

MAN AND NATURE

The Divine and nature meet in man (see AC 5081). The Divine in its proceeding never stops midway, but continues into the outmosts of nature (HH 107, 201, 202, 305, 315). And of all things in nature, the Divine proceeding is especially terminated in man (HH 304, AC 3632).

Man has, beyond what the angels have, that he is not only in respect to his interiors in the spiritual world, but also at the same time in respect to his exteriors in the natural world. His exteriors which are in the natural world are all things of his natural external memory and of his thought and imagination therefrom; in general, knowledges and sciences with their delights and pleasures so far as they savor of the world, also many pleasures belonging to the senses of the body, together with his senses themselves, his speech, and his actions. And all these are the outmosts in which the Lord's Divine influx terminates; for that influx does not stop midway, but goes on to its outmosts. All this shows that *the outmost of Divine order is in man*; and being the outmost it is also the base and foundation (HH 304; see also AC 3017).

The outmost of order in man is not just in his mind, but also in his body (cf. AC 3632). The physical body has been preserved in order by the Lord—an order corresponding to the order of heaven—though, of course, it is subject to various diseases and disorders now. The willing and thinking derived from our natural senses has gotten out of order, and so man no longer serves as the basis and foundation of heaven as he once did. In place of this basis and foundation, and also for the conjunction of heaven with the human race, the Lord has provided the *Word* (HH 305). "The laws of order are as many as the truths of the Word" (TCR 55; see also AC 1834.2; 2219.3).

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Is there some sense in which even nature has been changed by the fall of man? Yes, at least in regard to man's perception of it.

Man has been so created that the Divine things of the Lord may descend through him down to the ultimates of nature, and from the ultimates of nature may ascend to Him; so that man might be a medium that unites the Divine with the world of nature, and the world of nature with the Divine; *and thus the very ultimate of nature might live from the Divine through man as the uniting medium; which would be the case if man had lived according to the Divine order* There would be a descent of the Divine through man into the ultimate of nature, and from the ultimate of nature there would be an ascent to the Divine, if with faith of heart, that is, with love, man would only acknowledge the Lord as his first and last end (AC 3702; emphasis added).

All nature, even the natural sun, is dead in itself, so in this sense the ultimates of nature are not living, and so far as I can see never lived. So how are the ultimates of nature less living now than they were when man lived according to order? Because the ultimates of nature were *alive to man*, and he was able to perceive whatever aspect of Divine life was represented in them.

In such a state were the most ancient people, who were celestial men; for whatever they apprehended by any sense was to them a means for thinking concerning the things of the Lord... and from this came the delight they derived from things worldly and terrestrial (see n. 1409, 2896, 2897, 2995). *Moreover, when they thus contemplated the lower and ultimate things of nature, these appeared before their eyes as if they were alive; for the life from which they descended was in their internal sight and perception, and the objects presented to their eyes were as images of this life; which images, although inanimate, to them were thereby animated. Such is the perception the celestial angels have regarding all things in the world... and hence also little children have such a perception* (AC 3702; cf. 2297, 2298).

And again in regard to children:

Each and every object seemed to them to be alive; and thus in every least idea of their thought there is life Children on the earth have nearly the same idea when they are at their little plays; for as yet they have no such reflection as adults about what is inanimate (HH 338).

Animal and Human Instinct

Animals are in the order of their lives (HH 108, 296, 352), and they have no faculty of rational reflection such as humans have. Because they are in order, they are governed by general influx from the spiritual world (AC 5850). I wonder if this accounts for their extreme sensitivity, which almost seems to border on the supernatural. We call it "instinct," but as C. S. Lewis has observed, "instinct" is just a name for something that remains a mystery. To say that migratory birds find their way by instinct is only to say that we do not know how they find their way. "Who that thinks from any wisdom of reason will ever say that these instincts are from any other source than the spiritual world?" (HH 108).

Animal instincts are really no more mysterious than the fact that different kinds of trees (or snowflakes, or our own bodies) "know" what shape to grow in. It is only because animals have a semblance of human consciousness that their behavior seems so mysterious. We are surprised that a goose knows how to find its way, but take it for granted that the planets know how to go around the sun; but the same laws of order are operating in both instances.

Because animals are in the order of their lives they are part of the larger order of Creation, and thus far more attuned than we are to stimuli from nature or anything affecting the natural world. I think this is why they are able to sense storms and earthquakes long before we can, even with our scientific instruments, why they have such keen senses of smell, vision, hearing, or touch (depending upon the kind of animal), and also why many are able to stay so perfectly still. An animal is not an individual in the way a human is, but seems rather to be a part of a larger being. This is how I interpret the teaching that animals are governed by "general influx" from the spiritual world, while man, because he is born contrary to heavenly order, is governed by the Lord mediately through spirits.

