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New View is a journal supporting spiritual renewal in our times, based on the quest for a new wisdom of the whole human being, inspired by Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy and related approaches.

ANTHROPOSOPHY or 'awareness of one's humanity' is a path of knowledge and self development which encompasses the realms of religion, philosophy, art and science. Founded in what is universally human, it offers a cohesive interpretation of human and world evolution, the reality of spiritual worlds (of which this material world is a part), practical methods of developing an objective consciousness of these realms, and deep insights into Christianity and the world's religions and philosophies.

Anthroposophy was established by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) through books, lectures and other practical initiatives. He wanted no one to accept what was presented through blind faith and asked that everyone objectively test what was offered. He also insisted that individuals were able to work in complete freedom with what he presented.

(For information about the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain, contact www.anthroposophy.org.uk).

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Front Cover:

Sun and Winding Road by Jimmy, a serving prisoner at Winnfield Prison, Louisiana, USA

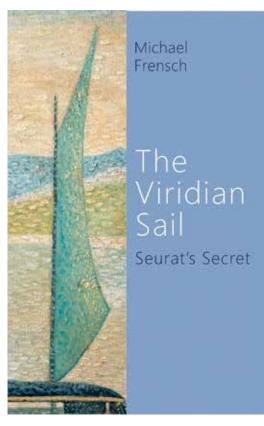
This poem complements the front cover painting, by the same artist.

Freedom of Evolution, Part 1

Through the universe I travel

Unseen by that which is without sight
Through cosmic channels of divine color
Forming within benign spiritual evolution
In the future... I will be
In the past... I will have been
In between both... I will always exist
Always have been... always will be
Because
Through the universe I traveled
Unseen by that which is without sight
Through cosmic channels of divine colors
Formed within benign spiritual evolution
Without form... without weight
Without selfish desire
I travel in true freedom

Jimmy, Winnfield Prison, Louisiana, USA.



New View Books

On Easter Sunday, 2018, we launced our first book, a novel by Michael Frensch:

The Viridan Sail: Seurat's Secret

Translated by Matthew Barton Paperback, 528 pages 23 colour and black and white illustrations ISBN: 9-781-9999608-0-3

£18.00 (plus postage)

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BOOK SYNOPSIS:

In our time, truth is becoming ever more difficult to know with any certainty. Fake news abounds. How can we determine the authenticity of anything? We need a new human faculty to help us do this. Centering around an old painting, found in an antiques shop, said to be by the French artist Seurat, *The Viridian Sail* is a novel of truth and fiction, fake and fact and takes us on a journey towards this new faculty.

The Viridian Sail, written for the mainstream, contains a wealth of insights informed by anthroposophy woven throughout the story.

A good read... Highly Recommended!

New View Contents

Bringing Light to the World: Our Deepest Human Vocation		The Gesture of the Human Form Charles Kovacs	51
Jeremy Naydler	3	Offaires (Covacs	31
		NNA - news around the world	
The Light of the World		Christian von Arnim	54
Owen Barfield	12		
		Neoliberalism and the Emergence of the	
Finance and the Social Order		Threefold Social Order	
Frances Hutchinson	22	Richard Cooper	57
Mother Holle, a Cautionary Tale?		Haiku	
Maarten Ekama	29	Paula Dunley, illustration by Zephir Delamore	63
Finding Freedom in Prison:		"Unite Behind the Science"? Greta Thunberg,	
Anthroposophical Prison Outreach in the USA		Extinction Rebellion and Technocracy	
Kathy Serafin	34	Terry Boardman	64
Self Development in the Penitentiary		Book Reviews	72
Fred Janney	43		
A Question of Identity			
Richard Bunzl	48		

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Michaelmas issue of *New View*. In the southern hemisphere spring beckons, whilst here in the north things turn more inward and leaves dream of being blown on the winds and reuniting with the land for the winter sojourn. A time more suited to reflection. And there is surely much to reflect upon.

How to organise one's inner thoughts for all that calls for attention and understanding? Rudolf Steiner gave an indication of how to approach this by offering an exercise for the beginning of each day; to decide what was essential and what was not essential to engage with, today. Of course that immediately calls into question one's discrimination, deciding what one should become active in and what to leave alone for now, perhaps for another occasion. And isn't decision making a mystery? One moment I am wrestling with something that calls for resolution and then, suddenly, I have decided on a course of action. The decision has arrived. How did that happen? Steiner once said that decision making was the highest form of initiation. Now that is something to ponder on! Not coming to a decision, being in limbo, being concerned not to make the wrong decision is a trial we are all constantly faced with. For all the lack of outer activity we may, nonetheless, be active, deeply so, in our inner life, turning things over, looking for insight, guidance, inspiration. Then again we may be just stuck and events blow us hither and thither. Yet sailors know how to work with the winds, to set a course and sail through even the worst of storms. There is courage in that, for the outcome is never certain. We live with uncertainty but can still set our course and go forward.

I am like a leaf, blown by the winds, but unlike the leaf I can be active within the winds, the winds of time. And that is a motif of Michaelmas, to be active, both inwardly and outwardly and find courage for the uncertainty. What resource is available when we are uncertain? What part of us remains steadfast? That is why, in part, this time of Michaelmas is important; to become aware that there is a connection to a source that can help. Steiner was in no doubt that the Michaelmas Festival was one that must gain more prominence in the future (it is little known or celebrated) because it carries this quality of courage for adversity out of which deeds can come. And it is deeds that shape events and the world around us; and the intentions in these deeds is everything, for good or ill. So it comes down to qualities, in each of us.

Which brings me gently to a strong contribution that appears in the pages of this issue of *New View*. There is a section of humanity that is often forgotten, overlooked; those in our midst who, for whatever reason, have fallen foul of the law and become incarcerated in prison. What happens when one is removed from society, for years, sometimes for life? The front cover is a piece of art made

by a prisoner in the USA, a country where, per capita, more men, especially, are in prison than anywhere else in the world. Let me pick up on this as we pass through the contributions for this issue of the magazine:

Bringing Light to the World: Our Deepest Human Vocation by Jeremy Naydler looks at the spiritual ramifications of 5G that is rolling over most of us before we even understand it. This is complemented with *The Light of the World* by Owen Barfield who died in 1997 but left a fine and helpful legacy of work that may only be better understood and appreciated as time unfolds.

Frances Hutchinson then offers insights into human community with *Finance and the Social Order*.

A Grimm's folk tale is then visited by Maarten Ekama in Mother Holle, a Cautionary Tale? where he ponders on inner attitudes and the consequences of them. And inner attitudes play such a part in the work of an initiative springing from members of the Anthroposophical Society in America with Finding Freedom in Prison: Anthroposophical Prison Outreach in the USA by Kathy Serafin. This work with prisoners across America is both humbling and inspiring and deserving of much support. We meet men who have found another way whilst imprisoned with the help of Anthroposophy through the deeds of people – and some of them share their experiences and art in letters poems and paintings. One of those who pioneered this work wrote a booklet that is made available to prisoners, based on Steiner's six subsidiary exercises and the text of this booklet, Self Development in the Penitentiary by Fred Janney, is shared with New View readers.

A Question of Identity by Richard Bunzl looks at the issues of gender, especially in the light of anthroposophy. The Gesture of the Human Form by Charles Kovacs (1907-2001) adds another perspective to this issue.

NNA – *news around the world* compiled by Christian von Arnim looks again at the issues surrounding Steiner schools in England.

A glimpse into how ideas affect the world we live in is offered by *Neoliberalism and the Emergence* of a Threefold Social Order by Richard Cooper from Switzerland.

Then a moments pause to consider a haiku, that poetic Japanese form, from Paula Dunley, illustrated by Zephir Delamore from New Zealand, before "Unite Behind the Science"? Greta Thunberg, Extinction Rebellion and Technocracy by Terry Boardman. All this is rounded off with a selection of thought provoking book reviews.

We still need to fund raise, year on year to keep going and my thanks to those readers who recognise this and have made our continuance possible. One day we may have a large enough circulation never to have to seek funding again!

Wishing you, the reader, well, wherever you are,

Tom Daines

Bringing Light to the World: Our Deepest Human Vocation

by Jeremy Naydler

Has the Digital Revolution Gone Too Far?

any people are now questioning where the Digital Revolution is taking us and, more importantly, how we should respond to it. Like the French Revolution, the Digital Revolution was welcomed at first. To many, the transition from analogue to digital technologies that began in the 1970s - for recording sound, photography, communications and so on – seemed like a quality improvement. Digital technologies belonged to the new computer age, and enabled far greater accuracy and control to be brought to bear on our dealings with the world. But there is a growing sense of apprehension today about the extent to which the Digital Revolution and its wireless networks is altering the very fabric of our lives, with new technologies seeking to bring human beings and machines into ever closer relationship, along with the prospect of the world we inhabit becoming an increasingly hybrid 'cyber-physical' world.

The current rollout of 5G (the fifth generation of wireless communication networks) has concentrated minds, and aroused unprecedented levels of anxiety about the direction the Digital Revolution is taking. It can seem reminiscent of that moment in the French Revolution when, as the guillotine was first rolled out, the initial euphoria subsided and no one could any longer feel safe. 5G will bring about a massive intensification of the electrosmog that has accompanied the growth of wireless communications. It will endow Artificial Intelligence systems with even greater power and autonomy, affecting every aspect of our lives. Its extremely rapid rollout, without any prior scrutiny of its potential health effects or environmental impact, is symptomatic of the Digital Revolution having acquired, like the French Revolution before it, a momentum of its own, beyond the constraint of any rational or moral consideration. Where is it taking us? Towards what end? What goal? And in the service of which genuine human needs?

This article is an attempt to explore how we might work towards a spiritual response to the ever more pervasive technologisation of our lives. Whatever else we do, whether through protest, political action or simply through taking measures to shield ourselves from intrusive electromagnetic fields, we also need to find ways of strengthening ourselves inwardly, so that we can hold our ground and keep standing humanly in the face of the very powerful forces that threaten to undermine essential human values. These values cannot be understood in isolation from our place in nature and the greater natural order to which we belong. The tendency of the Digital Revolution is to dislocate us from these values, and from the dimension of the sacred, both within ourselves and within nature. How, then, can we meet the existential threat posed by extreme technologisation, and recover the sacred ground that we need to stand on? How can we work towards a truly human future that, rather than creating yet more pollution and toxicity, brings blessing to the natural world in which we live?

Electromagnetism and Light

Our current situation needs to be seen in context. Both the saturation of the atmosphere with electromagnetic radiation and the development of Artificial Intelligence systems are relatively recent phenomena. Wireless transmission only began towards the end of the nineteenth century. Prior to this, the only phenomena of electromagnetism that people were aware of were thunderstorms and sunlight. But neither were regarded as electrical until the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries respectively, when first lightning and then

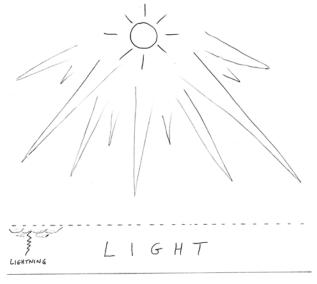


Figure 1. Diagram of light dominating the atmosphere (author's diagram).

light were interpreted as electrical phenomena. We are inclined to forget that it was not until the late nineteenth century that the "electromagnetic spectrum" was discovered: before that, no one suspected that it existed. Light was the actuality in this pre-radiofrequency world. It totally filled the atmosphere, and radiant electricity was completely absent (fig.1).

But if light was the actuality, then we must also understand that from time immemorial, this light emanating from the sun and flooding our world each day was experienced as bearing within it a spiritual power. If we go back to ancient Egyptian times, we find abundant evidence of a profound sensitivity to the intrinsically spiritual nature of light. Numerous sacred hymns declare that the light emanates from the life-bestowing sun-god Ra. The omnipresence of light signified that the world was immersed within the divine.¹ We meet a similar awareness in the sacred literature of ancient Israel, where we read how light is the garment that God wraps around himself.² This perception of light as the medium through which the divine manifests in the sense-perceptible world was readily taken up in the Christian era. For Dionysius the Areopagite and the mainstream Christian tradition, light was understood to be an image of the divine goodness, which is revealed in and through it.3 Beyond ancient Egypt, Israel and the Christian tradition, many of the world's cultures and religions attest to this primordial human experience.

This sacred status of light was devastatingly challenged in the 1860s, when the idea of the electromagnetic field was introduced into scientific circles. According to James Clerk Maxwell, who proposed the first comprehensive theory of the existence of an electromagnetic field, light was just one of many different frequencies of radiant electricity. It should be regarded as nothing more than a disturbance within the greater electromagnetic field, of which it occupies only a tiny portion, and its manifestation is entirely in accordance with electromagnetic laws.⁴ Maxwell's theoretical formulations were soon experimentally verified by Heinrich Hertz, who declared in 1889 that "light of every kind is an electrical phenomenon".⁵

From this time on, radiant electricity gradually began to fill the atmosphere as more and more frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum, each one oscillating at different rates per second, were artificially propagated and utilised for communications. This began with initial experiments in wireless transmission in the late nineteenth century and the first long-wave public radio broadcasts in the 1920s, evolving into FM radio broadcasting and TV in the 1950s, the first compact handheld mobile phones in the 1980s, smartphones in the 2000s and now the creation of the "cyber-physical" Internet of Things with the rollout of 5G in the 2020s (fig. 2). As each new technology was deployed, higher and higher frequencies oscillating at higher and higher rates with shorter and shorter wavelengths, were used so

– broadly speaking – we see a movement (from left to right in fig. 2) from low frequencies to high, from long wavelengths to short as we move through the twentieth, and into the twenty-first, centuries. Meanwhile, natural sunlight is reduced to a relatively insignificant narrow band of frequencies in the spectrum of electromagnetic, i.e. essentially subnatural, energies.



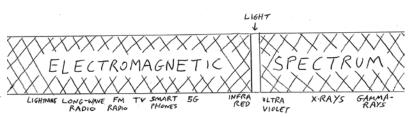


Figure 2. Diagram of electromagnetism dominating the atmosphere (author's diagram).

In the utilisation of electromagnetic spectrum, we also see a movement from initial sound-broadcasting to the transmission of visual content with the invention of television. The illuminated screen of television introduced human beings to a kind of Otherworld that could be regarded as both real and unreal at the same time. When desktop computers acquired a similar screen interface in the 1980s, this gave the user the ability to engage much more fully with machine intelligence. It presented to the user a window into the inner world of the computer, and the electric light that glowed from this window invited the human being in. The electric light was a simulation of natural sunlight, but it exercised a powerful attraction over the human soul because light, especially when it shines through another medium, has an irresistible allure for us. For this reason, the illuminated screen was one of the most psychologically powerful innovations in computer design.

I n the desktop computer, and subsequently the laptop, tablet and smartphone, the screen became an entry point into a parallel universe, where human beings would have a growing amount of experiences: communicating with friends, finding things out, conducting business, buying and selling things, and immersion in the fantasy worlds of computer games. Human thoughts, feelings, desires, and fantasies would increasingly be lived out in the arena of machine intelligence. In Figure 3, the artificially illumined screen hangs in the sky, with clouds in the background, and the electric glow that emanates from it has usurped the role of sunlight. It is an electronic imposter of the sun. The picture depicts the replacement of the natural light of the sun by the electrically generated light of the computer screen, which now commands the allegiance of the human soul, and casts a spell over human consciousness.

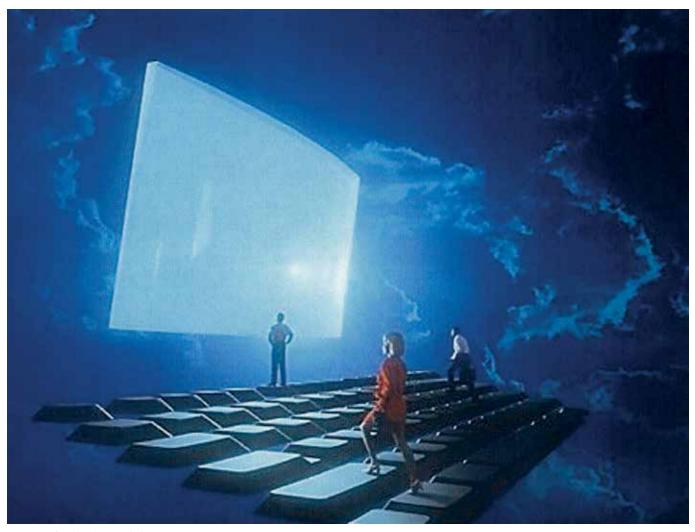


Figure 3. The lure of the screen.

Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence

But what casts the spell is not just the light, it is the peculiarly powerful *machine intelligence* that it makes available to us, and which seems to become more and more indispensible to our lives. Machine intelligence has the ability to engage us, and to draw us into all that it can do. It is significant that the first electro-mechanical computer was invented at the same time as the first experiments in generating electromagnetic waves and then wireless transmission.⁶ Just as it is important to understand how light was captured by electricity, so we must also understand how intelligence was captured by machines.

In the Western philosophical tradition, intelligence has long been understood as the distinctively human ability to gain insight into the essence of things. According to both Plato and Aristotle, intelligence (in Greek, *nous*) is a divine endowment that makes human beings active participants in the cosmic spiritual order. Through the gift of intelligence we are able to penetrate the outer appearance of phenomena and grasp their inner spiritual causes. It is, furthermore, a faculty within us which is independent of the physical body, granting us the experience of our own intrinsically spiritual nature.⁷ This understanding was transmitted into mainstream

Christian philosophy and theology by St. Augustine, for whom *intelligentia* is seated in the heart and directed towards what is eternal.⁸

By contrast the modern use of the word intelligence has become almost synonymous with computational ability, a view first advocated in the seventeenth century by Thomas Hobbes. For Hobbes, the activity of thinking is nothing more than making calculations. It was during Hobbes' lifetime that the first mechanical calculators were invented, and he was well aware of the fact that his definition of intelligence was applicable equally to humans and machines. Defined in terms of calculative ability, intelligence loses its distinctively human attribute: it becomes in the end something merely mechanical.

The implication that thinking is essentially no different from computing – analysing data, and then making calculations based on this analysis – is the basis of the graph in Figure 4, published in Ray Kurzweil's, *The Singularity is Near* (2005) – a book full of unnerving predictions about the increasing role of Artificial Intelligence in our lives. The graph shows the growth curve of machine intelligence since 1900, during the days of Hollerith's electro-mechanical computers, through the first electronic computers of the 1940s and 1950s, the personal computers of the 1980s

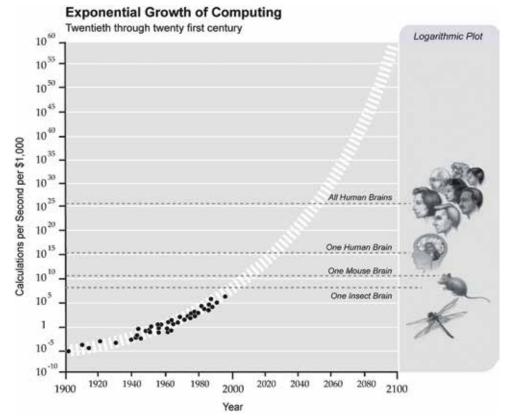


Figure 4. Growth of computing according to Kurzweil, The Singularity is Near (2005)

and the early smartphones of the 2000s. During this period both computer memory and processing speeds swiftly increased and could be incorporated in devices commercially available on the mass-market, so the price of machine intelligence rapidly came down. This meant that the amount of "calculations per second" that could be purchased for \$1000 rose exponentially. Kurzweil predicted that it would continue to rise to the point at which computers equalled and then exceeded human intelligence.¹

In the graph, machine intelligence is correlated with the intelligence of insects, mice and human beings on a qualitatively indistinguishable continuum. What distinguishes the intelligence of these different creatures is the number of calculations per second each can make. Just as light was absorbed into the electromagnetic spectrum, and defined in terms of a specific number of oscillations per second, so human intelligence merely functions at a certain level of calculations per second. According to the graph, this is a staggering number: several quadrillion (a number with fifteen zeros after it)! Kurzweil predicted that there would be computers capable of such speeds by the year 2020.11 Where the graph is questionable, however, is not so much in the accuracy of its predictions but in its assumption about the meaning of intelligence. Never mind about the cost or the dates, to measure intelligence in terms of calculations per second has nothing to do with our conscious experience of thinking. Most people, given

only one second, would probably fail to make just one calculation, let alone quadrillions! The graph assumes that intelligence can be correlated with electronic or electrochemical activity, but this is very different from our actual experience of thinking. From a phenomenological point of view, it is complete nonsense to define intelligence in this way. Nevertheless, this computer model of intelligence and of thinking has become paramount today. It is now a commonly held view that the brain is nothing more than a biological computer, and all human thinking is basically a calculative activity.

This view provides the rationale for the conversion of electrochemical processes in the brain into digital signals, all the better to work more closely with machine intelligence. Headsets that capture your thoughts and convert them into

digital signals have been commercially available for some time. Through such technologies, humans gain the ability to interact with, and control, machines by the power of thought alone. ¹² As this technology becomes more prevalent, we can only assume that human intelligence will become increasingly enmeshed with Artificial Intelligence. So just as light was purloined by the electromagnetic theory, so we see human thinking hijacked by the reductionist view of human intelligence. Treated merely as an electrochemical process in the brain on the same spectrum as machine intelligence, and conceived as nothing more than "calculations per second", the path is laid for the atrophy of the deeper spiritual capacities of genuine human intelligence.

How, then, can we reclaim for human intelligence a role that is independent of Artificial Intelligence, and based on an activity that is genuinely free and not simply subservient to the computer-dominated world? With the creeping pervasiveness of the Internet of Things, computational intelligence will be embedded in more and more objects with which we will interact on a daily basis. Therefore it is essential that we take steps to build up the truly human potential of thinking. As we shall see, these steps are closely related to the recognition of the spiritual nature of light.

Recovering the Relationship Between Light and Thought

The relationship between electricity and Artificial Intelligence is one of mutual interdependence. Artificial Intelligence cannot function without electricity. There can be no Artificial Intelligence without electricity,

because – as we know – as soon as the power supply goes off or runs out, our computer or smartphone collapses into total inertness. Furthermore, our mobile devices, insofar as they communicate with other devices, receive and emit electromagnetic radiation. Likewise, the embedded sensors, transmitters and actuators crucial to the Internet of Things, and the new "cyber-physical systems" that 5G will enable, all function by receiving and transmitting radiant electricity. But just as Artificial Intelligence depends upon electricity as its medium, so at the same time electricity finds its fulfilment in Artificial Intelligence. Electricity rises to its highest level when it is digitised in binary code, for then it acquires intelligence, albeit only computational intelligence. Electricity and Artificial Intelligence should thus be regarded as two aspects of a single phenomenon. Figure 5 represents this relationship diagrammatically.

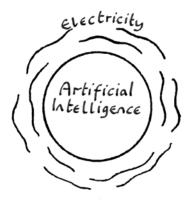


Figure 5. Electricity and Artificial Intelligence (author's diagram).

This relationship of electricity and artificial intelligence has, however, arisen as a kind of mimicking of the relationship of light and thought. Figure 5 is in fact adapted from a diagram originally drawn by Rudolf Steiner in 1920 when talking about the relationship of light and thought. In Steiner's diagram, the place of Artificial Intelligence is rightfully taken by thought and that of electricity by light (fig. 6).¹³



Figure 6. Rudolf Steiner's diagram of light and thought.

When he drew this diagram, Steiner's explanation was as follows:

"We have the light in us. Only it does not appear to us as light because we live within it, and because while we use the light, it *becomes thought* within us... You take up the light in yourself which otherwise appears outside you. You differentiate it in yourself. You work in it. This is precisely your thinking: it is a working in light... Light and thought go together. They are identical, but seen from different sides."¹⁴

The idea that thought and light are intimately connected goes back a long way. Perhaps not surprisingly, we find it in Plato, who saw that they are really one and the same entity manifesting outwardly as light, and inwardly as thought or human intelligence (*nous*). For Plato, light and thought both emanate from the same source, which he called the Idea of Good. This connection with the Idea of Good may seem obscure to us today, but each morning we can (if we allow ourselves) feel the sunlit world to be illumining us with the power of goodness. Goodness streams through our bedroom window in the sunlight. And this same power of goodness can also be experienced inwardly as giving us the light of waking consciousness, with our ability to think, to know, and to understand.

This intimate relationship between thought and light was regarded as quite obvious by other ancient thinkers as well as Plato, for example Aristotle and Plotinus, and was also understood in the Middle Ages. It figures prominently, for instance, in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. In ancient and medieval times, thought itself was inwardly experienced as illuminating or shedding light on the world.

After Steiner drew this diagram, he added more underneath it. The complete diagram is shown in Figure 7.

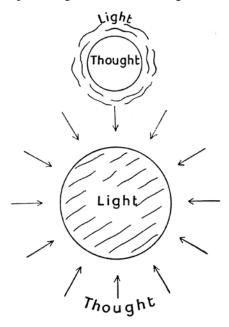


Figure 7. Rudolf Steiner's complete diagram of the relationship between light and thought.

At the top, the microcosm of the human mind is shown as a small circle, which contains our thoughts. Steiner says that, seen with spiritual perception, these thoughts are radiating light. At the bottom, the macrocosm of the world is filled with light. But then Steiner says, seen with spiritual perception, this light which is spread out in the world reveals itself to be permeated with thought. Thus the light we experience in the world around us is permeated with thought. If we were to ask what is the thought-content that the light holds, philosophers in ancient and medieval times would say: the light holds the archetypal forms of all creatures. In other words, the inner organising principle of each creature - the spiritual archetype that makes it what it is - is intrinsically luminous.¹⁷ This view is entirely consonant with that of Steiner who, in a lecture given ten years earlier in 1910, made the following statement:

"Every substance upon earth is condensed light. There is nothing in material existence in any form whatever which is anything but condensed light... Whenever you reach out and touch a substance, there you have condensed, compressed light. All matter is, in its essence, light." ¹⁸

So the sense-perceptible universe is a kind of condensation of light in matter. In so far as matter receives the impress of thought, which is what makes each thing what it is, it also receives the impress of light. The diagram illustrates the fact that this impress is received from the cosmic periphery, which works inwards. But at the same time in each living creature the archetype works *from within outwards*. This seeming paradox points us towards how the forces of life, or the etheric formative forces, act – from the cosmic periphery inwards, and from the spiritual centre outwards (fig. 8). So there is an important overlap between light and the etheric realm: we meet the etheric in light.

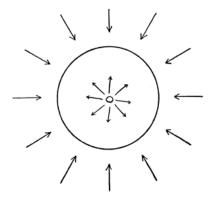


Figure 8. From the cosmic periphery inwards, from the spiritual centre outwards (author's diagram).

Light: a Bridge to the Etheric

One of the things that Steiner says about the nature of light is that although it is present in the world all around us, we do not see it directly, but we see by means of it. It

makes things visible, but it is in itself invisible. ¹⁹ So when we contemplate light we are contemplating something that, although present in the world, is *essentially a spiritual presence*. It can therefore be regarded as a kind of bridge that leads from the world perceptible to the senses to what is actually extra-sensory. It is *a bridge into the realm of the etheric*. ²⁰

Light can be our entry point into the etheric because the energies of the etheric, that is to say the formative forces of life, are conveyed through the light; they live in the light. For Steiner, electricity is a force that is inimical to life: it can only animate machines, whereas light is the medium through which the formative forces of life pour into the world.21 This is something we can all experience, but only through a degree of inner effort, a diligent practice of contemplative observation. The attempt to reach this experience is a first step that we can take to counterbalance the dominance of electromagnetism in the atmosphere, through affirming a greater reality and investing our energies in the exploration of a more profound truth. If we are able to become more conscious of the etheric forces living in the light, this will give us the basis for reclaiming for the light its rightful domain, which is not the realm of electromagnetism but the realm of life.

The onus is entirely on us to work towards such a consciousness of the connection between light and the realm of life-forces. It requires that, instead of just taking light for granted, we deepen our relationship to it by, for example, observing the different moods of morning and evening light, and how dawn light differs from the light at dusk; by attending more closely to the constantly changing qualities and interactions of light and shade; by noticing how the varying moisture content of the atmosphere affects the quality of light at different times of day and at different times of year, and how the attributes of light are so very different on a cloudy or sunny day; by focusing on the degree to which light is reflected, transmitted, or absorbed by, for example, leaves and flowers. These are simple but subtle things to observe, but they can sensitise us to the living, spiritual quality of light.

On a sunny day, in particular, we may notice the contrast between how things appear when the source of the light is behind them and when it is in front of them. When backlit, leaves and petals can appear transfigured by the sunlight. It is as if their intrinsic radiance is revealed: then it does not seem so far-fetched to conceive of them as made of condensed light. They can become not just luminous but, as in the case of the tulip in Figure 9, actually transparent. At such moments, we may feel we glimpse the presence of spirit in the world of nature, for this can be a numinous experience that arrests our attention, as we contemplate in wonder. And then we may understand something about the allure of the backlit electronic screen: for is it not precisely this numinosity

that the backlit screen seeks to replicate? But instead of drawing us into the living etheric world, it draws us into the lifeless electronic world. By immersing ourselves in such phenomena, we may begin to have an intimation of how light bears within itself powerful creative forces.

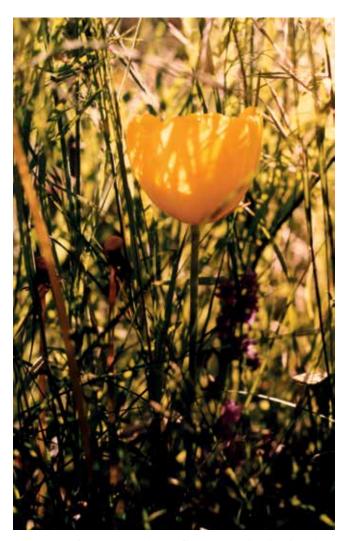


Figure 9. Backlit tulip in Spring (author's photo).

Coming Home to Thinking

If we consider the lower, macrocosmic part of Steiner's diagram again (fig. 7), it suggests that the more we are able to immerse ourselves in the light, the more we might feel a kind of "homecoming", for what we meet in the light as sensory experience we also meet within ourselves as an inner experience, namely thought. If the light outside us bears within it the cosmic thinking that gives rise to all forms in the world, then it is this same element of thinking that we meet within ourselves, at the centre of our own inner life. Thus human thinking would rightfully occupy a place in the centre of Steiner's macrocosmic diagram, as implicitly belonging to the greater macrocosmic drama (fig. 10). Outwardly, the cosmic logos wraps itself in the garment of light, while inwardly we may come to an experience of the same spiritual power as active in our life of thought.

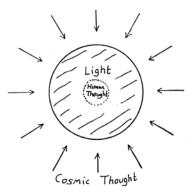


Figure 10. Light within cosmic thought; human thought within light (author's diagram).

Like light, the activity of thinking is essentially spiritual, but it is nevertheless present in the sense-perceptible world. So, like light, thinking can also serve as a bridge between the world perceptible to our senses and the spiritual world. But it can only do this if we go beyond the commonly held view that thinking is just a "calculative" process of logical analysis and reasoning things out. That describes *brain thinking*, but brain thinking is not the essential nature of thinking. Any computer can be programmed to analyse data, but when we truly think we go beyond brain activity and we are active on the *etheric* level. As we have seen, the etheric works from the cosmic periphery inwards and at the same time from the spiritual centre outwards.

Applied to the inner life of thought, this entails, first of all, an act of centering, in which we place ourselves at the inner threshold where thoughts arise. Thereby, we are consciously engaged in the arising of the thoughts – in the act of giving birth to them. The activity of thinking is an opening to what is not yet formed, and giving it form. It requires that we free ourselves of our concepts and our favourite opinions. In this respect, it involves a process of *unthinking*, because it is the opposite of falling back on familiar patterns of thought, and it is nothing to do with analysing data, or sifting through information and making calculations. It is essentially an *active receptivity* to what arises from within.

