

## Second Chorus

He shall ascend Parnassus awake and find his soul: 110  
 Proteus shall work unsleeping for ever, and forms shall  
   flow  
 As the meanings of words a poet has mastered. It shall  
   be so  
 That Zeus shall abandon to Cronos the antique starry  
   crown,  
 And softly out of Olympus the high gods shall come  
   down  
 Shedding ambrosial fragrance in clouds that for ever  
   abide, 115  
 And earth shall be covered with blushes and make  
   herself sweet as a bride.  
 And her light shall be liquid as honey, her air taste good  
   like bread  
 In the mouths of them that dwell upon earth, and all  
   shall be fed.

—Curtain—

FINIS

## PROGRAM NOTE FOR THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

*The following observations appeared on the Program when ORPHEUS was first performed, in Sheffield, at the Little Theatre, from the twentieth through the twenty-fifth of September, 1948.*

Most people have heard of the central event in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. They know of the condition under which he was permitted to rescue his wife from the lower regions and of his failure to observe it. But the surrounding mythology is much less familiar. There is, for instance, nothing in Gluck's lovely opera to suggest that Eurydice was a Nereid. In Virgil's fourth *Georgic* the well-known story occurs as the centerpiece in another story, that of Aristaeus and the loss and restoration of his bees. It is in fact told to Aristaeus by Proteus, when the former consults him to ascertain the cause of the disaster and its proper remedy.

The framework of my play is the whole of the story told by Virgil. The play presents the story primarily for its own sake, but since it is a myth, the true dramatic shape and development lie as much in the sequence of images as in the incidents and characters as such. A single sequence progresses from incidents of which Orpheus is the central figure to others of which Aristaeus is the central figure. One way of putting the matter would be to say that the true *hero* of the play is represented in the persons of both Orpheus and Aristaeus. But now for the story itself.

Eurydice, a Nereid, one of the fifty daughters of the sea-god Nereus, is wooed and won by Orpheus, who is the son of Apollo by the Muse Calliope. Their joy in each other is paradisaic, while it lasts, but Orpheus, inevitably, begins to impart to the vaguely conscious water-being, his wife, some of that reflective self-consciousness which made him a musician and poet and without which (as he points out to her) he would never have been able to single her out as his bride. Eurydice learns her lesson with enthusiasm. She even seeks to dwell on ecstatic experience by deliberately interrupting and repeating it, and it is while she has momentarily left Orpheus with this object in view that she is seen and pursued by Aristaeus, another son of Apollo by the water nymph Cyrene. In her flight she is bitten by a serpent and dies.

She is conveyed by Charon to Hades (the name, both of the lower regions and of their tyrannical ruler) but arrives there in a condition of sleep. Hades seeks to awaken her, but it proves impossible. He declares that, when she does awaken, she must be judged and placed in chains like his other subjects. But Persephone, his queen (who is a goddess partly of the nether world and partly of the upper air), insists that when that happens, Eurydice shall be allowed to proceed to Elysium, the abode of the blessed. The dispute is left unresolved.

Crushed by his bereavement, Orpheus seeks consolation in his power of song, and such is the beauty of his music that the birds and wild beasts assemble to listen to it. Beneath its spell they are moved to utter a language which Orpheus is able to understand. It teaches him the beauty and wisdom of renunciation, and he promises, for their sake rather than his own, to visit the realm of Hades, in order to seek the aid of Persephone.

He visits that realm and, expecting to be confronted with Persephone, in fact encounters the shade of Eurydice, whom his voice arouses for the first time from the condition of sleep in which she has been sunken since her death. Her touch reawakens all his renounced personal passion. Chains are at once fastened on Eurydice, against which Persephone protests to Hades. Moved, as he says, by the beauty of Orpheus's song and desirous of pleasing his Queen, Hades agrees to allow Eurydice to return to earth, but he and Persephone together impose on the lovers the condition that Orpheus shall lead the way to the upper air and shall not look back upon Eurydice till the journey is accomplished. With the help of his spy, Ascalaphus (recently transformed by Persephone into an owl), Hades takes care that the poet shall fail to fulfill these terms. Eurydice is snatched back into the shades and Orpheus returns to earth once more alone.

He is no longer followed by the animals. Nature has deserted him, and with dull despair, he finds that even his power of music has gone. He sings, but the songs are banal or sophisticated, and he knows it. The Maenads, followers of the wine-god Dionysus, are incensed alike by his idiotic constancy to the mere memory of Eurydice (which makes him decline the renewal of living inspiration they can offer) and by rumours of his indulgence in unnatural practices. Excited by a piece of crude but all too significant ritual, half serious, half burlesque, as well as by the drunken orgy which preceded it, they fall upon Orpheus and tear him limb from limb.

Meanwhile disaster of a different kind has overtaken Aristaeus. His bees, on which he relied for a livelihood, have all died of famine or disease. Destitute and hopeless, he decides to implore the help of his mother Cyrene, and he visits her accordingly at the source of the sacred river Peneus, where she dwells with her sister nymphs. It was into this river that the Maenads, or the Satyr who led them, had flung the head of the dismembered Orpheus, and when the nymphs discover it there, it utters the name of his beloved. When she has heard Aristaeus' story, Cyrene, after pouring a libation to Oceanus, is able to advise him to consult Proteus, a sea-god older and wiser than Nereus and possessing, like him, the faculty of changing himself into every conceivable shape. Acting upon the sea-god's advice, Aristaeus sacrifices a bull to the shade of Eurydice, and thereupon a miracle is wrought and his bees are restored to him in richer measure than before.

"If bees were always bees and nothing more," as Hades has remarked in Act II, Scene i, that would be all the story, but the bees had a way of carrying sunlight down from the upper air into the nether regions, a process which could end only in breaking down the barrier between the two worlds. It had begun to crumble a little before the story opens—a fact of which both Hades and, in his different way, Charon showed an uneasy awareness. The final choruses suggest that the dykes are down at last, and among them are heard the voices of Orpheus and Eurydice, joyous now, for Orpheus has found again both his music and his beloved.

That is the story, and Eurydice will find this account of it more than enough. Before I add any more, let me emphasise that it is the lady whom I am really concerned to please. If she should be delighted—even satisfied—not otherwise, I shall consider the play a success. The Orpheus in the Spectator's mind will be pondering over a *significatio* or inner meaning of some sort. I must tell him, not that there is no such thing, but that there is no single one. The figures of Greek mythology are so rich in imaginative potentiality that anyone who welcomes a few of them into his own imagination, with its twentieth-century furniture, will find that there is no need to go out of his way to hunt for modern instances and applications. Rather they come crowding so thick and fast that he is positively embarrassed by them. I think, however, that while I was working on this play, the figure of Orpheus came to stand, in some degree, for the

practice of reflection on experience and its results. All conscious nature has experiences of pleasure and pain. Man alone can deliberately will the *repetition* of an experience. And repetition, experienced as such, is at the heart, for good and evil, of his faculty of reasoning, and thus makes possible his language, his art, his morality, and indeed his humanity. Yet it is the enemy of life, for repetition is itself the principle, not of life but of mechanism.

