

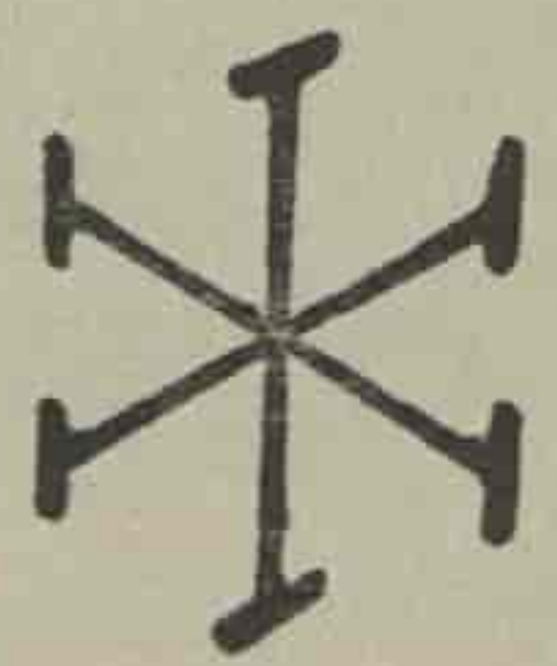
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ERICH GUTKIND

AS PROPHET OF
THE NEW AGE

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ERICH GUTKIND AS PROPHET OF THE NEW AGE

Erich Gutkind was born in Berlin in 1877 of a wealthy and cultured Jewish family. His studies, both at home with a private tutor and at the University of Berlin, included history of art, religion, philosophy, psychology and science. He was therefore acquainted with all the most up-to-date thought of his time as well as having a wide background in many fields of learning. But he was not merely an academic. He was deeply concerned with what should be done for the future of mankind; and this concern brought him into contact with a wide circle of distinguished friends. In 1933 he and his wife escaped from Germany, where they were in danger from the Nazis, and went to the United States, where he remained until his death in 1965.

Many of the New Atlantis Foundation Lectures over the last twenty years have been devoted to the work of men of genius or men of outstanding significance who have been neglected, or to some essential aspect of their work which has been overlooked. Erich Gutkind has not merely been neglected. Although known in the United States to those who heard him lecture or have read his later books, he remains virtually unknown in this country. Here he was first heard of through Dimitrije Mitrinović, who had been introduced to him by the painter Wassily Kandinsky before the First World War and had, until the war broke out, worked closely with him and other advanced thinkers. In 1920 and 1921 Mitrinović wrote a series of articles in *The New Age*, of which A. R. Orage was then editor, under the pseudonym 'M. M. Cosmoi'. These were

called 'World Affairs', and in the articles which appeared on 23rd June and 21st July 1921 he drew very special attention to Erich Gutkind's first book *Siderische Geburt* (Sideral Birth), which had been published in Berlin in 1910. He referred to it as 'a great and seraphic deed' and as 'a book of world-importance and radically symptomatic for the movement of our Aeon'.

It is in the first instance this book which entitles Gutkind to be called a prophet. In 1937 his second book, *The Absolute Collective*, was published in London in translation. It is also a powerful book and develops particularly Gutkind's vision of Socialism which in that book he calls 'The People'. Though it is written in the language of Judaism, it is capable of universal application. But since the whole of Gutkind's primal prophetic vision is contained in *Siderische Geburt*, I will this evening concentrate on that book. Reference will also be made to an essay called *World Conquest* which it is proposed to re-publish as a supplement to this lecture. Gutkind wrote that essay later and in it further developed his vision of Socialism. *Siderische Geburt* has never yet been published in an English translation, though several translations have been made, but *World Conquest* is near enough to its style and contains enough of its main themes to give the reader an idea of that great book.

In the title of this lecture Gutkind has been referred to as 'prophet of the new age'. It would not be right to call him merely a prophet of the new age, because his perception both of the present state of mankind and of the change necessary for its future development are of central and supreme significance. At the same time, however, to call him *the* prophet of the new age might lead to the misunderstanding that his work is being claimed as the whole new truth for mankind, superseding all previous truths. To anyone who wishes to think and act, not in a partisan spirit, but in terms of the whole of mankind, it is not possible to maintain that any of the major visions of life ever can or should be accepted as *the* right one to which the whole of mankind should be converted. Each one of us experiences many different sides to his own nature; and if anyone studies profoundly with an open mind let us say Buddhism, Kabbala, Christianity and Marxism, he will experience an aspect of living truth in each. He will find that each one speaks to a different aspect of himself and evokes a response somewhere within him. These different visions of life contradict one another in many respects, just as in our

personal experience we find contradictions within ourselves. But with all our inner contradictions we each think of ourselves as a single whole person. We recognise each different aspect of ourselves as being genuinely ourselves and would consider it an unbearable limitation and impoverishment if we had to reduce our whole self to a monotonous consistency.

