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A READER'S JOURNAL



**The Karma of Untruthfulness, Volume 2,
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by Rudolf Steiner

12 Lects Dornach, January 1917

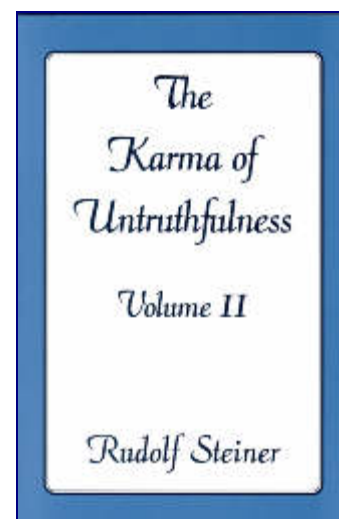
Translated by Johanna Collis

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2004

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Read Volume I of

[The Karma of Untruthfulness](#)  
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The theme of this two-volume book set is best summarized by Steiner in this passage in Lecture 20 given on January 15, 1917:

[page 136] Only if hearts exist which see things in their true guise and penetrate that terrible fog of untruth which shrouds everything in the world today, can we progress in an appropriate way.

It struck me as I read the above passage that it possessed a certain lyrical flair that I might capture in verse.

*Hearts are wise most verily
Who see the world in its true disguise,
Hearts are wisest when they see
The world through the fog which hides,
Hearts prepared this proper way
Prosper in the world today.*

"Untruthfulness is the counter-image of Imagination." This apothegm from the Contents page (page vii) sets the stage for Volume II which contains the final twelve lectures. We encountered the idea of untruthfulness in the form of error when Steiner told us that the existence of error itself points to the existence of the spiritual world. As Robert Sardello tells us in his introduction to [A Psychology of Body, Soul, & Spirit by Rudolf Steiner](#):

[page xxv] Steiner's response to these questions is quite startling: error originates in the spiritual world, and our stepping stone to this realm is through this aspect of the spiritual world itself! Thus, our first access to the spiritual world is through error. But we must recognize this error consciously. And, in addition to recognizing it, we must have the inner moral force not to be taken into the error: we must be able to utilize the inherent spiritual forces to bootstrap, as it were — or perhaps better said, "soulstrap" -- ourselves into the spiritual world.

In this book, Steiner continues his looking into the events of 1917 which involve prominent people in

various countries who do not have the "inner moral force" to prevent them from taking themselves, their countries, and the world into error. In his Introduction Rudi Lissau in 1991 calls the karma of untruthfulness "the conscious manipulation of the media by power elites" — a concept so prevalent in the nascent 21st Century that it has been given the sobriquet of "spin". Spin can be defined as a maneuver by someone — of insufficient moral force to tell the truth — who instead twists the truth like a pitcher twists a baseball to create a spin on it that causes it to curve from its apparent path. Thus "spin" by the media and the politicians can be seen as cant or hypocritical talk which seems to be aiming for truth while actually ending up far off the mark. One might even paraphrase the title "The Karma of Untruthfulness" to, in the words of Bill O'Reilly, "The Spin Stops Here."

Is it any wonder that Lissau says that these lectures may reveal a "pro-German bias" by Rudolf Steiner? One who would think that betrays an introjection of the very spin that Steiner strives to end with these lectures. What I found in these lectures was that Steiner systematically investigated both sides of the issues which eventually led the Entente and the Central Powers of Europe into a battle which soon involved the entire civilized world. Both sides were equally at fault. You won't find that written by a partisan of either side in World War I, but Steiner was saying exactly that.

This series of lectures is a tough slog. Much of the trek leads us through ruminations of events that only a person living in 1917 or a historian of WWI could know any details about. We trudge through the swamp of obscure details for many pages, but occasionally we climb upon a prominence where we catch a breath-taking glimpse of spiritual reality. And when we do, we realize that the light we see is shining through the muck of the details we have just endured. This is a book which must be read in its entirety in order to be appreciated. I will share with you the things I appreciated in the course of this book, but you will have to suffer through the book individually if you wish to appreciate fully those things.

Looking at the functions of the ego which are interwoven with the nervous system he points out the cultural epochs when each of the threefold nature of the soul had to be developed by the Ego, namely the sentient soul, intellectual soul, and consciousness soul.

[page 4] And the ego body itself — this, too, has to be interwoven in the proper way.

As I said just now, as man passes through succeeding periods of evolution he has to step into different developmental impulses with each period. He has to absorb whatever the contemporary age requires him to take in. In the first post-Atlantean period, ancient India, impulses of soul and spirit had to be absorbed which enabled the etheric body to be developed; in the next period, ancient Persia, the astral body was developed; in the period of Egypt and Chaldea it was the turn of the sentient soul; in the Greco-Latin period, the intellectual or mind soul; and today, the consciousness soul.

And then he points out that poisons will be deposited if one were to reject the development appropriate to one's epoch. Poisons appear in everyone's body, but one who has absorbed and developed the culture of his age will have the forces to eliminate poisons as they appear. Those who do not do so accumulate those poisons.

[page 5] . . . to remain behind in evolution means that man impregnates his being with a kind of formative phantom which is poisonous. On the other hand, if he were to absorb what his cultural impulses require him to absorb, the state of his soul would be such that he could dissolve this poisonous phantom he bears within him. By failing to do so, he allows this phantom to coagulate and become a part of his body.

