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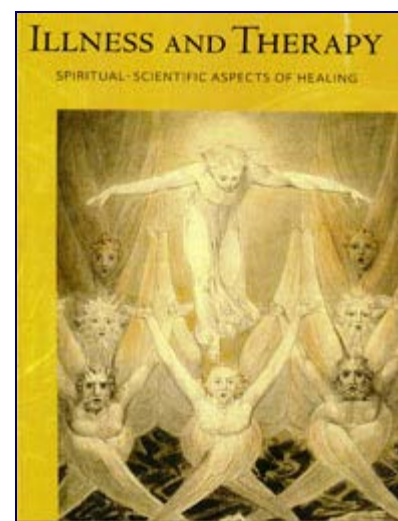
**Illness and Therapy, GA#313 Spiritual-
Scientific Aspects of Healing
9 Lectures, Dornach, April, 1921**

by
Rudolf Steiner

ARJ2 Chapter: Spiritual Science
Introduction by Andrew Maendl, MD, and
Matthew Barton

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2014



In a book devoted to anthroposophical medicine an Introduction contributed to by a medical doctor, Andrew Maendl, deserves our attention. He gives us spiritual science medicine's view of the full human being of body, soul, and spirit *vis-à-vis* so-called modern medicine's view of the human being as a higher primate composed of biochemistry with an enlarged brain.

[page xii] There is a great deal of dissatisfaction in medicine today, and this may partly be due to the prevailing view of the human being as a creature composed more or less entirely of complex biochemistry. Deep down most doctors sense that there is a great deal more to human nature. Steiner has given us a path, albeit a difficult one, for discovering deeper aspects of the human being, upon which a true art of healing can be based. The essence of Steiner's approach is holistic, i.e. not confined to sense-perceptible physical phenomena, but encompassing the whole person. In common parlance, terms like soul and spirit — if used at all — are today regarded as something very vague, at most a kind of 'icing on the cake' of physical reality, and produced by it. Steiner has a radically different, non-materialistic yet extremely precise view of the human entelechy, in which the physical body and its functions are embedded in three other aspects: forces of life and growth (etheric body), powers of sentience and sensibility (astral body) and finally powers of spirit, identity and self-realization (the ego or I).

What we will find in this book will help us to understand what Steiner means in other lectures by phrases such as, "the astral body is penetrating too far into the etheric", and many similar phrases. We come to discover that the astral body is the source of the unease which we label as "disease". Animals do not experience "unease" and when they get sick, they either die or get well again, taking appropriate actions to restore their healthy body. Birds, after ingesting some poisonous substance, are known to immediately fly to a particular berry which will counteract the actions of the poison. Humans have done similar things for thousands of years, and it is only with the advent of allopathic medicine, the processes of modern medicine, have humans immediately relied on someone else to doctor them back into health.

The four parts of the human being, physical, etheric, astral, and I, interact directly with or imprint upon the threefold human organism of head, thorax, and metabolism which hold our capacities for thinking, feeling, and will. Here's how the good doctor sees the importance of understanding this 12-way relationship.

[page xiii] It requires a great mobility and fluidity of thinking to grasp the complex dynamic involved in this four-three relationship, but in do so we unlock a wonderful diagnostic tool that will stand us in good stead in the appraisal over every patient.

Plus we are given a way of grasping the everyday meanings of thinking, feeling, and will.

[page xiii] We can easily get a sense of such difference by comparing the following three activities: forming a mental image of candle flame (thinking); going out to dig the garden (will); and listening to beautiful music (feelings). Our experience of will is closer to physical activity while calm, contemplative thinking is furthest removed from it. Feeling, which is centered in and involves the response of our rhythmic system (breathing and circulation), lies roughly midway between the two.

The imprint of the four on three is a "looser or freer reflection" than the primary effect. Steiner explains the various combinations of primary and imprint.

[page xiii, xiv] . . . the I, the astral body, and etheric body act only in a freer way, as imprint, in the head, while the physical is fully engaged there as primary effect. In the chest region, the astral and I are relatively free as imprint while the etheric and physical are more fully engaged in physical processes. In the system of metabolism and limbs, only the I is relatively free as imprint, and physical, astral, and etheric take primary effect there, in deeper engagement with the physical body.

Now consider an illness in the chest region must have its source outside of the rhythmic system, say, in the head system.