So the major visions of mankind are not to be thought of as a confusion of tongues, as at the Tower of Babel, but rather as different aspects of an organic wholeness. They are not yet recognised as such because, although the realisation is gradually growing that humanity is one whole, it has not yet been generally discerned that it is fundamentally an ordered whole and that the morphology or pattern of this order is the morphology of organism. This morphology has been known and expressed throughout human thinking as triunity in many different forms. Mitrinović first formulated the notion that all the different view-points or attitudes to truth could be reduced to three, which were contained in three major revelations to mankind. These three and the relationship between them have been described in earlier Foundation Lectures. The first two are well known. They are the pre-Christian Revelation found in Vedanta, Buddhism, Astrology, Kabbala and altogether in the wisdom of the ancient world; and the Christian Revelation. The Third Revelation is that which mankind now faces but does not yet recognise as a new revelation.

There is also a fourth necessary attitude, which is to know that although these three revelations have followed one after the other in time, they express three world-views which are widely held today; and although they express radically different points of view, yet they are all equally valid as aspects of truth. It may indeed be more natural for one who holds this position to think in terms of one revelation rather than the others, but he will nevertheless accept their equivalidity in principle and be able to express himself in the language of whichever is most appropriate at any time. Without such a recognition of the morphology of truth it will never be possible in practice to realise mankind as one whole, for only so will the major religions of the world be seen as equally necessary aspects of the whole truth, which do not have to fight one another to maintain themselves, and can never be reduced to terms of one another.

Mitrinović recognised Erich Gutkind as the prophet of the Third Revelation, and in doing so gave him profounder recognition than did any other of his distinguished contemporaries; and it is in this context that I am going to speak about him. Some aspects of this Third Revelation were described in the Foundation Lecture on Max Stirner and also in that on John Cowper Powys, but in order to bring out the essential differences between this and the other two revelations I am first going to compare Gutkind with two other men, both of whom lived in the second half of the nineteenth century, whom Mitrinović considered as the best exponents for modern times of these other revelations. Rudolf Steiner, who also lived into the twentieth century, can be taken as the best exponent for modern times of the ancient wisdom, and Vladimir Solovyov of the Christian revelation. One reason for choosing these two is the breadth of their vision. The whole spirit of the ancient wisdom, not just one aspect of it, speaks to modern man through Rudolf Steiner, and Vladimir Solovyov thought of himself as a member of the Christian Church in a universal sense, in which Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant with all their diversity, were equally included.

In many respects what Steiner, Solovyov and Gutkind are saying is the same, but it is in their emphasis that they differ. Yet each one gave due weight to the other two revelations. Both Solovyov and Gutkind spoke in terms of an organic cosmological development which is derived from the ancient wisdom, but it was Steiner who gave most emphasis to this approach and described most fully the whole process of the evolution of the world and of man. Steiner in describing the evolution of man gave unique and central significance to Jesus Christ, both as a cosmological and as a historic event, and Gutkind in *Siderische Geburt* gave full recognition to the revelation of Christianity and to the unique deed of Christ in consecrating all men as sons of God. And finally both Steiner and Solovyov looked forward to a future age. The higher worlds to which Steiner saw that man must by his own free-will attain, and Sophia, which was Solovyov's vision of mankind perfected—the age of the Holy Spirit—these are both comparable with the new age of which Gutkind speaks, and which he describes as being attained in sidereal birth 'starlike above all stars'.

But the emphasis of Rudolf Steiner is on the continuity of

endless cycles of cosmic development; that of Vladimir Solovyov is on a single world process of which the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the central event, and which must be completed in all its fullness by the self-perfecting in organic wholeness of mankind; and the emphasis, finally, of Erich Gutkind is on a critical jump which man must now make, raising himself by his own bootstraps into a wholly new state of life and consciousness.

It will lead us best into an appreciation of Gutkind's prophetic vision if we contrast his attitude with that of Rudolf Steiner. And if in doing this I appear to be, as it were, taking sides with Gutkind, it must not be thought that I am saying that Gutkind's approach is *the* right one, or better than Steiner's. It is of the essence of the Triune Revelation that all three are seen as different but equi-valid, and to give them each their due significance the differences between them must be squarely faced and not glossed over. The best approach to such different men of genius was well expressed by John Cowper Powys in his Preface to *Visions and Revisions* where he wrote, 'It is impossible to respond to a great genius half-way. It is a case of all or nothing. If you lack the courage, or the variability, to go *all the way* with very different masters and let your constructive consistency take care of itself, you may become, perhaps, an admirable moralist; you will never be a clairvoyant critic.' This evening I am going to go, and I hope to take you with me, 'all the way' with Erich Gutkind; and it is in this spirit rather than one of partisanship that the contrast between him and Rudolf Steiner must be understood.

