

Norse Mythology

and the Modern Human Being



BY ERNST UEHLI

TRANSLATED BY RUDOLF COPPLE

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and the
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Waldorf
PUBLICATIONS

Published by:

Waldorf Publications at the
Research Institute for Waldorf Education
38 Main Street
Chatham, NY 12037

Title: Norse Mythology and the Modern Human Being

Author: Ernst Uehli

We are grateful for permission to translate this book published in German as *Nordisch-Germanische Mythologie als Mysteriengeschichte*, 1984, 2nd edition, by J. Ch. Mellinger Verlag, Stuttgart, Germany.

Translator: Rudolf Copple

Editor: James Pewtherer

Copy editor: David Mitchell

Layout: Ann Erwin

Cover: Suzani Design

Proofreaders: Nancy Jane, Ann Erwin

ISBN# 978-1-888365-13-9

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Curriculum Series

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Preface

Why did Rudolf Steiner find Norse mythology of such importance? What do these myths have to teach us? Why are they still so universally captivating for children around the world? This book answers these questions and many more. The chapters which are included in this translation give a crucial tool to every teacher or parent who retells these stories: an understanding of both their deeper significance and the reasons why they are taught in Waldorf schools.

Rudolf Steiner once remarked that he could find no other mythology that spoke to the human condition in the way that Norse myths do. They speak to children and adults in any culture where the human being faces the challenges of living in our post-modern times—in other words, to people throughout the world today. They are deeply multicultural, even though their roots and images are northern European. These pictures create an important, imaginative basis for children to more deeply understand human development and human consciousness. Especially in the inexorable move towards the twilight of the gods in these myths, we find a picture which speaks to the journey of every child who passes through the portal of the “nine-year change.”

A few editorial notes are also in order here. The use of the word “Man” (with a capital letter “M”) refers in all instances to the human being without regard to gender in this text. The English edition, beginning with Part Two as it does, begins by directly addressing the role of each of the gods with the assumption that the reader has some idea of the basic myths.

Finally, the editors would especially like to thank long-time teacher Rudolf Copple, who recently celebrated his 90th birthday, for his tireless dedication in bringing this book into the hands of English-speaking readers.

– James Pewtherer, editor

Introduction

The contents of this volume are the second part of the book, *Nordisch-Germanische Mythologie als Mysteriengeschichte* (North Germanic Mythology as Mystery-History) by Ernst Uehli, first published in 1926. Ernst Uehli was one of the early pupils of Rudolf Steiner. He met the world of the Germanic myths through Richard Wagner's work. He began to study the ancient Norse stories in the *Edda*. From its pictures there arose in him a longing, which was not satisfied by the commentaries of the academic scholars, to discover the deeper meaning of these stories.

In a meeting with Rudolf Steiner in 1905, his eyes were opened by the glimmers of light which he sensed through Steiner's comments. A further conversation with him in 1909 had a lasting effect and served as the basis for his work on mythology. He felt that the legacy of the myths could contribute to human development and evolution now and in the future only if they could be transformed in full accord with their spirit. The greatest of the old Germanic mystery traditions is its vision of the future, after the "twilight of the gods."

The first part of the book, which is not translated here, comprises the following chapters: the motherhood of the myths (folk-soul and tradition); the fatherhood of the myths (folk-spirit and cosmology); gods and mysteries (mystery of the creation of language); mysteries and culture; the fall of the Aesir. This volume, which comprises Part Two of the book, deals with the gods and their destinies.

I found this part particularly important for all teachers and especially those who will teach the fourth grade. It gives a true understanding of the twilight of the gods.

– Rudolf Copple
Harlemville, New York
October 1998



Mímir

Mimir is older than the Aesir, for Odin, as the genealogy of the gods shows us, is the nephew of Mimir. The Mimir experience belongs to the very early Atlantean times and derives from Nivelheim. Nivelheim was covered with watery, foggy masses; the whole atmosphere had a different composition. Water and air were not strictly separated, as was the case later on. Both these elements were still connected and related to each other. The archetypal relation of water and air in the old Germanic or Nordic cosmology is expressed in the relationship of Mimir and Odin. The elements of water and air were spiritualized with world forces that stood in a cosmic, spiritual relationship to each other.

In this spiritualized atmosphere of Nivelheim, of Mimir and Odin, lived a twofoldness: the archetype of memory and the archetype of language. Mimir, the archetypal force of memory, had his spirit-revelation in the element of water, in the watery atmosphere of Nivelheim. Odin, the archetypal force of language, possessed his spirit-revelation in the element of air, the sphere of breath. Man had received both language and speech originally out of its spiritual environment, out of the cosmos. He received them both via a spirit revelation of nature. However, since memory (from an evolutionary standpoint) is older than the capacity of speech-

language, Mimir and Odin stand in a relationship of uncle and nephew, respectively.

In the spiritual, world-element of water, a holy, murmuring, archetypal wisdom holds sway. Wise Mimir was the carrier of this. The holy, murmuring waters revealed sound and rhythm. Therefore, Mimir was “Fimbultur,” the great bard of the runes of nature. He becomes the teacher of runes to Odin, for the archetypal secret of speech lies in the sound and rhythm of the spoken word. Language is born out of sound and rhythm; thus Mimir is related to both creations, the Nivelheim and the Muspelheim creations. Sound, as expressed deed, is death-related; rhythm, ever-creating, is god-related. Sound is a quality of the astral body (sentient body), rhythm of the formative body (ether body). The divine body of Mimir’s realm borders the world of the Hrimthursen, as well as the world of the gods.

By the early Atlantean time, “Memory Man” is a creation of sound and rhythm. The sound as well as the rhythmic element is the archetypal phenomenon of memory as well as language. Memory is on the rhythmical side a capacity of the formative body. The laws of sound hold sway in the astral body, the laws of rhythm in the formative body. The great power of memory that distinguished Men of ancient times, particularly they who were the divine bards, was the power that preserved faithfully the archetypal wisdom and later the customs and habits. It was this memory that transmitted them to successive generations until very late times. This is a characteristic capacity of the formative body.

In the progress of Atlantean development, Mimir changed, so to speak, from a more and more cosmic being into a being of the earth. The atmosphere of Nivelheim changed. The water condensed and flowed into the earth. The air became lighter and purer. A clear view into space now became possible. Nonetheless, in post-Atlantean time, Mimir’s being of wisdom continued to live in rivers and streams. It had, so to speak, streamed out of the

sphere of breath where the rivers of speech flow into the streaming watercourses. Taciturn still reports that the wise Germanic women of old prophesied out of flowing water. There is a little river called Mimling, which is still a localized memory of the turning point that took place with Mimir. Especially in the majestic, rhythmical streaming of the Rhine River there was preserved the archetypal memory of old Nivelheim. In the wondrous romanticism that has spun itself even down to the Lorelei, there continues to live something of Mimir, that venerable, cosmic bard of the rune. A line of the song reminds us of the connection of the Lorelei saga with this runic bard. At the onset of the twilight of the gods, it says (in verse 47) that Mimir's sons play "Keleika." The old Nordic expression, *leika*, means a nature sound or nature music. Norwegian farmers today still play a stringed instrument called the leika. The chords are plucked as on a mandolin, and the music that is played with them is mostly a strange, wonderful imitation of nature sounds, a last resounding of the world of Mimir Lorelei (i.e., "Lore leika").

The age-old relationship of the Rhine River with Nivelheim and the world of Mimir also comes to expression in the part of the Nibelungen Saga, which has its setting on the Rhine. Sigfried is murdered by Hagen at the Rhine. When Mimir appears in the Viking saga as a smith, what is expressed through this fact is that Mimir is the "smith" of certain rhythmical forces of the ether body, of the forces of memory that are transformed ("smithied") in the course of evolution.

Previous to the creation of language by Mimir and Odin, we find the creation of the dwarves. The creation of the latter is decided upon, according to the Voluspa, by the council of the gods, when the three giant Thurses' daughters (the Norns) appear from Jotunheim (Land of the Giants). Mouldsognir (the meadsucker) is the mightiest among them. The dwarves are the race of mead-suckers, of mead-sippers. Mead does not exist in the stream of Ymir of the race of giants but only in the stream of evolution to which the gods belong.

In other words, mead is to be found only in the world of formative (ether) forces, but not in the world of the astral body.

The biggest mead-sipper is Mimir. He drinks mead every morning out of the vessel of Odin-Allfather. There is only one kind of mead that this race of dwarves may sip—this is the mead of memory forces. The whole race of dwarves drinks Mimir’s mead. In the early Atlantean time, even in the Lemurian time before it, the etheric body drew out of the world of Mimir what would become the carrier of the memory forces. It sucks in the world of Mimir, which reveals itself in rhythm. Out of it comes the memory force. The sacrifice to the ancestors was a mead sacrifice.

The dwarf creation of the Voluspa is the creation of the early Atlantean “Memory Man.” That creation was necessary for the creation of “Language Man.” Through Mimir’s mead-sipping dwarves, the formative body obtains individual memory force. Mimir’s dwarves are smiths. This is an appropriate designation for the metamorphosis of the formative body, as it was an inherent trait of the “Memory Man.”

The part of mystery history which is given in the *Prose Edda* as Loki’s bet with the dwarves illuminates profoundly the workings of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic powers. This bet is about six treasures. The first three treasures are made by Iwaldi’s sons. As to how far these treasures represent a threefold intervention of the Luciferic elements in the astral body is referred to in the last chapter of this book. The three other treasures answer forces that work in the metamorphosis of the formative body where the Ahrimanic element operates. All this results from the deeds which are represented in the story of how the treasures are brought about.

Brock and Sindri, the dwarves with whom Loki arranged the bet, wagered that they could produce three treasures that were equal to those of the Iwaldi sons. These brothers are also dwarves from Mimir’s race. They are smiths of forces that hold sway in the formative body.

The two brothers went to the smithy. Brock put the skin of a pig into the forge and asked Sindri to blow continuously into it with the bellows until he pulled it out. He was to do likewise with each of the three items. Even though he was stung on the hand by a fly while blowing, Sindri refused to stop until the skin was withdrawn. When Brock pulled the work out of the forge, it had become a golden boar. Thereupon, Brock put gold into the forge. The fly came back and stung Sindri as strongly as the first time but now on the neck, also without getting him to stop. When Brock took the work out of the forge, it now was a ring that was called Draupnir. The third time Brock put iron into the forge. This time Sindri was stung so mercilessly on the forehead between the eyes that blood ran into them so that he could no longer see anything. He chased the fly away with his hand, stopping the bellows briefly. When Brock noticed this, he feared that the work, now transformed into a hammer, might be spoiled.

In the end, however, the Aesir decided the bet in favor of Mimir's smiths. Brock gave the ring to Odin, the boar to Freyr and the hammer to Thor. The ring possessed the capacity that every ninth night, eight equally precious rings dropped out of it. The boar could run faster than a horse, and his bright bristles could light up the dark night. The hammer always came back like a boomerang into one's own hand. No matter how hard one would hammer with it, it could not be damaged. In addition, its bearer could make it so small that it could be hidden in a chest.

The Ahrimanic element has its effect in the manufacturing of the three treasures. A fly stings the smith three times and interferes with the success of the work. At the manufacture of the first three treasures by Iwaldi's sons, Loki alone was a part. Only the work of the Luciferic gives the Ahrimanic element a working possibility. That happens in this case —it disturbs in the form of the fly. Other mystery traditions also know Ahriman in the shape of a fly, especially in the Persian mythology. In the book *Bundehesh* it is

told how Ahriman roams in a devastating way through the world in the shape of a fly. Ahriman himself is the Persian designation of the “father of lies.” Similar things are found in the Finnish epic, the Kalevala. The divine singer Wainamoinen sings of the origin of iron. He sings how Ilmarinen, the Samposmith, brings it about. He sent out a bee for honey, which he wanted to mix into the iron. He did not notice that instead of a bee, a hornet incorporated all the horror of Hiisis in the iron. Thus, it happens that iron injuries can carry a death-bearing strength.

Loki’s bet leaves behind very deep effects. The reason that the treasures are made at all is due to the fact that Loki cut Sif’s hair and must deliver a replacement. He also brings about the bet that leads to the enmity towards the three Aesir (Odin, Thor, and Freyr) because of their judgment. The verdict of the Aesir is in favor of the treasures of Mimir’s dwarves. The treasures of Iwaldi’s sons correspond to forces that lead to an ennobling metamorphosis of the astral body. They affect the nerve-sense organism but with a Luciferic touch.

The three treasures of the Mimir dwarves have an ennobling effect on the etheric-formative bodies of the gods. These bodies issued out of the streams of development from which arose the gods themselves, out of the ascending stream of life, not out of the descending stream. They have, so to speak, a closer relationship with the work that Mimir’s dwarves have created. Therefore, their judgment proceeds from there. Their judgment is a kinship judgment, since Mimir is the uncle of Odin. This brings a consequence for the god, which is related to the innermost core of the Nordic mysteries. From the treasures that they judged the best, Ahriman, their greatest enemy, is able to affront them. This is the old Germanic tragedy of the gods, which reveals itself at every step. When Odin makes decisions for the well being of evolution and acts on the basis of these, the world tragedy that flows from them is the unavoidable consequence.

The effect that the treasures bring about is the opposite one, for they span two opposing streams of evolution. Vålundr, in whose

workshop the first three treasures were made, is the ruler-prince of the Alfs. The Alfs of light are beings who transform the astral body. The clairvoyant soul disposition of the Atlantean human being was that of a dull, dream-like consciousness. The astral body, a creation of the pre-earthly moon epoch, was interpenetrated with moon forces. Therefore, only a dream-like consciousness could arise. The astral body was still asleep, and correspondingly, the activity of the nerve-sense organism was still dull. On the other hand, the life forces in the organism were alive because the formative body was awake. This state is altered with the rule of the Aesir, who have their connection with Loki. The astral body and the formative body both experience a transformation. The latter takes place through the treasures that Loki gives to the Aesir. They bring about a gradual awakening of the astral body. The moon forces recede, and instead it receives sun forces through the Aesir, which light up in it.

The impressions that the nerve-sense organism delivers from the sense world begin to become sharper and clearer. The dreaming state of the senses is overcome, and, therewith, the soul images of the things disappear. Wisdom shines as the spirit of a new acquisition into the descending, into the death-related stream of development, which in time leads to the rule of the world of sense and space. This is the lightbearing armor that is forged out of the bright forces of the awakening astral body. This is the sword with which the old moon forces of dream-like clairvoyance are overcome. Through his initiation trip, Svipdagr, the leader of the Thurses, won the sword Hávetein, but Loptr (or Loki), as it is reported in *Fiálsvinnmal*, has broken the branch which connected it to a cosmic stream. Loki brings about the awakening of the astral body; from him the Aesir receive their treasures.

There is a different relationship to the treasure that the three Aesir receive from Mimir's smiths. The treasures of these dwarves do not influence the consciousness processes of the astral body. They influence the life processes of the ether body. Odin received the spear from Iwaldi's sons; from Mimir's son he received the ring

Draupnir, which drops eight new rings every ninth night. There is only one organ in the whole human organism where the renewing force of the wonder of the ring can be found: That is the organ of speech. From the speech organism drip the purest, noblest formative forces. Why they form a ring will be shown in the chapter about Odin. The older treasures will also be mentioned in later chapters. Here we want to explore the whole effect of these treasures. The story of these treasures is nothing else but a part of the development of the "Ego Man."

"Three roots has the world ash Yggdrasil." Out of three wells flows the force that develops the "Ego Man." Correspondingly, we have three treasures. They organize the Ego-force, which, corresponding to the three roots, influences the astral body and the formative body three times each. As Mimir and Odin are the creators of speech, consequently the ring Draupnir is that part of the divine Ego-force that organizes the organism of the larynx. Never would Man have come to articulated speech if the Ego-force of the ring Draupnir had not given the larynx organism the capacity of articulation.

Through the fall of the Aesir the gift of Ego entered Man, according to world knowledge of the old Germanic mysteries. Loki is the bearer of Ego-hood. Loki is also the arranger of the bet as to the greater value of the two sets of gifts. The Ego-force, which organizes the astral body and the formative body three times each, causes completely opposite effects in them. While the dull and dream-like astral body wakes up, the sun-like, awake formative body begins to become duller and duller through the effect of the treasures. It, so to speak, goes to sleep. This is the result of the three stings that the smith received at his work. This is the consequence of Ahriman's intervention. Loki brings about the awakening of the moon-like astral body. Ahriman dulls the sun-like formative body. Consciousness processes awaken in the astral body. In the formative body the consciousness of the life processes goes to sleep.

In the history of evolution this is the great turnabout which began with Loki's bet. A crossing takes place between astral and formative bodies through the fall of the Aesir, through the Ego-gift.

The Ego-less Man of the past had a dream-like, clairvoyant consciousness which also showed itself in how the astral body was organized. At the same time, they possessed an awake formative body (divine or godlike body). He beheld the gods and their deeds in nature and in Man. The endowment of the Ego transformed the astral and formative bodies and led to an exchange of the poles of consciousness. Loki's bet with the dwarves is the evolutionary-historical point where this exchange begins.

This is the evolutionary-historical background of the enmity between Vålundr, the Alf Prince, and the Aesir. Enmity also arises between Vålundr and Mimir, for Mimir stays with the Aesir. This friendship, however, brings him his downfall.

Mimir was the rhythmical-sounding being of wisdom of the archetypal Atlantean time. His destiny is sealed at the moment when he begins, together with Odin, the creation of speech. With the creation of speech comes the fall of the Aesir as well as Loki's fall. Through his connection with Odin, Mimir is drawn into the consequences of the fall. He shares the destiny of Odin.

The dwarves of Mimir sip his mead. On account of this, the formative body is filled with the wisdom of Mimir. His dwarves forge the wisdom taken in by the formative body into such treasures as the evolution of continuous speech formation. However, through the judgment of the gods, the bet of Loki is turned in their favor. The consequence is that in taking in the Ahrimanic element, they are, so to speak, paralyzed and go to sleep, but avoid therewith the darkening produced by Ahriman in their consciousness. So it is Mimir's fate that his rhythmical-cosmic wisdom-forces, gained through his relationship with Odin, fall prey, in the formative body, to the Ahrimanic darkening.

In the *Voluspa*, there is a line that gives the somber information about Mimir's fate. At the beginning of the twilight, it says, Odin murmurs with Mimir's head. The key to this line is given in *Ynglingen-saga*. There is related the hostage-taking of Niordr and then of Hånir by the Wanir. The Wanir noticed soon that they were cheated with Hånir. If he had to decide a difficult case, he always used to say, "others may decide." Therefore, Mimir had to give advice. This infuriated the Wanir. They cut Mimir's head off and sent it to the Aesir. Odin embalmed the head and spoke magic songs over it so that it would not rot.

In this account is hidden another part of the mystery of speech. Early Atlantean "Thought Man" experienced the head differently from the post-Atlantean Man. They experienced formative forces holding sway in the head organism as the world of Mimir. Accordingly, they experienced the head in intimate relation with the earth. The head was a cosmic memory of the being of earth. Mimir always knew which advice to give. Thus, the head was the seal of the mystery of the world and the earth out of the creating word. The Wanir sent Odin the head of Mimir, for he became the bearer of the development of speech.

The Nivelheim creation, the world of the clairvoyantly-experienced head organization, was once penetrated by sound-rhythms of Mimir's world. It was pervaded through and through by the rhythms of sound of the great Fimbultr. The bet of Loki is the point of time where a separation, even an enmity of these, takes place. The forces of the Nibelungs attain and organize the head completely. The Mimir forces darken under the Ahrimanic influence. The astral body is the most awake and, therefore, the carrier of consciousness of knowledge in the head. The Ahrimanic forces worked most strongly in the obscuring and paralyzing of the formative forces in the head.

Here lies the secret of its ossification. Mimir died in the ossification and in the obscuring of the head. His well is exhausted.

For a time it continues to ripple the currents; then it vanishes completely. The sword bearer of Nivelheim took over the leadership in the evolution of the brain and of "Head Man." Mimir became the victim of the Ahrimanic powers. The skull is the testimonial of the fate of the development of the human head.



Baldur and His Death

The Germanic people of ancient times received their many spirit revelations out of the natural world which surrounded them. Their gods were nature divinities, their mysteries nature mysteries. We see into the heart of the Germanic nature mysteries if we behold the story of Baldur. No other mystery tradition possesses such a figure as Baldur. His life was wrapped in the pure, chaste nature dream of the Germanic soul of ancient times. His death was the tragic experience of the rupture that occurred when the spirit revelation in nature began to dwindle.

The Germanic peoples belong to a northern stream of humanity that held onto the good, clairvoyant soul disposition the longest. Owing to this gift, they dreamed into the Baldur-like nature-dream. The Germanic soul was once deeply absorbed in the chaste, sunlike dream of the spirit-revelation of nature. This was the time of the god Baldur, the beloved of both gods and men.

A world of nature which was bare of spirit did not exist during Baldur's time. It would have been felt as untrue, as a lie, for the senses were not yet awake. The people dreamed in dreams which revealed the divine truth about nature. When Baldur died, nature appeared naked and robbed of divine revelation; this was a time when nature was still beheld as a being with its own senses.

The Baldur dream wrapped nature into a soul-spiritual garment. Sense revelation and spirit revelation were one; the elements disclosed their innermost being: In fire was revealed the secret of will; in water, the wisdom-penetrated feeling; in the atmosphere, in wind and storm, and in lightning, the primal force of thought; in the earth and in the mineral, the body of a god.

The eye perceived the colors as the colors woven by the deeds of the gods. The ear heard the sounds, and in them the language of the gods was revealed. In touch, one experienced the body of the gods. In the nourishment that nature offered, one received the bread of the gods. Anything in nature was veiled in the chaste veil of soul-spiritual life. The ruler of this life was Baldur.

This dreamlike, pure experience of nature had contours that were flowing rather than firm. The formative, shaping forces were seen in those flowing contours, whereas what is shaped takes on a firm, rigid form. The essential being was experienced in stone, plant and animal. In the stone was found mute power, in the plant was revealed life, in the animal, that which gave formative shape. In the spirit-pervaded nature-dream, the “ever-becoming” of the divine, creating force was disclosed. Thus, nature was a cup out of which the dreaming soul was able to drink sun-like renewal forces.

The *Prose Edda* contains a description of Baldur’s being. He was Odin’s son, the best of all the gods, and was praised by all. From his beautiful, bright face, a light shone. He was the wisest, most eloquent and mildest of the Aesir. Nobody rebuked or questioned his judgment. In his dwelling, Breidablick, nothing impure was suffered. Behind this description stands the rich, unique soul world of the nature-dream of the Germanic peoples.

In the tradition, Baldur comes into the foreground only when his end is approaching through the change brought about by Loki. For a long time, the learned Nordic mysteries foretold that the end of Baldur’s nature-dream would come. Like an unchangeable destiny, Baldur’s death is expected. The most moving testament in

the mysteries to the tragic mood that pervaded the expectations of Baldur's death is found in the song of Baldur's dream, or the Wegtam song (Baldur's Drama).

Baldur is frightened by dreams that have a somber foreboding. The Aesir gather together in council. They hear the horrible message that their beloved Baldur is marked for death. Frigg, who is closest to Baldur, makes the decision to send messengers to all beings, with the entreaty that they should never harm Baldur. This was not enough for Odin. He mounted his horse Sleipnir and rode to Nivelhel to ask for tidings. At the gate, the hellhound bayed at him. He avoided the western gate of Hel and rode to the eastern gate. There, he sang the awakening song of Wala. He forced her through exorcism to answer him about Baldur's fate. In the conversation that ensued with Wala, Odin called himself Wegtam, Waltam's son, which means "the one who rules the paths." Odin is thus introduced as the guardian of the mysteries. He holds sway over the soul paths that lead to initiation. The Wegtam song, therefore, reveals the tradition of the Odin mysteries. The exchange between Odin and Wala takes the following course:

Wala: Which unknown man,
Unknown by me, brings me the burden?
Snow snowed on me, rain hit me,
Dew bedewed me, dead I was a long time.

Odin: My name is Wegtam, Waltam's son.
As I speak of the upper world, speak you of the better world;
For whom are the benches strewed with rings,
The shining beds covered with gold?

Wala: Here stands the cup, a gift to Baldur,
The shimmering drink covered by the shield.
The Aesir all are without hope.
Forced I spoke, now I will keep silent.

Odin: Don't be silent, Wala, I want to ask you
Until I know all. Still I would like to know
Who is the man will murder Baldur?
Will Odin's inheritors bring about the end?

Wala: Here to us brings Hådur the famous;
He will be the murderer of Baldur.
He will Odin's kin bring to an end.
Forced I spoke, now I will be silent.

Odin: Be not silent Wala, I want to ask you
Until I know all. I still would like to know
Who will bring us revenge on Hådur's deed?

Wala: Rindur in the West is winning the son
Who over-nightly go to battle for Odin's kin.
He does not wash his hands, his hair he does not brush
Until to the pyre he brings the murderer of Baldur.
Forced I spoke, now I will be silent.

Odin: Don't be silent, I want to ask you
Until I know all. Now I would like to know
How do you call the woman, who will not shed tears
And throw to Heaven the veils of the head?
Say this still, don't sleep before.

Wala: You are not Wegtam, as I first guessed.
You are Odin, the All-creator.

