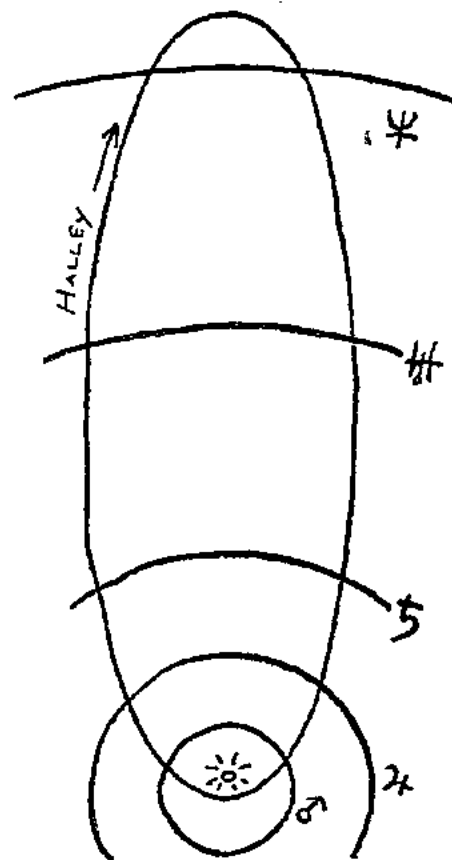


Diagram II

left our planetary system. The ellipse form of this orbit corresponds roughly to that of the first diagram. In Diagram II it is drawn again, crossed now by the various planetary orbits, starting from the path of Mars.

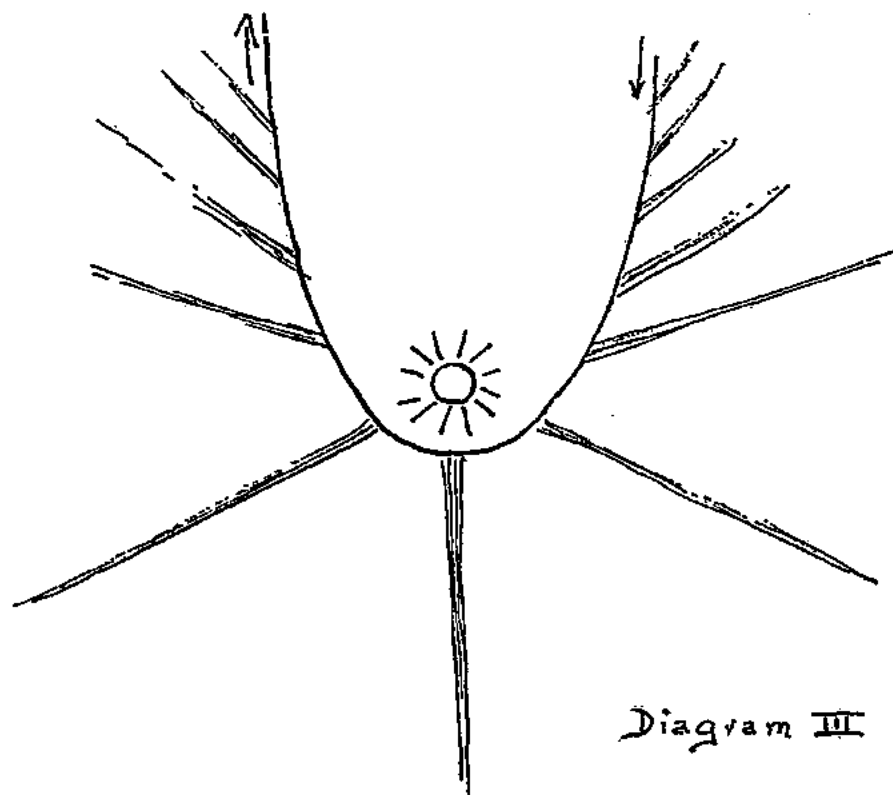
If one remembers that when the 'periodicity' of this comet was discovered by Halley, a contemporary of Newton, the solar system was known only as far out as Saturn, one sees what a mighty 'spring into the void' this cometary path then denoted, and one can understand the anxious suspense with which its return in 1759 was awaited—the very first prophesied and pre-calculated return of a comet. We will come back later to this comet.

When a comet first becomes visible, it generally looks like a little nebula. It has no nucleus and no tail, and consists only of a shining nebulous envelope (*coma*, hence the name comet), which must be regarded as the original being of the comet, a real 'astral image,' for in such a form the comet leaves the field of vision again after its journey round the Sun. From remarks by Dr. Steiner we know that the building up of the nucleus and the tail is connected with the comet's mission of working purifyingly on the astral. Whereas later the nucleus will reflect the sunlight, as Moon and Planets do, there must stream forth from the coma, the actual comet, its own light, as is the case with stars, nebulae and the Sun. These facts can appear comprehensible to us when we think of the cosmic hierarchical origin of the comets and the role which Lucifer plays there.

A comet can appear at any point in the heavens, but it always moves towards the Zodiac, for it is approaching the Sun, round which it then describes its curve with immense velocity and generally at a relatively small distance.

Sometimes earlier, usually later (sometimes not at all), the tail is projected. This, for human feeling, is the chief characteristic of a comet, and for science it has presented a riddle. For a comet, which ought to obey the laws of gravity, appears to contradict these laws in its most essential part. The tail is always directed away from the Sun, instead of being drawn towards it. In such a case one overcomes the difficulty by attributing the effect to electrical or similar forces, which can work with a thrusting, repelling action.

The comet of 1843 (Diagram III) must have had at perihelion a tail stretching from the Sun right out over the orbit of Mars—in astronomical concepts, 150 million miles). But when the comet



came to the region of the Sun it powerfully accelerated, so that the nucleus must have raced forward at the rate of nearly 500 miles per second. One may reckon, or try to imagine, with what velocity the end of the tail had to accomplish the revolution round the Sun.

Some comets, moreover, come so near the Sun so that they must pass through the sphere of the so-called 'Sun-flames' (protuberances), but one can trace no influence from the Sun upon the comet—nucleus or tail—nor disturbances of its path, nor alteration in its constitution, except in most instances a noticeable increase in the size and brilliance of its tail.

It will be seen that here we have *facts*, as, for instance, the observation of the passing of the comet across the Sun, and yet one does not arrive at the truth of these facts through an ordinary interpretation. Dr. Steiner, in his lecture-course "The Relation of the Other Sciences to Astronomy" (Stuttgart, January, 1921), spoke on this very point:

"If, for instance, one investigates the nature of comets, one does not reach right conclusions if one thinks of the body of the comet as one thinks of the planetary bodies. You may, if you like, picture a planetary body as if it were a body complete in itself, with a forward motion, and you would not greatly contradict the facts... but you will never understand a cometary body in its progress, its apparent progress, through space, if you look upon it as you are accustomed to look upon planetary bodies. Try to consider it in the following way and to string all the empirical facts upon the thread of this approach. Reflect: in this direction here—towards the sun, one might say—here the comet gradually comes into being. It pushes forward its nucleus, its visible nucleus; behind, there is a coming to an end, it vanishes. And so it pushes itself forward—on the one hand always newly arising, on the other side passing away. It is not at all a body in the same sense as a planet. It is something which gradually arises and passes away, which in front puts on the new, and behind loses the old. It moves forward like a mere shining of light (but I am not saying that it is merely such)."

And further:

"We must regard the comet throughout as something transient, an adjustment—if we take the Sun and Earth into consideration—between ponderable and imponderable matter. It is an encounter between ponderable and imponderable matter which do not so immediately equalise each other as they do when light is diffused in the air. Then ponderable matter and imponderable do indeed, meet, but spread out homogeneously as it were; they do not strike against each other. With comets we have a one-sided striking, because they do not adjust themselves. Take air, for example, and a passage of light with a certain strength through the air; it spreads out homogeneously, but if the light does not adjust itself quickly enough to the air, then there occurs, (but I beg you not to take it in a mechanical sense, but as something inward), an inner conflict between ponderable and imponderable matter. Investigate the comets—there is this friction between ponderable and imponderable matter continuing its way through space, something which is continually arising and passing away."

Science, too, has concluded that the tail of the comet cannot be a permanent structure. It is regarded as a column of vapour, which is

supposed to be maintained by the gases freed from the otherwise solid nucleus through the great heat of the Sun. With such ideas one does not get beyond materialism. With comets, however, the weightiest riddles are anchored in the Spirit. What comets are as an expression and instrument of Spiritual Beings, and what world-battles are fought around them—to these questions we will now turn.

* * *

In his lecture-cycle, "Supersensible Man," given at The Hague in 1923, Rudolf Steiner speaks of a special connection of the Mars sphere with the present-day evolution of the earth in the Fifth Post-Atlantean Period. That which plays itself out between Mars and Sun is a world-war between good and bad spirits, and the Sun takes part in this warfare in such a way that sun-substance is continually cast out into the Cosmos through the dark door-way of the Sun-spots:

What thus is flung forth from the Sun as Sun-substance into the Cosmos appears within our Solar System as comets and meteors, as well as the familiar shooting stars. Those beings who guide the world from within the Sun, cast—especially in our age—these things into our epoch. They did so also in former times, but with a different significance. That is why I said: In earlier times the spiritual impulse of the stars were chiefly effective. Now those impulses begin to have, for men, a special meaning which lies in the cast out-iron: they are employed in the Cosmos in the service of the gods by a particular spiritual Being, whom we call the Michael-Spirit, and he again acquires a special significance. In our age, therefore, something has entered into the Cosmos which was not there earlier in the same degree. The cosmic iron in its spiritual significance makes it possible for the Michael-Spirit to mediate between the supersensible and the earthly-sensible.

Here we look directly into a conflict—the great "War in Heaven" in whose destiny we become ever more involved. On a later occasion we will enter more fully into that part of Dr. Steiner's remarks which relates to the meteors and Michael's share in the conflict.* Here we will consider more closely from an astronomical aspect the facts that have been given to us.

We have seen that after the passage of comets through perihelion, after they have passed the Sun, they often show a surprising increase in brilliance for which no obvious cause can be found. But the

most remarkable thing is that many comets were not discovered until they had passed through perihelion, so there is no absolute certainty that they were even there before. Science assumes that the comet was previously so faint that its approach had not been noticed, and it could be seen for the first time only when—emerging again from the Sun's rays—it received an incomparably stronger light. There is a series of such comets including those of 1843, 1861, 1880. The earth must have passed through the tail of the 1861 comet, but at a time when it had not yet been seen.

The most remarkable case, however, is that of the 1843 comet. In Diagram III, we reproduced its theoretical path, in order to show the general law of the direction taken by the tail of a comet, but it must be emphasized that in this case one half of its path (the right-hand one in the drawing) is hypothetical, for the comet was not seen until the day after the perihelion. It then appeared so brilliant, with its tail stretching as far as the orbit of Mars, that one could see it in clear daylight, whereas two days before there was nothing to be seen.

The French astronomer, Flammarion, who had a fine sense for the purely phenomenal in Astronomy, wrote of this comet:

We can even remark that if it had been flung out from the Sun on 27th February 10hrs. 29mins., with a velocity of about 500 miles, its appearance and its course would harmonise with all the observations actually made.

We will now consider more closely the nature of the periodic comets which are observed fairly often upon the same path, so that their re-appearance can be foretold more or less exactly. With these comets a recurrent impulse is sent into the universe, although the comet itself, as we have seen, may be dissolved in the interval. Now it is peculiar that the periods of these comets lie within definite boundaries. There is a group whose members all return in from 3 to 7 years (only one goes to 8 years). Others have periods from 13 to 17 years and a few from 33-46 years. Then there are the long-period comets from 61 to 76 years, the last of which is Halley's Comet.

The orbits of these comets show that they have connections with certain planets in the solar system. The short periodic (3-7 years) surround Jupiter; the 13-17 years, Saturn; the next set, Uranus; the long periodic, Neptune. The shortest known orbit, that of

Encke's Comet, does not reach quite as far as Jupiter. It returns promptly every 3 years 4 months.

Astronomy regards these comets as "captured" by the planets concerned. The comet is supposed to come at some time into the neighbourhood of one of these large outer planets, and so constrained to have its further path defined by the attraction of this powerful planetary body. One therefore speaks of a "Jupiter family," a "Neptune family" and so on. Forty-one members of the comet family of Jupiter have been counted, but the majority do not return; in spite of the established elliptical orbits, only twenty-two remain. Saturn and Uranus hold in bondage only a few comets; Neptune only eight including a few whose return has not been established.

Here we have a domain where through calculations on the basis of the Newtonian theory many things have been arrived at which seem almost to establish the comets as regularly-conditioned world-bodies. The variations which the cometary orbits undergo through such attractions called "disturbances"—can be calculated to a considerable extent. And yet the comets contradict the laws again and again. Whether one of them—in spite of its calculated elliptical path—actually returns must be awaited; very often it does not. The comets belonging to Jupiter and Saturn pass quite near to them, although these planets, according to the attraction which they exercise, could bind comets at a much greater distance. Comets have come so near the Sun that astronomers honestly declare it to be incomprehensible that the comet should still be there afterwards; it ought to have been drawn into the Sun.

It is very remarkable to see the comets whirling round Jupiter, as shown in popular astronomy books, when one considers this picture in connection with spiritual scientific research. For there are certain beings in the universe who take an interest in the comets, because with their help they hope to bring the planetary system out of the right path. Dr. Steiner, in connection with the Apocalypse, called them the 'Satanic' powers.

It is precisely because the comets cannot be fitted exactly into the general laws of the cosmos that they are such desirable objects for those beings who do not wish to leave the future to the divine spirit-

* See the Letter for August, 1929; also Rudolf Steiner's lectures, *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*, Dornach, 1923.

ual powers, but want to claim it for themselves. Satan lies in wait for the comets; he unites them in a troop, as it were, in the hope of being able gradually to lead the planets out of their orbits. Naturally, anyone bound by the ordinary scientific concepts cannot conceive such an idea. For he must consider the comets so spider-web-like and weightless, in comparison with the powerful planetary masses, that he would never believe that these could be brought out of their orbits by the comets. He must think the reverse—that the planets draw the comets into their own domain. The Power, who is named 'Satan' in the Bible, however, cherishes other expectations and one gets the impression of his sinister ambush in the Cosmos when one sees Jupiter and also the Sun as if imprisoned in the net of encircling cometary paths.

We can likewise understand how comets which belong to the periodic class can be gradually led astray from the task given them by the gods and become harmful beings in the Universe. For an impulse which has once been given does not necessarily have a corresponding effect on human evolution through centuries and thousands of years. Halley's comet is such an impulse. One can read something of the conflict around the comets out of their life histories.

Halley's comet, which has a period of 76 years, can first be traced in the 1st or perhaps even in the 2nd pre-Christian century. From then on we find its appearances recorded, without a gap, in Chinese star-books, old chronicles and so on. On several occasions Dr. Steiner described the significance of these events—e.g. in the lecture-cycle, "The Christ-Impulse and the Evolution of Ego-consciousness" (Berlin, 1909):

"Now the appearance of Halley's comet, or what it signifies spiritually for the further evolution of humanity, is connected with what humanity had to absorb out of the Cosmos at various periods of Kali-Yuga, the Dark Age, in order that thought should descend more and more into materiality. With every new appearance of this comet a new impulse was born, to drive humanity further away from a spiritual cosmic conception by the Ego, and to urge it to grasp the world in a more materialistic way."

And again: "Halley's comet has the task of impressing human nature as a whole in such a way that human beings take a further step in the evolution of the Ego, leading it forward in its grasp of the physical plane."

The latter quotation relates more to the task of Halley's comet in general, the former especially to its appearances since 1759.

We can well understand that just when we meet with the earliest tidings about the "terrible comet," there was need for an impulse that would grasp the Ego of man and lead it into the physical sense-world. For in this sense-world the Christ was to appear in order to give a meaning to the earth, and the Ego of man has to unite itself on earth with the Christ impulse. (The last appearance of Halley's comet before the Mystery of Golgotha was in the year 12 B.C.). It has to do with the destiny of the Kali-Yuga that through this impulse an unspiritual concept of the world, materialism, came about.

Former humanity stood appalled before this cosmic impulse to materialism. It appeared to them as a veritable 'divine rod of correction.' In 837 the comet prepared for the deposition of the spirit at the Council of Constantinople. In 1066 it shone on the Normans who came over to conquer England. It appeared in 1456, three years after the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, and the Pope tried to turn away the scourge of God by the pealing of bells—the origin of the 'Angelus.'

In 1682 the comet fulfilled its mission inasmuch as it led Edmund Halley to discover its periodicity, after Newton, two years earlier, had recognised from the 1680 comet that there is a parabolic form of orbit and had proved it according to his system. One sees that there were then still great tasks to perform, heroic impulses. It was different from the 18th Century on . . . the last appearances brought only shallow materialism.

In 1759 came the impulse which led to the "Enlightenment" preceding the French Revolution; 1835 the one leading to the scientific materialism of the 19th century. One has the feeling: there has been enough of materialism now. Therefore Dr. Steiner warned us in 1910, two months before the perihelion of the appearance in that year, that humanity should now look upon Halley's comet as a rod which the good God flourishes, so that man should *not* fall a victim to 'materialism.' Otherwise still worse forms of materialism than those of the 19th Century would arise. Soon two decades will have passed since then, and already to-day one can form a picture of what the comet has brought about among a humanity which no longer fears it but has abandoned itself to it without a care.

The last three appearances of the comet are in their effect quite different from the former ones. For the necessity of "plunging into matter" with our thought is no longer present with the same intensity since the 18th century and has ceased completely with the end of the Kali-Juga, the Dark Age. Only the Satanic Power, one might say, still has an interest in the continuance of Halley's comet, and in letting it appear again and again.

The Archangel Michael, however, fights against that influence upon the comets which is attempting to use them to achieve victory in the universe for the spirits of evil.

MAN AT MICHAELMAS

*Trapped man break out!
Break out old holds are not fast more
nor fear to spear through soul forceful.
You can with clear seeing surge up
from dead sealed centre to end endless.*

*Mazed man wake out!
Dim daze is no more this time's now
nor dulled haze may slur destiny down.
You can with live purpose fire through
flame clear out of soul sleep.*

*Caged man wrench out!
No bar need block your will's way
nor brace bind nor yet uncertain stay.
You shall in Christ grace forge forward
from present prison to love's freedom.*

*Straight man stand free then!
Your image human is God's counter
set aside by God to return god later.
You by Christ rise hold palm power
to glory limitless. Seize hold, man!*

Charles Austin.

OLD FORMS OF INITIATION AND THE MODERN SEARCH FOR THE SPIRIT

A. W. MANN

*I drew nigh to the confines of death,
I trod the threshold of Proserpine,
I was borne through all the elements and returned to earth again,
I saw the sun gleaming with bright splendour at dead of night,
I approached the Gods above and the Gods below and worshipped
them face to face."*

THESE words by Apuleius¹ in the second century A.D. sum up, in five succinct sentences, the essence and scope of initiation. They represent the basic process of ancient initiation, though time and place influenced the sequence and emphasis of these events. Through the development of human consciousness, man grows away from feeling himself simply part of a continuous divine process and grows into a state in which he is self-directed. The word "initiate" means to begin, to set in motion, to be led to an understanding of some intricate process. The preparation is of key importance for the final event, which is the opening of a door to a hitherto unknown world.

The Greek word, *telos*, from which the Greek word for initiation is derived, has an even wider meaning. It can mean to begin, but also to complete. Christ's final word from the cross, "It is finished," could also be rendered, "It is begun," or, "it is initiated." Seen in this light, the words can move us deeply, because they express precisely what actually happened. The old pre-Christian initiation had ceased to be of significance for humanity; it was finished. The new initiation was begun.

Already, at the baptism in Jordan, the coming change was foreshadowed. "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier

¹ Apuleius, Lucius, b. 125 A.D. Best known as author of the *Golden Ass*, which includes the legend of Cupid and Psyche.

than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The change could also be indicated in the form of an injunction: "Take into yourselves the human ego that need not be shed on entering the spiritual world." The Greek word *metanoite* is best rendered as "Go through a metamorphosis of soul." The old forms of initiation, carried out in the secrecy of the Mystery centres, were to give way to something new.

As an approach to understanding the change, we will first look briefly at some of the characteristics of the old initiations, and in particular at the rites of Mithraism, the Persian mystery-cult which at one time looked like a serious rival to early Christianity. Finally, we will ask what bearing the old initiations may have on some of the cults and searchings of the present day. I shall draw on lectures given by Rudolf Steiner during the years 1922-23.²

Although the old initiations differed in details, they had two features in common: the "Lethe drink," or drink of forgetfulness, and the induction of a state of fear and shock. The Lethe drink is often mentioned in mythology and corresponds to a physical-psychological reality. It enabled the aspirant to forget his past life as it had been on the physical plane. The administration of the drink was combined with a certain ceremonial, with the result that the experiences of pre-natal life were opened up, thinking was deprived of whatever small degree of intellectuality it had acquired in those times; it became more mobile, more intensive, more given to imaginations. This was an influence directed particularly to the brain.

The state of shock influenced the rest of the organism. Through the experience of extreme fear, a kind of cataleptic state was induced. This immobility of the body enabled the eternal being of man, his soul-spirit, to enter into and work in the "softened" brain.

A further characteristic of ancient initiations, undergone in the Mystery-centres of India, Persia and Egypt, was that they were dependent on conditions of time and place. In Rudolf Steiner's words:

² See "Old and New Methods of Initiation" (Dornach, Mannheim and Breslau, January-March 1922), and "World History in the Light of Anthroposophy" (Dornach, December 1923).

In the oriental Mysteries if one wanted to know something of the sublime and terrible experience that was possible in these Mysteries one always had to wait until the right *time*. Some experience or other could perhaps be had only by making the appropriate sacrifice, the appropriate supersensible "experiments," as it were, in autumn—another only in spring, another only at midsummer, another in the depths of winter.... The priests of the Oriental Mysteries were dependent on time, and also on place and on all manner of circumstances for receiving the sublime and tremendous knowledge and vision that came to them. Quite different manifestations were received deep in a mountain cave and high on the mountain top. Or again, the revelations were different according as one was far inland in Asia or on the coast.³ These indications point to the fact that the old initiations were cosmically directed. The initiates were instruments chosen for carrying out the will of the Gods.