There is a sense in which Steiner is essentially looking to the past. His long and careful description of cosmic and human evolution gives the impression that the whole development of the world is an endless process of which we are now in the middle, and that just as crises have been lived through and overcome in the past, so they will be in the future. And even if things go wrong in one cycle of development, this will be put right in some future cycle. Gutkind acknowledges the endless cycles of evolution, but he is desperately concerned about the present crisis with an intense personal concern. To him every event is a unique event which will never be repeated in the whole of time. 'This,' he says, 'is the meaning of all singles and of all created form, that it says: Only once, just this alone, one single without equal'. The development which has led

man to the present state is described only to show that it cannot go on in the same way, that a jump must be made now into a wholly new and different life, one that has never before been imagined in the whole of human experience.

The contrast is further heightened by Steiner's attention to knowledge as opposed to Gutkind's insistence on deed. It is not that Steiner disregarded the need for action any more than Gutkind underrated knowledge. It is a matter of emphasis. Steiner called his Anthroposophy 'Spiritual Science' and to get to understand what he is saying, and to follow the path he describes requires patient study and application over many years. Gutkind's first prophetic book has the title *Sidereal Birth* and the sub-title 'Seraphic journey from the death of World to the baptism of Deed'. And in the essay which is called *World Conquest* he declares that he is commanded by unheard-of necessity and love violent in onslaught 'to utter words that are not words but deeds'. There is an imperative urgency about Gutkind which says 'Now!'. This very moment is the challenge which you and I and all of us have to meet. We have to make a leap into an unimaginable and unheard-of novelty. There was never before a moment like this, and there never again will be.

Finally, although Steiner had a clear conception of the changes in social life which he thought necessary to the present age, and wrote and spoke a great deal about them, nevertheless the effect of his work was to put the emphasis on the inner development of individual consciousness. Gutkind is speaking about a change which the individual cannot make alone. 'It is in vain,' he says, 'that we torment ourselves and ask what we should do. At this point all knowledge breaks down—for of what use are the deeds of single individuals? Even in the greatest men it is only the spirit of the whole of humanity which is effective, not the narrow self.' It is only in a profoundly committed alliance with his fellow men, which Gutkind calls 'socialistic interwovenness' that the individual can do anything at all.

Gutkind starts urgently with an affirmation of the uniqueness of the present human crisis and the need to make a leap into new realms of life. We have now to take a step, he says, 'which is greater than the step from animal to man'. 'World', as we know it, is outworn. It has reached the limit of its possible development. Nothing is to

be hoped for by progress along the same paths as we have followed up to now. We do not really expect that religion or philosophy or any social or economic reform will bring us the renewed life, the sense of fullness and attainment which we long for. And we are past the days in which we expected any salvation from science or technology. 'Ours,' says Gutkind, 'is the most terrible suffering that has ever been or ever will be. It is the suffering of the Creator in the face of limitation, the pain of not being able to grow any further. Extreme exhaustion is the secret of our time . . . But now when all is exhausted and nothing new can arise, we shall perform the one deed that is new and that will renew everything. We shall surmount all worldliness and materiality which excludes and rejects and shall enter into our own divinity, which includes everything . . . For we have received the most joyful message of all time—that we can burst open the confines of our world and form them anew in holy creation.'

To see what is before us we must look back to how we got here. Mankind has arisen out of the depths of nature. How we look upon nature depends on the state of our human development. Nowadays we regard nature as chiefly mechanism. We try to comprehend it by mathematical formulae and thus control it. We are now above nature. But there was a time when men were very much a part of it. These were the days of mythology, when animals, trees, rivers, mountains, thunder and rain, and also sun, moon and stars were beings like ourselves and seemed to dominate our lives. Our relation to them was what Martin Buber called I-Thou rather than the present I-It. We made gods of them and were never sure what they would do next. We lived in awe of them. Equally our own impulses and feelings, our imagination and even our very actions seemed to come from some source outside ourselves, as we can still observe to be the case with little children. In those days everything was alive, everything was in continuous movement and there was no real security anywhere.