Odin: You are not Wala, not a knowing woman,
But you are the three Thurses' mother.

Wala: Ride back, Odin, and praise yourself;
No man comes anymore to visit me
Until Loki will be free of that bond,
And with the twilight of the gods will devastation come.

In the *Prose Edda* the death of Baldur is told. After Frigg, in order to protect her beloved Baldur, took an oath from all beings, the Aesir had all kinds of fun with him. They put him in the middle of a circle, some shot at him, and some hit at him or threw stones at him. Whatever they did, it did not harm Baldur. This displeased Loki.

In the guise of an old woman, he went to Frigg and asked her if all the beings had sworn the oath. Frigg told him that at the east of Walhalla grew a shrub, mistletoe, which did not take an oath, because it appeared to her too young. Loki gathered the mistletoe and set out for the Aesir and induced blind Hådur to shoot a dart made of mistletoe at Baldur. He showed him the direction so that Hådur hit Baldur, who immediately tumbled dead to the floor. Thus, the greatest woe for the gods and for Men took place.

When Baldur had fallen, the Aesir stood speechless and did not even think of lifting him. All their thoughts were directed against the one who committed the deed, for the place was a sanctuary. When they recovered their speech, they began to cry so violently that none could describe their pain with words.

On the advice of Frigg, somebody was sent to Hel to offer to ransom Baldur. Hel answered the messenger Hermodhr: "If Baldur was loved so much that all beings, dead and living, will cry for him, then he should return to the Aesir. However, if even one being will not cry, then Hel will keep Baldur."

The Aesir sent messengers into the whole world and asked all to cry for Baldur in order to bring him out of the power of Hel. All beings which they met did so. In a cave, however, the messenger found Thack, a giant woman, sitting. She refused to cry for Baldur and said:

Thack must cry with dry eyes
About Baldur's death.
Not in life nor in death had I any advantage through him.
Let Hel keep what she has!

It was Loki who inflicted that grief on the Aesir. The *Prose Edda* completes the Wegtam song out of lost Baldur songs. Both give a more exact description of the Baldur tragedy, which is only found in the *Valusp*, in two lines.

Baldur's evil dreams announce the end of the nature dream of the Germanic soul of early times. This end is the tragic consequence of fate of the workings of the Luciferic forces. So long as Baldur lived, no separation between the gods and Men could arise. So long as Baldur lived, the naked, soul-less, sense perception could not take the place of the elemental-clairvoyant nature.

A gripping worry and complaint sounds from the song. The fear of the gods is not a poetical invention. It gives the mood present in the Nordic mysteries, when the end of the pure, god-penetrated nature dream was approaching.

The trip of Odin distinguishes itself on an important point from other trips to Hel. He does not enter through the western gate but through the eastern gate. Dead souls entered the western gates of Hel. In the west, the gate of the dead is found; in the east, the gate of the mysteries.

In the first words of *Wala*, we hear that it is a song of nature mysteries. The awakening *Wala* speaks of nature elementals.¹ The scene comes from early Atlantean times. Besides the leaders of the Atlantean time, there were also "wise women." The leaders gave these women certain tasks for the "common wealth" (living together of Men at that time). Their working had an ennobling influence on the superabundant will nature of Men. To these women were revealed the mysteries of nature, thanks to their particular clairvoyant, dream-like soul disposition. They heard the mysterious divine weaving of nature as an "inner voice." Out of their dreams, they received the impulses for their actions. In this way there developed the beginning of human religion. Human beings started to venerate the soul-likeness of nature and Man. These wise women transformed what lived in their innermost being into a kind

of nature language. The beginning of language resembled song in which the inner rhythm of nature sounded from the lips of such women. One gathered around them and received in their song the revelation of higher powers. There was no “sense” at that time in the spoken word. Instead, the sound, the tone, and the rhythms were felt. The power of what was heard was absorbed by the soul. Through such processes, the soul-life altogether was awakened. Such a scene is portrayed in the following way:

We are in a forest at a mighty tree. The sun just rose in the east. Mighty shadows are thrown by the palmlike tree. The other trees around it have been taken away. The priestess sits on a seat made out of rare nature objects and plants, face turned to the east, ecstatic. Slowly, in rhythmical sequence, stream a few strange sounds that repeat themselves. In a circle around her sit a number of men and women with faces lost in dreams, sucking inner life out of what they hear.

Other scenes also can be seen. On a similarly arranged place “sings” a priestess likewise, but her sounds are mightier and stronger, and the people around her move in rhythmical dances. This was the other way that soul came into humanity. The mysterious rhythms that one had listened to in nature were imitated in the movements of their own limbs. They felt one with nature and its ruling powers through all this. Those descriptions fall into the early Atlantean time and relate to a colony of southern Atlantis in which the Atlantean culture was prepared.

The Germanic tradition also had many “wise women.” The Wala of the *Edda* is the majestic priestess of Germanic nature mysteries. These mysteries reach back to the beginning of Atlantis. In the northern parts of Atlantis and in Nivelheim, “wise women” proclaimed nature mysteries. The Nordic Wala sang the human

archetypal language of the nature mysteries. She, therefore, became the harbinger of the working of “Valflodr,” the creator of language.

The nature dream of the ancient Germanic people did not always exist. It came about in relation to the mysteries of the speech creation. Wala sang the song into the souls. The Baldur dream arose during the Atlantean evolution. The Nordic mysteries tell us of this dream in their language, in their character. They say, therefore, that Baldur is Odin’s son, for before Odin the creator of speech had not come and let sing across the world the archetypal song through Wala. The Baldur dream did not exist. The latter is a creation, a procreation, of Odin and Wala.

The Baldur dream of the ancient Germanic people has a soul-historical, evolutionary beginning and end. As the beginning is a creation of Odin and Wala, so the approaching end leads to a reunion of Odin and Wala. This is the background as to why the “father of the gods” awakens Wala at the eastern part of Hel and compels her to sing the song of Baldur’s fate.

This is the historical-evolutionary background of Baldur’s drama; the conversation between Odin and Wala is an indication of the destiny that the Germanic nature mysteries faced. With Baldur’s end, one senses that the seed is sown for the decline of these mysteries. A part of the tragic conclusion of the Nordic mysteries is found in the secret conversation between Odin and Wala.

There seems to be “no sense” in the first words of the awakened Wala:

Snow snowed on me, rain hit me,
Dew bedewed me, dead I was for a long time.

If one does not perceive that the language of Wala is the language of the elements of nature, then the “sense” in the rhythm and the power that is revealed in the alliteration will be missed.

Odin, upon visiting Wala, saw tables bestrewn with rings. He saw beds covered with gold. These are no western images of hell. No souls burdened with guilt are expected. Here, in the east of Hel, Baldur is expected. This is the answer to his question from Wala. A cup with a shimmering drink stands ready for Baldur. This is not a drink of oblivion, no drink of Hel. Only the drink of sacrifice will be covered with the shield. The shield, however, is only a transcription for the sun. The shimmering drink for Baldur stands under the protection of the sun.

The translation of the line, “The Aesir all are without hope,” is, like almost all transmissions of this passage, easily misunderstood. It is paradoxical to speak as if the Aesir were with Wala. Is Odin, who alone makes the trip to Wala, supposed to meet there all the other Aesir? But these are no Aesir gods. They are beings related to the Aesir, who are of the same kin. They expect Baldur not “without hope.” They expect him with longing. They are those who hold ready for Baldur the sun-covered drink. These “*asmegrir*” gods will accompany Baldur when, after the twilight, Baldur will return again to Asgard. Then their names shall be called.

The answer that Wala gives Odin to his question has an evolutionary-historical significance. The Nordic Odin mysteries saw the time come when Baldur should be taken in through the east portal of Hel. They knew that the Baldur dream would come to an end. In the east of Hel, in the nether world of the solar plexus consciousness, Baldur is going to dwell. That world will vanish from the consciousness because in the place of the old god-permeated viewing of nature, the dull, god-devoid way of perception will come. There, in the east of Hel, he will live on with the mysterious “*asmegrir*” until his return.

The two other questions and Wala’s answer, the naming of Baldur’s murderer and his avenger, are parts of the hinted mystery insight. In the twelfth century, a sudden turning point takes place. Odin asks after the woman who does not want to cry about Baldur’s

death. At this question, Wala recognizes Odin. Odin answers her, that she is not Wala, but the mother of the Thurses or the Norns. Here we hit the kernel of the Baldur tragedy. Wala dismisses Odin; her last prophecy is that no male will visit her until, with its ruin, the twilight will come.

In order to penetrate into the center of the Baldur drama, we have to consider the death of Baldur.

The mistletoe with which Hådur kills Baldur is distinguished in its being from all other plants. It does not root in universal substance; it roots in the living substance of another plant. It follows a completely different lawfulness. Spiritual science shows that during the moon evolution (preceding our present earth evolution), the whole plant world was rooted in the living moon substance. Mineral, dead substance, appeared only in the course of evolution. Mistletoe is a moon plant: It did not evolve like the other plants from a “moon” lawfulness to an “earth” lawfulness. It stayed back; it preserved the moon lawfulness. Therefore, it grows and roots in the living substance of trees. Frigg did not take the oath from it but only from beings who progressed with evolution. Mistletoe is not bound to earth-evolution; it is connected by oath to the moon evolution. Therefore, Frigg finds it too young, because it stayed back on an earlier plane.

The mistletoe, as a moon plant, is bound by oath to Loki and not to the Aesir. The Luciferic beings, like the mistletoe, stayed back during the moon evolution. Because it follows the lawfulness of the moon, it attacks the astral body in which the moon forces work. Thus, the secret is revealed why Loki uses the mistletoe to kill Baldur.

This is, however, only one side of the Baldur tragedy. Loki doesn't kill Baldur himself; he uses blind Hådur for that. He cannot kill Baldur himself. He can only work into the astral body with his moon powers. But the light, sun-like Baldur still lived during his time in the “awake” formative body within the divine body. In

the formative body lives the lawfulness of the sun. It is built up of sun forces. He is deeply connected with the sun forces in nature. Everything that in nature follows the sun-lawfulness is obliged to the oath. If Loki wants to destroy Baldur, he has to use those forces that are not in the moon level, but rather those that stayed back on the sun level of pre-earthly evolution. These are the Ahrimanic forces (powers). They darken the formative body. They obscure the divine-spiritual beings for men which reveal themselves in the works of nature. They veil the creating gods and make human beings blind to divinity. Loki must use Hådur, the blind Aesir, if he wants to kill Baldur. Thus, Baldur becomes the victim of Hådur at the incitement of Loki.

From a point in historical evolution, the formative body, through the Luciferic influence, was seized by Ahrimanic beings. Thus, the formative body was obscured. With this progressive obscuring, the sun-like nature dream of Baldur's time faded. Nature began to be open to the eye of the senses, but no longer to the eyes of the soul. The Ahrimanic obscuration also affected the soul and robbed it of the Baldur dream. From then on, Baldur lived below the threshold of consciousness. This threshold is the eastern part of Hel. He is living in the solar plexus region and there is drinking the divine sun drink of the universe.

The effect that the Ahrimanic powers have on the formative body is varied. Just as the physical body has organs in an organ system, this is also the case with the formative body, for it builds up the physical body with its forces. These Ahrimanic forces slowly put the whole formative body to sleep and, thus, through their attacks bring about a darkening of human consciousness. This process is accomplished organ by organ. This is different from the process when the Mimir forces put the formative body to sleep. In this case, the Ahrimanic attacks occur on the speech organism. It is something different if Baldur sinks down into Hel. There the solar plexus obscures the consciousness.

Through Baldur's death, the effect which the astral and formative forces have on each other is also changed. This is shown by the attempt of the Aesir to overcome the power of Hel through the crying of beings bound by oath. But messengers find the giant woman Thack, sitting in a cave, who refuses to cry tears for Baldur. She says, "Thack must cry with dry eyes." The explanation of Thack illuminates a secret of human nature. The pain that the soul experiences is accompanied by a heightened activity of the sentient (astral) body. If the pain is so strong that it leads to tears, then the "I" works so deeply into the organism that it seizes the life processes of the formative body. The activity of the latter is then so enhanced that it reaches the physiological nature and activates the tear glands. In crying, the most spiritual aspect of the "I" is revealed in its effect on the astral and formative body down to the life processes. This is the background of why Baldur could be "cried away" (rescued) with tears from the powers of Hel.

If the sorrow for Baldur is so intense that the ego, through the astral body, can seize on the formative body, if the ego in its grief can still attain the life processes, then Hel will have lost her power over him. The case is different with the Ahrimanic obscuration, for the hardening of the formative forces is so strong that the ego can no longer penetrate the world of Baldur. It is different when the sorrow and pain for Baldur rebound from the hardened Ahrimanic formative body. Then, there is only dullness when Thack "cries with dry eyes" for Baldur.

At the time of Baldur, the human organization in its forces was different. The astral and the formative bodies were free and more in motion. They were not as tightly bound to the physical body as later. The ego, therefore, worked more deeply into the physical organization. Whatever the soul experienced was also experienced intensely in the physical body. Joy and sorrow did not only affect the soul; they intensively seized the body. Joy and sorrow, therefore, were not veiled; they broke forth like an element. The formative

body did not hinder the soul movement. It let the soul movements stream into the life processes, into the organs.

The tradition confirms all this. The people of early ages were beside themselves under strong soul experiences. Joy and sorrow ran in free course. The Greek or Germanic heroes raved, stormed and cried before everybody when rage or pain came over them. This did not affect their worth and reputation. On the contrary, one sensed that something higher was revealed in the hero through pain or rage. The higher the emotion, the more the ego became visible. The Ahrimanic influence on the formative body deadened the effect of the ego on the organization in the course of time. But the Ahrimanic powers have the tendency to proliferate into giant dimensions and to dry out the formative body and, therefore, Man. The gods fought on against it, and the mysteries fought against it.

The mystery tradition of Baldur's death through the mistletoe revealed which forces cooperated to bring the astral and formative bodies into a firmer connection with the physical body. The mistletoe is a poisonous plant. Poisonous effects, even if they are in a weakened form, can be recognized as a certain mode of nourishment. The human diet was very different in primeval times. Food produces fluids, from which forms the blood. A changed diet changes the composition and effect of the blood in the organism. Blood is, as previously explained, the expression of activity of the formative body. The rhythm of the blood, the fluid movement, is the picture of the rhythmical movement of the formative body.

The primordial, the oldest human nourishment was milk. Milk originated during the moon evolution. Milk nourishment is moon-nourishment. The second rung of human nourishment was the sun diet. It included what grows above the earth. At the end of the Lemurian epoch there were two races: the moon people who raised and nourished themselves by their milk and the sun people who took in plant nourishment. During the Atlantean time, the transition was made to nourish ourselves with what is dead. One

killed animals and ate their meat. Thus arose the people who were hunters. There came people who began to eat what grows under the earth from the plants. The salt of the roots, the mineral, was taken in. The transition from nourishment that was living to that which was dead corresponded to the advent of egotism. In the Germanic evolution, this had to do with the activity of Loki.

In post-Atlantean times, alcohol appeared. The poisonous effect of alcohol was the removal of the human still further away from the spiritual world of God. On the other hand, alcohol helped the development of the personal. Alcohol helped to make Man independent and to form the ego-consciousness.

The expansion of alcohol among the Germanic peoples does not have to be gone into especially. Loki's mistletoe influence is what, as a deluded effect of poisoning, the Germanic human being has taken into its organism. We can see that the altered nourishment, the dead nourishment and the alcohol, led the astral and formative bodies into a firmer connection with the physical body. The ego could not take hold of the altered organization and life processes. A certain hardening of the organism was the consequence.

The killing of Baldur at the behest of Loki is, therefore, an evolutionary happening. It came about slowly through the effect of the poisoning that changed the blood due to changes in nourishment. The formative body was attacked, and the Ahrimanic powers could penetrate it. This was Baldur's downfall. Hel had to keep him, because the eyes of the Jotun giantess Thack did not get wet.

The kernel of the Baldur-dream lies in Odin's question about the woman who does not want to cry. At this question, Odin and Wala recognize each other in the being of their destiny. Not for nothing does Wala name by his true name the one who calls himself Wegtam: Odin, the all-creator and the creator of speech. Not vainly does Odin name Wala: Mother of the Norns, mother of fate. This is what is grandiose in the Wegtam song. It concludes with the announcement about the destiny of the Norse mysteries.

With Baldur's death, they lose the divine, sunlike protection. This then is the reason for the deep mourning for Baldur.

With Baldur's death, they enter the shadow of a tragic mood of destiny. One knows the death of Baldur will unavoidably lead to the decay of the mysteries of speech.

Just as Baldur unavoidably fell as a sacrifice to the Ahrimanic power, the mystery of the gods shall fall as a sacrifice in the "Twilight of the Gods."



Oðin and the Fenriswolf

The Nordic mystery traditions of the *Edda* make Odin the “Creator of the All” (All-father, All-creator) and a mystery god (a wanderer with many names); this is a unique testimony to the poem’s profound depth. In the union of All-creator and “God of the Mysteries,” Odin shines out from the world foundations and the world origin. According to the Gospel of St. John, the world came into being out of the cosmic “verb-creating.” In the primal beginnings, verb and creation were one.

The Nordic mystery traditions are a pre-Christian confirmation of what John the Evangelist has to say about the mystery of the world creation. The John prophecy addresses the whole of humanity of the future. The pre-Christian prophecies of the Odin mysteries, however, turn only to the “holy children of Heimdall.” Out of the mystery of Golgotha, the mystery of the God become man, speaks the John prophecy. Out of the pre-Christian mystery of a defined people speaks Odin’s prophecy. This is the great world significance of the Germanic Odin mysteries of the verb, i.e., of the word. They sound out of the primal foundations of the world, which became historical through the John prophecy.

In the chapter “Gods and Mysteries” (from part one, not translated), there is a discussion of how language was created out

of nature through Odin. The archetypal language was a natural language, a language of creation. Out of this sublime language creation issued the Germanic nature mysteries, whose founder was Odin.

Odin, the archangel-being of language, worked out of the cosmic-nature element of air, the sphere of breath. How is his work related to the earth and the realm of language that receives his doings? How does the sphere of breath of Odin unite with the earth realm for which his mysteries work?

What is presenting itself to the senses in a certain realm, in the world of plants, of water, of climate, etc., is the physical expression of a spiritual reality. In a spiritual-scientific world view, this reality consists of a soul-spiritual as well as a physical topography of each area of the earth. The active native forces where fir trees thrive are different from those where olive and palm trees grow. Rather than being an accident, this is due to a world lawfulness in which Greek is spoken over Greek territory, Russian over Russian realms, and Germanic languages in Germanic land. The language and the area of earth on which a certain language is spoken have a quite definite relationship. The language is penetrated by the spiritual, nature element of that territory. This reveals itself in the sound, in the rhythms, and in the way the vowels and consonants are enunciated. The “mother tongue” is related to the “fatherland” and its soil.

The transition from one language realm into another is like the subtle changing of a soul-spiritual vestment. Not only the outer sense physiognomy changes, but also the soul-spiritual atmosphere of breath, out of which language is articulated, changes.

Spiritual science uses the term *aura* in referring to the differences in the areas of the earth. The aura is a precisely observed soul-spiritual topography; yet it is not fixed like the physical topography but is somewhat flowing. The territory of the earth is its firm form, its physical shape. The aura is like a flowing mantle which covers the firm territory.

Into this aura works the folk-spirit. The aura is the folk-spirit's territory of revelation and activity. Accordingly, each nation has a certain aura. The earth territory in which a nation dwells is wrapped in the aura of its folk-spirit, like a soul-spiritual mantle. The soul being of Man and the nature being that surrounds it are, therefore, in a soul-spiritual connection. This working together is revealed in the folk temperament. Life observation shows that the latter exists next to the individual temperament. The Italian, in belonging to their people, has a temperament different from the Russian. One is able to pursue the effect of this temperament even into the languages of different people. Just as individual human beings live in the being of their mother tongue, they live also in the living being of their folk temperament. Finally, the folk spirit, the folk temperament, and the language work deeply into the soul of the single human being. If one takes note of this, it is also possible to recognize that folk temperament and language form a common spiritual-soul organism with the corresponding part of the earth territory. Spiritual science calls this organism the *folk aura*.²

The folk temperament and language are creations of archetypal times. The gods and mysteries have created it. The traditions of the *Edda* have preserved the memory of the creation of language through the folk spirit. They also preserved something of the folk temperament, of the folk aura, through which Odin worked into the souls of the individuals of pre-historic times.

A threefold aspect is to be considered here: Odin as folk spirit and creator of language; the aura of the folk, into which he works; and also the corresponding earth territory, with its particular soil composition, flora and climate. The folk soul receives the work of the folk-spirit and forms the particular temperament out of it.

The matter is addressed by the *Wegtam* song in the stirring conversation about the fate of Baldur between Odin and Wala. Odin, with his stallion Sleipnir, penetrates, or strides, so to speak, through the territory that has been embraced by the folk aura. Recall

how this best of all horses came into being: Sleipnir is a descendant of Loki from the time when he prevented the Jotun builder from receiving his stipulated wage. The Luciferic world element is thus intermingled into the aura of the folk temperament through Odin's riding on Sleipnir.

When the Nordic mystery tradition speaks of the soul condition of the aura and its soul condition in nature, then it imagines Baldur and his sun-like being. This is because Odin is the creator of the folk aura, and Baldur is his son Odin, in his apprehension for Baldur, turns to Wala, the representative of the folk soul. Wala is the knowing folk soul. She has produced the working of the folk spirit down into the language, into the temperament. She announces in the *Voluspa*, the work of *Valfǫdr*. The folk aura is impregnated in her being. The nature mysteries are revealed through her. She knows about Baldur and his destiny. Odin has to turn to her if he wants to know about Baldur's end.

The conversation of Odin and Wala about Baldur is a dialogue between the folk spirit and the folk soul. It makes clear how in the Odin mysteries, the life of the folk soul was investigated. The "wise" priestess, Wala, who spoke in the sound and rhythm of the nature mysteries, was the annunciator of the time being of the folk soul. Through her is revealed the time being of Odin, the being of *Valfǫdr*.

In the end stanza of the *Wegdam* song, Wala announces that no man will visit her until Loki will be freed of his bonds, which means until the beginning of the Twilight of the Gods. The *Voluspa*, speaks also of the fettered Loki. In another version, there is a prose addition in which it is told how the Aesir bound Loki after he had escaped in the shape of a salmon. A more exact presentation about the fettering of Loki is contained in the *Prose Edda*.

After the loss of Baldur, Loki had done so much harm that the gods tried to capture him. He changed into a salmon and hid in a waterfall, where Thor managed to catch him. Thereupon they fettered him with the intestines of his brother Narvi. To this

purpose, Wali, Odin's son, killed Narvi. Therefore, he was called the avenger of Baldur. The Aesir fettered Loki to a rock. One of the bonds was under the shoulders, another passed over the loins, and the third was below the knee. The fetters changed into iron. Skadi took a poisonous snake and attached it above Loki so that poison dripped on his face. Loki's wife, Sigyn, held a vessel under it. When it was full, she emptied the poison. During all that time the poison continued to drip on his face. He resisted so violently that the whole earth shook, bringing earthquakes into being.

The threefold fettering of Loki is a picture of a historical development, which stands in closest connection with the rulership of the Aesir and all that it brought about in the human organization. With the rulership of the Aesir begins a transformation of the nerve-sense organism.³ Twelve rivers issue from Hwergelmir.

The human senses are localized in certain organs. The sense of sight is in the eye; the sense of hearing is in the ear; the sense of smell is in the mucous membranes of the nose; the sense of taste is localized in the palate and tongue. The sense of warmth and feeling represents an exception: It is not localized. It is spread over the whole of Man. But there was a time where the sense of warmth was localized in a specific organ. This was the case in the Lemurian epoch, which preceded the Atlantean. During the Lemurian epoch, the fire element was preponderant; in Atlantis it was the element of water. In the Lemurian epoch, the sense of warmth was localized in the pineal gland. In those times, the pineal gland was still active. It was not only the eye, through which the gods held sway and were beheld in "the eye of Odin"—it also served as the cosmic sense of feeling. It was a supersensible organ of world orientation.

The pineal gland underwent an involution during the transition from the Lemurian into the Atlantean epoch. A twofoldness is revealed: the sacrifice of Odin's eye and the fettering of Loki. In this lies no contradiction but two sides of the same occurrence.

Odin, through his sacrifice, brings about the loss of the old, dream-like clairvoyance. It was his destiny to conclude a pact with Loki. With the sacrifice of Odin's eye, the involution of the pineal gland begins. Thus, the pineal gland ceases to be the organ of the localized sense of warmth and feeling. The sense of warmth begins to spread over the whole organism and experiences at the same time a transformation. The fettering of Loki is the transition from the localized, cosmic sense of warmth into a generalized sense of warmth. The latter adjusts to the outer natural world; the previous one had conformed to the supersensible world.

Originally it belonged to the kin of Surtur, who were part of a Lemurian fire-race. Lemuria continues to live in hot Muspelheim. In the *Voluspa*, Surtur's kin are called "Sons of Muspel."

