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## NOAM CHOMSKY and the UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR

by Don Cruse (CAN)

Noam Chomsky is well known on two fronts, as a philosopher and as a social thinker. He is justifiably famous today for his efforts to combat social injustice, which has led him to present a radical critique of the institutions of power in modern society. His fame initially arose, however, from his work as a linguistic philosopher and his still controversial suggestion that the human brain is somehow equipped at birth with a Universal Grammar out of which all human languages later develop. It is mainly with regard to this aspect of Chomsky's thought that I wish to comment here.

The human brain is indeed a remarkable organ, consisting as it does of billions upon billions of nerve cells that are daily dying and being replaced in vast numbers, but still for most of us retains its coherent function throughout our lives. There are two radically opposite accounts, however, of what that function is. *The first* and most familiar is that the brain is a thought generator, and its ability to function as such has developed incrementally and accidentally over billions of years in the manner described in *Charles Darwin's theory of evolution*.

*The second view* is the one most effectively presented in the work of Rudolf Steiner, who insists that the brain's primary function is not to be a generator of thought, but an *organ of perception*, and that what it perceives is the spiritual 'inside' of all matter, which he tells us is what thought really is, a proposition now beginning to be born out in Quantum Physics. This view and some of its many ramifications has been clearly represented to the modern mind in the work of the late Owen Barfield.

In the first (materialistic) account the brain function is analogous to that of a computer, and even though the brain is immensely complex, recent developments in the realm of artificial intelligence (AI) have convinced many that it will soon become obsolete, and that this obsolescence will eventually apply to mankind itself.[1]

There are aspects of modern brain research, however, which suggest that this might not be the case, and that we have in fact barely begun to understand the brain's true function. Important in this respect has been the work of the Stanford neurologist *Karl Pibram*, whose study of how memories are stored in the brain led him to postulate that the brain operates on a holographic basis wherein 'the whole is present in every part,' and suggesting that the real repository of memory is not the brain cells but some-

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## from HUMANITY through NATIONALITY to BESTIALITY

The Problem of Nationality in Central Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

by Markus Osterrieder (GER)

In memory of Karl Heyer (1881-1914)

(Translated from the German by Hilde Stossel)

In 1849 a wise Austrian coined a phrase that was both a prophecy and a devastating comment on the educational aspirations of Enlightenment: "The road of modern education / leads from humanity / through nationality / to bestiality." <sup>1</sup> With these succinct but bitter words the poet *Franz Grillparzer* described the entire tragedy of his century, a century that had only recently come to stand under the sign of the industrial revolution. The year before, *Marx and Engels* had published their 'Communist Manifesto.' Also in 1849 another great citizen of the Habsburg Empire, the Czech historian *Frantisek Palacky* sounded a warning concerning the social force that had become the deciding element in the cultural, political and social life of Europe:

*What was the ecclesiastic and religious idea for the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, that is for our time the principle of nationality? - All countries and persons, especially in Austria, who today are still indifferent or apathetic in a national context, will not be so any longer in ten or twenty, to thirty years' time and thus, political motives based on national circumstances that still seem unimportant to many will acquire increasing significance. Any politician attempting to ignore the truth of this sentence, or worse, deny it, would be deluding himself disastrously; it would also be foolish to try and stem this tide, and no human invention or countermeasure would have more effect than blowing into the wind, which would neither stop nor change its direction?*

In 1848 the Habsburg monarchy had indeed experienced its 'spring of the nations.' Loyalty to the dynasty and to the traditional crown-lands was confronted by a new ideal. What had shaped Central Europe socially up to this point in time was basically a patriotism that derived its legitimacy not so much from culture and ethnicity as from lineage and social estate. For a Hungarian or Polish aristocrat

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NOAM CHOMSKY  
REINCARNATION  
ISAAC NEWTON  
HEISTERKAMP  
DR. DAVID HEAF  
OSTERRIEDER  
RUDOLF STEINER

ally all meet as equals. It is the responsibility of the politicians after appropriate discussion to set in writing what rights, i.e. laws, apply to the proliferation of GM foods. But in our society our politicians are not just politicians, they try to run another area of social life, namely the *economy*. This leaves them open to powerful influences coming from economic interests. The result is that making laws and putting them into practice becomes driven by economic interests. And in this country we could hardly have a regulatory system that is more favourable to the industry than it is.

