

ROMANTICISM

comes of age

OWEN
BARFIELD

ROMANTICISM COMES OF AGE

By

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By the same Author

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INTRODUCTION

The essays of which this book is composed were written at irregular intervals during a period between twelve and eighteen years ago. With one exception (here called *Coleridge's I and Thou*), which was contributed as a book review to *The New Criterion*, they appeared in article form in a periodical published under the auspices of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain. They are here gathered together in the form of a book, to which I am asked to write an Introduction. On re-reading them at this distance of time I see that the area of the subject-matter over which they directly or allusively range must appear wide, its communications tortuous and its boundaries ill-defined. I seem to have chosen a continent, instead of a country, for a rather haphazard walking-tour. A map on the scale required is accordingly out of the question and the best service I can do for any patient reader who may desire to read this book as a connected whole is to show him my diary and lend him my Baedekers.

In other words I have decided to try and give some account of the circumstances which led to their being written. I will not be so insincere as to express personal regret at the autobiographical stain which this will necessarily involve (it is a necessity which rarely arises and which few of us really regret when it does), but neither do I propose to indulge in any personal reminiscences merely for the fun of the thing.

I was brought up without religious beliefs and with somewhat of a bias against them. On the emotional side I was taught not to be flippant about things which others revere, but was not taught to be reverent myself. Thus, when I first began to think about such things as literature, art and religion, my mind was *tabula rasa* as far as any preconceived notions went. There was

nothing I held fast to, but on the other hand nothing which personal experience, as distinct from contemporary fashion, had taught me to reject as humbug. As time went on, I began to abhor this vacuum in myself which did not at all fit with the promptings either of my emotional or of my moral nature, but I did not see that I could do anything about it.

The first serious thing that happened to my mind was (at the age of about twenty-one) a sudden and rapid increase in the intensity with which I experienced lyric poetry. This was a fact. It was something I could not successfully convict myself of believing because I wanted to believe it. It was something that kept on actually happening to me—not nearly as often as I should have liked, but still often enough—and in the intellectual vacuum created by my scepticism on all subjects pertaining to the origin and spiritual nature of man it was a conspicuous object to which I was not sorry to turn my attention. I began instinctively to investigate it and the method I adopted, so far from drying up the sources of delight, seemed rather to enhance it. I attribute this to the fact that I kept my attention on the experience itself and was not attracted by theoretical explanations which led away from it.

What impressed me particularly was the power with which not so much whole poems as particular combinations of words worked on my mind. It seemed there was some magic in it; and a magic which not only gave me pleasure, but also reacted on and expanded the meanings of the individual words concerned. From the purely literary point of view this was dangerous and might have led (perhaps it did) to preciosity or pedantry. If it did not, it was partly because I had enough general love of literature to balance it and partly because I was not content to stop short at the magical experience but felt a strong impulse to penetrate into it and to reach what, if anything, lay behind it. This kept me from merely wallowing.

The second fact which made a tremendous impression on me was the way in which any intense experience of poetry

reacted on my apprehension of the outer world. The face of nature, the objects of art, the events of history and human intercourse betrayed significances hitherto unknown as the result of precisely these poetic or imaginative combinations of words to which I have referred. I found I knew things about them which I had not known before.

Thus, without any particular exertion or theorising on my part I had had two things strongly impressed on me, firstly that the poetic or imaginative use of words enhances their meanings and secondly that those enhanced meanings may reveal hitherto unapprehended parts of reality. All this seemed to promise a way out of the vacuum and I began to pursue my investigations more systematically. In the first place the second of the two propositions just mentioned might be (and I was thoroughly conditioned to believe that it was) an illusion. What I have just now called a revelation might be merely an emotion of my own. I was lucky enough in those days to be master of my own time. So, like Mr. Brooke in *Middlemarch*, I "went into all that a good deal."

Naturally it was the Romantic poets who supplied in the richest measure the kind of imaginative treatment of language and life in which I had become interested. But Romanticism had a philosophy as well as a literature and this philosophy was the natural starting point of my enquiries. I pondered much on Wordsworth's *Prefaces* and on Coleridge and his sources. But I did not specialise unduly. I went on to read a good deal of general philosophy and among other things was led by my enthusiasm on the trail to renew a rather sketchy acquaintance with Greek and to peruse all the later Platonic Dialogues, besides as much of Aristotle as I supposed relevant (which included the whole of the undeservedly neglected *De Anima*).

Actually it was the point at which philosophy borders on psychology which interested me most and I pursued my studies to some extent into the latter realm, limiting them however to psychology proper, that is to the study of the *psyche* starting

from psychic data. To begin, as so much contemporary psychology did, from physiological facts or theories appeared to me to be preposterous. Above all it was *genetic* psychology in which I was interested.

To avoid giving a false impression, I ought to add that I cannot claim to be expert or even widely read in any of these subjects. I inspected much, dipped into a good deal, but my actual reading was intensive rather than extensive and the quantity was not large. It was all grouped round the particular line of investigation I was pursuing. I was looking out all the time for ideas which (a) would fit in with the experiences I have referred to and (b) were not contradicted either by the rest of my own experience or by scientifically ascertained facts. The incidence, when it occurred, that they ran counter to widely, or even almost universally, held scientific *theories*, was a matter of less moment. It was a drawback, but a less serious one and it weighed with me less and less as time went on. The habit of distinguishing sharply between facts and theories is, I think, a good one to acquire in a scientific age.

I came out of all this with a fairly well-considered theory of poetry, or rather of poetic *diction*, as a means of cognition, which I embodied in a book that met with fairly wide approval and is, I have reason to believe, still consulted by those concerned with the subject. At the same time the attention which I had been giving to the semantic aspect of language (that is, the study of meaning and changes of meaning) had thrown a flood of light for me on the history and evolution of human consciousness, which I distinguished sharply from the history of *thought*.

I now began to look about me and consider what to do next, and the first thing I realised (for up to now I had been too absorbed and busy to do so) was that nobody else appeared any longer to take Romanticism very seriously. It seemed to have been attacked on all sides and defended (though I remember a valiant attempt of Mr. Middleton Murry's in his *Adelphi*) with very little spirit. The Humanists had been levelling its towers

and pinnacles, while the psycho-analysts were busy tunnelling beneath its walls. The comrade whom it grieved me most to lose was busy moving back all his formidable artillery into the ancient citadel of naïve realism and patriarchal theology—where, by the way, his arrival has since been made known to the enemy by a series of revealing explosions near the latter's Base. A fourth, and by far the largest, group had simply disappeared over the horizon altogether, marching to the deafening tune that no proposition concerning the human spirit even merited the privilege of refutation unless it was derived wholly and solely from contempt of the rottenness of twentieth century society. Altogether things were in a bad way.

I understood, or thought I understood, the reactions of this last group pretty well, though I could not make common cause with them. As to the outward symptoms of the rottenness, it seemed to me more important to look round for a remedy and inculcate its adoption than to go on depicting them in sardonic verses which, whatever their merits might be, were a tremendous bother to read because they would neither parse nor scan. As to the underlying spiritual causes, I believed and still believe them to be near enough to the heart of my own matter to justify me in proceeding with it.

Now at a fairly early stage in the process which I have attempted to record I came into contact with the writings of Rudolf Steiner. I began, after some hesitation, to study his spiritual science, or anthroposophy (a name which, after twenty years' experience, I am not confident that the mother tongue will ever really manage to assimilate), seriously and steadily; and this went on side by side, and in close interaction, with the other studies I have mentioned. As time went on, three things in particular struck me most about anthroposophy. The first was that many of the statements and ideas which I found there produced an effect very similar to the combinations of words to which I have already alluded. As in the one case, so in the other, this effect was independent of belief. Something

happened : one felt wiser. This was a fact. The question as to what exactly one believed about the fact came after. The second was that, so far as concerned the particular subject in which I was immersed at the time, Steiner had obviously forgotten volumes more than I had ever dreamed of. It is difficult to lay my finger on what convinced me of this. As far as I know there is no special treatise on Semantics or Semasiology among his works. Rather it was a matter of stray remarks and casual allusions which showed that some of my most daring and (as I thought) original conclusions were *his* premises—just as, when you meet a man for the first time, without knowing his background, it is not some long harangue, but the casual way in which he uses a particular word in a particular context, that reveals quite suddenly the extent of his knowledge of a subject with which you are yourself well-acquainted.

So much for my own particular subject ; and when it came to psychology (the adjoining region on which, as I have said, I had also been led to trespass), it was quickly apparent to me that Steiner's teaching of the three ' souls ' (Sentient Soul, Intellectual Soul and Consciousness Soul), at once delicate and profound, accurate and inexhaustible, resembled anything else I had read on the subject about as much as I suppose a modern text-book on electricity and magnetism resembles an adventurous 18th Century essay on the vagaries of lightning and the curious results which may be observed when amber is rubbed on silk.

The third was, that anthroposophy included and transcended not only my own poor stammering theory of poetry as knowledge, but the whole Romantic philosophy. It was nothing less than Romanticism grown up.

Let me expand this last a little. The adjective *romantic*, as Mr. Pearsall Smith pointed out long ago, was originally applied in a pejorative sense to persons like Don Quixote whose heads were supposed to be filled with the old Romances, of which they had absorbed too many. By a further development it was employed to characterise aspects of Nature of a kind among

which these 'Romances' were usually set. To the eyes of those who had stocked their minds with the events of romance and incidentally with the scenes among which they were usually set—uncouth mountains and blasted heaths—such scenes came to possess a significance to which other eyes remained opaque. Thus, the word denoted on the one hand the pure workings of fancy and on the other (by way of ridicule) the effect of these on man's observation of Nature. But the ridicule died away after the *Lyrical Ballads* had shown what could be done by choosing to be romantic in earnest. "It was agreed," wrote Coleridge afterwards :—

that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic ; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us . . .

Nor did either of them ever lose sight, as their successors have sometimes done, of the duplex nature of the process by which, for the romantic, the spiritual significance of nature is revealed—first the purely subjective experience artificially induced and then the reaction of this upon nature. Coleridge's oft-quoted

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

is matched by many passages in the *Prelude* which stress the importance of the productions of fancy for the opening of man's eyes to the true spirit of nature.

This is not the place to expound Steiner's theory of knowledge or to dilate on the "supersensible" cognition to which it naturally leads, and to which he has pointed the way in numerous

'books. All I wish to stress is that the "intuition" in which it culminates is to be reached by way of two preliminary stages, the first of which he terms "imagination" and the second "inspiration." In imaginative cognition, Steiner taught, one acquires a sort of picture-consciousness, a vigilant dreaming, in which the spiritual facts of life and creation come before the soul in the form of pictures. This is however purely subjective and it is of its essence that it should be recognised as such. It is only at the second stage, that of inspiration, that the *perceptive* faculty itself is enhanced in a way that has objective value for cognition.

From Steiner too I learned for the first time that a serious attempt to obtain exact results with the help of a perceptive faculty developed through controlled imagination had been made more than a hundred years ago, and by no means without success, by that uncrowned king of Romantics, Goethe. For a fuller account of this, with my other grounds for affirming that anthropology is 'Romanticism come of age,' I refer the reader to the first of the essays which follow.

Here was food indeed for thought—enough, it might have seemed, to draw anyone in my peculiar position, whatever the nature of the teachings erected by Steiner on these foundations might prove to be. But what could I say when I came to grasp (as I quickly did) how this very method of knowledge had confirmed for him, as a fact of experience, the historical tradition of the Incarnation of Christ and how those teachings, with their startling width of scope, were rooted at all points in that very Event? When, thanks to him, the impossible superstition (as I had hitherto judged it) from which the disintegrating spiritual life and the tottering civilisation of Europe had drawn their original strength, became for me too an obvious fact? To cut a long story short, I gave in. I acknowledged Rudolf Steiner with reverence as *il maestro di color che sanno*—master of those who know. Not without reluctance; for had I not already a single page of notes headed *Evolution of Consciousness*—germ of

the *magnum opus* with which I myself had proposed one day to startle the world? Others in like case were sacrificing careers and cash in order that they might devote their whole lives to his movement. I at least joined it.

It was clear then that all I had to do now was to point all this out to the lettered world. I began trying to do so. But at this point things began to go wrong. A very few experiments were enough to show that even those who shared my interest in literature, even those who were prepared to lend at least a sympathetic ear to my own observations on the subjects of poetry and semantics, were not in the least interested in the news about Rudolf Steiner which I was so anxious to bring them. They simply would not listen. I gave up the experiments and made one last attempt to convey my message in a different form and on a more ambitious scale, linking it up closely and, as I thought, sympathetically with psycho-analysis and the rottenness and theology and much else. Again I failed entirely, and it began to be borne in on me that I had not the abilities which such a task required at such a time. Shortly after this I lost the inestimable privilege of leisure and as a result was able, as far as the lettered world was concerned, to advance cautiously from inaudibility to silence.

By way of contrast with this dismal tale, I found that those who shared my devotion to Steiner *were* most anxious to hear all the news I could bring, both from my adventures in the realm of English language and literature and from my other studies, to them and through them to a wider circle which they were then, as now, seeking to approach. *Their* acknowledgements were almost embarrassing and my only regret is that I have not repaid better and more copiously the liberal hospitality which they extended to the products of my pen. What I did do with the material I had collected is—most of it—contained in the following pages, some of the articles having been written during the period which I have just been describing and others a year or two after its close. Whatever their value may be, it is certain that without

the encouragement I have mentioned they would never have been written. To my many friends in the Anthroposophical Movement therefore I humbly and gratefully dedicate this book.

I feel that one more word is called for on the subject of certain allusions to Germany and the German spirit which will be found in it. These essays were as it happens all written before 1933. I have never underrated the evil significance of the Nazi movement and the hold which it has taken of the German people as a whole. At a time when a good many of those who are very sure they do not *now* underrate it were finding excuses for Hitler, and some of my own friends were advancing the view that practically any concession or betrayal was preferable to war, I held and expressed the opposite opinion with vehemence. As far as I am able to understand it, the political Reich is and always has been not so much a nation as a septic disease of Europe—all the more so because it is *not* perfectly distinguishable from the spiritual Germany to which occasional reference is made in these essays, but is a recognisable distortion thereof. *Corruptio optimi pessima*. Those who best understand what the German spirit stands for in the whole concert of the human spirit will not be the least vigilant against the portent of its aberration. There is warrant for this. The existence of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914 was admittedly due to the foresight and exertion of the late Lord Haldane, wearer of ancient hats, who used to refer to Germany as his spiritual home. ("Here he comes," said the facetious Edward VII once at a garden party, "in the hat which he inherited from Goethe!") When the passion and misery of this war are beginning to recede, and the irrepressible leader-writer has forgotten what he was thinking and saying in 1944 as painlessly as he has now forgotten what he was thinking and saying in 1937 and as generously as he forgot between 1930 and 1937 what he had been thinking and saying in 1919, let us hope—if the disease does begin to spread again—that there will still be someone about in an old hat inherited from Goethe.

Meanwhile there are few attitudes I dislike and distrust more than the complacent humility which declares that, because "we" are all tarred with the same brush, any measures taken against Germany in the name of justice must needs be sheer hypocrisy. Perhaps some day this stupid and vicious "hypocrisy-lie" will be properly nailed. It was the main plank of the excusers and appeasers of 1934—1938 and has, in my opinion, played a large part in landing Europe where it is to-day. I, for one, shall not be in the forefront of those who after this War will cry out against the severity of any measures taken against that unhappy country, provided only that, whether preventive or retributive, they are honestly aimed at protecting Europe against a recurrence of the appalling events of the last ten years. Moreover I believe it to be a practical necessity that such measures should take absolute precedence of any grandiose scheme for "re-education" or reconciliation. But all this in my view in no way destroys the positive significance of the spiritual Germany in its pure act, which is all I was concerned with—and which I think the ruined janizaries of National Socialism can hardly obliterate, though they might succeed in driving it elsewhere. On the contrary I firmly believe that the question whether our own Commonwealth is to stand for something more in the history of human consciousness or is to become a hollow political shell and go the way of Nineveh and Tyre, will depend very largely on the candour with which the spirit of this Island learns to open its arms to that spirit and its gifts. There is nothing in this book on that or any other subject which I wish unsaid or would not say again to-day.

OWEN BARFIELD.

May, 1944.

FROM EAST TO WEST*

Readers of Carlyle's *French Revolution* will remember the opening chapters, in which he describes ironically the glories of what he calls 'Victorious Analysis.' In this phrase, characteristically repeated many times, he endeavours to sum up a state of mind which descended on intellectual Europe in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and which he presents as one of the deeper causes of the Revolution itself. Universal and exclusive homage to common sense and to the inductive method of reasoning, this was at the root of the matter. And it was in the form of a reaction against this mood and this sense of values that the movement which I am now to consider first appeared.

With this preface I shall be less uneasy in naming it the Romantic Movement, or Romantic Revival. I begin by considering it in its purely literary aspect—but only after making it clear that it was not a purely literary movement. As a literary movement, then, the Romantic Revival seems to me to have fallen into two fairly distinct halves. On the one hand the pursuit of what I will call pure Romance and the attaching to this of high human value. Strangeness and distance, these are the essence of this pure Romance. It is the cult of 'far away and long ago.' It is the mood of

'Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perchance the plaintive numbers flow
For old unhappy far-off things
And battles long ago.'

'Over the hills and far away,' said Mr. Chesterton, an excellent modern exponent of pure romance, is the finest line in English poetry. The other half of the movement is metaphysical. It

* From a paper read before the Lotus Club, Oxford University, 1929.

comes forward with a new theory of poetry, which it sees for the first time more as a religion than as a pastime. It makes much use of such words as *genius*, *imagination*, *creative*, filling them with a meaning which Dr. Johnson could never even have understood—much less approved.

It is with this half of the movement, and its subsequent history, that I am principally concerned. And it is this half of it which also leads us out of literature and into other departments of life. I mentioned the new use of the word *creative*. It is significant that the application of this epithet to human beings—poets and artists—aroused in the first place some hostility on religious grounds. It was regarded in some quarters as blasphemy. And it was, of course, just this sort of piety, or pietism, which convinced Shelley of the ‘necessity of atheism’—by which he really meant a new religion that would allow men to be free.

I doubt whether anyone, who considers it, will deny that the Romantic Movement is closely connected with an enhanced sense of *human freedom*. We have only to take such representative figures as Shelley, Beethoven, Byron, Wordsworth, and think of all that the French Revolution and the hopes it aroused meant to their inner life. I particularly say their *inner* life. If they dreamed of the *rights of man* it was because they had already felt the *powers of man*—in themselves.

To this dim inward sense of powers, and, therefore, of rights, hitherto unsuspected, I would draw your attention. Looking at the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries one seems to feel it growing in the darkness, this mysterious impulse, behind the outer shell of customary thought, customary routine, customary religion, until at the time of the Romantic Revival it cracks that shell and bursts through. It cracks the shell in many places. And I would like to remind you once more of the two especially large cracks which we have already noticed. First—hovering as it were between the two parts of the literary movement—(the pure Romantic part and

the Metaphysical)—a new conception is born, which we may sum up in the word *Beauty*. Beauty for its own sake is a new object of human devotion. In the eighteenth century we hear of elegance, and adornment and so forth, in speaking of works of art, but not much of *beauty*. Among the English Romantics I should put John Keats as in a sense epitomising the conception of literature as beauty.

Secondly there is, as we have seen, the conception of human freedom and connected with it, I suppose, a new, or at least renewed attitude to the problem of goodness. And Shelley here ~~takes the place of Keats as the principal exponent.~~

And now there enters in a tragic element, a tragic element of which I shall have much to say. For the point is that a third large crack ought also to have appeared in the rind of 'Victorious Analysis.' This did not take place, and here, too, there is a person who for me at least has come to symbolize the intercepting finger of tragedy. He is, however, a much less distinguished person than Keats or Shelley, indeed a nameless person.

Readers of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* will remember how he begins in the thirteenth chapter to give a philosophical account of the Nature of Imagination. After about two pages, however, the chapter breaks off, and for the remainder is substituted a note to the effect that "thus far had the work been transcribed for the press when I received the following letter from a friend whose poetical judgment I have had ample reason to estimate and revere. . . ." Coleridge subsequently describes this letter, which prevented or excused him from finishing the chapter, as 'very judicious.' I do not know who the writer was and I do not know if anyone else knows,* but it is this mysterious, 'very judicious,' friend of Coleridge's who symbolizes for me the tragic destiny of the Romantic Movement in this country. For it is perfectly plain to me that beside the two large cracks, or rather beside the new-fledged ideas which issued from them,

* It is sometimes said that the friend was Coleridge himself, and this seems to me to be the most likely explanation.

there should have been a third. To make Romanticism into a self-sufficient organic being, able to stand on its own legs and face the rest of the world, there ought to have been added to the new concept, beauty, to the renewed conception of freedom, a new idea also of the nature of truth.

We find in abundance an instinctive *conviction*, and courageous *assertions*, that Poetry, that Imagination, as it is now understood, bears some special relation to Truth. We need only go to Shelley's *Defence of Poetry* or to Keat's *Letters* for these. But there they stop short. "Poetry," said Shelley in the former work, "is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge. It is the impassioned expression on the face of science." "I am certain of nothing," wrote Keats, "but the holiness of the heart's affections and the truth of imagination." The point is that he did not in actual fact (whatever he might have done if he had lived) concern himself with the question: '*In what way is Imagination true?*' The point is that no satisfactory *critique* of Romance ever arose. It was never grounded satisfactorily in reality. And as a result the modern reader or critic is apt to feel, as he approaches even some of its noblest and completest productions, 'Yes, it is all very fine, very exciting, very noble—but as a philosophy of life, it really will not do!'

In the legend of Parsifal tragic consequences follow the failure of the hero to ask the crucial question at the crucial moment. The question he should have asked when he saw the Holy Grail was 'Of what is it served?' The same question should have been asked by the Romantic Movement, when it saw the visionary Grail of the human imagination. But it was not asked—not at any rate in this country—except by Coleridge who, as we saw, was at the mercy of his judicious friend. And in the state of Romanticism, as it exists to-day, we see the tragic consequences that followed. The charm faded. The mirror cracked from side to side. Just as Coleridge, who had indeed had a vision of imagination as the vessel by which divinity passes

down into humanity—just as he fell back from *this* kind of imagination into the fantastic dreams of the opium-slave ; so the metaphysic of Romanticism has gradually fallen sick, lost faith in itself. Imagination is still accepted, but it is accepted for the most part as a kind of conscious make-believe or personal masquerade. Modern æsthetic theory—as far as I am acquainted with it—has rejected Coleridge in favour of Croce. The few writers who are interested at all in the philosophy of poetry to-day drink of the Crocean spring either at the fountain-head or indirectly and in a slightly filtered form through some such native feed-pipe as Mr. I. A. Richards.

We have seen then that, as a result of what is commonly called the Romantic Movement, a new conception arose of the faculty of imagination. This was conceived not as mere idle fancy, but as being actually in some way a vehicle of truth or knowledge. But it was not asked *how*. And consequently Romanticism, without roots, is dying.

What then is the really characteristic thing about this ‘creative imagination’ for which the Romantics claimed so much ? How does it differ from any other human faculty and experience ? I think the true *differentia* of imagination is that the subject should be somehow merged or resolved into the object. Talent may copy Nature, but genius claims to ‘create’ after the fashion of Nature herself. Nature ‘takes the pen from its hand and writes’ : and there are many phrases of the same nature. Thus, Coleridge called imagination *organic*. It was ‘the repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.’ I think it was Lamb who spoke of the soul being ‘resolved into the element which it contemplates,’ and the same feeling confronts us in the *Adonais* :

“He is a portion of that loveliness
Which once he made more lovely.”

In a word, imagination involves a certain disappearance of the sense of ‘I’ and ‘Not I.’ It stands before the object and feels ‘I am that.’

Now in the East this resolution of the subjective-objective duality, the 'I am that' or *Tat tvam Asi*, is a very ancient maxim indeed. The West may resolve the duality in *theory*, and there are passages in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* which suggest that he had done so. The Eastern Sages, however, exhorted their disciples to make 'I am that' a personal experience. With them it was not the abstract conception of a Transcendental Unity of Apperception but a single and highly concrete proposition ('I am that.'). And in the Greek expression γνῶθι σεαυτόν or 'Know thyself!' we really find the same principle embodied. This was no exhortation to introspection, but rather, in modern jargon, an exhortation to make the unconscious conscious. If 'I' in my true self—that is, if you choose, in my unconscious self—am *that* (the apparently objective), then it is only by knowing *that* and by knowing it *imaginatively* that I can 'know myself.'

We begin in this way to see the Romantic conception of imagination, not as something entirely new, but rather as the emergence in the West, and of course in an altered form, of an experience which the East had cultivated for ages. The passage from East to West has always been a curiously fertilising process. "Time and again," said the late Sir Walter Raleigh, "when East meets West, the spirit of Romance has been born."

And this leads us directly to another episode, a subsidiary one—a kind of underplot—in the tragedy of which I am speaking. There is a difference between passing from East to West or from West to East and *jumping* from one to the other. When towards the close of the last century Madame Blavatsky arrived in London and drew around her a circle of romantics and would-be romantics, including, for example, William Butler Yeats, it is a psychological *jump* from West to East with which we are concerned. And the modern Theosophical Society which arose from her inspiration, is based, essentially, not on a naturally developing theory of imagination, a theory with its roots deep in Western soil, but on revelations given by mysterious beings

whom Blavatsky styled her 'Masters.' I am not seeking to ridicule her claim ; I am merely stating that this was, as far as I know, the point from which she started.

And now, like Aristotle, I have to draw your attention to the fact that between two extremes is to be found the mean. That, just as geographically Central Europe stands between the Eastern and the Western elements of civilisation, such too is her cultural position. It seems to be her true function to hold the balance, so to say, between Eastern and Western thought, to prevent, if possible, just such a flighty *jumping* as I have indicated, and turn it into a sober *passing*.

What is the position of Germany with respect to the Romantic Movement? It is, I think, a typical difference between the two nations that, whereas the English will do a thing half instinctively, and only really wake up to what they have done when it is all over, the Germans are much more conscious of their activity. They strive to be fully conscious of and to theorize about a thing actually while they are doing it. It was so with the Industrial Revolution. It was so with the Romantic Movement. Not only did the new ideas cause a great deal more general excitement on the Continent, but the Germans came much nearer to evolving what I have called a *critique* of Romance than anyone in this country.

Schiller, for example, is not content with extolling freedom and seeking beauty ; he must have a full-dress epistolary discussion on freedom with Kant, opposing the latter's notion of a categorical imperative. Or again he seeks to show in his excellent *Letters on the Æsthetic Education of the Human Race* how moral freedom and the sense of beauty are closely and necessarily connected, how the passage from a compulsory morality to a free morality must lie through the appreciation of the beautiful.

There is moreover the group of Romantic philosophers, Fichte, Schlegel, Schelling, about whom I am not competent to speak. But above all there is Goethe. Goethe was a kind of prophet

of Romanticism. From Goethe's hand, besides all the productions of his powerful imagination, we have abundance of critical work showing a harmonious and complete understanding of what they meant. He not only sought for beauty, freedom and truth ; he knew that he was seeking them—knew, moreover, the bonds of necessity which unite them. And he could say what he knew. It is typical of Goethe's completeness that he worked as a scientist no less than as a poet. Much is written in England of a more or less sentimental nature, as the case may be, of the discrepancy between poetry and science. It really makes one ashamed how few people here are aware that Goethe can so much as put in a *prima facie* claim to have resolved that discrepancy. Whereas in fact the claim can be substantiated.

In the first place a few words are necessary as to the state of natural science as Goethe found it. It was, as we have seen, completely under the thumb of 'Victorious Analysis.' Many philosophers have divined two opposing principles of human cognition—that faculty which analyses and distinguishes ideas and sense-phenomena one from another, and that again which unites them, which re-discovers the unity in their multiplicity. *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, or, as Locke called them, Judgment and Wit. In Goethe's time natural science had almost lost the use of the second faculty. Knowledge was a matter of making finer and yet finer sensible distinctions. In botany, for instance, it was the method of Linnaeus which held the field. Some slight variation from type being observed for the first time, the question was not asked, how did this varied form come into being out of the type ? But the new variation was eagerly marked down and named as a new 'species.' Species multiplied in this way until they were as the sands of the sea.

Into this state of intellectual disintegration Goethe brought his own scientific method, which is really none other than the method of ~~imagination~~. You may remember that in that thirteenth chapter of the *Biographia Literaria*, to which I have

already referred, Coleridge invented a new word 'esemplastic.' The derivation is from the three Greek words—*εἰς ἓν πλάττειν*—'to mould into one.' Now Goethe with his method of the 'exact percipient fancy,' as it is often translated, really transferred the esemplastic imagination from literature and art to science. His method differs from the ordinary method of induction in that the observer, when he reaches a certain point (the 'prime phenomenon'), stops there and endeavours rather to sink himself in contemplation *in* that phenomenon than to form further thoughts *about* it. It implies a certain—if one may use the word—chastity of thought, a willingness not to go beyond a certain point. The blue of the sky, said Goethe, is the theory. To go further and weave a web of abstract ideas remote from anything we can perceive with our senses in order to 'explain' this blue—that is to darken counsel. But more of this later. Meanwhile we must note that it was by this method that Goethe discovered that morphological principle which is now laid down on almost the first page of many botanical textbooks—the principle that all the parts of a plant can be regarded as metamorphoses of the leaf. It was by this method that he discovered—not only that there was, but that there *must* be (please note)—a bone in the human skeleton hitherto unknown to science—the *Os Intermaxillare*.

