

Wagner

In the Light of Anthroposophy

GA 92



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by

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Wagner's Festspielhaus ("Festival Theatre") Bayreuth, Bavaria circa 1900

Introduction

Richard Wagner (1813-1883) was a German composer that revolutionised opera through his concept of the 'Gesamtkunstwerk' ("total work of art"), a synthesis of the poetic, visual, musical and dramatic arts (as described in a series of essays 1849-52).

He is most known for his unique four-opera cycle 'Der Ring des Nibelungen' (The Ring of the Nibelung), written over a period of 26 years between 1848 to 1874. Performance is about 15 hours over four nights at the opera.

The secret of the grail in the works of Richard Wagner

[Music as etheric medium for 19th century]

In the nineteenth century it was not possible to make clear to Man the deep meaning of that great process of initiation in a drama. There is, however, a medium through which Man's understanding can be reached, even without words, without concepts or ideas. This medium is music.

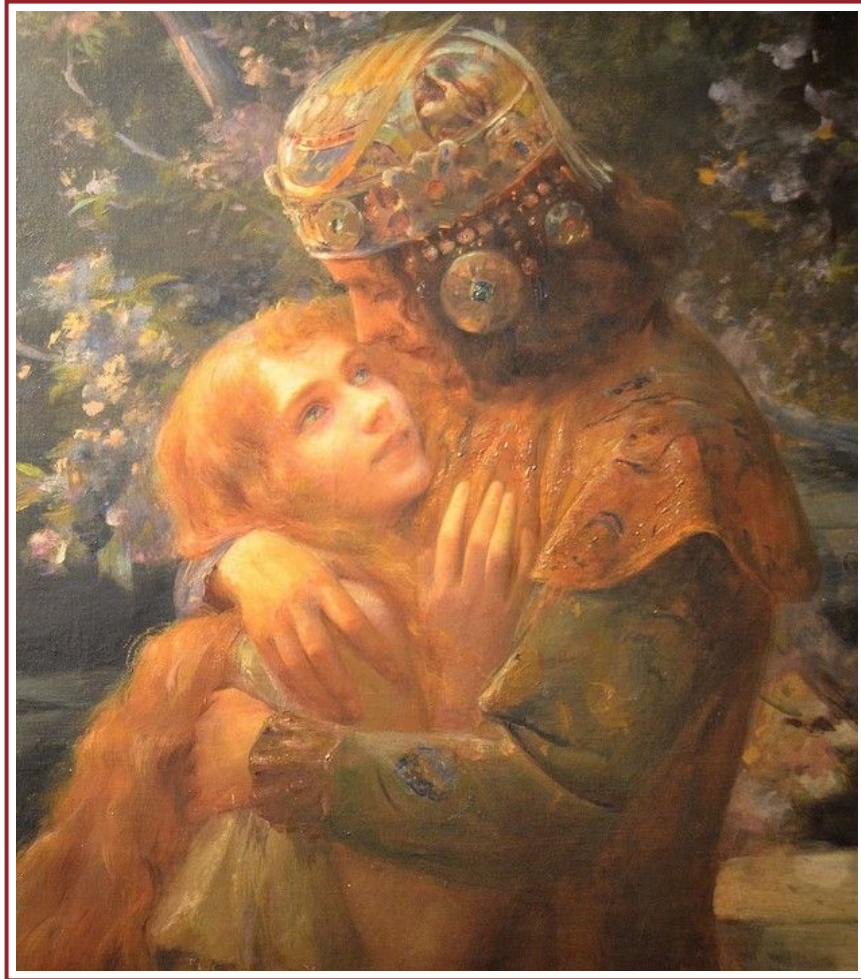
*Wagner's music holds within it all the truths that are contained in the Parsifal story. **His music is of such a unique character that those who listen to it receive in their ether body quite special vibrations. Therein lies the secret of Wagner's music.***

One does not need to understand it - not in the least. One receives in one's ether body the benign and healthful effect of the music. And Man's ether body is intimately connected with all the movements and throbbings of the blood.

Wagner understood the mystery of the purified blood. In his melodies are rhythms and vibrations that must needs beat in the ether body of Man if he is to be cleansed and purified so as to be ready to receive the Mysteries of the Holy Grail.

~Rudolf Steiner, 1906-07-29-GA097





Elsa and Lohengrin

1 Lohengrin

28 March 1905, Berlin

Myths are stories containing great truths, which great initiates have related to men. The Trojan War, for instance, is the narrative of the battle waged between the third and the fourth sub-race of the fifth root-race. The representative of the former is Laocoon, priest of an ancient priest-kingdom, who was at the same time a king. (Laocoon's struggle with the Serpent, the symbol of cunning.) The representative of the latter is Odysseus, the personification of cunning and of the force of thinking which developed within the fourth subrace.

We find that initiates lead the course of evolution also in the North. In Wales we come across a brotherhood of initiates of the pagan period, a priesthood and knighthood culminating in King Arthur and his Round Table. They are faced by the brotherhood of the Holy Grail and its knights, working on behalf of the spreading of Christianity. Art and the development of politics are all connected with great initiates belonging to these two brotherhoods, representing a pagan and a Christian civilisation. The influence of the Holy Grail gradually begins to increase toward the end of the thirteenth century. This is a special turning-point in the civilisation of Europe: cities begin to be founded. The ancient rural civilisation, based on the possession of landed property, is replaced by a city-civilisation, a *bourgeois* civilisation. This implies a radical change in the whole life and thinking of men.

It is therefore not devoid of meaning if just at the time of the meistersingers' contest on the Wartburg a legend from Bavaria should have come to the fore — *the legend of Lohengrin*. What was the significance of this legend during the Middle Ages?

At the present time we no longer have the slightest idea of how a medieval soul was constituted; it was particularly receptive for spiritual currents flowing below the surface of things. We find to-day that the Lohengrin legend specially emphasizes the Catholic standpoint. But this element which may disturb us today should make us consider the fact that during the Middle Ages this legend could only have influenced men if

clothed in something which was really able to stir human souls. This garment had to be supplied by the ardent religious feeling of that period, so that the legend contained something of what lived within the human hearts. What was the significance of the legend?

An initiation — the initiation of a disciple who advances to the degree of a Teacher.

Such a disciple must first of all become a man who has no country and no home; that is to say, he fulfils his duties just like other men, but he must strive to look beyond his own Self and develop his higher Ego.

What are the characteristics of a disciple?

1. He must overcome everything that is personal and develop the God within him.

2. He must be free from every doubt. The things pertaining to the spiritual world stand before his soul as true facts.

He must also be free from every superstition since he himself is able to control everything he can no longer fall a prey to illusions.

Upon a still higher stage the key of knowledge will be delivered to him. He is then said to have acquired the power of speech and becomes a messenger of the super-sensible world. The depths of the spiritual world are then revealed to him. This is the second stage.

3. The third stage is reached when he says "I" to every being in the world, just as he says "I" to himself. At this stage he has risen to the capacity of encompassing the universe. In mysticism a disciple who has reached the third stage is designated as a Swan, he is then a mediator between the Teacher and human beings.

The Swan-Knight therefore appears to us as an emissary of the great White Brotherhood. Thus Lohengrin is the messenger of the Holy Grail. A new impulse, a new influence was destined to enter human civilisation. You already know that in mysticism the human soul, or human consciousness, always appears as a woman. Also in this legend of Lohengrin the new form of consciousness, the civilisation of the middle classes, the progress made by the human soul, appears in the vestige of a woman. The new civilisation which had arisen was looked upon as a new and higher stage of consciousness. Elsa of Brabant personifies the medieval soul. Lohengrin, the great initiate, the Swan of the third degree of discipleship, brings with him a new civilisation inspired by the community of the Holy Grail. He must not be asked any questions, for it is a profanation and a misunderstanding to place questions to an initiate concerning things which must remain occult.

The influence of great initiates always brings about the promotion to new stages of consciousness. As an example illustrating how these initiates work, I will remind you of Jacob Böhme. You already know that Jacob Böhme proclaimed great, profound truths. Whence did he obtain his wisdom? He relates that when he was still an apprentice, he was one day sitting alone in his master's shop. A stranger entered and asked for a pair of shoes. Jacob, however, was not allowed to sell shoes during his master's absence. The stranger spoke a few words with him and then he went away. After a while, however, he called the boy Böhme out of the shop and told him: "Jacob, now you are still small and humble, but one day you will be quite another person, and the world will marvel at you!" What is implied in this?

It is an initiation, the description of a moment of initiation. At first, the boy does not realize what has happened to him, but he has received an impulse.

Also in the legend of Lohengrin we come across such a moment of initiation. These legends are important indications, which can only be understood by those who possess an Insight into the connections of things.

The Lohengrin legend (as explained, it is connected with the legend of the meister-singers) has a decidedly Catholic character. Richard Wagner used it for his Lohengrin poem. This reveals Richard Wagner's high inner calling.

Wagner used another ancient legend-theme in his Ring of the Nibelungs. These ancient Germanic legends set forth the destiny of the Aryan tribe. We must seek the origin of the *Ring* legends in a period which followed the great Atlantean flood, when the surviving peoples began to migrate over Europe and Asia. These legends are a reminiscence of the great initiate Wotan, the god of the Aesir. Wotan is an initiate of the Atlantean period, and all the other Aryan gods are only great initiates.

We can clearly distinguish three stages in Wagner's treatment of the Siegfried legend.

The first stage is a description of modern civilisation. In Richard Wagner's eyes modern men have become mere day-labourers of civilisation. He sees the great difference between modern human beings and those of the Middle Ages. Modern achievements are in part produced by machines, whereas during the civilisation of the Middle Ages everything was still an expression of the soul. The house, the village, the city, and everything it contained, was full of significance and men rejoiced in it. What do our storehouses, warehouses and cities mean to us to-day? In the medieval period the house was the expression of an artistic idea; the whole street-picture, with the market and the church in the middle, was the expression of the soul.

Wagner felt this contrast, and what he wished to achieve through his art was to place before man something which would make him appear complete and perfect at least in one sphere. In his Siegfried he wished to portray a perfectly harmonious human being in contrast to the labourers of industry. Our great men have always felt this: Goethe had the same feeling, and also Hölderlin, who said: "There are labourers in this world, but no men", and so forth. Every great man has longed after truly great human beings.

A change could not take place in an external form, for the course of evolution cannot be turned backward. A temple was therefore to arise in which art in a complete and perfect form was to raise human beings above the ordinary level of life. The modern period of civilisation needed this temple, just because modern life is so torn and splintered. This was the first idea in Wagner's mind in connection with the Siegfried-poem.

But a second idea rose up before Wagner's soul as he descended into still more profound depths of the soul.