So there are disorders in the form and interrelations of the three main sectors of social life: cultural, rights and economic which are deeply connected with people's dissatisfaction about genetic engineering and the mess that the government and retail trade have got themselves into with the issue. An opportunity offered by the GM debate is to start to think about how we can run our society so that the challenges of modern life are better coped with. Two improvements would be to recognise that freedom is paramount in cultural life and that the economic sector should be prevented from meddling in basic rights, in government. But more is needed. A healthy economic sector, one where solidarity - i.e. co-operation not just competition - has a proper chance to develop would work associatively in

that economic associations would bring together the interests of consumers, traders and producers. And of course, it would have its own regulatory system. At the moment we have consumers associations, traders associations and producers associations. They are even beginning to establish more or less formal communication channels between one another. Had we had associations in place where all three main actors in economic life, consumers, traders and producers were represented, this genetic engineering commercial adventure that has landed us in such an almighty mess might have been conducted in a more conscious way. It might even have never been started.

The greatest opportunity that this challenge of GM crops offers is to look again at our social structures to see if they are adequate for realising the ultimate potential of the human being.

*\* This article is based on a talk given by the author at a public debate the Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Bath, on 21 May 1999 organised by the Bath Anthroposophical Social Initiative Group. The other speakers were Patrick Holden of the Soil Association (UK's main organic certification body) and Dr Nigel Halford of the Institute of Arable Crops Research, Long Ashton, Bristol UK. The debate was chaired by Caroline Jackson MEP.*

## Archetype

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David Heaf,

it was by no means a foregone conclusion that a simple peasant belonged to the same 'nation.' However, since the beginning of the century a linguistic consciousness had awakened among Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Hungarians, Rumanians Croats, Serbs, Ruthenes and Italians, which first manifested itself in the cultural sphere, but—inspired by the slogans of the French Revolution—it soon made political and social demands. But what was the conception of Man upon which this consciousness was founded?

Many exponents of the Enlightenment, of German Idealism and the early Romantic period in Germany, saw the essence of human beings—their spiritual 'I'-monade or the 'entelechy' (Leibnitz, Goethe)—to be at home on a higher, divine plane of existence. In their eyes this sphere of the spiritual monade was common to all human beings. Once conscious for this very sphere, a human being could elevate himself above a specific language, race, or an ethnic or blood-determined context. They felt that the spiritual being,

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from **HUMANITY** through **NATIONALITY**  
to **BESTIALITY**

the hidden higher being in every earthly human was a 'wanderer between the spheres,' the realm of the divine spirit and the earthly world. Novalis wrote: 'When a spirit dies, it becomes human. When a human dies, he/she becomes spirit.'<sup>3</sup>

Thus the ideal of 'becoming human', of humanity in a spiritual sense, proceeded from the recognition of a higher state of existence. It was, indeed, the highest ideal of these representatives of the German cultural life to strive for this individual 'higher quality' in the human being, to awaken it through education and further its evolution in a comprehensive way.

So that every human being finally becomes a world of its own, of similar appearance to others externally, but its very own being inwardly, not interchangeable with any one else. . . . The entire human life is transformation; each stage of life a fable, and so the whole race is subject to constant metamorphosis.<sup>4</sup>

It was Herder's conviction that the human being, as created by nature, was able to give birth to a new Man who originated from the spiritual realm of true humanity.

