

**Globalization, Romanticism, and Owen Barfield**

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### **Abstract**

Globalization has a corresponding consciousness that has been maturing for three hundred years under the general term "modernization." This process has not matured uncontested. The Romantic Movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries provided an alternative consciousness with the possibility of alternative futures. Romanticism as an alternative consciousness can be seen not as a historically specific event, but as an unfinished project. The work of Owen Barfield, the English philosopher, writer and poet, provides a framework for examining Romanticism, globalization and consciousness in the broader context of the evolution of consciousness. Within Barfield's structure, Romanticism constitutes a *practical* vehicle for evolving beyond the consciousness of globalization.

## Globalization, Romanticism, and Owen Barfield

### Introduction

*And I had done a hellish thing,  
And it would work them woe:  
For all averred, I had killed the bird  
That made the breeze to blow.*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is about, among other things, the tear between humanity and nature. In a thoughtless and banal act, the mariner kills a bird for which he has no feeling, and disaster ensues. Two hundred years later, Coleridge's poem still resonates. But in the mariner's ocean, in the midst of his curse, where "slimy things did crawl with legs / Upon the slimy sea", today he might very well see only a dead ocean. The extinction rate today is estimated at 1,000 times the historic background rate, and estimated to range up to 10,000 times the background rate by 2050 (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported in 2005 that coral reef ecosystems in the oceans around U.S. territory were in "serious decline" due to pollution, over-fishing and human-caused climate change (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2006a). In October, 2006, UNEP reported that the number and size of ocean "dead zones" -- deoxygenated areas resulting from fertilizer run-off, fossil fuel exhaust and sewage -- have been growing since the 1970s, and increased from 150 to 200 zones in just two years (UNEP, 2006b). Something is wrong in the human-nature relationship.

One could argue, without difficulty, that there is something terribly askew with the human-human relationship as well. The World Institute for Development Economics Research in Helsinki reported in early December, 2006 that two percent of the world's population owned 50

percent of the world's wealth, and half of the world's population owned less than one percent of the world's wealth (Walker, 2007). Other metrics, e.g. access to clean water, life expectancy, and literacy suggest an equally skewed picture of the distribution of well-being (United Nations Development Programme, 2006).

How did we get here today? Economy and ecology share a common root, *oikos*, the Greek word for home. Economics describes one important dimension of our relationship to our *oikos*. The evolution of our relationship to nature is the evolution of our modes of production. At the same time, there is a correlative change in the way we *think* about nature. The evolution of the human-nature relationship is also the evolution of consciousness.

It is my contention that the consciousness that can kill an ocean is the same consciousness that creates an economy where one percent of the world's population controls 50 percent of its wealth: A *consciousness* of globalization correlative to an *ecosystem* of globalization (Davis, 2006a) and an *economy* of globalization. This consciousness has been maturing for three hundred years, alongside of industrial capitalism and positivist science as part of the global process of "modernization" (Makdisi, 1998). These processes have not matured uncontested. The Romantic Movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries (and here there are many possible verbs, e.g.) *reacted against*, *engaged*, and *challenged* modernization. Some argue that it also *compensated for* and *enabled* it. In any case, Romanticism, as it came to be called, provided an alternative consciousness: Romanticism argued unity where modernization separated; it argued holism against reduction; dynamism against atomism; process against product. We can even assign what was probably the most extensive alternative to this process, Marxism, to the family of Romantic oppositions (e.g., Abrams, 1971; Wessell, 1979; Lowy,

1987). Romanticism as an alternative consciousness floats free from a specific historical period, or a specific group of poets, philosophers and scientists. It becomes an unfinished project.

The work of Owen Barfield, the English philosopher, writer and poet, provides a framework for examining Romanticism, globalization and consciousness in a meaningful way. Owen Barfield's name is not one that often comes up in globalization discussions. And for those familiar with the work of Barfield, it might seem strange to connect him to an exploration of a contemporary and topical subject like globalization. However, the thread of changing consciousness runs through modernization, Romanticism and globalization; and this thread, the evolution of consciousness, was a topic that Owen Barfield spent the better part of his long life exploring. Human history fits within the evolution of consciousness. In that process, positivist science and mechanism are a key milestone, with the "Romantic impulse" playing a special role in evolving past that point. Globalization, I will argue, is the culmination of the matrix of processes lumped under "modernization": capitalism, positivist science, and the mechanomorphic model of the universe. Within Barfield's structure, Romanticism constitutes a *practical* vehicle for evolving beyond the consciousness of globalization.

## **Owen Barfield**

*By the way, I am not in the least concerned with literary fame. That is definitely not the spur that this clear spirit doth raise. What I want for my books, etc., or some of them, is that they may be used, where appropriate, to help jog things along in the right evolutionary direction...*

Owen Barfield to T. Kranidas, 1994<sup>1</sup>

The details of Owen Barfield's life, are recounted in several places (in the just-published Blaxford-de Lange biography, 2006<sup>2</sup>, the first of Barfield; also in Sugerman, 1976; Hunter and

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Blaxford-de Lange, 2006, p 143.

Kranidas, 1993; Diener, 2002); and likewise there are a number of excellent summaries of Barfield's ideas.<sup>3</sup> One important aspect of his life that bears noting here is Barfield's general shunning by the academic community. Born in 1898, and died in 1997, Barfield's long life covered most of the twentieth century. Despite three published books by the time he was 30, as well as a number of stories, poems and essays (including inclusion in *The Best Poems of 1923* and a story in T. S. Eliot's journal, *The Criterion*), Barfield was unable to earn a living by writing. After being blackballed from a teaching position at Oxford, despite a recommendation by his close friend, C. S. Lewis (Hunter and Kranidas, 1993), Barfield went to work at his father's law firm in the early 1930s. He worked as a solicitor for the next 30 years. Although a relatively obscure figure in letters today, Barfield's work was praised by many notables, including Nobel Prize-winners T. S. Eliot and Saul Bellow, and poets W. H. Auden and Howard Nemerov; his 1976 *Festschrift* (Sugerman, 1976) included essays by the well-known scholar Norman O. Brown and physicist David Bohm. The most likely cause of Barfield's relative obscurity today stems from his long absence from academia, compounded by his embrace of anthroposophy early in his career (he was member number 15 in the Anthroposophical Society of Great Britain, joining in 1924 according to Diener, 2002). He maintained an association with anthroposophy throughout his life, and he regularly acknowledged his intellectual debt to Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy. That intellectuals would not at least give some serious

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<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately this book came out too recently to be adequately reviewed for this project.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Steve Talbott's summary, organized around major themes in Appendix A of *The Future Does Not Compute* (1995); David Lavery's *Encyclopedia Barfieldiana* website, where key terms and concepts are hyperlinked; G. B. Tennyson's introduction to *History, Guilt and Habit* (1979); the Kranidas and Hunter introduction to *A Barfield Sampler* (1993); R. J. Reilly's "Anthroposophical Romanticism" (1971) available online; and Howard Fulweiler's "The other missing link: Owen Barfield and the scientific imagination" (1993).

consideration to Steiner's work was a source of frustration for Barfield (RCA, see References for the explanation of abbreviations used for Barfield's frequently-cited works).<sup>4</sup>

Barfield was attracted to Romanticism early in his career. In the introduction to the second edition *Romanticism Comes of Age*, Barfield provided the closest thing we have to an autobiography<sup>5</sup>, and that only takes us up to the mid-1960s. In the introduction, Barfield provides background on the currents that fed his intellectual work. He acknowledges poetry, but in a special way. Barfield describes, at about age 21,

a sudden and rapid increase in the intensity with which I experienced lyric poetry.

This was a fact. It was something that kept on happening to me -- not nearly as often as I should have liked, but still often enough. (p 9)

Barfield was drawn to the English Romantic poets, in particular, "[b]ut Romanticism had a philosophy as well as a literature and this philosophy was the natural starting point of my

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<sup>4</sup> Barfield publicly held that his marginalization in the world of letters was due to his interest in the then-unpopular Romanticism ("At all events it was unfortunate for me that all this I have described was going on at a time when Romanticism in general was under a growing cloud and everybody who was anybody was losing interest in it. Directly or indirectly, for I had to make a living, I suppose it was mainly for this reason that", save mainly for pieces in anthroposophical publications, "I produced nothing more of significance in the present context until *Saving the Appearances* appeared in 1957" (RCA, 12)). I think the shunning was more likely due to his radical embrace of anthroposophy, a movement quite outside of the European intellectual mainstream. He was characterized as "an English eccentric" (cited in Hunter and Kranidas, 1993, p 14 n1); and dismissed abruptly in a review: "Barfield's book [*The Rediscovery of Meaning*], in short will fascinate followers of Steiner and the anthroposophical movement; as literary theory, however, it is largely, if not totally, irrelevant." (Kuczkowski, 1977)

<sup>5</sup> Blaxland-de Lange (2006) mentions a "psychography" by Barfield that he abandoned in 1948, which he says is planned for publication at a future date.

enquiries." (RCA, 10) This philosophy used the imagination "as an ultimate mental activity that opposes, and transmutes into a kind of aesthetic or mystical contemplation, that absolute dichotomy between perceiving subject and perceived object on which our practical everyday experience ... is necessarily based." (RCA, 15) Through such activity "the spiritual significance of nature is revealed."

Barfield acknowledged a resurgence of interest and scholarship of Romanticism in the mid-20th century, including the work of people like A. O. Lovejoy, M. H. Abrams and Morse Peckham. Referring to Peckham's "positive" and "negative" Romanticisms<sup>6</sup>, Barfield declared his intentions for *Romanticism Comes of Age*:

There is perhaps room, then for a modest attempt to unite positive and negative Romanticism, modern symbol and ancient myth, imagination and inspiration in a single structure firmly bedded in the dimension of history, to show that, when so united, they may become an instrument for the kind of action required to be taken in our present predicament, and in fact to insist that the question: "Where do we go from here?" and the question: "How did we get here?" cannot fruitfully be considered in isolation from one another. (p 21-22)

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<sup>6</sup> Morse Peckham summarized the divergent themes of Romanticism as "positive Romanticism" and "negative Romanticism." Where positive Romanticism turns from static mechanism to dynamic organicism, valuing "change, imperfection, growth, diversity, the creative imagination, the unconscious", negative Romanticism expresses "the attitudes, the feelings, and the ideas of a man who has left static mechanism but has not yet arrived at a reintegration of his thought and art in terms of dynamic organicism." (cited in Schopf, 2004).



Barfield was arguing a rather striking position: that Romanticism is not just an object of study or a long past literary movement, but something of practical and historical significance, "an instrument for action."

Even in his first books published in the 1920s, *History in English Words* and *Poetic Diction*, Barfield presented a developed understanding of the evolution of consciousness. This concept was also present in the work of Romantics, e.g., the notion of consciousness changing over time is implicit in Abrams analysis of Romanticism as a program of return or restoration of unity (Abrams, 1971). Barfield saw that Coleridge had recognized an evolution of consciousness.<sup>7</sup> With respect to the evolution of consciousness, Barfield was also indebted to the work of Rudolf Steiner, who "had obviously forgotten more than I had ever dreamed" (RCA, 13); Steiner "began where I left off." (interview, in Diener, 2002, p 187). It would not be correct to say that Barfield's ideas came *from* Steiner -- Barfield had started his etymological research in 1922, before hearing of Steiner, which Diener (2002) dates at about a year later. Still, Steiner's ideas had an important and lasting impact on Barfield.<sup>8</sup>

Within Barfield's schema of the evolution of consciousness, Romanticism held a special place, as a kind of turning point. The Romantics failed to fulfill their historical role.

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<sup>7</sup> "The *Philosophical Lectures*, for instance, show an awareness, of the evolution, not now of nature, but of consciousness itself, which has rarely been evinced before our own time." (WCT, 58)

<sup>8</sup> Subsequent to Barfield's work, a number of writers have explored the concept of the evolution of consciousness, including Jean Gebser, Ken Wilber, Erich Neumann, and William Irwin Thompson. For a brief bibliography, see "Suggested Reading List for the Idea of 'The Evolution of Consciousness'" by William Irwin Thompson, <http://ralph-abraham.org/ross/genread.list.wit.html>. For a comparison of various approaches, see Gary Lachman, *A Secret History of Consciousness* (2003). While there are similarities in the overall structure of the

Romanticism had not "discovered its vocation", or as he described elsewhere, "one might say the tremendous impulse underlying the Romantic movement has never grown to maturity; and, after adolescence, the alternative to maturity is puerility." (SA, 130-1) Romanticism had not come of age. The implications of this failure become clear in Barfield's understanding of consciousness and its evolution.