[page xiv] In the later stages of the disease [TB], alveoli and lung tissues harden and Steiner sees this as the result of forces of ossification issuing from the head and acting on the lungs.

The Introduction ends by telling us that doctors do best not to fight diseases, but seek to rebalance the forces of human organism which are out of whack. When learning something new, it's best to know all about it before you start, and the two authors have given us an excellent basis to proceed with the remainder of the lectures devoted to illness and therapy, which Steiner tells us is a supplement to the previous year's course, [An Introduction to Anthroposophical Medicine, GA#312](#).

[page 1, 2] Now, though, as we come to consider the higher constituting levels of human nature, the supersensible human bodies, we will need to speak about substances in a different way. . . . Rather than substances per se, we must start from processes: developmental processes rather than finished products. And whenever we speak of substance we must really visualize how the external sensory appearance that a substance presents to us is in fact nothing other than a process that has come to rest.

Steiner focuses on processes, not content (which can be defined as a process which has come to rest). He visualizes the 4X3 interactions discussed above as processes which create a healthy human being when they are in balance and a diseased human being when they are out of kilter, acting too far in one direction because the counteracting process has become weakened. As we have already seen, that weakened process will often be in a different portion of the human body than the one where the disease is presenting itself in process and content.

Science can analyze and discover that we have silicon in our hair and in our urine. Steiner explains that we have silica in our hair because it provides a source of activity. The silica present in our urine is leftover excess for which the body has no use.

[page 14] A merely physical analysis of whether a particular substance is present somewhere really doesn't tell us anything of importance. We always need to know whether something is playing an active part at the right place or whether it is just present because it has been expelled or excreted. That is the decisive thing. . . . precisely through spiritual science we can demonstrate that the idea of particular substances which chemical and physical analysis locates in particular places in fact leads to nothing but error.

Sometimes, the excess of a substance is ignored by material science when spiritual science can enlighten us to the reason for its excess. That happens with nitrogen, Steiner was unable to find any notice taken of the excess of nitrogen in breathed-out air versus breathed-in air. Lacking a key understanding of nitrogen's involvement with our process of digestion, the slight unexpected excess had been ignored in all the literature he searched.

[page 16] But because materialism has no idea what to make of this difference, it cancels it out with a shrug of dismissal. Such things happen in modern research. As I said, I will just leave this here as a [unanswered] question, and return to it later.

Steiner urges us to imagine the human organism as consisting of four interwoven processes or bodies: a warmth body, an air body, a fluid body, and a physical body. He says about our brain:

[page 19] What we must regard as the brain's aqueous content should not be thought of as merely undifferentiated fluid, but is just as thoroughly organized as our limbs.

Our brain has major cavities filled with cerebrospinal fluid called ventricles which I have postulated provide the sense of spiritual sight that Steiner had since birth. These fluid processes provide spiritual sense for all those who work their way to spiritual sight as Steiner outlines in [Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment](#). We all have these ventricles and have the possibility of developing them in the current era, and many more people will develop them in coming eras. Some people access the spiritual world consciously, as Steiner did; others of us, actually the majority of us, access the spiritual world unconsciously, but we all have the possibility for recognizing those of our actions which were influenced by some unconscious spiritual input or insight.

Once more Steiner reminds us of the importance of balance in our various processes. If our digestion is impaired, we are more likely to become obese than when our food is properly assimilated.

[page 24] As our point of departure, therefore, we can try to focus on what we find by observing these initial processes, which are still very much within normal bounds. At the same time it is also important to say that if we could not fall ill we could not be human beings at all. Illness is simply a continuation or progression beyond due bounds of processes we need, that are indispensable. Human health, we can say, is the condition in which pathological and curative processes are in appropriate equilibrium. We are not in fact only at risk when pathological processes manifest but also when curative processes overshoot their target.

In ancient times the art of healing was a closely held secret because it also included the art of making people ill. Steiner explains further why this was so.

[page 26] Pathological processes, therefore, are nothing other than a further development of processes indispensable in a healthy person. If we were unable to fall sick then could not think or feel either. Everything that ultimately comes to expression in the psyche as thinking and feeling is, in clinical terms, a system of forces that becomes pathological when it exceeds its proper bounds.

These processes lead to the so-called toxic action which comes from the head: it results from an excess

thinking and feeling that exceeds its proper state. Tied up with these processes is the I. The I counteracts the physical processes which in turn fights against the I.