The largest part of Man is animal. We are only born with the capacity to be human which then has to be developed through effort and diligence.... All life long, the animal wants to triumph over the human, and most of the time it is allowed to do so. Unceasingly it pulls down, then, while the spirit wants to strive upward and the heart towards freedom; . . . Life is a struggle then, and the flower of pure immortal humanity, a crown obtained with difficulty. . . . Since the future condition will arise out of the present one, as ours did out of the condition of lower organisations, the business of the former is, without a doubt, more intimately interwoven with our existence than we think.<sup>5</sup>

Herder had also recognized that two streams of evolution—the spiritual and the natural one—meet in the earthly Man, hereby making it fundamentally different from species of the animal kingdom. Two generations before Darwin he wrote, having observed nature:

"In truth, ape and Man, never were one and the same species. . . .but you, Man, honour yourself! Neither the Pongo, nor the Longiman is your brother, but the American, the negro, is. It is him that you should not oppress, nor murder, nor steal from, because he is human like you; but you must not fraternize with the apes."<sup>6</sup>

Thinkers like Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Novalis and Fichte stressed that it was precisely their 'national character' that would enable the Germans to give birth, beyond nationality, to the ideals of humanitarianism, of individualism and of a free humanity, to the benefit of all humankind.<sup>7</sup> Thus Friedrich Schiller wrote: 'German national character. / To become a nation, you hope, Germans, in vain. / Instead, transform yourselves, you can do it, more freely into human beings.'<sup>8</sup> For Novalis, 'Germanness' meant 'cosmopolitanism combined with the strongest individualism'<sup>9</sup> Goethe thought that 'it was the destiny of Germans to rise to represent all world citizens.'<sup>10</sup> The world citizen, he said, concerns himself with the problems of all nations. 'Anyway, national hatred is a strange thing. On the lowest levels of culture you will always find it in its strongest and most intense form. But there is a level where it disappears altogether and where, in a way, one stands above nations and where one feels a neighbouring people's misfortune and good fortune as much as if it happened to one's own.'<sup>11</sup> Goethe did not think much of the concept of a 'German nation' as a natural unstructured collective, as he told Chancellor von Muller. 'Germany is nothing but each individual German is much; yet, many people think it is the reverse. Germans have to become transplanted and dispersed like the Jews in order to develop the good that is in them for the benefit of all nations.'<sup>12</sup>

**Convinced of the spirit of higher humanity, Herder wrote:**

What is a nation? A large untended garden full of plants and weeds. . . . Obviously it is the intention of nature that, like a human being, so too a family, and finally a nation will learn from and with others, learn incessantly, until all of them have finally understood the difficult lesson: 'no nation is chosen by God as being unique on this earth. The truth must be sought by all. The garden of the common best will have to be built by all. All nations, each in its own place, shall take part in weaving Minerva's veil, without hidrance and without pride in strife. It is no disgrace, then, for Germans to learn from other nations, old and new.'<sup>13</sup>

For many idealists the deeper meaning of Germany's 'nation-building' lay in the striving for individuality and cosmopolitanism en-globing the entirety of humanity. Therefore, it was necessary to cultivate and develop the individual 'I,' the real spiritual monade of a human being. The individual, looking up to a higher spiritual reality and striving for Self Consciousness, can find itself in the paradoxical situation of growing beyond nationhood and national identity, recognizing itself purely and simply as Man, as universal citizen of the world *and* as a unique member of a brotherly community of humans.

In the span of only one generation those views began to change. After 1840, the pioneering successes of positivistic and mechanistic natural sciences and the mechanization of everyday life reinforced the inclination to interpret human beings as creatures whose nature and characteristics could only be determined through the perception of the senses and from the physical order of nature. Although this development occurred in all of Europe, it made a particular impact on Germany, because there it superseded the views previously held by the idealists. It now emerged that these views had been developed within a limited circle of the educated class and had not been accepted as part of the general cultural inheritance. When, after 1840, the members of that generation had died, there was no way to rescue the idealistic human image from the assault of the mechanistic natural sciences and their materialistic and utilitarian conception of Man. The world of Karl Marx and Charles Darwin took the place of Goethe, Schiller and Herder.

