

Appendix A

Excerpt From Allen Upward's *The New Word*

The following excerpt is Allen Upward's chapter "The Magic Crystal" from the 1908 edition in the Library of Congress. The pages were reproduced xerographically and then were scanned into a word processing program. The scanner was an Apple scanner connected to a Macintosh II computer. Omnipage software was used for Optical Character Recognition (OCR). After the document was scanned, it was saved as a word processing document, and then checked for spelling and possible punctuation errors induced by the scanning process. Upon verification that there were no errors, and that it appeared to be free of substantive errors it was then put into a page layout program (FrameMaker) and the image of page 193 was inserted. This image was produced in a second scan of the page and saved as a Tagged Image Format File (TIFF). Additional modifications to the image, to reduce the blank area that was incorporated into the original TIFF, were made using Canvas 2.1. It was then imported into FrameMaker. A box with a two point line was then drawn around the image and placed to resemble a page image. The caption was then added.

This chapter is being reproduced as a separate appendix so that anyone who wishes may examine the document in question and determine for himself whether the similarity between Upward's thought and Shaw's is close enough to believe that he did exert an influence on Shaw. It is my contention that Ecrasia's joke provides an important clue to the origin of this element of Shavian metabiology and that further investigation is in fact warranted.

THE MAGIC CRYSTAL

Pure Verihood.—I. The Art of Speech.—2. The Sign. —3. The Shape.—4. The Symbol.—5 Ideal Dynamite.

So far the whirl-swirl is a mathematical figure. That is to say it is a word, like Euclid's triangle. It is Pure Verihood.

To be more than a word it must take shape. Verihood must put on falsehood ere it can dwell among us. The outline must be gained in battle.

It is my business to write this word more distinctly, knowing that what we gain in clearness we must lose in verihood. So, even a work of an idealist tendency cannot be quite true, because literature cannot be quite true. We can only draw the round by drawing a series of overlapping straight lines. We can only paint light by painting the shadows cast by light. We can only give to our God the figure of an Idol. Is not that why the perfect Idealist uttered his cryptic saying,—“They who know do not tell; they who tell do not know.”

I

These words which I am writing, and you are reading, these black marks upon white paper, are only signs for sounds, as the crotchets and quavers on a sheet of music are. And the sounds themselves are also in their turn signs for strength, in this case the strength within me, which is called feeling. I write this book to show you my feeling, to make you feel how I feel. It is a cheque drawn on your mind.

Words are, like money, a medium of exchange, and the sureness with which they can be used varies not only with the character of the coins themselves, but also with the character of the things they are offered for, and that of the men who tender and receive them. When we consider that the value of the British sovereign changes from day to day in Britain itself, and when we read the books in which political economists pursue their endless task of trying to tell us what is wealth, we shall wonder no longer at the wasted toil of the logicians.

But words are not the only medium of exchange, any more than gold and silver are. In Nigerland the coins most in use are slaves and cowrie shells. So, in wild lands, and in old days, men have told each other how they felt by other means than words.

Music is one such means. Another is the mystic dance. A black man who was asked concerning some religious thought answered,—“I do not dance that dance.” The dervish dances his worship of the Wheel of Heaven. The Christian kneels to show he is afraid of God.—That Roman critic who condemned tragedies in which the knot was cut by a god coming out of a machine, forgot why the word tragedy meant Goat-Song; forgot that the tragedy was a Mystery whose very end it was to show the god's power over men; forgot that the Song of the Goat began when the stargroup called the Goat led forth the great dance of the constellations, as it is written in the Samaritan copy of Genesis,—“In the beginning the Goat created the heaven and the earth.” Machines are a clumsy kind of writing, but tragedy is still the play that shows men overcome by a power outside them, greater than themselves.

The language of clothes still lingers in our palaces and churches, our courts and barracks. The language of the arms and hands is only frozen by the long northern nights. Letters themselves are halfbreeds, degenerate pictures merging into signs. Writing flowered in the sculptural hieroglyphs of Egypt, as afterwards in the illuminated missals of the monks. But it began in rude notches on a stick, and rude knots on a thread, serving, as

knots on handkerchiefs still serve the children, as reminders. The picture that reminds us is a Sign.

