

Shakespeare, Novalis, and their Succession: A Canonical History for our Time

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There are perhaps, in the end, as many canons of literature as there are seriously engaged readers of literature, each of whom will in their own way, and at some point, have inevitably come into some vision of how the history of literature, and indeed of human culture, unfolds. There are many such canons, but in my own life's work as a critical reader of literature and of culture, it would appear that I upheld one as the most significant of all for our time. It turns out that I have taken my own position in this respect, but this would hardly deny the intrinsic worth of many another canon that has been or will be championed or brought forward as offering other insights and inroads into the forbidding mysteries of historical succession. In the case of the canon I bring forward, a very good number of other authors are concerned, but the two that have stood out as the Jachin and Boaz among the lot are Shakespeare and Novalis.¹

A typical pantheon of the most representative authors across the epochs will have highlighted Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe, especially in connection with, respectively, *The Iliad*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Hamlet*, and *Faust*. To round things out in respect of range of accomplishment, one might, and perhaps should, also add to this supreme list of works, in the case of Homer *The Odyssey* and in the case of Shakespeare his three other "great tragedies," namely *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. It is easy enough, in going from Homer to Dante, to see the transition from Pagan to Christian, covering the first half of human history, if you like. The second half sophisticates further, as we enter, in the case of *Hamlet*, emblematically into the idea of the Modern Consciousness, as a sphere of experience distinct from anything that comes before in human history. In time, this idea is in turn completed, as it were, by the projection of a Supernal or Higher Life hypothesized to arise out of the Modern Experience as a further possibility, most representatively, it is thought, in the case of *Faust*. However, if the other great tragedies by Shakespeare are accommodated into this picture, along with *Hamlet*, and as perhaps should be the case, then the paradigm alters and another idea emerges beyond the more narrow focus on the experience of Modern Consciousness. This is the idea of a comprehensive encounter with Tragedy in the whole depth of human nature, both atavistically and in the

¹ *Jachin*, Hebrew for "He will establish" / *Boaz*, "In him is strength." [We are returned to this characterization in 'Endnote 1' to this paper. Ed.]

present. From this point of view, Goethe's *Faust* cannot serve as an authentic case of a more complete experience in our historical continuum, for it is well known that Goethe eschewed a final encounter with Tragedy, and is indeed famously associated with the idea of "The Avoidance of Tragedy,"² which dispossesses him of any triumphant or additionally progressive role we might be assigning to him in that continuum.

More to the point of the history we are tracing, if we look still deeper into Shakespeare's Tragedies, is the idea of Tragic Romance. All of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, in the main tragedies we have isolated, experience Tragedy in the end especially in relation to the Death of the Beloved (Hamlet in relation to Ophelia, Othello to Desdemona, Lear to Cordelia; this will be found to be so even in the case of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth³). This is why when Shakespeare re-emerges after the tragedies in his later plays, the central focus is on this Death (the death of Thaisa, the death of Hermione, the death of Prospero's wife); this Death being by that point, and only at that point, at last resolved (for, by now, this is a Death that is not the Tragic End, rather the Death that leads onwards and is transformed to greater Life).⁴ Romance, in our terms—which is to say, in its association with a totalizing *ideal* of love—is, in fact, a *late* development in Western culture, originating as late as the end of the 12th century (as C.S. Lewis, for one, was among the first to demonstrate conclusively some years ago⁵). Romance, in this sense, is the main idea to be associated with the second half of our historical continuum, *along with*, thanks to Shakespeare's resurrection of the matter, harking back also to the ancient world, the whole depth of human Tragedy.⁶ The compound idea that emerges from this wildly unhappy coupling of spheres we have identified as Tragic Romance. Out of this most representative of ideas in this latter-day epoch of ours emerges—as we have seen, from the whole pattern in Shakespeare—the further idea of the Higher Life that comes from *it*. Such a paradigmatic account is to be distinguished from the classic picture we have cited of a Supernal Life arising out of Modern Experience, as represented in Goethe, in the two parts of his *Faust*.

In the alternative paradigmatic line we are tracing, Goethe is already upstaged by Shakespeare, who, unlike Goethe, takes himself fully through Tragedy. In the last scene of the First Part of *Faust*, Goethe comes indeed to the limits of a Modern Experience of Tragedy, but

² See the essay by Eric Heller in *The Disinherited Mind*, 1957.

³ Lady Macbeth's death, when announced to him, being spoken of by Macbeth ironically: "She should have died hereafter," but lived through bitterly, for by this point, in the context of Macbeth's horridly hopeless struggle—"in blood/Stepped in so far," as he puts it—her death strikes him as superfluous, having passed beyond the possibility of his attending to it.

⁴ More on this theme below.

⁵ In *The Allegory of Love*, 1936. See also Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, 1942, orig. pub. 1939.

⁶ In Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth, atavistically.

in the opening Prologue to the Second Part (published some 25 years later), Tragedy is eschewed: it is treated as having been, as it were, but a bad Dream. What follows in this Second Part is the seemingly limitless account of a Supernal Life that is nothing other, and nothing less, than a grand Phantasmagoria incorporating what had become, by then, Goethe's many-minded poetic concerns and initiatives, such as he thought additionally possible to Modern Man, beyond Tragedy. In this Second Part, Modern Consciousness, in its characteristic, free detachment, has intervened to overrule the historical constraints of Tragedy, which had always imposed a form of Judgment or Limitation on human nature that it was understood would have to be reckoned with if human nature were ever really to come free and inherit any Brave New World.

Goethe's later concerns and initiatives take the form, contrarily, of a great Review of Western Civilization in both its medieval and classical components—brought to one head, in *Faust*, in the uneasy and finally unworkable association of Faust and the spirit of Helen of Troy—a Review that may be held to be itself but another Dream. Even Rudolf Steiner, who otherwise made a good deal of the significance of Goethe for our time, towards the end of his life pointed out this limitation in him:

*He went away finally from the Spiritual Soul [i.e., the prospective Higher Soul of our time that is locked away in Modern Consciousness] to the Intellectual or Mind-Soul [the Higher Soul of the classical-medieval era], which was gradually dying out ...*⁷

To summarize the point: as Goethe embodied this, there was the possibility of a further Supernal Life for the Modern Consciousness cut out of an Imaginative Re-kindling of the classical-medieval era's deepest forays into the realms of Nature and Spirit. However, this additional Life could only be itself a Dream, as it was soon to be “dying out.”⁸ At the same time, this possibility, as Goethe conceives of it, builds on a categorical rejection of Tragedy that will not be easily accepted by many. By the end of Part One of *Faust*, the tragic horrors for Margaret and for Faust have accumulated, as Goethe himself fully recognized. His response to this? Pointless to imagine that any of that could be resolved, so it will be best to wash it all off and forget. This is how he puts it:

Considering the horrors that [at the end of Part One] had descended upon Gretchen and their necessarily devastating aftermath upon the whole soul of Faust, I had no other recourse than to

⁷ See his “Michael Letters,” no.13, in *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*, tr. George and Mary Adams, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1985, 129.

⁸ Faust in Part Two alludes to this Life, of which he is Goethe's chief exemplar, as “an added living-space for man,” and he boasts that: “I work that millions may possess this space.” See the 2009 edition of *Faust Part Two* in Penguin, 258, 269.”

*paralyze my hero utterly, consider him annihilated, in order then to kindle a new life out of this apparent death. I was obliged to seek the assistance of those beneficent and powerful spirits we are accustomed to think of in the form and character of elves. It is all compassion and deepest pity. There is no sitting in judgment, and no asking whether he deserves it or not as might be the case if they were human judges.*⁹

And so does Faust happily re-emerge from the horrid depths of his tragic life. He is exhorted, by this Choir of Spirits, in spite of all, to “rise [“from sleep”] to wish and will unclouded ... in high resolve that banishes misgiving.”¹⁰ And so does Faust indeed have recourse, at last, to the overriding Spirit of Nature all around him: “the blend of joy and sorrow confounds us/Sends us to earth: to veil our troubled state.” Looking benignly on Nature’s unresisted spectacle, Faust, “heart elate,” can now consider “how splendid” it is “[t]o see the rainbow rising from this rage.” Such final, beneficent treatment has been thought to be the rule with all of Goethe’s potentially tragic heroes:

*When the crisis is over, they are at one again with the spirit of Nature. They are not purified in a tragic sense, not raised above their guilt through atonement, but enter, as it were, a biologically, not morally, new phase of life, healed by oblivion and restored to strength through the sleep of the just.*¹¹

The Just, then, are already Just and remain Just, in whatever pass they may have found themselves, and Margaret (Gretchen) may, as for her Life, simply be sacrificed to Them. Through her tragic fate, she is herself (one is never shown how) transformed and need only re-appear, in the briefest show of her beatitude at the very end of *Faust*, as the “Una Poenitentium [“One of the Penitents”] once called Gretchen.” So much for her in the meantime.¹²

Goethe’s rejection of Tragedy was, in fact, a betrayal of himself, for *Faust Part One* is Tragedy in the fullest sense.¹³ At the end of Part One, Faust may not have died, but his tragedy

⁹ Quoted by David Constantine in his “Introduction” to the 2009 edition of *Faust Part Two* in Penguin.

¹⁰ See the Penguin *Faust Part Two*, 24-25.

¹¹ Eric Heller, from “Goethe and the Avoidance of Tragedy, in *The Disinherited Mind*.

¹² For more on Goethe’s notable evasion of responsibility for tragedy or the encounter with guilt, see my monograph, *The New School of the Imagination: Rudolf Steiner’s Mystery Plays in Literary Tradition*, 2007, 3-6, at:

https://www.academia.edu/108697118/The_New_School_of_the_Imagination_Rudolf_Steiners_Mystery_Plays_in_Literary_Tradition

¹³ As I have demonstrated in “Re-claiming Goethe for Tragedy: The Outstanding Case of *Faust Part One*,” in *Tragical Historical: Late Essays in Western Cultural History*, 2023, at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365842850_Tragical_Historical_Late_Essays_in_Western_Cultural_History_from_Boethius_to_Beckett

is already fully accomplished. His situation compares significantly with that of Hamlet who, returned from his own voyage abroad, at the beginning of Act Five is suddenly apprized of Ophelia's death. By the end of that Act, Hamlet will be dead. Otherwise Faust's tragic fate as a slave to Mephistopheles is already sealed in the manner of Dr. Faustus at the end of Christopher Marlowe's play. Hamlet and Faust do not face up squarely to their guilt, but that hardly means that they do not see how guilty they are: Faust displays his awareness of this more openly even than Hamlet. Shakespeare will bring his tragic hero face to face with his guilt more directly in *Othello* and in *King Lear*, and Macbeth especially stands knowingly accused, guilt overwhelming him beyond even the freedom to bewail his Beloved. In the sequel of his tragedies, and beyond in the later so-called romances, Shakespeare in respect of guilt pursues a course of action, in fact, the direct opposite of Goethe's. The burden of guilt arising from Tragedy is confronted head-on, and, as it were, brought to a head in *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*, where it undergoes a further transmutation through the figures of Pericles and Leontes—precisely through atonement. This further transmutation of Romance and Tragedy into what turns out to be a completely new form of Higher Life, as Shakespeare's later plays embody this, is what makes of him the first chief Exemplar of the second half of the picture of History we are pursuing here.

It is a matter for our understanding of reaching down to the actual basis of this transmutation as well as the specific form it takes in Shakespeare which is an entirely new development unique to this later epoch in History. It is a development pivotally exemplified in Shakespeare, but not until the coming of Rudolf Steiner, who worked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is the basis and form of this transmutation at last fully accounted for in theoretical terms. This is after the long process of the development of Romanticism had intervened further. I have explored this whole situation at some length in my books.¹⁴ Shakespeare, in short, points to Steiner, whose account of the possibility of a successful Meeting with The Guardian of the Threshold and the Higher Powers that open up for one *from* such a Meeting—progressively greater powers of Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition, as Steiner denominates them—at last *explains* Shakespeare's exemplary evolution through Tragedy into a new Higher Life such as we find symbolically enacted in his later plays.