For example, the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt were regarded as channels through which the authority and life-giving power of the Gods came down to men. Hence it was customary for the Pharaohs to be initiates. They had gone through the probation, the tests of courage, a long period of study, and finally the experience of death in life.

When we look at the statue of a Pharaoh, for instance the famous one of Chefred in the Cairo Museum, we see a posture of extreme but involuntary rigidity. Sphinx-like, the eyes are directed to infinity, the ears likewise; they perceive the voice of the God. The limbs are surrendered to his will; the Horus bird, with its wings, forms the head-dress, inspiring the Pharaoh with the cosmic word. From coloured limestone statues and from the extensive finds of make-up palettes, we know that the Pharaoh, when he appeared in public, was in fact "made-up." The eyes were made lustrous and the cheeks were given a more "rosy" complexion. What does this signify? What we call a good healthy complexion is an indication of a right relation between ego and astral on the one hand, and etheric and physical on the other. We could describe a person with that kind of complexion as "well-incarnated." The average Egyptian was rather lightly incarnated. His soul-spirit could be said to have hovered above and around him.

With all this in mind, we can well understand the words of the priest Sinuhe when he came into the presence of the Pharaoh:

³ Dornach, 28 December, 1923.

"I found His Majesty sitting upon his throne in the silver and gold hall. There was I, as a man stolen by an eagle; my limbs shook, my body trembled and I did not know whether I was alive or dead." This expresses the feelings of a person when confronted by a spiritual experience for which he is not yet prepared. Something similar can occur to-day when methods used to gain spiritual experience are out of keeping with the spirit of the times. Of course it might be said that the powerful effect on the priest Sinuhe could have been caused by what one might call the Pharaoh's spiritual presence, enhanced in its outward expression by the cosmetic methods described above.

In the days when the ego had not yet entered fully into the human organism and when the etheric body still extended beyond the confines of the physical, it was possible to employ methods of further exorcising a man's spiritual being, thus enabling him to perceive a spiritual world peopled by spiritual beings. This condition was always accompanied by a period of unconsciousness, as far as the outer world and the physical senses were concerned. During such a period the person concerned was subjected to spiritual influences beyond his ken, and the hierophant, with the assistance of other priests, could influence, and indeed control, whatever of a spiritual nature passed over into the neophyte. Once the ego had taken control in man, it was no longer permissible to seek spiritual experience by going into a state of unconsciousness, especially as the protection and control of a hierophant were no longer available. Even if they had been available such a method would have been an inadmissible infringement of human freedom. An impairment of the ego-bring of man would have been the result.

It can be of great help to hear of the experiences of a neophyte in the Egyptian mysteries, as given in Edouard Schuré's book, *The Great Initiates*, in the chapter on Hermes, where the four stages are clearly set out.

1. Probation. Menial tasks to be carried through without murmur. Even in such seemingly minor details one can detect an educative process in the ability to carry out manifestly insignificant jobs without criticising the person, authority or circumstance that has imposed it.

2. Tests of courage and self-control. Facing the unknown, being brought to the brink of death on one hand and of lascivious-

ness on the other. These tests engendered such extremes of fear that the person undergoing them was changed in his whole nature and make-up. The circumstances of modern life can throw up situations of just such a kind. The past war gave many opportunities for such an experience as that of St. Exupéry, described in his book *Flight to Arras* (1942). During this flight he seemed to pass through a "fear barrier," enabling him to come to the true assessment that his physical body was merely a tool or instrument for his soul and spirit. In another book, *Dying We Live*, which records the last letters of victims of Nazi oppression to relatives and friends, we can see in almost every case a complete victory over the fear of death.

3. Dwelling in the Temple. Surrendering to the impact of the ceremonial and to the contemplation of the divine script or image.

Schuré describes how at this third stage, which can be very long-drawn-out, the aspirant has moments of despair and rebellion; but finally the time comes for the crowning event, the fourth stage.

4. Death in life. The aspirant was escorted by a company of priests to a low vault and enjoined to lie in an open sarcophagus. He was left alone and presently felt a deathly chill creep over him. His mind became diffuse, but at the same time, and in proportion, a spiritual awareness began to stir, culminating in an experience of Isis, his sister soul or divine Ego, who conversed with him, telling him to call on her when in need. After a set time of three-and-a-half days the aspirant was awakened and brought back to normal consciousness. He was led from the vault to the observatory of the temple and asked to tell his fellow-initiates of his experiences in the land of Osiris.

The Egyptian initiation ritual, as described by Schuré, illustrates vividly the old method of initiation, in which the aspirant surrendered his consciousness to the priest-hierophant. This was to give way later to methods which made greater demands on the personal responsibility of the aspirant, until finally all these methods were superseded by the coming of Christianity.

In between the old methods and the later ones were the Mysteries of Ephesus, which came to an end when the temple of Artemis was burnt down by Herostratus in 356 B.C. Rudolf Steiner spoke of the Ephesian Mysteries and their significance in various connections: here is a passage which bears closely on our present theme:

The Mystery of Ephesus stood midway between the ancient Oriental Mysteries and the Greek Mysteries. It held a unique position. For in Ephesus those who attained to initiation were able still to experience something of the tremendous, majestic truths of the ancient East. Their souls were still stirred with a deep inward experience of the connection of the human being with the Macrocosm and with the Divine-Spiritual Beings of the Macrocosm At the same time, the Mysteries of Ephesus were the first, so to speak, to be turned westward. They had already that independence of the seasons, or of the course of years and centuries; independence too of place on earth. In Ephesus the important things were the exercises that the human being went through, making himself ripe, by sacrifice and devotion, to approach the Gods. So that on the one hand, in the content of its Mystery truths, the Mystery of Ephesus harked back to the ancient East, while on the other hand it was already directed to the development of man himself, and was thus adapted to the nature and character of the Greeks.⁴

An important link between the old Mysteries of Asia and those of the Graeco-Roman world, and later between these and the rise of Christianity, can be seen in the worship and rites of Mithraism, to which we will now turn. Here I am much indebted to the excellent book, *Mithras-Mysterium und Urchristentum*⁵, by the late Alfred Schütze, from which all the illustrations accompanying this article are drawn.

For the origins of Mithraism we have to go back to ancient Persia, and even further, to ancient India, for Mithras is mentioned in the Vedas, but he comes to prominence first in the Avesta, the sacred book of the religion founded in Persia by Zarathustra in the far past. Here Mithras is described as a divine being created by Ahura Mazdao, the god of light and truth, to aid in the battle against Ahriman, the god of darkness and evil.⁶ Hence he stood between the realms of light, of Sun-radiance, and the realm of darkness, and could be regarded as a mediator between them.

A bas-relief found in Trier (Moselle) beautifully illustrates (see plate I) the mediating role of Mithras. Here he is represented as a child with his right hand boldly reaching into the starry realms, shown in the zodiacal signs, while with his left hand he holds the orb of the earth. Below, the animals and man yearn for this action of reuniting heaven and earth to be fulfilled.

⁴ "World History in the Light of Anthroposophy," lecture V.

⁵ Verlag Urachhaus, Stuttgart, 1937.

⁶ In the Avesta we find Ahura Mazdao speaking to Zarathustra and saying: "When, O holy one, I created Mithras, he of the wide horizons, I created him as greatly to be worshipped, as greatly to be revered as I myself, Ahura Mazdao."



Plate I

The infant Mithras uniting heaven and earth

Trier



Plate II

Cautes and Cautopates, with torches. Their Phrygian caps are marks of initiation.

Found in Ostia; now in the Museo Laterano, Rome.



Plate III

Mithras slaying the bull, Above, the signs of the Zodiac. Above that, scenes Mithras with Helios. In the final scene Helios is kneeling before Mithras.

Wiesbaden

Later on, Mithraism spread through Chaldea and Asia Minor to Greece, and thence in 65 B.C. to Rome, taken there by Cilician pirates captured by Pompey. But its great period of expansion dates only from the first century A.D., when it began to spread throughout the Roman Empire and became the favourite religion of Roman soldiers. It was encouraged by the emperors, for Mithras had come to be identified with Sol Invictus, the unconquered Sun, the divine patron of the imperial regime. All this happened in the Christian era and was influenced by the fact that the Sun Spirit had been incarnated on earth, whether or not this was acknowledged. It is no wonder that there were schools of thought where it was said, "The true Mithras is Christ." However, Mithraism continued to flourish until well on in the third century, and went into rapid decline only after Constantine, in 313, made Christianity the accredited religion of the Roman Empire.

In many countries, wherever the Roman armies penetrated, relics of Mithraism have been found—bas-reliefs, monuments, inscriptions, and remains of the underground sanctuaries where devotees gathered for a common meal of bread and wine, and where the initiation rites of Mithraism were performed.

The legendary history of Mithras has been reconstructed by scholars on the basis largely of scenes depicted in bas-reliefs and sculptures, with a little help from early Persian texts. He is said to have been born in a rock-cave, attended by shepherds, who came to worship him as the bringer of heavenly light, the mediator between Sun and Earth. His great exploit, and the central feature of the legend, was the "slaying of the bull." Mithras finds a wild bull and gives chase. He catches up with the bull and leaps on its back. A wild ride follows until at last the bull falls exhausted on the ground. Mithras takes the bull on his back and carries it to a cave. A raven, the messenger of the Sun God, comes to Mithras, now sitting astride the bull, and commands him to kill it. He immediately does so by plunging a dagger into its side. Its blood gushing out is transformed into healing medicine; its tail into ears of corn.

All this and much else appears in the bas-reliefs: it will be helpful to look at some of the details. Mithras is often shown accompanied by two attendants called Cautes and Cautopates (the origin of these names is not known), each carrying a lighted torch. One torch is directed downwards; the other, upwards (see plate II).

They should be regarded as symbolising the flame of passion directed downwards and the flame of enthusiasm, after the bull nature in man has been mastered, directed heavenwards.

As well as representations of the bull-slaying and of various other elements in the legend, some particularly interesting bas-reliefs show Helios, the Sun God, either alone or with Mithras, inviting him to mount his solar chariot. Other scenes seem to indicate veneration felt by Helios for Mithras (see plate III).

Here we may note that in the Catacombs there are early Christian portrayals of Christ, with a Sun-halo, as Helios;⁷ and relevant to this relationship between early Christianity and Mithraism, a relationship both of rivalry and of affinity, is a passage from a lecture by Rudolf Steiner:

There was a period during which intense efforts were made to inculcate into Mithraic worship the fact revealed by supersensible vision: namely, that the *true* Mithras is Christ. It was known that the Christ-power must be poured into those forces in man which conquer the bull. To make a Christian form of worship out of Mithraic worship was an intense struggle carried on by men in the early Christian centuries—even until the fourth century. Wherever Mithraism spread, there followed in its wake the impulse to Christianise this form of worship. An ancient and significant picture of the nature of man—Mithras riding on the bull and vanquishing it—was to be connected with the Christ Being and magnificent efforts were made with this end in view.⁸

Since the slaying of the bull is the central feature of the Mithras legend, we naturally want to know what lies behind it. In the bull we recognise one of the four creatures which composed the Egyptian Sphinx and later were symbolically associated with the four Evangelists. The fact that they appear in pagan as well as in Christian times shows their universal significance. Rudolf Steiner speaks of them as forces raying in from the universe, from the realm of the Cherubim, members of the highest Hierarchy. Each of the four creatures, Bull, Lion, Eagle and Man, represents one of the basic forces at work in the universe, and only the harmonious working together of all these forces can produce earthly man. The Bull-forces are related to the instincts and will-forces in human nature.

⁷ See the late Alfred Heidenreich's valuable book, *The Catacombs* (Christian Community Press, 1962). "It is certain," Dr. Heidenreich remarks, "that among the early Christian converts a fair number was found of those who had been devotees of Mithraism."

⁸ From "Aspects of Ancient Wisdom and Early Christianity," a lecture given at Dornach on 15 April, 1921. The quotation is from a complete translation of this lecture printed in *Anthroposophical Quarterly*, winter issue, 1965.

In this connection Alfred Schütze writes (*op. cit.* pp. 52-3):

When a man comes to the stage of consciously experiencing for the first time his own inmost being, he sees that this "I," or Ego, stands over against everything that does not belong to it and so can therefore be called the "not-I." He discovers that the "not-I" comprises not only other people, the external world and so on, but also his own bodily make-up his dispositions, capacities, weaknesses, the whole complex of his desires, inclinations and temperament. With all this he is certainly connected, but it is not himself. To all of it he can say "I have it," not "I am it." All this "Not-I" was known to ancient Mystery-wisdom as "the bull" . . . Through his individual activity man must set himself the goal of transmuting in a spiritual sense the "not-I," the purely natural, in himself. He will then be himself a "Mithras," who overcomes the bull.

The purpose of the Mithraic initiation, accordingly, was so to lead the aspirant that he could, stage by stage, give birth to a new man, endowed with higher faculties, within himself.

The seven stages of the Mithraic initiation are mentioned by St. Jerome (c. 340-420) in his *Epistles* (cvii), and there are brief references to it in a few other Latin writers of the period, but information about it has come mainly from wall-paintings in the Mithraeum excavated below the Church of St. Prisca on the Aventine Hill in Rome and from floor mosaics in a Mithraeum at Ostia, the old Roman port; these show the symbolic emblems which went with each stage and give some indication of its character. The Mithras initiation was for men only and was preceded by various tests and ordeals through which the aspirant had to prove his fitness for admission to the rites.

The seven stages, each associated with one of the seven planets, were Raven (messenger of the Gods); Occultist (the hidden one); Soldier (who carries out the orders of the Gods); Lion; Persian; Sun-hero; Father (the supreme hierophant and representative of Mithras on earth).

For a detailed treatment of the seven stages and their symbols (which would be far outside the scope of this article) I must refer the reader to Schütze's book, where all the symbols are reproduced, and to a book by a Dutch scholar, M. J. Vermaseren, cited by Schütze in various contexts and available in an English translation.⁹ I should like to recommend also an article by A. C. Harwood, "Mithras and Christianity," published in the *Golden Blade*, 1957, and to quote from it the following:

⁹ *Mithras, the Secret God* (Chatto and Windus, 1963).

Rudolf Steiner confirms these seven stages of Mithraic initiation. He says of them that they embodied the most graphic picture of pre-Christian initiation and lived on into the Christian era. He has even pointed out that an understanding of these stages is essential for a true interpretation of some passages in the Gospels. At the stage called the "Persian," for instance, the initiate had become so advanced that he entered into the sphere of the Archangel of his people. Indeed, he became the "eye" through which the Archangel could perceive the activity and development of the people he led. The term "Persian" was current only because of the historical origin of Mithraism. It could equally well be the name of any other people.

Only through such knowledge can we understand the strange conversation between Christ and Nathaniel, recorded in the Gospel of St. John after the account of the Baptism. When Nathaniel is brought to him, Christ says: "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Nathaniel asks Christ how he knew he was an "Israelite." Christ answers, "When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee," using a well-known picture of initiation and meaning that he had seen Nathaniel with the eye of the seer. Thus a Mithraic degree of initiation meets us at the beginning of Christ's activity.¹⁰

We can look at the subsequent decline of Mithraism in another way by relating it to the evolution of human consciousness. Man was gradually endowed with ego-consciousness during the centuries before and after the Mystery of Golgotha, and in the middle of this period the cosmic Ego, the Christ Principle, which the initiates of the old Mysteries had looked up to as the Sun-spirit in higher worlds, entered into the human body of Jesus of Nazareth. Not only was there now within man a terrestrial ego which would develop into a self-centred, self-directed entity, with all the egotistical tendencies we know, but there had entered also that cosmic Ego-power, capable of sacrificing the earthly ego on the altar of humanity and bestowing on all mankind the power to overcome egotism. What could happen if initiation was brought about by illegitimate means, once the terrestrial ego had taken hold, is exemplified in those Roman emperors, notably Caligula and Nero, who used compulsion to get themselves at least partially initiated.¹¹ The result can be summed up in one word—*megomania*.

* * *

¹⁰ See the Hamburg cycle on the Gospel of St. John (1908), lecture V.

¹¹ See the lectures, "Building Stones for an Understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha" (Berlin, March-April, 1917), lecture VI.

In the world to-day we can observe the dangers incurred by individuals who find their way to supersensible experiences without adequate preparation. Once we realise that the spirit of the times is calling upon us to develop higher faculties, we can well imagine that the soul-spiritual being of man, when freed from the body in sleep, is urgently seeking entry into the higher worlds. Moreover, as a result of the Christ impulse, the veil separating the physical from the supersensible is becoming steadily thinner. Hence there is a great temptation to tear the veil apart in order to reach into the world where one can see clearly, face to face. But the consequences of so doing can be even worse than an attempt to tear down the veil of Isis was in Egyptian times.

At the threshold of the spiritual world there stands a Guardian, and those who approach him, unprepared, are sternly warned to go no further. But what will happen to the impatient seeker who, deaf to this warning and heedless of the inexorable laws of evolution, succeeds in by-passing the Guardian? He will have spiritual or psychic experiences of an indeterminate kind. When he returns to normal consciousness, however, his intellectual powers may be gravely impaired, leaving him at the mercy of his instincts and bodily passions. To-day we have examples of this in some of the ever-increasing acts of violence.

In a lecture given at Dornach on 1 January, 1924, at the close of the Christmas Foundation Meeting, Rudolf Steiner spoke of the many souls who were drawing near to the threshold during sleep, and he continued: "Were the Guardian of the Threshold to grant such souls admission to the spiritual world, they would enter it with the conceptions that result from present-day schooling and civilisation, conceptions and ideas with which men are obliged to grow up to-day . . . These conceptions and ideas have this peculiarity, that if human beings enter the spiritual world with them, they suffer a paralysis of soul. And they would come back into the physical world empty of thoughts and empty of ideas."

An essential condition for entering the spiritual world rightly at the present time is that the aspirant shall have applied himself to a persevering study of the path that leads to the threshold of that world. Guidance concerning the path and its demands is given by Rudolf Steiner, in a form suited to the present day, in his book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds: How is it Achieved?* and elsewhere

in his writings, and a meditative study of it will in good time enable the Guardian to open the door for the questing soul. Nowadays, however, one often finds that young people with spiritual ambitions are reluctant to plunge into study. They want to be active and to help their fellow-men. Admirable as this desire is, we can see from history, going back only as far as St. Francis of Assisi, that in order to act in a Christian way, as he did, a prior development of the inner life is indispensable. The state of our thinking to-day calls for the assimilation of the facts of Spiritual Science. Concentration and meditation are also very necessary, but study is the first requirement, as Rudolf Steiner often said. In his own words: "When a man makes use of his unprejudiced human understanding, he can be enlightened by the communications that are given concerning the spiritual worlds. This is indeed, under all circumstances, the right first step for each one to-day."¹²

There is no reason to expect that the way of initiation will be any easier now than it was in ancient times. The eternal human virtues have to be exercised, now as then. Self-sacrifice, courage, concern for fellow-men, concern for nature at a meditative level—these are all qualities that have to be cultivated to-day, and, in addition, one other, which by the gracious dispensation of the Gods brings its own reward at every moment. It is the study of man and his spiritual evolution, the evolution of the earth and of the spiritual Beings of the Hierarchies, and all the wealth of knowledge which the work of Rudolf Steiner has placed in our hands.

¹² From a lecture given in London on 24 August, 1924. Relevant here also are some words by the late Dr. Zeylmans Van Emmichoven, from his book, *The Foundation Stone* (Rudolf Steiner Press, 1963): "The concept of meditation is not to be taken in too narrow a sense. Reading and studying Anthroposophy should also gradually be transformed from an intellectual into a more meditative activity, so that the spiritual content may live in the soul. This new way of reading is, in fact, one of the most important exercises in an age which is wholly accustomed to reading with the head."

THE ORGANIC SOCIETY

A brief historical sketch of Steiner's Threefold Social Order.

A. C. HARWOOD

AT the time of the Peace Conference of Versailles there were two contrasting views as to the settlement of Europe. The first was that of President Wilson, based on the self-determination of separate nations, essentially a spatial conception; the second was Rudolf Steiner's view of a functional division of European Society, in which the nation-State would be concerned only with the question of Rights as between its citizens, while responsibility for production and industry would be assumed by economic associations working across political frontiers, and the sphere of culture—religion, education, the arts, etc.—would be based on the free initiative of individuals and groups of individuals specially concerned for these matters.

Steiner knew his Europe—which Wilson did not—and recognised that its complex distribution of peoples and their interdependence in economic affairs made the picture of a group of neatly divided omniscient States an absurdity. But Wilson's view had behind it the enormous prestige of America's decisive entry into the war, and was easy to grasp in terms of traditional politics: Steiner's had some influential, and not a little popular, backing in Central Europe—he was a public figure and large audiences flocked to hear him wherever he lectured—but a functional division was difficult to grasp, and the idea probably never reached the Council table of Versailles. Steiner recognised the immediate failure, but he believed that his threefold distinction corresponded to basic needs of human nature, and that in some form or other it would evolve out of the difficulties of the next hundred years, if the western ideal of man were to survive.

Organism or Organisation

Steiner's functional division depends on regarding society as an organism rather than an organisation. An organisation, like a machine, can be separated spatially into its parts. An organism cannot be so divided into its functions. But, as Coleridge observed,

it is often necessary to distinguish where we cannot divide. Steiner took the functions of the human being as an analogy—actually more than an analogy—for the distinctions he made in the functions of the social organism. You can distinguish the conscious function (of head and nerves) from the rhythmical processes (of breathing and circulation) and from the metabolism (of the digestive organs)—but you cannot separate them spatially. They follow different laws, and it is precisely because they do so that they work harmoniously together.