### **The Evolution of Consciousness**

*When we study long-term changes in consciousness, we are studying changes in the world itself, and not simply changes in the human brain. We are not studying some so-called "inner" world, divided off, by a skin or a skull, from a so-called "outer" world; we are trying to study the world itself from its inner aspect. Consciousness is not a tiny bit of the world stuck on the rest of it. It is the inside of the whole world.*

Owen Barfield (HGH, 18)

*Language has preserved for us the inner living history of man's soul. It reveals the evolution of consciousness.*

Owen Barfield (HEW, 18)

In 1977, as he was approaching the age of 80, Owen Barfield acknowledged that "pretty well everything ... I have written is about the evolution of consciousness" (RM, 5). Barfield identified a fundamental, and fundamentally false, assumption in modern thought: namely that "whatever the truth may be about the psychological nexus between man and nature, it is an unchanging one and is now the same as it was when man first appeared on earth." (SA, 12) That notion is false, he held, and could be easily so demonstrated by studying the way language, and specifically the meanings of words, changed over time. "Language is the storehouse of

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evolution of consciousness in these various approaches, there are significant differences in explaining how evolution transpires, and the significance of different stages.

imagination." "When we use a word, we re-enact, or adopt, or reanimate or entertain the thought of previous users of the same word or some part at least of that thought." (SM, 22-23) "The actual meaning of a word must be regarded as a kind of habit, the normal habit of contemporary people when they speak or write" (SM, 29); this habit, or "lexical meaning", is "a kind of norm", and can be looked up in a good dictionary. But words take on extended or expanded meanings through creative usage, through "speaker's meaning", such that word meanings are "in a constant process of change." (SM, 31) The changing meanings -- both lexical and speaker -- reflect changing consciousness.

By tracing back through time how meanings have changed, one can see how not just ideas were changing, but the underlying thinking and perceiving were changing too. People in the distant past thought *differently* and perceived *differently* than today. This difference in consciousness<sup>9</sup> was reflected in word usage. The development of language, Barfield argued, was not a matter of simple words of practical day-to-day worldly activities having additional meanings added on to them to explain new feelings and abstract concepts. Instead the history of language was one of words that initially referred to both inner and outer "things", or rather, "things" we might now consider "inner" (referring to feelings, thoughts, intuitions and so forth) and "outer" (things "in the world out there").

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<sup>9</sup> For Barfield, consciousness is something we experience, "our inwardness at any moment." It arises out of the interpenetration of perception and thinking (HGH, 67). Consciousness for Barfield includes contents of which we are unaware or not fully aware. Barfield also used the term "passive habits of thought," as opposed "to any ideas we are actively entertaining at the moment." These habits "are inseparable from our perceptions," and is the changes in the habits of thought "with which a history of consciousness must deal." (HGH, 19-20) Later in the same book he notes that these habits precede, or underlie, ideology, culture, world outlook, etc. Barfield's conception of consciousness extends far beyond this inner experience though.

As consciousness evolved, the meanings of the words bifurcated into inner and outer meanings, reflecting and expressing a change in consciousness (PD, SA, SM, HGH). One potent example that has been quoted elsewhere (e.g., Fisher, 2002; Abram, 1996) is Barfield's description of the changing meaning of "spirit." The word meant at one point *wind, breath* and its contemporary meanings of an immaterial inner enlivening force and immaterial connection point to the universe, all at the same time. These were not distinct meanings, but overlapping and simultaneous meanings. Over time, the "moving air" meaning was replaced by words like "wind"; the inhalation/exhalation was replaced by other words like "breath", although the original root meaning lives on in words like "respiration." The point is that when ancients referred to the wind as "spirit", they were *not* being metaphorical, not in the sense we understand metaphor today as relating two concepts to reveal new connections or meanings. As an example of a modern word retaining both inner and outer meanings, Barfield pointed to the word "heart" which refers both to the physical organ and emotional matters, character, etc., too.<sup>10</sup> Barfield called this kind of consciousness "original participation" (SA).

The bifurcation of meaning into "outer" meanings and "inner" meanings signaled a change in consciousness, a splitting of outer and inner, of self and world, a process of separation and individuation that took place over many centuries. The process of individuation reached full flower with the Scientific Revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The change, Barfield explained, is evident when examples of medieval thinking are set against scientific thinking associated with such luminaries as Bacon, Copernicus and Galileo. Medieval consciousness saw qualities in the human being both inside the person and out in the world as

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<sup>10</sup> We tend to accommodate multiple meanings today based on context, as if they were different words, but Barfield is saying that early on, multiple meanings were simultaneously understood.

well. This interpenetration was severed with the Scientific Revolution. The Cartesian mind/body split was at the same time a hard separation of the self from nature. Galileo and Locke's "primary qualities" (like mass, size, volume) were seen as "objective" and quantifiable. These were distinct from the actual human experience of the things, the so-called "secondary qualities" like color, scent, beauty, now considered "subjective" and dependent on the observer.<sup>11</sup> "The qualities formerly treated as inherent in nature [i.e., the secondary qualities] have, as far as any scientific theory is concerned, disappeared from it, and ... reappeared on the hither side of the line between subject and object, within the experiencing human psyche; ... we conceive ourselves as 'projecting' qualities onto nature rather than receiving them from her." (RM, 177) Nature, first via early science, and eventually as a widespread new habit of thought, was drained of inner, hidden qualities, leaving only a husk of quantifiable properties, outer with no inner. Positivism and mechanism defined this new consciousness.

However, at the same time the outlook of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment was becoming widespread, a counter-motion began to emerge, what Barfield called the "Romantic impulse." (SA) Its appearance at the end of the eighteenth century heralded the potential of achieving a new kind of consciousness based on active imagination, a poetic kind of knowledge. Poetry was one way to rediscover the lost connections, seeing, via metaphor and poetic imagination, what Shelley called "the before unapprehended relations of things." But more broadly Barfield saw this new consciousness developing via a new kind of thinking, a "'directionally creator' relationship" with nature (SA, pp 131 - 132), a difficult phrase<sup>12</sup> implying

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<sup>11</sup> Evernden (1992) provides an insightful discussion of this transition. See also Edelglass, Maier, Gebert, and Davy (1997).

<sup>12</sup> Barfield added parenthetically, "I do not love the expression, but I can find no better one in English." (SA, 132)

a willfulness or volition mobilizing the creative imagination to forge one's relationship in the world.

Barfield described consciousness as the interpenetration of perception and thinking (HGH, 37). Although perception and thinking can be distinguished, they can't really be separated. Perception at least has the appearance of being a largely unconscious and passive activity (although here Barfield acknowledged the "intentionality" of perception); while thinking is essentially active. Or perception can be thought of as coming from without, and thinking from within. (HGH, 11) This description of consciousness echoes Steiner's (1893) definition: "Human consciousness is the stage where concept and observation meet and are connected to one another. This is, in fact, what characterizes human consciousness. It is the mediator between thinking and observation." (p 52) At different stages of the evolution of consciousness, perception or thinking might predominate. Barfield describes "participation" as "a predominantly perceptual relation between observer and observed, between man and nature, and one which is nearer to unity than to dichotomy." (HGH, 26)

The evolution of consciousness is a process of several correlative processes: the diminishing awareness of participation; the emergence of analytical "thinking about" (Barfield also called this "alpha-thinking"); the disappearance of inner meaning; the individuation of consciousness; the sharpening distinction between self and world. Alpha-thinking became such an embedded habit that it passed over into figuration, into the habit of seeing things as separate, as "thought about." Alpha-thinking forced it underground. So alpha-thinking was at the same time the beginning of the disappearance of awareness of participation.

As the awareness of participation disappears, and the representation begins to be confused as "an ultimate", a symbol for which we have lost that which it symbolizes, "when the

nature and limitations of artificial images are forgotten," they become idols (SA, 39). Phenomena become idols because they begin to be seen as independent of human perception (and only the "unrepresented" is really independent of human perception). Or we can say that concomitant with the disappearance of participation is the growth of idolatry. "Idolatry" (or the disappearance of the awareness of participation) reaches its most complete expression with the Scientific Revolution, beginning around the 16th century or so in the West (RM).

In the evolution of consciousness, Barfield saw a corrective to idolatry in the form of what he called "final participation." Idolatry carries the seeds of its own destruction inasmuch as science makes new observations that cannot be incorporated into its mechanomorphic model. Through beta-thinking we may intellectually grasp the notion of participation (i.e., an extra-sensory relation between a person and phenomena), but "final participation" brings that activity to the conscious level. Final participation can only occur after we have recognized the role we play in representation, that the phenomenal world is a "collective conscious." The Romantic movement demonstrated an impulse towards final participation (SA). Final participation, today, Barfield argued, can only be achieved by special exertion, that "it is a matter, not of theorizing, but of imagination in the genial or creative sense." (SA, 137) A *systematic* approach to final participation then meant a systematic approach to the use of the imagination. Barfield pointed to Goethe's scientific method as an example, and then Steiner's extension of Goethe's method.<sup>13</sup>

For Barfield, the way was forward to final participation, not back to original participation (if even such was possible). The last vestiges of original participation lingered in the Middle

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<sup>13</sup> Goethe described his approach to science in many places (see, e.g., Miller, 1988). *Very briefly* (at the risk of killing the thing with a word), Goethe's approach involved a two phase approach, including a detailed empirical study of the phenomenon, followed by the imaginative recreation of the phenomenon in the imagination. For a description of the method in practice, see e.g. Holdrege (2005).

Ages, such that they could conceive of the human being as a microcosm of the larger macrocosm. Events within the human body and mind reflected and resonated with processes outside. The idea of planets and stars having personal meaning was consistent within such a consciousness. The Scientific Revolution, for better or for worse, finished off original participation, but Barfield argued that that was a necessary evolutionary step towards the completion of the process of individuation. The next step should be not backwards, but forwards, through individual thinking and imagination, so as to achieve a participation that retained individual consciousness. By increasing the interpenetration of thinking and willing, in the "deepest sense", "active truth seeking", Barfield said, "you are pursuing a path in the direction of what I call final participation." When asked if this meant "cosmic consciousness", Barfield said yes, "as long as that doesn't imply abolishing individual consciousness."<sup>14</sup>

### **Consciousness and the World**

*This static, abstract thought has death in it.*

Owen Barfield (RCA, 59)

To relate the evolution of consciousness back to globalization, there must be an understanding of how consciousness and the process of history relate to each other. For Owen Barfield, "the actual evolution of the earth we know must have been at the same time an

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<sup>14</sup> New Age fascination with the science and culture of the Middle Ages -- astrology, alchemy, geomancy, tarot and so forth -- looks back to the last vestiges of original participation. "As above, so below." Many Romantics also looked back to the Middle Ages for inspiration (see e.g., Cobban, 1960).



evolution of consciousness."<sup>15</sup> (SA, 65) We can understand this in a few ways. Consciousness is not something stuck onto the world, an afterthought as it were, but part of (the "inside of") the world. So consciousness evolution occurs as part of world evolution because it is a part of the world. If we consider "the world as experienced" ("the earth we know") as the thing that is evolving, we are talking about the evolution of collective representations, which Barfield argues changes with changes in consciousness. So we are talking about the world as we experience it changing as consciousness evolves. In the sense that a thought precedes an act which changes the world, the world-as-collective-representation is transformed by consciousness via practice or labor or activity, which in turn affects consciousness. However we understand it, this connection between consciousness and the world provides a transfer point for exploring the implications of the evolution of consciousness and the worldly activity of human beings.

In his later writings, "polarity" appeared as a foundational term in Barfield's critical vocabulary. Barfield absorbed the term from Coleridge, who adapted the term from a variety of sources (McFarland, 1981). "Polarity is at the root of what Coleridge thought," Barfield argued (cited in McFarland, 1981, from WCT, 145). Polarity is neither a "paradox" nor simply opposites. Barfield described Coleridge's concept:

Polarity is a law which reigns throughout Nature; the duality of the 'opposite forces' is the manifestation of a prior unity; and that unity is a 'power.' It is not, that is to say, any abstract 'principle of unity' or of identity -- a point which it is hardly possible to over-emphasize... Polarity is dynamic, not abstract. It is not 'a mere balance or compromise,' but 'a living and generative interpenetration.'

