

The Meditation for Eurythmists

some initial thoughts

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At the beginning of the last lecture of *Eurythmy as Visible Singing* [GA278], Steiner rather wistfully admits that it is 'just a beginning, perhaps only an attempted beginning'. It is possible, after all, that the inauguration of a new art may not take root in humanity. Are we also led in such an expression as 'a beginning' to the spiritual source? This could involve recognition of the historical revelation of the Mystery of Golgotha and the subsequent events, of which anthroposophy renews our understanding. This source lies hidden in the Meditation for Eurythmists, [1] which speaks of 'the thinking of my head', 'the word of my feet' and 'the singing of my hands' (the entire limb is no doubt implied; Steiner used some Austrian expressions throughout his life). These three activities are related to three manifestations, 'the heavenly power of light', 'the earthly forces of weight' and 'the forming might of the air'. Heaven, earth, and the human being are linked in a comprehensive, reciprocal activity. Here the Great Triad of Far-Eastern tradition is renewed in the context of eurythmy. But are the heart and the lungs and their rhythmic activities omitted, or are they somehow present in the formulations? We approach a solution below.

<i>Ich suche im Innern</i>	I seek within [me]
<i>Der schaffenden Kräfte Wirken,</i>	the activity of creative powers,
<i>Der schaffenden Mächte Leben.</i>	the life of creative forces.
<i>Es sagt mir</i>	The earthly force of weight
<i>Der Erde Schweremacht</i>	speaks to me
<i>Durch meiner Füße Wort,</i>	through the word of my feet;
<i>Es sagt mir</i>	the forming might of the air
<i>Der Lüfte Formgewalt</i>	speaks to me
<i>Durch meiner Hände Singen,</i>	through the singing of my hands;
<i>Es sagt mir</i>	the power of heavenly light
<i>Des Himmels Lichteskraft</i>	speaks to me
<i>Durch meines Hauptes Sinnen,</i>	through the thinking of my head,
<i>Wie die Welt im Menschen</i>	how the world in the human being
<i>Spricht, singt, sinnt.</i>	speaks, sings, thinks.

(tr. A.S.)

NB *wie* (l. 13) should be translated 'how' (not 'so'). The German construction may not be immediately understandable when retained in English: the pronoun *es* ('it') of ll. 4, 7 and 10 stands for the nominative phrase making up the line that follows (for example, ll. 4-5 could be expressed more prosaically: 'the heavy weight of earth tells me...'). The given German construction, on the other hand, does allow more subtle and rhythmic meanings to be felt. The three 'tells me' of the verse culminate in the concluding 'How the world in man...'

In what follows, some thoughts on the question of the source is offered, based on GA279, the speech-eurythmy lecture-course. Steiner introduces the Meditation by declaring it to be 'drawn from the secret nature of the human organization' (p.223). This prepares us, not for information, but for ultimate considerations.

(i) Self-knowledge, not mere introspection, is sought. Steiner's phrase can only refer to the divine, creative personality (the Spirit) within His created image, the human being. [2] Put another way, the 'I' opens up, or grows into, the all-embracing Divine 'I'. Steiner reveals to the eurythmists how the human being was created: 'God eurythmizes, and as the result of His eurythmy there arises... the beautiful human form out of movement' (p.36f.). Primeval humanity called 'the realization... of that which is divine within him...: A ('ah')' (p.32). We moderns re-acquire reverence for our humanity as a pure and sacred thing; an eternal manhood lives in the Godhead. This is also a cabbalistic thought (the account of creation, *Sepher Yetzirah*, is mentioned in GA278 [Stourbridge 1996], Appendix 7).

(ii) The 'seeking within' for creativity at the outset implies the human condition, known as fragmentation, apostasy, or sin according to the perspective. Steiner describes in detail the effects of the Fall of Man on the sense-organization, [3] and more basically in *The Philosophy of Freedom*. The attitude 'I seek outside' for the source and revelation, which once characterized the Hebrew preparation for the Incarnation ('The Word becoming flesh is the *first* Michael revelation'), has now to change because conditions have changed. Steiner describes the 'the flesh becoming Spirit... that it may be able to dwell in the kingdom of the Word in order to behold the divine mysteries... must be the *second* Michael revelation'. [4] Today we need criteria with which to judge what we do, if we claim to be free creators. In the Michael age, we have to spiritualize spatial concepts. [5] The Meditation is full of 'activity'; active listening ('speaks to me through...') in eastern terminology is the pole of *Wu-Wei*. Intellectual reflection or speculation, or indeed passive inactivity is nowhere evident.

