

THE BEGINNING

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The wealth of reading materials in the OPUS Archives is challenging; I had intended to limit my search to items relating to creation mythologies. With the incisive aid of Richard Buchen, the OPUS Archives' librarian, I was able to structure my research around the relevant materials I needed for my project, a project that focuses on the beginning of the cosmos, and consequently "first light" and "first time." Particularly useful for me were various papers, articles, and manuscripts contained in boxes 107, 117, 122, 126, 134, 135, 139 (0139), and 142. Occasionally I would discover a manuscript that was subsequently published, but often I would find some very interesting thoughts or writings that were not included in the published form.

Especially useful and relevant were the Joseph Campbell interviews with Sam Keen (in *Psychology Today*, July, 1971) and with Tom Collins in a manuscript dated circa 1982 ["A ritual is the enactment of a myth.... Primitives recover time via rites.... Myths of origin extend the cosmogonic myth.... You'll never get there if you reject your own shadow...."], box 107; Kubera's Realm: Water Cosmologies in box 122; the writings on Jain Mythology ["... those timeless waters of the abyss from which the Universe emerged, and back into which it goes periodically..."], box 017 (0117); various manuscripts of Joseph Campbell in box 135 ["A myth tells us how a thing came to be.... exaltation of beginning in traditional society...."]; in box 142, a manuscript or rough draft of Jane Hollister Wheelwright's The Creative Aspect of the Shadow; Joseph Campbell's The Inner Reaches of Outer Space, New World Library, c 1986, 2002 Joseph Campbell Foundation ["What is this new mythology to be, the mythology of this unified earth as one harmonious being?"]; and Campbell's The Myths of Light, New World Library, c2003 by the Joseph Campbell Foundation.

Possibly the most relevant materials for my project were the twelve lectures (1961-62) in Dr. Marie-Luise von Franz's manuscript for Symbolism of Creation Myths, especially lectures 3, 5, and 9. (Box 117, Jane Hollister and Joseph Wheelwright

Collection.) Following are excerpts that informed both my libretto and the music that supports—and interprets—the libretto.

"In New Zealand cosmogonies 'there are 25 to 30 entities born before the world comes into reality, with concepts such as: whirling in the dark, vague longings, voidness, sexual passion, calling like worms in the dark, swelling.' These were the first creators—innumerable abstract reactions—and only afterwards was reality born. That is the opposite of our form of abstraction, it is the abstraction of the unconscious..." (Page 10, Lecture 3. October 31, 1961.)

"Therefore Jung says that in their ultimate nature archetypes are 'unanschaulich,' just as matter is because it reaches into the fourth dimension." "The unconscious psyche is 'unanschaulich' because the psyche and its images are the only reality immediately given to us, the only reality we can observe." (Page 4, Lecture 5. November 21, 1961.)

"...in one of the most modern theories of the origin of the cosmos we again find the twin motif. There is a cosmogony in modern physics that has been worked out by Jordan and Dirac...in which both start with the idea that the whole cosmos originated from twin particles—from two electrons that were twin particles— there was neither time nor space. As you know, the time-space continuum only comes into existence simultaneously with some content in it, so Jordan-Dirac constructed a cosmogony based entirely on the idea that first there were twin electrons from which the whole cosmic reality originated. In micro physics there is also the fact that there is not a single type of particle which does not have its anti-particle. There is always the anti-particle to each particle, but this goes so far that these two physicists try even to derive the whole cosmic reality from twin electrons. So you see there—but now projected onto matter—the same idea of the twin creators. Though this time it comes as a natural scientific idea and in this new form; yet one can clearly recognize the same archetypal structure behind the idea, for this duality of all conscious-unconscious contexts, as well as particle and anti-particle

shows a striking parallelism. It is therefore not really surprising that there is this duality motif in all man's attempts to describe the basic processes through which our awareness of reality came into existence." *Ibid. Page 5.*

"How things were before there was light we cannot say, they existed and they did not exist. As soon as we say that they exist, they are already doubled, as soon as they enter the field of consciousness they are, and therefore are opposite to 'not being.'" *Ibid. Page 6.*

"... In the earliest ages of the god
From what was not arose what is." [from a verse in the Rigveda, English translation]
Ibid. Page 1.1

{Author's note: Since Jordan-Dirac and their twin electron theory was proposed much has changed in physics, from further sophistication in quantum theory—Hawking et al to String Theory, Wheeler, et al. It is neither my intention nor is it within my capacities to contradict Jordan-Dirac.}

There seems little opposition among scientists that the Big Bang was the beginning and the cause of the resulting light and time as we "know" them. Because "shadow" is an effect created by light, and because I wanted to learn more about the importance of light in ancient creation stories and its importance to the birth of our world, I was led more deeply into the relevant resources of the OPUS Archives in my search for those writings and interpretations of these phenomena. The "lyric images" I devised to describe the Big Bang, and as informed by my research in the Archives, occur about midway in my composition: "There was a great noise of light, and time began, wrapped in the shadow of new light..." I interpreted this great occurrence musically with a soft-as-possible (PPPP) passage scored for soprano solo, female choir, and pipe organ. In the libretto I created the first half is concerned with what was *Not yet* there; e.g. "There was no Father...No Mother...no time, nor light...There was Nothing...." (See above, page 6, "How things were before....")