The three spheres of society also have their own laws and characters, and can work harmoniously only when they are so far distinguished as to react properly on each other. The keynote of each has never been better or more pithily expressed than in the inspired cry of the French Revolution: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—ideals naturally incompatible within one polity.

The keynote of the cultural life should be freedom in the highest degree; that of the sphere of rights, the equality which guarantees a reasonable share in the advantages of society to every citizen; while that of industry, considered in its proper role of production, is patently in the modern age fraternity. For in modern industry no man produces by or for himself—thousands must cooperate to make and market even one pair of shoes.

The Threefold Idea in English History

If the French nation produced an inspired threefold slogan, it may be said that much of English social history has witnessed an instinctive struggle toward a threefold ideal. It was a struggle out of the old conception of a separatist society—in which a man was either bond or free, either a secular or a religious etc.—into one where every man had a place in all functions of society. Steiner recognised the leading position of England in this struggle when he said that in 1848 England might have established something of the nature of a threefold State. For even then the political State was losing its hold on the cultural and religious life, which was passing into the freedom of the individual, and on the economic life, which was developing international finance and world trade.

This development had depended on England pursuing over many centuries an evolution largely independent of the rest of Europe and at a different tempo. Serfdom, for instance, disappeared from

England during the fifteenth century—well ahead of most of Europe. Or again, the English Reformation and the separation from Rome was of a totally different order from that of the Protestant States of Northern Europe. The Thirty Years War, which convulsed Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century, left England to its own affair of a private civil war, basically concerned with the question of sovereignty and law. Kings returned after Cromwell, but monarchy was never quite the same again, and by the end of the century Parliament demonstrated its supremacy by creating a king. Moreover the indifference of the first Georges to English affairs fostered the establishment of a parliamentary government in which the king, like his subjects, was under the law—and under the Parliament. It was in the eighteenth century, especially, that England felt itself as the country of freedom, fulfilling the claim already made by Shakespeare:

*Slaves cannot live in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free.*

Of course the freedom was of limited application, but it prepared the way for claims of freedom in the world of ideas and in industrial action which would have horrified most of those who first sang 'Britons never shall be slaves.' For the Industrial Revolution, which gave England an unparalleled supremacy in the world for a whole century brought to the surface aspirations which had shown themselves here and there even in the confused times of the struggle between king and Parliament. The evolution to the world, which first trade and then manufacture had brought about, had been accompanied by an even more tremendous involution towards man himself. The ordinary worker, living in concentrations of a size unknown before, was no longer content to accept a status confined to his work. He wanted to share the life of ideas through education; he demanded the right to send members to Parliament; in industry he claimed the freedom to combine in Trade Unions. By 1848 he had in a large measure attained all these things. He was transcending the separatist society and was already standing in all three spheres of the social life. He had reached this stature of involution at the time when John Bright was preaching to foreign Governments and Heads of State that the new conditions of industry were demanding free trade over all the earth.

All this was stirring in the England of the mid nineteenth century, but there was no-one to give conscious form to the new impulses or to show how they were related. The result was that in the century when "something like a threefold State" seemed possible, the three spheres had the misfortune to become entangled in a new and disastrous way, even though in many respects a natural instinct continued to move on the lines of a healthy separation. This may be illustrated for the cultural sphere in the development of education, and for the economic in the growth of the Trade Unions.

Freedom in the Cultural Sphere

The struggle for freedom of religious belief, freedom of speech and of printing was a long one, and was not finally successful in England until the beginning of the last century. It was then also that the ideal of universal education first took shape. But the exponents of this ideal did not generally advocate the provision of schools by the political State. J. S. Mill, for instance, wrote that the State should assist parents who could not afford the necessary fees, but should never trespass into the sphere of education by itself providing the schools. It was felt that freedom depended on free institutions, as well as on the vigilance of free individuals.

The middle decades of the century saw unparalleled activity in the founding of independent schools of all types, and the Registrar General's Certificates report 80% of the male populace as literate before the Forster Act of 1870 established the National Board Schools.¹

This Act killed many independent schools, but the English feeling for independence in education has kept not a few alive, often through great sacrifice on the part of the fee-paying parents. The avowed Socialist aim is to incorporate all independent schools in the State system. The Conservative aim seems to be to tolerate them while in some way regulating their intake. But there is a body of opinion, occasionally but increasingly heard, for devising some way of assisting parents to send their children to independent schools if they so wish, either by some form of tax relief, or by a "voucher" system entitling to a grant.²

¹ West, E. G., *Education and the State*, 1965, p.134.

² The former has been advocated by Sir Robert Birley, the latter by Sir Cyril Norwood.

The Butler Education Act encourages local authorities to assist parents to send their children to the school of their choice, but they have proved very reluctant to do so. Many continental countries assist independent schools (such as the Steiner schools), both in the matter of teachers' salaries and of capital outlay. England has—temporarily it is hoped—forgotten its tradition of fostering privileges rather than strangling them, to which Disraeli referred when he wrote: "There are two kinds of equality; there is the equality that levels and destroys, and the quality that elevates and creates. It is this last, this sublime, this celestial quality, that animates the laws of England. The principle of the first equality, base, terrestrial, Gallic, and grovelling, is that no-one should be privileged; the principle of English equality is that everyone should be privileged."¹

Not every parent would wish to send his child to an independent school. But monopoly is as dangerous in education as in industry, and there should always be sufficient independent schools to challenge, if not to overthrow, any monopolistic system.

In general, however, England is par excellence the country in which the freedom of speech, of religion and of ideas has been fostered and maintained. It is no doubt difficult to get a hearing on the media for ideas (such as Steiner's) which are drawn from unrecognised wells of thought; true originality is choked by the sensational and ephemeral, and there are certainly very powerful background pressures of both a positive and a negative kind. But at least the ideal of freedom is recognised, even if in practice it may call more than ever for the proverbial eternal vigilance.

Trade Unions and the Sphere of Rights

Theoretically, and to some extent practically, English law since Tudor times had forbidden combinations of workmen, but had compensated by empowering magistrates to fix wages. Pitt's Anti-Combination Act of 1800 brought this to an end. Its repeal in 1824-5 saw an enormous burst of "combination" activity of all kinds, especially among the working classes. For just at this time

¹ In 1940 I took up the idea of grants to parents using (approved) independent schools of a value equivalent to the cost of public education. Mr. R. A. (now Lord) Butler wrote that he would consider introducing it into his education act. Sir Percy Harris (then leader of the Liberal Party) said he considered it an excellent idea, but his party would not touch it because it would certainly lose them votes. It now appears again in California and at the recent Liberal Conference (1972).

the new industries were forcing cooperation on society in a way unknown in the old hand industries.

The fundamental question was in what way and under what sign these new industries would be inserted into life. Unhappily the feeling for liberty, which had become so strong in the eighteenth century, was carried over into the nineteenth and applied not so much to the cultural sphere, where it belongs, as to the industrial sphere, where it does not. The new industries were inserted into life under the sign of liberty, which basically meant liberty for the industrialist. The doctrine of *laissez faire* prevailed over the efforts of men like Robert Owen with more idealistic views.

This *laissez faire* attitude, which regarded human labour as a commodity to be purchased as cheaply as possible in the labour market, produced intolerable labour conditions, and it was only very slowly that Parliament, which should be the custodian of human rights, was induced to intervene in the matter of hours and conditions of work—beginning with child labour. It is not surprising, therefore, that the industrial workers saw in the new right to form associations a bargaining weapon against their employers. Trade Unions became, not unions of managers and workers for developing trade and production, as Robert Owen advocated, but unions of employees alone, fighting for better conditions and higher wages. Fundamentally this is still their character.

Wages, however, represent the individual's claim on the current production of society. What that claim should be is a matter for the Rights State (Parliament) to decide, not for individual trade unions concerned only with their own members. The absurdity of our present succession of strikes, or threats of strikes, and of a fixed percentage of wage rises irrespective of the existing anomalous scales, is becoming increasingly evident. In a threefold State, the Rights sphere—Parliament—would make an over-all survey of wage levels, and decide the appropriate amounts for all basic industries. The Trade Unions would have to give up their vested interest in the present strike-bargaining (no easy thing) and in return they would demand some amendment of the present function of capital (also no easy matter). Not a few firms today are seeking for new conceptions of the role of capital in their activities.¹

¹ See, e.g., the remarkable manifesto of the Scott Bader Company in *The Times*, of 1 January, 1973.

Recent events have shown how deeply the workers resent uncontrolled dividends and capital appreciation for absentee shareholders, who know nothing of the business but exercise a final control over it. If capital is only attracted by the prospect of a large return, it is a fairly obvious answer that labour will be attracted only in the same way. It would be the task of a real trade union to bring together the three parties in every industry, the management, the labour force and the suppliers of capital, to work out a harmonious relationship. But industry exists for the consumer, and the consumers' interests must also be represented in all industrial planning.

To bring about such changes will admittedly be a matter of enormous difficulty. For the Trade Unions, the right to free collective bargaining has become a matter of faith. They resist any attempt to restrict it and at present would not dream of giving it up. The Union leaders feel that their authority and prestige depend on their success in battling for the men's demands. It is hard to imagine them surrendering this role to any kind of government authority. We must, however, begin to envisage a system of economic production which will not be a battlefield, but will fulfil its real function of producing and distributing commodities by methods which would be generally accepted as rational and fair. The present system is rapidly becoming lethal.

All modern forms of social security are a step towards establishing the means of living as a fundamental "right" for those who cannot (and sometimes will not) work. The next step is surely for a "Rights State" to take over the whole sphere of the level of wages, i.e. the right to call on current goods and services. This emphatically does not mean that the political state should take over the management of industries. The political State running an industry is always in an ambivalent position. As employer, it must be interested primarily in industrial efficiency; as guardian of human rights, in the well-being of the workers—and the two by no means always coincide. A dialogue between the two interests is essential to strike the right balance. Moreover the union of political and industrial power, like the union of political power and educational control, is a fairly safe way to some form of totalitarian regime. The Rights State would, of course, continue to lay down conditions of labour, and would be ceaselessly active in enforcing regulations against pollution. In its working it would reflect the peculiar

genius of each country. There is something of a true instinct in the fact that not a few people are especially afraid of the effect of the European Common Market on our political institutions.

The Economic Sphere today

The economic sphere is the *enfant terrible* of the modern age, making the greatest demands and causing the greatest trouble. This is not only because it provides the products for what has come to be regarded as the good life, but largely also because it is regarded as the principal provider of the purchasing power necessary for the consumption of what it produces. It is largely for this end that every country now must produce more, every country must find new markets. Even in the eighteenth century a Bishop interested in space travel expressed the hope that, if we reached the moon, we might find there "a new vent for British woollens."

We have inherited this conception of wages—that if a man shall not work, neither shall he eat—from an earlier economy. It is a point at which we need a radical change of thinking. We must conceive the worker as performing his work not for himself but for others (which is actually the fact). He receives his financial claim on the general products of society because he is a man and a member of that society. This does not mean equal wages for all, as advocated by Bernard Shaw—one kind of work requires greater economic freedom than another—but that the final arbiter of that measure of freedom shall not be the economic sphere itself. It is a matter which belongs essentially to the sphere of Rights.

Economics is now a world question, and its problems will ultimately be solved only on a world level through economic associations with the imagination and expertise to relate world production to world consumption. A competent international body is needed to make, and to make continuously, a survey of world resources, world power and world productivity. Perhaps the first attempt towards this was made in 1924, when Mr. D. N. Dunlop, Director of the British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers Association, with the support of the then Prince of Wales, founded the original World Power Conference.¹ Dunlop was an ardent admirer of Rudolf Steiner, and regarded the World Power Conference as a first step towards a world economy as Steiner conceived it. Such a survey

¹ Now called the World Energy Conference (5 Bury Street, London SW1V 6AB)

would then be brought into relation with a similar survey of world needs, and one of its objects would be to anticipate the tensions between the so-called "developed" and "under-developed" countries.

Heroic as such a world basis for production and distribution may appear, it is the only way in which the "brotherhood" of the economic life can ultimately be realised. Indeed—as more and more people today are realising—the only solution to our industrial problems is by way of the ideal. The ordinary workers especially have a natural feeling for brotherhood over the world. They know subconsciously that they are working for others, even though, under the existing system, it appears that they are working for themselves. It may be that the Marxist cry "Workers of the World, Unite" has turned a little sour, but it did—and still does—represent a form of idealism very precious to the common man.

Of course it will be objected that such an ideal is well enough on paper but impossible to effect. The fact is, however, that modern evolution has already made the world an economic unity. Those who wish to preserve national economics are the modern inverted Don Quixotes, trying to preserve the windmills in the face of atomic power.

Naturally the drive towards a world conception of industry can be supported by whatever can be achieved along the same lines within a single state or group of States. Economic blocs, however—such as the Common Market—can face two ways: either towards a wider world economy, or towards a more potent exclusiveness. At all costs they should avoid the latter danger. And they should not enforce, or be confused with, a political union. Rather should they give rise to an increasing awareness of the distinction between the Economic Sphere and the Rights Sphere of Parliament.

It is noteworthy that Churchill realised the essential difference of these two spheres when, in a lecture at Oxford in June 1930, he said of the prevailing economic difficulties: "It would seem, therefore, that if new light is to be thrown upon this grave and clamant problem, it must in the first instance receive examination from a non-political body, free altogether from party exigencies, and composed of persons possessing special qualifications in economic matters." He then proceeded to advocate the forming of an economic sub-Parliament, which might "for the time being command a greater

interest than the Political Parliament." He was no doubt thinking in terms of national economy, and he probably conceived such an Economic Parliament too politically in structure; but he certainly thought it should be entirely independent of the political State, to which it should pass its recommendations.

In a short space it is possible only to mention an important financial proposal for the economic sphere, which might have a profound effect on the apparently insoluble problem of inflation. Steiner pointed out that whereas capital goods—buildings, machinery, &c.—decay and become obsolescent, and consumer goods disappear even more quickly, theoretically the money which they represent remains constant. He therefore called money the "unfair competitor" and strongly advocated introducing into the financial sphere the principle of "dying money." At present money does indeed die by the simple process of inflation, bankruptcies, etc., but in such a way as to cause the maximum social disturbance and injustice. Steiner recognised that the principle of "dying money"—not merely transferring money as in the case of death duties—could be worked out in a variety of ways. But he plainly thought it was a necessary element in a stable social economy.

The idea of dying money, however, is closely bound up with Steiner's recognition of three types of money, Purchase money, Loan money and Gift money, each with its peculiar nature and laws. There is a natural progression from one type to the next and it is when money reaches the stage of Gift money that it properly dies. It is Gift money through which the Cultural and Spiritual activities receive their support. For these complicated matters the reader must be referred to Steiner's *World Economy*.¹

Interplay and Interpenetration between the three Spheres

From one point of view the responsible bodies in the three spheres would represent the interests of their respective spheres alone, and would make demands of other spheres at "summit conferences" which Steiner described as "not altogether dissimilar to those between nation-States." But there would be an important difference. In a confrontation between nation-States each party is seeking its own interests alone. In a meeting of representatives of

the three spheres of society there would be the moderating influence of the knowledge that each shares in the other spheres as well, and not merely in the one he is particularly representing.

For instance, the cultural educational sphere is primarily concerned with the building of man. Steiner stood modern educational assumptions on their head when he stated that the true task of education is to decide what experiences are necessary for a child to grow to full manhood. Industry, he said, must then adapt itself to the nature of the fully realised man. But education requires its due share of the products of industry, and summit conferences would have to settle the level of that share.

Moreover, the conception of society as an organism demands that the individual shall always stand within all three spheres because he is human and indivisible. The saying of the monarch: *L'état, c'est moi* has now become the saying of every man, *Moi, je suis l'état*.

Thus the worker in the production line of a factory must always be something more than a mere manipulator or manufacturer, as he was originally and correctly called. His intelligence must be called on in the matter of practical arrangements at his level of work. He should be cognisant of the problems of his industry in production, marketing, etc., and be free to express his opinion. In one form or another he should be interested in the disposal of profits, not necessarily in the form of a bonus for himself but perhaps in the support of local cultural and recreational activities. He must no longer be regarded as a "hand," and his labour should cease to be a commodity in the labour market. But the inventor, the production manager, the sales director, though standing squarely within the economic sphere, represent within that sphere the principle of creative thinking, and, as doing so, they must be given the maximum amount of freedom. It is the great gift of capital that it emancipates itself from direct contact with particular forms of labour and production, and accords the freedom which the entrepreneur needs.

The days of personal ownership of large concerns are over—the director and the manager are increasingly salaried professionals acting as trustees for the capital at his disposal. There must be mutual recognition of the worker as a man and of the manager as a free agent. Only in this way will the trade union, as we know it today, develop into a true economic association.

¹ Fourteen lectures given in Dornach, July-August, 1922.

In a former age, when Plato set out on the search for the nature of Justice, he felt impelled first of all to create the picture of the just State, which would then play into the life of the individual. Today the situation is reversed. The State must be created in such a form that within it the individual can realise his full potentialities as a man.

The age of instinctive social organisations is past. A truly human society must be consciously formed on the recognition of the separate roles of economic production, of human rights and spiritual freedom. The first is a world question, the second reflects the peculiar genius of the nation, the third is the stamp of man.

SOME RELEVANT BOOKS IN ENGLISH

Rudolf Steiner:

The Threefold Commonwealth
World Economy
The Inner Aspect of the Social Question (Rudolf Steiner Press.)

Charles Waterman:

The Three Spheres of Society. (Faber, 1946)

A. C. Harwood:

The Way of a Child (Rudolf Steiner Press, 1942 *et seq.*)

E. G. West:

Education and the State (Institute of Economic Affairs, 1965)

Folkert Wilken:

The Liberation of Work (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969)

ECONOMICS AND CONSCIOUSNESS

ADAM BITTLESTON

WE need to be able to find significance in the events of our lives. What happens to us should become transparent, revealing the intentions of divine spiritual beings for ourselves and for the world. Yet when we look back, even over a few years, a great deal is dark. Influences work upon our lives, in which it is very hard to see a clear purpose. And one of these, in many lives, is the influence of money, and of economic pressures in general. We do not easily recognise in money an instrument for the good powers of destiny. Whatever is stamped on coins or banknotes, the real image which seems to look at us from money has perhaps at best an ambiguous air, waiting for us to make it a genuine servant of man. A favoured image for early Greek coins was the charioteer with his horses; we today ought to show the horses wild, threatening to tear the chariot in pieces.

In the lectures published in English as "World Economy," given at Dornach in July and August, 1922—now more than fifty years ago—Rudolf Steiner tried to share with his hearers conceptions of money and of economic processes in general which would help to bring them under effective human control. These lectures seem to have been very little understood at the time, and perhaps most of us find them arduous still. But the attempt will be made here to link a few of the fundamental conceptions developed in these lectures with problems we encounter in social and economic life today—in particular those problems which arise from different states of mind and qualities of consciousness.

Almost at the beginning of his lectures Rudolf Steiner describes two ways in which what is valuable in the economic process can come about: through the transformation of Nature by work and through the transformation of work by spirit. These are meant as very general conceptions, as inclusive as possible. If children pick blackberries in a wood, and carry them down to a roadside to sell them—this is a transformation of nature by work. If one of them finds a hole in a hedge to shorten their way, this is a transformation of work by spirit.

The distinction between these two processes is not an absolute one; they shade into one another like colours in a rainbow; and yet they are as different as red and blue. In a human destiny it makes a far-reaching difference if a man is engaged during life more in one way or in the other. The transformation of nature by work chiefly engages the will in man, and this is an element in his nature which is mainly an unconscious, deeply sleeping power. In the transformation of work by spirit, a man's conscious critical attention is awakened. If he stops working to say to himself—"Now why should I do it like this? Wouldn't it be better and easier if I did it in another way?"—then he passes from one level of consciousness to the other.

A further differentiation is important. A man can work on something in order to bring the result into the general economic process; at once, or eventually, it is to be sold. Or he can work at it for his own use and that of his family; it is not brought to market. Then he is a 'self-provider'. There is an element of self-providing in this sense in every household and wherever small-scale agriculture is carried on. Self-providing is always relatively expensive, because it does not share in the cheapening effect of the division of labour. And we find in fact that there is an enormous disparity in wealth, as measured in money, between those regions where there is a large element of self-providing, generally in the form of small-scale agriculture, and those where there is relatively little. Only very slowly are we waking up to the magnitude and complexity of the problems involved here.

We observe how countries with a great number of small landholders, when they do bring this or that commodity to market, have been able to obtain very low prices for it. They are able, compared with the rich countries, to employ few people in the organisation of labour, or as teachers, artists and others who belong to what we may call the free spiritual life, which nourishes the creativity of a society.

There is here an enormous qualitative difference; but it may be good to pause and see the range of difference in money terms.

Poor Regions	Production per head in dollars	
	1960	1970
Africa	120	145
Asia	95	110
Latin America	320	400

Rich regions		Production per head in dollars	
North America	2710	3500	
Europe	840	1200	
Japan and Oceania	600	1200	
Soviet Union	820	1000	

When people in North America or Europe look at figures of this kind, the general reaction is of course, "Well, the poor countries are improving their standards; in time they will be as well off as we are now." When we react in this way, at least two things are overlooked. We are not taking into account that during the ten years covered here most of the differences between rich and poor regions widened very considerably—and this has continued up to the present time. Further, the high production of the rich regions was achieved only by using a disproportionate amount of the world's resources. The 5.6% of the world's population living in the United States use about 40% of the world's output of primary resources—for example, 44% of world coal, 33% of world petroleum, 33% of world copper production, and so on. Were consumption at this level to spread over the whole earth, world production would have to increase on a scale, and with consequences, which hardly anyone has dared to imagine.

Nevertheless, it is still supposed almost everywhere that the countries at present poor ought to evolve economically in just the same way as the rich countries have evolved over the last 150 years. (For the moment the difference between capitalist and Communist economic systems may be disregarded; technological development has been in general the same.) Everywhere, the man who is trained to organize production thinks in much the same way; he wants machinery, for instance, that will produce the largest output with the least labour. From his point of view it is a satisfactory achievement if a rich country can sell to a poor country the latest type of nuclear power station.