[page 27] This physical process is implicit in continual dying within the human organism, and in what ultimately manifests in death. In fact, if the physical process hypertrophies, as it were, so that the I can no longer control it, the I is compelled to leave the physical body — which can of course occur at an earlier stage of life if an excessive physical effect arises somewhere in us, with further ramifications throughout the body. And so we can say that the human I is intimately connected with death.

In a like manner the Astral body is connected with illness, the Etheric body with health, and the Physical body with nutrition. He clears up a possible confusion for people imagine that the I and Astral body completely disconnect from the Physical and Etheric body; instead while disconnecting from the rest of the body, they stay connected to the metabolic and circulatory organization, in fact, during sleep they are even more connected to those parts. He likens this to the type of reconfiguration that occurs when location of night and day across the Earth is constantly changing. (Page 29)

[page 33] Study of disease ought to focus on the domain that belongs intrinsically to it — disorders that most clearly reveal an inappropriate influence of what we call the astral body.

Who has more disease country people or city people? The answer seems obvious, but the reasons for the healthiness of country folk are not obvious. Since our worries and care stem from the Astral body (look at your pets, they need worry nor fret). Since city folk have more worries and cares, their Astral body is usually out-of-whack, leading eventually to illness and disease.

[Page 37] Above all, you can experience the remarkable connection between the etheric and astral body if you observe how cares, worries and suchlike work on in people. Here it is not enough to observe the cares and anxieties that have occurred yesterday or in the past week, which are ultimately of least significance, but those which arose longer ago. A certain period must always elapse between the time when worries or griefs first affected someone, and the time when they have, in a sense, become organic, passing into the organism's activity. Cares and sorrows that reach a certain level of intensity always surface later on as anomalies in organic activity--and specifically in rhythmic organic activity.

A few days ago in our daily newspaper, The Advocate, I noticed an obituary for a former neighbor's mother who died at 103 years old. I called her to offer my condolences and was not surprised to hear that she had not been sick until two weeks before she died. Somehow the cares and worries of the city had never bothered her and her astral body was in harmony with her etheric body until the very end. It occurs to me, some thirty plus years since I conceived of my acronym [EAT-O-TWIST](#), that it provides a way for us to maintain stability in our astral body because it reminds us, *Everything Always Turns Out The Way It's Supposed To*. The *Supposed To* part means that the supposing we do today about how things are happening (Turns Out now) or will be happening later (Turn Out later) all result from what we are supposing, expecting, or imagining now. Saying EAT-O-TWIST now can sober up one's astral body and remove the cares and worries that might else beset it and result in creating in the future the very things worried about now. All future events are planned in the now, and now is the right time to say EAT-O-TWIST. There is no better time, don't you think? Do it now and you will use it from now on. If you use it, don't blame me if you begin to have no worries.

Steiner tells us of a Viennese physician and professor, Dr. Moritz Benedikt who decided to run for a seat in Parliament and when asked why, he is reported to have said, "So many patients consulted me for whom I was unable to prescribe what I ought — that is, better clothing, habitation, better air and so forth." (Page 35) Later in talking about therapy, Steiner explains the salubrious nature of Dr. Benedikt's desired

therapies.

[page 40] So [if] we take a patient to a region where his is exposed to . . . a sun-illuminated air — we work upon his rhythmic organism. And in fact we work in such a way that an irregular metabolism is directly combated by rhythm due to the latter itself being naturally regulated by such exposure to light.

Later he points out the benefits of altitude therapy. For myself, my first job out of college was in Oak Ridge, Tennessee at an altitude of about nine hundred feet, which may not sound like much to most people, but the altitude in which I grew up was at sea level and up to 17 feet below sea level. I worked at that altitude for two years and then returned to sea level and below in New Orleans and soon found myself with a case of amoebic dysentery and constant sore throats, both of which were fixed by medications and a tonsillectomy before I moved to California where I lived in Anaheim (200 ft) for three years, followed by Foxborough, Massachusetts (300 ft) for four years. Was I getting altitude therapeutic effects? Possibly, because since returning to New Orleans in 1976, I have remained healthy. It also occurs to me that since 1982 we have spent a week a year in our cabin at an altitude of 800 ft in Arkansas where we are subjected to altitude and climactic changes.

[page 41] If we find that a patient is particularly susceptible to parasitic infections due to irregular circulatory organism, it is a very good idea . . . to take him to a higher altitude than the one he is used to, a greater altitude above sea level, and thus give him an 'altitude cure'.