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<sup>15</sup> Or "the two kinds of evolution, of the earth on the one hand, and of consciousness on the other, have really been only one kind, one single process." (EC, 14)

Where logical opposites are contradictory, polar opposites are generative of each other -- and together generative of new product. Polar opposites exist by virtue of each other as well as at the expense of each other... Moreover, each quality or character is present in the other. We can and must distinguish, but there is no possibility of dividing them... At this point the reader must be called, not to think about imagination, but to use it. Indeed we shall see that the apprehension of polarity is itself *the basic act of imagination*. (WCT, pp 35-6, italics in original)

Within the polarity, one pole may predominate, and this may change over time. In his interview with Shirley Sugerman (1976), Barfield expanded on Coleridgean polarity. Life is "unity in multiteity", such that "individuation" and "connection" are in a polar relationship. So are "matter" and "mind": "matter is always that *of which* I am conscious; but correlative to it, and at the opposite pole, is the 'I' who am conscious" and "Spirit [or mind]... is not that which is perceived, but that which *is*. It is not what we perceive, but what we *are*." (RM, 147) "Inner" as consciousness and "outer" as world are a polarity; they interpenetrate.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Coleridge's concept of "polarity", on the face of it, is very similar to the concept in Marxist philosophy of "the law of the unity and 'struggle' of opposites," a basic tenet of its dialectics. See, e.g., Sheptulin, 1978: "The way in which opposites presuppose each other and are inseparably interconnected is a major form through which their unity manifests itself." "Being different aspects on one and the same thing, opposites not only exclude, but also interpenetrate each other; they not only express the difference between the inseparably interconnected aspects, but also their identity." (p 252) The same text quotes Lenin: "the human mind should grasp these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, becoming transformed into one another." (p 254, reference is to Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p 109, his "Philosophical Notebooks." The quoted sections are Lenin's notes on reading Hegel.) This "grasping in the mind" is none other than the mental (spiritual) act of imagination, to reach the immaterial but real unity of opposites.

Barfield was careful about his use of the word materialism. The way Barfield wrote about materialism is not the same materialism of, say, Marx -- not because he did not understand the philosophical position of materialism, but because he discussed materialism in its common usage and common understanding. In one essay, Barfield equates materialism with positivism.

"Positivism is the philosophical name for the belief now more widely know as 'materialism'" (RM, 11); positivism is the "habit" of observing the world and interpreting it according to physical cause and effect. In another essay, "materialism" in the title meant "not any materialist philosophy, a la Haeckel or Lenin, but the material habit of taking for granted, *for all practical purposes and most theoretical ones*, that the human psyche *is* intrinsically 'alienated' from nature" in the sense of divided from nature. (RM, 190, italics in original) In "Matter, Imagination and Spirit" (in RM), Barfield worked through the terms "matter" and "spirit", and settled on a working definition of matter as that which could be perceptible via the senses.<sup>17</sup> As a way of knowing, Barfield didn't reject the benefits of such habits of mind. He rejected the assumption that they constitute the *only* valid way of knowing the world. The weakness of the positivist position, Barfield argued, is that positivism only allows what can be empirically known, via the physical senses. Anything else is meaningless.

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<sup>17</sup> In the particular context, Barfield was attempting to arrive at a workable understanding of the word. This simple definition is reached at after some deliberation. The word "matter" refers to something abstract, a category or class of world content, i.e. something only approached by thinking (i.e., we perceive specific things -- a cloud, a pencil, a cat, and then abstract that to "matter"). People generally still think of "matter" in terms of classical physics, i.e. the physics of Newton and solid things interacting with other solid things, and not the physics of Einstein or Bohr or Bohm. But modern physics, in its dogged pursuit of fundamentals, has succeeded in finding that "matter" is more like energy, field, or vibration.

Barfield argued that there are two possible views of scientific knowledge. The first view holds that science is a set of hypotheses for "saving the appearances" (i.e. that explain perceptions), "tools for the application and further pursuit of that science." The second view holds that scientific knowledge is the *only* reliable knowledge available, having absolute validity. (SA, 54) Barfield was *not* anti-science. In lamenting what was lost in the triumph of the Scientific Revolution (i.e., the awareness of participation), he was always careful to acknowledge what was also gained. "The beneficial results need no stressing" but nor are they the be-all and end-all of human activity. (HGH, 13) Although referring to Rudolf Steiner in one speech, he could also have referred to himself: "Steiner did not want ... to undo, as it were the Scientific Revolution. He wanted to use it in a new way." (RM, 183) Positivist scientific knowledge allows us to learn about nature as mechanism and quantity. By excluding the secondary qualities from its area of inquiry, traditional science is only able to acquire certain kinds of knowledge -- ask a quantitative question, get a quantitative answer. "This has been its strength because, if our principal aim is to be technologically effective, we *have* to think in terms of mechanism." (RM, 183) And this, he recognized, was one of science and technology's powerful arguments, that science is true because it works. (RM, 183) Such an observation though is also the weakness of traditional science, "because traditional scientific method is coming more and more up against the fact, the really fairly obvious fact, that neither man nor nature *is* only mechanism."<sup>18</sup> (RM, 183) Organism plasticity, epigenetic inheritance, emergent behaviors, Gaia theory and the many

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<sup>18</sup> This is a similar argument to the one advanced by Thomas Kuhn (1970) in his description of scientific revolutions. Scientific work collects new observations, some of which do not fit into existing models. As a result, new structures or models or explanations are advanced to comprehensively accommodate the new observations resulting in a paradigm shift.

oddities of quantum mechanics challenge the one-sided-ness of the mechanomorphic model (e.g., Lovelock, 1986; Goodwin, 1994, 1999; Jablonka and Lamb, 2005; Holdrege and Talbott, 2006).

For Barfield, the immaterial or spirit or mind complements and completes the mechanomorphic, positivist world of surfaces and quantities. To balance the definition of matter as that which is perceptible, Barfield defined spirit as that which is imperceptible by the senses. Although imperceptible, it is accessible via imagination in the Coleridgean or Goethean sense.<sup>19</sup> While it might be tempting to dismiss Barfield at this point as an idealist, who rejected the material world and saw reality as ideas or springing from the mind, this would be a mistake. Barfield tried to reclaim the missing interior, to "rediscover meaning"; which could only be achieved by overcoming the matter/idea divide. Barfield called himself an objective idealist, describing it so:

The subjective idealist ... conceives of those ideas as being in some way as real, or more real, than the objective world. Objective idealism contends that that disjunction is itself an unreal one, and that reality, individual being, however you think of it, consists in the polarity between the subjectivity of the individual mind

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<sup>19</sup> I.e., not daydreaming or what Coleridge called "fancy." "Fancy", for Coleridge, is a kind of fantasizing that works on existing concepts, it cannot be considered creative except perhaps in the sense of re-arranging the known. "*Fancy...* has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The *fancy* is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space..." (Coleridge, in *Biographia Literaria*, Chapter XIII, cited in WCT, 75). "Imagination", on the other hand, is creative. Coleridge saw two types of imagination. Primary imagination is the process of creating the physical world out of sense impressions, what Coleridge called the "repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creating in the infinite I AM." (Ibid, in WCT, 74) Secondary imagination is similar ("differing only in *degree*"), but carried out in a conscious, willful way, as in the production of poetry. (PD, 27)

and the objective world which it perceives. They are not two things, but they are one and the same thing and what you call the objective world is merely one pole of what is a unitary process and what we call subjective experience is the other pole, but they are not really divided from each other. (Interview with Sugerman, 1976, p 18)

Although Barfield described matter and spirit as two phases of the universe (RM, 146), he often emphasized "spirit" as the original, prior state, and matter being a coagulation of spirit, a la Leibniz (RM, 145). Diener (2002) recognizes, accurately I think, that a load-bearing column of Barfield's thought is "the reality of ideas." But what is an "idea"? Barfield followed on from Coleridge's concept of "idea." Coleridge equated "ideas" with "laws of nature."<sup>20</sup> Barfield quoted Coleridge:

That which contemplated objectively (that is, as existing externally to the mind), we call a law; the same contemplated subjectively (that is, as existing in a subject or mind), is an Idea. (In RM, 179)

Barfield thought that Coleridge's efforts paralleled Goethe's scientific work. Coleridge's Idea was "perhaps hardly indistinguishable" from Goethe's *Urphänomen* (usually translated as "archetype"), "at the same time both mind *and* nature; it is neither subjective nor objective; or it is both at the same time." (RM, 179) Goethe (in Miller, 1988) described the *Urphänomen* as "ideal" in the sense of the "ultimate we can know"; "real" because we experience its expression; "symbolic" because it represents all instances; "identical" because it is identical with all

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<sup>20</sup> This is not to say that all mental activities, or ideas in the popular sense, are laws of nature. Coleridge is using "idea" in a particular sense.

instances. The archetype describes an inner lawfulness or logic or coherence. Naydler (1996) describes it like this: "The Archetypal Phenomenon is experienced when a group or sequence of phenomena reveal an underlying meaningfulness and internal coherence which is grasped by the intellect in a moment of intuitive comprehension." (p 103) Coleridge's concept of "idea" then was not a Platonic "transcendent and superhuman" thing, but was a "constitutive antecedent unity in some natural process." (RM, 179)

"Constitutive antecedent unity" is a key concept for Barfield's worldview. "Interior is anterior" is a recurring theme in *Unancestral Voice*. The inner -- the immaterial, the idea, the spirit -- comes *before* the outer or physical form or expression. After proposing some neutral terms for "pre-matter", including "paradisal matter", "archetypal matter", and "Edenstuff", an echo of the *Naturphilosophie* concept of *Urstoff* (Richards, 2002) -- Burgeon says in which case we might as well just call it "spirit." In the Sugerman interview (1976), Barfield described evolution as a process of "the materialization of spirit" and then "the spiritualizing of matter" where spirit appears at the beginning and end of evolution. However far one might wish to take this, e.g., as Steiner did in *An Outline of Esoteric Science*, the main point for this investigation, or for today, here, now, our era of globalization, is the fundamental unity of spirit (or mind) and matter, the immaterial and the material, the imperceptible and the perceptible, subject and object, human beings and nature. Consciousness is the "inside of the world", and is polar with the outside of the world. As a polarity, they interact and interpenetrate; a tension, distinguishable but not divisible.

Barfield's construction of the relationship of consciousness (subjective experience) and the objective world as a polar one implies interaction and interpenetration. Consciousness then develops through the material world, and the material world develops through consciousness.

This suggests two propelling forces or agents of change, from within and from without. These are two separate, independent forces, but should be understood in Coleridge's sense, "two forces of one power" (WCT), distinguishable but not divisible.

Traditional science recognizes one agent of change, the mechanical or external force. Darwinian evolution is an example of this: evolution is driven forward by external events that cause random mutations; the resulting variations are selected by the external force of natural selection. For Barfield, traditional science lost the counter-pole to mechanism. Mechanism is not the enemy, Barfield wrote, but rather one pole of a polarity with "organicism." Nature *is* mechanism, but not *just* mechanism. It is also organicism. These two terms -- mechanism and organicism -- describe two different understandings of how development occurs. In a mechanism, the whole is aggregated from parts, and the whole can be understood through its parts, via reduction. "Organicism treats the parts as resulting, by progressive development and individuation, from an antecedent whole." (RM, 183) Mechanism recognizes only billiard ball-type cause and effect; organicism also recognizes what Aristotle called "formal causality" (a form or pattern or formative force, the *Urphänomen*, Coleridge's idea). Organicism can be thought of development working from within outward; mechanism as moving from without inward (as in external forces causing change).<sup>21</sup> Organicism is life, mechanism is death (the world robbed of life) or the "death principle", a necessary counterpart to life. Understanding the

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<sup>21</sup> If organicism begins with a whole and differentiates, it sounds like a shaping from the outside in, and Barfield has described it as such (EC). And mechanism, as a process of aggregation, sounds like a building outward. Direction in this case is a property pressed onto the process; the key thing is to understand the two polar opposite processes. Quoting Coleridge, "Whatever is organized from without is a product of mechanism; whatever is mechanized from within, is a product of organization." (In RM, 184; "organized" is Coleridge's way of saying "organicized")



interpenetration of mechanism and organicism is required for a more complete understanding of phenomena. Neither can be properly dispensed with. The problem with traditional science and the technological vision it has spawned, according to Barfield, is that it has rejected the organicist pole. As a result, it is a science of quantities, exteriors, surfaces and mechanics exclusively. "[T]here is indeed only one world, though with both an inside and an outside to it, only one world experienced by our sense from without, and by our consciousness from within." (EC 15)

Towards the end of his career, Barfield acknowledged a growing number of writers and scientists that acknowledged the imbalance of the mechanistic worldview. (EC, 14) But Barfield saw a danger that traditional science, presented with new data that does not fit the old paradigm, would simply construct a new paradigm that "saves the appearances", but does not break out of old habits of thought.