At the beginning of the Middle Ages an ancient legend found its way into German poetry — the legend of the *Nibelungs*. This kind of legend contained the deepest feelings of the folk-soul. Only those who really study the folk-soul can conceive what lived at that time within the heart of the German nation. These legends were the expression of deep inner truths, of great truths; for instance, the legends of Charlemagne. These tales were not related as they are related today, they were not connected with the historical Charlemagne, for people possessed a deeper insight into the historical connections. The Frankish kings took on the aspect of ancient Aryan ancestors; the Nibelungs were priest-kings who ruled over their kingdoms and provided at the same time the spiritual impulses. These legends were the reminiscence of a great time which had past. In this light Charlemagne's coronation in Rome was looked upon as something special. The Nibelungs were consecrated priest and kings during a remote past of the Aryan sub-race, and their memory was handed down in the legends of the German emperors. Wagner's attention was attracted by these legends and a character appeared to him which seemed to represent the contrast between the modern period of material possession and the medieval period which was still connected with the ancient spiritual culture. Wagner occupied himself with the *legend of Barbarossa*. Also in Barbarossa we find a great initiate. We are told of his journeys to the Orient; from there he brings back from the holy initiates a higher wisdom — knowledge, or the Holy Grail.

According to the myth of the 12th and 13th century the emperor is under a spell and dwells in the interior of a mountain; his ravens are the messengers informing him of what takes place in the world. The ravens are an ancient symbol of the Mysteries; in the Persian Mystery-language they symbolize the lowest stage of initiation. Hence they are the messengers of the higher initiates. What was this initiate (Barbarossa) supposed to bring? Richard Wagner wished to set forth how an ancient period is replaced by a new one, with its changed conditions of property. What once existed has withdrawn like Barbarossa. The influence of the initiates becomes crystallized for Wagner in Barbarossa.

This thought transpires in the Nibelungs. Taken at first from a more external aspect, but now upon a deeper foundation, it becomes the expression of the profound views of the Middle Ages, setting forth the dawn of a new civilisation. Once more Wagner seeks a still more profound description of this thought. Guided by an infinitely deep and intuitive comprehension of the Germanic sagas, he finally chooses the figure of Wotan, instead of Barbarossa. These sagas describe the setting of the

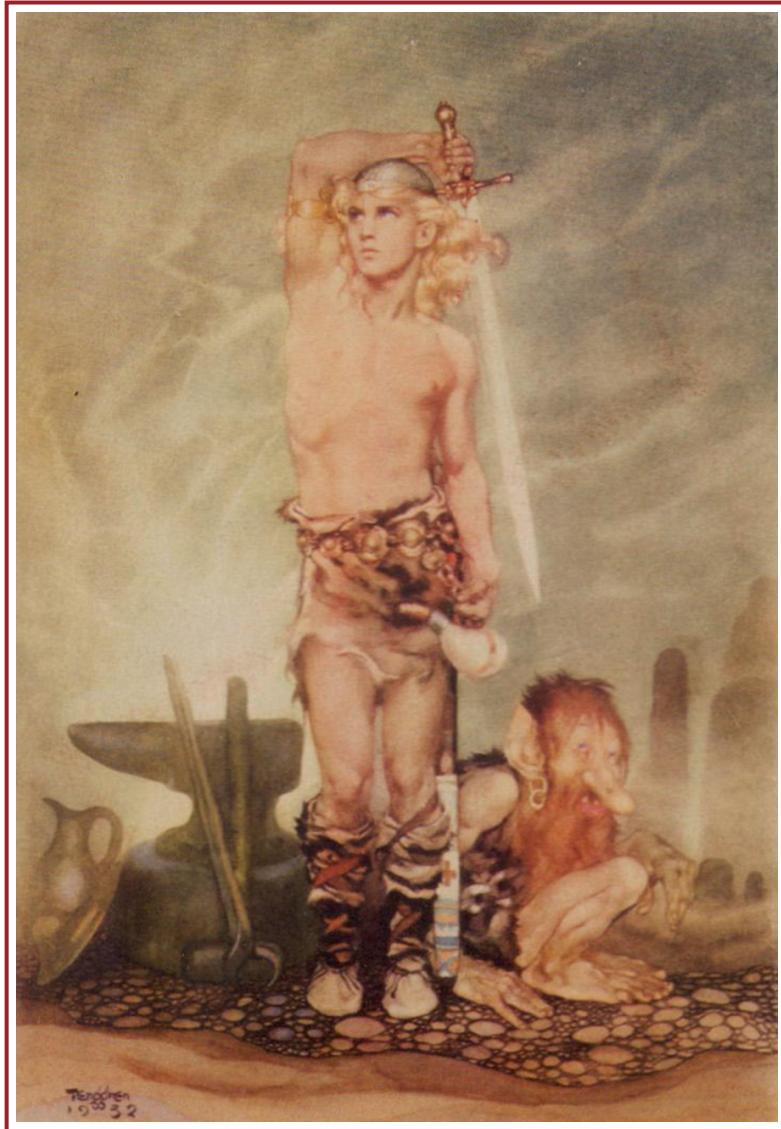
Atlantean period and the rise of the fifth root-race out of the fourth. This is, at the same time, the development of the intellect. The human intellect, or self-consciousness, did not exist among the Atlanteans. They lived in a kind of clairvoyant condition. We find the first traces of a combining intellect in the fifth sub-race of the Atlanteans, the primordial Semitic race, and this intellect continued to develop within the fifth root-race. Self-consciousness arises in this way. The Atlantean did not say "I" to himself as forcefully as a human being belonging to the Aryan race. After the fall of Atlantis this ancient civilisation was brought over into the new one; the Europeans are a surviving branch of Atlantis. A contrast now arises between the Germanic spiritual civilisation and the initiates who work in an occult way and inspire the intellect in its external form.

The dwarfs of *Nifelheim* are the bearers of the Ego consciousness. Richard Wagner makes Wotan, the ancient Atlantean initiate, oppose Alberich, the bearer of egoism, who belongs to the dwarf-race of the Nibelungs and is an initiate of the Aryan period. When similar new impulses arise something entirely new is born. The bearer of intellectual wisdom is gold. Gold is deeply significant in mysticism, for gold is light, and out-streaming light becomes wisdom. Alberich brings the gold, the wisdom which has become hardened, out of the waters of the Rhine. Water always symbolizes the soul-element, the astral element. The Ego, gold, wisdom, come forth out of the soul. The Rhine is the soul of the new root-race out of which arises the understanding, the Ego consciousness.

Alberich takes possession of the gold, he captures it from the Daughters of the Rhine, the female element characterising the original state of consciousness.

This connection lived in the profound depths of Wagner's soul. He deeply felt what was connected with the rise of the new root-race, of the Ego-consciousness, and he characterised it profoundly in the first E flat major chords of *Rhinegold*. This streams and weaves musically throughout Wagner's *Rhinegold*. Wagner's themes were poems originating from ancient myths. In these legends lived something which, filled with force and life, is able to permeate the soul with a spiritual rhythm. What we experience and what we ourselves are, this comes to life and resounds through us in these ancient sagas.





The Ring of the Nibelung

2 The Ring of the Nibelung

5 May 1905, Berlin

During the course of these lectures we shall see how in his works Wagner rose up to the gods and at the same time came down to the human beings, in order to set forth, within the human race itself, redemption and salvation.

There were Mysteries also in the North. A special being, Wotan, plays a prominent part in these Mysteries. Particularly in the countries inhabited by the Celts the last traces of the old Druid Mysteries have been preserved. In England we may still find them at the time of Queen Elizabeth.

The old sagas relate first of all of Siegfried, an initiate, who was able, after a certain number of incarnations, to give up his body to an old Atlantean initiate for a dwelling. This we may find in all the Mysteries. Even Jesus sacrificed his body to a higher individuality when he was baptized by John the Baptist.

Wotan was initiated stage by stage, in order to bring about the higher development of the Northern tribes. After the transmigration of the surviving Atlantean peoples to the desert of Gobi, a few tribes had remained behind in the North. Whereas four sub-races were continuing their development in the South, four other sub-races developed in the North. Here, too, we find four stages of evolution; the last one is the Twilight of the Gods. The northern sagas tell us about this, and these legends were conceived by the four preparatory races. Wotan passes four times through an initiation within these four sub-races, and each time he rises by one degree. He hangs upon the cross for nine days; he learns to know the things connected with Mimir's head, the representative of the first sub-race. Also in this case crucifixion brings redemption.

During his second initiation he wins Gunlöd's draught of wisdom. In the form of a serpent he must creep into a subterranean cave, where he dwells for three days before he obtains the draught. During his third initiation, corresponding to the third sub-race, he is obliged to sacrifice one of his eyes in order to win Mimir's draught of wisdom. This eye is the legendary

eye of wisdom, reminding us of the one-eyed Cyclops, who are the representatives of the Lemurian race. This eye has withdrawn long ago, and modern men do not possess it; sometimes, in the case of newly-born children, a faint trace of this eye may still be seen. It is the eye of clairvoyance. Why was Wotan obliged to sacrifice it? Every root-race must recapitulate the whole course of evolution. This also applies to the third northern sub-race. Clairvoyance has to be sacrificed once again, in order that something new might arise, which appeared for the first time in Wotan. This new element is the intellectual capacity, the characteristic way in which the Europeans contemplate the world.

Wotan's fourth incarnation is Siegfried, the descendant of gods. Human initiates now take the place of gods.

Siegfried passes through an initiation. He must awaken Brunhilde, the higher consciousness, by passing through the flames, the fire of passion. In this way he experiences a catharsis, a purification. Before his purification he has killed the dragon, the lower passions. He has become invulnerable. There is only one point between the shoulders where he can be wounded. This vulnerable point symbolizes that the fourth sub-race still lacks something which Christianity alone can give. The coming of One was necessary, who was invulnerable where Siegfried was still vulnerable — the coming of the Christ, Who carries the Cross resting between his shoulders at the very point where Siegfried could be wounded to death.

Christianity was called upon to check yet another onset of the Atlanteans. The peoples led by Atli (Attilas) are of Atlantean origin. The attack of these Mongolian races must give way to Christianity, personified in Leo, the pope.

Thus the myths described the course of evolution in symbolical images.

The same thing applies to the myth of Baldur. Also in Baldur we have before us an initiate. In this myth we find that all the conditions of initiation are fulfilled. The riddle of Baldur conceals a truth. The strange position of Loki in this northern saga can only be understood if we bear in mind this fact. You know that Baldur's mother, alarmed by evil dreams, made every living being promise to do no harm to Baldur. An insignificant growth, the mistletoe, is forgotten, and out of this mistletoe, which was not bound by any promise, Loge made the arrow which he gave to the blind god Hodur, when the gods were playfully hurling arrows at Baldur. Baldur is killed by this mistletoe arrow.