Most musicologists agree that the earliest music was an element of a ritual, or possibly, the principle ritual itself. In western music we see this to be especially true in regards to religious music, the Catholic High Mass in particular. Even in today's concert music the element of ritual remains an important component. In popular music it is perhaps more apparent, although it is mainly secular in nature. That "ritual is the enactment of a myth" seems most evident in creation rituals and/or myths. In my attempt to "musically interpret" our contemporary creation story, the Big Bang, I have incorporated this element of ritual into the musical landscape of The Beginning. This has been done through the use of musical (and textual) repetition: harmonic fields and resolutions, rhythmic cells and textures, and melodic motifs and units. I firmly believe that repetition is the glue that holds music (and ritual) together.

It is virtually impossible to describe music *a priori*, and I won't try to do so here with the music of The Beginning. In order to musically "picture" the beginning of the Universe -- which occurred in less than a billionth of a second -- I began by designing the music for a very large and varied ensemble: full orchestra, female choir, pipe organ, 2 88-note MIDI Keyboards, and a solo soprano.

The piece begins in a state of total, yet structured, chaos, where everything (all of the music that will unfold over the next 30 or so minutes) is simultaneously present. This beginning could be interpreted as the first of three Big Bangs that take place in the course of the composition. The libretto that emerges from this chaos describes only what was not present before there was time: "...There was no Sun, no sky to hold the light."

The music begins to form "pockets" of intelligibility, perhaps signifying (through sound) the gradual formations of galaxies, eventually resolving in our own Milky Way galaxy. Then from "deep within the Nothing" the "great noise" mentioned earlier begins the second part of the libretto, which describes what was created in

the ions that follow: ..."from the light, in-and time, stars were made, and clusters of many suns..."

As the piece draws to a close, the duality ("there is always the anti-particle to each particle") of all things natural is expressed in the libretto, eventually coming to Man-Woman, Good-Evil, Love-Hate. And just as the composition began in chaos, so it ends, but not with another "big bang." Rather it ends with a sonic expression of curiosity. Is there an end? Or continuous beginnings?

"Before the sea was, and the lands, and the sky that hangs over all, the face of nature showed alike in her whole round, which state men have called chaos: a rough, unordered mass of things, nothing at all..."

Ovid. Metamorphoses I. 5-20

Quoted by Joseph Campbell

"The Creative Void." MSS

Early in my visits to the OPUS Archives I happened upon a graph-like drawing of a "quadrant" space that Campbell had done for a book he was writing. I dreamed about the drawing and what I believed it depicted musically (music often comes to me, initially, in dreams). It was laid out in the manner of a map, somewhat similar to the Navaho sand painting, "Place of the Snake Pollen People" that Campbell references in The Mythic Image, p. 188. Princeton University Press. 1974.

He writes: "The center is blue water with bands of white foam, and the colors of the four Snake Pollen People are those of the four directions: white, the East; blue, the South; yellow, the West, and black, the North. The white figure is male and is named Snake Tracks; the blue, female, is Blue Sky; the yellow, male, is called Where They Built the Fire; and the black, female, is Rain Came Over Where Fire Is..."

In my dream I had imagined four separate "songs," each of which is a complete entity with its own "lyric" and music.. The text unfolds linearly, one song connecting to the one previous as well as those following. It becomes a musical circle, then a

sphere as the passage gathers additional textures, one superimposed on the one before. Once all four songs have been performed individually they are joined together to form a "fifth" song, which by then is supported by all the forces of the orchestra, choir, and soloists as the composition gathers force towards what will become "the ending." Its structure is similar to that of the "Place of the Snake Pollen People," as well as that of "The Gods of the Five World Directions," the Pre-Columbian painting as explained by Campbell in his *The Mythic Image*. *Ibid.* p. 187. In this image the god is in the center of the four directions (picturing four different birds on top of four trees of four colors), or as imaged in my composition, the fifth song comprised of the totals of the four individual songs. Below is the lay-out of the four lyrics, and below that, the fifth, or composite lyric of all four song lyrics.

I. Time began,

II. Wrapped in shadows of new light...

III. Clusters of many stars (appeared),

IV. Then the sun appeared.

[I. - IV. Time clusters began, then, wrapped in the shadows of many stars, new sun light appeared.]