But what we give birth to does not exactly arise from within us, in the sense of "from our own selfhood". We cannot really claim it as our own. It comes from beyond our ego. We can have the strong sense that the source of our thinking is not really *in us*. It is more that *we are in it*: we are functioning within a greater mind. That is why Steiner says that when we truly think the spiritual world "plays into" our thinking. It is a dialogue in which we are not alone. It is a communing with the spiritual world.²² Figure 11 depicts the paradox that the spiritual world within which we exist plays into our thinking from *within* us, and so we may experience our thoughts as arising from a sphere beyond our limited personality. This experience both gives us a taste of

thinking as an etheric activity, and it also provides the experiential foundation for rejecting the reductionist view of human intelligence as merely computational. It is thus an essential counterbalance to the current tendency towards ever closer integration of human thinking with Artificial Intelligence systems.

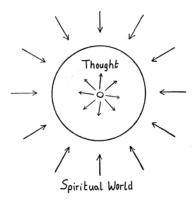


Figure 11. How the Spiritual World Plays into Thinking (author's diagram).

Bringing Light to the World

I have suggested that by immersing ourselves in the living, creative forces borne by the light, we can offer a counterbalance to the saturation of the atmosphere with electromagnet radiation. Similarly, by deepening of our thinking to the point at which we experience it as a living spiritual activity we can counteract the tendency today of human thinking to become enmeshed with machine intelligence. There is a further vital step that we can also take, as a spiritual response to the influx of extreme technologies into our lives.

One of the most important statements that Rudolf Steiner makes about thinking as a spiritual activity is that it contains within it "the power of love in its spiritual form." When we really engage in thinking – in *living* thinking – it is the power of love that we activate within ourselves.²³ Herein lies a crucial difference between human intelligence and Artificial Intelligence. Human intelligence is intrinsically selfless, which is why it gives us the capacity to enter into the being of another with loving understanding. By contrast, machine thinking is loveless and disconnected from the world. It is locked into the darkness of solipsism, unable to radiate spiritual light.

Both the outer light surrounding us and the light of thinking within us share the same characteristic of intrinsic selflessness. The one illumines all things, great and small, ugly and beautiful, without prejudice; the other enables us through our understanding to illumine the being of another, again without prejudice. This is the power of love in thinking. It directs the light of thinking outwards towards the world.

The activation of this level of thinking within ourselves is our highest calling as human beings. By bringing to the world our loving attentiveness and

the warmth of selfless understanding, we are actually bringing life-giving light to the world. And in so doing, we bestow a blessing on whatever this light illumines. In one of his meditative verses, Rudolf Steiner says that the world, without our consciousness of it, would become a frozen waste, empty of life.²⁴ We could add to that: the more we surrender our consciousness to a world dominated by intelligent machines animated by electricity, the more the world will find only death.

Human beings have something vital, literally vital, to contribute to the world. When we can hold other creatures in the embrace of a loving perception and genuinely selfless understanding, then we are illuminating them; we are bringing light to them. And according to Meister Eckhart, when we illumine other creatures in our understanding, what we are doing is preparing them for their return to God. It is our deepest human vocation.²⁵ This is beautifully illustrated in Greg Tricker's painting of *St. Francis in the Snow* (fig. 12), in which the saint is portrayed fulfilling this specifically human vocation in a frozen winter landscape.

Each of the three steps I have outlined involves building up our relationship with the light as a spiritual foundation of our response to the technological challenges we face. They will not, of course, stop the rollout of 5G, and after it 6G and 7G, nor will they prevent Artificial Intelligence from becoming increasingly pervasive. They should therefore not be seen as alternatives to political protest or the effort to raise consciousness of the dangers of extreme technologisation through reasoned argument based on scientific research. But, by helping us to find the sacred ground on which we can take our stand, they may be thought of as enabling us to place something on the other side of the scales, to counterbalance the negative forces that today assail humanity and menace the living Earth. To take on these forces, we need to fortify ourselves inwardly and find strength to work towards bringing real blessing to the world.

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Endnotes

- 1. Jan Assmann, Egyptian Solar religion in the New Kingdom (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).
- 2. Psalm 104.
- 3. Dionysius the Areopagite, *Divine Names*, 4.1-4, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, translated by Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp.71-75. This view is taken up by Thomas Aquinas, for example in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Lecture 2.



Figure 12. St. Francis in the Snow, by Greg Tricker.

- 4. James Clerk Maxwell, "A Dynamical Theory of the Electromagnetic Field" (1864), §97, in W. D. Nixon, ed., *The Scientific Papers of James Clerk Maxwell*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890), p.500:
 - "Light is an electromagnetic disturbance propagated through the field according to electromagnetic laws."
- 5. Heinrich Hertz, "On the Relations Between Light and Electricity" in *Miscellaneous Papers* (London: MacMillan, 1896), p.313.
- 6. In the 1880s, when Hertz was conducting his experiments on electromagnetic waves, Herman Hollerith designed and built his "tabulating machine", the first electro-mechanical computer, which was successfully employed in the American census of 1890. Hollerith's company was later consolidated into IBM.
- 7. Plato, *Timaeus*, 90B-C; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XI.3.8, and *Nicomachean Ethics*, 10.7.8.
- 8. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 7.17. Later authors, such as Boethius and Aquinas tended to use the word *intellectus* rather than *intelligentia*, but it referred to the same human faculty.
- 9. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I, 5.
- 10. Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near* (London: Duckworth, 2005), Chapter 3.
- 11. In 2019 the fastest computer (a gigantic supercomputer in China) reached the speed of 93 quadrillion operations per second. But it costs considerably more than \$1000, so it wouldn't yet feature on this graph.
- 12. The company Emotiv Inc., for example, which specializes in neurotechnology, offers a range of

- affordable headsets, and promises to enable the user to "control machines with the power of your mind".
- 13. Rudolf Steiner, "Thought and Will as Light and Darkness", 5th December, 1920, in *Colour* translated by H. Collison (London: Rudolf Steiner Publishing company, 1935).
- 14. *Ibid*.
- 15. Plato, Republic, Book 6: 517B-C.
- David L. Whidden, Christ the Light: the Theology of Light and Illumination in Thomas Aquinas (Augsberg, MN: Fortress Press, 2014) is an exemplary and very helpful recent study.
- 17. Etienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (London: Sheed and Ward, 1980), p.120: "All created beings are lights... and their very essence consists in being so many reflections of the divine light."
- 18. Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 27th May, 1910, in *Manifestations of Karma* translated by Heidi Hermann-Davey (Forest Row: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2000).
- 19. Rudolf Steiner, *The Story of my Life*, translated by H. Collison (London: Anthroposophical Publishing Company, 1928), p.64:
 "Light is not really perceived by the senses; colours are perceived by means of light, which manifests itself everywhere in the perception of colours but it is not itself sensibly perceived."
- Owen Barfield, "The Light of the World" in Supplement to Anthroposophical Movement, 31.2 (February, 1954), p.2. See also Rudolf Steiner, The Light Course, Lecture 5, December 27th 1919 (Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press, 2001), p.92.
- 21. Rudolf Steiner, lecture of June 16th, 1924 in *The Agriculture Course*, translated by George Adams (Forest Row: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2004), pp.153-155. Steiner warned that filling the atmosphere with radiant electricity would have detrimental effects on human beings and on all living organisms, because electricity doesn't belong to the realm of life, but tends to undermine it.
- 22. Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 5th January, 1919, quoted in Otto Palmer, *Rudolf Steiner on his Book*, 'The Philosophy of Freedom' (New York: The Anthroposophic Press, 1975), p.21f.
- 23. Rudolf Steiner, *Philosophy of Freedom* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1964), p.119.
- 24. Rudolf Steiner, *The Calendar of the Soul*, 33. Translated by Christopher Bamford (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2003), p.136:
 "The world, without my soul's experience of it, would be a frozen waste, empty of life... and itself would find only death."
- Meister Eckhart (1260-1328), German theologian, philosopher and mystic. See Sermon 56, in M. O'C. Walshe, ed., Meister Eckhart: Sermons and Treatises, vol.2 (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1987), pp. 80-81 (translation adapted):
 - "All creatures enter my understanding that they may be illumined in me. thereby I prepare all creatures for their return to God."

The Light of the World

by Owen Barfield (1898-1997)

This essay was originally a lecture delivered in 1953, at the request of Barfield's great friend Cecil Harwood, as part of a series on "Rudolf Steiner and Christianity".

Then man, in the exercise of his mechanical function, puts together a structure, he does it by adding one part to another, so that they lie side-by-side in space, and the whole is made up of all the parts added together. But when nature constructs, she follows a different principle – one which man also, when he is functioning not as mechanic but as artist or poet, must strive to follow. In an *organic* structure it will be found that the parts interpenetrate and, as it were, express each other in a characteristic way, and that often a single part will seem at the same time to be the whole, or to be potentially the whole. And this is the structural principle which, at all levels from the highest to the lowest, Anthroposophy reveals to us as present in the universe itself.

We know, for instance, that the substance even of the physical world consists primarily, not of some extrapolated system of atoms or nuclei or quanta or probabilities, but of a vast number of spiritual beings and the relations between them. And this is equally true of the inner world of consciousness. Anthroposophy adopts the Dionysian nomenclature and speaks of three Hierarchies of such Beings: of a First Hierarchy, consisting of Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim; of a Second Hierarchy, consisting also of three different Orders or Ranks of Beings, for whom we usually employ the Greek names, Kyriotetes, Dynameis, Exusiai, and of the third and lowest Hierarchy of Archai, Archangeloi and Angeloi. And already, at this exalted level, we find it higher still at the level of the Divine Trinity itself; where, as is so precisely stated in the Athanasian Creed, "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God." For, on the one hand, we think of the whole of the First or highest Hierarchy - that is, of the whole trinity of Orders which it contains - as being the Hierarchy in which the Father principle is especially manifested; of the Second Hierarchy as the Hierarchy of the Son and of the Third Hierarchy as the Hierarchy of the Holy Spirit. But, on the other hand, we also find Father, Son and Spirit manifest within each Hierarchy. For instance, within the First Hierarchy the Order of the Thrones carries the will of the Father, while the Seraphim express the Son and the Cherubim the Holy Spirit. And so it is with the Second, and also with the Third Hierarchy,

whose field of action is more the inner world of man's consciousness. Here it is the Archai, or Time-Spirits, who are the representatives of the Father.

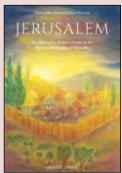
One can put it that way; but one can also say that through the Archai the whole of the First Hierarchy enters into and works within the Third. Or rather that it *may* do so; for when it comes to the Third Hierarchy, a good deal depends on the activity and the free choices of man himself.

It follows also that in each Hierarchy you get one Order of Beings which not only expresses a Person of the Trinity, but expresses it in a special emphasized way. The Thrones are not only Father-Beings, but are Father-Beings within the Hierarchy of the Father. So also, Exusiai express the Son within the Hierarchy of the Son; and the Angels the Spirit within the Hierarchy of the Spirit.

If we now descend, from this brief glimpse at the structure of the Spiritual World itself, to man as he lives on earth, we find the like hierarchical, or organic, relation between the four principles of which he is composed - and one which needs the like mobility of thought or imagination for its comprehension. We speak of man as consisting of the four principles, Physical, Etheric, Astral and Ego. And here, too, we find that we not only have these four principles, as it were, primarily and in their own right; but also, if we confine our attention to only one of them, we shall find all four in a secondary way, manifested, reflected, aspected – how you will – in that one. In the physical body, for instance, we find the Ego principle represented - where? In the blood. And in the same way we detect the astral, the etheric and the physical as present in a special way in the nerves and senses, in the glandular system, and in the bones.

And so it is with the Etheric. Here I say 'Etheric' rather than 'Etheric Body', because, although man certainly has an etheric body, yet this body is not insulated from the rest of the etheric – and elemental – world in the same way that the physical body is from the physical world against it. In the Four Ethers of which Rudolf Steiner has said so much, we find again the four principles of which man is composed. We find physical etheric, astral and ego in the Warmth Ether, the Light Ether, the Chemical Ether or Sound Ether and the Life Ether respectively.

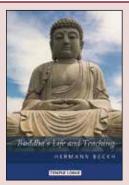
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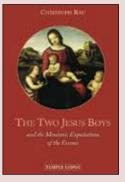
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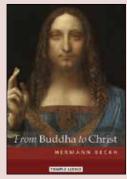
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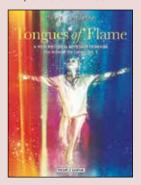
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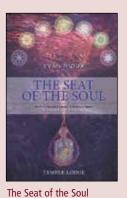
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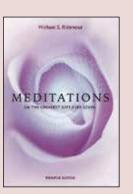
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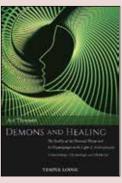
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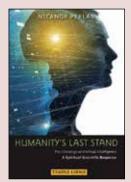
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Here again, in the case of the Light Ether, we get that special emphasis - of the principle within its own principle. Light Ether is the etheric in the etheric. Without going into the question how far it is possible to call any part of light 'physical', I suppose, then, we are not far astray, if we think of this light from the sun that comes flooding in on us through our eyes, when we wake in the morning, as a sort of gateway through which our consciousness can enter into an experience of the etheric world – if we think of light as, shall I say, the etheric par excellence. And that is why I begin by considering our experience of light from this point of view, by considering our experience of the etheric cosmos.

We must, however, distinguish experience of the etheric from ideas we may form about the etheric before we have any experience. These ideas are likely to be in my case they certainly were - not truly ideas about the etheric at all, but only ideas about the effects of the etheric in the physical. I well remember reading about the etheric body in Rudolf Steiner's book *Theosophy*, and getting from there the idea of the 'formative forces' of which it is composed, and which keep the living physical bodies of plants and animals and men from collapsing like dead bodies. I thought of growing plants and, insensibly, there formed itself in my mind the picture of a kind of swelling, an expanding or inflating force – something like what happens when you blow up a bicycle tyre! This really remained with me for years, and I was often much troubled by various allusions to the etheric in other contexts - lectures and so forth which did not seem to square with it. Particularly, when I was told that the etheric forces work inward from the periphery. This seemed to suggest that my previous imagination contained the opposite of the truth, and that I ought really to be thinking, not of expansion from within, but rather a kind of suction from without. But of course that was no nearer the truth; because I was really thinking all the time, not of etheric forces but of physical forces.

It is indeed very difficult for minds - trained, as ours have mostly been, to assume that there is nothing between a physical force, at one extreme, and an abstract idea at the other - to learn to imagine, or to realize in experience, something which is a force, and yet not a physical force; something whose influence is inward from the periphery, not outward from the centre; and yet which works upon that centre expansively and not contractingly. But when one has overcome this

obstacle, at least in some degree; when one has begun, in some dim way, to realize the etheric as etheric, then one begins to move forward into a kind of new and more intimate relationship with the world of plants. One begins, for instance, to feel, like a sort of tenderness in one's own heart, the infinite delicacy and tenderness that hovers about the growing point of the commonest weed. And at the same time – or it may well be later – it may come about that one will begin to feel a new, and again an intimate, relation with the light itself. One begins to perceive, or rather to feel, that the light itself – this light from the sun that comes to us through the senses – is etheric and that the etheric is a kind of light.

And this is a very deeply moving experience. Much deeper than mere observation. It goes to the roots of one's being, like the breath of life itself. One will begin to feel that the light is not only outside in space, but also within oneself. Indeed there are sure to be occasions when, for brief periods, one is aware, not only of seeing or feeling the light, but also of breathing it. Breathing it in and out, but especially in. Only a much more intimate kind of breathing – so that one will feel at times that one is in the light, not only as our bodies are in water when they swim, not only as they are in the air we breathe, but rather as we speak, in that significant English idiom, of people being in love. If one had to find a single word in which to sum up the more subjective aspect of the experience I am speaking of, there is only one word that could be used; and that is -joy. The sort of joy that we see made manifest in the sunlight dancing on the water. Deep draughts of pure joy, which obliterate, while they last, all anxiety, all sorrow, all considerations of karma, and even all memory of such things. A joy so uplifting and, if I may use the word, so thoroughgoing, that, however short a time it lasts, it will leave some enduring effects behind it. It may indeed somewhat affect the whole personality – with reverberations even into the sphere of physical health. It may bring a new and more intimate contact with the forces of growth and adolescence in us, so that we find ourselves developing a new strength to support our burdens, and a new energy for devising our tasks and carrying them through. In a word, it may lead to something which could perhaps be described, without altogether overstating it, as -Rejuvenation.

Let us suppose that, with the effects of this new and joyous light of perception in us, we choose to turn our attention to some of the great writings of the past; it may be to one or more of the Mystics – or it may be to the New Testament itself. What sort of experience shall we have? We shall have read Rudolf Steiner's description, in the Cassel lectures on the Gospel of St. John, of how, when the blood flowed from the Cross on Golgotha, it was much more than a merely physical event. How there was then a change in the aura of the Earth itself, so that, from being a mere planet, a mere receiver of

light from the sun, it began itself to emit light. "Earth began to glow," he says, "first astrally and visible only to the seer, but in future ages the astral light will become physical light and the earth will be a luminous body – a Sun-body". And now we may well feel that something has happened, like a cracking of the hard rind of a seed by the new life stirring within it; as if a stone had been rolled away, not only from the tomb of our own sense-bound thinking, but from the whole historical development of Christianity. And we shall feel a sort of astonishment, when we reflect on the sombre and gloomy thing which has been made of Christianity – perhaps by the Protestant confession as a whole, but certainly by all manner of narrow, evangelical sects, which have sprung up in the West in the last two or three centuries. We shall feel this astonishment, when we read, for instance, in St. John's Gospel, certain utterances of the Son of Man, such as: "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly," or: "These words have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Above all, we may feel that we now understand in a new and triumphant way those solemn words of the Christ: "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD".

Those five pregnant words "the light of the world" were uttered by Christ Jesus on three occasions, two of them recorded in St. John and one in St. Matthew. Steiner often pointed out that the Gospels were not composed or arranged in any haphazard way. If we wish to deepen our understanding of any particular event or utterance, we must always also observe exactly whereabouts in the narrative it is recorded: what came before and what followed after.

The Eighth Chapter of St. John's Gospel opens with the coming of Christ to the Temple in the early morning – after the Feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated with lighted candles. It describes how, while He was teaching the multitude, the Pharisees brought to Him a woman who had just been taken in adultery – "in the very act", as her accusers eagerly emphasized. The narrative of this encounter is too often repeated to need repeating here. At the moment I only want to draw attention to the fact that, directly after this incident has been described – immediately after Jesus' final words to the woman (those words which are quoted rather less often than the others): "Go, and sin no more" – in the very next verse the tremendous phrase occurs:

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life'."

Now in the ensuing dispute with the Pharisees the Christ alludes very frequently to the Father. He refers, for instance, all moral judgments to the Father:

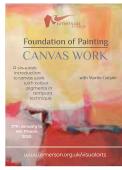
"I judge no man. And yet, if I judge, my judgement is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me".

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And He elaborates this argument in what at first sight seems a strange – even a far-fetched way. In the Mosaic Law, the testimony of two witnesses is true; therefore His, the Christ's, judgment is true – it is true because it is the judgment, not of one, but of two – of Himself and the Father.

If we bear these words in mind and the many, many other passages in St. John's Gospel where the Christ continually distinguishes Himself from the Father, refers all power and authority to the Father, emphasizes His obedience to the Father, as to one distinct from Himself; and if we set beside them other very different utterances such as "I and the Father are one", or His answer in Chapter 14, to Philip, when Philip says to Him, "Lord, show us the Father!" and if we meditate much and deeply upon them, we may hope to approach a little nearer to one of the great mysteries which St. John's Gospel seeks to reveal to us. The other mystery is the mystery of light – and the two are most intimately connected. That is why, before I return to the light, I want to say a little more about the Father-being, as we read of Him in St. John's Gospel.

I have said that there were many, many other passages; and indeed the words "the Father" recur so frequently throughout the Gospel that they positively seem to ring through its pages, like the note of a gong struck over and over again and coming clear upon our

ears through all the other sounds. In the early part of the gospel Jesus speaks more of His having come *down* from the Father, having been sent by the Father, doing the works of the Father, and so forth. Towards the end, however, He begins to speak of going *to* the Father; and it is then that His disciples fail to understand Him.

Steiner has spoken of this failure and has pointed out that they failed to understand that, when the Christ spoke of the Father, He was really speaking of what? Of *death*. When He said: "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world", it was really as if He said: "I came forth from death, that is from death in its true form, from the Life-Father". Only afterwards did it flash upon His disciples "that the world, as it surrounds them, is the outer expression of the Father and that the most significant feature in the outer world, its greatest maya or illusion, is equally the expression of the Father; that death is the name of the Father."

These are startling words; but I believe there is a road along which we can try to penetrate somewhat into their meaning. The ordinary conscious experience of a living being, that is, of a being in this world of maya, always has two sides to it, an inner and an outer. No matter what it may be of which I am conscious – whether it is of houses and trees, or whether it is only of memories, or whether it is of the light itself, the physical or etheric light, there is always the duality, the subjective-

objective duality, which is signified by the word 'of'. There is, on the other side, that of which I am conscious, and, on the inner side, that in me which is conscious. I can never at any moment be conscious of that innermost in me which is actually "doing the business of being conscious". If I say I am conscious of it, I am deceiving myself – for I necessarily presuppose a yet more inner innermost, namely the 'I' which is saying so. We get, in fact, what the philosophers call "an infinite regress".

But where the philosophers speak of an infinite regress, we speak of astral and ego; of the divine Hierarchies; and of the Father in us. For we assume that, besides the ordinary experience of human beings today, a different kind of experience is possible. We think that the part of us which is conscious – as distinct from the parts of which we are conscious - is not just a sort of phantom subject of the grammatical sentence "I am conscious of...", but a Being in a world of Beings. And it is that world which we call the astral world, and, at a further stage, the spiritual world. Thus, the difficulty still remains; but it has ceased to be merely logical and has become - awful. For it follows from what I have said, that to penetrate into the astral is to turn what by its very nature is an *inner* – what for ordinary experience is indeed inwardness itself – into an outer; into something like an environment. It involves – to use a very crude and perhaps rather offensive expression - a sort of turning inside out.

Now those who have read much of what Steiner has written and spoken about man's life between death and a new birth, will know that it is precisely in such terms that he often describes the experience of the dead. He says that, whereas on earth we feel ourselves as looking out from a centre to a periphery, after death it is the other way. We feel the periphery as ourselves, and we look inwards to a centre. It is the centre which is now the 'environment'. This is very nearly unimaginable; and it is unimaginable, because it is the experience, not of the living but of the dead.

This break between the experience characteristic of the living and the experience characteristic of the dead – with the abruptness, the sharpness, the bitterness which it involves – does not lie between the physical and the etheric. It lies between the etheric and the astral. Physical and etheric are, both together, our outer world. Astral and ego are the inner.

If, therefore, a man who had penetrated to some extent into the etheric world, that soundless realm of interweaving, ever-changing forms – a world of joyous light, but a soundless world (and a colourless one) – wished to go further and penetrate into the realm where the Divine Word is not only seen, but also *heard* – namely, into the astral world – he would have to do – what? He would first have to die! Either he would have to die in the ordinary physical sense, or he would have to go through an experience very near to death, on the

way of initiation. In one way or another he would have to take the great leap in the dark. He would have to cross the Threshold.

It is important to realise this. Not that penetration to etheric vision or experience is unimportant. On the contrary it represents, in our age above all, a real victory over Ahriman and, as such, is a matter for unqualified rejoicing. It may well be that the whole future of science depends on it. But it is also very important to realize its limitation. Because, if things should have happened in the order I have been supposing (and it is by no means inevitable that they should); if we have first acquired, or perhaps have been granted by that "natural clairvoyance" which Steiner foretold for many in the second half of this century, some measure of etheric vision, and if we then seek to progress beyond it, without making this abrupt break, this reversal of our whole attitude to life, we shall merely deceive ourselves. We shall never actually know the astral world. We shall at best know the effects of the astral in the etheric – that is, the Chemical or Sound Ether; just as we may formerly have recognized the *effects* of the etheric in the physical, without really knowing the etheric itself; that is, without actually experiencing it in our own etheric hearts - or glands.

Now this duality I have been speaking of, this awful contrast between an inner and an outer world, besides concealing the mystery of the Father, and of death has very much to do with the mystery of light and the mystery of the sun. For it was through the sun that it was gradually brought about. Read the first few lectures of the other Course on the Gospel of St. John, and you will realize how the opening words: "In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In it was life and the life was the light of men" - take us back to the remote past, before the separation of the sun from the earth, before 'Lemuria'. There was then *only* what, from our point of view, if we could be suddenly be transported back into it, we should feel to be an "inner" world; and the "life", which was in the Word, was not the organic, physical and etheric, life, which we contemplate as life today (contemplate rather than experience) – but the "life which we only know as death", or (to use Steiner's phrase which I recently quoted) "the Life-Father". And when light first began to shine forth as a manifestation of this life, this spirit-life, it was not the outer sunlight we know. That is why the Book of Genesis records the creation of light as having taken place before the creation of the sun and moon which, if it is taken superficially – is nonsense.

The Lectures last referred to contain a description of how light, as we see it, only began long after the separation of the Sun, when the sunlight, as an outer phenomenon, began to be dimly perceived by man through the fogs of Atlantis. This, then, was how the inner first became outer; how the *life* became the *light*



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of men. This was also the beginning of sense-perception in anything like the mode of today. But even then, it was not until a long time after this that the perceptions of the senses, and that contrast between outer and inner which they mediate, grew sharp and clear, as they are now. Elsewhere Steiner has described how, in the long course of our own Post-Atlantean cycle of ages, man's experience of the sun has undergone further changes. First, as we have seen it was changed from an inner experience to an experience received through the senses. But since then it has gradually altered from a direct experience of the Divine in sense-perception into an experience of *mere* sense-perception. The Ancient Persians, he said, beheld the sun as the divine Bearer of light; the Ancient Egyptians as the divine Bearer of life; the Greeks received the sun – I say the sun, but in their case it was rather the whole surrounding sphere of the sun-filled ether - as a soul experience; they felt it as the divine Bearer of love. That is, of course, of that aphrodisian love, which is the potency of organic life on its way through the soul. The Greeks, he said, felt the sun as the divine Bearer of Eros. It has been left for the man of our time to feel it as the physical begetter of physical, organic life.

Now let us turn to the second occasion in St. John's

Gospel, where those words "The light of the world" occur. It is at the beginning of the Ninth Chapter. Jesus sees the man who was born blind. His disciples ask Him whether this is retribution for the man's own sins or the sins of his parents, and Jesus answers: "Neither – it was in order that the works of God should be made manifest in him". And now, once more there come those five brief amazing words. For He continues: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world". And then He makes clay by mixing His spittle with the earth and anoints the blind man's eyes with the clay; and He tells him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam; and the man goes and washes, and thereupon his sight is restored.

I cannot go fully into the account of this miracle; but anyone who studies it carefully – with the events and utterances which follow it – will notice several things. He will notice, for instance, that the first words which the blind man himself is recorded as saying after he is healed are the words "I am". He will observe that the writer goes out of his way to translate the Hebrew name SILOAM which he says means "sent forth" – it was clearly a spring of water sent forth from the earth; and he will mark the Christ's words to the Pharisees, when they are disputing with Him afterwards about the miracle:

"For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind".

And then he will perhaps ask himself: What did the Christ really mean by those words: "That the works of God should be made manifest in him?" Remembering that one of the first "works of God" was the creation of light; remembering that krima, the word used for the English judgment was rather more the meaning "distinguishing" or "discriminating" than of condemning. I think myself that both the miracle itself and the Evangelist's account of it are meant, with the words which follow, above all to emphasize the distinction between the outer light of the world and the inner: between the outer light from the sun and the inner light, which is sent forth from a source or spring within man itself, as it was sent forth in the beginning from the Father – who also spoke the words I AM, and, in doing so, revealed His holiest name.

I suppose the real question is, how seriously one intends to take these things. Only, our truest and inmost intentions are not always the ones that are best known to us. It may even happen that we first learn of our own intentions, not from within, but from without, from the things which happen to us. For light is not the only thing which has been mysteriously externalized – changed from subject into object. If we really accept the doctrine of Karma, we must also believe that the things which happen to us, apparently by accident, are not just accidents - are not even really external to us – but are actually part of us, in something the same way that the visiting insects are part of the blossom they fertilize. And this belief may become rather more than a belief: it may begin to be realized as a positive experience, precisely then, when that other experience which contains the bitterness of death - the experience of the Threshold – I will not say, approaches us, but at least comes into view on the horizon. And this intimate relation between the inner life and the outer event is something which we shall find we can decidedly foster and cherish by meditation.

There are today hundreds of thousands – perhaps I should say millions – of people all over the world, to whom things are happening, which are very, very bitter. I am not thinking only of the violence and physical privation, which are as yet outside the experience of most of us here. There are other ways in which the consciousness soul has to meet the assaults of the world. There are people who feel that they have just about reached the end of their tether; who really do not know which way to turn, to whom life appears to be one long series of seemingly meaningless frustrations; people for whom, in their inmost souls – or what they as yet feel to be such – life really does, in one way or another, wear the mask of something like a living death. To such people it is not the province of a lecturer, and I

am not qualified, to speak emotional words of comfort in tribulation. I do, however, feel impelled to quote one short dry – perhaps even harsh – sentence of Steiner's. It is this: "It is an indispensable condition of initiation that we should not wish things were otherwise". It is a short sentence, but it will bear long reflection.

I do not mean, by quoting it, to encourage anyone who feels despair to infer from that that he is a very important person, for whom initiation is only just around the corner. But all tribulation involves a kind of dying; and what matters is, not whether the next one, or the next three or four or five, of our many deaths is to a physical death or an initiation death experienced in the body – but the inner attitude we gradually learn to adopt towards death. Christ, in accomplishing the Mystery of Golgotha, opened the way of initiation to all who truly seek Him. Physical death also is a crossing of the threshold, if we are prepared for it; and indeed we cross it every night when we go to sleep. And yet it depends on our attitude to it, on the strength we have, or have not, developed, whether we really do cross it, or whether we merely – sleep.

In the old conflict between those who represent Christianity as a religion of sorrow and gloom, which tells us only that this world is a Vale of Tears, and that it is absolutely necessary to be miserable now, because that is the only way of being happy later on – and those who represent it as being primarily a religion of comfort and joy - my own sympathies are all with the latter. But it has to be admitted that there are a good many passages in the Gospels which it is pretty difficult for us to get round. Take, for instance, the parable of Dives and Lazarus. It ends with Dives in Hell and Lazarus in Heaven. Yet it is nowhere even hinted that Lazarus was in any way a better, or a more loving, man than Dives – only, as Abraham expressly states, that he was more wretched. Or take the Beatitudes, as we find them recorded in St. Matthew and St. Luke. The overall impression is pretty uncompromising. Blessed are they that mourn! Blessed are ye that hunger now... Blessed are ye when men shall hate you... Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh! And so on, up to the final climax of the terrible Ninth Beatitude: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for My sake: for great is your reward in Heaven!".

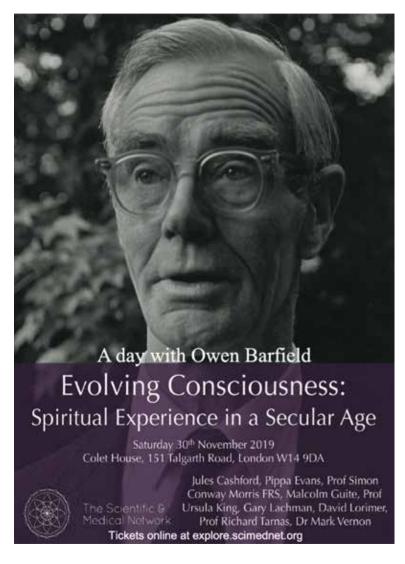
What are we to do with these very plain words? Are we just to pretend they are not there? To ignore them, and select others which we like better? Let us rather reflect that it is immediately after these very Beatitudes, as they are given in St. Matthew, that we come upon the Third of the three utterances of the Christ concerning the Light of the World. And then perhaps we shall understand to whom, and in what crisis, they are addressed.