You know that another evolution preceded the evolution of the earth; namely, the kingdom of the Moon. At that time matter resembled our present living substance. Some of the Moon-beings remained behind upon the Moon-stage of development, and penetrated into the new world in this form. They cannot grow upon a mineral soil, they can only grow upon a living foundation, upon another living being. The mistletoe is one of these Moon-plants. Loge is the god of the Moon. He comes from the Moon-period and is now the representative of something imperfect, of Evil. This occult connection with the Moon-period also explains Loge's double nature, male and female at the same time. As you know, the division of the sexes coincides with the Moon's exit from the common planet. The Sun-god *Baldur* is the head of the new creation. The new and the old creation, the kingdoms of the Moon and of the Sun collide, and Baldur, the representative of the civilisation of the Sun, is the victim. *Hodur* is the blind inevitable force of Nature. Guilt contains a certain progressive element. Thus Baldur had to be called into life again in the Mysteries, after having been killed by Loge through Hodur.

These are the feelings which fill our soul when we penetrate into Richard Wagner's creations.

Man comes down to the earth as a soul-being; his body is formed out of the ether-earth; the human being is not yet man and woman, and he has no idea of possession or power. The soul is referred to as water; possession, implying power, is still guarded by the surging astral forces, by the Daughters of the Rhine. The Ego, or egoism coming out of Atlantis is gradually prepared. But this human being who was originally a soul-being possessed something which he must renounce: it is love, which does not, as yet seek another being outside, but finds its satisfaction within itself. Alberich must renounce this self-contained love; the human being must attain love by becoming united with another individual being. As long as the two sexes were united, the Ring was not needed; when the human being renounced psychical love, or the two sexes in one, then the Ring had to unite externally what had thus become severed. The Ring is the union of individual human beings, the union of the sexes in the physical world. When Alberich conquers the Ring he must renounce love. Now comes the time when the human being is no longer able to work within a united sphere encompassing everything. Once upon a time, soul, spirit and body were one; now the Godhead creates the body from outside. The sexes face one another in a hostile way; the two giants Fafner and Fasolt symbolized this. The human bodies are now endowed with one sex instead of two; they create external life.

The human body is represented in every religion as a temple: the Godhead builds it from outside. The inner temple of the soul must be built by man himself ever since he has become an Ego. The creative Godhead still contains love, it is still creative in the outer temple. The myth explains this in the passage where Wotan wishes to take away the Ring from the giants, and Erda appears advising him to abstain from this. Erda is the clairvoyant collective consciousness of humanity. The god must not keep the Ring encircling what should become free, in order to unite it again upon a higher stage, when the sexes shall have become neutral. Thus the prophetic, clairvoyant power of earth-consciousness prevents Wotan from securing the Ring, which remains the property of the giants. Ever since, every human being has one sex only. (The giant represents the physical bodily structure.) Now the giants begin to build Walhalla. During a quarrel over the Ring, Fasolt is killed by Fafner. This is the contrast between male and female: one sex must first be killed within every human being: the man kills the woman, and the woman kills the man within themselves.





Tristan and Isolde by John Duncan, 1912

3

Tristan and Isolde

12 May 1905, Berlin

Higher consciousness must first be born out of the all-embracing consciousness of the earth. This takes place through Wotan's union with Erda; Brunhilde is born out of this union. She still possesses something of a wide and deep world-consciousness. To begin with, however, this consciousness withdraws to some extent. Wotan also begets Siegmund and Sieglinde with an earthly woman. They represent the two sexes of the soul, the male soul and the female soul. It is not possible for one to live without the other. The female soul, Sieglinde, is captured by Hunding. The soul must now submit to the physical brain. Siegmund, the soul imprisoned within the body, now begins to go astray. The soul is not strong enough to approach the Divine; the gods renounce Siegmund and his sword is shattered by Wotan's spear.

The guidance must now be left to the human Self which is active entirely in the sphere of the senses: to Hagen, the son of Alberich. The lower earthly forces begin to play the chief role. All the powers conspire against the union of the male and female soul-element: even Wotan must help Fricka against Siegmund on account of Hunding. Fricka represent the male-female soul upon a higher stage. She urges Wotan to sever the connection between male and female soul upon the earthly plane.

Upon a cosmic plane the male and female soul-elements are united, but upon the earth the blood and the senses influence human life. This is deeply indicated in the love between brother and sister, the forbidden element. If the original chasteness is to maintain its rule, Siegmund and Sieglinde, the physical element, must die. Sieglinde is doomed to be killed by Brunhilde, the all-encompassing consciousness, if the whole evolution of the earth is not to be obstructed. Brunhilde, however, helps her and gives her Grane, her horse, which bears the human being through the events of the earth. Brunhilde withdraws into exile. Flaming fire surrounds her rock. Clairvoyant consciousness is now surrounded by the fire through which the human being must first pass in order to become purified, if he wishes to reach once more the all-encompassing consciousness and to experience the catharsis.

Siegfried.

Sieglinde, the female soul-element, gives birth to Siegfried, the human consciousness which must again rise to higher worlds. He grows up secretly, guarded by Mime. He must overcome the lower nature, the dragon, in order to obtain power. He also overcomes Mime. Who is "Mime"? Mime can bestow something which renders invisible, the tarn-cap, the outcome of a power which remains invisible to ordinary human beings. The tarn-cap is the symbol of magicians, both of the white and of the black order. Even a magician of the black path may walk about invisibly in our midst. Mime is one who can bestow the tarn-cap which he has obtained out of the black forces of the earth. He strives to turn Siegfried into a black magician, but Siegfried rebels. He has killed the dragon, has taken up a drop of its blood, the symbol of passions, and is thus able to understand the speech of the birds (of the earthly world of the senses). He is able to tread the path of the higher initiates and is shown the path leading to Brunhilde, the all-embracing consciousness.

We have so far considered three phases of northern evolution. First of all the dwarf, then the giants, and now the human being. The Valkyria belongs to the second phase, and in Siegfried the human being itself is born. Imprisoned within his body he must find his way back again to the pure, white wisdom.

The Twilight of the Gods.

The fourth part of the Twilight of the Gods expresses that in the northern world the human being has not yet reached maturity and has not attained a complete initiation. Siegfried still possesses one vulnerable spot, where Christ bore the Cross. Siegfried cannot as yet take the Cross upon himself. This symbolizes in a profound way what the peoples of the North still lacked, and it also shows that Christianity was still a necessity for them. Siegfried cannot unite himself with Brunhilde. He is the human soul born out of a mortal woman, out of the union of Siegmund and Sieglinde. Brunhilde has remained virgin; she is the higher consciousness.

In the last phase, knowledge must be reached because man is not as yet able to unite himself with virgin wisdom. Consequently his impulse toward higher knowledge takes on the form of desire. This is the last stage which must be conquered. The fact that Siegfried wishes to become united with Brunhilde in earthly passion leads to an exchange of possessions; she gives

him the horse and he gives her the ring. Until the union with the higher Self has been reached, the ring, symbolizing coercion from outside, does not lose its power.

The human being dives down into lower consciousness, he is struck with blindness. Siegfried forgets Brunhilde and weds Gudrun, the lower consciousness. He even agrees to court Brunhilde for another unworthy man. This signifies that during the last phase, before Christianity arises, the human being follows the dark path of d falls prey once more to dark powers. The unrighteous union of Brunhilde with Gunther is the cause of Siegfried's ruin. He must incur death through the lower powers in the nets of which he has become entangled. (Hagen.)

The last phase approaches; the Norns appear once more. It is the phase in which the all-embracing consciousness is lost:

.....

"Ended is wisdom eternal!

The world nothing more

Hears from the Wise!

Descend to the Mother, below!"

.....

The higher wisdom which was formerly given to the sons of the gods is lost upon the earth, it returns to the Eternal. Humanity must now rely upon itself

Tristan and Isolde.

One who has a deeper vision, like Wagner, will discover that the Tristan theme is able to give a clearer insight into the problem connected with the dual aspect of sex.

The male and female elements are important only upon the physical plane. Tristan has the deep longing to be whole and undivided, to reach perfect harmony and a consciousness which is no longer male or female. This note of longing re-echoing throughout the drama may be expressed

as follows: Tristan does not wish any longer to be merely Tristan, merely "I", but he wishes to take up within him Isolde, so that in him live Isolde *and* Tristan.

The two have lost every consciousness of a division. This re-echoes in the final verses of the poem expressing redemption from a separate, divided form of existence:

*"In the blissful ocean's
rising and fall,
In the tidal's fragrant
resonant call,
In the world's breath, wherein
stirreth the All,
to drown, and
sink down,
unconscious
highest bliss!"*

These words are born out of a deeper knowledge. The surging ocean of bliss is the astral world, and Devachan is the sphere resounding in fragrant tones. The life-principle is the breath of the world; everything must be contained within it. To be no longer severed and divided in the sphere of consciousness, but to "drown and sink down" unconsciously into an undifferentiated element — this is highest bliss. Within earthly life it is indeed highest bliss to overcome it, to overcome sense-life through spiritual life. Desire seeking to destroy what pertains to the earth still takes on the form of desire. Nevertheless it is a noble form of desire if the element of desire contained in this aspiration is overcome. This is the problem which Wagner tries to solve in his "Tristan and Isolde". All these thoughts did not live consciously or abstractly in Wagner; they were thoughts contained in the myth itself.

It is not necessary for an artist to have these thoughts in an abstract form. Just as a plant grows in accordance with laws of which it knows nothing, so the cosmic forces within myths have a life of their own; these are forces which are also active within the human being and they penetrate into a work of art.

Wagner's Siegfried is still entangled in the earthly element; he must perish in it. Brunhilde realizes the relationship of facts and understands what is at stake. So she yields the ring to the Daughters of the Rhine, to an element which has not penetrated into the working influences of this world.

The whole evolution of the world goes back to the originally virgin substance. The older northern world conception is replaced by another one which does not appeal any longer to what pertains to the external world of the senses, but to what has remained virgin — to the soul.

Brunhilde, who has become involved in the external world of the senses through her union with Siegfried rides into the fire, and love is born out of it. The whole tragedy of this thought is deeply felt by the peoples of the north, because they realise that what they were once able to understand begins to perish.

Love is born out of the Spirit, out of the sea of fire, the originally virgin substance.

"Incarnatus est per Sanctum Spiritum ex Maria Virgine!"





Parsifal In Quest Of The Holy Grail by Ferdinand Leeke

4 Parsifal

19 May 1905, Berlin

The same element which gave birth to egoism, to a love which is selfish, now gives birth to a new feeling, high above everything that is entangled in the physical sphere. Wisdom withdraws in order to give birth to love out of that part of the elements which is still chaste and virgin. This love is the Christ, the Christian principle. Unselfish love opposed to selfish love, this is the great process of evolution which must take place through the mysterious involution-process of death, the destruction of physical matter. The contrasts of life and death are drawn by Wagner in sharp outlines.

The wood of the Cross symbolizes life which has withered away, and upon this Cross hangs the new everlasting Life which will give rise to a new epoch.