Thus in Central Europe we see Romanticism actually rising to the great question "*In what way is imagination true?*" and demonstrating that it had begun to find an answer. We see poetry approaching science with outstretched arms. Yet still they do not embrace. Still the tragedy remained unresolved. The scientific world took the most obvious and elementary of Goethe's discoveries into itself. Those which demanded a little effort, which demanded some understanding of his *method* if they were to be comprehended, it left alone. This was the case with the Goethean theory of colour, of which comparatively few people have even heard. Yet the prevailing Newtonian theory is in reality not a theory of colour at all, but only of the con-

ditions under which colour is possible. Similarly the Darwinians have, with their historical investigations, made 'species' look silly and unreal enough—but they have not presented science with any way of getting at the unity which underlies these innumerable variations—other than the trivial subterfuge of imagining a very remote time when they did not yet exist. Once upon a time. . . .

* * * * *

We come, somewhat late in the day, to the real hero of my tragedy. In the sixties of the last century there was born in Central Europe (to be precise somewhere near the borders of Austria and Hungary) a man called ~~Rudolf~~ Steiner. He tells us in his autobiography how, from ~~earliest~~ childhood, he felt a longing to overcome the apparent lack of connection between inner and outer experience, the subjective and the objective worlds. At the age of twelve he was reading Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* secretly, during school lessons, having bound it up in the covers of a text book for that purpose. At some time during his twenties Steiner was called to Weimar to co-operate in producing the *National-Literatur* edition of Goethe's complete works. His task was to edit Goethe's voluminous scientific writings, and he particularly emphasises the way in which this event in his life, occurring at this time, coloured and helped to determine the whole of his intellectual life.

More and more convinced, as the work proceeded, of the importance of Goethe's outlook and method, and yet convinced at the same time of the incapacity of his contemporaries to understand it owing to their deeply ingrained habits of thought (owing, in fact, to 'Victorious Analysis'), he felt impelled to turn aside from his editorial work and produce—what is, I believe, his first published book: the short *Principles of a Theory of Knowledge implicit in Goethe's Outlook*. (*Grundlinien einer Erkenntnistheorie der Goetheschen Weltanschauung*.)

It is particularly important to notice that this was Steiner's first work, and to understand that his own epistemological method

and his own outlook were developed organically and uninter-
ruptedly out of Goethe's.

I should have wished to say very much of this little book, but space compels me to be content with the following brief remarks. In it Steiner exemplifies and defines more closely these *Urphänomene*—the 'prime phenomena,' such as the blue of the sky—behind which it is really meaningless to try and penetrate. These are the true 'laws of nature.' They are apodeictic. And to seek either for objective 'causes' or for subjective formal principles of apprehension which compel us to 'accept' these laws is to depart from nature and knowledge into the realm of fancy. Corresponding to these prime phenomena, or laws of nature, which are the first principles of the inorganic world, we have in the organic world the Type. Having found the type in his imaginative experience, it is the business of the natural scientist to pause, to contemplate, to sink himself *into* it in such a way that he can redevelop the individual from it by his own activity. The point is that these *Urphänomene* are *neither objective nor subjective*. They come into existence as types, or as laws, only as they are intuited by human beings. And until they have so come into being, the object itself is incomplete. Knowledge in fact, so far from being a mental copy of events and processes outside the human being, inserts the human being right *into* these processes, of whose development it is itself the last stage.

Readers of Aristotle's *De Anima* will realise the parallel here between the Goethe-Steiner system and Aristotle's conception of the reality (*εἶδος*) which only exists potentially (*δυναμει*) until it is known, and when it is known has its full existence actually (*ἐνεργεία*).

Now in a science proceeding on this method the function of the thing we call *experiment* would also be different from what it is in a science proceeding on purely inductive lines. Here the purpose of experiment is not simply to provide data, from which explanatory theories can then be evolved, but rather

to clear away the accidents and leave the prime phenomenon visible in its naked purity. It might be compared to the drawing of figures by a geometrician. The figures are not there for him to learn from, but only to make his own thoughts clear to himself. "Experiment," says Steiner, "is the mediator between subject and object."

The remainder of Steiner's life, after he had finished the appointed work on Goethe, is the history of the further development of this method of knowledge, derived or developed from Goethe, and the application of its fruits in his own case to many different departments of life. I want to make the point once more that Steiner's method of knowledge is, in its essence, systematic imagination. The truth of imagination is apodeictic, not empirical, and he makes accordingly no less a claim for the results of his spiritual investigation. For imagination is not a *reasoning about*, it is a *Schauung*, a *seeing*, and indeed a *being*, the object. Systematic imagination is, in fact, clairvoyance.

I have spent some time in insisting that ideas of this kind are not easily grasped by contemporary Western thought, which is still to a large extent under the thumb of 'Victorious Analysis.' We have seen, however, that the same ideas are in some sense native to the East. Out of these two facts arises the sequel to the minor tragic episode of which I spoke a little way back.

Steiner had much to say; he was obliged to speak to those who would listen. And when he was asked by the Theosophical Society to co-operate with them and to act as the General Secretary of the German Section, he did not refuse. I venture to call this event tragic, because I do not suppose on the one hand that he could wisely have refused, while on the other there is no doubt that this temporary connection with the Theosophical Society has caused considerable unnecessary prejudice against himself and his work—especially in this country—and will stand in the way of his speedy recognition. It is important to note that, in agreeing to work with the Theosophical Society, Steiner reserved from the first the right to complete freedom in his choice

of expression and activity. On the same day that the inaugural meeting of the German Section of the Theosophical Society was held, with himself as General Secretary, he delivered a public lecture under the title of *Anthroposophy*.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce you to this very thing, anthroposophy. That is the name which Steiner gave to the movement which he himself founded, to his method of knowledge, and to the accumulating fruits of that method. He revived the ancient term anthroposophy, because the essence of it is that it is developed out of man himself by his own powers and of his own free choice. Anthroposophy is the rights of man carried into the sphere of knowledge. It leads in every department of life to a fuller and richer conception of the human being, of the 'rein menschlich' as the Germans are so fond of saying. But since it is founded on principles of knowledge, of which the essence is that they resolve the duality between subjective and objective, it leads at the same time and in the same degree to a fuller and richer conception of the world. We have already seen how the imagination knows instinctively what the Greek sages once taught—that all knowledge is self-knowledge—a proposition which may be said to conceal the root of all human wisdom. It is clearly a concept to be gradually approached, to be approached over and over again from totally different sides—to be meditated on rather than glibly discussed. I should like nevertheless to try and characterize it a little further from one special point of view—that of the difference between the typical Eastern and the typical Western attitude of mind.

We have approached these in the first place by showing that imagination, as the Romantics dimly divined it, as Goethe understood it, and as Steiner has shown us how to develop it, is not content with merely *looking-on at* the world. It seeks to sink itself entirely in the thing perceived—"to resolve itself (you remember Lamb's phrase) into the element which it contemplates." It tries, we said, "to overcome the duality between subjective and objective." But now, if we take the bare expression,

'I am that,' we shall probably note a certain difference between the tone in which it must have been uttered long ago by the Eastern Yogi and the tone in which it is uttered to-day by the Western devotee of imagination. There would be a difference of emphasis. For the Yogi, desirous of advancing further along the path of wisdom, the important thing is, or was, to feel, 'I am that'—there is indeed such an entity as *I* myself and I can find it by looking at the outer world. That is his discovery. For the Westerner, on the other hand, as he develops his imagination, the novel experience is to feel 'I am *that*.' There was never any doubt about there being an entity called '*I*,' he feels, but the great discovery, the advance in wisdom, is the realisation that this '*I*' is not shut up inside this physical body as if in a kind of box, as he had naturally supposed. No, it is out there in the flower and the stone. '*I*' am not merely the seer but the seen. I am *that*.

Each of the two, the Eastern yogi and the Western poet-philosopher, can be seen trying to transcend the *normal* consciousness of his hemisphere. For the normal consciousness of East and West differs in just this way, that each has by a kind of native right what the other lacks, what the other can only acquire by its own efforts—by becoming yogi or poet, as the case may be. It lies deep in the nature of the East, said Steiner, that its peoples are not fully *self-conscious* to the same extent as the Western peoples. ~~There is there no such cult of the individual personality.~~ The idea, for instance, that this individual personality should survive death appears somewhat childish and unnatural to the deeper and better sort of Eastern mind. Eastern society bears about it still the marks of having grown uninterruptedly out of deep, unconscious, instinctive levels of human experience. Thus, we can still see standing behind it the old theocratic organisation, when the priest or the initiate directed all that should be done, not by theory and hypothesis and debate but by direct intuitions drawn from a spiritual world. Whatever Western ideas may for the time being take hold of his fancy and

capture his brain, the Eastern man is still in the depths of his being fundamentally *religious*. So said Rudolf Steiner.

In the West, on the other hand, the typical kind of consciousness which everyone acquires without any effort—can hardly help acquiring nowadays out of the whole nature of his environment and education—is precisely the converse of this. Each man is a *personality*, alert, wide-awake, thinking in hard clear concepts and disposed to bring everything to the test of his intelligence and his senses. “I’m from Missouri,” as the Americanism has it—“You’ve got to *show me* !”

On one occasion Steiner summed up this contrast in the two words, *Maya* and *Ideology*. To the Buddhist (and Buddhism, he affirms, is still deep in the blood of the East, however much it may have been expelled from the brain) the outside sense-perceptible world is ‘*Maya*’—*unreality*. He hardly believes in it. What is real is that inner world of consciousness, into which his sages could sink themselves in meditation. Spirit is reality, matter non-existent.

In the West the opposite is the case. The doctrines of Marx spread wider and wider on the broad back of Lenin and there are millions of men who take it for granted to-day that matter is the only reality and spirit is—an illusion, a nothing. Everything included under the term Religion, Art, Culture and the like, is no more than an ‘*ideology*’—a pale flickering reflection of purely physical and economic processes.

Yet the true human consciousness—the consciousness for which man is, so to say, fitted and for which he longs, transcends these opposite distinctions of East and West. And for this reason we find in the East a kind of yearning towards the West and again in the West a longing and reaching out to the East. Thus educated Eastern people often have, or had until recently, a way of perceiving even more clearly than the Westerner himself the splendour of all that is most typically Western—its debating societies and parliamentary systems and psychology and elaborately organised mechanical civilisation. They do

not feel as acutely as the cultivated Westerner does the absence of the spirit from it all. For, in a certain sense, they *have* the spirit as a gift.

On the other hand the Westerner who is most keenly conscious of Westernism tends to reach out his hands towards the profound, silent, unconscious (or un-self-conscious) spiritual life which he at any rate thinks he perceives in the East. We have mentioned the Theosophical Movement, but in my opinion such phenomena as the popularity of Sigmund Freud, and in this country, of Mr. D. H. Lawrence are symptoms of the same unsatisfied desire—a desire for depths, dark, unconscious quiet depths—with less talk of this fussy little intellect, and this fiddling little ‘personality’ that we hear so much about.

This mutual need makes it very alarming to observe the rapidly increasing cloud of misunderstanding between East and West. It is not merely that misunderstanding is unnecessary ; we must go further and say that, for both, a true understanding is exactly what is necessary. Neither can know itself without knowing the other. And yet there is in fact nothing but misunderstanding ! The kind of misunderstanding that occurs is perhaps best typified in Gandhi's attitude to Christianity—Christianity which, according to many Westerners themselves, has been justly discredited in the eyes of the East by the European War. Here one sees a personality which is clearly equipped to understand *one* aspect of Christianity so much better than anybody in the West that the West needs all he can tell it. It is that aspect which does not differ essentially from Buddhism, that call to a *passive*, self-surrendering love, which the East has always known and which it has elevated to a method of knowledge. Thus, Gandhi, with his policy of passive resistance, and seeing only this side of Christianity, is found affirming, not without a note of patronage in his voice, that Christianity does not differ in any essential from Buddhism—except that its followers do not take it so seriously.

What Gandhi does not understand at all is that element which I can only call the other pole of Christianity—that aspect of it which the West above all has developed, though often enough out of all connection with the name of Christ. I mean the fact that, through the incarnation of Christ in a human body, there was born into the world, not for the West or for one section of humanity only, but for all men, what one can only call a legitimate *self-consciousness*. Steiner has described on many occasions and from many different points of view how in the Christ the human Ego, the true Self, of Man descended from the purely spiritual heights where it had hitherto dwelt, to the earth. Had Christ not come to earth, individual human beings would never have been able to utter the word ‘I’ at all. Steiner incurred here a good deal of opposition from theorists who insisted that all religions must be of equal value, and so forth, but his reply was always the same, that it was not his business to estimate the relative values of religions but merely to state the facts of human spiritual evolution as he knew them from direct intuition.

Now it is because a full consciousness of self depends precisely on a sense of the subjective-objective distinction—the feeling “I am here and the table is out there in space”—it is for just this reason that the West has had to develop its strong sense of that distinction, with the inevitable accompanying sense of exclusion from the unity of the spirit. Earlier I spoke of the ‘overcoming’ of the duality between subjective and objective as the goal which the Western romantic imagination set itself. *The East has never wholly fallen into the duality*; and that is why *the West longs for all that it has to give*.

If civilisation is not to come crashing about our ears, said Steiner over and over again in the most earnest words, there must be men not merely in the East nor merely in the West—but all over the world—willing to make the individual effort that is necessary in order to retain both—the instinctive, pre-Christian spirit-consciousness typical of the East and along with it the clear, post-Christian *self-consciousness* typical of the

West. That the whole of humanity should eventually acquire such a consciousness is the entelechy of the earth-evolution as a whole.

In a course of lectures delivered in 1923 at Vienna Steiner pointed out that he himself, in books such as *A Road to Self-Knowledge* and *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*, had shown the way to such a balanced East-West consciousness. He began by comparing the ancient yogi, who by a *physical* process, the control of his breathing, drew his consciousness more and more into his body and thus increased his self-consciousness, with the modern devotee of Spiritual Science who, beginning with strictly *intellectual* exercises of concentration and the like, lifts his consciousness *out* of the body, where it is all too firmly embedded, and thus increases his consciousness of a spiritual world outside of his personal self. He described how the instinctive Maya-feeling of the Eastern mystic—that dim dreamy realisation that the physical world is no more than a pale after-copy or reflection of a spiritual world from which he himself came when he was incarnated into the body—how this becomes, for the man who acquires self-knowledge by modern Western methods, a fully conscious, detailed *perception* of the way in which his own physical body, and then the whole physical world with which it is bound up, is indeed just such a symbolic physical residue of the spirit. He showed how the practice of Yoga, well adapted for its own time, is yet unhealthy if conducted to-day, in that it paralyses the soul for its life of ordinary social intercourse and activity. It demands a certain retirement from one's fellows, which the needs of the time do not justify. And he showed how the modern 'exact clairvoyant,' in the pain and suffering which come to him inevitably as he increases his self-knowledge, learns to comprehend Buddha's teaching of the escape from Maya to the Nirvana that is beyond suffering, while at the same time he transmutes this passive Nirvana of the Buddhist into that state of tireless spiritual activity about an inner core of peace, which we at any rate *ought* to mean when

we use the Christian word Resurrection. *Maya* and *Ideology* ; *Nirvana* and *Resurrection* ; they are the key-words to an understanding of the true relation between East and West.

I have tried to show that romance is essentially something which lights up with the passage of Eastern wisdom towards the West. To anyone who has really come under the spell of that great Movement—to whom romance and imagination are not merely a pleasant means of whiling away an hour after dinner, but are—as they were to Coleridge and Shelley and have been to many others since—a passion, a religion, a veritable key to the promised land, I have this to say. A man has recently died whose life-work has proved that that great enthusiasm of the Romantic Movement was no delusion, though voices on every side of us to-day will have us believe that it was. On the contrary, imagination is the most precious of all our possessions—the chosen one of all our faculties to be our saviour. Only we must take it seriously. And then we can learn to receive as it were into our own consciousness the spiritual antithesis between East and West. And in this way an active and truly scientific mood of romance is born in us, a mood which does not merely sustain and please us, but makes us better able to serve our fellow-men and our age. Above all, we help to prevent, by our own 'esemplastic' power, that terrible material conflict between East and West which must surely be played out before long on the outer stage of history—unless enough men are found with the ability and the will, not merely to say sentimentally 'we are all brothers', but to explain just *how* we are brothers and exactly what it is in our history, in our nature, and in our destinies that makes us so.

THINKING AND THOUGHT

There is a difference between "thinking" and "thought." One way of grasping this difference (which is of the utmost importance) is to consider the *history* of thinking and see how it differs from a history of thought. The following is intended to be a kind of digest of notes for a possible history of thinking—not of thought, but thinking—as it has developed in the Western world from the beginning of Greek civilization down to our own day.

If we examine reflectively the manner in which we Europeans think, to-day, of the world about us, one of the first things we notice is that the concept of "Law," explicit or implicit, as the case may be, plays an absolutely fundamental part in it. We might say that our thoughts take their whole shape and colour from this concept. The whole of what we respect as "science," for example, is nothing but the investigation and revelation of "laws," whether they be laws of nature in the stricter physical sense or the "laws" which are assumed, albeit with somewhat less universal consent, to govern such regions as human behaviour, economic intercourse, etc. The familiar "law of supply and demand" will do for an example of the latter kind. Nor is the idea merely one of those abstruse hypotheses which are deliberately adopted for the convenience of an accurate scientific method. It is fixed, as a reality, quite as firmly—perhaps more firmly—in the head of the proverbial man in the street than it is in the specialized mind of the professor expounding logic or the expert pursuing scientific research.

When we have realized the ubiquity of this idea in modern European thought, we may for that reason be inclined to stop and ask ourselves more precisely what is meant by it. What do we all mean? Do we, for example, think of a law of nature as

corresponding at all to a Hebraic "Law," that is to say, as being a definite *command* of the Almighty? I believe that very few modern Europeans and Americans conceive of the laws of nature in that light. Do we think of it, then, as a kind of custom or tradition, which Nature keeps tactfully agreeing to follow, as though, when she was bringing to birth a litter of puppies, she would say to herself: Well, I suppose I had better make them as like the parent dogs as possible—after all, I always *have* done so? It would be absurd. No, it is only when we think of nature, life, reality, or whatever we call it, as being *obliged* to behave as it does, or—to translate the same idea from Latin into English—as being "bound" to do so, that we begin to speak of "laws of nature." A law of nature is to us a something, an *x*, which binds or connects together otherwise discrete phenomena.

Now a history of thinking differs from a history of thought in that, not content with observing *that* men began to think thus and thus at a certain time, it goes on to ask *how* they became able to think so. Enquiring on these lines, it is quite easy to discover that the concept "law" arose out of human practices and institutions and was only afterwards transferred, by analogy, to nature, or to processes in general over which the human will is conceived to have no control. But human laws have been created and conceived of very differently at different times and places; so that we have still to enquire what particular kind of human law it was, which was adapted by analogy and became such an indispensable instrument of modern thought. Now, just as the Hebraic "Law" was much more of a command than a law, as we understand it, so the Greek law, as the word νόμος suggests, was rather in the nature of what we understand by "custom" or "tradition." It is only in the Roman *lex*, with its etymological derivation from "binding" (*ob-lig*-ation, etc.), that the modern meaning really begins to appear in human consciousness at all. Here at last, distilled as it were from the formidably practical activity of generations of Roman soldiers and statesmen, we have the true legal conception of a relation

between human beings, not based on blood or affection or religion, but upon a purely abstract something which is "binding" on them. This could be illustrated in an interesting manner from the meanings of all sorts of Latin words and English words derived from Latin. It could also be demonstrated, from such records as the writings of Augustine and Aquinas, old pictures of the Last Judgment, etc., that, as Steiner has pointed out, the peculiarly Roman conception of, and feeling for, law crept into all kinds of thought during the Dark and Middle Ages. But at the moment all this must be passed over. The question is, when did men first begin to think, in something like the modern manner, of "laws of nature"?

As far as I am aware, the first writer to draw the analogy in England (though it was not in the English language) was the lawyer-philosopher, Francis Bacon.* Moreover, Bacon's place in the history of European thought makes it pretty certain that he was at least *among* the first to draw it at all. So that, in the history of thought, we have here a fairly definite point—round about the beginning of the seventeenth century—at which the concept "laws of nature" first begins to reveal itself as working in human minds. But now, if we wish to go on from a history of thought to a history of thinking, we shall have to ask ourselves: then, how did men think nature before they had acquired this concept? I purposely avoid saying, how did they think *of* nature, because (as I hope to show) to think *of* nature, as we do to-day, the concept of "law" must to some extent have been already absorbed by the thinker at first or second hand. History of thought is illusory just because we tend to *think back* in this way *in our own terms*, to project into the minds of our ancestors a kind of thinking which was only made possible by the subsequent events of that very history. For history of thinking we have to be much more conscientious; and, once having perceived

* For the *lex naturæ*, or *naturalis*, of the Schoolmen meant always the law of God implanted in the human reason for the guidance of human conduct.

that such a concept as "law" in its application to nature only entered into human consciousness at a certain period, we must try for all previous periods, as it were, to *unthink* that concept together with all its intellectual and psychological implications and consequences. This requires a very real effort of the imagination, besides a fairly intimate acquaintance with the customary processes of our own intellects.

Now one of the most significant passages in which Bacon makes this strikingly novel use of the word *lex* (for he was writing in Latin) runs as follows* :—

It may be that nothing really exists except individual bodies, which produce real motion according to law ; in science it is just that law, and the enquiry, discovery, and explanation of it, which are the fundamental requisite both for the knowledge and for the control of Nature. And it is that law, and its "clauses," which I mean when I use (chiefly because of its current prevalence and familiarity) the word "forms."

The writer has just been vigorously condemning the scholastic science of his day, which consisted almost entirely of efforts to discuss and expound these "forms" of which he speaks. It will thus be seen that he actually substitutes the meaning of the word "law" for the meaning then commonly attached, in philosophical circles, to the word "form" (*forma*) and only refrains from substituting the word itself because of its unfamiliarity. But subsequently—from about the time of the Restoration—this was actually done, with the ultimate results which we have just observed ; and the word "form" was dropped altogether in that connection. Thus, there is some reason to suppose that, if we wish to grasp imaginatively the way in which men thought, before they had this transferred concept of "law" both to help and to hinder them in their mental processes, it may be worth while to investigate the old meaning of the term for which, in effect, it was substituted—I mean the word "form." As soon, however, as we attempt to do this, we find ourselves plunged into the world of Greek

* *Novum Organum*, II., 2. Author's translation.

thought, for the meaning attached to the word "form" in the Middle Ages was a definite relic of Greek philosophy. And in the kind of history which I am attempting to sketch Greek thought takes its place as the *result*, or product, of Greek thinking. We must consider the latter, therefore, first.

The pervasive quality of Greek thinking, and of Greek consciousness as a whole—the characteristic which distinguishes it most from our own and most delights us—is that it was in a certain sense *alive*. As a thinker or knower, the Greek tended to be at home, as it were, in the coming-into-being, or becoming; whereas our own thought, built as it is on the secure but rigid framework of *logic*,* (which the Greeks did not succeed in evolving for us until Aristotle's day), can only deal with the "become," the finished product—except, of course, where it is willing to bring in the aid of poesy and metaphor. Ontologically—and dismissing all moral and æsthetic values—it is quite legitimate to correlate "alive" with "becoming" and "dead" with "become"; and it is in this sense, as will appear more clearly, that I characterize Greek thinking as *alive*, when compared with our own. One casts about for a way in which one could try to convey this living quality of Greek thinking to those who had not had the opportunity of discovering it for themselves; and it must be confessed that it is not altogether easy. To take, however, a very homely example: the man of to-day knows quite well, of course, whether his hair is long or short; but if he examines this knowledge more closely, he will find that it is only knowledge of a *result*. Thus, he may look in the glass, he may see the snippets lying on the kind of surplice in which barbers envelope us, he may find that his new hat is now large enough to include his ears, or he may feel cold round the back of his neck as he goes out into the street. On the other hand, he may

* This is true of the average modern European, whether or no he is really capable of thinking with logical accuracy. There is all the difference in the world between the illogical and the pre-logical. The point is that he thinks *in the logical mode*.

feel the heat or weight of long hair. But if we try to imagine that, instead of this way of knowledge, we could actually be conscious *in* the growing of our hair, could feel it as *movement* in something the same way that we still feel our breathing as movement, we should be making an approach towards the difference between Greek consciousness and Greek thinking, and our own. Consciousness and thinking are practically interchangeable here ; for thinking, in this living sense, differs from thought in that it is not merely an intellectual operation connected with the brain, but involves the whole consciousness. Thought is only the *result* of this consciousness.

For this reason, history of thinking is often better revealed by the meaning of individual words (the study of which has been called *Semantics*) than by the parallel history of literature or philosophy. For the individual word is, in a sense, the point at which thinking becomes thought. Like thought, it is the product or *result* of thinking, and literature (apart from its redemption by poetry) and our thought, too, in so far as we have to think in words, is a kind of synthesis of these products. "It is only by recording our thoughts in language," says a recent writer on Logic,*

that it becomes possible to distinguish between the process and the result of thought. Without language the act, and product of thinking would be identical and equally evanescent. But by carrying on the process in language and remembering or otherwise recording it, we obtain a result which may be examined according to the principles of Logic.

Thus, if we try to enter imaginatively into the meaning of many Greek words, comparing them with apparently similar words in our own language, we get all sorts of interesting results. In the case of long hair, for instance, we find that, besides the static, analytic method of statement, which arises from a knowledge of results only—"to *have* long hair," the Greek language in its early stages actually had a single *verb* to express this

* Carveth Read : *Logic Deductive and Inductive*.

physical condition, a verb which is *ex hypothesi* untranslatable in modern English, and to which the nearest approach would perhaps be "to become long as to the hair," "to bristle," etc.

The important thing is to realise imaginatively *the kind of underlying consciousness* which would have expressed itself in such terms. I mention these few words less as evidence than as *examples* of the Greek manner of thinking. The proposition that the Greeks did in fact think in this manner is no more capable of experimental proof than the proposition that a manuscript of *Hamlet* contains something else beside a certain weight of paper plus a certain weight of ink. Those who combine, let us say, a dram of imagination with some knowledge of Greek art and literature must take the responsibility of deciding for themselves whether or no they can venture to agree.

The Greek youth of Homer's day, as he approached manhood, did not "have a beard," he did not even "grow a beard"; he did not require a substantive at all to express what was happening—he "foamed"! And again, in order to attribute youth, the Greek language did not require, as we do, the static, logical mode of copula and predicate—"So and so—is—young"; it could say "So and so 'blossoms' or 'blooms,'" using the same word as it used for the flowers of the field. It cannot be too often insisted that this was not a poetical metaphor, but a bedrock element in the Greek language; it is *we*, when we use such expressions to-day, who are trying to get back, *via* poetic metaphor, into the kind of consciousness which the Greek had and could express quite naturally and straightforwardly.*

Nor is it merely a poetic fancy to connect in one's mind the whole flavour and freshness of Greek thinking with a

* For an interesting discussion of the true meaning of the words *ἀνθος* and *ἀνθεῖν* and its distortion by the lexicographers' insistence on 'metaphor,' see now *Greek Metaphor* by W. Bedell Stanford (Oxford, 1936), O.B. (1944).

blossoming flower—a flower that is still moist, alive, in movement, becoming ; and our own thought (again, in so far as it is not redeemed by the poetic) with the withered leaf and stalk of Autumn, the hard rind of the seed, the motionless, the dead, the “become.” We can even take the connection in its most literal sense, when we find that the *popular* names of so many English wild flowers—*anemone*, *daffodil*, *bryony*, *celandine*, *cherry*, etc.—the names by which we instinctively call them when we see them blowing in the field, are traceable to a Greek origin, while the same flowers only acquire Latin labels, when they begin to appear, as dead, dried up specimens, in the botanist’s scrap-book. In the same way one could consider all the medical terms that have come to us from Greek, or again the unsurpassed vitality and perfection of living form which breathes to us from the Elgin marbles, as revealing the manner in which Greek consciousness as a whole tended to be at home in the physically living, in the process of becoming.

It is only as a natural growth from this pre-existing soil, this instinctive *kind* of thinking, that the world of Greek *thought* proper can really be understood. Philosophy may be defined as the most *wakeful* part of a people’s consciousness. We find, accordingly, early Greek philosophy concerned precisely with this problem of “coming into being” or generation. The kind of question which the first philosophers set themselves to solve would be expressed by us something as follows : where, they would ask, is the flower’s “form,” the shape and beauty which our eyes will see clearly enough when it blossoms, now that they can see nothing but the bare earth or the dry seed ? It is not too much to say, that all the famous puzzles of Greek philosophy, the puzzles about the One and the Many, about Being and Not-Being, and whether Not-Being *is*, and so forth, begin to be intelligible in the light of this underlying “becoming” quality of Greek thinking. Now it is one of our four fundamental “Laws of Thought” that a thing cannot both be and not be, and so obvious does this appear to us that when we find

Heraclitus maintaining the opposite, we are inclined to stigmatize him as a verbal quibbler. This is because we can only think "is"; we cannot really think "becomes" except as a kind of cinematographic succession of states or "is's." Consequently Dr. Karl Unger, in an interesting article, has recently urged us to regard these so-called "laws" of thought rather as subjective limitations to be overcome, and not as laws of Nature, in which sense they are sometimes accepted. We may thus compare them if we will with St. Paul's conception of the *Torah*, whose strict observance at one time was not more necessary than its supersession at another by a new impulse of Life.