Man was deeply embedded in the realm of Nature when he lived through his animal stage. He could not control either the rest of nature outside him or his own impulses and appetites within. Gradually, however, by the superior power of his mind man came to be above nature. And this does not merely mean the ability man has to use nature for his own ends, which has culminated in modern



technology. Man has created a world which owes nothing to nature and everything to his own creativeness—a world of cities, states, laws, history, painting, music, religion, philosophy and mathematics. This whole realm, which is altogether different from—and indeed antagonistic to—nature is what Gutkind calls 'world'. And the greatest of all inventions which emancipated man from nature was that which culminated in the concept, and gave him his power of logical thinking. This was man's ability in the continuous flow of his conscious experience to isolate moments as separate existences and to fix them by giving them names. We know that in practice everything is continuously changing. Rivers flow, living things grow and decay, and houses fall into ruins. We know too that there are many different rivers, many shades of green, and many different kinds of house. Yet the words 'river', 'green' and 'house' are supposed to represent fixed realities each of which is, and always stays, the same. And the same permanence and precision is meant to apply also to words denoting abstract ideas and all inner experience, even those most changeable and elusive of all things, our emotions. This enabled man to be no longer oppressed by nature outside him, for it enabled him to treat everything else as 'things'. He could fix them and make them stand still while he looked at them and learnt about them, and finally gained the power to use them.

This act of naming is graphically described in the book of Genesis, when God brought all the animals and birds in turn to Adam to be named 'and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof'. This last phrase shows very clearly the sense of power which naming things gave to man, and the connection of names and magic is well known. And we see this process being repeated again and again by every young child as it learns the names of things. Once he has isolated little bits of reality out of the sea of consciousness and sensation, he can start to learn the properties of each and how they behave relatively to one another. And in the course of doing this ancient man, as every child does, gradually isolated himself as a thing or being separate from all else. He objectified himself. He became not merely a whirlpool of sensations, feelings, desires and imaginings or a body with all its senses and reactions, but felt that there was a centre to all this, around which it all revolved and by virtue of which he said 'I see'

or 'I feel' or 'I eat'. To this centre he ascribed the same existence and permanence as he did to things. He called his inner consciousness 'soul' and the inmost 'I' which was the subject of all his actions, thoughts and feelings he called 'spirit'. But this 'I' was a precarious and changeable thing which needed to be carefully tended in order to maintain itself and grow. Just as his body had to be fed, so did his inner self. His body was indeed outer evidence of the reality of himself, but it was not enough. In order to develop the full sense of his own individuality man needed fine clothes, a house of his own, cattle, land, a large family—the more he had the more he needed, even up to an empire, power, fame and a monument after his death. The whole process of 'empire-building' to boost one's ego is too well known to need further description, but it is not always realised what an essential part it has played in the development of man's individuality. And if he could not get, or had no desire for, material wealth or power, there were other more subtle and often more effective ways of feeding the ego to make it grow, such as the accumulation of learning, the practice of moral virtue, self-sacrifice for the sake of others, and the many other ways in which a man can cultivate his self-esteem or the esteem of others.

It is clear that the whole process by which man has built up his world out of raw nature is the counterpart of that by which he has developed the sense of his own self. The two were necessary to each other. The development of reason and intellect has been necessary to both. Science has given us the means of using nature for our own ends and raised us out of our childishly subjective attitude to the world around us. It has raised us beyond the ever-flowing and changing phenomena of nature which could only overwhelm us, so that we stand above it all and look at it and analyse it—that is to say, we cut it up into little bits which we command to stand still, so that we can observe them and put them to our use. What we see when we have done this intellectual act we call 'existence'—what really 'is'—and it is this of which science gives us knowledge. So Gutkind classes 'having', 'knowing', 'being' and 'feeding' all together. The ego feeds on possessions, and knowing is a way of possessing what is, namely being. Man devours possessions or devours knowledge in order to enhance his ego. Gutkind does not say he should not have done this. He recognises that it was wholly

necessary to the building up of man's world, but he protests that this world has now become too narrow, and can lead nowhere.

Man has now reached beyond nature, but part of the trouble is that he does not yet realise that he has done so. He does not realise that 'world' is not at all a part of nature, but has only been built up in defiance of it. The full realisation that the world is man's own creation and of an entirely different character from nature is necessary before man can make the next step forward. One of the greatest obstacles to any change is characterised by the monotonously repeated and stupid phrase 'You can't change human nature'. It is usually said by the very same persons who maintain that man has evolved from animal ancestors. As Gutkind says 'They repeat that "everything has developed from the lower", but they always emphasise "the lower" and forget that after all it has "developed"'. And what do they mean by this human nature which you can't change? Usually the acquisitive urge, greed, selfishness, aggressiveness for one's own self-aggrandisement. But, as Kropotkin showed in his book *Mutual Aid*, such competitiveness is not even the rule among animals, co-operation is just as or more common. But man's acquisitiveness and desire for possessions goes far beyond anything animal. An animal may fight for its own survival or that of its young or its mates, but it will fight only for what it immediately needs. It has no urge to self-aggrandisement. Man's desire for possessions goes far beyond nature and must be explained by the drive to build up his world against nature. It is human, but it is not nature. And if man was able to conquer nature both within himself and outside in order to build 'world', is he not able, if he so decides, to conquer 'world'?