For example, Albert-László Barabasi (2002) has written that "network science" solves the problems of "reductionist science." After dissecting processes into ever smaller units, scientists are still coming up short:

Now we are close to knowing just about everything there is to know about the pieces. But we are as far as we have ever been from understanding nature as a whole. Indeed the reassembly turned out to be much harder than scientists anticipated. The reason is simple. Riding reductionism, we run into the hard wall of complexity. (Barabasi, 2002, p 6)

Through the new discoveries of "network science" we can understand the laws of self-organization: per Barabasi, complexity has a "strict architecture", and its name is *network*.

The danger that Barfield alluded to is that network science describes a deeper reduction. Instead of just the parts -- now called "nodes", network science has added another abstract fundamental, the "link", to represent the richness of interconnection, reducing that to a bundle of discrete threads, each of which can be examined and presumably understood. Simple mechanics are enhanced to include another order of properties. William Brinton (1999) acknowledges a similar process in the field of ecology, a discipline founded on interconnection. He writes that "ecological perspectives within the sciences often only strengthen reductionistic directions, since they provide important details about relationships, which in turn help 'fine tune' the existing mechanical models."

In a harsh critique of "complexity", Steve Talbott (2002) argues that the more abstract theories and observations become the more they become about nothing.

The problem with a scientific method based on maximum generalization and abstraction is that the more it succeeds -- that is, the more general and abstract its results become -- the shallower they tend to be. They tell us less and less about the particular contexts we wish to understand... In our drive toward generality and abstraction, we end up with what we ask for... We will get a theory that 'connects' diverse things, but in the process loses the things we are connecting.

How much simpler can the abstraction "network" become? The network diagram is to the actual process or phenomenon as a stick figure drawing is to the person it attempts to represent.

In general, modeling and abstraction are useful tools in the dialectical process of coming to understand phenomena, *assuming* that the researcher makes the return trip to the phenomena. As Barfield noted, "The employment of 'models' for the purpose of thinking may be very well;

for the purposes of exposition it may even be essential -- as long as we know what we are doing and do not turn the models into idols." (SA, 136) The abstraction is not the phenomenon. A phenomenon cannot be *understood* as a "network." The "network" reduction is an abstraction. However, the "network" reduction, as part of a bigger project of isolation and focus, and then re-assembly, re-contexting and re-imagination, *can* lead to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Barfield asked for a bold leap. "A theoretical world-view that places mind and /or consciousness on an equal footing of reality with the so-called outside world is not after all so rare. A good many philosophers ... have arrived at it. But to accept it as theory and take it really seriously for practical purposes are two very different matters." (EC, 14) The challenge is to *think* holism, not just to *think of*. Ultimately, "knowing the network" is a process of imaginative participation in the phenomenon. This is necessary because the complexity of the interactions can only be grasped imaginatively, and also because the network is a process in time, developing, changing, growing or dying or both, and likewise only graspable in the imagination.

In his treatment of the process of history, Barfield focused on the consciousness pole, with relatively few references to the worldly, social pole. As noted above, at least early in his career, he wrote frequently about economic and social matters in his published stories, letters, reviews and articles. He recognized the social implications of changes in consciousness, so he was not insensitive and certainly not oblivious to the social dimension (Diener, 2002; Blaxland-de Lange, 2006). But the world of economies, classes, movements and so forth do not figure prominently in his discussion of evolving consciousness.

As noted above, in Barfield's terms, a complete understanding of the evolution of consciousness would include two forces: an inner, generative force, and an outer, shaping force.

The evolution of consciousness happens through the interactions with the world. It is an organic process, where the generative or formative force, the agency of inner being, operates through material processes. Consciousness develops within an enabling environment, but the process is not a passive one shaped exclusively by external environmental forces.

For example, Joseph Campbell (1969) identified various "ineluctable factors of human experience" (p 57) that have shaped human consciousness. We live on a planet that experiences the regular alternation of day and night, light and dark. In higher latitudes we experience the annual cycle of seasons, which is also the experience of the regular rhythm of environmental changes, including length of day, warmth, and biological growth and decay. Our planet has a single moon that cycles through its phases every 28 days or so; the night sky is filled with a regularly changing array of stars. Gravity provides a sense of up and down. The fetus gestates, babies are born, they physically separate from the mother, go through a process of physical growth of fairly distinct stages, ending in a physical death. Through our bodies, we interact with all of these phenomena -- sunlight, gravity, air, plants and animals and each other -- in particular ways determined by our sensory apparatus. (Edelglass, Maier, Gebert and Davy, 1997) And in order for our physical bodies to experience this, we need to live -- feed ourselves, protect ourselves from the elements, and so forth -- which requires social organization and, using the term very generally, an economic life -- and so we relate to the mode of production surrounding us. (Marx and Engels, 1845)

The ultimate source of these experiences is the unrepresented. These experiences provided a structure for mythology. The mythologies of societies organized around hunting-and-gathering differ depending on whether they tend more to hunting or to gathering (which to a large extent is based on the mix of local flora and fauna). The mythology of planting cultures is

different from hunting-and-gathering cultures (Campbell, 1969). Properties of the unrepresented shape our interactions with them.

The reader will be quite aware that in this book I have called that 'something quite vague' by the name either of 'the particles' or of 'the unrepresented' and have then, for reasons given, largely dismissed it from consideration. This is perhaps the place to say a final word about it. Physical science postulates an unrepresented, as a something which is independent of our consciousness in a way, or to an extent to which the phenomena are not. Our consciousness is, however, not independent of *it*; for it is in response to its stimulus that our senses and our figuration and thinking together construct the phenomenal world. (SA, 153)

It is important to note that "the unrepresented" here means exactly that. When we try to conceive of it, we represent it. The temptation, from the above quote is to think of the unrepresented as what physics tells us is "out there." Barfield calls this "idol-matter" in "idol-space" and "idol-time."

Barfield continued from the above quote, "It has however lately been growing apparent that all attempts to conceive the unrepresented in terms of idol-matter in idol-space and idol-time break down" (SA, 153), referring to modern physics.

Consciousness evolves through and within human beings interacting with the world. First and foremost, this is done via our bodies (see, e.g. Abram, 1996 describing the work of French phenomenologist (and Marxist) Maurice Merleau-Ponty; or Edelglass et al, 1997). Beyond physical activity, we interact with the world using tools, and develop through that interaction.

Our activity changes nature. Collective representations develop in conjunction with changes in modes of production. One could say that consciousness flows into world *through* technology.

We can go further though, and assert that consciousness changes with developments in technology; and technology changes with consciousness in a kind of positive (usually) feedback loop. So the evolution of consciousness and the development of modes of production are not just *parallel*, but are the necessary conditions within which each evolves.<sup>22</sup> Beyond the physical body, human interaction with nature is mediated by tools. Tools change the shape of the collective representation of nature -- it changes the boundary of the humanly possible. McLuhan (e.g., 1964/1994) described technologies as extensions of the body such that they change our psychic space. The means by which we interact with the world -- tools, processes, production, rituals -- structure our thinking. Engels, pre-figuring the concept of "gene-culture coevolution" (Foster, 2000) argued that the process of labor, working with tools, besides changing how we see the world, also helped to change the physical structure of human beings -- "the hand is not only the organ of labor, *it is also the product of labor*" (Engels, 1876, p 453).

Barfield held the evolution of consciousness in general flows in the direction of individuation, the gradual separation or distinction of self, as acting subject, from the world as object, and then ultimately towards a re-union, with the individual consciousness intact. Productive activity using tools facilitated the separation by sharpening the distinction between the subject and object of labor. Original participation doesn't just map to hunter-gatherer and early planting cultures; they are correlative. Julian Jaynes, in his rather controversial book, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (1976), which Barfield

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<sup>22</sup> I mean consciousness here not in the Marxist sense one's awareness of social relationships like rights, duties, obligations, etc., but the consciousness that supports that, i.e. Barfield's understanding of consciousness.

referenced in at least two places (HGH, EC), goes so far as to assert that the shift from what Barfield described as original participation corresponded to shifts in the scale and requirements of economic activity in early urban cultures. Jaynes associates the shift especially with the development of the technology of writing. David Abram (1996) sees an important change in consciousness with the development of the technology of the phonetic alphabet -- developed, at least in part, to facilitate trade in the Mediterranean area<sup>23</sup> -- which shifted the experience of language in profound ways.

There are two main ways that productive forces<sup>24</sup> affect consciousness, one direct and one indirect. Laboring, directly interacting with the world, affects consciousness. The physical interaction provides new perceptions as well as opportunities to see old things in new ways. From reflecting on the production process (in Barfield terms, alpha-thinking), we understand the world in new ways: the universe as a big clock, the psyche as a steam engine (RM), the brain as a computer network (Johnson, 2004). We sense, act and think through our technology.

Indirectly, new productive forces make new ways of interaction with the world possible, that different social forces then exploit. That exploitation affects consciousness. For example,

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<sup>23</sup> Abram (1996), McLuhan (1964), et al argue that the phonetic alphabet led to a kind of synesthesia, where the visual was transformed into written symbols experienced as sounds. Early cultures were auditory cultures, where language was only spoken. The phonetic alphabet enabled an efficient writing system. It also resulted in the diminution of memory as the sole repository of tradition, and the fixing of standardized and "official" versions in authoritative text. Following this line of thinking, the spread of the corresponding consciousness tracks the spread of literacy and the technology of writing reproduction.

<sup>24</sup> Marx's terms provide a useful vocabulary. In the course of satisfying needs, people apply skills (knowledge) to tools -- the unity of which Marx called the *productive forces* -- to transform nature. During the production process, people enter into definite relations with each other (*productive relations*). Together, the productive forces and production relations comprise the *mode of production*. (Marx, 1967)

digital telecommunication allows for just-in-time production, which at the same time allows for just-in-time workers and the relocation of production to cheaper labor markets. Our economy exploits these new abilities. This broad process of economic re-organization has a dislocating and destructive effect on the psyche. Contingency, individualization (as opposed to socialization), and dispersion describe pathological psychic states as much as features of the global economy. These effects may or may not be intended by the technology's creators.

Globalization is an example of new organization of production made possible by new technologies; the dynamics of capitalism moves to exploit the possibilities (Davis, 2005). The indirect impact on consciousness that follows from new technologies (generally unintended and unanticipated) is especially powerful with changes in the means of communication and transport, the technology of consciousness. The impacts of the technologies of writing and the phonetic alphabet have already been noted. It is difficult to overestimate the impact of the printing press {McLuhan, 1964/1994}; or the Internet for that matter (Talbot, 1995; Castells, 2001).

While consciousness is shaped by technology, consciousness has a reciprocal effect on technology. Tools must be *thought* before they can be made. Every invention and discovery is also an act of imagination and creativity. Marx (1859) formulated that productive forces were mobile in relation to the relatively static productive relations<sup>25</sup>; the role of consciousness accounts for this mobility. Marx recognized the process of technology flowing into the world from consciousness:

But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the

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<sup>25</sup> "At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production ... within which they have been at work hitherto." (Marx, 1858)



end of every labor-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the laborer at its commencement. (Marx, 1967, p 174)

Steve Talbott (1995) emphasizes the consciousness half of the consciousness - productive forces polarity. Since technology takes shape in the mind before it is realized in the world, it is a "reflection of the human intellect" (p 351). "Every cultural artifact approaching us from the outside also has an 'inside', and this inside is at the same time *our* inside." (ibid) The flow of effects is from the inside out: the impact of technology on the world is the impact of our own mind; the technology prefigures its effects. The social effects of technology are "in part the fulfillment of our own vision and long-standing habits of thought."

Consciousness is also shaped by one's position within society's property structure, its productive relations. The practitioners of science and engineering participate in the world via the class structure of society. For example, Edelglass et al (1997) write of two very different sources of scientific knowledge. One current flowed out of mystery cults and the priesthood, through the academy and medieval university. These philosopher/scholars were literate and their knowledge was relatively public. The other current flowed from artisans and craftsmen, through the medieval guilds. Typically their knowledge was practical, applied, secret and passed through oral tradition. It was not until the printing press provided a means of easily externalizing that knowledge that it provided a means of the two currents, "manipulation of thought" and "manipulation of matter", to merge at the beginning of the Scientific Revolution. From these two different consciousnesses, different scientific and technological output flowed. These two currents also came out of different economic classes, with different social outlooks, different interests, and addressing different problems. The scholars were not engaged with the practical matters of production; their problems tended to the immaterial, to thought, to the spiritual. The

artisans, typically slaves or serfs, tended to the empirical, they were engaged in practical problems of production, the manipulation of matter.<sup>26</sup>

To summarize, consciousness and the world are in a polar relationship, which means that they interact and interpenetrate. We become conscious through our bodies. Consciousness precedes action or production, but production in turn shapes consciousness. Consciousness sees the world in a particular way, and plans and designs accordingly. We implement those designs using particular tools, which shape the world in particular ways, but the tools also shape the way we understand the world, and set boundaries on the possible. The shapes and content of the world arise in consciousness, but their appearance are collective (i.e., social) and not haphazard.