Although the basic concepts of 'beauty, good and truth' continued to be handed down as part of 'national education,' there was less and less understanding of its former spiritual content. The concept, emptied of all substance, began vacuum-like, to be filled by its counter-image. The elements of German culture, especially of classicism and romanticism, were perverted and reversed, turned into their opposite and preserved in name only. Word-cadavers remained which had been robbed of their content of truth and were now stuffed with resentments. The language of idealism sank to sentimentalised phrases or misunderstood abstractions. Hermann Glaser noted: '. . . murky pictures, numbing of the logos through mythical whispering, a destruction of the conceptual core leaving empty word shells only, a heap of incorrect, crooked or unnecessary genitives, inversions at pains to simulate pompous solemnity, an accumulation of synonyms.'<sup>14</sup>

After 1840, the enthusiasm of the older generation that had immersed them in foreign languages, peoples and cultures, allowing them to investigate lovingly their peculiarities as 'different forms of one human family,' also disappeared. (Herder) It gave way to an introverted Pan-German nationalism that re-interpreted the vocabulary of idealism in order to give it a materialistic and biological meaning. Preoccupation with national endeavours increasingly became an end in itself. Individualism was contemptuously regarded as a symptom of decline of the decadent 'western nations.' But in reality it was pre-

cisely at this point that many ideas in the field of economics, social welfare and natural sciences were introduced to Germany from the English-speaking hemisphere. In the English-speaking world these ideas originated in and were linked to the national spiritual and cultural life and therefore had their full inner justification. However, in Germany the *mere unproductive imitation* of these ideas furthered the loss of the German cultural identity. Here the inner justification was absent because the cultural experience was, to a large degree, a different one. With Germany's own higher forms of culture out of the way, the mixture of old-fashioned social and political as well as popular scientific ideas were bound to have a destructive effect on the complex Central European conditions

In a time when the capacity for instinctive community building began to dry up in the same way as the forces that had shaped the social order of past epochs, the renewal of social life by representatives of Central Europe—motivated by I-penetrated sensations of a higher spiritual reality—stopped short in its beginnings. It was not yet possible to translate these spiritual sensations into concrete spirit-beholding perceptions. Instead, those forces prevailed that sought to imprison the people of Central and Eastern Europe in their language and descent. In itself justified and even necessary, the awakening of nations east of the Rhine did not meet with the understanding energy that could have made their individual talents and abilities serve a greater whole and a higher goal. The representatives of Idealism tried to translate the French Revolution's impulse for political freedom into a cultural, all-human and rather 'metapolitical' sphere. But the idea of a political civil state was also carried across the Rhine by Napoleon, inflaming the hearts of people in Central Europe.

However, in the ensuing decades, the less one was able to separate the cultural and linguistic sphere of an ethnic group, the political and legal sphere of the civil society, and the tribal community sphere based on inherited blood-forces, the sharper the conflicts grew between the various national groups. By 1848, Germans regarded efforts made by the nations bordering the German-speaking area to develop their national particularity within the European framework as an attack on the German's political, cultural and social position. Not only the student fraternities, but also Marx and Engels spoke with contempt of the "garbage nations" who must be left to their "total destruction or denationalization." [15]

The Austrian Victor Freiherr von Andrian-Werburg, one of the delegates who had come to St. Paul's in Frankfurt in order to launch a German national assembly, had to make the surprising discovery that many assembled delegates imagined the Czechs to be 'a class of people comparable to the Helotes of Greece.'<sup>16</sup> Some were even more radical. One individual, Count Deym, wanted

... to found a giant empire of 70 and, if possible, 80 or 100 million people, plant Hermann's standard in this realm and, armed against East and West, against the Slavic and Latin nations, wresting the naval supremacy from the English, become the largest, most powerful nation on earth, that is Germany's future.<sup>17</sup>

In comparison, the wise words in 1816 of Prussian Minister Wilhelm von Humboldt seem to come from another world.

Nobody could prevent Germany from becoming also a conquering nation, something no true German would want; since it is well-known that the German nation has made significant contributions in the field of spiritual and scientific education, while it had no political aspirations regarding others; but it is still undecided how such aspirations would make themselves felt.<sup>18</sup>

But after 1848, the unadorned matter-of-factness with which even German liberals justified the shifting of borders and forced assimilation of other ethnic communities (while referring to the model nation-state of the French Revolution, the *Etat Nation*, and to the supposed superiority of German culture) caused strong reactions from the Slavic neighbours. Because of century-old settlement processes, the border of the German language area extended to the East and Southeast into other language areas,