Through his fettering, Loki has to suffer heavy pain: from a free-roaming god, he is transformed into a fettered, suffering god. Through the extension of the sense of warmth over the whole organism, he is prone to all human agonies and pangs. The fettering of Loki is also a genesis of pain. The roaming Loki was the cause of the pain of the gods due to Baldur's death. In binding Loki to human nature, the pain of the gods became human pain. Pain became an educator. The mystery wisdom, therefore, spoke a world truth—that pain is sent by the divine.

Not only Loki, but also his three children, the Midgard Serpent, the wolf Fenris and Hel, experience through the Aesir a particular destiny. In the *Prose Edda* it is told: The gods know that much calamity would appear through the children of Loki. Odin had the three children brought to him. He threw the Midgard serpent into the deep ocean. It grew there to such a size that it surrounded all the world and bit its own tail. Odin threw Hel into Nivelheim and gave her power over nine worlds. She also had to give dwelling to those who died of sickness and old age who were sent to her. The wolf Fenris, Odin kept himself, and it was reared by the gods.

The fate of Loki's children is naturally no different from that of their creator. In the rule of the Aesir, the "I" begins to enter the human soul-being ever more strongly. Thus, the Midgard Serpent grew, taking an ever stronger hold on the astral body. All this results in having the physical body penetrated strongly by death processes. The astral body belongs to the creation of Nivelheim. The Nivelheim creation is related to death, for it leads to ossification, which is a gradual transformation to death. The soul world of the astral body under the dominion of Lucifer is always in danger of ossification, of becoming booty to Ahriman. Moreover, a whole world lies in the image of Hel being thrown by Odin into Nivelheim.

The death forces of Hel appear ever the stronger, the less the formative body—which stems from the life-creating Muspelheim creation—is able to counter the weakening, descending world of the Nivelheim creation. The astral body belongs to the latter. What prevents the formative body from countering these death forces is the Ahrimanic element that entered it. This element consumes the life-substance, (i.e., the divine substance) of the formative body. The Ahrimanic element nourishes itself with the divine, creating substance out of the formative body. In as much as it consumes formative forces, ossification proceeds, and death forces arise.

The traditional mysteries of the North describe the Ahrimanic, life-consuming forces in the grandiose figure of the Fenriswolf. The nourishment of Fenris is the task of Hel. This represents the deepest, most conscious world knowledge about the workings of Ahriman. This is the immense, universal greatness and tragedy of the old Germanic world. They provide the deepest, most spiritual beholding of nature through the mysteries and the penetration into the core of the formation of the world. They also show the penetration into the holiest of the world-creating word (the archetypal verb) and the consumption of this world by the wolf Fenris.

The mystery of the verb (Logos) and its Ahrimanic counter-image are the deepest, most moving, biographical testimony of fate

of the world in the German tradition. But what is in a more narrow sense the background in the particular relationship that exists between Odin and the Fenriswolf?

Odin throws the Midgard serpent into the deep sea, Hel into Nivelheim. The wolf he keeps for himself. The gods have to nourish him. The wolf Fenris consumes the nourishment of the gods. But only the war god Tyr has the courage to go to the wolf and give it food.

When the gods saw that the wolf grew with each passing day and would bring them ruin, they made the decision to fetter it. They put fetters on it which were called "adung." As the wolf was not yet very strong, it permitted itself to be bound. But when it stretched for the first time, the fetters burst. Now the Aesir tried to put fetters on it that were again stronger by half, but these fetters were also torn, for the wolf had grown in the meantime. That bond was called "Droma."

Thereupon, the Aesir made a third bond with the help of the black elves. Its name was "Slepnir." It was made out of six things: the echo of the cat's step; the beard of a woman; the root of mountains; the sinews of bears; the voice of fish; and the spit of birds. Slepnir was as thin as silk. The Aesir said to the wolf that he should agree to be wrapped in that bond. He would certainly tear it more easily than the heavy, iron fetters. The wolf feared betrayal and asked that one of the Aesir put as a guarantee his hand in its jaws. Tyr the war god was ready to do this. When the wolf stretched, the fetters became tighter and ever stronger. Tyr, however, lost his hand when the wolf bit it off.

Thereupon, the Aesir bound the wolf to a rock which they lowered deep into the earth. Fenris opened wide his jaws and wanted to bite the gods. They pushed a sword into its mouth, the hilt against the lower jaw and the point of the sword against the palette, thereby spreading wide his jaws. In this condition the wolf had to lie until the Twilight of the Gods. The Aesir did not want to kill the

wolf, though they knew that he would be Odin's murderer, because they did not want to stain the holy sanctuary with its blood.

This is the story of the Fenriswolf as it was introduced into popular folklore by the initiates of the Nordic mysteries. The background of this history reaches back into the Atlantean epoch. It is the story of the mystery of the evolution of language (speech) that followed the creation of speech by Odin.

The Atlantean ur-language was a homogenous nature language. A split of tongues (i.e., different idioms) did not exist at this first stage of language development. There was only one language family. Its unique and common root was the divine nature-revelation. Thus, the Atlantean culture was homogenous.

With the beginning of the post-Atlantean evolution, this homogeneity came to an end. The split into language groups, peoples and races started. A double aspect accompanies this split: war and the appearance of different tongues.

The Nordic mystery traditions describe this tremendous revolution in its effects and particularly as it took place with the peoples of Odin; it can be seen as the fate of Odin and as a fate of the mystery of the world.

All separation, all quarreling, has its beginning in the Luciferic influence. Loki brought about the Germanic clans and races. The Nordic tale told in the Lokasenna is an irrefutable witness to this. There, Loki reproaches Thor's wife, Sif (Sippia), for allowing him to cause Thor to be cuckolded. The blood clan or the blood quarrel and the revenge of the clan are the fruit of this connection of Loki with Sif. Also in the Lokasenna, Thor derides the war god Tyr because Fenris had bitten off his hand.

The homogenous Atlantean ur-language was a colossal power. The extent of this power is shown by the decay of Atlantis through the abuse of the power of language. The Aesir, as leaders of the post-Atlantean, Germanic evolution, had to take measures to avert the danger of an abuse of this power. This was done through

bringing about the split of the ur-language into idioms and through the division into clans or races. The Atlantean ur-language was differentiated. Its powerful dominion in language was directed into the vast stream of races and blood clans. The abuse of the supersensible power of language brought about wars, which in their central essence are connected with the dissimilarity of languages.

This is the gigantic turn that came about with the post-Atlantean development. These are the deeds of the Aesir which the Odin mysteries transmit. Here lies the source of the Germanic language evolution; here the origin of the hero worship confirmed by the wars. Therefore, the heroes are Odin's sons. Therefore, Odin is the "Father of Wal," the Wal-father,⁴ the father of war; and Tyr, the god of war, is the son of Odin. The mysteries of Odin transmit not only the creation of language, but also the evolution of language, its splitting through wars.

The seat of language is the formative body or the divine body. With the formative forces in the organ of the larynx, Odin created the nature-language (in Odin's visit to Gunnloed). The formative body has received Odin's holy runes. Through the alliance of Odin with Loki, the Ahrimanic power could enter the formative body. It also entered the language organism and penetrated it. Into the undivided ur-language of Atlantis, the power of Ahriman entered and held sway. On this account there also arose the misuse of the nature force of language, which led to the destruction of Atlantis through natural catastrophes. But the Ahrimanic power in the undivided language also endured in its essence after the Atlantean catastrophe. This is the wolf Fenris, according to the Nordic traditions. With the beginning of the post-Atlantean time, the Aesir had to fetter the Ahrimanic power of language in the formative body. In other words, they had to fetter Fenris.

Lying deeply within the mysteries of speech evolution is the fact that Odin had to keep the wolf. It is also deeply significant that the power of speech is "tamed" into idioms by Odin and the

gods and that Tyr alone dares to go to the wolf Fenris and is willing to offer his hand. The severed hand of Tyr in the maw of the wolf Fenris reveals the deep, occult connection of war and the separation of languages. The hand of the war god Tyr becomes the tongue of the wolf Fenris; war divides the tongues. The sword blocks the Ahrimanic maw of the “tonguewolf.” Thus, he lies fettered to the threefold human nature-being—to the astral body, the formative body and the physical body—until the Twilight of the Gods. Then he becomes free and devours Odin.

The wolf Fenris becomes the world destiny of Odin. This is the great insight of the tragedy of the Nordic mysteries. The creator of speech (language) falls prey and becomes a martyr to that being who, as an offspring of Loki, works as the Fenriswolf. Out of Odin’s union with Loki, the Germanic hero worship arose. In the shadow cast by his deeds arises the wolf which brings an end to his work.

The struggle for which Odin gathers his forces is the struggle against the wolf Fenris. The Germanic hero-cult is a hero-cult of war. The hero proves himself in clan wars, in tribal wars. The “wal” is the place of the Germanic hero-cult. Whoever stands out in the struggle for the Wal-father is a hero and a fighter for Odin. The warcall that at the beginning of war went from mouth to mouth was originally a supersensible speech art of fiery enthusiasm. In the battle call, “Odin has all of you!”—which penetrated into the ranks of the enemy—there still lived a remainder of the old magic of language, which Odin had to harness for war.

This agrees with the innermost harmony of the Germanic nature mysteries that the actions of the hero were pursued further, even through death, when his physical being was not present anymore. Whoever did not die in the “straw-death” in his bed, but fell in battle as a hero and leader, his heroic actions went beyond him and continued after death. The hero who fell on the Wal as a fighter of Odin continued being a fighter for Odin. He came to Walhalla and was received there by the Valkyries. He was accepted into the

hosts (the Einherier) there present. Death had significance only for the earth. The hero continued to live, and his actions continued as well. He fought invisibly alongside the others who still lived on earth as the leader who helps bring victory. This consciousness was maintained far into Christian times. Invisible heroes took part in the battles spoken of in German legends. Their presence and leadership were known, as they fired the whole army. The great who died continued to live as they brought new forces to the affairs of Earth.

Once they were accepted at Walhalla by the host of the Einherier, the heroes and leaders fallen in battle took part in Odin's struggle against the wolf Fenris. The souls of the heroes who passed through death fight against the death-bringing Fenriswolf. When he moves to fight the wolf, Odin gathers around him the forces of those who went courageously into death. In subduing the power of speech through wars, Odin is supported by the soul forces of those whom the wolf can no longer harm. A verse in *Grimnismâl* supports this connection:

Five hundred doors and four by ten
I presume at Walhall.
Eight-hundred Einherians turn out
If the wolf is to be prevented.

Odin's great figure, surrounded by a tragic sense of sacrifice, arises in all its features out of the mystery of the Word. To him, out of the depth of the world, arises the Ahrimanic "wolf of lies" as opponent. The wolf Fenris hides any traces of himself wherever language becomes a means to obscure the spiritual world and to deny its depth of being. Fenris' nourishment is the Ahrimanic deception which obscures the spiritual world. If the Word no longer issues from the work of Valfadr, if it now expresses only sensual-physical rather than supersensible-spiritual facts, then Odin has become a prey to the wolf.

The story of the six treasures that Odin received is a part of the history of the evolution of language. The three treasures out of Vålundr's shop and the three from Mimir's dwarves represent a state of balance in the working of Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings in man. Through the judgment of the three gods of the Aesir, Odin, Thor and Freyr, the equilibrium is shifted to the advantage of the Ahrimanic forces. The cosmic tragedy of the Aesir is here revealed in its full significance. Their judgment could not, and ought not, be different. But the effect of their judgment is the increase of the Ahrimanic powers, which put themselves as obscuring and veiling maya between the gods and men.

Odin received the spear Gungnir from Loki and the ring Draupnir from the dwarf Brock. Through the power of the spear, the thrust of breath in the speech organism is seized and transformed by the soul in the astral body. The power of the ring, which is able to renew itself, works in the formative body of the speech organism. At the creation of the ring, Ahrimanic forces took part in its formation in the shape of a fly. They disturbed the progress of the work. The place where the disturbance took place is also pointed out: The fly stung the smith in the neck, which is a picture of the Ahrimanic disturbance in the speech organism.

One can ask the question whether a ring would have come out of the forge if there had been no fly sting. Without any doubt, language would have become something different if the Ahrimanic interference had not taken place. It would not have lost its spiritual-nature forces and its magic. The Ahrimanic interference slowly lamed the original magic of the language. This is the result of Loki's work, the consequence of the bet and the curse of the quarrel that he instigated. The boundless, magical power of speech was forced into the ring of egoity, i.e., into the self, at Sindri's forge through the Ahrimanic attack of the fly on the neck of the smith. Nonetheless, the renewed formative forces drip down new rings into the larynx again and again. However, the ring, closed in itself, remains the witness

of the paralyzing Ahrimanic forces on the power of language. The creative forces of the larynx as an organism and the revelation of its spiritual being are connected to the ring, which is able to renew itself. The origin of all this is the separating quarrel. The work of war is also at its root, and the development of egoity is a consequence of the power of speech overcome by Odin.

Odin sacrificed the ring Draupnir at Baldur's death. It accompanied Baldur into Hel. The age-old, holy nature-dream woven by the gods sank into Hel, as did the natural, cosmic power of language. Both Baldur's death and the existence of the ring are huge testimonies to the workings of Ahrimanic powers in nature and language. Baldur, however, sends back the ring to Odin out of Hel as a sign that truly he himself would one day come back. The power of language would be freed of the Ahrimanic, non-spiritual coercion.

The ring Draupnir is, in truth, the archetypal image of the ring of the Nibelungs. Fighting and conflict are the origin of Siegfried's fall and the end of the Nibelungs. It started with the quarrel of the women, a misuse of the tongue. It ended with the bloody conflict of men. A physical-supersensible power brings about this fall, the Ahrimanic tongue-wolf. A language mystery-tragedy is the center of the tragedy of Siegfried and the failure of the Nibelungs. Siegfried received from Brunhild a ring with runes, the ring of the power of language. But the ring was cursed. The wolf Fenris had power over it. This failure to see both sides of the power is the delusion to which the greatest hero is sacrificed.

The ring "Andwanant" was sent as a warning by Gudrun to Atli and Hågni before the voyage. Onto this ring she attached a wolf's hair.

The ring Draupnir is the formidable sign of the spiritual, creative power of language bound by Ahriman. Here lies the origin of the golden ring which unites human beings for life. It is an age-old custom out of the mysteries of speech to scratch into these rings

the name as a rune, and the first holy service that the child receives, which issues from this ring union, is the name rune at the baptism. This practice indicates the origin and descent out of spiritual-divine worlds. It accompanies the child into a world where the Ahrimanic forces are at work.

There is a consequence of Loki's bet with the dwarves, as far as Odin's speech treasures are concerned. In post-Atlantean language development, sound shifting becomes visible as a phenomenon.⁵

Articulated language is the result of an organization of speech through the ego. The Luciferic influence awakens the astral body more and more. The Ahrimanic influence, however, puts the formative body slowly to sleep. It dulls the previously awake experience of the life processes, for example, those found in the breathing. This becomes obvious in the sound-shifting. On the one hand, new elements are taken into the language: A continuous language-creativity takes place.

On the other hand, the articulation becomes duller. Paralyzing elements appear, which find expression in the fusing of sounds, or that certain vowels and consonants vanish out of the language or die away. The archetypal-language, often through wars, separates into many tongues. Birth and death, creating and dying, also rule in the speech organism. Odin's spear is the expression of language creation. Both creation and dying are revealed in the phenomenon of the shifting of sounds.

The astral body receives its impulse through Odin's spear, which is a gift of Loki for the integration of sound into the living speech organism. In the paralyzing and dulling of the formative body, the Fenriswolf eats away vowels and consonants. Through the latter, death enters into the organism of language. A dead language, such as the Latin language or any language that is no longer spoken, has had the fate that the language became a prey of the Fenriswolf in the sense of the Nordic mysteries. Thus, in the law of the sound shifting, there is revealed a moral world-element in the origin of the

workings of Luciferic and Ahrimanic powers, for Lucifer works as speech-awakener, Ahriman (in the form of Fenriswolf) as speech-disguiser. One achieves his goal through quarrels, the other through death.

A lonely world-grandeur lives in the exalted figure of the old Germanic folk spirit, Odin. He renounces his ascension and sacrifices himself for the Germanic evolution. His creation, the language, endures. The creator will slowly be forgotten—he disappears from consciousness. The Nordic bards were the last who sang about Odin as the father of the “galdr,” who were the last carriers of Odin’s magic of language. They were the last who still had a consciousness of the moral-cosmic occurrence of Odin’s creation of language. Between them and the consciousness of men, the Fenriswolf stepped as disguiser. The Odin mysteries declared long before that Odin would be devoured by the wolf. The messenger of untruth, the Ahrimanic tongue-wolf, stepped up against the messenger of the spiritual world, the messenger of truth, disguising the truth of the spiritual world.

The Nordic mysteries formed grandiose, cosmic images from world phenomena and the knowledge of the struggle of Odin with the wolf. The wolf also pursues the sun and wants to seize it. In this picture, the old Germanic mystery knowledge related the occurrence of an eclipse of the sun. The mysteries beheld an eclipse of the sun as a moral-cosmic deed. Here, the lie is an objective happening. It reverses an objective fact into its opposite. The clairvoyant knowledge reveals the lie to be a wolf that pursues the truth. In the occurrence of an eclipse of the sun, the objective fact of the lie is intensified into a world view. The wolf pursues the sun. The untruth intensified into a cosmic event of the sun eclipse. But how can a sun eclipse be predetermined by the minute? How can a cosmic, moral world event be accounted for astronomically? Is this not an unheard of contradiction?

In truth, this is not a contradiction, but the opposite. Just because the moral happening in the cosmos, as for example the path of the sun, is the most lawful of deeds, the most trustworthy event there is, so can the cosmic morality of the path of the sun and its eclipse be mathematically calculated with precision.

Modern astronomy has now broken off from the cosmic-world in its calculations. The connection is cut, because the cosmic morality that is present in the cycles of the constellation cannot be taken in by the consciousness. If that morality were not present, we could not have a mathematical calculation of a sun eclipse. The truth is that in the occurrence of such an event, a cosmic fight takes place between lie (wolf) and truth (sun). Both have their cycles, the wolf as well as the sun. The astronomical calculation is only the dead shadow picture of living world truth, guaranteed by the sun.

Here the mystery of the word is lifted up to the sun being as a moral, cosmic truth. Valfǫdr-Odin is a mystery-messenger of the sun being. The ancient Germanic god and mystery drama attains its peak and the limit of its world view in Odin and its shadow picture, the Fenriswolf.



Thor and the Giants

The biographies of the gods are, in truth, a revelation of the mysteries of Man. What has been preserved in the songs about the gods in the Nordic mythologies are fragments of these biographies. They are testimonies to the mystery of Man. Those tremendous, venerable testimonies of Germanic ur-time would remain silent if spiritual science did not translate their language. It dares such an undertaking and makes it possible to re-read, in halting attempts, the faded and destroyed runes of the Nordic-Germanic gods. These biographies and the mystery of Man are one. Man has preserved the order of the gods out of which Man appeared and repeats this order in each life path. In the traditions of the Nordic-Germanic mythology, the light of the order and morality of the gods shines through.

In the human life path, the capacity of the Word appears first. Out of Word, the Logos, the created-All is born: the word-gifted human being. The word, the language, wakes up in them first. With this fact is unveiled not only a first but a central mystery of their being and of their descent as a being born out of the cosmos. Through this they reveal only that they follow the order of the gods and that they carry that order in their being and body.

Great and lofty, the Nordic mystery traditions put Odin, as the carrier of the word, at the apex of the world order and the order of

the gods. The mystery of the word is the mystery of the beginning. Odin is the father of the gods and of Man. Both gods and human beings are connected through the mystery of the word. Man follows this order of the gods from the beginning of his life; it is born into him.

Mankind attains ego-consciousness only when he has gone through the experience of language, when he receives the possibility of speech in his third year of life. Mankind follows the innate order of the gods.

Mankind born out of the cosmos received the language from the gods, also the ego from the gods but later in time. The birth of the ego is consummated in different peoples at different levels of their development in a clearly unequivocal, differentiated way. This birth determines a biographical originality and uniqueness which works further in the historical destiny of the peoples.

The ego is the youngest member of fourfold Man. On Old Saturn, the first spiritual disposition for the physical body was created. On Old Sun came the basis for the formative body, and on Old Moon, the sentient or astral body. During the Earth evolution, the birth of the ego takes place. But only when the three members created at earlier world levels have been transformed by this Earth evolution can the human being become the carrier of the ego.⁶

The act of the birth of the ego during Earth evolution takes place among the youngest, the last, generation of gods. Further generations of gods cannot follow, for with the ego, the divine has entered Man. Receiving the ego, human beings give themselves to it rather than to the gods. But no mythology has so dramatically displayed the experience of this break with the world of the gods. This experience was a consequence of the birth of the ego and transmitted as the Nordic mythology in the picture of the "Twilight of the Gods." Here one hits the kernel of its biographical originality with regard to the ego-birth of the Germanic race. What are the original elements of this development?

Rudolf Steiner, in *Mission of the Folk Souls*, gives the spiritual scientific foundations of the ego-birth of the Germanic peoples. These are unique and grand. Out of them one learns to know the background of destiny. The Germanic peoples have received and experienced through a kind of world-historical grace the birth of their ego out of the old clairvoyant soul disposition. The ego stood before their souls as a clairvoyantly-experienced objective of their age. Receiving the ego, they knew that they received it out of the spiritual world as a gift of the gods. The ego was for them a clairvoyant experience, and according to this experience, they shaped their institutions in life. Therefore, the old Germanic justice, as will be seen, is a result of the clairvoyant ego experience.

Under very different conditions the ego birth of the Romans took place. Without clairvoyant insight and experience, the Romans experienced, by leaps and bounds, the birth of the ego. In such a situation they could not form their institutions out of clairvoyant experience. They had to meet the demands of the world out of their earthly experience. Roman law came out of the fact that the single egos stood separated and next to each other in the outer world. The Germanic egohood was bloodbound in kin and clan. In Rome there was no blood relationship. Here, ego stood next to ego—Roman citizen next to Roman citizen, independent of blood ties. Justice reveals the mystery of ego birth, for with the ego the creative law is born. The Germanic justice was a justice of blood. The Romans created true justice. The latter came about through the single ego, out of the *casus* [basis of the unconscious – *ed.*], which is only a question of the isolated, single ego.

The purely historical birth of the ego in Rome brought along with it a condition in which the Romans became a prosaic people without much fantasy. They had no god of their own, no original mythology, no art. But thanks to their ego-birth, they were able to create the formidable “Imperium Romanum.”

Likewise, the Romans carried no pre-natal forces [i.e., clairvoyant, ego experience – *ed.*] into their historical life; rather, they developed the mightiest impulses of power toward outer life. The Germanic peoples, on the contrary, carried strong pre-natal powers into their historical life. They had a unique, original circle of gods—an incomparable mythology, gifted with fantasy. Seen historically, the Nordic evolution began late and without culture, when the world-historical encounter with the earlier, tired, Roman culture took place.

When the cultivated Roman, Tacitus⁷ learned to know the barbaric Germans, he stood in front of peoples who differed fundamentally from what it was that made someone a Roman. This differentiation had as its intrinsic reason the contrast of the ego-birth of the peoples. The symptomatology of the description of Tacitus in his *Germania* comes from a completely different manner of ego-birth. This is the great significance in the world historic encounter of the Romans with the Germanic people: Here forces measure themselves against the “other” when the soul-spiritual character of the birth of the two peoples was in complete opposition. In this encounter, we find a world-historical necessity and lawfulness. It was an expression of a kind of world destiny.

The Germanic peoples, as far as their ego-birth is concerned, stand in the spiritual middle within the IndoGermanic family of peoples.

The Hindus came late to an awakening of the ego. But it already had behind it a tremendous soul development within a clairvoyant soul disposition. The Vedas are a resonance of all this. There, the spiritual center lay in the divine world. With the Romans it lay in the physical world; with the Germans it rested between the two worlds, spiritual and physical.

In early India, all the experience of the gods was impersonal. With the Romans, everything was personal but without personal,

clairvoyant, divine experience. The gods formed only an appendage. With the early Germanic people everything was personal but penetrated by divine experience. With their ego they seized both aspects: the world of the gods and the world of sense. This capacity was inborn, and the whole character of the Nordic Germanic mythology is formed through it. It carries the pithiness and exactness right into the style of the dramatic dialogues.

The Germanic people experienced the birth of language out of the cosmos under the guidance of Thor. Speech and ego were received in a clairvoyant soul stage. Both happened according to the order of the gods, first the language and then the ego. Therefore, Odin is the father of Thor. The order of the gods is expressed genealogically.

The breathing process that formed the language was a compounded soul-experience. Outside of the human being, the spirit penetrated all as the world-breath, the wind, and the breath of Odin. The ego was experienced clairvoyantly in the rhythm of the blood. Corresponding to it in the cosmos was the flash of lightning as the world-fire and the roll of thunder. What lived divinely in the warmth of the world was found in the warmth of the blood on the human level. In the rhythmic pulse beat, there was experienced the ego strength of the hammer-throwing Thor. In the rhythms of the breath, there was revealed the speech-creating work of Odin. Just as breath and language are two sides of the same divine working, so are blood and ego two sides of divine working. Odin weaves and works in breath and language. Thor works with ego power in the blood.