### **Science, technology, and capitalism**

*My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings,  
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!*

Percy Bysshe Shelley, Ozymandias

In the preceding review of key themes in Barfield's work, the emergence of ideas of positivist science, mechanism, and the Cartesian subject-object split indicated an important

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<sup>26</sup> This raises the contentious question of whether there is a "bourgeois science" and a "proletarian science" (or a "scholar-science" and an "artisan-science") Yes, in terms of the social practice of science: they have different social goals, are driven to different practical problems, etc. There may even be class-centric paradigms that creep into the work, since science is also an ideological practice. E.g., seeing Darwinian evolution in the narrow sense has been seen as confirmation of assumptions of capitalism of competition and natural selection in the marketplace. On the other hand, to the extent we share one objective world; there is only one science that is incomplete. I think that this is true whether the work of science is to understand how that world works, what Barfield called "dashboard knowledge" (PD, SA); or as a spiritual pursuit.

turning point in the evolution of consciousness. In order to situate globalization along the evolutionary path, it will be useful to see how capitalism in general relates to this turning point.

The mode of production that we live in today is capitalism. It is not a "thing", but a process. Capitalism, like any process, functions according to various necessary connections that define it as capitalism. If those necessary connections are changed, such that it functions in a different way, it ceases to be capitalism, it becomes something else. Marx's analysis of capitalism identified a few key features, among them, the private ownership of the means of production, the appearance of labor power on the market as a commodity, and the maximization of profit as its driving rationale. Profit comes from unpaid labor, and is realized in the process of exchange of commodities. The goal of production under capitalism then is to produce commodities for exchange in the market to maximize profits; not to produce things for use, i.e. to satisfy needs or desires. Human desires are just a necessary condition for commodities to circulate, so that unpaid labor, in the form of surplus value (as the source of profit) can be realized (Marx, 1967).

When human wants are subordinated in economic life so that production is for exchange and not use, then economics becomes an exercise in quantities and abstraction. Marx in fact made the distinction in commodities between "use value" as a qualitative, sensuous dimension, and "exchange value" as a quantitative, abstract dimension. Just as a reductionist, quantitative science dismisses qualities in nature, capitalism dismisses (or subordinates) the qualities of goods (their ability to satisfy human wants, what Locke would have called their "secondary qualities") in favor of measurable but essentially abstract quantities. For Marx the quantitative dimension was measured in terms of abstract labor time (the time it would take an "average" worker using the modal technology to produce a commodity, what he called "socially necessary

labor"). Marx used the term "Value" (capitalized here to indicate its special meaning) to represent the abstract labor time bound up in commodities (Marx, 1967).

The "Value form" also describes the abstraction of all of the contributing factors of commodities, including both human activity and non-human nature. Since labor power -- the ability of human beings to labor, to transform the world -- also becomes a commodity under capitalism (workers go to the labor market to sell their ability to work), human beings as the bearers of labor power are turned into quantities or abstractions. Nature, as the ground of all production, also becomes an abstraction in the context of capitalism. Commodities are products of both human activity and non-human nature. "Nature contributes to the production of use values; yet capitalism represents wealth by a purely quantitative, socio-formal abstraction: labor is time in general," writes Paul Burkett (1999). As a result, nature is also abstracted and reduced to a Value as an input into the production process. The qualities of nature are of interest only to the extent they can contribute to a commodity destined for exchange. Seeing products as simply things, as *commodities*, misses their natural and social content. Commodities are products of real, living fellow human beings expending muscle and nerve and sweat, laboring under definite conditions to transform nature. Marx called this abstraction the "fetishization of commodities", "a definite social relation between people, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things." (1967, p 77)

Capitalism, then, in its inner lawfulness, treats human beings, nature, and the productive results of human interaction with nature as surfaces or things only, devoid of inner content, and hence devoid of meaning and inner being.<sup>27</sup> In this way capitalism shares with positivist science the outlook of the world as surface. The two in fact are connected. Capitalism emerged alongside

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<sup>27</sup> "In one word, it creates a world after its own image." (Marx and Engels, 1848)

the new scientific world view, and they reflected and reinforced each other's properties. The dynamics of capitalism demand the constant increase in the productivity of technology, accomplished by advances in science. As Marx and Engels (1848) wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*, "The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society." This impulse helps to propel research and implementation forward, but in particular directions only, to the extent that science and technology can contribute to the overall goals of capitalism, i.e., ultimately, the maximization of profit. Science, as a domain of human activity, is narrowed to a specific function -- not just practical application, but only practical applications that may be justified via the market.<sup>28</sup>

### **Capitalism and globalization**

*The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.*

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

"Globalization" is a broad term, meaning many things. It seems to appear as a concept, rather abruptly, in the 1990s.

[E]verywhere people looked they 'saw' globalization happening: global connections, interconnections, and disconnections. It was seemingly happening all around them -- economically, culturally, and environmentally... The buzzword

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<sup>28</sup> This is not to suggest that basic or pure research science is ignored or neglected (although there is a continual struggle as to who should bear the cost for this activity).

'globalization' gives a term to the many conflicting and interconnected processes at work throughout the world. (Rowan, 2006)

In a world systems view, this process has been going on for all of human history as populations grew and social and trading ties expanded. (Frank and Gills, 1992) In this sense, the world has always been as globalized as technology and policy allowed it. Such a perspective however does not offer much insight into the particularity of today. How is globalization *today* different from similar processes 100 years ago, or 5,000 years ago? Why did public consciousness tip in the 1990s, and become aware of globalization?

William Robinson, in his work on globalization (2004), uses a much narrower definition. Following what he calls the "global capitalism school", globalization is a period or stage of capitalism. Periodization is an analytical device, and itself the source of some debate regarding where to delineate the periods. Both Robinson and Lioukakis (2005) use modes of production to define the stages: mercantile capitalism (which Lioukakis omits); industrial or competitive capitalism beginning in the late 1700s; monopoly capitalism or imperialism beginning in the late 1800s; and global capitalism or globalization beginning in the early 1970s. One can argue though that the rupture began with World War II, and emerged in full force in the 1970s (Davis, 2005). The global capitalism school argues that globalization is an "epochal shift" from a "*world economy*", characterized by the internationalization of trade and finance, to a "*global economy*" where *production* is also internationalized (or transnationalized). Globalization, in this sense, is still capitalism, but significantly different because of the transnationalization of production. Capitalism completes its geographic extension with globalization. As a result, further expansion must take place through the *intensification* of the market via the commodification or marketization of every aspect of social life, and where every human being is pulled into capitalist

relations in some way (Robinson, 2004). Since this new stage emerges with (and is dependent on) "electronics"<sup>29</sup>, globalization can also be thought of as "capitalism in the age of electronics" (Davis, 1998) or simply "electronic capitalism." I will use the term "globalization" in that sense, as "electronic capitalism."

It should be noted that describing globalization as a stage of capitalism does not restrict it to economics. As a mode of production, capitalism embraces politics and culture as well. Changes within production relations of capitalism are inter-related to political and cultural changes as well. So globalization is still to be understood as operating on many levels (Jameson, 2000; Robinson, 2004); and the "global connections, interconnections, and disconnections", "the many conflicting and interconnected processes" referred to above are all to be understood within the framework of capitalism making its epochal shift in the age of electronics.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's (2000) book *Empire* also argues that a profound change is taking place within the capitalism system. "Empire" emerges with globalization, and represents a break with the previous form, imperialism. With globalization the entire planet is absorbed into Empire; it "rules over the entire 'civilized' world. No territorial boundaries limit its reign" (p xiv). That is, the term "Empire" is not a metaphor, but is a concept "characterized fundamentally by a lack of boundaries: Empire's rule has no limits" (p xiv). The process of globalization is not just a process of corporate agents transnationalizing production and perfecting the world market. The "multitude" is the "productive, creative subjectivities of globalization" (p 60) that initiates actions, to which Empire can be seen as a response. "The multitude is the real productive force of our social world, whereas Empire is a mere apparatus of

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<sup>29</sup> The rationale for this rather antique word is that breakthroughs in computers, robotics, communications, material science, genetics, complexity, etc. were made possible by breakthroughs in electronics. (Davis and Stack,

capture that lives only off the vitality of the multitude" (p 62). At the same time, from another perspective, "Empire stands clearly over the multitude and subjects it to the rule of its overarching machine" (p 62). Because of its totality, resistance and opposition takes place *within* the Empire as insurrections countered by police actions, and not wars in the classic sense of opposing powers.<sup>30</sup>

Globalization cannot be separated from its technological environment -- no, this should be stated more strongly -- globalization is possible *only with* the environment of electronics. (Davis, 1998) While many writers on globalization acknowledge the coincidence of new technologies, it is generally as only one of many features, almost an afterthought, while the real relation is much more profound and interdependent. Globalization and electronics are inextricable. While capitalism, from its very beginning creates the abstractions and quantification of the world, this process takes on deeper and more profound dimensions with the aid of new technologies.

### **Globalization and Owen Barfield**

*[I]t is no part of my case that push-and-pull empiricism is weak or ineffectual, only that it is, like other giants, ignorant. The possibility of man's avoiding self-destruction depends on realizing before it is too late that what he let loose over Hiroshima, after fiddling with its exterior for three centuries like a mechanical toy, was the forces of his own unconscious mind.*

-Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction* (Second Preface)

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1992) "Electronics" will be used as a stand-in for the broad range of new technologies.

<sup>30</sup> The emergence of Empire must be understood as a process, albeit well under way. The 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq can be seen as an action to bring Iraq within the Empire (helping to complete the formation of Empire); after the very brief war, the ongoing conflict has transmuted into a protracted police action.



Steve Talbott, in his 1995 book *The Future Does Not Compute* and subsequent articles in his online newsletter *NetFuture*, provides a convenient bridge between new technologies to globalization to Owen Barfield. Barfield made passing reference in his writings to new technologies, e.g., nuclear fission and gene modification, but did not spend much, in any, ink examining computer technology. Talbott though has used Barfield as a reference point, and explored and incorporated Barfield's thought in his writing about contemporary science and technology. In a career working with computers, "it slowly became clear to me that the central issues bedeviling all of us who try to understand the relation between the human being and the computer are issues upon which Barfield began throwing light some seven decades ago." (p xviii - xix) Computer technology and the Internet have a host of tendencies, some anticipated<sup>31</sup>, some unanticipated, some unacknowledged, that challenge nothing less than what it means to be human. Talbott describes his intention as "an attempt to bring those tendencies to the full light of consciousness, so that we can choose our future rather than compute it automatically and unawares." (p 3)

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<sup>31</sup> Two examples: Norbert Wiener, one of the founding scientists of cybernetics, anticipated the impact of electronics on jobs at the very beginning of the revolution in computerized control systems. In a 1949 letter to Walter Reuther, then head of the powerful United Auto Workers union, Wiener predicted:

The [computing machine] is extremely flexible and susceptible to mass production, and will undoubtedly lead to the factory without employees; as for example, the automatic automobile assembly line. In the hands of the present industrial set-up the unemployment produced by such plants can only be disastrous. (in Noble, 1993, p 141)

And "Rapidly, we approach the final phase of the extensions of man -- the technological simulation of consciousness", Marshall McLuhan wrote in 1964. (p 3)

Computers can be thought of as general purpose machines for processing digital signals. The flexibility, speed, accuracy, and cheapness of this essentially mechanical activity provide a compelling economic argument for the rendering of concrete qualities into digital form for computers to process. Digitization is an abstraction, the translation of analog phenomena into logical yes-and-nos. (Davis and Stack, 1996) The world must be doubly abstracted for us to work with it via new technologies, first from continuous analog qualities into digital representations, and then into software abstracts with which we can interact.