Firstly, let me briefly recall the other two. The first followed immediately after the incident of the accused

woman. She had just committed adultery. In her soul, therefore, she knew something - and, at that time, in Palestine, there must certainly have been among the bystanders many Hellenizing Jews, who knew something – of the power of the Eros content of the joy-bringing light. And here it is necessary to pause for a moment and ask a question which, in our particular phase of society, has become rather uncomfortably esoteric. Why is adultery prohibited by the Seventh Commandment? For the Decalogue is not, as the man of our time has been adroitly diverted into believing, an accidentally preserved list of primitive tribal taboos. It is, on the contrary, the framework, the scantlings - rather the blueprint - for man's own voluntary cooperation with the First, Second and Third Hierarchies in their age-long labour of constructing a human Ego out of divine materials.

When we commit adultery, in an effort to snatch the glory of the Eros-bearing light for ourselves, we surrender the conscious ego, which normally controls our actions, to the unconscious Father-forces of procreation in the physical body. We relapse, as it were, into the First Hierarchy, rather as – according to Solovyev – the individual animal rejoins the group-soul in the act of copulation. When we consummate a marriage – I mean a true marriage – we make indeed the same surrender; but now the Father mitigates and balances the surrender - humanizes it, if you prefer by - tentatively asserting His more recent sovereignty in the astral and ego organization - in the conscious ego itself; whether, as at first, from Sinai, with thunder and the threat of savage penalties; or whether, as now, from His throne in the free will of each individual who determines, and in course of time effects, that the mutual consequence of the act shall be at least life-long. Through the First Hierarchy the Father reigns in the outer world, which includes our own physical bodies and their processes. Through the Time-spirits, who are His representatives in the Third Hierarchy, He will reign in the inner world of man's consciousness. Therefore these Time-spirits the Archai – are also called Spirits of Personality.

In placing immediately after this incident the naming of Himself by the Christ as the Light of the World, it is clear to me that the Evangelist¹ intended to underline the distinction between the false light of the world and the true. He is indicating that, for Ego-men, the way to the Father is not the backward way through Eros and orgasm, but the journey on, which leads through death. In recording it again, during the leading of the man born blind, we have seen that he brought out the contrast between the outer light and the inner. The third of the three occasions on which these words occur – this time in the Gospel of St. Matthew – is during the Sermon on the Mount, immediately after the Beatitudes. But this time the setting is different. This time Jesus is no longer addressing the multitude. He is alone with His



own – with His disciples, who need no such instruction in discrimination. They have been "so long time with Him", as He once reminded Philip, and have so often seen the true Light of the world - the light from the source within – shining from His countenance, that they need no education in distinguishing that Light from any other light. Instead, therefore, He first prepares them by endeavouring to build up in them, through those uncompromising Beatitudes, the kind of attitude to the deathly bitterness of tribulation, which I have already mentioned – the attitude which can detach itself from strong feelings and treat them as a means to an end; which does not wish disaster away; which can even accept it as a blessing. And then, after He has prepared them in this way, He speaks the Five Words. But this time He speaks them a little differently. This time He does not say "I am the light of the world." This time he makes the terrifying, or the sublimely exalting revelation. This time He says "Ye are the light of the world." And again "Ye are the salt of the earth!" And immediately afterwards He instructs them in the Our Father, the Lord's Prayer – the prayer which – except, perhaps, for one half-sentence - He could Himself join them in saying.

What did he mean by such words? He, who also said: "The Kingdom of God is within you". He, who also said: "The Father in Me, and I in you"? The "salt" of the earth is its essence, its true being; and it is this essence, which in future is to be the light of the cosmos – gradually taking the place of the sun. When, therefore, He told His disciples that they were the light of the world, He was in effect saying to them: Once the Word was spoken by the Father, and the Word was the source of the true, the Father-Life, and the Life was the source of Light. And henceforth that Light, that Life, that Word and that Father are *in you!* "The Father in Me, and I in you!".

And what is He saying to us? He is saying the same thing; but He is also saying: The change in the earth's aura, which took place at the time of Golgotha, depends, if it is to grow and brighten, or even if it is to continue at all, on a change in *man's* aura. It depends on whether there will be enough souls of men struggling somehow on towards a time when they will not merely *enjoy* the light of the world, but will actually *be* it.

There are many of Steiner's writings, which will take us from here and which will carry our thoughts into that astral region where the light is experienced from within. this astral light to speech. Although we do not yet *shine* from within, we do already speak the word from within ourselves; and if we could really follow language back to its source, back to what is called the "Lost Word", we should come also to the source of light.

If, after penetrating to the source of light and uniting ourselves with it, we then return, and open our eyes, like the man born blind, to the outer etheric light, then above all is there a true rejoicing in the light. For I do well to rejoice in the etheric light, if I am so related to it as to be aware all the time that 'I', that is the Father in me, am the true source of it; and not the blazing sun out there in space, which is now no more than a hollow reflector. When we absorb the light from without, we absorb also the fallen Bearer of the Light. We take Lucifer into our souls, and he gives us his strength and his enthusiasm, in exchange for a seat on the Father's throne in us. When we ourselves go out into the light from within the light – that is, from beneath the Father's throne in us – then, too, Lucifer gives us his strength and his joy; but now it is as a free gift, as a thank-offering for his redemption. And just as he brought *Eros* to the Greeks, so he brings us Agapé – namely, the love whose well-spring is rather compassion, but whose intensity is desire. And, with that, he brings also – not so much that rejuvenation, of which mention was made earlier, but rather something, which is very like rejuvenation, but also very unlike it - the first, firm beginnings of something which could more properly be described as - resurrection. All this he can do, because he himself has fulfilled, in us, his old longing to rise again as the Holy Spirit.

The source of the light cannot experience the light objectively. It is the light. That is why, to one on the

very verge, the very threshold, of union with it, the true spiritual world – the Supreme Identity, the Inwardness itself – looks, not like light, but like a darkness and a death. This is also the secret of the link between the many references to the light in St. John's Gospel and the still more numerous references to the Father. For the Father is the *source*. Indeed, that is what we mean by calling Him Father.

And in those references we can find, if we seek it, a sure touchstone for detecting the presence of Lucifer, there, where he has his last, and perhaps his best, chance for concealing it from us. That is, when he chooses to hide himself, like a maggot in an apple, in the very core of the high impulse of Johannine Christianity. Seated on the Father's throne in us, Lucifer will glibly and readily say: "I and the Father are one," hoping thereby to deceive us into mistaking him for the Christ. For those are the very words of the Christ. But Lucifer will never say the other thing. Lucifer will never say – as the true Christ said over and over again, according to the testimony of St. John: "I and the Father are *two*". Because his pride will not allow it; and because in any case he prefers to keep mum about the Father.

Steiner often spoke of the time, from about 1930 onward, as a period in which the faculty of etheric vision would become more and more widespread. He pointed also to the middle of the 20th century as a time in which there would be "violent breakings in of the new" from many directions. Perhaps therefore, just at this juncture in the life of the Twentieth Century and of the anthroposophical Movement, it may not be unimportant that we should come to distinguish more and more clearly between the outer light and the inner; between the etheric light and the astral light; between the conquest of Ahriman and the redemption of Lucifer; between the light in and for itself and the Source of the light in the Alpha and Omega, in the Word of the Father.

Endnotes

Thie following endnote was provided by Owen Barfield in the first publication of this essay as a supplement to the journal *Anthroposophical Movement* in 1954.

1. I mean, of course – as anyone without clairvoyant knowledge must mean – the actual compiler or compilers of the gospel as we have it in the Canon. It was Rudolf Steiner who first convinced me that the gospels yield their deepest secrets to those who ponder the familiar text, rather than to those who lose themselves in the mazes of textual criticism; which, in the case of the *Pericope adulterae* (John VII, 53 – VII, 11), has a long history stretching back to Jerome and Augustine.

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New View

Finance and the Social Order

by Frances Hutchinson

"The Machine," they exclaimed, "feeds us and clothes us and houses us; through it we speak to one another, through it we see one another, in it we have our being. The Machine is the friend of ideas and the enemy of superstition: the Machine is omnipotent, eternal; blessed is the Machine."

E.M. Forster¹

he megamachine of the urban bureaucrats is fast rendering the Earth uninhabitable. Intensive farming systems make soils unproductive, complex bureaucracies are becoming increasingly dysfunctional, whilst warfare and civil unrest appear everywhere. There is every indication that artificial methods of human reproduction, driverless cars, pilotless aircraft, genetically modified organisms and digital communications in general may prove to be of little value to the future of humanity, and may indeed lead to disaster. What is certainly beyond doubt is the fact that all the scientists and technological experts in the world put together could not reconstruct a dead planet, still less cultivate the living communities essential to sustainable management of the resources of the natural world. Since publication of Forster's novella in 1909 many individuals have voiced their deep concern at the spread of materialism and the adoption of industrialisation of all forms of production on a planetwide scale.

Compliance with the emergent 'bureaucratic dictatorship' may succeed in maintaining growth in the world-wide industrial machine. But such economic progress comes at a heavy price, as Ivan Illich explains:

"Man would live in a plastic bubble that would protect his survival and make it increasingly worthless. Since man's tolerance would become the most serious limitation to growth, the alchemist's endeavour would be renewed in the attempt to produce a monstrous type of man fit to live among reason's dreams. A major function of engineering would become the psychogenetic tooling of man himself as a condition for further growth. People would be confined from birth to death in a world-wide schoolhouse, treated in a world-wide hospital, surrounded by television screens, and the man-made environment would be distinguishable in name only from a world-wide prison." ²

Industrialisation and economic growth based upon greed, the quest for power and pure self-interest - i.e., the 'economics of sin' – must inevitably result in financial, ecological or social disaster for humanity. The only alternative could be a type of "world-wide prison", as envisaged by Forster, where citizens fall in line with the

nightmare designs of a centralised world bureaucracy – which to a certain extent some do already in our time.

The industrialisation of man

Throughout the 20th century scientific and technological 'progress' brought increasing sophistication without understanding, leading to escalating warfare and environmental degradation. Urban populations became completely dependent for their food, clothing and housing upon a world financial system which eluded the comprehension, and hence the control, of the vast bulk of the citizens. Any who challenged the universal blind faith in the magic money tree were quietly ignored.

Although the peace movement has long questioned the necessity for the industrial workforce to manufacture fighter planes for export in order to maintain economic growth and hence employment, production of aircraft designed to drop bombs upon civilian populations has continued relentlessly. In 2016, for example, a contract was signed for 22 single-seat and six twin-seat Eurofighters – Typhoons – to be supplied to the State of Kuwait, who is the eighth customer in the programme and the third customer in the Gulf Region next to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman. Speaking on behalf of the consortium and its Eurofighter Partner Companies the CEO of Eurofighter, Volker Paltzo, said: "We are delighted to officially welcome the State of Kuwait as a new member of the Eurofighter family".3

The Eurofighter is just one example of technological and scientific 'progress' rampaging out of the control of humanity. Citizens seek jobs because work offers a money income, and money offers the worker the right to claim a share of the production of society as a whole in terms of food, clothing and housing. Production of cars, weapons, aircraft, food clothing, white goods and all manner of plastic containers in increasing numbers boosts the *chrematistical* (money-measured economy), whilst devastating *oikonomia* (the real-life economy) of families and nature.⁴

Rather than pay people to make warplanes and all the other paraphernalia of the arms trade, we could more sensibly re-route our energies and resources into feeding the starving, cleaning the house, tending the





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garden, caring for the sick, farming, writing poetry and spending time with our children, at least in their vital early years.

Illich has used the term "the industrialisation of man" to describe the convergence of corporate monopolies upon all social institutions, indicating that the corporate world is shaping our thoughts on what it is to live and work and be a human being. Western language currently reflects this "materialisation of consciousness". Many schools and colleges are no longer centres of learning. Instead they have been transformed into institutions selling the product of certificated education giving entitlement to be employed. Homes have become little more than consumption depots, shrines of materialism. Peasants recognise that work is what they do, and take responsibility for what they have created. Salaried employees, industrial workers and bureaucrats, on the other hand, think of themselves as 'having' work. For him, work is a material possession, which gives rights without responsibilities. The shift from verb to noun reflects the notion of 'ownership' under industrialisation, the deep-rooted belief that you are what you own.

Our task is not to find socially tolerable and ecologically sustainable 'sticking plaster' solutions at the margins, but to prepare for an end to industrialised economic growth so that it can be replaced by a fundamentally different social order, cultured from the

bottom up. Over the course of industrialisation, non-industrial forms of production were set aside as if they were of no account. According to Illich, these include "Housework, farming, handicraft, and subsistence activities ranging from the making of preserves to the self-building of a home", to which I would add, most crucially of all, child-care from birth to maturity. The Household, set within the local community, remains the essential institution for the restoration of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship necessary to allow every man, woman and child to become *Homo donans*.

Who holds the baby?

In her essay entitled 'Childcare Policy and the Economy'⁷, Maria Lyons asks the fundamental question of our times: what are we raising children *for*? Is it to serve the money-making economy that presently can only account goods and services that are exchanged for money? Or do we recognise a world beyond the getting and spending of money? If the latter is true, the serious quest must be to break the spell that finance casts over the entire social order, not only over the economic sphere, but more crucially over the political and cultural spheres. Such a reappraisal is long overdue. As early as 1978, in his book, *What Went Wrong? Why Hasn't Having More Made People Happier?* Jeremy Seabrook eloquently raised the same question. By the accounting

methods of economists, working people were better off than their forebears. But interviews with hundreds of people revealed chronic isolation, loneliness and malaise. The situation faced by children was worst of all. In Seabrook's own words:

"The child tends to be stripped of all social influences but those of the market place, all sense of place, function and class is weakened, the characteristics of region and clan, neighbourhood or kindred are attenuated. The individual is denuded of everything but appetites, desires and tastes, wrenched from any context of human obligation or commitment. It is a process of mutilation; and once this has been achieved, we are offered the consolation of reconstituting the abbreviated humanity out of the things and the goods around us, and the fantasies and vapours which they emit. A culture becomes the main determinant upon morality, beliefs and purposes, usurping more and more territory that formerly belonged to parents, teachers, community, priests and politics alike."

In order to meet the demands of the formal economy, individual family members feel obliged to prioritise the earning and spending of money. Money management comes before all other considerations in their daily



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lives. As a result, family time evaporates into thin air, as does culture, the arts, community, care for the land, meaningful contacts with the natural world and awareness of the spiritual world. Since Seabrook wrote those words, so long ago, the obsession with the flickering screen, digital communications has become an epidemic. As we spin around the world at ever increasing speeds⁹, we are happy to be paid to spew out plastics, electronic gadgets and machines that have been designed to become obsolescent and hence have to be disposed of. Whether we are the workers/producers or the consumers, matters little; like it or not, we are all, without exception, enslaved by the money system. The question lingers in the air – what is the alternative?

Lessons from the past

As humanity embarks upon uncharted waters, it would make sense to look again at traditional village life. Although pre-industrial technologies, resources and belief systems varied widely, traditional societies of the past displayed certain common features. The chessboard can be used as an analogy. Pawns appear to be the least important players on the board, yet without them there would be no powerful positions to be held by kings and their henchmen. Furthermore, the human 'pawns' at ground level are far from stupid. On the contrary, as peasant cultivators they are in physical, intellectual and spiritual contact with the land and its living plants and animals. They hold in their hands, eyes and brains the essential skills necessary for the tending of the land, the maintenance of the Household, the building and crafting of materials and implements, and the weaving of stories, song and dance. In the game of chess pawns appear expendable. In real life all worldly power depends upon their loyalty and support. Withdrawal of that support spells the downfall of any would-be dictator. Hence the corporate world focuses attention on implanting ignorance and apathy across the social order, whilst destroying the credibility of identifiable teachers and figureheads who might rock the corporate boat.

Throughout the system, the work is done by the mass of pawns, of women and men working together. Presently the practice of working-for-money in the waged and salaried slavery system accounts work undertaken *outside* the Household as having value because it is paid for, whilst voluntary work undertaken on the the land, in the farm and garden *inside* the Household, is left entirely out of the reckoning. Expansion of the industrial mode of production, distribution and exchange has been backed up by the free resources of the Household and the natural world. It is now becoming increasingly difficult to turn a blind eye to the signs of approaching catastrophe that must result from increasing ignorance of the necessity to maintain the viability of the *real (oikonomial)*, as opposed to the *financial (chrematistical)*, economy.

What is approaching is not a crisis that will be



The Seòl Trust is part of the Ruskin Mill Trust Group which is a provider of specialist day and residential services for children, young people and adults throughout the UK. We use a distinctive Practical Skills Therapeutic Education (PSTE) approach in the delivery of our care and education services that draws on the insights of Rudolf Steiner and has been developed over three decades.

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overcome in due course of time with the further development of science and technology. All the signs are that we are well on course for a total, catastrophic breakdown of the megamachine that presently supports humanity's presence on the planet earth. It is not a question of reclaiming the National Health Service from commercial interests, or finding alternatives to the use of plastic bags, or solving the refugee crises, or checking the advances of 5g technology, or fighting free of cashlessness, or banning inhumane commercial animal rearing practices, or paying a basic income to all, or reducing carbon emissions, although all those things are very necessary. But it is *the very basis of the industrial structure of society* that must be questioned.

The answer lies not so much in the soil itself, as in the necessity for all of us, especially children, to be reconnected with the earth-bound values of the natural world. As the writings of Jay Griffiths and many others tell us, traditional societies retain the love of the natural world and the sense of the spiritual that is born in childhoods rooted in the land. Since eating is an agricultural act, our present urban culture of Western 'civilisation' necessarily retains the physical links with the land. But children born in an urban setting live under the illusion that money provides their parents with food, clothing, housing and the other necessities of life.

Tools for community

Published originally in 1973, *Tools for Conviviality* is the title of Ivan Illich's deceptively slim volume of thoughts on the social question. Illich argues that living

together on this planet is an art form that has to be relearned by ordinary people living their everyday lives in their local communities. If the sustainable rebalancing of culture, politics and economics is to be achieved, it must be through study and action at grassroots level. The task is to distinguish between the types of tools available to humanity. On the one hand certain tools can be used to extend human capability, and these now need to be cultured in every community. On the other hand there are tools that take over, contracting, limiting or replacing human functions:

"In the first, man as an individual can exercise authority on his own behalf and therefore assume responsibility. In the second, the machine takes over – first reducing the range of choice and motivation in both the operator and the client, and second imposing its own logic and demand on both." ¹¹

The task for the future is for every one of us to assume responsibility over how we work together and use the tools at our command. The 'idolatry of science', the corruption of ordinary language, and the loss of respect for the formal process by which social decisions are made, are the three formidable obstacles to be overcome. The task of forging new tools cannot be left to the corporate world and its political puppets. Thoughtful ideas must flow from the grassroots upwards. This calls for systematic study and concerted action by all citizens without exception. No task is more urgent. As Rudolf

Steiner recognised so long ago, if the "rebalancing of culture, politics and economics" is to be achieved, it must be done at grassroots level, where there are no powerful statesmen under the control of powerful commercial interests.¹²

We need to Participate

If global catastrophe is to be averted, we need to be proactive in our problem-solving. The answer is not to attempt to revert to pre-industrial conditions, any more than it is to accelerate technological development in the quest for techno-fixes. We must learn to see the technologically accelerated social, political, and economic chaos ahead of us as an invitation to more wilful participation. "We can't go back; we must go *through*." The challenge humanity faces is that of the whitewater rafter on encountering the rapids.¹³

There is frustration at the widespread inability of the ordinary man and woman in the street to see the wood for the trees. Blind faith in technological progress in science, health, and engineering of all kinds, makes people content to have their knowledge produced for them, to allow health and education measures to be organised for them by the experts, and to allow their rights and freedoms to be determined by the bosses. The result is near universal paralysis of the moral and political imagination. Unquestioning support for the industrial mode of production, gives rise to the firm conviction that those who do not work-for-money should not eat. Echoing Illich, alongside the idolatry of scientific progress and the corruption of language and learning, there has been a progressive loss of confidence in the political and legal process.

There is no single, identifiable problem that can be solved by a wave of the wand. Technology, scientists, markets, robots, algorithms and the human appetite for progress have created all manner of problems, but they only become problems when pursued at the expense of "more basic, organic, connected, emotional, social and spiritual sensibilities. We must balance our human need to remain connected to nature with our corresponding desire to influence our own reality"¹⁴.

Although all forms of human communication can be used to disseminate lies and deception when controlled by powerful individuals or groups, the Internet provides the corporate world with unique powers to fragment family and community life under the guise of opening up communications between individuals. In reality, they have become mechanisms of social control.

Anarchistic individualism as communitarianism

Steiner's use of the term "anarchistic individualism"¹⁵ presents students of his threefold social order with a bit of a puzzle. Anarchy has been presumed to mean an unlicensed free-for-all, without rules, regulations or government. Clearly, without political, economic and

cultural institutions of some kind no work would be done, individuals would fight for access to the means of survival, and a powerful dictator would have to enforce law and order from above. Hence it has been assumed that anarchists must be people with a chip on their shoulder, with some hare-brained ideas about what everybody *ought* to be doing, and who throw bombs to attract attention. They are nothing but a danger to society. So, what could Steiner possibly mean when he uses the term "anarchist individualism"?

Study of the honeybee can provide some clues. In late spring, as Thomas Seeley observes, bee keepers watch as the major part of a bee colony, numbering perhaps ten thousand bees, flies off with the old queen to produce a daughter colony, whilst the rest stays at home and rears a new queen to perpetuate the parental colony.

"The migrating bees settle on a tree branch in a beardlike cluster and then hang there together for several hours or a few days. During this time these homeless insects will do something truly amazing: they will hold a democratic debate to choose their new home." ¹⁶

It has been commonly assumed, since the days of Aristotle, that order was maintained in the honeybee colony by the Queen acting as benevolent dictator. It is true that the queen lies at the heart of the whole colony, as the thousands of her active daughters (the workers) strive to promote her survival and reproductive processes. But all she does is lay the eggs. She is not, indeed cannot possibly be, omniscient. She knows nothing of the colony's ever- changing labour needs - for "more comb builders here, fewer foragers there" - to which the colony's staff of worker bees steadily adapts itself. There is no all-knowing central planner supervising the thousands and thousands of worker bees in a colony. The hive is governed *collectively*, as each worker bee makes tours of inspection, looking for things to do and acting on her own authority to serve the community and the common good. In observing bees in the process of house hunting, for example, we meet two mysteries.:

"First, how can a bunch of tiny-brained bees, hanging from a tree branch, make such a complex decision, and make it well?... Second, how can a swirling ensemble of ten thousand airborne bees steer themselves and stay together throughout the cross-country flight to their chosen home, a journey whose destination is typically a small knothole in an inconspicuous tree in a remote forest corner?" ¹⁷

The bees in a honeybee swarm achieve their collective wisdom through organising themselves. Although each individual has limited information and limited intelligence, "the group as a whole makes first-rate collective decisions".



So – what can we learn from the bees? Analogies and parallels can be misleading if taken to extremes. But all human societies have one thing in common. They operate according to a complex series of a myriad separate agreements whereby each individual can agree to cooperate within the social group. The important point here is that the ordinary person is a thinking individual who can make it his or her business to participate actively in the common action being taken. This capacity to evaluate circumstances with a view to taking responsibility for our actions as individuals has, over the past century, been deadened by the educational, political and economic systems at work in the world.

From extinction protest to eco-parenting

In our everyday actions as Householders, workers, consumers and citizens, we give our active consent to the collective actions of other individuals throughout the social sphere. In doing so we actively collude in the political, economic and cultural institutions that are currently wrecking the planet. We may resent 'having' to work for a money wage or salary. But we fall in with the assumption that family life must be moulded around serving the economy-as-we-know-it by providing a nuclear family home complete with all the trappings of materialism necessary to function as a waged or salaried worker. As we do so we give our assent to the system.

Even the slave, forced to work under threat of starvation, beating or death, gives consent as he or she performs the work demanded. Recognising this fundamental fact calls every one of us to review our relationship with the social order as a whole. And the starting point is the birth of every individual child.

A baby is not a toy, a pet or a posh new car. The newly born are far more than consumer items that need to be cared for in carefully budgeted time spared from existing commitments to careers, employers and the money economy.

The bond between the birth mother and the child is unique, like no other human relationship, a fact that remains true even where the birth mother dies or places the child for adoption¹⁸. At birth, and for the first three years, every baby has physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs, and the ways in which the mother arranges for those needs to be met have lifelong consequences for that child19. The great tragedy of our times is that when a child is born many parents lack the necessary skills and capacity to meet the needs of the child in those vital first three years. The harsh reality is that so often the parents themselves were inadequately parented. Meanwhile, across the board, women's experiences of the mothering process, and knowledge of housekeeping skills as a whole, have been eradicated from the formal education system.

What happens to a child in those crucial first three years, and on into the seventh year, has consequences for the rest of his or her lifetime. It could be said that the lack of appropriate educational and financial provision for the child's first three years is one of the greatest tragedies of our times. Not only does the child lose out. The parents, the Household and the local community lose the opportunity to develop our common cultural heritage of skills, knowledge and material resources. including land, free from the shackles of the finance driven chrematistical political economy. The child is the greatest teaching resource available to help us solve the social and ecological crises of our times. Recognition of this fact could help us to learn ways of using our natural, social and technological heritage wisely and responsibly. To be continued ...

Dr. Frances Hutchinson lives in Keighley, Yorkshire, England.

Endnotes

- 1. E.M. Forster *The Machine Stops* p 42. See Article 1, The Machine Stops, *New View* 88, Summer 2018
- 2. Ivan Illich, (1973) *Tools For Conviviality*, Marion Boyars (2009 edition) p101
- 3. https://www.eurofighter.com/news-and-events/2016/04/kuwait-signs-contract-for-the-delivery-of-28-eurofighter-typhoons (Note: in modern warfare 90% of deaths are of civilians men, women and children living in their own local communities).
- 4. See article 3, The Social Question, *New View* 90, Winter 2018/19.
- 5. Ivan Illich, (1973) *Tools For Conviviality*, Marion Boyars (2009 edition) p88
- 6. *Homo donans* is the giving person, as contrasted with *Homo economicus*, the self-interested taking person of economic theory.
- 7. See *New View* 90, Winter 2018-9
- 8. Quoted in Herman Daly and John Cobb Jr., (1990) For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Towards Community, the Environment and a Sustainable Future, Green Print, p163
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- 10. Jay Griffiths (2013) *Kith: The Riddle of the Childscape*, Hamish Hamilton. Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry (1994) *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era*, HarperOne.
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- 12. Steiner, Rudolf (2018) Social Threefolding: Rebalancing Culture, Politics & Economics: An Introductory Reader, Rudolf Steiner Press, (Edited by Stephen E Usher).
- 13. Douglas Rushkoff (2019) *Team Human* W.W. Norton & Co.
- 14. Douglas Rushkoff (2019) *Team Human* W.W. Norton & Co.
- 15. Rudolf Steiner (2018) Social Threefolding: Rebalancing Culture Politics and Economics). An Introductory Reader edited by Stephen E. Usher. Rudolf Steiner Press p26.
- 16. Thomas D,Seeley (2010) *Honeybee Democracy*, Princeton University Press. 2010 p1
- 17. Thomas D,Seeley (2010) *Honeybee Democracy*, Princeton University Press. 2010 p6-7
- 18. Where the mother miscarries, or undergoes an abortion, the lost child lives on through the rest of her life.
- 19. Karl König (1957/2007) The First Three Years of the Child: Walking, Speaking, Thinking, Floris Books (2005 edition) See also Evelien van Dort (2018) Why Don't Children Sit Still? A Parent's Guide to Healthy Movement and Play in Child Development, Floris Books.

Mother Holle, a Cautionary Tale?

by Maarten Ekama

he folktales which originated in Europe have been told from generation to generation since the late Middle Ages. They existed as oral folk traditions, and were not written down until the early 19th Century, when the Grimm brothers realised that this particular tradition was in danger of being lost. Both Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm were linguists, and had developed a lifelong interest in researching the early history of German language and literature, including oral traditions and folktales. As court librarians in Kassel, they earned very little, but had ample time for research. They began to collect and write down the *Märchen* (= 'little fables') from anyone willing to tell them. There are no fairies in the folktales collected by the brothers Grimm.

Mother Holle is a fable that can be approached on a number of levels: as a moral story in which hard work is rewarded and laziness is punished; as a dream experience; as a conscious super-sensible imagination; or as an actual experience of life between death and rebirth. All but the first of these approaches lead into the same 'landscape' where the action takes place, i.e. in a super-sensible world, inhabited by human souls and elemental beings. Mother Holle tells about the links between life on earth, and life in the spirit. There are many aspects to a spiritual truth, but, as in so many folktales, the images presented in Mother Holle are unambiguous and uncompromising. There are no extenuating circumstances.

Folktales such as *Mother Holle* cannot be explained. Certain ideas are able to cast a light on this or that aspect, by clarifying the relationships between the various characters and situations, but the light of a candle is in itself not an explanation of the object it illumines. What follows is what my particular candle has revealed to me over many years.

"Once upon a time there lived a widow who had two daughters; one of them was beautiful and hardworking, the other ugly and lazy. The mother, however, loved the ugly and lazy one best, because she was her own daughter, and so the other, who was only her stepdaughter, was made to do all the work of the house, and was quite the Cinderella of the family. Her stepmother sent her out every day to sit by the well on the highway, there to spin until her fingers bled.

The opening sentence of the story sets the scene. A widow is a wife who has lost her husband. The father of the girls has died. The father is an image of Our Father, the Father of the world. Although many people today profess to believe in God, He is no longer actively present. He "rests". He is as far away from us as the soul of someone who has died.

The girl's stepmother is an image of Our Mother, Mother Earth who gives us our physical bodies and our life, who supports us and feeds us, and for whom we must work. The Father did once walk upon the earth – a long time ago, in paradise. Now He no longer does so. Mother Earth has become a widow.

The widow's stepdaughter works hard from morning to night. Her modesty prevents her from asking for more than the bare essentials she needs to eke out her existence. The soul nourishment, which a mother provides for her children is not available to her. She is a stepchild of Mother Earth. She is beautiful because in spite of everything her soul shines through her miserable existence. The true daughter contributes nothing, but is fortunate enough to live off the bounty of Mother Earth. She is ugly because her lifestyle masks her soul.

The good girl provides for her own soul nourishment by spinning. She does this when she has completed the housework, her daily earthly chores. Spinning is a traditional allegory for consistent and creative thinking. One aspect of such thinking is to hold the thread of a story. Even today we "spin a yarn" when we tell a story. Homer in ancient Greece, the bards in Celtic Britain, the troubadours in medieval France, were masters at this. The ability to tell meaningful stories requires great presence of mind; grandmothers with their life's experiences behind them used to be able to do this. As the telling of tales was gradually taken over by magazines, later by comics, TV and Hollywood, most people have lost this ability.

A second aspect of this kind of thinking is that the girl sits by the highway to spin. This places the tale very much in our own times. The ability to think creatively only gradually became the possession of humanity as a whole. Initially it was only philosophers who dedicated their lives to it, keeping their work in small circles of disciples. The school of Plato in Athens was one such place; students had to be fully qualified in geometry (=

mathematics) *before* they were allowed to enrol. The secrets of thinking were not for the uninitiated. Today it's different. Any passer-by can make the thoughts of another their own. We have no difficulty thinking each other's thoughts. (It's quite different feeling each other's feelings – this ability still lies a long way into the future.)

The possibility of thinking logical and consistent thoughts has brought about tremendous progress – both positive and negative – in our lives. It has in fact been the well-spring of our present civilization.