Thor, like Odin, renounced his ascendance and became, therefore, the leader of the Germanic peoples' experience of the ego-birth. Had he ascended he would have become an archangel being. He stayed at the angel level. Out of this renunciation grew the tremendous power that made him leader of the Germanic ego-birth. Rudolf Steiner, in the previously mentioned lecture cycle,⁸ characterizes him as one of the mightiest angels there ever

was. The way Thor is represented by spiritual science is confirmed by traditional texts. Without this key, Thor remains a riddle or an enhanced, superhuman peasant.

The lower the gods on the hierarchical ladder, the closer they stand to Man. As an angel being, Thor stood on the lowest step and was, therefore, closest to the old Germanic human being. These people were akin to Odin by language and breath. With Thor they were akin by the blood and ego. Odin was the god of the mysteries, Thor the god of blood-race. In the later times of the Germanic hero worship, when the veneration of Odin was already overshadowed, Thor was the peasant god.

What a formidable trail of his work, Thor, the god of blood and clans, left behind. It stands before us with tangible significance in the Icelandic sagas. They glorify the latest and last epoch of the Germanic heroic age in Iceland. One motif runs through all of them: strength of kin, pride of kin, and revenge of kin in a heroic, peasant age.

The saga of the wise Njal is a document of the first order for the study of the history of the age of kin and of the blood vendetta. But the history of kinship is also the history of the effect of Thor, the "I"-god in the blood.

The saga of the wise Njal is a historical document of the waning, instinctive clairvoyance, of the heroic yet tragic passion for blood. (It is to be distinguished from "blood-revenge," which destroyed whole generations of the old Germanic peoples. This blood revenge and blood justice were fruits of the clairvoyantly-experienced ego-birth.) The Njal saga is still the Icelandic national saga today. It takes place in the year 1000 during the time of the Christianizing of Iceland.

Among its various characters, two are notable: the wise Njal and his friend Gunnar of Haldenende. The wise Njal is one of the last great but tragic figures to be gifted with clairvoyance. He knows how to read the implications of blood-revenge of kinship.

Nobody else in Iceland is so knowledgeable in the laws, and no one else but he can give such wise council. Both generous and wise, he, himself, knows how to avoid all quarrels. Because his judgment is always fair, people call on him to straighten out struggles. Faithfully he stands at the side of his younger friend Gunnar of Haldenende with his council in all life situations. Gunnar, the strong, noble, peasant figure of his time, is drawn into a wild storm of kinship-passion and blood-avenging. In these storms the wise Njal stands out, lonely in his wisdom. With a heroic composure, he bears the tragic consequences of his good council, as it is misused through the passion of others and falls back on him

Early in the course of events, Njal counsels Gunnar to beware of committing manslaughter out of his blood relationship, if he becomes embroiled in kin struggles, for this would lead to the end of his race. But through a chain of circumstances, and out of justifiable self-defense, Gunnar is forced to commit homicide. From that time on, the passion of the whole kinfolk spreads like a wildfire and destroys Gunnar and his farm. Thereupon, the sons of Njal get embroiled in the further raging kin fight through the destruction of Gunnar. Their farm is besieged and burned, and Njal, though he himself was not guilty, together with his son finds death in the flames.

The spark that brought about this kin quarrel was provoked by Gunnar's haughty wife Hallgerd, who began a quarrel with Bergthora, a woman worthy of Njal. Hallgerd is described as an ambitious, quarrel-seeking but beautiful woman, whose blond hair reached down to her knees. The figures in the Njal saga are historical. The ruin of the two ranches destroyed by fire by the enemy kinship still exist today. The writer reported what is still preserved by oral tradition. Every Icelander of today knows the Njal saga.

One recognizes in Hallgerd's beautiful hair the reflection of Sif's golden hair for which Loki had to find a replacement. One perceives the effect of Thor's pulse beat in those defiant, brazen, heroic, but

blood-bound figures of the Njal saga. The fruit of the clairvoyantly experienced birth of the ego in the old Germanic blood justice is clearly perceived in the unique form of law called the “Allthing.” In the Njal saga, the course of the “Allthing”-complaint is described in detail. Such a complaint took the following course: Gunnar of Haldenende, son of Haimond, has committed manslaughter. At the same time, the enemy kin has made a surprise attack. But the decisive point is that he dealt the first blow against the attacker, Thorgeir, killing him instantly. The complaint of manslaughter had to be supported by witnesses and brought publicly before the Allthing, using an exact text. An error in form made the complaint untenable. The wording of the complaint that the plaintive Sizur brings read as follows:

I proclaim against Gunnar Haimondson a punishable attack; that with a first punishable attack he rushed on Thorgeir Otkelson and wounded him with an inner wound (wound that penetrated to the bowels) that became mortal and brought death to Thorgeir. I declare that on account of this complaint he must become an outlawed woodsman (Friedloser, an outlaw), unfed, unled, unprotected without any shelter. I declare as forfeited his property, half for me and half to the four (or quadruple) fellows who are entitled to take the penalty from him, according to the law. I proclaim it to the quadruple court to which the complaint has to be made after the law. I proclaim it in lawful proclamation. I proclaim it to all ears on the rock of justice to proceed in the pursuit and outlawing against Gunnar Haimondson.

For a second time Sizur named witnesses and proclaimed a complaint against Gunnar Haimondson, because he wounded the bowels of Thorgeir Otkelson, which led to his death on the battle

ground, where Gunnar rushed on Thorgeir with a punishable first attack. Thereupon he made a second proclamation like the first one.

The essence of this complaint is that the surprise attack he made on Gunnar is of no importance and that he has grounds for making the complaint twice. The first time it proceeds from the attack of Gunnar, the second time from the wound it caused. This is what is decisive. First, the complaint rests on the ego that committed the manslaughter; the second rests on the flowing blood. The ego and the blood are the essential factors in the old Germanic blood justice. The blood is the physical expression of the ego. Thor worked within the blood.⁹ The old Germanic justice is descended from the divine. The Roman justice is more earthly, from a human origin. It has supplanted the Germanic justice in the course of time.

The intensity of the kind of temperament with which Odin and Thor work in their respective fields can be identified exactly. Odin's field of action in Man is the breathing and speech organism. Thor's is in the blood organism. Odin is working in the element of air, while Thor works in the fluid or the liquid element. As breathing and blood and their lawful rhythms relate to each other, so do the actions of Odin and Thor. A lawfulness is expressed in the "thrust" of breath, still another in the pulse beat. These kinds of laws have their origin in the different natures of Odin on one side and Thor on the other. The field in which the deeds of the gods reveal themselves is part of the mystery of Man. The rhythm of the breath follows the lawfulness of eighteen breaths a minute; the blood follows a rhythm of seventy-two pulse beats a minute. In their dissimilarity of breath and blood rhythms (in the ratio of 1:4), there is the expression of a definite difference of being between Odin and Thor. The rhythm of breathing is a picture of Odin's all-embracing weaving. It is a completely different picture with Thor. The being of Thor is so represented in the traditions that one senses immediately a different rhythm, a rhythm that has its image in the pulse beat. A pulse beat is four times faster than the measured breath in the workings of

Odin. Odin lives and weaves in the rhythmical, breathing man. Thor is filled with fiery and sudden energy in the blood of the human metabolic system.

The deeds of Thor are popular ones that show a hardness that can be powerfully related. In the fine details of the story, one can discern the work of the "I" in the blood. Thor is characterized as a choleric: He has a red beard; he is ardent and dominated by the will; he boils up at any moment, lowering his angry brows and seizing his hammer. He holds this hammer so tightly that his knuckles become pale. All of these features betray the relationship between blood and ego.

Thor's being and deeds, his characteristics, are characteristic of the old Germanic ego and its working in the blood. This ego was elementary, like a nature power. Out of these powerful elements of nature, out of lightning and thunder, the ego also was received. The working of this mighty force of Thor found its mighty continuation in the ego being and in the blood of the Nordic man. The mighty angel figure of Thor and his powerful elemental force in the outer and inner human fields of action is the soul-spiritual foundation of the Germanic clan, kinship and blood relation.

Two outstanding features characterize Thor's work: his travel to the east and his fights with the Jotun giants. There is never a question about travels to the west, nor to Hel. Traveling to the west is done by the souls who are destined to Hel, for they enter there through the gate of the west. Thor's trips to the east and his struggles with the giants rest within the being of the god of the ego and the blood.

Blood is the substance of the body which builds. While the substances that build up the body come from nature, it is through the ego that these formative forces become blood. The body of formative forces must be metamorphosed and individualized by the ego, so that out of the simpler fluids, blood can come into being. The human form is the result of ego and blood, but the mediator is the

creative formative-body as the individualizing force giving itself to blood substance.¹⁰

Thor's field of action is the human formative body. Here he works within Man. He hammers in the pulse beat of the blood. Without Thor beating his hammer, the human form would be ruined. Outside the human being, cosmically, he works in everything alive, in nature's formative fields. Cosmically, he also works in lightning and thunder. There exists an inner relation between lightning and thunder, the pouring rain of the thunderstorm and the pulse of the blood stream.

On his eastward travels, Thor is found wherever blood streams in the human organism. Through the formative body, the ether body is active. The Nordic mystery tradition speaks of the east wherever upbuilding forces [i.e., eastern forces – *ed.*] are working. The Thor who hammers in the pulse beat is as a god of the east; his journeys are eastern journeys. In the popular picture language, but touching on the kernel of the matter, it is always pointed out that Thor in his travels has to wade through rivers. Even names are given to the rivers that Thor has to wade through when he goes to the council of the gods, to Urd's fountain. It is even here a question of a clairvoyantly-seen picture of the human head and of the blood streams flowing into it.

Another popular characterization of Thor is his huge desire for eating. On his trips he always takes along a bag of food. These pictures are, so to speak, the husks for what lives spiritually in the blood-building process of the metabolism.

In Thor's eastern travel, as he wades through rivers, as he eats and drinks, it is always a matter of images of the working of the blood, of the creation of the ego in its life-building, substance-forming activity. In Thor's fights with the Jotun giants, there is always a sense of the immediacy of his working in the human ego.

The gods are the carriers and the executors of the moral-spiritual world order. Odin and Thor are particularly striking

representatives of this. Both have renounced their ascendance into higher spheres. Both have thus made a divine sacrifice for the furtherance of evolution. Therefore, to both has accrued the power of the divine and the assumption of a very special task. With his creation of speech, Odin brought about a free act of world morality. For his part, Thor acts as a leader of the old Germanic ego-evolution.

The human ego is a champion against the forces of the astral body and the formative body. Without the individualizing activity of the ego, they would grow, without metamorphosing, into giant-like dimensions. There is also the aspect of ego activity in the realm of justice, which corrects the encroachment of the impulses of the astral body, even as the ego alters it. Justice is closely bound up with the moral-spiritual act of the world order, which took place with the birth of the ego.

Thor's fight against the Thurses mirrors the fight of the ego against the instincts of the astral body (i.e., against the urges that Loki excites). In the worldwide fields of the astral body with its heaving sea of instincts, the ego meets the Luciferic element and fights it. The image of this huge struggle is unfolded in the mystery tradition as the fight of Thor against the Midgard serpent.¹¹ The latter is Loki's creature, which Odin threw into the deep sea of the human astral body. Thor, deciding to catch it, rowed into the open sea and threw his fishhook after it. The snake snapped at the bait, and Thor, accompanied by the giant Ymir, pulled the serpent up. At the moment when Thor wanted to smash its head with his hammer, Ymir, out of fear, cut through the line and the serpent sank again into the sea.

Ymir is the father of the race of the Thurses and is therefore related to the Midgard serpent of the human astral body. Thus, Thor's trip miscarried. At the Twilight of the Gods, Thor fights against the Midgard serpent and kills it but perishes from its poison. It is another picture in the struggle of Thor with the Jotuns. Here it is not a question of soul powers, but a question of nature powers. Here

Thor meets the Ahrimanic powers that work against the gods in the formative body. Thor's most powerful enemies on his eastern travels are the Ahrimanic nature forces, not the Thurses. The Ahrimanic powers are the arch-enemies of the Aesir. They are the ones who killed Baldur. They bring about the Twilight of the Gods and the fall of the Nordic nature mysteries. Against them the hammer-armed Thor storms without respite.

The working of the Ahrimanic nature spirits is good as long as they keep within the limits given to them. They proliferate, giant-like, if they pass their limits. Then Thor must fight against them. The Ahrimanic forces working in the human formative body have the tendency to pass beyond their limits. Could they do it, then the human form, which the gods gave to Man, would be destroyed. The ego in the formative body must always fight this destruction of the human form through the Ahrimanic powers. Thor must incessantly travel to the east¹² to pull the Jotuns back to their limits so that they cannot penetrate into Asgard.

Memory is a quality of the formative body. At the time of clairvoyant soul capacities, there existed a blood memory, in which the experiences of ancestors were carried in the blood. This led to the cult of ancestors. What happens if the Ahrimanic forces step over their limits, if they penetrate into Asgard? The blood memory vanishes. The worship of ancestors ceases. According to the explanations of Rudolf Steiner about the Druids, their nature spirits become frost, storm and fire giants when they overstep their boundaries. Thor fights against similar beings. When, in the course of nature's year, does Thor lead the fight against the fire giants? He leads it in the high summer, when the plant world develops the blossoms. There the fire giants of the blossom free themselves—and there Thor fights against them in thunderstorms.

Wherever in the Nordic mystery traditions Thor appears—wherever he is acting—one can experience the powerful forces of this mighty angel of the old Germanic ego impulses. The “I” god

Thor appears in these traditions as an executor of the moral-spiritual world order. The ego appears as an object of world morality.

This stands in contradiction to the “fall” of the Aesir, of which Thor is a part, as told in the Lokasenna. Here, he too is insulted by Loki. Loki taunts him, saying that, at the Twilight of the Gods, he won’t be able to do anything against Fenriswolf. Loki utters there a deep truth, for Thor does not have the power to overcome the wolf—he is too weak. For the victorious struggle against the wolf, a stronger one is called upon. Nevertheless, Thor acts differently from the other gods in the Lokasenna. He is more powerful than Loki and confronts him; he is the only one who dares to lift his hammer against him. Loki in turn fears Thor and is able to escape. The Germanic world could not exist, if this relationship among these mighty beings were not as it was. Mystery vision points here to the mystery of the ego.

That Loki, Odin and the other Aesir are connected is apparent in the story of the treasures in Loki’s bet with the dwarves. Thor received from Loki the golden hair for Sif, which was made by the sons of Iwaldi. From Brock came the hammer. In the case of both Odin and Thor, the treasures represent a state of balance between the Luciferic element in the astral body and the Ahrimanic element in the formative body. With Odin, this balance is sought in the realm of language (the ring Draupnir) and breath (the spear Gungnir); with Thor it is in the realm of blood (Sif-kin) and ego (hammer).

The Germanic blood-kin relationship received its Luciferic imprint through the treasures of Iwaldi’s sons. The golden hair that Loki gives Thor for Sif lets us know how the ego within the blood relationship of the race seizes and re-forms the astral body. The strong blood relationship of the clan is the fruit of the ego impulse organizing and individualizing the astral body with the help of Luciferic forces.

The story of the wise Njal is, at bottom, nothing else but the story of the treasure of the golden hair carried over into the

historical realm. We notice in the figures all the charms and all the heroic features of the clan; from them radiates the origin of the clan and of its soul beings. Thor receives the golden hair from Loki's hand.

A deep insight into the connection of the Thor impulses with the Ahrimanic element in the formative body is revealed in the coming into being of the hammer. The smith Sindri put iron into the forge and told Brock never to stop operating the bellows. While he was blowing air into the fire, a fly came and sat between his eyes and stung him so that he bled. He stopped the bellows in order to clear the blood out of his eyes. When Sindri saw what had happened, he feared that almost everything in the forge would be spoiled and thereupon pulled the hammer out of the fire.

Man could come to ego-consciousness at the point in the body when the formative body and the physical body had reached a certain congruence. This point lies between the eyes, above the root of the nose. In the course of evolution, this congruence—at the place where there is the activity of the pineal gland (Odin's eye)—began to dissolve. In a child, that congruence occurs in about the third year. At about that age, the child begins to say "I" to himself, and the ego consciousness begins to be cut off from the consciousness of the "all." From this fact it is perhaps evident why the location of the fly sting played such an important role in the forming of the hammer. This shows that the congruence (indicated by the fly sting) comes about through an Ahrimanic intervention.

The other important part of the evolutionary history is the iron. Just as without ego there is no blood, there is no blood without iron. The red blood corpuscles come about through the iron mixed into the blood. Here there is no question of the chemical element of iron (i.e., that which is found outside the human), but rather of the living iron (within the human). The forming of the hammer shows this with palpable significance. Thor's hammer is made of iron. He

also seizes the handle of the hammer with an iron glove. However far he throws it, it always returns to his hand. Thor throws his hammer to the furthest limits of the whole organism. He throws it wherever red blood is pulsating. There, too, is found the living iron in the beat of Thor's hammer. In speaking of living iron, we refer to the fact that through the activity of the formative body, organic substance is transformed. The Thor impulse could not have been effective unless the ego worked in the blood. In other words, without the iron in the life processes, without Thor seizing his hammer with the iron glove, the blood could not have been the bearer of the ego.

The ego is a creation of earth evolution. Thor is also named "son of the earth" in the Lokasenna. As long as Man has not received the ego, he is not a son of the earth but a dependent member of the gods. Thor's power encounters the force of egoity in the astral body, in the shape of the Midgard serpent, the creature of Loki. In the formative body it meets the working of the Ahrimanic forces. In the fight against these forces the ego gets stronger. It gets stronger through the Ahrimanic resistance in the blood. This is evident in the creation of the hammer. These images are not reflective thoughts—they are beheld. They are a clairvoyantly-seen blood and ego experience. Therefore, they are given a form out of mystery experience and can be relived by everyone. This also throws light on the otherwise dark verse in the Våluspa (verse 32): "In the East the aged woman sat in iron bushes / And fed there Fenris' race." In the original text, we find the word *jarnvidi* which is here translated as "iron bush."

Most translators used "iron bushes" or "iron forest." Evidently an expression was looked for that would connect the mineral with the plant-like, the inorganic with the organic. But without a connecting link this is impossible; this link is the formative body. It transforms inorganic, dead substance into organic, living substance. It transforms chemical iron into living iron, into organic, plant-like

iron. This is the iron of Thor's hammer. The dwarves prepare it in the forge, which is nothing else but the substance-transforming activity of the formative body. But Ahrimanic forces are part of it.

The Våluspa part speaks of the old woman who in the east sits in the iron bushes. The old woman is nobody other than Angrboda. She is the same being who does not want to cry for Baldur's death. She is the Jotun giantess and the Ahrimanic shadow giantess from whom descends the Fenriswolf. She holds sway in the living iron of the blood. The blood is like the formative body that builds up the substance of the body; it is like an "eastern province" in the human organism. There the old woman sits and feeds the race of the Fenriswolf. There she prepares the Twilight of the Gods through the Ahrimanic darkening and paralyzing of the formative body. Thus, this part of Våluspa is in full accordance with what is contained in Thor's hammer and gives a view into the life-secret of the "I" organization.

Still other images point toward the macrocosmic being of Thor, such as the belt of strength and the two rams.¹³ Through Thor's working together with the ram forces, the upright human shape is caused macro-cosmically. The uprightness and walk of Man is a deed of the ego. Thor traveling with the rams is an image of the cosmic working together of the zodiacal forces of the ram with the cosmic-divine ego-being.

In the Song of Harbard there is described an experience that meets Thor on one of his travels to the east. Thor arrives at a strait and wishes to have Harbard, the ferryman, transport him. The ferryman refuses and a harsh, coarse argument ensues.

Harbard (flaxen-haired or gray-bearded) is, according to the *Grimnismâl*, a surname of Odin. Therefore, the song, with its enraged combat in words, was seen as a male exchange between Odin and Thor. But why should Odin and Thor, father and son, insult each other as it happens in the song?

In truth it is a question of an encounter of Thor with Loki. One historical source holds that Loki had taken the name Harbard in order to mock Thor. None other than Loki could come out to deride and scoff at Thor in such a way. Only Loki can speak of a snow-white maiden whom he caresses in the east. This maiden is Idun the Aesir, who was abducted by Thiassi the giant and brought to Jotunheim. Loki brought her back to the gods, after she had threatened him with death. Only Loki can tell Thor that his spouse Sif had a lover. In the Lokasenna he says this to Sif herself in the presence of all the gods. Only Loki, not Odin, can make such an utterance. Odin has the lineage of the princes that fall in battle, Thor the lineage of the menial. The Harbard song marks itself, and other analysis confirms it, as a quarrel between Loki and Thor, in which Thor comes out with the shorter end.

A much deeper and more significant view into the connection of Thor with Loki is found in the *Prose Edda* in the description of Thor's eastward travel with Loki to Jotunheim. In the Harbard song and the Lokasenna, Loki refers to that trip in a mocking manner. This again is additional, irrefutable proof of the identity of Harbard with Loki.

According to the *Prose Edda*, Thor, with his rams, was accompanied by Loki on a trip to the east. In the evening they lodge with a peasant. Thor killed the rams, and together with the peasant and his children, ate them. The skins he put next to the hearth and instructed everyone to throw the bones onto the skins. Thialfi, a son of the peasant, after eating the meat off the thigh bone of a ram, broke it apart to get at the marrow.

The next day Thor took his hammer to consecrate the skins. The rams rose immediately, but one of them had a lame back leg. Thor said somebody must have been careless with the bones and, furious, lowered his brows. The peasant and his folk were seized by fear. Thor grabbed the hammer so firmly that his knuckles got white.

The company cried out in terror. When Thor saw this, he quieted his wrath, but he demanded that both children of the peasant accompany him. They accompanied him forthwith on his trips.

Here we have an expression of a night experience in the form of a popular tale. Man is only in an awake state in the upright ram position. In sleep he changes to the horizontal. Then the rams are slaughtered and eaten. At night, going to sleep, the ego with the astral body leaves the human body. It does not then work within Man, but works macro-cosmically outside him. Out of the cosmos, during the night, the human forces are renewed. In the morning the ego re-enters the body. It is in the morning that Thor consecrates the two skins. The rams stand up. The human beings change from the horizontal to the vertical. During the day Man receives sense impressions which they take in with their ego. Then the rams begin to move. However, during sleep Man receives a nightly food, which the astral body and ego send them as a gift from the All. Then they eat the meat of the slaughtered rams. Only the physical body and the formative body are present during the night, only bones and skin. This is only an envelope. Ego and astral body nourish them. They renew their forces from outside, from the cosmos.

To wake up in the morning means to come to one's self, to come to one's ego. There Thor consecrates the skins, then the rams stand up. Then, in the sense of the Nordic mystery wisdom, Man again and again receives the consecration through which the dignity of Man is documented in the shape of their body: the upright position. With all this they document their human relationship to the cosmos, to the heaven of the fixed stars. From there they have the ego through the godly help of Thor out of the spirit realm of the ram.

Thor now continued his trip together with Loki. They wandered eastward towards Jotunheim. The rams Thor left with the peasant. He now encountered the strangest adventures on this trip to the east.

Thor passed the night with his companions in a hut. At midnight there occurred a big earthquake. The hut swayed so much that Thor got up and found another part of the hut and went into it. Thor put himself into the doorway and kept the handle of the hammer in his hand to defend himself. At the break of day, Thor went outside and found a huge man in the wood, who slept and snored loudly. Thor noticed that all the noise they had heard the night before came from there. As the giant man woke up, Thor did not dare to hit him, but asked for his name instead. He was called Skrymir. He said immediately, "I know that you are of the Aesir, Thor. Where did you carry my glove?" So it was that Thor and his companions had slept in the glove of Skrymir. The other part of the "hut" was the thumb of his glove.

This is the adventure about which Loki derides Thor on two occasions, in the Lokasenna and in the Harbard song. In the former, he says:

Four trips to the east
Would forever stay unmentioned
Since in the thumbs-tail, oh knight, you cowered in glove.
And you yourself meant to be Thor!

Skrymir offered himself as companion, and they continued their journey. They put the reserve of provisions together, and Skrymir carried the bundle. Overnight they stayed under an oak tree. Skrymir gave the provision bundle to Thor and said that he wanted to sleep. He fell immediately asleep and snored mightily. Thor wanted to open the bundle of provisions, but despite all of his efforts the knot would not come apart. Thereupon fury overcame him. He took the hammer and hit Skrymir on the head. He awoke and asked whether a leaf from the tree had fallen on his head. At midnight, Skrymir snored so tremendously that the whole forest resounded. Thor seized the hammer and hit him on the cowlick.

He noticed that the end of the hammer sank deeply into Skrymir's head. Skrymir woke up and asked whether an acorn had fallen on his head.

Toward the morning Thor hit a third time, this time on the vein at the temple. The hammer sank down to its shaft. Skrymir awoke again and asked whether the droppings of a bird had fallen on his head.

In the morning Skrymir parted from Thor. He said that his path led him northward. If Thor wanted to continue his trip eastward, he would soon come to Utgard. There he would find still stronger men than he.

Thor continued eastward with his companions and came to Utgard and King Utgardloki. The latter showed his teeth in derision. "This little fellow must be 'Ockuthor,' (carriage-riding Thor)," he said with a sneer.