How could this be important? To understand this one need only look at the symptoms of a civilization with such accumulating poisons and ask if we live in such a civilization, a civilization where the word "civil" in the sense of polite and courteous often does not apply.

[page 5] This is the source of all the sicknesses of civilization — the cultural decadence, all the emptiness of soul, the states of hypochondria, the eccentricities, the

dissatisfactions, the crankinesses and so on, and also of all those instincts which attack culture, which are aggressive and antagonistic towards cultural impulses.

Steiner says, "Human beings acquire poison, sometimes in a very concentrated form, if they refuse to accept what could dissolve such poison." He also points out that in certain dialects of his region one says not that one is *angry*, but that one is *poisonous*. And he tells us what people are refusing to do which could lead to dissolving the poisons they would otherwise be accumulating.

[page 5] Nowadays, untold people refuse to accept spiritual life in the form fitting for today, which we have been endeavoring to describe for such a long time, more recently even in public.

How does the dissatisfactions and crankinesses show up in public? Primarily in the demonstrations of the "Anti's" — those groups who are *anti-* or opposed to something. The Anti-War, the Anti-Abortion, the Anti-Oil, the Anti-Freedom, the Anti-Infidels, the Anti-Trade groups to name a few prominent ones who parade daily across our TV new screens. Their common ground is that they are Anti-Spirit, but they are unaware of this aspect of their being. Instead they go on accumulating poisons instead of dissolving them and act out their poisons in angry protests, projecting upon others the cause of their anger. Isn't it amazing that some of the most warlike public demonstrations are those created by those to claim to be protesting some war or the other? Steiner helps us to understand this otherwise paradoxical circumstance.

One of the ways to stop *spin* is practiced by knuckleball pitchers in baseball. Instead of applying spin to throw a curve, they use their knuckles to apply the same resistance to the top of the ball as to the bottom of the ball so that when they throw it, the ball does not spin at all! In this next passage Steiner shows us that living truth contains its counter-image so that, like the knuckleball, resistance is applied to both sides of an issue and it does not spin. Recognizing the counter-image of their one-sided version of truth is exactly what the anti-groups are unable to do, up until now.

[page 6] We have already mentioned the highly contradictory and yet no less important fact that the question: To whom do we owe the Mystery of Golgotha? could elicit the reply: To Judas. For it could be argued that if Judas had not betrayed Christ Jesus, the Mystery of Golgotha would not have taken place, so therefore we ought to be grateful to Judas, since Christianity — that is, the Mystery of Golgotha — stems from him. However, to be grateful to Judas and perhaps recognize him as the founder of Christianity is going too far! Wherever we strive to enter higher realms we have to reckon with living, not dead truth, and the living truth bears within it its own counter-image, just as in physical existence life bears death within it.

The Sufis like to tell the story of the petty thief who was accosted by a Sufi and told that he was wasting his talents — he should be thinking bigger. Soon the man had become the Sultan of his entire country. He applied his talents to bigger things and soon was no longer a thief. By applying his talents on a higher plane he became a respected and admired leader. Steiner has said in several other places that "evil is a good out of its time" — here he reiterates the thought using a slightly different perspective of "place" instead of "time".

[page 10] If thieves were to use their thieving instincts, and murderers their murderous instincts, and liars their lying instincts to develop higher forces, instead of enjoying them here on the physical plane, they would develop quite considerable higher forces. Their mistake is only that they develop their powers on the wrong plane. Evil, I said, is good that has been transposed down from another plane. Of course, if we know this it does not make a thief or a murderer or a liar any better. But we must understand these things, otherwise we cannot fathom what is going on, falling unconscious victim to these dangers.

In the Lord's Prayer the final passage is where we plead, "deliver us from evil". As free human beings our deliverance must come from our own will applied when we recognize the true nature of what is before us to be evil. How can we recognize evil if there are no examples of it extant?

[page 10] As a counter-image of spiritual endeavor it is essential for a violent evil to exist. And one of man's tasks today is to recognize the true nature of this evil, in order to be able properly to recognize and oppose it when he comes upon it in life.

It may occur to some "anti-war" zealot, for example, to say, "Well, I oppose the evil of war when I demonstrate against it, do I not?" This is a form of falsehood to which such fanatics are prone — they are unable to perceive evil as something they are to avoid in their own lives rather than attempt to save others from it. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are asking help in delivering us from creating evil with our own lives. If anti-war zealots prayed that way, they would be able to find the courage to avoid making war on others with their violent demonstrations. We live in a world full of falsehoods in whose name no end of evils are perpetrated on others. Unless we endeavor to understand the spiritual world, we will lack the moral force to dissolve this poison within us and we will instead be led to project our poison upon the outside world. "What we hide, we advertise," is an apt psychological apothegm which can be applied here.

[page 10] Superficially we see how falsehood throbs through the world in mighty waves which devour much more than one might think. For falsehood is monstrously vigorous. But as we have seen today, falsehood is nothing other than the corresponding counter-image for spiritual endeavor which ought to exist but does not. The divine, spiritual wisdom of the universe has given to the human being the possibility of spiritual endeavor. We have within us the poison which we can dissolve. Indeed, we must dissolve it, for otherwise it will become a kind of partial corpse within us.