For many decades now a few voices have been raised to challenge this whole frame of mind. They could sometimes be dismissed by saying that the people concerned understood nothing about technological necessities. And, indeed, some of them did simply wish that we could go back to a civilisation without technology. But in 1973 there appeared in England a book which should surely be given much more careful attention than it has yet received. Dr. E. F. Schu-

macher, in his recent book, *Small is Beautiful; a Study of Economics as if People Mattered*,* deals with the great human problems brought about by technological development all over the world. He has himself long and responsible experience in a great nationalised industry—the Coal Board in Britain—and has made a wide range of observations and contacts in many countries. He gives many vivid examples of how development in poor countries may fail to meet their real problems. For instance, on a recent visit to a textile mill in Africa:

“The Manager showed me with considerable pride that his factory was at the highest technological level to be found anywhere in the world. Why was it so highly automated? ‘Because,’ he said, ‘African labour, unused to industrial work, would make mistakes, whereas automated machinery does not make mistakes. The quality standards demanded today’ he explained, ‘are such that my product must be perfect to be able to find a market.’ He summed up his policy by saying ‘Surely, my task is to eliminate the human factor.’ Nor is this all. Because of inappropriate quality standards, all his equipment had to be imported from the most advanced countries; the sophisticated equipment demanded that all higher management and maintenance personnel had to be imported. Even the raw materials had to be imported, because locally grown cotton was too short for top-quality yarn and the postulated standards demanded the use of a high percentage of man-made fibres. This is not an untypical case.”

It may be thought incredible that such mistakes should be made—and go on being made. But we should note that such a factory might be profitable from the investor's point of view. It is tragically irrelevant to the needs of its region. Many of the poor countries are already faced with urban unemployment on a nightmare scale. But the drift from an impoverished country side into cities unable to provide the services necessary for the health of their inhabitants, or really to use their capacities properly, will almost certainly increase.

Dr. Schumacher advocates for the poorest regions of the world what he calls “Intermediate Technology.” He has himself worked to devise and organise methods suitable for relatively small-scale production with high employment of human labour. He does not

* Blond and Briggs, London, £3.25.

think of these methods as merely transitional, on the way to full present-day technology. He believes that such methods could provide opportunities for work itself to be more humanly satisfying, and organised in a more human way, than in large-scale production; and they can be much less violent in their effects on the natural environment. They could be more adaptable to changing local needs, products, and capacities. Production would be diversified at every stage; dependence of a considerable area on a single main product, which has so often proved calamitous, would be avoided.

Dr. Schumacher does not suppose that it will be easy to get such policies adopted, or even to get such machinery made. He has met people engaged in planning the economic development of India who believe that in order to set a man to work you need on average so much electricity, so much cement, so much steel. Full employment must wait for these to be produced. Such patterns of thought stand in the way of the kind of development needed, not only for the poor countries, but for the protection of life in general.

Dr. Schumacher struggles with the problem: How can habitual patterns of thought be transformed? Certainly there must be an appeal to the hearts, and a challenge to the wills, of those capable of influencing the course of events. “It is basically a problem of compassion with the ordinary people of the world. It is basically a problem, not of conscripting the ordinary people, but of getting a kind of voluntary conscription of the educated.”

How could such a “voluntary conscription” conceivably come about? An almost opposite tendency can often be seen. Even in the poorest countries small, relatively wealthy social islands are formed, protected from the consequences of the poverty around them. And we see how easily a managerial consciousness can arise, which may be quite incapable of imagining, or communicating with, those who do not share it.

Of course, Marxist economic theory has always taken differences of consciousness in a class-divided society into account. Western economic theory has tried to reduce them to simple, fundamental motivations. Rudolf Steiner was entirely clear-sighted about the effects of a man's social and economic position on his ways of thinking, feeling and acting. And yet he saw that everywhere human life bears witness to influences which are not limited to the world we experience through our senses between birth and death.

There is often indeed a hidden but acute conflict between the real individuality of a human being and his external position in society. We may have a man who by his status finds himself obliged to make decisions about the work of others; and before long he comes to take for granted his right to do this, and does not observe that he may be quite unable to imagine how those he directs feel about his decisions. In all countries today—and here the distinction between capitalist and Communist does not seem to make a very great difference—we see the formation of a managerial class, whose habits of thought are shaped by the technology of production rather than by any natural intuitive experience of other human beings. And this alienates them from the deepest sources of their own being.

* * *

One of the most vivid and widely read descriptions of this condition of mind, and of a way in which it might be transcended, has been written by Charles Reich in *The Greening of America*.^{*} This book has been criticised with some justification, and may even be held to have been disproved in some respects by very recent events. Nevertheless, it should be honoured as an attempt to see a way out, where most people either fail to see the real problem or see *only* the problem.

Charles Reich distinguishes three kinds of consciousness: they exist side by side in present-day America, but have developed in succession. Consciousness I, in his terminology, is a continuation of the original pioneering mood—innocent, hopeful, individualistic, ruthless towards failure. Consciousness II is that of men who live in the service of great organisations, skilful in self-protection, without any long-term purpose or hope of their own. Consciousness III awakens among the young, in a feeling of their betrayal by modern America, in the quality of their love for nature and for each other, and their sense of the infinite significance both of the individual and of true community.

It is evident that Charles Reich does not use the word “consciousness” in quite the same sense as the Anthroposophist does—as distinguishing dreaming from waking, for example. But he means by it more than, say, attitude of mind, or prevailing convic-

^{*} Random House, U.S.A., 1970; Penguin, 1972, 40p.

tions. He recognises that no-one conforms completely to his description; but he is sure that what he is describing is real, and matters.

“Consciousness II believes more in the automobile than in walking, more in the decision of an institution than in the feelings of an individual, more in a distant but rational goal than in the immediate present.” When we read such descriptions in Reich’s book, we may be tempted to dismiss them as caricatures; no healthy human being could think as Consciousness II is supposed to do! But if we read more attentively, we may observe—it is not after all so strange a monster, but can be identified, quality by quality, within oneself. To devote oneself to an organisation can be a great ideal—where does it go wrong, that it can hollow out a man, and leave him with no genuine relationships, no real faith in anything?

If a man’s sense of identity depends upon his status in an organisation, he has no defence against *fear*. And it is one of Charles Reich’s themes that under the surface in great modern organisations there is a permeating element of fear.

“Every decision is a crisis, for any mistake can be fatal. It is necessary to dress properly, to follow all the rules, to placate authority whenever possible below the surface of success is an abyss where one can fall, where one becomes a non-person. Courage is out of the question; it is not possible to fight the system because the system is the source of one’s existence; the day of individual independence is over, and only one’s desires, covered now by guilt and shame, remain.” And just as one’s own identity comes to depend on status, another human being is seen in a similar way. “Consciousness II often fails to see behind the classification to the unique individual. Upon meeting a person, the first thought is to classify him, the second thought is to judge him, and the third is to find the best way to deal with him.”

It is evident how enormous the contrast is between relationships of this kind and the fraternal, or “brotherly”, relationships which Rudolf Steiner says are necessary and in a sense natural in the economic sphere. However friendly and humane a man may be in his personal life, under the dominion of Consciousness II it would be unsafe for him even to try to share the inner experiences of another human being, or to listen to his opinions with genuine respect—though under some circumstances he must appear to do so.

Yet human beings long for real meeting; through all the defensive tactics and long-term offensive strategies of an organisation, actual human needs are always struggling to break through, crying out for attention. Why is it often so enormously difficult for consumers—to take an important example of this problem—to get themselves heard by organisations which are supposed to exist for their benefit?

It is easy to criticise, to blame, and to protest; it is much more difficult to see that what has to be overcome is a whole framework of thought, indeed a state of consciousness. We have come to take for granted that organisations must work with a *reduced*, one-sided conception of man. At one point Reich gives a long list of kinds of experience which are natural to man, which he indeed needs, but which are left out in his working relationships and in the thinking that determines them. Here are just a few of them:

Bravery

Worship

Magic and mystery

Awe, wonder, reverence

Play

Ceremony and ritual

Performing for others

Imagination

Seasons Observing the four changes of season by stopping other activities for a while and going to some place where the change is fully visible.

Inner life Introspection, reflection.

Wholeness Being completely present with another person, or completely given to some experience, rather than being partially withheld as most roles demand.

People Perceiving them non-verbally

Brotherhood

Liberation

These things, and many others, we are inclined to leave out; for we have cultivated, over centuries, a part of the mind for which these things seem irrelevant—especially in economics. But if a man spends a great deal of his time with many of his capacities unused, he cannot have a fully human influence on the organisations to which he belongs. He is caught in a trap that he himself tightens.

What Charles Reich calls Consciousness III arises in deep protest against a human society dominated by organisations of this kind. But it is in itself much more than a protest; it has positive, creative aims, though these are not fully clear to those who participate in it. Indeed, Consciousness III has a difficult relationship with words, by means of which we often help ourselves towards clarity. There is a great deal in Consciousness III that does not seem to go into words at all; on the other hand, it has a great longing for effective words, of an imaginative, in a sense “symbolic,” kind. It desires real meetings between human beings, but knows bitterly how often these are not achieved.

What is happening in Consciousness III cannot really be understood without a spiritual conception of man's being. This makes evident that much more is being carried over from the life before birth into the period between the ages of about 17 to 27 than was evident in recent centuries, apart from a few exceptional people. (Shelley longed to encounter a child who could tell him about the realm from which his soul had come.)

Certain things of earth are felt as particularly alien by those in whom this experience is most strongly at work: competitiveness, possessiveness, destructive judgements by human beings on one another, nationalism and racialism, lack of honesty in meeting one another, rules and regulations (even those one may make for oneself), routine... It may well be said that some of these things are necessary on earth. And many young people of course come to terms with them, or some of them, quite early; each of us has to find *some* place in life. We see how young people go from academic life into business, from business into academic life, breaking off again and again as one or the other becomes unendurable; forming independent communities in lonely places, leaving again to do social work in a great city—everywhere threatened in ways they had not foreseen, from outside or from within.

What Dr. Schumacher calls “the voluntary conscription of the educated” would come about quite naturally if there were organisations formed in such a way that the protection of the life of the earth and genuine human cooperation were really the decisive considerations in their development. Rudolf Steiner tried to describe such organisations when he wrote about ‘Associations of producers and consumers,’ which would not be limited within national boundaries.

it is important to see in what ways the institutions we have fail to achieve this form. The multi-national concerns are ruled by Consciousness II, often in its most radical expression, and are far from being able to adapt themselves to the real needs of developing countries. Where western Governments have sponsored projects for young people to help developing countries, they have found it hard, to say the least, to prevent the infiltration of political motives. And nationalised industries (though they have often been unfairly criticised, as Dr. Schumacher warmly points out) are limited to national borders, and have not yet been able to give either their workers or their consumers a sufficient effective share in the direction of their policies, in general and in detail.

If we consider only what is visible in the world today, it would be easy to conclude that man has caught himself in an inextricable tangle, and that it is impossible to bring into being genuinely human institutions. But this conclusion is forced upon us only if we accept a reduced, one-sided picture of man. It is not inevitable that our thinking should harden, as we grow older, into accustomed patterns, incapable of development. Where this happens, the impulses of the future will indeed prove destructive, just as all-too-rigid buildings collapse during earthquakes.

At the present moment, the wildness of money expresses our failure to mediate between the dynamic, largely unconscious impulses in man and his forms of thought. But this mediation is possible. And it could be the special task of older people, if only they could be selfless enough. In the young, heroic impulses and longings stream in from the life of the soul before birth; into those who are old, powers of reconciliation and imaginative understanding should enter, having their origin among those who have already passed through death. And this should happen particularly, remote though it may seem, in the economic life of the world.

In the course of time all that is visible of our earth must inevitably die. If we do violence to the earth, this process is hastened and rendered tragic. Those who have died look back on our earth and see our violent wills, our cold and calculating thoughts. But they see also where a genuine giving comes about, or a meeting where human beings respect one another, or a conscientious decision. And all these things can and must happen in the field of money relationships.

Prices, for example, cannot in the long run be regulated from outside, by Governments; only associations whose policy is effectively controlled by consumers and workers, in mutual understanding can decide, again and again afresh with changing circumstances, on right prices. And such associations would be free to make loan capital available where it is really most needed, not where it can command the highest interest. And such associations could learn as well how to give freely to free spiritual institutions, when they have learned the lesson that it is not really healthy for an economic body simply to grow and grow, but that its size should be limited by its essential task.

In the life of every individual, there is much that he can recognize as bound up with his own strength and weakness, the use he makes of his own qualities and limitations. These shape his own personal destiny. But he is also connected with the destiny of great groups of people and with humanity as a whole. And in these wider relationships he may be able to learn a selflessness that is the most promising, the most essential, seed for the future.

UNDER THE LEAVES OF LIFE

* PETER GRUFFYDD*

*In the quickening rustle of leaves
That turn brightpenny sides
To a high, dulled sky
I hear more than in our words.*

*Trees that walked like men
That took out the grasping root
And nodded grace along
The skyward limit of the hills
Move in my waking dreams
With a flowing alphabet
Of sound, were once word's ground.*

*Alpha and Omega, let rise
The wiser race of plants;
Forces of morning and evening
Forge a greener link for us
From the revelling of the leaves.*

AIRY WAY

*As leaves turn and rustle
In the cool aftermath of day
I think of one swift's smooth
Fishing of the air, its black wings
Scythe a tight bow, taking bird
Beyond my mundane sense
Through a rippling element.*

*Some martins, white bellies aflash,
Prodded and darted like tugs,
But you, dark swift, your airy
Casting was grace, was precision
An absorbed process only my eyes
Dizzy with your raking trails
Could follow through air's blue sea.*

FORE RUNNERS

*As spry, sober and successful
As a sparrow
Bouncing from floor
To rung-rim of bench:*

*Or a starling typing
A last letter
In the rain, shrieking,
Drilling, informing all callers:*

*Or a robin in his business suit
Landlord's waistcoat
Stabbing from furrow to furrow
Perching on sawn logs
In odd mimicry
Of his Christmas pose:*

*None of these who came before
We made our way to flesh,
But myself in a complex cage
Of bone, blood, nerves and spirit.
Watch them, they are forerun
Masters, led by a group-soul
Over earth's reaches, are forms
Which dive, glide, sing
Are informants of your soul.*

NIGHT WANDERERS

*In the morning man, a stranger,
Unpeels raw eyes at the world,
Then knows form, action, smell,
Coffee, bread, steering-wheel, mirror
Shape the half-asleep dayself.
Then he forgets that first wonder,
The moment in a cockerel's throat,
Of absolute apartness from earth
And day senses, from corporeal things.*

*Man, this stranger, leaves earth in sleep
And where he goes, down the cloaked
Depth of the subconscious or a soul
Wandering between the staring stars,
No-one knows except he, the visitor,
Half-knows in his sealed self.*

* Peter Gruffydd's first volume of poetry, *The Shivering Seed*, was published by Chatto and Windus, here and America, last year.

CHOICE

*Sourness from memory
And joy from sleeping.
Choose slowly, sleep is good
And memory also ends in mud.*

*Fair hair and always weeping,
Black hair and loves me.
Choose none, love both
Youth runs and age is loath.*

WIND RIDER

*The children rise up and saw down,
Boy and girl, one and one, the eternal
Scale of making: the rainworn plank
Clunks the shattered concrete beneath
In this gouting wind which shakes
The land like a woman a mat.
Overhead some gulls, harried in by storm,
Poise, cling to the wind-tunnel
Of soft downland flanks, slipstream
By then boomerang back casually.
These careful masters of the riving air
Are precipitate spirits in sky's maw
On tensile wings hooked lightly
Over the seaward barrelling gale.*

*Leaves, twigs, branches whip, rise,
Loop earthward, skip, leap, die
Into shadows, plunge ditches
As the kids laugh, shriek at bawling
Gusts, hair in wind's rippling
Winnows, raucous life agog
In their exultant eyes.
Now let soul dive childlike
Down the bank, tumbled
By the wind's coarse humour,
And idly soar storms, gull-like
Scan the shuddering landscape,
A whole world shaken under
A still eye above, wheel, watch,
Ride wind or swing with casual ease.*

HUNTED

*Johnny, autistic, the tasselled surface
Of his mind, splayed mosaic, so near
Mine I too could rock for comfort:
His distance blanks the cowering heart.*

*Look at the woodpecker, Johnny,
In its lowslung red pants,
Out there diligent in this season
Of roughhouse gales, mossfuzzed treebark,
Rooter, avian pig—Johnny, see!
Look, uncertain soul, shattered timber
Vision of your inner eye, glimpse
Something other than burning frames
Of nearby fears, inward, looming adults
With zinc-tank voices, fragment
Giants from a disordered order
Where you chose not to live, chased
Inside and away by our clumsy
Difference, our fear, your fear
Squirrelling over bombsites
Of our understanding to where
Your soul crouches, a scruffy
Human rag in an echoing cellar*

*Maybe I know a little of that
Which hunted you off our plane,
Feel the same hares tug
In my blood as blind hounds
Course in, obedient to a scent
Of prey, belling blutbrüderschaft:
John child, your madness and mine
Is a weal of bayed humanity.*

NOVEMBER SUNFIRE

*Soon, directly facing the house,
A late November sun will rise,
Explode slow beaten brass,
Forge coppery forms of fire,
Warm, inform an opening horizon.*

*Winestained light now pools
Past the gable-end, lays lucid
Hands on turned soil, glancing
Each heap, clod, shadow
Into its holy embrace.*

*Godlike the shivering disk
Swell and tumbles into sight;
Its seven blazing faces climb
Wintering air. Sing hosanna
To sun's canticles of heat,
Day's hardening reaches shaped
By crystal fingers of light.*

*The high mass of shuddering
Fires pour down their equinox
On the earth and I see forward
Through still grottoes of smoking
Field, wood and hedge to new shapes
Of our days for there I must
With the absolving sun, arise.*

GREENING

*Why is it that my heart slips faster
Beats a thicker measure
When I see warm pictures
Or hear simple tunes played
By hands that have loved:
The fond rewashing memory
Or an easier let of sentiment?*

*It is because these things are signs,
Like greening grass or crocus, dawning
Air and sleep by a swart fire,
Of man's hold on what is calm
In life, his bright, quiet living
In which he is as pure as water
As untroubled as a feeding flame.*

NOT TOO OFTEN...

*At times when I write
A rising voice in me
Restless chants louder
For mere joy
In nearness to you
In the moving fabric
Of words. Do not
Let me know too often
How this witless song
Rattles the windows
Of your being, singing
To me, sluggish shouts
To you, an erratic
Child loose in a music room:
Do not let me know too often.*

THE WHITE AND THE BLACK RACES

Some Thoughts on a Topical Problem

L. F. C. MEES*

WHEN we concern ourselves with the so-called racial problem, we can hardly fail to have in mind the conflicts which sometimes break out violently in the United States. In this article my intention is to approach the subject from a completely different angle. The task will be to shed some light on the actual, one might almost say mysterious, being of the African negro.

Of course I gained only a limited experience during the two months I spent in South Africa. However, the impressions I received in that short time may perhaps be worth writing down.

First of all, a brief comment on the word *apartheid*. Naturally I will not go into details, as this is a problem on its own. Nevertheless I should like to mention that those who wish to make the African negroes equal to the white people at all costs base their views upon the idea that negroes have to be extensively introduced into our present-day culture as soon as possible. One is here perhaps inclined to draw too much attention to the blessings of our culture, as these might be discussed in theory. The boundless chaos in the social, economic and political fields seems to me a not very favourable proposition.

Another matter of importance in understanding the African negro is that one should never compare him to the American negro. The latter has already lived in Western civilisation for many generations and has thus grown into it. The fact that nevertheless an intensive and real *apartheid* still exists in America needs no further mention. If an American negro wishes to withdraw from contact with Western civilization, he is forced to accept the negro districts and negro communities such as exist in many American cities, and where one can talk about "slums," without being too tendentious. If on the other hand, the African negro wishes to return to his own

community, after spending several years in a town or working in a mine, he will often find the natural life to which he has belonged for hundreds of years.

The first thing that struck me when visiting many friends with African servants was the existence of an unspoken, perhaps even subconscious, sympathy for these people; a kind of interest which one could not clearly account for but could not fail to appreciate. Of course in South Africa, too, there are problems connected with the inability of negroes to adapt themselves to "alcoholised" society. There is much drunkenness and theft. On Saturday nights fights and murder are frequent. All this does not detract from the fact mentioned above.

I should like to mention four characteristics of the African negroes that I observed during my stay:

The first is their upright gait, in particular that of the women, whose habit of carrying everything on their heads, whenever possible, confirms this impression. Anyone who carefully observes and compares the white man's gait will conclude that this is no coincidence. This cannot be mathematically deduced; it is simply a strong impression. But what one must bear in mind is that there are also quite a number of white people who walk upright: they are our young children. Whenever one hears the view that negroes are "like children," here we have an example of a childlike characteristic which cannot be admired enough.

A second characteristic is the intense contentment with little. If, for example, one sees a group of Zulus performing a dance in their village, in brightly coloured dress, and always with untiring energy and gaiety, and if one takes a look into the village itself, one would ask oneself, "Where do these people keep their possessions, what do they actually possess?" One could only answer, surprisingly little! Perhaps their contentment is connected with this fact, for one meets the same characteristic in children of poor white families. It is a true maxim: only he who has much can be bored.

The third characteristic is the most attractive and perhaps the most touching. I had already been in Africa for a few weeks when someone asked me, "Have you ever given a negro anything? Notice how they always take it with both hands, however small it is."

And indeed, one never forgets the gesture of two half-opened, stretched-out hands, not greedy but grateful and resigned. And to

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repeat it once more, the white inhabitants of South Africa notice it time and again, discuss and admire it. In the same way, children can be as thankful for something small.

The fourth characteristic is the wonderful quality of patience: what a contrast to our nervous, rushing civilisation!