With the Greeks themselves there could be no question of having to overcome such laws of thought; for no such laws had been formulated. Even by the end of Plato's career Greek consciousness had not yet succeeded in distinguishing either of the two opposed concepts of "being" and "becoming" from a third concept of mere logical "predication," as we do. The struggle to achieve this can actually be overheard, at an acute stage, in the dialogue called the *Sophist*. And if we go a little further back, we come to a period when the Greek mind had not even succeeded in distinguishing "being" from "becoming." For up to this point Greek consciousness had actually *lived* in this experience of "becoming." And because of this the Greek mind could not be conscious of it as such. Thus, although the early Greek philosophers were indeed occupied with a problem which we are now able to *name* as that of "coming into being" or "becoming," they themselves could have no such name for it, for being conscious *in* it, they could not get outside it and be conscious *of* it. So that, in a sense, this too was the problem of early Greek philosophy—to acquire, as far as possible, the *idea* of such a world of becoming. And it began to do so, when Anaxagoras set over against the for-ever-changing world of growing and decaying substance (the "universal flux" of Heraclitus) the other principle of *Nous* or Mind. This was the beginning of the antithesis (hitherto unapprehended) between

Spirit and Matter,* and if enforced brevity may excuse a somewhat amateurish expression, it may be said that by Plato's time the central problem of philosophy was how spirit, or *νοῦς* "becomes" matter, or how matter, at certain times and seasons imitates or takes the "form" of spirit. It is no wonder that the Greeks were a nation of artists !

Note that our own problem tends to be the reverse of this : for we ask how (if at all) matter becomes spirit, and enquire into the "origin of reason" which we often conceive of as having arisen at a certain point of time, in a world which previously consisted entirely of material substance.

We are therefore, in a position to ask ourselves once more the question which was asked a few pages back : what were the "forms" of which Bacon speaks, and which, by altering the meaning of the word, he wishes to eradicate from men's minds, putting in their place his own abstract "laws" ? They were nothing else than the memory, so far as it had been retained by European thought since Plato's and Aristotle's day, of those elements, as it were, of *Nous*—of the Mind—or Spiritual world, which the best Greek thinking could still apprehend in its time as living Beings. They were a faint, shadowy recollection of those Thought Beings, neither objective nor subjective, which Greek thinking could actually enshrine within itself—Beings, by whom the part of Nature which is perceptible to our senses is continually brought into being and again withdrawn, in the rhythm of the seasons and of life and death.

But by Bacon's time most, if not all, men had already lost the power to think these Forms. They could only think of them, filling their minds with the abstract, subjective "ideas" of modern thought, which are at best no more than their shadows. Bacon transformed these ideas, already abstract in men's minds, to the still more abstract idea of "laws" ; and modern science

* The idea of "matter," however, was not really crystallized out into any thing like its modern form before Aristotle's day.

has grown up since his day entirely as a system which deduces from sense-observation these laws, or rules for the changes which occur in the sense-perceptible part of nature.

Now to the most typical Greek thought this part of nature, as we saw, was itself but the sum of the accomplished deeds of another invisible part—that of the “Forms” as we will call them. Indeed the Greek tended to lose interest in the Nature which had *become*, dwelling only on the Nature which was still in process of becoming. We may even characterize this as its weakness. The “law” type of thought, on the contrary, if strictly observed, can only deal with a nature that has already, in the physical sense, become. To it, the seed is a congeries of minute particles, which are disposed in a certain relation by the “laws” of their being, and which, as the year proceeds, draw other particles towards them, building up, again according to certain “laws,” the leaf, the blossom, and so forth. And the flower is nothing else than these particles—apart from the mysterious “laws” which determine their changes of position.

But now if we ask again, as it was asked at the beginning of this chapter, what these “laws” are, no scientist with a sense of his responsibilities can admit them to be more than the fact *that* certain changes *have been* constantly observed. He may, of course, add other ideas out of his religious or æsthetic convictions as a private individual, but that is the definition of “law” which he has to observe in his work. He must deal with *facts*, and facts, alike in their real and their etymological significance, are simply “things which have been done.” Natural law is observable in its effects only.

The result is, of course, a purely static type of thought which can deal adequately only with the most static part of nature—the mineral, the inorganic, the dead. With that part it can deal in a marvellously skilful manner. The most elaborate machine which the Greeks ever even attempted would look like a drawing by Mr. Heath Robinson if it were placed beside the

electrical installation that hums to-day in the power-house of a tiny Alpine village. That is the first result.

The second result is the modern civilization which has arisen along with this static thought and the machinery which it has produced. But for those who see clearly how the *institutions* which make civilization possible are but the bodies or husks of concrete creative thinking in the past, there is also a third result, as inevitable as the other two. It is the imminent disruption of this same civilization. For this static, abstract thought has death in it. As far as being is concerned, it can *give* nothing ; it can only classify what is there already and re-arrange somewhat its component parts.

For a long time our systems and institutions, grown up out of the ancient world in which this real thinking was still operative, have gone on working, as it were, by their own momentum. But the period which culminated in the Industrial Revolution and the Great War has altered the world out of all recognition. Is it not painfully obvious on all sides that, if the continuity of Western civilization is to be preserved, we need fresh creative thinking, the power to create fresh forms out of life itself, that is to say, out of the part of Nature which is still coming into being, the Spiritual World ?

Not that this power to think life into the world has ever been wholly lost from Europe. As religious inspiration, as art, as poetry, it has continued to manifest itself sporadically right down to our own day. But it is a very long time since it appeared anywhere with strength enough to be *operative* in the practical, scientific sense. And it is the development of scientific thought with which I am here particularly concerned ; when we want to cure a man of tuberculosis, we go to-day, not to religion or art, but to science.

By the end of the eighteenth century, then, apart from these isolated exceptions, the power to think in a living way may be considered as having died right out. The man of the eighteenth century lived in a clockwork cosmos. And because

this static, clockwork cosmos which he had spun out of his abstract, scientific fantasy was remote from the truth, and because he was honestly seeking for the truth, he had at last to dislodge it from its repose with the idea of "evolution"—an attempt to get back again, in a new form, to the old notion of "gradually coming into being." But it was as yet no more than a notion—even in its Lamarck-Bergson-Shaw evening-dress of "creative" evolution it is not much more than an abstract shadow of the real Life Force, the true creative Logos, which was once not an idea for men but an experience and a Being. If "evolution" to-day were not merely a *theory* for men, but an actual experience, it would be impossible for them, when speaking of it, to omit all reference to its meaning—which is the evolution of *consciousness*. The spell-bound teachers and parents, who must go on inculcating this lifeless, repressive dogma, do not introduce Shakespeare to their children by repeating what psychologists have said about the causes of the impulse to clap hands. This is because the genius of Shakespeare is, not somebody else's theory, invented to explain the repeated phenomenon of hand-clapping, but a concrete *experience* of the individual soul. There is no such experience of evolution.

How are we to get back this experience, this which will alone enable us to impart fresh life to our decaying civilization? There is no question of going backwards and trying to be little Greeks. The Greeks are not to be our models; they are merely interesting examples, historically close to us, of a people who possessed something which we need desperately ourselves, though in a different form. Indeed, our problem is essentially different from theirs. The task which their philosophers instinctively set themselves was, as we saw, to get outside a plane of consciousness in which they normally lived, so as to be able to conceive of it: to turn thinking into thought. Our problem is the converse of this. We *are* outside it already. Our task is twofold, first to realize that it is still there, and then to

learn how to get back into it, how to rise once more from thought into thinking, taking with us, however, that fuller self-consciousness which the Greeks never knew, and which could never have been ours if they had not laboured to turn thinking into thought. Thus, being normally outside it, it follows that we shall also be conscious *of* it as a different world, a world into which we can plunge at will. In this case the Greeks did *not* have a word for it. We shall.

The first part of the problem has already been solved. Rudolf Steiner's comprehensive work is enough and more than enough many times over to enable any really unprejudiced, unobsessed mind to realize that this great world of formative thinking is still there, awaiting us, if we have but the will to reach it. His book, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, for example, is a bridge, itself compacted of ordinary, logical thoughts, which leads beyond and away from such thoughts right up to this other world of creative thinking. And the name which, in other books, Steiner has given to this world is "etheric."

But the second part of the problem is not solved, and it depends on ourselves, the men of this generation and the next. This is the problem of actually *reaching* the etheric in fully conscious experience of thinking. The preservation of continuity in Western Civilization depends on how many and how active may be the spirits which shall succeed in doing this. For the futile inadequacy of our method of knowledge to the rapidly changing realities by which its dignified Roman nose is being tweaked on all sides at present simply shouts at us. We understand what is at rest and what has become, and we can deal with it as never before ; but when we try to grasp what is in motion or alive, we merely gibber fantasies in a vacuum hermetically sealed from the truth. Thus, in Medicine, the whole of the *surgical* branch has reached a point little short of perfection ; but when it is a question of treating malignant growths and, in general, diseases of the living organism, where

are we? In this country, no one who has been brought into contact with even the outer fringe of medical controversy on these matters (I mean, of course, outside the wide area over which the British Medical Association extends its virtual censorship) will need to wait for an answer. Indeed, the healthiest sign of all, probably, is the increasing number of doctors and others who are beginning to realize, and in some cases to admit, their helplessness. Not to admit it is to be led blindfold into a grotesque world of superstition in which our posterity will hardly be brought to believe, a world from which the sense of humour eloped long ago with the sense of proportion.

In 1924, when Cancer Research on orthodox bacteriological lines had been going on for more than twenty years and had already absorbed thousands and thousands of pounds, the Medical Correspondent of the *Times* (Sept. 13th), in an article on a lecture, enumerated the following results, as "an important addition to knowledge":

- (i) The first time a carcinoma has ever been produced in a guinea-pig.
- (ii) The first demonstration that a mechanical irritant *can* produce cancer.
- (iii) The first time a cancer of the glandular type has ever been produced experimentally.
- (iv) The first demonstration that a pathological substance developed wholly within the living body (*i.e.* a gall-stone) can produce cancer by prolonged irritation or injury.

But, as though his readers might feel almost too triumphant at these startling results, he prefaced them with the remark that:

Rash conclusions cannot and must not be drawn. While mechanical irritation does cause cancer in the gall-bladder of the guinea-pig, there is no assurance that it will do this in other sites or in other animals. In all disease we have to consider the pathogenic agent on the one hand and the susceptible or refractory tissue on the other. Thus, if tar is applied to a mouse's skin, a skin-cancer will eventually develop, but no amount of tar-application will cause cancer on a rat's or a guinea-pig's skin. . . .

We must also, he said, face the fact that tar applied to the inside of the bowel in a mouse does not produce cancer. It is as though he held up a warning finger : Steady ! Do not be too optimistic, my friend. We can produce cancer in some of the animals some of the time, but, remember, we cannot yet produce cancer in all the animals all the time ! Not a word, be it observed, of any *remedy* ! But this is the sole method of investigation open to a mode of thought which can only perceive the formative forces in their effects : first produce similar effects, and then hope you will somehow chance on a remedy ; ignore throughout as irrelevant all specifically human impulses of decency and compassion.

Or one could take Economics. The economic life is to-day the real bond of the civilized world. The world is held together not by political or religious harmony, but by economic interdependence ; and here again there is the same antithesis. Economic theory is bound hand and foot by the static, abstract character of modern thought. On the one hand, everything to do with *industry* and the possibility of substituting human labour by machinery has reached an unexampled pitch of perfection. But when it is a question of *distributing* this potential wealth, when it is demanded of us, therefore, that we think in terms of flow and rate of flow, we cannot even begin to rise to it. The result is that our "labour-saving" machinery produces, not leisure, but its ghastly caricature, unemployment, while nearly every civilized and half-civilized nation of the world sits helplessly watching the steady growth within itself of a malignant tumour of social discontent. And this increasingly rancorous discontent is fed above all things by a cramping penury, a shortage of the means of livelihood, which arises, not out of the realities of nature, but out of abstract, inelastic thoughts about money !

It is a startling thing to go back to poetic writers such as Ruskin or Shelley and to find them forestalling already, out of the living thinking that was in them as artists, the most advanced

and intelligent criticism that is being directed to-day upon the financial mechanism of distribution in our industrial civilization. It is startling, but it is not very consoling. For what effect did their intuitive foreknowledge have on the problems upon which it was directed? About as much as Cassandra's. It is no longer enough that an occasional artist here and there should see his parcel of truth and speak it out, while the actual direction taken by civilization continues to be wholly determined by a *soi-disant* scientific method of knowledge. Science must itself *become* an art, and art a science; either they must mingle, or Western civilization, as we know it, must perish, to make room for one that may have spirit enough to learn how to know God's earth as He actually made it.

It is intoxicating to go on repeating the word "must," besides giving one a very pleasant sense of superiority. But this time it was not the result of ignorance. Flirtations, it is true, are common enough, but it would be difficult to exaggerate the repugnance with which artist and scientist alike are generally inclined at present to contemplate any such spiritual marriage as anthroposophy desiderates for them. Indeed, for those few who have as yet been brought by the circumstances of their lives to comprehend how desperately Europe needs what anthroposophy can give her, it is an experience more moving and at the same time very much more bitter than the spectacle of high tragedy to see the indifference, misunderstanding, antipathy, and cold suspicion, with which Rudolf Steiner's work meets on every side. A kind of bigotry and arrogance is sometimes imputed to anthroposophists for their exclusive emphasis upon his work and their movement in so many different departments of life. The answer is in the facts themselves. Those who have accepted Steiner's priceless gift are not the choice and picked ones of the earth: they are simply those who have felt out of the depths of their being the fearful need of this living, creative thinking. They are only too glad to take and use such thinking wherever they find it. But where do they

find it? Does the traveller, dying of thirst, stop to complain because the torrent gushes from a single spring instead of oozing up out of every stone beneath his feet?

SPEECH, REASON AND IMAGINATION

We can quickly learn from etymology that the meaning of practically every word we use has what may be called a sensual substratum. That is to say, the word can be traced back to a time when it, or some older word from which it is derived, had reference to either a material object or a bodily action. All sorts of deductions have been drawn from this. Anatole France, for example, in his *Jardin d'Epicure*, has an amusing dialogue between a young metaphysician and an elderly etymologist, in which the latter makes hay of the former by reducing all the words he uses (such as *God*, *spirit*, *Absolute*) to what he affirms to have been their original meanings (*fire*, *breath*, *untied*). With M. France it is, of course, merely a good opportunity for a little polite irony at the expense of bombastic philosophy. But in the last century, when men were taking etymology, and other things, more seriously, there was something like a real controversy on the matter. Such a conclusion, if true, appeared to many people to carry with it grave metaphysical implications; it would be debated, for example, whether such words as "I" and "God" could be excepted from the general rule. Finally, when at any rate the general principle seemed to be definitely established, a new question arose out of it: if speech is dependent on sense-perceptions, then what is the relation between Speech and Reason? Is the latter wholly dependent on the former or not? And on the whole, I think it can be said, the tendency here too was to admit complete dependence. "No reason without speech," said Max Muller, "and no speech without reason."

It is easy, in looking through the books of that time, to see what was at the back of people's minds. "Reason" had been regarded throughout the eighteenth century as the divine

element in man, or at least, as the principle thing which distinguished him from the brutes. But if Reason depended on words for its existence, and words upon sense-perceptions, that important distinction began to look less important; the question affected one's whole conception of the relation between body and soul, and therefore, necessarily, of immortality. And these problems—the relation of man to the brutes and of the soul to the body—were just those which, for other reasons too, were uppermost in people's thoughts and feelings.

To-day the word "Reason" is somewhat ambiguous. Sometimes it is used to mean "discourse" in the technical sense, that is to say, the *logical* or deductive process, and sometimes it is intended to include all possible intellectual activity. This very ambiguity suggests that yet a third question may arise out of the other two: is there any intellectual activity other than the logistic one of deductive, *abstract* thought? Thus, we get a kind of connected series of questions: (i) are words dependent on sense-perception for their meaning? (ii) if so, is Reason dependent on Speech? (iii) if so, is there any intellectual activity which is *not* dependent on "Reason"? I do not suggest that it is impossible for these questions to occur to people in any other order. Kant, for instance, tackled the last question without reference to words at all, and ended by answering it in the negative. But whatever their proper order, it is these three questions which I wish to consider here.

Let us begin by approaching the matter historically. If we ask, have men always felt convinced of the inter-dependence of these three things—thinking, words and sense (waiving for a moment the previous question of the exact nature of thinking), then the answer is emphatically no! To Plato, dialogue was a *τόκος*—a begetting; the words of one speaker were conceived of as merely the instruments by which true thinking, itself beyond words, was 'begotten' or generated in another. It is only in the Middle Ages that the words and the thought begin to be identified, and intellect therefore conceived of as waiting

upon the senses. The human being, wrote Dante, who was so deeply read in Scholastic philosophy : " solo da sensato apprende Cio che fa poscia d'intelletto digno "—only takes up through the senses what he afterwards makes fit for the intellect.* Hence the medieval period was above all the age of Logic—it worshipped Logic, in which—through the concept of the ' term '—the word and the thought are kept as close together as possible.

But if we scrutinize the men of the Middle Ages more closely, contrasting them with ourselves, we shall find something yet more significant. And it is this, that they identified *themselves* with their thoughts. This is of the utmost importance. It is this that is at the bottom of all that strikes a modern observer as most incomprehensible and alien about the men of that time—for example, their intolerance. Identifying the thought with the words, they felt that truth could be wholly embodied in creed and dogma, and identifying the self with the thought, they were—quite rightly—intolerant. A wrong thought could strike them as far more immoral than a wrong action.

Now, when we are confronted with a phenomenon like this universal intolerance of the Middle Ages, we can only explain it in one of two ways. Either common-sense, kindness, and self-control have miraculously increased among us, and the great men of that time were therefore a kind of foolish children compared with ourselves ; *or*, we may feel a little uncomfortable about this explanation, and ask ourselves accordingly whether the cause may not be otherwise, whether it may not be that thinking was actually something different then from what it is now—not only *believed* to be different, but *actually* different. And those who find a certain difficulty about the picture of, say, St. Thomas Aquinas grovelling in intellectual chains, while, say, Mr. H. G. Wells basks without effort in the sunshine of intellectual freedom, will no doubt consider what there is to be said for the latter view. They will be led, in fact, to

* One may compare with this the later pronouncement of John Locke : " *Nihil in intellectu, quod non prius fuerit in sensu.*"

consider whether there is not such a thing as the evolution of consciousness.

To-day, they will notice, everybody is tolerant. We are really extraordinarily polite to each other nowadays, even on such subjects as religion. "Oh, I see, my dear Sir," one theologian is reported to have said to another, whose meaning he had at length succeeded in grasping, "*your God is my Devil!*"—whereupon they took each other's wives in to dinner. And so these suspicious people may ask themselves: does this universal tolerance arise from the fact that we have at last succeeded in subduing the evil passions that formerly drove men to quarrel and burn one another for their opinions, or is it—can it possibly be—that we no longer *care* very much whether people agree with us or not?

Really, there is no doubt at all about the answer. The fact is, we have *ceased to identify ourselves with our thoughts*—at any rate, with such thoughts as can be expressed in words. We are for 'the spirit and not the letter' to-day. We distinguish between thinking and believing. And not only is this so, but it is one of the most typical modern experiences. I quote from *More Trivia*, the second of those two remarkable little books, in which so many typical modern experiences are summed up with an odd mixture of suppressed pathos and cynical humour, and in such musical prose:

WELTANSCHAUUNG

When, now and then, on a calm night I look up at the Stars, I reflect on the wonders of Creation, the unimportance of this Planet, and the possible existence of other worlds like ours. Sometimes it is the self-poised and passionless shining of those serene orbs which I think of; sometimes Kant's phrase comes into my mind about the majesty of the Starry Heavens and the Moral Law; or I remember Xenophanes gazing at the broad firmament, and crying, "All is One!" and thus, in that sublime exclamation, enunciating for the first time the great doctrine of the Unity of Being.

But these Thoughts are not my thoughts; they eddy through my mind like scraps of old paper, or withered leaves in the wind. What I really feel is the survival of a much more primitive mood—a view of

the world which dates indeed from before the invention of language. It has never been put into literature ; no poet has sung of it, no historian of human thought has so much as alluded to it ; astronomers in their glazed observatories, with their eyes glued to the ends of telescopes, seem to have had no notion of it.

But sometimes, far off at night, I have heard a dog howling it at the Moon.

“ These thoughts are not my thoughts.” That is the feeling. And it is an experience which really distinguishes our own from all previous civilizations. Other peoples, of course, have known what it is to weigh one hypothesis against another, but never before has it been such a vital personal experience—this sense of thoughts which are ‘ not my thoughts.’ Never before has it existed on such a vast scale, so that a man may think through three or four entirely different and contradictory explanations of the Universe before breakfast. Even the Sceptic had his intellectual conviction—concerning the impossibility of knowing—and he at least felt *this* conviction to be a part of himself. The true Agnostic—the man who says, not “ men can’t know,” but “ *I don’t know*,” is a much later arrival ; for he is speaking out of immediate personal experience. And to-day the world is simply full of him. There he goes, in the street, on the bus, in the factory, the office, the bank-parlour, the consulting-room—his mind full of a queer mixture of odds and ends of scientific and religious theories—but personally convinced (if he really examines himself) of none of them. These thoughts are all very interesting—but they are not *his* thoughts.

That human consciousness is perpetually evolving was, of course, Steiner’s perpetual theme ; and he often described this particular stage of it which I have tried to depict, as the Ego developing in the “ Consciousness Soul.” The Consciousness Soul indicates the maximum point of *self*-consciousness, the point at which the individual feels himself to be entirely cut off from the surrounding cosmos, and is *for that reason* fully conscious of himself as an individual. He has attained complete self-consciousness—at the cost of practically everything else.

It is easily distinguishable from the Intellectual Soul, an earlier stage of development, in which, though clearly discerning itself from perceptible objects over against it in space, the Ego still feels its words and thoughts to be a part of itself. In the Middle Ages the Ego was still working in the Intellectual Soul.

Starting, then, from this pronounced difference between ourselves and the men of the Middle Ages, we can gradually begin to see more and more clearly what it means, this evolution of consciousness, which, at any rate up to the present, is also the evolution of *self*-consciousness. We can see the successive stages following and overlapping each other in the history of man as a whole, and in our own day we can see them succeeding each other all over again—on the principle of what Mr. Bernard Shaw has called ‘condensed recapitulation’—in the life-history of the individual. The very small child has, properly speaking, no self-consciousness at all. He cannot say “I.” But then, through the operation of his physical senses, he gradually comes to realize : On the one hand there is something that is “I,” and on the other, there is something out there in space which is “Not-I.” At this stage he still feels the *words* which he speaks as emanating wholly from himself, the “I” division. But, sooner or later, because words, too, have this sensual substratum, he begins to feel detached even from them. They are instruments which he picks up and uses and drops again. He begins to discover that, even when used in quite ordinary prosaic, logical forms, they can be made to prove the most contradictory things—can be made to prove almost anything. If he is a philosopher or a logician, he may develop his elaborate system of “antinomies” ; but if he is a “plain man,” he will only become vaguely confused by the variety and dis-harmony of all the different systems of ideas (each apparently quite convincing, when taken by itself), with which he is deluged from press, pulpit and platform. “Well, I dunno !” he will say ; and, with more or less awareness of what he is doing, he will transfer words from the “I” to the “Not-I” division of his

consciousness—just as Hamlet did, at the moment when he cried our “ Words, words, words ! ” in that mood of loneliness and despair. And at last comes the experience—possibly a deep and painful one—that not merely words but thought itself—abstract thought—“ Reason ” (and by many, as we have seen, no other kind of thinking is admitted)—must be transferred in the same way ; for in its inmost nature it is wholly dependent on words.

Thus, from the standpoint of the Consciousness Soul, we can see how the Ego at first, as it were, hovers over the physical body, and then gradually, through the medium of language and abstract thought, uses that body as a “ tool ” (in the words of the American psychologist, J. M. Baldwin)

for turning all the series of external things into copy for his mental manipulation. He thus achieves the wonderful step whereby all objects alike become *his* objects, *his* content of meaning, *his* experience.* And now, when this has occurred, the Ego has reached rock bottom. It feels itself to be alone, on an island, cut off from all sense and objective meaning. This is the full price of self-consciousness. This is the experience which the English poet, Matthew Arnold, tried to express—in its social bearings—in the fine poem that begins :—

Yes, in the sea of life enisled,
We mortal millions live alone !

And we are the more justified in regarding it as an experience of special present significance, and in agreeing with Steiner that it represents a definite stage which we have reached in the evolution of consciousness, when we find that it can *either* come as an intellectual discovery in such diverse departments of study as etymology and philosophy, *or* much more indirectly, out of the very conditions of life as we know it to-day. This conviction is strengthened further, when we find the same experience expressed in various forms by the poets. It is still more strengthened by the following consideration:

* *Thought and Things*, i., v. 7.

A little reflection must persuade anybody that personal experience of just this nature—the living in the Consciousness Soul—is the foundation, and the only possible foundation, for something which only began about four hundred years ago, and which has very special historical associations with England. I mean the Scientific Spirit. Men had investigated natural phenomena before, but the scientific *spirit* means very much more than this. It means absolute, unqualified *open-mindedness*. It means the deletion of the word *belief* from one's vocabulary, and the readiness to unite one's sympathies temporarily with any conceivable hypothesis, for which the barest *prima facie* case can be made out, in order to give that hypothesis a completely unbiassed consideration. The rarity of this attitude at present among what are popularly called "men of science" is of course a sign of the times; but it need not be unduly emphasised at the moment. For, if it is true that the pundits of the scientific world are now respected as "authorities" in much the same way as the Church Fathers once were, it is also true that allegiance is only given to them because they are at any rate in some vague way *believed* to be really open-minded. And that is equally a sign of the times. We are determined to believe something, so we believe this. We go on living in the Intellectual Soul, because we want something to lean on, but all the time we know in our hearts that the Consciousness Soul is something beyond and above it; for, whether we like it or not, we are born into the age of the Consciousness Soul. Why is it that, to-day, while everybody praises the scientific spirit, practically nobody takes the trouble to acquire it? It is because (let me whisper it very softly), to-day, the scientific spirit really is a *virtue*!

To those, however, who really are living with all their might in the Consciousness Soul, who are really open-minded, really imbued with the scientific spirit—to such persons, whether they find themselves inside or outside of laboratories, the third question asked at the beginning of this article must sooner or later occur: Is there any kind of thinking not dependent on the

reason and therefore not dependent on the senses ? Is there a kind of wordless thinking, with which the self can actually unite, as in the Middle-Ages it united with ordinary logical thinking ? In other words, what is Truth, not for Aristotle, or Thomas Aquinas, or my great-great-grandson, but for myself here and now ?

I am going to cut right across the main thread of the argument with another question. What is anthroposophy ? Believing (some would answer) without a shred of evidence, everything that Steiner chose to say. And this is exactly what it is not. Anthroposophy is knowledge, as it is expressed and grasped by the Consciousness Soul ; and the Consciousness Soul (if it really is the Consciousness Soul and not the Intellectual Soul dressed up to look like it) knows first and foremost that *anybody's* thought, once it is conceived in ideas and expressed in words, must be alloyed with error. It is easy to understand Steiner's extreme reluctance to have his lectures recorded ; and it is easier still to realise why, in his lectures and books, he kept on repeating, almost to exasperation, such phrases as " what is contained in," " what is reflected by," and so forth—if we only recollect that, of all men, he spoke from the Consciousness Soul to the Consciousness Soul. " Think these thoughts without believing them," he once said ; and in nearly all his utterances he employed the mode, not of discursive argument, but of pure assertion—though he could syllogize as well as anyone if he chose to, as he showed in *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. And this reluctance, and these phrases and habits of his, and the essential nature of anthroposophy, place—so it seems to me—rather a heavy responsibility upon its adherents. I cannot think it is unduly paradoxical to say, that it is really a kind of betrayal of the founder of anthroposophy to believe what he said. He poured out his assertions because he trusted his hearers *not* to believe. Belief is something which can only be applied to systems of abstract ideas. To become an anthroposophist is not to believe, it is to decide to use the words of

Rudolf Steiner (and any others which may become available) for the purpose of raising oneself, if possible, to a kind of thinking which is itself beyond words, which *precedes* them, in the sense that ideas, words, sentences, propositions, are only subsequently *drawn out of it*. This is that concrete* thinking which is the *source* of all such ideas and propositions, the source of all meaning whatsoever. And it can only take the form of logical ideas and propositions and grammatical sentences, at the expense of much of its original truth. For to be logical is to make one little part of your meaning precise by excluding all the other parts. To be an anthroposophist, then, is to seek to unite oneself, not with any groups of words, but with this concrete thinking, whose existence can only be finally *proved* by experience. It is to refrain from uniting oneself with words, in the humble endeavour to unite oneself with the Word.

For this concrete, wordless thinking is not something which has only just been discovered. Men were united with it long ago—though not men who had developed the Consciousness Soul. Very small children—lacking full self-consciousness—are still united with it, as we may see in their faces. A sense of its living presence pervades alike the Platonic dialogues and the opening of the Fourth Gospel. And this may bring us to reconsider something of what has been said already. I have been expressly distinguishing this kind of living thinking from words, suggesting that it could not by any means be expressed in words, was ‘wordless.’ But in doing so I intended ‘words’ and ‘language’ to be taken in the sense in which a logician would understand those terms. There is another sense besides this, and a very different one. I mean the sense in which a poet would understand them. As users of language, the poet and the logician stand at opposite poles. To the logician the *sound* of a word means nothing at all, while to the poet it is of the utmost importance. To the logician those words are of

* The word “concrete” may here be taken as meaning “neither objective nor subjective.”

value which change their meaning as little as possible, when they are used in different contexts ; the poet likes the meanings which change most, and is always trying to change them further himself. The logician tries for statement, the poet for suggestion. And so we could go on. But the object of this digression was to point out that, while this other kind of thinking is certainly not expressible in words taken in the first sense (though certain *results* of it may be, and for definite practical purposes *must* be, so expressed), yet it has a very close connection indeed with words taken in the second sense. In their sound and rhythm, and in all that is metaphorical and figurative about their meanings, there we should listen for its voice. The presence or absence of that voice is the difference between poetry and prose.