Thomas Edison is known as a prolific inventor, but what is not widely known is that he had a paucity of original ideas for inventions. What he was excellent at doing was taking the ideas of others and by sheer persistence of will and application bringing them to fruition. The remarkable story about how he created the first light demonstrates that. Did he have a great idea about which element would work best as a filament? No. He simply eliminated by exhaustion all those which didn't work. I met a man whose father worked for many years as Edison's chauffeur in New Jersey. His dad told him that Edison never bought his own cigars, but was always bumming one of his. In the area of ideas, he apparently did the same thing — taking ideas for new inventions like the motion picture, the phonograph, etc, from other people and implementing them better than anyone else. Did Edison experiment? I suppose you can say he did, if you mean trying every possible way to do something. He was a leader in creating new materialistic technology even though he was poor in ideas. Here is what Steiner had to say about the modern penchant for experimentation.

[page 23] Were materialistic progress to continue its development along the lines of the nineteenth century, people would grow ever poorer in ideas. Put simply: No ideas suitable for comprehending the world would occur to people. Any thought they might have about the world could only be stimulated by means of experiments, or by what they could see with their own eyes. The modern insistence on experimentation is nothing other than a paucity of ideas.

What happens if, burdened by materialism and abstract ideas, people are no longer able to receive ideas from the spiritual world? The answer should surprise no one who is even a casual watcher of world events — nationalism will arise from the diverted intensity of impulses rushing up from the blood instead of from the spiritual worlds of ideas.

[page 24, 25] I have told you, however, that the human soul needs a certain degree of intensity in its impulses. If it cannot reach up to ideas, it will take this intensity from elsewhere, from obscure, unconscious soul forces, from forces that rush up from the

spirit of the blood. Fundamentally, nationalism is nothing other than a consequence of the lack of ideas. Mankind's primary need now is the will to rise up to ideas. But it has to be said: if this is to succeed, something else will be needed, too: namely, an understanding for the element of grace which can come from the spiritual world. For it is not possible to win through to the spiritual world from a starting-point of a limited sum of preconceived opinions. The spiritual world can only be reached by keeping the soul open for whatever wants to enter in, by desiring not merely to judge, but also day by day to enrich one's ability to judge.

One area where a paucity of ideas exist is in the area of crime. This idea came as a shock to me when it first arrived. I immediately scoffed at it, thinking of all the ingenious criminal schemes I had seen in various movies and detective stories. But, as with all new ideas when they arrive, they don't come with ready-made explanations — they are like babies who need to be nurtured till they grow to maturity. I began watching crime-based stories and plots and soon I discovered that criminals do not have original ideas — they take their ideas for criminal schemes from others.

If you consider ideas to be primary property [\(1\)](#), they steal others' primary property just as they try to steal the material or secondary property of others. Think for a moment of all the places in a movie you've seen where someone asks the ring leader what they're going to do. What happens? He thinks of some scheme he's seen someone else use in a different job or applies a scheme from another line of work to his current criminal endeavor. This is what usually passes as "ideas" in the criminal world.

Unfortunately for humanity, it mostly passes for ideas in the rest of society as well. To most people being "creative" today no longer requires that one have ideas. The best example of this type of thing is the Betty Crocker Cake Mix box which said in bold letters on its front, BE CREATIVE and HERE'S HOW YOU DO IT! People take art lessons and learn how to paint like someone else, then display their paintings in shopping malls and call it art. Or they go to ceramics class, pour stuff in a form, bake, and paint and consider themselves creative — all without needing to have a single original idea except maybe about which color to paint on a flower. The world has become a gigantic "Paint-By-Number" Set which is supposed to enrich our lives without us having to work to receive a single new idea.

In the consciousness soul age that we currently are living in it is urgent that as many people as possible have insight, become filled with ideas.

[page 25] So to begin with it is above all necessary that insight should take hold of human beings. We live in the age which is to grasp hold of the consciousness soul. So this age must strive for insight. But insight can only come about in ideas that span the world; for insight to come about, reality must be filled with ideas. Yet, especially with regard to the most recent events, our age is thoroughly disinclined to accept ideas. An abstract concept, however logical, however convincing, is not an idea. An idea must be born of living reality. Nowadays we see hardly any ideas come into being.

We hardly see any ideas come into being except for abstract concepts, usually formed out of whole cloth from some interest group with an axe to grind, such as getting favored treatment that they would else not qualify for. Abstract concepts do not have a basis in reality, Steiner tells us, and as a result they are powerless to change reality. He gives the example of "eternal peace," and discusses the very abstract concepts that have been applied to create the supposedly neutral, but really only *neutered*, body of the United Nations or UN.

[page 25, 36] One of the many abstract ideas ruling us today is that of eternal peace. In the way this is handled it is an entirely abstract concept which does not spring from a living understanding of reality, and yet it appears to those who do not desire to widen their horizons as something entirely convincing. These people say: The various nations — and they do not wonder whether this expression 'the various nations has any reality

— ought to create an inter-nation organization, something that stretches across the entire world and is constructed after the pattern of a single nation. Furthermore, something called 'international law' is to be established. The idea is beautiful and so everybody finds it convincing. The various nations are to commit themselves to keep the peace and they must also create legal norms which can contain their various mutual interests. All very nice! It would be equally nice if, to heat a room, all we needed was the abstract concept of warmth instead of having to light the stove. It is irrelevant whether an idea is nice, or convincing. For what could be more convincing than the thought that our need for stoves and the like really means that nature is a terrible despot!

