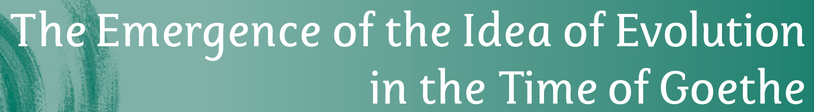

The Emergence of the Idea of Evolution in the Time of Goethe

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The Evolution of Evolution

The earth has gone through a long period of evolution; this is obvious to everyone today. We know that plants, animals, and human beings have evolved, too, and we generally accept that the concept of evolution applies not only to the kingdoms of nature, but to cultures, languages, and even forms of consciousness. An evolutionary approach has become so widely accepted that today every good textbook on evolution begins with a chapter covering the evolution of the subject itself. We may be surprised to remember, then, that the concept of evolution is barely 200 years old. Before that time there was no comparable concept.

The contemporary meaning of the term evolution is the lawful change of what are, usually, sense-perceptible phenomena. For the biologist "evolution is a transformation of an organism in form and behavior, with the result that succeeding generations differ from those that preceded them."[1] Even more reflective of today's mentality is the statement that "phylogenesis—the true meaning of evolution—is the creation of ever new programs of genetic information."[2] This mentality, all too common, chooses to forget that a being is evolving and, thereby, manifesting or revealing itself in various forms of appearance. This insight was of the utmost importance, however, to the early discoverers of the idea of evolution.

The word *evolution* dates at least to Roman antiquity. At that time, evolution meant the unrolling of a scroll. Everything that the scroll contained was evolved or unrolled as it was read. Evolution still has this meaning in relation to the development of a thought, when we articulate step by step what is present as a whole in our consciousness.[3] Kant used the term with essentially this meaning in his *General History of Nature* to describe the origin of the universe out of a gaseous mist. For him, for celestial bodies to be "uncoiled" from matter in which mechanical laws hold sway corresponds most closely to the nature of God. In Kant's words, "The origin of the world lies in a mechanical evolutionary process rooted in the general laws of nature."[4]

In this sense, evolution assumes preformation, the presence of a perfectly formed miniature encapsulated in the germ that, in the course of time, evolves. Whether in botany, where preformationism was widely held to be true (v. Haller), or in the literature of the time, this use of the term was widespread. Seventeenth century novels, examined with this in mind, have "preformed" heroes everywhere. Princes are intelligent, just, manly, brave, occasionally even able to speak from the moment of birth. The stories of their lives consist essentially of their using and preserving these character traits and capacities through a series of adventures. They rescue imprisoned virgins, slay villains and outlaws, punish the overly proud and, in the end, are given a kingdom—the goal that has lived in their souls from the beginning. A good example of such a book is *Hercules and Valisca* by Andreas Heinrich Buchholtz (1659).

At the beginning of the 18th century, movement begins to creep into this rigidity of thought. Leibniz is one of the first to enter new territory. In his later letters to Lady Masham (1704), he differentiates between two elements that underlie all development: uniformity, which nature maintains within objects, and change, which reveals itself outwardly:

> I hold not only that these souls or entelechies all have with them some kind of organic body appropriate to their perceptions, but also that they always will have, and always have had, as long as they have existed: so not only the soul, but also the animal itself (or what is analogous to the soul and to the animal, so as not to argue about names) remains, and thus that generation and death can only be developments and envelopments of which nature, as is her custom, gives us several visible examples to help us to work out what she keeps hidden.

This idea is expressed in private letters and therefore remains hidden from Leibniz' contemporaries. It surfaces again in Herder, who takes it up vehemently—"my grand theme!" In keeping with his character, Herder immediately publishes his first attempt at a philosophical history, entitled *This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity* (1774). Herder writes about change and the process of becoming throughout history:

> Those who have so far undertaken to unfold the progress of the centuries for the most part have in the process the pet idea: progress to more virtue and happiness of individual human beings. ...Should there not be manifest progress and development but in a higher sense than people have imagined it? ...Do you see that growing tree, that upwards striving human being, having to pass through diverse ages of life, all manifestly in progress, a striving one for the other in continuity! Between each there are apparent resting places, revolutions, changes, and yet each has the center of its happiness in itself....No one is in his age alone, he builds on the preceding one, this becomes nothing but the foundation of the future, wants to be nothing but that—this is what we are told by the analogy in nature, God's speaking exemplary model in all works! Manifestly so in the human species. The Egyptian was not able to exist without the Oriental, the Greek built upon them, the Roman raised himself onto the back of the whole world—truly progress, progressive development, even if no individual won in the process. Its goal is on the large scale. It becomes—what husk-history boasts about so much and what it shows so little of—the stage of a guiding intention on earth.[5]