A new spiritual life proceeds out of the Twilight of the Gods. Richard Wagner's longing, to set forth the Christ principle in all its depth, after his description of the four phases of northern life, appears in his Parsifal. This is the fifth phase. Because Wagner felt so deeply the tragic note contained in the northern world conception of evolution he also felt it incumbent upon him to set forth the glorification of Christianity.

Parsifal.

The deeper we penetrate into Richard Wagner's work, the more we shall find in it cosmic-mystical problems, and riddles of life.

It is very significant that after having described the whole primordial age of the Germanic peoples in the four phases of the Ring of the Nibelungs, Richard Wagner created an eminently Christian drama, the work with which he closed his life: Parsifal. We must penetrate into Richard Wagner's personality if we wish to understand what lives in Parsifal.

For Richard Wagner, the character of Jesus of Nazareth was beginning to take on a definite shape ever since his fortieth year. At first he intended to create an entirely different work of art, by setting forth the infinite love for

the whole of mankind which lived in Jesus of Nazareth. He conceived the fundamental idea of this drama when he was fifty, and it was to be entitled, "The Victor". This work shows us the deep world-conception which was the source of the poet's intuitions. The contents of the drama is briefly as follows

Arnanda, a youth of the noble Brahmin caste, is loved passionately by Prakriti, a Chandala maiden, that is, of a lower, despised caste. He renounces this love and becomes a disciple of Buddha. According to Wagner's idea, the Chandala maiden was the reincarnation of a woman belonging to the highest Brahmin caste, who had haughtily spurned the love of a Chandala youth, and whose karmic punishment it is to be born again within the Chandala caste. When she has reached a point in her development enabling her to renounce her love, she also becomes a disciple of Buddha.

You see, therefore, that Wagner grasped the problem of karma in all its depth, out of the true spirit of Buddhism; when he was about fifty years old he had developed to the extent of being able to create a drama of such deep moral force and earnestness as "The Victor". All these thoughts then flow together in his Parsifal, but at the same time the Christ-problem stands in the centre of the drama. Out of Parsifal streams the whole profundity of this medieval problem.

Wolfram von Eschenbach was the first one to give a poetical shape to the mystery of Parsifal. In him we find the same theme, created out of the deepest substance of the Middle Ages. In the highest minds of the Middle Ages who were imbued with spiritual life lived something which the initiated named the exaltation of love. Before and after, there were Minnesingers, minstrels of love. But there was a great difference between what was formerly understood as love in the Germanic countries, and what arose later on in Christianity as purified love.

This is illustrated and handed down to us in "Armer Heinrich" ("Poor Henry"). Hartmann von der Aue's "Poor Henry" is filled with the spiritual life which the crusaders brought back from the Orient. Let us place before us briefly the contents of "Poor Henry": A Swabian knight who has always been fortunate in life is suddenly struck by an incurable disease, which can only be healed through the sacrifice and death of a pure virgin. A virgin is found who is willing to sacrifice herself. They go to Salerno to a celebrated

physician. At the last moment, however, Henry regrets the sacrifice and does not wish to accept it. The virgin remains alive. Henry regains his health after all, and they get married.

Here we have, therefore, a pure virgin and her sacrifice on behalf of a man who has only lived a life of pleasure and who is saved through her sacrifice. A mystery lies, concealed in this. From the standpoint of the Middle Ages, Minnesinging was looked upon as something which had been handed down from the four phases of ancient Germanic life, as contained in the sagas which Wagner placed before us in his Tetralogy. Love based on the life of the senses was considered at that time as something which had been overcome; love was to rise again spiritually, linked up with the feeling of renunciation.

In order to realise what took place, we must collect all the factors which reconstruct for us the expression, the physiognomy of that past period. And then we shall be able to understand what induced Wagner to set forth this legend.

The earliest Germanic races had a legend which we can trace throughout history, one of the root-legends which can also be found in a somewhat different form in Italy and in other countries. Let us place before you, the outline of this legend: A man has learnt to know the pleasures and joys of this world, and penetrates into a kind of subterranean cavern. There he meets a woman of exceeding great charm and attraction. He experiences the joys of paradise, nevertheless he longs to return to the earth. Finally he comes out of the mountain and returns to life. — This is a legend which we can find everywhere in Europe, and it appears to us very clearly in Tannhäuser. If we study this legend we shall find that it is, to begin with, the personification of love in the Germanic countries before the great turning point of the times. Life in the world outside is renounced for a retirement in the cavern to the joys brought by the old kind of love, by the goddess Venus.

In this form the legend has no real point of issue, no possibility of looking up to something higher. It arose before love underwent the already mentioned transformation. Later on, in the early times of Christianity when love began to take on a spiritual form, people sought to throw a glaring light on these earlier periods and on this paradise in the cave of Venus, as a contrast to the other paradise which they had found.

At this point we must consider our fifth root-race. When the floods had buried Atlantis, the sub-races of the fifth root-race gradually emerged: the Indian, the Median-Persian, the Assyrian-Babylonian-Semitic, the Graeco-Latin races. When the Roman culture began to flow off, our fifth sub-race emerged, the Germanic races in which we now live and which have a special significance for Christian Europe.

Not that Wagner was aware of all these things, but he possessed an unerring feeling for the world-situation and felt what tasks were incumbent upon the races; he felt it just as clearly as if he had known spiritual science.

You know that every one of these races was inspired by great initiates. The fifth root-race arose out of the ancient Semitic races. A trace of this origin still lives in all the sub-races which have so far constituted the fifth root-race. You know that after the destruction of Atlantis by the great flood the peoples who had emigrated and had thus been preserved from destruction were led by Manu, a divine guide, into Asia, into the desert of Gobi. Cultural influences went out from there to India, Persia, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and even to our own countries.

History can no longer trace the first semitic streams of influence upon human civilisation when contemplating the ancient Aryan civilisation. This influence appears more clearly only in the third sub-race, in the Egyptian-Semitic-Babylonian peoples. The people of Israel even derive their name from it. Christianity itself may be led back, as a fourth influence, to a semitic impulse. If we continue studying the development of these influences we shall find the semitic impulse in the Moorish culture which penetrated into Spain, and spread over the whole of Europe influencing even Christian monks.

Thus the primal semitic impulse reaches as far as the fifth sub-race.

We see the impulses of one great stream penetrate five times into the earliest civilisations. We have one great spiritual stream coming from the South, which is met by another stream arising in the North, which penetrates into four phases of the early northern civilisation and develops until it meets the first stream, thus flowing together with it. A childlike, unworldly nation dwelt in northern Europe and these early inhabitants underwent the influence of the stream of culture coming from the South at

the turning point of the 12th and 13th century. This new culture penetrated into these regions like a spiritual current of air. Wolfram von Eschenbach was entirely under the influence of this spiritual current.

The northern civilisation is symbolized in the legend of Tannhäuser, which also contains an impulse from the South. Everywhere we come across something which may be designated as a semitic impulse.

There was one thing, however, which was, felt very strongly: namely, that the Germanic races were a last link in this chain of development and that something entirely new would arise, preparing something completely different within the sixth sub-race: the higher mission of Christianity. The Germanic peoples longed for this new form of Christianity: a Christianity was to be called into life which had nothing to do with what had been taken over from the South. A contrast arose between Rome and Jerusalem; "Rome on the one side and Jerusalem on the other" was the battle-cry under which the crusaders fought. The idea that Jerusalem must be the centre was never lost.

A spiritual Jerusalem, rather than a physical one, was borne in mind: Jerusalem as a spiritual centre, and at the same time as an outpost of the future.

It was felt that the fifth sub-race had to serve still another purpose, that it had to fulfil a special task. The old impulses had ceased, something entirely new was to come, a new spiral curve in the civilisation of the world began. What had come from the South was only an attempt; the kernel was now to be peeled out of its skins. At the turn of the Middle Ages it was felt that something old, which had been experienced as a boon, was setting and had come to an end, and that the longing for something new contained a new impulse which was gradually coming into life. These were the feelings which lived particularly in the strong personality of Wolfram von Eschenbach.

Consider now the new period. Imagine this feeling rising up anew in a period of decadence, and then you will find in it something of what lived in Wagner. Many things had in the meantime taken place which were formerly experienced as decay of the race. Richard Wagner felt this particularly strongly ever since his conscious life began. The chaos which surrounds us to such a great extent to-day, the chaos in which the masses waste away through sickness, contain both the symptoms of decay and of a new life.

The misery of the great masses of European people, whose spiritual life remains hidden in darkness, who are cut away from education and culture, has never been experienced more deeply than by Richard Wagner, and for this reason he became a revolutionary in the year 1848, for the following thought weighed heavily on his heart: It lies within our power to help in accelerating the downward course of the wheel, or in guiding it up again.

This is the idea of Bayreuth. The events of 1848 were only an insignificant symptom of the coming spiritual movement. If we grasp this, we shall be able to understand how Richard Wagner came to his race-problem, dealt with in his prose-writings. He expresses himself more or less as follows: In Asia, in the Hindoo race, we may find something of the primordial force of the Aryan race. Some of the strong spiritual forces of the Aryan race exist for a chosen few, for the Brahmin caste. The lower castes are excluded, but a high spiritual standpoint is reached by the Brahmins. Then we may find in the North a more childlike race (thus Wagner continues), which has passed through the four stages of evolution within the race itself. These people delight in hunting; killing is a joy to them, but this pleasure in taking away life is a symptom of decadence. It is a deep, occult fact that life is strangely connected with knowledge, with the development of man in the direction of higher spiritual knowledge. Everything man doer, in the way of cruelty or of destruction of life takes away from him the pure spiritual forces. For this reason, those who increase the forces of egoism, who tread the black path, must destroy life. (In Mabel Collin's "Flita", the story of a woman dealing in black magic, Flita destroys unborn existences, because she needs life in order to maintain her power.)

There is a deep connection between the taking away of life and the life of man. In the eternal course of evolution this is a lesson which must be learnt and experienced. But it is another matter if during a certain period of evolution people take away life in a naïve way. Once upon a time the act of killing made man feel his own strength. This may be said of the ancient Germanic races, the hunting peoples. Ever since Christianity has appeared, it is a mortal sin to kill, and killing is now a symptom of decadence in a race.

This was the foundation of the view which induced Wagner to become a strict vegetarian. In his opinion, the only way in which a race may grow in strength is through a nourishment which does not imply killing.

The feeling that a new impulse had to come produced in Wagner also his ideas concerning the influence of the Jews upon our present civilisation.