A—what shall I say?—a root-concept of this nature has a way of showing its face beneath many widely separated realms of human experience. Especially if you *give* it a face, by allowing it to coalesce with a living figure such as that of Orpheus. I at any rate seemed to see that countenance peeping through such things as: music and poetry, the relation between man and woman, the relation between mankind and the world of nature, the progress or regress of civilisation, the fall of man and his morality, psychology, the history of the Romantic Movement, and the mystery of death and resurrection. And the lacerated look which it wore seemed to me to express the tragedy inherent in human destiny itself. The number “two” was regarded as sacred to the god Hades, and it was perhaps natural that I should conceive the place Hades as the region where the principle of lifeless repetition has triumphed, where Sisyphus’s stone rolls back to him with the regularity of clockwork, and where the innocent voluptuousness which Orpheus had awakened in Eurydice, and his own tendency to substitute for her personal “otherness” a mere wraith fabricated by the devil and his own desires, have both been carried by Tantalus to their logical conclusion (“logical” indeed) in sub-humanity. Whether it was equally natural to relate this place as closely as I have done to the *upper* world, as we know it today, the world of our highly abstract and therefore increasingly totalitarian and mechanized civilisation, may be disputed. The play was written before 1939. Those who can accept the convention will, I hope, feel with me that for us too, there are signs, faint enough no doubt, of an imminent crumbling of the stern barrier between that dreary place and what corresponds with the “upper air” of myth.

OWEN BARFIELD

## Afterword

Since Mr. Barfield began his Foreword to *Orpheus* with an anecdote of its genesis, it seems fitting, *sub specie polaritatis*, that my Afterword begin with an anecdote of its regeneration. In the summer of 1973, with the aid of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities—whose support is here gratefully acknowledged—I was doing some literary research in England. In connection with that project (which was chiefly concerned with the work of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien), I spent more than a week with Owen Barfield, inquiring into Inklings and related matters. During the course of my visit, Barfield’s own literary productions came in for a good deal of discussion. But though I made many discoveries—correspondence with C. S. Lewis and others, numerous essays then out of print and not readily available, and a fair amount of unpublished poetry—I learned nothing at all about *Orpheus*. And though I reproach myself for my lack of enterprise, Barfield must share the responsibility, for he scrupulously avoided mentioning any of his fictive offspring. Indeed, his other major early poems, *Riders on Pegasus* and *The Unicorn*, not to mention several other plays, a novel, and a novella, continued to elude my search and are only now being given the attention they deserve.

I came across my first clue to the existence of *Orpheus* only several weeks later, in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University, where I was investigating the miscellaneous correspondence of C. S. Lewis. (The main C. S. Lewis archives are in the Wade Collection of the Wheaton College Library, but the Bodleian has, besides photocopies of the Wade material, a substantial collection of original letters and manuscripts. For making this material available to me, and for assisting my circumlocutious researches, I owe a substantial debt of gratitude to the librarians of the Duke Humphrey Reading Room, and to the Reverend Walter Hooper.) Since I was primarily interested in Tolkien’s relation to the Inklings, *via* Lewis, the clue aforemen-

tioned almost escaped my notice entirely. In one of Lewis's letters to Barfield, dated December 16, 1947, my attention was briefly captured by the following obscure allusion: "I am delighted about Orpheus." Being unable to make anything of this cryptic aside, I thought little enough about it at the time and merely noted it for future reference.

My first solid lead turned up only two days later, in a photocopy of a letter that Clyde Kilby, then curator of the Wade Collection, had discovered "with other letters attached . . . to Owen Barfield's ms. 'Orpheus.'" The undated letter was, in essentials, the Note on *Orpheus* that is printed on the back cover of the present volume, followed by two postscripts: "Why do I feel a cad to be writing blurbs for you?" and "It is better than I remembered. How can they *not* see?"

This unmistakable intimation of hitherto unsuspected treasure was at last sufficient to awaken my interest, and I resolved to sift the matter of *Orpheus* to its bottom. Since I was reluctant to trouble Mr. Barfield with vague suspicions, and since the circumstances of my discovery appealed even more powerfully to my extracurricular interest in detective fiction than to my professional instincts, I postponed an immediate appeal to the author. In the true fashion of fictional detectives in quest of Orphic mysteries, I set out by indirections to find directions out, or at least to discover as much as I could on my own before appealing to authority. My circumspection was abundantly rewarded the next day as I was exploring Barfield's correspondence with Sir George Rostover Hamilton. Following a letter dated 27 December 1948 was a Programme Ticket for the Little Theatre production of *Orpheus*, which had been performed from the twentieth through the twenty-fifth of September. Besides Lewis's "blurb" (slightly emended), it contains Barfield's original commentary on the play, which is reprinted (slightly emended) in the present volume.

Lest I should be thought singularly obtuse, I should perhaps observe at this point that I did inquire whether the Bodleian had a copy of the play. Lewis's blurb had in fact been quite sufficient to prompt such an inquiry, especially in the light of its Wheatonian context. But the arrangement with Wheaton College which provided for the duplication of Lewis's materials did not extend in general to Barfield's productions. So I was forced to fall back on more direct methods. The loss of aesthetic detachment was,

however, more than compensated by the revelation which ensued.

Feeling that I now had sufficient evidence to warrant an accusation—What's all this about a play? Why was I not told?—I called Barfield on the telephone and confronted him with my facts. He immediately confessed to having written such a play, and under further questioning he admitted that he might have a copy lying about somewhere in his study. ("Confessed" is of course an hyperbole, a license inspired by the metaphor of detective fiction, but it is only a slight exaggeration of Barfield's initial reluctance to have the whole question of *Orpheus* brought to light again.) When I asked him if I might see it, he graciously consented, and though it was his only copy, he even went so far as to allow me to carry it back with me to this country. Though I was somewhat reassured by the existence of that other copy in Wheaton, I literally did not allow the typescript out of my sight.

My first reading of the play, on the plane back to the States, struck me with the force of a revelation; though I was more or less prepared for an exceptional insight into Barfield's genius, nothing that he or Lewis had said about the play quite prepared me for the immediate experience of it, or for the shock of recognition: here is the evolution of consciousness made flesh, the thing itself in human form, the myth made fact as imaginative experience. As I began to digest this experience, I felt almost at once that the play should be—must be—published. When I reread the play, in somewhat more leisurely fashion, my first impulse grew into a settled conviction: if Barfield himself were reluctant to pursue the matter, I would seek to do so myself and to make whatever practical arrangements were necessary. And so it fell out. When I first raised the question with him, he expressed "an invincible repugnance to pushing that or any other verse" of his. Fortunately, his repugnance did not extend to my attempting to have *Orpheus* published: "Naturally I should be glad all the same to see it in print, and if you really feel the inclination, time and energy to have a shot, well . . . more power to your elbow!"