This initial sketch, in which nature provides an analogy for the development of humanity, is soon revised and rewritten, thanks to Goethe's support and interest: "Herder is writing a philosophy of history, which, as you can imagine, is new from the ground up. We read the first chapters together yesterday. They are delicious... the history of the world and of nature was just racing by us."[6]

Beginning with a fairly simple plan that he brings progressively to perfection, Herder works to develop the idea of the evolution of humanity. Natural evolution appears in his work as a precursor to the cultural evolution of the human race:

> Air, fire, water and the earth evolve out of the spiritual and material staminibus in periodic cycles of time. Diverse connections of water, air, and light precede the emergence of the seed of the simplest plant, for instance moss. Many plants had to come into being, then die away before an animal emerged. Insects, birds, water animals, and night animals preceded the present animal forms; until finally the crown of earthly organization appeared—the human being, microcosm. He is the son of all the elements and beings, Nature's most carefully chosen conception and the blossom of creation. He must be the youngest child of Nature; many evolutions and revolutions must have preceded his formation.[7]

There are still many transformations to come before human beings reach the "radiant glow" of their "bud of humanity." Nature aims to reach this stage, for

> ...nothing in Nature stands still; everything strives and moves forward. If we could only view the first stages of creation, how the kingdoms of nature were built one upon the other, a progression of forward-striving forces would reveal itself in all evolution.[8]

But human beings cannot count on nature for their own further evolution. They have to "lay the foundation for [their] own future appearance" themselves. Through "spiritual exercises" they must "spin the fabric" that will once again clothe them.[9]

Goethe's Evolution

How deeply Goethe feels himself connected to these ideas becomes clear in his morphological studies, written some 30 years later:

> My difficult, painful study of nature was lightened, even sweetened, as Herder began to draft his *Sketch of the History of Humanity.* Our daily discussions revolved around the primordial origins of the aqueous earth and the organisms that have evolved upon her through the course of time. The origin and its ongoing evolution were discussed at length and through the exchange of ideas and the arguments that ensued, our scientific understanding was purified and enriched. With other friends I also had lively discussions about these topics, which interested me passionately.[10]

Goethe goes on to say, however: "Today, thanks to broader experience and a greater depth of philosophy, there are aspects that have become visible which were hidden to us at that time." Goethe had gained a "greater depth of philosophy" through an understanding of nature that was still closed to him in the 1780s. What does he mean by this?

Another source[11] sheds light on this question. In Goethe's youth in Leipzig and later, Susanne von Klettenburg brings him into contact with pietistic autobiographies. These constitute a form of literature that, like journaling, grows from an author's willingness to account for the way he or she leads life. In pietistic circles it was also the practice for an author to show herself to be worthy of God's guidance in her own life and to continually examine her efforts to achieve this worthiness.

Pietism touches Goethe directly during his time as a student in Strasburg. He becomes acquainted with Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling, who tells him stories of his own youth, highlighting the adventures in which he believed himself truly to have been under God's guidance. Jung was raised in a simple, peasant-like surrounding and had as a child already been drawn to spiritual questions. In addition to an apprenticeship and practical training, he had trained as a teacher and taught at seven different schools in an equal number of years. At the end of this time he experienced a revelation. A radiant cloud enveloped him and permeated him with an unknown energy. In that moment, he dedicated his life "to the honor of God and to human charity." He also "made a strong and unshakable pact with God, in the future to subject himself fully to God's guidance and refrain from all vain wishes and desires, if God so wished, to remain a simple working man for the duration of his life and to do so contentedly and joyfully."[12] He proves not to be content as a simple working man, but becomes first a private tutor, then a doctor. Goethe meets him while he is studying medicine in Strasburg. After hearing his stories, Goethe suggests that he write the story of his youth and young adulthood. Jung-Stilling applies himself to this task and sends the manuscript to Goethe, who edits it in a number of places, then has it printed without mentioning any of this to his friend. In the meantime, the latter has begun to practice medicine. His initial success quickly takes a turn for the worse. Patients become ever rarer and family finances plummet catastrophically. Finally, Jung-Stilling finds himself with unpaid rent and only fourteen days to eviction.