Rudolf Steiner said, as is generally known, that the negro has a hardened etheric body. This saying is often quoted. For me it had always remained a problem not clearly understood, until I gained the following experience. On my journey I was able to visit a large school with about a thousand black children at Bulawayo in the south of Rhodesia, where only black teachers instruct their pupils in the native tongue (the English language is also taught). The headmaster, Mr. Hancock, is one of our friends.

Anyone who loves children, especially small children, will think tenderly of negro babies. Probably he will find them even "sweeter" than white babies, with which I could agree. To many of us, their round faces, with big, sad and timid brown eyes, render them "delicious." When one comes across such children in the kindergarten and lower classes of a primary school, it is a pleasure to experience the development of these children: their out-spokenness, their desire to learn, their tremendous enthusiasm for everything they do; one will not cease to enjoy oneself.

I asked the teachers about the discipline. They just laughed, "there is no such thing." The children are much too intent on learning; they follow the master's words closely; they admire and adore him. In classes 3, 4 and 5 the children already had something to offer: they loved being invited to come in front of the class to recite a poem in Sindabele for me (and of course also in English). Their faces had gained much more expression and their eyes, less timid—there is always some timidity in a negro's look—had an expression of brightness. They were proud of showing their drawings and handiwork, and it is striking how legibly and neatly they write. Their singing, too, is pleasant to listen to. It is always pure, and of course splendidly rhythmical, but always too loud. A teacher told me with a smile: "I have never been able to teach them to sing *piano*, let alone *pianissimo*."

Thus I prepared myself to meet the twelve-year old children and those of class 7 (who might go on to more advanced schools), and to see how far these children had developed their powers of self-

expression. What I experienced then it is difficult to express in words. In a short time, overnight as it were, all pliability and docility and "transparency," as one might say, had disappeared from their faces. Suddenly in the top class it seemed—I cannot put it differently—as though they were wearing masks. It was as though all liveliness had solidified in a fixed mould, predetermined for each tribe. I can only use one expression: it was tragic! For the first time I understood better what Rudolf Steiner meant by "a hardened etheric body."

I also learned a great deal about the life of the black people, from which I concluded that this wasn't just a spontaneous natural life, but a willed life, willed by the tribes themselves.

A negro mother feeds her baby, if this is at all possible, for two years and even longer, with the special purpose that it should resemble as closely as possible the characteristics of the tribe. Tribal life suffers no individual development. This practice is carried so far that each family thrusts as much as possible of its own tradition on to its members. Hence the gregariousness, and hence the fact that when a servant takes a negro girl for his wife, he gets the whole family with her, so to speak. I observed this myself in Bulawayo, and it seemed a matter of course.

It is my personal opinion that because of this group-consciousness one cannot judge murder, for example, by the same standards that would be applied in our case. In the tribe a man is not an individual, but one of a group, and if one is no longer there, others are still there.

In terms of character, we could say that a negro largely ceases his development at the age of twelve. Of course there are exceptions. A result is that further development for higher education is very difficult for many African negroes. One could say: the negro does not readily surpass his childhood stage—but one could also say that he hasn't lost his childhood being!

In the observation below, this fact appears to be of major importance. One main difference between a European (let us consider an Englishman, Dutchman or German as examples) and a negro is the latter's consciousness of a European's mental capacities: not his knowledge of facts but his powers of thinking, contemplation and consciousness of time and space. A negro's sense of sharing a European's knowledge and powers of discrimination gives him an impression of incredible expansion in our mental powers. With our

consciousness we embrace a large part of the world, so to speak, and we can call this power of our consciousness "light"; we have light in our consciousness. That enables us to confront things such as the universe, nature itself and even ourselves when it is a question of self-knowledge. We have the sense of bearing within ourselves the centre of a tremendous spiritual capacity.

If we describe a quest for knowledge as "love of wisdom," we can speak of "philosophy." In this light every European, whether housewife, businessman or artist, is a philosopher (the word "philosophy," which in daily life we attribute to a certain field of intellectual inquiry, is thus conceivable as a specialization of this).

The "confrontation" just referred to implies that we are less concerned with the intrinsic value of things; this culminates in the fact that we have developed a scientific way of thinking, from which the warmth and life are in danger of being lost. We see things from the outside; the light we cause to shine upon them threatens to become a cold light. We see things in clear contours, but with that we tend to see and think of things as being "dead."

On the other hand, this method of thinking is largely an element which embraces everyone in the European world; we all live, so to speak, in one huge world-embracing thinking space. One can recognize in this the openness of our consciousness.

Of course a great deal more could be said on this. Perhaps we can agree to characterise European culture as an open space filled with philosophy, which can, however, lead to coldness—death.

It is clear that our technology, in the widest sense of the word, is strictly related to the development of this world of thinking. Technology is its material mirror-image, as it were. Whenever we speak of "Western civilization" we mean, as a rule, the union of these two products of the human spirit.

Although a technical culture, as now developed, has never existed before, it is generally known that there have been many past eras of civilization where something similar existed. The Greco-Roman, Persian, Egyptian cultures, and not to forget the Chinese and Indian cultures, and also the great cultures that existed in America, have always shown an increasing development of both the spiritual and structural aspects of human daily life, whether on a technical, social or political basis. Of these cultures some have come to a standstill, and some have disappeared.

Why has this type of steadily developing civilisation never arisen in negro Africa, although research has shown that some of its diverse regions have long cultural histories of a different kind?

Here, one significant fact has to be remembered. The civilisations mentioned above had a *script*, and it is easy to see the connection between the development of a culture and the power to record its experience in written signs.

The African negro has never had a script (the current written forms of some African languages came into being through the patient work of missionaries in the fairly recent past), but he has something else which may be called unique in the world. He has his drum. True, the drum is found in other parts of the world, but the beating-drum-heart of Africa surpasses all the rest.

One would be deceived if one were to see this as a disqualification of the negro soul. The drum represents a living world; it has kept tribes and individuals in many parts of Africa in touch with one another for thousands of years.

The impression this makes on the attentive onlooker is something I cannot describe better than by quoting one of the greatest authorities on the negro race to-day, Laurens van der Post. In his book, *Venture to the Interior**, he writes:

If anyone wants to know the African heart he should listen to its drum, as I did that night alone on the crest between the two frayed ends of my journey. It is entirely appropriate to its meaning. It, too, cannot change, it cannot alter its voice or tone, but by God, it can be fast or slow, loud or soft, long or short. It knows densities and rhythm, but only one quality. It takes you so far, with a beating, straining heart, and then drops you and your excitement in the dust, because it cannot go beyond. But it can and does begin again.

Continuing, Mr. van der Post describes the intense feeling-life a negro has:

He belongs to the night. He is a child of darkness, he has a certain wisdom, he knows the secrets of the dark. He goes to the night as if to a friend, enters the darkness as if it were his home, as if the black curve of the night were the dome of his hut. How the ghosts of the European mind are warmed with memories of the African's response to the night. He does not really care for the day. He finds his way through it with reluctant, perfunctory feet. But when the sun is down, a profound change comes over him.

A character-sketch of the negro may now be evolved. The characteristics mentioned earlier—the upright walk, the contentedness, the abandon and the patience of the negro—are in every way

* Hogarth Press, 1952; Penguin, 1957.

connected with a warmth of soul, as we still find it in the child. What radiates from the negro is warmth and vivacity. But there is still something to be added: the secrecy of the hidden life that belongs to the night. It is a life lived mainly in an inner community. It lives strongly in diverse groups of people; and we no longer know its power. Concealed, warm life.

If one reads accounts of journeys made in Africa (Stanley, Julien, Schweitzer), one invariably meets with a certain description: the warm, beating heart of Africa; the negro and his drum; the dances around the night-fires—it is all in accordance with the potent African life and character.

Is not this a complete contrast to the open world of thinking, with its danger of coldness, which marks European and Western civilisation more and more?

We have developed a culture primarily through our mental powers; in African civilization the heart predominates.

Many would ask the question: "Has the negro, then, no philosophy?"

Not in the sense discussed here. The African negro knows his stories, endless, full of imagination and profound images, but this is not a knowledge that faces the outside world. It is a closed world of thinking which is connected with the outside world but is even more in union with the negro's entire soul-life, as it expresses itself in feeling and in action.

It is magnificent how van der Post makes us aware of the sorrow, conscious or unconscious, that accompanies this dark inward life; how the negro, consciously or unconsciously, longs for the light:

We could tell him—we who have too much of the light and know not enough of the night and the secrets of darkness. We could but we will not because we are split against ourselves, we are infinitely prejudiced against the night. Half the love we give ourselves would do for him; half for our bright morning selves, and half for him. It is enough for both: two halves for a whole, and the whole for both. Listen to his drum and listen to his wail, look how he goes with us, cheerful, staunch, friendly and strong, on a journey he does not understand, to a place he distrusts. He does not go anywhere we ask for half our love. There is no problem there.

Mr. van der Post uses the word "love" here; but love alone would not suffice. Love must go with light. And that is what was meant by "philosophy."

If we penetrate as deeply as possible into the realization of the vast contrast between the souls of the black man and the white; if by this time we go as far as to say: the negro has not yet lost the

child within him, but the white man is in danger of killing the child within him, one of the most precious elements in his soul (one only has to think of modern methods of education, especially in America), then we should ask what can we do? For it is clear that the answer should in the first place come from ourselves; not the negro, but we, bear the responsibility for answering this question.



We will now try to approach the large contrast between Europe and Africa from a completely different angle in order to strengthen even more the impressions we have developed so far. It is not without reason that I say "Europe and Africa." Max Stibbe has often mentioned the uniformity, in a certain sense, of North and South America, of Asia and Australia, and of Europe and Africa, in a series of lectures, although this is little recognised. The geographical picture on which he bases these lectures can give us a totally different view of the earth-formation. I can only reproduce his conclusions and consider more closely the concept of a link between culture and soil.

Africa is the land of gold, even though gold is found in many parts of the world. In every continent places can be indicated where gold is or has been mined, and in many places gold mining has been very intensive; but there is significance in the facts that the history of gold started during the Egyptian culture and that at present about half the world's gold comes from Africa.

Gold is a very special metal. In his book, *Gold*, G. H. V. Sutherland asks: why have men always been so attracted to gold? He concludes that this is explained by the most obvious consideration: because gold is so beautiful! I entirely agree with him and should like to push this thought to extremes by associating it with a certain "function" of gold. Of all metals one can say where in technology they play a leading part. Of gold one should say: it is there to be looked at. Anyone who visits a gold-mine today and sees the final product, the goldbars, which are to be transported to the vaults of some bank, will say (if he has at all considered the nature of gold): this must really be the last phase, and with it the true nature of gold remains totally hidden from us.

In antiquity, gold was in the possession only of Kings (and this was so for a long time). If one recalls the treasures that have come

to light from the graves of ancient Kings (e.g. Tutankhamen) one should observe not the weight of the gold (which would be interpolating the present system of valuation), but that the gold has been spread over a maximum surface area.

All metals can be rolled out, but none so much as gold, which can be hammered to a thickness of less than a thousandth of a millimetre without fracture, the so-called gold leaf. This property is not accidental and is related to the very special part played by gold in the lives of ancient Kings. It is as if the gold said, I am here to be looked at, and Kings could be Kings only by doing this. Why was it so?

One fact should here be remembered, a fact Rudolf Steiner often mentioned, that the leaders of ancient peoples (including Kings) had sometimes to be hundreds of years ahead of their time. They had to develop a knowledge of earthly life which could not reach the rest of mankind until centuries later and only then become man's "own" wisdom. A King had to condense in himself, as it were, wisdom, and primarily a power of judgment, in order to be a wise and just leader.

In the times we are now discussing, a King could be this only if he was enabled to absorb wisdom and judgment by the sight of gold. It was as though the gold reflected the power of the sun's rays into the King's consciousness.

This light is not different from the light which radiates into our own consciousness. But now it radiates from a point which dwells inside the human soul, a centre which can be said to be the "Ego."

One could regard in this way the gold which one of the Magi offered to the infant Jesus in the Gospel of St. Matthew. It is as if they intended to say by it: We do not need gold any more, We know that the power of the Sun-being will henceforth dwell in man himself.

I have mentioned the light of consciousness. Could we not speak of being gifted with a golden consciousness, or say that we regard the world with a golden look?

The negro has his gold lying in the earth. If one sees the negro dances, performed before thousands of people during the mine-dances on Sundays, one cannot but think that these dances amount to stamping on the earth, almost as if the negro wanted to say: Inside this earth is the gold I would so much like to have as light in my soul!

It has already been mentioned that all solid metals are malleable in varying degrees. This thought is not at all applicable to mercury. Just as gold in its malleability asks to be looked at as much as possible, so mercury shows an extreme tendency to round itself off into drops; it prefers to remain hidden as much as possible.

Mercury is a liquid metal. The liquid state can be brought about comparatively easily in all metals. For this they must always be heated; a liquid metal is warm. Mercury does not feel warm to the touch; the old alchemists concluded from this that mercury has a hidden flame; it keeps its warmth concealed.

Rudolf Steiner says in his lectures on *Mystery Centres* that all metals were once in a liquid, mercurial state. As the earth began to harden, they gave up their mercurial condition. They became "more dead." Mercury hasn't quite followed this pattern. On earth it has remained "alive" to a certain degree. Is it not remarkable that medical science can still speak of "*Mercurius vivus naturalis*"—living mercury (quicksilver)? Hidden, warm, alive. Those are the three characteristics one can attribute to mercury.

Rudolf Steiner calls the negro race the mercurial race. How appropriately this is illustrated by the three characteristics—hidden, warm, alive—which we have discovered in such different ways both in the negro and in mercury.

Mercury is found in many parts of the world, but most of it comes from Europe (Spain). Mercury is thus a European metal.

What part does mercury play in our technology? Certainly in measuring instruments (thermometer, barometer, blood-pressure measurement). Measuring means expressing in figures; mercury serves this purpose in that part of science which is called exact science; the science most in danger of becoming deadened.

In a child we can always discern mercurial traits—the closing-in and spreading-out tendencies in children's games! It is mercury which can split up into droplets and then coalesce into one big drop. And how often does one not say to a child, you are just like quicksilver!

If we know to what extent a child is given to being mercurial, we are involuntarily led to see a similarity between what we attribute to quicksilver and what to a child in appreciating their true being.

Is not this a striking discovery? The negro has his gold in the earth and his consciousness desires it (subconsciously); the European

has his mercury lying in the earth and does not realise to what extent his mercurial life is in danger of being stifled. The profound relation between such apparently unrelated facts can lead us to ask the question already raised: what shall we do?

I said at the beginning of this article—what do those who are strongly opposed to *apartheid* want to give the negro? The answer was: our present-day culture. The experiences we have gained in this field would fill chapters. Perhaps we have to ask the question: how has the negro race maintained its childlikeness and vitality, even though there is a tragic point in a negro's life, namely the changing over from being a child to being a grown-up? Is it not anyway a blessing for the rest of humanity that this race exists? Do we, who have held the impression of having so much to offer, perhaps have to ask ourselves: what can we learn from the negro?

If one accepts the reincarnation idea as a matter of course, one will look with increasing interest at the problem of the continued existence of the mercurial negro race. One can define the question just put even more sharply: Is it perhaps a blessing that souls, who experience our cold, head-thinking culture in an extreme form, should also experience the complete opposite? We have a strong inclination to talk about the negro race and our own as forming two completely separate worlds, but is not the problem of all races our own concern also? Sooner or later all races will have to disappear; this will not happen of its own accord, but only through the evolution of man as Rudolf Steiner pictured it, especially in his lecture-cycle, *The Mission of the Folksouls*.

If one were to educate the negro by offering him that which connects the light with the hidden powers of youth, which are preserved in his innermost being, a new possibility would be created. The constitution of the negro might become so pliable that the result could be a liberation, a healing of the hardened etheric body to which Rudolf Steiner drew our attention.

At school we learn that white light consists of seven colours. We learn that the plant is composed of minerals that exist in earth and air; we learn that man is the highest animal. If we could develop a "Goethean" culture, where colours are regarded as activities of light in its "passive and active modifications," where plants grow between heaven and earth according to the laws of "polarity and intensification," and where it could be said of man in

Goethe's words: "When the healthy nature of man works as one Whole, when he feels himself to exist in the world as in a great and beautiful Whole, when the harmonious sense of well-being imparts to him a pure, free delight, the Universe—if it could be conscious of itself—having attained its goal, would shout for joy and admire the summit of its own becoming and being." *—then we should have a culture of sunlight for which the negro asks in his innermost being.

How far is something like this feasible in the world of today? In South Africa, European-Anthroposophical communities should be founded which would set themselves the task of gradually building up a growing contact with the negro world, through medicine, education, curative education or any other possible means. Under the present laws, this will hardly be possible, but I do not believe these laws will remain so forever. What really matters is that the negroes should gradually become acquainted with a different social existence, with a different cultural life.

Van der Post speaks of a gulf between the white European and the negro, between the day and night cultures; he speaks of bridging this gap and then strikingly concludes: a gulf bridged makes a cross.

If one observes the human body in its polarity, a similar contrast occurs. In between, in the middle region lies the heart; the heart which is pre-eminently a sun-gold organ as well as a mercurial organ. In the heart the polarities become one; gold and mercury join hands.

Of course, bridging the gulf will be an extremely slow process. The language difficulty alone makes it impossible, for example, to introduce, Steiner school methods on a large scale; the least one could do would be to try to include Eurythmy in the curriculum. However unlikely this may sound and however remote realization might be, I am convinced that in South Africa resistance is overcome more easily than one is perhaps inclined to think.

In an article such as this it is impossible to enter into the practical problems to such an extent that one has to consider the political situation. That would change the whole aspect. If one concludes from this article that its purport is an appeal to as many friends as possible, working in educational, medical and social fields, to consider contributing to the initiative that has already been carried out with the greatest intensity in South Africa in an anthroposophical field for several years, then one has drawn the correct conclusion.

* Quoted by Rudolf Steiner in his *Goethe's Conception of the World*, 1897.

CURATIVE EURYTHMY AND REMEDIAL EDUCATION

MARGARETHE KIRCHNER-BOCKHOLT

Dr. Margarethe Kirchner-Bockholt, who passed from us last April, was appointed by Rudolf Steiner to develop Curative Eurythmy in the light of his lectures on the subject in 1921. For a short account of her life, and of her years of close collaboration with Dr. Wegman at the Ita Wegman Clinic in Arlesheim, we would refer readers to the later part of the editorial Notes introducing this issue.

The following article was first published in *Natura* in 1926. We are grateful for permission to print a translation of it, both as an introduction to the use of Curative Eurythmy in pedagogy and as a tribute to Dr. Kirchner-Bockholt's many years of devoted pioneer work in this field.

A new means of healing has been given to us in Curative Eurythmy. We have learnt of its extraordinary effects through years of application, not only with adults, but especially with children. It is an indispensable factor in remedial education.

Eurythmy was given by Rudolf Steiner as an art, and is known as such all over the world through the work of the Eurythmy Section at the Goetheanum. It rests on the elaboration of regular forms of movement for single sounds. This regularity is obvious to us in the formation of the vowels and consonants in our language. Nobody would think of making his mouth round in order to say an Ah, or of making it angular in order to say an Oh; he will naturally follow the ordinary rule of making his mouth round for an Oh and opening it wide for an Ah. The same rule holds good for Eurythmy, and those who practice it find that when they give expression to an Ah, they naturally open their arms wide at an angle, and expressing an Oh, they carry out a rounding movement, as in speaking. It cannot be otherwise, for these movements are taken from the human organism itself. They were discerned through supersensible vision and given to us by Rudolf Steiner. Hence it is not difficult for us to find these forms again in our organism.

In the natural movement of our arms we have an A (ah). We open them wide if we want to apprehend the world with wonder. This movement does not come naturally to the eyes. They



Dr. Margarethe Kirchner-Bockholt

show the E (eh) in their functions and in the structure of the optical nerves. If we are to see anything clearly and consciously, one optical nerve has to cross over the other. Everywhere, when we perceive, when there is an activity of the nerves, we encounter the E (eh) in this anatomical crossing over of the nerve-fibres.

In the upright column of the spine, which stretches in its power between earth and heaven, in contrast to the animal's horizontal back we can recognise the I (ee).

The embracing gesture of the ribs, which lie protectively around the heart, reflects the rounding forces of the O (oh).

In the legs, standing on the strong earth, we find the parallel form of the U (oo).

So we recognize in the forms of our organism, in our anatomy, the form-forces of the vowels. We cannot do this with the consonants. They lead us into dynamics; out of anatomy into physiology. There, everything remains in motion, does not lead over into stable forms of the physical body, but into the dynamics of the etheric body and its interplay with astral body and ego. This can be demonstrated most characteristically by the vibrant sound R in its eurythmic form, showing how it can set the etheric body in motion from out of the astral body. In the R we have a motion like the rolling of a wheel, where, during a continual forward movement, a backward movement for every point on the wheel can also be observed. So we have in the R a rhythmical interplay between a going out of the astral body and a coming back again, and this stirs up the etheric body. It is a similar process to the one we need to have in our intestinal activity. In the horns of a bull this outgoing impulse is, as it were held fast, and the bull's forward thrusting movement can even remind us of the movement of the R.

In the L we have a sound which, even in speech, shows that it has something to do with the element of water. Its eurythmic movement may become apparent if we try to enter into the dynamics of the etheric body of a plant. Just as the physically solid element of the earth is here laid hold of by the forces of life and light streaming in from the cosmos, and the unformed physical is thereby led over into a form that conforms to the archetype of the plant, so do the forces at work in the L lay hold of the physical element and bring it under the laws of the watery etheric.

Even these few examples can show how in the single sounds real forces are at work, as they are also in the formative and life-creating processes of earthly creatures. They are none other than the forces that radiate in from the spheres of the planets and the Zodiac. These are the forces that build up the human being, and where there is illness they can also heal. In order to see this, and to learn how to make use of it, we need to change our medical way of thinking.