Before I draw the outline of the whirl-swirl, I will draw its sign.

II

The Cross is the rude picture of a knot. As such it is the sign of Matter; and the Man on the Cross signifies the thought that Matter is Evil. The Cross by itself is pure ugliness. The Man on the Cross is a tremendous allegory, whose full interpretation has yet to come.

The root significance of the Cross is not altered because it has also signified other things to other minds; to some, the crossing of the sun from south to north at Easter, to others a material Cross on which Rome in the flesh impaled Idealism in the flesh. The men who adopted the Cross as the sign of the religion which that Idealist has been accused of founding, were men whose habit of mind led them to look for more than one meaning in signs. For them the heaven and the earth abounded in double meanings, in what I will call ontological puns. The days of the week were seven, the moving planets were seven the stars in the Plough were seven, and the number seven was sacred for all these reasons put together. By such frail supports they groped their way towards truths which we have since learned and measured, so that their mistakes are prophecies.

The Cross is the Sign of Matter, and as such it reminds us of the nature of Matter. Not only is it the rude picture of a knot, that is to say, of a joint in the network, but it shows us how the knot is made. It is by two lines of string meeting crosswise. Thus it reminds us that two Ways of Strength must meet crosswise to become entangled. And their entanglement is their arrest. We know they do not rest. The strain of forward motion turns into the strain of pressure. The soldiers do not halt, but they mark time, and mark it faster than they marched. The wrestlers tremble as they lock. The imprisoned crabs beat their incalculable wings against the cage. The word fast is true in its prophetic meaning.

Nevertheless the word fast is also true in its historical meaning. The net which stops the way is in itself wrought by a stoppage of the Ways of Strength. The nature of Matter is Fixity, and it has no more ultimate nature than this. The ultimate nature of Materialism is the worship of Fixity, under a hundred names, whether Matter or Shape, Exactness or Certainty, or Rest or Death.—The enemy of Fixity is Change.

What is the sign of change?

The Chinese sign for Everything is a point in the middle of a round. Viewed as still figures this sign and the Cross offer the utmost unlikeness to one another. But both are still figures; to be the sign of Change, the Round ought to be turning into the End, and returning into the Round.

The wheel of the Buddhists is a better sign. But the motion of the wheel is not the full motion of the Whirl-swirl, in which wheels pass into lesser wheels, and back again into greater wheels.

The least false sign that I can draw is a line turning from a round into an end, and back again into a round. The line going inward is the whirl, and the line coming outward is the swirl. It goes in black and comes out white. And according as a man judges the black line or the white to be more real, he writes himself Materialist or Idealist.—Is it not written in the book of the perfect Idealist that the hollow within the bowl is more to be regarded than the bowl, inasmuch as the bowl is made for the sake of the hollow.

I find that I have drawn a Spring.

III

From the language of Measure we rise to that of Matter; the Sign grows to a Shape.

Let us begin from the real thing from which the likeness is to be withdrawn, namely the waterspout. How does a waterspout behave?

The story of the waterspout, as it is told in books, shows it to be a brief-lived tree. A cloud is whirling downwards, and thrusting out its whirlpoint towards the sea, like a sucking mouth. The sea below whirls upward, thrusting out its whirlpoint towards the cloud. The two ends meet, and the water swept up in the sea-whirl passes on into the cloud-whirl, and swirls up through it, as it were gainsaying it. So in a tree the sap whirls upward from the roots into the trunk, and then again swirls upward into the boughs and leaves, meeting the air and light

In the ideal waterspout, not only does the water swirl upward through the cloud-whirl, but the cloud swirls downward through the sea-whirl. To make their passage through each other easier for the trained mind to follow, let us change the water into air, and the cloud into ether.