Animals are governed by means of general influx from the spiritual world, because they are in the order of their life, and animals have not been able to pervert and destroy that order because they have no rational faculty (HH 296).

Humans, too, are part of nature, of course, but the free will and rationality we have been given has made it possible for us to rebel against order, and so we are not as much in harmony with nature as the people of the Most Ancient Church were. Being in harmony with nature is not our primary goal, of course. We are created to be

part of a *spiritual* larger being (the Grand Man of heaven, that is, the Lord); however, finding our place in the Grand Man requires that we regenerate and bring our lives into order, and it would seem that if our lives were in order we would surely be more in harmony with nature, also, since the order of nature corresponds to the order of heaven.

Furthermore, it is the spirit that actually senses things through the body; this is why angels, who are in order, enjoy such exquisite sensation in the spiritual world, after the gross natural body has been cast aside (HH 296). In fact, it is really the Lord, the source of all life, who sees, hears, etc., through the spirit of man and hence through his body (AC 322, 447e, 5119, 5779; HH 433, 434; HD 50; DP 314; AE 152.2).

Animals also live only from the Lord, and yet it is different with them. They live from general influx. They are forms of specific affections, and each one has knowledge corresponding to the particular affection it represents (DLW 61, 134, 255; AC 4906e, 5198, 7750).

This so-called 'knowledge' is nothing but the organization of its sensual degree so that it may receive an influx from the spiritual world which causes it to act from its native love. This influx gives it instinctive reactions so that it may respond to all situations within the scope of its love.²⁷

My thought on this is that the life from the Lord which is embodied in animals flows directly through them into the natural world, giving them an extremely keen sense of sight, smell, hearing, or touch, depending upon the kind of animal and affection represented. "... with them the influx passes through their organic forms down into the world, and there terminates and vanishes, and never returns" (AC 5114e). With men, though, the influx is "interrupted," so to speak, by the rational mind, which stands between his inmost and his bodily sensations. But in a person whose mind is in order, sensation through the body should be greatly improved, within the limitations of the physical body, of course. And what are the limitations of the human body? Some adept people can do amazing things after much training. Surely our bodies are capable of sensing much more than we are consciously aware of: tiny changes in temperature, for instance.

²⁷ Hugo Lj. Odhner, *The Human Mind*, Swedenborg Scientific Association, Bryn Athyn, 1969, pp. 40-41.

My conclusion is that, while we may never have such keen senses as some animals, if our lives were in spiritual order we would be more sensitive even physically, since physical sensation is really of the spirit in the body (see the reference to *Zen in the Art of Archery* below). One example the Writings give of a sense enjoyed by animals, but which men have lost, is the ability to find the way home. "This sense is common to such as live according to order; this order has been impressed on their souls. Such would also have been the case with man had he lived in order" (SD 2209).

People who still live very primitively in Africa and elsewhere are admired for being very sensitive to and in harmony with nature. And there is a persistent romantic idea that if we could get back to nature all would be well with us. But what is often overlooked is the fact that these primitive people are very spiritual minded—they honor spirits everywhere, in every tree and animal and lake. They do not have the scientific view of nature common to our society. Nature is not devoid of life for them as it is for us, but is the abiding place of spirits. We do not so much need to get back to nature as we need a restoration of the spiritual dimension in our lives, and a spiritual view of nature. *This* is how we can come into order.

Man is to live in harmony with nature, but not as an animal. "Man has what beasts have not, an inmost, into which the Divine flows, raising man up to Itself, and thereby conjoining man to Itself" (DP 314; AC 10,236; HH 435). "Man has been created so that he can look above himself to heaven, even to the Divine, and can also look below himself to the world and the earth" (AC 7607). The elevation of our minds into the light of heaven is what makes us human; otherwise we are just beasts.

This is why man stands erect upon his feet and turns his face heavenward ... while a beast stands upon its feet in a position parallel with the earth, and turns its whole face in that direction; nor can it without difficulty raise its face heavenward (TCR 69).

Animals because they are born into the order of their lives, have instinct which tells them how to find food, make their nests, and so on. "But if man were born into the order of his life, which is to love God above all things and his neighbor as himself, he would be born into intelligence and wisdom, and as knowledges are acquired would come into a belief in all truth" (HH 352; AC 6323.3). This, then, is what it would mean for us if we were born into the order of our lives—we would have an "instinct" for what is true.