Utgardloki said to Thor that he had heard of his many great deeds and demanded to see examples of his art. Thor had to undergo three formidable proofs.

Utgardloki commanded that a drinking cornucopia be brought. He said to him that a good drinker could empty it at the first drink, but a less good drinker surely with three drafts. Thor drank without stopping until his breath was exhausted, but the content had only diminished a little. For a second time he drank as long as he had some breath left. The end of the cornucopia did not go up in drinking, as he would have liked it. Utgardloki said he would not be valued as much of a great man as he is by the Aesir, if he could not empty the horn. Thor got energy and drank with all his might for a third time. It diminished considerably but he could not empty it. Thor said he would try another game.

Utgardloki now demanded of Thor that he should lift a cat from the earth. Here, he said, young fellows would be able to do that. Thor lifted with all his might, but the cat bent its back and stayed with one foot always on the earth. Utgardloki derided him

and said: "I see the cat is big and Thor is small and short next to the men who are here."

Thor answered, "Even if you call me small, anybody may come and wrestle with me, now I am furious." Utgardloki called the old nurse Elli, that she might wrestle with Thor. The more Thor strained himself, the firmer the nurse stood. It wouldn't have been long before Thor would have fallen on his knees. Thereupon Utgardloki commanded that the fight come to a finish.

The following morning, at the good-bye, Utgardloki accompanied Thor in front of the castle. Thor said that one would take him here for an insignificant man. Utgardloki answered that he wanted him to know the entire truth, for he had almost brought them to a great disaster. He himself had been the man to whom Thor had given the three hits with the hammer. He would have brought him to death if he had not placed a rock between the hammer and his head. Only Thor did not notice this.

Concerning the drinking test, it was a wonder to see what Thor had done, for one end of the cornucopia was lying in the sea. The decrease in sea level had been so great that the ebb and flow of the tide had come into being. The cat had been the Midgard serpent. He almost lifted her up to the heavens. Another miracle was the wrestling with Elli, for never had there been one, nor would there ever be one, whom she was not able to bring down in a fall. In the future, said Utgardloki, he would protect his castle from such a visitor. Thor seized his hammer, but when he wanted to smash Utgardloki, he had vanished.

The key to these gigantic and coarse images lies in the ego-power of Thor. The spiritual background of all of this has to do with the inner and outer fields of action of his being. Without the key to Thor's being, those pictures are nothing but physical happenings magnified giant-like.

The power of Thor works within Man in the blood and, therefore, in the metabolism. It works outside Man in the cosmos

and therewith also in nature. Odin's spiritual world element is the air, while Thor's is all that is liquid. Thor fights with his hammer without respite against the Jotun giants, against the Ahrimanic power of coercion. They have their dwelling, their stronghold, in all that is ossified. Within man it is bone which brings the Ahrimanic to its strongest expression, for the bone is most closely related to death. Death is the skeleton. It is Ahrimanic. In nature, the most akin to death to Ahriman is the rock—it is the geological skeleton of the earth.

Thor, the strong “son of the earth,” is the fighter against all that is ossified—the skeleton of the earth within Man and without. Out of the breadth of the zodiac, the inborn ego of Man fights the adversary against materialism, against death, against Ahriman. The ego and death are the most powerful opponents in the world. Thor is not able to reconcile the conflict between the ego and death (i.e., the ego overcoming death). For this task, the handle of the hammer is too short. In the Nordic mysteries one knew exactly the limits of the world-mighty Thor. Therefore, it was said that the hammer has a fault: the shaft is too short (due to the fly sting during its creation). But within his limits, Thor is a formidable fighter.

In all the mysteries, three worlds were known: the spiritual world, the soul world, and the world of nature. All three are also in Man. The human being is the representative of the three worlds. (The Nordic mystery wisdom calls them Asgard, Midgard and Utgard Gotunheim.)

Thor travels eastward to Jotunheim, and Loki accompanies him. It belongs to the deepest features of the Nordic mystery wisdom that Loki takes Thor to the other Loki, to Utgardloki. Utgard, whose meaning is already indicated by the word itself, is the outer world, the world of nature to which the human physical body also belongs. There is found the other Loki, the outer one who holds sway in nature: Utgardloki.

King Utgardloki is really only the Nordic name for Ahriman. The inner Loki (Lucifer) leads Thor to the outer Loki, to Ahriman. In the world happenings, the work of Lucifer¹⁴ pulls the work of Ahriman along with it. No documentary, no traditional mystery wisdom has preserved the cosmic connection of Lucifer and Ahriman as clearly as has the Nordic-Germanic wisdom in such a mighty way.

In the fights and trials of Thor on his travels to Jotunheim-Utgard in the east, there has been preserved the old Germanic relationship between ego and death. The struggle against death-related events is a gigantic and heroic one. The power of Thor did not suffice for a victory over death or for overcoming what is related to death. For this Thor was too weak. Therefore, Loki and Utgardloki mocked and derided him. Inexorably, the twilight of the gods had come.

With all this we only wanted to point out the spiritual background out of which Nordic mystery wisdom has imprinted in popular images the mighty, incomparable vigor of Thor and his fate.

The visit of Thor to the peasant, the slaughter of the rams, the common meal are all images for his work on the inner human being. They are pictures of the building up, the renewal of the human body out of the ego through the metabolic processes. These are imaginations out of an old nature-like clairvoyance bound to the blood, working to rebuild the body.

The events of Thor's trip to the east have an inner connection: First, his inner field of action within the human being is revealed, and then he continues his trip east with Loki. They come to Jotunheim. Utgard is a stronghold of Jotunheim. There is revealed the outer human, the nature-like field of action. It is, therefore, expressly stated that he left the rams behind with the peasant. There in Utgard, he battles against the Ahrimanic powers of nature. It lies in their being to bring about deceptive lies and coercive forces.

Thor is in his element in all that is liquid. Although he does not empty the horn completely, he brings about the tides, for in the Nordic mystery knowledge, the ebb was a consequence of the rhythmical activity of the formative forces of the earth.

Thor's realm of deeds is the human's as well as the earth's formative body in the sense of the Nordic mystery knowledge. If Thor travels east to Jotunheim, he then comes to the border where the formative body meets the physical body in Man and nature. There he clashes with Ahrimanic forces of coercion and lies, with all material ossification that is related. At these eastern borders of the formative forces, he encounters and fights with the Jotun giants. Here lies the true field of action and the core of his activities, succumbing before all-powerful death.

Odin and Thor are, according to their beings, words and fate, two opposing gods. Yet they are related. They are like father and son.

Odin lives and weaves in the living breath, in the power of speech. He lives in the rhythm of the movement of breathing and speech, whose lawfulness issues from the order and morality of the gods. Odin is akin to the world of feeling. Consequently, he is also the god of suffering. As a god of sacrifice and suffering, he connects himself with the descending, death-related stream of Ymir. He is connected by fate, so to speak, with the kind of development that dies into space. His field of action is the inner and outer human world of the astral. He is the universal, all-feeling mystery god.

Thor works in the blood, in the rhythmical pulse beat. His world is the will. His will nature appears in each feature. He is connected by destiny with the stream of life that builds. He is a pugnacious rather than a suffering god. His world of action, within as well as without Man, is the world of the formative forces. He is a god of all-will.

There is a point where one can grasp the difference and the kinship of these two gods in their cooperation. It is in the poetic form of alliteration, that form of language presented in the tradition

of the Nordic mystery. The old Nordic alliteration is, like the old Germanic justice, the fruit of old clairvoyant activity. Where the law is related to the ego experience, the alliteration is related to speech experiences.

In the alliteration two principles of rhythmical lawfulness work together: the rhythm of breathing and the rhythm of blood circulation. At the basis of alliteration lies the fact that the breathing movement is rhythmically divided by the blood and pulse stream of the alliteration. To a breath, there are four alliterations or pulse beats.¹⁵ In the working together of the rhythm of breathing and blood, the blood rhythm is four times faster than the breathing rhythm. In the lawfulness of alliteration, there is revealed the difference as well as the relationship of Odin and Thor. They work together in the alliteration, but Thor works in a rhythm which is four times faster than that of Odin. The separate being and fate of Odin and Thor are mirrored in the form of alliteration. The alliteration is the expression in language of the old clairvoyant soul disposition.

The oldest traditional form of alliteration is the so-called “fornyrdalag.” The *Våluspa*, and the *Hávâmal* are written in fornyrdalag. It consists of four long-lines or eight half-lines, accommodating itself to the 1 to 4 rhythmical relationship of breathing and pulse beat. This is the way Thulir sang the songs. He was not a secular singer—he was a divine singer. Odin and Thor sang through him. And above him stood his ancestor the great singer of nature-runes, Fimbultr.

Studach came perhaps closest to the origin and being of alliteration. He formed in his preface to the transmission of some songs of the *Saemunder-Edda* the following beautiful words about alliteration:

It is almost impossible for the high German written language, if it wants to be generally understood, to render the iron-firm and majestic step of alliteration, in which the

angular and heavy word moves its thought like Achilles in the Twilight of the Gods.

And furthermore about the form and the spirit of these old mythical songs in opposition to those of the later bards:

Those old myth-songs stream deeply and full of meaning out of the harp. They rustle so enthusiastically that they seem consumed and ensouled, that the alliteration often appears like the prophetic mysticism of its thought. Nevertheless, they are so simple and loose, so thin, that one seems to gaze at a quiet lake through that thought. In the depth of that lake wander stars, and the dancing elves whirl in its reflection, just as the mystery which has created it, remembering the words: *Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo.*

These explanations about Odin and Thor also illustrate the genius of such mythologists as Jakob Grimm and Victor Rydberg and their research. Grimm created his *German Mythology* out of the old speech movements. He gave himself completely to what sound and language wanted to reveal. He was truly an Odin researcher. Rydberg plunged with his *German Mythology* into the stream in which is revealed what connects blood with blood, ego with ego. He descended into the depth of the blood clan. He was a Thor researcher.

Grimm's and Rydberg's researches make them members of an archetypal god relationship. As an Odin inquirer, Grimm plunged into the field of action of the astral body. As a Thor inquirer, Rydberg plunged into the field of the formative body. Though separated by space and time, they worked together in a deeper sense. Both followed age-old traces of the gods. Behind them stands the lonely and forgotten researcher Studach, who carried the torch for the hidden mysteries.



Freyr and Gerða

Freyr is a divine figure closely connected with Odin and Thor. This is totally evident in the story of the treasures. The judgment of the treasures is brought down by Odin, Thor and Freyr together. Each receives two gifts: one from Loki, the other from Brock. In this joint judgment a correlated, common destiny is revealed, a common biography of the gods. This triad of gods—Odin, Thor and Freyr—reveals the mystery of Man, unveiled through the being and destiny of Freyr. He unites and becomes a trinity with the other two gods. In Freyr's being and destiny, his parentage and clan are of primary significance. That descentance is vast and, in a strange way, puts him into that trinity.

The Vanir¹⁶ god Niordr came as a hostage to the Aesir. He stayed with them and married there. The story of the marriage is told in Bragi's conversation in the *Prose Edda*.

Through the guilt of the quarrelsome Loki, the Aesir goddess Iduna was stolen by the giant Thiassi and brought to Jotunheim. Iduna possessed the apples without which the Aesir gods could not live. They became gray-haired and old when they lacked the sustenance of Iduna's apples. They held a divine council. Loki was threatened with death if he did not bring back Iduna from Jotunheim, for it was he who had brought it about that Iduna was lost to Thiassi. Loki promised to bring her back and did so. He bragged

about this journey to Thor in the Harbard song. The giant Thiassi wanted to revenge himself for Loki's plunder and flew to Asgard in the shape of an eagle. The Aesir killed him within the castle court, a holy place. Thor, in turn, bragged to Loki in the Harbard song (verse 19) in front of Loki that he had killed the presumptuous Thurse.¹⁷ With his slaughter, the Aesir had broken the holy peace. This in turn led to a very complicated knot of fate.

Skadi, the daughter of the giant Thiassi, traveled to Asgard to avenge her father. The Aesir promised a replacement and to make amends. They had to do so, because the killing was done in a holy place. Skadi was to choose an Aesir for a husband, but without seeing any more of him than his feet. She was shown perfectly beautiful feet. There she called out, "This one I choose. Baldur is without fault." Yet it was not Baldur, but Niordr from Noatun that she had chosen. Thus came about the marriage of one of the Vanir gods to one of the Aesir, in a way which was completely divergent from all tradition. Niordr did not choose Skadi—she chose him.

A second condition was that the Aesir bring Skadi to true laughter. This was brought about by Loki.

To give Skadi further compensation, Odin took the eyes of Thiassi and threw them at the heavens, forming two stars out of them.

The father of Thiassi was named Aelwaldi. He was the head of the clan that played an important role in this connection with Freyr. Groa was the husband mentioned in connection with the trip to Hel of Svipdagr and was named Oerwandil the Bold. Thor was of service to this Oerwandil in carrying him home in a basket out of Jotunheim. A toe sticking out of the basket got frozen. Thor broke it off, threw it into the sky and formed a star of it called Oerwandil's Toe.

Iwaldi was the father of those who created the first three treasures (Sif's golden hair, the boat Skibladur, and the spear Gungnir) at the request of Loki. Among Iwaldi's sons was the Alf (elf) Prince Válundr, the smith. In his shop the treasures were made.

The alliterative connection of Aelwaldi, Oerwandil and Iwaldi is also a proof for the genealogical connection as, for example, Windkaldr, Warkaldr, Fiorkaldr, Fiolsvinnsmal. With this race the Vanir god Niordr related through his marriage with Skaldi, the daughter of Thiassi. He married the daughter of a Thurse.

Skadi bore to Niordr two children: Freyr and Freya. According to the *Prose Edda*, Freyr is the god of growth. He ruled over rain and sunshine. He was the god of the fertility of the earth. Freya was the goddess of love.

It is important to remember that Svipdagr, who made the trip to Hel in order to win the Menglada-Freya was a leader of the Thurses. He was the son of Groa and thus belonged to the race into which Niordr entered through his marriage with Skadi.

According to the *Grimnismâl*, Freya dwelt at Volkivang, Freyr in Alfheim. The gods gave it to him in the beginning of time, we are told. Freyr ruled the realm of the Alfs. Vålundr the smith was called a prince of the Alfs in the Vålundr song. Through the marriage of Niordr with Skadi, his children were also related to the Iwaldi sons who included Vålundr. Freyr also received from Loki the boat Skibladuir out of Vålundr's workshop.

In previous passages the relationship of Vålundr to Iwaldi's race and the production of the treasures was mentioned. That relationship is not evident from the bet of Loki with the dwarves. This knowledge is a result of Rydberg's all-embracing research about the Iwaldi clan. He completed the gaps in the *Edda* out of the books of Saxo-Grammaticus. But Rydberg's research is only a confirmation that results from the inner connections, as will be shown.

Freya, through her marriage with Svipdagr, became part of the race of Oerwandil; with Aelwaldi she was related through her father Niordr. What is the story with Freyr's marriage?

In Skirnisfâr the story of the wooing is told. It is the song that by all meteorological mythologies is considered a spring myth. Freyr once sat in Hlidskialf and looked over the world. He looked

at Jotunheim and saw a beautiful maiden come out of his father's house. A great affection arose in him. His servant Skirmir offered to woo the maid. For this purpose he begged of Freyr the use of his horse and his sword, which swings by itself. Skirmir was given both, and away he traveled to Jotunheim.

Gerda is the name of the maiden for whom Freyr is consumed with longing. Her father is Gymir; the place where they live in Jotunheim is called Gymirsgard.

Skirmir came to Gerda and offered her the gifts of Freyr: eleven golden apples and the ring Draupnir, which Odin once gave to Baldur. Gerda refused both. Then Skirmir threatened to cut off her head with Freyr's sharp sword if she continued the refusal. She declared then that she wouldn't tolerate any coercion and that her father Gymir would fight for her. Skirmir heaped a flood of terrible threats on her if she would continue with her refusal: Grief would come to her from Odin. Freyr would curse her. The wrath of the gods would destroy her. Thereupon, he conjured the Jotuns and Huimthurses, the Suttungsons and the Aesir to condemn her to stay single. He cut the magic rune of the Thurses for her. Through the effect of three rune-staffs she was to faint, to be disgruntled and to be impatient. Because of these threats, she changed her mind. She declared:

Hail be to you hero and take the ice cup
Full of glaciers' mead.
Never I suspected that I would
Choose from the race of the Vanir.

After nine nights she would belong to Freyr. With this message, Skirmir returned to Freyr. With the successful wooing of Freyr, however, a loss of the greatest significance for his fate is connected. At Skirmir's request, Freyr gave him his sword for the wooing trip. Skirmir lost the sword on the way. The significance of

this loss is pointed to in the Lokasenna. There, Loki turned to Freyr to charge him before all the gods for his weaknesses. He says here:

With gold you bought Gyimir's daughter
In giving Skirmir your sword.
But if the sons of Muspel will ride through Myrkwidr
With what are you going to fight, unlucky one?

In the *Prose Edda*, at the twilight of the gods, the fateful consequences of this loss are clearly seen. At the twilight, Freyr fought with Surtur. He succumbed to Surtur because he missed his good sword which he had given to Skirmir.

Without any doubt we can see that Freyr's sword and its ostentatious loss plays a destiny-shaping role. There is a sword-story which, however, reaches far beyond Freyr, but which stays within the circle of the clan to which he belonged. Rydberg, besides his far-reaching clan research of the Iwaldis, has also researched the sword story. It is in general as follows:

Vålundr, the Alf Prince, in his wrath against the judgment of the Aesir about the treasures, smithied a sword of revenge. King Nidurd, who surprised Vålundr in the wolf's valley, took it from him. This sword was the same that Svipdagr used to kill the rooster Vidofuir and that Sinmare held locked in a shrine. Svipdagr acquired this sword. He brought it to Menglada-Freya in Asgard. It came into the possession of Freyr, who lost it to Skirmir at the wooing. Skirmir gave it to Gyimir, the father of Gerda, as a gift. At the twilight we find the sword in the hands of Surtur. In the end then, Freyr died by his own sword.

It is not important whether Rydberg's sword story is right in every detail. Most important is the fact that Vålundr and Svipdagr belonged in the circle of the clan. The sword plays such a huge, fateful role.

Through his relation with Gerda, Freyr joined a new clan, which enlarged a huge circle that already existed. In the generation talk of Hyndle with Freya, Freya said to Gerda, Gymir's daughter, that she was related to the giants and Aurboda. Thus, the giant Thiassi is also related to Gerda. But the daughter of Thiassi is Skadi. From his mother's side, therefore, Freyr was related to Gerda.

Among the women whom Svipdagr finds sitting at the feet of Monglade is Freya Overboda. As Angurboda and Overboda are names in alliterative relation to each other, it means they are blood-related. They are related beings.

The relationship between Angurboda and Gullveig¹⁸ had a central role to play in the war between the Aesir and the Vanir. The peace brought the hostage taking of the Vanir Niordr to the Aesir. There he married Skadi. His son Freyr wooed Gerda, who was related to Skadi and Angurboda. And so a new, embracing clan circle was brought about through Freyr's marriage to Gerda.

The wooing, the sword and its loss, along with the two treasures that fell to him out of Loki's bet, were the determining factors of fate that fashioned the god Freyr and his divine fate.

What is the sense and the background of this huge clan circle where Freyr's destiny takes place? Which position or place does Freyr take in the divine trinity together with Odin and Thor? What is his part in his position and through his being in the mystery of Man?

The deeply-entwined knot of destiny that weaves around Freyr has its beginning with the Vanir Niordr, his father. Earlier, Niordr was characterized from two different sides: One part of his being was his Hyperborean background;¹⁹ the other part was his connection with the mystery of Nerthus, the mystery of incarnation. As a Vanir god, he belonged to a time of a pure, primordial, clairvoyant soul disposition—the golden age whose end was brought about by the Aesir.

As a hostage of the Aesir, he entered their realm of destiny. It became evident through his marriage with Skadi—he did not choose her—she chose him. The choosing of the husband was one of the conditions under which the Aesir made penance for the death of her father Thiassi. But the cause of Thiassi's death, the cause of the abduction of Iduna, was Loki. The innocent Niordr, the carrier of the life mysteries from Hyperborean times and the Nerthus mysteries of incarnation, was pulled into the guilt of the Aesir. The fall of the Aesir became his destiny, too. A deep trait was revealed when Skadi, in choosing her husband, was allowed to see only the feet of the gods. Why were the feet of Niordr just as beautiful as Baldur's? Because up to that time the Ahrimanic element could approach neither Baldur nor Niordr. The Ahrimanic element worked in all matter, in everything connected with gravity. It pulled Men down into the matter. The feet are adapted to the earthly, to gravity. The beautiful and perfect feet of Baldur and Niordr are a deep and true image for a state of humanity at the pre-Atlantean time. There existed soul characteristics not yet adapted to the earth, not yet a booty to Ahriman. These were the Niordr and Baldur characteristics of the incarnation and nature mysteries.

Not arbitrariness, but rather a secret orderliness, lies in the fact of the ravishing of Iduna through Thiassi, his death, and Niordr's marriage to Skadi. Also, Skadi's ancestors were told in "Bragi's conversations" that Bragi, the speaker for the Aesir, related these events.

To begin with, Bragi had an important reason to carry these events, for Iduna was his consort. But more important is the fact that Bragi's conversations contain the mysteries of the larynx.²⁰ This was the case for Iduna especially, because she was Bragi's consort. In the organism of the larynx there is created that which reveals the soul-spiritual Man. Speaking Man reveals a spiritual mystery of begetting language. All gods take part in it, for Man is a creation

of the gods. All twelve Aesir and eight goddesses, including Iduna, took part in Bragi's conversations. Without the apples of Iduna, the gods age and get gray. The apples kept them young. The youth of the gods was begotten always anew through eating the apples. The enjoyment of the apples is connected with the nature of greed, as shown in the paradise legend. This greed also applies to Iduna, the guardian of the apples. In the Lokasenna, Loki tells her directly that, of all goddesses, she is the maddest about men. The apples of Iduna speak of divine greed. The Greeks called this divine greed Eros. Eros was an innocent, young rejuvenatory god, as can also be seen in the ancestral descent of Iduna. Originally, she was not an Aesir, but an Alf. In Odin's crow magic her descent is mentioned. She was the youngest of Iwaldi's children. This passage is the proof that she was related to the Alf Prince Vålundr, who, therefore, must have belonged to the Iwaldi clan. Iwaldi's sons produced those treasures whose strength work in the human astral or sentient body, which is also the carrier of all impulses of lust and greed. This then throws light on the secret of her apples and the nature of greed and lust in the gods and Men.

For the destiny that Niordr experiences with the Aesir, it is of deep significance that his marriage is a consequence of Iduna's abduction by Thiassi with the help of Loki. Loki brought Niordr to his fated relationship with Iduna and further to Skadi. Of interest is the historical evolutionary background of Niordr's marriage to Skadi. What was brought about through this marriage?

Skadi wished of Niordr that he live with her in Thrymheim where her father had dwelt. This wish has its justification, as she has chosen him as her husband. In rocky Thrymheim Niordr was seized by longing for his home Noatun, located at the water where the swans sing. They agreed that they would live alternately nine nights in Noatun and nine nights in Thrymheim. Neither of them felt at ease at the dwelling that the other one loved. The howling of the wolves in Thrymheim seemed repugnant to Niordr. In Noatun, the

singing of the swans disturbed Skadi's sleep. In their inclinations, Niordr and Skadi are opposites.

The rocky Thrymheim, filled with the howling of wolves, lies in Jotunheim. This is the significance of this marriage. With Niordr and Skadi, two worlds of opposite forces are united: What comes through Niordr from Hyperborea connects with Skadi; the Nerthus mysteries of procreation and incarnation, which come from Jotunheim, create a link to the world where the Ahrimanic forces are working. The old Hyperborean world, lying beyond birth and death, is darkened and extinguished. The mystery of procreation and incarnation are pulled down out of the supersensible, innocent dream experience into the world of desire. The incarnation dream experienced in the sanctuary of the goddess Nerthus dies and changes into waking consciousness. But the awakening is acquired by the submerging of the original mystery into the world of greed. According to the Nerthus mysteries, it was servants or slaves who had lost the mystery. Evolution brought the change to pass, and they slowly became servants and fell prey to desire.

Thus, a deep change was bound up to Niordr and Skadi's marriage. Niordr came as hostage to the Aesir and was, thereby, embroiled by fate in their fall. The Vanir kept the human souls in the divine, beyond the earthly. The Aesir proceeded in the opposite direction. They led the human souls from the spiritual, which was beyond the earthly, into the earthly realm. This was the effect of the fall. They led the souls down into the regions of desire, but this also was the region of independence. The world beyond the earthly of Niordr is led down into the earthly world by Niordr's marriage to the Jotun daughter Skadi.

A contrasting deed, however, lay in the striking deed of Odin, when he threw Thiassi's eyes into the sky and made stars of them as compensation. He made the race of the Aelwaldi into a star race, just as Thor did with the race Oerwandil. A star race comes about if, in the astral body, the carrier of desire can light up the star of earthly-

heavenly knowledge. Thiassi was a Thurse. He was a giant of those forces that are active in the astral body. He ravished Iduna, and Loki helped him. Stars are made out of Thiassi's eyes by Odin if, out of the earthly realm that Ahriman rules, if out of Jotunheim, the stars of deep insight²¹ light up. In this sense every capacity which transforms the desires of the earth-bound astral body into knowledge is a "star capacity."