Granted this license, I resolved to become a sort of Orphic midwife, *et redactor et bucinator Orpheos*, and so began to shape myself by degrees into a species of editor *cum* literary agent. The editorial and critical parts of my enterprise—correcting the typescript and writing about the play—were an unalloyed

delight. I even prided myself that I had occasionally helped the author to clarify his intention. The sustained attention which I was compelled to give to the details of the text served only to nourish, and was itself nourished by, my attempt to form a coherent critical assessment of the whole. As *Orpheus* became more and more a part of my own imaginative life, and I began to feel that I was in some measure participating in its recreation, I was often led to recall Lewis's pithy observation: "It is better than I remembered." And Barfield's response to all of this was even more deeply gratifying. Besides flattering me with the suggestion that I had more than once penetrated to the true mystery of the play, he expressed very powerfully his own quickening interest in bringing *Orpheus* once more to light: "Your letter," he wrote at one point, has "agitated me! *Orpheus* is not used to being taken so earnestly. What he *is* used to is being forgotten all about. Result: there is a kind of Rip van Winkle resuscitation of an old Barfield of the late '30s going on, which is of course not unpleasurable, but is certainly agitating."

The rest of the story is now more or less a matter of historical record: you hold the result in your hand. And there my tale of fortune would have its natural ending, but for the fact that I have incurred further debts of gratitude which I am delighted to acknowledge. My greatest debt is to Professor Thomas Kranidas, for his encouragement and for bringing *Orpheus* to the attention of the Lindisfarne Press. As plans for publication were being brought into shape, I found it necessary to revise my own commentary, to bring it up to date, to clarify some of its accidental obscurities, and to flesh out some of the sketchier connections I had tried to draw between *Orpheus* and Barfield's other work. In this research I was greatly assisted, materially by a Humanities Grant from the University of Arizona, and spiritually by the wisdom of Professor Georg Tennyson and the generous enthusiasm of Professor Jane Hipolito. In point of fact, Professor Hipolito's assistance was also material, since she allowed me to peruse, and to plunder, her extensive bibliography of Barfield's work.

Finally, having sought to thank those whose kindness and generosity have assisted and encouraged my own efforts, and to acknowledge the active industry of those who have made this celebration possible, I have still to thank the founder of the feast. Perhaps the most useful way to express my gratitude to Mr. Barfield for having created *Orpheus* is to reflect briefly on the

nature of his achievement, and to measure the peculiar, poetic excellence of *Orpheus* against the general quality of his other published writings.

Inasmuch as it reflects a similar depth of imaginative insight, the *Orpheus* is clearly of a piece with all of Barfield's other major work; its essence is the rediscovery, the recreation, of meaning. What G. B. Tennyson has recently said of *History, Guilt and Habit* (1979) is no less true of *Orpheus*: "It is meaning that Barfield gives back to us in the face of all the contemporary assertions that meaning has fled forever." At the same time, however, *Orpheus* possesses an immediacy of imaginative appeal which renders it unique; its meaning is not so much achieved by the reader as given in his immediate experience. More than any of Barfield's other published work, *Orpheus* is fully mythopoeic, not because it is about a myth, but because it is the imaginative recreation of myth itself as an immediate experience. Though the play has been shaped by, and is in some sense the expression of, Barfield's ideas about myth, it is not *about* those ideas. It is, rather, a poetic reincarnation of myth itself, a concrete embodiment of the poet's imaginative life discovered in the myth. And for this reason, the play is easier to grasp, as an experience, than Barfield's other work.

With the exception of certain relatively minor efforts, like *The Silver Trumpet* (1925) and *This Ever Diverse Pair* (1950), the great majority of Barfield's published work is characterized by a certain argumentative density. Even a relatively popular work like *History in English Words* (1925) makes an unremitting demand on the reader's imaginative participation. And it is this quality, I think, which makes his work seem difficult: his basic assumptions must be actively grasped rather than merely acquiesced in. Once one has got hold of his argument, it is easy enough to follow; in the graceful medium of Barfield's style, even the most complex ideas become lucid, without losing any of their evocative subtlety. Indeed, the argument becomes prognostic: one finds oneself anticipating the sort of development that will come next. But getting hold of the argument may be another matter altogether. Barfield's conception of mind, and of the subject-object relation *within* the mind, is radically at odds with some of our most widely held assumptions about the nature of things. Moreover, his ultimate appeal is not to the understanding or the senses but to imagination and reason; we are called upon again and again to produce in ourselves that

very act of imagination which is the principal subject of investigation.

That crucial act of imagination is both the method and the aim of all Barfield's work. As he cheerfully proclaims in his introduction to *The Rediscovery of Meaning* (1977), he is "always really saying the same thing over and over again." And as he goes on to emphasize, "the 'same thing' that is always being reaffirmed is the importance of penetrating to the antecedent unity underlying apparent or actual fragmentation" (p. 3). Another name for that "antecedent unity" is *polarity*, grasped as an immediate fact of imaginative experience. And polarity, Barfield teaches us, is not a mere duality of opposite quantities, a Cartesian abstraction of mind from matter; it is rather the concrete interpenetration of contrary qualities, as a subject become its own object in the act of self-discovery. And that self-discovery is what Barfield means by the evolution of consciousness. When we experience in ourselves the polar transformation of unconscious inspiration into conscious imagination, we begin to grasp the historical evolution of consciousness as a growth of potential into actual meaning. Thus, as it were by degrees, the experience which Barfield describes in *Poetic Diction* (1928) as a "felt change of consciousness" (p. 48) is transformed into the active imagination of polarity, and that imagination leads him to evolve his seminal insight into evolution itself as a metamorphosis of potential into actual form.

This two-fold emphasis on polarity and the evolution of consciousness can be discerned in Barfield's writings almost from the first. In the unpublished correspondence with C. S. Lewis, which Lionel Adey explores in his monograph on the *Great War*, we observe Barfield's repeated attempts to ascertain the polar relation between subject and object, to perceive them as mutually interdependent parts evolved from an organic whole. At the same time we can begin to glimpse the way this organic polarity expresses itself, historically, as an evolution of unconscious into conscious meaning. This semantic evolution is the primary concern of *History in English Words*; as Professor Tennyson observes, its argument is grounded in "the peculiarly Barfieldian insight amounting to a discovery that the history of language contains within it a record of the evolution of human consciousness." Underlying this historical process, of course, is the polarity of language itself, the metaphoric tension between image and idea. And that is the primary subject of *Poetic Diction*,

which "claims to present, not merely a theory of poetic diction, but a theory of poetry: and not merely a theory of poetry, but a theory of knowledge" (p. 14). Among the many insights afforded by Barfield's argument is the crucial perception that mental activities which we ordinarily take to be discrete, as prosaic analysis and poetic synthesis, are in fact interdependent, and that it is only through their interpenetration that we are able to construct the "real world" of our objective experience. So it is that genuine knowledge, as distinct from superficial understanding, always requires the participation of the knower in the known.

Participation is, of course, the central idea of *Saving the Appearances* (1957). Where the primary theme of *Poetic Diction* is the capacity of imagination to recreate the past in the present moment of aesthetic awareness, as a polarity between the meaning "given" in language itself and its present metaphoric extension into new meaning, *Saving the Appearances* takes our awareness of history itself as its principal subject; it explores the power of language "to mediate transition from the unindividualized, dreaming spirit that carried the infancy of the world to the individualized human spirit, which has the future in its charge" (*Poetic Diction*, p. 23). And it is this sense of the present as a polarity of past and future which gives Barfield's historical study of Coleridge its peculiar relevance to our own epistemological concerns. For Barfield's description of Coleridge's thinking is also an apt description of *What Coleridge Thought* (1971): it is itself a "radical critique of one or two major presuppositions, upon which the immediate thinking, and as a result the whole cultural and social structure of this 'epoch of the understanding and the senses' (including supposedly radical revolts against it) is so firmly—or is it now infirmly?—established" (p. 11).