¹⁴ Notably in the third section of *Othello's Sacrifice* and in *Prospero's Powers*, both re-printed in *Remembering Shakespeare*, 2016, and in *The Thinking Spirit*, 2007, a theoretical collection focused on Rudolf Steiner and Romanticism intended as a companion-piece to the foregoing. For a convenient, recent summary of my effort, see "Shakespeare's Initiation-Drama in the Light of the Romantic Evolutionary Thought of Rudolf Steiner" at: https://www.academia.edu/144573909/Shakespeares_Initiation_Drama_in_the_Light_of_the_Romantic_Evolutionary_Thought_of_Rudolf_Steiner

Goethe turned away from the horrors into which his Faust had come. Shakespeare, contrarily, *assumes* the horrors of his heroes. We can only imagine what the creator of Hamlet, Othello, Lear, not to mention Macbeth, was left living with in his mind. What can have been involved, to be fully experiencing Tragedy in such terms, and then somehow (after some time) to come out of it into the Higher Life symbolically enacted for us in those later plays? However did Shakespeare come through? We can begin to have some idea of what his experience involved with reference to Steiner's description of the form that a Meeting with the Guardian takes. As for this Meeting, Steiner explains that "[h]owever terrible the form assumed by the Guardian, it is only the effect of the pupil's past life... awakened into independent existence outside himself."¹⁵ For Shakespeare, this "past life" has been, at least more recently, an accumulation of horrors in his mind, from the activity of his own imagination of the abysmal depths of human nature, as conveyed through his tragic creations. Steiner insists additionally that "[a] truly terrible, spectral being confronts the pupil, and he will need all that presence of mind and faith in the reliability of his path of knowledge which he has had ample opportunity to acquire in the course of his training." This would assume a certain "training" of the spirit in Shakespeare that, from what we sense of his genius or natural stature of mind, he could well have achieved for himself, though some exposure to contemporary Rosicrucian culture could very possibly have also been the case.¹⁶ There is no getting around the impact such an encounter with the Guardian must have: "As a rule we cannot enter the spiritual worlds without passing through a deep upheaval in our souls ... We experience a kind of inner shattering ... fear ... anxiety ... horror ... Such a person must be prepared."¹⁷

It is also the case, however, that an encounter with the Guardian, in the strong soul who is prepared for it, brings forth *through its own force* the Higher Self that one will, in one way or another, whether consciously or half-consciously, have in the meantime cultivated in oneself: thus "his *lower self* is before him as a mirror-image ... but within this image there appears the true reality of the *higher Self*."¹⁸ And it is just the point that this Higher Self must be actively at work in this encounter: "He has to direct and lead with his new-born self what he is in his ordinary self and which appears to him in an image."¹⁹ This turns out not to be any easy matter at all: "A sort of battle against the *Doppelgänger* will result ... to establish the right relationship

¹⁵ See *The Thinking Spirit*, op.cit., 112.

¹⁶ Novalis also undergoes an individualized training, as I show in my book on him. See below for details. Such an individual training does not, in the case of these great spirits, preclude building on a universal process. For more on the Rosicrucian connections in Shakespeare's case, see "Prospero's Powers" in *Remembering Shakespeare*.

¹⁷ *The Thinking Spirit*, 113.

¹⁸ *The Thinking Spirit*, 106.

¹⁹ *The Thinking Spirit*, 113.

to this *Doppelgänger* and not permit him to do anything that is not under the influence of his new-born ego.”²⁰ And that is what makes the experience finally “necessary”²¹: “The pupil can exclude what comes from himself only if he has first recognized the image of his own *Doppelgänger*.”²² This difficulty is just what Goethe’s Faust experiences when he stands face to face before the Spirit of the Earth, who assumes the terrible aspect of the Guardian: “O fearful form,” Faust cries out, “I tremble, come not near.” The Spirit will maintain this form throughout this scene only because Faust is unable to rise beyond it. The Spirit’s judgment of Faust at this point determines all the rest of his story in Goethe’s epic drama: “You match the spirit that you comprehend, not me.” Unable to find himself at a higher level, Faust must be thrust back upon himself. Here one might adapt a famous formulation.²³ Faust’s bafflement at the absence in his nature of a further link to the Higher Self—such as would allow him to break through the impasse with the Guardian—is but an expression of his creator’s bafflement in the face of his own inability to rise to such a Self. Goethe, in short, doubted that he had it in him to do this, a gnawing thought that will stand with him right through into the Second Part of his drama, which would be made necessary in its own turn.²⁴

And what of Shakespeare and *his* better fortunes with the Higher Self? The first great moment of self-revelation Shakespeare provides that concerns his emergence into the Higher Life takes the form of the wondrous reunion between Pericles and Marina, as presented in Act V, scene 2 of *Pericles*. This meeting takes place after each character has been through every adversity, at a certain point in a mirror-image of each other (“She speaks, / My lord, that may be hath endured a grief / Might equal yours, if both were justly weighed”—167). On the one hand, Pericles lies in a complete debilitated condition: he is consumed by deepest “melancholy” (177) over his loss of wife and daughter, and has been, even before this, in another deep “melancholy” (65) bearing on his experience of relentless persecution at the hands of the world’s evil (both human and natural).²⁵ Here is a symbolic enactment (simple in outline, yet profoundly apt) of Shakespeare’s deepest immersion in Tragedy up to that point, this “melancholy” invoking the depths of his entanglement in his lower or ordinary self, which has “lived” (vicariously) in subjection to Tragedy. At the time of the meeting with Marina, Pericles

²⁰ *The Thinking Spirit*, 113.

²¹ *The Thinking Spirit*, 113n.

²² *The Thinking Spirit*, 106.

²³ T.S. Eliot’s, who was commenting on “Hamlet and his Problems.”

²⁴ The second part of Steiner’s comment cited in n.7 makes the full point, namely that Goethe “*was able*” in the meantime “to carry over an infinite amount from the Intellectual Soul into the Spiritual Soul.” (Italics mine.) To what extent so is seen in the two large volumes of Steiner’s lectures on *Faust* available from SteinerBooks.

²⁵ Page citations from the edition of *Pericles* as published in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Simon and Schuster, 2005.

presents himself in a state of utter subjection: for fourteen years, from the time of the death of his wife, he has not cut his hair (107), and having learned of the additional death of his daughter years later, he has not washed or shaved, has put on sackcloth (141), and ceased to speak or to listen, eating only as much as is necessary “to prorogue his grief” (163). His condition is at once an embodiment of guilt, a form of protest, and a mode of atonement. Steiner has delineated the form that the initiation-experience takes at this stage: “his *lower self* is before him as a mirror-image.” This is the sphere of the untransformed Imagination, which, as Imagination, is nevertheless already progress in spiritual evolution. And then, “within this image there appears the true reality of the *higher Self*,” what I have elsewhere described as “a first effect of Inspiration working through the world of Imagination.”²⁶ Marina is this Higher Self, which has always been there *in potentia*, and has likewise suffered calamity (“a grief equal yours”), but has remained aloof from it all (“a stranger”—169), and is now called forth. She is no less of noble descent than the concrete human being who has suffered: having a “derivation equivalent”—167, but She appears, contrary to this being in subjection, “Like Patience smiling . . . extremity out of act”—171), and is otherwise “a Palace/For the crowned Truth to dwell in”—169. It is now for this human being to respond and to come forth in relation to its Higher nature, for it is Pericles’s purpose now “to direct and lead with his new-born self what he is in his ordinary self.”²⁷

An extraordinary species of atonement underlies the whole event, and for Shakespeare, who is the one atoning, it has been ongoing. *Pericles* is the atonement-process operating at one level, in respect of the self’s fundamental innocence, for Pericles is never literally guilty of the adverse events that are mounted against him. And yet he is, universally speaking, *held* guilty, in the sense, for example, in which we are all said to have been guilty of an “original sin,” at the time of the Fall. Thus Pericles suspects himself guilty: “mine, if I may call it, offence” (27); “doubting lest he had erred or sinned” (31). He happens only to have stumbled upon knowledge of Antiochus’s incest with his daughter, and this stumbling upon it has made him guilty. And yet, he is not, of course, otherwise directly guilty of anything himself.²⁸ This is one way in which we are, as it were, both innocent, and yet guilty, of Tragedy when it befalls us. To the extent that it befalls Shakespeare’s tragic heroes, even they are in some measure innocent (they are far from being pure villains), and it is this dimension of innocence (of being innocent, if yet still universally guilty) that is addressed in the development of events that concern Pericles. Leontes in *The Winter’s Tale* dramatizes the atonement-process at a level complementary to that in

²⁶ *The Thinking Spirit*, 106n.

²⁷ See *Remembering Shakespeare*, 138 for more on the symbolism of this scene.

²⁸ If Pericles can be said to be personally guilty of anything, it is what one might describe as “wanting out of order,” in seeking the hand of Antiochus’s daughter in the first place, even if without knowing what has transpired between daughter and father. In that episode, Pericles is lost to appearances.

Pericles, inasmuch as the hero of the *Tale* is overwhelmingly guilty and nothing but, this being the other dimension to the experience of Shakespeare's tragic heroes. Shakespeare has, as it were, separated out the whole experience of his heroes in order to have us see better how the further evolutionary development unfolds. For it is only by virtue of what remains innocent in us that the Higher Self in us can be engaged at all, and, even so, then follows a still greater and harder form of confrontation with oneself, in respect of the deep problem of one's guilt, and in Shakespeare who is bearing that guilt with us.

The process of atonement in which Leontes is engaged is altogether straightforward, profound, and also comprehensive. In the play's terms it has proceeded for 16 years, and even when at this time it is brought up that he has done more than enough penance ("No fault could you make/Which you have not redeemed—indeed, paid down/More penitence than done trespass"—195), he himself knows better than to think this can be true ("Whilst I remember/Her and her virtues, I cannot forget/My blemishes in them"²⁹). Here is, once again, an image of the lower, downtrodden, guilty self unable by itself to bring about its redemption, though, in its seeking in the meantime to atone, it opens itself to that possibility. Far more challenging to our understanding in our experience of this play is the role assigned to Perdita, who as the figure of the daughter who was once brought to the brink of death and yet survived, herself embodies the Higher Self, which in the meantime has come through, invoked by the atonement, and come forth at last to bring the process of redemption into being.

Greater possibilities emerge in the Higher Self at this stage that are linked to a Power embodied in Time who literally appears as the Presenter of the play's developments at this point, at the beginning of Act IV (just after the last of the play's tragic misdeeds have taken place). It is a Power that operates through the order of Nature and indeed in every moment of time, and with which the Higher Self is further linked, a Power that it is now Perdita's role to mediate.³⁰ At this stage in the evolution of the Self, the process of Imagination has extended itself further to a point inside "great creating Nature" (139) where a progressive Inspirational order is now revealed within which a higher life is constantly being re-created out of death:

*What you do
Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever. When you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,*

²⁹ All quotations from the edition of *The Winter's Tale* as published in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Simon and Schuster, 2009.

³⁰This Power would appear to be based in Christ Himself: Says Time: "Let me pass/The same I am ere ancient'st order was" (119). Cf. from the New Testament, KJV John 8, 58: "Before Abraham was I am"...

*Pray so; and for the ord'ring your affairs,
To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the' sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that, move still, still so,
And own no other function. Each your doing,
So singular in every particular,
Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds,
That all your acts are queens. (143)*

In Steiner's account of the sphere of Inspiration,³¹ such "acts," or "actions," follow as a consequence of being now inwardly able to "read" from an occult "script" that is, in fact, "heard," and through which the Higher Powers who govern this world communicate their evolutionary purposes ...

[Ed. Text left unfinished; more on these themes below.

[For the draft of an account of how Novalis fits into the evolutionary picture as the author was developing this in the above essay where the focus has been exclusively on Shakespeare, **see Endnote 1** below, p.16: "On Novalis in the Comparison with Shakespeare."

[The Author's Canonical Line: From Shakespeare to Rilke

[From this point the Reader can go on to John O'Meara's books where a full exposition of these themes continues:

first, to *Remembering Shakespeare*, pp.142-144 and 155-178.

thence, to *The Thinking Spirit: Rudolf Steiner and Romantic Theory, A Collection of Texts with Notes*, beginning with Chapter 7 ("The Critique of Goethe") and proceeding from there right through Chapter 9 ("Knowledge of the Higher Worlds.") Authors included in this canon: **Goethe, Novalis, Coleridge, Emerson.**

For the link between **Steiner and Shakespeare**, also presented in *The Thinking Spirit*, see by way of introduction, "Shakespeare's Initiation-Drama in the Light of the Romantic Evolutionary Thought of Rudolf Steiner" at https://www.academia.edu/144573909/Shakespeares_Initiation_Drama_in_the_Light_of_the_Romantic_Evolutionary_Thought_of_Rudolf_Steiner

thence, to *The New School of the Imagination: Rudolf Steiner's Mystery Plays in Literary Tradition*. Authors in this canon: **Wordsworth, Coleridge, T.S. Eliot,**

³¹ See *The Thinking Spirit*, 114-115.

then, to *On Nature and the Goddess in Romantic and post-Romantic Literature*. Authors:
Robert Graves, Ted Hughes, (Shakespeare), Keats, Wordsworth,

thence to **Novalis**, *The Way of Novalis*³²

then to **Rilke**, *Rilke in the Making: A Comprehensive Study of His Life and Work* . . .