THE TAO OF PHYSICS

If I am correct in saying that because animals are in the order of their lives they are one with all creation, this fits in well with the modern scientific view of the cosmos, which sees all things as interconnected parts of one great unity. I have a fascinating book (one of several on this same theme which can be found in any bookstore) called *The Tao of Physics*, in which the author expounds upon the parallel between the view of reality found in Eastern religion (specifically Taoism), and that propounded by modern quantum physics. "Quanta" is a word used to describe subatomic particles; quantum theory is concerned with the properties and interactions of the subatomic particles of which all matter is made. I must confess to a very small understanding of quantum theory (or any physics, for that matter), but the book was written for people like me. The gist of the argument, as I understand it, is that there is only one great Reality, and all apparently independent things are merely manifestations of that one Reality. In terms of the science of physics, or Einstein's theory of relativity, this Reality is called the "Field."

The quantum field is seen as the fundamental physical entity: a continuous medium which is present everywhere in space. Particles are merely local condensations of the field; concentrations of energy which come and go, thereby losing their individual character and dissolving into the underlying field. In the words of Albert Einstein: "We may therefore regard matter as being constituted by the regions of space in which the field is extremely intense There is no place in this new kind of physics both for the field and matter, for the field is the only reality." The conception of physical things and phenomena as transient manifestations of an underlying fundamental entity is not only a basic element of quantum field theory, but also a basic element of the Eastern world view. Like Einstein, the Eastern mystics consider this underlying entity as the only reality: all its phenomenal manifestations are seen as transitory and illusory.²⁸

The most important characteristic of the Eastern world view—one could almost say the essence of it—is the awareness of the unity and mutual interrelation of all things and events, the experience of all phenomena in the world as mani-

²⁸Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, Bantam, New York, 1975, pp. 196-197.

festations of a basic oneness. All things are seen as interdependent and inseparable parts of this cosmic whole; as different manifestations of the same ultimate reality — The basic oneness of the universe is not only the central characteristic of the mystical experience, but is also one of the most important revelations of modern physics. It becomes apparent at the atomic level and manifests itself more and more as one penetrates deeper into matter, down into the realm of subatomic particles.²⁹

This all seems to me to have great relevance for us, if we understand the "ultimate reality" sought by mystics and postulated by quantum physics to be GOD. The flaw Ken Wilber (see n. 29) sees in Capra's approach is that it reduces essential reality to the natural plane, and so harms mysticism rather than helping it, as intended. Wilber counters: "But all things are not ultimately made of subatomic particles; all things, including subatomic particles, are ultimately made of God" (p. 27). This is more in line with New Church thought. The physicist sees that all things in creation are related, and in fact are merely manifestations of one underlying reality. And in the Writings we read:

... in each and all things created there is something of good and truth from the Lord. For what is done and goes forth from any one bears a likeness of him. And reason can also see that it is so, from the order in which each and all things were created in the universe, which is that one thing is for another and that therefore one depends upon another, like the links of a chain (CL 85).

I am reminded too of the teaching that the Lord created the universe out of Himself, and that all things that exist do so every moment from Him (see DLW 55, 282).

... whatever is not in connection [with the First] is dissipated ... [N]othing can have permanent existence from itself,

²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 116-117. I am not at all suggesting that we accept everything Capra and other "new age" writers propose, but the general correlation between the physicist's and the mystic's exploration of underlying reality seems valid and worth considering. For a critique of *The Tao of Physics*, see *Quantum Questions, Mystical Writings of the World's Great Physicists*, Shambhala, Boulder, 1984, by Ken Wilber (editor), and the review by Stephen Jay Gould of another Capra book in *The New York Review of Books*, March 3, 1983.

but only from what is prior to itself, thus all things from a First;... permanent existence is a perpetual springing forth (HH 303; see also AC 5116.3, 5377).

The First from which all things subsist and to which they correspond is the Lord. And since the Lord is a Man, the sphere of creation proceeding from Him is a Human sphere. The order of the universe is a human order, the order of the Grand Man (AC 839, 10185). This is a powerful thought to me, with endless meaning to be derived from it. The order of all creation, the order by which all things were made and continue in existence by Divine influx every moment, is the same order as that by which we are to live spiritually, the order of eternal life. In brief, it is the order of Love ruling all (cf. AC 939, 1055).

"We are because God is" (DP 6). We are nothing but a manifestation of the Lord's creative power. Even the perversions of His good and truth could not exist except from the love and wisdom proceeding from Him; evil is nothing in itself, it is just a disordered manifestation of the proceeding Divine.

The Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert have a very poetic way of expressing this: "There is a great dream across the world that we are a part of. It is not like any ordinary dream in sleep. For we do not dream this dream. Instead this dream dreams us. It dreams us all the time, even while we are awake, and we know that it must be lived out on this earth through everything we do" (*The Seven Mysteries of Life*, p. 612). This reminds me a bit of the Lord's statement in John: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

Losing and Finding Our Identity

When all the various parts of our nature are brought into a proper relation with the other parts and with their source, that is, the Lord, then our lives will be in order. The result of this will be that *we will be less conscious of ourselves as individual beings, and more conscious of ourselves as beings who live every moment from the Lord*. Quantum theory seems to correspond to this when it says that all individual entities are really just manifestations of the underlying ultimate reality.

The paradox for humans, though, is that the more they perceive that their lives are from the Lord alone, and that they have no existence apart from Him, the greater sense they have of life in themselves.

... it is conjunction with the Lord that makes a man seem to himself to be free and therefore his own; and the nearer the conjunction with the Lord is the more free he seems, and thus the more his own. He appears to himself more distinctly as if he were his own, because the Divine love is such that it wills its own to be another's, thus to be the man's or the angel's. Such is all spiritual love, and preeminently the Divine love (DP 43; cf. AC 155).

The angels plainly perceive that they do not live of themselves, but from the Lord, since they live in the very being of the Lord's life, because in His love. But yet to them above all others there is given the appearance as of living from themselves, together with ineffable happiness (AC 1735.2).

The Lord is Life Itself; any life people ever feel in themselves is from Him, but before regeneration we hold to the appearance that it is our own. The reality doesn't change, just our perception of it. When a person rises above this appearance, and delights in the perception that his life is from the Lord every moment, he does not lose his identity or dissolve away (as a drop into the ocean, as the mystics say), but rather rejoices much more fully in the reception of life which the Lord gives him as if it were his own. He never had any other identity, really—no proprium, no life of his own—so nothing is lost except a false appearance. The Lord alone *is*. He alone has proprium, or selfhood. He alone has *life*. Our "identity" is derived from Him. "The particle is only a manifestation of the field" (cf. DP 293).

Yet we do not go so far as the Eastern mystic in calling the self and this world an illusion. True, we are to subjugate the self, with the Lord's help, but only for the sake of obtaining a new self, a "heavenly proprium." This world is real, and the spirit acquires a permanent form here, which lasts to eternity. The Lord is Being Itself, but He gives substance to this world, which He created out of His Divine Love. The teachings of the New Church lead us, not to deny the world, but to look beyond it to the higher Reality of which it is the outermost form, and which it was created to serve. Physics may discover that all matter is simply a formation of some higher Reality, but the nature of that higher Reality itself can only be learned from Divine revelation. Science alone can never discern its nature. To understand the universe as a whole, and even really to understand any part of it, requires knowledge of the Lord and the spiritual world.

The Lord is the "only Man," it is true, but He gives us the appearance of self-life, so that we might receive His Divine life as if it were our own, and rejoice in it. The appearance itself is not contrary to order, only the confirmation of it in life. The Lord placed the tree of knowledge in the garden, the sin came with the eating from it.

Another interesting fact from *The Tao of Physics* is that there is no real line between the observer of subatomic particles and the phenomena observed (not that they can actually be seen, of course; but they can be detected). The very fact of observing influences what is observed. How these subatomic particles are "seen" depends upon the way the viewer chooses to see them. They may be seen as particles or as waves, for instance, depending upon the way one chooses to describe them. They have reality, they do exist, but in a sense they do not exist apart from the observer. (I would suggest a rainbow as an illustration of something which is perfectly real, and yet which depends upon the viewer as part of the phenomenon. Where is a rainbow? You can't fix it in space apart from the viewer. And yet it is not just a subjective thing—the light and the droplets which refract it exist independently of the viewer. But the viewer's eye is also part of the phenomenon.)

This is all somewhat mysterious to me, but it seems similar to what is said about the way man's view of nature has changed since most ancient times (as described in AC 3702, quoted above). *Nature to them was different than for us because of the way they perceived it.* The ultimate of nature did not change, but human nature changed at the time of the fall; and perhaps this is tantamount to the same thing. When human nature is in order, than *all* nature is in order; that is, serving the use for which it was created, not to serve just man's physical needs, but also to serve as a foundation of spiritual truth; to serve revelation.

Wholeness

When we are healthy, we do not feel the separate parts of our body, but are aware of it as an integrated whole, and we have a feeling of well-being and happiness. Similarly, when we are spiritually healthy or in order, we are not so aware of ourselves as separate from God and His creation, or from other people, but are part of the Grand Man. (Perhaps this is why the phrase "self-conscious" is so often preceded by the word "painfully.")