Consequently it is often those who are much concerned with the beauty of words who most easily catch an echo of it. Throughout the ages it has been the poets who have talked most of 'inspiration' ; while the Romantic poets of the last century (I allude especially to Coleridge's conception of the Imagination—a word, whose meaning his thought perceptibly altered) actually had a glimmering of the special relation of this concrete, or inspired, thinking to the Consciousness Soul. And what is this special relation ? There is a concrete thinking (experience alone can prove it), which is independent of the senses, and there is an abstract, logistic thinking, which is entirely dependent on them. But between these two there is an intermediate stage, at which consciousness takes the form of pictures or images. In the history of mankind that intermediate stage contains the mystery of the Myth. It still contains to-day the mystery of Poetry, and with that the whole great mystery of Meaning. It is Imagination. Imagination is the marriage of spirit and sense. Therefore the Consciousness Soul, which is the Ego cut right off from sense by its abstract thoughts, will have, in its passage back to its home in the spirit, to pass through this intermediate stage of Imaginative Consciousness. That is

the peculiar relation of the Consciousness Soul to concrete thinking, or to the Word. The Consciousness Soul is cut off from knowledge. Does it wish to know again? Then it must become the Imaginative Soul.

We may very well compare the self of man to a seed. Formerly, what is now the seed was a member of the old plant, and, as such, was wholly informed with a life not wholly its own. But now the pod or capsule has split open, and the dry seed has been ejected. It has attained to a separate existence. Henceforth one of two things may happen to it: either it may abide alone, isolated from the rest of the earth, growing dryer and dryer, until it withers up altogether; or, by uniting with the earth, it may blossom into a fresh life of its own. Thus it is with the Consciousness Soul. Either it may lose itself in the arid subtleties of a logistic intellectualism, which no longer has any life, though it once had—preoccupying itself with a nice balancing and pruning of dogma, theory, and memory—or, by uniting itself with the Spirit of the Earth, with the Word, it may blossom into the Imaginative Soul, and live. It differs from the seed only in this, that the choice lies with itself.

Thus it is, if we describe it from outside. But from within, it would have to be put quite differently. Having abandoned all beliefs, the man slowly begins to gain—whence he hardly knows—a certainty of a different kind. The experience is a difficult one to express. It has already come to many people, and must come to many more. It had come to Keats, when he wrote in a private letter to a friend: "I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart's affections and the truth of imagination."

Steiner was never content with general statements. Consequently, besides the delicate revelation which he gave of the stages of evolution of man's consciousness as a whole, he frequently pointed out the way in which the nations and races, and certain historical individuals born into them, have their special, several relation to each stage. Thus, he often said that

the English nation is the nation of the Consciousness Soul. England is the island nation ; it is England whose greatest writer creates a matchless gallery of individual 'characters,' each standing on his own feet and valuable for his own sake—every conceivable type of man, as someone has pointed out, *except* the mystic ; it is England, out of which the scientific spirit arises ; it is England, who, alike in her notions of sport and her economics and biological theories, sees the world as an aggregate of free competing units ; and it is the English-speaking peoples who, for good or ill, are taking the lead externally in the present age, which is the age of the Consciousness Soul.

When Steiner said such things, he always used to assume that he was speaking to people who were capable of viewing them quite objectively and apart from the accident of their own birth. To say this of the English nation, then, is not to suggest that it is ultimately more important in the scheme of things than any other nation ; it is only to suggest that in the present age it bears a specially heavy responsibility. To be born an Englishman, a German, a Russian, or a member of *any* nation whatsoever, is to have certain things (different, of course, in each case) given to you, which other nationals can only acquire by their own efforts as individual men. And, for the reasons given above, the things which are—generally speaking—born into Englishmen have their peculiar relation to the present age.

And now, what signs are there that England may live up to her responsibility and perform her mission ? She can only do this by a right development of her *consciousness*, for out of the consciousness all free actions spring. It is not easy to be very optimistic on the subject. If there are any signs at all, they are at present to be found—so it seems to me—not in the centre, but at the periphery—not in the public man, but in a few private men, and not so much in the town as in the country. Perhaps the growing popularity of Blake's "Jerusalem" heralds a dim awakening of purpose. I should have liked to say more of

William Blake. The problem of the right action of England must clearly be connected with that of the right development of the Consciousness Soul; and Blake seems in a remarkable way to have felt himself as the spokesman of this development, besides connecting it obscurely with the Spirit of England. Mr. Foster Damon, in the introduction to his book on Blake, points out that the man is really complementary to Shakespeare; for if Shakespeare (the spokesman of the Consciousness Soul undeveloped) represented every type *except* the mystic, Blake could apparently conceive of no other! To Blake logic is always something that has to be, not ignored, but conquered—overcome. Imagination and the Redeemer are almost synonymous, and Albion—the old name for Britain—is a symbol for universal Man. Logic, and with it the whole experience of Nature as matter, and, with that, the unfree morality that is based on the law—all these emanate from the Daughters of Memory. But the Daughters of Memory are to be overcome by the Daughters of Inspiration, who are also Jerusalem. “Nature” is to be redeemed by Imagination, is to become Imagination.

These are only broad outlines of his elaborate symbolical system, the details of which are, for the most part, well beyond my comprehension. It is conceivable, however, that the fault is not entirely Blake's, and that, as time goes on, the Prophetic Books may begin to take an increasingly important place in the English consciousness. Careful and sympathetic studies have now been made of them—in at least one case by those who came to scoff and remained to pray. In the meantime no very deep study is necessary to see the bearing of Blake's work on what I have been trying to say here. Let anyone read enough of it to get at the essential notions I have selected above. Albion is Humanity. Jerusalem is the Daughters of Inspiration. And then let him ask himself: What does it mean, “I will not cease from *mental* fight!”? And let him turn to one of the hundreds of passages in which Blake explains exactly

what it means. Suppose it to be the first Chapter of *Jerusalem* :

I rest not from my great task !
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
Of Man inwards, into the Worlds of Thought, into Eternity
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination.

Or his description of the enemy :

A dark and unknown night, indefinite, unmeasurable, without
end,

Abstract Philosophy warring in enmity against Imagination
(Which is the Divine Body of the Lord Jesus, blessed for ever).

And at last let him ask himself : What does it mean, then, to
“ build Jerusalem in England’s green and pleasant land ” ?
And what *can* it mean except this, which is not the concern of
England alone, but of all humanity, to rise from the Conscious-
ness Soul to the Imaginative Soul ?—The other Jerusalem—the
invisible one—can only arise as the outward form of this invisible
City of the mind. The ‘ Satanic Mills,’ which have arisen
over England since Blake’s time, will never be thrust down from
their hideous tyranny, until those of which he actually sang—
the dead thinking of Newton, Locke, and Hobbes—have been
burst asunder from within.

OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS SOUL

Anyone who wishes to reflect on the human being in greater detail than usual may decide to take help from the classification and analysis which Rudolf Steiner spent his life in developing. This classification, which upon a first introduction has a cold and forbidding sound, is no end in itself. It is no more than a means to a more intimate and loving understanding of the human being. A map, with its pink and blue patches and its rigid lines of latitude and longitude, would look cold and forbidding if we mistook it for the world. We do not do this. We use it to enable us to travel through the world.

One may say that man has on the one hand a body and on the other a soul or a mind. But if we stop at this, we immediately find ourselves involved in all kinds of confusion and complication and arguments as to which, in any particular case, is which. Steiner did not stop at this. Man, he said, has a *physical body*, in this resembling the mineral world, an *etheric body*, which the plants can also claim, an *astral body*, which he shares with the animal kingdom and which is the vehicle of his sensations and passions, and lastly an *Ego*. In virtue of the last principle alone is he entirely differentiated from all other earthly creatures. He alone can say "I."

Among the many and varied trains of thought and investigations for which such a classification and all that follows from it has been found fruitful is that metaphysical conception of the human being which sees him as a 'microcosm' evolving from a 'macrocosm' and finally returning, in a sense, to the great whole from which he took his birth; which sees him reposing at first unconscious in the bosom of the Father, then, like a shed seed, separating himself from this unity and finally regaining in some remote future his "at-one-ment" with the Father

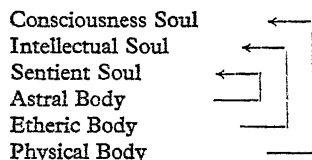
principle, only now in full self-consciousness, as a self-poised, self-contained 'Ego.' It is from this point of view that the following article is written.

The addition of an Ego to the other three principles does not leave them unchanged. Just as it raises the physical body from the horizontal to the vertical position, so it works in other ways into the astral and etheric bodies. Man does not merely experience appetites and passions. Because there is an Ego working in his astral body he is also capable of a new experience—he is now capable of *mere* sense-perception, without desire or aversion. With this is closely connected his life of sensuous, artistic pleasure. Out of the astral body, in other words, he develops the *Sentient Soul*, and one is not far wrong if one thinks of this principle as being the vehicle of his whole *æsthetic* experience, taking 'æsthetic' in the wider sense. In a similar way, working in the etheric body, the Ego leads to the development of the *Intellectual Soul*; and here we are at once at a crucial point of its evolution. Man has now reached the stage at which he can *think*, and about thinking there is something essentially paradoxical. When I think the truth (let us say that $2+2=4$) my thought is not individual to myself: one cannot say that there is *my* $2+2=4$ and also someone else's. It is the same thought—the same thing. To the extent, therefore, that I think truth, I am one with all other Egos and with the macrocosm. Yet it is only because I have my *separate* existence as an Ego that "I" can think at all! What does this suggest? That here in the intellectual soul is the crucial point of this great mysterious process of separation, that is to say, of the separation of the Ego from the objective world, of the microcosm from the macrocosm. Inasmuch as man is experiencing in the intellectual soul, this separation is actually taking place.

And where there is a process of separation, or severance, going on, one will be able to detect a certain point at which the severance is finally accomplished—a birth-point, a cutting of the navel-string. In the evolution of human consciousness, Steiner

named this stage the *Consciousness Soul* or *Spiritual Soul*. What, then, do we mean when we say the Ego is working in the consciousness soul? We mean that this severance, or birth, of the human microcosm from the macrocosm has just been completed. The consciousness soul, we might say, is "the having been cut off."

Thus, expressing human consciousness and its evolution diagrammatically, we obtain, to begin with, a scheme such as the following.*



In all the other principles but the two extremes the human being maintains a certain primeval connection with the universe, the source of his creation. But his physical body is complete in itself, enclosed within its own skin, like a little island. And when the Ego works right down into this principle, then on a higher level of consciousness is developed the consciousness soul with its corresponding spiritual isolation.

Now let us suppose an impossibility. Let us suppose that a man develops up to this point of unfolding the consciousness soul and then stops dead. What would he be? Considered as a self-conscious individual, what would he actually be? He would be precisely nothing. We could never say what he is, only what he is not. We could only define him as 'that which is cut off,' as 'what is left.' His actual content would be zero. Of course it is impossible that this should happen. What has been described is a *pure* consciousness soul condition; whereas, in fact, the stages of development must continually overlap and interweave. But for the purpose of clear thinking it is also

* The reader is referred to Steiner's book *Theosophy* for a full statement, as well as a justification, of the material in this grossly inadequate preliminary sketch.

well to be able to abstract them and consider them apart ; and then we can say that, in so far as a man is experiencing in the consciousness soul, he tends towards this condition, this paradoxical zero-point, where self-consciousness and nonentity coincide.

Now one can go a step farther. The evolution of human consciousness, as Steiner saw it, must not be thought of as a kind of flat race where the competitors run parallel courses between strings. Much more is it presented as an orchestral symphony, or dance, in which each individual has his own figure to perform in harmony with all the rest. And here we have to consider, not merely the Egos of individual human beings, but the souls of groups of men such as families or nations ; and indeed this orchestral development of human consciousness was, as he depicted it, the rationale of that manifold division of humanity into races and nations, which has brought about all that we read of as history. Over and over again Steiner traced out some particular theme in the universal symphony into a loving wealth of detail ; here we have to do with one only among these intuitions—when he pointed to the English nation as the special vehicle for the unfolding of the consciousness soul.

Few things are more startling than the sheer *effectiveness* of this occult key to the quiddity of the Anglo-Saxon genius. The indications are innumerable, and I can only select two or three. In the first place there is the geographical one—the island form, the “piece of land surrounded by water” as we learnt at school, with all its reverberations into character and history. “Every Englishman,” wrote Novalis, “is an island.” And so we find the Englishman developing out of an instinctive feeling the rule that ‘his house is his castle.’ Nothing will do, but he must have another little island inside the big one ! And this raises the whole question of that social and political freedom of the individual which Europe has so long connected with the name of England. For, seriously enough, if we examine the Law of the Constitution to see what documents and principles

this is based on, we do not find any. Nothing is said of what the citizen may do, but much of what policemen and the King and civil servants may *not* do. (In the latter case it would perhaps be truer to say—what they once *might* not do!) In other words, his much-vaunted liberty is nothing in itself: it is ‘what is left.’ We do not know what it is; we only know what it is not. But it is none the less real for that.

It is important to understand the real relation of the Englishman to liberty. Liberty is not something which he understands better than other nationals; it is not something that he puts enthusiastically before him as an ideal. It is not something which he is especially competent to talk about. It is something that he *takes for granted*. That is the point. And it shows us immediately something of what is meant by saying that a certain nation ‘is the vehicle for the unfolding’ of a certain human principle. It means that the people of that nation have this principle, as it were, ‘given’ them, whereas other nationals have to work their way to it by individual effort.

Where else can we trace the working out of this instinctive consciousness-soul experience of the English people? In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there gradually spread over Europe that outlook on life which is commonly called the ‘scientific spirit.’ England can by no means claim a monopoly of great scientists, but when we are talking of the scientific *spirit*, it is English history and literature that we must study in order to understand its origin. And now if we come on to consider the system, the cosmogony, at which the scientific spirit, as such, at last arrives (this is quite different from saying that all scientists have this outlook), what is it? It is a system in which Nature is seen as a structure of unalterable laws. And what is Man? Nothing can be said of Man except what concerns his least distinctive principle—the physical body. Sweep this aside, and ask: What is Man *as Man*! And the answer is; ‘What is left.’ This is perfectly true of everything that can be said out of the real scientific spirit, and is not affected by the fact that

the British Association now recognises all sorts of *demi-mondaine* 'ologies.'

To understand the scientific spirit in its essence and to realise the enormous gulf that yawns between it and the medieval way of thinking, one must read Bacon. And then one realises how the scientific spirit is really identical with the spirit of English philosophy. And the spirit of English philosophy is—materialism. Only this word, materialism, is not necessarily a term of abuse, as we shall see. It is impossible to go deeply into this ; but one has only to consider the extraordinary detachment of our philosophy from that great and distinctive modern European movement of thought—pure mathematics—in order to perceive something of what is meant. England can show no Descartes, no Leibnitz : she has mathematicians, but they are not philosophers. Newton employed his mathematics in practical scientific investigation, while the philosopher Hume built up his system on the work of his predecessor Locke, ignoring the Cartesian and Newtonian mathematics. If we are looking for a Newtonian philosophy, we must go to Germany, to Kant.

Now what is meant by the label 'materialism ?' As a term of abuse, as a missile weapon slung by anthroposophists at the rest of the world, it commonly signifies a refusal to admit the reality of anything but matter. Whereupon we come upon another paradox ; for it is a peculiarity of materialism in philosophy that it actually renders this other, naughty kind of materialism impossible ; it does this, by carrying it to its logical conclusion and showing it up for the nonsense it is. If, for example, we consider Hume's scepticism over the concept, 'causation,' we see at once that its effect is to emphasise and bring into the light the loose thinking on which this naughty 'materialism' depends. For if we are consistently materialistic, we are obliged to maintain that the world consists of an arbitrary collection of objects and events entirely unconnected with one another, and that in every instant of time it holds itself

it arises out of the consciousness soul itself. The paradox that honest materialism cannot be wholly materialistic is nowhere better illustrated than in English literature and particularly in the English manner of dealing with its favourite subject of death. It would be possible to write at considerable length of this ; but at the present I will only take two passages, the first from Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* :

"Ladomeia died ; Helen died : Leda, the beloved of Jupiter went before. It is better to repose in the earth betimes than to sit up late ; better than to cling pertinaciously to what we feel crumbling under us, and to protract an inevitable fall. We may enjoy the present while we are insensible of infirmity and decay : but the present, like a note in music, is nothing but as it appertains to what is past and what is to come. There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave : there are no voices, O Rhodope ! that are not soon mute, however tuneful : there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last."

The second from *Love's Labour Lost* is more extraordinary. We are in the middle of a practical joke ; the 'fantastical Spaniard,' Armado, playing Hector, is being bated by all the courtiers ; everywhere laughter. And then suddenly the following pathetic protest is made by Armado, not on his own behalf but actually on behalf of the character he is representing. He stops in the middle of his part and protests to his chaffing audience :

"The sweet war-man is dead and rotten ; sweet chucks, beat not the bones of the buried ! When he breathed, he was a man !"

This sudden, half-whimsical drop into pathos on the subject of mortality is very typical of the English genius. It is the poetic aspect of that honest materialism which we have already traced in philosophy. The consciousness soul can only see the physical ; and the most certain thing about the physical body is that it dies ! Yet here too we find abundant evidence of the truth that has already been indicated—that honest materialism cannot be wholly materialistic. Why is this ? It is because, if we examine the sonorous word-music to which English literature

tends to rise, when it speaks, as it so often does, of death, we shall find that the nameless, unknown *content* of the isolated human soul sounds mysteriously through it. It is not mentioned. But it is *suggested*—often, quite without design on the writer's part.

It is surprising how far genuine honesty and clear-headedness will carry one. The truth does not consist of a collection of isolated facts ; it is all woven together into a single fabric. Consequently, even if you are so constituted that you can only see one small part of reality, yet if you make it your whole endeavour to state that part with absolute accuracy *and without saying anything you do not mean*, you will not be able to help suggesting the whole truth. This is a very important fact. Its application to English Literature is as follows : that you cannot write well and truly of death without suggesting the resurrection. Let us say that you are absolutely incapable of 'seeing' the spirit that rises as the body falls, and that you are rigidly determined to say no more than you know. You may put it in the simplest terms that you can find, stating the bald fact that such and such a being was and is not. And all the time there will ring through your words something of which you had no idea, the overtone, the music, the glory of the spirit that rises as the body falls. The art of Literature is not much more after all than an exceptional faculty for utterance that is honest, absolutely honest with one's whole self. And so, if there exists in you somewhere a real capacity for seeing the spirit, and you ignore it and try to write of death in the manner of your forefathers, you will not achieve this mysterious overtone. Many modern writers are unaware of this.

To understand English Literature, to acquire any sort of taste for it, one must really be able to appreciate this gentle art of *suggestion*. One must learn to read the thing that is *not* said and to see how important it is that it should not be said. Then one will appreciate that hovering lightness of touch which is the essence alike of English lyric and of English humour. One

will appreciate, for example, that remarkable old English carol of the *Seven Virgins* :

“ All under the leaves and the leaves of Life
I met with virgins seven,
And one of them was Mary mild,
Our Lord's mother of Heaven.

“ ‘ O what are you seeking, you seven fair maids,
All under the leaves of life ?
Come tell, come tell, what seek you
All under the leaves of life ? ’ ”

I will only pick out a verse here and there :

“ Go down, go down, to yonder town,
And sit in the gallery,
And there you'll see Sweet Jesus Christ
Nail'd to a big yew-tree.”

and so on, up to the last verse but two, the climax of the poem :—

“ Then He laid his head on His right shoulder,
Seeing death it struck Him nigh—
‘ The Holy Ghost be with your soul,
I die, Mother dear, I die.’ ”

We have reached the climax. And now how does the poem go on ? These are the two last verses :

“ O the rose, the gentle rose,
And the fennel that grows so green !
God give us grace in every place
To pray for our king and queen.

“ Furthermore for our enemies all
Our prayers they shall be strong :
Amen, good Lord ; your charity
Is the ending of my song.”

You see how it is. Nothing is said of the resurrection—and yet . . . Perhaps in this context, where the ultimate object is an earnest attempt to come nearer in all love and humility to the Spirit of a nation, it would not be unduly

flippant to say : ‘ the poet was too much of a *gentleman* actually to *mention* the resurrection ! ’

One could equally well take a poem by a living English poet—one of the most beautiful which the language contains.—I mean Mr. Walter de la Mare’s *Nod*.

“ Softly along the road of evening
In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age and drenched with dew,
Old Nod the shepherd goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
Their fleeces charged with gold,
To where the sun’s last beam leans low
On Nod the shepherd’s fold.

The hedge is quick and green with briar ;
From their sand the conies creep ;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon’s roses,
Yet when night’s shadows fall,
His blind old sheepdog Slumber-soon
Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet steeps of dreamland,
The waters of no-more-pain,
His ram’s bell rings ’neath an arch of stars :
Rest, rest, and rest again ! ”

In this case there is no outward sign that the writer is thinking of death at all. All is symbolism—suggestion—a kind of slyness. One need not labour the point further. The thing is in the very blood of English Literature. I am personally acquainted with a student who, after graduating with first class honours in English Literature, had the greatest difficulty in understanding the French ‘ Symbolist ’ movement in poetry, for the simple reason that he could not conceive of any other kind of poetry. It might just as well have been an Ink or Paper movement, for all it meant to him.

From what was said at the beginning it will be fairly clear that the interest of all this extends far beyond the limits of England. If Steiner was right, what we have been describing is not merely the English Genius but, in a deeper sense, Man—Man seeking to express himself as he unfolds the Consciousness Soul. And we will ask again: What is the typical experience of the consciousness soul? It is the experience of nothingness—of having no content “perhaps I am not.” It says uneasily: “for one thing is certain. I do not *know* what I am. I only know what I am not!” To this we may add what is not yet perhaps a typical experience, but an occasional one, a possible one. Out of the nothingness and uncertainty overtones begin to sound forth, bringing with them an extraordinarily sweet certainty of their own. At first this may be a certainty of pure *feeling*, and then perhaps a conviction, an absolute knowledge, of the truth that resides in beauty and imagination. This is the stuff of which the English Romantic Movement was made. “I am certain of nothing,” wrote Keats in a letter (and he meant every word literally) “but the holiness of the heart’s affections, and the truth of imagination.”

But human consciousness can never, in its forms of expression, come to a state of rest. The moment it seeks to do so, it begins to degenerate. How common an experience it is for the individual to discover something new in his inner life, some fresh experience such as may come from a piece of music or a mountain, and to say to himself: ‘Ah, now I have got this! I shall always be able to return to this for fresh inspiration, or to restore the equilibrium when things are awry.’ And then he finds that this is not the case at all; the more he seeks to draw from the treasured memory, the more flaccid and lifeless it becomes. No. He is obliged to metamorphose it, to give it new life by incorporating it in other experiences, if it is to remain a real inspiration.

It is the same thing with the march of human consciousness as a whole. And in this way we can understand the tragedy of

the Romantic Movement. For this movement first arose out of the fact that human forces which could no longer find any expression for themselves in the increasingly abstract forms which European thought took on in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that these forces broke through these forms, smashed them up, and made of the pieces a vessel of a different kind that was better able to hold them. This new vessel was imagination—symbolism. For Literature it meant the finding in words of other meanings than the superficial reference. All over Europe there was a flaming up of enthusiasm, and one may perhaps see in Blake's picture *Glad Day* a sort of prophetic vision of these flames. But now in our own times we are living out the tragedy. For on the one side is an intense desire to retain this romantic-imaginative consciousness, and the will to keep it sacred, as something quite apart from the scientific-logical element in experience. And yet on the other side it is being steadily undermined. A wealth of ideas which have sprung up since Keats's day (for example, ideas connected with the *demi-mondaine* sciences of psychology and anthropology) are all tending to do to Romance that most dangerous of all things, to explain it! At the same time we find a tropical growth in the practice of introspection, which leads to the same end. One could mention Mr. Aldous Huxley as a striking example of this gnawing desire for romance living in perpetual strife with a psychological necessity for introspection. Now one way of approaching anthroposophy is to see in it the solution, or, since that has a somewhat facile sound, let us say the λύσις of this tragedy of Romance.

It will be easiest to plunge *in medias res* and to enquire precisely what Steiner said of the further development of the human Ego beyond this stage of the consciousness soul. We have arrived, then, at the point of development at which the macrocosm is so to speak focussed to an invisible point in the isolated Ego. What next? The answer of anthroposophy is

that there are two alternatives open to it : ultimate death or nonentity on the one hand, and on the other the first step towards an expansion outward again to the macrocosm—an expansion of such a nature that the centre and source of life is henceforward within instead of without.

Steiner spoke of future as well as past stages of evolution, and we may now add to the six principles of the ' scheme ' given at the beginning, the three which are concerned with future development. Thus we have :—

Remoter future	Spirit Man	
Seventh civilisation	Life Spirit	←
Sixth civilisation	Spirit Self	←
1450 A.D.—Our own period	Consciousness Soul	←
750 A.D.—1450 A.D. Græco-Roman period	Intellectual Soul	←
Egypto-Chaldean period	Sentient Soul	←
Ancient Persian period	Astral Body	←
Ancient Indian period	Etheric Body	←
Remoter past	Physical Body	←

To the unfolding of each of these principles a whole period of civilisation, lasting over 2,000 years, has been or will be, dedicated. All these periods themselves are for the most part recapitulations of infinitely longer periods of development, which took place in the remote past. Such was the account of the Earth's history which Steiner gave, claiming to speak not from theory, but from direct knowledge. There is no verifying it, except by experience of the same kind. Failing that experience, everyone must decide for himself whether or no it appears reasonable ; and these essays will have succeeded if they show how reasonable it can appear, when worked out, in at least one direction, into detail.

From this completer point of view, which directs our gaze to the remote future, we can see how the three soul-principles, sentient soul, intellectual soul and consciousness soul, are really regarded more as stages on the way to the ultimate transformations than as ends in themselves. And it will be noticed that

with the consciousness soul we have (for the first time in the long period specially under review—more than 8,000 years) a working back into the lowest, or rather the *earliest*—for in a sense the physical body is the most perfect of all—of all the human principles. With this fact there are two important matters connected.

It is with the working of the Ego right down into the physical body that the impulse to *self-knowledge* first really becomes a serious matter. Now it is, to take one example, that man demands to know, that he *must* know, more of the way in which the reproductive part of his organism pulsates through the whole of his soul-life. Psycho-analysis is a symptom of this necessity. Anthroposophy differs from it in realising that genuine self-knowledge is another name for the knowledge of higher worlds; for the microcosm is the germ of all worlds. It is good to bring to the surface of consciousness the hidden workings of the body, but only if one is prepared to go further and unmask in that body itself the hidden workings of the spiritual Hierarchies. Secondly, if we realise that the Consciousness-Soul age only began in the fifteenth century, and that we are still only in its first quarter, we can see the importance of an understanding of English History since this date. The history of England from the fifteenth century, when it first began to play a leading part in Europe, down to to-day, is the history of the consciousness soul in its nascent condition. It is therefore an important study, not for English people alone, but for all. For we are all in the *age* of the consciousness soul, whether we like it or not, and by studying an element in its nascent condition we can often learn things about it which can be learnt in no other way.

In the present day this nascent or 'unconscious' development of the consciousness soul is drawing to a close. The instinct for self-knowledge, one might say for the body, is growing at a rapid pace and undermining not only 'Romantic' experience, but all experience of an emotional

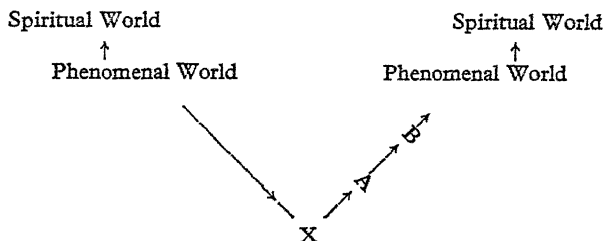
nature.* People can no longer say, with Keats, "I am certain of the truth of imagination." No. They must know *in what way* imagination is true! Otherwise they cannot feel its truth. And here it is that the enormous difference between the consciousness soul and the intellectual soul begins to appear. If we ask for the *meaning* of something, it is to the intellectual soul that we must go for an answer. The consciousness soul can suggest and depict—but it cannot utter. It is to the intellectual soul that we must look for our answer to questions concerning the *meaning* of Romance and Imagination or (which is the same thing) to the question "in what *way* is Imagination true?"

For consider: anyone who objects to this statement that imagination is true, will probably do so on the ground that imagination is entirely an inner, 'subjective' activity. That is indeed the ordinary meaning of the word—especially of the adjective 'imaginary.' In seeking to answer the above question, therefore, we are brought up against the whole question of the relation between 'inner' and 'outer' in human experience, between the 'objective' and the 'subjective.' The consciousness soul cannot tackle this question. It is already cut off. Subjectivity is its essence, as I have tried to explain. But in the Intellectual Soul, as was said near the beginning of this essay, we have the human Ego still actually in process of being 'cut off' from the macrocosm. It is to the intellectual soul, therefore, that we must look for an understanding of these questions and an answer to them.