Clearly what can be useful in one area may be harmful in another, Steiner cautions us, but my body, soon after I moved back to New Orleans from Oak Ridge in 1964, contracted amoebic dysentery, a disease caused by a parasite.

In addition to altitude therapy, Steiner discusses light, climatic influences, and magnetic and electric fields. He says that applying a strong magnetic field to a patient's back can be extremely beneficial for combating disorders such as those implicated in tuberculosis of the lungs. (Page 45 paraphrase). This revelation was amazing to me because I had worked in Oak Ridge on devices with strong magnetic fields (so strong if a tool got attached, it was impossible to remove, and high electrical voltages in the 100,000 volt range. I was exposed to these fields for eight hours a day, usually from a distance of from five to twenty feet. My two years in Oak Ridge subjected me to light, climatic influences, magnetic and electric fields. The very treatment that would be helpful to someone with TB, something that I never to my knowledge had. But my aunt, only three years old than I am, contracted TB and was in the Dibert Sanatorium for the disease for some year. She lived with my family around the time I was going to college and it was during that time she was diagnosed and placed under treatment. None of the rest of my family including me were detected as having TB. But about twenty years ago, after a minor operation to repair a navel hernia, the X-ray showed something suspicious and I went to a medical specialist who carefully examined the spot and said he was certain it was a TB scar. A year later, his initial diagnosis was confirmed by a second X-ray. All of which raises the question for me, "Did I have a minor TB case and did my exposure to climatic and light change, altitude change, and exposure to high levels of magnetic and electrical fields eliminate it by restoring whatever was out of balance in my body?"

Since I am not a medical doctor, I do not have case histories of patients that I can share to help shed light on my study of these illnesses and therapy lectures, but I am able to share my own experiences with illnesses and how changes in my locations may have impacted my health in various ways.

Eating uncooked or raw fruits and vegetables is covered in Lecture 4 and once again, Steiner lectured against any kind of diet that is strongly skewed by some new fad regimen. Always he stresses a diet which is individually determined, not according to dietary prescription, even his own. Some people have short small intestines and a meat diet is better for them, for example. A story will help illustrate Steiner's attitude towards rigorous diets. After a lecture on vegetarianism one evening, Steiner accompanied some members

of his audience to a local pub for supper. The special for that day was a meat dish, and each member hassled the proprietor in an attempt to order something completely vegetarian. Finally the owner asked Steiner, "What would you like to eat, Sir?" and Steiner replied, "I'll take the special." Here he expresses a definite aversion to extreme forms of raw food diets, a kind of regimen which seems to be gaining a following in recent decades along with the rigorous vegan regimen.

[page 49, 50] The kind of fanaticism which can come to expression, say, in extreme forms of raw food diets, applied fanatically as dietary prescription(1), will have a very specific consequence for the whole human organism. Raw food--in other words never eating in cooked form the parts of a plant that are lower down, towards the root--means that the health of the respiratory system is gradually undermined. The human organism isn't easily wrecked and so the ruinous effects of a fanaticism of this kind will not become apparent for a long time. Gradually, though, an extreme raw food diet will express itself in marked shortness of breath or similar conditions.

This recommendation is modulated by Steiner later as not including fruit diets because fruits are essentially already cooked, if you will, by their exposure to the Sun. If a disorder originates in the circulatory system not the respiratory system, a diet of raw fruit may be called for.

[page 50] That will be absolutely right — in such a case one can certainly resort to a raw fruit diet. But if an impairment of chest function tends to originate in a patient's breathing, such treatment will achieve nothing and may even be harmful. Here instead I will need to provide a diet of cooked roots. The instability of fluctuating dynamics in this system shows clearly how misplace any particular form of fanaticism is.

The material on pages 53 through 55 is very important to parents and caregivers of children between seven and 14 years old who have digestive problems. Steiner recommends children during this age do not be overfed or subject to any dietary prescriptions or food fads. The deleterious effect on them can last the rest of their lifetime. Without forcing food upon them, but instead finding foods they like and allowing them to choose the amounts they can eat even if it seems too small. In addition he says to keep their schoolwork down to a minimum(2). Do this, and they will begin to thrive and become very healthy when puberty arrives. This is the wisest path to health for such children.