We are accustomed to considering organs one by one, each with its finished structure, situated above, or below, to the right or left, of its neighbours, and with its function determined by its structure. Nowadays, the doctor usually intervenes only when something in the structure of a particular system of organs is disturbed. But these illnesses are not the whole story. They are those which manifest on the coarsest, most physical level. More important for taking effective action are those that occur in the fluid organism—the human body is about 75 per cent fluid—or even in the organism of air and warmth which we can picture as a hidden “man within man.” Here we have disturbed *activities*, of which disturbances in the organs are only static expressions; and it is precisely these *activities* that we can come to influence through Curative Eurythmy.

These activities are quite different if we look at the forces which radiate down into the organism from the head, from the upper part of the human being, and see how quite other forces come to meet them from the lower man. Our metabolism, through the absorption of nourishment by way of the blood, provides the substances for building up our organs. The force radiating down from the nervous system of the head lays hold of these substances and moulds them, gives them their contour and structure. The two systems of forces, carried over into blood and breathing, meet in the rhythmic system.

We must see qualities of soul and spirit in these processes that shape our organs. The firm structure of thought works sculpturally on the nervous system of the head, while the impulse-bearing element of will surges up from the metabolism; our feeling flows between them in our rhythmic system. There is always a danger that in the organism one system may reach over too strongly into the other, and the rhythm that ought to be there will then be disturbed.

The harmony of this system of forces is especially unstable in the child. Hence we have here the greatest possibility of intervening

with the healing powers of sound. A few examples will show how this can occur.

A boy came to our children's home, the Sonnenhof, when he was nine years old. The trouble was that his whole organism was much too strong and hard. The structure of his bones was strong and powerful; the muscles barely developed; his angular movements showed that they came more out of the dynamic of his bony system than out of the dynamic of his muscles, in complete contradiction to his age. His dark eyes and hair showed that in his organism iron was preponderant over sulphur, for sulphur is the substance that makes the organism mobile and alive from out of the metabolism and gives rounder forms and bright eyes and hair. This shortage of sulphur, combined with the brittle organs, made it impossible for the child to carry his soul and spirit down into his metabolism in the right way. Hence his body could not be adequately permeated and ensouled and so it remained immobile and his consciousness dream-like. The part of his astral body which was left outside the physical assumed the form of pictures of animals, which came towards him as lions, etc.

The task now was to lead into his metabolism, through Eurythmy, those forces which were missing. This was done through the sounds R, L, M, N. The sounds worked on him quite directly. When the boy came to Curative Eurythmy in the morning, he stood there immobile, unhappy, with melancholy eyes. One saw that it was not possible for him to set the heavy burden of his limbs into motion. It took the greatest effort to get him to speak, even slightly, the rolling of the R. One needed at least, “Rosse rasend rennen, und ein grosses Rad von Riesen den Berg hinaufrollen lassen,” in order to rouse him to activity. If that succeeded, a great deal had been achieved and we could go on to the L.

The L is a sound in which the physical element is raised up out of its heaviness and by the time the boy had done a series of L's, his temperament altered visibly. Previously so melancholy, he became more and more cheerful; his face grew bright. He clearly experienced a liberation through the fact that he could overcome his heaviness by his own strength and come more under the influence of the forces of the etheric body, in which children of his age live by nature and from which they gain their sanguine temperament.

Now that his metabolic forces had been activated by these sounds, a sulphuric influence made itself felt in him. One could see it: he almost ran wild; he jumped about and played the fool and it was hard to bring him to rest. One felt, quite clearly, that one could not leave it at that: the work was only half done. Now one had to give direction to these forces that had been aroused. This was done through the M. The M allows us to lay hold of the external world in a loving, thoughtful gesture; or, speaking physiologically, it leads the dammed-up metabolic forces rightly, through the outgoing stream of the breath, into the external world.

The climax of the exercises, and also our pleasure in them, was reached with the N. The boy, who had otherwise preferred to sit or stand, jumped about with easy bounds and his awkwardly large hands did their best to respond to the sound of the N. In this way the activity of the will-forces in his metabolism was drawn up into the conscious forces of his head. He was always happy and gay when he left his lesson, and the memory of this experience led him to ask for Curative Eurythmy again and again, although starting off was always difficult for him.

Besides Curative Eurythmy, the boy received medical treatment. He had arsenic baths and, internally, a pituitary preparation.

Another child was the exact opposite in almost everything: blue eyes, light hair, thick-set, plump, always in motion. Here we have an organism that has more than enough sulphur. Everything in it is loosened up, fluid, and the astral body, which in this case is weak in itself but highly mobile, finds no resistance from the ether body and no real place where it can gain a hold. So the astral body remains almost inactive in the organism, and is only just able to bring the etheric body into continual vibration. On the other hand, it squanders its forces by losing itself in its surroundings. It is absorbed by everything it sees and hears. All the forces of nature—fire, air and water—are its element. The strong mobility of the astral body is expressed in the child's speech through a preponderance of the R sound. This was the first sound he spoke and was his favourite for a long time. The counterpart in the physical is a too rapid intestinal motion, with a marked tendency to diarrhoea. Hence it was not permissible to enhance this child's dynamic energy through the consonants. We had to help him through the vowels, so as to give his organism, with its tendency to flow away, firmer,

more controlled forms. This was done through the sounds U (oo), E (eh) and Oe (like the vowel in "first"). The effect of the contact between crossed arms and legs in the E-gesture is that the ego and astral body take a stronger grip on the etheric body and the physical body and give them firmer shapes. The consciousness, which had been outside in the surroundings, as it were, comes to itself and gathers itself together. Concentration becomes possible for the child.

The U has in a certain sense an opposite effect, for it raises the ego and astral body more out of the physical and etheric bodies, but then these bodies are consolidated by the U-forces streaming into them and the flowing away of the organism is held in check. So we lay hold of the organism from two different sides and bring the two sides into balance through the Oe.

The path taken during a lesson such as this leads away from excessive activity to restfulness. The boy, previously at the mercy of his surroundings, now had the possibility of becoming calmer and of setting up his own resistance. It was often like a miracle to see how, under the influence of the E-sound, for example, he became quiet and thoughtful, while his own soul-spirit nature began, for once, to count.

These examples may serve to show how Curative Eurythmy can work into remedial education. Of course, this is only part of its sphere of action. On a later occasion we will go further into the connections between sounds and the organism, illustrated from other forms of illness.

Translated by Nancy Hummel

PROTEST AND QUEST IN POPULAR SONGS

JOSCELYN GODWIN*

MUSIC has always been, at least potentially, a vehicle for spiritual influences. If we mention only Gregorian Chant, Bach's B-minor Mass, Beethoven's *Heilige Dankgesang*, and *Parzifal*, we are sure to strike at least one chord of assent in all those for whom music is a part of life. It will probably seem almost blasphemous to them if, in the same breath, we mention rock 'n' roll, and yet our purpose here is to show that there are important changes taking place in the popular field: that it may indeed be there that one should look for positive developments in music as a whole.

The *Vox Populi* has condemned contemporary "serious" composers, if not to silence, then at least to relative obscurity, while the taste of many music-lovers obstinately remains about a century behind the times. Something is evidently wrong here: it is unnatural to despise the arts and crafts of one's own time, while it is equally unnatural for composers and artists to persist in creating things that barely anyone really wants.

It is not our duty to apportion the blame for this sorry state of affairs, but we must mention that among those few who know anything about contemporary music, there are fewer still who find in it anything positive in a spiritual sense. John Cage may be a Zen aspirant, Karlheinz Stockhausen a devotee of Sri Aurobindo, but only the coterie which surrounds each of them seems to share their conviction that their music is correspondingly inspired. Many feel on safer ground with, say, the Anglican Benjamin Britten, who at least writes in a language comprehensible to the uninitiated, and makes no "cosmic" claims.

The most obvious thing about modern music is that no-one since Wagner has been able to pull together the threads, as Josquin, Monteverdi, Handel and Beethoven did in their respective periods; no-one is *universally* acknowledged as a master. The scene is like a battlefield in which composers' egos vie against each other in pursuit

of Innovation, Experimentation, Self-Expression, and the other guiding chimeras of our time.

The popular field is, if possible, more chimerical still, but there is more direction there. It is easy to chart the course of rock 'n' roll from 1950 to 1970, whereas an attempt to do so for serious music would founder because of the absence of any overall direction. No-one in serious music, for instance, has a central position comparable to that of the Beatles, who assimilated nearly everything and influenced nearly everyone else. Neither has serious music been through an all-encompassing change in the past ten years, such as has made popular music into an altogether different creature. It is this that we must first analyse.

Three things have combined to change popular music in the past decade: protest, drugs, and an awakening interest in things spiritual.¹ Of the three, the last is the newest, and so far the least apparent, but the mere fact of its presence is enough to warrant our attention. Before concentrating on it we will set the stage with a few words on the other two factors, which must also be understood if we are to grasp the whole movement of the Spirit which seems to govern them all.

There have been songs of protest at least since the early fourteenth century *Roman de Fauvel*, an epic poem which contained songs satirising the clergy and those in power. But it has taken the wars of the twentieth century, and particularly the American involvement in the Far East, to turn the young against the generation to which their parents belong. Folk singers such as Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger articulated this kind of protest in the 1930s, but not until 1962 and 1963, the years of Bob Dylan's rise to fame, were these sentiments the common property of very many young people. "The times they are a-changing," sang Dylan, sounding like a hoarse-voiced, grimly smiling prophet of doom for all politicians—and parents. His were the battle songs of those who marched on the Pentagon and besieged the Democratic Convention in Chicago; the songs of those who left home, as he did, to go "on the road," seeking something they could not yet name. Dylan woke up—the young—always excepting the very poor, the blacks, and those too far away from the urban centres to understand what he was talking about—and through his songs the young saw themselves as aliens in an old people's world gone sour.

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The other thing that woke them up was drugs. Many popular songs of the mid- and late 1960s refer to them: among the best known were Dylan's "Rainy Day Woman" with its refrain "Everybody must get stoned," and the Beatles' album *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the first long-playing record integrally planned as a "trip" in itself. The history and discography are conveniently charted elsewhere.² What we wish to emphasise is the importance of drugs, particularly marijuana, in young American and (to a lesser extent) English society: here is something that parents do not share—which indeed they mustn't know about—something of which the businessmen and politicians of the Establishment know and understand nothing. The world is polarised into those who have turned on, and those who have not. Drug use becomes comparable to esoteric knowledge: it is illegal, secret, and like an initiation it differentiates its possessors from the exoteric masses.

The experience of drugs, moreover, tends to weaken the materialist hypothesis. Those who have taken LSD or mescaline are seldom inclined to believe that matter is all, or that there are only five senses: even if they have not actually had a "metaphysical" experience. After experiencing intimately the breakdown of the materialist dogma, they must either seek elsewhere for truth, or remain forever unsatisfied. But if their only esoterism is that of drugs, their path will end in illusion, for the truth must be experienced in the normal waking state for it to be actualised in the person. An "acid enlightenment" is like a film of a process which is witnessed but not taken part in by the subject; and if proof of this were needed, one need only look at the subsequent behaviour of such persons and ask whether these are the acts of enlightened beings.*

It is for these reasons that we look for something more spiritual in popular music and lyrics. Like so many things, it seems to begin with the Beatles. Everyone knows of their brief affiliation with the movement headed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi; and evidence of that epoch survives in the music of George Harrison. His song, "Within you and without you," from *Sergeant Pepper*, expresses such thoughts as:

Try to realise it's all within yourself
No-one else can make you change
And to see you're really only very small
and life flows on within you and without you.

* See also a review (page 120) of a new book by Dr. L. F. C. Mees, *Drugs, a Danger for Human Evolution?*—Editors.

This is very different from the usual advice tendered by pop singers—can one imagine Elvis Presley singing it? George Harrison, having been cast as the introverted, melancholic member of his group, can succeed where others would fall into gross hypocrisy.

A singer who, for a time, cultivated a similar persona of docility, humility, and devotion to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was Donovan (Leitch). Clad in a white shift and beads, accompanied only by his guitar, he would come on stage to be introduced as "Your Evening Star," with a speech from his proud father. His songs include some charming children's verses, in which are sometimes hidden deeper meanings such as this:

Little pebble on the sand
now you're lying here in my hand
how many years have you been here?
little human upon the sand
from where I'm lying here in your hand
you to me are but a passing breeze.³

Other songs are frankly devotional:

Lord kiss me once more,
Fill me with song,
Allah kiss me once more
That I may that I may
Wear my love like heaven.⁴

Several of Donovan's songs are set in historical periods:⁵ "Guinevere" in Camelot and "Widow with Shawl" in Regency England, while "Under the Greenwood Tree" is purely a setting of Shakespeare's poem. "Atlantis" goes beyond history to include, as a prelude, a spoken account of that land and its fall, somewhat as it has been recounted by Rudolf Steiner, Edgar Cayce, and others. Such intellectual concerns were new to the popular field, and the climate which could accept them also made possible deliberately antique ventures into musical history (e.g. the music of Ars Nova, the New York Rock 'n' Roll Ensemble, the Winter Consort, and John Renbourn). At the same time one can detect a general sophistication of technique; no longer could noise alone satisfy. Yet some of the noisiest performers, such as the late Jimi Hendrix, were also the most accomplished as musicians.

All of this is of importance only because it joined with the protest movement to make pop music more serious, and more of a *conscious* affair for its listeners. Close and repeated listening was

rewarded, as it always has been with classical music, by increased perception and intellectual pleasure.

Much has been written about the lyrics of recent rock regarded as poetry,⁶ and the mere fact of such a discussion proves our point. Bad poetry it often may be, but the words are important. Some pop singers so fancy their poetic talents that they use the record sleeve not only to display the texts of the songs, but also as a billboard for further verses: thus Bob Dylan's album, *Bringing It All Back Home*, contains as much poetry as the average slim volume, besides what is found in the songs. Richie Havens, another singer with religious aspirations, writes on the record sleeve of "Something Else Again":

I HAVE SAT IN THE REALM OF HEAVEN (mind)
all my days (periods of accomplishments)
to catch a crooked day
here and there
manifesting experience after
experience
Dodging sounds
hollow ones (vibrations)
simply by not being there
Recording since the beginning of
illusive time
My childhood in the cave
weighing and watching all the
energies to the point of
acceptance
I AM ACCEPTANCE

Whether or not this makes sense, its orientation is clear. With ideas like this thrust at them, even when they are somewhat garbled, the young have no excuse for ignorance of the existence of spiritual experience. Whereas the spiritual path may, in the past, have been something which only an esoterically inclined few stumbled upon, or were led to, nowadays many come up against the choice of whether or not they will follow it.

The group that has concentrated most on producing songs with metaphysical content is The Incredible String Band. It consists of two very versatile musicians, Mike Heron and Robin Williamson, supported by two girls, Rose and Licorice, and occasionally by others. Like all successful pop groups, they present an attractive dichotomy of temperaments: Robin is evidently the introvert, with silky blond hair and the eyes of a visionary: Mike is tougher, darker,

and obviously a ladies' man. His songs are mostly about love, while Robin writes most of the songs which concern us here. A good sample of his poetic style is this extract from "Maya" (on *The Big Huge*, 1969):

The great ship, the ship of the world
Long time sailing
Mariners, mariners, gather your skills
Jesus and Hitler and Richard the Lion Heart
Three kings and Moses and Queen Cleopatra
The cobbler, the maiden
The mender and the maker
The sickener and the twitcher
And the glad undertaker
The shepherd of willows
The harper and the archer
All sat down in one boat together
Troubled voyage in calm weather.

Almost unpunctuated, sometimes ungrammatical, the words of Robin's songs are often an alternation of images with reflections; the image sets the mood, and the reflection resolves it into a philosophical insight. In this song it is the Hindu doctrine of Maya, the cosmic illusion which conceals the Absolute, which is invoked. A whole world of appearances is summoned up, with all its frantic activities, and resolved in the last line to mere froth on the ocean of Being.

God is again pictured as a playful creator in "The Juggler's Song" from "U" (1970): here he pulls out four coloured balls from his bag, Substance, Space, Power and Time. With the last, he says: "I can't juggle four, so I'll toss it to you," whereupon Time sings:

I'll teach you to forget the truths
you always knew
See what might be,
See what might have been,
Though you yourself created me,
Your own mistake has set me free.
I was your slave, now you are mine
I am Time, I am Time

The memory of an Edenic state crops up elsewhere, as does the concomitant notion of a Fall. In "Douglas Traherne Harding" (from *The Big Huge*), one of Mike Heron's few metaphysical songs, such a time is evidently implied by the words:

When I was born I had no head
My eye was single and my body was filled with light
And the light that I was was the light that I saw by
And the light that I saw by was the light that I was.

This is reminiscent of some of Rudolf Steiner's descriptions of Saturn Man:

... the body of the man of that time consisted only of a fine mist-form or vapour-form: it was a body of air or gas, a gas-body rayed through and entirely permeated by light. If we imagine a cloud formed with some regularity, a chalice-like formation expanding in an upward direction, the chalice glowing with inner light, we have the men of that time ...⁷

Later in human evolution the chalice-like organ was to atrophy, and Man exchanged his single, clairvoyant eye for two physical ones. The song goes on to describe (as I see it) the change in the nature of death:

And many's the time that I've passed by the river
And saw no tollman and needed no ferryman to cross

Compare Steiner:

As long as there was light alone, he did not know birth and death. The light-permeated cloud transformed itself perpetually, but man felt this only as the changing of a garment.⁸

Later, with the penetration of the air breath into his body, Man knew death and lost his "chalice" (my italics):

But one day walking by the river
I met a tollman with an angry face ...
And cold was I, *no crown did I wear.*

But the enlightened man knows better:

And seeing the ferryman and seeing the tollman
The light within him leaps to greet them
For he sees that their faces are none but his own
One light, the light that is one though the lamps be many
You never enjoy the world aright
"Till the sea itself floweth
In your veins and you are clothed
With the heavens and crowned with the stars."

The last lines of the song are a quotation from Thomas Traherne,⁹ which explains at least part of the title, and makes one realise that Heron and Williamson have gone far beyond the "literary" inspiration of Dylan and other intellectually inclined singers.

Several of Williamson's songs deal with renunciation of the world, following a spiritual rebirth. The subject comes in its simplest form in "Ducks on a Pond" (from *Wee Tam*, a companion album to *The Big Hugs*):

Following my fortune the Holy Grail is found
And the Holy Bread of Heaven it is gathered all around
Farewell sorrow, praise God the open door
I ain't got no home in this world anymore.

Christian symbolism is common in his poems, although the ideas are evidently informed also by Eastern wisdom. The achievement of detachment is described in "Cutting the Strings" (from "U"), with a rueful look back at the life of ignorance and karmic bondage:

There now, they're all gone
almost as if they had never been
I turn my eyes backwards and gaze into my own gaze
I turn my eyes backwards and gaze into my own face

I built my prison stone by stone
how many useless knots were tied
I dug the footfalls in my path
how many useless tears I cried
here to build in worlds of beauty
no-one made a joy a duty
no-one, no-one but me

His songs are by no means always solemn, although we are necessarily concentrating here on the most serious ones. In "Puppet Song," also on "U", we meet God in person "sitting deep and easy in a heavenly chair," very much the Old Man up in the sky. But his reply to the "little man," who demands to know whether God is responsible for whatever goes on, is truly profound:

God looked up from having a heavenly think,
he gave that little questioner a heavenly wink saying
"men have coloured me with the colours of their minds so I find
used me as an excuse for all kinds of goofs
and for crimes of all kinds
all your so hard facts painted thinly on the void
why were you not more pleasantly employed ...
You're one of my kind, you're an infinite mind
you make each new day
there's nothing more I can say"

A respect for the Earth and a willingness to see God's beauty everywhere is less exclusively a virtue of the Incredible String Band,

but it seldom comes clothed as poetically as in Williamson's "Invocation" from "U." These lines remind me of some of Kathleen Raines' poetry:

You that create the diversity of the forms
open to my words
you that divide and multiply it
hear my sounds
I will make yield league to you (*sic*)
ancient associates
and fellow wanderers
you that move the heart
in fur and scale
I join with you
you that sing bright and subtle
making shapes that my throat cannot tell
you that harden the horn
and make quick the eye
you that run the fast fox and the zig-zag fly
you sizeless makers of the mole and the whale
aid me and I will aid you.

A prayer to the formative forces and the group-souls, in a popular song? This is certainly what it appears to be, but naturally its import passes over the heads of the majority. The two-record album, "U", contains many more accessible songs, and some that verge on the banal, in addition to those from which we have quoted. Note, however, how metaphysical truths are put over in an apparently frivolous context, as in "Puppet Song." This is an example of the best kind of popular art.

Sometimes Williamson's imagery seems to run away with him into mere surrealism, unless it is into some private esotericism which I cannot fathom:

Who moved the black castle
Who moved the white queen
When Gimmel and Daleth
Were standing between?
Out of the evening growing a veil
Pining for the pine woods that ached for the sail¹⁰

And in "Maya" we meet the remarkable lines "The book, man, bird, woman, serpent, sea, sun/Blessed O blessed are they of the air," where the intention seems to be to fill the inner vision to overflowing with archetypally charged images, without apparent meaning.

The richness of allusion to myth, history and fairytale has given some the idea that the songs of the Incredible String Band are

merely surrealist escapism. Naturally the profane mind is going to sense here something repellent, and this may arouse hostility, or at least a deliberate avoidance of the issues at stake.¹¹ There is little reference to "normal" life, and no protest or social commentary such as Dylan and the Beatles have written. But anyone who has followed thus far will agree that these lyrics deal with the most serious things that exist: the spiritual tasks of Man on earth, and his experiences with higher worlds. Their success with at least a sector of the young is a heart-warming sign.

We have not treated music in this discussion, finding it better to present our case with the more accessible evidence of words. A proper treatment of popular music, as music, would require much more space and many musical examples, as well as more technical knowledge than it is reasonable to demand of readers in a non-musical periodical. Here let it suffice to mention a few complementary tendencies to those noted above. Most obvious is the influence of serious music and the acceptance of classical instruments such as the violin and the flute. Next, there is the influence of Oriental, and particularly of Indian music, manifested not only in the use of sitars, etc., but also in a frequent abandonment of harmonic motion in favour of a drone bass or chord. Western music has been obsessed for eight centuries with polyphony, and for the past two centuries specifically with the possibilities of harmony; perhaps there is indicated here a way out of the impasse induced by excessive emphasis on this element, virtually unknown to other cultures.