Social Darwinism, founded by the Englishmen Thomas H. Huxley and Herbert Spencer as a socio-scientific theory, became the dominant thought pattern of social interpretation in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in no small part due to its dissemination by the popular press. Belief in the legitimacy of 'natural selection,' the survival of the fittest through territorial, economic and military expansion demanded that 'Might is Right' and in the nations' struggle for existence, it backed the 'superior race' and its state.<sup>19</sup>

Although Social Darwinism fitted in congenially with the society of the Victorian empire, some of its most radical exponents were found not in England or France but in the Central European area. Next to the most primitive catch phrases of social Darwinism, Central Europeans adopted those race-based theories (of Gobineau, Lapouge or Houston S. Chamberlain) that valued the biological characteristics of the 'Nordic Aryan' as a mark of the higher 'God-Man'.

The casualness with which Social Darwinistic ideas were accepted by the so-called 'man in the street' as an expression of natural order in the age of industrialization increasingly led to a relationship between the Germans and their ethnic neighbours as a 'struggle of displacement'<sup>2</sup> that only could lead to either victory or destruction. After 1880 this interpretation—publicised by nationalistic propaganda experts in the form of articles, pamphlets and booklets—increasingly conjured up the vision of an impending decisive conflict between Germans and the Slavs, who were suspected to serve solely as 'Trojan horse' in the Russian desire for supremacy. By interpreting the nationality question as a biological and demographic problem, pan-German and nationalistic circles arrived at the conclusion that 'in the national struggle everything depended on the production of people.'<sup>20</sup>

Such slogans also detracted from the internal political difficulties in Germany and the growing unrest among industrial proletarians, as well as the dissemination of Marxist class-struggle slogans. These slogans clearly revealed that despite the economic expansion, very little had changed since 1850 regarding a social stratification that was taking the form of a pyramid tapering steeply towards the top. The fact that intellectuals as well as the educated middle-class had taken leave from 'great politics' (carefully separating culture and politics, which they felt to be incompatible contradictions) proved to be an ever increasing and ominous omission for the political development in Germany.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the largely non-political cultural life that had developed under the Kaiser toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (such as culture-critical and social-reforming trends, as well as the *avant-garde*) had practically no influence on the thinking of the leadership. For those who took an active interest in the cultural life, politics became something 'vulgar' and 'nasty.' Political thinking was left to a nationalistic and Pan-German-minded minority derived from the aristocracy, government, armed forces, administration, business, industry and public relations. These pathetic 'Nibelungen oaths' who displayed a pathological need for admiration, pigheadedness, petty upstart

behaviour, beer swilling, sabre-rattling and juvenile war-cries, did not exactly present an appealing image of Germans abroad.

Prussia had had a strong Polish component since the partition of Poland at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (around the year 1800 three out of eight million Prussian subjects were Polish). Prussia represented the one German principality where the attitude described earlier had put a more durable stamp on the social and political climate. But here, too, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a real possibility for politicians like Wilhelm von Humboldt, Hardenberg, vom Stein or Altenstein - who mostly were not native Prussians<sup>22</sup> - to influence social and national life to such an extent that it could have transformed Prussia into a model community.

After the Polish riot in Russian-occupied Congress-Poland, this policy of relatively tolerant reformation government was discontinued. This policy was discontinued in Old-Prussian tradition in order to strengthen the conservative-absolutist central state, but after 1840 it became for reasons of 'cultural struggle', political settlement policies and race. Finally, Bismarck's policy of sustaining an alliance with Russia became only possible at the expense of the 'unbearable neighbour,' Poland, which had to serve as 'anvil' to the German 'hammer.' Consequently, around 1860 the future Imperial Chancellor advised:

Thrash the Poles, why don't you? Make them give up on life; I have a lot of sympathy for their dilemma, but if we want to prevail, we can't do anything but exterminate them.<sup>23</sup>