He was not anti-semitic in the present, odious way, but he felt that Judaism as such had finished to play its role, and that the semitic impulses must die out. This gave rise to his call for emancipation from these impulses. A powerful spiritual direction made him feel that something new must replace earlier influences. This is connected with his ideas about the Germanic races. He made a clear distinction between the development of the soul and of the race. This distinction must be made by saying: We were all incarnated in the Atlantean race. Whereas the souls have risen higher, the races have degenerated. Every step we ascend is connected with a descent. For every man who grows more noble-minded there is one who sinks down lower. There is a difference between the soul dwelling within the race-body and the race-body itself. The more a human being resembles the race to which he belongs, the more he loves what is transient and is connected with the qualities of his race, the more he will degenerate with the race. The more he emancipates himself, lifting himself out of the peculiarities of his race, the more his soul will have the possibility to incarnate more highly. Richard Wagner knows that in fighting against the Semitic element we should not fight against the souls who are incarnated within the race, but only against the race as such, which has finished to play its role. Wagner thus makes a distinction between the descending evolution of the race and the ascending evolution of souls. He felt the necessity of this ascending evolution just as keenly as a medieval soul, just as keenly as Wolfram von Eschenbach, or Hartmann von der Aue.

We must consider once more what is contained in the fact that in "Armer Heinrich" (Poor Henry) Henry is healed by a pure virgin. Henry has lived, to begin with, a life of the senses, his Ego is born out of his race. This "Ego" begins to all as soon as it begins to hear the higher call, the call meant for humanity in general. The soul grows ill because it connects itself with something which is only rooted in the race: with a form of love which is rooted in the race. Now this lower kind of love living within the race must develop into a higher form of love. What lives within the race must be redeemed by something higher, by the higher, purer soul that is ready to sacrifice herself for the striving soul of man.

You know that the soul consists of a male and a female part, and that the impressions of the senses which enter the soul push this soul-element into the background.

"The eternal Feminine draws us along!" ("Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan!" Goethe, Faust II). Salvation means that sense-life must be overcome. We find this redemption also in "Tristan and Isolde".

The historical expression for the overcoming of sense-life is "Parsifal". He is the representative of a new Christianity. He becomes the King of the Holy Grail because he redeems what has once been held in the bondage of the senses and thus brings into the world a new principle of love. What lies at the foundation of Parsifal? What is the meaning of the Holy Grail? The earliest legend which appears at the turning-point of the Middle Ages tells us that the Holy Grail is the cup which was used by Jesus Christ at the Lord's Supper, the cup in which he offered the bread and the wine and in which Joseph of Arimathea caught up the blood streaming out of Christ's wound. The spear which caused this wound and the chalice were born up by angels, who held it suspended in the air until Titirel found them and built upon Montsalvat (which means: the Mountain of Salvation) a castle in which he could guard these treasures. Twelve knights gathered together to serve the Holy Grail. The Holy Grail had the power to avert the danger of death from these knights and to supply them with everything they needed for their life. Whenever they looked upon it they acquired new spiritual strength.

On the one side, we have the temple of the Holy Grail with its knights, and on the other, the Magic Castle of Klingsor with his knights, who are, in reality, the enemies of the knighthood of the Holy Grail. We are confronted with two forms of Christianity. One kind is represented by the knights of the Holy Grail and the other by Klingsor. Klingsor is the man who has mutilated himself in order not to fall a prey to the senses. But he has not overcome his desires, he has only taken away the possibility to satisfy them. Thus he lives in a sensual sphere. The maidens of the magic castle serve him, and everything belonging to the sphere of desires is at his disposal. Kundry is the real temptress in this kingdom: she attracts everyone who approaches Klingsor into the sphere of sensual love. Klingsor has not destroyed desire, but only the organ of desire. He personifies the form of Christianity which comes from the South and introduced an ascetic life; it eliminated a sensual life, but it could not destroy desire; it could protect against the tempting powers of Kundry. A higher element was perceived in the power of a spirituality which rises above sensual life into the sphere of purified love, not through compulsion, but through a higher, spiritual knowledge.

Amfortas and the knights of the Holy Grail strive after this, but they do not succeed in establishing this kingdom. So long as the true spiritual force is lacking, Amfortas yields to the temptations of Kundry. The higher spirituality personified in Amfortas falls a prey to the lower memory.

Thus we are confronted with two phenomena. On the one hand, Christianity which has become ascetic and is unable to reach a higher spiritual knowledge; and on the other hand, the spiritual knighthood which falls a prey to Klingsor's temptation until the redeemer appears who vanquishes Klingsor. Amfortas is wounded and loses the sacred spear; he must guard the Holy Grail as a sorrow-laden king. This higher Christianity is therefore diseased and suffering; it must guard the mysteries of Christianity in sorrow until a new saviour appears. And this saviour appears in Parsifal.

Parsifal must first learn his lesson, he passes through tests; he then becomes purified and finally attains spiritual power, the feeling of the great oneness of all existence. Richard Wagner thus unconsciously comes to great occult truths. First of all to compassion. Parsifal at first passes through a scale of experiences which fill him with compassion for our older brothers, the animals. In his violent desire to embrace knighthood he has abandoned his mother Herzeleide, who has died of a broken heart. He has battled and killed. The dying glance of an animal then taught him what it means: "to kill".

The second stage consists in rising above desire, without killing desire from outside.

So he reaches the sanctuary of the Grail, but he does not as yet understand his task. He learns his lesson through life, He falls into temptation through Kundry, but he stands the test. Just when he is about to fall, he rises above desire; a new pure love shines forth within him like a rising sun.

Something flares up which we already discovered in the Twilight of the Gods: "Incarnatus est de spiritum sanctum ex Maria Virgine", born of the Spirit through the Virgin, (the higher love, which is not filled with sensual feelings).

The human being must awaken within him a soul which purifies everything transmitted by the senses. because virgin substance, virgin matter, will give birth to the Ego of the Christ. The lower female element in

the human soul dies and will be replaced by a higher female element which lifts him up to the Spirit.

A higher virgin power faces the seducing Kundry. Kundry, the other female element pertaining to sex which draws man down, which seeks to draw him down, must be overcome.

Kundry has already lived once as Herodias who asked for the head of John the Baptist, Herodias, the mother of Ahasver. The force which cannot find peace and seeks everywhere a sensual love, this force takes on the form of a love which must first be purified, undergo a transformation, like Kundry. Emancipation from a love dependent on the senses — this is the mystery which Richard Wagner has woven into his Parsifal.

This thought permeates all the works of Richard Wagner. Even in his "Flying Dutchman" the intuitive force of his nature leads him to the same problem, for in this work we find that a virgin is willing to sacrifice herself for the Dutchman, thus redeeming him from his long wanderings. And the same problem is contained in "Tannhäuser". The singer's contest on the Wartburg is set forth as a contest between the singer of the old sensual love, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, and Wolfram von Eschenbach, who is the representative of the new, spiritual Christianity. He overcomes Heinrich von Ofterdingen, who has called in the aid of Klingsor from Hungary, but Wolfram overcomes both. Now we are able to understand *Tristan* more deeply, because we know that what lives in him is not the killing of love, but the overcoming of the race, or the purification of love.

Richard Wagner rose from Schopenhauer's "Denial of the Will" to a purification of the will.

Wagner even expressed this purification in his "Meistersingers", where Hans Sachs' feelings toward Eve undergo a purification when he seeks to win her for himself. This is expressed not so much in the text, as in the music.

All this has streamed together in his Parsifal. Richard Wagner looked back upon the ancient ideal of the Brahmins, and perceived with sorrow the symptoms of decay in the present race. He wished to give rise to a new impulse born out of art. In his Festivals at Bayreuth he had in mind to redeem the race by giving it a new spiritual content.

This was the spirit which prompted Nietzsche, so long as he was connected with Wagner, to write about "Dionysian Art". He felt that these Festivals contained something of the spirit of the ancient Mysteries. The Mysteries had contributed to the development of the human race up to the fourth sub-race. In the Mystery-temple of Dionisos it was possible to experience this uplifting impulse, and in the North, the initiates, the druids, spoke of the twilight of the gods out of which a new race would come forth, would *have* to come forth.

Our civilisation, with its task of introducing Christianity, stands in the very midst of these ideas. Sorrowfully the Greek disciple of the Mysteries spoke of the man "who would come to fulfil the Mysteries".

Richard Wagner saw the time approaching when Christianity, developing out of the fifth sub-race, would have to be fulfilled. He brought faith also to those "who could not see". A time will come when the God of the Mysteries will rise again from the human into the divine sphere. The twilight of the gods of the ancient northern saga shows us this ascent, in the gods' journey to Walhalla along the rainbow-bridge. The time draws near and must be fulfilled when Christianity begins to speak its own characteristic language, when "those who believed will be able to see again". Bayreuth thus shows us two currents of civilisation: The renewal of the Mysteries of Greece, and a new Christianity — thus uniting what had become severed.

Richard Wagner and all those who surrounded him felt this, and Edouard Schuré had the same feeling about this art. He saw in it the prologue introducing the union of what had become severed in the past.

Religion, art and science were united in the ancient primordial drama: then came the division and three separate currents began to flow out of the one source contained within the Greek Mysteries.

Each current owes its development to the fact that it went its own separate way. In the course of time a "religious" element arose for the soul, an "artistic" one for the senses, and a "scientific" one for the understanding.

This was inevitable, for perfection could be reached only if man unfolded every one of his capacities separately until they attained the highest point of development.

If religion is led toward the highest form of Christianity, it is willing to become reunited with art and science. Art — poetry, painting, sculpture and music — will reach the summit if it becomes permeated with true religion. And science, which has reached its full development in the modern period, has really given the impulse for the reunion of these three currents.

Richard Wagner, one of the first who felt the impulse leading to a reunion of art, science and religion, has offered this to humanity as a new gift.

He felt that Christianity is again called upon to unite everything. And he poured this new Christianity into his Parsifal.