At the risk of being trivial, I will offer this illustration. A piece of a jigsaw puzzle is nothing by itself; it has significance only when put in

its place in the puzzle. Now if that piece of the puzzle were conscious, it might seem to it that this is just the point when it *loses* its identity, for then its contours disappear and it becomes just a part of a large picture. In reality, though, it is only then that it *finds* its identity, that is, the use for which it was created.

Similarly, we find our true identity when we finally come into our place in the Grand Man of heaven, our lives having been molded by the Lord into the form of that use for which we were created. As with the angels who "live in the very being of the Lord's life," but yet above all others have the appearance of self-life, so we then find our true identity.

But for us to come into our eternal use, our lives must be brought into order. And this involves temptation combats. We must "take up our cross" and follow the Lord, that is, His laws of order, which are the truths of His Word. This involves a loss or kind of death, yes, but it is also the means of entering into real life. "He who loses his life for My sake will find it," the Lord says (Matthew 10:39).

This was well expressed by Tennyson: "All at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to fade away into boundless being—the *loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction hut the only true life.*"³⁰

When angels... are in what is their own, they begin to be sad. I have talked with them when they were in that state and have seen their sadness; but they said that they hoped to return soon to their former state, and thus into heaven again, as it were; for to them it is heaven to be withheld from what is their own (HH 160).

THE HUMAN FORM

Divine order is the Lord Himself in heaven, because the Divine good and truth which are from Him constitute order, insomuch that they are order, Divine good its essential, and Divine truth its formal. *When Divine order is represented in form it appears as a man;* for the Lord from whom it is, is the only Man; and insofar as angels, spirits, and men receive from Him, that is, insofar as they are in good and thence in truth, thus insofar as they are in His Divine order, so far they are men. From this it is that *the universal heaven represents one man*, which is called the

³⁰ Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, Mentor, New York, 1960.

Grand Man, and that the whole and every part of man corresponds thereto. From this also it is that the angels in heaven all appear in the human form; and that, on the other hand, the evil spirits who are in hell. . . in the light of heaven appear as monsters... and this because evil itself is contrary to order, and thus contrary to the human form (AC 4839).

Divine order, then, is a *human* order. The order in nature, which we have been discussing, is a *human* order. Divine order is terminated in the outmost of nature, and especially in the highest of all natural forms, the human form (HH 304; AC 3632, 4302.3; LJ 9, 20).

Nature was created in order that the spiritual might be terminated in it... the things in the spiritual world are causes, and those in the natural world are effects. Effects are terminations ... (nature was created) in order that there might be ultimate materials into which everything spiritual might close, and in which creation might subsist;... also in order *that all things might thus return to their First source, which is effected through man* (AE 1207.4; see also DLW 65, 316).

Successive and Simultaneous Order

We mentioned above how contemplation of his daughter's ear led a man to believe in God. But the formation of the body is witness to more than just the general fact that there is a God. All the various states of thought and feeling that a person experiences leave their mark on the body, especially on the face, of course. Thus these spiritual things are all present in the body. In the ultimate form of the body, the successive spiritual states of will and understanding exist simultaneously. Because of this "angels are able to see in a man's hand all the thoughts and intentions of his mind" (CL 314).

There is a successive order and simultaneous order, and the latter is from the former and according to it The highest things of successive order become the inmost of simultaneous order; and the lowest things of successive order become the outmost of simultaneous order He who knows the influx of things successive into things simultaneous can comprehend the reason why angels are able to see in a man's hand all the thoughts and intentions of his mind; and also why it is, that wives, from their husbands' hands upon their breasts, can feel their affections The reason is because the hands are the

ultimates of man into which the deliberations and conclusions of his mind are determined and become simultaneous (CL 314).

Animals are born into the order of their lives, but man is not. It is not just that man is born into disorder, but that his order at birth is incomplete. Through regeneration he can cooperate with the Lord in establishing order in his life, and thus, in a sense, participate in the creation of the human in himself. The human body is fully formed at birth, and yet, especially in regard to the face, the body is not finished. The many spiritual states a person experiences throughout his life are brought together in the body, where they exist simultaneously.

In the mind, they are brought together in the memory, where they form the person's "book of life," upon which are engraved all the successive states of his spirit. Thus every moment of life has consequences to eternity (AC 3854.3, 5122e). Each state of life is determined by those that came before, and in turn influences those that follow, so that in the end all these successive states exist simultaneously.

Unlike animals, which are born with instinctive knowledge, man is born into no knowledge so that he might come into all knowledge (CL 134). Animals have knowledge of all things that belong to their love; this is called "instinct" (AC 7750). But man, because he is born with no knowledge, can, by means of the knowledges he learns, come into a state of good or love, and from this truths may be multiplied with him forever.