At the beginning of the century, the warning from Education Minister Altenstein that suppression of nationalistic endeavours would only serve to promote them and ultimately make the state ungovernable seemed forgotten. *The conservative federalist Constantin Frantz*, one of the severest critics of Bismarck's nation state, demanded in vain the compulsive introduction in Eastern German provinces of a Slavic language in all high schools and technical colleges: 'It has to be a question of life and death for Germany to be on friendly terms with the Western Slavs and Southern Slavs.'<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, the growing self-confidence of the socially and economically active and innovative Polish people in the provinces of Western Prussia and Posnania confirmed the voices which stood for relentless Germanizing. As a consequence, in 1886 they welcomed the expulsion of 26,000 Poles into the adjoining Vistula country belong-

ing to the Czarist empire as part of a 'Neo-German East Mark settlement policy.' They said the German nation had had to suffer long enough because of its 'sense of justice developed to pathological proportions and its lack of healthy political selfishness.'<sup>25</sup> A similar ruthless Germanizing also was perpetrated on the Danes in Schleswig and in the Alsace. In the name of 'nationalistic unity,' the Pan-Germans already projected a 'planned higher racial development of the German people' and demanded the 'suppression of all forces that might hinder or damage the development of the German people.' Included in these 'forces' were, above all, the Jews.<sup>26</sup>

Although there had been a national German empire since 1871, 'Great Politics,' the national appetite for glory, and re-armament exerted their price. Since the German culture of the 'I' could not have been inherent by common tradition (as for example, the English cultural forms had been) but had to be worked for and acquired by the activity of each individual through inner, independent self-education, there were relatively few individuals who were able to rise from the general popular level.<sup>27</sup>

German royalty and the aristocracy continued to dictate social issues. However, the soul-structure of many representatives of this class had been arrested in forms of thought, emotions and ideas that had not essentially changed since the early Middle Ages. They had not even experienced the spiritual transformation, the purification of compulsive wildness, that had been created by the gradual Christianising of Central Europe. This meant that ever since the urban middle-class came into being after 1200 the German territorial princes basically had no comprehension of the changing social and political demands of the age. These latter-day 'Nibelungs' did not understand and felt disgust for the decline of the aristocratic order, the rise of the middle-class and the social liberation impulse, and consequently—in accordance with their innate nature—displayed indifference, even hostility, towards the culture of idealism and Goetheanism.<sup>28</sup>

In vain Friedrich Nietzsche, lone voice in the ever-expanding spiritual desert of the German Empire, told his compatriots:

It is so that, whenever a nation goes forward and grows, it bursts its belt that has, until that time, given it its national standing; if it stands still, it withers and a new belt closes around its soul; the ever-hardening crust builds a prison, as it were, with the walls steadily growing. If, then, a nation has much that is hard, it proves that it wants to turn to stone and even aspires to being a monument. As happened to the Egyptians from a certain moment in time on. If you wish the Germans well, then look to them growing out of what is German. Turning towards the un-German was, therefore, always the sign of the efficient ones in our nation.<sup>29</sup>

He went on to remind his contemporaries:

Goethe's voice and . . . example point out that Germans must be more than Germans if they want to be useful to other nations, or at least be tolerated by them. And they must endeavour to go beyond and outside themselves.<sup>30</sup> While the middle-class of the 19<sup>th</sup> century expended their energy on business and endeavoured to avoid any confrontation with the political reality of the authoritarian government, a trend persisted in the politico-social area that had always existed next to the spiritual stream of the idealists. Its exponents experienced 'Germanness' not in the conscious search of the 'I'-principle but in the forces active in the vague subconsciousness of the blood.

As a curiously tragic fact in 19<sup>th</sup> century German history, it appears the state of soul founded on the belief in hereditary blood forces, the warring military forces

## **Public Conference of the Nizam Group**

**Date: 16-18 August 2001**

**The Political Power Structure at the time of World War I and Now: An Esoteric Perspective Based on the Spiritual Scientific Research of Rudolf Steiner.**

**Speakers:** Terry Boardman, Markus Osterrieder, Stephen Usher and possibly Amnon Reuveni.

**Where:** In the Adirondack State Park in upstate NY.

**Enrolment** limited to 25-30 people.

**Conference fee** US \$150. Room and board separate.

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and the absolute glorification of the state (in which the subject was beholden in ancestral-German allegiance with Nibelungen loyalty to the ruler until death) spread throughout much of the middle class. Darwin's doctrine fueled the debate because it gave the 'Nibelungen' claim that the 'higher being' existed in the biological hereditary stream a pseudo-scientific touch. The exponents of this trend saw a 'national calling' in the 'breeding and propagation of pure-blooded species,' dismissing the free development of I-endowed humanity. 'Nationality' (rather a politico-social category) and 'folk' (*Volkstum*, a soul-embedded and cultural category) could be understood by them only as a mark of 'race' (biological) because they experienced their own identity in their blood. They mostly felt contempt for the democratic-national and social demands of the age.