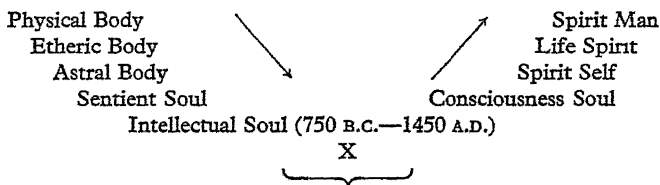
Anthroposophy is, in one sense, the intellectual soul speaking to the consciousness soul. It is the science of meaning. "In genuine creative imagination" it says to the consciousness soul, "you are already taking the first step towards reunion with the macrocosm; for it is not man alone who creates in Imagination,

* See C. S. Lewis's Riddell Lectures (*The Abolition of Man*, Oxford University Press, 1944) for a wonderfully firm and powerful exposition of this fact and its inevitable results.

but Nature herself!" Let us, for the moment, express the whole course of human evolution in the following diagram :



Then, if the point A is the consciousness soul, B represents the developed consciousness soul, the consciousness soul on its way to becoming what Dr. Steiner once called the 'Imaginative soul.' And at X, which marks the intellectual soul, we have, says anthroposophy, the human nadir, the true mystery of the resurrection, the mystery of the New Man from the Old. Let us look at it historically :



Then we see how it is that the intellectual soul has an understanding of this great problem of the relation between a 'subjective' and an 'objective' world. It has this understanding, because just at the time when it blossomed on Earth, that question arose, and arose not as a matter of knowledge but as a matter of action. It arose and was answered, not by words, but by a deed. This deed, the incarnation of Christ in a human body, and subsequently in the aura of the Earth, was the solution in fact of that divorce between a subjective and an objective world which had only recently arisen in human experience. We may put it another way. In the last great period of civilisation

a question stood before the whole Earth—the question whether it should henceforth have any *meaning*. And the question was answered by the deed of God, who brought meaning to the Earth from the Sun. In our own period the *same* question stands before, not the Earth, but individual souls, and must be answered, not by God, but by themselves. Yet it is the God Who gave the Earth its meaning in the age of the Intellectual Soul, the Græco-Roman age, who has also made it possible for them to give the positive answer now. That is the teaching of anthroposophy, as I understand it ; and its whole object is to give what assistance it may to humanity, to the humanity of the Consciousness-Soul age, in answering that question.

THE FORM OF *HAMLET*

Some years ago Mr. Clive Bell, who is sometimes regarded as an expert in the subject of Aesthetics, wrote a book called *Art*, which attracted a good deal of attention. The burden of it, if I remember rightly, was that a work of art is to be distinguished from all other things (including cheap imitations of itself) by the possession of something which he called "significant form." My impression is that if the reader went on to ask the question: significant of *what*?—he got his knuckles smartly rapped for having already left the sphere of pure art and departed away into philosophy, which is, of course, a miserable abstract science that has nothing to do with Art. I think the book consisted largely of reasons why it was better *not* to say anything else about works of art except that they had "significant form."

The impression which Mr. Bell succeeded in making with his phrase proves that 'form' is a very suggestive word. Most modern writers on art try to conjure with it in one way or another; I have done so myself; and I only pick out Mr. Clive Bell's book because it happens to be a particularly good example of the sort of disability under which people labour who write authoritatively and at length on something, in the existence of which they do not believe.

What is form, the form of a work of art, the form of anything? I think it is fairly safe, to begin with, to say that it involves some kind of unity in variety. Neither mere unity nor mere haphazard 'multeity' (to borrow Coleridge's word) have form, but something between the two. The one theme, with many variations, this is not only the basis of all musical form but the basis of all form. So far, if it can be called far, all are agreed. It is when the critic seeks to go beyond, or to apply, this elementary maxim that he commonly gets into difficulties.

This is especially so in the case of literature. For what is it that makes the form of a play or a poem into a real solid *thing*, something to be reckoned with, something that is able, so to say, to send a little shiver down the back? What is it that gives life to a work of art? It is, that the unity which is at the base of its form is itself a real being. At the lowest it must be a part of the author's own being, informed with his own life, so that if you prick it will bleed. At the highest it will be something altogether beyond any one personality. But it will be a being, not an idea.

Whereas the only unity which your modern critic can conceive of as underlying a literary work is—an idea. Hence his difficulty. Supposing, for example, that we were to have had a really deep experience, a specifically artistic experience, of the unity which underlies all the rich variety and seeming inconsequence of the play *Hamlet* and that we were then to approach this experience, armed with the above conception of form as 'unity in variety', in the hope of throwing some light on it. Well, our efforts to name the mysterious unity which we had experienced would end, inevitably, in our turning it into an idea, a theory. We might, for instance, try and demonstrate that some such notion as 'uncertainty' or 'mutual distrust' was the theme of the play and seek to show how this same theme is variously expressed in the characters of Hamlet, Laertes, Ophelia, Polonius and so on. All this is very interesting while we are working it out, but we have only to forget it for a moment and go and see (or read) the play itself again, the whole play and nothing but the play, and the theory suddenly crumbles through our fingers. It looks hopelessly thin, dry and mouldy. It explains nothing, has left everything that matters out. It is simply talk. We feel all the discomfort of the eminent zoologist who, on opening his study door one day, found awaiting him not the MS. of his new book on the Lion, but a lion.

As a reaction against this somewhat doctrinaire interpretation of form (it is the type of criticism which tends to conceive

of writers as having a 'purpose' or 'message') there is another way of approaching the problem of the nature of art, which has come to the fore more recently. This second sort of criticism approaches 'form' more from the genetic point of view. It asks, not so much what form is, as how it came into being, and the reply it gives is that the artistic activity is a function of 'the Unconscious' and that artistic form is the product of the impact of this dreaming, unconscious part of the self upon its ordered and conscious, waking world. It is the unconscious caught in the act of becoming conscious.

Here again, however, as in Mr. Clive Bell's case, a certain amount of tact or awe seems to be demanded of the student. He is not to inquire too persistently what is meant by 'the unconscious.' At any rate, the more he does inquire, the more he finds himself fobbed off with all sorts of 'impulses,' 'tendencies,' 'complexes,' 'states of the organism,' 'hypnoses,' 're-integration of the personality at a higher level,' and so forth, which are really not a whit more concrete than 'uncertainty' or 'mistrust.' There is indeed a curiously close resemblance between the writings of the modern whole-hogging psychological critic and the stiffer sort of medieval allegory, in which such abstractions as 'Courage' and 'Fear' are brought on to the scene to fight a full-dress battle for the vacillating soul of the hero.

This is a good example of the way in which ordinary present-day ideas, striving as they do to limit themselves to the sense-world even when considering things which are *ex-hypothesi* supersensible, are brought over and over again into an *impasse*. From such tight places the transition, as into another dimension, into the anthroposophical world of ideas appears to those who are familiar with it to be not only natural but inevitable. Thus, whereas from one point of view the works of Rudolf Steiner seem full of the strangest stuff, from another he seems merely to utter what is trembling on everyone's lips.

What is 'the unconscious?' Anthroposophy *answers* this question. It answers it with a library. The unconscious is the

whole world of spiritual beings, of the Folk-Spirits, the Time-Spirits and the Hierarchies above and below them. It tries by all the means in its power to make exactly clear the ways in which these beings are related to each other and to man, and the part they have played in his evolution. We learn from it that they interpenetrate with the human Ego in a way so foreign to the physical world that, although they are *other* than self, it is correct (speaking from the point of view of everyday consciousness within the body) to say that they are experienced *within* the self.

The same spiritual world is there as the unconscious part of every human being. But among human beings there are some whom we call geniuses. In such beings the world of spiritual beings has already begun to break through into the conscious self. They are therefore able to create form.

So, too, there are among geniuses certain great representative ones—it may be, nationally representative—such are Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe. And again, among the productions of these representative geniuses there are certain specially typical or representative ones—as the *Divine Comedy*, *Hamlet*, *Faust*.

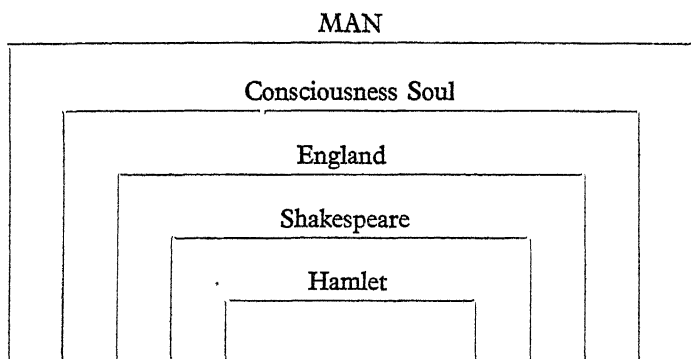
In the case of such world-famous productions of the human imagination as these latter are, we should expect to find, and we do find, that that which constitutes, if I may put it in rather an ugly way, their representativeness, is also that which constitutes their unity—the unity underlying their artistic form. And so, making use of anthroposophical ideas and the anthroposophical vocabulary, we are able to say that the one spiritual essence which gives life to the play of *Hamlet* and which at the same time makes it so typical, so representative, can be properly named the Spiritual Soul or the Consciousness Soul.* We ask : what is the consciousness soul ? Anthroposophy replies neither with silence nor with the pat scientific substitution of another

* According to which translation we adopt for the German *Bewusstseinseele*. I have taken "Consciousness Soul," which seems to me to be a more appropriate term when it is the *past* that is in question.

name. It does not say "there is no answer," but it does say that the answer cannot be given in a formula, in one chapter, or even in one book. Just because the consciousness soul is not a subjective idea but a real being, Steiner did not attempt to reveal its nature by a definition but by approaching it from continually new directions, under new aspects, in new environments, new departments of its activity. Thus, the answer is in the library. There, if you are interested enough to seek for it, you will find it. From such a course of lectures as the *Karma of Materialism* and again from the book *Mysticism and Modern Thought* the fact will become apparent that the consciousness soul is that part of the whole human entelechy which comes to expression in the history of the world during a period beginning in the fifteenth century and extending far into the future beyond our own time. Again, from the course entitled *On the Altered Conditions of the Times*, the consciousness soul gradually takes form as the principle in the human being which expresses itself more particularly in the nature of England and of the English Genius ; while from reading such fundamental works of Steiner as *Theosophy* and the *Outline of Occult Science* (from these but also from scattered references in many other books and courses—the selections I am making are fairly arbitrary), it is made clear how the consciousness soul is the part or principle of man by virtue of which he acquires a separate and independent consciousness, a separate mental existence. Now for the first time a completely self-conscious Ego *detaches* itself from the rest of the spiritual world which rules in his unconscious. Fully responsible at last for his own actions, he is deprived of the instinctive guidance of spirits, even including his National or Folk Spirit, on whom, up to now, he has leaned. This is described in an illuminating way by Steiner (in this case actually with especial reference to Hamlet) in the first lecture of the course on *St. Mark's Gospel*. Living in the consciousness soul man experiences isolation, loneliness, materialism, loss of faith in a spiritual world, above all—uncertainty. The soul has to make up its mind and to act

in a positive way on its own unsupported initiative. And it finds great difficulty in doing so. For it is too much in the dark to be able to see any clear reason why it should, and it no longer feels the old (instinctive) promptings of the spirit within.

We must conceive of this being, this living mansion, so to speak, of the spirit of man as present in the fullness of its power just below the crust of Shakespeare's waking consciousness, and we must conceive of it as the spiritual unity which, in the act of breaking through to the surface of that consciousness and stamping itself upon the sensuous manifold which constitutes our daytime world, gives rise to *form*—to the form of the play *Hamlet*. Diagrammatically the representative nature of Hamlet may perhaps be expressed as follows :—



If it seems perverse to speak of the soul-principle by which man becomes self-conscious, as being itself present *in the unconscious*, it must be remembered that Shakespeare lived in the very dawn of the Consciousness Soul age when it was still, so to speak, within the womb. That his imagination was secretly pregnant with the whole nature and history of the age that was to follow him, this is at the base of that modernity and vast forward reach which has surprised so many critics. That he was *unconsciously* the bearer of—consciousness ! this is at the

bottom of what is often baffling and even unsatisfactory about him. This, I believe, is why sometimes, after reading or seeing a play, we have the uneasy feeling that Shakespeare does not *mean* anything. He has nothing to say. His characters know what they mean and can utter it in the most beautiful language. They know also what they want, have individuality. Not so the author. He is indeed "not one but all mankind's epitome." He has no existence apart from the characters. He will be as *you* like it, undertake what *you* will; but he has no like or will of his own. Such at any rate is the impression left by his work as a whole—with the possible exception of the Sonnets. If we can imagine a state of *mere* consciousness without any individuality, without any will, then there we have Shakespeare.*

It is particularly interesting to observe how this mood of isolation in excessive consciousness, of individual uncertainty, of 'will-lessness' is what gives the play of *Hamlet* its characteristic 'form.' So much so, that critics who are insensitive to this mood are often heard complaining that the play has no form, that as a work of art it is a failure. For example, the farewell scene between Ophelia and Laertes and between Polonius and Laertes is often criticised as a mere excrescence and the same has been said of the scene between Polonius and Reynaldo, in which the former directs Reynaldo to spy upon Laertes' doings in Paris by employing all sorts of exceedingly cunning pretences and devices. Such critics do not see how the reciprocal relations between Ophelia, Laertes, Polonius and Hamlet are carefully modulated variations of the central consciousness soul theme of isolation, uncertainty and distrust of all outside the self, including other selves.

* I realise, after having written it (and gladly acknowledge the forgotten debt), that this is almost exactly the point of view taken by Mr. Middleton Murry in his admirable book, *Keats and Shakespeare*. Mr. Murry, however, would not have agreed that there is anything unsatisfactory about such a state, which indeed he identified with poetic inspiration, and with much more.

From the mild but nevertheless slightly stinging retort made by Ophelia to Laertes :—

“ But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven ;
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And reck's not his own rede.”

to Laertes' stilted and even priggish sowing in his sister of distrust for Hamlet's motives—thus revealing at the same time his own lack of confidence in *her* :—

“ Perhaps he loves you now ;
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will : but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;

.....
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.

.....
Be wary, then ; best safety lies in fear. . . .”

it is really remarkable how the whole speech is directed towards inculcating *fear*. Laertes is a “ Safety First ” man. From the careful watering of these seeds of misprision by old Polonius (“ Aye, springes to catch woodcocks ! ”) to Ophelia's perhaps weak abandonment of her faith in Hamlet and too ready obedience to her father, the whole scale is played, until the diapason closes in the pathetic scene, not actually played on the stage but described so graphically by Ophelia herself, in which, after she has suddenly returned him all his letters and gifts, Hamlet comes to her in his wild and dishevelled state, seizes her hand and simply stares questioningly into her eyes :

“ He took me by the wrist, and held me hard ;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm ;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so ;

At last—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down—
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
And end his being : that done, he lets me go :
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes ;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me."

Superficially we know that Hamlet is asking himself—and the eyes—the question : Are you honest ? Have you simply been acting in obedience to Polonius's commands ? Or are you after all only a heartless coquette ? But actually—and this comes out both in the quality of the poetry and in the whole structure of the play (the *place*, for instance, at which this speech occurs) he is asking much more than this. He is asking the question : Is there such a being as Ophelia at all ? A body no doubt ; I have hold of it ; but is that island inhabited ? He is being forced back into an unwelcome solipsism. He looks into her eyes and he asks the question that is asked, in this age, many thousands of times a day all over the Western world by people who cannot see the other being—the telephone question : "Are you there ?" And so we are led by this play through the whole gamut of uncertainty and mistrust, not excluding the central uncertainty of all—Hamlet's mistrust of the revelation he receives from the other, the spirit-world from which, as from his fellow creatures, he is severed by his excessively insulating self-consciousness.

In the same way it has often been complained that the episode of the Players' entrance and their long practice speeches made at Hamlet's request is tacked on for no artistic reason and spoils the shapeliness of the play. Critics who make such a complaint have not noticed what the First Player's speech is about. Let us consider it for a moment. Hamlet himself selects the particular passage to be spoken, from which we see that a dim recollection of the scene it conjures up is already

running in his mind. But with what else has his mind been pre-occupied? With the practical result of uncertainty—indecision. He has come to the moment in his life at which his destiny calls on him to act, to act positively without excessive hesitation, without being held up and paralysed by an excess of sympathy with the other's point of view (*mere* consciousness). The world of Denmark is out of joint and *his* action is needed to put it right. He does not want to. He wants to do nothing, to retire, to have, or say he is having, a nervous breakdown. Moreover, he himself is alive to this danger; he knows well that alleged moral scruples may mask a mere supine inactivity—that “conscience” may “make cowards of us all.” He knows that he is in need of a little ‘ruthlessness.’ Instinctively, therefore, he draws on the Player to put before him an imagination of the opposite state of mind to this of his own; and the Player at his request recites that scene from the fall of Troy, in which Pyrrhus has to kill the aged and venerable Priam—as Hamlet knows *he* ought to kill his uncle. The verse describes in ranting terms how Pyrrhus seeks out Priam amid the smoking ruins and strikes at him, and how, though he strikes wide, the old man falls “with the whiff and wind of his fell sword.” And now comes the crux of the speech. Pyrrhus pauses. He is, so to speak, becalmed.

“ . . . for lo ! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick :
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood ;
And like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.”

This is the picture with which it is so important that Hamlet should be confronted. For it is an imagination of his own condition. It is surely no accident that the last two words are given a line to themselves.

What does this mean for the *form* of the play? We are nearing the centre of the drama. And now there is put before

Hamlet's soul the very picture of the crucial moment of the consciousness soul. It is his chance. Lost in uncertainty, no longer moved by divine promptings or commandments from within, the dramatic question that stands before him is the question whether he will now choose to act and to act out of his own initiative ; not for any abstract reason or logical compulsion but freely imitating a picture set before him and *known* ("What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?") to be no more than a picture.

For myself at any rate this has long been one of the most dramatic moments in the whole play. In this moment, Hamlet *is* the Consciousness Soul. He is every soul that has lost all its bearings, all its motives and springs of action, its very *raison d'être* and which now has indeed to decide for itself the stark question "To be or not to be." The soul has to assert its own existence as a separate, self-moved, spiritual entity. Nobody else will do that for it. But it can find no *reason* for asserting itself and its own existence—no balance of pleasure over pain and so forth.—If it could, it would not be consciousness soul, and (what matters) it would not be free. Reason compels. Instead of reasons, therefore, it has pictures set before it—imagination or examples, which it may imitate in freedom if it chooses. Such imaginations, mirroring its own true nature, are—other souls, the events of history, inspired works of art. In fact the play of *Hamlet*, properly understood, may itself function as such a picture. It may bring to the consciousness of its spectators in the age of the Consciousness Soul the drama of their own souls, just as the play in the play was used to "catch the conscience of the King."

In order to make it perfectly clear what is meant, a further distinction must be drawn here. Hamlet has been called 'representative' of mankind as a whole at this particular stage of their development. He is so in the sense that not only he, but every soul, in order to become a free, self-moved moral

agent, must first go through this purely negative experience—must be ‘becalmed.’ Every soul is faced at some time with this problem of transition from obedience (whether the obedience was to instinct, to the Law, or to a categorical imperative) to free imitation. And the imitation will always be of some picture or example. But inasmuch as he is the *representative*, Hamlet is also more than a mere random *sample* of Consciousness Soul humanity. As the type and symbol of this experience, his crisis must represent the experience in its intensest possible form. And this is achieved by Shakespeare’s selecting as the particular picture which is set before Hamlet at the psychological moment, not the soul of another human being, not the Christ, not any symbolical glimpse of the glorious future open to his soul, but simply a stark imagination of *the bare consciousness soul experience itself*. Hamlet is shown, in the picture of Pyrrhus, the bare sequence. Action—paralysis or becalming—renewed initiative and action. And that is all. That is the only imagination that is put before him—his own experience. For there is certainly nothing very admirable or inspiring *per se* in the deed which Pyrrhus performs.

Involution, a sort of Chinese box structure, is thus characteristic of the whole form of this play. What is its central point, the crisis in the middle of the third or middle act? It is the play within the Play; and the plot of this play within the Play recapitulates in brief the story on which the Play itself turns. And as if this were not enough, this play within the Play is itself preceded by a Dumb Show (the play within the play within the Play) which recapitulates the same plot more briefly still. I am not concerned to suggest that Shakespeare was fully aware of all he was doing, but there is no question that the form of *Hamlet*, taking the word ‘form’ here in quite an obvious, external sense, is able to cast an almost magical spell—especially on the young. It induces a sort of ‘ecstasis’—a sense of looking on at ourselves in the same moment.

What does Hamlet himself do at this crisis of his life? He fails. He does not imitate the imagination. The Player's speech goes on :—

“ But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region ; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work ;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour, forg'd for proof eterne,
With less remorse, than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.”

The words “ with less remorse ” should be especially noted. But, unlike Pyrrhus, Hamlet does not take any action. He only curses himself for not doing so. He needs something to *drive* him to action. He needs a violent force of external circumstances, such as was provided by the King's treacherous plot through Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern, the pirates' attack on his ship, and again at the very end of the play.

Hear his own account of some of the things that happened on the voyage to England :—

Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them ; had my desire ;
Finger'd their packet ; and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again ; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission ; where I found, Horatio,
O royal knavery ! an exact command,—
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
Importing Denmark's health and England's too.
With, ho, such bugs and goblins in my life,
That, in the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Being thus be-netted round with villainies,—
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,

They had begun the play—I sat me down,
Devis'd a new commission, wrote it fair. . . .

I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal ;
Folded the writ up in form of the other ;
Subscrib'd it ; gave 't the impression, plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known. Now the next day
Was our sea-fight ; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

The sea-fight he had already described in a letter :—

Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike
appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of
sail, we put on a compelled valour ; in the grapple I boarded
them ; on the instant they got clear of our ship, so I alone
became their prisoner . . .

Promptitude, courage, startling initiative, and after it is all
over a curt, pungent report of the incident—a masterpiece, as
Coleridge has pointed out, of coherent brevity ! Here is the
amateur introvert of the *Elsinore* soliloquies in rather a different
light ! Certainly he is not the man to set right a disjointed
world by obeying the summons of a purely spiritual intuition ;
but let someone else ' begin the play ' ; demand of him a *compell'd*
valour ; put him to sea with the toughest definite job to
do and in the tightest possible corner you can think of—and
you get the Nelson touch.

Perhaps enough has now been said to explain the difference
between saying, on the one hand, that ' uncertainty ' or ' mis-
trust ' is the theme of *Hamlet* and, on the other, that it is a repre-
sentation of the consciousness soul. But it is by no means all
that could be said. There are many important aspects and
qualities of the play which have not been touched.

A recent reviewer in *Punch* concluded his criticism by
recounting, apparently with some self-approval, that he could
not say how the final scenes of the performance under notice
had been played, since he had followed his usual practice of
leaving before the gravediggers' scene, thus escaping the vulgar

ranting about death and the melodramatic claptrap which mar the conclusion of this otherwise fine play. This critic was, I think, an exceptionally insensitive one. Others do at least accept the gravediggers and the pile of corpses at the end as an integral part of the play, even if without quite knowing why. The truth is, of course, that *Hamlet* without the gravediggers, without the whole atmosphere of death and corruption which permeates the play even into the very metaphors which the poet selects, and of which the scene in the graveyard is not more than a fitting climax—*Hamlet* without all this is only a little less inconceivable than *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark.

Our immediate and quite unsophisticated perception is enough to tell us that this is so. But it is quite another matter when we attempt to explain why. And vagaries such as those of the *Punch* critic suggest that we are reaching a stage when attempts will have to be made to explain why. For, crude as such criticism may be, we must at least accept this about it, that it is there. It is written, and it is read. The time may come therefore when it will have to be answered.

The objection that the gravediggers' conversation, Hamlet's soliloquy over Yorick's skull, and the fight in the grave are mere sensations, introduced without reference either to the plot or to the inner psychological development of the play, is at first sight plausible. Certainly they cannot be derived from the 'uncertainty' theme and, as long as we see no further than that they will also be felt to mar the unity of the play. But, as has already been pointed out, to say that *Hamlet* is a representation of the consciousness soul is to say very much more than that it is built up on the theme of 'uncertainty' or 'diffidence.' That is only one aspect of the consciousness soul.

From other of Steiner's numerous writings (and this time I find myself at a loss for specific quotation) it can be seen how intimately related is the consciousness soul to the experience, and especially the imaginative experience, of death. Of the many startlingly obvious truths to which Steiner was nevertheless

alone in drawing attention, there is none more paramount to the whole of human experience than the truth that consciousness, based as it is on a perpetual wastage of the nervous and sensory tissues, is a direct concomitant of—death. Other Central European psychologists have spent their lives indicating out of a muddled sort of empiricism that there is *some* vague connection between the unconscious life of the soul and the metabolism of the body. Steiner, beginning his investigations before psycho-analysis was heard of, had set in a beautifully clear light before he died the truth that—reflected physically in the cerebro-spinal system and the metabolism—Consciousness and Life stand at dead opposite poles. There is not space to go further into this here, but to grasp the nature of this conscious principle of the human being is to perceive at the same time, and now not merely æsthetically but with the intellect too, how perfectly appropriate all the gruesomeness in *Hamlet* is, how even the flavour of rant and exaggeration (which was obviously imparted deliberately by Shakespeare)* is appropriate, as delicately stressing the fact that it is the *imaginative* experience which is pointed to. Regarded as an event, the fight in the grave is, of course, preposterous. It is neither actually possible nor (what is twice as important) artistically convincing. As an imagination, however, it is colossal. The very stage direction, the laconic “*leaps into the grave*,” has an electrifying effect on a reader, coming precisely where it does in the play.

It is interesting in this last respect to contrast *Faust* with *Hamlet*. Nothing more opposite could well be conceived. Where *Hamlet* has death in every line, *Faust* has life in every line. From the wonderful moment of the outburst of the Easter hymn near the beginning of Part I to the very end of the Second Part, we are constantly being overwhelmed, positively submerged in deep floods of life. And the two characters are a no less perfect contrast than the plays. They are not so much

* Hamlet actually cries to Laertes : “Nay, an thou’lt mouth
I’ll rant as well as thou.”

opposed to one another as complementary. They are like Jack Sprat and his wife ; each lacks all the qualities which the other possesses, and possesses all the qualities which the other lacks. Both together would make a whole man.

It is, for instance, nowhere indicated that Faust found any difficulty in asserting himself. This seems to have come to him as naturally as breathing. He soars freely above it. His problem, which he only succeeds in mastering near the end of the Second Part (when he gives way to the old couple) is to become able to do something which Hamlet simply cannot help doing with every other word he speaks—that is, to display a piece of ordinary generosity. We again see how much wider a thing these characters are than any theory of them. How is this open, generous quality in Hamlet's nature related to the main thread of his character ? The very acuteness of Hamlet's consciousness of his surroundings has this effect too, that he *lives* much in them. He is interested in the people he meets, critical and penetrative of their absurdities and dishonesties, but generally speaking in a kindly way. Thus, the nothingness of his own soul has its good side. Above all, he is interested in people *for their own sakes* and not with any conscious eye to their possible part in his own destiny. When they come in, we feel he is glad to see them.

Whereas the mood and manner in which Faust's character is drawn leave the impression of its being doubtful whether—when not under the influence of infatuation—he is ever really glad to see anyone, except possibly his own face in a mirror. Of course it is in a way absurd to react to Faust personally in this way. But, as far as it goes, the comparison stands and is, I think, 'significant.'

Again—and this takes us still further away from the 'uncertainty' motif—Hamlet seems to possess in a marked degree the virtue of constancy. It is the Saturn virtue. Somehow through all Hamlet's weakness we feel the bracing, astringent power of that death-nature which permeates the

consciousness soul. This is really a deep meditation. Life as such, whether it be the life of an organism or the biography of a human being—or even perhaps the life of a Society—always has the metamorphic tendency. Its nature is to keep passing into ever new forms, to divide and again to subdivide. It is a good thing to be “lebendig,” but a living creature is held together, kept from mere riotous multiplication, only by its death force. It is the skeleton which binds the body together and keeps it on the earth. It is the force which we acquire from having, or having had, a skeleton which makes constancy and stability possible even in the spirit.

It would be possible to continue making cursory observations of this kind, but they lack force unless each can be traced separately from the roots of the play in the same way as has been attempted in the case of that aspect of the consciousness soul's manifestation which can be called ‘uncertainty.’ For it is not that it is incorrect to say that the theme of uncertainty is there, but only that it is incomplete. If it were said that this is *the* theme of *Hamlet*, it would be both incorrect and cramping to the imagination. For there are all these other themes as well. That is the difference between a work of literature which has form and one which merely has doctrine. It is the difference between myth and allegory. A doctrine or a ‘message’ in a work of art only says one thing ; and when the thing is said, it is said. So too, a being who is the allegorical personification of, say, ‘Courage,’ has only one quality—courage ; only one function—to be brave. Whereas the ‘Nemean Lion’ or the mythical figure of Hercules, though they mean that, mean very many other things too. Thus, with a play such as *Hamlet*, which rises to the imaginative level of a Greek myth, criticism which treats it as mere allegory or mere doctrine will maim the play and cramp the reader's appreciation. Whereas criticism which treats it *as* myth, criticism which sees underlying its form not a theoretical but a spiritual unity, will be in a position to illuminate *all* the meanings which it contains, instead of only

one, and will enable us to trace them out more distinctly, if we want to.

Such criticism may itself rise to the level of an art. For it will each time come back from its journeys out into the particular aspects of the myth to the centre again, returning as in a dance to the underlying spiritual unity and bringing light from without to assist in raising the hidden centre to consciousness. And, in looking at a work of art, it is precisely when we are aware of having enjoyed such an interior dance that we know we are in the presence of 'form.' Only the unity to which we return must be, however dimly apprehended, not an idea but a spiritual being.

A spiritual being? Let me add in conclusion that the understanding of the nature of the three 'Souls' is immeasurably deepened when they are related to the three mysterious female figures, *Philia*, *Astrid* and *Luna*, who appear in Steiner's Mystery Plays. In particular the figure of *Luna*, together with the fourth figure, 'the other *Philia*,'* is important for an understanding of the consciousness soul. He is especially careful to affirm of these three characters that they are *not* mere symbolic or allegorical figures but actual individual beings. How can a principle of the human being, a stage, so to speak, in the development of his consciousness be at the same time a Being? This is an exceedingly difficult thought and I do not profess to be able to think it through, though I believe there must be a sense in which it is true. I come nearest, however, to being able to understand it along such lines of thought as I have attempted to put forward here.