For 'world' is hastening to its zenith. The doctrine of perpetual progress can no longer satisfy us. What if we increase our knowledge a thousandfold, if we discover how to tap sources of energy and means of transmuting material things so that we could have all the wealth and comfort which we can possibly dream of? Would we in any way have changed our life experience? It is this that is now suffocating us with its poverty—the old gods are outworn, the old morals merely restrictive, material success merely means piling up more things, and even pleasures pall as they become more and more sophisticated. Temporary and personal satisfactions there may be, but where is the sense that our human life on this earth has

some universally acknowledged meaning and value and direction?

We are beginning, says Gutkind, to experience new needs. The need for material wealth is still with us, but it could be amply satisfied if we would learn to live together in unity and distribute to all mankind the wealth which we could produce. Poverty was once valuable in the development of man, because it also taught him to develop spiritual qualities in defiance of bodily discomfort. Capitalism was similarly a necessary stage in the development of individuality. But poverty no longer has any value for the building of man's character. It merely delays the time when men will urgently feel new needs beyond. So long as there is poverty, material wealth will continue to be what men chiefly desire. This is the meaning of socialism today. And how could it be otherwise? You cannot tell people who have not enough to eat that they should have desires beyond food. But the paradox is that not until enough people feel over-full with the satisfaction of their worldly demands will they long for the new socialism which will make possible the free distribution of wealth to the many. Not until man grows weary of the world which he has built up, will he want to break into new realms beyond.

But where? And into what? Only if you have ever asked this question, only if you have at some time felt in yourself that man's present life is narrow or empty or meaningless and that you wish to burst out into the skies beyond—only then has Gutkind anything to say to you. If you have not, if you are still driven by the impulses of an acquisitive society to fight to accumulate things for your personal satisfaction, or knowledge for your own self-esteem, or power or popularity to puff yourself up with, or any of the things the popular press and the advertisers tell you you ought to want, then Gutkind has no message for you. 'The lower paradises,' he says in *World Conquest*, 'must be outlived through satiety'. He does not moralise at you or tell you that you ought to rise above such things. He is not preaching some kind of asceticism. Rather he is proclaiming a new wealth and luxury and super-abundance so far beyond the present worldly wealth, that you cannot imagine it unless you are, as he puts it, 'suffocating in the straitness of a wantless society' and 'yearning for new needs, immense and abysmal needs'.

He compares this state to the state of a seed which has grown



inside a plant as we have grown inside nature, and has formed its own being inside itself from all the wealth of the plant as we have formed our own individualities and our world from all the wealth of nature, but is now over-full and can absorb no more and grow no more. It now needs to be sown and to burst open and sprout in the ground in order that it may emerge as a new plant. If it tries to grow any more or refuses to burst itself open, it will rot and become mere dust. There is a whole new realm before us, affirms Gutkind, beyond Nature and beyond World. But we must be prepared to make a leap into the unknown. Such a leap Nietzsche spoke of into Superman, and Max Stirner into the life of the unique self. The leap envisaged by Gutkind has much in common with both these great men, but it is still more revolutionary. The assumptions on which world was built must be wholly overturned and we must abandon any idea that we have anything at all to hope for from it. But this is not to escape from the world as some religions would have us do. Gutkind is not preaching some other-worldly life beyond. Rather it is to seize the world and overcome it; to realise that 'world' is after all a human creation and decide that we will no longer let it dominate us, but that we shall conquer it as we conquered nature. We shall give up the security of our small egos and the rigidity of our thinking which is always looking for some point of certainty, for these are now no longer necessary props, but rather intolerable restrictions.

But in fact this world, which we once thought so firm and certain, is dissolving before our very eyes. The old God in heaven to whom we used in a childlike way to pray to give us what we wanted, the morality which appeared fixed for ever and decreed by heaven, our established order of society—everything seems to be falling to pieces. But this is all merely an outer sign of what is really happening. Gutkind wrote *Siderische Geburt* sixty-five years ago when religions, morality and the social order seemed comparatively stable. All great human developments start in the realm of thought, and this dissolution was started nearly two hundred years ago by Immanuel Kant, whom Gutkind calls the great Liberator—with the warning nevertheless that 'to understand Kant means to go beyond him'. Kant showed that although we conceive knowledge or perception as a process which takes place between a person, who is the subject, and an outer world, which is the object, yet we never

experience either the ego as such or the outer world as such. All that is ever experienced is the perception itself, in which ego and world exist only in relation to each other, never in isolation. Or, as Gutkind expresses it, 'Subject and object are not two halves which unite to form a whole, but two different points of view.' For 'what would hardness be without our sense of touch? If our strength were to increase gigantically marble would become soft as wax and thinner than air. What would light be without our eyes? And the laws of our mathematics depend on us—on the fact that our spatial and spiritual sight is so constructed as to be aware of three dimensions.'