When in 1849 a delegation of the Frankfurt Paulskirchen parliament offered, deeply moved, the German imperial crown to the Prussian king Wilhelm IV, he rejected abruptly this bourgeois 'cirlet made of dirt and clay' to which clung the 'stench of revolution.'<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the imperial coronation took place in the hall of mirrors in Versailles, beneath the portrait of the 'Sun King,' Louis XIV, which carried the prophetic inscription: *Le roi gouverne par lui-meme* ('The king rules through himself.')32

Instead of human beings becoming Self-conscious individuals as demonstrated by the exponents of idealism (in the course of which the Self learns to rule over its own soul-world as superior 'spirit king'), most of the German society, mired in the spirit sleep of materialism, increasingly projected the higher principle in distorted form outward towards an 'emperor, prince or leader.' Julius Langbehn already had asserted in 1890:

The sovereign occupation of the German nation is already expressed by the word 'Volk', 'folk'. itself; originally it meant following; but to a follower belongs, of necessity, a leader *Fuehrer*.<sup>33</sup>

In 1933 the individual's place in guiding itself and acting in accordance with its own free decisions was taken up by the 'nation of guided people,' a reversal and perversion unprecedented in the history of occidental cultural development. Falling back into pre-Christian consciousness, a majority even joyfully welcomed this 'I'-less (even 'I'-hating) 'leadership': *Fuehrer*, command us, we will follow you!

However, this widening rift in the spiritual development of the German society did not prevent the technical modernization and industrialization of the German Reich. On the contrary, modernization happened with such speed that a British observer—the well-known journalist William T. Stead—remarked around 1900:

There are no more Americanised cities in Europe than Hamburg and Berlin. They are American in the rapidity of their growth, American in their nervous energy, American in their quick appropriation of the facilities for rapid transport. Americans find themselves much more at home, notwithstanding the differences of language, in the feverish concentrated energy of the life of Hamburg and of Berlin than in the more staid and conservative cities of Liverpool and London.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, none of the politically responsible people of the German and Austro-Hungarian empires could bring constructive ideas to bear on the corroding forces of the 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism and class struggle. Social creativity resulted from an image of Man that would have been conscious of the true nature of Man, of the higher spiritual Self. Thus, at the end of the century the basic question remained unsolved; namely, how one could rise above the particular context of language, race, ethnicity or blood that every earth-dweller had been allotted. Nobody could free the Central Europeans from the responsibility of finding an answer to this question.

**After all, the differentiation of European peoples is based not on blood but on soul qualities. It was (or rather, it would still be) the task of today's Europeans to become conscious, to become spiritually aware of these individual soul qualities in order that they can recognise, appreciate and complement each other in their unique affiliation to a soul community.**

In 1836, under the influence of Herder and Goethe, the Slovak Jan Kollar had formulated:  
People and nations, in the best meaning of the word, only become part of humanity through conception of the whole, without which individuals remain only children and tribes only barbarians. Tribes and nations, who avoid influences and contact with others, are like apartments into which no fresh air comes. . . . The life of humanity is development of Reason, or unfolding of the human being's inner world. Nations are forms in which humanity evolves.<sup>35</sup>

Have we left the 19<sup>th</sup> century behind us? Isn't there something familiar to us contemporaries? Do the words of Grillparzer have no more validity for us? Are we able to really *understand* Jan Kollar today?

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## BRIDGES TO A SCIENCE OF THE SPIRIT

towards a new 'scientific' clairvoyance

by Nick Thomas (UK)

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Bringing together a genuine scientific approach and an openness to the spiritual aspect of the world continues to pose an interesting but difficult challenge. There are essentially two false approaches to this, bracketing a more genuine one.