Talbott (1995) argues that this process of abstraction reflects a consciousness that has *already* turned the world into quantity and abstraction, of externals and nuggets of things without insides. This is the mechanomorphic consciousness; it is also the consciousness of capitalism. *Technology expresses the consciousness that creates it.* "The computer took shape in the human mind before it was realized in the world." (p 351) We can see in electronics the culmination of quantitative thought; digital versus analog; a computational universe reduced to an algorithm<sup>32</sup>;

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<sup>32</sup> Mathematician and physicist Stephen Wolfram is closely associated with the concept of a "computational universe." He opens his massive *A New Kind of Science* (2002):

Three centuries ago science was transformed by the dramatic new idea that rules based on mathematical equations could be used to describe the natural world. My purpose in this book is to initiate another such transformation, and to introduce a new kind of science that is based on the much more general types of rules that can be embodied in simple computer programs. (p 1)

In a *Wired* article about Wolfram and his book, interviewer Steven Levy asked Wolfram about the computational universe (Mathematica is a mathematics modeling program authored by Wolfram):

Wolfram's theory that there is a single rule at the heart of everything - a single simple algorithm that, in effect, generates all the rules of physics and everything else - is bound to be one of his most controversial claims, a theory that even some of his close friends in physics aren't

buying. Furthermore, Wolfram rubs our faces in the dreary implications of his contention. Not only does a single measly rule account for everything, but if one day we actually see the rule, he predicts, we'll probably find it unimpressive. "One might expect," he writes, "that in the end there would be nothing special about the rule for our universe - just as there has turned out to be nothing special about our position in the solar system or the galaxy."

I have some trouble with this.

"I've got to ask you," I say. "How long do you envision this rule of the universe to be?"

"I'm guessing it's really very short."

"Like how long?"

"I don't know. In Mathematica, for example, perhaps three, four lines of code."

"Four lines of code?"

"That's what I'm guessing. I mean, I don't really know, but I think there's no obvious evidence that it's any longer than that. Now, in a sense, it will be short if Mathematica was a well-designed language. It will be longer if it doesn't happen to be as well-designed, in the sense that that doesn't happen to be the way the universe works. But we're not looking at 25,000 lines of code or something. We're looking at a handful of lines of code."

"So it's not like Windows?"

"No." Wolfram laughs. "It's not like Windows. It's going to be something small, I think. I've certainly wondered. You ask about the theological questions and things. I think there will be a time when one will sort of hold those lines of code in one's hand, and that is the universe. And what does this mean? You know, how do we then feel about things, if this whole thing is just five lines of code or something? And in a sense, that is a very unsatisfying conclusion, that sort of everything that's going on, everything out there, is all just this five lines of code we're running."

There is a moment of silence between us. In the background are the clatter of dishes and silverware, noises that come from a restaurant in Urbana, Illinois, preparing for closing time. The mundane but complex stuff of equivalent computational processes.

"Well," I say finally, "I guess we'd feel really bad if it wasn't well-written."

the substitution of virtual reality for real reality. "What we embed in the computer is the inert and empty shadow, or abstract reflection of the past operation of our own intelligence." (p 353) To the extent that the human brain is the model for the computer, the brain must first be conceived of as components, modules, as a machine in order to re-created as a machine. As Elmar Schenkel (2002), also writing in the context of Barfield's work, notes that "[a]ll of computer culture may very well be a projection of externalization of this level of neural functioning." To which he adds, "Disembodied thought... leads us into an autistic universe, or nowhere." (pp 178-9)

Barfield saw the camera as a particularly defining technology of the mechanomorphic consciousness, "a symbol of the post-Renaissance man." (RM, 71) The camera is a

caricature of the imagination, although it is a true emblem of perspective.

Imagination is living, perspective is only 'lifelike'. It used to be said that the camera cannot lie. But in fact it always does lie. Just because it looks only in that immediate way, the camera looks always at and never into what it sees. (RM, 73)

In the same way, new technologies, as instruments of scientific production, no matter how much they seem to get us into the insides of things -- inside the brain, the atom, or the rings of Saturn -- we are still just seeing more "outside." (Schenkel, 2002)

Talbott (1999) analyzes the effect of modern technology: "Technology works powerfully to destroy polarity -- in particular, that fundamental polarity between Barfield's abstract, rational, analytical principle, and his poetic, synthesizing principle." If the properties of the computerized world are laid out as polarities, e.g., syntax (structure) vs. semantics (meaning), accuracy of communication vs. fullness of expression, or data vs. understanding, then "the aggressive assertion here is that only the purest abstraction really counts, since it is what gives us precise

syntax and accuracy. Only one pole needs to be pursued, and everything else is reducible to it. There is no polarity." Without polarity, the dynamic tension of a process is lost, and the process dies as such. "Barfield's notion of polarity is the pivot on which all understanding of the technological society must swing." (1999)

In Talbott's analysis, we can see modern habits of thought -- the mechanical, abstract, now digitized figuration -- present in the essential technology of globalization and infused in contemporary science. This same habit of thought infuses the economy. "Technology, you could say, consists of the machinery embodying our one-sidedly abstract habits of mind." (Talbott, 1999) Modern science and technology, by focusing on the abstract and quantifiable, "is at the same time an abandonment of the macroscopic, or phenomenal, earth." And part of this abandonment takes place in the economy. He describes

the abstract, one-dimensional fixation of modern economics and commerce, where society is conceived as one, vast computation. Just note the prevailing conviction that capital's sole obligation is to stream blindly through the world seeking nothing more than its own mathematical increase. Or consider the fact that corporations function more and more like social computers, whose whole aim is efficiently to calculate the bottom line. Real-world contexts and values hardly count for anything -- because they're not abstract and therefore can't be counted. (Talbott, 1999)

For Talbott, "globalization" describes a neutral maturing of economic and social activity, a spreading out of interactions to a global scale, without qualification of *what kind* of economic or social interactions take place. "Globalization" in this sense could equally be described as

"planet-ization" -- it has no specific economic or social content. This kind of globalization can take many forms, productive, benign or otherwise. From this neutral starting point,

"localization", as an equally neutral description of activity on a local scale, can be set up as the polar opposite of globalization. As polar opposites, "these opposites form an interpenetrating unity; each pole exists not only at the expense of the other, but also by grace of the other."

Talbott uses the qualification "technologically motivated globalization" to describe the process that I mean by "globalization as electronic capitalism." It is this qualified globalization that is so destructive. Such a globalization "shows every sign of simply obliterating the local and thereby sacrificing the truly global as well." (Talbott, 1999)

Globalization, as "electronic capitalism", can be understood as the culmination of the objectified, idolatrous world of surfaces-without-interior. Two hundred years ago, this world was just coming into being.

### **Romanticism and globalization**

*First Trades & Commerce ships & armed vessels he builded laborious  
To swim the deep & on the Land children are sold to trades  
Of dire necessity still laboring day & night till all  
Their life extinct they took the spectre form in dark despair  
And slaves in myriads in ship loads burden the hoarse sounding deep  
Rattling with clanking chains the Universal Empire groans*

William Blake, *The Four Zoas: Night the Seventh*

*Happy if they had all continued to know their indissoluble union, and their proper place! Happy if learning, not debauched by ambition, had been satisfied to continue the instructor, and not aspired to be the master. Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.*

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790 (in Abrams and Stillinger, 2000, p 127)

*[W]e, the swine of Great Britain, have no right to esteem ourselves superior, in the scale of beings, to the swine of France, or any other country; we regard our brethren, whether they be found in the East or Western Indies, or on the burning plains of Africa, with true fraternal affection.*

Daniel Isaac Eaton, *Politics for the People*, 1794? (in Makdisi, 2003)

Hardt and Negri's *Empire* describes a twenty-first century phenomenon, but their two great protagonists, *Empire* and *multitude*, resonate with the language of William Blake and Edmund Burke and the age of revolution and the Romantics. Capitalism began to mature and assume its modern form with the beginning of the industrial system in the mid-eighteenth century. The industrial system used waged labor to operate larger and larger scale machinery driven by increasingly powerful and flexible power sources. Although the system originated in England, the ramifications of the system, even in its early days, was global (Makdisi, 1998). What we today think of as "globalization" is the latest manifestation of that industrial system, although suffused throughout with electronics. In this sense there is a clear continuity between then and now. What the Romantics witnessed in its infancy<sup>33</sup>; today we see the thing grown up, spread out, in its gigantism.

Globalization also reflects the late 1700s and early 1800s in another important way. The beginning of the industrial system was made possible by a profound revolution in technology, economics and science. These revolutions were accompanied, as are all revolutions, by social dislocation. A similar upheaval is taking place today. New technologies have dramatically changed the boundaries and the contours of the economic environment. This new economic environment has its corresponding policies in neoliberalism, dispersed production, the

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<sup>33</sup> Marx (1967) famously wrote that into the world "capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt." (1967, p 712)

transformation of the production process, the mass migration of labor, and the social destruction that accompanies such upheaval (Davis, 1998). New technologies have also revolutionized the instruments of scientific production, opening up new research fields (Davis, 2005). The new technologies have also changed the terrain of the cultural environment, providing new media for expression, new distribution channels, as well as new forms of ideological control. New technologies have also eased the flow of new voices and ideas into the common consciousness. The speed and extent of the change is truly remarkable. One has only to pause and contemplate the new landscape today to get a sense of the dislocation people must have felt 200 years ago.

The "Romantic period" is generally dated from about 1785 to 1830, give or take a few years (Abrams and Stilling, 2000) -- that is, that period 200 years ago at the beginning of the cultural revolution bound up with the new industrial system (Makdisi, 1998). "Romanticism", as the western cultural phenomenon came to be known later (Butler, 1981), was part of a historical process, and an important cultural expression of it, too. Romanticism resonates with today -- as the beginning of a process that we still experience today; and as part of an economic, political, and cultural transformation of the same scale as we experience today. "When all is said and done, Romanticism will turn out to be not only worldly, but also global, and to have been so all along -- marking the beginning of a process that has only in recent years come to be recognized as 'globalization'." (Makdisi, 1998, xii)

Romantics, Romanticism, the Romantic period, Romantic ideology, the Romantic impulse -- these terms mean different things, none of them unproblematic. Romanticism has been described as a historical phenomenon, that is, located in the Romantic period (a range of years). In such terms it can be thought of as a *response* to economic and social processes (Butler, 1981); Abrams and Stilling, 2000). Or it can be thought of as an *engagement* with those



processes, which suggests autonomy or initiative or impulse (e.g., by the "swinish multitude"). That engagement can be seen as either an oppositional alternative, or as enabler (Makdisi, 1998). Indeed, the period was one of turmoil and upheaval, and it is perhaps easy, at this great distance to minimize the scale of change. It was a time of urbanization, industrial revolution, imperial conquest, the transformation of the countryside, environmental destruction, and alienation (Makdisi, 1998). The revolution in France was understood by many at the time as the defining event for the Romantics in England (Abrams, 1963). But the period also included the American revolution and the Haitian revolution, an upsurge of revolutionary activity in England and Ireland, the Napoleonic wars, the struggle over the slave trade, political repression, and the consolidation of imperial rule in India (Makdisi, 1998). The period also saw a revolution in habits of thought as the terms of the Enlightenment -- empiricism, Newtonian physics, and a mathematical universe -- spread. The Romantic period was, like all social processes, the interplay of economics, politics and culture; in this particular case, "the dynamics between these three discourses and practices constituted an overall *cultural revolution* called modernization." (Makdisi, 1998, p xii)

English Romanticism is often compressed down to a canon of six writers (the first generation included Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge; the second generation, Byron, Keats and Shelley). Although they represent only the tip of the cultural iceberg, the lives of those six poets indicate a political engagement with their world not often associated with Romanticism. Coleridge contemplated establishing a commune in Pennsylvania and lectured against the slave trade; Wordsworth wrote political pamphlets; Blake was tried for sedition; Shelley agitated for Irish emancipation; Byron spoke in the House of Lords in defense of the Luddite framebreakers

and died in a war for Greek independence. (Williams, 1958; Noble, 1993; Ashton, 1996; Abrams and Stillinger, 2000)

For these two generations of poets lived through the crucial period in which the rise both of democracy and of industry was effecting qualitative changes in society... [O]f the slower, wider, less observable changes that we call the Industrial Revolution, the landmarks are less obvious; but the lifetime of Blake, 1757 to 1827, is, in general the decisive period. The changes that we receive as record were experienced, in these years, on the senses: hunger, suffering, conflict, dislocation; hope, energy, vision, dedication. The pattern of change was not background, as we may now be inclined to study it; it was, rather, the mould in which general experience was cast. (Williams, 1958)

It was in the midst of this worldly context that Romanticism emerged. Or one should say Romanticisms, since there were many forms, themes, and tendencies. "Romanticism is no one thing," Abrams wrote (1963, p 93). Makdisi (1998) says this heterogeneity is related to the heterogeneity of modernization taking shape at the same time. Still, there are common threads in Romanticism, including a rejection of Enlightenment ideas of positivism and mechanism; the embrace of the possibility of other worlds, of enchantment; the power of poetry and imagination as a way of knowing; of "an animate, plastic Nature, not transcending but immanent in and breathing through all things" (Wimsatt, 1954). Romanticism also expressed themes of fragmentation, ruin, dispersal, and desire, not only in the ostensible subject matter of the poems, but in their form as well, paradoxically often in the context of trying to articulate complete systems (McFarland, 1981). Romanticism also had a strong philosophical component (RCA).