Then there is discernible in some quarters a turning away from noise (and for this we must thank the folk singers) and away from electrification towards the gentler and more honest sound of natural instruments. The singer accompanying himself or herself on the (unamplified) guitar is the archetypal figure of this new music, and reminds one of a long and respectable ancestry: the Psalmist singing to his harp, the Greek to his lyre, the Trouvère to the vielle, the Italian humanist improvising verses to the viola da braccio, the Elizabethan with his lute. Somehow the baroque singer, backed by a harpsichord and cello, and the singer of Lieder with his piano accompanist, seem complicated and artificial by comparison. It is particularly fitting, too, that the guitar should be the chosen instrument, for it has a more continuous pedigree than almost any other

instrument, having remained in use, and virtually unchanged in form, since the mid-sixteenth century.

A thorough survey of spiritual currents in modern music has yet to be written.¹² This essay is offered as a pointer to the direction in which I see most promise. The music of the future will not be the music of the Church, or of aristocratic patrons, or of the new patrons of the arts—the universities. It will be the music of those who are young today. We must hope that they will exercise discrimination, and use their mandate wisely.

REFERENCES

1. I am writing only about the English-speaking world, and more particularly about North America, where the spiritual renewal of the young seems to be centered. The youth of most European countries, if they are "awake" at all, are so more politically than spiritually. In less evolved countries such as Spain and Greece every effort seems to be made to prevent the young from awakening, in almost every sense.
2. See Lillian Roxon's *Rock Encyclopedia* (New York, Grosset and Dunlap, 1971), s.v. "Acid Rock" and "Head Music"; Jonathan Eisen, Editor, *The Age of Rock* (New York, Vintage books, 1969), p.23 and *Passim*.
3. From "Happiness runs" on *Barabajagal* (1968); also on *Donovan in Concert* (1967-68), under the title "Pebble and the man."
4. From "Wear your love like heaven" on *A Gift from a Flower to a Garden* (1967). This album includes a picture of Donovan at the feet of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and a polemic by Donovan against drugs.
5. "Guinevere" is on *Donovan in Concert*, as is "Widow with Shawl." "Under the Greenwood Tree" is on *A Gift from a Flower to a Garden*, and "Atlantis" on *Barabajagal*.
6. See Robert Christgau on "Rock Lyrics are Poetry (Maybe)" in *The Age of Rock*, p.230 f.
7. Rudolf Steiner, *Egyptian Myths and Mysteries* (New York, Anthroposophic Press, 1971), p.53.
8. *Ibid.*, p.54.
9. From Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditations*, no. 29 of the First Century (London, The Faith Press, 1960, p.14).
10. From "The half-remarkable question" on *Wee Tam*.
11. E.g. the cavalier treatment of the Incredible String Band in Nik Cohn's *Rock from the Beginning* (New York, Stein and Day, 1969), p.227: "Finally purely in my role as chronicler, I should note the existence of the Incredible String Band, a folk duo whom several English critics described as the best song-writers since the Beatles. This mention made, I will make no further comment." The entry in Lillian Roxon's valuable *Rock Encyclopedia* recognises only their gift for fantasy and "primitive philosophy."
12. See my article "Spiritual Currents in Music" in *Studies in Comparative Religion* V, 2, (Spring, 1971) for a survey of Western music up to the Romantic period, regarded from a spiritual point of view.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE LEADING THOUGHTS

Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts, by Rudolf Steiner. (Rudolf Steiner Press, £2.25)

RUDOLF Steiner began issuing these Leading Thoughts in January, 1924, directly after the Christmas Foundation Meeting, and continued them week by week up to his death on 30 March, 1925. The last two sets came out after he had gone from us.

Hitherto the Leading Thoughts, and the Letters which accompanied the later ones, have not been available in English in a single volume. The Leading Thoughts alone, translated by George Adams, were published in a small mauve-bound book in 1927, prefaced by the Foundation Stone meditation. For many this little book has long been a treasured possession and will remain so, but the Leading Thoughts do need to be studied in conjunction with the Letters, and these had to be sought in a separate volume, called in its first edition *To the Members*, translated by Mrs. E. Bowen-Wedgwood and published in 1930. Here could be found the later Leading Thoughts and their accompanying Letters, but not the earlier Leading Thoughts, since no Letters had accompanied them. In 1956 a new edition, now entitled *The Michael Mystery*, with the translation revised by George Adams, was published, but the earlier Leading Thoughts were still absent from it.

Now, in the present volume, we have all the Leading Thoughts and all the accompanying Letters, brought together for the first time, with the translations by George and Mary Adams used throughout, so at last a long-felt need is met.

The contents of this volume must not be confused with the quite different letters on the character, aims and problems of the Anthroposophical Society which Rudolf Steiner wrote for the weekly journal, "Das Goetheanum," during part of the same period. The Letters in this latter series have been published in two volumes entitled *The Life, Nature and Cultivation of Anthroposophy* and *The Constitution of the School of Spiritual Science*.

After September, 1924, Rudolf Steiner was confined to a sick-bed in his studio on Dornach hill, close by the site where the scaffolding for the second Goetheanum was going up:

He loved the living noise of hammering and scaffold-building which penetrated into the quiet of his sick-room, announcing the building in the process of coming into being. He was united through his counsel and help with this work to his last breath and beyond death. From another page of Dr. Wachsmuth's invaluable book* I will quote a further passage which brings out the circumstances under which the Leading Thoughts and the Letters were written:

Upon entering the studio during these weeks and months, one generally found Rudolf Steiner resting half erect on his bed, reading

* *The Life and Work of Rudolf Steiner*, by Guenther Wachsmuth. Translated by Olin D. Wannamaker and Reginald E. Raab. Second edition, enlarged. (New York, Whittier Books, Inc., 1955).

or writing. He continued to work without interruption. Almost every day during this time he requested me to lay before him the correspondence at the habitual hour of eleven o'clock, had the letters read to him, dictated the answers or gave directives and advice for replies going to all parts of the world. For the stream of questions and of requests for counsel from the whole world never ended. If, in order to protect him, I presented to him as little as possible, his questions drew into the discussion what had been withheld; for, even in this time of apparent external separation, he shared most intensely in the life of the Society, of the friends, of his students.

Every week Albert Steffen received from Dr. Steiner the contribution for the weekly, "Das Goetheanum," painstakingly written in bed with his own hand. He was then writing down, for the first time, for serial publication in the weekly, his autobiography, *The Course of My Life*. In these conversations in the studio there came to light constantly new glimpses into the nature of significant individualities, into the mission of humanity, and into contemporary events.

That all these activities could be pursued in the course of a painful, debilitating last illness is very extraordinary, and hardly less so is the fact that the Leading Thoughts and the Letters show no trace of weakness, right up to the end. Indeed, as George Adams once wrote, they "contain some of the most wonderful illuminations he had ever given. Here we are taught to understand the new spiritual age in which we live (since the last third of the nineteenth century), in its relation to the Christ and to the guiding spiritual beings."

The Letters and Leading Thoughts will be known to many readers, and to discuss them in any detail here would be beyond my capacities and my scope. Among the main themes woven through them are the threefold being of man in relation to the Hierarchies; the background of the epoch of the Consciousness or Spiritual Soul; the stages whereby the Divine-spiritual comes to expression in the Cosmos; the aims of Lucifer and Ahriman and, in contrast to them, the mission and work of Michael.

For me, the Leading Thoughts have a crystalline quality, clear and concentrated; it takes study to realise how much there is in them and how difficult they often are. We can feel that here we are being given an epitome of the communications which Rudolf Steiner wished particularly to impress on the minds and hearts of his hearers and readers during the closing years of his life. And the very last Leading Thought has a striking prophetic relevance to our times. "The civilised activities of mankind are gradually sliding downward, not only into the lowest regions of Nature, but even *beneath* Nature . . . This makes it urgent for man to find in conscious experience a knowledge of the Spirit, wherein he will rise as high above Nature as in his sub-natural technical activities he sinks beneath her. He will thus create within him the inner strength *not to go under*."

C.D.

THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES

Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centres, by Rudolf Steiner. Fourteen lectures given in Dornach, 23 November to 23 December, 1923. Translation and revision by E. H. Goddard and D. S. Osmond. (Rudolf Steiner Press, £1.80).

This course of lectures was first translated into English exactly thirty years ago and has long been out of print. Now it appears in a timely new translation. A sudden upsurge of interest in esoteric matters has made the subject of the Ancient Mysteries of far wider appeal than hitherto and the need for an authentic interpretation of their inner nature is only too apparent. That this can be given only by a great Initiate is also apparent, for though much evidence survives—archeological, historical, artistic—of the importance of the Mystery centres, it reveals little of their real purpose, while the "secrets" transmitted by the hierophants to their pupils have remained, for the most part, inviolate. The influences going out from these centres, or Schools, by various channels have, however, been very far-reaching—as they were intended to be.

It was the wish of Rudolf Steiner's heart that into the chaotic, dis-integrated life of the modern world, where art, science and religion have fallen apart, the principle of initiation should be restored. Then would the trinity of art, science and religion be realised again as a unity. Their wholeness would be not seen only in the light of abstract thought but experienced as a reality in daily life. In many different ways he sought to make his pupils awake to their own need and to the need of the world for this integration. In the time of the Ancient Mysteries, it was experienced. Now, in a changed form, adapted to the present era, there must be a renewal of the Mysteries. And this is what he sought to bring through Anthroposophy.

These lectures were given immediately before the re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society, when Rudolf Steiner wished to see the esoteric life developed more strongly. He had already spoken on many occasions of the Mysteries of both the East and the West; in this case he appeared to be concentrating on these centres where man could find, more especially, his connection with the fount of creation.

This course makes it clear that the different centres had certain specific aspects of knowledge to reveal, and of these Rudolf Steiner chose to describe the nature of the Ephesian Mysteries, the Hibernian, the Eleusinian, and those of the Samothracian Kabiri, touching at the close on the mediaeval Mysteries of the Rosicrucians. He does not plunge at once into any of these, however, but introduces them by speaking of man's life of soul and of practices whereby it can be enhanced and intensified so that he may develop feelings in himself that will raise him from his present state of consciousness to levels considerably higher. He learns to know what effects the soul-life can have upon the physical body, his connection with the earth, of the coming-into-being of the kingdoms of mineral, plant and animal and of the influence of Spiritual Beings in human life.

In short, he becomes that "different" man demanded by those in past and present times who are responsible for guiding the steps of the pupil who is in search of knowledge of the Higher Worlds.

The first centre Rudolf Steiner turns to is the Ephesian, where the Mysteries of the Word, the Logos, of which we read in the opening verses of St. John's Gospel, were imparted. In this chapter—more, perhaps, than in any other in the book—we can see and feel the creative process at work from its primal beginning, "moving and weaving as the living essence in all things," with the pupil experiencing himself as "a vessel for the faint reflection of the Cosmic Mystery in his own speech." Among his experiences of the creation of the plant world he has the perception of silica as the active element through which Thought became added to the Word.

In the Great Mysteries of Hibernia the pupils were also prepared for experiences of the Word. In their case, they would be led to an experience of future stages of planetary existence: ultimately, when the Earth is metamorphosed into the Vulcan planet, the thoughts of man will become sound; Thought itself will become Word, and man will feel himself to be "the Word that comprehends the Cosmic Word."

The prescience vouchsafed in the Hibernian Mysteries had long before the time of Christ prepared the pupils for the Incarnation. It was recognised that the evolutionary course of the Earth is orientated to that Event, and when the Mystery of Golgotha took place, they knew of it through their spiritual intuition. Effects and impulses from this Hibernian centre passed over into Brittany, the Netherlands and Central Europe. But the time came when a less spiritual and a more historical, materialistic tradition of the Incarnation triumphed and the Hibernian influences were overshadowed. An age was dawning when the physically perceptible was to assume more and more importance, and the ancient teaching of the spiritual sources from which the world of the senses derives was to grow more and more remote.

This stage in the evolution of consciousness had been anticipated by Plato. The Greek Mysteries of Eleusis, into which had flowed the Chthonic Mysteries with their deep penetration of the secrets of the metals, revealed the nature of man in relation to all that surrounds him on earth and is received by him from the cosmos. The time for this "true natural science," Rudolf Steiner said—this science which, "in order to find an explanation of the Earth, reached out to the Heavens and soared aloft into the wide spaces of the Cosmos"—was already past in Greece. Plato himself had received the wisdom of the Eleusinian Mysteries and with it the mission of communicating to his pupil, Aristotle, an extract from its body of knowledge which he, in turn, had to impart to the world in terms of abstract thought.

How this task was fulfilled was described by Rudolf Steiner in the course of lectures, *World History in the Light of Anthroposophy*, which followed the one now under review. Soon after this, in January 1924, he led his pupils further into the Mysteries and the tasks of the present age in a series of lectures on *Rosicrucianism and Modern Initiation*.

MILDRED KIRKCALDY.

WIND ON THE FROZEN HEATH

Where the Wasteland Ends, by Theodore Roszak. (Faber, £3.75).

A strong wind blows through this book. Its blast is directed at most of the concepts and ways of thinking which make up the modern scientific view of the world: a view that springs from "single vision and Newton's sleep." Blake's famous phrase describes what is now often called the onlooker consciousness, and this is the central target of Mr. Roszak's attack. "My purpose," he says, "is to discover how the essential religious impulse was exiled from our culture, what effect this has had on the quality of life and course of our politics, and what part the energies of transcendence must now play in saving urban-industrial society from self-annihilation."

Much of what Mr. Roszak says in pursuing this purpose will be familiar and sympathetic to most readers of the *Golden Blade*. He knows something of Rudolf Steiner, in spite of referring to him rather misleadingly as "the gifted Austrian mystic"; he quotes Owen Barfield on "idolatry" and shows how this treatment of nature as "desacralised" has allowed the modern technocrats to feel that they have the power and the licence to remake the world—and in some cases even human beings—according to their own ideas and scale of values. This has led to the reckless exploitation of the environment, and it tends towards a system of authoritarian rule by a technocratic elite.

After this formidable case for the prosecution, Roszak goes on to look for light and hope in Blake, Wordsworth and Goethe, in whom "the best of Blake and Wordsworth meet: Blake's transcendent symbolism drawn from the esoteric tradition (Gnosticism, Christian cabbalism, the Hermetica), Wordsworth's sacramental vision of nature." I think we shall need to go beyond Goethe, as Steiner did, if we are to have a valid world-picture in which the "transcendental symbols," highly and rightly valued by Roszak, can recover the significance they have lost in modern times. And can Roszak really mean what he appears to mean when he insists that "we have nothing to add to the splendour of the Old Gnosis and can make no progress 'beyond it'?" This seems unexpectedly conservative.

Roszak is good on Blake, clarifying various obscurities and showing how remarkably relevant some of Blake's prophetic sayings are to the present times. A weakness in his book, I think, is the implication that "single vision" arose through a kind of avoidable perversity, or through an arbitrary dismissal of the testimony of saints and seers. According to Rudolf Steiner, the incoming of the onlooker consciousness was a necessity of human evolution; it reflected the final contact of the descending human ego with the very bones of the human body. Again, while Roszak is a splendid critic of the modern scientific outlook, he does less than justice to science as a great and necessary adventure of the human spirit. Most certainly, the limitations of the onlooker consciousness now

need to be first recognised and then transcended, but the positive achievements of modern science in exploring the world and discovering some of its ordering harmonies will endure.

One of the best chapters in the book is the last, where Roszak argues that secular humanism, whatever necessary social reforms it may promote and however firm its support of the old liberal values of freedom of thought and tolerance of dissent, cannot cure the sickness of the modern world, for it is itself a victim, and a willing victim, of the "single vision" which is a main cause of the sickness. And so it tends to dismiss religion as an illusory distraction from "real" social tasks.

There is much more in Roszak's book than can be discussed here, notably his treatment of the "visionary commonwealth," where he looks at the trend that is inclining many young people—particularly in America—to turn away from urban industrialism towards decentralisation and experiments with self-supporting communes. But he wisely adds that "drawing up social prescriptions runs the risk of becoming an expert's game; and then it belongs to the technocracy, not to its opposition."

The book seems to me too long; it would have been more effective if shortened—especially in the middle part—and equipped with an index. But it is a rich book, packed with stimulating insights and pithy comments; for example: "Surely no alchemist would have been surprised to learn that the secret of life does have after all to do with the sacred sign of the double helix—the caduceus borne by Hermes." In spite of its length and high price, it is a book that deserves to be widely read in our circles.

C.D.

BIOGRAPHER OF THE METALS

The Secrets of Metals by Wilhelm Pelikan. Translated by Charlotte Lebensart. (Anthroposophic Press, Inc., New York, £1.47 inc. postage).

A renewal of science, Rudolf Steiner often said, must grow from the sense of wonder. Great scientists have often retained something child-like in their relationship to the world, a wide-eyed capacity for surprise which can open the way to revelation.

It is symptom of the feeble state of the sense of wonder in our present culture that we take the metals so much for granted. These extraordinary substances have, of course, accompanied developing human culture over vast periods of time—indeed they have given names to certain phases of history: Bronze Age, Iron Age (and myths of a long-vanished Golden Age). They are interwoven with human culture for a simple physical reason: they are not in general given by nature, but have to be wrested from the earth with the help of fire. As man has mastered fire, he has become master of metals, culminating in the triumphant combination of coal and iron which launched the industrial revolution.

Throughout this evolution, however, the metals have been at work in a more secret and intimate way within the living processes of our bodies. Both in the earth and in our blood, iron is the dominant presence, visible in the fields as the reds and browns of the soil, and in our arteries as the scarlet, oxygen-carrying haemoglobin. But many other metals are more subtly present, their functions still to be fully explored. In their physiological activities they point to a future science when we can begin to grasp the metals (and other elements) not merely as matter, but as *processes*.

Very little is known for certain about the formation of the great deposits and lodes of metallic ores in the crust of the earth, but the available facts begin to fall into a suggestive new perspective if we recognise, following Rudolf Steiner's descriptions of the earlier stages of the earth's evolution, that we are studying a record of long-past life-processes of a younger earth, when the whole planet was functioning as a kind of organism within a living planetary cosmos. The metal deposits are a kind of fossil of a past planetary physiology, of an activity which we can still study now, retained within our own organisms.

As we begin to rediscover the metals as processes, even as cosmic presences or personalities, we shall begin to be able to make sense once more of the old traditions linking certain metals with the planets—lead with Saturn, iron with Mars, tin with Jupiter, etc. But still more important, in the long run, will be the exploration of the therapeutic properties of the metals, when prepared in various special ways, and on which Rudolf Steiner laid so much emphasis when inaugurating anthroposophical medicine.

Wilhelm Pelikan is a scientist, an outstanding naturalist, who also worked for many years with the Weleda company on the preparation of medicaments, and all these aspects of this work colour his approach to the metals. He writes of them not as impersonal chemicals, but as complex personalities whom he has gradually come to know over the years. Thus the individual chapters on particular metals—notably the seven "planetary" metals—are more like biographies of beings than surveys of inanimate substances. Yet they are totally objective and backed with a wealth of facts.

I have used the original German edition for some years as a guide to the world of the metals, returning to it again and again, and can only say how happy I am that it will now reach English-speaking readers. In the West, particularly, where the industrial revolution began, a renewed sense of wonder, and a path to a phenomenological reading in the book of nature such as Pelikan practises here, are of special importance for the future.

The translation is accurate, if a bit rigid. Reading would have been easier with a freer style. But the metals themselves soon begin to speak to the reader through the words, in a language which can begin to show us the way to a rediscovery of the planetary spheres where the metals are truly at home.

JOHN DAVY

A LAWYER ON DARWINISM

Darwin Retried, by Norman Macbeth. (Gambit Inc., Boston, £3.10)

ALL through my life I have been shocked, even outraged, by the naive acceptance of the Darwinian theory of evolution, especially when it is used to "explain" the wonders of life in all its manifestations and its taking for granted that the fantastically complicated and beautiful forms of life are produced by chance variations, natural selection and survival values. On the other hand, I have always accepted the fact of evolution itself as broadly revealed by the graded forms of life now in existence, and by the fossil record.

The appearance of Norman Macbeth's book, *Darwin Retried*, comes like a breath of fresh air to bring clarity to the whole affair. It constitutes a masterly revelation of the frailty, nay, even non-existence, of the foundations on which Darwin's hypothesis rests. Here it is again important to distinguish between evolution as a broad phenomenon and the "mechanism" or process which has brought it about. "Let the following points be nailed down at once," says the author. "I am not denying evolution in the large sense. I am not discussing genetics, I am not defending fundamentalism or propounding any other theory. I assert only that the mechanism of evolution suggested by Charles Darwin has been found inadequate by the professionals and that they have moved on to other views and problems. In brief, classical Darwinism is no longer considered valid by qualified biologists."

Macbeth speaks as a lawyer trained to examine evidence dispassionately and is not at all inhibited by the high scientific reputations of those in whom the power of clear and honest thought is not among the gifts which have made them famous.

His motive for writing the book was his complete inability to find satisfaction, or indeed credibility, in the explanation of the coming into existence by chance of the fundamentally varied, intricate and marvellous phenomena of life made manifest to all who study or observe even the smallest fraction of it. The lawyer in him gave him the impulse to look into the matter and clarify in a simple manner just what the evidence was. He in fact expected to find that there really was strong evidence, since so many of his colleagues, among whom were expert biologists, believed in it, as also did virtually the whole of the intellectual world. He soon found, to his surprise, how fantastically slender and almost non-existent the evidence was.