The UN reality is an example of what a newscaster, such as one did yesterday, might misread on a teleprompter as *un-reality*. One wonders how the UN can ever work effectively when it bridges so many different cultures with their various levels of soul-development at any particular time. Take the three countries of Italy, France, and Britain, for example. The Italians have a sentient soul development, France an intellectual soul development, and Britain a consciousness soul development.

[page 36] We are familiar with the threefold nature of our soul in that it consists of the sentient soul, the intellectual or mind soul and the consciousness soul, all three being filled, spiritually permeated, enlivened by our egohood. When the Italian folk soul works into individual human beings, it is the sentient soul that is influenced by the forces and impulses with which it works. In the French individual it is the intellectual or mind soul, and in the British individual the consciousness soul through which the folk soul works. For the folk souls of Central Europe it is the ego that is receptive, and for those of the Slav peoples the spirit-self. If we could fill ourselves with an understanding of this, we should no longer be tempted to form judgements in the way in which they are so frequently formed.

Should Italians be upset because they are not blessed with a natural consciousness soul as the British are? No. If one wishes to be at the forefront, it is possible to do so, no matter one's folk soul or country of birth, by the study of spiritual science.

[page 36, 37] A certain person heard this and was furious, because he understood anthroposophical spiritual science to be saying that in the German nation the folk soul works through the ego, as if this was something higher than a folk soul working through the consciousness soul. This was his own misunderstanding! For in spiritual science different aspects of knowledge are viewed objectively, side by side. The folk souls have tasks to do and to accomplish them they have to work into their nations. But as regards the working of the folk souls in human souls we must realize that in our fifth post-Atlantean period a certain development has to take place. And those who are drawn towards anthroposophical spiritual science ought to feel themselves in the forefront of this development.

One who does not study spiritual science will say "My blood ties me to my country" while one who does study it will say "My karma ties me to my country." One has only to cast one's eyes towards Ireland, the Middle East, and other troubled areas of the world to see the difficulties caused by the blood of one group or another rising in anger and retribution against another. These problems are caused by what Steiner calls, "superficial judgments."

[page 39] In short, we are touching on something pervaded by tragedy which should have nothing to do with ordinary logic or ordinary, superficial judgments. For whether these things are seen as a matter of blood or as a matter of karma, blood lies below, and karma above, logic.

The ordinary logic and superficial judgments that Steiner is referring to are those which utilize conscious

information we receive from the material world. Matters of blood have no need of logic as they are felt directly. Matters of karma rise above ordinary logic because they bridge lifetimes and lead us to make decisions for which we might be unable to offer a logical reason using ordinary logic.

In ordinary logic, it might be possible for us to have a utopia or paradise on Earth. Steiner warns us that this is a foolhardy goal, given the lack of spiritual consciousness available in the world at the present time for most people.

[page 39, 40] It is necessary to come to a profound sense for the fact that it is not possible to understand the world without seeing the reality of the necessary conflicts leading to all that is tragic in the world. And to believe that something like Paradise is possible on the physical plane shows a total lack of comprehension of the peculiarities of the physical plane. Paradise does not exist on earth. There can be no comprehension among those who strive to realize the new Jerusalem as a Utopia on earth or who, like the social democrats, want to bring about some other satisfactory solution. There is a profound law which says that human beings, in so far as they live here on the physical plane, can only reach a satisfactory view of reality if they are aware that higher worlds also exist, and that they are connected in their souls with these higher worlds. Only if we understand that we are citizens of higher worlds can a satisfactory view be attained. Therefore, when spiritual consciousness was extinguished, a time had to come when mankind could no longer understand why so much disaster, so many conflicts, are present on the earth. These conflicts can only be resolved when we feel ourselves not only to be living in the physical world, but also in the spiritual world. Then we may begin to grasp that just as man cannot always be young but has also to grow old, so there has to be a breaking down of what was once built up - conflict and destruction as well as creation. When you understand this, you also understand that conflicts have to arise between groups of human beings. These conflicts are the tragic element of world events, and they must be seen to be something tragic.

This next passage leads me to agree with Hebbel and say that, "Only the clever can experience tragedy; others merely stumble into accidents."

[page 40, 41] Hebbel was a contemporary of Grillparzer and knew him. As I said, Hebbel was a somewhat somber, melancholy genius, but after he had seen Grillparzer's plays *The Golden Fleece*, *Thou shalt not lie!* and *A Dream is Life* and so on, he said — and this is most interesting: Grillparzer depicts tragic conflicts, but only those of which it can be said that, if people were clever enough to see through the situations, it would be possible to resolve them in the end. According to Hebbel, the tragic circumstances in Grillparzer's plays only come about because the characters are not clever enough to see through the tragic situations. This, he says, is not really tragic. Real tragedy among human beings only comes about when those involved are as clever as anything and yet none of their cleverness and caution can help them, so that conflict becomes inevitable.