One who is in the good of genuine charity, and thence in the affection of truth... desires to be enlightened from the Word as to what truth is, and to see the truth before he confirms it. Moreover, he sees it from good, because the perception of truth is from good; for the Lord is in good, and gives the perception. When a man receives truth in this way, it increases indefinitely. In this respect it is like a little seed, which grows into a tree, and produces other little seeds, which in turn produce a garden, and so on (AC 5355).

Evolution of the Human Body

The spirit is that... from which the body has its human form (AC 10758.3).

According to the theory of evolution, the human form evolved from lower animal forms. There may be truth in this, though of course we need to fill in the vital spiritual element which is missing from the purely scientific theory of evolution. If there was in fact an evolution of the human form, this process was directed at every step by the Lord.

We would also note that nothing can "evolve" unless that which evolves is first contained within the form from which it evolves. There has to be an "involving" before there can be an "evolving." If man evolved from lower natural forms, then the human form existed potentially in those lower forms from their first creation, and it was for the sake of the human that they were created.

What is said about the letter of the Word may be said about nature also: "That is said to be full which contains in itself all things prior, even from the first, or all things higher even from the highest; the ultimate is what includes these" (AE 1087.2). Divine truth itself is contained within the letter of the Word, where it is accommodated to natural human understanding. The Lord "reaches down," as it were, in and by means of the letter of the Word and raises a persons mind up into the form of heaven. Might there not be a corresponding raising up of natural substance to the human form, also, just as there is a raising up of man's mind to the spiritual human form by means of the letter of the Word?

"God introduced order into the universe and into each and all things of it at the time of their creation..." (TCR 89). This takes on special meaning when considered in light of the statement that "when Divine order is represented in form it appears as a man; for the Lord, from whom it is, is the only Man" (AC 4839; TCR 134.4).

My conclusion is that the only order there is, in nature as in spiritual things, is human order. As the Lord works to bring mans spirit into the truly human form (which is an image and likeness of Himself), so even natural substance, from the order introduced into all things at the time of their creation, has built into it a tendency or conatus to the human form (AE 1208.3).

A human fetus certainly "evolves" in the womb, resembling lower life forms at various stages. Perhaps something similar happened in regard to the race as a whole over the eons. In both cases, "the soul is form and doth the body make." In the one case, an individual soul forms the body in the womb; in the general evolution of the human race, the Lord as the soul formed the human body ever more perfectly through successive forms.

In any case, a seed can only evolve into a tree because it came from a tree; the tree was contained potentially in the seed from the beginning. The case is the same with the human form. And what is the first origin of the human form? It comes from the Lord, of course, who is the original Man, Very Man, and the Only Man. Whatever forms the human body may have evolved from, the human potential existed in them from the Lord.

In nature, the outmost of order, the Divine comes into its fullness and completion; "and when it is in its outmost it takes on its form, and by means there collected it renews itself and produces itself further, which is accomplished through procreations. Therefore the seed-ground of heaven is in the outmost" (HH 315).

I think the teaching that the Lord operates from firsts (or primes, or inmosts) through ultimates, and then into intermediates, can be applied here (see AR 627, DLW 316, AE 1086.5, 1087.3, etc.). The Divine is the first, nature is the ultimate, and man is the intermediate, through which the ultimate is connected with the first. The Divine reaches down, so to speak, into the ultimate (natural substance, which is a materialization of Divine Love) and from the dust of the earth raises up man, the means whereby this love may return to its source and complete the great circle of life. Moreover, the Divine does not stop midway in its upward return any more than it stops midway in its downward proceeding.

The uses of all created things ascend by degrees of height to man, and through man to God the Creator from whom they are. The end of creation takes form in outmosts, which end is that all things may *return* to the Creator and that there may be conjunction (DLW 316; cf. DLW 65; AE 1207.4, man is the means).

So things do not just evolve *from* something, they evolve *to* something ... that is, toward the human form which exists perfectly in the Lord, and to which all natural forms, which correspond to some heavenly use from the Divine, strive (or to which the Lord strives in all natural forms as His Divine influx seeks to return to its source).

The forms of the animal kingdom... are all in accord with the flow of spiritual substances and forces; and from the conatus that is in these forms this flow tends to the human form — This [conatus is derived from] the First from whom all things are, who is God, because He is Man (AE 1208.3,4; cf. AC 3632, AE 1207.4).

As an illustration of this, I would use a magnet and some iron filings. Like all illustrations, this one is imperfect and incomplete. It regards just physical substance, and has nothing to say about when an immortal soul was first present with men.