> The fourteenth day drew closer and there was absolutely no indication as to where the money would come from. Time and again, tears came to poor Stilling's eyes; he often ran to his sleeping chambers, buried his face in his hands, wept and begged God for help, and when his work called, his wife Christine would take his place. . . .Finally the dreaded Friday arrived, both prayed incessantly as they went about their work. . . .At 10:00 a.m. the postman arrived; in one hand he held the bill and eviction notice, in the other a heavy letter. Full of anticipation, Stilling took the letter. It was in Goethe's writing; on the edge was the notice that it was weighted with 120 talers in gold. Astonished, he opened it and read that his friend Goethe had published the beginning of his memoirs under the title of *Jung-Stilling's Life* and this was the author's honorari-

> um. How powerfully this tangible intervention of divine providence affected Stilling and his wife is indescribable; they resolved never again to stumble or doubt, but rather to bear all sorrow and tribulation with patience. In the light of truth, they also realized that the father of humanity was leading them by the hand, that their path was right in his judgment and that he was preparing them for higher goals through such trials.[13]

Following this divine intervention, Jung-Stilling writes to his publisher:

> Now dearest Decker! I have to tell you that I am Heinrich Stilling. Yes it is I. I have had to walk this difficult path before I could reach the point at which I now find myself. Everything you have read in my story is truth without invention. . . .It is strange how God passes out the roles in this flower- or caterpillar-like life of his humans. Everything is all right with me, for I am not yet finished, I am still in the smelting.[14]

Jung-Stilling experiences himself as an evolving being, but he is waiting to see what will be unrolled. He does not take an active part in his own evolution. Karl Phillip Moritz takes this step a few years later and describes it in his novel *Anton Reiser* (1785). This is also an autobiographical account of the author's youth. But how different is his experience; at 17, he has a kind of awakening. He discovers that if he tries hard enough he can independently guide the forces of his own thinking:

> And what were at first but empty names, slowly became full, clear concepts, and when he now read or thought the names again and everything grew light and radiant which had previously been dark and twisted, a wonderful feeling overcame him that he had never felt before—he tasted for the first time the bliss of thinking. …A new creation took place in the forces of his thinking. It was as though dawn had appeared in his understanding and now a new day was breaking and he could not get enough of the stimulating light. …From then on he was less unhappy because the forces of his thinking had begun to evolve.[15]

This does not tell of the finger of God intervening in the course of a person's life. God's part is replaced by the individual's own self-directed thinking. This experience is so powerful that it transcends the pietistic tradition in which Moritz, too, was raised.

This novel is published as Goethe works with Herder on *This Too a Philosophy of the History for the Formation of Humanity* and conducts intensive botanical studies. With this preparation, Goethe sets out for Italy. On this journey, his whole structure of thoughts and ideas is soon brought into fluid motion. In Padua on September 27, 1786, he notes:

> Amidst this new array of different sorts of plants, the idea emerges ever more strongly that perhaps all forms of plants could be developed out of one. …This is where I have been stuck in my botanical studies and I do not yet see my way out of the confusion.

Just a few months later, in Rome (February 19, 1787), he seems more hopeful: "I am on my way to discovering new and wonderful indications how Nature, what an incomparable monster, lets the manifold evolve out of the simple." Then, not long after this, in the botanical garden in Palermo, Goethe finally grasps the idea of the archetypal plant. This idea, which permeates all his future work, is not merely a discovery that allows him to bring order to a small segment of his surroundings. At least as important to him is the leap in consciousness that finally allows him to follow in his mind's eye the flowing, constantly changing forms. His own consciousness likewise must become fluid and mobile. Thus he writes in the introduction to the *Metamorphosis of the Plants* (1807):

> When he who is called to lively observation begins to hold his own in the struggle with Nature, he first feels a strong drive to master the phenomena. It does not take long, however, before they draw near to him with such force, that he rightly feels to have cause to recognize their power and revere their presence. As soon as he becomes cognizant of this reciprocal effect, he becomes aware of a double

infinity: in the phenomena the manifold nature of being and becoming and the living, weaving relationships, in himself, however, the possibility of an infinite development in that he continuously makes both his sensibilities and his reason able to respond to new forms of accepting and reaching out.