What kind of spiritual consciousness should we be striving for in the current epoch or period of evolution? Use your imagination. Or rather, Imagination — the first level of seeing images in the spiritual world. If we do that and avoid abstract thinking which can lead to slogans from which people can form superficial judgments which fly in the face of facts and lead even the cleverest human being — absent Imagination — into tragedy.

[page 45] In earlier lectures here I said: In the fifth post-Atlantean period we can only make progress if we strive on the one hand to achieve Imagination, and on the other to let the facts speak for themselves. All preconceived judgments are doomed increasingly to become empty phrases. Least of all can abstract thinking — as opposed to thinking that is bound up with actual facts — lead to judgments about the tragic conflicts in the

world, the tragic play of impulses which work in the way I have described.

When people accept counterfeit truth for actual truth, those who wish to hide their real intentions from people will have succeeded. They will, in effect, have “shrouded the world in untruth” or thrown a “fog over the truth”. (Page 49)

During the time leading up to and during the 2003 Iraq war France made all kinds of suggestions to the United Nations and to the USA about what should be done. Read the next passage and decide for yourself if France was doing what Britain was doing almost a hundred years earlier around the events of World War I.

[page 59] From the British quarter came all sorts of meaningless suggestions of the kind made by those who either want to take a hand in affairs without thinking things through properly, or who want to build up for themselves from the start a world-wide reputation of having endeavored to settle the matter by peaceful means. This is not actually the aim, but it has to be possible later to say that it was.

One should be able to perceive that the "karma of untruthfulness" is not something that was restricted to Steiner's time, but it is actively at work in the world yet today.

Steiner introduces in this next passage the idea of "materialistic specters" as a way of describing the penchant of modern historians to construct history based on available documents, any of which may have no record of the underlying historical impulses which are always of a spiritual nature. One historian did come around later, R. G. Collingwood, who claimed that “all history is the history of thoughts” — something I imagine Steiner would have liked, at least more than he liked the modern tendency to a “description of materialistic specters”. Ideas may not appear in the available documents of the time, but they can provide a basis for uncovering the underlying historical impulses, it seems to me.

[page 75] Since the nineteenth century it has been the custom to construct history purely materialistically, on the basis — as people put it — of the available documents. Today it is not yet realized that this does not lead to a true depiction of historical impulses, but merely to a description of materialistic specters — paradoxical though this may sound: a description of materialistic specters. Even in the best history books, the description of people and events of the past right up to the present shows nothing but specters without any real life, however realistic it is meant to be. It can, indeed, only be a description of specters because all reality is founded on spiritual impulses, and if these are omitted, what remains are specters. Thus up to today, the recounting of history has been spectral, yet in a certain way it has satisfied human souls; it has worked in a certain way.

Steiner was particularly upset by a note from the Entente which mentioned a people that no one in the world had ever heard before: the Czecho-Slovaks. He says he knows the Czechs and he knows the Slovaks, but that he has never heard of a Czecho-Slovak. But we all have heard of such a thing because the jury-rigged nation known as Czechoslovakia existed for over 70 years as a result of that note which used an abstract term with no basis in reality to refer two different peoples as one as if it were possible without force for them to form one country. That it was *impossible* to do so was shown by their immediate division into the separate countries of the Czech Republic and Slovakia as soon as the imposition of force by the USSR had disappeared. It is in matters like this one where the results have played themselves out that one can discern the prophetic nature of Steiner's understanding in other matters which have yet to be completed.

[page 88] Further it is said, funnily enough: The Czecho-Slovaks are to be liberated. We know the Czechs and also the Slovaks. It goes without saying that only the Entente has heard of Czecho-Slovaks. Let us presume that it is the Czechs and the Slovaks who are meant.

One gets the impression that Steiner was talking about how ridiculous it was to talk of a Czecho-Slovakian people rather than the Czech people and the Slovakian people. He says, on page 90, "but those in western Europe who know nothing about the actual situation would make of this: 'Czecho-Slovaks'." Unfortunately that is exactly what happened and soon the hyphen between Czech and Slovak disappeared entirely into the name of the country we all knew as Czechoslovakia — which no longer exists as one country.

With Lecture 19 Steiner leaves the discussion of the events surrounding World War I and begins a detailed discussion of the nature of the human being. We find that our real Ego is actually operating below the surface of our consciousness and what we take to be ego-stuff is but the flotsam and jetsam which washes to the surface of consciousness. To investigate consciousness by investigating such detritus would be like studying submarines by examining the debris they jettison to the surface.

[page 91] The nature of man is complicated, and very much of what actually goes on within the human being remains more or less beneath the threshold of consciousness, merely sending its effects up into consciousness. True self-knowledge cannot be won without first obtaining insight into the working of the sub-consciousness weaving below the surface in the impulses of soul. These, it could be said, move in the depths of the ocean of consciousness and come to the surface only in the wake of the waves they create. Ordinary consciousness can perceive only the waves that rise to the surface, and on the whole one is not capable of understanding their significance, so true self-knowledge is not possible. Merely pondering on what is washed up into consciousness does not lead to self-knowledge; for things in the depths of the soul often differ greatly from what they become in ordinary, everyday consciousness. Today we shall look a little into this nature of man in order to gain, from this point of view, an idea of how the subconscious soul-impulses in the human being really work.