Broadly speaking, Barfield's other books can be thought of as so many attempts to suggest the relevance of his ideas to the cultural and social issues of modern life, to remind us again and again that our consciousness has evolved out of earlier forms of awareness, and to insist that the tension between external nature and our inward experience of it, a tension which we commonly experience as an alienating dichotomy of matter and mind, is in fact a polarity, recoverable in conscious experience as an interpenetration of object and subject. The essays in *Romanticism Comes of Age* (1944; enlarged 1966) elaborate one of the central propositions underlying the collective argument of

*History in English Words, Poetic Diction, and Saving the Appearances*: that the Romantics first sought to do consciously what primitive man had done unconsciously, to participate in their phenomena. A mature Romantic outlook, grounded especially in what Coleridge thought, seeks to unite "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" (p. 21). *Worlds Apart* (1963) speaks directly to that predicament. Seeking to break down the "watertight compartments" which characterize so much modern thought, it employs Socratic dialogue as a means to heal our fragmented consciousness. Evolving through mere dualities of conflicting viewpoints, the dialogue struggles toward a polar interpenetration of ideas, and so toward the central Barfieldian affirmation that imaginative participation "through the symbol in the symbolized" (p. 207) is the ground of human consciousness: "Thinking," as the anthroposophist Sanderson says, "becomes conscious in me to the extent that I make it my act" (p. 174). And this act is the starting point for *Unancestral Voice* (1965). The essential polarity of consciousness is first aphorized—"interior is anterior"—and then developed into a vision of evolution as a spiritual process actively wrought by a "transforming agent." As in *Saving the Appearances*, the Incarnation is contemplated as the central moment in human history: the antecedent Unity of unities, "the uncreated light, the untransformed transforming, entered [the human] consciousness [of Jesus] and became also the Christ of history" (p. 113).

If this crucial moment of realized consciousness suggests a movement of imagination toward mystical vision, the remaining books polarize this tendency by applying mystical insight to issues more immediately practical, more obviously relevant to the dilemmas of modern secular life. *Speaker's Meaning* (1967) explores the polar relation between expression and communication in order to disclose the evolved, "constricted" consciousness of modern man and to suggest present uses of the creative imagination to expand our awareness once again, to recover, by recreating, the meaning that is given in language itself. *The Rediscovery of Meaning and Other Essays* explores various directions—spiritual, aesthetic, scientific, social—in which our awareness might be expanded. In the various matters of which it treats—psychology, philosophy, and religion—Bar-

field's imagination seeks always to penetrate to that "interior unity informing the *disjecta membra*" (p. 7) of our mental, psychic, and social experience, and to ground itself in "the concrete realities of nature and human nature" (p. 215). And *History, Guilt and Habit* is even more insistently relevant in its central insight, that our responsibility for our own evolution, and for the evolution of all Nature, "will only be discharged, if at all, not by tinkering with the outside of the world but by changing it, slowly enough no doubt, from the inside" (p. 92).

Freedom, responsibility, the transformation of unconscious impulse into conscious volition—these themes, as they are focused by the idea of polarity and directed toward the evolution of our consciousness, suggest the pervasive relevance of Barfield's prophetic insight into the crucial issues of our time. If we will know the truth, he argues, and only if we participate actively in our knowing, as makers rather than mere spectators, we shall be able to liberate ourselves from the prison of ignorance and self-deception. That is relevance with a vengeance—more reality, perhaps, than mankind can easily bear. Barfield's crucial significance, however, is not to be defined by the timeliness with which he addresses specific issues of current concern— isolation, alienation, and consequent guilt, or the dehumanization of man by technological abstraction and our possibly consequent reduction to atomic dust. In many of these areas, indeed, Barfield has anticipated our current crises, as prophets are wont to do. As the *Orpheus* makes clear, for example, he foresaw the actual, radical evil of totalitarianism before it was made flesh in Nazi Germany. Long before Creationism became fodder for our journalistic cannons, Barfield was pointing out the radical inconsistencies in the popular, Darwinian view of evolution. He has indeed been reading the signs of our times, and he may have helped to create, as well as to foresee, some of our present dissatisfactions with positivistic ways of thinking. But this way of signifying his relevance is suggestive rather than definitive. The root of the whole matter, as Barfield has repeatedly said, is his attempt to develop in himself, and to encourage in his readers, that genial power of imagination which alone enables consciousness to penetrate our experience of the world and ourselves in order to reach what lies behind it, to discover the meaning of our existence. For this purpose, the participation of mankind in its own creation, only a truly liberated imagination will serve, an imagination at once

deeply in tune with its origins, in the life of nature, and at the same time fully conscious of its individual responsibility for recreating nature. And as Barfield said in *Saving the Appearances*, "it is of the very nature of imagination that it cannot be inculcated. There must be first of all the voluntary stirring from within. It must be, not indeed self-created, but certainly self-willed" (p. 179). And for imagination to be willed effectively, it must be awakened, so that it becomes a fully conscious activity.

The great advantage of *Orpheus*, from this point of view, is that it does not immediately require any such *conscious* effort. Imagination cannot be inculcated, but it can be, in some measure, *inspired* by aesthetic experience. The "felt change of consciousness" which Barfield explores in *Poetic Diction* is inherently progenitive: it can reproduce itself in our imagination, as if by a kind of unconscious imitation, and as an immediate experience rather than as a reflection upon that experience. And so it is with *Orpheus*: simply as an imagined experience it embodies, in Coleridge's phrase, "the mind's self-experience in the act of thinking," not reflectively, as an argument about, but immediately, as the experience of a subject which is its own object. *Orpheus* is not an exposition of Barfield's ideas but a concrete embodiment of his thinking, in which the reader's participation is implicit.

To assist that participation, however, it may be useful to recall the substance of Barfield's thinking about the nature of consciousness. A brief recapitulation of *Saving the Appearances* is perhaps the best way to achieve that end, for it is both the most comprehensive development of Barfield's ideas and their most concise expression. For our present purpose it has the further advantage that its argument is most nearly analogous to the action of *Orpheus*. For just as *Orpheus* progresses from unconscious, dreaming awareness to full waking consciousness, so *Saving the Appearances* is an "outline sketch . . . for a history of human consciousness" (p. 13). Barfield traces the evolution of consciousness, and its corollary, the evolution of phenomena, from what he calls "original participation," through "non-participating," objective thought, to the possibility of "final participation." In original participation man experiences phenomena as representations of an immaterial other; his relation to appearances is not merely external, through the senses, but internal, through the spirit in which he participates. Objective thinking does not participate in phenomena, does not experience its

phenomena as representative of anything; the only conscious relation that the mind has with objects is through the senses. Final participation re-establishes an extra-sensory relation between the mind and phenomena; appearances are self-consciously perceived as representations of man himself, of the spirit dwelling *within* him (rather than, as in original participation, on the other side of the phenomena).