* [All material (except for *The Thinking Spirit*) now available for downloading at
<https://independent.academia.edu/JohnOMeara5>]³³

[From the Author's Notes on His Canonical Line

[In the end, in this Succession, Shakespeare points to Rudolf Steiner; Novalis points to Robert Powell, as indicated in the section on “Novalis and his Successor,” from my website, at <http://johnomeara.squarespace.com/riddle> (see details to the Novalis/Powell association in the second half of that page). [See Endnote 2 in the present document—Ed.]

The historical development in going from Shakespeare to Novalis may be described as a *further* evolution, from “a direction towards” to a “coming in of” a New Age in a first stage that receives still more definitive expression in our time in the work of Steiner and Powell, among others.

To put it still more pointedly, both of my authors belong to the Sophianic-anthroposophical stream that comes to expression in our time (i.e., they point, among other things in this stream, to the further association of Steiner and Powell in our time).

[In the meantime, Shakespeare “eclipses” Graves and Hughes in the sphere of engagement with the Goddess, and Novalis “eclipses” Wordsworth and Keats in the sphere of Romantic Imagination.³⁴

³² A close account of Novalis’s ill-fated love and tragic life and the elaborate process of self-work by which, through his experience of tragedy, he made himself at last worthy of the vision of “a New History, a New Humanity.”

³³ As for obtaining *The Thinking Spirit*, see <http://johnomeara.squarespace.com/the-author-in-a-second-stage>

³⁴ [Ed. As a climactic demonstration of Novalis’s more far-reaching powers of Imagination relative to Wordsworth and to Keats, see the chapter “Coming into the Visionary Life” in *The Way of Novalis*, HcP Ottawa, 2014. What Wordsworth laments he can no longer fully live (back) into, Novalis does live (back) into: we are asked to consider, in this respect, Novalis’s greater success with a common perception of the “sea” and “sun” of that otherworld (see p.123). Wordsworth’s limitations are brought forth fully in O’Meara’s monograph on Wordsworth, *This Life, This Death: Wordsworth’s Poetic Destiny*. Keats’s limitations are demonstrated in O’Meara’s *Myth, Depravity, Impasse*, Keats representing the aspect of “impasse” in this study, Graves and Hughes the aspect of “myth,” Shakespeare the additional, confounding consideration of

Both Shakespeare and Novalis have a deeper understanding, than do these other historically eminent authors, of the all-deciding dynamic between Tragic Romance and the Higher Life (for more on this dynamic, see below **Endnote 3**).

[Rilke, for his part, harks back to the inspiration of Novalis, but in a relation of creative misprision that is forced upon him, seeing as he cannot give up the Dead Beloved (the Lou Salome of his early Florentine days): the result is the sublime anguish, creative of another, ambiguous form of transcendence, of the modern, tragic Orphic Poet.

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[Some Basic Concordances: Shakespeare, Steiner, Novalis, Robert Powell]

II	I	III
Shakespeare		
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Pericles</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>
Perdita-Leontes	Pericles-Marina	Prospero-Miranda
Rudolf Steiner		
(<i>The Thinking Spirit</i> ³⁵)		
Inspiration	Imagination	Intuition
(Acts/ Actions)	(Self-ennoblement) ³⁶	(Service to humanity)
<i>The Search for The New Isis,</i> <i>Divine Sophia</i>	³⁷ <i>Knowledge of the Higher</i> <i>Worlds and its Attainment</i>	<i>The Reappearance of Christ</i> <i>in the Etheric</i> ³⁸

“depravity” that further challenges an identification with mythic Imagination that is judged to be, in the end, too easily championed by Graves and Hughes. Neither Wordsworth nor Keats are otherwise at all belittled in this comparison, who are presented as being, in the profound reaches of their respective powers of Imagination, certainly “on the way,” each in his own guise.]

³⁵ For the link between Shakespeare and Steiner, see also the last sections of “Shakespeare's Initiation-Drama in the Light of the Romantic Evolutionary Thought of Rudolf Steiner,” cited on p.10.

³⁶ All three terms in this line draw on Steiner’s own language, as cited in *The Thinking Spirit*, 113-116.

³⁷ The three titles in this line constituting seminal pronouncements by Rudolf Steiner, among many others. See the Rudolf Steiner Archive (<https://rsarchive.org/>) under books and lectures.

³⁸ With reference to Steiner, see also by Sergei O. Prokofieff (grandson to the composer, and a leading expositor in our time of Steiner’s extensive work). *The Heavenly Sophia and the Being Anthroposophia* (a close study of Rudolf Steiner that I comment on in my memoir sequel *The Bereaved Writer*, 2017—see pp.51-54):

II	I	III
Resurrection of the Sophia	Quest for the Sophia and the Meeting with Anthroposophia	Communion with the Living Christ (in the etheric)
		<u>cont’d/p.13 notes</u>

II

Hymns to the Night
(Sophie in the company of
the Mother—Sophia)

Penetrating the Cosmos

I**Novalis**

Philosophical Writings,
Letters, and Diaries³⁹

Penetrating Nature
(the Eucharistic Embrace)

III

Christendom, or Europe
(the meeting with Christ, and
inspiration by the ‘Brother’
who serves the Sophia⁴⁰)

A New History, a New
Humanity

Robert Powell

Astrosophy, or
the New Star-Wisdom⁴¹

⁴²*Cultivating Inner Radiance and
the Body of Immortality*

The Sophia Grail Circle⁴³

II

Hermione
The Winter’s Tale

I**cf. Shakespeare**

Pericles-Marina
Pericles

III

Prospero*
The Tempest

(* For Prospero’s association with a higher Intuitional “service to humanity” and the Damascene (Christ-inspired) experience that is linked to this, all of which is Shakespeare’s own experience since the play’s action is but an allegory of *his* evolution in consciousness, see my account in *Remembering Shakespeare*, pp.161-176 (for the Damascene experience, see p.173).

³⁹ See *The Way of Novalis*, 28ff, for an extensive study of these writings and the elaborate program of self-work they expand on towards one goal: to meet up with Sophie again in death!

⁴⁰ More on this below, p.14.

⁴¹ For the background to such Star Wisdom, see, by Robert Powell, *Hermetic Astrology I*. Lay readers would do well to begin by looking at p.44 bottom through p.49, where the *foundation* of such Star-Wisdom is described, namely *the birth of Christ in the soul* as mediated by the Sophia (cf. Raphael’s *Sistine Madonna*). See especially today the work of Julie Humphreys at <https://steiner.presswarehouse.com/browse/author/2dfa080c-3b9c-4df7-8c0c-c13443f68238/Humphreys-Julie?page=1> Such Star-wisdom has been further applied in the form of the Choreocosmos, or Cosmic Dance, which Powell has developed in great depth over years. See <https://sophiafoundation.org/portfolio/>

⁴² This astounding collection can be said to extend across all of our three categories (**I**, **II**, and **III**) and is, indeed, very much grounded in a relationship to **III**, which is to say, in Christ’s foundational presence in our time.

⁴³ See <https://sophiafoundation.org/portfolio/> Especially notable among Powell’s initiatives, as celebrated in the context of the Sophia Grail Circle, is his institution of the “Mass of the Lamb and His Bride,” to which he devotes an article in the Easter 2020 issue of *The Starlight Journal*, at <https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Starlight-Easter-2020-issue-99p.pdf>

*See, also, *Elijah Come Again* (Powell's big book on Novalis)*

*

Readers may continue with the structural narrative of these “concordances” by going on from here to Chapter 1 of *The Riddle of the Sophia*, as cited below, where the categories are developed in the form of **I** Thought/ **II** Feeling/ and **III** Will.

Deepening our understanding Sophiologically and Christically, the categories extend also to **I** The Holy Soul (the Shekinah)/ **II** Divine or Heavenly Sophia/ and **III** The Divine Mother (Mother Earth), with whom, in Her etheric sphere, Christ is united in His resurrection-body. For more along these lines, see *The Riddle of the Sophia*, as cited below, from Chapter 3, p.37 through Chapters 4,5, and 8.

[From a Note to a Friend:
On Novalis, the Sophia, Shakespeare, and Steiner

Needless to say, I do not in my book on Novalis proceed to a *direct* proof or demonstration of his link to the Sophianic-anthroposophical stream.

That line of demonstration comes from Robert Powell in his monumental book on Novalis, and also in his review of my Novalis book (see https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/starlight%202014%20easter_final_s.pdf pp.58-64).

A direct demonstration is also to be found in Steiner's many esoteric pronouncements about Novalis. See <https://rsarchive.org/Search.php>

In the meantime, I do link Novalis to the anthroposophical method in Chapter 1 of *The Riddle of the Sophia*: see <http://johnomeara.squarespace.com/riddle>

I have also offered an exceptional description by Novalis that would appear to link his experience at that time directly to the work of Robert Powell today. See my write-up on Powell that appears at <http://johnomeara.squarespace.com/riddle> (scroll down to the middle of this page):

*He has made a new veil for the Holy Virgin ... whose folds are the letters of her sweet Annunciation, the infinite play of the folds ... a music of numbers... her singing ... the ceremonial call to a new foundation gathering... (from *Christendom, or Europe*)*

This write-up is brought forward in the context of my unpublished article on “The Figure of Novalis's ‘Brother’ in *Christendom or Europe*” that is also given on this page. In the revelatory, pioneering work and mission of Robert Powell in our time, something of this Brother's influence is also being conveyed. [More on Robert Powell in Endnote 2 below—Ed.]

What I do in my full-length study on Novalis is to trace closely the long line of experience and self-work that, over years, leads him at last to his otherworldly vision of the Mother in his *Hymns to the Night*, which vision has definite affinities with the Sophianic stream of experience, as becomes clear from some exposure to that stream (especially the work of Powell in our time). The process of self-work in Novalis also has definite affinities with the anthroposophical method of self-development as set down by Steiner in our time. A distinct parallel can be traced between Novalis's initiation-path and the terms of procedure in this sphere as elaborated by Steiner (see, for example, *The Thinking Spirit*, 82-83, including n.7 and n.8, through to 87, with which compare my account of Novalis in *The Way of Novalis*, 97-98; also *TS*, 105 through 108 and *The Way*, 119.⁴⁴

I suppose one could say the same about my work on Shakespeare: that I never proceed to a *direct* proof or demonstration of *his* link to the Sophianic-anthroposophical stream, except that in his case I explicitly, and at length, bring Steiner into my discussion, in *Remembering Shakespeare* as well as via *The Thinking Spirit*. [In connection with this latter case, see the citation given on p.10 for "Shakespeare's Initiation-Drama in the Light of the Romantic Evolutionary Thought of Rudolf Steiner"—Ed.]

My argument in the case of both of my authors, as for their participation in the Sophianic-anthroposophical stream, is on the basis of analogy and an affinitive concurrence of terms...

All of my books are intended primarily as close literary-critical studies, and in the meantime I have had a longstanding and direct experience of the culture that is associated with the Sophianic-anthroposophical stream, which is what allows me to draw on, and link myself to, some major authors from that stream, in association with my work as a critic.

In the meantime, I never do leave off from the literary-critical method in my books, which always comes first since, as a writer, I see myself primarily as a literary critic.

This is so even in the case of *The Riddle of the Sophia*. I approach the published life-work of the authors treated there primarily as a critical reader, one who is, at the same time, familiar with the world of thought and experience out of which they write...

⁴⁴ [Ed. We compare in this latter juxtaposition of pages the otherworldly "tones" that, from his own experience, Steiner tells us read like "the letters of an alphabet" and Novalis's "music of numbers," which is also heard or read from an occult script written into his experience of the Sophia Mother's "singing."]