Thus what Kant liberated us from was the authority of merely speculative ideas beyond all possible experience, and the oppressive domination of an objective world of things. The intellect of European man had made both God and world into things which appeared to exist on their own, holding us in subjection, and the ego into an object as fixed and limited as a hard little pebble. Kant freed man from the oppression of objectivity, and showed in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that man's reality rests not in some hypothetical existence, but in the exercise of his free spirit.

And now even the most materialistic, because the most intellectually orientated, branch of modern science, physics, which is the stronghold of objectivity and of the reality of the tangible, can no longer give us a firm resting-place. There used to be 'things' called atoms which were real indivisible bits of stuff, but now these too have been dissolved and there is no hard core of 'thingness' in anything. Only continuous motion. And indeed in our ordinary experience there is no rest or permanence in the realm of matter. Everything is perpetually changing. As long ago as the fifth century B.C., Zeno demonstrated that by the laws of our thinking motion is impossible. He did this most concisely in the example of the flying arrow, which at every infinitesimal moment of its flight is where it is—so how does it get to where it is not? Of course, it never is where it is while in flight, but only when it stops; for motion, as Bergson pointed out, is continuous and not, like space, infinitely divisible. And since we know motion to be a fact, for there could be no change at all without motion, we have to admit that the logic by which we normally think does not serve to give us knowledge of the real world, only the ability to use it for our own ends. This logic can only turn nature into 'world', and use it by

cutting it up into little bits, giving each a name, and demanding that once we have named something it should always stay the same, fixed in existence. Bergson in *Creative Evolution* compared this to the way in which a cinematograph cuts real motion into a series of still shots, which, when they are put together in quick succession, can simulate motion, but never reproduce it. So our logical and scientific intellect can indeed take the whole to pieces, but it can never comprehend that wherein lies the life and wholeness of the whole, which is more than the sum of its parts. This thinking that invented matter and force, and all the other fictions that science has had to use, is the same thinking as turned God and ego into 'things', for it cannot deal with anything at all unless it can reduce it to a standstill and fix it within definite bounds.

Gutkind takes the co-relativity of subject and object in the act of perception as the prototype of the new way of looking at life. 'In this process' he says, 'it "selves" and it "things" is only one single act, even as the convexity and concavity of a surface are one and not two, for I cannot have one without the other. Self and thing are completely interwoven.' And from this he derives what he calls the final wisdom of our time, that 'everything is relative and is related to something else' and hence 'all things are interwoven one with another.' For then we see that motion precedes any idea of a thing that moves, relationship precedes any things that are related, and the whole precedes any parts into which it can be dissected. And Gutkind speaks of the complete revolution in someone's development when he realises the transcendent character of all sense experience and suddenly perceives that everything depends on what is beyond itself, so that all worldly reality dissolves into insubstantiality. 'In earlier stages,' he says, 'everything we came upon seemed immovably firm, cradled in the certainty of the thing-like. And then comes the most mysteriously stupendous event in human history, more mighty even than the maturing and liberating influence of science, and a counterpart to its work of fixing: the dissolution of certainty and the appearance of world no longer as something eternally ordained, but rushing by as a momentary state of tension, till finally we cannot even grasp or hold anything in thought or word . . . Our sense experience is no longer what is most certain, but has become wholly problematic . . . And as we leave behind the lower reality of being, we reach beyond

consciousness, for being is the basic function of consciousness and of the same nature—a kind of possessing . . . But can we pass beyond experience to the transcendent? We not only can, we must.'

Let me immediately clear away any possible misunderstanding that Gutkind is talking about some remote or obscure 'spiritual' realms into which we ascend as if by magic, a realm of things outside our present experience, like some childish Beyond or higher regions. 'There are,' he affirms most strongly, 'no supra-empirical things,' In the realm of existence, of what 'is', the empiricism of science must be wholly accepted as the arbiter. The realm of existence, however, is only this man-made world of things—and thoughts—which we can grasp and possess, which we can feed on by knowing. 'But,' says Gutkind, 'it is not a question of knowing, but of rising up by a super-human deed of faith . . . A great mystery is revealed in the words: I must have faith before I can know. Faith is not merely a childlike belief that something is true. No knowledge can come into being unless we have faith to take up a firm position from which it can be won . . . And in all we are saying there is a fatality which compels us first to assume without question that which we seek to attain; and this fact is a reflection of the world, whose most characteristic feature is to rise beyond oneself, to stand on one's head or to jump out of one's skin . . . The transcendence we speak of is Sidereal Birth . . . And the realm to which we seek to rise, which is the consummation of "world" we will call, making free use of a gnostic term—Pleroma.'