Now it chanced one day that the spindle became covered in blood, and as the girl stooped over the well to wash it off, the spindle sprang out of her hand and fell into the well. She ran home crying to tell of her misfortune, but her stepmother spoke harshly to her, was without pity, and said: "As you have let the spindle fall into the well you must go to fetch it out again yourself."

The girl went back to the well not knowing what to do, and in deepest distress, she jumped into the well after the spindle.

She lost consciousness, and when she awoke and came to herself again, she found herself in a beautiful sunlit meadow, with countless flowers blooming in every direction.

As she walked over the meadow, she came upon an oven full of bread, and the loaves cried out to her: "Take us out, take us out, or alas! we shall be burnt to a cinder; we were baked through long ago." So she took the bread-peel and drew them all out.

She went on a little farther, until she came to a tree full of apples. "Shake me, shake me, I pray," cried the tree; "my apples, one and all, are ripe." So she shook the tree, and the apples came falling down upon her like rain; but she continued shaking until there was not a



single apple left upon it. Then she carefully gathered the apples together in a pile, and walked on again.

The intensity of the girl's thinking eventually causes her to lose the balance between what her physical brain can achieve and what she is striving for. The fingers that guide the thread (the brain which guides the thoughts) are worn out. She is no longer in control of her thoughts. She loses the thread, the spindle drops from her hands and disappears into the well. The powers of thinking disappear into their source.

Blood is the bearer of our DNA, our personality. Together with our fingerprints and the iris in our eyes, it is the most individualised part of our physical constitution. The girl is selfless, and she wants to wash her blood off the spindle containing her thread, her thoughts. She wants to wash the imprint of her personality from her deeds. This was possible in the past, but is no longer possible today. The work people do remains united with them.

The stepmother is unable to help in a situation like this; she is too earth-bound to be able to work constructively with spiritual realities. But unwittingly she does the right thing; she sends the girl to retrieve the lost spindle herself. This is the point at which she despairs. Everything she had done and thought appears to her to have lost its meaning and value. The foundation of her existence has been taken away. A power much greater than her own takes hold of her. The power of her destiny overcomes her and she jumps into the well. This is *not* suicide, because she gives herself up to the source of her life.

She comes to her senses in a completely different world. She is no longer in familiar three-dimensional space. (Notice that although she fell down the well, Mother Holle later refers to earth as down there.) She is at the very source of life; a sunlit green meadow covered with the most beautiful flowers. But this is no paradise or nirvana in the usual sense of the word. She is soon faced with more tasks. On earth bread is the staff of life. In the spiritual world we also need nourishment, but it comes from a different source - from the transformation of her earthly deeds. The girl is able to draw from this, because she willingly carried out her chores while on earth. Her deeds of devotion are fully baked, the fruit of her labours has fully ripened. Being used to performing a task when it needed to be done, she is now able to take the loaves out of the oven, to gather the apples, and proceed on her way.

Bread is a product of the warmth of the oven (the heart). It gives us the physical strength to fulfil our earthly tasks. Apples are a product of the warmth of the sun (the heart of our universe). They don't give us energy in the way bread does, but nourish our senses (colour, taste, aroma, texture).

At last she came to a small house, where she saw an old woman looking out of the window, with such large teeth, that she was terrified, and turned to run away. But the old woman called after her, 'What are you afraid of, dear child? Stay with me; if you will do the housework properly for me, it will go well with you. You must be very careful, however, to make my bed in the right way, for I wish you always to shake it thoroughly, so that the feathers fly about; then they say, down there in the world, that it is snowing; for I am Mother Holle.' The old woman spoke so kindly, that the girl summoned up her courage and agreed to enter into the old woman's service.

The girl now meets another aspect of Mother Earth, her life-sustaining energy, driving the seasons and the global weather systems. Mother Holle is a powerful elemental being; not beautiful, but full of blessing. She helps human souls, whilst in the spirit between two successive lives on Earth,

to find their tasks for their next earthly life. These tasks are of the utmost importance, not only for those in the spiritual world, but especially so for those on earth. If Mother Holle's bed isn't made properly, snow cannot fall on earth.

Souls able to fulfil the demands of their divine destiny are able to work in harmony with the elemental processes of weather and climate, and do not disturb the order of nature. They are able to contribute to the natural forces of creation; the snow melts, is taken up by roots and seeds in spring, and life bursts forth anew.

Most people can only experience Mother Holle's elemental nature indirectly: in the growth and decay of plants; in the ever-changing weather systems we see in satellite images of cyclones, hurricanes, and typhoons; in the towering banks of cumulonimbus clouds releasing their fierce energy in cloudbursts, hail, storms and tornadoes; and in the ocean's steady currents (such as the Gulf Stream) bringing a sense of stability to earth's turbulent atmosphere.

She took care to do everything according to the old woman's bidding, and every time she made the bed, she shook it with all her might, so that the feathers flew about like so many snowflakes. In exchange she enjoyed a good life; not a cross word was spoken, and there were roast and boiled meats every day.

She stayed with Mother Holle for some time, and then she began to grow unhappy. She could not at first tell why she felt sad, but she became aware at last of a great longing to go home; although she was a thousand times better off with Mother Holle than with her stepmother and sister. At last she went to Mother Holle and said, "I am so homesick, that I cannot stay with you any longer, for although I am very happy here, I must return to my own people."



Then Mother Holle said, "I am pleased that you should want to go back to your own people, and as you have served me so faithfully, I will take you up home again myself."

Thereupon she led the girl by the hand up to a broad gateway. The gate was opened, and as the girl passed through, a shower of gold fell upon her, and the gold clung to her, so that she was covered with it from head to foot.

"That is a reward for your diligence," said Mother Holle, and as she spoke she handed her the spindle, which she had dropped into the well.

The gate was closed, and the girl found herself back up in the world, not far from her mother's house. As she entered the courtyard, the cock, perched on the well, called out:

"Cock-a-doodle-doo! Your golden daughter's come back to you."

There comes a time when the girl begins to long for the earth again, even though it is a thousand times better where she is. Mother Holle understands, and accompanies her to the threshold. Here the rewards of her work in the spirit world are given to her. Gold – the image of wisdom and spiritual riches – is poured out over her, and will accompany her on her future path on earth. She is also given back her spindle; she will pick

up her earthly tasks where she left them; just like in the morning we pick up the tasks left undone the previous day. The gold is also of great benefit to her stepmother and stepsister, because what the girl has achieved is a blessing to good and bad alike – like all blessings from the spirit

Then she went to her mother and sister, and as she was so richly covered with gold, they gave her a warm welcome. She told them all that had happened, and when the stepmother heard how she had come by her great riches, she thought she should like her ugly, lazy daughter to go and try her fortune. So she made the sister go and sit by the well and spin, and the girl pricked her finger and thrust her hand into a thorn-bush, so that she might drop some blood on to the spindle; then she threw it into the well, and jumped in herself.

Like her sister she awoke in the beautiful meadow, and walked along the same path, until she came to the oven. "Take us out, take us out, or alas! we shall be burnt to a cinder; we were baked through long ago,"cried the loaves as before. But the lazy girl answered, "Do you think I am going to dirty my hands for you?" and walked on.

Presently she came to the apple-tree. "Shake me, shake me, I pray; my apples, one and all, are ripe," it cried. But she only answered, "A nice thing to ask me to do, one of the apples might fall on my head," and passed on.

At last she came to Mother Holle's house, and as she had heard all about the large teeth from her sister, she was not afraid of them, and engaged herself without delay to the old woman.

The first day she was very obedient and industrious, and exerted herself to please Mother Holle, for she thought of the gold she should get in return. The next day, however, she began to dawdle over her work, and the third day she was more idle still; then she began to lie in bed in the mornings and refused to get up. Worse still, she neglected to make the old woman's bed properly, and forgot to shake it so that the feathers might fly about. Mother Holle soon got tired of her, and told her she might go. The lazy girl was delighted at this, and thought to herself, "The gold will soon be mine." Mother Holle led her, as she had led her sister, to the broad gateway; but as she was passing through, instead of the shower of gold, a big bucketful of pitch came pouring over her.

"That is in return for your services," said the old woman, and she shut the gate.

So the lazy girl had to go home covered with pitch, and the cock on the well called out as he saw her:







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RESIDENTIAL HOUSE CO-ORDINATORS

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Background experience in social care is valuable as is an interest in participating in intentional community.

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www.hoathlyhilltrust.org.uk

https://vimeo.com/93464384

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Your dirty daughter's come back to you."

But, try what she would, she could not get the pitch off, and it stuck to her as long as she lived.

The lazy daughter has left things undone on earth, possibly through no fault of her own, as she has been molly-coddled by her mother. Prevented from carrying out her earthly chores, she was also unable to spin the thread of her destiny, and seeks the source of her life for purely materialistic reasons. Her greed compels her to cross the threshold using false means. As a result she is condemned to do everything wrong in the spiritual world. How amazing that she still comes across the oven full of bread and the tree full of apples, and appears to be given the opportunity to take for herself the nourishment she will surely need. But she is so wrapped up in her greedy thoughts that she cannot take what is being offered. Unable to distinguish between need and greed on earth, she is now unable to harmonise her actions with the needs of the spiritual world, so that she refuses to shake Mother Holle's bed.

Her selfishness disturbs the ordering of earth's weather systems. Earthbound souls, in the dark about their whereabouts after crossing the threshold, are more than merely a hindrance to the work of the elemental beings. Their selfish thoughts actively interfere with

this work, and bring about unforeseen changes in earth's weather; changes manifesting in extremes of heat and cold, in ferocious storms, in severe floods and droughts.

The selfish girl is soon asked to return to earth. Her 'reward' is a bucket of pitch (German: *Pech*, which also means 'bad luck'). This is *not* a punishment, but a direct consequence of her selfish attitude. She also doesn't get back her spindle. She will have great difficulty finding her tasks in the life about to begin. A harsh ending indeed. But although her outlook is bleak, hope springs eternal. The cock on the well crows to announce the dawning of a new human life, the beginning of a new Cosmic Day; filled with potential and the possibility of redemption.

Maarten Ekama worked at the Sieben Zwerge ("Seven Dwarfs") drug rehabilitation centre in the South of Germany many years ago. This is a revised version of the article that appeared in The Threshing Floor in the early 1990's under a pen name.

Illustration: Wiki commons.

Finding Freedom in Prison Anthroposophical Prison Outreach in the USA

by Kathy Serafin



ach one of us has our own story of how we discovered the work of Rudolf Steiner. Some connected through Waldorf education, Bio-Dynamics or the medical work. Some came across a book randomly in a bookstore. In the United States, anthroposophists have taken positive steps to make anthroposophy available to a population that might not otherwise have that opportunity - people serving prison sentences!

With 2.2 million people behind bars, the U.S. has the highest percentage of the population incarcerated of any country in the world. Prison is generally viewed as a place to punish, rather than rehabilitate individuals who have committed crimes. Anthroposophical Prison Outreach (APO), founded in 1999, recognizes that there are many, many individuals in prison who want to turn their lives around. They seek a new relationship to their spiritual self and the people around them and APO gives these individuals access to a spiritual path. Indeed, we can imagine Rudolf Steiner walking through a prison, entering each cell where a prisoner is studying anthroposophy and speaking to him or her through the printed words. While these individuals do not have freedom to come and go. or create a tranquil environment, they do have freedom to study, meditate, and reflect. They do have freedom to choose how they respond to any given social situation and set goals for their lives.

The inspiration for this work can be found in the following excerpt from Steiner's book *How to Know Higher Worlds*:

"...Such an attitude of mind, for instance, alters the way

I regard a criminal. I suspend my judgment and say to myself: "I am, like him, only a human being. Through favorable circumstances I received an education, which perhaps alone saved me from a similar fate." I may then also come to the conclusion that this human brother of mine would have become a different man had my teachers taken the same pains with him they took with me. I shall reflect on the fact that something was given to me which was withheld from him, that I enjoy my fortune precisely because it was denied him. And then I shall naturally come to think of myself as a link in the whole of humanity and a sharer in the responsibility for everything that occurs."

The founding of the program has an interesting story. In 1997 Eileen Bristol was talking with Blanche Price. an administrator at the office of the Anthroposophical Society in America (ASA) about the launching of a program to link study partners around the country who did not have access to local study groups. Blanche asked her if she was thinking of including prisoners. The idea appealed to Eileen and she began linking up with others who already had experience working with people in prison. Years later, Blanche explained that in the office filing cabinet was a folder 'Eileen Prison Work' that she had never opened. She assumed that it was the same person and thus had raised the question. In actual fact, the contents of the folder had to do with a different Eileen! It was one of those amazing 'coincidences' that shape our lives. After two meetings at the Steiner House in Ann Arbor (Michigan State), with people coming from around the country it became clear that a national lending library with postage prepaid envelopes for returning the books was the best way to start.

In 1999 advertisements were placed in prison newsletters around the country with the question: "Does your life have meaning?" and offering an introductory packet with a copy of Fred Janney's article Self Development in the Penitentiary (outlining Steiner's six basic exercises) as well as a list of library books and general information. Posters were also sent to prison libraries and APO was included in prisoner resource lists. Letters of inquiry began arriving and they continue to this day.

Today, when a request for more information is received, APO now sends an introductory packet that includes: *Self-Development in the Penitentiary*, additional meditative exercises, a copy of Steiner's *Practical Training in Thought*, an article on non-violent communication, a list of library books available and information on how the program works.

The program has experienced tremendous growth over the years. In our first year 24 books were circulated. By 2019 we had circulated over 21,000 books, connecting with 4,000 prisoners in around 700 prisons across America. The library, which started with a handful of books, now includes over 300 titles. Library books are provided free of charge to prisoners, and a prepaid return postage envelope is provided with each package of books. Some favorite subjects of study are: The Mysteries – such as *Egyptian Mysteries* and *Ancient Myths*, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry and also the gospel lecture cycles.

I am a man seeking to master my own self. I have such love for humanity and self, that has arisen because of esoteric study and application, meditation, soul purifying, and connecting with the heavens. I no longer blame others for my own karma and for their behaviors. I started to study with you a long time ago. I was prideful and dark then. I began applying the teaching in the books. Upon introspection, I can see just how much anthroposophy has been a major factor in my personal growth as a man. It has changed my views and corrected my criminality. I am now upright, duly and truly tried by the heavens, a child of life.

John, Cross City Prison, Florida

Rudolf Steiner provides many down to earth exercises we can do almost anywhere and anytime. We find out, if attentive, that these practices cultivate healthier thinking and memory. Many things about our character are discovered, being pushed to the forefront of consciousness that were previously hidden. Overall we can find through the struggle a kind of freedom, a new road of choices that cannot be inhibited by the fact that we are in prison. The cultivation of our inner life can only be limited by our self. There is no one we can blame and realizing this can go a long way toward developing healthy lives. Realizing this is actually only where the road begins, living it is where the strength comes from. Peace be with you.

Alexis, Hinton Prison, Oklahoma

Your philosophy has touched me deeply, thus this letter to you. It has opened my soul to the truth. It's true that every thought, word, and deed counts

and it's also true that the journey is much more profound than most people imagine. So, each day I've been applying some of the things that I've read to my daily life and I've been like a new person. The things we've done to hurt other people are powerful teachings for us. You know, the opening feeling of humility shows us the need for self-control and taking responsibility for our actions and makes us feel how deeply connected we are to all other human beings. Truly, this quest for truth is the most satisfying and rewarding action I have ever undertaken. These past few months have been the most meaningful, most real months, of my life. As I sit here now, I'm really here and I'm free. Who could ever imagine a man's freedom being found in a prison? There's an unfolding process within me now, an awakening to higher levels of understanding and to purer forms of love and service to humanity. So, my intention is to devote time and thought to Mr. Steiner's studies and to continue to the end of each book. Thank you very much for helping me to find my purpose. Your works are greatly appreciated by many of us, more than you will ever know. Your friend and brother.

Lavon, Midway Prison, Texas

In 2015 a study guide workbook written by Eileen Bristol and a free copy of the book, *How to Know Higher Worlds* (for the student to keep) was provided to 800 active students and in 2016 we placed an additional 600 copies of *How to Know Higher Worlds* in prison libraries. Each of the books placed in a library has our contact information and an invitation to write for more information rubber stamped inside the cover. The prison librarians were happy to receive the books and some have requested more!

We thought that a correspondence study course would be helpful and Joan Almon (a former General Secretary of the ASA) introduced us to a kindred spirit in Erwin Berney of the Anthroposophical Society in Australia. His Self-Awakening Study Course in Anthroposophy fitted our needs exactly and he generously allowed us to use this course free of charge for prisoners.1 Who would have thought that the initiatives of APO and EduCareDo would create 'community' across the globe? The course of 26 lessons was first offered to prisoners in late 2006 and currently 67 prisoners are signed up. Mentors work with the student and respond to their writing in with diary sheets. In these diary sheets the prisoner responds to three questions: What was really new to me in this lesson? What was most important and closest to my heart in this lesson? and What can I do, what will I do with this finding? Space is also available for summaries, comments and questions about the material in the course lessons.

Illuminating Anthroposophy, the APO's bi-annual newsletter, connects prisoners with each other as well as

with ASA members and donors, each of whom receives a copy of the newsletter. Here prisoners can share their experiences, reviews of books they have read, submit artwork, poems etc. *Illuminating Anthroposophy* also features practical articles written by members of the Anthroposophical Society. Topics that have been covered inclde: 'The Rose Cross Meditation', 'Working with the Astral Body', 'Eurythmy: The Human Being As an Expression of the Cosmos' and 'The Seven Fold Nature of the Human Being'. In the '*Illuminations*' section of the Newsletter we sometimes get a glimpse of the value that anthroposophical prison outreach represents to prisoners:

Dear Society, I'm a 24 year old in Corcoran State Prison in California. I have never tried any type of religion or "spiritual enlightenment" or anything. I've always believed that the only meaning to life is death, nothing else. Therefore, I went through life not caring for myself and hating others. My main goal in life was to hurt others. I'm not a smart guy that uses big words but I know pain, strife, humiliation and I've never once in my life known love... Today, I received your No. 1 Newsletter (Spring 2003). Yes, it has been floating around in this unit for that long. I read it once but only understood parts of it. My second go around I could not read it all because my eyes were blurred from the tears that I was crying. I do not recall the last time I cried, must have been 12-13 years ago when my grandma died. That's the last time I remembered. I'm not sure why I was crying but I'm sure it was from something I read... Why can't I read it anymore? I try but my eyes fill with tears. It's really scary how it happens but it has to be good because I'm smiling. Have you ever went over a hill real fast? You know how your heart jumps? Well, I feel like that for some reason. Could you please send me whatever you can send me to point me where I should go in life? Also, it says something about a mentor? I'd like that if possible. Please Help. Thanks Always,

K.M. in California

Thank you for the books and for the current newsletter. Which when I read it, I was happily surprised to find my last letter published. I hope that my words can encourage others and bring healing to those in need; it feels good to be able to give something back to something noble and altruistic. I've always had to think about the (my) negative effects and their lasting implications. So, to see something that came from my heart, that is unselfish and good is healing for me. Thank you for allowing me that inner experience!"

George, New Jersey

We encourage participants to create art and poetry, as inspired by their studies. Many send their finished works to us, some of which we publish in our newsletter and we offer a box of note cards with art by prisoners for sale as a fundraiser for APO. To bring a voice to the inner struggle of prison participants we created a poetry event titled, Enter Light – Voices from Prison. In 2012 our first event took place in Ann Arbor in which a group of 21 local teenage poets and artists dramatically performed poems and biographies which were sent to us in response to the question "What would you as a prisoner like to say – especially to our youth about your journey studying anthroposophy". We continue to bring the APO Enter *Light – Voices from Prison* poetry and art event to other communities. Margaret Shipman from California shared with us that Enter Light – Voices from Prison was one of the most profound events their branch had ever sponsored and they invited us to do another. Such local events raise funds for APO and engage the community in a creative way. They call attention, through art, to the effects of mass incarceration in the USA.

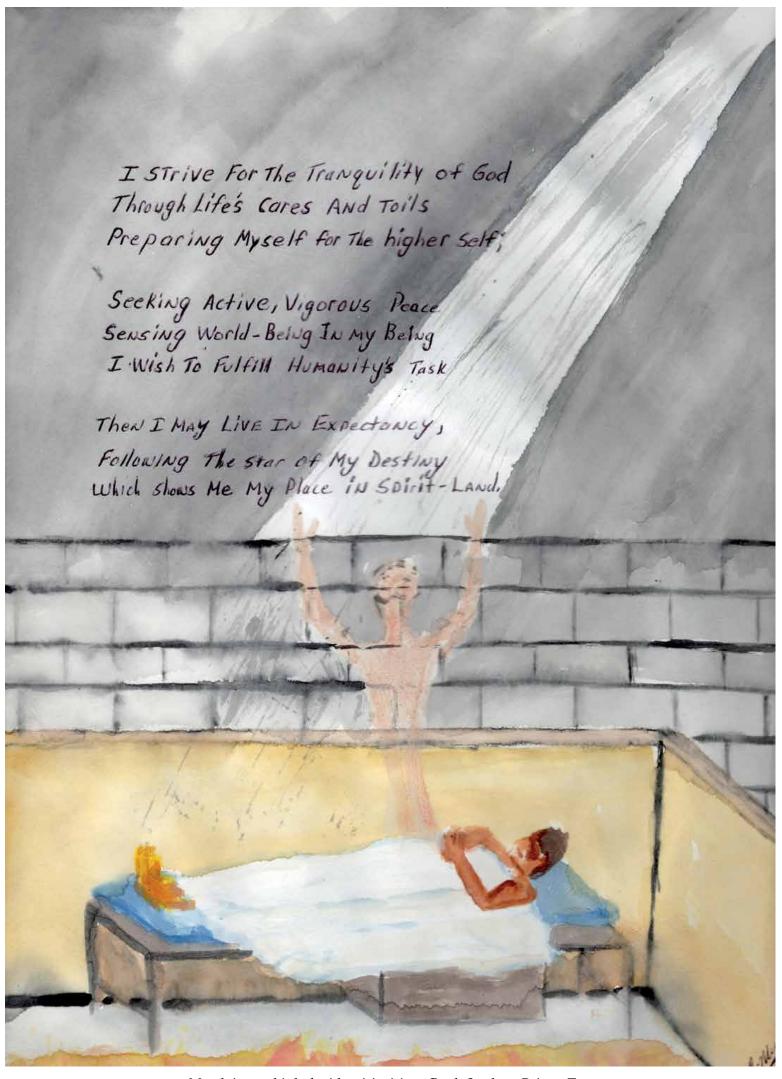
We were gathered, the end of the first conference day, a warm fall night, under full-star in a patio of the Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ. Behind us, on a stucco wall, the photo of an inmate was projected. His biography and poem were presented by someone standing behind a podium, some feet in front of the wall.

As each inmate was represented and his poem recited, I could feel... these inmates have not only studied Anthroposophy behind bars, but they are individuals whose lives have presented them with real, hardcore challenges and experiences. Each one, without any training or study of the craft elements of poetry, uses the tool that language provides. They each have honestly recorded on paper what they have lived through.

When my turn came, the preparation I had done at home, seemed to peak. I realized my inmate, Ruben Berrios, in his long poem with the recurring line: "Darkness is but for a moment," was sharing a 21st-century "Dark Night of the Soul" experience. His poem was a contemporary mirror of the magnificent poem by the Spanish monk, Saint John of the Cross, 1578. Saint John's nine-month lock-up in a Toledo prison five-hundred years ago, Saint John's experience of no-way-out-but-in, was being expressed by Ruben today.

This is important work. Please support the APO. We have no idea how lives are being changed and shaped, how inmates who are locked up, can enter a path of light and consciousness. Those of us supposedly free, not locked up, can learn from the determination and dedication of these inmates.

 Written by Gail Langstroth, following her participation in one of the
 Enter Light – Voices from Prison performances.



Man lying on his bed with spirit rising: Raul, Stockton Prison, Texas

DARKNESS IS BUT FOR A MOMENT

Darkness is but for a moment,

It appears disastrous and dreadful at first...

Darkness is but for a moment,

It is during this time that we learn our greatest fears,

learn our true inner self and lose the world we once knew...

Darkness is but for a moment,

Panic begins to sink in, desperation and despair engulf you

in an instant, or so it seems...

Darkness is but for a moment,

Now you must move with caution,

unsure where your next step will take you...

Darkness is but for a moment,

Your heart flutters as you reach out for the unknown.

what is it you shall encounter next?

Darkness is but for a moment,

Pitch blackness. Noises never before heard.

Anger. Strife. Hate! And so much more...

Darkness is but for a moment,

With each step made, you gain wisdom,

learning from all the bumps and bruises you've endured so far...

Darkness is but for a moment,

You've accepted loneliness as your only friend, And can now make your way through this dark, dark world...

Darkness is but for a moment,

Time and space have long been forgotten,

All you know is to just live...

Darkness is but for a moment,

Your weaknesses no longer exist,

for you've built on them in your will to survive.

Darkness is but for a moment,

Then out of nowhere, something very familiar is before you...

Darkness is but for a moment,

A beam that shines so much

it hurts your sensitive eyes.

Darkness is but for a moment,

What is this, has it been so long? Yes!

You now recall the brightness from a world you knew so long ago...

Darkness is but for a moment,

A smile creeps on your lips as this brightness manifests

itself completely in your heart...

Darkness is but for a moment,

Light! Its brightness, its warmth,

its life-giving rays!

Darkness is but for a moment,

Where has it gone all this time?

You reach out for it with joy,

Embracing it as if you'd never again let it go...

Darkness is but for a moment,

In its brightness, you shine.

Better days are certain now

that you've entered the world of light, the

illuminated path.

You are now ready, tried and tested...

Darkness is but for a moment...

My name is Ruben, and I am 31 years old. I've been incarcerated for eleven and a half years, so I've practically spent my entire adult life behind bars. I am paying for my crime and must admit that I am a better person today than I was over a decade ago. I've learned so much while in this place. I refused to allow my time to go to waste, so I forced myself to earn a GED [General Education Development certificate] and read. Books have become a true passion of mine, so much that I've taught myself how to write novels.

I wrote this poem, 'Darkness is but for a Moment' a few days after my 31st birthday. I am locked in solitary for 23 hours a day, so on the day I wrote this poem, I had a deep melancholy spirit upon me. I wanted to express my entire sentence, all I've been through, how this place actually makes you feel. I also wanted to do it in a way that many people could relate to it—not just from being incarcerated, but how we all sometimes get trapped in the darkness and feel as if we'd never get out.

I had to remind myself and others that darkness is only but for a moment, and we could always count on the light at the end of the tunnel—my light is the knowledge and wisdom I've learned while in my darkness; my light is the fact that in just a few more years, I'll have paid my debt to society and walk out of here a free man. I'll be stepping into the true light, one that is truly life-giving.

Ruben, Milton Prison, Florida

Prisoners who maintain their study for some time have the option of participating in the mentorship correspondence program. This program provides study support and connects students behind bars with others who live in the outside world. About 30 mentors are active in this part of the program. All mail back and forth flows through the APO Ann Arbor office.

We at APO value the opportunity to provide this service to prisoners, who may be locked up but they are still members of humanity and may one day be free citizens beyond those walls. Who can say what contribution to humanity, from each, lies in their future? When free will leads an individual to search for the larger truth in his or her existence, we are pleased and

willing to make anthroposophy available as a support! APO demonstrates the power of Steiner's work to affect people deeply and make a lasting difference in their lives. Like the tide that raises all boats, a change of heart dramatically increases the probability of a prisoner's successful re-entry into their community, eliminates barriers to stability and gives access to the inner calm and social skills that are a prerequisite for successfully holding a job and having healthy relationships with family.

One interesting anecdote showing the power of human relationships involves an APO participant in 2010-2012, Christopher DeRusse. Having heard about APO from a fellow inmate, wrote us a letter and began his studies. He had actually read a couple of anthroposophical books when he was much younger. When he was released, he searched on Facebook for other anthroposophists and he found a European woman named Annee. Through her empathy and passion for Christopher's search, she reassured him that so many channels and opportunities are available for the sincere seeker. Many communications were sent from Annee to Christopher, to aid him, especially for the Christian Path. Annee connected Christopher with Reverend Bastiaan Baan, a Christian Community priest in the US, to support his Esoteric Christianity studies and to this end Rev. Baan sent Christopher his own personal published materials as guiding help. This connection and support continues to enrich his life profoundly and later he became a member of the Anthroposophical Society. He is currently active with other anthroposophists in his local area.

For a few years now, Fred Janney and I have offered *Mastering your Self* classes at a local Huron Valley Women's Prison in Michigan. This course is based on Steiner's six basic exercises already mentioned. We have presented 4 sessions of 7 classes, with over 200 women completing the class! Additionally we are offering a 7 class course featuring local anthroposophists who share their knowledge on different aspects of anthroposophy, such as man's life experience, the twelve senses, physiology through music, and eurythmy. Looking to the future, we hope to develop a team of people around the country to expand this in-prison work.

APO receives a steady stream of inquiries from individuals who found the work of Steiner in a prison library or through a conversation with a fellow inmate and want to change their lives. Our current steering committee, consisting of Fred Janney (Michigan), Eileen Bristol (Texas) Rick Ruffin (Pennsylvania) and myself (Michigan)is dedicated to sustaining and developing APO. The program is limited only by our ability to gather the funding necessary both for sustaining and growing the program. We would love to place more books in libraries and expand our services.

Each person in the program values what you help them do. We can't say it any better than Curtis, a prisoner in Texas who wrote to us: "...not only am I grateful to the benefactors for the opportunity to continue to access these books to prisoners like myself, I'm grateful to them for my expanded ability to be grateful. Surely the benefactors are aware of how splendid their contribution to humanity is in this respect."

As I look back on my 19 years of work with prison outreach, I feel truly blessed and thankful for all the relationships that have developed. I am inspired each day witnessing emerging spiritual awareness and new ways of becoming in the other, and I have grown right along with them. I have come to recognize that all that which we can heal and transform creates extraordinary potential in one's life. To have the opportunity to connect with so many individuals through their handwritten letters and to follow their personal story of development over the years has been an honor and a beautiful gift, awakening reverence for the gifts of anthroposophy and the human spirit.

If a reader has any questions they can contact Kathy Serafin direct at: kathys@anthroposophy.org

Appeal for help and funding the APO work:

By nature of their situation, prisoners are an indigent population and all costs must be covered through gifts. It is through the gifts of anthroposophists from Europe as well as the U.S. that the program is kept alive. We are asking that each of you reading this article might consider supporting this important work by making a donation. You can do this online on our website which also includes past newsletters and samples of prisoner artwork. The web address is: www. anthroposophyforprisoners.org

We also have a donation button on our Facebook page and mailed contributions are welcome at

APO, Anthroposophical Society, 1923 Geddes Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104, USA.

If you would like bank wiring instructions please call the Society offices at 001 734 662-9355.

We are also actively seeking European foundations that would be able and willing to establish receiving accounts, making it easier for Europeans to support this important work. If you can help make any such connections, please let us know!

Endnotes.

 For anyone else interested, this course is offered to all for a comparatively small fee at www. educaredo.com

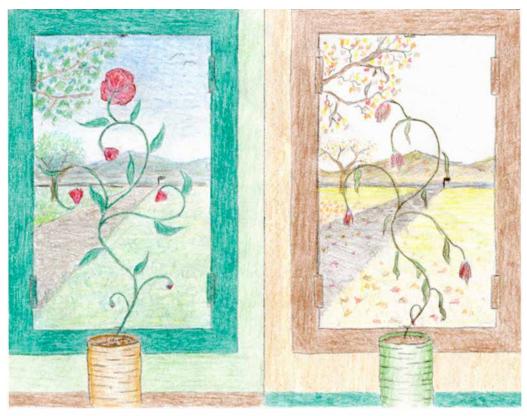
Art produced by Prisoners connected to...