In this action of Odin, a wonderful feature of his being and working is revealed. As an archangel he has renounced the ascent from the element of air to the element of light. He has united himself with Loki and therewith inaugurated a development that ought to make souls ripe for the earth. They achieved it in the struggle with the earth powers, with the Jotuns. The struggle of the Aesir against the Jotun giants, the struggle of Odin against Fenris, is a struggle for the earth worthiness of the evolution of humanity. The light that Odin renounces, so to speak, shines into the capacity of knowledge. The star power of the astral body shines in Thiassi's race. Odin has made the great sacrifice. He has attained the capacity to transform Thiassi's eyes into stars.

Star forces live in the astral body of the Iwaldi's race. Out of these forces they formed the treasures. A star force lived in Vålundr, the smith. He is the prince of the light-Alf race. The star force of the astral body became the light-Alf race.

As in Niordr and Skadi where two opposing worlds connect, so two opposite worlds are also revealed by Niordr and Skadi's children, Freyr and Freya. Yet they point with their close blood relationship as brother and sister to the common origin from which they issued. With this related pair, worlds now separate themselves completely. This opposition was expressed in the marriage of their parents Niordr and Skadi who lived alternately in Noatun and Thrymheim.

Through his having been taken hostage, Niordr brought to the Aesir the noblest and purest that the age of the Vanir possessed: the

divine mystery of incarnation of Nerthus. With the Aesir everything descends one step. This occurred with the marriage of Niordr and Skadi, unwanted by them but achieved through the world destiny of the Aesir. During the age of the Vanir, procreation was innate in a supersensible dream experience. At the age of the Aesir, it descended out of its divine height and became earthly and surrounded by desires and greed. A complete separation appeared with Niordr's children.

Freya became the goddess of sexual love. With her the generation-forces sink into desire, become independent and go their own path. This shows fully and clearly in the generation conversation between Freya and Hyndla. Hyndla is a Jotun giantess and rides a wolf. The procreation forces are now earthbound. Hyndla it is who names the choicest and noblest races. But the generation forces have been of divine origin.

The inverse takes place with Freya's brother, Freyr. In him the forces that turn downwards for Freya turn upwards. They do not become earthbound generation forces but are lifted up into the spheres, where they transform into ideas and thought forces.

What proceeds out of the Nordic mystery traditions? The most sublime that the age of the Vanir possessed, the dreamlike, divine experience of incarnation, descends into the earthly field of consciousness with the rule of the Aesir. It differentiates in the course of evolution on the one hand, into the generation-forces, sunk completely into the field of desire, and, on the other, into the germinating forces of ideas and thought. Both have a common origin.

They stand in a relationship comparable to brother and sister. This close relationship comes also to expression in language through the alliteration of Freyr and Freya. These are two branches of the same stem: Niordr.

The mysterious relationship between the procreation forces and the representation and thought forces (the spiritual-creative

forces and the word-creative forces) of the larynx is known. It is revealed in the change of voice at puberty in the male. The sexual maturity shows a plainly noticeable organization in the new procreation forces and in the representation-thought forces. Of course, the latter germinate earlier, but at this time they take on a different character. They take hold of the leading position in the soul life. Of course, the breakthrough of the procreation forces already shows itself earlier in certain symptoms. With the expression of sexual maturity, only one-half of the transformation is grasped at that time. The other half is not considered. With the term *puberty*²² both manifestations, the brother and sister pair, are taken in. This expression would answer fully the evolutionary historical facts. The Aesir had as a task to make Men ready for earth maturity. Odin is their highest leader.

The story of the Vanir god Niordr, in his destiny with the Aesir and in his children, forms only the spiritual-evolutionary-historical background of a generally known fact in human development. Here is unfolded from Nordic mystery wisdom and Nordic-Germanic spiritual vision, the divine-spiritual field of action, from which stem these facts.

If one honors fully this mystery-story, then the assembly of the gods, in which Bragi's conversations take place, takes a position of eminence. Bragi told the story of Niordr's marriage. He told of the tremendous fate of the Vanir god. The whole assembly of the gods comprises the mystery of Man. The sanctuary is the larynx organism. It is the twilight of the gods. If one hears Bragi's conversations about Niordr, then one experiences the choice holy place which the Vanir god takes on in the mystery of Man.

The children of Niordr possessed precious treasures. Freya was the owner of the jewel Brising-amen. That's why she was also named "Menglad, the jewel-happy." Has this jewel also a characteristic that reminds us of Niordr and the Vanir?

Brising-amen is a necktie. It lies in the immediate vicinity of the larynx organism. The generation forces at that time were deeply connected with a natural, inborn clairvoyance—a general human soul capacity closely bound together with the memory forces. The memory forces were bound to the forces of inheritance. The past was experienced in the blood. Memory was a blood memory. It delivered the images of the past. It delivered the memory of the deeds of the ancestors. It was a generation-memory. It is the memory strength that lives in Brising-amen. Freya then wore the jewel of generation-memory. Only the daughter of the Vanir Niordr, not an Aesir, can be the owner of this jewel. She is, so to speak, legitimized as a Vanir daughter through Brising-amen, which she wore as a neck-jewel, close to the larynx. The forces of memory distinguish all Vanir. She reached back into the farthest age of earth evolution, up to the Hyperboreans. She reached beyond birth. She was a clairvoyant, blood-bound force of memory. The jewel of the Vanir daughter is the witness for the relationship of the generation forces with the memory forces.

Freyr's dwelling was in Alfheim, the realm of the light-Alfs. In the *Grimnismâl* it is said expressly that the gods gave Alfheim as a special gift to Freyr. Alfheim is the realm of the light-Alfs. The being of Freyr is clearly pointed to with this dwelling place. The light-Alf generation is the carrier of those forces that light up the ideas and thoughts in the astral body of Men. Images and thoughts were clairvoyant and dream-like soul experiences in the very early times. They were, so to speak, divine encounters. Whoever had a clairvoyant idea or thought did not seek for its origin in themselves but outside themselves. It was a divine happening, a light-Alf encounter. In the lighting up of ideas and thoughts, star forces are revealed. They light up in the astral body or sentient soul. It is a star body, because the star of consciousness, of knowledge, lights up in one that is wrested from death. Death forces form the bottom of consciousness processes.

Freyr and his residence in Alfheim represent a later stage of evolution and was pre-formed at an earlier cosmic evolution. The third root of the world ash Yggdrasil, the root of thinking force, extends to Nivelheim. There we find the fountain Hwelgelmir. From it flow twelve streams, the archetypal images of the sense-nerve organization of the head. Below gnaws the serpent Nidhogr. There grow the desires in the realm of sex. Here the pair, brother and sister of generation forces and thought forces, Freyr and Freya, are already formed on a cosmic, evolutionary level.

Out of this connection emerges the consequence that Freyr is related to the star races of Aelwaldi, Oerwandil and Iwaldi. Just as evident is that Freyr is related to the Alf King Vålundr. The Iwaldi race, which belongs to Vålundr, is an Alf race. The youngest daughter of Iwaldi is Iduna, the “Alf-illuminator.” The genealogy in this mystery tradition with its wide, branched-out relations and with the biography of Freyr, is the genealogy and the biography of the forces of representation and thought. It relates the fateful path of the thought forces from the realm of gods to the realm of the earth.

Not only the place where Freyr resides but also the exact time when the gods offered Alfheim to Freyr is important. Indeed, it is even of deep significance for the being of Freyr and his field of work.

In his pedagogical writings, Rudolf Steiner presented the change of teeth as a spiritual-body archetypal phenomenon of child development. When the child replaces the inherited teeth with his very own, forces are freed that up to that time have been used for the building of the bodily organization. These freed formative forces are now put at the service of the soul-spiritual development. They are transformed from the beginning of the change of teeth in the seventh year until the beginning of sexual maturity—earth maturity in the fourteenth year—into forces of representation and thought forces. At the seventh year the entrance into school takes place. Then the formative forces that have been freed through the change of teeth can be used for the assimilation of knowledge and

forming of concepts. In the fourteenth year, with the beginning of earth maturity, what began in the seventh year with the change of teeth has matured.

Before the change of teeth, the child plays. Up to the seventh year, the child is given entirely to the formative forces. He begins to start to learn with the change of the teeth. With the seventh year, the child has to transform the freed formative forces into the development of the astral body. From the seventh year onward, a significant change takes place in the relationship between the formative and astral bodies—with the earth maturity between the astral body and the ego.

Up to the seventh year, the chief focus of child development lies in the formative body. From seven to fourteen, the chief emphasis is in favor of the astral body in its adaptation of the sense-nerve organization to the outer world at the fourteenth year. With the fourteenth year the astral body becomes, so to speak, preponderant. It is at twenty-one that the ego receives the leadership. The actions gain validity before the law.

How the biography of the gods containing the mystery of Man became palpable is shown clearly out of a significant point in the life story of Freyr.

The gods gave Freyr the dwelling of Alfheim as a “tooth gift.”²³ Jakob Grimm expresses himself even more clearly. He says that Freyr receives Alfheim while teething.²⁴ In the original text of the *Sæmundar Edda* (*Grimnismâl*, line 8) is written:

Alfheim Freyr gafn
I árdaga
Tivar at tárnf

Tanngríosh and Tanngrismir (teeth-crackler and teeth-cruncher or gnasher) are, significantly, the names of the two he-goats of Thor.

There is no doubt that here speaks Nordic mystery knowledge of a historic, developmental, and archetypal phenomenon. In the passage in Part One, "The Motherhood of Myth," it was shown how in the Atlantean age a shift took the place of the life forces in favor of the brain forces. This shift occurred because life forces were freed and could be transformed into other capacities. This revolution is bound to Niordr's marriage with Skadi and their children Freyr and Freya. With Freyr's dwelling in Alfheim the development, pictorially speaking, entered the period of the change of teeth. Forces that were occupied with the development of the formative body were transformed and seized by the astral body and could germinate slowly into forces of representation and thinking.

What in age-old times under different circumstances of historical development had its beginning is repeated at other levels. In the seventh year every child receives, as a comparison, Alfheim as a teething gift.

Why is Freyr called a god of growth and fertility in the tradition? Because Freyr's forces are nothing else than the metamorphosed growth forces, The formative forces give Freyr the substance for his work. However, he metamorphoses this substance into something else. The formative body of Man finds his cosmic counter-image in the formative body of the earth, in everything that is in close connection with the fertility, the growth of the earth, its rhythms and seasons.

From a historical, evolutionary point of view, it is deeply founded to call Freyr the god of growth. The forces of representation and thought are transformed life forces. The life forces, on the other hand, have their origin in the cosmos.

Through all this, the relationship of Freyr with the Alf-woman Iduna, the owner of the apples, becomes transparent. The gods eat these apples in order not to age. They enjoy the same food that Man also eats. The divine body offers them divine nourishment. The gods enjoy the all-pervading life force. Man eats as much of this godly food as the gods offer him through the formative body.

The mystery traditions speak of the gods not in an outward human sense. They speak cautiously of the field of action in the human body even down to formation of the inner organs. They speak of a spiritual, bodily work of the gods in the development of Man.

Freyr is the god who leads the old, clairvoyant soul forces in such a way that they are of value only in the physical-bodily world. He leads these soul forces (Niordr) down into the physical-bodily world, where they continue to work on as forces which allow human beings to make representational pictures and to think.

With Freyr and his field of action, there is a definite aspect of the Nordic nature mysteries given. His far-reaching relationships give the genealogy and biography of those forces that cut off the development of clairvoyant forces and continue being transformed in the physical-bodily world. The connection of the soul-spiritual with the bodily-physical is the connection of Freyr with Gerda, the Jotun giantess, the daughter of Gymir.

Freyr's working field is clearly in opposition to Thor's work. Thor fought with the Jotun giants without respite. On the contrary, Freyr fell violently in love with a Jotun giantess and married her. This is the case with none of the Aesir. The Aesir and the Jotun powers are adversaries. But originally Freyr is not an Aesir. He descends from a Vanir god. Here a new aspect is shown of the deeply-entangled knot of destiny that came about to the Aesir through the hostage-taking of Niordr.

In this tragic-heroic working of the powers of destiny that surround the Aesir, we can see signs of archangelic deeds when it comes to Odin's destiny. Odin has sacrificed his eye, he made an alliance with Loki, and, thus, brought about the fall of the gods. This produced the war with the Vanir. The peace accord between them led to the hostage-taking of Niordr. While the Aesir gods fought against their arch-enemies, the progeny out of the marriage of Niordr (which is a ransom for the guilt of the Aesir) is Freyr, who does not fight the Jotun powers but, rather, relates himself closely to them.

Through the marriage of Niordr, the clairvoyant soul forces, which were present during the Vanir age, descended one step. This is seen in the close relationship of Niordr with the genealogy of Aelwaldi, Oerwandil, and Iwaldi. All of this stemmed from the fact that Skadi was a daughter of a Thurse. Through the marriage of Freyr with Gerda, they descend a second step in the close relationship of Freyr with the Jotuns. This is because Gerda is a daughter of a Jotun.

Through this descentance, these relationships of what is spiritual and bodily are married. The old, clairvoyant soul capacity is transformed into capacities that are valid in the physical world and which can be acquired only in it—the capacities for pictorial representation and for thinking. With the same forces out of which were beheld the working of the gods in a dream-like clairvoyance, later human beings pictured and thought, but now in connection with the sense organs and the brain. In other words, these capacities were linked with the physical world from which the Jotun daughter came and which Freyr desired to join. The clairvoyant forces change when they are married with the physical world in which the Ahrimanic forces hold sway.

Through this marriage with Gerda, Freyr was, so to speak, the executor of what Odin once sacrificed with his eye: the old clairvoyance. But the love of Freyr for Gerda was a justified one. Only with this marriage could he fulfill his task as a son of the Vanir. Here the Ahrimanic powers work positively. They harden the old, clairvoyant capacity into picturing, mental representation and thinking, and thus serve progress. Whenever they step over their limits and disturb progress, the Aesir, especially Thor, stand up against them. Thor fights the encroachment of the Jotuns. Freyr, the Vanir son, connects with them in such a way that they serve the good and prosperous. A danger for the gods arises only if they can no longer master the Jotun powers. This is, however, their constant worry. It is the preoccupation of the twilight of the gods.

If we look now at Freyr's task, as it has been sketched here, then we can also see the evolutionary-historical reasons for the strict refusal by Gerda of Freyr's proposal. How could Jotun powers be ready for a union with the gods? The most terrible of threats were needed to bend Gerda's hard mind. But what an evolutionary historical motif is contained in Skirmir's curses. This motif is embedded in the words of Skirmir, verse 33 of that song:

Cross with you is Odin,
Cross with you is the Aesir King.
Freyr curses you.
Flee, bad maid, before the magic wrath
Of the gods destroys you.

Odin and the Aesir themselves urgently desire the marriage of Freyr with Gerda. What would happen if Gerda stayed obdurate? Then Odin and the work of the gods on the human being would fail due to the resistance of the Jotun daughter. Then Freyr could not fulfill his task to bind the soul-spiritual with the physical-bodily. Then clairvoyant soul forces could never be transformed into forces of representation and thinking. Odin wants to make Man into an independent being in the "All," in the Cosmos. This he can never attain if man stays with the inborn but dreamy clairvoyance, if he does not become a being able to picture and to think. Through her refusal, the work of the gods is stymied, and the progress of the souls of Men is endangered.

On the other hand, the question arises: What would have become of Gerda if she had stayed with her refusal? In the interest of earth evolution, the old clairvoyant forces must be transformed into earth forces. If this could not happen, then the souls would become entirely the booty of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic powers, of the Huimthurses and the Jotuns. The physical body would be

animalized in its form. Human speech would be lost, because the son of Sultung would again rule. This otherwise inevitable destiny can only be avoided if evolution can progress, if earthly Man can become caretaker and steward²⁵ of the earth, including all of what the gods have given them—in one word, if Gerda marries Freyr.

Gerda's acceptance of the suit has secured the work of the gods for humanity's progress. This is the height of the song that wonderfully unites mystery wisdom and popular presentation. Herein lies also the zenith of Freyr's destiny. In her agreement, Gerda says to Skirmir:

Never did I even sense
That I ever would choose
Somebody from the race of the Vanir.

A great truth lies in these words. Here one is able to seize the secret of the torturous knot of destiny whose carrier is the imposing Vanir god, Niordr. Here there is revealed a sense of Freyr's unbelievable circle of relations.

An overwhelming testimony to the greatness of the Nordic mystery tradition can be seen in the fact that, while the Aesir are fighting against the Jotun powers, Freyr, the son of the Vanir, is joining their clan. With Niordr, the preserver of the secret of incarnation, the Vanir bring to the evolution of the earth the purest clairvoyant soul forces. Freyr, his son, may then marry those forces in a transformed way to earthly-physical development. Thus metamorphosed into the gift of forming mental representations (or picturing) and thinking, age-old, clairvoyant soul forces save the progress already achieved and therewith the work of the gods. The Jotun powers are there and want to destroy the work of the gods. They would destroy it, if the old, clairvoyant soul forces were not transformed into the new capacities. But these forces are so strong in their metamorphoses that development can continue in spite of

the Jotun powers. Thus, they appear in their transformed state. This change was brought about in the physical-earthly world, which the Jotun powers themselves had formed.

Freyr brings to reality the decision of Odin to ready the path to independence and freedom for the human souls who stand under Odin's leadership. For without the development of thinking within the physical-sensual world, freedom cannot be attained.

Amazement over the course of evolution is reflected in Gerda's words when she accepts Freyr's suit. The place of this astonishment about that which leads to progress and freedom in the physical-sensual world lies, in its true origin, in a world beyond birth and death.

According to his field of action to connect the soul-spiritual with the physical-bodily, Freyr makes use of the two treasures that he received. From Loki he received the boat Skibladnir. Loki's bet with the dwarves was the cause. In *Grimnismâl* (verse 43), the following is said:

Iwalt's sons went forth in age old times
To create Skibladnir,
The best of ships for the shimmering Freyr,
Niordr's worthy son.

The ship, briefly said, is a work of the Alfs. Its characteristics are described in the *Prose Edda*. It is so huge that all the Aesir, with their arms and effects, could go on board. As soon as its sails are lifted, it has fair winds wherever it is directed. If it is not in use, one can fold it like a piece of material and carry it in one's pocket.

The other treasure is a boar with golden bristles, which Freyr received from Brock. In working at it, the smith was stung on the hand by a fly. The boar can run faster than a horse. Its bristles shine so strongly that they can illuminate the deepest darkness.

The treasures bring about a transformation of the astral and formative body with the participation of Luciferic and Ahrimanic powers. However, this time is Freyr's field of action. The latter lies in those organs that serve as physical tools in thinking and representation—the sense organs and the brain of the head organization.

In the day-awakened stage, Man uses his sense organs and the brain for thought processes. During the day he gives himself to the earth forces, but in sleep he is devoted to heavenly and cosmic forces. In other words, sleeping Man takes a trip to the gods. He travels in the macrocosm with the ship *Skibladnir* and all the Aesir on board every night. The nightly trip to the gods renews the forces of the organism. That ship always has a fair wind as soon as the sails are lifted at the moment of going to sleep.

Upon awakening, Man is bound again to the earth. Then he no longer travels with the ship. He is then bound to the bodily-earthly organ of the brain. In other words, he folds the ship like a piece of material. It becomes as small as the brain. He can put it in the pocket or the chest, the “bony box” of the skull. Freyr's ship is the real picture of the connections of the soul-spiritual with the bodily-physical. The ship is the work of the Alfs. It is a matter of the active forces of the astral body and its physical carrier in the brain and the nerves.

There is a different relation with the second treasure. Here one can perceive the activity of the formative forces that lie at the foundation of mental representation and thinking; these are the growth-forces. Not only the nerves and the brain take part in the thinking process, but also the blood. In the brain, too, we find metabolic processes. The thought process is accompanied by a “shining light” as far as the formative forces and the blood have a part in it. Thinking is a light being. It receives its shine from the etheric body, the body of formative forces, from the blood. As long as the clairvoyant soul disposition was still there, the images of the

ancestors rose illuminating out of the blood-experience. When the clairvoyance began to vanish, the thoughts began to light up. The bristles of the running boar shone.

Freyr's treasures reveal the working together of the astral and formative bodies of the nerve-sense and brain processes in conjunction with the blood in a later epoch. As far as the history of evolution is concerned, that epoch began to appear through the marriage of Freyr with Gerda. At the time of the initial clairvoyance in the epoch of the Vanir, it was different. Waking and sleeping were not so strongly differentiated as they were later. Waking was a clairvoyant dreaming, and dreaming was a clairvoyant waking. The workings of the Luciferic powers led to a slow separation or division. The astral body awakened, and the formative body went to sleep, a complete reversal of their state in earlier times. The power of the treasures, which were created with the cooperation of Luciferic and Ahrimanic powers, began to act. Astral and ether bodies experienced transformation. The result of this transformation was the separation of waking and sleeping. In waking, there developed a devotion to the physical outer world; in sleeping, a devotion to the cosmos. In waking, a folded-up divine ship appeared; in sleeping, a ship of gods spread sails in full course.

Between waking and sleeping, as long as clairvoyance had not entirely vanished, there was an in-between state, the dream. The dream of revelations is a remnant of that archetypal soul state when waking and sleeping were not yet fully separated. The most frequent was the generation dream. The Nordic sagas contain many illustrations of it. In dreams, the births of heroes and kings, or of whole races, announce themselves.

Twofold facts are hidden in such dreams: the domination of the generation forces (Freya) and the union of the soul-spiritual with life-bodily (Freyr). Brother and sister, the pair, work together in the generation dream. Behind them, in the far distant past, is their ancestor Niordr, the carrier of the mystery of incarnation. In

the generation dream there is mirrored the end of the divine, nightly trip with Freyr's ship. It appears at the time when the ship is in the process of throwing its anchor into the "port" of the central nerve-sense organ, the brain. It appears when the soul-spiritual unites again with life-bodily and brings about the awakening.

The famous Norwegian hero Halfdan had a generation dream in which the Norwegian race of kings was announced. He had that dream after following counsel to sleep in a pit-stable. There is nothing degrading in this—this is confirmed by the fairy tale of the swine herd and by the proverb of "having pig" (i.e., good luck). In the generation dream of Halfdan, there work the Vanir pair. The fact that he dreamed in a pig sty only reveals that this is the field of action of Freyr's boar.

At the wooing, Freyr loses his sword. What this loss signifies for the gods becomes evident by its place in the progress of the evolution. His sword is the bridal gift for Gerda. It is transferred to the Jotun powers. He misses it at the twilight. This loss brings him death.

Freyr's sword is a work by the Alfs. Vålundr, as we know, was the smith who forged the sword. Whether it is exactly the same as Freyr's is not essential here. Svipdagr also acquires a sword. He is a Nibelung, like Vålundr. But Alf forces work in the Nibelungs. Under Loki's influence, the Alf forces make the astral body ever more awake, more independent. The astral body gains preponderance, where earlier the formative body was preponderant. In other words, the earth wakening becomes more and more pronounced. The soul forces become more independent. Freyr's world lies in representation and thinking, in the head organism. He unfolds there his greatest earth wakefulness. The earth-awakened self reliance and freedom appear here first. In the thinking, not in feeling and willing, freedom is first born in its origin. These forces can unfold only within earth life. Through his marriage to Gerda, Freyr gives it, thus, the possibility. However, he loses his sword to the Jotun powers.

Grown in dependent, god-free autonomy, the earth-awakened soul gains the sword forces. The hero becomes the sword bearer. His sword is a sword of the gods. The gods lose it—Man become sword bearer.

The Germanic sword mystery shines also in a wonderful way in The Volsunga-saga. What happens there does not stand in contradiction to Freyr's sword and its loss. It is rather a confirmation of Freyr's sword story, albeit from another side.

In King Volsung's hall stood a mighty tree called "the childrenstem." Its branches towered over the roof. In the hall was celebrated the marriage of King Siggeir with Signy, Volsung's daughter. Towards evening, during the wedding meal, a man entered the hall. He was wrapped in a spotted coat. He had his hat deeply pressed into his face. One could see he was old and one-eyed. He drew his sword and pushed it into the trunk up to the hilt. He who could pull it out would receive it as a gift from him. He had never held a better sword than this in his hand. All men in the hall tried to pull the sword. Only one succeeded: Sigmund, Volsung's son, the father of Siegfried.

It was Odin who pushed the sword into the trunk. Freyr is only the executor of Odin's will to sacrifice. Two motifs attest to the inner relationship with Freyr: the childrenstem and the marriage. They confirm the connection of the forces of growth, generation, and the sword. All three issue from Freyr's field of work. Odin's weapon is the spear. Freyr is the carrier of the sword of the gods.

Freyr's field of activity falls into the latest time from the point of view of historical development. The powers that he planted into the soul appear late. Freyr was also considered to be a young god. He was also called "Yugroi Freyr" in the Lokasenna. This second name he carries because from him descends the race of the Yunglings.²⁶ *Yungling* means "youth." The young god created a race of youth. They became the carrier of Freyr's sword forces.