These higher realms of Pleroma must not be thought of as a denial of the lower realms. It does not mean that in some mysterious way we leave our bodies and escape beyond nature and world into an existence where there is only disembodied 'spirit'. On the contrary our bodily life will become more intense and more real, not less so. Pleromá means the whole-fulness of all reality, physical, psychic and spiritual, and so includes 'world' but goes beyond it—it does not deny it or go outside it—and world includes and goes beyond nature. Pleroma is 'the kingdom of love where all forms penetrate one another without obstruction and where one does not hate the other. There we do not find, as we do in the world, that everything always excludes something else, whilst something is lacking in everything. In Pleroma everything is molten together in seraphic heat, and yet each single stands alone in its glorious idiom.

For Pleroma is governed by the seraphic law of love, just as "world" is governed mechanistically by the sadistic law of touch.' And so when Gutkind uses the word God, he does not mean some childish notion of a kindly old man in the heavens or some absolute—and thus ultimately empty—principle, but this inter-relatedness of all in ever-flowing life and movement. We must realise that 'neither the tangibility of things nor the certainty that "I exist" can be the starting-point. That "there is Godness" is the most certain foundation of experience... So in place of "I think, therefore I am" we say "I actualise Godness, therefore I am". "I think" still belongs to "world", "I actualise Godness" goes beyond self and thing.' It goes to the whole, which is at once both subject and object. 'We do not' says Gutkind, 'take the name of God upon our lips unnecessarily but only with a hesitating reluctance. Now everything must be imbued with this: that from now on we rise to sidereal birth in which we ourselves become God.'

Gutkind speaks about the incomparable experience, when we realise that we are greater than 'world', and that 'world' is not any longer over us and around us, but within us. For the 'I' is the highest of all forms of creation. It is, says Gutkind, 'the key to the world, and world is nothing but the life of the "I" . . . Everything first comes to life in the "I". In the "I" everything is interwoven with everything else . . . It is that which is first able to stand on its own with a certain freedom and independence.' And so we should give up creeping about the world with the ignominious idea that everything has developed from the lower as if by some accident and affirm with confidence as an act of faith that the higher always precedes and creates the lower, and that it is the whole which precedes and creates the parts. This is the same as to say that 'it is not the stones of a mosaic which form the picture in all its beauty, but the picture in all its beauty guides and directs the stones, which are nothing apart from the picture.' Mere existence is meaningless. In itself nothing has value, but gains it only in relatedness. And it is in man's power to conceive in his imagination the wholeness and movement of relationship which he can bring to actuality; and so he can endow with value that which hitherto merely existed. Thereby man becomes a creator. 'The human mission and meaning,' says Gutkind, 'is to bring to life and warmth what was cold and dead by means of valuations glowing with love.' But it is only the seraphic

self, the self which has experienced sidereal birth, that is thus able to establish and create reality, never the isolated or merely intellectual self.

What must we do to achieve this Sidereal Birth? In *World Conquest* Gutkind answers that 'we must first learn what we must not do. We must clear ourselves out of the way'. For the idea that the narrow separate self can now initiate anything new is quite ridiculous. This ego, which man has built up through so many centuries, or rather millenia, as the centre of the world, as the most significant development in the whole of evolution up to now—this ego with its potentiality for freedom and for creation through valuation has now reached the limit of the growth which is possible by acquiring and possessing, whether it be material things or knowledge or virtue. If it wishes to develop further and not to die miserably in futile emptiness, it must now burst out and start to give from the fulness it has gained. This is the only freedom and the only creativeness possible to it. And this means abandoning the security of fixed 'being' and 'having' and 'knowing'. 'Not that I live, but that I *live*—am truly alive—is the crucial point. That the divine ocean of life flows in me and that in holy poverty the individual keeps nothing for himself.' But this is not for those who have not yet felt security in themselves or the security of possessions; nor is it for those who still feel that they need that security. Gutkind does not preach self-sacrifice or self-denial or any asceticism. He is speaking only to those who feel the poverty of a self which is restricted in the narrow world of things; of social and political institutions which are outworn; and of ideas, words and arguments which have lost their meaning. He is speaking to those who feel that they have nothing more to gain from the world, because they have an exuberance of wealth inside themselves which will turn sour unless they can share it and give it out to others.