Just as the known four dimensions of our Universe are in a constant symbiotic relationship with one another, so too are the six major art forms: music, theater, dance (where the fourth dimension is more important in that these are structured within a "fixed" block of time), literature, the visual arts (architecture, painting, sculpture, photography, etc.) and, since its emergence in the early 20th century, film (now, plus video and media arts), which encompasses (and often utilizes) the five previous art forms.

As a composer who has also studied film composition in college and who has made a number of short films, I often employ the techniques of film making, and especially film editing, in my musical compositions...quick cuts, montage, lap dissolves, et al.

I believe that, for example, photography had a huge impact on Picasso's and others' paintings early in the last century. I once heard David Hockney explain the genesis and thought behind the making of one of his "photo montage" pieces, a picture of a single chair (Van Gogh Chair). He began by taking numerous photographs of the chair and all its "parts," from every conceivable angle. Next he cut and pasted these photographic images in such a way that the viewer could then see the chair three dimensionally on a two-dimensional plane. He said that the idea came from observing Picasso's portrait paintings wherein the subject's face and other body parts are rearranged in space so that the viewer can experience it as a fully three-dimensional image. The viewer can see the side of the face and body at the same time as seeing the front or back.

When I first encountered some of Hockney's photo collages (in the 1980s) Pear Blossom Highway, 1986, Paint Trolley, 1985, and Merced River, Yosemite Valley, 1982, were of particular interest. It wasn't until I heard Hockney explain his process, and his debt to Picasso, that I began to imagine that this imaging process of creating three-dimensional pictures—without traditional perspective playing an important role—might also be possible in "simulating" in a work of music. But it wasn't until I began to explore the source materials of my libretto for The Beginning that these past encounters coalesced into a potentially workable approach. (An approach that does not employ traditional modes of musical form.) However, just as Picasso and Hockney continued to use space, line, and color, so do I still use rhythm, melody, and harmony. (Hopefully in a new and comprehensible manifestation for the listener.)

"It would be very interesting to preserve photographically not the stages, but the metamorphoses of a picture. Possibly one might then discover the path followed by the brain in materializing a dream. But there is one very odd thing -- to notice that basically a picture doesn't change, that the first vision remains almost intact, in spite of appearances."

"Everything interesting in art happens right at the start. Once past the beginning you're already at the end."

Pablo Picasso. Quoted by John Berger. Success and Failure of Picasso. p. 35 Penguin Books Ltd. 1965.

"...For some time I have been rather pleased with my own work, because I think that at last I am entering on a period of realization. What's more I've been able to test my progress: formerly when I started a picture I was satisfied at the beginning and dissatisfied at the end. Now the beginning is always rotten and I loathe it, but the end, as a rule, is a pleasant surprise."

Juan Gris. Quoted by Berger, pp. 34-35. Ibid.

It is interesting how these two great Spanish painters differ so much regarding the genesis of their artwork. Picasso believed that a painting (or sculpture) was complete at its beginning, or remaining essentially what it was at its beginning, perhaps even at its conception. Gris believed that his paintings changed or developed from beginning to end. Both men were correct because they both believed in what they observed about their own processes.

A year ago, I would have agreed wholeheartedly with Picasso as it relates to my own work process. When I wrote my proposal for the Opus Archive grant I had already worked out a complete scheme/structure for the entire composition. I could even hear much of it in my mind's ear. I devised what I thought a near perfect ensemble for the task at hand. I only lacked a libretto to begin orchestrating my musical thoughts. But, after a few visits to the OPUS Archives it became apparent to me that many of my preconceived musical notions would have to become more organic. For example, I began to re imagine the ending of the composition. Originally I had planned to build an ending that was a "retrograde inversion" of the beginning of the work. I had intended to musically portray the universe as ending in a reverse of its beginning, or as an oscillating entity, forever beginning and forever ending. (I am

aware that there is no observable evidence yet that the universe has begun to contract. In fact, quite the opposite is true; the universe continues to expand.)

"What is it that keeps the varied life of the universe going?..... It is the transformation of energy from a more available to a less available form; it is the running downhill of energy...And so, the universe cannot go on forever; sooner or later the time must come when its last erg of energy has reached the lowest rung on the ladder of descending availability, and at this moment the active life of the universe must cease.... We are left with a dead, although possibly warm, universe... a 'heat death.' Such is the teaching of modern thermodynamics."

Sir James Jeans.

The Universe Around Us

The Macmillan Company, New York revised edition, 1931. pp. 316-317

Quoted by Joseph Campbell

"The Creative Void." MSS 133N, Also titled "The Mythological Void" in a later version of the manuscript.