Spaceship by Eric, Dibboll Prison, Texas



Lion mask by Mark, Livingston Prison, Texas



New View 40

Flowered Pot withering and blooming by Alexis, Oklahoma

....Anthroposophical Prison Outreach



Egyptian Myths by Michael, Michigan City Prison, Indiana



Spiral of colour by Jeremy, Wrightsville Prison, Arkansas



Bird by Cushing, Oklahoma



Cheeta by Jeremy, Crawfordville Prison, Florida using coffee and twsited paper

The Truth has set me free

Strife that surrounded me as a child, resulted in feelings inside that made it hard to smile missed education and disinformation, left me lost, out in the wild ignorant and confused, I met my needs, conspiring with connivers and thieves feeding my own selfishness and greed providing for myself, through unrighteous deeds--Fully submerged in darkness. The light came to me, within my cell a lonely place, that I equated with Hell which became the place, where truth was unveiled, the place where I emerged from my shell when I learned to listen, I was able to hear when I learned to watch, I could see when I learned to confide, I developed truth and holding onto faith, I believed and the dawn approached

My life began in poverty and turmoil, but all along there has been all kinds of helpers and encouragements to steer me in the right direction, and when I finally acknowledged the helpers and the encouragements, everything improved and has continued to improve exponentially as I maintain focus. I've learned the importance and benefit of being still and quiet and of spending time alone in my thoughts. Also, how much can be learned about others and myself by paying attention and studying. Anthroposophy has brought me insight. It has given me understanding and direction. I realized through anthroposophy that there are numerous aspects of life that I had ready access to which I had always considered beyond me. I hope to have the chance to share what I have learned and to be able to bring people together who may not have otherwise ever considered associating.

The Truth Has Set Me Free was inspired by the realization of what life truly is and my being able to see. My awakening to true life, images of being released from previous misconceptions and restrictions. Flying above ignorance.

Dushaan, Tennessee Colony Prison, Texas

Self Development in the Penitentiary (a booklet sent by Anthroposophical Prison Outreach to Prisoners in the USA)

by Fred Janney

The six exercises described in the booklet were developed by Rudolf Steiner, who lived between 1861 and 1925. Among his vast legacy of knowledge and wisdom, part of which is related in over 300 volumes of books and lectures, these exercises are among the most primary and basic for developing strength of character and self-confidence.

About this booklet

ou may be a career criminal or in the penitentiary for your first offense. Your sentence may be short, long, or permanent. You may even be innocent of the crime for which you were convicted. Whatever the circumstances that brought you to prison, you are confined to a small area, subject to search and observation by others twenty-four hours a day, and you are under strict and changing rules dictated by those in authority and the "prison code." No matter where you turn, the reality of concrete, steel, barbed wire, and surveillance confronts you and forces you back on yourself. Life in the penitentiary separates you from society, friends, family, and the stimulants and habits of your life in the outside world.

On the other hand, prison naturally provides time and opportunity to think and reflect. It allows you to develop a deeper understanding of yourself, of how you got to be where you are today, and of possibilities for the future. Thus, you have a rare opportunity to get to know yourself, Self-education! Time and opportunity may be the only things of which you have plenty these days, and the phrase "Learn how to do the time or the time will do you" is fitting.

Your best shot at making a better life for yourself is right here and now. Now is the time to start to become more aware and gain control of yourself. Your training ground and partners, regardless of their skin color or uniform, are with you at all times. Come to view the prison as your school for increasing your self-education. You need to train and develop the inner tools to guide you through the rest of your life, whatever your address.

What are these tools of self that need training in order for you to grow and learn? You live with them everyday and yet probably do not know them very well, or you take them for granted, much like a fish who has no awareness that he lives in water. These tools are the gateways that allow you to know yourself and the world. They are your own thoughts, feelings and will.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with instructions for the development of these essential tools for self development and personal growth. The method calls for six exercises, which should be practiced in the order given, because mastery of one exercise will

help you develop your skill in the next one. You should spend at least thirty days of daily practice on each one before undertaking the next one and adding it to your daily schedule. After doing the first exercise for an extended period, add the second one, so that now you re doing these two activities every day. Then, after another extended period, add the third exercise, then the fourth and so on, until you are doing all six exercises daily.

Let us begin with a riddle. What activity takes place in you from the instant you wake up until the moment you fall asleep? This activity is generally not under your conscious control, and the content of it changes without your noticing it. It can repeat itself over and over again and you cannot escape it, much as you try. It combines with feelings that are painful, and even brings actions that you later wish you could take back. Thinking! That's right, thinking. Unless you gather some control over this activity, making sense of the world will not be accurate, reflecting on your past will lead to confusion, and your plans for the future will be based on false information. Because of all of these aspects, it would be in your best interest to gain control over your own thinking. The best way to learn how to think clearly and in line with reality is to practice it every day. Here, then, are the six basic exercises.

Control of Thought



Take a common object that you use every day, such as a comb, pencil, shoelace, or coffee mug, and place it in front of you. Observe the object in every detail, thinking only of the object. Describe its basic parts, how the parts are put together, and is essential uses and purpose. Ask yourself any other questions related to its use, function, origin, or characteristics. Compare it with other objects that have a similar function.

Do not use an object for observation with which you have any personal, emotional attachment like a photo of a loved one. Do this exercise for three to five minutes at about the same time every day for at least a month. After practicing this exercise for a while using the physical subject, you may substitute a word (concept)

or sentence (thought). For example, concentrate on the word "pencil" instead of having the actual pencil in front of you. This exercise is provided to help you develop your thinking so that it flows in line with the facts.

The following is an example of a thought exercise, which follows an appropriate sequence of having the object of observation at the center of attention.

I have a pencil in front of me. It is a writing utensil. It is about four inches long and a quarter of an inch wide. It is made of wood, rubber, metal and lead. At one end is a rubber eraser held in place to the wood by a thin, rounded hollow metal band about a half-inch long. The metal piece has grooves in it. The other end comes to a point of lead, which runs the length of the wood frame through its center. The pencil is generally held in the hand by the thumb, index finger and the third finger but there are many variations in how the pencil is held in the hand. The lead side of the pencil is made to contact paper and leaves a trail based on the movements of the pencil in hand. A pencil is generally used to express thoughts into words to communicate ideas or to draw pictures. The trail of lead on the paper can be erased by rubbing the rubber end of the pencil against it. The advantage of a pencil is that the writing trail can be easily removed whereas a pen which leaves an ink trail is much more difficult to remove.

An example of a thought exercise that does not follow an appropriate sequence of thought might be:

Here is a pencil it is yellow in color. It is about the same color as a sweater I used to have. What happened to that sweater? I might have given it to my brother.

You will probably find this activity to be a simple but not an easy task to carry out, for your thoughts will wander away and concentration can be easily distracted by various things. When you find that your thoughts have drifted away from the object of thought or observation, simply bring your attention back into focus upon it. Continue the exercise until you have consciously completed the task. Through this process you are building your 'mental muscles'. Much like body building, you must practice it on a regular basis over a long period of time to achieve positive results. After practicing the exercise for a while, a feeling of firmness and security can be noticed within your mind and even your head. Learn to notice and cultivate this feeling.

Control of Will



After you have gained some mastery of the first exercise, control of thought, by practicing it daily for a least a month, you can now add the second exercise, control of will. Two major areas in human behaviour, which involve the will, are decision-making and actively following through on a decision by

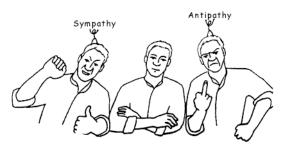
physically carrying it out through an action of the body. Examples of poor will-control are common to everyone. For instance, do you find yourself active and busy all day but never accomplish anything? Do you make up your mind to do something and then put it off until the next day, at which time you make the same promise to your self? In the prison environment most or even all of your actions may be motivated by following or rebelling against rules and expectations set by others, and so it appears you have little opportunity to practice your own decision-making or exercise any freedom of choice. Your life is regimented; your will appears to be controlled by others.

Also, many of our actions are the result of long-standing habits that we developed in childhood, of which we now have only minimal or no conscious awareness. After waking, we go through a set of personal hygiene and dressing routines in the same order every day, as if sleep-walking our way through the processes, never questioning their effectiveness or efficiency, we continue the pattern only because that's the way it has been for us as long as we can remember.

The purpose of this exercise, control of the will, is to learn to use your decision making power and followthrough ability, to carry out your own instructions exactly, and be conscious of the activity as you're doing it. Your aim is related to gaining awareness and control of your will rather than satisfying some personal desire. The method of this exercise is to do something every day that has no purpose beyond just doing it for its own sake - like untying and tying your shoelace even though you don't need to, or turning the ring on your finger a certain number of times, or tapping your foot or hand. For the purpose of developing will-control, activities aimed at satisfying personal desire would not be suitable, even though they have other benefits. For example, weightlifting would not be a suitable routine for this exercise because it brings person satisfaction, such as improved physical fitness, an attractive appearance, or perhaps weight loss. The idea is to do something regularly every day that has no purpose other than to exercise your will. The activity you choose need take only a few seconds to carry out and, like the first exercise, should be done at the same time every day. After doing these first two exercises for a couple of months, you'll find that your power of concentration and your will-power are growing stronger. Instead of the world controlling your thoughts and actions, you are beginning to control them. Then you will be ready for the third exercise.

Control of Feeling

Your feelings are your personal reactions to life situations. They are unique to you and are based on what you are drawn to or repelled by. Your life of feeling is going on all the time, but you are generally not aware of it unless your reactions are strong, abrupt, or intense.



The purpose of this exercise is to establish and nurture a sense of calm and balance in your feeling life. Whether you just received a parole, a pardon, or a flop, the expression of your feelings needs to remain under your control. We are all familiar with situations in which we lost control over the expression of our feelings – so much so, that for many of you it has led to property destruction, injury, or even the death of another person. "It is not the justified pain that one should suppress, but involuntary weeping; not the horror of an evil action, but the blind rage of anger; not attention to danger, but fruitless fear, and so forth."

A major aspect of your feelings is that they can surface without warnings. They occur spontaneously, suddenly rising up and then passing away. It is of great importance that you become aware of a potentially strong feeling as soon as possible so that you don't immediately react outwardly to it. Instead, create a little distance from the feelings and ask yourself, "What message does this feeling bring me?" Then, when you have an opportunity, attend to the feeling in such a way that you stop blaming others for it. Attend directly to the feeling, and let it speak as in a poem, scribbling, drawing, image, song, or whatever non-destructive creative outlet it can find in you. Through this creative process, you can learn much about the situation or the person who incited the feeling in you.

Above all, you can learn to establish some distance between yourself and the feelings that come charging in at you. That is, you can control your own feeling rather than let it control you. But this third exercise requires you to be alert to feelings as soon as they start to arise. It's not easy, but if you've done the first two exercises faithfully, you will find that the third lies within your strength.

In addition to controlling the expression of your feelings as they occur throughout the day, set aside a few minutes each day to concentrate on a word, thought, or image that represents calmness, peacefulness, serenity, or equanimity for you. Practicing this exercise daily will help you in situations where strong feelings suddenly rise up and threaten to overwhelm you.

You'll be able to hold them at a distance and realize that even the strongest feeling will pass. A picture of this process may help motivate you to develop the inner calm we're looking for here. As I stated earlier, your feelings can be separated into two categories. One type of feeling in you pushes away, resists, repels, opposes, or stands against. All these words can be summed up

in the word antipathy and will be symbolized as (-). The other type of feeling draws you toward, appeals, accepts, agrees, or stands with, and is summed by the word sympathy, indicated by the symbol (->). The purpose of this exercise is to develop a middle point, a center of calm and composure between these two poles of sympathy and antipathy - that is, equanimity, which is represented by a growing dot (•). These symbols together (• •) represent the range of feelings from antipathy to sympathy, with equanimity in the middle. Instead of letting your feelings pull you this way or that way, you want to grow into this sense of calm (◆ • →). Eventually your feelings will become a sense organ, much like an eye -. If you do not let the expression of feeling become an end in itself, your feelings will become a means for understanding the world.

Positivity

Some incarcerated individuals have set out on a journey of self-development. As part of the program, they isolate themselves so that they are not negatively influenced by other inmates. Recalling times they got "caught up in the wrong crowd," they justify their isolation. Selfdevelopment requires a balance of learning how to be by yourself and also with others and the world in which you live. As in the process of breathing, which requires in-breath and out-breath, individuals need to strike a balance between being alone and interacting with others and the environment. Instructions for this, the fourth exercise, are given after some work in the control of thought; will and feeling have been undertaken. The first three exercises have a more inward quality, while positivity calls on you to look for goodness, truth, and beauty in the world and in other people.

Begin to realize how much time and energy you take up daily in judgmental thoughts and negative feelings toward others. Your negativity allows you to see things only from your own point of view and clouds your ability to see clearly. Truth is sometimes found in the ability and willingness to view a situation from other and opposite points of view.

There is an old Sufi tale about some blind men who were asked to describe that part of the whole that each was touching with his hands. The first man stated that he put his arms around what seemed like the trunk of a tree but it was softer and not so coarse. The second man said that he ran his hand down a rounded, smooth, and very hard object that came to a point at the end. Another man described a long hose-like object, and yet another said that his outstretched arms and hands could not enclose the soft coarse object he was touching. Each man was touching a part of the object which, when all put together, made an elephant. So truth sometimes depends on your point of view, and to take more viewpoints into consideration is to let the truth stand out more clearly.

An example of someone seeking, to find "the good"

in a situation would be an individual who comes to realize that if he hadn't been caught and sent to prison, he would probably be dead because the lifestyle he was leading would have led to his own self destruction. He is able to move through his feelings of resentment toward the victim, witness, or authority figure so that he can see positive qualities in the people who carried through on their responsibilities, and even be thankful to them that he is still alive.

"This positivity should not be confused with noncriticism, with the arbitrary closing of the eyes to the bad, false, and inferior. One cannot consider the bad good and the false true, but it is possible to attain the ability not to be deterred by evil from seeing good, and by error from seeing truth."

The fourth exercise, then – to be added only after you've become good at the first three – is deliberately to look every day for goodness, truth, and beauty in other persons and in the world. We call this positivity. The result? You overcome your own negativity.

Openness

The purpose of this exercise is to open yourself to experience the situations of daily life in new ways – to allow yourself the possibility of learning something new, so that you're not just trapped by your past experience. It is an openness of attitude in which you might otherwise say to yourself, "I don't believe that, it's impossible. No way!" If only for the moment, keep yourself open to explore the possibility that the situation may be different from what you think, believe, or have experienced before. Particularly in prison, life is marked by routines and repetition, which brings human reactions of boredom, dullness, monotony, and weariness. People then close themselves off, sleepwalk, and miss opportunities to be receptive to different possibilities, to new ways of thinking about things.

A dramatic example of this approach is the person who refuses to attend an interview with the parole board because of the belief that a decision has already been made for a continuance. Another example is the person who goes to the interview believing a flop is inevitable. The person then carries this belief into the interview, and it not only affects the way he conducts himself, but it leaves a negative impression on the parole board member interviewing him. It may even be true that the parole interview is strictly a formality, but the way you conduct yourself and your willingness to be open may affect the outcome in a later interview, and you may learn something important about the interview process.

This, the fifth exercise, calls on you to be open in your daily life, to be receptive of others and the world through the power of your thinking and will. Spend some time every day focused on learning something new from everything and everybody, and have faith that it may be different from what you thought you knew

Harmony



The sixth exercise calls on you to practice the previous five exercises in such a way that they become an essential and regular part of your daily living. After you have practiced integrating all the exercises into your life, you can then work with them in pairs, threesomes, or whatever combinations you choose for your personal growth. The sixth one, then, is to orchestrate a beautiful harmony among the first five.

Parting Thoughts

Now that you have read through this short "how to" manual for personal development, I want to call your attention to several factors which I hope will encourage you to take them up and make them a part of life. The penitentiary, with its many restrictions and isolation from the world, offers you an opportunity to get to know yourself in ways that were not available to you when you were on the outside. To make time and energy available for your inner life to grow is essential for your personal rehabilitation. When and if you get out of prison, these abilities will need to be firmly planted in your soul in order that you not go back to old patterns of thought, feeling, and action, which bring many people back to prison despite their best intentions and efforts.

A self-centered point of view in which a person believes that the whole world revolves around him and is there strictly to benefit his personal desires is part of the normal developmental process that we all go through as children. When, however, this point of view lasts into adulthood, selfishness, greed, and a life guided strictly by one's own personal likes and dislikes takes over. Then isolation from others will surely follow whether or not you are in prison. It is in the nature of a human being to overcome himself, adversity, and the obstacles he and the world create.

While it's never too late to begin, delay gets you nowhere. Patience and perseverance need to become constant companions in your efforts to bring these exercises to life. Naturally, you will crave immediate results, benefits you can see here and now. For a long time you may not notice any improvement. That's okay. For the results to come, you have to overcome the need to see them, and you have to move through a self-centered point of view to engage other and opposite perspectives.

As you go through the process of practicing these exercises you will come to see more clearly, areas of your personality that need further development and correction. You will also find the means by which to change them in a positive way.

In addition to the work required in doing the six

basic exercises, another important quality needs to be developed: the ability to stand outside yourself as a witness or spectator, to observe your own activity without judgment. The quality of objectivity calls on you to see yourself from the outside in, just as you would observe someone else. You can develop this capacity by reviewing the events of your day as if you were watching yourself on a movie screen and seeing all the events that took place in your life, that day. The major difference in watching these pictures is that the film is moving backwards from your most recent activity back to the moment of waking. For example, if you brushed your teeth just before starting the exercise, you would watch yourself taking the toothbrush out of your mouth and putting the toothpaste back into the container from which it came and putting the cap back on the toothpaste container. You watch yourself doing everything backwards. It is best when first starting this exercise to work with only a short period of time for review. Pick a one – or two hour block of time for study. Practice this for awhile, then lengthen the time you spend doing it until the whole day is seen passing in review.

Now I offer one last parting thought. Do not let the waves of negativity coming at you from the outside world or your inner doubts prevent you from getting on with this work – newspapers, talk shows, politicians all trying to outdo one another in their "Lock-'em-up-and-throw-away-the-key" attitude, or your inner enemies of fear, doubt, laziness, or lack of confidence. You need to be aware of these outside and inside influences, but do not let them deter you from working on yourself.



Anthroposophical Prison Outreach

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Editor's note for readers:

The Six Basic (Subsidiary) Exercises

The six 'subsidiary', or 'basic', exercises are part of a system of exercises in the initiation science of Anthroposophy which develop the 'lotus flowers' or chakras of the astral body. They are at the same time the development of moral qualities – an integral feature of the esotericism that Anthroposophy promotes. The six exercises correspond to the development of half of the 12 petaled lotus flower located in the heart region of the astral body. It is these six, this half, that we are called upon to develop in our time with our conscious activity. In other techniques, Rudolf Steiner makes clear, the lotus flower is awakened by illicit means, uncontrolled by the practicant and thus often leading to moral ruin. It is described that as the six 'petals' corresponding to the six subsidiary exercises are developed in full consciousness, the remaining six are awakened properly and of their own accord, i.e. indirectly.

The above text is an extract from http://initiativeforanthroposophy.org/wiki/six-subsidiary-exercises/

A Question of Identity

by Richard Bunzl

uestions of identity and belonging are at the heart of our existence as living, sentient beings upon the earth. In order for us to function in modern society, we must agree, subliminally or with variously increasing degrees of consciousness, to certain societal norms, conventions and regulations. We have an identity through our nationality, through our ethnic heritage, through our cultural influences – our so-called mother tongue being probably the most potent and selfdefining of these – that imprint themselves deeply upon us right from our earliest beginnings. To be without any one of these is a potential cause of deep existential crisis. Such an absence is a challenge to our sense of belonging in the world, our need to form meaningful relationships with others, not to mention meeting the bureaucratic necessities that modern life presents us with. To be without nationality leaves us displaced and bereft of legal status in the world. To be without cultural reference points leaves us detached from our fellow human beings in terms of shared history and identity. To be without language leaves us destitute in a vacuum of non-communication, not only with those around us, but also with ourselves.

Our sense of self, and our ability to experience other people, is being tested and probed on many fronts. For example, in the whole area of human relationships, the challenges posed by digital technology are well known and openly discussed. However, there are other changes also taking place that are equally profound. In terms of the last few years, one of the greatest shifts linked to our sense of identity has been in relation to gender. The changes of attitude in relation to gender that are currently taking root, at least in some societies, are rapid and far reaching. For example, an increasing number of people, many of them young and of school age, are, out of a deep inner need, recognizing themselves and their identity as closer to the gender of the body they were not born into. In order to try and find their true place in the world, and often in the face of long-standing cultural norms, people are transitioning to the gender not of their birth. They are discarding their birth name, and revealing for themselves a new name and identity that more closely reflects who they want to be in the world.

In any area of human understanding, attitudes and assumptions are constantly evolving. Generally speaking, we understand something in relation to something else, and not in isolation. In discussing questions of gender, transitioning, LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender] rights and all the practical and moral issues these entail, time and again we need reference points upon which to build our own field of understanding. Anthroposophy, as its very name suggests - meaning literally wisdom of the human being - gives us a starting-point for understanding the world that is anchored in ourselves. We have the potential to know our thoughts and the web of attitudes and relationships that underpin them more fully and more intimately than any other phenomena in the world. If we seek to probe our thoughts and make their workings transparent to us, what is gradually revealed has within it the living kernel to provide us with a basis for penetrating the manifold issues and phenomena that modern society and culture throws at us. In relation to gender, anthroposophy is particularly illuminating in that it furnishes us with different perspectives on the make-up of the human being that in turn can inform any judgements we make based on our own life experiences and life encounters.

For his time, Rudolf Steiner made many highly progressive statements regarding equality (or the then lack of it) between the genders. His book The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (first published in 1894) contains several passages on gender questions that seem scarcely to have dated, and need none of the apologetic caveats required by many writers from a hundred years ago. A prime example of this almost timeless approach to questions around human nature, even as here when writing about a sensitive subject such as gender equality, comes late in the book in the fourteenth chapter called 'Individuality and Genus'. Here Steiner writes the following: 'The tendency to judge according to genus is at its most stubborn where we are concerned with differences of sex. Almost invariably man sees in woman, and woman in man, too much of the general character of the other sex and too little of what is individual. In practical life this does less harm to men than to women. The social position of women is for the most part such an unworthy one because in so many respects it is determined not as it should be by the particular characteristics of the individual woman, but by the general picture one has of the woman's natural tasks and needs... As long as men continue to debate whether a woman is suited to this or that profession "according to her natural disposition", the so-called woman's question cannot advance beyond its most elementary stage. What a woman, within her natural limitations, wants to become has better be left to the woman herself to decide. If it is true that women are suited only to that profession which is theirs at present, then they will hardly have it in them to attain any other. But they must be allowed to decide for themselves what is in accordance with their nature. To all who fear an upheaval of our social structure through accepting women as individuals and not as females, we must reply that a social structure in which the status of one half of humanity is unworthy of a human being is itself in great need of improvement.'1

In another of his books, Theosophy, published ten years later in 1904, Steiner develops further this notion of comprehending the unique individual. In particular, he furnishes us with concepts to broaden our understanding of the human being that overtly embrace a soul and spirit dimension to human existence, as well as our physical, here-and-now earthly nature. Among the manifold aspects of human reality explored in this book, one that is particularly relevant to the present theme is the notion that each and every human being is akin to a whole species in themselves. Animals of the same species live concurrently upon the earth and coexist in numerous physical forms, gradually adapting and evolving over time. The human being is different in that, while physically speaking they belong to a single species, as individuals we only exist on earth in one body at a time. In this regard, Steiner notes that, 'I have not in the least understood the nature of Mr. Smith if I have described his son or father. I must know his own life-history. Anyone who reflects on the nature of biography becomes aware that in respect of the spiritual each man is a species for himself.' A page later, Steiner adds: 'As physical man I spring from other physical men, for I have the same shape as the whole human species. The qualities of the species, accordingly, could thus be acquired within the species through heredity. As spiritual man I have my own form as I have my own life-history. I can therefore have obtained this form from no one but myself.'2

At this point in *Theosophy*, Steiner extends the logic of his argument to make the case that, because we come to the world with a uniqueness embedded in the core of our being, we must therefore have an individual life-history that pre-dates our present earthly existence. In whichever way we relate to a concept such as repeated earth lives, the fact remains that we all have an inner essence that defines us as uniquely different from all the other billions of human beings alive today.

Of those billions of people, approximately half inhabit a female body, half a male body. We exist as a unique individual; yet we also inhabit a human body that predefines us as male or female. We might, therefore, ask how it is that our bodily gender and all



that goes with it relates to the notion that, as individuals, we are really a whole species in ourselves. Are these two notions indeed compatible with one another?

At the heart of grasping the anthroposophical view of identity and the meaning of existence is understanding the importance of *polarity*. When the concept of polarity begins to infuse our world view, it can raise our own perceptions to new levels of insight. While any vision of the human being based on anthroposophy needs to be placed, to a lesser or greater degree, within the overall context of Steiner's evolutionary cosmology, much can be gained from Steiner's exploration of the quality of polarity as it exists in each and every one of us. However, before we do so, it is necessary to give some explanation of the concept of the so-called *etheric body*.

Our etheric body is what imbues our physical body with what we understand as life. It is a play of living forces that journeys with us through life from the moment of our conception to the time of our death, helping to form our physical body on the one hand, while absorbing and transforming all the different worldly experiences that come to meet us from the cradle (or to be more exact, the womb) to the grave. We can imagine standing with a light shining on our face and body. Our physicality casts a shadow that extends far behind us. Our etheric body, meanwhile, casts no shadow, but is itself like a light shining within us, holding within that light a record of all that is behind us in terms of our lived experiences up to that moment, while at the same time infusing our physicality with life.

Returning to the issue of gender, speaking in Munich in 1908, Steiner candidly said the following: 'At present we will concern ourselves with the physical and etheric bodies. For herein lies the solution to the riddle of the sexes. The etheric body is only to a certain extent a picture of the physical body. In regard to the sexes things are different. In the man the etheric body is female and in the woman it is male. However strange it may seem, a deeper observation will disclose the following: something of the opposite sex lies hidden in each person. It is no good however to look for all kinds of abnormal

phenomena; rather one needs to pay attention to normal experiences. By confronting this fact, it is no longer possible in the strict sense to speak of man and woman, but rather of masculine and feminine qualities.' We can reflect freely upon this in our daily life whether we are a man or a woman, gay, heterosexual, in transition or have an affinity with one of the other many new gender-based designations that are coming into being. We can see it in ourselves, in those we love, or indeed in every human encounter we have. It is an insight out of which we may find a more conscious equilibrium in terms of our own identity as sexual beings. Indeed, in the same lecture Steiner goes on to say: 'Countless phenomena in life will become clear to us if we think of human nature as the working together of two polar opposites.'

In contemplating this polarity in each of us, we create for ourselves the opportunity to pose anew many of the great questions about life and the meaning of life. At the heart of Steiner's cosmology is the notion, already hinted at above, that human beings experience repeated lives in an earthly body. As the planetary body of the earth has evolved over eons of time, so too do we, as unique beings, experience those changing earthly conditions, with all their cultural and environmental variations and subtleties of human relationship.

The polarity between masculine and feminine, and the opportunity to find our own equilibrium between them, is central to our continually evolving existence as an individual species in our own right within a continually evolving universe. If we lived only once, or indeed repeatedly in a body of the same gender, even if the world had changed and evolved around us, we would still miss out on certain experiences that are unique to inhabiting either a man or a woman's body. Steiner describes this in the following terms: 'Spiritual science... shows us a deeper reason why a masculine quality is to be found in the woman and a feminine quality in the man. Spiritual science speaks of how human beings strive after ever greater perfection, through many lives. Our present life is always the result of a previous one. Thus as we proceed through many lives, we experience both male and female incarnations. What arises in this way may be expressed as the effect of those experiences gathered on both sides in earthly life. Whoever is able in this way to look more deeply into the male and female natures knows that the more intimate experiences of the two sexes are very different, and must be very different. Our entire existence is a collection of the most varied experiences. However, these experiences can only become comprehensive through their being acquired from the viewpoint of both sexes.'5

In Steiner's day, the so-called woman's question was far from being resolved. It is still far from being resolved today, with incredible and sometimes painful differences evident across the cultures of the world. However, as society fragments and people become ever more conscious of their rights and of themselves



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as individuals, the questions that Steiner posed in 1894 in terms of recognition for women are today gradually transforming into more general questions about gender and the individual. As we approach future questions of gender, the answers to these as yet unimagined questions lie deep within ourselves and our relationships with those around us – in the recognition of the common humanity, polarity and uniqueness that exists in all of us.

Dr. Richard Bunzl lives in Hebden Bridge, England.

Endnotes

- 1. Steiner, Rudolf, *The Philosophy of Freedom*, transl. Michael Wilson (Rudolf Steiner Press: Forest Row, 2006), pp. 204-5.
- 2. Steiner, R., *Theosophy*, transl. M. Cotterell (Rudolf Steiner Press: London, 1989), pp. 54 & 55.
- 3. This is quoted from the fine collection of Steiner's lectures and writings on the theme of sexuality, love and partnership compiled by Margaret Jonas. See: Steiner, R., Sexuality, Love and Partnership. From the Perspective of Spiritual Science (Rudolf Steiner Press: Forest Row 2011), p. 40.
- 4. Ibid.
- 5. Ibid., pp. 40-1.

The Gesture of the Human Form

by Charles Kovacs (1907-2001) (A talk given on 28th May, 1977)

n a number of lectures Rudolf Steiner has stated, quite emphatically on several occasions, something that is so contrary to our usual way of thinking that it is really quite difficult to come to terms with it.

He wants us to understand that the human body, or to be quite exact, the form of the human body, is not the product of natural forces and natural laws. The physical, chemical, biological laws that produce the whole of Nature around us – minerals, plants, animals – cannot and do not produce the human form; in fact, so we are told, they can only destroy it. When the spirit has left the body at death then Nature has her way with the body, with the corpse, and the *form* is destroyed.

It is an idea, which, as I said, runs counter to every scientific principle of the present day. It is one thing to speak of significant differences between the human form and the form of a horse or a cow. It is quite another thing to say that the human form belongs altogether to a different order, to a different dimension.

The difficulty of making sense of such a statement lies in this: that we are not sensitive enough for subtleties of form, that we are in fact insensitive to the forms all around us. We look at some hills or at a mountain range but we don't usually 'read' these different shapes or gestures. The shape of a mountain is, indeed, a gesture by means of which Nature wants to convey something to us – but we don't understand the meaning of the gesture. We look at dogs and cats but we don't read the difference between these two kinds of animals as we would read the difference between a proud expression and a humble expression on a human face.

But in lectures called 'Occult Reading and Occult Hearing' Steiner recommended that as a training of our occult sensitivity for forms one should look upon mountain forms (for instance) as gestures, or upon animal forms as "mimics," as facial expressions of Nature.

One could, along these lines, compare the shapes of a palm tree and a pine tree, of a spider with a butterfly, of a volcano with undulating hills and, if one does so, then the forms indeed begin to speak; it is a 'silent language' but it is also an artistic language. For it is the same language of form that makes us understand the 'gesture' of the Pyramids as compared with the gesture of a Gothic church.

And if one then, with a certain sensitivity for forms, turns to the human form, to the form of the human body, then one comes to a strange experience, especially when one sees the body of someone who has died: one feels – no, one realises – that of all the forms in the world the human form should not lie there dead, the human form calls for immortality. The human body was not designed to die; it is only through the corruptions wrought by Lucifer and Ahriman² that the human body does die. But the form itself, not the substances that compose the body, the pure form pronounces immortality, just as clearly as the spire of a Gothic church pronounces striving upwards to heaven.

Of course, to be quite exact it is really the *ideal form* of man that has that stamp of immortality; our own particular individual forms are, in one way or another, distortions showing the death-bringing influences of Lucifer and Ahriman.³ But there was once on earth, walking on earth, the ideal form of man and this ideal form is immortal: it is the resurrected body of Christ.