[Endnote 1

[On Novalis in the Comparison with Shakespeare

I have spoken of Shakespeare and Novalis as, respectively, the “Jachin” and “Boaz” of the literary canon that I have highlighted in this paper: literally “He will establish” and “in Him is strength.” Shakespeare’s pre-eminence consists in having taken upon himself the full atavistic residue of tragic passion such as humankind had inherited up to that point in its historical progression. All this he takes upon himself vicariously with the intention of offering a “basis” for supposing that all can yet be overcome in a further evolution of suffering consciousness. By the time we reach Novalis, some two hundred years later, in him we find, as it were, a new “strength” such as will allow him to penetrate the higher worlds in an access of straightforward, immediate, and durable visionary power, of which we have no *biographical* record at least in Shakespeare’s own case. That is not to say that Shakespeare would not have experienced his own form of visionary power, and it is always possible that this would have been for him, personally, also of a durable sort like that of which Novalis’s life gives immediate evidence. We cannot know, but it looks more like Shakespeare’s experience was rather of the “rudiments” of such vision, which I have traced to a process of development in higher states of consciousness, later denominated (by Steiner) as “imagination,” “inspiration,” and “intuition.” Still, such states of consciousness, as Shakespeare would have experienced these, were not, as a rudimentary phenomenon, any less creative of a developing higher destiny for humankind already at that time, if not so fully a self-conscious experience for Shakespeare as it would be for Novalis in his time, not to mention also in our own time.⁴⁵

The message we finally derive from Shakespeare was that humankind *can* overcome the worst in its own nature. In this picture, Shakespeare’s specific mission (and it was big one) consisted in “clearing a path,” as it were, out of the confounding atavistic inheritance, on which Novalis could then appear to make it believable that the process of visionary human destiny could indeed be moving further along, for in him *was* the “strength” to show what is finally, really and truly, possible, beyond Tragedy and beyond Romance: the adopted name, Novalis, literally denotes the inheritance of a “clearing”. In Novalis, it would appear that passion is indeed endured “only” inasmuch as there is the suffering *of* the Beloved in her death,

⁴⁵ For more on an essential difference between Shakespeare’s experience and Novalis’s, see (once again) *The Thinking Spirit*, p.113 n.31 and p.114 n.32.

as well as the suffering inflicted on Novalis by her death, which was, all together, horrible enough. But even in the case of Novalis, one can speak of a sense of his share of guilt in this death. Novalis himself suspects this. In a letter to a friend, he raises the issue of the effect his love of Sophie would have had on her, who would appear to have thought it smacking a little too much of passion, and whether this might not at some level have contributed to her death. This effect is viewed as an indication of a height of “good”-ness in her to which he did not measure up, even if he otherwise has nothing to blame himself for as for suspect passion:

*Don't you think, too, that she was too good for me? O! And am I not the distant cause of her death; on this I do not yet reproach myself. About my love, I need not blush—now she knows better, how heartfelt and peerless was my love for her...*⁴⁶

She knows better “now” in death, but did not know this “then” when she was alive. In a written sketch he made of her during her illness, he noted: “My love often oppresses her,” a remark that is immediately followed by: “She is *cold* through and through,”⁴⁷ as if (in part at least) he were registering here an effect that his love had on her by its importunacy. In a letter to another friend, he acknowledges that he was indeed far too attached to an earthly life with Sophie, and that it will be especially difficult for him to live without her on account of this:

*I previously lived in the present and in the hope of earthly happiness ... It will be very hard for me to completely separate myself from this world that I have studied with so much love; the renunciation will lead to many frightful moments...*⁴⁸

And to another friend he laments:

*I loved the earth so much.*⁴⁹

He describes how “her first attack of horrible anxieties” in the face of death was linked to him: “Just beforehand she scolded me, because my heart could not contain itself and had to weep.”⁵⁰

Sophie’s death had, of course, a physical cause; it was brought on by a defective liver, but Novalis’s thought is that on a spiritual level, at some depth, the importunacy in his love, such as it was, would have somehow predisposed her to illness, the consequence of an attachment in him that was somewhat too “earthly” for her “heavenly” nature (to simplify this

⁴⁶ See *The Birth of Novalis: Friedrich von Hardenberg’s Journal of 1797, with Selected Letters and Documents*, tr. and ed., Bruce Donehower, State University of New York Press, 2007, 70

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 62

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 74

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 73

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 68

distinction), and that her being had been corrupted by the “imperfect” form his love took. He had in this highly qualified sense contributed to her death as well as to her anxiety in the face of it, and, by his love, had worsened her suffering.⁵¹ In comparison with all that Shakespeare had borne in his imagination of the full horrible depths of human perversity, one can say that in Novalis’s case it was a matter “only” of what was left of confounding passion in human nature. There would have been at least that much of guiltiness in his experience. But in any case, there was despair enough. There had been a tremendous amount of suffering in the situation they had known together; it was a terrible illness that Sophie supported (exacerbated by a long series of ineffective surgical interventions.) Novalis left us a graphic account of the horror of this scene, to which in the end he found it impossible to bear immediate witness; the contradiction between levels was too great to support:

It was beyond my strength to witness helplessly the horrid struggles of a blossoming young life laid so low, the appalling anxieties of that heavenly being . . . For that reason I summoned up the courage to go away on Friday morning—I could not possibly bear to be present at the terrible scenes that I foresaw were soon to pass . . . I will eternally feel the torment of her suffering.⁵²

Needless to say, after such tragedy, there would have to be a proportionately extraordinary effort of self-work and self-transformation before any full reunion with Sophie would be possible. Novalis’s despair extends to an understanding of the very great distance he would now have to go to be with her again where she now was, and to make himself worthy of being with her there. That he would finally come through in this purpose is our measure of an imaginative strength in him that would have been historically unique. One may even trace the moment in which Novalis finally has his momentous breakthrough. This is many months later in the so-called *General Draft* he had been devoting himself to, in which, among other things, he was working out the whole import of his Tragic-Romantic experience, which he could sense had predisposed him to/had made him worthy of a beginning in outlining what all future human activity would look like in relation to that experience. The moment of breakthrough bears comparison with the great reconciliation of terms, of the lower nature with the higher, that we have traced in the situation between Pericles and Marina, while pointing to far more to come of visionary journeying from there, such as we also find reflected in Shakespeare’s late plays. Novalis had come, at last, to a full understanding, as I put it in my book, that, “morally-speaking the ‘perfect’ can only be grasped in a necessary

⁵¹ Sophie did not become ill until some months after his courtship of her and their subsequent engagement.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 67-69

relation to the ‘imperfect’,” and, as he puts it, that “everything . . . expresses a whole related world.”

Here is another form of representation of the lower, downtrodden, guilty self unable by itself to bring about its redemption, though, in its seeking in the meantime to atone, it opens itself to that possibility. The imperfection, the guilt, is experienced in all sincerity. And then, as Steiner puts it, “within this image there appears the true reality of the *higher Self*—for one to direct and lead, with this new-born self, what he is in his ordinary self”:

. . . the master sees the work that is ostensibly his separated from himself by a gulf of thought—whose breadth he can scarcely grasp—and which only the power of the imagination can cross. . .

A first effect of Inspiration follows from this seminal act of Imagination. Novalis paints the effect in the *Draft* as follows:

*That is why [or how] the veil of the eternal virgin floats around perfection of every kind—which the lightest touch dissolves in magic fragrance, which becomes the cloud-carriage of the prophet.*⁵³

And, as he will narrate the unfolding event as it finally comes upon him in all its fullness, in *Hymns to the Night*:

Away fled the glory of the world, and with it my mourning; the sadness flowed together into a new, unfathomable world . . . [T]he region gently upheaved itself; over it hovered my unbound, newborn spirit. The mound became a cloud of dust, and through the cloud I saw the glorified face of my beloved. In her eyes eternity reposed. I laid hold of her hands, and the tears became a sparkling bond that could not be broken. Into the distance swept by, like a tempest, thousands of years. . .

Possibilities emerge through the creative reach of the Higher Self that are now linked to a Power that operates inside “great creating Nature,” as around the figure of Perdita in *The Winter’s Tale*, where a progressive Inspirational order is now revealed that finally presents the Sophia Mother to him:

*Glory to the queen of the world, to the great prophet of the holier worlds, to the guardian of blissful love! **She** sends you to me, thou tenderly beloved, the gracious sun of the Night. . .*

*I see a grave face . . . that inclines towards me . . . and reveals the youthful loveliness of the Mother. . .*⁵⁴

⁵³ See *The Way of Novalis*, 95ff.

⁵⁴ See *Hymns to the Night*, tr. George MacDonald, Crescent Moon Publishing, Kent, UK 2010, 37-40.

We see indeed how at the centre of Novalis's extraordinary achievement lies the co-opted will of the Sophia Herself with Whom by now his beloved Sophie had become united: the parallel point of development in Shakespeare, who is experiencing this in his own way in historically earlier circumstances, coincides with his presentation of Perdita (re-)uniting with Hermione.⁵⁵

And in *Christendom*, which Novalis goes on to write in this same period, we have an extensive account of all the cultural possibilities that he saw could now follow from the visionary experience into which he had come, further possibilities that are grounded in the discovery of "a new history and a new humanity" in the making. This has its parallel, *mutatis mutandis*, in Shakespeare's own presentation in *The Tempest*, for all of *its* awareness of the many ironies that will continue to attach to this prospect, relative to the condition of human nature as it continues to be at present, but for which the prospect of reform had opened, in both of these authors, as never before...⁵⁶

For a further view of Novalis's full progression in vision (as invoked here and outlined in the Concordances above, p.13) see

https://www.academia.edu/108697658/Novalis_on_Nature_the_Eucharistic_Embrace_and_a_New_Humanity_with_a_Further_Note_on_Novaliss_Brother_in_Christendom_or_Europe

For a comprehensive treatment of the subject, see Chapter 9, "Coming into the Visionary Life," in my full-length book on Novalis: *The Way of Novalis*, at:

https://www.academia.edu/38022374/The_Way_of_Novalis_An_Exposition_on_the_Process_of_his_Achievement

⁵⁵ [Ed. See again footnote 38, above, as well as Novalis's relationship to the content of this note on p.13. Involved at this stage of the initiation-process, in both Shakespeare's case and Novalis's, are moral "acts" or "actions" made possible by reading from an otherworldly, occult script that is mediated by the Sophia Mother. See n.44 above, and p.10 top]

⁵⁶ For more on Prospero's experience of this prospect in his own terms, see my *Remembering Shakespeare*, 172-175. For more on the later phase of Novalis's unfolding vision, see *The Way of Novalis*, 117ff. Novalis's *Christendom* can be found in *Philosophical Writings*, tr., and ed., Maragaret Mahony Stoljar, State University of New York Press, 1997. [Ed. In this way has an altogether new, creative, universal power emerged, after penetration of the otherworldly powers, out of humankind's own, higher identity in this experience. Thus Steiner, in *The Thinking Spirit*, 115: "everything is left in his own hands"; "he must find his way...from out of himself."]

[Endnote 2

[On Robert Powell
as a Successor to Novalis in Our Time

He has claimed that there are, in fact, three great spiritual teachers in our time: Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg, as well as the re-incarnated Novalis who Steiner predicted would appear, by way of bolstering the Anthroposophical Movement, towards the end of the twentieth century. Robert Powell professes to be channelling the influences of this Novalis-figure in mediating also the work of Rudolf Steiner and Valentin Tomberg (Powell having become the legal executor of Tomberg's work).⁵⁷ An instance of this threefold association of influence is to be found in the case of the Foundation Stone Meditation, Steiner's principal bequest to the Anthroposophical Society. Valentin Tomberg gave some of his own most important lectures on the Foundation Stone Meditation, and Robert Powell has extended this line of influence by setting this Meditation to the Sacred Dance of Eurythmy. [1] Novalis's influence today, according to Powell, is principally *in the religious-artistic sphere*. Another instance of the threefold line of influence is represented in the "Prayer Sequence" that is meant to be practised every day. This brings meditations given by Steiner and by Tomberg, along with the traditional prayers of the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary," into an artistic sequence of sacred dance that incorporates direct addresses to the Holy Trinosophia [about which more below] alongside those to the traditional Trinity (as, e.g., in the "Glory Be"). [2] This Prayer Sequence, for anyone who has truly experienced it in the context of the many diverse activities of the Sophia Community generally, constitutes one of the most significant meditational practices of our time.

[1] Eurythmy : a spiritual dance practice based on Rudolf Steiner's spiritual science and created by him under the direct inspiration of Christian Rosenkreutz.

[2] All the stated material can be ordered on-line through the Sophia Foundation of North America website.

cont'd/p.22

⁵⁷ There is the *Meditations on the Tarot* by Anonymous, who was otherwise exoterically known to have been Valentin Tomberg, but much other material some of which can only be obtained through the auspices of the Sophia Foundation of North America.

*

Powell's work generally bears the imprint of the inspiration of the Novalis-Individuality in our time; still more specifically it shows the direct influence of Novalis's 'Brother'—as I present this in my “**Note on Novalis's 'Brother'**” at

https://www.academia.edu/108697658/Novalis_on_Natures_Embrace_and_a_New_Humanity_with_a_Further_Note_on_Novalis_Brother_in_Christendom_or_Europe_2022

In *Hymns to the Night*, in *Spiritual Songs*, and in *Christendom*, Novalis speaks of a “brother,” a “friend,” and a “singer,” an “angelic herald,” all of whom turn out to be one and the same (see *The Way of Novalis*, 117-120). This ‘brother,’ as I show in my “Note”, is none other than the Spirit of Exoteric Christianity who lies behind Novalis's inspiration insofar as this bears on the unfolding of the further implications of Novalis's visions for the development of a full religious-artistic practice for the new age that has arrived. The following passage from Novalis's *Christendom* indicates most clearly the influence of this reigning Spirit who has been active ever since the appearance of Christ, and who re-appeared to Novalis in his time. This Spirit's message: a fresh cultivation of the Sophia's ascending power of presence in our lives, which is now to be further associated with a new scientifically-based, religious-artistic culture:

He has made a new veil for the Holy Virgin ...whose folds are the letters of her sweet Annunciation, the infinite play of the folds ... a music of numbers... her singing ... the ceremonial call to a new foundation gathering...