* See also *The Inspiration of the Divine Comedy*, page 120 *et seq.*

OF THE INTELLECTUAL SOUL

I have previously pointed out that the great outburst of feeling and enthusiasm which marked the turn of the eighteenth century, and which we may loosely describe as the Romantic Movement, is for us to-day a tragic spectacle ; and further that the increasing impulse towards self-knowledge is tending to undermine by 'explaining' Romance. I have suggested that anthroposophy is a genuine solution of this tragedy, describing it as the 'science of meaning' and again as 'the intellectual soul speaking to the consciousness soul.'

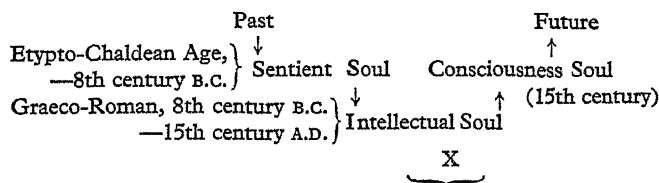
It will now be necessary to try and give some clearer idea of what the last phrase means. I say 'try' because there is really, by the very nature of the subject, an almost insuperable difficulty about describing or 'explaining' the intellectual soul, as seen from within, that is to say, from the Ego itself. It is much more a question of living with certain kinds of thought for a long time, turning them over and over, concentrating on them, relating them to ever fresh phenomena of inner life and outer observation, and so on. And then this understanding of the Ego-intellectual-soul nature grows up of its own accord.

One can, for instance, reflect, not once, but many times, on a curious fact that penetrates nearly all our experience. I mean the fact that what one *is* one cannot at the same time contemplate, or experience in full consciousness. We must be in some sense outside an experience—it must have become a memory—before we can realise its objective nature and significance. Those who are interested in problems of artistic creation and criticism will have a ready approach to thoughts of this kind, but they can also be understood out of the feeling life as a whole. From this one can go on to dwell on the opening chapters of St. John's Gospel and feel how, according to the author, this same fact is at

the heart of all creation. The light, the divine creative principle, was in the world—in a sense, it *was* the world, for through it all things came into being—but the world *knew it not*—was not conscious of it.

Again (to take an example), one can, if possible, immerse oneself in the whole nature of Greek thought, experiencing how the more self-conscious, Socratic intellection emerges gradually from the dreamy, Platonic mind. One can feel the significance of such an historical fact as the following: On the one hand the philosophic problem of an opposition between “subjective” and “objective” was not heard of until the time of the Stoics, and on the other hand it is in this same sect that we first meet with a theory of the divine Logos. Men begin to be *conscious* of an indwelling creative principle, precisely as they *begin* to feel themselves detached from it.

Now, if one throws upon all that one knows of history the light that comes from an intimate acquaintance with such thoughts as these, then one can see the inward meaning of the scheme which was given in the essay on the Consciousness Soul (I will remind the reader of the three crucial periods):



The result is that one begins to assert with confidence, and out of one's own experience, that *some* remarkable event must have taken place at ‘X,’ some gift of power to arise from the depths, some passing over of life and meaning from the macrocosm to the microcosm, some mystery, let us say, of resurrection. And then the question arises, not so much, do I believe in the Gospels? but rather “How far do the Gospels present a consistent and illuminating account of just such an event?”

In this way questions of faith, belief, and knowledge take on rather a different complexion ; and we begin to grasp the true nature of *certainty*. Certainty of knowledge must be a very different thing in the Consciousness Soul age from what it was in the age of the Intellectual Soul. And this, I think, is felt instinctively by all minds which are in any sense abreast of their time, whether their bent be scientific or romantic. The consciousness soul will only say "I know," when it can add : "because I have experienced."

Thus, the ability to say 'I know what happened on Golgotha' really depends, for the consciousness soul, on having experienced it. Experienced, not suffered (though there must of course have been some suffering with it). It is painfully easy to-day to write glibly about Christ. Every quill-driver, who has just discovered that life is not all beer and skittles, rushes into the market-place to explain that he has been 'crucified.' For that reason I want to emphasise that what I mean here is rather a thought experience than an emotional one. To do so is neither to be emotionally casual nor to overlook the supremacy over both thought and emotion of the moral issue. Only it is impossible to say everything at once. Elsewhere I have stressed the fact that a pristine motion of good will towards others is a condition precedent to self-consciousness itself* and therefore to knowledge and the certainty that comes with it. Beyond that, the decision to *imitate*, taken irrespective of belief or knowledge, is for the consciousness soul the typical moment of *μετανοία*—repentance, or change of mind.† But once that moment is past, the most inflexible and lasting choices of the will are those which originate in response to neither emotion, exhortation nor command, but because of knowledge. Before such decisions can be taken the eyes must be opened, the mind, as the idiom has it, 'made up.' After they have been taken, the heart will be warmed and strengthened in ever increasing

* See, in this Book, Coleridge's 'I and Thou.'

† See *The Form of Hamlet*.

measure by circumstances themselves, alike by success and failure, happiness and dismay. It will be found that all creation is in the conspiracy to satisfy and uphold them.

Certainty, then, about the central event of the Intellectual Soul age is only possible, when we have, so to say, recapitulated the event in consciousness. It is only possible, when we have re-experienced as a problem of consciousness what was once a problem of history. The historical problem was the problem of the resurrection—the problem of establishing a living umbilical connection between macrocosm and microcosm, in order that life might pass from one to the other. It is easy to see how this problem, when we recapitulate it in consciousness, must be the problem of “subjective” and “objective.” In what way does the macrocosm, the world which presents itself as “outside” me, live in me, so that it is indeed I, so that its tremendous forces are some day to become the forces of my will? *In what way* is imagination “true?”

And the first step towards the solution of this problem is the grasping of a right theory of knowledge. The mind which has grasped a right theory of knowledge, and has *experienced* it, that mind is on the road to certainty—the only kind of certainty that is open to the consciousness soul—because it has begun to overcome the barrier between the objective and the subjective worlds.

Now the Romantic Movement never properly crystallised into a theory of knowledge. In this country—apart from Coleridge—there was hardly even the desire for such a theory. But in Central Europe it was somewhat different. Apart from the group of Romantic philosophers, Goethe, with such conceptions as that of the ‘exact percipient fancy’ and with all his scientific work, brought an initial confidence in the truth of imagination at any rate to the verge of a theory of knowledge. And Steiner, in his *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, carried it over that verge and established it firmly in the promised land of philosophy. Almost from birth Steiner had felt it as his task

to break down the theoretic barriers between the objective and the subjective worlds and he had hardly reached the age of thirty before he succeeded. His subsequent work—the fruit of his own method of knowledge—enables one to perceive, among other things, how infinitely much is hidden behind this apparently trifling phenomenon, the divergence in the paths of development taken by the Romantic impulse in this country and in Central Europe. Bernard Shaw has used the phrase ‘condensed recapitulation’ to describe the course which evolution takes. And this is the principle which we always find at the heart of that larger, all-embracing evolution of the world and of humanity, the *evolution of consciousness*, which Steiner depicted. Thus the achievements of the two great periods which preceded our own—the Egypto-Chaldean and the Graeco-Roman—are in a sense picked up in the present age by different parts of Europe. And we may, I think, conceive, in general, of the sunny Mediterranean lands south of the Alps as the home of a Sentient Soul development, while the continent north of the Alps and West of Russia is peculiarly the vehicle for the Intellectual Soul. The British Isles develop the Consciousness Soul in the age of the Consciousness Soul.*

Thus it is in Central Europe that we find this instinctive impulse to grasp the *meaning* of life. And this comes out, not only in vast highbrow philosophical “Strömungen,” but in all sorts of delightful little ways. Notice, for instance, how fond its inhabitants are of such words as “significant” and “deep” (*tief*). We have only to cast our minds back to the scheme of evolution depicted earlier in these articles, with the Intellectual Soul at its inverted apex, and we can see how natural it is that

* The only definite pronouncement of Steiner’s with which I am acquainted on this subject is a lecture in which he gave Italy as the Sentient Soul and *France* as the Intellectual Soul nation. The peoples of Central Europe were carriers of the Ego itself. It will readily be seen, however, that from the present point of view—the resurrection point of view, if I may so call it—the relation between intellectual soul and Ego is peculiarly close. The mystery of the resurrection is the mystery of the Ego. Compare *The Inspiration of the Divine Comedy* at page 133.

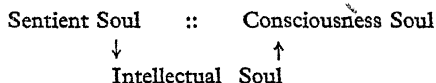
they should all have this vague instinctive sense of living over a dark, unplumbed abyss. This is the abyss in which all those 'deep' meanings to which our attention is constantly directed will somehow, they believe, be found, this is the abyss into which Faust descended to find the Mothers, and in which Goethe discovered the Primal Plant. This is the abyss from which the fashionable theory of the Unconscious was muckraked up by the Freudians.

'O Mensch! Gib Acht:
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?
Ich schlief—ich schlief!
Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht!
Die Welt ist tief,
Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht:
Tief ist ihr Weh—
Lust—tiefer nach als Herzeleid!
Weh spricht: Vergeh!
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit—
Will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit.'

One might almost say that the Ego in Central Europe lives always at the point of incarnation, and the Intellectual Soul is that point. It is as if constantly surging up and down between life and death. It is naturally adapted therefore to understand the Johannine mystery of the light shining into the darkness, the mystery of resurrection, the mystery of meaning. And it is to the culture of Central Europe that we in the West must look if we would find the actual concrete *meaning* of life—the living heart of nature—the Eternal Feminine.

We in the West are so placed that, as our self-consciousness increases, we feel: over there is the material world, all that I experience as sense-perception and ordinary thought, and over here is the "I," a mysterious entity (perhaps non-entity) about which I can never know anything, and between the two there is no connection. Sentient soul: consciousness soul. At best we can jump restlessly to and fro from one to the other. It is only as we get nearer to the true heart of Central European culture,

it is only as we begin to penetrate the loving darkness of the intellectual soul, that the connection between the two, which is indeed *Ourselves*, begins to glimmer into conscious experience.



Then we begin to understand that another relation between the senses and the too acutely self-conscious Ego is possible, besides that unhappy jumping to and fro which characterises the life of the modern intelligentsia. For we begin to understand how we can resolve the two once more into one. We go back now to all the richness and colour of the sentient soul, but in such a way that it is redeemed. Sense-perception has become spiritual perception. And this is precisely the dramatic choice which lies before Imagination, as the Romantics understood it. Either it must go boldly forward and turn itself into clairvoyance (for clairvoyance is a partial reunion with the macrocosm)—or it must fall back and become—at best idle fancy, at worst sensuality.

The last act of this tragedy is performed over and over again—every time an ego which has begun to live intensely in the consciousness soul tries to turn back, to turn back, as it were, *directly* to the sentient soul, without deepening itself in the intellectual soul first. The Western Ego repudiates the earnest search for the meaning of life, repudiates all that Central Europe stands for in the history of modern European culture, and seeks instead a place in the sun—in the old easy-going *instinctive* imaginative experience of the sentient soul. If one wished to sum all this up in a kind of occult formula, one might say: “The Englishman should travel to Italy—but he should go by way of Central Europe.” The other route is a tragic one. And we can trace the tragedy of it far back into the earlier days of consciousness soul development, back even to the time when no other route was possible.

To understand the cultural relations between England and Italy one must, I think, realise that for the spiritual life of the ordinary Englishman Italy is a kind of *temptation*. Just as in our own day the English critic gives up Coleridge for Croce, just as we have Mr. Chesterton and his school of beer and tobacco Catholics, with their intense dislike of Teutonic culture, succumbing to the same sensuous Roman temptation, so a little while back there came the Oxford Movement in Religion and the pre-Raphaelite movement in art, both tending to a simple, but affected and essentially rootless Romanticism. The *struggle* against temptation comes to light with peculiar force in a soul such as Cardinal Newman's.

But the extraordinary thing is that we find this same tragedy further back still. We find it, for instance, in John Milton, whose relations with the culture of Italy were so close that he wrote poems in that language which won high praise from Italians themselves. In Milton the struggle between sentient soul and consciousness soul never ceased, and indeed gave rise to his finest poetry. Over and over again, while the Puritan in him wished to reject as unlawful the beauties of the senses, there was something else, a deeper voice, which told him that these beauties must have a spiritual reality of their own. Alike in his life and in his poems the discord is always there, sounding through the rest. It comes out in the rhetoric of *Comus* and hovers behind the magnificent dialogues of Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*. And it is peculiarly noticeable how Milton often brings forward his glorious wealth of pagan imagery with a half disapproving air. He never fully resolved that discord—and it was out of his perception of this failure in the great poet's life and experience that Blake subsequently wrote his poem, *Milton*. It is especially significant (especially 'tief') that both poets should have been 'modern', inasmuch as they remained throughout unable to shake off a certain preoccupation with the matter of sexual indulgence. One cannot help wondering what it might have meant to both of them, but especially to Milton—

if time had been kinder and allowed them to encounter the spiritual voluptuousness of, for instance, Novalis.

In this way we gradually begin to behold the inter-play between the three soul-principles more as a moving historical spectacle. Can we not almost see with our eyes the warm brilliantly-coloured Italian painting of the Madonna working its way underground up through Provence, through the medieval French courtly tradition, to blossom at last in the pure inward experience of Goethe's 'Eternal Feminine,' or in that profound imagination of Isis which runs so curiously through Novalis's work?

At the same time we can begin to understand the real significance of a phenomenon which punctuated the transition in another part of the world—Puritanism. It really is more useful to try and understand what Puritanism means than to sneer at it. Puritanism went furthest in scouring the last echoes of the senses from the religious self, as English philosophy went furthest in scouring them from the speculative self. We may perhaps grasp its true meaning best in an imagination—if we think of a vast empty whitewashed cathedral, with every carven image removed, with not a single object to catch the eye, and, whispering and welling out through the living space beneath the dome, re-filling it, so to speak, out of the depths of the Ego itself, the grandeur of a Bach Fugue or the rich feminine tenderness of one of his Cantatas. Milton loved playing the organ. And again the picture dissolves into an image of the *human* temple. Body and soul are swept and garnished; vanished are the last echoes of the unredeemed senses of the old Adam. The temple is empty—ready at last to be re-filled with the voluptuous yet pure imagery of the soul's own conscious making.

And so once again we are brought back to the mystery of the resurrection, of the passage through the little wicket gate from the old man to the new. And we see the relationship between consciousness soul and intellectual soul in yet another

light ; for the consciousness soul is the little wicket gate, and the intellectual soul is the passing.

What has been spoken of here as the resurrection might also be called the resurrection of the body ; for that is the full re-union with the macrocosm. It seems as if minds which pass beyond a certain level of sublimity acquire as of right a presentiment of this final goal of creation, and it is interesting to compare the way in which this presentiment echoes in the language of two representative poets. First Novalis's *Hymn*, of which I have attempted to give a very free English rendering, though it is unfortunately hard to imagine a more untranslatable poem, and I am only too well aware that nearly everything is lost :—

HYMN

Very few listen
To the secret of love,
Feel the unquenchable
Undying thirst !
The Supper
Hath a heavenly meaning
Passing the understanding of the senses.
Yet whosoever
From hot and dearest lips
Hath drunken breath of life :
Whose heart the holy glow
Hath ever melted into tremulous floods—
Whose gaze hath risen
Even to heaven,
Plumbing its fathomlessness,
Will eat of his body
And drink of his blood
Everlastingly.
How few have guessed
The holy meaning of the earthly body !
Who dares
To say he understands blood ?
One day—all body—
One body . . .
A blissful pair

Swimming in heavenly blood—
Oh ! that earth's pale seas
Were flushing *now*
And into odour-dropping flesh
These rocks were passing !
Fair never-ending meal !
For love can never take enough.
Nearer ! More in me ! More mine own,
Beloved !
By softer, ever tenderer lips
The elements are changed
Inwarder—nearer—
Fiercer and fiercer longing
Thrills through the soul :
Thirstier and hungrier
Grows the heart.
So must love's banquet last
From eternity to eternity !
Had the abstemious
Only tasted,
All would they leave
And would sit down with us
To the table of love-longing
That never is bare.
They would hail love's magic bounty
And praise their commons
Of body and of blood.

Is there not, in this poem, a certainty, a grounded *knowledge* ?
It is not content to stop in imagination and hint and suggestion.
One feels that its meaning, its *openly expressed* meaning, reaches
right down into the solid earth and again right up into the
empyrean. It is the resurrection of the body—in terms of the
body.

Over against it let us set the song from Shakespeare's last
play, *The Tempest*, which is so full of invisible meanings.

' Full fathom five thy father lies ;
Of his bones are coral made ;
Those are pearls that were his eyes.
Nothing of him that doth fade,

But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell :

Burden : Ding-dong.
Hark ! now I hear them—Ding-dong bell.

Now this song is not of the earth at all. It never touches earth. Everything in it is imagination, hint, suggestion. The deeper meanings are not expressed but rather fly off like the invisible vapour from the surface of volatilising spirits. This is the resurrection of the body in terms of pure imagination.

'Puritanism'—'pure'—the words themselves give us a further clue to the manner in which intellectual soul and consciousness soul dovetail into and complement one another. It is the function of the intellectual soul to inspire—of the consciousness soul to correct. Only the intellectual soul knows what is the meaning of life—but the consciousness soul knows what is *not* the meaning of life—and therefore either is helpless without the other. Earlier I said that we in the West must go to the culture of Central Europe to find the meaning of life. Yes, but we shall find it in solution with all sorts of waste matter—nonsense, sentimentalism, credulity, ruthless egotism. We ought to be able to purge it of this dross. In this connection we might consider one of those little peculiarities of expression which often tell us so much. There is a word which springs very naturally to the lips of English people endeavouring to characterise their general impression of German literature, and that word is "earthy"—not "earthly," which is something quite different. I cannot go into it further, but one can see at once that this is a quality in which the good and evil elements are likely to be hard to disentangle. Even in the *Hymn* of Novalis, which has just been quoted—one can feel how open it would be to a false, or too easy reading. In a sense one has the feeling that only dead people ought to be allowed to read this *Hymn*. This is where the consciousness soul, like a spiritual

policeman, steps in. It never forgets death. It is not going to allow us to forget that, before there can be a resurrection, there must be a death. It knows at any rate what is *not* the meaning of life; and so it keeps a humorous, suspicious, weather-eye open, and if it finds the intellectual soul groping secretly backward to the sentient soul—if, for instance, it catches the Eternal Feminine crystallising too easily into the pretty lady, it picks up a death's head, strikes an attitude, and with a certain grim satisfaction, declaims: "Now get you to my lady's chamber and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come!"

In a word, the Consciousness Soul strives to purify by baptising in the waters of Jordan. We might say that the Central European 'should not travel to Italy until he has crossed the Channel.' It is perhaps no more than an accident that Shakespeare's poem is as watery as Novalis's is 'earthy.' But we may remark in passing that the unsatisfactory interpretations to which the former is open are of quite a different order. The danger here is that the poem may seem to have *no* substance—so that, for example, I might be accused of fancifulness for connecting its meaning with the resurrection of the body at all. And yet every day we find more and more that we cannot do without substantial certainty upon these great subjects. We must have the substance of knowledge, the substance of meaning, not only its beautiful overtones and shadows.

Anthroposophy, arising out of Central Europe, contains in it precisely this substance of knowledge; so that the soul which makes anthroposophy a part of itself gradually begins to *know* this mystery of the emergence of the old man from the new as a fact of concrete experience. For it begins to grasp meaning, not merely in those abstract shadows of thoughts from which the intelligentsia are already beginning to shy, but in that concrete thinking which reveals itself as being functionally related to (for instance) the breathing. Thus, it does not merely read about the light shining into the darkness, inter-

penetrating the darkness, but experiences the process—experiences it, for example, as the counterpart of its bodily breathing. Gradually it begins to feel the inbreath as a light experience, as a red experience, as the old man, and the outbreath as a dark experience, a blue experience, as the new, resurrected man. Upon such a soul the meaning of the old prophetic exhortation “Know thyself!” suddenly dawns in its full reality, as it perceives that all genuine wisdom involves the overcoming of precisely that dilemma which was referred to at the beginning of this essay, where it was said: ‘What I *am* I cannot at the same time experience or contemplate.’ The human heart *can* overcome this dilemma. It is a contradiction which would only be really true of a creature without a heart, without any rhythmic experience of heart or lung. Man need not be such a creature. Nor need our civilisation. If anthroposophy remains true to itself, over in the centre of Europe the Goetheanum should stand as the heart of an otherwise ever more heartless civilisation. The consciousness soul, critical without being negative, can see that it does remain true to itself.

Of course it will make nonsense of all this if it is taken in such a way, as to think: Yes, all English people have the consciousness soul strongly developed, and all Central Europeans the Ego and intellectual soul. They mean much rather that the nature and function of the consciousness soul can be *better understood*, if the English culture is sympathetically grasped, the intellectual soul, if French and German culture are so grasped. ‘We’ means, not so much ‘we English’ or ‘we Westerners’ as ‘we anywhere in the world who are Western in spirit or Westernized by tradition.’ It would be equally false to read into what has been said any sort of political meaning. In this connection a final word remains to be added.

I have been treading to a certain extent on dangerous ground. When we turn our minds to the description of national characteristics, passion and prejudice die hard. The elimination of bias is a much harder matter than those imagine, who, having

achieved a superficial smear of the anti-nationalism that is given away nowadays with a pound of socialism, smile complacently at anyone who demurs to their facile manifestos. Even if we feel pretty confident that the super-national conceptions of Spiritual Science have already given us complete 'objectivity' in these matters, we shall do well to be especially on our guard. Perhaps then more than ever. National pride works underground and penetrates to surprising depths, nor is it in absolutely every case love of our *own* nation which blinds our critical faculties.

At the end of the essay on the *Consciousness Soul* I ventured to describe anthroposophy as 'the intellectual soul speaking to the consciousness soul.' In front, so to speak, of this idea I should now like to place something in the nature of an imagination. Let us try to call up two divinely tall spiritual forms, and suppose them meeting each other for a moment in the intricate figure of a dance. And let us suppose that this dance is also a choral hymn, so that these two gracious, serenely moving spirits interchange not merely motions and positions, but words. As they meet, the Spirit of the German Nation calls across to the Spirit of the English: "Seek life! Know thyself! Go down with Faust to the Mothers, to the Eternal Feminine, go down into the teeming earth and rise again in full certainty, having found both thyself and the world. Take the confidence that is based on this knowledge. Know thyself! Seek life!" And the English Folk-Soul calls back: "Seek death! Yes, *know* thyself and the world! Do not merely *believe* in the old way, substituting one creed for another. Rather live in the very breakdown of all belief. Even encourage thine own opposition, as men do in games. Immerse in the destructive element! And so learn to tear thy true self free from all thought and all feeling in which the senses still echo. Leap, with Hamlet, into the grave, in order to wrestle there. Seek death!"

In such a way, starting from what we know best, we might gradually learn to fill in the rest of the picture, until that greater

imagination, of which Rudolf Steiner once spoke, of *all* the Nation-Spirits moving in solemn dance round the blinding brilliance of the Central Figure, should stand before us in all its majesty and terror and yet at the same time in all its little and intimate charm.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE *DIVINE COMEDY*

In the last of Steiner's four Mystery Plays a figure appears on the stage, whom we have not hitherto seen, called the " Spirit of Johannes Thomasius' Youth." The spirit makes two or three very brief appearances and each time it is in connection with another character, who bears the strange name of " the other Philia."

It is noticeable that in the list of dramatis personæ prefixed to the second and third plays " the other Philia " is described as " the spiritual being who hinders the union of the soul-forces with the Cosmos " ; this is in clear contrast with her three companions, Philia, Astrid and Luna (recalling the sentient, intellectual and consciousness souls), who are described as the spiritual beings who mediate that union. In the dramatis personæ to the fourth play " The Souls' Awakening," on the other hand, the same being is described as " the bearer of the element of love in the world to which the spiritual personality belongs." No explanation is offered of this apparent discrepancy.

Those who have seen or read " The Souls' Awakening " will certainly recollect those musical words of the other Philia, which run through the play as a sort of refrain :

Und wachendes Träumen
Enthülle den Seelen
Verzaubertes Weben
Des eigenen Wesens.

of which a rather lame translation would be : " And may waking dream unwrap from souls the enchanted weaving of their own nature." Now it is in the second scene of this play, while Johannes is murmuring over to himself these lines, which he has just heard spoken by the " other Philia," that the spirit of his youth first appears. The spirit explains that he is kept alive

by Johannes' wishes and nourished by the dreams of his youth (*Mein Atem schlürfet deiner Jugend Traume*). And he implores Johannes not to forsake him, leaving him to do service to the cruel shadows.

In a later scene Johannes, under the impression that he is listening to the other Philia, awakes to find that the voice is that of his own Doppelgänger or double, who then at once leads him before the Guardian of the Threshold. The Guardian explains that this shadowy double can only be freed from "enchanted worlds of soul" (*Seelenzauberwelten*), if Johannes will kill out of himself the wishes which still accompany him on his path of spiritual progress. Until that happens, Johannes will be led each time, not over the threshold, but past it. The Doppelgänger, too, is connected with Johannes' past. He says to Johannes: "Leave to its life in the realm of shadows that in yourself which is lost to you. But give it light from your Spirit light, for then it will not have to suffer pain."

So there are two beings connected with Johannes' youth—parts of himself, it seems, which he has left behind as he grows older, but which he has left behind in the wrong way. They are forced to lead a shadowy and painful existence from which they seek redemption. And they are nourished by the youthful wishes and hopes which are still not quite eradicated from Johannes' soul. What is to be done with these beings? The wishes and hopes themselves, says the Guardian sternly, must be killed before the threshold can be crossed. It seems to follow that the Doppelgänger and the Geist von Johannes' Jugend are to be simply starved to death. But this is a hard saying, in view of the dramatic sympathy which they have been allowed to excite. We expect, and in the tenth scene we get, some further reference to the "redemption" which has already been spoken of.

It appears that the instrument of this redemption is to be the other Philia. She tells him that he himself has created the Doppelgänger out of himself and she goes on to say that she (the other Philia) must remain with him as long as shadows continue

to surround him—until he himself redeems the shadow into which his guilt has breathed an enchanted life. We begin to gain a little insight into the two different descriptions of her given in the *dramatis personæ*. She tells him what to do : *Gib mir, was du dir denkend selber bist*, and then she explains who she is :

I am in thee, a member of thy soul. I am the power of love in thee, the heart's hope which stirs within thee, the fruits of long past lives on earth which are preserved in thy being ; oh, behold them through me—feel me in thee and behold thyself through my power in thee.

Gib mir was du dir denkend selber bist . . . Give to me what thou thyself thinking art to thyself. The line is reminiscent of one of the thought-weighted lines from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and is equally untranslatable. What does it mean ? In the superficial sense this is clear enough ; but its *content* will depend on the wealth of emotional and imaginative experience with which anyone can relate it. With this in mind, we may begin by asking : Do we know of anyone who has actually done what the other *Philia* bids *Johannes* do, when she speaks this line, who has redeemed the spirit of his youth, or who has at any rate done something very much like it, taking into account the different circumstances of the age in which he lived ? And if we have really felt and understood some part of the great poem to which I have just referred, I think we shall be able to answer : Yes, we know of, at any rate, one such person ; we know much of him ; and his name is Dante Alighieri.

Most people know that the *Divine Comedy* is divided into three long books called the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*. The details of the story which they tell are not so well known. At the opening of the *Inferno* the poet describes how in the midst of the path of this life he came into a situation, a "dark forest," in which his courage failed him. The scene changes to heaven, where the Virgin Mary, who has observed his trouble, sends a messenger to Beatrice, herself also in heaven,

to enquire why she is doing nothing to help her former lover. Beatrice summons the Spirit of the Latin poet, Virgil, from the region on the outskirts of hell, where he dwells with the other virtuous pagans, and bids him encourage Dante. Virgil descends and does so. He tells Dante that he will show him the whole universe, both the sorrowing and the rejoicing. The poet is at first reluctant but on his hearing of Beatrice's intercession, all fear is dispelled.

The rest of the *Inferno* describes Dante's journey through hell under the guidance of the Latin poet and his encounter with the various types of sinner who inhabit the different circles of hell. Dante's hell is much more varied than the "everlasting bonfire" which is commonly imputed to the medieval imagination. It is located in the interior of the earth and only some parts of it are involved in flames, the inmost circle (where Judas and Satan are found) being a place of freezing cold. When Satan fell from heaven, he fell head-first, and, penetrating the earth's crust at a point in the southern hemisphere, which is the antipodes of Jerusalem, he finally came to rest with his head and shoulders in the hollow of hell which had been prepared for him in the interior of the northern hemisphere, while his nether extremities stretch upward into the south. When, therefore, Dante and his guide, who of course start their journey from Italy in the northern hemisphere, reach the centre of hell, they come upon the head of Satan. This happens in the last book of the *Inferno* and there follows a brief, grotesque, yet somehow awe-inspiring account of the continued journey of the two poets past the earth's centre of gravity, when Virgil, who is leading, astonishes Dante by turning round and apparently standing on his head (*sotto sopra*), and *up* Satan's huge and hairy legs, flying in the dark from frozen shag of hair to frozen shag—until they emerge beneath the stars of the southern hemisphere at the foot of the mount of Purgatory. The mount of Purgatory is comparatively small. It was thrown up, like a sort of molehill, when Satan's fallen bulk suddenly penetrated the mass of the earth. The

ascent of the mount by the two poets and their encounters and conversations on the way is the story told in the *Purgatorio*.