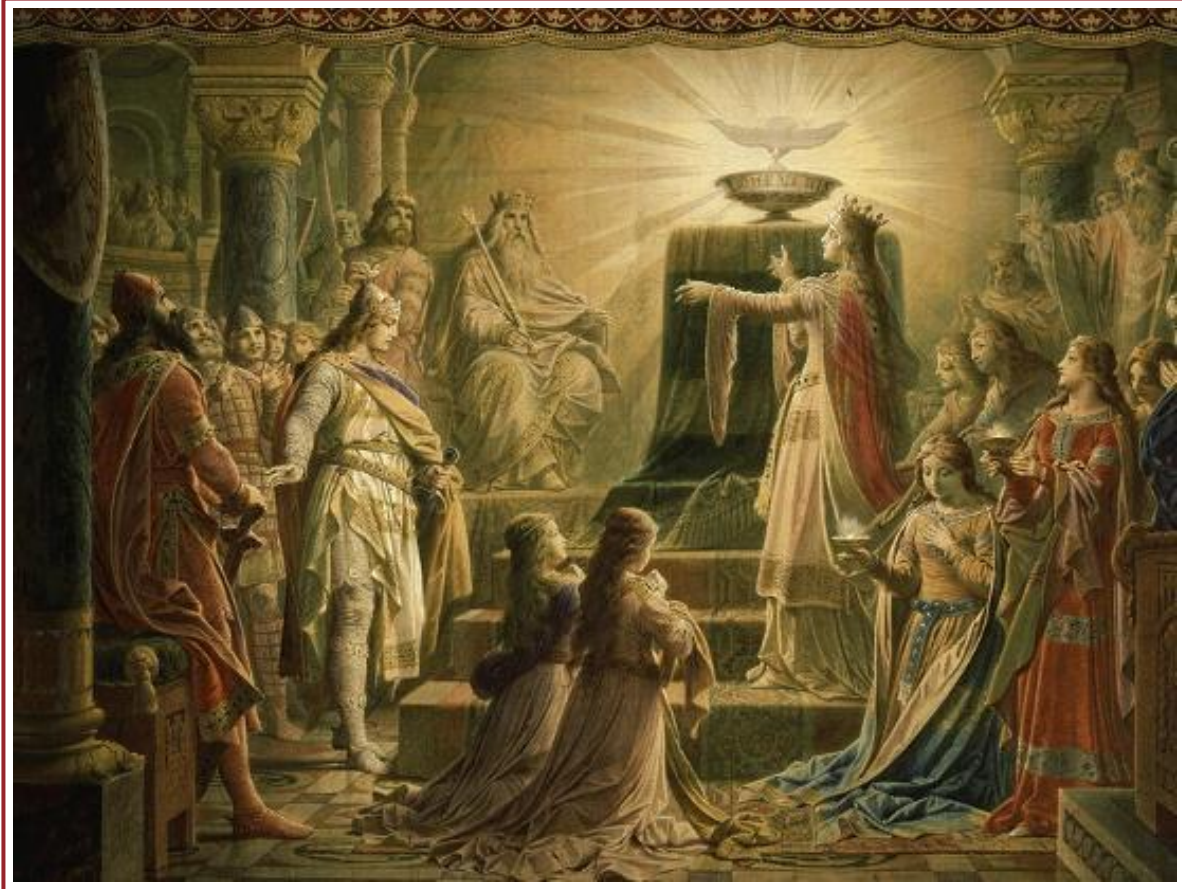
The Good Friday music, expressing Wagner's own Good Friday feelings, re-echoes in our ear as if it were the great current of a new civilisation. The Good Friday experience revealed to him that the individual development of the soul and the development of the race must go separate ways, that the souls must be lifted up and saved, that it is our task to awaken the soul to new life, in spite of the tragic fate connecting the body with the race, with the forces which are doomed to decay.

To fill the world with tones pointing to a new future, this is what Richard Wagner wished to set forth at Bayreuth, this is the newly rising star which he pointed out to us. At least a small part of humanity should listen to the tones of the future age.

Wagner's life-work ends with apocalyptic words, the apocalypse which he wished to proclaim to his period, as a true prophet who knew that a new age would dawn very soon:

"The visions I see

let me proclaim to you!"



Temple of the Holy Grail, Final Scene from Parsifal, Opera by Richard Wagner by Wilhelm Hauschild

5

Richard Wagner and Mysticism

2 December 1907, Nuremberg

It is not the aim of Spiritual Science merely to satisfy curiosity or a greed for knowledge but to be a spiritual impulse penetrating deeply into the culture of the present and immediate future. It will begin to dawn upon us that this is indeed the mission of Spiritual Science when we realise that its impulse has already made itself felt in the form either of clear or vague premonitions, in various domains of modern life. To-day we shall consider how an impulse akin to that of Spiritual Science lived in one of the greatest artists of our time. In speaking of *Richard Wagner*, I certainly do not mean to imply that he was fully conscious of this impulse. It is so meaningless when people say: 'You tell us all kinds of things about Richard Wagner, but we could prove to you that he never thought of them in connection with himself.' Such an objection is so patent that even those who think as we do could raise it. I am not suggesting for a moment that the impulse of which we shall speak lived in Richard Wagner in the form of definite ideas. Whether or not one is justified in speaking of it, is quite another matter. Detailed evidence in support of this point would lead us too far, but a comparison will show that our method of approach is fully justified. Does a botanist not think about a plant and try to discover the laws underlying its growth and life? Is not this the very thing that helps him to understand its nature? And will anyone deny him the right to speak about the plant from this aspect just because the plant itself is not conscious of these laws? There is no need to reiterate the generalisation that 'an artist creates *unconsciously*.' The point at issue is that the laws which help us to understand the achievements of an artist need not be consciously realised by him any more than the laws of growth are consciously realised by the plant. I say this at the outset in order to clear away the above-mentioned objection.

Another stumbling-block which may crop up now-a-days, is connected with the word 'Mysticism' itself. Quite recently it happened that somebody used the word among a small group of people, whereupon a would-be learned gentleman remarked: "Goethe was really a Mystic, for he admitted that very much remains obscure and nebulous in the sphere of human knowledge." He showed by this remark that he associated 'Mysticism' with

all ideas about which there is something nebulous and vague. But true Mystics have never done this. Precisely to-day we hear it said in academic circles: 'To such and such a point clear cognition can attain; from that point onwards, however, we grope blindly among the secrets of Nature with vague feelings, and Mysticism begins.' But the opposite is the case! The true Mystic enters a world of the greatest possible clarity — a world where ideas shine into the depths of existence with a light as radiant and clear as that of the sun. And when people speak of obscure feelings and premonitions this simply means that they have never taken the trouble to understand the nature of Mysticism. In the first centuries of Christendom the word *Mathesis* was not used because this kind of experience was thought to be akin to mathematics but because it was known that the ideas and conceptions of a Mystic can be as lucid and clear as mathematical concepts. Men must have patience to find their bearings in the domain of true Mysticism, and it is purely in this sense that the word will be used here in connection with the name of Richard Wagner.

And now let us speak of what is really the fundamental conviction of everyone who is a true student of Spiritual Science. — It is that behind the physical world of sense there is an invisible world into which man can penetrate. This, too, is the attitude of Mysticism. Did Wagner himself ever express this conviction? Most certainly he did! And the significant thing is that he expressed it from the musician's point of view, indicating thereby that to him music or art was far more than a mere adjunct to existence, was indeed the most essential element of life. He speaks in a wonderful way about symphonic music. He regarded symphonic music as a veritable revelation from another world, a revelation by which the threads of existence are elucidated far better than by logic. And from his own experience he knew that the convictions which arise in a man when he listens to the speech of symphonic music are so firmly rooted in his being that no intellectual judgment can prevail against them. Such words as these were not uttered at random; they were indications of a deep and profound theory of knowledge.

And now let us see whether we can explain these words of Wagner in the light of the conviction that is characteristic of Mysticism. Again and again we find Mystics describing the nature and mode of their knowledge in definite terms. They say: In the act of knowledge, man uses his intellect when he endeavours to understand the laws of the natural and spiritual worlds. But there is a higher mode of knowledge. — Indeed, the true Mystic realises that this higher kind of knowledge is much more reliable than any intellectual judgment. Curiously enough it is invariably

characterised by an image — which is, however, more than an image. Those who really know what they are talking about, speak of *music*. The 'Music of the Spheres' spoken of in the old Pythagorean Schools was no mere figure of speech, in spite of what superficial philosophy may say. The Music of the Spheres is a reality, for there is a region of the spiritual world in which its melodies and tones can be heard. We are surrounded by worlds of spirit, just as a blind man is surrounded by the world of colour which he does not see. But if a successful operation is performed upon his eyes, colour and light are revealed to him. It is possible for the faculty of spiritual sight to awaken in a man. When his higher senses open, the higher world will emerge out of the darkness. To the surrounding spiritual world that lies near us, we give the name of the astral world, or world of light, while a higher, purely spiritual world is designated as that of the 'Music of the Spheres.' It is a real world into which man can enter through a higher birth. Initiates speak openly of this world. We are reminded here of certain words of Goethe, albeit they are generally thought to be mere fantasy. Indeed our interpretation of these words will be put down as inartistic because of the current opinion that so far as intelligence and reason are concerned, a poet must necessarily be vague and indefinite. But a poet as great as Goethe does not use phrases; and if there were no deeper underlying truth, he would be using a phrase when he writes:

*"The sun with many a sister-sphere
Still sings the primal song of wonder, ..."*

These words are either an indication of deeper truth or mere phraseology, for the physical sun does not 'sing.' It is unthinkable that a poet with Goethe's deep insight would use such an image without reason. As an Initiate, Goethe knew that there is indeed a world of spiritual sound and he retains the image.

To Richard Wagner the tones of outer music were an expression, a revelation of an inner music, of spiritual sounds and harmonies which pervade the created universe. He felt the reality of this music and stated it in words. On another occasion he said something similar in connection with instrumental music (*Eine Pilgerfahrt zu Beethoven*): "The primal organs of creation and of nature are represented in the instruments. What these instruments express can never be defined in clear, hard-and-fast terms, for

once again they convey to us those archetypal moods arising from chaos in the first days of creation, when as yet there was no human being to receive them into his heart."

Such words must not be analysed by the intellect. We should rather try to live into their mood and atmosphere and then we shall begin to realise how deeply Wagner's soul was steeped in Mysticism. To a certain extent Wagner was aware of his particular mission in art. He was not one of those artists who think they must 'out' with everything that happens to be living in their soul. He wanted to realise his destined place in evolution and he looked back to a far remote past when as yet art had not divided into separate branches.

Here we reach a point which was constantly in Richard Wagner's mind when he realised his mission, a point too, upon which Nietzsche meditated deeply, and tried to characterise in *The Birth of Tragedy*. We shall not, however, go into what Nietzsche says, because we are here concerned with Mysticism as such, and Mysticism can tell us more about Richard Wagner than Nietzsche was able to do. The study of Mysticism carries us back to very early stages in the evolution of humanity — to the Mysteries. What were the Mysteries?

Among all the ancient peoples there were Mystery-centres. These centres were temples as well as institutes of learning and they existed in Egypt, Chaldea, Greece and many other regions. As centres alike of religion, science and art, they were the source of new impulses in the culture of the peoples.