[page 50] The very opposite of this is done on a large scale, and by overlooking or transgressing this law we do not nurture healthy human development. Instead, all sorts of predispositions for illness potentially result from these digestive ailments, and can continue to affect a person for the rest of his life.

What is a medicine? Anyone reading this far into these lectures must be wondering what distinguishes a food from a medicine. Steiner's answer is simple, "Whatever the organism can digest when healthy is not a medicine. This cannot be a medicine."

[page 56] We can only start to speak of a medicine when we administer something to the organism which it cannot digest when healthy, which must therefore only be assimilated in an abnormal human organism. We challenge the abnormal human organism to assimilate something that is no assimilated in a healthy human organism. Healing is therefore a continuation of digestion — but digestion, in fact, which is gradually transposed into the interior of the human organism.

Allopathy is scientific medicine claiming to be proven with materialistic research. Homoeopathy is scientific medicine based on the ability of the body to heal itself, often uses tiny quantities of substances to promote healing. Steiner calls our human organism a homoeopath because of its inherent ability to heal itself, to return to health after an errant side trip. He explains that only the subtlest qualities of metals can be used for healing, this achieving by potentizing, that is, creating successive dilutions to create a homoeopathic medicine.

[page 57] This is why I said last year that basically the human organism won't let you muck about with it using metals allopathically, for it is itself a homoeopath. In the ascent from the digestive system to the head organism, it fragments the metals itself — and we can of course support the organism in this process by potentizing a substance.

Steiner adds that the closer we come to the head region we come, the higher the potencies required.

Our I or Ego carries warmth to our extremities, which is easily observed when one shakes hands with someone.

{page 59} In chilled hands and feet you find images of what is occurring in the whole human organism. And then we can learn to assess the symptoms in a way that allows knowledge of the whole human being to leap out at us from them. If a person has chilled hands and feet this is profoundly indicative of a failure of this I to engage properly in later life. If we take account of such things or if in general we simply engage with what spiritual science has to say, based on its fundamental approach, we can forge a real connection with the human organism. A failure to do this, to take account of such things, will gradually lead to a loss of connection and capacity to really perceive and understand the human organism. If we engage with what spiritual science has to offer, on the other hand, we acquire a connection with an insight into the human organism. We grow into it.

How can a doctor fail to take account of such things? By running a series of medical tests and entering the consultation room for the first time without even shaking hands with her new patient. Herein lies the source of much of the ills of modern society: doctors who spend more time entering data into computers than actually touching patients, resulting treatments directing to data image of the human, not the full human organism.

One example of a homoeopathic medicine involves arsenic, which is known as a strong poison, but in potentized does can be quite helpful to increasing the penetration of the astral body which carries along with it the I. Arsenic poisoning is known to create mummification in corpses. But there is a arsenizing or astraling process in all humans, and only in high concentrations can arsenic poisoning of humans occur.

[page 62] For instance, the corpses of people who strongly astralize, and in whose organic, physical processes arsenization is therefore at work, will decay less easily than those in whom the astral body is too weakly connected with the organs. This is certainly something we should take note of. In extreme form we can see it in the tendency to mummification of corpses poisoned by arsenic. They mummify and show strong resistance to the process of decay.

How does one counteract excessive astralizing? By turning the human into a tooth, figuratively speaking, that is, administering magnesium in some form. The common household product, Epsom salts can be used in such cases.

[page 62] We make the whole human being into a tooth: in other words, taking the whole organism into account we try in some way to administer to him the radiant power of magnesium, magnesium in some medicinal form.

Another excellent definition by Steiner: Nutrition — the proper reciprocity between organic insides and environmental outsides. Lacking such reciprocity, what happens?

[page 63] The inner, organic processes start energetically developing their own vital energy, and cease to be receptive to outside influence. The power of the I no longer penetrate food substances to thoroughly, and in consequence the astral body is also engaged one-sidedly, and cannot gain proper access to the etheric body.

The doctrine of signatures is no longer in use due to our human evolution of consciousness having led us away from spiritual sight and into seeing only the outside of things; it states that every fruit and vegetable has a shape that points to the human organ it is best used for. The tomato, e. g., is an oval shaped red fruit which resembles the human liver, and in fact the eating of tomatoes helps one to maintain a healthy liver.