And though we are, each of us, only distorted versions of this ideal form there is still enough of the original design recognisable to speak to a sensitive eye and to proclaim that this form was not meant to be destroyed.

I can only compare it to a certain feeling response that most civilised people have when they hear of the destruction of a great work of art. Perhaps you remember the time, some years ago, when a madman damaged Michelangelo's famous "Pieta" in St. Peter's Church in Rome – there is initially a sense of outrage that a beautiful work of art should be so attacked.⁴ A work of art, a great work of art, is not meant to be destroyed; it is not meant to cease to exist. And that kind of feeling that people quite normally have about works of art is the feeling one gets for the human form, for this human form is a work of art.

In life between death and a new birth when the soul is in the spiritual world, the greater and most important part of this spiritual life is given to the task of building the spiritual model of one's future body on earth. And this building of the body is done with the help and guidance of the highest spiritual powers — with the gods. It is divine work; it is the artistry of the gods that flows into the forming and shaping of every human body. And that is why the form of the body is indeed a work of art;

the most wonderful work of art in the world for indeed it is, one could say, God's masterpiece.

Of course, the substances that, as it were, fill this form when we are incarnated are taken from the physical world; but these substances, the physical matter, are not allowed to follow their own laws but are made to conform to the inner laws of the human form. And this is something very similar to what happens in the creation of a work of art – a painting, let us say.

The materials of the picture, canvas, paper, paints, come from the world of Nature, from minerals and plants, but they are taken out of the natural context in which they occur, out of the processes of Nature which produced them and used in quite a different context according to aesthetic laws, laws of aesthetic beauty, which exist (to begin with) only in the spirit of the painter.

The artist, like the gods, has to use physical materials to create a physical work of art but the arrangement of these materials has nothing to do with the laws under which these materials exist in Nature. The artist, like the gods, uses the physical materials to fill a 'form,' a form that exists only in his spirit.

But there is one vast difference between the works of God and the works of man: what the human artist produces, the painting, the sculpture, the poem, the play or the symphony is not a reality; it is a deliberately created illusion, whereas the form of the human body is a reality and a reality which has a very real part to play in the evolution of the human soul.

The true spiritual core of man is the Ego [the 'I', the essential self] but this Ego could not become conscious of itself without incarnating in a physical body. The Ego, the spiritual core of our being, and the form of the physical body belong together. The Ego can only incarnate in this form of physical body and it can only become conscious of itself (Ego-conscious) in such a body. And only in such a body can man attain freedom.

This inner freedom of man is due to the fact that the human body is formed by forces that oppose each other, forces that contradict each other and, in this way, balance each other. There are the forces that form the head and the nervous system; these forces come from the past, from the previous incarnation; they are, one could say, 'old forces.' Then there are the 'young forces' that form our limbs; they are not yet fully developed forces but will achieve full development in the next incarnation. Our whole organisation is really the expression of a 'tug-of war' between forces of the past and forces of the

future.

In between these opposing elements there is the heart, the whole rhythmic system, which, as it were, reconciles the opposites.

This three-foldness of the human organisation – of which Steiner speaks again and again in lecture after lecture – is the design that makes freedom possible. I said before that the form of the human body speaks of immortality; now I have to add that this form also speaks of freedom. One could also say that the occult sign for freedom is the form of the human body.

And this freedom makes its first appearance in the middle system, which holds the balance between the opposites; freedom appears first in the realm of feeling as the impulse of art. In love for art, in the enjoyment of art, is the beginning of freedom for the human soul.

You see, most of the things made and produced by man are made and are produced to satisfy some need; they are necessities. But a painting, a play, a symphony, these are not in the same sense necessities. One can after all live without them. Yet the curious thing is that from the very dawn of human existence on earth, men have always found time for art; even the most primitive tribes paint and carve, they sing and they recite stories and they dance. They do all this not because they are compelled by any physical necessity but out of freedom, simply because they love doing these things. And that is what freedom means: to do something for the love of it.

You see, the gods create their great work of art, the human form, a form designed for freedom – and out of this freedom man creates his works of art.

But these human arts also work back upon the body, upon the organisation: architecture and sculpture work upon the head forces, painting and music work upon the rhythmic system and poetry, in particular the art of drama, works upon the will. When the Greek philosopher Aristotle defined the task of dramatic art as rousing fear and compassion and so leading to a 'catharsis' or purification [for the audience], he recognised that this art works upon the will. And eurythmy works on the whole organisation. The arts have a harmonising effect upon the forces of the human body because both art and the human form have their origin not in this world but in the spiritual world.

Christ spoke of the spheres where art and the human form come from when He said: My kingdom is not of this world. Out of that kingdom he brought into this world immortality and freedom.



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Charles Kovacs' talk is published here by the kind permission of Charles Kovacs' executor, Howard Copland. This is a lightly edited version with additional endnotes by the editor.

Endnotes

- 1. Occult Reading and Occult Hearing (GA156), R.Steiner, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1975.
- 2. Charles Kovacs was aware of the anthroposophical background to that which he was speaking about and as this talk was given to those also with an understanding of that background he felt no need to explain some of the terms and concepts he uses in this talk. Simply put, Lucifer and Ahriman are extensively referred to in the lectures and writings of Steiner who he refers to as mighty spiritual beings active in all of us, who bring gifts for humanity but present terrible challenges too. They are more normally known by their biblical names of the Devil and Satan, although many people conflate and interchange these two names as if there were only one and the same entity. But, according to Steiner, they are two distinct beings, rather opposite in their workings in human development and when a human being succumbs to their influences - for in human terms one could say they have an agenda that does not have the good and loving development of humanity in view – then a certain corruption enters into the human

- condition; on a soul level then into the body itself, over time. In essence this is what Kovacs is referring to in this talk.
- 3. In the sense of the corruptions indicated in endnote 2.
- 4. Laszlo Toth, damaged the Pieta with a hammer on 21 May 1972, but was never charged with a criminal offence. On 29 January of the following year he was declared by a Rome court to be a socially dangerous person and was ordered confined to a mental hospital for at least two years.
- 5. Kovacs is now drawing on Steiner's insights to 'paint' his picture.



Every cloud has a silver lining - the future of Steiner Schools in England

Many Steiner schools in England have come in for serious criticism of their practices in recent inspections by the English schools inspectorate Ofsted. **Sylvie Sklan** explains the issues.

As the school year draws to a close, it is a good time to take stock of the situation regarding the English Steiner schools. The bright light of the schools inspectorate Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) has been scrutinising all of the schools in England over the past months and now many of them find themselves having to confront an unfavourable judgment.

A dark cloud is hanging over them and the whole of the school movement is affected. So why this unprecedented focus on Steiner schools?

This whole episode began in November 2018 with an Ofsted inspection of the Steiner Academy Exeter. Academies are publicly funded independent schools which can follow their own curriculum. Inspectors were alarmed by what they found and this resulted in the school being closed for a few days so that some of the very concerning safeguarding issues could be addressed straight away. A school closure after an inspection – even a temporary closure – inevitably draws media attention and the academy in Exeter was no exception.

There was an explosion of media interest. This led to the local member of parliament writing to the secretary of state for education, Damien Hinds, to request that other "similar" schools were inspected. It didn't take long for inspectors to turn up unannounced at the three other Steiner academies, as well as at five independent Steiner schools. The outcome was that a further four schools (two academies and two independent schools) were judged "inadequate" and three "require improvement". Only one school (Steiner Academy Hereford) was judged "good".

This sudden spate of inspections caused serious alarm. There was much speculation about whether the anti-Waldorf lobby had had a hand in what some saw as a witch-hunt. It also triggered a debate about why so many of the schools seem to be in such a poor state of

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health.

On the one hand, there are those who see it as the failure of Ofsted inspectors to understand properly what they are judging; that the independent schools have been disadvantaged by being inspected by Ofsted, rather than by the Schools Inspection Service, an independent body established to carry out inspections of independent schools in England.

On the other hand, there are those who are broadly in agreement with Ofsted's findings and see this situation as a symptom of the failure of many of the schools to move with the times and, in the case of the academies, that they have tried to grow too fast too quickly. That debate rumbles on.

Serious concerns

Whatever the explanation, with only one school out of nine being judged "good" at the beginning of this year, this situation resulted in a public exchange of letters between the head of Ofsted, Amanda Spielman, and the secretary of state, Damian Hinds, raising serious concerns about the situation and about Steiner education.

To quote from Spielman's letter: "At the root of many of the weaknesses are poor leadership, management and governance. Many of the schools inspected lack clear lines of responsibility and, too often, senior leaders do not hold staff to account, while governors fail to fulfil their role in holding school leaders to account."

The letter continues: "With the exception of the Steiner Academy Hereford, there were shortcomings in the quality of teaching and outcomes for all pupils across all the education inspections. [...] Given the prevalence and seriousness of these issues across both state-funded and independent Steiner schools, they raise questions about whether these common failures are a result of the underlying principles of Steiner education." [See the Open Letter to Amanda Spielman published in *New View issue* 92, Summer 2019 addressing this issue. – Editor.]

Spielman goes on to say the secretary of state should "consider and further investigate why so many of the Steiner schools inspected are neither protecting children adequately nor giving them a good standard of education". In his response, Damian Hinds urges Spielman to inspect all the other Steiner schools and adds that "we will take enforcement action against any independent school that does not improve quickly following a failure to meet the independent school standards."

He continues: "You will understand that decisions on enforcement action are, and must be, taken on a case-by-case basis according to the specific failings identified for each school. In terms of the three inadequate academies, the Regional Schools Commissioner's team have started work to re-broker the academies into strong multi-academy trusts to ensure swift improvement."

Since then, all the other Steiner schools in England have been inspected. A further five have been judged inadequate, including two of our longest established schools, and further three "require improvement". There is some good news though: four have been judged to be good. Two more reports are still to be published.

The fact that some of the schools that were inspected were found to be "good" proves that the identified weaknesses are not inherent to Steiner education, even if these weaknesses are pretty endemic at the moment. Further, the fact that in the most recent round of inspections some schools were judged to be "good" suggests that it is relatively straightforward for some schools to put their house in order when the changes needed have been identified.

What next?

As regards the independent Steiner schools that are funded by parents, with nine having been judged inadequate and seven that "require improvement", these schools urgently need to demonstrate that they do have the capacity to turn themselves around. The hope is they will each in their own way take on this challenge and transform it into an opportunity to embrace change and to ensure that tradition doesn't get in the way of a more outward facing attitude that is needed now.

The jury is out with regard to how many of the independent schools will respond effectively and quickly. It requires positivity and energy to embrace this challenge. But if they don't, then, as the secretary of state says in his letter, the government will take enforcement action against all inadequate Steiner schools that fail to improve rapidly.

As regards the three Steiner academies - Exeter,

Frome and Bristol – they will be taken into a multiacademy trust (MAT), as directed by the secretary of state. The hope is that this MAT will be the Avanti Schools Trust and ongoing discussions with the Trust look very hopeful.

Some Avanti Schools Trust schools are Hindu-faith designated schools; but the Trust is keen to also develop other schools that have an ethos that is committed to the pursuit of human values and spiritual development. Under the Trust, these three Steiner academies would be likely to become schools "inspired by Waldorf principles".

That is similar to Langley Hill, where the separate Avanti Foundation is opening a school on the site of what used to be Kings Langley Rudolf Steiner School. That school was closed last summer after failing to show capacity to improve in four separate inspections after it was first judged to be inadequate in December 2016.

It needs to be made clear that Langley Hill is not sponsored by the Avanti Schools Trust. The Avanti Schools Trust and Avanti Foundation are separate and independent organisations which are linked by a shared ethos. The Avanti Schools Trust is the MAT hoping to take over the three Steiner academies in Exeter, Bristol and Frome (South West Region Academies), whereas Langley Hill is sponsored by the Avanti Foundation, a separate organisation

It remains to be seen as to how authentic a school "inspired by Waldorf principles" can be. There is cautious optimism, however. There is also a great sense of relief that through this initiative the future of the three Steiner academies in Exeter, Bristol and Frome is likely to be secured, if not in name, then at least in spirit. What is certain is that without the Avanti Schools Trust the future of these three state-funded schools would be very bleak.

At this moment we don't know what the future holds for the English Steiner schools; but there is always a silver lining to every dark cloud, even if right now that silver lining it is not entirely obvious.

Until her recent retirement, Sylvie Sklan was the lead on all matters related to Steiner academies for the UK Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF).



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Neoliberalism and the Emergence of a Threefold Social Order

by Richard Cooper

thical individualism was the term created by Rudolf Steiner to describe the process of spiritual self-development in one of his first and fundamental books, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* first published in1894. The Social Threefold Order of 1920, was a logical progression of this philosophy, reflecting years of further thinking and experience of socio-political reality from a practical and spiritual perspective. As a thinker and 'activist' along these lines, one has to raise questions about ethical, public and private life. Indeed, one individual may act in an ethical way, alone, but each deed can have historical and societal effects beyond their immediate concerns. Consequently, individualism is by necessity 'associative': it calls forth the question of social engagement.

Millennials (i.e. those born in late 1980s and up to 2000 have very different work-life aspirations to previous generations. For example, corporate managers are surprised when their new recruit is prepared to walk out due to the firm's or boss's ethics – On Linkedin (a business to business internet platform) was the following comment: "If I get the feeling that I'm only working only to fund your new Mercedes, then you won't see me stick around for long".

Forthright and idealistic, but also prepared to take on established authorities, are Millennials symptomatic of a wider ethical change in society? On May 15 of this year, in the New York Times, relating to America's opioid abuse epidemic (prescribed painkillers leading to dependency).1 Entitled 'Money so tainted museums don't want it', it featured the story of a billionaire family behind a major pharmaceutical company who used to donate generously to the New York Metropolitan Art Museum.² The family, behind a producer of opioids (painkillers), had downplayed the allegation that the drugs led to abuse and addiction, in order to encourage sales.³ The criticism of the Metropolitan Museum that philanthropy had been used to 'scrub the consciences of the wealthy' was passionate and indignant. We may celebrate the financial settlements imposed by courts on the excesses of corporations and praise the stand of the Metropolitan Museum; however, reflecting on how the socio-economic system creates such cases becomes rather disquieting.

For example, in Switzerland, the pharmaceutical

company Roche recently published its results for the year 2018. Research costs were 9 billion dollars, while the marketing budget was 12 billion. There was criticism in the press and from shareholders - especially with concern to the effect of the high drug prices on Swiss health insurance costs, which has increasingly become a political issue in Switzerland (medicine prices have risen by 54% in the last five years in Switzerland). At the Roche shareholders meeting 2019, Ms Veronika Hendry, President of ACTARES "association of shareholders for a sustainable economy" sought for clarification as to why Roche sets its prices by the elusive term 'benefit to the population' rather than according to the 'actual' costs of research and production. Considering this term is difficult to define and could also be said to be controversial, it was far from satisfactory for the Chief Executive Officer of Roche to state in the press that the marketing budget has to be high enough to maintain the 'efficient ratio' between price and production, when shareholders were actually pointing to social concerns concerning Roche's guiding rationale for the price setting.

A contrasting example can be found with the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act (2012) whereby the United States government overturned the Smith-Bundt Act (1948) post-war ban on domestic dissemination of propaganda. When congress recommended passage of the bill in 1948, they stated "truth can be a powerful weapon." They further listed six principles for its implementation: tell the truth; explain the motives of the United States; bolster morale and extend hope; give a true and convincing picture of American life, methods, and ideals; combat misrepresentation and distortion; and aggressively interpret and support American foreign policy. The bill was intended to counter propaganda from the Soviet Union during the Cold War. With the bill's repeal in 2012, propaganda is redefined as "public diplomacy information" and could be seen as a response to an age of internet and social media, beyond the more traditional promotional roles of - for example - the BBC or Radio America.

Public diplomacy that traditionally represents actions of governments to influence overseas publics within the foreign policy process has expanded today – by accident and design – beyond the realm of governments to include the media, multinational corporations, NGO's and faith-based organizations as active participants in the field.⁴

With the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act (2012), 'public diplomacy' has now officially expanded to 'domestic markets' as it was at the time of the pre-1948 period, during the Second World War. The Brexit referendum and the Trump election in America are prominent examples of how Facebook particularly was used to influence public political opinion. Is this discrete psychological influence of the public by the state a moral failure or simply a political necessity for a state, nation or party to promote and sustain its 'brand' on the world stage? - The answer is both! -The fundamental social contract of trust between the state and its people is weakened when media forces the public to constantly need to sift the truth from the effective marketing of the state to the domestic population.⁵ Perhaps, negligence of ethical responsibility, as this and recent cases in the opioid crisis have shown, can help us imagine an alternative to marketing and media: when government and corporations fail to think through contradictions then a new form of public dialogue could prompt them to do so.

The neoliberal stage and setting

Neoliberalism began in the 1930s, but became more overtly expressed in the United Kingdom under Margaret Thatcher and the United States under Ronald Reagan in the 1970s and 80s. The book *Road to Serfdom* written by economist Friedrich Hayek is a popular early advocate of neoliberalism. Written between 1940 and 1943 the book asserts that fascism was a capitalist reaction to communism. Hayek proposed that the world needed a new economic answer to the challenge of the recent and future enemy: the state militarism of Nazi Germany and the communism of Soviet Russia. But it was only after 1980 that 'neoliberal' ideals were to really take hold. In the UK of the 1980s and 90s, Margaret Thatcher described society as an abstract concept and that real action and change comes from individuals seeking to better their own lives. Coal mines were shut down; trades unions were challenged; home ownership increased – the economy as a whole improved while the benefits were professed to 'trickle down' to all sections of society.

Consequently Tony Blair in the UK (Prime Minister 1997-2007), President Bill Clinton (1993-2001) in the US and Gerhard Schröder, Chancellor of Germany (1998-2005) rejected traditional socialist policies of income redistribution in favour of public-private partnerships and 'personal responsibility' under what was called a 'Third Way'; characterised by what

Blair called 'ethical socialism'. There followed a gradual world Recession (ranging from 2006-2013, peaking in 2008 with the western bank crisis) that led to innumerable home foreclosures – particularly in the USA – pension fund collapses and cuts to public spending, under President Barack Obama in the US (2009-2017) and Prime Minister David Cameron in the UK (2010-2016). Through the 1980s and up to the present time the effects of deregulation, privatisation and free trade and cuts to public spending reveal the defining feature of neoliberalism, namely: 'austerity'.

Since the turn of the century and post 2008, the global economy has become increasingly interlinked and co-dependant. Had the banks not been 'bailed out' by the US and UK governments in 2008, following the collapse of Lehman Brothers in the US, the global financial system would have faced severe systemic threats and may well have collapsed itself.⁶ Part of the reason for the crisis can be explained by the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Banking Act of 1933, which had sought to prevent using ordinary peoples' deposits and savings for commercial speculation that had led to the Great Depression in America of 1929. For, in 1999, the Financial Services Modernization Act was passed into law by Bill Clinton, allowing banks to once again integrate investment and commercial banking. The 2008 crisis showed how integrated the global economy had become with rampant speculations leaving financial institutions insolvent. Financial corruption is extenuated when legislation reinforces the deficiencies of the system.

Philosophical responses

Building on his philosophical analysis of history, Michel Foucault⁷ (in lectures from 1976) has described neoliberalism as 'state racism'; less a conspiracy of interest than an unconscious systemic process, whereby those with power consolidate their position, vis-a-vis the less privileged. For Foucault, the rise of neoliberal politics represents a 'crisis of the general apparatus of governmentality' and the search for a new one. Democratic politics, as we are accustomed to think of it, in direct or representative terms, has lost its validity, to become replaced by what Foucault designated 'the social':

"In historical terms, the emergence of the social proceeded as the gradual decline of the political... the social state represents the result of social struggles, yet its strategic significance extends in the opposite direction: an 'active politics of de-politicisation' which is supposed to make these very struggles unnecessary."

Notwithstanding Foucault's polemic, the 'depoliticisation' of the 'social' under neoliberalism can help us rethink society. Firstly, under the neoliberalist injunction not to limit the freedom of others and seek our own gain any criticism of the immorality of others in

the system is disavowed: the individual is led to become what Foucault terms 'an entrepreneur of himself'. Moreover, the socio-political system is thereby able, through common consent – primarily through the media – to effectively defend this ideology: so, alternatives to the established system are deemed 'unworkable', 'idealistic', or 'utopian'. Ethical and political ideals are then allowed expression, but only so long as they remain oriented toward the specific causes of 'interest groups' within the established system: for example, lobby groups, trade organisations, think tanks and institutions. The political debate of ideas for a completely different socio-economic basis for society and how that would be practically structured remains completely side-lined within this network.

Unsurprisingly, one of the criticisms of Foucault is that although he is able to chart socio-historical dynamics, he has not been able to formulate how a 'new society' might look. No practical steps are on offer. Contemporary philosophers of the left, Alain Badiou⁹ and Slavoj Žižek10 have been more assertive. They advocate the need for a new form of communism. that would promote the autonomy of the human 'subject' against the outworn and exploitative aspects of the capitalist system. From the other side of the political spectrum, British philosopher Roger Scruton¹¹ is a conservative critic of Foucault, Badiou and Žižek, whom he feels fail to acknowledge the failures of communism and indulge themselves in overly-abstract language. He claims they lack the rigor of true philosophy. Furthermore, he argues that their pervasive influence in academia has led to an undermining of culture. Scruton was knighted in 2016 for "services to philosophy, teaching and public education", and has received honorary medals for his work in Poland and the Czech Republic for his work with dissidents under Communist Party rule between 1979 and 1989. Notably, as a result of his work with The Jan Hus Educational Foundation - founded in May 1980 at the University of Oxford to help provide an 'underground' education network in the former Czechoslovakia, at the time under Communist Party rule, running seminars in philosophy, smuggling in books, and arranging for Western academics to give lectures – Scruton was put on the "index of undesirable persons' by the Czech police. The following give a sense for his ideals of free and associative community:

"The social world emerges through free association, rooted in friendship and community life. And the customs and institutions that we cherish have grown from below, by the 'invisible hand' of co-operation. They have rarely been imposed from above by the work of politics, the role of which, for a conservative, is to reconcile our many aims, and not to dictate or control them." 12

Where Foucault drew inspiration for his research on sexuality and subjectivity from Ancient Greece and chivalry in the Middle Ages, Scruton's great passion has been music, notably Richard Wagner's epic drama of Norse mythology 'The Ring of the Nibelung'. Žižek, in addition to his psychoanalytic and philosophical works, has produced extensive studies of German and Soviet Russia contemporary culture and cinema, whilst A Badiou has augmented his mathematicsbased philosophical work with studies of Maoism and Marxism. All four have been politically active: Scruton in Eastern Europe and the UK; Foucault in Iran; Žižek in Slovenia and Greece; Badiou In France. Even though standing opposite on the political spectrum regarding 'radical change' and neoliberalism, Scruton has a sense for it, quoting John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) "we must reform to conserve" and does not rule out valid criticism of capitalism.¹³ Notwithstanding their diversity of analysis and philosophical standpoints, what unites Foucault, Badiou, Žižek and Scruton is their erudition, political engagement with contemporary culture and their imaginative regard for social, political and cultural history. These examples highlight the important dynamic of how new ideas about society arise from history, on the one hand, and from a reverence for the ideas expressed in culture, on the other.

Rudolf Steiner's Threefold Social Order

Rudolf Steiner's Threefold Social Order arose from the rising challenge of social and geopolitics toward the end and after World War One. Between the years 1917 and 1922, with the burgeoning Russian Revolution to the east and the beginnings of corporate America to the west: Steiner's proposal was from a concern for the middle, for Europe. Since that time, geopolitics has changed. Through the twentieth century Europe has collaborated with the United Nations and been guided, to varying degrees, by America. Whilst the United States now makes up a smaller proportion of the global economy, the influence of its policies is now far greater than in the 1990s.¹⁴ However, as China, the second largest economy, also highlights, challenges ranging from inequality to environmental pollution present unresolved contradictions to the growth of the world's socio-economic system.15 As tensions in the South China Sea and the US trade war with China show, China is a 'rising power' to the United States - much like Germany was to the British Empire at the turn of the last century. Global governance will have to find new terms of resolution beyond ust the economic. Europe's potential role is as a bridge – developing inspiring forms for human rights and a socio-economic system with a free cultural and political life.

The potential gift of middle Europe is to be able to perceive, out of the feeling life, the ideas of the spirit that can be drawn into impulses of the will, into practical deeds. A Threefold system is apparent between the head and the metabolic limb system of each human being, mediated as it is by the rhythmic system of heart and lungs. It is this breathing, balancing organism that regulates and composes the actions of the limbs, whilst connecting the ideas that flow from the active stimulation of the senses and the inner thinking processes. By this 'real' analogy to a physical human organism, one can imagine that Europe stands, like a heart, with a vital balancing and healing role between the more thinking pole toward the East and the willing/activity pole to the West. Spiritual activity as developing consciousness -brings autonomy to the thinking, feeling and willing aspects of a human being. To see the course of history as the gradual separation - but free association - of the cultural sphere from the political and the economic spheres of life, was the basis for Steiner's socio-economic proposals based on the threefold image of the human being. He recognised that until these three spheres operated autonomously, there could not be a healthy social life. At present these three spheres are not free, with the political and economic too interwoven and overbearing the cultural life. By encouraging, in practical structural form, the free and collaborative unfolding of the cultural, political and economic, the threefold sovereignty of body, soul and spirit can be brought about. These were Steiner's words one hundred years ago, yet they can speak to us with an added pertinence today:

"One who looks at social life with the eyes of the spirit can see, everywhere, the ghastly signs of social tumours forming... In fact, even if one were able to repress all interest in obtaining knowledge of life's events by means of a science recognizing the spirit, these signs alone would impel one to speak of the means of healing in words forceful enough to rouse the world."

A good example of the social failings of a very public global company can be seen at work in one of the largest corporations in the world, Amazon. In 2019, Amazon again faced strikes - ongoing since 2013 - regarding low pay and working conditions. Workers reported intense surveillance on what was called 'the rate', i.e. how fast and efficiently they could work. Many workers reported 'repetitive strain injuries', while their protests met with a hostile and threatening attitude from the Amazon management. In its US warehouses, a fulltime job earns around \$20,000 per year, which is difficult to sustain one person on, let alone a family, with health care provision, pension and rent, etc. This is in light of the profits of 2018, when Amazon made \$1.2 billion, while avoiding any federal tax due to various tax and legislative 'loopholes'. The Amazon situation is in stark contrast with Steiner's advocacy of "true prices" and the "unfolding of human capacities":

"Appropriate or "true prices" arise when workers receive sufficient income to meet their needs along with those of their dependents."¹⁷

"It is not the free unfolding of human capacities, supported by capital, which has led to human labour being forced into the role of a commodity, but rather the fettering of these capacities by the political state or economic forces... . If we continue to pursue the path which follows from this prejudice, we will create institutions which, far from leading humanity to its goal, will oppress it more and more." ¹⁸

Socio-ethical change

Geopolitical economic decisions of the 1920s to 1930s shaped the course of the twentieth century. At the ending the First World War, The Treaty of Versailles officially came into effect on 10 January 1920, and was instrumental in the circumstances leading up to the Second World War. The Threefold Social Order was put forward by Steiner in his memorandum of July 1917 to the Austrian emperor and a range of German and Austrian politicians. Significantly it was at the Treaty of Brest Livotsk in 1918 that the German Foreign Minister, R. von Kühlmann, was to have read Steiner's memoranda. The text remained in von Kühlmann's pocket. Steiner said of the missed opportunity 'This should have emerged as a spiritual deed in place of the impossible deed of Brest Livotzsk." The Treaty of Brest Livotszk ended the war between Russia and the Central powers, yet laid the ground for the harsh terms on Germany of the Treaty of Versailles, with all its future implications:

"The treaty was the ultimate betrayal of the Allied cause and sowed the seeds for the Cold War. With Brest-Litovsk the spectre of German domination in Eastern Europe threatened to become reality, and the Allies now began to think seriously about military intervention [in Russia]." ¹⁹

The spiritual world prompts us to question our place in society and history. Reminiscent of 100 years ago, global politics is at a similar impasse where limited ideologies are unlikely to avert the need to reassess the global socio-economic system. Contemporary crises of culture, from the environment to work and finance, plus the egocentricity of much of humanity at this time are linked to the socio-political crisis, for they reflect areas where the human intellect in its clever inventiveness has overlooked and outpaced accompanying ethical considerations.

Our time is one for which Steiner's work, specifically between 1917 and his death in 1924, seems particularly prescient to offer help to us. In his time, Steiner spoke prophetically of one hundred years in the future as the 'culmination':(20) when broader steps might be made toward a threefold social order. As I have tried to indicate with regard to a rising new generation and the challenges of current events, there is a mood and a necessity for moral change in the world. Historically, it is a juncture where we are called to build on humanity's

spiritual and cultural heritage out of our perceptions of society's needs. As individuals, there is a particular irony here: despite what may appear to us as insurmountable difficulties – both personal and in community – the pressing need for new social forms may yet fill us with a fiery enthusiasm for timely ethical deeds.

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Endnotes

- 1. Facing Addiction in America (PDF). U.S. Surgeon General. 2016. p. 413. "Between 1991 and 2011, painkiller prescriptions in the U.S. tripled from 76 million to 219 million per year. All across the United States, individuals, families, communities, and health care systems are struggling to cope with substance use, misuse, and substance use disorders. Substance misuse is a major public health challenge and a priority for our nation to address."
- 2. New York's Met museum to shun Sackler family donations BBC News website 15 May, 2019.
- Chris Mc Greal, Drug makers conspired to worsen 3. the opioid crisis. They have blood on their hands, The Guardian.com 29 August, 2019. Legal settlements alone will not solve America's opioid crisis The Economist.com 29 Aug, 2019. "This week saw a landmark reckoning in court for a drugmaker involved in America's opioid disaster. A judge in Oklahoma ordered Johnson & Johnson (J&J) to pay \$572m to fund a state plan to combat opioid addiction. Whatever the outcome of J&J's legal appeal, this is a milestone in a public-health calamity that cost 47,600 American lives in 2017 and could well claim a further 500,000 over the next decade. Faced with such devastation, states, counties and municipalities have served firms with roughly 2,500 lawsuits.
- 4. On 'Public Diplomacy' Crocker Snow Jr., Acting Director Edward R. Murrow Center, May 2005.
- 5. Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan (1651) argued for an undivided 'strong sovereign' to prevent a 'war of all against all'; and a 'social contract' between the government and the people.
- 6. Lehman Brothers: When the financial crisis spun out of control by Matt Egan CNN Business –story originally published on September 14, 2018. "What ensued was the largest and most complex bankruptcy in American history. The implosion of Lehman Brothers and the mayhem it unleashed was the most terrifying moment for business and the US economy since the Great Depression."
- 7. Michel Foucault, (1926-1984) French philosopher who focussed on the themes of power, sociology and sexuality in the construction of subjective identity. Notable works include: *The History of Sexuality*, Vol.1-3.
- 8. Thomas Lemke, Foucault's Analysis of Modern Governmentality, A Critique of Political Reason, p.227, Verso (2019).