(iii) The whole question is resolved by a recognition of the threshold to the spiritual world. For everyday affairs and the world of applied science, too, the threshold is represented by the epidermis, my skin. This temporary solution will not survive importation into other areas, including any artistic life that has something to do with the mysteries. The threshold has been described as existing between the activity of thinking and its product, thought (Coleridge/ O. Barfield). For practising eurythmists, this is localized at the point of departure itself. Certainly, Steiner points out, the spirit may be found in nature, but it is under 'veils' and needs 'disenchanting' from its spell (R. Steiner, lectures Munich 15 & 17.2.18 [GA271]). In short, all and every recognition of spirit 'outside' is only possible through the recognition first 'within'. The training and using of 'his or her body as an instrument' follows as a consequence of developing consciousness of the point of departure. The TAO eurythmy-exercise, for example, points to this fact, and is 'a wonderful means of making your *inner* bodily nature flexible, inwardly supple, and able to be artistically fashioned for eurythmy' (GA278, I, p.63).

(iv) The productive law of polarity (by no means confined to Neoplatonic thinking) is already present in the next two lines of the Meditation which both contain the word 'creative'. 'Everything in the world is formed as a polarity,' Steiner claims (GA276, p.79; tr. corrected). The life of the Godhead spans eternity (cf. Rev 22, 13; Rom 11, 36). By bridging the polarity God-man, Christ becomes for humanity the one mediator to the Father-God, our one mode of access. He has been connected to the human race from the beginning. 'God has wonderfully ordained our natural state,' sums up Austin Farrer, [6] 'and more wonderfully has redeemed it.' And just as there ever has been, as Alpha, so as Omega there forever shall be, a divine-human Christ. This title (Christ - 'the Anointed One') refers to the Being who is the activity of God, whose life is the perfect sacrament. (If in these lectures, understanding of musical terms like 'major' and 'minor' is to be extended, there is a precedent for other areas of life, too, such as physiology and worship. And in all terms, for example, whether

'minor stream' and 'major stream', activity' and 'life' or 'body and blood', there is no occasion to leave the concrete, experiential realm for some mystical meaning.) In the Meditation, 'activity' and 'life' witness to the regenerate life of the Risen Christ, which has been available to humanity since the first Pentecost. (Is the re-creative 'breathing' [Jn 20, 22] experienced at the point of departure? For E Rittelmeyer, every breath could be an experience of communion. [7]) Both 'activity' and 'life' are freely available for human 'form' and 'singing'. Precisely here in the Meditation, we may experience the lungs and the heart with their vital rhythmic functions, as seat of the personality ('me') that links us to the Divine (named as 'I'). The limbs (and the head) are linked to, and proceed from, this human-divine centre. The angle-gestures, for example, are centred here (GA277a, p.68) not, for example, between the feet as is clear from the diagrams and even from the arithmetic ($30 \times 6 = 180$).

(v) If, as Steiner tells, the Second Advent is taking place today, it is confirmed by virtue of inner recognition. Like St Paul's Damascus experience so frequently referred to by Steiner, it is not essentially an outer event. It is the same Logos-Christ, who was God's agent when He spoke (Gen 1, 3) the creation, who Himself walked the earth experiencing its weight, speaking-singing, singing-speaking with a human larynx, who is returning. Eurythmy (understood in the widest sense) is His language, both speech and music, 'form' and 'singing', Body and Blood; if 'God eurythmizes', then that heavenly eurythmy is identical with the Logos ('Reason' and 'Word') which became flesh. The entire alphabet appears to be 'the missing word' of esoteric tradition; it is the Alpha and Omega, the Human Being himself. Steiner refers to the Logos-teaching of the Prologue to John's gospel (GA279, p.23).

(vi) Elsewhere Steiner calls his theory of knowledge 'Pauline' Austin Farrer contributes a revealing comment:

Now if Christ's death had just been something that a man consented to and underwent, it would have been a pattern for our imitation, and no more. But because it was an act of God, it had in it an infinite power, to the radiation of which no limit can be set. Christ's dying into life [Rom 6, 10] has the power to carry us all through the same motions; and so, what we have to do is not simply to imitate, but to adhere: to take hold, by faith, of this strong swimmer in the gulf of death, who not only supports us, but makes us swim with him. For we do not hold him with our hands; we consent that he should hold us by his spirit. And his spirit is an invisible bond which has this strange power, that it *links our hands to his hands, our feet to his feet, our heart to his heart*: in such wise that, without visible contact, our hands move as his hands move, and our feet follow the motions of his feet; and yet we are not dragged through the movements we make, we make them freely; for our heart is linked to his heart; it all comes from there. [8]