[page 68, 69] The old doctrine of signatures — which has vanished today simply because people no longer have the necessary powers of observation — relied on instinctive inner vision. It is important however to be able to perceive the inner activity which, basically, is apparent in all external appearances in the world. Someone, therefore, who does not get stuck in a mystic realm, veiling things in all sorts of mystification, but instead retains his healthy common sense, will have to say that vermilion, red cinnabar, is something that in a sense expresses an activity that counteracts fungal processes. Whatever tends towards a colorless state can become fungal. Whereas too strong an astralization of the earths surface is implicated in fungal growth, in cinnabar-related substances we find a reactivity to this astralization, a counteraction, and therefore the red color. Wherever reddishness appears in natural processes, astralization is strongly counteracted. To couch this in moral terms, one could say that by reddening the rose tries to defend itself against astralization. Such realms therefore involve an interrelated view of pathology and therapy that can lead us into this remarkable relationship of I and astral body to the other organs, in which they grasp hold of organs or withdraw from them; or manifest excess astral activity in streams rising from below upwards.

On pages 75 through 80 we reach the portion of Lecture 6 where Steiner explains that the excess of nitrogen in our exhaled over our inhaled breath shows that nitrogen is involved in our process of digestion, going into and out of proteins as they are formed internally. He explains that we have three levels of breathing: our head breathes the etheric (sensory data is an advanced breathing process), our lungs breathe air, and our liver breathes nutrients.

[page 76] The breathing is in fact metamorphosed in the head, and all thinking functions through to the assimilation of perceptions are nothing other than breathing configured in an upward, forward-evolving direction. The head is a more advanced breathing organ which has progressed beyond the scope of the lungs. It simply holds back breathing and, in place of air intake through breathing, replaces it with intake of etheric forces through the senses. Sensory perception is nothing other than a refined breathing process — that is, one taken into the etheric realm. The head breathes and the lungs breathe. But something else — the liver — also breathes in us at a still lower level of this metamorphic development. The liver is an incomplete lung, an incomplete head form, and also breathes. Here, though, the polar metamorphosis to sensory activity predominates: the absorption and assimilation of nutrients. This is why the development of lungs and liver development occupies a middle position between stomach development on the one hand, and brain and head development on the other.

Head forces are the least spiritual which explains why head-type humans become materialistic. "The more of a thinker one is — a head thinker — the more one will end to become a materialist." Nitrogen is utilized in the production of proteins and some of it is given up when digestion is completed. Thus we see that nitrogen is vital in the breathing-in of nutrients, and , being used up in digestion, it is expelled later, causing the excess of nitrogen in exhaled air over inhaled air. This slight excess of nitrogen is something that the head-type materialistic thinkers claim to be insignificant since their man-made instruments are unable to detect how nitrogen affects the organs spiritually. Only human-instruments, those processes formed inside the human being, can perceive the spiritual reality effects of nitrogen which Steiner reports to us.

[page 78, 79] The activity which comes to expression in breathing is also apparent externally, in the elimination of carbon as carbon dioxide. But the accompanying activity

of spiritualization, which unfolds in an inward direction, is connected with nitrogen. Once the nitrogen is expended, it is expelled, you see, for the purpose of spiritualization. The degree to which nitrogen is expelled is a measure of how much our organs are working inwardly towards spiritualization. From this you can gather that someone who does not credit the existence of spirituality will inevitably remain in the dark about the uptake of nitrogen in the human organism. Only once we know that both an inward- and outward-directed activity unfolds every time protein is formed or configured can we understand the role of nutrition. If you examine this process, which is fundamentally a process of respiration with its polar contrasts, you can see that nutrition and digestion border everywhere on processes of respiration. Wherever nutrition and digestion are at work, breathing and spiritualizing processes come towards them. In this spiritualizing process — thus in the other aspect of breathing — we find shaping and modeling forces at work in protein formation, every thing gives us form.

One of the universal images of hospitals is that of putting a patient in a bed and covering him with a blanket. This is done to bolster the I of the person whose job of creating warmth is facilitated by the blanket covering. The first thing a patient does when he feels recovered is take off the blanket.

[page 80] The I must always be allied with warmth, and its activity always proceeds from warmth. If we put a patient to bed and cover him with a blanket, this means nothing other than inviting the I to make suitable use fo the increase in warmth thus achieved.

The search in Biblical times for a land flowing with milk and honey indicates that they could see the constructive forces in milk which leads to healthy babies and the constructive forces in honey which leads to healthy mature adults. Milk is a substance best for babies and honey best for adults. Keep this in mind as you read this next passage how substances can have different effects on children and adults.