Firstly, it is tempting to apply statistical methods to psychic phenomena, believing thereby that "rigorous science" (statistics!) and spiritual phenomena (psychic manifestations) are thereby brought together (numerous examples exist in the literature of the Society for Psychic Research and other organisations). Such an enterprise is far from worthless, but it needs to be recognised for what it is, and that is, NOT spiritual research.

Secondly, it is attempted to interpret standard scientific findings in terms of ancient mysticism e.g. *The Toa of Physics* by Fritjof Capra. *The more difficult middle way* requires the human being involved in the research to undergo self-development, to acquire direct spiritual percepts in conjunction with a new type of thinking.

The main problem with the first approach is that in the end it is not spiritual phenomena that are studied, but physical phenomena that are believed to be anomalous, and thus in need of an intervening spiritual cause acting over and above the laws of Nature. Spiritually aware people know that the whole world of Nature is in any case a manifestation of the spiritual, so in that sense such an approach represents nothing new i.e. that the spirit manifests outwardly is already obvious, except that it does so in harmony with physical laws.

Furthermore, the philosophical problems concerning "intervention" are formidable. Were intervention possible and necessary then some form of dualism would be unavoidable as the whole notion implies that the spiritual agents are unable to manifest in the normal course of Nature and must resort to other methods. This assumes two kinds of physical phenomena: those in harmony with physical laws and those which flout them, hence dualism. Those espousing such a research method hope (and who cannot sympathise) to demon-

strate that spiritual agents exist, and are effective. The dualism implied, however, results either in acceptance by occultists, who in any case believe in all manner of "hidden factors", or in rejection by scientists seeking a rational approach to the understanding of Nature which eschews *ad hoc* interventions and the like.

The widely acknowledged work of Capra and like-minded souls involves a different kind of problem. Reverting to ancient mysticism is attractive for it has the authority of something old and is rooted in the truly great spirituality of the past. In the end it ignores, however, the possibility that the spiritual 'itself' evolves and in particular it ignores the spiritual impact of the Christ Impulse. What partially justifies it, on the other hand, is most interesting for there are deeper reasons why it is attractive. We will return to this after a sketch of the middle way.

Dr Rudolf Steiner was very concerned to give to humanity a method of research that is both scientific and spiritual and which is capable of reaching genuine spiritual facts of which this culture is in great need. When issues are approached such as: the ethical implications of the Human Genome Project - deciding when a foetus is so far developed as to be a distinct human being; whether euthanasia is morally justified and so on, then actual knowledge of the spiritual aspect is indispensable. Otherwise at best vague ethical principles are invoked which usually do not withstand economic and other pressures, or at worst mere utilitarianism prevails. Perhaps a most notable such issue concerns the cloning of a human being. Generally it is supposed that this would be wrong, but a group in the USA has declared its inten-

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## NOTE TO READERS

Readers may find frequent reference by authors to Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), a European philosopher/scientist.

Distinguished author/academic, **Owen Barfield** - one of a celebrated group of writers which included Charles Williams and J.R.R. Tolkien, who met in the Cambridge chambers of C.S. Lewis in the 1920's - when asked why he laid so much emphasis on Dr Steiner's work, said:

**"If one wanders in a parched desert, does one complain that water only rises from one spring?"**

We are still passing through a period of intense scientific materialism, a period when even 'idealism' is based upon materialistic assumptions. For those who have critically studied Dr. Steiner's work, it quickly becomes a source of great scientific insight, and, as observed by Russell Davenport, one time editor of Fortune magazine,

**"That the academic world has managed to dismiss these works as inconsequential and irrelevant is one of the intellectual wonders of the twentieth century"**

It is right, therefore, that we should address this imbalance, even while acknowledging the progressive institutes where this is changing. Trans Intelligence does not promote dogma or personality. While it regards the communication of these ideas to be vital, it equally holds that each individual must orientate themselves to these on the basis of their own freedom.

Owen Barfield (see: <http://www.owenbarfield.com>)

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