The human's Ego, astral body, and etheric body are invisible, even though it is possible to discern their effects at work.

[page 91] However, the manner in which what is evident works through what is not evident is very complicated. But if we work our way bit by bit through the various parts of this complicated process, and place them all together, we shall, in the end, attain an overall view of the being of man. Even this, though, will always remain incomplete, for the being of man is infinitely complex. But at least we can gain a certain basic knowledge of human nature as a valid foundation for self-knowledge.

The distinction between the Ego, which is the fourth and highest body in the human being during this stage of evolution, and the ego, which is our personal consciousness is often confusing to newcomers to spiritual science, particularly if they come from a Freudian background. Steiner makes a crystal clear distinction in this next passage between the Ego and the ego. He calls the Ego (also the "I") the "real ego" and the ego the "ego-thought." Note that the Ego is also the newest or youngest member of the four-part human being which accounts for its "very dull consciousness" which refers to what can bleed through to human consciousness of the Ego:

[page 92] We must be quite clear what we mean when we say: The ego works through the point of contact of the solar plexus. What it means is this: The ego itself is equipped with only a very dull consciousness. The ego-thought is not the same as the ego. The ego-thought is what is washed up into consciousness, but the ego-thought is not the real ego. The real ego intervenes as a formative force in the whole human organism through the solar plexus.

In the [Lord's Prayer](#) we pray "Deliver us from evil" in the final Ego or "I" portion of the prayer which has taken us through the seven-part human structure. When we ask to be delivered from evil, we entreat the spiritual forces (at the same level and higher than the luciferic forces which infected our Ego or "I") to

assist us in overcoming the negative aspects of the gift of freedom Lucifer has presented us. With freedom always comes the possibility for error. With error it is possible for a good to come out of its proper time or place — that is what we call evil. Is it no wonder that evil is so attractive when it rears itself in our lives? It is a good — something we would wish or desire — and would gladly succumb to if we were able to. And with our freedom, we are able to! "Deliver us from evil" is a plea to help us remember that when an evil appears it is disguised as a good, and we ask assistance from above to identify evil-tainted *goods* that are out of the proper time for us — coming too soon or too late.

[page 93] This human ego, given to man during the course of earthly evolution as a gift from the Spirits of Form, has been, as we know, subjected to the temptation of Lucifer. The ego, as it now exists in man, and because it has been infected by luciferic forces, would be a bearer of evil forces. The truth of this fact must definitely be recognized. The ego is not a bearer of evil forces because of its own nature, but because it has become infected with luciferic forces through the temptation by Lucifer; it is in fact the bearer of truly evil forces, forces which, because of the luciferic infection, tend to distort the thought life of the ego towards evil. Since the moment when the ego was given to him, man has been able to think. If there had been no luciferic temptation, man would think only good thoughts about everything. But as the luciferic temptation did, in fact, take place, the ego does not think good thoughts, but thoughts infected by Lucifer. This is a fact of earthly evolution: the ego is malicious and dastardly. It thinks only of showing itself in a good light and consigning everything else to the shadow. It is infected with all kinds of egoisms. This is how it is, because it is infected by Lucifer.

A curious result of the connection of the Ego and the solar plexus is that the Ego is bound to our abdominal organs. As long as our abdominal organs are healthy the demons infecting the Ego are held in check. If some abnormal condition arises in our abdominal organs, even something like constipation, these demons can be released and can cause all kinds of havoc: from manic behavior to madness.

[page 94] Assume now that these abdominal organs are unhealthy in some way, or not in a normal state. Not to be in a normal state means not to want to take in fully what fits into them spiritually, what spiritually belongs to them. The ego can be somewhat freer in its activity if the abdominal organs are not quite healthy. If this freeing is brought about by some physical hyperactivity, this can express itself in the human being in that the ego is let loose on the external world, instead of remaining bound. When the ego behaves freely in this way, we have a case of psychological illness: the human being displays the characteristics of the ego infected by Lucifer. The characteristics of the ego of which I have spoken then make their appearance. There is certainly no need to be a materialist in order to understand fully the manner in which the spiritual — in this case the ego — can be bound to physical organs in life between birth and death, though in a way that differs from what is perceived by a materialist. There is no need to be a materialist to see how, in a manner of speaking, the devil can throw off his chains and break loose. This is one instance of psychological illness.

The amazing feats produced under hypnosis, on the other hand, provide us ample examples of what can happen when the normal activity of the abdomen is switched off by suggestion.

[page 94] The freeing of the ego, however, is not necessarily a question of psychological illness, because another state of affairs is also possible. In such an instance it is not a question of illness in the abdomen but rather a switching off of its normal activity. This is what happens in the great majority of cases of hypnotic consciousness. The functioning of the system of ganglia in the abdomen is put into a state either by natural causes or by all kinds of mesmeric effects — in which it is unable properly to keep the ego under control. Thus in this way, too, the ego has an opportunity to become more involved with its environment. It is not embedded in the system of ganglia and is therefore free to

make use of channels to the outside world which enable it to perceive from a distance all kinds of processes in space and time which, when it is embedded in the system of ganglia, are processes which it cannot normally perceive.