The philosophical component was perhaps strongest in the German Romantics, but in Coleridge as well, who was heavily influenced by their work.<sup>34</sup> Part of this metaphysic was "Romantic irony", the opposition to literalness (Colebrook, 2006). Irony -- crudely, saying one thing but meaning another -- can be extended to the world at large, such that the world never *is*, or never is one thing, i.e., never literal, but always multi-formed, multi-faceted, becoming, changing, full of possibility.

As a romantic *critic*, Barfield belongs to the same generation of critics as Northrop Frye, M. H. Abrams and Harold Bloom who have approached Romanticism on its own terms, generally in the vein of New Criticism. By the 1980s, however, a sea-change was taking place in Romantic studies away from such analysis towards the "new historicism" associated with academics like Marilyn Butler, Marjorie Levinson and Jerome McGann. "New historicism" saw works as the products of a particular time and place, as social and historical products. The work expresses an ideology, and so does the criticism of the work. Jerome McGann (1983) described both the canon as well as much of the criticism (especially Abrams et al.) as expressing a "Romantic ideology."<sup>35</sup> By discerning the operative ideology, it becomes clear that the "on its own terms" is in fact embracing, implicitly, an ideology of a particular class structure, economic possibility or political goals. McGann uses Coleridge's description of what a poet is -- mobilizing the "whole soul of man"<sup>36</sup> -- as an example of an ideological statement, which he contrasts with

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<sup>34</sup> For a defense of Coleridge against charges of plagiarism, see Barfield (WCT) or McFarland, 1981.

<sup>35</sup> McGann defines ideology as "a coherent or loosely organized set of ideas which is the expression of the special interests of some class or social group." Following Engels (1893), one's real ideology is invisible -- otherwise it would not be an ideology.

<sup>36</sup> From *Biographia Literaria*, chapter XIV:

the "Marxist interdependence of superstructure and infrastructure ideology." Both are ideological positions about what constitutes the individual, and should be recognized as such.

Criticism itself also expresses an ideology. For example, a reading of the meaning and impact of the French Revolution cannot help but be infused with an ideology that includes an understanding how history happens, what is possible and impossible, and why. As an exercise, one can contrast how Abrams (1963) describes as Romantic the "impossible hopes of the French Revolution", (p 110) with the Marxist Christopher Caudwell's position (in Schopf, 2004) that Romantic despair originated not in "impossible hope" but in betrayal by the bourgeoisie. Partisan positions of Romanticism as subversive, spiritual, a doorway to mysteries, to creative processes, etc. are ideological. This paper is ideological. "Romantic poetry ... constructs a theater for the conflicts and interactions of the ideologies of Romanticism." (McGann, 1992, p 739)

Butler (1981) argues that there is a "vulgar wisdom" about Romanticism, much of which was formulated after the fact. "Generalizations about Romanticism and 'the Romantics' rest upon hazy historical beliefs, which have become fuller with time, and now demand to be questioned and checked." (p 9) The relationship of the author and the text is not a closed system, but open at both ends: the author is influenced by social events and part of a social structure; and the work becomes part of a social process of distribution and consumption. With an awareness of the surrounding historical process and the community which helped to produce the art and became its public adds to its understanding. "For Bloom and critics like him, poets as *poets* exist

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A poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone, and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination.

primarily in their internalized imaginative worlds, and in relation to one another." (p 185) This location of the poets perhaps say more about "Bloom and critics like him" than about romanticism. What "safeguards" the historian is "his empiricism" and "a methodology which gives weight both to the collection of evidence and to analysis as opposed to synthesis." (p 186)

The criticism coming from "new historicism" is an important reminder of the external shaping forces of history. Its shortcoming is its one-sidedness, its preference for "analysis as opposed to synthesis." Eliminate the synthetic pole in the analytic-synthetic polarity described above, then the project fails. A methodology that eschews the synthetic replicates the positivism of traditional science: It captures what is outside of the work, but not its inside -- "we murder to dissect."<sup>37</sup> But there is one additional insight from Butler (1981) that should be noted.

Contemporary events are shaping our curiosity and desire to explore the "Romantic impulse." While she casts this desire in a negative light<sup>38</sup> the point is well taken -- *why*, today, might one have a preference for Coleridge's metaphysics or Blake's imagination?

### **The Romantic impulse**

*But oh! That deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
A savage place! As holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon lover!  
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,  
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,*

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<sup>37</sup> William Wordsworth (1904), "The Tables Turned."

<sup>38</sup> "The social upheavals of the twentieth century, and the aftermath of war and revolution, have to some extent duplicated the experiences of the early nineteenth century, so that some of the more extreme cultural reactions then have a renewed appeal now." (Butler, 1981, p 186) If this is the case, it is all the more reason, she argues to be careful about framing Romanticism as one thing.

*A mighty fountain momentarily was forced*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Kubla Khan"

*"He is Romantic -- Romantic," he repeated. "And that is very bad -- very bad. ... Very good, too," he added.*

Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*

In his writings about history, science, and philosophy, Barfield acknowledged the material, exterior shaping forces; but he emphasized the immaterial, interior agency. Within the context of the evolution of consciousness, Barfield saw a "Romantic impulse", "growing in the darkness" and then "cracking" the shell of customary thought and routine, rather than a "response" to social and political events. Or "[s]lowly the divers of the Romantic expedition brought up to the surface of consciousness that vast new cosmos that had so long been blindly forming in the depths." (HEW, 217) His main interest was not in the material forces shaping Romantic consciousness, but "the still deeper spiritual impulse, which was the original drive underlying the Romantic Movement." (RCA, 22) He described this movement as a "Romantic revolt against the encroaching grip of scientism on the mind of Europe." (PD, 38)

In Barfield's evolution of consciousness, the "Romantic impulse" drives the turn from the separation, and objectification towards unity, but now as a *conscious* experience of unity, where imagination is the mediating faculty, consciously and deliberately exercised (Diener, 2002). Barfield traced the history of the "creative imagination" through various early Christian era philosophers down to the seventeenth century, where the idea finds increasing receptivity in opposition to the growing empirical outlook. As the world is drained of meaning, Barfield argued, that meaning must be pulled up from within. Once nature is "apprehended as automatic by the senses and by reason," only imagination can restore its living meaning. The new cosmos

that the Romantic divers brought to the surface was "a cosmos in which the spirit and spontaneity of life had moved out of Nature and into man." (HEW, 217) The evolution of consciousness had seen the spirits of nature migrate into the individualized consciousness, "there to sleep until the trump of Romanticism sounded its call to imagination to give back their teeming life to Nature." (HEW 217)

Barfield elaborated on this process in *Saving the Appearances*. If science has dis-godded nature, but we experience nature as alive, e.g., after reading a poem by Wordsworth, what is it that we are experiencing? Barfield posed the question and his answer like this:

I]f there is no "represented" on the far side of the appearances, and yet we begin to experience them once more as appearances, as representations -- the question arises, of *what* are they representations?... There is only one answer to the question. Henceforth, if nature is to be experienced as representation, she will be experienced as representation of -- Man. But what is Man? (p 131)

Barfield acknowledged that today, the human being has also been turned into a thing, an idol. But "Man" is more than physical body and personality. "Man" -- "not my poor temporal personality, but the Divine Name in the unfathomable depths behind it" -- stands in the "directionally creator" relationship with nature (SA, 131-2).

Even though Barfield emphasized the interior, germinating impulse of Romanticism that "bursts through" (RCA, 27) in the late eighteenth century, it bears repeating that this immaterial process intersects with and expresses itself through material processes. Barfield described the fertilization of Western thought by expanded European access to works from India in the late 1700s. These new works were brought back to Europe by functionaries of the British East India

Company who recognized their importance. Barfield wrote that "one way of looking at the Romantic Movement is to see it as yet another fruitful contact between East and West." (RM, 79) This reminder of the interpenetration of material and immaterial as the way that Romanticism "bursts through" reminds us that Romanticism coming of age is also a material and immaterial, inner and outer process.

Although Barfield wrote about the Romantics, he was much more than a critic -- he was himself a Romantic, and his philosophy of poetry, imagination and consciousness is Romantic. Barfield's attraction to the Romantics, as noted above, was his own empirical experience of the poetry. In terms of his theory of poetry, it was the "felt change of consciousness" (PD, 48) he experienced when reading the poetry that drew him to Romanticism, and a desire to understand that experience. Romanticism for Barfield became not something one studies, but something one *does*. As we have seen, Barfield was influenced by the Romantic poets and philosophers, in particular, Coleridge. His deep interest in Rudolf Steiner was a plausible next step, since Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) himself belongs in the Romantic tradition -- "Steiner himself was so thoroughly influenced by the Romantics that in the end it will be difficult to untangle his influence [on Barfield] from that of the Romantics."<sup>39</sup> (Diener, 2002, p 95) Barfield's style has

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<sup>39</sup> Steiner edited Goethe's scientific works for the Kurschner edition of German national literature, and helped organize the science writings in the Goethe archive in Weimar. During the same period, Steiner wrote *A Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World Conception* (1886) and *Goethe's Conception of the World* (1897). Steiner's *Truth and Knowledge* (1892) as well as *Philosophy of Freedom* (1893) explored related questions of epistemology and the relationship of perception, thinking, thought, and being that follow from Goethe's work (dates from Bamford, 2006). While at university in Vienna, Steiner attended lectures by Franz Brentano (Steiner, 1928), the mentor of Edmund Husserl, one of the founding lights of phenomenology (Husserl, 2006). Goethe's scientific work was seen as a forerunner of phenomenology (Heinemann, 1934).



Romantic elements. Schenkel (2002) observed that "Barfield does not present so much thought as thinking, not so much product but production." (pp 179-180) The dialogue format that Barfield used in *Worlds Apart* and *Unancestral Voice* is one such example, a form where ideas emerge from the process itself, multi-voiced, challenged and conflicted. Patrick Grant (1982) commented that Barfield's style keeps the reader off-balance, using a tentativeness that allies him with the reader's skepticism, but at the same time pulls the reader along. Barfield's method requires the reader to participate in experiencing the ideas he is introducing (Grant, 1982). "The irregular is the unfinished part -- on which the possibility of change and transformation depends," said Barfield's Meggid character in *Unancestral Voice* (in Schenkel, 2002, p 180).

### **Romanticism in the world**

*I am a little tired of literature which can do nothing but point out ironically that there is nothing much going on but disintegration and decay.*

Owen Barfield to T. S. Eliot, 1924<sup>40</sup>

*Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,  
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,  
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower  
A new Earth and new Heaven*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Dejection: An Ode

*Where the son of fire in his eastern cloud, while the morning plumes her golden breast,  
Spurning the clouds written with curses, stamps the stony law to dust, loosing the eternal horses  
from the dens of night, crying  
Empire is no more! And now the lion & wolf shall cease.*

William Blake, A Song of Liberty

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<sup>40</sup> Cited in Hunter and Kranidas (1993), p 6.

In her systematic treatment of Barfield's work in the 1920s, Astrid Diener (2002) describes a socially engaged Barfield. Barfield's early writings addressed a variety of social issues including alienation, class division, unemployment, and fascism; he saw both modern society and modern thought in crisis. Barfield sought a solution for the social problems he saw around him. As his letter to Eliot quoted above indicates, Barfield, at an early age, lost interest in aloofly describing the social problems around him. As we have seen, he felt that the English Romantics failed to develop their ideas into a comprehensive and solid philosophical system. Diener's take on "coming of age" includes an extension into the world of practical affairs. In Barfield, Diener sees a philosopher in the spirit of Marx's ideal: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it." (Marx and Engels, 1845) She adds in a footnote:

Barfield does not consciously appear to draw on the ideas of Karl Marx. A comparison of the two authors should therefore not be taken too far. Nevertheless, the parallel is interesting and deserves in my view further attention. (fn, p 159)

There are rich connections, in fact, between Marx and Romanticism. In a detailed analysis of Marx's early intellectual development, Wessell (1979) points out Marx wrote Romantic poetry, before turning to Hegel, and then moving beyond Hegel as he developed his theory of history and revolution. Throughout, Marx retained the essential core of the "Romantic imperative to subjectivize objectivity." (p 115) Wessell described Marx's problem as "how is the world to be made philosophical and philosophy made worldly?" (p 156), and one could substitute "poetry" or even "spirit" for "philosophy" here. Marx saw the proletariat achieving this goal; its material force achieves the spiritual goal of overcoming the subject/object divide. Marx must be

read on two levels, Wessell argues, in terms of his historical materialist system of natural laws, a scientific mode (or, as external shaping forces), as well as in terms of its "mythopoetic core."