The magnet stands for God, the iron filings for natural substance. Proceeding from the magnet there is an invisible magnetic field, the nature of which is a mystery. But place the magnet beneath a piece of paper covered with iron filings, and they will conform to the invisible sphere of order proceeding from the magnet, so that in them it becomes visible. The invisible magnetic force represents the proceeding Divine, which brings created substance into order conforming with the Lord's Divine purposes, that is, into the order of its uses.

The human body is constituted of natural substance, the same stuff as animals' bodies, and even inanimate things. In regard to the theory of evolution we could say that the Divine (the first, the magnet) came down into the natural world (the ultimate, the filings) and with a constant endeavor seeks to bring natural substance into the form of the Divine, that is, the human form. The *essential* human form is not in the human body; it only represents or images it, just as the iron filings represent or image the invisible magnetic field. *The human form itself is in the Lord, and in that invisible ordering force which proceeds from Him.* This ordering force has been present from the first of creation, and this is how a worm could evolve into a man, if, indeed, such was the case.

In any case, it seems clear that the human form, though a natural form, is also a Divine form. This follows from the teaching of the Writings that the Divine comes down into the outmost of nature and terminates there, and also that the Divine terminates in man. The Divine terminates in nature, but not in the sense of just stopping or coming to rest there, for there is a constant creative endeavor which keeps nature in existence and also strives to raise it up into the human form. The Divine seeks to return, to complete the great circle of life, in nature as a whole as in each human life. So the real termination of the Divine in nature is only in the human form, the highest and most perfect of all natural forms.

I do not mean by this that the various animals, for instance, are only incompletely formed humans. They are perfectly formed. But each one represents some human quality, some human affection, and in that sense they are all human forms. And the higher an animal is on the scale of evolution, the more it resembles human

features. The general arrangement of the human face—eyes, nose, and mouth—is common to all mammals, and to a lesser degree even the lower animals. Man is the goal toward which all nature strives.

There is in every man a capacity to be formed, and in one who desires it there is from his infancy to old age a continual formation for heaven, that he may become an angel. This is evident from the law of Divine order that all things should return from ultimates to the first from which they are, as can be seen from every created thing in the world. The seed is the first thing of a tree. From the seed the tree rises out of the earth, puts forth branches, blossoms, produces fruit, and stores up seed therein, and thus returns to that from which it was. This is true of every shrub, plant, and flower. Also seed is the first thing of the animal . . . Thus everything in the animal kingdom, like everything in the vegetable, from its first rises to its last, and from its last rises again to its first from which it was.

The same is true of man, but with this difference, that the first of an animal and of a vegetable is natural, consequently when it has risen it relapses into nature; while the first of man is spiritual like his soul, receptive of Divine love and Divine wisdom. And when this is separated from the body, which relapses into nature, it must needs return to the Lord, from whom it has life (Wis. VIII: 5-6).

Human Images in Nature

. . . all things in nature bear relation to the human form...
(AC 10185.2).

I have always been interested in the fact that human features are represented by things in all the kingdoms of nature. Various plants and fruits look like organs of the human body. Does not a walnut, for example, resemble a human skull, complete with a two-lobed brain? There is a kind of fungus that grows on trees that looks exactly like a human ear. Various roots occasionally grow into the form of a hand or even into the form of a whole human body (notably the mandrake and ginseng, but carrots and other roots also). This resemblance between certain plants and parts of the human body was the basis of the medieval Doctrine of Signatures.

People are always discovering stones that look like men (such as the old man of the mountain in New Hampshire). In a general way

trees resemble the human form, and the grain of wood sometimes appears like a human face. No wonder some Christians find visions of Christ in door panels, rocks, and so forth. The pattern of the human face shows up everywhere. The bodies of animals resemble the human body in certain features; especially apes, of course. And every child has enjoyed spotting a giant or some other human figure in the clouds. We have a tendency to see the human form even if it is hardly represented. But if we have a tendency to anthropomorphize, nature itself does also.

How much of this is "projection?" I don't think it matters to the argument, for this tendency to project or see the human form in things is itself part of the evidence that all nature tends toward the human form. We instinctively, as it were, try to mold things into this form in our minds; we try to complete or perfect things in nature which fall short of the human form, and will seize upon the merest suggestion of this form. Why? I think this is from the Lord, and is evidence that the human form is the highest of all forms, and the most perfect physical embodiment of Divine order.