We can see that madness results from some deformation of the abdomen, whether by psychological or hypnotic means. As a teenager I had read up on hypnosis and attempted it with a group of my friends. One older friend who was engaged to a girl in the group was particularly skeptical about hypnosis and asked for proof. While he was under a trance, I gave him a post-hypnotic suggestion to say “I hate you” to his girl friend. In my naivete I thought this would prove to him that he could do things under hypnosis that he wouldn’t have ever considered. He came out of trance, we all talked about other things for awhile, then I said the trigger word and he walked up to his girl friend and slapped her in the face and said vehemently, “I hate you!” This shocked her, him, and the rest of us, none more than me. I vowed never to play with hypnosis as a parlor game ever again. The couple broke up later — whatever truth had been unleashed by the artificial deformation of his abdomen under hypnosis, it freed his Ego to express the truth in an unexpected burst of madness, but truth it was and led in a precipitous manner to the severing of an otherwise unhealthy situation. Whatever the good that might have come from the split did not matter to me and I shelved my interest in hypnosis until I could understand it much better and use it properly.

Note that chemical means is a by-product of these three means and, as such, are not mentioned by Steiner. Not surprisingly in this age chemical and genetic means are identified as the culprit by medical specialists who mistake the effect for the cause and treat the effect with sometimes disastrous and oftentimes unwanted side effects which mask the original problem to the extent that some amelioration by the chemical drug doses can be claimed. If one removes the placebo effect of taking drugs for psychological illnesses, one wonders what exactly is left of their claims for efficacy.

[page 95] If the ego is freed, if it feels, you might say, free of its chains and is linked, not with its body but with the spiritual forces in its environment, this is always, in away, a pathological state, just as is also the case in madness. That is why some forms of madness are characterized by the appearance of spite, mendacity, cunning and craftiness — everything that comes from luciferic infection; the urge to place oneself in the light and consign others to the shadow, and so on.

Next Steiner compares the lion with the ox. The lion is notably a carnivore and the ox a vegetarian. The lion's group ego is less bound due to the forceful activity of its abdominal organs, so its group ego is freer. The ox with its vegetarian diet has its group ego more bound up in its abdominal organs and it leads a more placid life. (Page 95 paraphrase) What is amazing is the conclusion that Steiner comes to is that a hungry vegetarian is likely to become more savage than a hungry carnivore. Here's his logic.

[page 96] When hungry, one is apt to be less inhibited. So it would be likely that the hungry vegetarians, who are in the habit of containing themselves as a result of their vegetarian diet, would be the more savage. For hunger brings about changes in the functions of the abdominal organs, which are then less able to fetter the ego than they are when satiated. [Thus, relatively speaking,] . . . the hungry vegetarian, in contrast to his state when satiated, is likely to be far more savage than the hungry carnivore, in contrast to his state when satiated.

It is possible for signs of madness to stem either from the ego or the astral body being released from its normal condition. If the ego is freed, one could expect instances of megalomania or criminal activity. If the astral body is released, one could expect manic-depressive or bi-polar disorders to show themselves. This could happen if the release is caused either by psychological problems or by hypnosis.

[page 97] When the ego is released, this leads, as I have said, to characteristics such as spite, cunning, wiliness, fraudulence, giving prominence to oneself and putting everyone else in the shade, and so on. When the astral body is released, this leads to volatility of

ideas and lack of cohesive thought, manic states on the one hand or, on the other, to withdrawal, depression, hypochondria.

If someone's etheric body is released from its confinement in the cerebral system, one finds envy, jealousy, and greed prevalent in that person's life, "a kind of letting oneself go". Steiner here summarizes the Ego, astral, and etheric body's contact points in the human being.

[page 99] The only point of attraction for the ego is, more or less, the system of ganglia and whatever is connected with it; the astral body's point of contact is with the spinal system, but together with the system of ganglia; and the etheric body is linked with the cerebral system, but jointly, with both the spinal system and the system of ganglia. So, from this point of view, the system of ganglia also has to do with the brain, for instance, in so far as it serves all subconscious organic processes. If the system of ganglia brings about a process of illness which runs its course in the brain, then it could be the etheric body which is freed, even though the root cause lies in the system of ganglia.

This material provides a useful adjunct to that contained in the series of Steiner lectures published as [Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit](#). Psychiatry, if it is ever to rise to the challenge of its own name — *psyche-iatry*, or soul-healing, will need to absorb the teachings of spiritual science and reverse its precipitous fall into materialism with its concomitant chemical, drug, and genetic attempts at soul-healing. What Steiner said almost a hundred years ago is still true — psychiatry which is charged with healing of soul-sicknesses, has no means of making these simple distinctions of Ego, astral, and etheric body symptoms, up until now.

[page 99, 100] Psychiatry today has, as yet, no means of distinguishing between these three forms of soul sickness. Psychiatry will only achieve some degree of perfection when distinction is made between psychological abnormalities brought about by the freeing from bondage of the etheric body, or the astral body, or the ego. Then there will be a really significant way of distinguishing between, and assessing, the various symptoms of psychological abnormality — and it will be important to assess them in this way.

This freeing of any or all of the three bodies brings with it pleasant feelings which can become a detriment to the healing which should take place. This results in the paradoxical situation that when a patient begins to get better they resent the doctor and attempt to sabotage further efforts to help them. This phenomenon provides an excellent gauge as to whether an illness is psychologically based or not.

