**The Religion of Richard Wagner - Tomira Zori (The Ring of the Nibelung)**

“Ex morte vita,” said the ancient philosophers, “out of death comes life.” Death and life are the only continuity of being. Where does life begin and where does it end? What is death and when does it begin? Neither biology nor medicine can answer these questions. These processes are so closely intertwined, so intertwined that the mathematical moment of the beginning of each of them is shrouded in mystery. No, they are separated by a defined demarcation line; they are connected to each other, like the elusive colours of the sun’s spectrum: a transition to every next colour is almost elusive.

**Isn't death only a change?** Liberating the eternal life energy from a crystallised shell of matter to create another more perfect and more subtle? The activity of the vital force is like thought upon the sculptor’s creativity, which incarnates the marble or bronze and gives that shape greater and greater perfection. Therefore, the subjective value is only the artist’s thought, trapped in this or that objective manifestation. The destruction or disintegration of the form is just the passage of the energy animating it, the life consciousness making another, more appropriate form. A characteristic example of this concept of life and form is known in Benvenuto Cellini, a famous goldsmith in the times of Alexander Borgia: Cellini, influenced by the vision of a new work of art, not having at hand, free material, threw into the crucible of molten gold, his wonderful masterpieces, which are his glory and fame: an example of the idea, triumphing over matter, Life over Form.

**The source of Wagner's favourite concept** of Life and Death and Form was partly Buddhist philosophy, partly the astonishing intuition of a mystic, possessing a profound knowledge of truths scarcely sensed by modern science. Science studies the origin and disintegration of form, a mystery, still remaining, of that power which creates forms and which we call life. “Astiatmanastitwa - sadhanaasambhavat,” repeated Wagner, with the philosophers of India, "the existence of spirit is true, or it is impossible to prove its non-existence." Spirit - Life - Motion are ambiguous concepts. The ring of life and death resembles the ancient symbol of the viper devouring its own tail. It is also a biological symbol. ***For does not the life strength of the seed pass into the existence of the sprout at its death***? The slow decay of the plant gives life to the seed in which it hides again the potential life. The death of a caterpillar is the birth of a chrysalis, which, when dying, pours its life energy into a butterfly. These are more obvious examples, accessible to study by each of us and concerning the transplantation of life from one conglomerate of atoms to another - from matter to matter. The same process, however, is more about subtle transformation: the transfer of Life - from one plane to another, from a three-dimensional body, which is the physical shape of a man - to higher bodies’ dimensions. For, from mathematics, we know that the number of dimensions is infinite, and this transition of the vital force from one plane to another is usually called death. The rise and fall of life forms a circle, whose most closely joined segments are called life and death.

**Biology teaches us** that every death is but the beginning of a new life. This process is governed by the threefold law of Sacrifice - Love - Resurrection. Sacrifice - preceding and being in every expansion of consciousness, the basis of life; Love - the embracing continuity of the one Life; Resurrection - through Sacrifice and Love, woven on the yarn of laws, of which man himself is the creator.

This is what must be born in mind in order to fully understand thegenesis of ***Rheingold,[[1]](#footnote-1)*** in its opening music, ascending and descending arpeggios are a symbol of the evolution and involution of Life. It is a powerful scheme of Wagner’s philosophy. In “The Ring of the Nibelung” Wagner depicted the entire Cosmos in motion,in the chord of creative work. People and gods, creations of air, earth, fire, and water against the background of the eternal laws of nature. "Rheingold" is a poetic re-enactment of the history of evolution itself, the evolution of creative powers. The gold that rests at the bottom of the quiet, green waters of the Rhine, extracted and then, returning it again, forged into the shape of a magic ring - that is the whole drama of the Monad. The waters of the Rhine, full of unknown powers and a peculiar life from which springs the visible shape, emerges, and into which, after passing the cycle of experiences, returns - this is the Sanskrit, *Prakriti,* symbolized in Oriental philosophy and in primitive Christianity by the passivefeminine element of water.

**The Monad,** in order to gain self-consciousness, must be the obvious the Prime Matter selected. Gold is a symbol of spirit, and the spirit must go through thousands of experiences, in a thousand shapes - in a colorful rosary of many lives, to be purified, aware of itself, could return to Oneness. Woglinde[[2]](#footnote-2) reveals the secrets of the waters of the Rhine to dwarf Alberich who is only a caricature of a man, a symbol of the blind instinct, the lowest creative force that curses gold; it is, in short, a poetic repetition of the legend of original sin. Like the monstrous dwarf lurking in the depths of the Rhine, dragging itself henceforth behind the human spirit will be a monstrous caricature of love – a brutal, lurking, animal lust. Wagner’s Alberich, like Zulawski’s Blaks, in ‘Eros and Psyche’[[3]](#footnote-3), is a symbol of the physical body, the instincts of primal matter. The curse of the dwarf hangs over of the progress of the Monad and follows it, like Blaks for Psyche (an Arcadian princess), nullifying every ascent and laying barriers with radiant ones, dreams of Beauty and Freedom. It is, after all, the beginning of the division of consciousness into lower and higher, the beginning of the eternal struggle of the two elements in man, the eternal struggle between Ormuzd and Ahriman, Tobias with an Angel.

**And here comes the miracle:** the dwarf’s curse feeds the gold’s hidden life - static and potential becomes dynamic and evolutionary. Let's pay attention to the music. The first three topics? Rhine, Ondines[[4]](#footnote-4) and Gold are in a major key. Not a single note going beyond the general coloring. Everything is quiet, beautiful, harmonious, and joyful, mathematically strict in the world of the unmanifested, in the world of Platonic ideas, music is here with a beautiful geometric pattern, with no clashes or complications. We know after all that *God geometrizes*. The great and immutable laws of cosmic geometry are reflected in our world, creating a thousand shapes, connecting human beings, drawing intricate lines of historical pragmatism of peoples.

The first minor tone can be heard when Alberich comes onto the stage. This physical law, this world of matter, cuts into the harmony of the existence of the spirit. The radiant joy of the gods darkens. We are entering the first phase of the drama of the Monad into Involution. The minor key now predominates. The ***Ondines*** are defeated. They retreat deep into the cool, green waters of the Rhine, into the primeval land. The key of their song matches Woglinde’s recitatives: (“The desire for love in whom it lasts, And who tames the rush of love, Can by now make spells and, Bend it into a golden ring.”)

**Only Love will lift the curse.** But love is “tamed." The curse is thrown there, in simple and tragic ignorance, destroying what it does not understand. The force is put into motion. It will be reversed by the one who loves, he who renounces individual love will subjugate himself. Give up love? But neither Ondines nor Alberich understand what love is? Love - it is the product of total harmony between energy and matter. Ondines belong in the spirit realm, they are pure and undefiled and they do not know what individual love is. For Alberich, love is like a light he longs to see, the blind man. Love is the realm of manifested spirit, the realm of differentiation of forces, the realm-division of a single power into two polarized, eternally yearning powers, parts of each other. Ondines form a whole within the sphere of magnetic bi-polarisation. Alberich, a symbol of nature and an expression of the instincts dormant in the matter of love, cannot know it.

1. The first of the four operas comprising Wagner’s ‘Ring of the Nibelung’ cycle [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. One of the three ‘Rhinemaidens’ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. An opera with libretto by Jerzy Zulawski, premiere, Warsaw, 1917 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Rhinemaidens [↑](#footnote-ref-4)