His assembling of the material for the conclusion was not superficially carried out. He conversed with the most eminent of the leading biologists and carefully studied their books and those of almost every authority on the subject. It is a leading part of his method of procedure to show from his intensive studies of the modern biological experts how far the modern

evolutionary theory has departed from the classical theory of Darwin himself, T. H. Huxley and the 19th century school. How, in fact, it now works in an entirely different thought-realm, relying on statistics and genetics and a process, not clearly defined but continually brought into the argument, called "adaptation." But the experts still cling to a kind of unbreakable faith that minute changes in the organisms, due to genetic modification, lead in a so-called "upward" direction which tends to generate more and more complicated life-forms. Thus life develops from its spontaneous material origin, first attaining to the cell and then to the multi-cellular organism, in which different parts of the organism have different functions subservient to the existence and survival of the whole, and thus on to the whole scale of the development of life so familiar to us in pictures and diagrams of "trees of life" in the textbooks and popular articles.

His second line of attack, which illustrates how the co-called experts contradict each other, is very significant. The contradictions are not only of each other, but also of themselves, sometimes in a quite surprisingly direct manner. "Survival of the fittest," struggle for existence, are no longer believed in. They are terms which have now become almost meaningless. Thus he claims to have found that there is no "Establishment" of Science. Such a conception is illusory; each department has its own philosophy. They do not support each other.

In contrast to this we have the notions of the layman about it all. In general he is blissfully unaware of the revolutionary work which has been done by the experts and accepts as a matter of course chance mutations, survival of the fittest and the struggle for existence.

If any staggering biological phenomenon, such as the caterpillar to butterfly transformation confronts the expert, he falls back on what Macbeth calls "the best in the field" argument, that is: "It may be difficult, even impossible, to see how it came about on the Darwinian hypothesis, but, after all, there is no alternative hypothesis, so, however incredible, it must be true."

The fundamental postulate of Darwinism and Neo-Darwinism is that all evolution has proceeded by a succession of minute changes, each of which—if it survives—gives the organism a slight advantage, in competition with others. Macbeth draws attention, at some length, to the phenomenon of the human eye as a refutation of this postulate, and shows how one after another of Darwinian evolutionists have failed to account for the phenomenon in terms of this assumption.

There is an excellent chapter entitled "Religion in Reverse", which clearly demonstrates that Darwinism is really a *religion*. It is indeed this fact which accounts for its present acceptance by the world at large.

R. H. BARFIELD, D.S.C.

CAN LIVING ORGANISMS TRANSMUTE ELEMENTS?

Biological Transmutations, by C. L. Kervran* (Crosby Lockwood; £2.25 hardback, £1.25 paperback).

FROM time to time one comes across, and reads with mingled excitement and scepticism, observations which appear to contravene the basic laws of the scientific universe, such as the conservation of matter, the impossibility of perpetual motion, the immutability of the elements; and the observations are often accompanied by detailed experimental data. More often than not, one never hears any more of these claims. Have they been found unrepeatable, and so relegated to the limbo of faked or biased findings, or have their ideas seemed so proposterous that no-one has ever bothered to test them?

Professor Kervran's *Biological Transmutations* is a book of this kind. As a result of many quantitative experiments and observations, by himself and by other scientists, reported here in detail, he claims to have shown many cases of the transmutation of elements by living organisms. Moreover, he gives a highly ingenious (though at first glance improbable) explanation of his findings. Since his conclusions, if proved, would be revolutionary, his book is surely worth a sympathetic, though objective, appraisal.

The idea of the transmutation of elements is of course not new. Whatever interpretation one may put on the aims of the old alchemists, they clearly regarded the interconvertibility of the elements as by no means impossible. But the rise of modern chemistry, after the formulation by Dalton of the atomic theory (1808), seemed to rule out this old idea, and the principle of the immutability of the elements came to be firmly established. Certainly, the principle has had to reckon with the discovery (1898) of the radioactive elements, which decay gradually into lighter elements; it has also been shown that various elements can be split and transmuted when they are bombarded by nuclear particles; and the same process, intensified, has produced many artificial elements, unknown in nature. However, these phenomena are regarded as special cases; all the non-radioactive elements are assumed to be immutable under normal conditions, and this remains a basic principle for chemists.

Another basic principle, also challenged by Kervran's work, concerns the chemistry of living organisms. Until early in the 19th century it was generally believed that all living tissue is made up of materials in some way different from those found in the laboratory. Life was a mystery and should not be expected to behave in the same way as inanimate substances. Then, in 1828, came a death-blow to vitalism in chemistry. Wohler, a German chemist, produced urea from a laboratory product,

* Professor Kervran is Director of Industrial Hygiene Services, Vocational Diseases and Industrial Medicine, Paris; Member of the New York Academy of Science and of the UNESCO Advisory Council for Scientific Research. The French original of his book was published in 1966.

ammonium cyanate, simply by heating it, and this urea was found to be identical, in all measurable properties, with the natural urea excreted by the human body. This experiment led straight on to modern biochemistry with its conviction that living organisms are subject to the same chemical laws as lifeless substances.

Both this conviction, and the immutability principle, are now simultaneously challenged by Kervran. He claims that transformations of one element into another can and do occur in nature, but only in the presence of living cells (of fungi, algae, bacteria, germinating seeds, &c.). In short, his thesis is that living tissues contain enzymes which are capable of bringing about nuclear transformations while conserving mass (i.e. the law of the conservation of matter remains intact). He makes a passionate plea for an objective appraisal of his data and for repetitions of his experiments, to strengthen his claim that living matter is *not* subject to the same laws as dead matter, and concludes with a quotation from Einstein, who towards the end of his life is reported to have said that "God did not play just one game, but four or five" (i.e. there may be more than one set of physical rules for the universe).

I hope it will not seem presumptuous if I say that I found much of Kervran's data frustrating, and lacking in the rigorous attention to detail which one would expect from a reputable scientist hoping to gain attention for a wildly controversial idea. Frustrating, because hardly any relevant original references are given in this English edition; lacking in rigour because in many cases, where apparently detailed data are given, one finds on close examination that one essential quantity is missing. For instance, when attempting to show that more potassium is produced from sodium (by yeast) in the presence of a small initial amount of potassium than in its complete absence, he does not say how much potassium was there originally, thus rendering his final figures meaningless.

However, having conquered my annoyance, and my natural chemical scepticism, I found on careful reading that my unbelief was being slowly eroded. It now seems to me that after sifting the wheat from the tares (the questionable, non-proven data), there remains some golden grain, too significant to be thrown into the fire without further investigation.

I will now quote a few of the best-attested transmutations reported in Kervran's book, before outlining his hypothetical explanation of them. *Sodium (Na) to potassium (K)*

Fungi grown in sand showed finally 200 to 300 times more potassium (as K_2O) than was present in the original sand (1.57g K_2O from 0.006g, by gravimetric analysis). Controls showed that no K had arrived from any outside source.

Komaki, in Japan. With yeast used in a sterile nutrient solution, after 72 hours 2.02mg of K was present, compared with 0.1 initially (per flask). Fifteen such experiments were made, with careful controls. The amounts seem so small that credibility is stretched, but the spectroscopic method used here is capable of very great accuracy.

The potassium content of fresh-water fish in dilute saline (no K) increased by 60 per cent. in 4 hours; the calcium content remained the same. *Sodium (Na) to magnesium (Mg)*

Some striking figures are given for studies made on men in the Sahara at high temperatures. The amounts of Mg ingested and excreted were measured daily for five months. Results showed a daily average of 117 more milligrammes of magnesium excreted than ingested, while there was a decrease in sodium so remarkable that the experiments were later repeated by a new medical team during 8 months in an even drier district. An increase of more than 80 per cent. of excreted over ingested Mg led the doctor in charge to expect a magnesium deficiency. None was found. These results suggest that in a very hot climate the human body can manufacture magnesium from sodium.

Potassium (K) to calcium (Ca)

Hens with no available calcium appeared to lay eggs with calcareous shells when they had access to mica (potassium silicate). When kept on a clay soil containing no calcium in the form of lime, they laid soft-shelled eggs. On being given pure mica, which they had never seen before, they fell on it enthusiastically and pecked so hard that they became breathless! Next day, the eggshells were normally hard. This cycle was repeated, always with the same result. K seemed to be transformed into Ca within 20 hours.

A crab which had just shed its shell was put into sea water as a soft mass. In two days it had a firm shell containing far more calcium than was present in the sea-water. But why the Ca should be assumed to come from K is not clear, as there would not seem to have been enough of it (0.05 per cent. of K in sea-water).

I must now indicate briefly how Kervran explains these apparent transmutations.

The nucleus of any atom consists of protons and neutrons (known collectively as nucleons), numerically different for each element. If you could change the number of protons in a nucleus, you would get a different element. Kervran suggests that groups of nucleons can unite or split, to give different elements.

I find it hard to go all the way with this idea, mainly because the energy required for such changes would be, according to orthodox science, enormous, but it builds up into a very neat picture (the bracketed figures stand for the number of protons in the nuclei of the elements concerned):

Sodium (11) + oxygen (8) = potassium (19)

Potassium (19) + hydrogen (1) = calcium (20)

Silicon (14) + carbon (6) = calcium (20)

A noteworthy point is that the auxiliary elements required to complete these transmutations—oxygen, hydrogen, carbon—are all common elements, widely available. If Kervran had had to bring in some rare elements to balance his equations, his thesis would be much less credible.

The energy changes involved are discussed in some detail. Kervran

believes that they are small, which would not be so surprising if they are carried out by enzymes, for it is well known that enzymes can induce biochemical reactions which would otherwise require the application of energy, if indeed they could be made to occur at all. But there is at present no evidence that enzymes can carry out nuclear transformations; this would seem to set the enzymes a quite different and far more onerous task.

Kervran's findings, if confirmed, would have important implications for medicine and agriculture. For example, the local mechanism of bone calcification in the human body has never been satisfactorily explained; in many cases recalcification has appeared to be promoted, unexpectedly, by a diet low in calcium and high in organic silica. Similarly, bone fractures have been found to heal more quickly on a low calcium diet. These anomalies could be interpreted, in terms of transmutation, as implying that the conversion of silicon to calcium *in situ* renders the calcium more assimilable than when it is ingested in food.

On agriculture, I cannot go far into detail, but anyone familiar with bio-dynamic methods will find much to interest him in Kervran's remarks, especially as Rudolf Steiner mentions briefly in the Agriculture course (Lecture V) that the transmutation of certain elements occurs naturally in healthy soil. Kervran says that in France the annual absorption by crops of potassium from the soil exceeds by a very large figure the amount of potassium put in as fertilisers (manure and artificial). This discrepancy, he suggests, can be explained by the transmutation into potassium of either sodium or calcium. He says also that the over-stimulation of micro-organisms by chemical fertilisers can cause them to stop reproducing, leading to the "death" of the soil. He mentions Pfeiffer's pioneer work in the bio-dynamic field—eg. Pfeiffer's observation that daisies tend, unexpectedly, to grow on lawns which have become calcium-deficient, and that thereafter the incinerated ash of the daisies is rich in calcium. Kervran interprets this as implying that "when lime is lacking, silicon-loving plants grow and their ash is rich in lime" (i.e. silicon drawn from the soil is converted by the daisies into calcium). Kervran's general conclusion is that soil scientists who believe that biology equals chemistry are not the right people to advise farmers.

It appears to me that Kervran's work deserves to be taken seriously. The primary question is not whether this theory of nuclear transformations is correct but whether his factual findings are valid. There is certainly need for further experimental work. A report by Dr. D. B. Long, published in 1971 by the Henry Doubleday Research Association, describes carefully controlled experiments designed to test Kervran's claims in a limited field germinating seedlings. No statistically significant positive results for transmutation were obtained. However, it seems doubtful if Dr. Long was reproducing Kervran's experiments exactly, for he used very highly purified water. It is possible that trace elements in the water may be necessary for enzymic activity of the kind envisaged by Kervran.

JEAN KOLLERSTROM, D.Sc.

DOOR-OPENING DRUGS

Drugs, a Danger for Human Evolution?, by L. F. C. Mees (Regency Press, £1.20).

IN this short, swift-running book Dr. Mees is concerned with drugs which are taken in order to bring about changed states of consciousness and have been seriously recommended on that account. He excludes heroin, for "nobody will ever, in the real sense of the word, advise anyone to become an addict."

In his early chapters Dr. Mees discusses the other psychedelic drugs in relation to their usage, origin and effects, showing how they tend to reflect the characters of the particular plants from which they derive. He brings out some very unusual and interesting points, as can be seen from the table in which he sums up his findings:

Substances and plants:	LSD (Ergot) Mescaline (Cactus) Psilocybine (Mushroom) Ecstasy	Alcohol (Grape) Marijuana (Hashish) (Hemp)	Opium (Poppy)
Consciousness: Part of the world:	West	High Centre	Dreams East

Why are these drugs so attractive? One reason, Dr. Mees suggests, is that they lead into a world of images which offer the soul a kind of nourishment much more satisfying than the arid facts which saturate the modern world.

A further reason is that there is to-day a widespread and justified search for higher forms of consciousness. At this point Dr. Mees describes, briefly but clearly, the methods recommended by Rudolf Steiner for achieving this goal. He notes that Steiner's account of the first breakthrough into the world of Imagination is closely paralleled by some reports of experiences induced by LSD. Hence "we can come to the conclusion that in the case of using LSD there is also some real approach, contact, perception of the spiritual world in some form"; but with important differences.

One essential difference is that a person who works through the arduous exercises given by Rudolf Steiner will discover that "during his exercises a new being has been created by himself, by forces of his will-power. It is this new-born being that is entering into the spiritual world, because it is that being which has the right of existence in that same world." On the other hand, a person who breaks into the spiritual world by means of drugs is no more than a transient visitor; he has not earned the right of existence there.

A further difference is that someone who has earned this right has taken a first step on the forward path of human evolution, whereas the kind of experience gained through drugs may be a reversion to an old form of clairvoyance which holds no promise for the future.

Dr. Mees draws on his experience as a psychiatrist to elucidate the results of drug-taking that he has observed, and brings some evidence to suggest that LSD can activate—though not in a healthy way—the "lotus flower" in the centre of the forehead.

His book is too short for its subject, I think, but it is full of uncommon insights and stimulating ideas. His publishers should have got someone to go over the text with him; he writes a lively but sometimes awkward English, and now and then uses words and phrases which do not quite mean what he intends. C.D.

BEFORE AND AFTER BIRTH

A Child is Born, by Wilhelm zur Linden (Rudolf Steiner Press, £2.16 clothbound; £1.22 paperback, inc. postage).

To the making of this very unusual "baby book" Dr. zur Linden brings the experience of many years of clinical practice, the close observation of five children of his own, and a vigorous and imaginative study of Rudolf Steiner's teachings on the threefold being of man. The child and its needs and development—both inner and outer; both before and after birth—are shown as a coherent spiritual whole on which many small practical details of nutrition, exercise, warmth, quiet and so on can have important and lasting effects.

Though the book is immensely practical and detailed and omits nothing in the infant environment, from safety pins and dummy-sucking to poisonous plants and the family cat, its essential basis is the spiritual picture of human incarnation.

A considerable proportion of the book deals with various aspects and stages of nutrition, but there are also sections on pre-natal factors and their effects, the process of birth, baby-care and hygiene, and pre-school education.

A possible criticism, perhaps, is that the book is almost too detailed, making at times insufficient allowance for variations in circumstances and temperament, and for individual parental insight and experience. One feels that before using it as a day-by-day instruction book, any expectant mother would benefit from reading it all through, slowly, and pondering on the mental-physical-spiritual approach which lies behind it. D.E.E.

'AN ENIGMA TILL THE END OF HIS LIFE'

Gurdjieff: Making a New World, by J. G. Bennett (Turnstone Books, London, (£3.50))

GURDJIEFF is best known to most people as the founder in 1922 of the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man at Fontainebleau. He was then aged 45. He was born in Eastern Turkey, near the Russian frontier, and grew up speaking Turkish and Armenian. As a young man he travelled widely through the Near East and Central Asia in search of places where he believed an ancient wisdom had been preserved.

In 1912 he began to lecture in Moscow. There he met Ouspensky, who later lectured in England on Gurdjieff's system for many years and gave the clearest account of it in his book, *In Search of the Miraculous*.

The Fontainebleau Institute was going well, having attracted a number of gifted, hard-working students, and money from America, when in 1924 Gurdjieff was almost killed in a car crash. When eventually he recovered, it was too late to save the Institute as an active enterprise. For the next ten years Gurdjieff devoted himself mainly to writing, though he continued to receive visitors at the Institute and in 1930 he visited the United States, where Rom Landau met and talked with him, as described in Landau's well-known book, *God is my Adventure*.

Of Gurdjieff's four books, the first, *The Herald of the Coming Good*, was soon repudiated and withdrawn. Two others, *Beelzebub's Tales to his Grandson*, and *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, were not published until after his death in 1949; and the fourth, *Life is Real Only Then, When 'I am,'* is coming out this year.

Mr. J. G. Bennett, author of the book under review, has himself been a searcher all his life, as readers of his excellent autobiography, *Witness*, and his other writings, will know. He has travelled extensively in the lands where Gurdjieff spent his youth, and his new book is devoted in part to examining the intricate historical background of these regions, where various nationalities, creeds and traditions have intermingled, often turbulently, for evidence which might throw light on what Gurdjieff may have found. Gurdjieff was certainly influenced by Sufism, and Bennett believes that he must have had contact with other esoteric sources, but who were his teachers, and how exactly he built up his system, will probably never be known.

Bennett first heard of, and later met, Gurdjieff in Constantinople in 1920, while Bennett was serving as a British Army staff officer concerned with political intelligence. One day he received an official warning to look out for Gurdjieff as "a very dangerous Russian agent," who was then said to be in Georgia and might come to Constantinople. Bennett believes that Gurdjieff probably had some connection with the Soviet secret service at that time, or he would not have been able to travel so freely in regions under Russian control, but that he was not so much working for the Russians as using them to further his own plans. There

were also phases in Gurdjieff's versatile life when he made a lot of money by dealing in oriental carpets—again in order to pursue the projects which led up to Fontainebleau.

In 1923 Bennett paid several visits to the Institute and was preparing to return when Gurdjieff's car crash changed everything, and it was twenty-five years before he saw Gurdjieff again, this time in Paris, where he often visited him between 1946 and 1949, the closing years of Gurdjieff's life.

Bennett then had behind him a successful career as a scientist in the fuel industries; later he travelled and wrote and lectured on Gurdjieff's ideas; and later still, some while after Gurdjieff's death, he became associated in turn with Subud and Sufism and was received into the Roman Catholic Church. But he has always continued, he says, to look with gratitude to Gurdjieff as the teacher who has done most for him and has had most influence on his life.

Here I can mention only one feature of Gurdjieff's teaching, a feature which Bennett considers particularly relevant to the world at large and to the present time. This is the doctrine of Reciprocal Maintenance—"everything that exists maintains and is maintained by other existences, and this must apply to man also." As Bennett points out, this maxim has an obvious bearing on current anxieties about the reckless exploitation and pollution of the earth, and he agrees that something like it has come to be widely recognised by conservationists and even by governments, but he seems to claim that Gurdjieff's statement of it is in some way unique. Yet on many occasions Rudolf Steiner emphasised that man needs the earth and the earth needs man, and he explored this relationship in much deeper detail than Gurdjieff seems to have done. Much the same could be said of Bennett's claim that Gurdjieff alone gave a satisfying answer to the question that "became the *idée fixe* of his inner world—what is the sense and significance of life on the earth in general and of human life in particular?"

There is no doubt that Gurdjieff made a powerful impression on a number of gifted people, some of whom became his devoted disciples and felt that he had changed and illuminated their lives. One of them spoke to me of Gurdjieff as "the great awakener." But I would not myself feel confidence in any present-day esoteric teacher whose methods could give the impression that he was coercing and bullying his pupils, or using them for his own ends, even though Bennett implies that it was all intended to help them along the path. Or in a teacher who behaved as Gurdjieff did towards women. "At times," Bennett tells us, "he had sexual relationships not only with almost any woman who happened to come within his sphere of influence, but also with his own pupils."

Here and throughout his book Bennett shows that his intention is not to idealise Gurdjieff but to give a true impression, as far as he can, of a man who "remained an enigma till the end of his life." Why did Gurdjieff drive from him, one by one, all his ablest supporters and interpreters,

including Ouspensky and A. R. Orage? Why did he veil his writings in such obscure and eccentric language, although apparently wishing them to be widely read?

As Bennett says, "in terms of his hopes and aspirations, Gurdjieff's life may appear to have been a failure. His Institute collapsed; he left very few outstanding disciples behind him. His books have been read as curiosities rather than as harbingers of a new world." Nevertheless Bennett believes that Gurdjieff's teaching, and especially his doctrine of Reciprocal Maintenance, have much to offer the world. Time will show whether his abiding faith in his old teacher is justified.

CHARLES DAVY

HEALING MOVEMENTS

Experience in Remedial Eurythmy: Practical Advice for Doctors and Therapists, by Maria Glas (M.D. Vienna). Published privately by the author, The New Nursing Home, Cainscross Road, Stroud, Glos. 50p; postage 3p.

This booklet, described by its author as a "working autobiography," tells of her use of the remedial Eurythmy exercises given by Rudolf Steiner in his *Heileurythmie* course, 1921. She set to work directly after attending the course and so has long experience of the problems encountered in treating patients by this method, including those of adapting German speech-sounds to English needs.

The booklet is full of practical advice; it includes, besides a general introduction, sections on eye-exercises, on working with school-age children and with children in need of special care, and a short section on the remedial aspect of the scales and intervals in music, as given in Eurythmy. Many of the speech-sounds are discussed in relation to the Eurythmy figures, designed by Rudolf Steiner and executed by Edith Marion. The happiest part of the booklet for some lay readers may be the author's discovery of the healing value that lies in the "framework" that Rudolf Steiner gave the eurythmists in connection with the weekly verses in the *Calendar of the Soul*.

Dr. Glas wrote this booklet in the hope of encouraging others to study and practise the work that she so actively helped to pioneer. May it fulfil this aim among the English-speaking peoples for whom it is intended.

N.H.

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