And now let us briefly consider the nature of the Mysteries. What were the experiences of those to whom the hidden teachings were revealed after certain trials and tests had been undergone? They were able to realise the union of religion, art and science — which in the course of later evolution were destined to separate into three domains. The great riddles of the universe were presented to those who were admitted to the rites enacted in the Mysteries. The rites and ceremonies were connected with the secrets of spiritual forces from higher worlds living in the minerals and plants, reaching a stage of greater perfection in the animal and finally to self-consciousness in the human being. The whole evolution of the World-Spirit was presented in the form of ritual to the eyes of the spectators. And what they saw with their eyes, they also heard with their ears. Wisdom was presented to them through colour, light and sound and to such men the laws of the universe were not the abstract conceptions they have

become to-day. Cosmic laws were presented in a garb of *beauty* — and art arose. *Truth* was expressed in the form of art, in such a way that men's hearts and souls were attuned to piety and devotion. External history knows nothing of these things and indeed repudiates them. But that matters not. — Just as in the ancient Mysteries, religion, science and art were one, so were the arts which later on broke off along their several paths. Music and dramatic representation were part of one whole, and when Wagner looked back to primeval times he realised that although the arts had once been indissolubly united, they had been forced into divergence as a result of the inevitable course taken by evolution. He believed that the time had now come for a re-union of the arts, and with his great gifts set himself the task of bringing about this re-union in what he termed an "all-comprehensive work of art." He felt that all true works of art are pervaded by a mood of sanctity and are therefore verily acts of religious worship. He felt too, that streams which had hitherto been separated were coming together in his spirit, there to give birth to his musical dramas. To him, there were two supreme artists: Shakespeare and Beethoven. He saw in Shakespeare the dramatist who, with marvellous inner certainty, staged human action as it unfolds in outer happenings. He saw in Beethoven the artist who was able to express with the same inner certainty experiences which arise in the depths of the heart but do not pass over into deed. And then he asked himself: 'Is this not evidence of a severance that has taken place in human nature in the course of the development of art?' Man's inner and outer life is directed and controlled by *himself*; he is aware of desires and passions which rise up and die down again within him and he expresses in action what he feels and experiences in his inner being. But a cleft arose in art. Richard Wagner found passages in Shakespeare's plays which gave him the impression: There is something at this point which had perforce to remain unexpressed, for between this action and that action there is something in the human heart which acts as a mediator, something that cannot pass over into this kind of dramatic art. Again, when human feeling would fain express itself in a symphonic whole, it is doomed to inner congestion if a musician must limit himself to tones. In Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Wagner felt that the whole soul of the composer is pressing outwards and as it becomes articulate is striving to unite that which in human nature is in reality one and undivided but has been separated in art. Wagner felt that his own particular mission lay in this same direction, and out of this feeling was born his idea of a comprehensive work of art in which the inner life of a human being could express itself outwardly in action. That which cannot be expressed dramatically, must be contained in the music. That which the music cannot

express must be contained in the drama. — Richard Wagner was striving to synthesise the achievement of Shakespeare on the one side and of Beethoven on the other. This was the idea underlying all his work — an idea that had arisen from profound insight into the mysteries of human nature. Herein he felt his call.

A way into the *inner* depths of human nature was thus opened up for art. Richard Wagner could not be a dramatist of everyday life, for he felt that it must once again be possible, as it was in the Mysteries, for the deepest and most sacred experiences to be expressed in art. When he tells us in his own words that symphonic music is a revelation of an unknown world, that the instruments represent primal organs of creation, we can well understand why in his musical dramas he feels it necessary to express much more than the physical part of man's being. Towering above this physical man is the 'higher man.' This 'higher man' surrounds the physical body like a halo and is much more deeply connected with the sources of life than can be expressed in outer life. It was just because Richard Wagner's aim was to give expression to the higher nature of the human being that he could not draw his characters from everyday life. And so he turned to the myths, for the myths portray Beings far greater than physical man can ever be. It is quite natural that Wagner's stage characters should be mythological figures, for he was thus able to express cosmic laws and the deeds of Beings belonging to an unknown world through the dramatic action and the music — albeit in a form not always understood. I can only give a few examples here, for to enter into every detail would lead too far. But it is everywhere apparent that in the depths of his being, Richard Wagner was connected with the teachings of Spiritual Science.

Now what does Mysticism tell us with regard to the relation of one human being to another? To outer eyes, men stand there, side by side; in the physical world they work upon each other when they speak together or when one becomes dependent on another. But there are also much deeper relationships between them. The soul living in the one man has a deep, inner relationship with the soul living in the other. The laws manifested on the surface of things are the most unimportant of all. The deep laws which underlie the *soul* are spun from the one man to the other. Spiritual Science reveals these laws, and, as an artist, Richard Wagner recognised and knew of their existence. Therefore he uses themes in which he is able to show that laws far deeper than the outer eye can perceive are working between one character and another.

This urge to reveal the mysterious connections of life is apparent in one of Wagner's earliest works. Do we not feel that something is happening invisibly between the Dutchman and Senta, and are we not reminded of another mysterious influence in the medieval legend entitled *Der arme Heinrich*, when miracles of healing follow the sacrifice of a virgin? Such images as these are the expressions of truth deeper than the superficial doctrines of conventional erudition. There is a deep reality in a sacrifice made by one being for the sake of another. These mystic threads — unfathomable by the superficial intellect — express one aspect of the universal soul, albeit this universal soul must be thought of as a reality, not as a vague abstraction. Wagner is expressing a profound truth when he uses the image of one human being sacrificing himself for another.

I shall here repeat certain teachings of Spiritual Science which will help you to understand these things. We know that the world evolves and that in the course of its evolution certain beings are continually destined to be thrust down. There is a law of which we learn in Spiritual Science, namely, that every stage of higher evolution is connected with a fall. Later on, compensation is made, but for every saint, a sinner must arise. Strange as this may appear it is nevertheless true, because the necessary equilibrium has to be maintained. Every ascent involves a descent and this implies that at a later stage, the powers of the being who has ascended in evolution must be used for the redemption of the other. If there were no such co-operation between beings, there would be no evolution. Thus is the flux of evolution maintained. And a picture of one human being sacrificing himself for another reminds us of the mysterious link that is created by the ascent of the one and the descent of the other. Such truths can only be expressed with the greatest delicacy. Richard Wagner realised and understood the mysterious thread that binds soul to soul, and when we study the fundamental features of his works we find that the mystical life is the source of them all.

And now when we turn to his most famous work — the *Nibelung* — we shall see out of what depths of spiritual scientific wisdom it was created. But first we must consider certain things which are explained by Spiritual Science, however contradictory they may be of the views of modern science.

Our remote ancestors lived in a region lying to the West of Europe, between Africa and America. Science itself is gradually beginning to admit the existence of a continent there in the far past — a continent to which we give the name of Atlantis. Atlantis was the home of our ancient

forefathers whose form was very unlike our own. As I say, science is already beginning to speak of old Atlantis. An article on Atlantis appeared in a magazine entitled *Kosmos*, issued under the direction of Haeckel. True, it only spoke of animals and plants and omitted all mention of human beings, but Spiritual Science is able to speak with greater clarity of what natural science is only now beginning to surmise.

In old Atlantis, the atmosphere was quite different from the atmosphere around us to-day. There was no division of water and the sun's rays in the air. The air was permeated with vapours and clouds. Sun and moon were only seen through a rainbow-haze. Moreover man's life of *soul* was entirely different. He lived in a far more intimate relationship with Nature, with stone, plant and animal. Everything was immersed in cloud-masses. In very truth the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters! The wisdom that lived on among the descendants of the Atlanteans was possessed in abundance by the Atlanteans themselves. They understood all that was living in Nature around them; the rippling brooks were not inarticulate but the actual expression of Nature's wisdom. Wisdom streamed into the men of Atlantis from everything in their environment, for those ancient forefathers of ours were possessed of dull, instinctive clairvoyance. Instead of objects in space, colour-phenomena arose before them. They were endowed with clairvoyant powers. Wisdom was there in the mists and clouds and they perceived it with these powers. Such things can, of course, only be indicated here in the briefest outline. As evolution proceeded, the mists condensed into water, the air grew clearer and clearer, and man began, very gradually, to develop the kind of consciousness he has to-day. He was shut off from outer Nature and became a self-contained being. When all men live in close connection with Nature, wisdom is uniform among them, for they live and breathe in a sphere of wisdom. This gives rise to *brotherhood*, for each man perceives the same wisdom, each man lives in the soul of the other. When the cloud-masses condensed into water, man emerged with the beginnings of Ego-consciousness; the central core of his being was felt to lie *within* himself, and, when he met another Ego-being, he began to make claims on him. — Brotherhood gave way to the *struggle for existence*.

Legends and myths are not the phantasies they are said to be by erudite professors. What are legends and myths, in reality? They represent the last echo of the ancient clairvoyant experiences of men. It is nonsense to say that the myths are merely records of struggles between one people and another. Learned professors speak of the 'poetic folk-phantasy,' but it is *they* who are indulging in phantasy when they say that the 'Gods' were

simply poetical allusions to clouds. That is the kind of nonsense we are expected to believe! But even nowadays it is quite easy to understand the real origin of myths. — The legend of the 'Noonday Woman' is still familiar in many regions. This legend is to the effect that when labourers stay out in the fields at noon and fall asleep instead of returning to their homes, a figure of a woman appears and puts a question to them. If they cannot answer within a given time, the woman slays them. This is obviously a dream which comes to a man because he is sleeping out of doors with the full heat of the sun pouring down upon him. Dreams are the last vestige of ancient clairvoyant consciousness. — The example given indicates that legends do indeed originate from dreams. And the same is true of the Germanic myths. For the most part these are myths which originated among the last stragglers of the Atlanteans. The old Germanic peoples looked back to the ages when their forefathers lived away yonder in the West and wandered towards the East in the times when the mists of Atlantis (Nebel-land) were condensing and giving rise to the floods now spoken of as the Deluge, when the air was becoming pure and clear and waking consciousness beginning to develop. The ancient Germanic peoples looked back to the 'Land of Mists,' to 'Nifelheim.' They knew that they had left Nifelheim and had passed into a different world, but they also knew that certain Spiritual Beings had remained behind at the spiritual level of those times. And they said that such Beings had retained the characteristics and qualities of Nifelheim while sending their influences down into a later age, that they were 'Spirits' because they did not live a physical existence.

We can never understand such marvellous interweavings by reference to pedantic text-books. We must rather have an eye to the interweaving of phantasy and clairvoyant faculties, of legend and myth. Nor should we divest these ancient legends of the magic dew upon them.

The ancient Germanic peoples looked back to the time when the mists of Nifelheim were condensing, and they conceived the idea that the water from these same mists was now contained in the rivers in the North of Central Europe. It seemed to them that the waters of the Rhine had flowed out of the mists of old Atlantis. In those ancient times wisdom came to men from the rippling of brooks and the gushing of springs. It was a wisdom that was common to all, a wisdom from which the element of egoism was entirely absent. Now the age-old symbol of a wisdom that is common to all is *gold*. This gold was brought over from Nifelheim. What became of the gold? It became a possession of the human Ego. The universal Wisdom, once bestowed by Nature herself now became a wisdom

flowing from the *Ego* into human deeds and confronting them as a separate independent power in each individual. Man had built a '*Ring*' around himself and the Ring changed brotherhood into the struggle for existence among human kind. The element of wisdom common to all men in earlier times lived in water, and the last vestige of this water flowed in the Rhine.

Now just as human beings have developed Ego-consciousness, so too must the *Nibelungen*. The *Nibelungen* knew that they possessed the old universal wisdom and they now forged the Ring which thence-forward surrounded them as the *Rising of Egoism*. This shows, albeit in brief outline, how true realities stream into the world of phantasy and imagination. Gold represents the remaining vestige of the ancient wisdom flowing through the mists; the wisdom-filled Ego builds the Ring which gives rise to the struggle for existence. — Such is the deeper truth underlying the myth of the *Nibelungen*.

