



Gene Mallove

Finding the Truth About the Furor and Other Thoughts About the Cold Fusion Controversy on the Fourth Anniversary of Gene Mallove's Death

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*Turning and turning in the widening gyre,
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand. . .*

—William Butler Yeats, 1919,
from "The Second Coming"

These immortal words by William Butler Yeats, from his poem "The Second Coming," capture his vision of the chaotic decline of spirituality, morality, and humaneness that occurred during the first quarter of the twentieth century. They provide a stark picture of humanity, with potentially dire consequences, that portended the truly inhuman acts that occurred during World War II and afterwards. As the fourth anniversary (May 14, 2008) of Gene Mallove's death approaches, I am reminded of these words. Not only do they seem to fit in an entirely different context involving mainstream science and the lack of creativity (which can be viewed as a lack of scientific spirituality) and humaneness that most scientists have shown in their attitudes about (and, in some cases, outright disdain for) cold fusion, but I sincerely believe that Gene would have liked for me to quote Yeats in this way.

Yeats' words do seem to fit in other ways. The falcon that is spiraling out of control (which is interpreted as humanity spiraling out of control) can also be viewed as pure, uncontrolled science that, given the opportunity, can wreak havoc. The falconer (which symbolizes God) can be viewed as the gatekeeper of science who stands idly by, unable to avoid the ensuing chaos. (The falcon could also be viewed as cold fusion and the falconer as the Physics Establishment.) "The best lack all conviction" can be viewed as a statement about the bystanders who, like the falconer, allow the "worst" events to take place. (During the now infamous, raucous session of the American Physical Society on May 1, 1989, where Pons and Fleischmann's reputations and their work were almost destroyed, the "best"—the bystanders—lacked all conviction, while the "worst" were "full of passionate intensity.") Also, in a figurative sense, a "Second Coming" involving a revelation of the truth about cold fusion may well be

at hand, with unforeseen consequences for the naysayers.

Both Gene Mallove and William Butler Yeats were visionaries. Gene realized almost immediately that the events of 1989 were so tragic that they would cause a scientific crisis of unprecedented importance. When he penned the title for his Pulitzer-nominated book *Fire from Ice: Searching for the Truth Behind the Cold Fusion Furor*, in a single set of words he captured not only the obvious, important theme (the seemingly impossible task of extracting unlimited heat from "the cold") behind cold fusion, but a subtler, potentially more long-lasting, second theme involving the "furor" and anger that had resulted during the days after cold fusion was announced. Ironically, we now know the truth. Cold fusion is real. But the anger, resentment, and obstinateness about it continue. The truth about the "furor" is that it should not exist now, but in subtle ways it still does. It has left scars that have not healed. But with time, the situation will change. Healing will occur. My good friend David Nagel has coined the expression "the end of the beginning" as describing the situation today. I think he is right about this.

Gene played a tremendous role in helping us to reach this point. His unflinching will, fortitude, tireless idealism, and strength of character not only helped to invigorate all of us, but through his efforts the word has spread and continues to spread about the truth (and this has helped to keep the cold fusion field alive). Through his efforts, new and creative approaches both in journalism and in science have been initiated. His legacy to the field and to science continues in this magazine and through its parent organization, the New Energy Foundation.

What Gene did has inspired all of us who have been involved to do our best to continue to inspire the idealism and creativity that were his hallmark character traits. Gene Mallove and this magazine have been well-springs of knowledge, information, and excitement for a field that has so desperately needed recognition. Gene is sorely missed, but his spirit continues in these words and in these pages. His magic is alive.