M. H. Abrams (1971) sees in Marx's overall structure of history a pattern that appears throughout Romantic literature. Abrams describes the structure as the "circuitous journey", a general pattern of wholeness and unity, broken apart by separation and division, and then restored, often on a higher level. Barfield's schema of original participation, followed by individuation, to be reconciled through final participation follows this pattern. The historical materialist structure of history follows the same structure as well: original communism, followed by a fall into the division and alienation of class society and property, and reconciled in final or advanced communism. The content of the "circuitous journey" in Marx's earlier works was even closer to the earlier Romantic philosophers. The problem Marx saw was not property or capitalism per se, but "essentially separation, the division of the integral man and society into self-centered, isolated, and hostile parts." (Abrams, 1971, p 314) In capitalism, workers are alienated from their product, which then comes to confront the worker as an alien power (capital), such that "all the 'sensuous external world' of 'natural objects' has been transformed into an 'alien and hostile world'." (p 315) For the earlier Romantics, the "imaginative work of the artist" achieved reconciliation and integration; Marx expands this "to include all the work of men's hands" if it can be carried out within "the social ambiance of the free communal enterprise." (p 316)

The Romantic current has flowed through Marxism, appearing in different guises. English socialists like William Morris embraced both Marxist ideas as well as Romantic ones (Lowy, 1987). Raymond Williams (1958) saw the Romantic tradition showing up in English Marxist attempts to construct a Marxist theory of culture in the 1930s. Romantic concepts of

imagination influenced the autonomous Marxist Antonio Negri<sup>41</sup> (Makdisi, 2003). Even the most traditional texts of Soviet Marxism-Leninism evoke Romantic images in describing the urge to communism (a society of non-alienation): "The ideal of communism goes back deep into history, into the very depths of the lives of millions of the working people. Dreams of this ideal can already be found in folk tales about the 'Golden Age' that were composed at the dawn of time." (from O. Kuusinen et al, *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, 1963, cited in Wessell, 1979) The "dreams of the ideal" are seen to stand outside of ideology, an idea (spirit) to be realized in the world (matter) through a creative agency (proletariat).

This is not to say that deep down, Marxism and Barfield's thinking are the same, which of course they are not. The differences in their respective programs are important and enlightening. In particular, Marxism has one taproot in Romanticism, another in the general scientism of the 19th century (SA, 164). Engels (1988) called his and Marx's work the "science of society." (p 372) Barfield believed that the application of the principles of natural science to history, as with other sciences, robbed the object of investigation, history, of its interior (UV). While the scientific aspect of Marxism has been emphasized in its best known historical expressions<sup>42</sup>, Marx proposed a participatory dimension as well: "The chief defect of all materialism up to now

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<sup>41</sup>"[F]ancy and imagination do not simply mediate between the concrete and the abstract -- they are not epistemological functions; on the contrary, they are ontological and constitutive functions." (Makdisi, 2003, p 267; the reference is to Negri's book *Insurgencies*, 1999) It may be that both the English Romantics and Negri share a common inspiration in Spinoza.

<sup>42</sup> An analysis of the Soviet experience is far beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that the demands of industrializing the Soviet Union in the context of a world capitalism system still sorting out its own "crisis of imperialism" gave a particular centralized and scientific character to the expression of Marxism that developed there and for better or worse, dominated the world communist movement at least until the 1960s.

(including Feuerbach's) is, that the object, reality, sensuousness is only taken hold of in the form of *objects* or as *what is beheld*, not as *sensuous human activity, practice*; not subjectively."<sup>43</sup>

(Translation in Williams, 1977, with modifications, italics in original) While the "science of society" approaches the process of history from the outside, a Goethean method can be used, e.g., to penetrate through, say, the process of social development work or the fetishization of commodities, and thereby approach the inside of history (Kaplan, 2005; Davis, 2006b).

Marxism and Barfield's thinking do share, however, a common Romantic impulse and a common desire to bring that impulse into the world. The common elements of both support Barfield's contention that some impulse within human beings -- an impulse that strives to unify subject and object, which we can identify with Romanticism -- drives human beings to manifest it.

According to Diener (2002), "Barfield was quite aware of the fact that his concept of wholeness -- if it was to have any meaning at all -- had to be translated into 'reality.'" (p 143) Imagination must become "operative in the practical scientific sense." (RCA) And as noted, Barfield felt the Romantics had failed: "[T]heir theory of the imagination 'was never ground satisfactorily in reality.'" (p 144) If imagination is left as a merely contemplative act, it becomes impotent. In Barfield's thinking, imagination was not just "an intellectual activity." "[I]t is also a force of transformation. It represents a standard of human wholeness. And wholeness is not only a state of mind, but also a form of being, a way of life, a process." (Diener, 2002, p 145)

For Barfield, Romanticism became a "way of life" in the form of anthroposophy. Steiner and the anthroposophical movement provided a broad philosophical foundation, a program for spiritual self-development, and practical initiatives in a variety of fields, including education

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<sup>43</sup> I thank Craig Holdrege for assistance with the translation of this passage.

(what became the Waldorf school movement), agriculture (biodynamic farming), medicine, business, and politics. Anthroposophy, Diener (2002) writes, absorbed and transcended Romanticism, and Barfield described anthroposophy as "Romanticism grown up." (RCA, p 15) For many others of his generation, the 1917 Russian Revolution and post-World War I upsurge in radical activity provided different opportunities.

But by the early 1970s, when globalization had begun to emerge in its current form, many different expressions of a desire to break through the mechanomorphic mold had arisen as well. In the mid-1970s, Barfield saw evidence that the edifice was beginning to crack (RM, 192, the same verb he used to describe the emergence of the Romantic movement in the late eighteenth century). The edifice was being threatened from both "above and below" -- again, the outer force and the inner force (RM). Barfield's evidence included counter-culture, new age, activist and political projects. He also saw new work in science threatening the old mechanical model. Barfield's list was just a beginning, which has continued to morph and grow in the ensuing decades. The growth of holistic and Goethean science (e.g. Holdrege, 2005), Gaia theory (Lovelock, 1986), the environmental movement in general, and variants like ecopsychology (Fisher, 2002) are of particular note; as is the worldwide anti-globalization movement (e.g., Solnit, 2004) and the wide range of insurgencies among the most dispossessed. Alongside the rise of globalization, a counter-motion has also been growing.

In Makdisi's (1998) reading of Blake, the poet's image of "Universal Empire" prefigured globalization. That is, Blake saw in the emerging capitalist world-system of his day what it could and did become. Makdisi sees "universal" as total, singular, and homogeneously structured by capitalism. There is one universal history and one universal narrative into which all are pulled. Romanticism helped to structure the coming age by showing how to see the rest of the world,

how to define the "other", and how to relate to it. William Blake was especially aware of the constricting new order. He proposed alternative, "impossible", unpredictable, improbable histories in terms of his own personal mythology. Romantic poetry, and Blake especially, is characterized by its ambiguity and contradiction (Colebrook, 2006; see her discussion of Blake's "London" poem). "Universal Empire" can also be read as the *opposite* of the totalizing, constricting Empire of Capital. It can be read as a counter-Empire of the Imagination, universal and hence of un-bounded possibility (but it is chained with the slaves and must be set free).

Makdisi describes Blake and his "impossible history", in terms that connect to Barfield's vocabulary:

Indeed, it is precisely in accepting that what can be perceived defines what is possible, and what is possible defines what can be perceived, that the fall takes place, every day. The fall, in other words, does not constitute a reality. Rather, it constitutes a certain highly circumscribed ontology of perception and being -- a mode of perceiving which is precisely what makes reality real to the limited forms of life appropriate to it. The latter, stripped of the capacity of imagination, and 'bound down / To earth by their narrowing perceptions,' regard this fallen world as the only world, this reality as the only possible reality, themselves as the only possible forms of being, and hence their history as the only possible (that is, legally sanctioned) history... 'Impossible history,' on the other hand, refuses such assumptions; its impossibility consists precisely in its refusal to take for granted that which the law mandates as 'possible' and 'necessary.' (Makdisi, 2003, 261-2)

Blake's Universal Empire anticipates the Empire described by Hardt and Negri Empire, and/or it describes the counter-Empire existing in "impossible time." It holds up the possibility of alternative globalizations.

### **A world to win**

*"The center of destruction is also the center of birth."*

Owen Barfield, *Unancestral Voice*

To return to the question posed earlier, *why*, today, might one be attracted to Romanticism a pessimistic response might see it as an escape from the challenges we face, a turn from "the militancy of overt political action" to "the paradox of spiritual quietism", as Abrams (1963, pp 110-1) described Wordsworth's personal turn. On the other hand, as I think Barfield argued, Romanticism can also be understood as an optimistic act, of worldly or political action *complemented* by (and incomplete without) a spiritual vision.

"The 'overcoming' of the duality between subjective and objective," Barfield wrote, was "the goal which the Western Romantic imagination set itself." (RCA, 43-4) This insight speaks to us today, as well. I have used the term "globalization" to name the complex of forces that comprise world we live in. Globalization, as I have been using the term, is the form that capitalism takes in the presence of the technological environment of electronics. The term "global capitalism" could perhaps be used, or "capitalist globalization", or "technologically motivated globalization" or even "Empire", to describe the phenomenon in question, but the two essential features of what any of these terms attempt to name are (a) capitalism and (b) electronics. And as we have seen, the two features treat the world as mechanism, and turn the



world into mechanism. The worldview of mechanism is a direct consequence of the Cartesian split of subject and object.

The Romantic imagination, taken to its logical conclusion, is the repair of the subject-object rift. And this means the defeat of globalization as electronic capitalism, because the transformation of consciousness is at the same time the transformation of the world. One needs to live in the world in a different way, to interact with nature in a different way, to be with other people in a different way. And so it transforms the economic, political and cultural architecture as well. "When, through the power of imagination," Talbott (2001) writes, "the whole community finds its reflection in the individual soul, and when through the same power each of us learns to contribute our own virtue to the whole community," then we defeat alienation.<sup>44</sup> This is not much different from the first half of Marx's communist maxim: "From each according to ability, to each according to need." For Winstanley, the seventeenth century English Digger who influenced the Romantics a century later, communism was not a question of abstract rights, but, Makdisi (2003) writes, an "argument about how we are to live." (p 289)

So the stakes are quite large. Globalization in its worst sense, electronic capitalism, is a world of surfaces only, of outer with no inner, which leads to the globalization of dead oceans and extreme wealth side by side with absolute poverty. Owen Barfield described the challenges before us as part of a -- not historic (though it is that too) -- but a *cosmic* process, of the evolution of consciousness. And this challenge is both an individual challenge to see the world in a radically new way, and a global challenge to create the social forms that *allow* us and *enable* us,

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<sup>44</sup> Talbott is paraphrasing a quote from Steiner he used earlier in the piece being quoted from: "The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue of each one is living." (in Talbott, 2001)

everyone, the multitude, to see the world in new ways. Owen Barfield helped us to clarify our task -- to reforge the broken unity of the world.

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Abbreviations for often-cited works:

EC	<i>The Evolution Complex</i> (Barfield, 1982)
HEW	<i>History in English Words</i> (Barfield, 1926/1967)
HGH	<i>History, Guilt and Habit</i> (Barfield, 1979)
PD	<i>Poetic Diction</i> (Barfield, 1928/1973)
RCA	<i>Romanticism Comes of Age</i> (Barfield, 1944/1966)
RM	<i>The Rediscovery of Meaning</i> (Barfield, 1977)
SA	<i>Saving the Appearances</i> (Barfield, 1957/1988)
SM	<i>Speaker's Meaning</i> (Barfield, 1967)
UV	<i>Unancestral Voice</i> (Barfield, 1965)
WCT	<i>What Coleridge Thought</i> (Barfield, 1971)

Note: Where two dates are given, the first is the date of original publication, the second is the publication date of the text referenced.

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