Purgatory is the country of the soul, as the heaven of the *Paradiso* is the home of the spirit. The mountain is cut into a series of terraces (in the old prints it looks rather like a wedding cake) and on each terrace there are souls being purified by suffering from all traces of the different grades of sin. A soul which has been but slightly affected by any particular sin only stays a short time in that particular circle. It remains longest in the circle which corresponds to its besetting vice, but its time may be shortened even there by the prayers of the living. On the summit of the mountain is situated the Garden of Eden, for at the end of its path of purification the soul regains the pristine innocence from which it fell through Adam's transgression. This is the *earthly* paradise. It is in the earthly paradise that Dante's first meeting with Beatrice since her physical death takes place. She approaches in a car drawn by a grifon, the animal symbolical of Christ Himself, amid crowds of blessed spirits flinging flowers. She comes from the spirit world of the *Paradiso*, to which Dante is about to ascend with her. Her car is symbolical of the Church and the reader can already see her in the light in which she is to appear throughout the rest of the Divine Comedy—as the embodiment of divine wisdom or revelation. But for Dante in the earthly paradise at this moment she is still a Beatrice of the soul-world. The language in which he describes the scene is closely reminiscent of the account which he had already given in an earlier work, the *Vita Nuova*, of their first meeting upon earth. At first he does not see her face, for she is veiled. The revelation which she is to be is still scarfed in a cloud of the bewildering wishes, hopes and fears which once beset his awakening adolescence. But already, before she unveils, Dante feels her presence through some hidden virtue that goes out of her. "I felt the might power of ancient love," he says. *D'antico amor sentì la gran potenza*.

He turns to Virgil like a frightened child, crying : “ Men che
dramma

Di sangue m'è rimaso che non tremi ;
Conosco i segni dell' antica fiamma.”

Less than a drachm of blood is left in me that does not
tremble. I recognise the tokens of the ancient flame.

He turns with these words to Virgil, only to find that Virgil
has disappeared ! It is a poignant moment ; doubly so when
the last words are recognised as a quotation from Virgil's own
Aeneid.* The name “ Virgilio ” echoes like a dirge through
the succeeding terza, in which Dante bemoans the loss of the
“ dolcissimo patre ” who has been his help and stay so long.
But Virgil has done his task and can go no further. Henceforth
Beatrice is to be the guide.

We are now in the 30th Canto of the *Purgatorio* and nearing
its end. Beatrice begins by chiding Dante for his shortcomings
since her death. He has plenty to weep for, she says, besides
the loss of Virgil ! Dante is overcome with shame and misery
at the thought of all that he has become since that first meeting
and since he lost her. He is bidden to look on her and, on
raising his downcast head, sees how she now surpasses her
earthly self in beauty as much as she formerly surpassed all
other women. His remorse becomes so bitter that he loses
consciousness. At last he is allowed to be plunged in the waters
of Lethe, which wash away all memory of sins, except as occasions
of divine mercy. And when he emerges, it is to see Beatrice
gazing on the grifon and Christ reflected in her eyes.

“ A thousand desires hotter than flame held my
eyes fast bound to the shining eyes, which remained
ever fixed upon the grifon.”

There is nothing more about trembling blood. The poet
is ready for his journey to the stars. •

* *Agnosco veteris vestigia flammae*. The words are spoken by Dido
to her sister Anna.

It is important to gain a clear picture of the scene in which the Divine Comedy is laid and through which Dante's journey proceeds. It is nothing less than the whole universe of Ptolemy, whereof the earth is at the centre surrounded by nine concentric spheres. The first six of these are the spheres of the planets, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the three outermost spheres are those of the Fixed Stars, the Primum Mobile and the Empyrean. The centre of gravity of the earth, therefore, is the centre point of the whole universe and it is here that, at the end of the *Inferno*, Dante encountered and passed the source of all evil (Satan) congealed, as it were, in the maximum condensation of matter. Henceforward his path is outward from the centre towards the circumference, slowly at first, as he winds his way with Virgil up the comparatively diminutive cone of the mount of Purgatory until, caught up into the spheres with Beatrice from its summit, he traverses in a series of effortless leaps (*salite*), of which more hereafter, the enormous distances between the orbits of the planets, in each one of which he stays some while. At the beginning of the 11th Canto, having reached the sphere of the Sun (which is the fourth planet outward from the earth in the Ptolemaic astronomy) the poet takes a look backward and downward at the earth and apostrophises the insensate care of mortals hurrying to and fro on their mundane affairs.

Quando da tutte queste cose sciolto
 Con Beatrice m'era suso in cielo
 Cotanto gloriosamente accolto.*

While freed from all these things I was high in heaven with Beatrice so gloriously received.

Each sphere is inhabited by different ranks and orders of the spirits of the dead and in each one Dante meets and

* I give the Italian in many of these quotations in the hope that their cumulative effect will convey to readers unacquainted with Italian some impression of the weight and resonance of that musical language in which, the vowels always predominating, every syllable is given its full and distinct value.

converses—often at very great length—with some who on earth were either known to him personally or, like Justinian and St. Thomas Aquinas, famous among all men.

Beyond the sphere of Saturn Dante and Beatrice come into the circle of the Fixed Stars and next into the *Primum Mobile*, the First Mover which, itself unmoved, is the source of all spatial motion. Here, in the 28th Canto, Dante describes how, as he was gazing into Beatrice's eyes, he beheld something reflected in them which made him turn his head to see what it was. He saw a point of light so intense and concentrated that an ordinary star as seen from the earth would appear as large as the moon beside it. Round the point of light nine circles of fire were swiftly wheeling. These are the nine hierarchies as manifested in the *Primum Mobile*. Dante notices that the inmost circle is the swiftest. He is told that this is because it is the most divine and therefore nearest to the centre. It is the circle of the Seraphim. Now the speeds of the Ptolemaic spheres through which Dante is passing are arranged in the opposite order. The *outermost* of these spheres (the Empyrean) is the most divine and the swiftest. Beatrice explains that there is indeed a correspondence between the hierarchies and the spheres, but he has forgotten, she says, that since he reached the sphere of the Fixed Stars he has left the world of space behind. His only "where" now is in the divine mind.

E questo cielo non ha altro dove

Che la mente divina.

Light and love encompass the heaven of the Fixed Stars even as it encompasses the other spheres and only He Who "Himself girdles this girdle" can understand it. Thus the point of light, is God himself. It is the non-spatial centre of the universe, just as Satan is located at the spatial centre. The innermost (in a non-spatial sense) of the fiery rings represents the Hierarchy of the Seraphim and corresponds with the outermost of the heavenly spheres; while the outermost ring (the Angels) corresponds to the innermost sphere of the Moon.

The conception, or rather the *experience*, of the Universe as composed of two interpenetrating contrasted worlds, one of them spatial and the other non-spatial, is one of the most striking characteristics of the *Paradiso*. The point is that *both* worlds are experienced objectively ; both worlds are experienced in that perceptual way in which the modern soul can ordinarily only experience one of the two—that of the senses. It is not simply that Dante expresses the *theory* that there are two such worlds (though, as we have seen, that is done—pictorially—in the 28th Canto) but rather that the whole style and quality of the poem, the choice of language and imagery, make us feel, as it proceeds, that we are actually living in two such worlds. To illustrate this in full, it would be necessary to pick out a line here and a phrase or word there throughout the poem and to write on them at some length. I will only give two or three examples.

When, to-day, we speak of “ seeing ” the truth, it is little more than a metaphor. Axioms and self-evident propositions are for us experiences of an inner subjective nature. But Dante makes us feel how, for the Spirits in his heaven, to say that they “ see ” the truth is a literal expression. Thus, in the 6th Canto the spirit of Justinian, describing how a contemporary had convinced him, while on earth, of the dual nature of Christ, adds : “ I believed Him and now I see clearly what was contained in His faith . . .

Si come tu vedi

Ogni contradizion e falsa è vera

“ just as you see that contradictories cannot both be true ! ” Observe the argument. I *believed* then, but *now* I see . . . I see as clearly as you on earth see . . . we should expect “ daylight ” or some similar comparison drawn from the perceptible world. Instead we get : “ That every contradiction is both false and true.” So in the Second Canto Dante, describing his entrance into the first heaven of the moon, uses the beautiful simile of a ray of light entering water : “ The eternal pearl (*i.e.*, the sphere of the moon) received us, as water receives a

ray of light and yet remains undivided." How was this possible, he asks, if I was in the body? And he adds: If we cannot conceive how two bodies can occupy the same space, that should fire us all the more with the longing to behold Christ, in Whom the divine and human natures are united. There what we hold by faith will be *seen*; not demonstrated but . . . again we expect a metaphor drawn from the vision of the physical eyes. Instead we get: "But self-known like an axiom" (*a guisa del ver primo che l'uom crede*)! For the poet himself the thoughts which come to him are not only "seen," they are *tasted*. He receives them and takes them into himself almost as the body takes food and in one place those which are difficult to understand are called "acerbe" (bitter). Still more striking is the line with which in the 10th Canto Dante designates the whole of creation:

Quanto per mente o per loco si gira (whatever revolves through mind or space).

Another quality which is characteristic of the Divine Comedy as a whole, but which finds its paramount expression in the *Paradiso*, is the perfect welding of lyrical emotion with intense, concentrated and (as we should say) *abstract* thought. Again the problem is to select examples which will tell, though taken out of their context. For an instance of the condensation of Dante's thought we may perhaps revert to the meeting, in the heaven of Mercury, with the spirit of Justinian, the imperial legislator.

Cesare fui, e son Guistiniano.

Che, per voler del primo amor ch' io sento,
d' entro le leggi trassi il troppo e il vano.

Cæsar I was, and am Justinian who, through the will of the primal love which now I feel, purged from the laws the excessive and the idle parts.

There is a long conversation between him and Dante. To begin with, Justinian briefly resumes the history of the Roman eagle until the time when it came into his hands. His narrative

reaches the reign of Tiberius, when the Roman power was allowed by *la viva giustizia che mi spira—gloria di far vendetta alla sua ira*.

“ By the living justice which inspires me the glory of avenging His wrath.”

From the intense concentration of thought embodied in such an allusion to the crucifixion as is contained in the line “ *gloria di far vendetta alla sua ira*,” the poem passes without strain or bathos to a description of Dante’s diffident desire to ask Beatrice to explain one of the difficulties that had arisen in his mind as a result of Justinian’s speech and the boyish shyness which comes over him

Io dubitava e dicea : “ Dille, dille ”

fra me, “ dille ” diceva, “ alla mia donna.”

I hesitated and said to myself,

“ Speak up, now, speak to her. Speak to my lady ! ”

She can’t eat you ! But his courage fails under that excess of reverence which overcomes him, even if he only hears detached syllables of her name such as “ Be ” or “ ice ” spoken.

Quella riverenza, che s’ indonna

di tutto me, pur per “ Be ” e per “ ice.”

Until she herself comes to his help, reading his thoughts and, radiating upon him (*raggiandomi*) a smile that would make one blessed even in the flames, immediately proceeds to enunciate in a long speech full of intellectual vigour and apt imagery the majestic drama of the fall and redemption of man. I do not know if such transitions would be possible in any other language. In the *Paradiso* all is carried forward without effort or strain on the never-ending stream of light and colour with which the poet’s choice of imagery fills the mind and the noble clangour of the sounds of which his language is composed. I wish there were also space to quote the beautiful simile of the two rainbows, one born from the other, which occurs at the opening of the 12th Canto. All the metaphors and tropes in the *Paradiso* seem

to have to do with light, colour or music. The spirits are referred to as "torches," "lights," "flames," "stars," indifferently and their movements likened to dances. Thus, when in the sphere of the sun St. Thomas Aquinas and a group of learned doctors approach, Dante describes them as being "like ladies interrupted in the dance (*non da ballo sciolte*), listening silently until they can catch the notes of the music again." And when the spirits resume their wheeling dance and song, they are "like the clock that calls us to prayer, in which one part draws and impels the other chiming 'tin tin' so sweetly that the well-disposed spirit swells with love."

tin tin sonando con si dolce nota

che il ben disposto spirto d' amor turge.

The question may be asked of Dante, as of other poets, how much of the quality of his work is due to his own individuality and how much of it to the age in which he lived. Instead of putting the question in that rather barren form let us approach the matter in another way. Let us suppose that one were to gather together all the threads of experience of many different kinds that come from the study and enjoyment of the Divine Comedy and place them side by side in the mind without, for the time being, forming any opinion. Thus one may set side by side, firstly the actual picture of the Ptolemaic universe as it is portrayed in the Divine Comedy, the picture of the nine heavenly spheres by means of which the nine Hierarchies work out of the spaceless into a space which has the earth for its centre; secondly, the intense, abstract quality of the thought and above all the objective perceptual way in which precisely that kind of thought is experienced, and thirdly, the peculiar fusion of just this seemingly abstract kind of thinking with *feeling*, with that intense lyrical feeling which presents itself to the imagination as the essence of all feeling. And then one can picture Dante on his journey through Paradise taking into himself, absorbing into his mind almost as the body absorbs food, this whirling world of hierarchies or "intelligences"

("Quanto, per mente o per loco si gira"), which is at the same time the *substance** of the phenomenal world.

And then, when this has been done, and the mind is resting, with full attention, but without undue theorising curiosity, in contemplation of these three qualities, it may happen to a student of Steiner's writings that another experience will come, a distinctively "anthroposophical" experience. I had almost said *the* distinctively anthroposophical experience. The three qualities may unite themselves with all that the imagination and memory hold between them of what Steiner described from so many diverse points of view as the intellectual soul. And in so doing they will become, not three qualities, but one quality—one single æsthetic experience. The concept drawn from spiritual science acts, in chemical parlance, as a "catalyst," fusing diverse substances into one, and it is in such experiences that I, for one, find the most convincing proof of spiritual science itself.

The age of the Intellectual Soul extended from the foundation of Rome to the 15th century. Dante lived and wrote at the end of the 13th century and at the beginning of the 14th. Steiner has, more than once, given an account of how in the latter part of the 4th Post-Atlantean era (that is, the age of the Intellectual Soul) a process was taking place which may be described as the incorporation of the cosmic intelligence into the human being. We can see from the *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*—and also from the study of psychology—how this absorption, or individualising, this subjectivisation of thought is accomplished. It is accomplished through the union of thinking with feelings or sensations (for sensation is, after all, only a hardened kind of feeling). In this way are produced those "after-images" of which psychology speaks and which become, at a later stage, "ideas." The shadowy world of ideas in which the modern mind lives and moves and has its being is a world for the most part of passive experience, but it had its origin in

* In the true philosophical sense—that which "stands beneath," or sustains—that which *is the ground of*.

the union of an *active* cosmic principle (that of concrete thinking) with the passive or sensational element in human experience. It need not then surprise us that in the Divine Comedy, and indeed in medieval literature as a whole, a type of thought which we must to-day classify as "abstract" should yet seem to have a living and even poetic quality. (It is along this line, too, that we shall best understand the medieval cult of allegory for which the present generation has lost all taste.) It is because the "abstract" thought which we meet in the literature of that time is *not yet* fully abstract ; it is still in process of becoming so, still active in its own noumenal nature, not yet spellbound by sensation into the form of idea.

Gradually, then, the *Paradiso* reveals itself as the dramatised picture of an historical epoch in the evolution of human consciousness—of that epoch which was itself a repetition or recapitulation in the *soul* of man of an event which had already taken place without his conscious participation at an earlier period, in Atlantis. Both the whole of the Divine Comedy and some of its smallest parts, as individual lines and even words, are alive with the urgency of this event. We feel it happening in the style ; in the genius of the Italian language at that date. We feel the Ego of man in the act of uniting with the soul of man, the Ego which is alike that in him which thinks and one with the substance of the universe by which, as a physically embodied being, he perceives himself to be surrounded in space. No wonder that we are struck with the perceptual, *recipient* nature of the poet's experience of the thoughts that come to him. No wonder that we are struck by that close welding of thought and emotion of which I have spoken. For the union of thought and feeling is the exoteric nature of the Intellectual Soul just as the union of the Ego with the soul is its inner nature or "mystery." The intellectual soul, writes Rudolf Steiner in chapter 2 of his *Outline of Occult Science* . . . "partakes of the nature of the Ego and in a certain sense *is* the Ego, not yet conscious of its spiritual nature."

In the preciseness of the visual representation and in other qualities of the poem, but above all in its light-filled imagery (the whole of the *Paradiso* is as if bathed in gold) something else becomes apparent to us. The Divine Comedy was written by an Italian. It is the paramount expression in literature of the sentient soul, just as *Hamlet* is of the consciousness soul and *Faust* of the intellectual soul. But unlike the other two, it was written *in the age of the Intellectual Soul*. It is the characteristics deriving from this last fact which are for us the most distinctive and the most difficult to apprehend with sympathy, and it is these which I have especially tried to delineate. I can understand many readers of Dante shrinking from subtleties of this sort. I can only say that to ponder on the Divine Comedy as the sentient soul flowering in the age of the Intellectual Soul has never done it any harm with me. I have only found it a richer mine than ever. And I must add that a distaste for subtlety of thought *as such* in any case is an absolute bar to anything like full appreciation of that poem.

It is a commonplace that the sequence of events in the Divine Comedy has, and was intended by Dante to have, more than one meaning. Thus, besides its literal interpretation as a description of the spiritual and material universe, it is throughout an allegorical representation of moral experience. For the modern reader the thought often remains profoundly true on this level, even in those parts, whose literal interpretation is the most harsh or difficult.

The desperate situation of the souls in hell,* for example, as contrasted with those in Purgatory, is a very clear imagination of the difference between a soul which has not, and a soul which has, taken the step known to Christian experience as "repentance", when the soul accepts its own responsibility for its own

* It is, however, doubtful if Dante really confused eternity with infinite duration of time. At any rate it is clear from the *Paradiso* that the crudity often imputed to his theological notions by those who are not at the disadvantage of being acquainted with them exists mainly in the minds of the imputers.

sufferings and those of others. This experience may also be mediated by a conviction of the truth of reincarnation. In fact it may be deep in the heart, but it cannot to-day be taken seriously by a mind, which will not take the fact of pre-natal existence equally seriously.

But besides these two meanings the poem clearly has a third. It is an imaginative account of the experience known as initiation. There are many indications of this. For example, if we study the way in which the poet describes each 'rise' or 'salita' into a higher sphere, we find that in each case it takes the form of a *discovery that he is already there*. (The occasion of this discovery may be the increased beauty of Beatrice or the reflection of a new light in her eyes.) Again at the end of the whole poem, Dante says of the beatific vision of the Trinity with which it closes, not simply that he cannot describe it, but (as Steiner has said of the experiences of clairvoyance) that he cannot even *remember* it. It is the feeling, the increase of joy that comes to him as he speaks, which makes him believe he saw it :

Credo ch' io vidi, perchè piu di largo,
dicendo questo, mi sento ch' io godo.

It is also clear from the course of the narrative as a whole. The descent into hell, followed by purification and enlightenment, are easily recognisable steps even to those with no more than a nodding acquaintance with the writings of the mystics. What is, however, perhaps peculiar to Steiner's descriptions and accounts of initiation in an intenser and more conscious form of that which every human soul is suffering or must at some time suffer. Thus, the *Divine Comedy*, and particularly the *Paradiso*, appears to represent, on the level of an initiation experience, that which the human soul in general was suffering at the time in which it was written. *Gib mir was du dir denkend selber bist*. It is the union of thought with feeling, but carried so far, so intense, so vividly and consciously experienced, as to amount to inspiration or enlightenment. Intense,

youthful feeling—not extinguished but purified, but redeemed—becomes a grail into which the light of the world is poured. Intellectual Soul becomes transmuted into Life-Spirit :—

Luce intellettuale piena d'amore,
Amor di vero ben pien di letizia,
Letizia che trascende ogni dolzore.

Light of thought full of love, love of the true good full of joy, joy which surpasses all sweetness.

How is this transmutation, this enlightenment accomplished? It is Beatrice who accompanies the poet on the whole of his journey through Paradise, from the first 'salita' into the Sphere of the Moon—that 'eternal pearl' which receives them into itself as water receives a ray of light—until the final 'salita' out of the Primum Mobile into the Empyrean

fuore

Del maggior corpo al ciel, ch' è pura luce

"Out of the greater body into the heaven which is pure light."

Nor does she merely become a pale allegorical figure, as is often objected, representing Theology in the abstract. Quite the contrary.* Thus, even in the thirtieth Canto of the *Paradiso*, near the end of the Comedy, when her beauty becomes so great as to make it impossible to describe it any longer in verse, Dante refers back quite naturally to the day when he first saw her face. Still more striking, and much harder to convey, is the quality of the *light* which shines through every canto of the *Paradiso*. It is in very truth the brilliant, warm, thrilling light in which the eyes of an unspoilt adolescence perceive the world to be bathed—only purged of all those vaguely personal hopes and wishes and all that element of strangely projected egotism to which the term 'erotic' is properly applied. The spirit of Dante's youth, redeemed, no longer wanders in the shadows,

* See now Charles Williams's delightful and spirited book, *The Figure of Beatrice* (London, 1943), which is (*inter alia*) one long refutation of this miserable error. It is also a splendid general invitation to the work of Dante. O.B. (1944).

but carries the poet with him into the light. And the result is a poem, in very truth, of light, made firm with the philosophy of Aristotle and filled with colour and music and with an inspiration as intense as it is sustained.

At the same time it is important not to try and read into the inspiration of the Divine Comedy things which are not there. Dante tells us that he was nine years of age when he first saw Beatrice and she eight. Between then and her death, at the age of twenty-five, he only saw her once or twice, and it is probable that she knew very little of him and his feelings. From the point of view of Beatrice's own development, therefore, the whole connection with Dante appears to have been, at any rate for her life on earth, quite unimportant if not non-existent. The intellectual soul would appear to be very little concerned with personal relationship as such. This is matter for the consciousness soul (which does not find cultural expression until our own age); and accordingly it is our own age which is grappling in the modern novel and drama with the psychology of marriage, the woman's point of view, and so forth. For a woman to understand anything written about women before the fifteenth century it is first necessary to think herself masculine or make in some other way the required readjustment of imagination and sentiment. Spiritual science should help her to do this. It should help to remove out of the way of a sympathetic understanding of medieval 'romance'—and perhaps also of its nineteenth century after-echo—the typical feminist revulsion of feeling against the symbolical, lay-figure position occupied there by the woman. This revulsion of feeling is the critical reaction of the consciousness soul, rightly stressing the element of reciprocity and mutual equality, rightly insisting that love and affection can only be a relation between two equal units. But such an insistence, good in itself, is none the less bad if it is allowed to cramp appreciation of a monument of the human spirit such as the Divine Comedy. The event of our own age is the union of thought with *will* rather than

with feeling, and accordingly the relationships of human beings, not only with the whole spiritual world but also *with each other as spiritual beings*, are increasing in spiritual significance. But that union cannot be achieved otherwise than *through* the grace of feeling and therefore that event cannot happen, unless the human soul continues to be sustained and deepened by the fruits of its evolution in former ages.

COLERIDGE'S "I AND THOU"

Coleridge as Philosopher by Professor Muirhead is an extremely important book and I would, in a way, rather thank the author than write a review of it. For he is one of the few people in the world who are really well acquainted with the whole of Coleridge's published works, not simply with the *Poems*, the *Biographia Literaria*, and the *Lectures on Shakespeare*; and this acquaintance extends, fortunately, to the extracts recently printed by Miss Alice Snyder in her *Coleridge on Logic and Learning* from unpublished works such as the *Logic* and the *Semina Rerum*. Writing out of this abundance of material, Mr. Muirhead has, in effect, rebutted once and for all the two principal charges commonly brought against Coleridge's metaphysics, of incoherence and insincerity. The fact is, it has long been the custom for English men of letters to think traditionally rather than immediately, and honestly, on such matters; Coleridge was incoherent because he wrote on the margins of books, and thought upon many subjects (whereas it is now authoritatively known that one man can understand one subject only): he was insincere because he reported that his conclusions were compatible with those of theological orthodoxy. This is, or was, 'all ye know and all ye need to know!'

An unprejudiced study of the lesser known prose-writings quickly reverses these facile judgments. As for his toadying to orthodoxy, Coleridge held that faith 'does not necessarily imply belief,' he described the doctrine of hereditary sin as a 'monstrous fiction,' and his theology was sufficiently correct to win from Cardinal Newman the golden opinion that he had 'indulged a liberty of speculation which no Christian can tolerate, and advocated conclusions which were often heathen rather than Christian.' Again: Coleridge's system of thought is incoherent

in its outer form alone. The more we study it, the more infallibly shall we recognize the same clear principles working their way to the surface from beneath whatever he wrote. For their precise formulation we have to go, as with all philosophers who beg none but the inevitable questions, to his exposition of the nature of thought. This he developed most fully in the *Logic*; but, once understood, the principles themselves can be discerned as clearly in the *Essay on Faith* as in the *Theory of Life*; they are there as unmistakably behind the lecture on *Romeo and Juliet* as behind the political lucubrations of the *Friend*.

What is wanted, therefore, is such an arrangement and exposition of Coleridge's voluminous and scattered philosophical writings as would serve to reveal these principles to those who have not yet penetrated to them for themselves. And this is what Professor Muirhead, with his systematic arrangement of chapters under the heads of Logic, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Nature, Philosophy of Religion, etc., and above all, with his generous and skilfully linked chain of quotations, has attempted to do. He has succeeded in a measure which far surpasses any work on Coleridge that has yet come to my knowledge. Professor Muirhead has, in fact, done some of the work which Coleridge's disciple, J. H. Green, ought to have done, but signally failed to do, in his *Spiritual Philosophy*, and I shall not pass on to my more critical consideration of his book without again expressing the thanks due to him from all those to whom, in Keats's phrase, 'the truth of imagination' is an experience and therefore the theory of imagination a matter of the first concern.

This confirmed, I pass on to the reviewer's more arrogant task of distinguishing the better from the worse. Coleridge's world of thought may, for this purpose, be divided into two hemispheres—one of which turns on the relation of the self to nature, while the other turns on the relation of the self to other selves. The first he may be said to have very largely absorbed from the German philosophers other than Hegel, with whom he came in contact early in life; the second, which he himself

regarded as the necessary complement of the first, was more definitely his own contribution to philosophy. It was his own, that is, as far as any thought other than palpable error can be termed a man's own. Scholars interested in 'influences' could, and no doubt will, some day, represent it as a mosaic of fragments culled from Greek philosophy, the Gnostic and Mystic writers, Giordano Bruno, the Church Fathers, Hegel, and so on, just as the *Ancient Mariner* (as Professor Lowes showed us in the *Road to Xanadu*) can be plausibly resolved into elements, all of which are in some sense 'borrowed.' This does not affect the point that both the *Ancient Mariner* and this part of Coleridge's philosophy are his own in a sense which is not true in quite the same way of the first part.

German philosophy found the unity underlying that sensuous manifold which we call 'nature' to be necessarily and only grounded in the self of man. Coleridge found that self itself to be necessarily grounded in at least one other self. German philosophy proclaimed as the last word '*I am!*' Coleridge replied: '*I am, precisely because I can say "thou art"!*—for it is just the power and will to say so which makes me an "*I*"' I doubt if there is anything more sublime in the whole range of philosophical thought than the brief passage in the *Essay on Faith* in which Coleridge demonstrates this relation between consciousness and conscience:

"This is a deep meditation, though the position is capable of the strictest proof, namely, that there can be no I without a Thou, and that a Thou is only possible by an equation in which I is taken as equal to Thou, and yet not the same . . . but the equation of Thou with I, by means of a free act, negating the sameness in order to establish the equality, is the true definition of conscience. But as without a Thou there can be no You, so without a You no They, These or Those; and as all these conjointly form the materials and subjects of consciousness and the conditions of experience, it is evident that conscience is the root of all consciousness—a *fortiori*, the pre-condition of all experience—and that the conscience cannot have been in its first revelation deduced from experience.

And this relation between the I and the Thou, between two conscious selves, so far from being, as is often assumed, specially evolved to square with theological dogma or with some private sense of sin, is itself only one aspect of that central intuition of 'polarity', which is (to employ something more than a metaphor) the immovable axis about which the whole cosmos of Coleridge's thought perpetually revolves.

With such first principles it was inevitable that Coleridge should dissociate himself from that semi-oriental tendency noticeable in German metaphysics to submerge the individual spirit completely in the Whole. Indeed, to judge from such little indications as the joke about Fichte which he retails with gusto in the *Biographia Literaria*, one can well suppose that he was able even then to foresee its logical culmination in Schopenhauer's western variant of Nirvana. Nor was it less inevitable that he should find a fuller measure of truth in the Christian writers than elsewhere. For they alone had concerned themselves with the same problem. (I must mention at this point that I am, of course, fully aware of the impropriety and even absurdity of 'potting' philosophy in this way. But then either books of a philosophical nature must cease to be reviewed or else philosophy must continue to be potted. Under this *caveat*, then :) Philosophy seeks to resolve Many into One. To German philosophers the Many was the individual's world of experiences with its mystifying numerical distinctions; it was 'Nature'; whereas the One was the Ego; and their solution of the duality was simply to predicate one of the other, saying with the eastern Yogi: 'I am all that!' Coleridge's early manifested innate *imaginative* experience of the unreality of the 'subjective-objective' illusion had pre-disposed him to accept this solution without question, and accept it he did, as soon as he heard of it. Indeed, it would be truer to say that he *recognized* it. It was because it was in a sense something he knew already that he was able to swallow it with such surprising rapidity (winning himself a reputation for plagiarism in the process) and

yet to assimilate it and make it thoroughly his own. He himself, therefore, was free to carry the problem of the One and the Many on to another plane. The question for him became rather, granted that the individual 'is' ultimately the Whole, to explain how more than one individual can 'be' the same Whole, yet without ceasing to be separate individuals. It was not *many phenomena—one self*, but *many selves—one Self*, which he had to explain; for his very definition of the term 'self' involved the coincident reality of other selves. Thus, with Coleridge, as with Plato, the problem of One and Many became, as his mind developed, the even more quintessential problem of Same and Other.