The argument of *Saving the Appearances* begins by examining participation generally and original participation in particular. If we reflect on the activity of perception, we discover that anything presented to consciousness as an object is in fact a *representation*, the product of an interaction between a formless other—the "given" of physical science—and our sensations. The transformation of an undefined "given" into a representation is dependent on some sort of mental activity. In order to experience anything *as* something, an act of construction "is required in us to convert sensations into 'things'"; this activity Barfield calls *figuration* (p. 24). Since we are not ordinarily conscious of our figuration, we do not experience objects as representative of anything; when the activity of representation is thus unconscious, it is useful to refer to the products of figuration simply as appearances, or *phenomena*. Any phenomenon may be perceived as a representation, but it may also be perceived simply as an "object," and that is how we ordinarily perceive it. We must bear in mind, however, that all our common experience of phenomenal nature is produced, collectively, by our figuration; the whole world of familiar nature is in fact a system of "collective representations" (p. 20).

Now, what Barfield calls "original participation" is characterized precisely by the *conscious* experience of phenomena as representations of some "other" standing behind them. A tree, for example, was not simply, or even primarily, an object in space; it was a "stopping place" for "Mana," a manifestation of spirit. Primitive man was "not detached, as we are, from the representations." Whereas "the only connection of which we are conscious is the external one through the senses" (p. 31), he was conscious also of an *internal*, supersensible connection with the life-principle, which was manifested in the phenomena. This consciousness depended not merely on a different conception but on a different figuration from ours. In original participation, that which is represented is experienced as outside of man, on the other side of the representations. On the other hand, "if our



participation, having been first understood and accepted . . . as a fact, should then become a conscious experience, it would have to take the form of a conscious (instead of, as now, unconscious) figuration"; in final participation we would experience the represented within ourselves (p. 41).

Once we moved beyond pre-historic, originally participating awareness, the history of consciousness is primarily a history of the ways in which objective thinking has altered our collective representations by transforming the figuration which produces them. Objective thinking had begun with participated representations, but "the very nature and aim" of pure objective thinking is "to exclude participation" by distinguishing between ourselves as subject and the thing thought about as object (p. 43). We are thus cut off from participation in the phenomena. Our collective representations are based on the supposition that truth is "objective" and sensible rather than supersensibly participated. For a non-participating consciousness, phenomena are dichotomized; an appearance is *either* sensible or spiritual, *either* a literal object in space or a symbolic representation.

At the same time, however, objective thinking frees phenomena from their nexus in space and time, and by so doing it makes possible the development of memory, and hence of self-consciousness: "When I experience the phenomena in memory, I make them 'mine', not now by virtue of any original participation, but by my own inner activity" (p. 155). And this inner activity may give rise to final participation, which has been made possible in the first place by the loss of original participation. Our ordinary, non-participating consciousness is split between object and subject, "outer and inner . . . thing and thought." But that very disjunction, the polarization of an ancient unity into an outer and an inner meaning, "is the basis of conscious evolution." Meaning was originally experienced, through participation, as *given* in the phenomena themselves, in which meaning was felt to be inherent; now meaning must be *made* and assigned to the phenomena by metaphor, which depends for its existence "precisely on the *absence* of participation" (pp. 121-123). "When we use language metaphorically, we bring it about of our own free will that an appearance means something other than itself, and, usually, that a manifest [outer] 'means' an unmanifest [inner]. We start with an idol [from which participation has been excluded], and we ourselves turn the idol into a representation" (p. 126). When "subconscious organic processes

have been sufficiently polarized to give rise to phenomena on the one side and consciousness on the other, memory is made possible. As consciousness develops into self-consciousness, the remembered phenomena become detached or liberated from their originals and so, as images, are in some measure at man's disposal." When the human imagination "chooses to impart to them its own meaning, it is doing, *pro tanto*, with the remembered phenomena what their Creator once did with the phenomena themselves" (pp. 126-127).

Original participation "began as the unconscious identity of man with his Creator"; as man's self-consciousness increased, participation "contracted to a faint awareness of creative activity alike in nature and man, to which was given the name of the Logos or Word." In the Christ original participation was crucified so that it might be reborn as final participation, the *conscious* identity of man with the Creator: "In one man the inwardness of the Divine Name had been fully realized; the final participation, whereby man's Creator speaks from within man himself, had been accomplished. The Word had been made flesh" (p. 170). It is now our part to utter that flesh as Word, consciously and freely: "in original participation, we were dreamers and unfree . . . Christ is a Being who can be participated only in vigilance and freedom" (p. 185).

In Barfield's view, then, the evolution of consciousness implies the fundamental pattern of Christian myth. The evolution of the human spirit "from original to final participation . . . is the progressive incarnation of the Word" (p. 165)—the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of meaning. And this redemptive pattern provides the most conspicuous analogy between the argument of *Saving the Appearances* and the symbolic action of *Orpheus*: the myth of Orpheus, in Barfield's recreation, is a drama of sacrificial death and rebirth.

Eurydice, a Nereid, daughter of the dreaming Sea, is first named and then wedded by Orpheus (the son of Apollo by the Muse Calliope). Orpheus then begins to transform the vague consciousness of Eurydice's original participation into the human self-consciousness which has made him a poet. Eurydice learns to cultivate pleasure for its own sake, by deliberately interrupting her ecstatic experience and repeating it. Her new imaginative freedom, however, leads almost immediately to the death of her consciousness. When she leaves Orpheus, briefly, to enjoy her gift, she is exposed to the lust of Aristaeus (another



She filled with light the light  
But filled more full the night.

(II. ii. 13-14)

The Swan now re-embodies that memory—"I fill with light the light" (112)—and at the same time makes explicit its idolatrous narcissism:

But always cruel night  
Shoots from my frowning forehead looped to kiss  
Itself in the clear water.

(113-115)

The animals, who thus take on as their own life the life which Orpheus has given them, are the creation of his poetic imagination.

The argument of the play as a whole is much taken up with matters of poetic activity, in its relation to (original) inspiration on the one hand and (final) creative imagination on the other. Orpheus first implores the inspiration of Mnemosyne to give Eurydice a name and then almost immediately begins to create her consciousness in the image of his own. In the terms suggested by *Poetic Diction*, the Nereids represent 'pure poetry', or rather the unmingled activity of the poetic principle; its contrary, the prosaic principle is represented by Hades and by the absolute, abstract objectivity of his kingdom. At these extremes, however, the polar relation in which synthesis and analysis must subsist has become disjunct: the consciousness of the nymphs is not poetic, cannot even express itself, for it is simply undifferentiated; the wholly dissociated objectivity of Hades results, paradoxically, in an absolute unity of disintegration, where "rightly to be one is, not to be" (II. i. 187). In neither case does imagination operate, destroying in order to recreate; in neither case is the unity *organic*—dependent, that is, upon a consciousness at once fully distinguished and fully unified, in which each part contains the whole. The true, organic polarity of imagination is to be found only in the interpenetration of poetic and prosaic principles, as that is represented in the poetry of Orpheus, and even more in the imaginative relation between Orpheus and Eurydice, in the creative love that suffers death in order to be reborn.