Freyr was venerated in Sweden. In the town of Upsala, the Freyr cult possessed a center. A temple was later erected there for him. Until then his place of worship was a holy grove, where horses were sacrificed for him and holy horses were kept.

One can pursue here the transition from the working of the gods to the workings of the earth and Man. The destiny and significance of Freyr's divine sword can be followed from a cultural-historical point of view. Upsala was the cultic center of the youngest god. Upsala is an old, venerated university city in Sweden. Here the youngest, Germanic, divine gift was cared for and developed in a human and earthly way. Here the sanctuary of Freyr was transformed into a university.

The three gods—Odin, Thor and Freyr—are closely connected with each other. They form, beyond what they are as single figures, an inseparable, fateful trinity. This trinity follows not only out of their common decision with which they meet about the treasures. It comes about by their special kind of being, their images of destiny and fields of action. Although they are very different in their beings, together they form, so to speak, an archetypal unity.

This divine trinity was in later times represented in pictures. Such a picture from Sweden shows Odin sitting on a throne. He bears on his head a globe-like crown, studded with stars. In his right hand he holds a spear; in the left a board with runes. On his shoulders sit his ravens. One step below to his right stands Thor. He carries a notched crown. Above his head he swings his hammer. From it crackle five zigzag lightning bolts. Opposite him, to the left of Odin, stands Freyr. He is bareheaded. In his right hand he holds a tree stem; in his left he holds a horn. Behind him is a setting, vanishing sun. Behind Odin's head is a mighty, radiating sun disc. Above Thor's head are five stars. At the feet of the three, on the lowest throne steps, lies Loki, fettered to three rocks. Close to Freyr's feet hangs a snake. Sigyn sits next to Loki, catching the poison trickling down in a bowl. This picture breathes world depth in spite

of its ponderous solemnity. It is an illustration out of an archetypal, divine mystery drama. It is documenting a cosmic-human state of facts

The godly trinity—Thor, Odin, and Freyr—has its image in the world ash tree, Yggdrasil. They unite their work there. Here each one has a field of action corresponding to their beings: Odin at Mimir's well, Thor at Urd's well, and Freyr at the fountain Hwergelmir in Nivelheim. But the world ash is the archetypal image of Man who is also a trinity. The human being is a thinking, feeling, and willing being. The gods are the archetype, Man the image.²⁷

Also, in the organization of his body, he is an image of the order of the gods. The brain and nerve-sense system are the bodily tool for picturing and thinking; This is the field of action of Freyr. The rhythmic system, which includes the breathing and speech organism, is the corporeal tool of feeling and language. This is Odin's field of action. The metabolic and limb system is the bodily tool of willing. This is Thor's field of action.

Nivelheim and Muspelheim, Ymir and the cow Andhunnla, form the origin of two opposing worlds. This is why Freyr and Thor are two separate beings: thinking and willing. The brain processes are opposite poles.

Odin is in the middle. He is the sacrificing and suffering god. In his world-feeling, he unites world-willing and world-thinking. He is the All-father. He is the mystery god. Therefore, he is enthroned between Thor and Freyr. Behind him is the mighty sun disc, and at his feet the fettered Loki.

The trinity of gods—Odin, Thor, and Freyr—is a cosmic, archetypal picture. The human being is the trinity's image. This trinity reveals the mystery of the human being.



Oðin, Víðar and Michael

The Nordic-Germanic mythology has in its true form proved to be the traditional conveyer of the old Germanic mysteries. These traditions are fragments of a world-shaking mystery drama of the gods. The climax of this drama is the twilight. One grasps the true kernel of this divine drama in the struggle of the gods against the Jotun powers. In other words, this is about the struggle against Ahriman.

The old Germanic mysteries were nature mysteries. In every feature, one learns to know them as such, equipped with the key provided by spiritual science. The disguise of spirit revelation in nature through Ahriman brings about the twilight. Tradition describes this as a world catastrophe. A gripping tragic mood weaves through these traditions. They announce the twilight as an unavoidable destiny. There is no power available to avoid this fate. In their struggle against the Jotun powers, the gods succumb. The Fenriswolf swallows Odin, the father of gods. Thus, the Jotuns are victors. These are world-gripping legends of the ages which the Nordic mystery traditions describe. The mysteries describe their own destruction with the twilight.

Next to Baldur's traumas, the tragedy of the twilight holds sway in the most moving way in the tale of Odin's raven, Hrafnagald. In this song the twilight is beginning.

The Aesir are troubled by contrary signs. Hugin, one of Odin's ravens, is used to investigate the dark pronouncements of Mimir's dwarves, Thranis and Panis. Mimir's fountain has dried up. Iduna sank down from the World Ash. In consequence the gods miss their apples and feel the effects of aging.

Odin's ravens, which he sends out every morning to fly around the world to bring him news, are present particularly in nature mysteries. They are mystery messengers, which are called ravens. This name corresponds to a certain degree of the Odin initiation. On this degree one is messenger of the outer world and of the mysteries. The designation of ravens as bad luck or as "a raven message" comes out of the time of the dying, old Germanic mysteries.

We can see the after-effects of the Odin mysteries up to the Kyffhäuser Saga. Within the Kyffhäuser mountain sits Barbarossa, waiting for the message of his ravens.

In the Greek nature mysteries of Delphi, there were not ravens but doves. The very famous egg of Delphi is related to the sending out of two doves by Zeus. They were supposed to fly around the world in order to bring messages. The place where they were to meet again after their flight was Delphi. Thereupon, the Delphic mysteries were established. At the time, Delphi was considered the center of the world.

The dark, melancholic, and tragic Hrafnagaldr of Odin is the message announcing the decline of the old Germanic mysteries. It is in a deeper, original sense a "raven message." In this song, Odin is also sending a message to Urd, the Norn of fate. She is supposed to give news about the approaching fate of the gods and the world.

Why did Odin, after the heavy dreams of Baldur, not go himself on the path as he did to ask Wala? Why does he send a message to her daughter, Urd?

In a profound way, it is shown here that the songs are members of an all-embracing whole, that they are part of an archetypal, powerful mystery drama. Here is the point where the climax of this drama begins, deeply shaking and fateful.

The last word he receives of Wala, when he asked about the fate of Baldur in the Wegtam song, is that no man would visit her anymore until the ruinous twilight. Odin cannot visit Wala any more. He also cannot send a message to her, for Wala will not give an answer any more. She stays silent.

Odin can try only one more thing: He can send his message to Urd, the daughter of Wala. He calls on Heimdall to bear the message. The latter is accompanied both by Bragi, the speaker for the Aesir, and by Loptr, the airy Loki. These three travel to Urd and ask her about the fate of the Aesir. But Urd also keeps silent:

She did not want to speak, not announce she could.
As avidly they asked, she uttered not a sound.
Tears shot out of the mirrors of the head,
Hidden with effort, and wetted the hands.

As numbed by sleep appeared to the gods,
The wretched one who held back her words.
The more she refused, the more they urged!
But with all inquiring, they got no answer.

After all that has been said about Wala and the nature mysteries, can it be said in a clearer, more moving way about the coming of the end?

Bragi, named Odin's bard, stays back as guardian with Urd. Heimdall and Loki go on to Asgard to the council of the gods. They are questioned about the result of their trip. It is a significant fact that the questioning gods divide into two groups. The gods queried Heimdall; but the goddesses turned to Loki. Heimdall appears in this song for the last time, according to Rigsmal in his role as mystery messenger.

The tears of Urd let the gaze roam back into far distant times. In her fountain swam swans, which nourished themselves from it.

Swans sang once in Noatun, the dwelling of Freyr. They remind us of the Hyperborean swan song. The sublime swan song sounds forth, so to speak, at the beginning of this historical-evolutionary mystery drama of the gods. The tragic, somber raven message speaks of the end of it. According to the Hrafnagald, with its melancholic, somber verse, Ulfruna's son is Heimdall:

Up got the ruler and Alfradiator (Idun).
The night sank northward from Niflheim.
Ulfruna's son climbed up Argiol,
The horn blower to the heaven-mountains.

Here, the old Germanic mystery drama of the gods lets its kernel enter the bright light, as it reveals its evolutionary-historical range. Its beginning and end, its swan song and its last raven message, should be envisaged at the same time in their true significance. Viewed in this light and grasped in its depth, it is the fateful drama of the decline of the age-old, holy, clairvoyant soul forces. Here the mystery of Men and their birth out of the cosmos lay open to the ancients.

This decline began in its kernel already at the time when Odin sacrificed his eye at Mimir's well. This drama is in truth the drama of a sacrificial deed of an archangel. It is the drama of the leading Germanic folk spirit in pre-Christian times.

It is a question of decisive significance why it is only the Germanic mystery traditions that produce such a tragedy of gods with the "twilight." The traditions of other peoples do not know such a tragedy. In its given character, in its tragic, unavoidable coming, it is unique. There is nothing in other traditions that could be put next to the Germanic twilight.

This question touches the kernel of being of "German-ness." The birth of the ego takes place here by a world-historical grace, directly out of the spiritual world, through clairvoyant soul

disposition.²⁸ Therefore, these people take on a world-historical, exceptional position. The way the birth of the ego took place has deep and formidable consequences. It made it possible for the people to connect with their gods in their innermost being. The clairvoyant soul disposition deeply impregnated their being. Through the particular way in which the ego was born, the spiritual world was “inborn” in them.

The gradual loss of the clairvoyant soul capacity was experienced as a tremendous loss, even as a catastrophe. If something which was wholly impregnated and penetrated by the ego was lost, it was, for the consciousness of those times, equal to a world catastrophe. Through the ego, Man is bound to the world. The ego mirrors the world.

Odin and the gods of the Aesir have penetrated up to the ego of the old Germanic Man. The gradual loss of the clairvoyant soul capacity is a gradual withdrawal of the gods from the ego. The latter stays alone, godless and left to itself. The twilight is based on all this. The old Germanic initiates, in the grand images of the twilight of the mysteries, passed down only the catastrophe that befell the ego of those peoples. They imprinted in these images at the same time the destiny of the old Germanic mysteries. The twilight signified the end and the decline of these mysteries.

The gods do not die—they live eternally, and eternally they are bound to the evolution of humanity. Between Men and the gods is laid the dark, obscuring shadow of the Ahrimanic, the spirit-veiling powers. They gained the upper hand. The Jotuns’ power made the ego of the Germanic peoples godless. The Fenriswolf devoured Odin.

Thus, it becomes clear why it is only in the Germanic mythology that there is the twilight of the gods. The key to all this is revealed in the character of their ego-birth. The Germanic gods and mystery dramas, down to the form of their runes, which tradition

has given to us, are only the consequence of the drama of the ego-birth up to its climax, which is the twilight.

Into which age does the twilight fall? The answer can be summed up in the following. The Germanic people out of their ego were disposed to the clairvoyant insight into the spiritual world. This insight ceased with the twilight. The Nordic mysteries announced that the twilight would last as long as the insight into the spiritual world was obscured. It would come to an end only if a new world arose, if the clairvoyant insight into the spiritual world would be achieved anew. Only then will the gods return.

For the old Germanic initiates, the twilight time related to the whole ego disposition of those peoples. It was the time that no ego-connected clairvoyant soul capacities existed. Therewith opened up a mighty perspective. The Germanic twilight becomes a historical fact. It can be followed from an evolutionary historical point of view.

The somber, dark twilight descriptions of the Voluspa are mystery images to a world-historical state of facts. The world power that made the Germanic twilight historically perceptible was the advance of Romanism and Christianity. From an evolutionary historical point of view, all this was prepared within the German peoples themselves, for the marriage of Freyr with Gerda had taken place in prehistoric times.

In the historical meeting of the Romans with the early Germans, not only did they encounter each other, but also two completely opposite worlds met. The difference of these worlds lies in the completely opposite form of the birth of the ego in these peoples. They were in this respect two poles that are as far apart as two distant stars.

The early Germans received the ego as a birth, as something from the gods. In Romanism the ego is born without god (i.e., with the exclusion of clairvoyant soul capacities). This state of things is most tangible in the justice systems of these peoples. With the

early Germans the justice of the blood arose out of clairvoyant experience. With the Romans, justice was completely adjusted to outer experience. With the Germans the blood clan was a kind of collective person of rights. With the Romans, it was a matter of the single ego, the Roman citizen. The Romans had a great, world-significant history behind them. The early Germans, when they met the Romans, were still without any history. They become a historic people through the Romans. It is the Roman, Cornelius Tacitus, who becomes their first historian.

Belonging to the most outstanding references of the Germania of Tacitus is the mention and short account of the German Nerthus mysteries. He designates a number of Germanic clans directly as Nerthus or Hertha peoples.

In a composition, "Of the Christmas Child and Its Trees,"²⁹ Kurt Englert made a worthwhile contribution to the information provided by Tacitus about the Nerthus cult. He shows there how the science of linguistics provides information for the spiritual-scientific research about the Nerthus cult. According to the root of the word, *nerthus* means "to dive," or "to disappear into the earth." The name of Nerthus contains itself the secret of incarnation of the Nerthus mysteries. Even the name "Germans" conceals, as Englert shows, a deeply-related sense with germ-power, within a chaste plant life. The Latin, *Germanus*, is related to *germinare* (i.e., to germinate). *Germanus* means "inborn, full-blooded." Even the word *trene* (faithfulness) is related to "tree," which fixes with strong roots in the earth. These philological contributions of Englert again throw light on the fundamental being and sense of the World Ash with its three roots.

Englert also points out that the "Ingaevonen" were those who performed the Nerthus service. According to Tacitus, the cult members lived at the seashore on an island in the sea, not on the continent.

The Ingaevons (as has been mentioned earlier), as well as the Istavoens and Hermions (Irmions), belong to the three main Germanic races descending from Mamus, son of Tuisko. In the German language the relation to descentance was mainly expressed through two syllables, *ing* and *isk*. If we take the word *askr* (ash), one has again a linguistic relationship to the three main clans of the ash (the world ash, Yggdrasil). Mennor is also the name of Widukind the Manus. Mennor is linguistically related with memory, with reminiscence, and with a capacity that is characteristic of Freya, the daughter of Niordr. Mennor reminds us also of Mimir, the memory Man of early Atlantean times. Mimir was also, according to Snorri's *Heimskringla*, with the Vanir, for they sent Mimir's head to the Aesir, with whom Odin murmurs in viewing the twilight.³⁰

The Germans (meaning the "germinating," akin to growth), those who, in the spiritual sense, are the creating, word-producing "natives,"³¹ received their name from the Romans. They have used this name because of a character feature observed by them, which stands in intimate spirit-relationship to the Nerthus cult, which they found among the Germans. As one of the highest characteristics of the early Germans, Tacitus praises the sacredness of their marriages, their chastity, and their moral strength. The moral effect of the Nerthus mysteries is unmistakable.

The different results of research here do not contradict each other. They form together a high-towered, exalted building. The information of Tacitus, the texts of the *Edda*, as well as the philological research show even more significantly the deep and bright, radiating, archetypal phenomena, especially through the light of spiritual science. The Nerthus mysteries are concerned with the secret of procreation and incarnation, and with the ego birth within the clairvoyant soul disposition of these people out of a world-historical grace.

Why only Tacitus describes the Nerthus mysteries, while the *Edda* contains nothing of them, is easy to understand. The Roman

Tacitus makes his observations as a historian. The traditions of the *Edda*, as both mystery and history, speak to the destiny of Niordr in the Rigsmal. In truth, the *Edda* traditions only confirm Tacitus. They are original—they are mystery-history. The Roman observed only their effect, not their origin. That origin and effect, which the mysteries and history through the *Edda* and the Germanics meet together, can be sensed as part of the world destiny between the Germans and the Romans.

Tacitus points out that the only kind of tradition and history reporting consists in old songs. This remark also throws light on the origin and the age of the *Edda*. *Edda* songs, which reflect the *Edda*, were certainly sung by Thulir at the time of Tacitus. These include not only a certain content (to which belong especially the Rigsmal), but also the form of the age-old runes.

The Rigr researches of Grimm and Rydberg, because of these differing and comprehensive points of view, gain a new background. In starting with the three main tribes, Grimm trod in the footsteps of the Germanic ego-birth. Rydberg connected the Rigr saga with the Secaf, a Vanir saga. He followed the path of the Nerthus mysteries.

The Nerthus mysteries (Niordr and Rigr) and the birth of the ego together form the secret of the early Germans. Their spiritual roots can be traced into the Atlantean time and even farther back into the far distant time of Hyperborea.

The deepest trait in the being of the early Germans was an unlimited trust in the spiritual world, even at that world-historic moment when they entered the light of history through the Romans.

This trust revealed the age-old sacred roots of their being. The center of their being was rooted in the spiritual world, the world of the gods. Faithfulness was for the old German world the faithful rooting in the spiritual world. Even the language, the most spiritual treasure of a people, has preserved this relationship of faithfulness to the world of the gods. The faithfulness to the spiritual world was

not educated, but inborn. The spiritual world was the essence of their being.

The age-old, holy Nerthus-service, the exalted mystery service, which preserved from long-distant times the secret of unbornness, was still alive when the Romans met them. Between the Romans and the German peoples there existed a world destiny. We see the kernel of this in looking at the opposite form of ego birth of these peoples: the Germans by a god-given birth, the Romans born of the earth. Only in looking at these spiritual-historical backgrounds illumined by spiritual science can we know the tragedy of the twilight for the heathen Germanic peoples.

The old Germanic initiates knew that when the trust in the spiritual world dwindled, when the old soul supporting powers became dim, then Heimdall would blow his horn, then Surtur would come out of the South and the twilight would begin. It would bring the fall of the old mysteries, for those could last only out of the trust of and the faithfulness to the spiritual world. With the break of this trust, the holy oaths which bound the old Germanic soul to the spiritual world broke asunder.

With the world destiny long prepared in its core by Odin, the twilight had its world-historical beginning through the legions of the Imperium Romanum. They prepared the way for the Roman Christianity.

The Germans had two possibilities to find the way to Christianity. The one possibility of taking in the Christ impulse consisted of making use of what was still there out of their clairvoyant soul disposition. This meant to find a way from the old mystery to the new mystery of Golgotha. The other possibility was to make use of the path that the other peoples took, becoming Christian through the new Imperium, in Roman Christianity.

What prevented them from choosing the first path? Why did they not take the path that their mysteries showed them? The answer

reveals a part of world destiny—it reveals the inner connection between Celts and Germans.

The Germans received their mysteries originally from the Celts. According to this, the Celts were the bearers of the secret of incarnation. The early Germans received it from them, and it lived on as the continuation of the Hyperborean age. The Hyperborean swan song continued to sound in the Celts.

The Celts had spread widely in pre-Christian times from Spain to Italy, into a part of Germany and up to Ireland and England. In Hibernia they had their most famous mystery center. Gradually, however, the Romans destroyed the Celts. The destruction began on the Roman side of the Alps. Later, it went beyond the Alps, through Julius Caesar in the Gallic War when Gaul was Romanized. The Celts found their last place of refuge in Southern England, Wales, and Brittany. Yet their complete destruction as a historical power by the Romans brought about their greatest achievement. Their disappearing from the outer scene of history led to an evolution that lifted their souls to a scene of a tremendous inner happening. They found the path from their old mysteries to the true Christian Grail mysteries. Since age-old times, with their preservation of the swan song of the Hyperboreans, the Celts were the carrier of the human secret of incarnation. Now it was lifted by the tragedy of its outer destiny to become a carrier of the divine secret of incarnation. Out of the holy, curtained carriage of the goddess Nerthus stepped the Virgin, carrying in her hand the Grail. Instead of servants destined to die, there arose now swan knights who, like Lohengrin, served.

The fate of the Germans was intimately connected to the Celts in its deepest being, that is, in their mysteries. The evolution of the Germanic peoples with regard to the Celts took a completely different direction. It is a deeply moving, world-historic view: The fate of both peoples, the Celts and the Germans, is dammed up. Up to that time these peoples were related, inwardly connected within their most sacred mysteries. The meeting with the Romans separates

them in their innermost, most sacred core. Their evolution from then onwards is in opposite directions.

Through Caesar's Gallic War, the Romans brought about a world-historical ruin. But through this destruction they achieved their greatest sublimity: the mysteries of the Grail. The Germans, however, gave the Imperium its death blow. They now became a world-historical power in the highest degree. Their old mysteries, however, were in tragic ruin.

The Celts experienced an outer historical tragedy through the world power of the Imperium. Through this destiny they rose inwardly to the purest heights. They reached their exalted aim.

The Germans, on the other hand, achieved a heroic breakthrough towards world-historical greatness. But inwardly they experienced a tragic decline. Instead of new mysteries, they won outer power. They paid for this decline with the twilight. The Celts lost their outer power, but instead of twilight they received highest light. In the mysterious texture of interwoven destiny between Celts, Germans and Romans lies the fact that the Germans took the outer and not the inner path at the turn of time.

This threefold knot of destiny brings about the question of its origin. To answer this question the gaze goes back to an archetypal past. It is as if the ancient fall of the Aesir, brought about by the alliance of Odin with Loki and the hostage-taking of Niordr, would take its effect in world history between Celts and Germans. The Romans appear as executors of age-old events. Behind these world happenings, guiding and leading them majestically, is the lofty work of the sacrificing archangel Odin, who forms the destiny through the mystery of the word.

What happened when the Germans went on their way to outer power and inner tragedy? On the same path that once led the Roman legions to Germania came Roman Christianity.

The cutting of the holy oak through Winfried is only the symbolic act of the unrelenting battle of destruction against the

old Germanic mysteries and all that is connected with it. Caesar destroyed the Celts as a people in order to hit the core of their being, to hit their mysteries. It was different with the Christian victors of Rome. To bring the Germans to Roman Christianity it was sufficient to extirpate their mysteries. Thus, the spiritual foundations of the old Germanic world began to waver. That world tumbled and with it went the trust in the spiritual world that had carried it since the beginning of the old Germanic world. With this began the twilight. The wolf devoured Odin. This deeply moving image contains profound historical truths.

What is described here is to be understood from the point of view of the old mysteries. Another point of view would naturally also bring other perspectives.

The initiates of the old Germanic mysteries were not in search of a historical power position, which the Germanic races won. They directed their spiritual vision to the inner tragedy that befell the old Germanic world. For them the destruction of their mysteries was the destruction of trust in the spiritual world resulting in a world ruin. The Germans took in the spiritual world, the world of their gods, with its inner being, with its ego. But the ego simultaneously signifies and embraces the world. Consequently, the old Germanic initiates painted in the *Voluspa*, in sublime images, the tragedy of the twilight, which was their own tragedy expressed as a world catastrophe.

The initiates could not behold in the Roman Christianity the true Christianity. They had to see an enemy in it, for it destroyed their mysteries. They could see the true Christianity in a new birth of the mysteries. These initiates said to themselves: The twilight will last until the mysteries of true Christianity again open up the beholding of the spiritual world.

It could be seen as a good destiny in the course of time that the Celts and the Germans were able to preserve themselves for a long time on two islands: Hibernia and Thule (Iceland). The old

mysteries rose again victoriously and phoenix-like out of Hibernia's sacred places in the form of the Grail dove above destruction and death. The far-distant Thule, on the other hand, could for a long time preserve a part of the old Germanic world. A new annunciation radiated out of Hibernia in the form of the Celtic Grail and Parcival saga. It was a dimmed, age-old song, Thule, which could announce the news through the *Edda*.

It has been shown in which relation and at which point of its development the Celts surpassed the Germanic world. Now the opposite shall be shown.

The Celtic world had sung its swan song with the Grail's saga, for as a community of peoples, they were extinguished. The old Germanic initiates did not speak their last word with the twilight. The spirit gaze reached far beyond that into far distant times. For them, the twilight was only an intermission. They knew that the mysteries (and with them the insight into the spiritual world) did not pass away forever. They knew that a new world with new mysteries which offered insight into the spiritual world would rise again. This is what they announced.

This is the monumental, spiritual, testimonial power of the old Germanic mysteries: that, in facing the ruin of the old mysteries, it could announce a world of new mysteries.

The initiates of the Odin mysteries were proclaimers of the mysteries of the creating Word. The creating Word never perishes—it transforms and renews itself. The initiates annunciated the sacrificial deed of Odin at Mimir's well and the acquisition of the power of speech. They annunciate the end of Odin by the Fenriswolf. But their last and most powerful word was the annunciation of Odin's avenger, of Vidar. So long as Vidar kept silent, so long lasted the twilight. When Vidar begins to speak of the new mysteries, then the new age begins. What kind of evolutionary-historical value lies at the foundation of the Vidar character? What does he say?

The old Germanic god and mystery drama is penetrated by a fundamental motif, the inexorable, the unavoidable coming of the twilight through the Jotun powers. The insight into the spiritual world was inborn to the Germanic peoples. Through the Ahrimanic powers this insight was destroyed and obscured. Against them the revenge of Vidar is directed. It is directed against the wolf. Of all the Jotun powers, the wolf is the most dangerous enemy.

The Ahrimanic powers dwell in the formative body, while the Luciferic powers dwell in the soul organism. As the Ahrimanic powers are in the life organism, they penetrate more deeply. Their working is more fateful. An unrivaled, more powerful strength is necessary to vanquish them. The Luciferic powers in the soul organism could be transformed into good. The Ahrimanic forces, on the contrary, working in the life organism could not. Therefore, with an unmistakable necessity the twilight had to set in.