This was a theme which Richard Wagner could reproduce in the form of dramatic action and in the tones of a music expressing the invisible world behind the world of sense. And so he wrote a modern version of the Nibelung myth and in his picture of this whole process of evolution we feel how the new Gods who rule over mankind have come forth from the ancient Gods.

And now think once again of old Atlantis. — Clouds and mists, wisdom sounding from all creation. — As time went on, the Gods could no longer work through a wisdom possessed uniformly by all men; they could work only by means of commandments and decrees. When Wotan, one of the new Gods has to fulfil his covenant to deliver up Freia, since he himself is now entering into the sphere of Ego-wisdom symbolised by the Ring, a figure personifying ancient, primordial consciousness appears before him — a personification of the Earth-consciousness wherein all men were enveloped in the days of Atlantis.

This consciousness is represented in the figure of *Erda*:

*"My musing is the ruling of wisdom;
For when I sleep I dream,
And all my dreams are sovereign wisdom."*

A great cosmological truth is contained in these words, for all things were created by this wisdom as it lived in the springs and brooks, rustled in the leaves and swept through the wind. It was this all-embracing consciousness out of which *individual* consciousness was born and it was verily sovereign wisdom.

This wisdom was mirrored in the ancient clairvoyant faculties of man, in an age when his consciousness was not confined within the boundaries of his skin. Consciousness flowed through all things. One could not say: here is Ego-consciousness and there is Ego-consciousness.

*"All that the depths conceal,
All that pervades the hills and vales,
Water and air, is known to thee.
Thy breath doth blow throughout creation;
Thy mind is there wherever knowledge dwells:
All, it is said, is known to thee."*

All is known to Erda in this consciousness. And so step by step, we can see how through his intuition Wagner was able to draw upon amounts of primordial wisdom and express this in the Nibelung myth.

And now let us consider the time of transition from the old phase of evolution to the new. — Again let it be repeated, however, that Richard Wagner's achievement was not the outcome of any *conscious* realisation on his part. — The old Atlanteans were possessed of a consciousness of brotherhood in the truest sense of the word. This was followed by the transition to Ego-consciousness. And now think of the beginning of the *Rhinegold*. Is not the coming of this Ego-consciousness expressed in the opening notes themselves, in the long E flat on the organ? Do we not feel here that individual consciousness is emerging from the ocean of consciousness universal? In motif after motif we find Richard Wagner expressing in the tones of music a world that stands *behind* the physical world, using the instruments verily as if they were the primal organs of Nature.

And now, if we turn to *Lohengrin*, what do we find? Lohengrin is the emissary of the 'Holy Grail.' He comes from the citadel of the Initiates, where a higher wisdom has its home. The legend of Lohengrin is

connected with a universal tradition which indicates that the Initiates send down their influences into human life. We must always turn to legends for enlightenment in regard to significant turning-points in evolution, for the truths they contain are deeper than those recorded in history. Legends show us how the forces and influences of Initiates intervene in the course of history and they are not to be regarded as accounts of happenings in the outer world.

The time of transition from the universal clairvoyant consciousness to individualised Ego-consciousness was of the greatest significance, and we find it set forth in the Lohengrin myth. It is an age when the new spirit emerges from the old. Two 'Spirits of an Age' confront one another. Elsa, the feminine principle, represents the soul who is striving for the highest. Conventional interpretations of Goethe's words in the *Chorus Mysticus* at the end of his Faust are terribly banal, whereas in reality they emanate from the very depths of Mysticism:

"The Eternal Feminine leads us upwards and on."

The human soul must be quickened by those mighty events through which new principles find their way into evolution. What enters thus into evolution is represented in the Initiates who come from mysterious lands. Spiritual Science speaks of advanced individualities and again and again one is asked: Why do these individualities not reveal themselves? But if they were to do so, the world would enquire about their civic name and rank. This is of no significance in regard to one who is working from spiritual worlds, for the position of an Initiate whose mission is to proclaim the mysteries of existence is so sublime that to ask about his birth, name, rank or calling, is meaningless. To put such questions shows such a lack of understanding of his mission that parting is inevitable.

*"Ne'er shalt thou ask
Nor yearn to know,
Whence I have come
And what my name and nature"*

These words of Lohengrin might be spoken by all those whose consciousness transcends that of the everyday world, when they are questioned about their name and rank. This is one of the notes struck in *Lohengrin*, where the clear, true influences of Mysticism are apparent in music and drama alike.

Now there is a certain profound mystery bound up with humanity and it is depicted symbolically in a myth. When at the beginning of our evolution Lucifer fell from the ranks of those Spirits who guide humanity, a precious stone dropped from his crown. This stone was the cup from which Christ Jesus drank with His disciples at the Last Supper and in which the Blood flowing on Golgotha was received. The cup passed to Joseph of Arimathea who brought it to the West. After many wanderings it came into the hands of Titurel through whom the Citadel of the Grail was founded. The cup was guarded by the "holy love-lance," and the legend says that all who looked upon it took something of the Eternal into themselves.

And now let us think of the mystery contained in this myth as a parallelism of the progress of human evolution, as indeed it is known to be by those who understand the mysteries of the Grail. In the earlier phases of evolution on the earth, all love was bound up with the *blood*. Men were united by the blood-relationship. Marriage took place between those who were united by the blood-tie. The point of time from whence onwards marriage took place between those who were not of the same kith and kin marked an important turning-point in the life of the peoples. Consciousness of this truth is expressed in many sagas and myths. To begin with, as we have said, love was bound up with blood-kinship and later on, the circle within which human beings were joined by marriage grew wider and wider. This was the one stream in evolution: love that is dependent upon uniformity of flesh and blood.

But later on, a different principle began to hold sway — the principle of *individual independence*. In the age preceding that of Christendom these two streams were present: the stream expressed in love bound up with the blood-tie, and the principle of independence, freedom. The former represented the power of *Jehovah*, whose name means "I am the I am," and the latter the *Luciferic* principle of independence. Christianity was to bring into the world a love that is independent of blood-kinship. The words of Christ are to be interpreted thus: He who forsakes not father and mother — that is to say, he who cannot substitute for a love that is bound up with flesh and blood, a love that flows from soul to soul, from brother to sister, from a man to all men — he "cannot be my disciple."

A stone falls from Lucifer's crown and this stone becomes the holy cup wherein the Christ-Principle is united with the Lucifer-Principle. Knowledge of this mighty impulse developed the power of the Ego in the Knights of the Grail. And to those who were pupils in the Mysteries of the Holy Grail the following teaching was given: — (I will give in simple dialogue form what the pupils of the Grail were made to realise step by step. Many people will say: This is unheard of! None the less it is truth but truth that will be subjected to the same fate as those emissaries who were sent from civilised States to the courts of barbarians — as Voltaire relates. First, unworthy treatment and then, afterwards, recognition and acknowledgment.) This, then, was said to the pupils of the Grail: 'Look at the plant. Its flower may not be compared with the human head. The flower, with its male and female organs of fertilisation, corresponds to the sexual system in man. It is the *root* of the plant that corresponds to the human head.' Darwin himself once rightly compared the root of the plant with the head of man. The human being is a plant reversed. He has accomplished the complete turn. In chastity and purity the plant stretches out its calyx towards the light, receiving its rays, receiving the 'holy love-lance,' the 'kiss' which ripened the fruit. The animal has turned only half-way. — The plant, whose 'head' bores into the earth, the animal with its spine in the horizontal direction, and the human being with his upright posture and his upward gaze — these together form the cross. To the pupils of the Grail it was further said: 'Verily, Plato spoke truly when he said that the World-Soul lies crucified in the Body of the World. The World-Soul, the soul pervading plant, animal and man, lives in bodies which, together, represent the cross.' This is the original signification of the cross — All other interpretations are meaningless.

In what sense has man accomplished the complete turn? According to the insight of true Mysticism, the plant has the consciousness of *sleeping* man. When he is asleep, the human being is, in a sense, like a plant. He has acquired the consciousness that is his to-day by having permeated the pure plant-body with desires, with the body of passions. Thereby he has risen higher on the path to self-consciousness. But this has been achieved at the cost of permeating pure plant-substance with desire.

The pupils of the Grail were told of a state to which man would attain in the future. Possessed of clear, alert consciousness, his being would be purified, the substance of his body would become as pure and chaste as that of the plant, and his organs of reproduction transformed. The idea living in the minds of the Knights of the Grail was that the man of the future will have powers of reproduction not filled with the element of desire

but as chaste and pure as the calyx which turns towards the 'love-lance' — the rays of the sun. The Grail Ideal will be fulfilled when man brings forth his like with the purity and chastity of the plant, when he brings forth his own image in the higher calyx and becomes a *creator in the Spirit*. This ideal was known as the Holy Grail the transformed reproductive organs which bring forth the human being as purely and as chastely as the word is brought forth to-day by the waves of air working through the larynx.

And now let us see how this sublime ideal lived on the heart and soul of Richard Wagner. — In the year 1857, on Good Friday, he was standing on the balcony of the summer-house at the Villa Wesendonck and as he looked out over the landscape he saw the budding of the early spring flowers. The sight of the young plants revealed to him the mystery of the Holy Grail, the mystery of the coming-to-birth of all that is implicit in the image of the Holy Grail. All this he felt in connection with Good Friday and in the mood that fell upon him the first idea of Parsifal was born. Many things happened in the intervening period but the feeling remained in him and out of it he created the figure of Parsifal — the figure in whom knowledge is sublimated to feeling, the figure who having suffered for others, becomes "a knower through compassion." And the Amfortas-mystery portrays how human nature in the course of evolution has been wounded by the lance of defiled love.

Such, then, is the mystery of the Holy Grail. It must be approached with the greatest delicacy; we should try to get at the whole mood and feeling and let the ideas in their totality stand before our souls. Wherever we look we find that as an artist and as a human being, Richard Wagner's achievements were based upon Mysticism. So clear, so full of mystical feeling was his realisation of his mission that he said to himself: The art which is living in me as an ideal must at the same time be divine worship. He realised that the three streams (religion, science, art) converge into one another and he desired to be a representative of this re-union. Out of his insight was born that feeling which though mystical in essence is yet clear as daylight and which lived in all the great masters. It lived, too, in Goethe who wrote: "The man who overcomes himself breaks that power which binds all beings." When this urge to give freedom to the Ego, to penetrate into world-mysteries pulsates through all a man's forces and faculties, then he is a Mystic — in every domain of life. No matter whether his activities in the outer world are connected with religion, science or art — he works through to the point of unification. Goethe was trying to express this

mystery of man as a whole and complete being, when he clothed the secret of his own soul in the words: "He who has science and art has religion too. He who has not these twain, let him think he has religion!"



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