(Novalis, from *Christendom, or Europe*)

That is the message that has been taken up once again by Robert Powell in our own time. It is a message associated with the positive re-creation, as supported by a renewed creative expression of the Divine Sophia in this later age, of what Novalis describes as “a truly Catholic Christianity,” by which he meant, very strictly, “what Christianity had made of itself (under the influence of the angelic herald who first appears at this point) in the centuries immediately after Christ before the Catholic Church began to corrupt its message,” in other words, that “original time when the Christian religion unified all of Europe until the Catholic Church succumbed to its excesses”—“those truly Catholic or truly Christian times” (*The Way of Novalis*, 119-120).

This Spirit of Exoteric Christianity is also its own gateway in time to a full esoteric experience of the initiation mysteries. It is at once the paradox and the strength of Novalis's world-vision that his philosophically determined “science of the whole” should, in the end, open up an experience of the mysteries for everyone. One way of recognizing the *exoteric* stream in Christian spiritual practice is precisely in the concept of accessibility for all (along

the lines of Novalis's notion of "the general Christian communion," as expressed in *Christendom, or Europe*). Forms of practice are offered in which everyone of good will may immediately participate. In this way the door is opened for all to enter the mysteries. Then, more and more what we find within are the *esoteric* grounds of the practice—as mediated in this case by Robert Powell under the direct guidance of Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg, and the Novalis-Individuality in her incarnation at this time. For as Powell puts it in *The Most Holy Trinosophia and the New Revelations of the Divine Feminine*: "In reality, there is only one Christianity, embracing all those who believe in and love Jesus Christ, extending from the simplest pious peasant to the spiritual masters encircling the Christ [i.e., the Bodhisattvas]," in all of which active engagement the crucial point is the commitment, on every hand, to "an increasing consciousness of the Christian *mysteries*" (p.130).

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In all of which regard, Powell's inspired contributions to a new understanding of the celebration of the Eucharist and Christian liturgy generally, with their profoundly informed interweaving of exoteric *and* esoteric elements, constitute what may be seen as the *middle* sphere of his life's work (corresponding to phase **III** in the Concordances section above). In this middle sphere, the sphere of the so-called 'Sophia Grail Circle,' belongs also Powell's mediation of those forms of eurythmic practice that are designed to help 'Cultivate Inner Radiance' and to build up the 'Body of Immortality' (corresponding to phase **I** in the Concordances section above).—See the select Bibliography below.

Still other dimensions of Powell's prodigious work bear the imprint of Novalis's inspiration: in an *upper* sphere (corresponding to phase **II**), in the form of the highly developed 'Star-Wisdom' he has elaborated, with its link back to what Novalis intimates about an experience in this sphere in his *Hymns to the Night*, as cited by Powell in his big book on the Novalis-Individuality (alluded to above in the "Concordances"), *Elijah Come Again*, p.185: "The star world now is flowing, / As living, golden wine, / Its joys on us bestowing, / Ourselves as stars will shine."

Finally there has also been work in the *lower* sphere, looking still farther beyond where we are today, in the form of 'The Shambhala Path' (to the Earth's center) most recently elaborated, which has appeared as a further extension of the direction Novalis was taking in the last part of his unfinished life: "the mystery that led Novalis into the depths of the Earth as a mining inspector in the region of Thuringia," (*Elijah Come Again*, 192). Powell's foundational work on the Path is available from The Sophia Foundation of North America, as a video presentation at <https://sophiafoundation.org/product/the-shambhala-path/>

*

Among many other publications by Robert Powell, the reader may wish to begin by consulting the following as foundational resources,

1) *The Most Holy Trinosophia and the New Revelations of the Divine Feminine* (2000) (containing Powell's foundational presentation on the Sophia in her *three* aspects as the Heavenly Sophia, the Divine Mother, and the Holy Soul, and on the pivotal role in Her new ascension in our time of the three teachers, Steiner, Tomberg, and the re-incarnated Novalis.) See also, representatively, Powell's article on "Stages of the Incarnation of Sophia Leading to the Rose of the World," at <https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Starlight-Easter-2020-issue-99p.pdf>

2) *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality: An Awakening of the Soul through Modern Etheric Movement* (2012) (an 'encyclopedia' of spiritual-scientific/religious-artistic practice for our time that carries forward the work on a 'science of the whole' on which Novalis himself embarked, as touched on in my 'Note' adduced above and more fully elaborated in my book on Novalis (p.94ff).¹

3) *Elijah Come Again* (2009) (being a full exposition of the deep spiritual biography of the Novalis-Individuality over the ages.)

* To all this should be added, at some more advanced point, **also** a full viewing and experience of Powell's presentation of 'The Shambhala Path,' as the latest and the climactic development of a Novalis-inspired activity in our time. (See the link above.) A good number of the practices included in Powell's *Cultivating Inner Radiance* have been expanded upon and further deepened in 'The Shambhala Path').

[For a full Bibliography by Robert Powell, see <https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Robert-Powell-Publication-List-2014.pdf>]

Epilogue

In *The Way of Novalis*, p.125, I asked about Novalis: "Where did his sense of purpose go after the defeat of the appeal he makes" among his eminent friends in the sphere of literature, philosophy, and religion in his time, as for "the transcendental project he was so ready to proclaim" and to build on?

It went underground but, if anywhere, has surfaced again today in the wide-ranging Sophia culture that has gathered over a few decades now around the life-work (among others associated with the Sophia Foundation of North America) of Robert Powell.

I have no doubt that Novalis would have seen himself deeply reflected in the solemn activities of this culture.

But there have been other major influences on this culture as mediated principally by Powell, most notably those of Valentin Tomberg and Rudolf Steiner.

I have concentrated on Powell here because he is less known than either Steiner or Tomberg, but there is also the very deep line in Powell back to Steiner whose formulations bear more directly on the foundations for the level of breakthrough in visionary experience I have been outlining here with reference to Shakespeare and to Novalis.⁵⁸

Apart from how I have presented Shakespeare (both in this document and in *Remembering Shakespeare*), those familiar with Steiner will recognize in my study of Novalis also, from the chapter “Novalis Carrying on with Himself” right through to the end, the same foundations in visionary development as we find developed and elaborated by Steiner more consciously and fully. I have already alluded here to, arguably, Steiner’s most fundamental work from this point of view: “Knowledge of the Higher Worlds,” which makes for a substantial beginning in our understanding of what is at stake (I have in this respect myself offered a compendium of Steiner’s thought in my collection of his earlier texts in *The Thinking Spirit*, cited above). Steiner remains, unarguably, the main foundational reference-point in all this, as Powell himself has always fully acknowledged. In seeking a necessary grounding today for our further evolution in consciousness from here, it is to Steiner that one will have first recourse. This was the case originally with Valentin Tomberg (who spent over 25 years building on Steiner’s teachings), no less than it would have been the case today for Novalis.

The work of Steiner indeed continues to hold its foremost place as the matrix of all further progress in this direction...

cont’d/p.26

⁵⁸ See Chapter 1 of *The Riddle of the Sophia* for a close comparative account of the three distinctive paths to the higher life offered respectively by Tomberg, Steiner, and Novalis—Ed.

[Endnote 3

[On an Essential Interassociation between
Tragic Romance and the Higher Life

I have spoken above (on p.12) of “the all-deciding dynamic between Tragic Romance and the Higher Life” in the evolutionary fate of the Modern West. That this had become at some point, in fact, the decisive relation in its cultural history is borne out by the way in which Rudolf Steiner himself proceeds in our time to establish the basis for the only genuine development of the Higher Life that will be possible in the future. In the very first of his ‘Mystery Dramas,’ it is precisely this inescapable dynamic relation that is principally highlighted, and it is arguable that if Johannes does not fully undergo his suffering of that relation as presented there, none of the rest of what is developed in these Dramas becomes possible. This is to point Johannes’s indispensable centrality in the developing fates of the other characters in these Dramas who are also intent on a process of development in the Higher Life. See my monograph on these Dramas, *The New School of the Imagination: Rudolf Steiner’s Mystery Plays in Literary Tradition* at

[https://www.academia.edu/108697118/The New School of the Imagination Rudolf Steiners Mystery Plays in Literary Tradition](https://www.academia.edu/108697118/The_New_School_of_the_Imagination_Rudolf_Steiners_Mystery_Plays_in_Literary_Tradition)

Johannes has had the Romance, and it has issued in Tragedy, and now he must confront the guilty depths of tragic human nature that have driven him in this experience. Principally this concerns his wilful separation from the Beloved and his failure to feel any guilt in separating from her, but also the form his engagement in that Romance takes, falling short as he does of a complete sincerity in it, as it happens in his case. Otherwise, the possibility of Romance was *all that it should be*, for it is the *necessary ground* for any further genuinely human development in his experience: it is only because he suffers through an occult form and level of guilt pertaining to that particular form of engagement, i.e., Romance as such, that Johannes can find that particular depth of spiritual “strength” that alone will give him the power at last to see his integral way through into the Higher Life. In short, without Johannes having undergone the Romance as this has issued in Tragedy, the Higher Life which he comes to know would not have taken place. It is the same pattern one finds both in the Shakespearean evolution we have traced, as well as in Novalis’s own evolutionary fate.⁵⁹ At the same time, it cannot be a matter of a merely-willed separation from the Beloved such as Kierkegaard for instance pursued, as opposed to separation

⁵⁹ See the third part of “Othello’s Sacrifice” in my *Remembering Shakespeare*, 2016, as well as *The Way of Novalis*, 2014.

motivated by what we may describe as a naturally fateful wilfulness, as in our instance.⁶⁰ Nor can there be any hope of an integral experience of the Higher Life for anyone who would continue to insist on the Romance through all, as was the sad case of Edouard Schuré in Steiner's own time, who finally lost his bearings in his experience.⁶¹ Otherwise Schuré's engagement in Romance in the first place was altogether the right way to be going if any later experience of the Higher Life *was* to be an integral one, so deeply grounded as such Romance is in a reality that has for long confounded human nature and would, for this very reason, have to be worked through.⁶²

In my recently published book, *Tragical Historical*—see this book at

https://www.academia.edu/99518463/Tragical_Historical_Late_Essays_in_Western_Cultural_History_from_Boethius_to_Beckett

I offer a representative outline of the course Western Cultural History has taken from the time of the Middle Ages right through to Modern Times. Far from seeking to predetermine the

⁶⁰ Kierkegaard's separation from Regina (a famous story) was, contrastingly, deliberately conceptualized. The key point about *Tragic* Romance is that it is *bound to be tragic*, and that it constitutes *for just this reason* an essential experience in the whole evolutionary process in spiritual vision. In fact, one must have, or have had, the experience ... to grow out fully in the end, morally and imaginatively. That all romance *is* fated to end tragically is a point that Kierkegaard is making negatively when he rather too violently decides to abort it with his Regina: "When two people fall in love and begin to feel that they are made for one another, then it is time for them to break off, for by going on they have everything to lose and nothing to gain." The main point here is that the romance must be *seen through* to the end, and in a *naturally fated* way, if there is to be a real moral evolution in the human being. It cannot be just willfully aborted, as Kierkegaard presumed he could do, to avoid the inevitable tragic consequence and get on with his moral mission, which for this reason was bound to be a mission finally abstracted from human experience.

⁶¹ On this subject, see the article by Richard Ramsbotham in *New View*, Issue 98: "The Importance of Freedom and the Future of Culture: Who was the original Johannes Thomasius?" As Schuré's case illustrates, the romance *has to be* finally *outgrown*, and cannot be just craftily set aside, as seems to have been Schuré's idea with his Marguerita. He seems to have acted on this idea (along with his beloved) to ensure that the romance between them would continue to attend on him in his esoteric development as an undefeated memory, a course which, in the end, could only have confounded him in that development, which *is* what happened..