Following are some quotations from a book I have about how the human body is represented in many natural forms:

Granted that we can conceive of ideals behind abstract qualities of beauty, justice, etc., as we can conceive of ideal geometric types behind many of the productions of nature, to what extent can we postulate an ideal, preexistent type for human beings or an archetypal design behind the human form and features?³¹

Tests show that a newborn baby, before it could have learnt by experience to interpret what it sees, responds to the pattern of the human face. Anthropomorphism is built into us and inevitably conditions our view of nature.

Yet it is also a fact, independent of our way of seeing things, that many of nature's products are marked with very obvious masks or face patterns. Such examples as are illustrated here have always puzzled the learned, and many various explanations have been thought up to account for nature's tendencies to reproduce in different contexts the eyes-nose-mouth pattern of human and animal features. Still the mystery remains. We are programmed to see face patterns in our surroundings.

³¹ John Mitchell, *Natural Likeness, Faces and Figures in Nature*, Dutton, 1979, p. 36.

The image of a face appears therefore, in the Jungian sense, to be an archetype, an element in both inner and outer reality, haunting our dreams, conditioning our perception, and contributing also to the shape and appearance of the world around us.³²

The Lord disposed all things into order in His Divine Human (AC 3017). This reestablished order in the spiritual world. The order of the spiritual world, from which the natural exists, is a human order. The Lord Himself is a Man, with eyes, nose, mouth, etc. (DLW 18). And Divine and heavenly order are terminated in man (AC 3632). Considering all this, it is not too surprising that even in inanimate nature we find representations of the human face and body.

Spiritually, of course, there is a correspondence between the uses of natural things and human faculties and conditions. Trees represent men all through the Word. The Lord is called a Rock, and Peter, who represents faith, was also named for a rock. And so on. All things in nature represent the human form spiritually, if not naturally. For the human form is essentially spiritual.

Yet perhaps there is a basis for thinking that the human images seen in nature are from the Divine. All things are created by the Lord, and whatever goes forth from Him bears a likeness of Him (CL 85). This is speaking of good and truth, but perhaps it has a more concrete application, also. The Writings impress upon us that God, being a Man, has a body and everything pertaining to a body... "that is, a face, breast, abdomen, loins and feet... also eyes, ears, nose, mouth and tongue" (DLW 18). So are not the human images in rocks, trees, etc., in a sense images of the Lord? This would be a very specific application of the doctrine that nature represents the Lord.

There may not be much concern in our world with coming into order spiritually, but almost everyone wants to be in order physically. People want to have bodies like Greek gods or goddesses, and will carefully diet and exercise to achieve this goal, as far as possible. But if order is just external, it is only "cosmetic" (a word derived from the Greek word *kosmos*, meaning order). Man is to be a microcosm not just in bodily form, but especially spiritually.

... man is man from his mind; for the mind itself constitutes the man, and such as the mind is, such is the man... [M]an is not man [because of his outward form, or because he can speak or think], but from the fact that he can think what is true and

³² *Ibid.* p. 43

will what is good, and... look up to the Divine and perceptibly receive it. It is in this that man is distinguished from the brute animals (AC 5302).

We are not born human, but become human, as we come into order (see AC 3017, 3632, 8988.3, DLW 270, CL 417, TCR 69). To be truly human is to be in the image and likeness of God. And to "create in the image and likeness of God" means "to confer upon man all things of Divine order from firsts to ultimates, and thus to make him an angel as to the interiors of his mind" (LJ 20).

When Divine order is represented in form it appears as a man; for the Lord, from whom it is, is the only Man... and insofar as angels, spirits, and men receive from Him, that is, so far as they are in good and thence in truth, thus *insofar as they are in His Divine order, so far are they men* (AC 4839; cf. TCR 69).

The last number of *Divine Love and Wisdom* speaks of the primitive form of man in the womb, which is like a little brain. (We are familiar with photographs of the physical beginnings of human life now, such as those by Lennart Nilsson, but in Swedenborg's day such things were unknown, of course. His description sounds like the photos, though—a brain, "a kind of delineation for a face," and "covered round about with a very delicate skin or membrane which was transparent"). But it is noted that the structure of this little brain was in the order and form of heaven *within*, but outwardly was in direct opposition to that order and form (DLW 432). And elsewhere we are told that "when a man becomes a hell the inner or higher parts of his mind are closed up and the outer or lower are opened" (AE 1144.3). The spiritual order of humanity is in the inmost of everyone from the Lord, and the goal of regeneration is to bring us fully into this order, which is the true human form.

The physical human form is the epitome of beauty, though. We sense that it is Divine, and that the body of man is a holy temple. Some of you may have seen the *National Geographic* television program on "The Human Body." The Divine perfection represented in the human body was inspiringly referred to when the narrator spoke these words from Shakespeare while a gymnast performed:

What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!

(To be continued)