Now it is this second part of Coleridge's philosophy which I find most adequately elucidated in Professor Muirhead's book. The later chapters on the ethical, political and religious writings appear to me to be better than the early ones on Logic, Metaphysics and Nature. Nor (although I have called the second part more specifically Coleridge's own) is the defect a trivial one; for it must be remembered that the two parts are correlative, or rather that Coleridge's philosophy is in very truth a rounded whole, a real *world* of thought, upon which the equator dividing its two hemispheres is merely an imaginary line drawn by myself for the convenience of cartography. Consequently, the flaw in Professor Muirhead's exposition, of which the cause appears to be as follows, spreads its baneful influence through the whole.

To Mr. Muirhead, Coleridge's thought is evidently valuable, less for its own intrinsic quality than as the historical anticipation, and in some degree source, of something he likes better. This something is 'modern idealism'. Thus, at the end of Chapter One, he actually defines his object in writing the book at all as having been: 'to state the broader features of nineteenth century idealism, of which more than any other he [Coleridge] was the founder.' The frequency with which he reiterates this position in the body of the book is as unnecessary as the position itself

is undesirable. It is scarcely possible to read ten pages without coming on some such passage as the following :

‘ With regard to its general form [Coleridge’s “ Theological Platonism ”], we may be prepared to share some of Coleridge’s enthusiasm for it, if we are prepared to find in it an anticipation of the principle, of which later idealists, notably Bradley, have made so much, that “ what is necessary and at the same time possible must be real ” ’.

Why? Why, in heaven’s name, should our enthusiasm be allocated on such extraordinary principles? Must philosophy, too, turn antiquarian, finding nothing interesting but museum specimens of the history it already knows by heart? This choice of anticipation as a measure of value would be chilling, even were the thing anticipated more perfect than its prototype; where the later form is degenerate, it is simply disastrous. And it is the very excellence of Professor Muirhead’s exposition in other respects which leaves one so completely at a loss to account for the mysterious blind spot that pre-determined him, apparently with his own full and free consent, to see just as much and no more of Coleridge’s world as would fit into a framework subsequently constructed by Bradley and Bosanquet

This is in no sense intended for a gibe, nor is the present review the place for a critique of modern idealism; but, of the gulf which yawns between Coleridge’s well-nigh Aristotelian wholeness and consistency of thought and the incoherent compromise and elaboration of what Mr. Muirhead himself appears to mean by ‘ modern idealism,’ no better illustration could be found than the book itself. Mr. Muirhead’s idealism is one which so completely lacks the courage of its convictions as to be continually forgetting them. It is an idealism which proves to us that thought is not merely subjective—and then, boggling at the consequence of its own doctrine, goes on to talk of it as if it were a process taking place inside the head. It puts empirical knowledge in its proper place—and a moment afterwards takes

off its hat to 'science' with the abject politeness of Mr. Santayana himself. It is, indeed, almost incredible that anyone, after expounding Coleridge's concept of the 'Idea' as fully and lucidly as the author of *Coleridge as Philosopher* does in his third chapter and elsewhere, should be able to write, on page 224 : 'Modern Realism is not likely to accept Coleridge's characterization of mathematical objects as purely mental, and has adopted his term "subsistence" for the express purpose of indicating their essential objectivity . . . '—on the obvious assumption that 'purely mental' and 'objective' are contradictories. It is almost incredible that, after telling us with the help of quotations how Coleridge claimed to have 'unmasked the fallacy that underlies the whole Newtonian philosophy, namely, that the mind is merely a "a lazy Looker-on on an external world,"' nevertheless, when Professor Muirhead comes to discuss the *Theory of Life*, the fact that much of it 'would probably have been rejected by the science of his own time' (let alone by ours) is allowed to be a decisive factor in determining its untruth. As well refute an objection to the doctrine of verbal inspiration on the ground that the objector is not verbally inspired ! This idealist, we are at last obliged to conclude, is unaware, even after writing it several times with his own nib, that if you *really* regard the mind as an active participant in and not 'a lazy Looker-on' on Nature, the ground is automatically knocked away beneath the whole of Newtonian science, whose theoretical constructions take their place as a myth alongside the other myths of which history has to tell. He is unaware, apparently, that, if thought is not merely subjective, it is not merely subjective.

Apropos of this, it is interesting to remark that the name of Goethe is mentioned only once throughout the book. We are, therefore, left to speculate whether the author is, or is not, aware of the existence of a Goethean science, whose method actually *assumes* from the start this participation of the mind in the production of phenomena, instead of, like the empirical

method of Newtonian science, assuming its complete detachment. For Goethe's 'Urphanomen,' or the 'Ur-pflanze' of his work on the Metamorphosis of Plants, are simply practical working examples of Coleridge's 'Idea.' In the latter event it is to be hoped that he will remedy the defect and eradicate in the process that troublesome blind-spot. For we shall hear more in the near future both of Goethe and of Coleridge—and the re-interpretation of the latter to a generation familiar, unlike his own, with the conception of an 'Unconscious,' is a fruitful vineyard in which it would, indeed, be well to have Professor Muirhead for a labourer.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE*

The sign under which we have come together is a common interest in the overcoming of the decadence of our time through what the inaugurator of this Conference has called 'Goetheanism.' Naturally, the use of the word Goetheanism in the year 1932 not only carries our minds to this building, the Goetheanum—in order to do that the more familiar word anthroposophy or the name of Rudolf Steiner would have been sufficient—but it also takes them back to the figure of him after whom the building was named, to Goethe himself. It may well induce us to ponder over the whole relationship between anthroposophy on the one hand and on the other the legacy which Goethe bequeathed to the western world in 1932.

It is a very close relationship indeed. It is a very, very important relationship. It is essentially a relationship of *likeness*. Only—as the subject of my lecture to-day, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, knew and pointed out—when two things are like one another, then, in order to become fully conscious of that likeness, it is necessary to be aware on the one hand of their *sameness*, their positive identity, and on the other hand of their *difference* from one another.

We may have a dim, vague perception that one thing is like another—a confused perception, for instance, that the substance of Goethe's work is like the substance of anthroposophy. And this may well arouse our enthusiasm. But what must we do, if we want to be *fully conscious*, wide-awake and conscious, of that likeness for all that it really is? If we want to do that, we must polarize the likeness into the two contradictory tendencies of sameness and difference.

* From a lecture given at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland, during the Goethe Centenary Festival, August, 1932.

animal or type of animal to which the bone belonged. So, to Coleridge, the whole world of thought—even logic itself—was an *organic* structure. Now he himself conceived of an organism as a whole in which each part implies or contains every other part, in which each part as it were contains the whole. Thus, the moment his mind began to undertake the necessary analytical work, the splitting up into parts, which is requisite for the purpose of discursive expression, Coleridge began to feel that he was denying his own intuition. As soon as he had separated out a part of his system for the purpose of giving expression to it, he would feel with anxiety the necessity of trying to show there and then how that same part implied the whole. His extraordinarily unifying mind was too painfully aware that you cannot really say one thing correctly without saying everything. He was rightly afraid that there would not be time to say everything before going on to say the next thing, or that he would forget to do so afterwards. His incoherence of expression arose from the coherence of what he wanted to express. It was a sort of intellectual stammer.

It was this that laid him open to Carlyle's charge. Carlyle facetiously complained that Coleridge could never begin to discuss anything without first assembling round him an imposing array of 'logical swim-bladders and transcendental life-preservers.' Alas, by the time the transcendental life-preservers, that is the elaborate and far-reaching metaphysical arguments which were to bring the battery of the whole to bear on the little abstract fortress of the part, were complete, it sometimes happened that Coleridge had either forgotten what he began to speak of, or (more often) that his audience, being rushed too precipitately out of their depths, had lost all interest, if they had not actually left the hall.

Goethe's interest—as a knower—was directed in the first place to the world around him. It was in the ordinary sense of the word an *objective* interest. It was out of this interest in nature, and especially when it brought him into conflict with

epistemological ideas widely current at the time—as happened, for example, through his intercourse with Schiller—it was out of this interest in observing Nature, and as a justification of his own *method* of observation, that he was led to develop (so far as he did so) the *theory* of knowledge which Steiner has so lovingly recreated and set in so clear a light for us. With Goethe, his method was cause, his theory of knowledge the effect.

Coleridge began from the opposite end. He was primarily interested in knowledge itself, in mind and the activity of mind. It was out of this interest, and as an application of it to a particular sphere, that his method of interpreting the phenomena of nature took shape. Theory of knowledge was cause ; method was effect.

Goethe was a scientist before he was a philosopher. He tells us himself that he had “never thought about thinking.” Coleridge was a philosopher (and also, in the true sense of the word, a psychologist) first ; he interested himself in science only incidentally and on one occasion. He spent most of his life thinking about thinking.

The truth at the core of things is one and the same from whatever direction it is approached, and it is particularly interesting to observe that these two thinkers, starting from opposite poles, Goethe from the pole of Nature and Coleridge from the pole of Pure Reason or Spirit, meet. Both of them overcame (and hence the degree of misunderstanding which they have encountered) the arch fallacy of their age and our own, the fallacy that mind is exclusively *subjective*, or, to put it more crudely, that the mind is something which is shut up in a sort of box called the brain, the fallacy that the mind of man is a passive onlooker at the processes and phenomena of nature, in the creation of which it neither takes nor has taken any part, the fallacy that there are many separate minds, but no such thing as Mind.

It is this fallacy which underlies that other notion, so pathetically mistaken and yet so firmly entrenched in the world's

brain to-day, that the inductive method, besides assisting man to control nature, may be a means of his gaining *insight* into her. That the power of controlling does not necessarily imply insight many holders of driving licences will gladly testify.

It is interesting to find both Coleridge and Goethe speaking of the same concrete entity, only by different names, characteristically different names. What Goethe *described* as the *Urphänomen* or prime phenomenon, Coleridge *defined* under the name of 'idea.' The idea, for Coleridge, is something in which all distinction between subject and object disappears. He speaks of a science "which in the Ideas that are present to the mind recognises the laws that govern in Nature if we may not say the laws that *are* Nature."*

The first thing which is necessary in order to understand Coleridge is to gain some sort of grasp of what he meant by the word Reason. He insisted on a distinction in kind between Reason on the one hand and Understanding on the other. Not only in his philosophy but also in his critical writings Coleridge frequently attempted to express this distinction, to which he attached the very first importance. Yet it is at this point that the critics with one accord part company from him.

Modern criticism, as is well known, consists of anecdotes of the private lives of writers. Consequently the modern critic, when he attempts to study Coleridge and is asked to distinguish between, let us say, Imagination and Fancy or between Understanding and Reason, rightly feels that he is wasting his time. What can he do? He writes a short and snappy article on Coleridge, pointing out that the distinction between Reason and Understanding was a fiction of the fellow's opium-sodden brain, and then—up goes the book on to the shelf for ever.

* It will of course be seen that this use of the word 'idea' must not be confused with its use in our English translation of the *Philosophie der Freiheit* (*The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*). Coleridge's idea has nothing to do with images. It is, in his own words, "anterior to all images." Its definition is the definition of Goethe's *Urphänomen*.

Nowhere is there any understanding for the sublime truths which Coleridge, however imperfectly, has expressed.

Thus, for a lover and admirer of Coleridge it is a very great pleasure to feel that he is addressing an audience in whose hearts and minds just the very deepest and best elements in Coleridge may look to find some understanding. It is a special privilege to be permitted to address such an audience on this subject.

'Reason' for Coleridge is not something to be found manifesting in human beings; it is something *in* which human beings—and the whole of nature—are manifest. It is not merely a part or function of the individual mind. Rather it is that spiritual whole in which the individual mind—all individual minds—subsist. It is in fact as much an objective as a subjective reality.

The concreteness of Coleridge's conception of Reason is well brought out by the way in which he speaks of the so-called 'laws of thought.' These are, of course, the laws or rather self-evident axioms on which the possibility of logical thinking depends.* Coleridge describes a law of thought as "*a somewhat that in the mind actually exists, as any object recognised by the senses exists without us.*" And he goes on to insist that these laws of thought, these objects existing in the mind, are not merely as real but actually *more* real than objects which appear to exist outside the mind. Why is this? It is because our experience of these laws is immediate. Reason is at the same time both the laws and the organ which apprehends them. Our confidence in the reality of the external objects of sense—if we examine it—is *derived* from our immediate experience of the laws of thought within us. He speaks of the mind as distinguished from all other things by being "*a subject which is also its own object.*" He compares it to "*an eye which is its own mirror, beholding and self-beheld.*"

* For instance—that the same thing cannot both be and not be in the same moment.

You will remember how the same all-important fact of the immediacy of the mind's experience of itself is used by Rudolf Steiner in *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* to refute such theories as that of 'specific nervous activity' and in general theories which would limit all 'real' knowledge to knowledge of things in the sense world. This is not putting it strongly enough. It would be truer to say that the immediacy of the mind's experience of itself is the rock on which the whole of that book, and indeed the whole of Spiritual Science, is built.

This is what I meant by saying that Coleridge approached the problem of knowledge from the pole of Pure Reason or Spirit. He had *grasped in pure thought* the fact that Reason was the very substance of his mind, of his soul, of his self-consciousness. He knew that Reason was his mind and his mind was Reason. He experienced Reason as the very being of his own Ego—and since *Being is one* everywhere and at all times; since Being is the being of all things, of nature no less than of man, Coleridge in his knowing did really approach nature from the point of view not of a creature but of a creator of nature.

On the one hand Reason is that *in* which I exist, the ocean of being by which my soul is upborn. This is true of my everyday self. But there is another point of view. Why is my soul self-conscious? Why can I say "I am?" I can only say this because through my soul or lower self there shines all the time the light of the higher Self. And of this higher Self it cannot be said that it subsists *in* Reason or Spirit. It can only be said that it *is* Reason, that it is Spirit. So far the doctrine is one that is common to Coleridge, Kant and Rudolf Steiner. But there is something which distinguishes Coleridge's presentation of Reason from Kant's. It is true that Reason was for Coleridge, as for Kant, coextensive with nothing less than the whole of Being. But Coleridge, unlike Kant, was intensely aware of Reason—aware of it not merely as theory but in actual

experience—as the *activity* of his own Ego. He felt a corresponding weight of responsibility ; and his life shows that the burden proved a heavy one.

In the *Treatise on Logic* which, like so much else that Coleridge wrote or attempted, remained unfinished, he gave, I believe, the fullest expression to this philosophy of what I will call Active Reason or Active Mind. The work has never been printed, but the manuscript is fortunately in the British Museum and a great part of the material for this lecture has been drawn from it. Coleridge's logic is not a mere system of the rules of inference. On the contrary, it is characteristically enough an analysis and a representation of the *act* of thinking, yet a representation of such a kind that the reader is never allowed to lose sight of the fact that this act of thinking is the ground of Being itself, of the Being of all things. It is a logic in which one feels the presence of the Logos.

Now the essence of self-consciousness is unity, unity in multiplicity. I can say " I am " because through all the variety of my passions, sensations and experiences I am aware of a unity. Else, like the man possessed of devils, my name would be legion. My name is ' I ' because I am one. I am aware of a unity. It is that unity which I call myself. Yet at the same time, said Coleridge, that unity which is myself is the unity which underlies the whole of nature. I am one, because God is one. I am one because this one God was incarnate in Man.

Thus, the higher Self, the ultimate unity of which we are made aware in experiencing the laws of thought, is not for Coleridge a transcendental Ego, in the sense that he feels he has nothing to do with it, is infinitely separated from it, takes no responsibility for it. His relation to it is not that of creature to Creator. True it is for him as for Kant the source of the unity which underlies all external nature. But it is not a mere abstract principle like the "transcendental Ego of Kant. It is an *active* unity. It is a *Productive Unity*. This is a truth which

cannot, strictly speaking, be demonstrated. It can only be known by me to the extent that I experience Reason as my own activity.

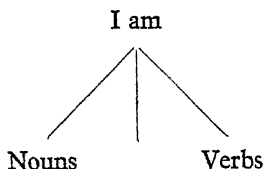
I have made this attempt to enter with some precision into the metaphysical foundation of Coleridge's doctrine of Reason, because it was only when, from studying the *Logic*, I came to grasp the full implication of this conception of Reason as *Productive Unity*, that I realised the beautiful wholeness of Coleridge's system of thought.

Now the second conception of which an understanding is essential if we are to come to terms with Coleridge's philosophy, is one which constantly reappears throughout the whole of his prose-writings on all subjects. Yet very little attention has been paid to it. It is a conception which anthroposophists are specially trained to understand. It is that element in Coleridge's works which made me feel more than anything else that he was in a very special sense a forerunner of Spiritual Science. It is the conception of *the universal law of Polarity*. Elsewhere Coleridge speaks of "*the universal law of polarity or essential dualism, first promulgated by Heraclitus, 2,000 years afterwards republished and made the foundation, both of logic, physics and metaphysics, by Giordano Bruno.*"

I need not spend time trying to explain the sort of thing that Coleridge meant by polarity, for you know it already. I should like, however, to try and illustrate some of the ways in which he revealed the working of this universal law.

I said that in his logic one feels the presence of the Logos. Some of the most startling, I will say the sublimest, passages in his *Treatise on Logic* are concerned with grammar and, generally, with language. I can only give a few extracts. Thus, he points out how the world of grammar subsists between the two poles of verb and noun, the one expressing activity and the other passivity, the one an action and the other a state. All the parts of speech may be so to speak polarised into these two components with one of them predominating. We may think

of grammar as a sort of world revolving about an axis. Only in the axis itself do the two poles coincide. And what is this axis? It is the verb 'to be' itself. This verb to be is the only word which expresses both action and state. Only 'I am' is both verb and noun at the same time.



I spoke just now of the wholeness of Coleridge's system of thought. The justness of this expression will become clearer as we go on to see how the second of the two essential elements in that system arises inevitably out of the first; how the law of polarity is already implicit in the conception of Reason as *Productive Unity*.

In Coleridge's words "*the essential duality of Nature arises out of its productive unity.*" Unity which is productive must strive to do two things. It must strive to reproduce itself, that is it must strive to detach from itself another being like itself and in the same act and moment it must strive to *overcome* that detachment, to overcome that individuation, thus maintaining the unity.

This is the first polarity, the polarity which underlies all life. And it is because it is based so firmly on this foundation that Coleridge's system of thought may itself be called living, organic. He himself contrasts it with the so-called 'philosophy' which was fashionable in his time and which with some unimportant trimmings is still fashionable in our own—the Atomic Philosophy. Coleridge calls the latter a 'mechanic system' and insists that its knowledge is limited to distance and nearness, in short, to "*the relations of unproductive particles to each other.*" This, he says, is the *philosophy of Death*. It holds good only

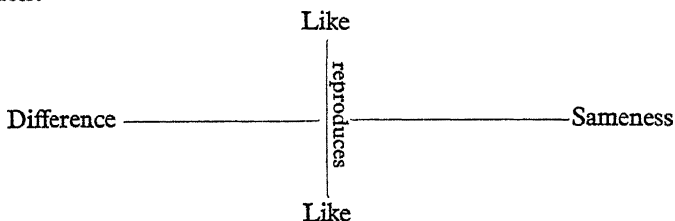
of *dead* nature. Whereas all *life consists in the strife of opposites*. Water is neither oxygen nor hydrogen nor yet a mixture of both. It is no less a single body than either of the imaginary elements.

To have revealed the law of polarity as the process which underlies all life and then to be able to educe this law of polarity from productive unity, *i.e.* from the act of self-consciousness : to have done this even with some difficulty and obscurity is, I think, enough to justify one in saying that in Coleridge's logic one feels the presence of the Logos. The Logos is the Word, but it is also that through which all things that are have come into being. The connection between these two aspects of the Logos is not an easy one to see. We may perhaps get glimpses of it in art and poetry. The aim of this building and of the work that is carried on in it is surely to make that very connection clearer to the world. I only want to indicate in a very sketchy way how Coleridge strove to grasp in *thought* both these aspects of the Logos as well as the connection between them.

For instance, in treating of language, he points out how on the one hand the *letters* or sounds provide the elements of *sameness* (for the same letters must be used over and over again) while the *positions* of these letters (which are almost infinitely variable) provide the counter-element, or counter-pole, of *difference*. Sameness and Difference are the positive and negative aspects—of what? Of *Likeness*.

Let us try and construct diagrammatically. It is quite appropriate to pass at this point from speech to diagram, for diagram is of the nature of geometry. And it is at this point that the creative process of Coleridge's system of thought passes into the world of space. In geometry we may catch a glimpse of the transition from pure thought to space, which is the product of thought. There would be no line, says Coleridge, if the mind were not capable of creating it*by what he calls an 'act of length.' Mathematical points, lines and surfaces are in fact

“acts of the imagination that are one with the product of those acts.”



Like reproduces like in the act of productive unity. The resulting duality remains nevertheless a unity and as such may be polarized along its whole length into the two extremes of Sameness and Difference. Sameness, the eternal unity of God, is experienced by finite beings as duration in Time. Difference, His omnipresence and variety, is experienced as Space. Elsewhere Coleridge speaks more speculatively of a 'figurative space' which would have "real Being and energy and the active power of figure." The active power of figure! We see him thinking his way into the etheric. In his own words he reaches "the transition of the Dialectic into the Organic." This, he says in the *Treatise on Logic*, is the point at which Logic would cease and a 'Poetic or Formal Science' would begin.

This poetic or formal science is that science to which I have already referred. It is the realisation of what Coleridge called 'Ideas' and Goethe *Urphänomene*.

Somewhere among the unpublished works this all-important transition from the Dialectic to the Organic may yet be found, more fully worked out by Coleridge. At present the nearest thing we have to it is the *Theory of Life*. This essay is among the published works and is printed in Bohn's Library. It is in many ways a most unsatisfactory production. It was originally intended as a contribution to some particular medical controversy of the day, and partly for this reason, partly owing to Coleridge's general lack of the power of arranging and controlling his material, it is extremely uneven.

There are many pages of quite insignificant matter and then, suddenly, perhaps half a page so packed with meaning that it would take four or five lectures to deal with it fully. One can however, see from it how for Coleridge *knowledge* of nature was a sort of *re-creating* of nature.

If we begin, as before, from the fundamental polarity—the I AM striving to reproduce itself or its like in self-consciousness—we may represent this as a line :

I AM



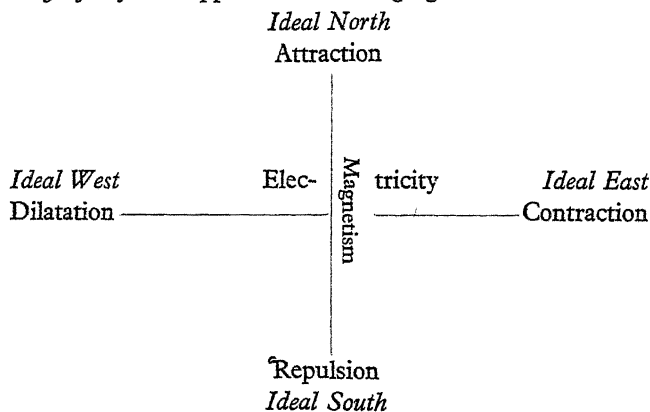
This is the polarity of Productive Unity. Coleridge also called it ‘*separative projection*,’ ‘*the tendency at once to individuate and to connect, to detach but so as to retain or reproduce attachment*.’ From this primary polarity Coleridge’s thought generates, first Time and Space and after them the whole phenomenal world.

In order to understand it, it is necessary to remember what was said above. Each polarity, while being a duality from its own point of view, remains nevertheless a unity. Thus, while, *qua* duality, it has already been polarized, yet *qua* unity, it may again be polarized into two further contraries, and so *ad infinitum*. It is in this way that nature rises from stage to stage of complexity. This principle contains in it the concept of what is experienced empirically in the organic world as ‘recapitulation.’ For it has long been known from direct observation of nature that the individuals of every species, as they come to birth, recapitulate the history of the species itself. Ontogenesis repeats the stages of phylogenesis.

Diagrammatically this may be expressed, and was expressed by Coleridge, in the form of a cross. * Thus, if the first polarity is represented by a line, then the two extremities of the line

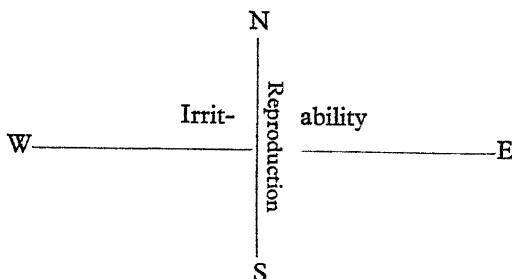
represent its duality. But inasmuch as it remains also the original unity, it is represented by each *point* on the line. These points can therefore again be polarized, or in other words, the original line can be polarized along the whole of its length. It thus becomes the *axis* of a new polarity. A new natural quality is produced and the production of the new quality is symbolised on the diagram by taking it into a second dimension. Throughout the whole of creation, not only as its foundation but also perceptible at each stage, the principle of *productive unity* is paramount.

It was along these lines that Coleridge sought to grasp the "transition from the Dialectic to the Organic." The 'separative projection,' which gave birth to time and space, continues to work in the world of time and space which it has created. At this stage it is easily recognisable as the physical properties of Attraction and Repulsion. The tendency "to detach but so as to retain or reproduce attachment" is clearly, in the physical world, the polarity of Attraction and Repulsion. We have reached the concept of force, or gravitation. Polarize again and we begin to conceive the essential nature of Matter. This gives us the four co-ordinates on which the main structure of the *Theory of Life* is supported. Coleridge gives it thus :



The transition from dialectic to organic must of course pass through the stage of inorganic nature. Coleridge passes from the inorganic to the organic world *via* his conception of electricity and magnetism. I only wish to give some idea of the way in which he developed everything from the original concept.

At the next stage, the organic stage, the two co-ordinates reappear as the principles of Reproduction (vegetables) and Irritability (insects).



In the course of the few paragraphs which he devotes to this subject, Coleridge, emphasising the close relationship which exists between insects and flowers, throws off as a kind of poetic speculation an idea which Rudolf Steiner has since affirmed to be an historical fact. He speaks of the butterfly as a flower liberated from its stalk—*flores* liberti et libertini*.

His treatment of insects is particularly interesting. He speaks of them as nature's first attempt at consciousness. They are a sort of *externalised* version of something which is essentially *inward*, that is, of sentience. That which should be a purely inward process is here seen objectified in a materialistic spatial form. The morphology of the plant is an expression of the principle of reproduction. The irritable feeler of the insect is reproduction raised to another power. It reproduces *movement*. It imitates in its own motions the external stimulus which excited

* Bohn's text has *floræ*.

it. Yet these marvellously irritable organs are themselves only a sort of physical caricature of those far subtler motions that are proper to nature's next production—the animal and human-soul. Coleridge points out the startling metamorphosis of outward form which characterises nature's transition to the next stage of animal existence. The exuberant complexity of structure typical of the insect disappears altogether from the surface, having been withdrawn to the interior parts of the body. The outlines of the fish are the simplest and severest which can well be conceived. Nature sinks back exhausted from the line which she has hitherto been following and in her repose gathers strength for her newest creation—consciousness. The insect's organ mechanically reproduces the external stimulus. The soul reproduces and retains in the form of after-images the impressions which come to it through the senses. This is the foundation on which later there is to be built the self-conscious life of the spirit.

Thus, at the final stage of the process of evolution, and bringing it full circle, we awake to see the whole as an expression of the original polarity. We see realised as fact that polarity which, as dialectic, was found to constitute the nature of grammar and logic—the I AM in the act of reproducing itself. That which I AM has so long and laboriously created, itself affirms 'I am.' The Son of God awakes on earth and, awakened, names himself the Son of Man.

I will not carry this any further. I merely wanted to give a rough indication of the way in which the nature of Coleridge's thought enabled him to approach nature from *within*. The *Theory of Life* itself is no more than a sketch. What I am giving is the sketch of a sketch. Coleridge was not, in general, a close *observer* of nature, as Wordsworth and his sister were, or as Goethe was. But he was a very close observer of his own thought-processes. And this initiated him into the heart of nature. So that he was able to know nature by mentally re-creating her.

Goethe had his feet firmly planted on the earth. As a scientist, as a knower, he largely confined himself to the realm of natural science and his regular industry combined with his great genius had by the end of his life illuminated this realm with a steadily increasing flood of light. Coleridge never succeeded in finding his feet on earth at all. Look at the portrait of him in the National Portrait Gallery in London, and you will feel the full force of Wordsworth's description of him :—

“ The rapt one of the godlike *forehead*,
The heaven-*eyed* creature ”

Compare the majesty of the forehead and the eyes with the pathetically weak mouth. He himself said that he had “ power without strength.” He was continually forming vast schemes of works to be written on every conceivable subject, or on all at once, which he never had the energy to carry out.

What does it mean to have power without strength? A flash of lightning is in many ways a very weak thing. As soon as it has come down from heaven and discharged into the earth it is diffused through the whole earth and vanishes from sight. You cannot direct it into channels. A flash of lightning will not run an electric tram. But still it is a flash of lightning.

Power is of heaven. Strength is the faculty of applying it on earth.

Goethe had strength as well as power. But Coleridge had, I think, the *kind* of power which Goethe lacked. He had the power of self-knowledge in thought and he had the strong sense of moral responsibility which self-knowledge brings.

Had I time, I should have liked to show from Coleridge's other writings how his morality, too, was derived from these two fundamental conceptions of Reason as productive unity and of polarity. Through them he arrived at a conception of the threefold consciousness of man and even of his threefold body.

In conclusion, let us remember that as followers of Rudolf Steiner we must necessarily seek to acquire this power of self-knowledge in thought and to take on this responsibility.

If we approach Coleridge's philosophy from this point of view, we shall not be oppressed with his weaknesses and failures as a man. Rather we shall feel a strong impulse to take into ourselves, as far as we may, and there to continue, the struggle that was his life—the struggle to draw from the inexhaustible well of conscientious thinking the necessary feeling and the necessary strength of will.