⁶² And what, we will ask, of the Beloved herself, who was abandoned? Johannes's guilt has justified her, but she has also had her own fate. What can it mean that the Beloved must die, herself dies? Answer: as borne out in the Shakespearean evolution, as in that of Novalis, *her death saves...* A woman's fate would seem to be quite different, the development after separation on quite another path—not the path of the Hero, but the path of the Mother, without whose further intervention in his fate, in fact, the Hero would be doomed. No doubt this points to the prospect in time of what will be another set of Mystery Dramas, to go alongside those of the Hero, devoted to the Mother. Steiner's series of Dramas do not give us this.

outcome of these studies, my purpose was simply to concentrate on what were, in the case of the earliest works in that History, literally the most widely read of these; further along in time, it is a case of those works which can easily be said to be among the most widely valued for their centrality to the age in which they appeared.⁶³ What eventually emerged from these studies quite of their own was a set of patterns that point to what are certainly *some* of the most, if not *the* most, defining of those tendencies in that History that have paved the way to the dead-end in which Humanity finds itself today, having reached our own so troubled, indeed disturbed, Modern Times. In this book's Preface I offered a summary of these patterns which are fully developed in the rest of the book:

in the case of moralistic tradition, an overdetermining of our ends that has left us with a lack of nerve before the tragic depths of human experience; also, a put-on contempt for passion-love that has otherwise haunted and undermined us with its alluring promises to this day; the pretension to naturalism as a deliberate flouting of the ideal world; the barren struggle of the individual...

moralistic tradition
put-on contempt for passion-love
naturalism
(also as the inevitable negative reaction against the idealism in such love)
the barren struggle of the individual

All is of a piece here: what has principally dictated the direction Western Culture has taken has been the moral-philosophical imperative, measured against which—the presumption is—human tragedy and the Romantic passion-love that at some point contributes to it are judged to be merely aberrations.⁶⁴ The consequence of this deliberate short-circuiting of human experience has been a denial of those tragic depths in human nature that *must* be consciously engaged if we would not be undermined by them subconsciously, as it turns out has been the fatal case in late Western Culture in the last analysis.

It was the aim of Rudolf Steiner's Mystery Dramas, among other purposes, precisely to lift us out of this final impasse in Western culture. Tragic human nature would have to be fully engaged with, which includes for us in this later age *as well* that inevitable disposition to

⁶³ In the case of the earliest works: *The Consolation of Philosophy*, *The Romance of the Rose*, *The Book of the Courtier*, and, among these most widely read books, in a later age: Rousseau's *Julie*. In the case of works from a later age, the authors considered include Matthew Arnold, Friedrich Nietzsche, Carl Jung, among a good number of others...

⁶⁴ Passion-love is more generally known to us today as Romantic love. For a short history of passion-love up to Rousseau's time, see especially Chapter 9 of *Tragical*: "Rousseau and the Legacy of Passion-Love: Old and New Heloise."

Romance in human nature in which Humanity has been additionally involved from the time of the Middle Ages onwards, *even if*, and indeed just *because*, this disposition will lead to Tragedy in one way or another and *in due course* engage us in our guilt. All of which becomes in turn *the primordial and indispensable ground of experience* out of which any further *integral* evolution in the Higher Life can materialize. It is all-telling in this respect that Novalis's close associate and friend, Friedrich Schlegel, should have *envied* Novalis his tragic life in this respect, and this from the very midst of Schlegel's own quite happy one with his Beloved at the time. Something, he knew, was missing from his life that he might never get to know, and this would only abort any development in the Higher Life he would want for himself. See my essay on this astonishing admission at https://issuu.com/johnomeara1797/docs/friedrich_schlegel_s_lucinde

The whole matter can be put more pointedly if also cryptically:

Humanity can only evolve any further from here by making ourselves drastically responsible for the tragic death of the Beloved *in every possible sense and at every level* in which this has been, and can be, experienced (for 'drastically' here, read finally 'occultly'—for the experience turns out to be supported at some higher level by those who know that such is indeed the path.)

The evolution one has in mind will necessarily be an evolution out of Tragic Romance into the Higher Life.

Such is the situation in which we find ourselves today, such the situation in which Western culture finds itself today, at what is now a momentous turning-point in human evolution.

Novalis anticipated this impasse that was to come in our time. His was an exemplary experience of Tragic Romance as the basis for an evolution in the Higher Life, Romance which begins from *and is rooted in* Loving the Earth So Much ('I loved the earth so much' he says, before he undertakes so painfully to transform and evolve further out of this experience into the Higher Life.)—And so Shakespeare also, on another—in his case, purely imaginative—plane...

cont'd/p.30

[Endnote 4

[On the Issue of Goethe's *Faust*, Part One and Part Two:
Rudolf Steiner and the Critics

Here I shall not be citing specific critics on Goethe's *Faust*, but rather invoking the well-established view maintained by innumerable critics and commentators on Goethe's work—ever since the whole of *Faust* first appeared—of the superior relevance and achievement of *Faust* Part One, in comparison with what Goethe many years later finally offered his readership as Part Two.

At its best, this view is solidly based in a longstanding and naturally ongoing concern with the seemingly ineluctably tragic limitations of the human condition, so powerfully conveyed in Part One, which appeared to these many critics to have been wilfully flouted by Goethe in Part Two. In the light, or darkness, of Goethe's apparently deliberate avoidance and denial of tragedy, so much of Goethe's presentation in Part Two comes across as all the more fantastically unreal, with its wishful back-tracking to earlier cultural epochs, medieval and classical, and a somewhat highfalutin synthesis dramatized between them finally offered as an ultimate model of reality. In this back-tracking Goethe would naturally appear to many as having become in later age very strangely insensitive and indeed oblivious to the beleaguered, tragically baffled plight of Modern-day Humanity, which he had dramatized so outstandingly in Part One.

Building on this same perception of the avoidance of tragedy, I have offered (above) a reading of the relationship between Part One and Part Two that, more generously, brings out Goethe's admitted limitation in this respect precisely as the ground for his venturing further to provide Modern-day Humanity with more than its unhappily circumscribed condition. He now offers it a further cultural "space" elsewhere; in this fresh space, Humanity can expand into what I call a Supernal Life of Imagination that would isolate the best of what those former periods had to offer by way of deeper insight into the more esoteric processes of Nature and the Spirit... Here in these farther regions of Imagination, it would be possible at least for now to live oneself out as fully as possible beyond tragic limitation precisely...

Rudolf Steiner, for his part, takes the matter much further.⁶⁵ In his view, focusing these deeper processes of Nature and Spirit in Part Two, as Goethe does, with such a uniquely full dramatic intensity, Goethe was, in fact, building on a real possibility of esoteric vision that was coming out of his own age—in Goethe himself. Behind Goethe's elaborate demonstrations of these processes, Steiner claims, was an esoteric power of insight that was

⁶⁵ In all references that follow I refer the reader to Steiner's comments as collected in *Anthroposophy in the Light of Goethe's 'Faust'*, SteinerBooks, 2014. At some point below the references zero in more specifically on a Lecture given in Dornach, Switzerland on May 22nd 1915, 127-149.

all Goethe's own, which it took him many years to develop, and in its own way this insight anticipates the full expression of an immediately effective spiritual science which Steiner had at last come to provide Humanity with, in his time. Those intimate inner processes of knowledge of Nature and of the Spirit that Goethe was dramatizing represent, in fact, the development of a direct insight of his own into such matters.

To what extent this was the case, according to Steiner, will strike most of us as fictional, given our own limited experience. With his Faust, Goethe in Part Two had "transported" himself into that former time *in fact*⁶⁶. This Goethe achieves through an advanced process of spiritual thinking power which Steiner attests is indeed available, on the basis of a fully practiced spiritual science, or with the appropriate self-work. Such a spiritual power had taken Goethe years to develop. Helen herself, the Helen of classical times, in this way *actually appears* to Goethe in his time in her reincarnated consciousness as a spirit, a measure of what the backtracking process we have spoken of actually signifies in this drama. Hence the value of the drama in Part Two *as reality*: Goethe could have the immediate experience of that possibility.⁶⁷ As Steiner puts it, in the terms we have considered on p.3, it was in this highly special and extraordinary way that Goethe could be said to have "carried over an infinite amount from the age of the Intellectual Soul into the age of the Spiritual Soul." Whatever we may finally think of the claim that Goethe had been in some sense literally "transported"—it will appear more than far-fetched to those unfamiliar with Steiner's spiritual science, but fully and coherently accounted for by him to anyone who *is* familiar with it, the prospect of our reincarnation being an article of faith in this culture—to claim so much for Goethe's presentation in Part Two of *Faust*, and indeed the whole of Part Two, is to say very much on behalf of this Part as a demonstration of spiritual consciousness in Modern Times.

II

⁶⁶ "Transported" is the term that is attributed to Steiner in our text, cited above, *Ibid.*, 162.

⁶⁷ See Lectures 1 and 2 in *Anthroposophy in the Light of Goethe's 'Faust'*: "the urge arose in Goethe to bring over into the new age what it was from the Greco-Roman period that could live on in any period as something eternal ... The fourth cultural period was living on unconsciously in the fifth one ... How can it be brought forward in a conscious way? ... What would some living element of the Greco-Roman culture look like if we could bring it over into our present-day awareness consciously? ... A chord was struck in Goethe's soul ... the whole problem of reincarnation or re-embodiment (72-73) ... How can a consciousness be recuperated consciously? How can one, for example, recuperate the consciousness that lived in Helen?" (81) ... And so can Helen "in the third act of Part Two ... appear before us in the flesh ... The way to connect with Helen is ... by really living through the mysteries of existence and experiencing the reality of reincarnation ... We see the doctrine of reincarnation secretly woven into the second part of *Faust* in a poetic and artistic way" (60-61).

But if Steiner can make so much of Part Two, it is because he accepts what Goethe had made in the meantime of the problem of human tragedy in the transition from Part One to Part Two in having Faust “forget” it (this is also Steiner’s way of describing Goethe’s manoeuvre) and to pass on from it.

How could Steiner have arrived at this view so paradoxical and indeed offensive as this will appear to those (and I am one of these) who will not in the meantime have forgotten Goethe’s deliberate repudiation of tragedy, as a consequence of which only is he in any position to go on in the seemingly free and blithe way he does in Part Two?

Steiner fully clarifies how he sees the two Parts of *Faust* relating to each other. Far from seeking continuity between them on a realistic plane, he views the two Parts as constituting a kind of artistic Diptych, held together only by the opening of Part Two which operates as a kind of hinge. Thus do the two Parts stand somewhat incongruously side by side each other. They were, after all, written in radically distinct parts of Goethe’s life. Part One was begun in the very earliest period of Goethe’s literary career and finally rounded out as a work only some 25 years later, before it was finally published in 1808. The writing of Part Two was not finally undertaken for another 15 years or so after that, in the last 5 to 6 years before Goethe’s death. Steiner proceeds on the basis that Part One represents the elaboration of a typically youthful level of life immersed in, and indeed lost to, an indulgence in what he describes as the “lower life” of the “passions.” Part Two represents, in its turn, the elaboration of a life that can be experienced only after a progress of many years, in a finally matured wisdom, such as finally gives Faust and his author access to the saving development of a “higher life” of “the spirit.” The combination of the two Parts is what gives to Goethe’s work its unique power and status as a comprehensive representation of a complete striving of human soul: “the World’s greatest poetic work of human striving,” in Steiner’s final judgment.

In the context of such a different reading, the question of the tragic guilt Faust has in the meantime incurred is itself approached on a significantly different basis.

Steiner does not make light of this guilt: he paints it as “the heaviest guilt imaginable”: “Faust has a human life on his conscience; he has deceived a human being”: and Steiner otherwise notes how “great and powerful” is the “guilt Faust has burdened himself with.”⁶⁸ What’s more, he insists: “Mephisto has Faust in his clutches . . . We must not imagine that Faust, as we see him at the beginning of Part Two, is in any sense set free from these hellish powers.” Notwithstanding, *in spite of* this great depth of embroilment in guilt still perceived

⁶⁸ For all quotations in this and the following paragraphs, see the lecture given in Dornach, Switzerland on May 22nd 1915, 127-149.

and experienced by Faust, “there is something in human nature—the higher human self—that maintains its connection with the spiritual powers of the world” and that “has not been able to fall prey to guilt.” In the meantime, to be able to wake up from all this and stand free again in the spirit, Faust would have to “undergo a special transformation that we can call the transformation of guilt into a higher kind of knowledge.” Hence Faust’s equally powerful living, at this moment of awakening, into “the spirit of the earth’s aura with which this higher self is connected”; that alone can make this transformation possible. Steiner goes so far as to see it as a case of Faust’s guilt becoming “the source of a higher and more precise knowledge of life which is gradually dawning on him”; in this way, “despite . . . the enormous burden of guilt upon his soul, the possibility is opening up for him to be embraced by what lives, moves and weaves through the world as spirit.” It is not quite clear from Steiner’s account precisely how Faust’s guilt can become in this way “the source” of his new higher life in the spirit, except, conceivably, as a basis for Faust’s motivation in seeking now to make himself into a more ethically developed human being. A reference by Steiner in a later part of his account invokes the idea that it is just as well that Faust has put aside his guilt, for it is imperative for him in the meantime to allow “something else” to “develop in him that, as his higher self, will protect him from what is coming in later incarnations.”