With Vidar the old Germanic initiates announced the appearance of a power that is stronger and mightier than the powers that brought about the twilight, for it made an end to it. With the speaking of Vidar, a strength appears in the formative body (the body of the gods) that was long silent and hidden. The time had now come to work. These are the new, awakening forces of the formative body, which form the basis and the substance for a new insight into the spiritual world and for new mysteries.

The lineage of Vidar confirms his being. He is Odin's son and of a giant wife, Gridr. *Gridstadr* means "holy place." Gridr also helped Thor with good service on his trip to the east. She lent him iron gloves and the belt of power, as Thor had left them at home.

The lineage and the service to Thor make it clear that Vidar is equipped with extraordinary powers. With Vidar it is a question of an awakening of life forces that were hidden in the deepest part of the holy place (*Gridstadr*) in the formative body (body of the gods). When Vidar starts to speak and avenges Odin, they are revealed out of what had been hidden.

The mysteriously hidden, formative forces in the human-life organism have their history. The mystery traditions speak of it. Their being is described in the *Wafthrudnismâl*. It is not by chance that we find this description in that song. It corresponds only to a spiritual lawfulness, for the *Wafthrudnismâl* describes a cosmic wandering of Odin, and there we have a question of cosmic life and reawakening forces.

Odin (Gangradr) asks the world giant Wafthrudnir, “Who still lives and moves when the long horror song of winter vanishes?” He answers:

Lif and Lifthrasir live hidden
In Hoddmimir’s wood.
Dew is all its meal.
From them stems a new race.

The parents of that old race were Ask and Embla. The world ash Yggdrasil, Ego bearer, was the life tree of the old race. The arch-ancestors of the new race, Lif and Lifthrasir, reveal their being with their names: Life and Life-Carrier.

The *Prose Edda* resolves here a seeming contradiction. The winter of horror (the fimbulwinter) of which Odin speaks is the twilight, and in the *Prose Edda* it is told that Lif and Lifthrasir held themselves hidden in Hoddmimir’s wood during the twilight.

Hoddmimir is the Hortmimir, the one who possesses the treasure, the cosmic rune-bard, the fimbultr. Hoddmimir’s wood is that domain of the formative body that the Mimir forces received out of the cosmos. There Lif and Lifthrasir wait for the end of the twilight.

The story of the parents of that new race, which nourishes itself by dew, is nothing else but the life forces fetched out of the depth of the history of the development of the mysteries. These are life forces that stayed hidden, that waited for the end of the twilight.

Here we seize the decisive point where the tragedy of the old Germanic gods and mystery drama turns into its opposite. Odin creates Vidar on sacred ground out of these hidden, waiting formative forces. In the formative body (body of gods) arises a son of god³² as avenger of his father. Wherein rests the revenge of Vidar? The victorious power of this divine son in the human life organism opens again the gaze into the spiritual world, which the Ahrimanic powers locked away during the twilight. This son of god pushes the steel into the heart of the Fenriswolf.

As a world catastrophe the old Germanic initiates had to describe their gods and mysteries. With the twilight of the gods perished the god and mystery world inborn into the Germanic soul. They had to annunciate a new world creation, when the divine son Vidar began to speak in Man. Then the renewal of the ego-birth takes place. Then the ego, thus far hidden in Hoddmimir's wood, seizes the divine forces³³ of his life organism.

With this closes the world-mighty circles of the Germanic gods and mystery drama. The gods unite again, but otherwise than before the twilight of the gods. They are transformed. The Voluspa annunciates the birth of the new world and metamorphosis and evolution of the gods.

There she sees rise another time
Out of the water, the earth again greening.
The floods fall back, above flies an eagle,
Which on a rock feeds on fish.

The Aesir come together on the Idafeld
To speak about the world embracer,
Remembering great, age-old dicta,
Runes found by fimbultr.

Studach translated this last verse as follows:

In vales of Ida Aesir meet
And judge of mighty earth embracer;
Remember them—the great Urthels
And fimbultr's age-old runes.

In dark, mysterious words, the Odin mysteries announce here the change of the gods. Now the gods speak of and judge the God of the greatest event on earth. They also speak of Christ—the world embracer, the world-surrounder. The gods have received the new mystery of the Word. They speak of and judge the appearance of the creating world Word in the body. Therefore, they are aware of the old runes. Now they receive the new runes. The old gods, not Men alone, have a part in the Christ event. It is significant not only for the evolution of Men, but also for the evolution of the gods.

It becomes clear as day that the initiates of the Odin mysteries in their annunciation did not have Roman Christianity in mind. They saw in it their enemy, which robbed them of their gods. This adversary brought them the fall of their mysteries. They beheld in the far future a Christianity in which gods and humankind at the same time have a part, which will again unite the gods and mankind. They speak, therefore, of a council of the gods on the Idafeld, on which gods, not humankind, “judge” the highest of all gods. Man achieved what none of the old gods, not even Odin, could accomplish: the incarnation into flesh and the victory over the earth death.

What the highest god brought about is described by another Voluspa verse:

Then, unseeded the fields will bear,
All evil disappears. Baldur returns.
In the heaven of the victorious God dwell Hodur and Baldur,
The wise gods.
Do you know what this means?

In this question lies the secret of metamorphosis of the old Germanic world into the future world. In between lies the epoch of the twilight of the gods. During this time, devoid of gods, the old Germanic nature mysteries are transformed into modern science. The devotion to the being of nature is inborn in the Germanic peoples. Therefore, that devotion has never ceased. It continues to be an outstanding characteristic of these peoples up to the present time. Only its content changed to a devotion to the revelation of the gods at the time of the nature mysteries, at the time of Baldur. This was a devotion to the pure sense revelations of the world at the time of the twilight of the gods. The latter found its strongest manifestation in modern natural science and the world image created by it. This is the prodigious fruit of the godless time.

The act of the twilight of the gods extends itself to a history of culture. The godless time created the foundation for human independence and freedom. To become independent of the gods was a world providence, an agreement of the old gods themselves. The nature mysteries were transformed into modern science. The latter is the fruit of the marriage of the youngest Aesir, Freyr, with the Jotun daughter Gerda. The old Germanic initiates announced an age that would unite in a brotherly way the seemingly greatest enemies—natural science and the new insight into the spiritual world. This would be a science that again takes in the gods. The opposites become reconciled. Baldur and Hodur live at the same place. The new mysteries of the leader of the gods and Men unite Baldur and Hodur as brothers.

The old Germanic god and mystery drama is in its world-redeeming last act. The Christ also enters into this drama inborn in the being of the Germans. In early times, the spirit-being of the cosmos was taken in with a dull, dreamlike and clairvoyant soul capacity. The twilight of the gods extinguished this spirit-being for human consciousness. In the meantime there waited hidden,

withdrawn from conscious life, forces of awakening. A new age with new capacities, the spirit being of the cosmos appears in order to be accepted. Science unites with an insight into the spiritual world. The old clairvoyance was instinctive, a capacity of the blood. A scientific capacity will be the basis of a new clairvoyance, a new insight into the spiritual world. The old Germanic mystery wisdom announces it, but in the language and imprint of its own world. This world demands to be deciphered, if it is to be understood.

Old Germanic mystery wisdom announces which forces have united in the meantime with the returning Baldur. Here emerges again the question after Asmegrir in “Baldur’s Drama.”

The Asmegrir expected Baldur in the east of Hel. They had the shimmering drink ready for him, which they had covered with the shield of the sun. In sense-based translation, “Asmegrir” means the “stomach” of the Aesir, that is to say, to be related to the Aesir. The hidden progenitors of the new race related to the Aesir, waiting for the end of the twilight of the gods, are Lif and Lifthrasir. They wait for Baldur. They have the drink covered with the sun shield, ready for him. They step forward with Vidar, the son of a god. This is the race of those who are stronger than the Fenriswolf and his race.

From these explanations it is clear that the old Germanic initiates presented a deep insight into the true being of Christianity. They knew that none of their old gods, even the leader of their gods, Odin, was mighty enough to overcome the Jotun powers in the fight against Ahriman. This is a fight only the world-embracer, the leader of all gods could endure. This is one who had the power to step into a human body in the physical-earthly world where Ahriman works. For them Christ was the god of the new mysteries, as Odin was the god of the old mysteries. Odin was still able to awaken Vidar, the son of a god, in Man. But Vidar and those with him are servants of the new mystery god. He is spoken of in the following vista of the future that ends the Voluspa:

There rides the powerful to the council of the gods,
The mighty from above who steers all,
Decides the quarrel, settles discord and fixes all dissension.

Studach translates this in the following way:

There comes the rich
To the Thing of the braves,
The powerful from above
Who guides everything:
Quarrels he smooths,
Speaks judgment,
Sets peace celebrations
Firmly for ever.

In a footnote he added: "This law seems suspicious to some because it is too sublime. Not to us. There is no trace of an addition in its form; it agrees in spirit with the preceding and the following law, for its authenticity gives witness to the tone of the whole song."

Studach's opinion seems correct. It is of insignificance whether the Voluspa has always been written in its present form or was so recorded after the Roman Christianizing. Its cast is brazen from beginning to end. It does not show the slightest trace of Roman Christianity. Christ is leader of the gods, not a prince of the church. He is not named by his name. His spirit power is woven into the majestic and serious garment of the Nordic mystery language. Here speaks initiates of the Odin mysteries about Christ, not an erudite Roman clergy. He describes him as a mystery god, as god of the initiates, not as a Roman world-judge.

The Odin mysteries annunciate the mystery of the verb before its embodiment on earth. But they do give the message through the word of the archangel Odin. With these eyes, with the eye of Odin, the initiates beheld the earth-future of the mystery of the world. It was for them a question of world destiny. It was the deepest

question that had to come out of their age-old mystery experience, the question of overcoming Ahriman in the course of the world. Therefore, they could describe in a last, grand imagination of the future world, the new and the highest mystery god, as the conqueror of Ahriman.

Yet the last word has not yet been said in the *Voluspa*. The gods who meet after the twilight on the Idafeld are not the old gods from Asgard, at least not those who fell in the battle with the powers of the twilight of the gods. Odin himself knows that, at this point of time, his leadership has come to an end. He asks the giant Wafthrudnir:

Who takes care of the Aesir, the heritage of the gods
When Sotur's fire goes out?

Wafthrudnir answers:

Vidar and Vali will take care of the sanctuary
When Sotur's fire is extinguished.
Modi and Magni shall swing Miolnir
And fight that war to the end.

The traditions speak in full clarity that the Odin mysteries do not find a continuation, that Thor will not swing his hammer any more. Not they, but their sons, lead on the evolution of the new world. They talk on the Idafeld about the earth embracer. They take care of the sanctuary of the new mysteries. Of the old gods, Baldur, Hodur and Honir join them. But those three had no part in the twilight. Baldur's death happened long before. Soon after, Vali, the avenger of Baldur, sent Hodur to Hel. Honir was taken hostage by the Vanir.

A deep-reaching question arises here. In the old mystery traditions of the *Edda*, it is clearly expressed that with the twilight, the leadership of the archangel being Odin is at an end for the

development of these peoples. Is another archangel being taking the place as a leading archangel being? Does a new folk spirit take on the leadership and the further development of these peoples? Can one find a trace in the traditions of the Odin mysteries?

The question poses itself with necessity out of the whole of old Germanic gods and their mystery drama. To pursue the further development of Odin cannot be a question, because there is no trace of it in the *Edda*. With the twilight vanishes the trace of Odin in the circles of these traditions.

The archangel Michael, as a fighter and leader of souls, appears very early within the Roman Christian development of the Germanic peoples. He leads the battle against the revolting angels,³⁴ who are seduced by Lucifer. He is the victorious conqueror of the dragon. As a soul leader at the last judgment, he weighs the good and bad deeds of the deceased souls. He is the archangel being who is closest to Christ. He is His most formidable servant.

In the numerous Christian-Germanic traditions of Michael, there is expressed a feature that senses this angelic being as particularly close to these peoples. At the same time his being seems to be widened far beyond such a limitation. Old legends tell of Michael appearing on the mount Gargarus in Italy, and on Mont Saint Michel, an island in Normandy named after him. The Michaelmas day in the calendar in earliest times shows that he was placed in connection with the course of the year. The Michael-feast was celebrated in the Fall.

The archangel Michael was also known in Iceland. He appears in the saga of the wise Njal. The role he played at the Christianizing of Iceland around the year 1000 comes forth in a characteristic scene of the Njal saga.

A priest of the Icelanders celebrates the Michael festival. At this occasion an Icelandic peasant hears of Michael for the first time. He asks about Michael's characteristics. The priest says to him that he weighs good and evil deeds. In his charity, however, he weighs

the good ones as heavier than the bad ones. The peasant declares thereupon to be baptized with his kin, if the priest promises him that Michael would be ready to be his guardian angel.

In the original text the words *fylgia engill* stand for “guardian angel.” *Fylgia*, or “follow spirit” was called the protecting spirit being which accompanies every human being. At those times there were still numerous people in Iceland who could perceive *fylgia* clairvoyantly, particularly the wise Njal. He took in Christianity out of a clairvoyant soul disposition, and out of this disposition he also interceded for it. It formed for him, so to speak, a clairvoyant experience. It is there, also, in the expression “*fygliaengill*,” of the peasant who takes the baptism.

About the encounter of “Michael with the dragon” at the Michael’s festival, Rudolf Steiner published an article.³⁵ In that article a bright light falls for the first time on the world significance of Michael and the dragon in connection with historical evolution. According to this portrayal, the dragon is a being belonging to a pre-earthly state. In archetypal time there were beings that lived in a finer substantiality that were, therefore, more spiritual than is the human being today. Such a being was the dragon which Michael fought. This dragon was destined to take human form in later times. The point of time when this was to happen was to be determined by higher spirit-beings. The dragon, however, became arrogant. He wanted his own will, not the will of higher spirit beings. He rebelled. Independence of will could be maintained only in a denser material than one in which he lived himself. If he wanted to persist in his rebellion, he had to become a different being. Michael followed the will of higher spirit beings. He forced the dragon to take the form that was congenial to his own will. He pushed the dragon, who was a supersensible being, into deeper regions.

This is the battle of Michael with the dragon. Rudolf Steiner briefly relates this fight. The sketch is the fresco-sketch of a horrendous world drama. Our present world came forth out of this

battle. The realm into which Michael pushed the dragon became nature in its denser materiality. Michael, with his spirit-devoted will, stayed above in the realm of the gods. A separation had taken place, just as liquid separates from matter. The world of the dragon formed, so to speak, the sludge of the world of Michael, who stayed in pure, serene spirituality.

Outside human nature the dragon has no power. He could not become visible in it. He rules as invisible spirit in it. But inasmuch as the spirit separated its being from nature, nature became a mirrored image of that spirituality from which the dragon had separated. Nature is an image of this pure, spiritual, archetypal image.

Through his being, Man takes part in nature and in the higher spirituality. He is a double being. In outer nature the dragon is powerless. But not in the human being. The dragon lives in human nature as greed. In its greed, in its life of instinctive impulses, the dragon fallen from the spirit is the one which governs. This drama is the drama of the Fall of Man, but in the Michaelic spotlight.

This drama shows that the spirit of insubordination, the dragon, was thrown into the human being. If Men, out of their higher spirituality, turn to the spirit-faithful Michael, then the inner battle of Michael with the dragon begins in the human soul.

Rudolf Steiner said that, even in the 18th century, such representation lived still in many souls. For them nature was the mirror of a higher spirituality. Nature in Man, however, was the seat of the serpent that ought to be fought through devotion to Michael.

The spiritual-physical drama of Michael is part of the course of the year. Here it reveals its cosmic grandeur. In Autumn, when the leaves fall, outer nature dies. In Spring and in Summer nature cares for the nature of Men with warm sun rays. In Fall she leaves them alone. Now they have to find in themselves what, earlier, nature had given them. Nature becomes weak, and now the spirit must become strong. The dragon loses its might. Now Michael appears within the soul. When nature and the dragon were mighty, Michael

was powerless. Now in the Fall, he becomes mighty, when with the coming frost, nature and the dragon draw back.

Out of such a living with the course of the year, the Michael festival was celebrated. In Spring, nature becomes an earthly benefactor, but it weaves Man into the realm of the dragon. The dragon, which invisibly rules in Man as ugliness, puts this loathsomeness in front of the beauty of nature. In Fall it is reversed. The beauty of nature passes away. The Autumn drives the dragon, the opponent of the spirit, into hiding. The spirit of strong beauty appears. The spirit of Michael appears. At the Michael festival the appearance of Michael in the course of the year is celebrated.

One can turn back the gaze from this age-old Michael drama revealed by Rudolf Steiner to the old Germanic gods and mystery drama. In the Germanic nature mystery in battle with the Jotun powers, these features are mirrored. The outwardly invisible spirit of nature revealed itself in these mysteries as the nature gods, the Aesir. The Jotun powers are shown as that which in human nature are forces in which a higher spirituality (the gods) have to see their adversaries. The Fenriswolf, the horrible fiend of the Jotun powers, was fettered by command of Odin. The opposing spirit was bound to human nature. In the shape of the Jotun powers, what ruled in outer human nature became, through the fettering of the wolf, the spirit-darkening force of greed within human nature.

But it would be a failure to recognize the grand, cosmic and earthly drama of Michael with the dragon, if Michael were equated with the old Germanic gods and mystery drama. The archangel Odin is not the archangel Michael. Wherein lies their difference? The archangel being Odin renounced in archetypal time his ascent into higher regions. Instead he descended. He made a covenant with Loki. By this fact, he was later put into the battle with the Fenriswolf. Tragedy rules over this battle. The wolf Fenris proves himself stronger in the twilight than Odin. Odin is defeated by the wolf. He disappears out of consciousness as the Germanic mystery

god. The wolf lives on. It continues to live in all the manifestations where old clairvoyance shows itself in the symptoms of decadence and other vestiges.

The reverse shows itself with the archangel being Michael. He stayed in a higher spirituality. He did not make a covenant with Loki. He purified the higher spirit realm in throwing the rebellious dragon into lower regions, which later became visible nature. That's why Michael does not bring, like Odin, the twilight of the gods. He is the one who brings about the end of the twilight of the gods. He makes Man a co-fighter against the dragon. He is able to do that because he leads his fight out of the spirit world, which is purified from the dragon. Michael does not descend like Odin. He rises upwards. He did not renounce his ascent as does Odin. He fights faithfully against the dragon. He waits to vanquish the dragon, so to speak, for his ascent, until he has steeled in battle his divine forces. His ascent begins when Odin is slain by the Fenriswolf. His ascent brings about an end to the twilight of the gods. With his ascent the gaze into the spiritual world is again opened.

In spite of all this there exists a world significant spiritual connection between Odin and Michael. Odin, before his end, created his son Vidar who is, therefore, his father's heir. He avenges his father. He fights against the wolf. But Vidar is not Michael. Michael is an objective, spiritual world power. Vidar is the son of a god, who transforms individual Man from a fighter against the dragon to a co-fighter with Michael. But Vidar's genealogy reaches back into the old world of the Aesir.

The archangel Odin, with all the Aesir gods, were Michael's servants. In the service of Michael he led the old Germanic development as a folk-spirit. Through all this the old Germanic god and mystery drama experienced its Michaelic character. It is a reflection of Michael's world.

The mystery traditions of the *Edda* treat of nothing else but the attitude of Man to the spiritual world. All of it was inborn for the

Germans. It was silent during the twilight of the gods. With Vidar that relationship began to speak again. Vidar is a servant of Michael within the Christian development after the twilight of the gods. However, that cannot, in the sense of the old spirit-faithful initiates, be a Christianity that closes the gaze into the spiritual world, but rather one that opens it. They did not envisage Roman Christianity other than a Christianity that Michael serves. Did they point in their traditions to this “inborn Christianity” and their new birth of the spirit world through Vidar?

In the *Voluspa*, Christ is not named by his name. His appearance in time is covered by the mystery secret of the “Mighty from above,” the leader of the gods. Un-named but wrapped into the mystery secret, there appear two sublime beings. Verse 40 speaks of the one being:

Sublime over all One was born.
Him is praised, the ruler richest and greatest.
Through race akin to the whole of all peoples.

Nobody else is meant in this verse but Vidar. Vidar stands high above all the gods. He takes care after the *Wafthrudnismâl* in the new sanctuary after the twilight of the gods. According to his being he is related to all peoples. The old narrow kinship is overcome with him. The Hyndle speaks of the exalted (sublime) son of Odin. It is part of the style of the song that his name is not named. This is also the case with Heimdall, whose birth is told in a few verses.

Immediately before the Vidar verse, there is mention of the birth of the Fenriswolf by Loki. After Vidar comes another one. Here the style becomes still more concise. It ends with the coming of Odin’s battle with the wolf. The composition of the song is such that one has to bring those two unnamed figures in closest relation to the Fenriswolf.

The verse sounds:

Once will come an other one, mightier than he.
But even to name him, I do not dare.
Few will gaze further
Until Odin will attack the wolf.

Whether this “mightier than Vidar” meant the Michael being remains undecided. Deeper than Vidar the name of this figure stays wrapped in the chaste veil of the mystery. But Vidar is the forerunner to the spirit-world of Michael. The traditions testify to it. The “mightier than Vidar” can only be Michael, who also vanquishes the dragon in the outer human cosmic world.

The archangel Odin has fulfilled his task as old folk-spirit in the service of Michael. He was a forerunner for the archangel of a new spirit-epoch. Odin has brought down the Germanic peoples out of the spiritual world into the twilight of the gods.

Here ends the old Germanic gods and mystery drama. One senses its deepest being in its Michaelic resonance. The old Germanic initiates announce it, giving their mightiest power to a new spirit-epoch. Michael, victoriously battling the dragon of the twilight of the gods, will reopen to human souls the spiritual world.

This new annunciation was given by Rudolf Steiner. This was his mission and work. He announced the end of the twilight of the gods. He announced the new spirit-faithful age, and with it, the new mysteries.

The old Germanic initiates spoke the truth.

The End

Endnotes

1. Rudolf Steiner describes the way nature mysteries are announced by Wala in an enlightening scene about the soul world of these ancient times and about the Akasha Chronicle in the magazine *Lucifer Gnosis* (no. 18, 1904).
2. Compare Rudolf Steiner's cycle, *The Mission of the Folk Souls*.
3. How that organism incorporated out of the cosmos into Man was presented in a chapter in Part One, entitled "The Fatherhood of the Myth" (not translated).
4. For a description of "wal," see below in the text.
5. That is, the sounds of the language begin to change.
6. See *Occult Science, An Outline* by Rudolf Steiner.
7. Cornelius Tacitus, Roman historian (c.55AD to c.117AD).
8. Steiner, *The Mission of the Folk Souls*.
9. The spilling of blood at the hand of the ego is an assault on the god-bestowed honor and life carried through the blood line.
10. These processes have already been explained in the myths about motherhood in the untranslated first part. Here they are used for the workings of Thor.
11. See the *Prose Edda*.
12. That is, the place of the birth of the new sun each day.
13. The cosmological song, *Grimnismâl*, expresses an association of the twelve Aesir dwellings to the Zodiac.
14. This has been explained in the untranslated "The Fall of the Aesir" in Part One.

15. Human beings after the age of nine or so maintain a heartbeat to breath rhythm of 72:18.
16. Another race of gods who work for the good of Mankind. Their role is described in the un-translated Part One.
17. Thiassi is called “the presumptuous Thurse” in the Ilyndln song (verse 29).
18. Addressed in Part One of the original book.
19. See Rudolf Steiner’s *Cosmic Memory* and also *Occult Science*.
20. As has been shown in the chapter about the Odin mysteries.
21. German: *Erkenntnis*.
22. The German is literally, “earth ripeness.”
23. German: *Zahngebilde*
24. *Deutsche Mythologie*, vol. III, page 76.
25. German: *fortsetzer*.
26. Mentioned also in the Hyndlas song.
27. German: *abbild*.
28. See Chapter 4, “Thor and the Giants.”
29. *Goetheanum Weekly*, 4th year, #3.
30. From *The Voluspa*.
31. German: *eingeborenen*.
32. German: *Gottensohn*.
33. German: *Gottertkrafte*.
34. See Genesis, strife in the heavens.
35. *Goetheanum*, year 3, Nos. 8 and 9.

In light of the many valuable conversations about the cultural relevance of the Waldorf school curriculum, this book has an important part to play. Rudolf Steiner found in the Norse myths a quality and an insight which he could find in no other mythology. The depth of wisdom to be found in these stories of Odin, Thor, Freyr and the other gods are outside the normal bounds of time and place. They speak to children and adults in any culture which faces the challenges of living in our post-modern times; in other words, to children throughout the world today. They are truly cross-cultural in the way they artistically address the historical basis of human development and human consciousness. These myths provide a basis, then, for post-modern human beings to understand their times and so many of the challenges that come with them.

In this fine book, Ernst Uehli explains what lives in these myths and why Rudolf Steiner felt that these tales were so important to the child and the curriculum.

The publishers feel especially grateful to Rudolf Copple, now ninety years old, for his valuable gift of this translation for English-speaking children, teachers and parents. Waldorf Publications would like to thank him for his tireless efforts on behalf of all of us who work now and will work in the future with the rising generation of children.

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