Taken as a whole, the play represents not merely the creative imagination but the universal law of polarity. In Coleridge's

words, "Every power in nature and in spirit must evolve an opposite as the sole means and condition of its manifestation: and all opposition is a tendency to reunion." Mind and nature, subject and object, are thus "two forces of a single power," one tending "to expand infinitely," the other seeking "to apprehend or *find* itself in this infinity." The action of Barfield's play expresses the fundamental contrariety—the unity in multiteity—of existence as it is grasped by consciousness. Existence manifests itself through the contrariety of life and death, Dionysus and Hades: in seasonal nature as the rhythm of summer and winter, Persephone above and below, in animate nature as the alternation of waking and sleeping—as Eurydice is awakened out of her unconsciousness, returned again to sleep, then again to death, and finally reawakened. Consciousness seeks to grasp its own existence by the power of imagination, destroying in order to recreate, as happens to Orpheus, as had happened to Dionysus, torn apart by the Titans and regenerated by Zeus. And since every polar opposition is the manifestation of a single power, each set of contraries is contained by a third term: Zeus restores life to Dionysus, as Aristaeus does to Orpheus; Demeter redeems Persephone from the underworld, as Persephone redeems Eurydice. In every case, as in every true metaphor, the reconciliation of opposites produces not merely a recovery but a recreation of meaning.

All of this is more or less what one would expect: Barfield's expository writings can provide very useful guides for interpreting his dramatic fiction. Although *Orpheus* is fully perspicuous in its own right, it is nonetheless richly illuminated by the radiance of Barfield's other work. Conversely, the play can be used, not only to illustrate or substantiate, but to elucidate some of Barfield's ideas. What he says, for example, in *Saving the Appearances* about the function of memory in liberating images from original participation is considerably amplified and clarified (as well, of course, as demonstrated) by the argument of the play. Orpheus, the grandson of Memory, explains that repetition, which is the basis of memory, is the fundamental principle of human consciousness:

He who says: Lo, what I gaze on  
Is the same as even now,  
He abides and knows and loves it  
Clinging: steadfastness is all.

(I. ii. 72-75)

At the same time that repetition makes consciousness possible, however, it is inherently the enemy of life, and ultimately of consciousness itself, for it is the principle of mechanism. And mechanism is pre-eminently the principle of Hades, where the rule of action is senseless, abstract repetition, empty of life, and even of memory itself. As Barfield observes in his Program Note, Hades is "the region where the principle of lifeless repetition has triumphed, where Sisyphus's stone rolls back to him with the regularity of clockwork." In Sisyphus, who has lost all memory of his former self, and even more strikingly in Tantalus, who has been reduced to pure subjectivity, we see projected and crystalized that life-denying impulse toward the repetitive manipulation of experience which is the death of consciousness as well as life. Held in proper balance, however, with the formless life principle, memory is the basis of living form, which contains life without destroying it—or at least destroys in order to recreate; memory makes possible the transformation of prophetic inspiration (in which the whole of Nature breathes through human life) into creative imagination (by which human consciousness contains Nature). And as the argument of the play demonstrates not merely the ambivalence but the fundamental *polarity* of memory, so the imaginative life of the play manifests the ability of memory, not merely to recall, but actually to *recreate* the past in the present, as Orpheus comes alive in the mind of the audience, the myth reborn.

That coming alive is, of course, the very essence of the drama. To have said even as much as I have about exposition and argument is, perhaps, to have said too much, since it could lead to a mistaken impression both of the play itself and of its most important relation to Barfield's other work. For in no sense should the play be regarded as a mere aggregate of themes, as though the author had set out to put some of his ideas into the play, regarded for this purpose as a persuasive vehicle. (The reader might well find the play persuasive, but that is quite another matter.) The attempt to define themes might in itself suggest that their interrelation is quantitative or merely objective—as if idea *A* in *Saving the Appearances* corresponded to idea *a* in *Orpheus*. In fact, however, the relation is qualitative and organic: the Idea manifests itself now in one now in another form. The true interrelationship is metaphoric: just as every part of *Orpheus*, every theme and image, implies the whole, so *Orpheus* as a whole contains and is contained by the argument of

Barfield's work. For the purpose of interpretation, the coincidence of certain ideas is not nearly so important as the form of the play (the way in which it *actualizes* ideas) and what might be called its texture—the interpenetration of idea and image, sound and sense. It is here that the relations between *Orpheus* and Barfield's other work are most intimate, in the imaginative realm where we participate in the process of thinking itself rather than merely contemplate the products of thought. That qualitative process can perhaps best be suggested by an illustrative instance—a part implying the whole. When he attempts to illuminate the nature of "true poetic metaphor" (the metaphor which reaches beyond mere fanciful association to reveal truth), Barfield often speaks in metaphor: "the world, like Dionysus, is torn to pieces by pure intellect; but the poet is Zeus: he has swallowed the heart of the world; and he can reproduce it as a living body" (*Poetic Diction*, p. 88). At the same time that it expresses the interpenetration of meaning and myth, this metaphor also embodies the very principle of meaning which it seeks to illuminate. In other words, although it contains within itself the principle of its own explanation, the metaphor does not "explain"; it *is* the meaning to be apprehended by the active imagination. That meaning cannot be inculcated; it will never disclose itself to a passive understanding. The reader must actually participate in making the author's meaning, recreating the argument in himself.

The whole of *Orpheus* is metaphoric in precisely that sense; it is a symbol. And as Barfield has more than once pointed out, "it is only when you attend to [a symbol] wholeheartedly instead of speculating on what is behind it . . . that you really reach what is behind it" (*Worlds Apart*, p. 146). A symbol must be participated in. To say of what *Orpheus* is the symbol might partially describe but would inevitably distort its imaginative reality. One might say that the play expresses the growth of a mind becoming fully conscious of itself, with all that such growth must be taken to imply. At one point I asked the author whether it would be appropriate to describe *Orpheus* as a myth of the evolution of consciousness. I was properly answered: "Can you imagine me producing a myth of *anything else*?" And of course I could not; there can be no question of preferring some other meaning. Nonetheless, one could certainly conceive of the play (not adequately but still appropriately) as a myth of sacrificial death and rebirth. Neither meaning, thus defined,