Farrer uses the mighty word 'faith' which Steiner names as 'the basic force in our astral body', and calls 'the musician in us'. [9] Faith, St Paul remarks, is born 'by hearing'; do we not hear melody and message in faith's awakening 'through a word of Christ' (Rom 10, 17)? After all, the dual activity of eurythmy also stems from the one source. Farrer also summarizes St Paul's doctrine of the Body:

The full gift of the Spirit is only possible in and with that [gift] of the body. That body is its home, as the sun is the home of the sunlight: yet it can shine abroad – outward in the dimensions of space, from our Lord's Glorified Body to our mortal bodies: *backward in the dimension of time, from our true and ultimate being to what we now are*. There two participations – in what Our Lord already is, and in what we ourselves are to become – are themselves complementary and inseparable. [10]

The Resurrection of the Body is not a question of apparitions; for 'St Paul it is his philosophy, his standard of conduct, his secret of victory... the keystone in the arch of Divine manifestation'; upon the resurrection the story of humanity turns. [11] The Body has been taken through weight and death and made a new creature; here is the growing-point of eurythmy, too. Farrer's comments illuminate a difficult phrase in the *Ton-Kurs*: 'the gestures of music [eurythmy] have to flow back [i.e. in time] into the human being' (GA278, lecture I). Here is the secret of why art is forever 'an attempted beginning', ever a renewed creation. In normal speech and gesture (Steiner relates in the passage below), we barely begin to be free of gravity, of weight. The Meditation speaks not only of 'heavenly light' but of 'earthly force of weight'. It is the taking hold of that very weight and air and light through the 'I' seeking within, which is crucial. The weight, air and light themselves are transmuted. The activities of 'weight, air, light' is the one side; the activities of 'feet, hands, head' is the other side, of a comprehensive, sacramental unity. What is celebrated is not the original creation (St Paul's 'natural body'), but the spirit humanized ('I seek within [me]') in terms of the body. By seeking 'within' in love (centred in the heart), I re-find the 'world'. Ultimately the living unity is the same as that of John chapter 17, where self-donation (love) is completely personalized. There is neither split nor evasion, but incarnation and revelation.

(vii) The completely human 'art for everyone' (R. Steiner, lecture Dornach 7.10.14) contributes its part in the complete re-uniting of 'heavenly' and 'earthly' in a new creation:

Now it is especially charming when the process which lies at the basis of language (the drawing into the region of gravity of the super-earthly human being who is free of it), appears from the other side. That is, when we try to free the burden (which is within our movement-organism and which is only made free from the earthly influence in a completely elementary way, in a weak fashion, with every step, with every hand and arm gesture) when we try to become completely free from the earthly [pull], when we lead over singing into movements that are rhythmic and metrical. We lead over the most expressive human movements of the arms and hands from gestures laden with gravity into free gestures. Thereby we see in the human being something quite special. By looking on the organism which stands on the earth in which the forces of gravity insert themselves, we see how the human being continuously overcomes gravity through the force of his soul.

Speech (the sounds of speech) becomes an abstract means of expression through the human being's placing himself into gravity. [However], in that which is attempted when gravity is overcome in living gesture through the arms and hands [to become] a speaking, the human being achieves the *contrary* of what the sounds of speech do. With the sounds of speech he carries heaven down to the earth, as it were inserting heaven into the earth. With eurythmy, which comes to its revelatory gestures through a meaningful overcoming of gravity in the human organism of movement, the human being tears away (*entreißt*) the earthly element of his own existence and expresses what lives in his soul. In every single eurythmical gesture he asserts up to a point: I bear a heavenly human being within my earthly human being.

If we would express this a little pictorially, we would have to say: With *normal* gestures, where the human being expresses what he wants to say in an unostentatious way alongside the sounds of language, angelic beings help the human being to support his earthly language. But if that which in normal daily gesture is transferred into the *articulated* gestures of eurythmy, then what you see (when it is conceived as transferred into the language flowing from being to being) is actually that which the

archangels speak to each other [cf. R. Steiner, lecture 11.3.23 in GA222]. [12]

The verb '*entreissen*' = lit. 'tear away' (cf. St Paul's 'stripping off', Col 2, 11). The human being does not identify with 'the earthly element', which is destined to become a slag heap of cosmic dust (GA134, Hanover 31.12.11). No, the human being is to 'tear away' from the force of gravity or weight within matter, which has brought over-materialization; a 'meanignful overcoming' is Steiner's phrase. Both error and death have entered our experience; eurythmy is to be 'a corrective influence' to naturalism and schematization in art (GA278, lecture 3). Evasion and escape are never even suggested. The weight, air and light are themselves transmuted through the soul expressing that which it has learnt from its stand against the insistence of matter (GA278, I, p. 40).