The Wholeness of a Living Idea

Goethe's observation is of the utmost significance for the emergence of the idea of evolution. The idea of evolution cannot be seen or found in the environment if the fact of evolution is not first experienced within a human being. A person who is not himself in the process of evolving will not be able to recognize evolution. It is the fundamental problem of all evolutionary research.

Knowing full well how difficult *Metamorphosis of the Plants* would be for his readers, he adds an introduction in which he sketches out the fundamental problem:

> When we become aware of living Nature in such a way that we desire to gain insight into her being and the way she works, we tend to believe that this is best done by dissecting an organism into its constituent parts. It is true that this approach can bear fruit. …But these efforts to understand everything by dissecting it do have a negative side. What was once alive lies before us separated into the elements that made it up, but it is not possible to put these back together and bring the organism back to life. This is as true of many inanimate objects as it is of all living organisms. Thus scientists throughout history have been driven to recognize the living form as such, to grasp the significance of the outer, perceptible parts in the context of the whole, to understand them as a manifestation of something within and thus to master the whole in their examinations. …If we observe all forms of Nature, especially the organic forms, we discover that nothing is static or at rest, nothing is finished, but rather that everything is in motion. …What is once formed is then transformed and if we wish to achieve a living understanding of Nature, we must follow her example and be just as mobile and formative as she. …Each living thing is not singular, but plural; even though it appears to us to be individual, it remains a collection of living, autonomous beings, which can appear to be either similar or dissimilar.

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Readers can only understand such a description if they can recreate the connections fluidly in their own consciousness. If they do not do this, they cannot understand. Goethe was aware of this difficulty. He characterizes it in his *Morphological Notes* (1820), in which he publishes his findings concerning the human intermaxillary bone. In this essay he investigates the possibility of envisioning the bones of the skull as metamorphoses of the vertebrae. And he confesses:

> I have been convinced of this hidden relationship for thirty years and have continued to study it. Yet such an apercu, the awareness, grasping, envisioning, the concept or the idea, however one wishes to call it, do what one will, retains a certain esoteric quality. It can be spoken of in its wholeness, but not proven; one can present it in its details, but can't quite mange to fully round it out.

This conceptual difficulty proves painful to Goethe upon his return from Italy:

> From Italy, with its richness of forms, I have returned to Germany, formless; the lovely beckoning skies were traded for gray ones; instead of comforting me and welcoming me back into the fold, my friends drove me to despair. My delight over foreign, little-known objects, the pain I felt at having to leave it all behind me, seemed to be as an insult to them. I missed their interest; no one seemed to understand me. In this embarrassing state, I did not know how to find myself. The loss I felt was too great for my senses to be able to acclimate themselves. My spirit strove to keep itself whole. For the past two years, I had observed, collected, contemplated, and had striven to sharpen all my capacities. As the gifted Greeks

> had striven to evolve the purest art within the context of their nation, I had hopes of slowly seeing the whole and achieving thereby a pure, unprejudiced level of artistic enjoyment. Further, I believed that I had recognized how Nature goes about her work to bring forth living forms, the templates of artistic endeavor.[16]

Goethe describes his own evolution. He develops within himself the "art" of "slowly seeing the whole." In this he mirrors his teacher, Nature. For the moment, he finds himself alone with this capacity; no one in his circle of friends has taken the same path: "It is terribly painful not to be understood, when one with great effort finally comes to the point where he believes to understand both himself and the issue at hand."[17]

Through his own development Goethe discovers the lawfulness that governs evolution in nature. He becomes aware within himself of the seed or germ that maintains continuity in everything that manifests itself outwardly. Through this experience, he searches to discover the generative, autonomous being in Nature that in all its various manifestations remains true to its own ideal. In his papers we find a short note which characterizes this concisely: "It is an enjoyable business to at once explore both Nature and oneself, to use force on neither her nor one's own spirit, but rather to let the two of them bring each other into balance."[18]

Having thus become aware of evolution, Goethe tries to bring the observed lawfulness into artistic form—*Wilhelm Meister*. He works on this, the first of the German "developmental novels," for many years, from 1795 until his death in 1833. Naturally, he returns time and again to contemplation of his own life and his own growth. From 1810 on, he works on his autobiography, *Fiction and Truth*. He characterizes the leitmotif of this work:

> It seems as though the primary task of a biography is to present a person in the context of his time, and to show to what extent it all works with him or against him, how he develops through this a picture of the world and of humanity, and how, if he is an artist, a writer, or a poet, he brings this to expression in the world.[19]

This wholeness can only be depicted artistically, as is true for the wholeness of an "autonomous being" as a living idea. Thus Goethe must give his memoirs the title *Fiction and Truth* and not, as Jung-Stilling said, "truth with no invention." Only through a consciousness of the whole can wholeness be brought to expression.