[page 80, 81] For instance, substances we know to be very beneficial in children may well have no effect in adults. This is because the child is involved in formative growth and weight increase, and therefore needs intake of substances, needs these to enter him and unfold their forces inwardly. If a particular substance has a good effect in a child, this does not by any means signify that it will work in an adult in the same way. In an adult it may well be far more important simply to sustain the repose-seeking forces in his tissue fluid by activating an appropriate stimulus.

The heart is not a pump but rather a hydraulic ram whose job is create vortices to ensure mixing of airy (oxygen) and solid nutrients, and the ebb and flow by these rams create the signature pulse of the heart. Another way of looking at the heart is that it is a monitor of the activity of our fluids. In deriding those who insist the heart is a pump, Steiner opens a jocular vein with a humorous analogy.

[page 81] The heart is not a pump, as I have often remarked, but is more what I would call an instrument for reading or monitoring the activity of tissue fluid. The pumping actions of the heart do not cause blood circulation, but the circulation, rather, gives the heart its impetus. The heart has as little to do with the circulatory function in us as the thermometer has to do with producing external heat or cold. Just as a thermometer is nothing other than an instrument for recording heat and cold, so the heart is an instrument for recording our circulation and what flows into it from the blood's metabolic system. Here we have a golden rule we must faithfully observe if we wish to understand the human being. The modern scientific belief that the heart is a pump that drives blood through the blood vessels is the opposite of the truth. Those who subscribe to the heart-as-pump belief should, if they wish to be consistent, also declare their faith in the capacity of a thermometer to raise the temperature in a room!

Those who live by the spirit, die into the spirit; those who live by the matter, die by the matter. Those who ignore soul and spirit can never understand the dynamic interplay of the heart with forces of the body.

[page 81] So you see the consequences of an outlook that ignores by far the most important aspect of the human being--the spirit and soul. It overlooks the motion-impelling, dynamic force in us and instead bases everything on mere substance. This outlook seeks to derive from matter the forces which are really impressed upon it. It tries to impose on the heart capacities which in fact it only acquires through the dynamic play of forces informing it.

What leads to the processes of paranoia and hallucinations in mental illnesses? Due to a defective organ, paranoid illusions arise as compulsive imaginations which stay inside the organ. If the illusions cannot be held inside by the organ, they flow out into hallucinations, as in schizophrenia. Below is the detailed explanation.

[page 86] Last year I said that certain types of mental illness present as a compulsion to form imaginations and inspirations, and this is indeed what inner release of spirit signifies.

If this kind of compulsion is present, this is basically because the organ has become damaged. If the organ is not defective but normally constituted, it does indeed develop imaginative capacity but this remains unconscious. Once it has been damaged it is no longer able to develop imagination properly. On the one hand the organ is defective and in consequence a compulsion to develop imagination arises, and on the other the imagination remains unsecured by the organ and therefore appears as hallucination and so forth. We can see it like this: if we have an organ and the imaginations enveloping within it which then radiate into the rest or" the human organism and are perceived, then if the organ is deformed the developing imagination cannot unfold properly in its plasticity and thus, being abnormal, it impresses itself on conscious awareness. Then we find the patient has hallucinations and visions. On the other hand, the organ is not filing properly, and this gives rise to the urgent desire for real imaginations. Such things become clear simply by gaining an insight in their inner nature.

The remainder of the book, Lectures 7, 8 and 9 dealt with answering questions, uses of specific medications, and when either vowel or consonant eurythmy would be prescribed for various ailments.

What we can learn from this body is how therapeutic approaches to illnesses are possible with the insights of spiritual science, approaches that are determined by direct observation of the whole human being, not from looking at data on some electronic device or printout. If you go to a physician who specializes in anthroposophical medicine, be prepared for a complete life history to be taken and for lots of questions which might seem unnecessary, but know that your health will improve due to the logical corrections of the various organs and processes of your body being brought back into alignment close enough for your body to take over and carry the healing on from there.

----- *Footnotes* -----

Footnote 1.

Note: when Steiner says "dietary prescription", he is likely *not* referring to a doctor's prescription, but to the dietary choice of an individual, a "food fad" as we might call it today.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)

Footnote 2.

Waldorf and Steiner schools are often criticized for giving their students in this age group too little homework. This is one of the bases in reality for the apparent lack of homework; these

schools aim towards fostering healthy human beings in school years and later life.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)

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