The ideal waterspout is not yet complete. The upper half must unfold like a fan, only it unfolds all round like a flower-cup; and it does not leave the cup empty, so that this flower is like a chrysanthemum. At the same time the lower half has unfolded in the same way, till there are two chrysanthemums, back to back. In one the air is whirling inward, and the ether swirling outward; in the other it is the ether that whirls, and the air that swirls.

Now let us change the air into ether, and the ether into ethereon, and so on into more and more "perfect fluids," till we have pure strength whirling in on all sides, and swirling out again.

It is the pure Shape, reached by the same road by which the mathematician reaches his flats and lines. It is the grin without the cat. It is the ideal whirl-swirl.

It is strength turning inside out.

Such is the true beat of strength, the first beat, the one from which all others part, the beat which we feel in all things that come within our measure, in ourselves, and in our starry world, the beat that is called Action and Reaction.

Yet this ideal is not yet an idol. The whirl-swirl is not truly formed into a ball. Every real ball we know of has an outline; but this one has no outline, except eternity. How shall we clothe it with a skin?

IV

What is a real skin? It is Matter. It is indeed a network through whose pores encompassing strength flows in and out. The heat waves reach the blood, the light waves break through the eyeball into the brain; others, more subtle, to which we have not yet given names, touch the invisible membranes of undiscovered cells within.

The mathematical skin is Time. The whirl-swirl ebbs and flows between the turning-point within and the returning-point without, and the moment at which the swirl changes into the whirl is its outline.

The Magic Crystal 193

Whirl-swirl, in which wheels pass into lesser wheels, and back again into greater wheels.

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III

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N

Allen Upward's Symbol for the Whirl-Swirl

To be real, the outline must be gained in battle. And since the battle must go on all round at once, it must be waged against another whirl-swirl, greater than the first one, and inclosing it. If the cloud had inclosed the water, or the ethereon the ether, the inner whirl-swirl would have been shaped into a ball.

If both the inner and the outer whirl-swirls are of pure strength, and both keep the same time, shrinking and swelling together, then one will not feel the other. Where there is no resistance there is no existence, and so the two whirl-swirls will be one. And that is the demonstration of the Nirvana of the Buddhists.

But both do not keep the same time, any more than the waves of the incoming tide all reach the same height upon the shore. The farthest wave, as it ebbs back, meets the next wave flowing forward; and so the outer strength, as it whirls inward from its longer period, meets the inner strength swirling outward, and resisting it. And that meeting is a real outline. The inner whirl-swirl is created.

Again, the pressure of the greater whirl-swirl rolls up the inner one into less room; and what is lost in room is gained in time. The beat of the inner whirl-swirl is quickened, and quickness is hardness. And in this greater hardness of the inner strength we have the very difference between ethereon and ether, between ether and "ponderable matter."— Strength has foamed into stuff.

Consider this idea. Consider this inner strength, coming and going, turning and returning, millions of beats in every tick of secular time, while, throbbing through the network woven by their meeting, the over-strength comes and goes faster than flashes in a diamond.

It is no longer a mere word. It is a magic crystal, and by looking long into it, you will see wonderful meanings come and go. It will change colour like an opal while you gaze, reflecting the thoughts in your own mind. It is a most chameleon-like ball. It has this deeper magic that it will show you, not only the thoughts you knew about before, but other thoughts you did not know of, old, drowned thoughts, hereditary thoughts; it will awaken the slumbering ancestral ghosts that haunt the brain; you will remember things you used to know and feel long, long ago.

What do you see in the magic crystal?

Do you see the Atom, the only real one, the point of strength within the All-Strength?

Do you see the crumb, the tiny crystal that breathes ever so faintly, swelling and shrinking too slightly for our measures, while in and out of it there throbs that beat of strength we call attraction and repulsion?

Do you see the sun's orb, not fixed as we suppose, but nearly in the middle of our sun-whirl, swelling and shrinking in great tides of fire, while it breathes in and out those throbs that we call Energy and Force? Or is it this planet that you see, not altogether weaned, but clinging like a suckling to its mother's breast, drinking in life, and giving it forth again? Ourselves, invoked in the vast cocoon of silken light, do we not seem to other eyes, watching from other orbs, to be flame-spirits moving in a burning world?