In the second part of his memoirs, Goethe draws attention to precisely this relationship. He introduces a "hopeful Old German saying: What one wishes for as a youth, one will have in excess when aged." He sees the wish as a striving:

> If a certain focus becomes an essential part of our nature, then with every step we take, a part of this wish is fulfilled. If the conditions are right, the path of fulfillment is a straight one; otherwise it is a winding, twisted one. If one finds something that one once hoped to do being done by another, the wonderful feeling stirs within his breast that humanity in its totality is the true human being and that a single person can only truly be joyful if he has the courage to experience himself within that totality.

Thus Goethe closes the circle, for it is this relationship between individual development and the evolution of humanity that he and Herder pondered as young men. What Goethe strove for in his youth, he attains as an old man!

The idea of evolution emerges for Goethe from the observation of his own life. He discovers his inkling of an idea at work in the forms of Nature. And, vice-versa, what he experiences in Nature, he discovers secretly at work within his own soul-spiritual nature. As an old man looking back over his life, he writes:

> The ever-changing display of plant forms, which I have followed for so many years, awakens increasingly within me the notion: The plant forms which surround us were not all created at some given point in time and

> then locked into the given form, they have been given… a felicitous mobility and plasticity that allows them to grow and adapt themselves to many different conditions in many different places. …How they can be brought together under one concept has slowly become clear to me and that this conception can be enlivened at a higher level [of consciousness]: thus I began to recognize in the sense perceptible form a supersensible archetype. Whoever has felt what a rich, saturated thought … has to say, will admit what a passionate movement comes to life in the spirit when we are enthused, and we anticipate the totality of what will evolve step by step…"[20]

First Definition of the Concept of Evolution

Goethe gains insights from his own sense of his evolving self. These insights, however, do not contain a concept of evolution. The German idealists, who develop their ideas based on Goethe's work, take this step. In the introduction to his book *History of Philosophy*, Hegel characterizes the situation in which he finds himself:

> Evolution is an idea that is bandied about all the time. One of the specialties of philosophy is to examine what is thought to be known. Those things that are applied and used without being examined, the things used to simply get through life, are precisely what are most unknown for those who are not philosophically trained.

Hegel then tries in a circuitous yet fundamental manner to grasp, in thinking, the idea of evolution. He differentiates first, as Leibniz did, between two elements: the idea that has evolved and its articulated, mobile manifestation. He then adds to these the specific, concrete content of the idea itself. Evolution consists in the working together of these three elements:

> What is true and defined unto itself, bears within it the drive to evolve. Only what is alive, the spiritual, is active within and evolves. The idea—in itself concrete and evolving—is an organic system, a wholeness that bears within itself a wealth of stages and moments.

Wherever something is evolving, Hegel recognizes a living spirit, an idea at work. From this point of departure, he turns to an examination of the history of philosophy, characterizing it as a sequential blossoming of the human spirit: "Philosophy is itself the cognition of this evolution and is, as conceptual thinking, itself the cognized evolution. The further this path of evolution proceeds, the closer philosophy comes to perfection."

Schelling also struggles to understand this idea. In his fragmentary work *The Age of the Earth*, he begins with inner unity or oneness:

> If, by any process of evolution, the inner unity of the evolving subject is assumed, then it follows conclusively that each system has but one subject, one living being evolving itself within it. Thus it is in principle impossible to form a definitive, static concept, for since it is in continuous motion, progress, enhancement, any concept can only hold true for a moment; as a living organism it is in fact not one, but many. We see from this that there is no point in the living wholeness of scientific art, where one can stop or that one can hold on to, but that only by waiting for the evolution of the whole is it possible to express the concept of the evolving subject in its totality. The subject is present as well in the middle and at the end, as it is at the beginning, and it is not what it is at any given point; it is in truth not singular, but rather both one and all. Whoever attributes a protean nature to the subject of any given process of evolution has come closer to the truth than he may realize.

This characterization of evolution shows clearly just how close Schelling is to Goethe. This last remark and the use of such terms as "continuous motion," "progress," and "enhancement" shows a close connection between the two great thinkers.