- 9. Slavoj Žižek (b. 1949) is a Slovenian-born philosopher and psychoanalyst. «Although governments make claims about increased citizen participation and democracy, the important decisions are still made in the interests of capital". For communism: see *The Relevance of the Communist Manifesto* (2019) Wiley; *Conference: Communism, a New Beginning?* Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek with Verso Books at Cooper Union, New York, October 14th-16th 2011.
- 10. Alain Badiou (b,1937) French philosopher whose philosophy draws on the analytic and continental philosophical traditions. In relation to anthroposophy and history some important works include: *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, transl. by Peter Hallward; (New York: Verso, 2000) *The Century*, transl. by Alberto Toscano; (New York: Polity Press, 2007)
- 11. Roger Scruton (b.1944) British philosopher whose works of spiritual interest include: Why Beauty Matters (BBC Two, 2009) The Ring of Truth: The Wisdom of Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung (2016) Conservatism: An Invitation to a Great Tradition (2017).
- 12. Roger Scruton, Why it's so much harder to think like a Conservative, 10.09.2014 The Guardian.com
- 13. Roger Scruton, Stand up for the real meaning of conservatism, The Spectator, 4.1.2014
- 14. Jeanna Smialek, Ripples from trade war felt in Australia. *New York Times*, August 30, 2019. "Bank of England research indicates that increases in America's policy interest rate have twice the effect on foreign growth that they did in the 1990s, even though America now makes up a smaller share of the global economy, Mr Carney said."
- 15. See Daniel C. Lynch, China's Futures: PRC Elites Debate Economic Politics, and Foreign Policy (2015). p.29 "The six bottlenecks that most concern China's Future Direction: (1) insufficient domestic consumption, (2) worsening shortages of natual resources, (3) ecosystem destruction, (4) increasing socio economic inequality, (5) structural issues in the economic system, and (6) lack of low wage labour.
- 16. Rudolf Steiner, The Threefold Social Order (1920) Chapter IV International Aspects, Translation by Frederick C. Heckel, GA 23.
- 17. Rudolf Steiner, quote taken from: Gary Lamb, *The Fundamental Social Law: Theory and Practice*, Biodynamics, Spring 2008.
- 18. Rudolf Steiner, Toward Social Renewal (1919) GA23 p.69/70.
- 19. Spencer C. Tucker, *The European Powers in the First World War: An Encyclopedia*. (2013)
- Rudolf Steiner, Karmic Relationships: Esoteric Studies
 Volume III IX Entry of the Michael Forces Decisive Character of the Michaelic Impulses. (1924) GA 237.



A haiku is a very short poem consisting of three, usually non-rhyming, lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllable words (in that order) making a total of 17 syllables. This form of poetry first emerged in Japanese literature during the 17th century and later became a popular genre within and outside of Japan.

We refer to the number of *syllables* when dealing with haiku written in English, but for haiku written in Japanese we would more correctly talk about the number of *onji*, an *onji* being a unit of sound similar, but not entirely equal, to what we define as a syllable in English. This is due to the linguistically different nature of the Japanese and English language.

Traditionally haiku brought to mind images of the natural world, the seasons, the time of day, or activities associated with them. They were generally simple and succinct expressions of what was being experienced rather than what was being observed, thus stirring the reader's or listener's own senses and resulting in them participating in the experience.

A traditional haiku would contain a literary device known as a 'cutting word' (in Japanese *kireji*), which would function as a kind of punctuation and generate a dramatic effect or, perhaps, a pregnant pause.

Nowadays writers of haiku can be a little more flexible with their compositions.

The haiku on the opposite page is by Paula Dunley.

The illustration is by Zephir Delamore.
The Japanese characters (kanji) to the top left of the picture mean 'cat's temptation'!

I ate your goldfish I did not mean to do it but I am a cat

Paula Dunley



"Unite Behind the Science"? Greta Thunberg, Extinction Rebellion and Technocracy

by Terry Boardman

t is a challenge in today's world to think for oneself when from all sides of our electronic public arena, from news broadcasts and current affairs programmes to dramas and advertisements one is being bombarded by the same messages, day in, day out. It is hard enough for supposedly educated mature, middleaged people who were brought up in the world of print culture and private thoughts and imaginations to think for themselves in this situation, let alone for young adolescents who have known nothing but the 24/7 world of social media and are at all times at the mercy of their screen-mediated groupthink and peer pressures. Two of the prominent phenomena of 2019 – the teenage 'climate change' campaigner Greta Thunberg and the "climate change" campaigning movement Extinction Rebellion – share the striking characteristic that, unlike virtually all great radical causes of past decades and centuries, their cause is almost entirely supported by the Establishment and by many, though not all, of its usual propaganda instruments in the media. From the global business elite at their annual jamboree in Davos, Switzerland in February this year – where Ms Thunberg told them she wanted them "to panic" because "our house is on fire", but did not tell them to change the fundamental nature of western capitalism – to the Pope in Rome, to the leaders of the EU and of the British political class, Ms Thunberg has been welcomed and feted by the rich and powerful everywhere she has been, by the leadership class in religious, political and business circles. This salient fact seems to escape Ms Thunberg's younger supporters and also many of her older ones.

Four Points of Reflection

Why is this so? Why, her supporters will reply, it is because those world leaders, the rich and powerful, all recognise the truth and justice of what she is saying, and saying with the heartfelt insight of a child. But before we are carried away by "the heartfelt insight of a child", there are a number of points we ought to reflect on: Firstly, Anglo-American culture has long claimed to uphold and develop the rights and qualities of *the individual*, so if you want to make an impact in this culture, of whatever kind, the impact is culturally greater the more you can focus your message, *whatever it happens to be*, through

a single individual, and the younger that individual the better. We can recall the way in which those images of a single young man, who seemed to be a student (although we have never learned his actual identity) blocking the path of a line of tanks near Tiananmen Square in Beijing in June 1989 were used in the western media, or the way in which video footage of a single 15 yearold girl Nayirah giving tearful testimony - which later turned out to be completely fake¹ – to an international tribunal about Iraqi troops who she claimed had thrown babies out of their incubators in Kuwait and left them to die on the floor, was used to justify military action against Iraq in the name of the UN and was supported by countless media organs around the world. After all, how can one argue with the tearstained testimony of a young girl who furthermore clearly comes from that same region? Then there was the global media anguish over 3 year old Syrian refugee child Alan Kurdi, whose dead body was photographed on a Turkish beach at the height of the refugee crisis in Europe in September 2015 and used, amongst other things, to justify opening European borders to refugees from Syria and elsewhere, often places that had suffered as a result of wars in which the US, the UK or Israel had been involved. Paul Slovic, a psychology professor at the University of Oregon has said: "In addition to the cognitive impact that [a humanitarian crisis] is happening, you have to [evoke] emotion and feeling. Emotion is a critical factor in helping us understand an event, and it is a motivator that impels action as opposed to just abstract thoughts. Writers know this [when they] impress upon us the importance of a larger issue by telling the story through the eyes of one individual."2 Advertisers and propagandists know this as well as journalists, novelists and filmmakers. Older readers will recall shocking images of individuals in the Vietnam War: the images of a self-immolating Buddhist monk, a Vietcong prisoner being executed by a Saigon police chief, a naked 9 year old girl fleeing from a napalm attack all went round the world. The focus on individuals stimulates and amplifies mass emotion.

This is especially the case in western culture when the people involved are young, and this is the second point: the emphasis on *youth*. Since the 1950s a cult of youth has spread from English-speaking societies throughout

the world. In the 1950s and 60s it accompanied growing prosperity in post-war societies, when teenagers and young adults had more money to spend and businesses and advertisers calculated that young people were a more gullible market because they were especially prone to make judgments based on emotion, image and peer pressure. One of the ways in which young people were appealed to by advertisers was through clothing and fashion. These are an outer expression of feeling, and young people live especially in their feelings between the ages of 14 and 21 and 21 and 28, the times which Rudolf Steiner identified as those periods in an individual's life when the growing human ego acts primarily through its feeling life, when the Sentient Body (14-21) and the Sentient Soul (21-28) respectively are developing.³ In the flower power years of the 1960s, that decade when the youth culture really broke through and challenged all previous norms, very colourful, even shocking and increasingly or deliberately outrageous clothes were very much in fashion.

There was a reaction against this in the late 1970s when black, the 'Goth' look and sombre colours became more fashionable and since the late 1980s, under the influence of minimalist Japanese designers such as Rei Kawakubo, Yoji Yamamoto and Issey Miyake, black and other sombre colours have been increasingly popular. When, after crossing the Atlantic on Prince Albert of Monaco's racing yacht, with its all-black sail and large red letter 'A', 16 year-old Greta Thunberg stepped ashore in New York on 28 August, she was kitted out in a designer chic all-black outfit which prominently bore her name and the slogan UNITE BEHIND THE SCIENCE in capital letters. Her fellow crew members wore the same outfits with the same slogan, which was also featured on the black sail and on other parts of the yacht – all intended for the cameras of the global media.

This brings us to the third point we need to reflect on - the scientific and technological obsessions of our age. Greta Thunberg arrived in New York to address the United Nations Climate Action 'Summit' on 23 September and will then go on to address another UN climate conference in Santiago, Chile, in December. No accident perhaps that her slogan begins with the letters 'UN' - UNITE BEHIND THE SCIENCE. What does that say? This imperative tells us that there are scientific experts whose judgment we are all to accept and 'get behind': they lead, we follow. It implies that 'the science' on climate change is understood and fixed – by the scientific experts, whereas in fact, any scientists worth their salt would tell us that no science is ever fully understood or fixed, as human knowledge is forever growing. Even the nature of gravity is not yet understood, and in recent years cosmologists have had to admit that they do not know what 96% of the matter of the Universe is made of. 4 Yet in our time "the scientific facts of the effects of vaccinations", "the scientific facts



of climate change" and so on have become sacred cows that only 'heretics' dare to question, and if they do, they are labelled as "deniers" or "conspiracy theorists" and are "burned" at the stake by sections of public opinion. For many people, the truth of these issues is considered to be 'fixed', 'settled', as if they were as certain as the boiling point of water or the speed of light. The veracity of the seemingly untouchable 'idols' involved in such issues seems never to be called into question. Those who do question the dogmas of our 'scientific age', online for example, are being steadily censored from the Internet by the tech companies that control the electronic public Forum of our times.⁵ This censorship has been greatly stepped up in the last few years.

This leads to the fourth point - the increasing singularity and uniformity of opinion and focus in today's western societies, especially among the politically active young, which has resulted from the growth of highly polarised identity politics. If one dares to have dissident views that differ from the norm, one is regarded as a 'crazy conspiracy theorist', a "denier", a "fascist", a "danger to humanity" or "a threat to the health of humanity" depending on the issues involved. One is then shunned, 'de-platformed (from public speaking)', harangued, insulted, or physically attacked. For those doing the shunning and the attacking, the claim is made that issues of physical survival are at stake, whether for minorities or for the human race as a whole, or for the planet itself. If this is the case, for example when the issue of compromising 'herd immunity' is raised, in the vaccination debate, then many seem all too ready to set aside the individual rights of parents on behalf of their children. In other words the rights of the individual are being subsumed in the rush to 'fry bigger fish'.

The Chilean Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights since 2018, has warned humanity about the danger of the approaching "harm to Human Rights" and "major conflicts" that will break out because of "climate change." She has "used the 'climate scare' in order to promote widespread migration and globalist solutions, suggesting that refusal on the part of sovereign states to follow the United Nations on those counts would lead to disruption and injustice the world over." She has praised freemasonry's "firm defence of the liberty of conscience" and the "autonomy of thought", and it is the Gran Logia de Chile, one of Chile's leading

masonic lodges, that sends its representatives to Chilean high schools to encourage young people to join the UN climate conference in Santiago de Chile in December⁷, the conference at which Greta Thunberg will speak

Emergency! Unite!

For Ms Thunberg, there is only one issue that is of concern: our survival and that of countless species on this planet are threatened, she says, because "the science" tells us that greenhouse gases, notably Co2, are causing catastrophic global warming (or 'climate change') due to human action. With the singularity of her focus no doubt also affected by her medical condition - she has Asperger Syndrome, a milder autism spectrum disorder - her slogan also tells us to get behind the science that is coordinated by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in accordance with the IPCC's data and computerised climate models. We are to UNITE - to become 'one' under and with the United Nations, a supposedly cosmopolitan organisation that, like its forerunner the League of Nations (1919), was created by Anglo-American elites in 1945 to facilitate world domination by those same Anglo-American elites after the two world wars of the 20th century.8 Evidently, we are to become 'one', a single world brain with a single world thought about various issues, even while we are repeatedly told by the media and the political class that we must be 'diverse', 'diversity' being one of today's sacred cows in this age of identity politics. E pluribus unum - 'from the many, one' - the Latin motto of the allegedly modern United States of America: is this affirmation of the American 'melting pot' to be humanity's motto? A girl who has a form of autism, which is known to restrict feelings and social sensibility and to accentuate a narrowly focused, rationalist mindset, tells us that we are to unite 'behind' the science and the scientists, not the artists nor the men and women of politics, law, religion or business. Modern natural science is largely based on the rationalist, calculating side of the mind. Of course, some will say: "But the slogan 'unite behind the science' only refers to climate change". But does it? With such a prominent media event and a cause that its proponents argue is allembracing and supremely important, will many people not be tempted to apply the slogan to society and culture in general?

Almost every day since the Spring, voices on BBC radio and TV have been referring to "the climate emergency", "the extinction crisis", asking: will the public accept *drastic changes* to their lifestyle (e.g. giving up meat or flying or travelling by cars etc.) over the next 10 years or will they have to be nudged, pushed, or *forced* into accepting them?

Just the other day I heard on BBC radio that the public will *all* have to do this; no-one left behind or left out, they will *all* have to... unite behind the science.

And what is the "climate science" we are supposed to unite behind? It is the *computer models* of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). But what do we, or Greta Thunberg, know of the UN bureaucrats in New York or of the 'scientists' at the IPCC? We are simply expected to trust them, because the media imply we should do so.

Former US Vice-President Al Gore, who in the early 1990s was one of the most prominent advocates both of the global warming hypothesis and of the emerging Internet (which he dubbed "the Information Superhighway") and in the 2000s, after failing to win the Presidential election, reinvented himself as a public advocate for "climate change" awareness, gave a lecture9 in which he said that the Depression and mass unemployment of the 1930s was not solved by the New Deal of President Roosevelt, as many still mistakenly believe. No, said Al Gore, it was solved by the Second World War and the central government-led "national mobilisation" that was required for the war effort. The entire nation was mobilised for this great cause, and that, he said must happen again in relation to the "climate emergency" in our time.

What happened in the western democracies in the 1940s, of course, was a major extension of the power of the State over the lives of individual citizens and the habituation of the citizens to that aggrandised State power, which carried over, especially in Britain, in the years after the war – the notion that the government must be responsible for and take a lead in all aspects of national life, controlling a country much as a board of directors does a company. If we are to survive the climate emergency, goes the logic today, we must imagine we are at war and must submit to the same kind of strictures, limitations and deprivations that we accepted during wartime. Our society would be put on a permanent 'war footing' for the rest of the century.

Gore's very words and phrases from 2013 are echoed almost exactly today by Greta Thunberg and by the leaders of the Extinction Rebellion movement in Britain, Gail Bradbrook and Roger Hallam. These two self-confessed professional revolutionaries claim that we must change our entire lifestyles and do so by 2025 in order to achieve "zero net (Co2) emissions" by that date in western societies. What they are calling for is what Al Gore implied in 2013 already: radical, all-embracing, authoritarian government controls to enforce austerity on western societies rapidly in the name of the "Green New Deal" (again harking back to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his "New Deal" programme of the 1930s) by the year 2030, which is the date by which the UN's "Agenda 2030" is supposed to be achieved. Agenda 2030 refers to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 to be achieved by the year 2030. This program began as "Agenda 21" at



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the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or Earth Summit, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Maurice Strong, Jacque Fresco and Technocracy

One of the key individuals involved in the Earth Summit was the Canadian oil and mineral businessman Maurice Strong (1929-2015), a diplomat who served as Under-Secretary-General of the UN and as Secretary-General of the Earth Summit. He was something of a mentor to Al Gore on ecological issues and could be seen as "Mr Establishment environmentalism". For decades since his youth, Strong was closely allied to the Rockefeller family, who facilitated his *entrée* into the UN. Both the Rockefellers and Strong had a keen interest in China and the capacity of its authoritarian government to enforce rapid socio-economic development. Strong spent many of his later years living in Beijing, not least because he was under suspicion of corrupt dealings in relation to the UN's "Oil-for-Food" programme.

Strong's interest in China as a model for 'effective' top-down social, economic and environmental development, and his childhood in the economically depressed 1930s link him with the American futurist and self-styled designer and social engineer, Jacque Fresco (1916-2017), whose ideas were also strongly

marked by his experiences in the Depression years of the 1930s and the apparent failure of conventional western democratic societies to deal with that crisis. Fresco's ideas failed to find much headway after the mid-1950s but in the 2000s his utopian visions of a technocratic society that would be inspired and led by engineers and designers (like himself) gained a new lease of life through his association with the young filmmaker Peter Joseph, who created the cultish online sensation of the Zeitgeist films a series of three documentary films released between 2007 and 2011 that posit a number of conspiracies, as well as proposals for broad social and economic changes that attracted many young people and who started a movement for cultural and social renewal based on them. From the second of the three Zeitgeist films (2008) Joseph drew on Fresco's ideas in what Fresco called his Venus Project, and the two men collaborated until 2011.

Both Strong and Fresco were, in a sense, technocrats, men whose youth was marked by the failure, as they experienced it, of democratic capitalist societies to deal with the pressing problems of their age. However, they did not look so much to the fashionable totalitarian alternatives of the interwar years, fascism and communism, but to ideas of a technocratic bent, melding capitalism with science and technology.

In 1919 William H. Smyth, a California engineer, invented the word "technocracy" to denote "the rule of the people made effective through the agency of their servants, the scientists and engineers" In the 1930s and 40s this word 'technocracy' was applied to a shortlived movement, Technocracy Inc., led by engineers Howard Scott (1890-1970), Walter Rautenstrauch (1880-1951) and the geologist M. King Hubbert (1903-1989). They believed that society should be run by engineers in terms of efficiency and material energy; politicians, financiers, merchants and lawyers should disappear. 12 Like the Technocrats, the Venus Project and the Zeitgeist Movement have no use for politicians or for businessmen and financiers; they believed, on the basis of a thoroughly materialistic, even anti-Christian, worldview that those with the knowledge to structure physical reality deserve to be the leaders of society: "unite behind the designers", one might say.

Similarly, Maurice Strong saw the future in terms of the application of science and technology, though melded with a dose of Eastern and neo-pagan, 'Gaian' mysticism, to environmentalism. "Sustainability" and a "resource-based economy" were key values for both Strong and Fresco. The point is that the changes they sought were not something that could arise out of an individualistic, democratic society; they need to be imposed from the top down by an elite: Fresco's 'designers', or the Chinese Communist party cadre that Strong admired so much for their achievements, or the bureaucrats of the many UN agencies that he also worked with for so long. Such concepts, which are rooted in early 20th century, non-democratic notions of a technocratic elite, are echoed in the ideas of today's advocates of technocracy, such as the Indian American academic Parag Khanna in his book Technocracy in America - Rise of the Info-State (2017) in which he argues that the USA should import technocratic ideas and practices from China and Singapore and direct democracy practices from Switzerland.

Strong often said that he didn't believe in "world government" but his actions throughout his life contradicted this, as he was always working through his vast network of elite contacts to realise his vision, especially through the UN, which was, as stated earlier, established by Anglo-American elitists during the Second World War to facilitate Anglo-American world domination. What are the regular meetings at Davos, at Bilderberg, at the G7, the G20, the Trilateral Commission, the Group of Thirty, the Bank of International Settlements et al – all of them meetings of the same kind of people sharing broadly the same kind of views – if not a form of world government of the global masses by the technocratic elites, the self-appointed 'aristocracy' of the rich countries?

Extinction Rebellion

Strong believed in provocative action. When he was

young, he argued that "we will have to recognise that having children is not just a personal issue but a societal issue and at a certain point we may be faced with a need to have a permit to have a child" and that "that was controversial and I've been used to controversy ever since. Over the years, I've also noticed that this is one way of getting attention. For example, you'd probably never heard of me if people weren't always attacking me. It is, perhaps, a peripheral benefit that the attacks call attention to the issue." ¹³

Gail Bradbrook of Extinction Rebellion, who repeats the 2013 message of Al Gore about urgent national mobilisation, says that environmental campaigners "have to be disruptive unfortunately". She said she found the idea for Extinction Rebellion after "praying for the codes for social change" while on a retreat with "psychedelic medicines." "I've always been interested in how things change, in social change. I was involved in the animal rights movement as a young woman. I've been involved in issues around gender and racism. I've been focused on trying to start civil disobedience since 2010 and tried lots of things that didn't work. So I actually went on a retreat and prayed deeply, with some psychedelic medicine... it was a really intense experience. I prayed for the codes for social change... and within a month, my prayers were literally answered."14

This was how the BBC chose to describe Gail Bradbrook on its global website, as a PhD in molecular biophysics who takes psychedelic substances on retreats and prays for the social codes for social change. The inference could be made that not only does she have a science PhD but that she also has "God" on her side: her "prayers were answered". Of course the BBC did not ask her, or does not want to tell us, what those "psychedelic medicines" were. It does tell us, however, that Extinction Rebellion has three demands: that the government is transparent on climate change, for the UK to be carbon neutral by 2025, and for a "citizen's assembly" on environmental policies." i.e. bypassing Parliament

For a detailed critical analysis of Extinction Rebellion and Greta Thunberg, readers might like to access the detailed, six-part study by Cory Morningstar at the website wrongkindofgreen.org and also the penetrating analysis of Extinction Rebellion in six videos produced by News from Nowhere.¹⁵

The ideas of Extinction Rebellion, the Zeitgeist Movement, the Venus Project, Jacque Fresco and Maurice Strong and Greta Thunberg too, as far as this writer can see, are all based on a materialistic worldview. Hence, in varying ways, they all call for us to "UNITE BEHIND 'THE SCIENCE", in other words the experts of *natural* science and technology. They do not reckon with an invisible world of spirit that embraces both the human being and the Earth. Their invisible world is

one of atoms and molecules and at most, "frequencies".

The 'code' for social change

In this writer's view, the actual 'code' for social change, the code for society itself, in fact, as well as the code for the human being, is threefolding, as indicated by Rudolf Steiner 100 years ago. ¹⁶ In esoteric terms, it is the number 3, which underpins three other numbers: 5 (the number of mankind), 7 (the number of Time, movement) and 12 (the number of Space, fixity): man works through time in space. In his various works Steiner reveals how these three numbers relate to the human etheric body (5), the astral body (7) and the ego and the physical body (12) to

produce a threefold human entelechy of body, soul and spirit.

Those who call for us to "UNITE BEHIND 'THE SCIENCE" - and the man who projected Greta Thunberg onto the world stage, Ingmar Rentzhog, the founder of a Swedish climate-focused social media company, We Don't Have Time, was himself trained in campaigning by Al Gore in the USA – have the number 12, they have a sense for Space, that is physical Nature, but lack both the numbers 5 and 7. They seem to have no understanding of what the human being is, beyond the physical, and they have no sense of time, history and evolution, which, according to Steiner, is governed by the number 7, or rather, they have a false understanding of time and evolution, believing, as Maurice Strong did, that "we blithely assume that life will continue no matter what because it always has. But it's not correct that it always has. Look at the history of planet earth – there's only a minute moment of time when the conditions have been conducive to human life."

This pessimism, which Strong acknowledges, is what drove his impulse to bring about change as *rapidly* as possible. It is what drives many revolutionaries, who believe that they only have one life on this earth and that humanity has existed for a mere speck of Time. Steiner, however, showed in his book *Occult Science – An Outline* that human life has always been present in some form at every stage, not only of planet Earth, but also of the solar system. Fresco, Joseph, Strong, Gore, Bradbrook, and Thunberg – none of them has a concept of the development of human consciousness that even goes beyond the class-consciousness of Marxism. They focus only on *physical* nature and the *physical* human being, despite Bradbrook's words about "prayer" and "psychedelic medicines".

The One Ring

As the second millennium passed over into the third, 20 years ago, two artistic creations showed that there



was an awareness among contemporaries of a very dark force emerging in our culture, in our time, a force that seeks total control of everything on the planet. These creations were the two movie trilogies *The Lord of The Rings*, based on J.R.R. Tolkien's book of the same name, and the dystopian sci-fi film about the near future, *The Matrix*. The three volume novel by J.R.R. Tolkien on which the first film trilogy was based contained a verse about the One Ring, which is at the centre of the story; it includes these words:

One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.



J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring

These two lines were engraved on the One Ring, the Ring of Power. The Lord of the Rings, the dark force, is symbolised by his single eye, which is shown on the cover of the original book as red within a black circle. The One Ring, the Ring of Power, is made of gold, traditionally the metal of the sun, of the heart and of wisdom. These two things, the gold and the black/red, point to the two aspects of the human I and the directions in which the I can move: to the sun within, which leads

to one kind of power, wisdom; or only to the natural world without, which leads to another kind of power – domination of nature and of human and other living beings through a calculating knowledge.

The One Ring symbolises both the dark aspect of human union or community - all- embracing tyranny and servitude - and the dark aspect of the human 'I' (the essential self): the 'I' that is only an eye that only looks *outwards*: the *dark* aspect of the 12-foldness, the wholeness of the 'I'. With the black sail and the words: UNITE BEHIND THE SCIENCE, I cannot think of a more suitable slogan, nor a more suitable cause ("We Have No Time") nor organisation (Extinction Rebellion) for the dark and deceptive force emerging in our time, a force that is able to mask itself as something progressive and hopeful, even innocent and playful, something that seeks to attract the support of very many well-meaning people who are understandably concerned about the environment and the future of humanity; the road to hell is paved with good intentions. But the real nature of that force is one of control and domination and it can breed fear, panic, and desperation among those who don't see behind the mask. In neither of the two trilogies does the force of the One Ring succeed. In them and in the work and life of Rudolf Steiner we can look for inspiration in how to meet it.

Terry Boardman lives in Stourbridge, England.

Endnotes

- 1. Nayirah's false testimony was given before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus on 10 October, 1990 in the run-up to the Gulf War. Only her first name was given, but it later turned out (1992) she was the daughter of Saud Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States. Her testimony was widely cited in the media and referred to by US senators and President George H. W. Bush to justify US military action in the Gulf War. It was also exposed that her testimony was organised by the US public relations firm Hill & Knowlton for the Kuwaiti government.
- 2. Paul Slovic, quoted in "Study: What Was The Impact Of The Iconic Photo Of The Syrian Boy?" by Diane Cole: https://text.npr.org/s.php?sId=509650251
- 3. See R. Steiner, *Theosophy* (1904), Ch. 1.4: Body Soul and Spirit.

- 4. https://www.space.com/11642-dark-matter-dark-energy-4-percent-universe-panek.html
- 5. https://quillette.com/2019/02/12/it-isnt-your-imagination-twitter-treats-conservatives-more-harshly-than-liberals/ h t t p s : // w w w . t h e v e r g e . c o m / interface/2019/4/11/18305407/social-network-conservative-bias-twitter-facebook-ted-cruz https://www.wired.com/story/fight-over-section-230-internet-as-we-know-it/https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/break-up-the-social-media-companies-to-protect-free-speech/
- 6. Web: September 5, 2019 Jean Smits (LifeSiteNews): "UN Rights Chief: Climate Change to 'Generate Restrictions and Harm' to People's Rights".
- 7. See n. 6.
- 8. US State Dept. Archive: *The United States and the Founding of the United Nations*, *August 1941 October 1945* https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/fs/55407.htm
- 9. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KfJx5Cd5ug
- 10. The Oil-for-Food Programme was established by the UN in 1995 at a time when Saddam Hussein's Iraq was under intense pressure from the USA. It allowed Iraq to sell oil on the world market in exchange for food and medicines etc while conforming to US demands that Iraq not be enabled to increase its military spending.
- 11. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technocracy_movement
- 12. Technocrats believed that society would best be organised in an essentially hierarchical fashion by scientific and technological experts, a kind of modern version of Francis Bacon's utopian state Bensalem in his book *New Atlantis* (1626).
- 13. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2010/jun/22/maurice-strong-interview-global-government
- 14. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-49513802
- 15. http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/02/13/
 the-manufacturing-of-greta-thunberg-for-consentthe-new-green-deal-is-the-trojan-horse-for-thefinancialization-of-nature/
 And:https://nowhere.news/index.php/2019/05/11/
 extinction-rebellion-and-the-theory-and-practice-ofoligarchical-collectivism/
- 16. R. Steiner, *Towards Social Renewal* (1923, Collected Works GA 23).

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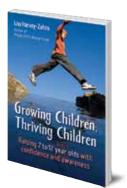
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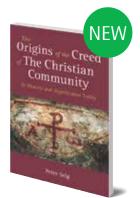
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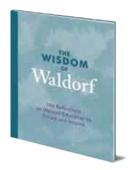
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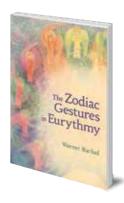
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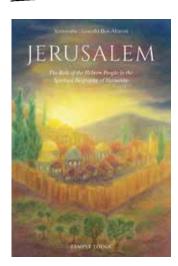
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Jerusalem: The Role of the Hebrew People in the Spiritual Biography of Humanity by Yeshayahu Ben-Aharon Temple Lodge, 2019 ISBN: 9781912230242 Pb, 278pp, £20.00

I have read all of Yeshayahu (Jesaiah) Ben-Aharon's eight books. I find them to be profound, wideranging in subject matter, innovative, complex, and

inspiring. His newest book extends his previous work into new territory. Jerusalem is based on a series of six lectures that he gave in his native Israel. The lecture series was titled 'The Stories of the Bible as Tales and Adventures of Initiation.' They were originally published in Hebrew, but he expanded and rewrote the text for its English translation and publication. Ben-Aharon is an anthroposophist and spiritual-scientific researcher, who is most well-known for his little book, The Spiritual Event of the 20th Century which outlines his spiritual research of what took place in the spiritual world from 1933-1945. The content of all of his books have their primary source and inspiration in the transformation of his consciousness and being that occurred in his meeting with the second 'etheric' coming of Christ in the 1970s, as described in detail in his The New Experience of the Supersensible. The spiritual research laid out in his books comes from direct experience but also a deep life-long study and reanimation of the collected works of Rudolf Steiner. There are a few direct quotes from Steiner in Jerusalem, but you can also see the influence of his lectures and books woven throughout the text, from the anthroposophical cosmology to Steiner's research on the initiation of Moses, to the etheric body of Shem that was passed down through the old Hebrew initiates. The research of Emil Bock was also an important influence.

But one of most interesting elements of this book is that Ben-Aharon extends the research of Steiner and Bock in new and inspiring ways. He is always looking far into the future and is able to reveal some of the essential mysteries which are connected with the evolution of both exoteric and esoteric Judaism from the viewpoint of one who speaks Hebrew and who has lived most of his life in Israel. In this sense Ben-Aharon is an 'insider.' On the other hand, as an independent anthroposophical researcher, who claims first-hand experience of the Second Coming, he is also able to achieve an objective distance in regard to some of the more regressive elements of Judaism, or any outdated conservative stance. In this sense, he is an 'outsider.' Paradoxically, he is able to penetrate to the living sources of the Old Testament and the Kabbalah in order to reveal their living potential for all of humanity today and in the future, while also displaying an in-depth

knowledge of their detailed history and development, but without falling into mere external intellectual scholarship. He not only presents his spiritual research into what lies behind certain key passages in the Old Testament (which he just calls 'The Bible' in contrast to 'The New Testament'), and the Talmudic literature, but he also draws heavily from the main written source of the Kabbalah, the Zohar, some of the 'apocryphal' esoteric literature like *The Cave of Treasures*, as well as the very interesting 'proto-Kabbalistic' Merkabah and Hekhalot mystical texts. The Hekhalot texts (not well-known, but most of which have now been translated into English by a small group of scholars), like The Minor Book of Hekhalot and Enoch 3, are unique esoteric accounts of various Rabbis' 'descents' into the heavenly spheres and palaces to speak with the angels, in connection with the chariot from the vision of Ezekiel. For example, Ben-Aharon pays special attention to interpreting the Hekhalot story of the four rabbis who entered Pardes (paradise). In addition, Jerusalem covers the original moment of the solidification of the earth on Mt. Moriah, as well as the essence of Hebrew initiation in general and in-depth accounts of the initiations of Isaac, Moses, and King David. This is a deeply esoteric work (for example, uncovering certain aspects of the mysteries of Cain and Abel), but also a very human one.