And here is the key perspective in Steiner’s view of all these developments: “the Faust that could incur guilt . . . that succumbed to guilt”—by which Steiner intends the passionate choice of life Faust had made that plunged him so deeply into tragic consequences—all this “will have to wait until its next incarnation” for its resolution: “this has to be left to the next incarnation.” *Two* Fausts thus show themselves to our view: there is the Faust who emerges to us now in Part Two as the one who is, yet and already, inwardly involved in embracing the higher life, and that other “guilt-laden Faust” who even by now already “lies deeply buried in his subconscious for safekeeping until his next incarnation.” That is the paradox: that “even now, the spirit has freed itself from what has to be preserved until the next incarnation.” Most especially, it is a matter of “no longer wanting, as the Faust of Part One still did, to fling himself into life the way it threw him into guilt and evil deeds,” and “after this night” Faust has “come to that point.” It is not quite clear whether Steiner is saying that Goethe was himself consciously thinking along these very lines in bringing the two Parts together: Faust will only be able to settle his situation in his next incarnation, and in the meantime is bound to work at himself in a higher way if he is to have any hope of coming to terms with himself in that next incarnation. It seems unlikely that Goethe was thinking precisely those thoughts, whatever his best imaginative intuition of the problem might be. The tone of Steiner’s account in context strongly suggests that he is, rather, sharing some better knowledge of the situation with his audience who were already familiar with such spiritual concepts as Steiner is building on here. . . .

III

I have stood by the view, shared with many other critics and commentators, that by going on so blithely with Part Two, however grand its achievement may be in its own consequential function, Goethe in fact betrayed himself as the master tragedian he had shown himself to be in Part One. It is just because Faust cannot in Part One break through with the Spirit of the Earth, just as Goethe himself could not, that he falls back, along with his author, on what is left to him as an imaginative course of life that yet itself leads progressively to tragedy. This failure to come through, which Goethe himself experienced, is a real fact of the human condition, and where else is there to go because of this? There is a very strange reductionism here to Steiner's account of Part One. To describe Faust's further course of life as conveyed there merely as a case of an indulgence in the "lower passions" and in "evil deeds"⁶⁹ will seem to us (especially for Steiner) a startling aesthetic simplification. Faust and Gretchen are incontestably (probably for everyone) Romantic Lovers in the grandest sense of "Love in the Western World,"⁷⁰ and the tragic complications of human nature, deep-set and immovable as they are also in them, have indeed brought it about that the circumstances engaged have in the end brought on Gretchen's death. There is a great guilt attached to this for Faust. And here Faust is in a situation directly comparable to those of Shakespeare's own tragic heroes: that of Hamlet with Ophelia, Othello with Desdemona, Lear with Cordelia (on another plane of Love).

I have traced in some depth precisely how out of this tragedy Shakespeare very bravely fights his way through to another saving higher life *immediately*, through a further direct confrontation with the human tragedy as conveyed through the multiple situations of his lovers. That exemplary achievement is what sets Shakespeare in the end apart from all other authors over the next few centuries right up to our age, including Goethe, and except for Novalis (as presented above). The problem of Tragic Romance is *the* problem of Modern Times, before which only these two authors showed themselves equal to the task of a direct evolutionary development on the basis of a full immediate confrontation with this problem, an achievement that involved them in roughly 2 to 3 more years of the questing will. In Steiner's own Mystery Drama, *The Portal of Initiation*, written and performed only a few years before his account of *Faust* that we have been focusing on here, his main character Johannes, on whose success everything of a higher development that is presented later in this Drama depends, goes the very route that Shakespeare's characters did and Faust does not. He confronts, occultly, the very consequences of guilt pertaining to the Tragic Romance in which he had gotten involved in the course of his own life. In this way Steiner takes the foregoing

⁶⁹ *Anthroposophy in the Light of Goethe's 'Faust,'* respectively 74 and 146.

⁷⁰ See the book by this title by Denis de Rougemont.

achievement of those two Exemplars in Modern Western Tradition, Shakespeare more especially, decisively and once for all into our own times. The Higher Life will only emerge finally from the confrontation with Tragic Romance (as argued in Endnote 3 above), just the confrontation Goethe had himself shied away from...

IV

What, then, does the disparity in Steiner's two approaches to the situation of Tragic Romance, in *Faust* and in his own Drama, suggest?

First, that Goethe did not have it in him to cope directly with such guilt as Faust incurs and was himself forced to go another way. Unable to ply his way through, he had to get out, to lift himself out of his beleaguered situation, which could only encumber him as it remained issueless for him, out and away into another cultural world in a remote and great past where he put himself in the position to continue to expand in spirit. This is Steiner's own view of Goethe's situation; Goethe knew that it had to be so for him.

In the meantime, in his presentation of how guilt such as Faust's is to be looked upon, Steiner does not address the outstanding issue of the two contrary views of the relationship to such guilt that emerges with further reference to his own *Portal of Initiation*. Steiner does not bring his audience in on this issue, carries on here entirely with the view that guilt is to be left "to the next incarnation." It is surely to be assumed from the context of his address that the view that such guilt (and quite possibly all guilt) was to be put off to the next incarnation is one that Steiner was implying his audience would have to be making its own, (for all guilt sticks irremediably to the soul in the present life, in any case—such is the understanding Steiner shares with his audience here). Among other things that this remarkable position said (a position that could easily encourage dubious forms of self-entitlement) was the fact that, made to focus on this particular view of how such guilt is to be dealt with, Steiner's group would be seen by him to be more in the position of Goethe's Faust than of Steiner's Johannes.⁷¹ Not for the members of this group to pretend to go the way of Johannes just yet; better to educate themselves with Goethe's *Faust* first, and at least to take in for now what Johannes otherwise demonstrates as an advanced esoteric fate for their time, but *without* pretending to go the way of Johannes themselves, for like Faust they would have to wait till the next incarnation. They would have to wait as Faust and Goethe behind him had had to wait...

⁷¹ Steiner's audience at this time was, in fact, a rather special group gathered around work that was being done on their future centre of spiritual-scientific work, named the Goetheanum, in Dornach, Switzerland. They were being prepared by him for their own destiny in the higher life.

But why the reductionism, so anomalous, in Steiner's treatment of the Tragic Romance between Faust and Gretchen, which he otherwise vaunts of at one point as "a marvellous tragedy"⁷²?

One can only assume here a rather special tactical consideration on Steiner's part who was clearly seeking in his lectures to direct the attention of his audience away from Part One in order to focus primarily on Part Two and for the most part on those dimensions of Part One which anticipate it and contribute to its unfolding later in Goethe's life. To paint Faust's situation as a case merely of "lower passions" and "evil deeds" and that only in "a next incarnation" would he be able to deal with such a depth of culpability: this would certainly make it easier to get on to Part Two. But is this view of the import of Faust's extraordinarily involved destiny and course of life really his case? And what of the proportionately extraordinary awe in which Part One has been held by audiences for decades, or the insistent dismay before the spectacle of Faust's tragedy in which they have been left? It is precisely the *inevitability* of Tragedy that dictates the further need to confront its challenge and to see this challenge through into a triumphant Higher Life until now rarely achieved. The idea, what's more, that Faust's depth of guilt could be dealt with only in "a next incarnation" is belied by the fact that, by confronting *his* guilt immediately, Steiner's Johannes himself manages what Goethe's Faust does not, to the point indeed of echoing Faust's situation, for the voice that haunts Johannes with guilt echoes strongly that of Gretchen herself.⁷³ However one breaks this situation down, it is to Part Two that Steiner in these lectures will go. According to Steiner's account, Goethe was not ready for a direct spiritual vision in his early years and *Faust* Part One is the record of that limitation. Over many years of further personal development, Goethe at last does make himself ready, and of this achievement *Faust* Part Two is the record. But let us be clear as to the limits of Goethe's achievement even in this grand respect. He became a grand harbinger of the spiritual science that was to come, but he was not for all that himself in that direct line of evolutionary history to which Shakespeare and Novalis belong that finally brings it in.

There had been a great Spiritual Demonstration on Goethe's part, with much to learn from this about the basis in fact of a spiritual-scientific development of consciousness—this Demonstration being more than worthy perhaps of the tremendous esteem in which Steiner, for one, holds Part Two especially—but this was not a Demonstration that could *in its own*

⁷² *Anthroposophy in the Light of Goethe's 'Faust,'* 57.

⁷³ This connection I have traced in my monograph on Steiner's Mystery Dramas, *The New School of the Imagination*, published some 17 years ago in, in 2007 (see pp.5-6). Indeed, as I show in *The New School*, Johannes's achievement brings to historical fulfilment the whole import of post-Renaissance Western literary-cultural experience, in both its German *and* English manifestations, up to that point.

terms be carried over into Modern Times as we know them today. All is carried out within the confines of Goethe's Age beyond which nothing more could materialize in these terms. It had been a "going away from the Spiritual Soul to the Intellectual or Mind Soul, which was gradually *dying out*." Goethe's was, by Steiner's own admission, not a pure evolutionary development of consciousness in historical terms, for in this process Goethe had gone away from the Spiritual Soul and the further evolutionary development that in this matter concerned *it* especially, on which line of development Shakespeare and Novalis *are* to be found. Goethe finds himself eventually developing a spiritual science all his own that forecasts Steiner's finally fully achieved form of it, but it remains for all this, strictly-speaking, *premonitory* work in Goethe, of great educational value as a springboard for a study of spiritual science such as Steiner was himself presenting as the now fully-fledged thing it had become by his time, but Goethe's path is not a straight one through to our times, not a direct *evolutionary* route through; there has not, in his case, been a passage through the great needle's eye of Tragic Romance that could only have been the way through. Romantic Love brought to the point of Tragedy, not wilfully but by a natural determination of Events, *and only then renounced*, was the only way, for only in this way could the fullness of human nature have been known. Humankind would have to have experienced Romantic Love if only for that purpose. Nor was it a matter of anything less than a full engagement in such Love in the first place for the full evolutionary development of human nature to come about that finally opens out on the prospect of a Higher Life as accounted for by Steiner in our times (all this I have recounted above in Endnote 3).

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A Final Statement

On the Role of the Initiate in Our Time

It hardly needs to be said here that, of course, in their initiate's life both Rudolf Steiner and Robert Powell stand beyond—though they otherwise lay a bridge for it towards resolution—that inevitable, historical-dialectical, lay process of the tragic-romantic crisis that had been for so long the predestined challenge to the modern humanistic consciousness, and whose representative dramatization for our instructional benefit I have claimed in these pages we should especially remember Shakespeare and Novalis for, canonically. What my highlighting of Steiner and Powell otherwise suggests is that for the immediate, and perhaps a long-term, present, literature will have first to go through the alembic of such contemporary

initiate-philosophy if it is to ever emerge again as the dominant force it has been in the past. See my 'Preface' to *Tragical Historical*, cited above, [p.27].

[Endnote 5

[On Rilke's Inverted Relationship to Novalis,
as Modern Orphic poet
(see p.12 above)

[On this subject, consider this extract from the author's correspondence with Gary Geddes—
Ed.

"I am happy to think you have read through the Novalis book also, especially since that now puts you in the position to appreciate more how Rilke comes into a relationship with him as I present the matter in my Rilke book (if and when you get back to that book).

Your terms, transcendental and empiricist, are useful tools to express what I make of all this. None of this is very easy. I think Novalis's transcendental *is* empirically based, Rilke's empiricism transcendentially based, but at the same time Novalis's empiricist is not Rilke's, Rilke's transcendental is not Novalis's.

And how to bridge the two seemingly opposed worlds is precisely the issue I would finally raise about them.

This issue is all the more poignant as Rilke himself seems to be aware of it in the depths, in his subliminal association with Novalis, which is established in Rilke early on, though he clearly insists on distinguishing himself from Novalis in the end.

Rilke is compelled to give over the struggle towards transcendence in Novalis's terms on account of the way he is tragically impacted by Lou Salome in his early years.

He resists renunciation because he can only continue to embrace his dead Beloved/Eurydice (the Lou Salomé of Rilke's early Florentine days.)

Thus can human tragedy continue to have its own way...

The result is itself sublimely revealing in its own right, but also existentially ambiguous, in Rilke's own terms." JOM

[See, also, from *Orpheus Redux*

https://books.google.ca/books/about/Orpheus_Redux_A_Memoir.html?id=rP5LEQAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y

p.65:

“There are issues raised between Rilke and Novalis finally that must be reserved for a still more advanced stage of inquiry in the future. Is Rilke’s seemingly opposite direction from that taken by Novalis (back down to the earth rather than up towards heaven) a step backward in evolutionary terms? Or is it paradoxically a progression, pointing to the need in the future for a higher synthesis of extremes than what Novalis himself conveys, one more comprehensively attentive to the sway tragedy can have? Seen thus, a close, in-depth study of their lives and work would seem to reveal that Rilke and Novalis hold the future between them, but who will rise up to meet the challenge represented by the issues they raise?”