Is it the mite you see, the tiny life-crumb, fire-begotten, water-born, air-fed, earth-clad, of which we know neither the beginning nor the end?

Is it the seed, feeding upon the earth-strength, and sending it forth again in roots and shoots? Is it the living waterspout, through which strength courses to and fro from leaves to roots, and back again to leaves;—is it the Tree Yggdrasil?

Or is it rather the cell, swelling and shrinking within the body-strength~. while within the cell there swells and shrinks the nucleus, and within that the nucleolus, and within that what lesser nucleolites we have not measured?

Suppose it is yourself. Suppose it is your heart that pants and throbs, while through it the blood whirls in and swirls out in systole and diastole. Suppose it is your inner strength swelling and shrinking along its nervous tracery, while through it the great Outer-Strength comes and goes, coming in sense, and going in emotion.—That word emotion is not an Andronican cipher. It means outgoing. It means the swirl. Those old men who used it first knew well enough what it meant. They were not sleep-walkers as we are.

Suppose we say it is the Strength Within, played upon by the Strength Without. Suppose we say, in words we hardly understand, that what we call the Body is a network woven between the tiny Strength Within and the great Strength Without.

V

I have drawn near to certain old familiar words, which once were good and beautiful. But they are become so deeply tarnished by evil use, so bent and battered, that I dare not use them; for if I were to, I should feel that I was no longer trying to write truly.

On the other hand it seems to me that as fast as some words are becoming ugly and meaningless, other words long deemed ugly and meaningless are becoming beautiful and full of meaning. The old confused cries of the savage are changing into prophecies; and one fairy tale succeeds another. The earth is turning eastwards, and certain stars are going down below the horizon, while other bright forgotten Signs, are rising on us out of the deep. Yet it is still the same earth and the same heaven.

This is the virtue of the magic crystal in which each one sees himself. It is a touchstone of words. It is, as I have said, itself a word.

How shall I find courage to offer it to those great learners who have built the glorious temple they call Science, wherein I see them standing like archbishops at the altar, talking with God; while I am no more than the little ragamuffin who has been put outside to clean the steps? I have not listened to them as I ought. Even in the last age there was a boy outside on the steps, looking on, and thinking his own thoughts, while the archbishops within were muttering solemnly their Mediterranean incantations; and when they came to the heart of their mystery, and recited the words—*Hoc est corpus*, the boy outside repeated to himself—*Hocus Pocus*. That was how the Mediterranean words sounded to him.

But now suppose that boy has found a seed-pearl, or what he thinks may be a seed-pearl, on the steps; what must he do? He knows it is not his. He knows the great archbishop must have dropped it from his jewelled robes, as he was passing in. So all the boy can do is to go up to the archbishop as he comes out again, and say,—“Please, sir, is this yours?”

And lest my archbishops should not understand the street boy's words, and should not recognize their seed-pearl, I will name it for their sakes by an archbishop's word.

That is to say, *Metastrophe*

By this word I mean more than the archbishops have meant by their word metabolism. I mean, not growth and decay, but growth turning into decay, and decay turning into growth. I mean involution in the midst of evolution. I mean life turning inside out. And I mean more than life; I mean also the expression of life. *Metastrophe* is a mood, and in so far as we attain this mood, so will the Strength Within us chime more and more sweetly with the Strength Without; not in dead unity, but in living unison, and the faint gladness of our earthly voices climb and thread the thunder music rolling out of Heaven.

Here is ideal dynamite that shall break up the bony knobs that clog the brain, and set thought free. I cast this little seed into the mind. If it be a true life-seed, I have no fear but

that it will take root and grow. It will be slower than the other kind of dynamite; it may take a thousand years; but it will do its work more surely in the end. For it is stronger than the real dynamite. It is alive. It will grow.