His task is to show the unity of humanity and the earth as a living spiritual and material wholeness, through expanding our consciousness in relation to the living spiritual potential of the city of Jerusalem, which is intimately connected with the spiritual center and evolution of each human being. Ben-Aharon writes, "In the future, humanity and earth will come back to life, not because of a return to the old forces of blood, soil, and race, whose proper time was fulfilled long ago, but because the real and actual Jerusalem is nothing but a living symbol of one's self...Where on earth should the new foundation of life flow if not from the first, original source, where the first death occurred, where Adam and our mother Eve were buried?... True resurrection today, which is first and foremost a resurrection of dead consciousness and thinking, of the fossilized heart, of suppressed conscience, can, therefore, take place only upon that mountain and place... where heavenly Jerusalem is being prepared as the co-creative accomplishment of humanity.". Jerusalem, he tells us, means 'Yeru-shalem' - 'You shall see this wholeness.' Melchizedek (Manu-Noah), the priest of the supreme god of wholeness, El Elion, and the great teacher of Abraham and all humanity, has always worked from this 'center of the earth'. "Jerusalem is where the physicalmaterial densification and materialization of earth and humanity began [on the Even ha Shetiya or Foundation Stone discussed throughout the book], and Jerusalem is where the material world and humanity would be first resurrected, spiritualized, and return to increasingly spiritual states."

In the rest of this review, I would like to outline some of the content of this wonderful book. What was the mission and contribution of the Hebrew people in the evolution of humanity? Ben-Aharon writes, "What



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at first can be achieved only within the development of one, separated, chosen people, based on common blood ties, religion and worship, gradually passes into the conscious and spiritual hands of any person who wishes to develop his powers of self on his own. Blood ties were the foundation of the Hebrew people, because the infant power of the 'I AM' had to be protected in this motherly womb until it could be born as a free self. But today blood has been replaced by the free moral love and responsibility of each person, and those people who strive to fulfill this freedom, come from all races, nations, and genders."

In regard to the development of the spiritual essence of Judaism over time, Ben-Aharon makes it clear that the phase of the writing down of the Torah as well as the later writing down of the legalistic, ritual, and mystical texts became necessary because the living spiritual perception was dying out in humanity as a whole. It was necessary that humans would lose their ancient capacity of astral clairvoyance in progressing from the 'sentient-soul' period to the 'mind soul' period. [Sucessive periods of soul development for the whole of humanity] Abraham was one of the great leaders of humanity in this process of shutting down the ancient clairvoyance with its daily experience of spiritual beings of all sorts. Abraham brought in a 'dark' era of worshipping one God (Jehovah) who was bringing the nature of the independent self-conscious I AM into humanity's reach. Ben-Aharon writes, "It was only in the late Second Temple period that the Bible was defined and closed, separately from the Talmud and Mishnah, which later were also gathered and became canonical. In this crucial time of transition... one, living stream of ancient Hebrew life was divided into three branches and traditions: The Bible, the Talmud, and the esoteric traditions. But it must be remembered that all three still formed one living whole, based on real initiation practice and knowledge, until the second and third centuries AD in which the gates of heaven were closed in order to let the new mind soul develop independently." "While some 'books' were written, we must understand that this actually means a concealment of the true practice of ancient Hebrew initiation. Initiation would be replaced by an intellect bound to scriptures, faith, and rituals; deepened by an inner, subjective mysticism in the Middles Ages, which would pave the way for the era of new natural sciences and new spiritual science."

But the novelty and strangeness of this new 'intellectual soul' religion to the pagan people who still possessed a hint of the old clairvoyance produced one of the powerful roots of anti-Semitism. "All of the Hebrew Biblical history... is an image of the struggle to emerge from the decadent forces of the once sublime spirituality of the Eastern cultures." "This new earthly consciousness and individual moral responsibility could have been perceived by the pagan soul as extremely unnatural, menacing, and even demonic - 'This God aspires to solidify the earth and to build a person from dust! These people will worship him and follow only his abstract commandments, shattering and destroying all other gods?' We in the Western world today have all become Jews, that is, we all possess now, as a given matter of fact, the state of consciousness that they pioneered and developed thousands of years ago... Natural science, with its clear sensory perception of a spirit-empty physical world... is a direct heritage of the ancient Hebrew-Jewish-Christian-Islamic conception of the world." But he also says that the positive element in materialism, subjectivity, responsibility, and personal suffering is that it leads to spiritual individualization and a higher blessing in the future. One advances beyond Buddhism and the ancient gifts of astral clairvoyance by lifting their inner aspirations to an even higher level, "The divine-spiritual mission of the Hebrew people is to deepen Buddha's mission, to take it one step further down to the physical world and physical body, and to cause eventual spiritualization, resurrection and redemption of the whole human being, in spirit, soul and body together. It turns death into a new life, sickness into healing and suffering into solace and hope. And while death itself is portrayed in the Bible as a curse and the result of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden (in the pedagogical-moral version), in the Jewish esoteric traditions, it actually brings a higher blessing; since resurrection from the dead and spiritualization of the whole human being, will create a higher human being, because it will be both individual and spiritual, and will harvest the fruits of his earthly labour, joys, and sufferings to co-create a wholly new earth and heaven."

In his discussion of the Hekhalot story of the four people who entered Pardes (paradise), Ben-Aharon shows us the results of balanced and healthy entry into the spiritual worlds, and the serious results of errors and distortions. In the story, only Rabbi Akiva is able to achieve initiation in the correct manner, while his companions die, go mad, or reverse the Truth into egoism. Ben-Aharon says, "An incorrect, one-sided devotion and ecstasy can bring actual physical death to initiates who have not balanced their spiritual desires and ambitions with love and understanding of the spiritual meaning and value of human life." In addition, madness will result when the spiritual student "holds on to the experiences he had in the higher worlds and is not willing to fully return to his physical body and mind... He also proves that he did not prepare himself adequately in advance, that he belittled the basic mental training, rules, and practices, whose role it is to build a balanced and grounded earthly personality and character." The third mistake in spiritual development concerns Rabbi Abuya, who 'cut down the saplings' after entering paradise. "We can understand how great the temptation is to use not just scientific and technological knowledge, but also spiritual knowledge - pertaining not just to material forces but also to the very forces that constitute humanity's existence, origin, and mission - for selfish purposes." The secure path for us today can be found by following the precise detail of Steiner's writings.



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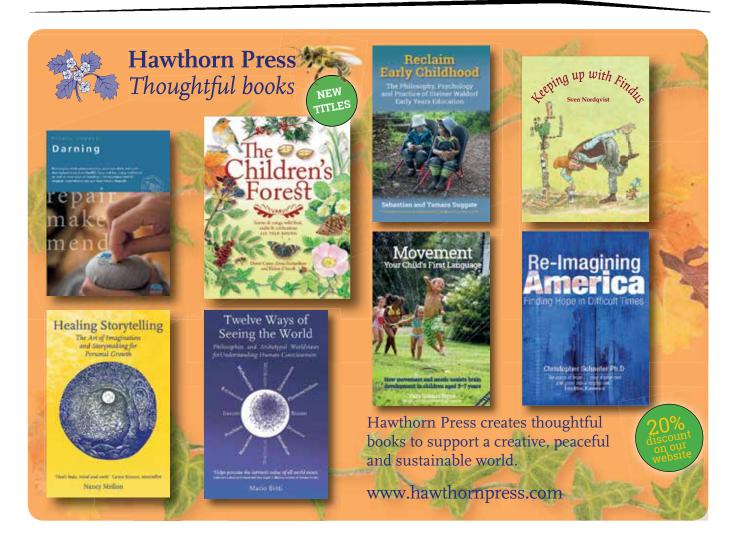
We look forward to hearing from you!

Ben-Aharon also uncovers and clarifies the mysteries of the Serpent in the Garden of Eden. Jehovah and the Luciferic Serpent are actually different aspects of the Supreme God. "Behind the God who created heaven and earth and who battled the Serpent with a humanlike rage... is a higher God - called in the Zohar the sphere of 'Ein Sof,' the sphere of infinity beyond the ten known spheres where the highest Father God, Atika Kadisha, presides from eternity to eternity... But neither the Serpent nor Jehovah, the fiery domineering God of Genesis and leader of the Hebrew people, is the supreme God. But rather Jehovah and the Serpent are incomplete expressions of the highest, supreme God who is pure love, grace, and blessing and who encompasses all the spiritual worlds, from the highest sephirot and the sublime angelic beings, to the last earthly creature." Lucifer is a bringer of freedom, but also the bringer of Evil. "This is where the riddles, the paradoxes, and the contradictions arise. Evil is bad enough, the damage is real, and the expulsion and the Fall and the sin and so on, are no less real. But that is precisely why the contradictions are not theoretical contradictions, to be solved in ever so clever intellectual, dialectic brainy operations. They are actual contradictions which can be solved only in life itself, and also this only for each day anew, because they belong already to the first steps taken on the path of real initiation." "What is worth destroying this perfect divine image and this lofty divine garden for? Who is this God who creates perfection and destroys it himself in order to let a still greater perfection blossom from it?... From the supreme God's vantage point, the Jehovah-God and Lucifer contradiction, the terrible quasi-eternal battle between them, are part of the plan to realize humanity's freedom...Without all this humanity would have remained a slave to its master... We would have never progressed from a created being

The chapters on the initiations of Isaac, Moses, and King David are incredibly worthwhile, but we do not have the space here to go into details. Suffice to say that I was astounded when I read that 'when the knife touched Isaac's throat, his soul streamed out, spread its wings and was liberated from its body' (a quote from Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews*). Ben-Aharon elaborates this process in great detail.

to become an independent creator."

Regarding the initiation of Moses, I will give a small extract regarding Jehovah's commandment that Moses 'take your sandals off your feet.' Ben-Aharon writes, "The divine creative forces flowing from the earth's centre into our bodies through the feet are mixed with other forces that originate from the lowest and basest forces in the earth's interior, where there is much evil mixed with the highest divine powers... Therefore, in the ancient esoteric schools as in modern spiritual science, it is not recommended to make the feet, hands, and the other lower inner bodily organs into organs of consciousness at the start of the path, before the higher organs of clear thinking, discernment and judgment have been developed to a high degree... Moses was



the first to develop these higher forces of cognition through the Arabic-Median initiation of Jethro... and this is why Michelangelo sculpts his Moses with the powerful thinking horns, sprouting from his forehead." Thus Moses was fully prepared and could 'remove his sandals' to spiritually perceive the interior of the earth through his feet.

Regarding King David's initiation, Ben-Aharon goes even further. David's mission was to consciously experience the abysses of soul and spirit that open when one descends into the interior of the earth, which is the interior of the human body. "It is extremely hard for us to understand today, to say nothing of feeling and experiencing, that the depths of the soul and its abysses are one and the same - spiritually, morally, and in practice - as the depths of earth itself. We experience the life of our soul as internal life, closed within the skin's boundaries of the physical body, no longer as part of the actual, spiritual, external world. But the esoteric streams throughout the ages knew that everything that occurs within us, in the conscious and unconscious, occurs at the same time in the actual spiritual worlds outside us. For humanity's every thought, feeling, instinct, and act of will, takes place inside the spiritual world and influences it, in a manner hidden from our coarse physical senses... David is charged with assimilating and redeeming, in his own soul and body and in that of the earth, the results of the drama of temptation and sin, the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the fratricide, and transforming them through redemption and healing, which is the real meaning of the drama of initiation." In this way, his body and blood could be a source for the coming body of Jesus. This is small taste of what the book offers on these subjects. In a sense, Ben-Aharon only reveals the tip of the iceberg. I would love to read 20 more books that offer such expansive and living Imaginations of the secrets of the Bible and Jewish mysticism from the perspective of actual anthroposophical spiritual research. This is a great start.

As Yeru-shalem means a vision of the whole in past and future, Ben-Aharon also gives a vision of the whole – the fact that the golden calf is an integral part of the whole revelation to Moses on Mt. Sinai, the fact that the ram caught in the thorns is an essential part of the wholeness of the initiation of Isaac, and the fact that the suffering of humanity is part of the wholeness of evolution and not an aberration. One sees the purpose of the loss of clairvoyance when we know that it was a planned disappearance. One then can see the meaning of the new etheric clairvoyance and the sense of the independent, individual I AM which is now coming to prominence in the most contemporary possibilities of human freedom. We see the necessity of temporary ages of darkness. Ben-Aharon reveals a Jerusalem that is the beating heart of a Messiah who

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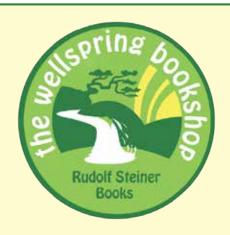
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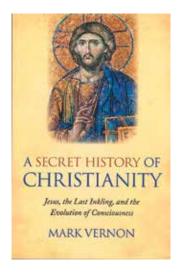
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is here and working now in the foundation of our earth and being. Ben-Aharon writes, "This is one of the most potent meditations, this 'seed meditation' of the Bible as a whole as condensed biography of the whole earth and humanity, and the seed of this seed is contained in the imagination of Jerusalem... As long as my personal biography is more important than the real spiritual biography of the cosmos, earth, and humanity, I will not be able to know and experience who I really am." This book is highly recommended.

Scott E. Hicks



A Secret History of Christianity

by Mark Vernon Christian Alternative Books 2019 ISBN: 978-1789041941 Pb, 232pp, £13.00

The sub-title of this book is 'Jesus, the Last Inkling, and the Evolution of Consciousness', the 'last Inkling' being the late Owen Barfield (1898 – 1997). Barfield seems to be attracting a growing

interest among scholars who are actively pursuing a path that transcends a reductionist materialistic view of the world. Many of these scholars – in books as well as seminars or lectures – approach Barfield, and the work of the other so-called 'Inklings', from a background in Christian theology, while there are others who are more versed in pagan occultism. The book under present consideration is an example of the former kind; while another book likewise published this year, *The Magical History of Britain* by Martin Wall (Amberley Publishing, Stroud) well exemplifies the other approach.

The first thing to be said of A Secret History of Christianity is that it displays a scintillating breadth of

knowledge of religious and philosophical history and also of the work of scientists, poets and other writers who illustrate the author's discernment that human consciousness - that is, the way that human beings experience the world - has not always been the same as it is now. Taking up Barfield's terminology, Vernon traces a development from the 'original participation' of antiquity, when - as he says - 'there is little distinction between what is felt to be inside someone and what is outside', when 'the inner life of the cosmos is the inner life of the people', to the characteristically modern sense of separation from the whole through an enhanced self-consciousness. As Barfield himself writes: 'Early man did not observe nature in our detached way. He participated mentally and physically in her inner and outer processes.' Vernon goes on to refer to a third phase, where a new form of participation - 'final' or, to use his terminology, 'reciprocal' participation - arises through the free, self-conscious individual's consciousness expanding into a renewed awareness and knowledge of the whole. We are competently led from the Hebrew and Greek antecedents of the Incarnation through an imagination of a 'Jesus' consciousness to impressions of developments in medieval and modern times, with abundant references to such as Shakespeare. Martin Luther, Thomas Traherne, William Blake and Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, and of course to Owen Barfield himself.

There is, however, no reference to Rudolf Steiner; and those approaching the book with a knowledge of anthroposophy may – as I did – find it to be somewhat lacking in depth. The same cannot be said of *The Magical History of Britain* referred to earlier, which enters into deep – and some might say murky – waters and culminates in what is on balance a generous tribute to Steiner and a fulsome praise of the aims and intentions of the Inklings, together with a recognition of Barfield as the most original thinker among them. Wall likewise has a – very different – story to tell, and he does so with a well-judged mixture of passion and erudition.

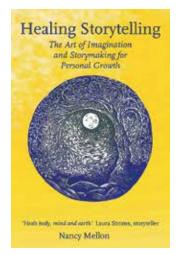
One of the lectures by Barfield to which Vernon briefly refers, "The Son of God" and the "Son of Man" (given in Zeist, Holland on 31st August 1958), helps one

to understand the limitations of *A Secret History of Christianity*. In this lecture, Barfield goes to some length to describe two polar-opposite aspects of our human nature in the context of endeavouring to shed light on the two ways of referring to the Christ Being expressed in the lecture's title. Essentially, he indicates that we are sons of God insofar as each of us is of divine origin, while as sons of man we come in the course of many earthly incarnations to dwell, as the term implies, in a state where we fully embrace the individual freedom that typifies our modern consciousness.

The significance of the Incarnation is that the Son of Man can lead us as individual human beings over this and future ages from a consciousness of our individual humanity to one that is imbued with the mysteries of the Word (as John describes at the beginning of his Gospel). However, this latter process of development is possible only through a rediscovery of the first kind of divine sonship (that of being a 'son of God'), so that the two paths must ultimately converge. Interestingly, Barfield points out that theological discourse has largely been focussed on the moral obedience and salvation of the individual human being, while there has in Christian circles tended to be a suspicion of the more pagan, occult study of man's divine origins. This does, I think, explain why Vernon - who used to be an Anglican priest - does not enter into the spiritual foundations of what he so eloquently observes and describes, and why his book does indeed have to do with Jesus but hardly at all with Christ. It is also why he refers at one point to a 'cyclical' as opposed to a 'linear' process associated with participation and a withdrawal from participation over the historical period with which he is concerned, in that he well discerns the more superficial historical phenomena in his study but fails to be aware of the more hidden depths. It is not for nothing that Barfield's visionary work Unancestral Voice, where he boldly describes certain aspects of Steiner's Christology, does not feature in Mark Vernon's book.

Barfield was always at great pains to point his readers and listeners to the work of Steiner, even though he emphasises here as elsewhere that he only became aware of anthroposophy and its relationship to Christianity after he had stumbled upon the vivid reality of the evolution of consciousness through his love of lyric poetry. I shall let him have the last word from his introduction to the miscellany The Rediscovery of Meaning, the volume in which "The Son of God" and "The Son of Man" was printed for the first time: 'The relationship between the doctrine, or system, or what you will, of the evolution of consciousness which I am sometimes credited with having developed and what is to be found in the legacy bequeathed by Steiner to posterity is somewhat similar to that between, say, a primer of Greek grammar on the one hand and the whole corpus of Greek language and literature on the other'.

Simon Blaxland-de Lange



Healing Storytelling The Art of Imagination and Storymaking for Personal Growth by Nancy Mellon Hawthorn Press, 2019 ISBN 978-1-912480-13-5

Pb, 190pp, £15

Healing Storytelling is the third edition of Storytelling and the Art of Imagination first published in 1992 in the USA.

This book is inspiring

for anyone wishing to embark upon a pathway to becoming a storyteller, as Nancy Mellon shares her own journey where she emerged, like a butterfly, from lacking confidence to become one from whom stories would flow.

Mellon shows us how to create a warm inviting space that creates a mood for the audience and how that can release a story to flow from within the teller.

In the first chapter we are led through the creating of an inner space, from which words can flow, to the role of sound and silence and the wisdom that can silently show itself, through the ending of a story.

We learn how to create our main characters, find their names and set them on their journeys. Importantly, we are encouraged, and given permission, to find our own spontaneous stories, which can be a healing experience in itself as our stories evolve within us, often being ones that we need to hear, to help heal our own sufferings from the past.

Other chapters cover 'Movement and a Sense of Direction'; 'Storyscapes'; 'Journeying Through the Elements'; 'Seasons and Moods'; 'Story Characters'; 'Power and Protection' and 'How to Nurture Storytelling'. At the end of each section are instructions to further develop ourselves and our storytelling. Finally there is a story Bibliography and an Afterword from the author.

This book takes you on a journey of inner and outer discovery, guiding you along the way and giving you tools to give you confidence as you hone your skills.

Mellon also looks at tales such as Grimm's Snow White, Charles Dodgson's Alice in Wonderland and George MacDonald's Curdie stories and the wisdom inherent in them.

We can discover how courage and resilience develop in our characters as they descend into darkness or face difficult challenges, often with gifts or wise words of advice helping them on their way, if they are able to listen and use them wisely.

Mellon shows how the storyteller has the opportunity to selfheal and to create an atmosphere of healing for their listeners. Music can also play a part in this as it can 'unlock images and the power of speech'.

You can listen to, and adjust, the quality of your own speech as it reflects the pulse and beat of the story being

told; at times, for example "'largo,' 'vivace' or 'allegro modera' " – slow, lively or fast but not too much so – as musicality in a subtle way helps to carry the story.

Through stories we can explore the depths of human nature such as jealousy, cruelty, innocence, wisdom, truth and lies. Stories can be used therapeutically to address situations in life for both children and adults. Hearing about a pathway through difficulties and challenges can give us the inner strength to meet them in our own life circumstances.

Student's stories form Mellon's courses are shared throughout the chapters as examples of how to develop our storytelling.

Mellon asks us to look deeply into the movement intrinsic to a story: What does it mean to descend, to rise, to circle, go forth and return?

Place and storyscapes are researched: mountains; pools, lakes and inland seas; dark woods; bogs, swamps and morasses; dark towers; doors and gateways; keys; huts and hovels; castles and palaces; paths, mazes and unchartered ways and high seas. These give us an imaginal world in which to set our story that can be further enhanced by our understanding of the perennial wisdom that can lie behind such settings and why we are using them for our story.

Mellon journeys with us through the Elements, looking at trials of fire, air, earth and water, followed by the seasons and moods, which range through life and death; darkness and light; gratitude; sleeping and waking; yearning; wishing; quests and wedded bliss which can be the unifying of the male and female as an outer example of an inner unifying of the soul forces within one's self.

We explore 'the wise mothering presence' that lies within us giving warmth and safety to our audience as we develop our story characters, which may be a good or bad mother/stepmother, the strong or weak father, or siblings. Deep truths can be revealed through such characters. For example, often there are stories of the simpleton, the third child who has an innocent wisdom and kind heart, whereas the older brothers may represent the thinking and will but use them one-sidedly, proudly and crudely. They embark on journeys and do not succeed. Yet the simpleton, with his purity, is able to find the right words and deeds to overcome challenges, often with help, and is rewarded. Bees, ants and other insects may make an appearance that, after kindness from our simpleton, help him to complete his tasks.

The chapter on 'Power and Protection looks at the symbolism of various objects that play important roles in a story: Shoes as in Grimm's Cinderella for example; Crowns as a symbol of power;, Gowns and mantles with inherent powers, cloaks which could give invisibility; Magic touchstones or talismans; Seeds, which have to be collected. A golden bowl, or Holy Grail, lies deep within us yet in stories we search for them outwardly often with lances and swords. We need to learn the wisdom of using a wand or wishes wisely. This is a magical chapter to read through.

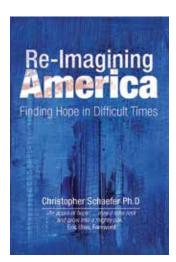
In the final chapter on 'How to Nurture Storytelling' Mellon establishes how hearing stories helps to give

us the confidence to try storytelling ourselves. One may observe how children who listen to stories may naturally use their toys to then make up stories for their family and friends. I remember my son's Godfather, who has a Welsh heritage, develop dragon stories for my son. It was magical to sit quietly and watch as the story developed in the moment and the bond between them blossomed.

Finally we look at transformations in stories where we see how vanity and pride can develop into understanding, fear into courage, and death into new life. How, through overcoming adversities, we develop inner qualities. Mellon recognises the threefold nature of each human being in their thinking feeling and will capacities and how we can strengthen them through stories that inspire and speak to us.

In her afterword, Mellon looks at the global renaissance of storytelling and shares how her listening to and studying of "poetry, prose, ... creative writing" and her Waldorf curriculum studies helped her to enrich her storytelling language. Today she continues in private practice and travels to inspire others

Valerie Taylor



Re-Imagining America: Finding Hope in Difficult Times

by Christopher Schaefer, Ph.D.

Hawthorn Press. 2019 ISBN: 9781907359965 Pb, 182pp, £15.00

It needs to be said at the beginning that this book is written out of a deep concern for the destiny and mission of the United States to provide a home

for humanity's future. In this sense the book is written out of the spirit of the preamble of the United States Constitution:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The spirit of this preamble is that the United States, in attempting to form a more perfect union, is in a process of bringing social ideals that belong to the whole of humanity to realization, a process leading over time from imperfection to realization or perfection.

Christopher Schaefer identifies three times that the United States has gone through a deep crisis in relation to this process: The initial Revolutionary War, the Civil

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War and World War II. Schaefer suggests that we have entered into a fourth crisis period and that leadership is profoundly needed to guide the country through this fourth crisis period. His book is directed towards this awareness of crisis, concern for leadership and identification of the essential issues at stake. He suggests that each individual has a responsibility to help create the leadership that is needed today.

Out of his concern for the future and the importance of the social process that the United States is engaged in, the author points the reader to *The Gettysburg Address* by Abraham Lincoln (November 19, 1863):

... that we here highly resolved that these dead shall not have died in vain ... that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom ... and that a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

The author's intention in this book is to reach out to the widest possible audience. Consequently, he attempts to present the content of the book in the most accessible manner possible for readers coming from a wide range of backgrounds. The way he does this is by sharing with the reader how he came to know what he shares in the book. I use the word "sharing" because this book has an intimate mood. It is not primarily about methods, programs and policies. Rather, the book describes an approach for the individual to the world situation today. This intimacy is created by the author's willingness to share his own biographical story throughout the book, his personal experience of proceeding on the path of self-transformation. He also speaks out of his feeling life, and not just his thought life. He offers a feelingcognition to the reader.

One of the ways this feeling-cognition is communicated is in the structure of the book itself. The book consists of a series of essays. These essays were written over the last fifteen years and cover events such as 9/11 (2001) and the 2008 economic crisis. In addition, there are essays that are written in the last two years and also essays written currently for the book that tie the pieces of the book together. There is an element of repetition in the content.

However, this repetition does not become a tiresome rambling, but rather it carries the essential intimacy of a person sharing the story of how he has come to think the way he does now about current events.

The book offers to the reader an in depth description of the author's cognitive path leading to the formulation of an inner path for the individual who wants to engage in creative social action and various concrete proposals for social action. Facing various challenging situations multiple times in different sections of the book, the "going over things several times," the looking at matters from "different points of view," is part of the feeling-cognition approach of the author. He wants the reader to understand how he has come to think about the individual's responsibility and the issues we are facing.

In the book the author offers the reader not only incidents from his own biography and his thoughts about matters, but also is a wealth of references to current writers on the subjects that are addressed. The author willing shares with the reader all the sources he has read and how they have influenced him.

There are four parts to the book and twelve chapters. In the final part contains four chapters by which the author ties the book together, providing detailed suggestions for inner practices for self-transformation and a number of concrete proposals for social-political actions to address major issues facing people today.

The path or way that the author offers is oriented to the individual. This path includes the taking of responsibility by individuals for their inner development as being the essential act for addressing the problems of the day. Without developing the capacity for insightful thinking, compassionate/empathetic feeling and the practicing of healing will, no policies or programs will be able to succeed. The author devotes a significant portion of the book to the subject of developing the capacity for this threefold practice of transformed thinking, feeling and willing, and in doing so, asks the reader to become an engaged 'witness' of their time.

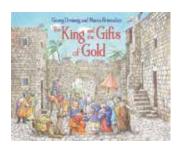
In describing the path of the individual's inner transformation, the author shares his experience of being part of a global, new age, spiritual, holistic movement of such individuals. It is in this context, the

author introduces the idea of evil, with the concept of the "shadow" of an individual or a nation. The shadow is an expression or a being that is independent from the true being of a person or a nation of people that is working for the good of humanity. The shadow works against the good. The coming to terms with the concept of 'the shadow' is a particularly challenging part of the book pointing to the individual's responsibility to take on the inner transformation of the shadow.

The process of transformation of evil is likened to health and illness. The author proposes the existence of social and anti-social forces. Progress consists of the individual's willingness to grapple with these forces and bring them into a balance that constitutes a state of social health. All of the author's specific proposals for action are related to bringing this transformative balance into the spheres of life relating to freedom, rights and economics.

The final chapter brings the whole discourse to a conclusion by setting forth specific actions that can be taken in regard to the important issues facing humanity today that have been explored in the book: economic inequality, the threat of an elite global economy, immigration, freedom of education, climate change and so on. It is all set forth in detail by the author. He also points to the importance of Rudolf Steiner's ideas about the threefold social order. In fact, the work of Steiner resounds throughout the entire book. All of these proposals are formulated in the context of the responsibility that the United States has to fulfill its mission for humanity "to form a more perfect union" where the social future has a home.

David Andrew Schwartz



The King and the Gifts of Gold

by Georg Dreissig and Maren Briswalter Floris Books, 2019 ISBN:078-178250-601-0 Pb, 32pp, £12.99

This is a beautifully

illustrated book for children about Melchior, one of the three kings "known as the King of Gold". The story is an imagination of what may have happened to Melchior as he journeys to Bethlehem, his transformation on meeting the baby Jesus and his life afterwards.

The author uses descriptive language creating a rich mood for storytellers and their listeners. The story begins, "There was once a powerful king...". We travel with Melchior as he notices "a wondrous star" and travels to Bethlehem. Here he meets the poor family in a stable and kneels before their child, offering a gift of gold. His advisors are surprised about this unusual behavior, thinking it not fitting for such a noble king. But something has changed for Melchior, meeting the child Jesus has brought forth a deep humility within him. He describes this child as a true king and as he begins

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his travel back to his kingdom he gives gold coins to beggars and those in need he meets along his way.

His chief advisor Omar, a proud man and deeply disappointed with Melchior's new behavior, decides to act and drugs Melchior who falls into a deep sleep. In the morning Melchior awakes, shivering and wondering where his warm rugs are. Gone is his beautiful tent and his entourage; he has been left alone in the desert.

He walks to the nearest village and is confronted by men thinking he is a robber, but he collapses with exhaustion and the villagers then care for him. When well again, he tells them the story of the Holy family. They believe him because of the light shining in his eyes and listen avidly. Melchior then travels on, sharing his story in each village as he passes through.

Time passes and as he finally nears his home he becomes concerned for his son and hopes Omar has not harmed him. He decides to approach the Kingdom incognito. There, in the market, he recounts his story (but does not reveal he is their old King) saying that in the presence of the child Jesus you felt "as rich as the King of Gold simply by serving him". The people recognised from the story that their King Melchior had also gone in search of a king, and followed a star, but they had been told that his caravan had been lost in a sandstorm and Melchior's son was now their king.

Melchior realised he no longer wanted to be king as "the story he had to tell was more valuable than any throne". The young king heard of the storytelling and Melchior was invited to the palace. There his son recognized his voice and greeted "his honoured father". Melchior choses to remain incognito and declines his son's offer for him to ascend to the throne. Instead, he wanders through the kingdom sharing his gift of storytelling about the "greatest king" of all, "worth more" to him "than any gold".

There is wonderful detail in the illustrations as Melchior journeys through the pages of the book, from a cat balancing on the rafters above the bazaar, the architectural detail, to the ever-changing skies.

As a storyteller you can enter into the well paced narrative to create a beautiful mood for the tale.

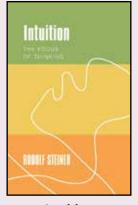
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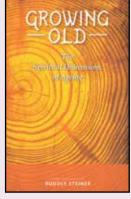


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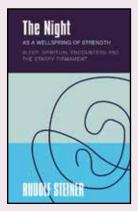


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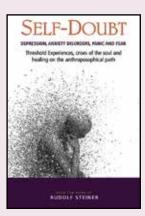


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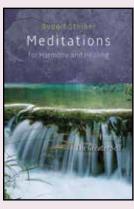


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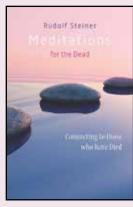


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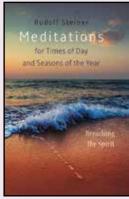
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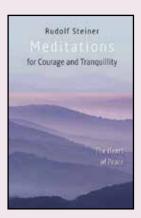
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