'If we are to make our way to eurythmy,' declares Steiner, 'we must of course be able to love the visible realm' (GA2787, I, p. 55; 'love' is used four times in contrast to the word 'hate' which is used six times to describe J. M. Hauer's negative attitude). Nothing less is meant than the transforming love of the consciousness-soul. Freedom and love almost become interchangeable terms as they merge in the unity of the human ideal, present in the Meditation: 'the world' (the World-, or Cosmic-I) 'in the human being/ speaks, sings, thinks.' The Meditation for Eurythmists follows the reconciling pathway of incarnation and manifestation (or revelation), for in truth they are one and the same. The 'pure' or 'single' heart (cf. Matt 5, 8) achieves the unity of vision which supersedes all division (including Cartesian dualism). These fourteen lines are comprehensive, and it is hard to imagine they will ever be superseded.

[A] The first sentence (A: three lines), starting from personality (1 line), passes to polarity (2 lines).

[B] Next, a trinity of activities in communion with the world is described in two triads of dual expressions (B: 3 x 3 lines). The three-line pattern in the German hints respectively at the purgative, illuminative and unitive way, as do the three main parts of the Meditation itself.

[C] Thirdly, it ends with the world and self in a purified, creative harmony that expresses participation in the fellowship of the Three-in-One (C: 2 lines). In the German, the three words of the last line contain the one vowel with which the very first word begins. Everything mentioned is related to creative activity, manifesting through the 'I' in human movement. The seeking 'I' eventually earns the right to recognize (because of its own involvement) 'how the world in the human being/ speaks, sings, thinks'. In other words, the 'I' has enlarged its heart by reconciling the polarities of existence. That seat of consciousness is the place of meeting, both in this world and the next. [13]

In GA279, Steiner concludes: 'When people will see in beauty the spirit working in human movement (*Formen*, lit. 'forms, figures'), then this will make some contribution to the whole attitude which humanity through anthroposophy should take up towards the spirit' (p. 241); 'humanity' entire, for (as Coleridge insists), we all can share in 'the One Life, Within us and Abroad'.

Dates of lectures are given day/month/year.

RSP = Rudolf Steiner Press, London. AP = Anthroposophic Press, New York.

[1] *The Meditation, given 11.8.24, is pub. in Eurythmy as Visible Speech (RSP 1956) GA279, Lecture 14, p.224.*

[2] *See Dom Gregory Dix, The Image and Likeness of God (Dacre Press, Westminster 1953).*

[3] *R. Steiner, The World of the Senses and the World of the Spirit, lectures Hanover*

27.12.11-1.1.12 [GA134].

- [4] R. Steiner, *The Mission of the Archangel Michael* [GA194], *lecture Dornach 22.11.19* [AP 1961], p.34.
- [5] R. Steiner, *lecture Dornach 17.6.14*, in *Man and the World of the Stars...* [AP 1963].
- [6] A. Farrer, *The Glass of Vision*, [London 1948] p. 149.
- [7] E Rittelmeyer, *Das Heilige Jahr* [Stuttgart 1928], pp.146-9; E. T. in MS.
- [8] A. Farrer, 'Atoning Death' in *Said or Sung* [Faith Press, London 1960], p.68; U.S.A. title, *A Faith of Our Own* [World Pub., Co. 1960].
- [9] (i) R. Steiner, *lectures Nuremberg 2-3.12.11*, GA130 (Steiner Book Centre, N. Vancouver) also *The Golden Blade 1964* [RSP], pp.1-26. (ii) R. Steiner, *lecture Stuttgart, 10.4.24 a.m.*, GA308 [RSP 1968].
- [10] A. Farrer, 'Eucharist and Church in the New Testament' in *The Parish Communion*, ed. A. G. Hebert [SPCK, London 1957], p.79, *emphases added*.
- [11] H. Scott Holland, *Miracles* [Longmans, London 1911].
- [12] R. Steiner, *The overcoming of the forces of gravity through eurythmy*, *Introduction*, Dornach 8.7.23, [GA277a] pp.365-370, E.T. in *Newsletter Assoc. of Eurythmists*, GB-Forest Row, Summer 1997.
- [13] '[T]he beings of spirit-land reveal themselves to him not through outer organs, but from within, like his own ego in the act of self-awareness...' (R. Steiner, *Occult Science/ Esoteric Science*, Chap. 3, tr. Adams p.88; tr. Monges p.81; tr. Creeger p.96f. – 'rather than' is an inaccurate tr. of nicht durch = 'not through' outer organs).