Oriental or pseudo-Oriental cults which teach the unreality of the ego or reversion to some state of merging with the whole are merely atavistic. There is no need to go back to the ancient East, only forward to Immanuel Kant, to realise that the ego does not exist as a thing. And from Kant one can advance further, while westernised Oriental thought leads only to passivity and dissipation in the face of the world's problems. And the early Christian notion

that we should give up the things of this life for the sake of an after-life beyond is equally inappropriate. For it is exactly in this life and in this body that the next step forward has to be taken. Indeed Max Stirner, with his declaration of the sovereignty of the self, is far nearer to Gutkind's sidereal birth than either of these views, when he says 'only the self-dissolving ego, the never-being ego, the finite ego is really I' and 'If I set my cause upon myself, the unique one, then my cause rests on its transitory mortal creator, who consumes himself, and I may say: I have set my cause on nothing'. For Stirner, like Gutkind, does not preach. Both of them set a Zen test which is in accordance with the original spirit of Zen far more than some of the modern Zen cults. As is also the saying of the Gospel that 'he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it', which is no preaching of poverty, but an invitation to unbounded riches.

'The new supra-personal realm of nature for which we are searching' says Gutkind in *World Conquest*, 'is the real human love, the true Socialism', which he further describes as 'the new spontaneity which ensues when the zero-point of pure isolated individuality has been passed'. This socialism has nothing to do with any present-day political creed. The miserable grasping after material wealth, which is what socialism stands for today, differs from capitalism only by the difference of opinion about who should possess it. It has no new message for mankind. Both the grasping of capitalism and the egalitarianism of so-called socialism are essentially poverty-stricken ideas and cannot even lead to the abundance of material wealth which it is both possible and necessary that we should now have, so that we can press on to new needs.

'True socialism' says Gutkind, 'does not aim at riches for the individual, but rather at holy poverty for the individual and riches for the community'. When the individual gives away to his fellows all that he has, keeping no reserve for himself, because he feels in himself an overwhelming sense of wealth and knows that in giving to others he is giving to himself, because he and the others are the same co-human person; only that giving, which is felt not as impoverishment but as enrichment, is true socialism. And this giving does not apply only to material wealth. Our learning, our thoughts, feelings and desires, which nowadays we express only within the bounds of convention or so far as we consider it prudent

or in some way to our advantage to do so—why should we not share these freely with others in the spirit of Max Stirner, when he says ‘Bring out from yourselves what is in you.’ To give, in the sense of self-sacrifice and with a feeling of virtue attached to it, is relatively easy, for the separate ego is thereby enhanced, and it is consequently a valueless gesture in our present age. But to make our possessions common property with others is far more difficult. It requires, as Gutkind observes, ‘the most strongly developed personality’, for such a one takes on himself a much wider responsibility for his fellow men and ultimately for the whole of mankind. ‘For when the “I” steps beyond “world”, it draws the whole seraphically into itself and takes upon itself the whole as its task and no longer merely itself’.

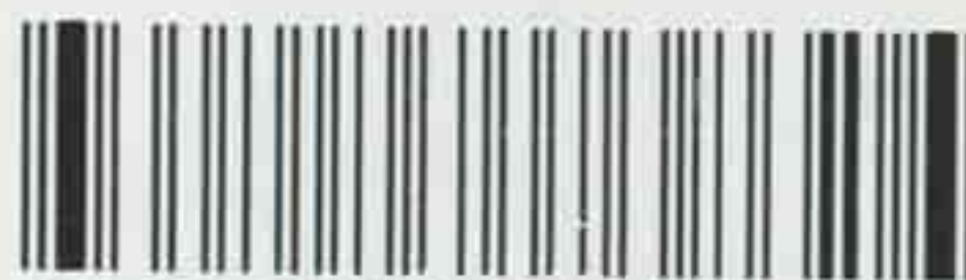
This deed of abandoning the imagined security of fixed ideas and the limited ego, and allowing oneself to expand into a world of life and movement and uncertainty, both in one’s own thoughts and feelings and in relationship with others, feels like the death of the self. And in a sense it is a death. But it is also victory over death. ‘I escape death’ says Gutkind, ‘when I expand into the universal. Death is not the end of life, but stands in the midst of life. In my finite being I experience the death which is destruction, but through my divine seraphic deed I must win eternity even in the midst of life . . . God enacts death by emptying himself into the zero-point and into mankind. Man enacts death by casting himself seraphically into Godhead in rapture of blessedness. Death, the “I am not”, is the highest deed of humanity, just as the “I” was the highest goal of nature.’



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