either includes or excludes the other; the myth contains both. The meaning of *Orpheus* is limited, not by any discursive framework, but by the degree to which the reader participates, in its making, so that its life becomes his. The life of *Orpheus* is Protean; it will assume almost any shape that is imposed upon it—though of course it will yield up its deepest secrets only in its proper shape. When I reflect on the form which my own participation has most consistently assumed, the shape—the countenance—which it presents to me is myth, or rather the mythopoeic process. The meaning, and making, of myth is a crucial point in Barfield's interpretation of human consciousness; indeed, one might formerly have wished that he had had a good deal more to say directly on the question. Now we have the whole matter of Greek myth (and many of its relations with Hebrew myth) sifted to the bottom, concocted, digested, and finally transformed. What Barfield says in *Poetic Diction* about the nature of mythic consciousness gives only a hint of what is here, in effect, a fully evolved theory of myth—presented, however, not as a set of propositions about mythology, but as the embodiment of mythic consciousness in dramatic form. In *Orpheus* we see revealed the process by which myth becomes conscious and, by becoming conscious of *itself*, reincarnates itself as living meaning, so that what was first spoken by the gods is now uttered by man. And in this way the play becomes a kind of anatomy of Greek myth. By analyzing in order to re-unify, the play transforms the corpus of Greek myth into a new organism; *Orpheus* makes actual the interrelations between various myths which had been hitherto only potential. Thus, for example, the stories of Heracles, of Aristaeus, and of Orpheus are drawn into a single action: as Heracles had extorted the secret of the Hesperides from the shape-changer, Nereus, so Aristaeus compels Proteus to reveal the secret of his own lost paradise; as Heracles had plundered Hell, so Orpheus attempts to regain his lost Eurydice, and as he had gone below to implore the aid of Persephone and her great mother, so Aristaeus must descend to the underwater world where his mother, Cyrene, dwells. Ultimately, the story of Orpheus and Eurydice is also the myth of Demeter and Persephone, wherein "the ideas of waking and sleeping, of summer and winter, of life and death, of mortality and immortality are all lost in one pervasive meaning" (*Poetic Diction*, p. 91). In *Orpheus*, however, which is not myth simply, but myth re-making, that pervasive

meaning is *consciously* expressed, not as dream but as poetry. What was lost in unity originally, and subsequently lost in disintegration, has been recreated from within, so that the myth becomes conscious of itself *within* us.

Anyone who has experienced the play, however, will not need to be told that it celebrates the mythopoeic imagination. The appeal of *Orpheus* is, as it was meant to be, immediately symbolic: it is the *sense* of the action, not the critical significance of its themes, which communicates the life of the play. To some readers *Orpheus* will represent an initiation into Barfield's thinking; for them I hope I may have made slightly easier, not the play itself, but the passage from the play to other regions of Barfield's thought. To other readers Barfield's work will already be more or less familiar; in them I hope I may occasionally have awakened a sense of something they might otherwise have missed. Even if I should have failed of these aims, I might still hope to have offered a small tribute to one whose work has made mine possible. In dedicating *The Allegory of Love* to him, C. S. Lewis called Owen Barfield the wisest and best of his unofficial teachers. Readers of *Orpheus* will surely number themselves among those who gladly echo Lewis's sentiment.

JOHN C. ULREICH, JR.  
The University of Arizona  
Tucson, Arizona

**John Ulreich** is an Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Arizona, where he teaches courses in the English Renaissance (chiefly Milton and Spenser), the literature of the Bible, and modern fantasy. In addition to reviews of Barfieldiana—*What Coleridge Thought*, R. J. Reilly's *Romantic Religion*, and Lionel Adey's *C. S. Lewis's "Great War" with Owen Barfield*—he has published articles on Milton, Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, C. S. Lewis, and the Old Testament. Foremost among his current projects is an authorized biography of Owen Barfield.

# Glossary and Guide to Pronunciation

## A BRIEF MYTHOLOGICAL GUIDE

to Characters Appearing in,  
and Persons and Places

Mentioned in  
ORPHEUS

### CHARACTERS

- Arethusa** (ă-rĕ-thū'-să), a wood nymph who, to escape pursuit by the river god Alpheus, was changed by Artemis into an underground stream.
- Aristaeus** (ă-rĭs-tee'-ūs), son of Apollo and Cyrene, father of Actaeon, and half-brother of Orpheus.
- Ascalaphus** (ăs-kăl'-ă-fūs), Hades' spy, transformed by Persephone into an owl.
- Charon** (kair'-ōn), the boatman who ferried the souls of the dead to the underworld.
- Cyrene** (sĭ-ree'-nee), a water-nymph beloved by Apollo, to whom she bore Aristaeus.
- Danaïds** (dăn'-ay-ĭdz), the fifty daughters of Danaus, who commanded them to slay their husbands; only one refused.
- Eurydice** (ēūr-ĭd'-ĭ-see), daughter of Nereus and wife of Orpheus.
- Hades** (hay'-deez), god of the underworld (also called Hades), ravisher and then husband of Persephone; brother of Zeus and Poseidon.
- Maenads** (mee'-nădz), female worshipers of Dionysus.
- Nereids** (nee'-rĭdz), the fifty daughters of Nereus.
- Nereus** (neer'-ēūs), a sea deity, forerunner of Poseidon.
- Orpheus** (orf'-ēūs), son of Apollo and Calliope.
- Persephone** (per-sĕf'-ō-nee), daughter of Demeter, and Hades' Queen; she spends half the year (summer) with her mother, the other half (winter) with her husband.
- Satyr(s)** (say'-tūr), nature spirits, half man and half goat; followers of Dionysus and companions of Pan.
- Sisyphus** (sĭs'-ĭ-fūs), for attempting to cheat death, is punished by having to roll a huge rock up a cliff, only to have it roll down again as he reaches the top.

**Tantalus** (tan'-tă-lūs), for having fed his son, Pelops, to the gods, is tormented by being unable to drink from the river in which he stands or to eat from the cluster of grapes above his head.