Fichte is a third in this club. He includes the idea of evolution in his work on the history of philosophy. In *Foundations of the Present Time* and *Talk to the German Nation* (1806), he takes up and develops further ideas articulated twenty years earlier by Herder.

How strongly Goethe felt himself challenged by the clarity of the idealist philosophers finds expression in his second collection of *Morphological Notes* (1820) in the essay "Effects of the New Philosophy." He begins this essay with a description of how he had developed an artistic method to apprehend Nature's working. He continues:

> Further progress I owe to Niethammern who has attempted with friendly tenacity to help me solve the main riddles and understand the concepts and expressions. What I owe to Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, the von Humbolt brothers, and Schlegel should gratefully come to fruition in the future, especially if I have the chance to sketch out the events of the last decade of the last century.

None of these later philosophers would have been able to conceive the idea of evolution were it not for Goethe's work. They recognize evolution as occurring between the activity of a spiritual being—which always remains identical with itself—and its changing manifestation in the course of time. Whenever we use the term evolution we should keep in mind that we are speaking of a being. We may focus on a sense perceptible manifestation, but this does not gainsay the being's existence. For the moment, we have merely forgotten it.

The Spiritual Dimension

The discovery of the idea of evolution brought an ancient, static view of the world into motion. This raised immediate questions: How does evolution happen? What stages or changes does something that evolves pass through in the course of time? Answering this question did not bind investigators solely to the examination of nature. The earth, plants, animals, the human species, peoples, cultures and their languages have all gone through long processes of evolution. Great thinkers and scientists of the 19th century focused on placing ever new phenomena within the context of evolution.

Less visible are the results of those thinkers who applied the idea of evolution to spiritual phenomena. A major contribution in this realm is Immanuel Hermann Fichte's exhaustive study of the evolution of human consciousness. (Immanuel is the son of the great philosophical idealist, Johann Gottlieb Fichte.) In the first volume of his *Basic Principles of a System of Philosophy* (1833), Fichte addresses the question of how consciousness evolves to reach the point of desiring to embark on philosophical explorations. This is a matter of choice. But then

> ...[i]t educates itself to philosophy, which is not only the beginning of consciousness but its own proof of itself. Thus the first part of the system contains ... the scientifically founded evolutionary history of consciousness toward and in thinking, and also an excursus on the possible relation of thinking to truth.[21]

He also observes that thinking itself must reach a certain stage of development to be able to grasp its own evolution. To do so it has to be able to place itself within the focus of its own examination. Fichte calls this most sublime level of thinking, at which the thinker not only thinks but at the same time consciously examines the activity of his own thinking, a "speculative, beholding knowing." It is the highest stage of spiritual activity. It evolves itself only through untiring, self-directed spiritual practice. Consciousness has to want to educate itself.

At the end of the 19th century, Rudolf Steiner expanded Fichte's conception of thinking to include the totality of human experience. The human species has reached a stage in its development at which there is no further natural evolution. The natural course of evolution leads to the emergence of self-directed thinking. This form of thinking gives us the capacity to take our own future evolution as individuals into our own hands, and, in so doing, to give it a direction that we ourselves determine. The idea of the "human

being" is thus one that does not contain all its possible manifestations. It guides the individual to a certain stage of development, then sets her free. Steiner writes:

> The perceptual object "man" has in it the possibility of transforming itself, just as the plant seed contains the possibility of becoming a complete plant. The plant transforms itself because of the objective law inherent in it; the human being remains in his incomplete state unless he takes hold of the material for transformation within him and transforms himself through his own pow er. Nature makes of man merely a natural being; society makes of him a law-abiding being; only he himself can make of himself a free man. Nature releases man from her fetters at a definite stage in his development; society carries this development a stage further; he alone can give himself the final polish.[22]

Goethe said, "What one wishes for as a youth, one will have in excess when aged." Our modern understanding of the path of spiritual evolution is the same: The goal toward which a man or woman strives through practice, he or she will one day reach. Goethe set himself such a spiritual goal, and, in spite of hindrances, remained true to it throughout his life, evolving himself as he went. As a fruit of this striving he was able to bring the idea of evolution to light. Through Goethe's individual effort it became possible for us to find ourselves in a stream of individual development with the goal of becoming freely choosing human beings who can set our own goals. We find ourselves today at the beginning of this process of evolution.

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