[N.B. The author has alerted me additionally to passages deemed especially relevant to the foregoing comments about Rilke’s inverse relationship to Novalis: from *Rilke in the Making: A Comprehensive Study of His Life and Work, in Three Volumes* (2023):

pp.291(289,290)-312 /pp.415-422 /pp.459-461,

and as background to this material:

pp.56-58

(including notes—also, exceptionally n.68)

and

pp.151-162 on

“Rilke’s Defeated Hopes After Florence”]

[Endnote 6

[On Poetic Creativity and the Sophianic Process

See the Vladimir Solovyov text provided at the end of this Note.

Vladimir Solovyov’s Model

Vladimir Solovyov, the great Russian Sophiologist, can himself be said to be in a line of succession from Shakespeare and Novalis, as Steiner and Powell are, as we have seen, in *their* own, somewhat more removed spheres. Solovyov bases his whole philosophical-poetic experience of the world in the very same, shared, structural notions governing our evolutionary development in consciousness and experience. The terms of his comments in the

text given below, if differently conceived, yield themselves to the same breakdown of interrelated **stages and spheres** that we have traced in the others (see above, pp.12-14, including n.38):

I

(rational contemplation)
the idea of good
the higher meaning of life
a reality that is for us otherworldly and drawing nigh

II

communication with images from
the kingdom of glory and eternal beauty
(cosmic nature)

III

the perfect content of being
the beauty of the future life
the infinite power of love
(the divine world)

I shall elaborate at length on the correspondence with the phrasings that characterize the notions of those others in a moment.

Here, to note forthwith that, along with Steiner and Powell and predating them, Solovyov sees this evolutionary development more strictly or overtly than do Shakespeare or Novalis as a matter of expansive living in with the Sophia. It is well-known, and has indeed by now been well-established, that Solovyov's notions were, for their part, constructed on a genuine, immediate vision of the divine Sophia herself.⁷⁴

*

Some time later, Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov took up this Sophiological direction in Solovyov's formulations on the basis of their own inner experience of the Sophia, though this would appear to have stopped short at an actual, direct vision of Her. Even so, their own formulations are immensely clarifying of the evolutionary development in question.

⁷⁴ A contemporary *locus classicus* of Solovyov's writings in this regard (philosophical, visionary, and poetic) is the *Divine Sophia: The Wisdom Writings of Vladimir Solovyov*, ed. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, Cornell University Press, 2009. See also my essay, "Solovyov on Sophia, the World Soul, and Evil" in '*The Riddle of the Sophia*' and *Other Essays*, cited above.

Addressing the close interassociation between the three main stages and spheres of this development, enacting as they do a deeper and deeper progression into the creation, Florensky notes that it is precisely the Sophia Who makes this development possible, serving as She does as “the absolute root of creation”. It is She Who, when reached interiorly, makes it possible that experience at one stage, now fully realized, shall open out on the next. Still more to the point, Bulgakov speaks of a “coinherence” of the stages, which only the Sophia makes possible, because *She* is “the world in God,” which is to say where Self, Nature, and God meet, in a progressive evolutionary creation, “from the external side as beauty of nature and the internal side as love,” as Solovyov puts it...

Pavel Florensky’s Model

Solovyov’s model in focus here is metaphysical in import, Florensky’s psychological. The latter’s terms, provided from that point of view, fill out further our sense of the stages of development in question:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>I
the bearing of the spirit
(cf. ascesis)</p> | <p>II
love-pity for the creation</p> | <p>III
being-in-love with the creation⁷⁵</p> |
|---|---|--|

“The bearing of the spirit” corresponds to the stage of evolutionary development represented by the meeting between Pericles and Marina in Shakespeare’s *Pericles* (see, once again, the correspondences as outlined on pp.12-14). This scene concerns the emergence of the Self or I in its *inmost* significance, from which *specific* point all the rest of the evolution will, in time, emerge as a matter of law (the forbidding process of ‘ascesis’ has, in the meantime, been fulfilled). Comparatively, Solovyov’s “rational contemplation” has not yet reached that stage, but strongly invokes it, or is on its way there. It corresponds to a certain extent with Novalis’s own preliminary work in his Philosophical Writings. “Love-pity for the creation” (where ‘pity’ translates as ‘compassion’) corresponds to that further stage of

⁷⁵ See my full breakdown of these terms in my essay, “On the Sophia and the Relation to the Creation: Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov” in *The Riddle of the Sophia*. Steiner breaks stages II and III down as follows: in the case of II, the Self still stands apart from the creation, in the case of III it has fully merged and united with it, has become, that is, what the creation is and what the Self is, all in one, which is to say all *in God*, through a climactic mediation of the resurrected Christ (cf. the Damascene experience invoked above, in n.38).

evolutionary development represented in the ‘acts’ or ‘actions’ that follow *from* the “bearing of the spirit,” as symbolically dramatized in *The Winter’s Tale*. (With the outline provided above on pp.12-14, readers can fill out the correspondences from here.)

The Stages of a “Pure [Poetic] Lyricism”

Solovyov’s metaphysics are elaborated here out of a specific intention of elucidating the poetic creative process and begin from the point where the creative poet initiates his efforts. From this beginning, Solovyov outlines a clear progression in this process.

In *his* elaboration of the stages of evolutionary development, Florensky includes the all-essential pre-stage of *ascesis*, or tragic self-confrontation. This stage, in our terms, corresponds to the whole struggle in tragic romantic experience in Shakespeare and in Novalis as outlined above, but it can clearly have a very broad application to where humanity begins from generally. Solovyov describes it thus, as a case of “finding oneself yet in a world of contention and vague apprehensions.” This is where the creative poet begins.

1) In the process “*concerning* himself further with the divine world,” for that is the ultimate ground out of which a (Sophianic) poet works (anticipating stage **III**), *concerning* himself thus “by an act of rational contemplation” (anticipating stage **I**), equally with the work of the philosopher,

2) *he now “enters into communication with vivid images from the kingdom of glory and eternal beauty”* (anticipating stage **II**).⁷⁶ The poet by this point “catches glimmers of eternal beauty in the flux of our reality,”

3) and (here is a crucial additional qualification bearing on what is, up to this point, an as yet untapped, progressive *depth* of immersion or greater *potential* in this developmental process) “*continuing them further, anticipate[s], allow[s] us to have premonitions of a reality that is otherworldly and drawing nigh...*”

It is all seen here, in fact, from a relative point of view, for “while history is still continuing, we can have only individual and fragmentary premonitions (anticipations) of perfect beauty,” but it is otherwise clear from this account *what the full evolutionary development will be for a poet who persists in this process*, which we have said Shakespeare and Novalis, seemingly alone among previous poets, had begun to enact or break into literally. In these cases, we may speak indeed of an “art in the sense of inspired prophecy.” For those poets who are still “only” on the way, Solovyov describes it as a case at least of a “positive although

⁷⁶ “Significant [here] is the connection between philosophy and poetry; the goals and functions of the two are identical,” p.43. See the citation for Samuel D. Cioran’s book at the end of this Endnote.

incomplete knowledge or penetration into the reality of the divine world,” and this is otherwise a proper beginning.⁷⁷

It would be the task of a more advanced form of literary-philosophical criticism to establish just how far along in the visionary process Solovyov himself came *as a poet*.⁷⁸ Certainly, as a visionary *per se* and a philosopher, Solovyov takes us well into the realm of real, Sophianic happening. As a poet, he may be otherwise compared with Shakespeare who, with his own symbolic technique in his last plays, invokes an experience that points beyond the strict poetic terms offered to what was likewise for him a real happening.⁷⁹ In the case of Novalis, exceptionally, the poetry *is* the fully, conscious real happening.⁸⁰ In one form or another, the poet today and in the immediate future will, in any case, do well to find their own way into this ‘one process and one process only’ that will link the Self, Nature, and the Divine, *with an inevitable concreteness*, with the Sophia, who rules in all *as* “the world in God.” This poet will do so also as a philosopher of sorts, to some degree initiating themselves at that level of “rational contemplation” of the whole process that at last lays the pure ground for a full breakthrough in visionary happening. Here an immersion in the philosophical-poetic work of Solovyov and Novalis will no doubt serve as a springboard of inspiration, not to mention the fully conscious presentations that likewise lay the ground for this breakthrough in the work of Rudolf Steiner and Robert Powell. At least it is the view of the author of the present

⁷⁷ Solovyov captures the *full* development in crystal form in the following words: “Every true poet must necessarily penetrate “into the fatherland (III) of flame and word” in order to take from there the primal images (II) of his creation, and together with them, the internal lucidity that is called inspiration (I).” It is all one process by that point. See n.81 below.

⁷⁸ Cioran, for his part, expresses bafflement in this sphere: “The feminine inspiration of Solov’ev’s poetry, while unmistakably the Sophia of his theosophy, never appears under that name. Her titles are numerous, but invariably as vague and indefinite as her actual presence. As befits the mysterious nature of her poetic incarnations, more often than not we have only intimations of her presence, echoes and reflections and fleeting encounters with what is little more than an incorporeal and ethereal being. The poet takes great pains to keep the mysterious revelation private and personal, as though its complete divulgence would destroy the vision itself,” p.50. See the citation for Samuel D. Cioran’s book at the end of this Endnote. One could quote, additionally, Judith Kornblatt in *Divine Sophia* (cited above) who is also speaking of the poems here: “the reader can never be sure of the reality of the vision—or rather in *which* reality it exists—and therefore how seriously (i.e., literally) to understand it,” 265.

⁷⁹ ‘Symbolic’ remains a useful, if capacious, term. In Shakespeare we find more specifically a structural symbolism, in Solovyov a poetic symbolism. These terms could be still further refined. See my elaborate account of Shakespeare’s case in *Remembering Shakespeare*, cited above, pp.133-178. Solovyov’s case must await another exposition.

⁸⁰ And not just the poetry. See the chapters “Coming into the Visionary Life” and “The Novel as Refraction of the Life” in my book, *The Way of Novalis*, cited above.

essay that this can only be so, if the poet of tomorrow is indeed to find his way into ‘the one form and one form only’ of the world that lies ahead for us.

Quotes from Vladimir Solovyov

from

Vladimir Solov'ev and the Knighthood of the Divine Sophia

by Samuel Cioran (Wilfried Laurier University Press: Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 1977, 43-45)

The task of poetry, and of art in general, does not consist of “decorating reality with pleasant contrivances of the living imagination,” as it was stated in classical aesthetics, but of incarnating in sensible images that very higher meaning of life to which the philosopher gives definition in rational concepts, which is preached by the moralist and realized by the historical agent as the idea of good. To the artistic sensibility is immediately revealed in the form of sensible beauty that same perfect content of being which is gained through philosophy as a truth of contemplation.

While history is still continuing, we can have only individual and fragmentary premonitions (anticipations) of perfect beauty; the arts existing today, in the greatest of their works catching glimmers of eternal beauty in the flux of our reality and continuing them further, anticipate, allow us to have premonitions of a reality that is for us otherworldly and drawing nigh, they serve in this fashion as a transition and connecting link between the beauty of nature and the beauty of the future life. Art comprehended in this manner ceases to be empty amusement and becomes an important and edifying work, but not at all in the sense of didactic sermonizing, but only in the sense of inspired prophecy.

And man, as one who belongs to both worlds, can and must by an act of rational contemplation concern himself with the divine world, and finding himself yet in a world of contention and vague apprehensions he must enter into communication with vivid images from the kingdom of glory and eternal beauty. But in particular, this positive although incomplete knowledge or penetration into the reality of the divine world is characteristic of poetic creativity.⁸¹

cont'd/p.45

⁸¹ The text from which this third quote is taken continues as follows: “Every true poet must necessarily penetrate “into the fatherland of flame and word (III)” in order to take from there the primal images (II) of his creation, and together with them, the internal lucidity that is called inspiration (I).” See Kornblatt, 89. “Into the fatherland of flame and word” quotes from a contemporary poem by A.K. Tolstoy.

The general meaning of the universe is revealed in the soul of the poet in a two-fold fashion: from its external side as the beauty of nature, and the internal side as love... These two themes: the eternal beauty of nature and the infinite power of love together make up the essential content of pure lyricism.

[The whole of “Shakespeare, Novalis, and their Succession”

drafted between the years 2023 and 2025—Ed.]

ENDNOTE

¹ In Powell this still developing “science of the whole” takes into its orbit knowledge of the Microcosmos and the Macrocosmos (amply evidenced in *Cultivating Inner Radiance*), of the Christ Mystery and the Sophia Teachings, the Institution of the Sophia Grail Circle, as well as Star-Wisdom (Astrosophy), Choreocosmos (a new science of Cosmic Dances related to the Planets and the Zodiac), Astrogeographia (likewise new, touching on Correspondences between the Stars and Earthly Locations), and knowledge of the Inner Life of the Earth (including the newly established “Shambhala Path”), to name the most prominent expressions of this science in Powell’s activity.