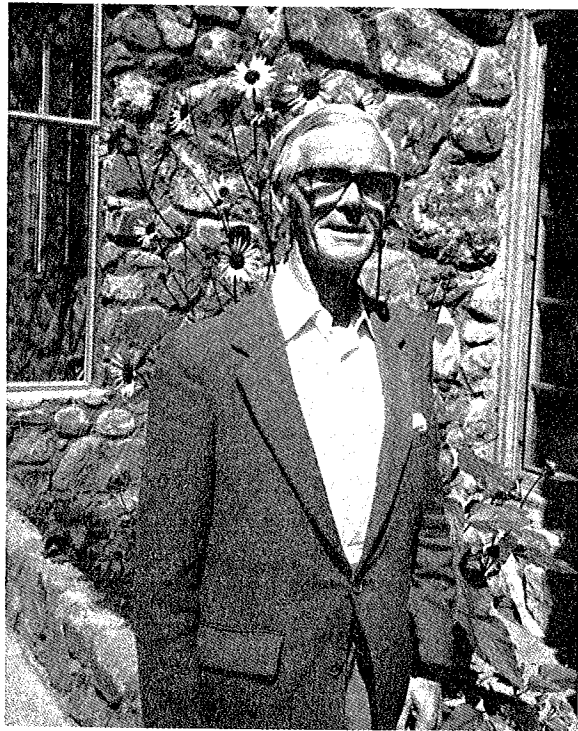
### MENTIONED

- Acheron** (ăk'-ĕr-ōn), Sorrow, one of the rivers of Hades.
- Actaeon** (ak-tee'-ōn), the son of Aristaeus, was turned into a stag by Artemis (Chastity) and killed by his own hounds.
- Aegean** (ee-jee'-ăn), the sea between Greece and Asia Minor, named after Aegeus, the father of Theseus.
- Aphrodite** (af-rō-dĭ'-tee), goddess of generation and human love.
- Apollo** (ă-pōl'-ō), the Sun God, father of Orpheus and Aristaeus.
- Argus** (ăr'-gūs), a creature with a hundred eyes, set by Hera to guard Io, beloved of Zeus; slain by Hermes.
- Artemis** (ăr'-tĕ-mĭs), twin sister of Apollo, virgin goddess of the Moon, chastity and hunting.
- Avernus** (ă-vĕr'-nūs), an entrance to Hades; also one of the rivers of the underworld.
- Beroë** (bĕr'-ō-ee), one of the Oceanides (sea nymphs), attendant upon Cyrene.
- Cadmus** (kăd'-mūs), founder of Thebes and father of Semele.
- Calliope** (kă-lĭ'-ō-pee), daughter of Zeus and Mnemosyne, Muse of heroic poetry; mother of Orpheus.
- Cerberus** (sūr'-būr-ūs), the three-headed dog of the underworld.
- Cronos** (kro'-nōs), a Titan whose union with Rhea produced Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, who eventually overthrew their father and placed Zeus on the throne of heaven. The reign of Cronos had been associated with a Golden Age on earth.
- Clymene** (klĭm'-ĕ-nee), a Nereid, attendant upon Cyrene.
- Clytaemnestra** (klĭ-tĕm-nĕs'-tră), daughter of Leda and Zeus, who came to Leda in the form of a swan; twin sister of Helen and wife of Agamemnon, whom she slew to avenge his sacrifice of their daughter, Iphigenia.
- Cocytus** (kō-kĭ'-tūs), Lamentation, one of the rivers of Hades.
- Deïopeia** (dee-ĭ-o-pee'-ă), a Nereid, attendant upon Cyrene.
- Demeter** (dee-mee'-tĕr), The Earth-Mother goddess, mother of Persephone.

- Dionysus** (dī-ō-nice'-us), the Wine-God, son of Zeus and Semele, or Persephone (to whom Zeus presented himself in the form of a serpent). When Semele demanded that Zeus appear to her in his proper form, his radiance burned her to a cinder; Zeus preserved the fetal Dionysus in his thigh, whence in due course he was born.
- Drymo** (drī'-mo), a sea nymph, one of the attendants of Cyrene.
- Elysium** (ē-līz'-ī-ūm), the dwelling place reserved for the spirits of the blessed.
- Erebus** (ēr'-ē-būs), the underworld, particularly the region through which the virtuous passed on their way to Elysium.
- Evoe** (ay'-vō-ay'), the ritual cry of the Maenads.
- Giants** (jī'-ents), sons of Uranus (Heaven) and Ge (Earth), who sprung from the wound given Uranus by his son Cronos; they were cast into Tartarus when they attempted a rebellion against Zeus.
- Helen** (hel'-ēn), daughter of Leda and Zeus, twin sister of Clytaemnestra, wife of Menelaus (brother of Agamemnon); Helen's abduction by Paris caused the Trojan war.
- Hephaestus** (hē-fige'-tūs), god of fire and metal work, unlovely husband of Aphrodite.
- Hera** (hee'-rā), daughter of Cronos and Rhea, wife of Zeus.
- Herakles** (heer'-ā-kleez), the greatest hero of the ancient world. His eleventh labor was stealing the golden apples of the Hesperides, whose secret he had forced Proteus to reveal; his twelfth was bringing the hell-hound Cerberus up to earth.
- Hesperides** (hes-pēr'-ī-deez), paradisaal gardens in the far west, in which there were golden apples guarded by a dragon.
- Hesperus** (hes'-pēr-ūs), the evening star, father of the Hesperides.
- Hippocrene** (hīp-o-kree'-nee), a spring on Mount Helicon, sacred to the Muses.
- Iacchus** (ee-ak'-ūs), another name of Dionysus.
- Lethe** (lee'-thē), Oblivion, one of the rivers of Hades.
- Marsyas** (mar'-sī-ās), a satyr who challenged Apollo to a contest of musical ability.
- Metis** (meet'-īs), an Oceanid. She was the first wife of Zeus, who swallowed her when he learned she was pregnant; Athena was later born out of Zeus' head.

- Minos** (mīn'-ōs), king of Crete, father of the Minotaur, supreme judge of the underworld.
- Mnemosyne** (mnee-moz'-i-nee), Memory, the mother of the Muses, who inspire all human arts.
- Oceanus** (o-see'-a-nus), a Titan, god of the stream surrounding earth.
- Olympus** (ō-līm'-pūs), sacred mountain of the gods.
- Pan** (pan), part man, part goat; the god of shepherds.
- Peleus** (peel'-ēūs), married Thetis, a Nereid, by whom he begot Achilles.
- Peneus** (pee-nee'-ūs), a river in Thessaly, home of Cyrene.
- Phlegethon** (flēg'-ē-thōn), Fire, one of the rivers of Hades.
- Philomela** (fīl-ō-may'-lā), sister of Procne, raped by her sister's husband, Tereus, and transformed into a nightingale.
- Phoebus** (fee'-būs), Brightness, a name of Apollo.
- Phyllodoce** (phīl-lōd'-o-kee), one of Cyrene's attendant nymphs.
- Procne** (prōk'-nee), sister of Philomela, wife of Tereus.
- Proteus** (prō'-tēūs), a sea deity, shape-changer, and prophet.
- Rhadamanthus** (rād-ā-man'-thūs), of Crete, became a judge of the underworld.
- Semele** (sēm'-ē-lee), daughter of Cadmus, mother of Dionysus; when Zeus appeared to her in his divine radiance, she was burned to ash, but Zeus preserved their fetal son in his thigh, from which in due course, Dionysus was born.
- Styx** (stīx), Hatred, one of the rivers of Hades.
- Taenarus** (tee'-nā-rūs), an entrance to the underworld.
- Tartarus** (tar'-tā-rūs), the place in the underworld where sinners were punished.
- Tempe** (tēm'-pee), a famous valley in Thessaly.
- Tereus** (tee'-rēūs), husband of Procne, ravisher of Philomela.
- Theseus** (thee'-sēūs), slew the Minotaur in the Labyrinth of Crete.
- Thetis** (thē'-tīs), a Nereid, was the mother of Achilles by Peleus.
- Titans** (tī'-tānz), offspring of Uranus and Ge (Heaven and Earth), were overthrown by Zeus and other Olympian deities.
- Uranus** (yoo-ra'-nūs), Father Sky.
- Zeus** (zēūs), Father of gods and men, especially of Dionysus and Persephone.

Owen Barfield was born in 1898. Well-known today as a philosopher and literary critic, and as a seminal influence in the revival of "romantic religion," he is the author of, among other works, *History in English Words* (1926), *Poetic Diction* (1928), *Romanticism Comes of Age* (1944), *Saving the Appearances* (1957), *Worlds Apart* (1963), *Unancestral Voice* (1965), *What Coleridge Thought* (1971), and *History, Guilt and Habit* (1979).



Owen Barfield, photographed at the Lindisfarne Mountain Retreat in Crestone, Colorado during a conference on *The Evolution of Consciousness*, Summer 1982. Photograph by Judy Van Hook.

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1948

This lyrical verse drama, written in the 1930's and performed only once, in 1948, is a classic account of the ancient myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, interwoven, as in Virgil, with the tale of the countryman, Aristaeus, and his bees. Described in scenes of great passion, charm and humor, these three figures move as aspects of a single being through a vital drama of death and resurrection, *eros* and *agape*.



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