[page 101] Somebody with a psychological abnormality gains a certain satisfaction from his abnormal soul activity and is therefore loath to depart from it. In every age, those who have concerned themselves with the healing of psychological abnormalities have reported the following experience: When doctors have found a way of healing their patients, it happens that as the moment of health approaches, the patient senses that he can no longer freely merge with his spiritual environment and that he has lost a certain feeling of voluptuous bliss, so he begins to hate the doctor who has taken this from him. Usually those who are not psychologically ill are grateful to their doctor when he heals them, but efforts expended on the psychologically ill are met with the opposite. You will find this documented in the appropriate literature. Doctors have frequently found that when a cure is effected, or even only an attempt is made to overcome the sickness, the patient begins to find his doctor abhorrent because he is taking away what the patient really wants, especially in his subconscious, even if he would consciously deny this.

Steiner reports a case of madness which involved the freeing of the Ego, astral, and etheric bodies. The patient talked about his madness thus, 'Everything appeared easy to me. No obstacles presented themselves either in theory or practice. My memory acquired, all of a sudden, a singular degree of perfection. . .'. Steiner tells us about the case:

[page 102] Someone who understands these things can tell from this that the patient must otherwise have suffered from severe constipation, i.e. an abdominal condition, which led to a dulling of his memory. As soon as his ego tore itself free, his memory was again intact.

In another case, he describes how it would make sense that a person who is exceptionally stupid might benefit if he received an accidental shot in the head. This makes no sense unless one understands the relationship of the etheric body with the head. An old saying goes, "Somebody ought to knock some sense into his head." This seems to indicate that something is very tight in a person's head that could be loosened by a sudden jolt, which is exactly what Steiner tells us. Often we find that old sayings reveals truths that were once known by direct observation of the spiritual world

[page 103] Take a person who is stupid to a greater degree than is apparent in external life. There are such people. Well, stupidity is only one stage on the way to a certain abnormality of soul: namely, imbecility. The cause is possibly that the otherwise bound etheric body is free because the brain is too compact and cannot achieve sufficient fluidity in the way it works. Perhaps this person shoots himself in the head without killing himself. Someone who knows what to look for might find that this is not a bad thing, as long as he had not done himself any other harm. For the resulting loosening of his compact brain might lead to his becoming clever. There are certainly known cases in which head wounds have led to people becoming more wide awake than they were before.

When Francis Bacon wrote that we were thenceforth to accept only the reports of our senses as valid data about the world, he began us on a plunge into the materialistic world which gets deeper every day. Soon people began accepting only what was material in everyday life as well. The process is one so aptly described by this quatrain of Samuel Hoffenstein which I first read in 1958 and quickly committed it to memory, although it wasn't until I began to read Steiner's works some forty years later that I understood why I was so attracted to it.

**Little by little we subtract
Faith and Fallacy from fact
The illusory from the true
And starve upon the residue.**

I see it now as an example of my [remembering the future](#). This fall into materialism is in full swing, but like a pendulum it is moving the fastest right at the point when it begins slowing down in preparation for a reversal of direction to come. Or like the night which is darkest before the dawn — already we can espy streaks of spiritual dawn breaking through the dark materialistic night sky.

[page 113] The materialistic way of life began when science became willing to recognize only what is material. It has already led to a stage at which people are prepared, in life, too, to accept only what is material. This will be taken much, much further and will become far more intense. For the fifth post-Atlantean period must be lived to the end. In all areas it must reach a kind of climax. For spirituality needs its opposite pole if it is to recognize itself with the intensity that will be needed if mankind is to step with maturity into the sixth post-Atlantean period [RJM, ca. 3573 AD].

In this next passage, Steiner expands what he said about three levels of soul and the countries of Italy, Spain, France, and Britain.

[page 118] Now we come to the third element, the one which corresponds to the fifth post-Atlantean period and has the task of bringing into being the culture of the consciousness soul: the English, the British element. The sentient soul element, brought

into culture by the Italian-Spanish sphere, expresses itself in the theocratic element of the cultus — the sentient soul does not live in consciousness. Similarly the political and diplomatic element corresponds to the French sphere. And now in the British sphere we have the commercial and industrial element, in which the human soul lives fully and entirely in the material world of the physical plane.

During an interview with James Lipton recently, Cate Blanchet quoted Martin Scorsese as living by this motto as a director, "Pain is temporary; cinema is permanent." What an improved world it would be if everyone took that advice about life on Earth to heart. They would become more earnest about learning the spiritual truths, no matter what the pains involved, because while the painstaking task of learning is temporary, the benefit to the world and to one's immortal spirit is permanent. And yes, there are good forces ready and waiting to help us — but they cannot overcome the rampant materialism of the world alone, we must first be open to them.

[page 131, 132] Have the good forces no power against the evil forces we see all around us? To answer this we have to remember how difficult human freedom makes it for the spiritual world to assert itself amid the surging waves of materialistic life. This is what it is all about. Is it to be made so very easy for human beings to enter fully into the life of the spirit?

Future ages will look back to today and say: How careless these people were with regard to adopting the life of spirit! The spiritual world is sending it down to us, but human beings resist it with all their might. Apart from all the sadness and suffering holding sway at present, the very fact that all this does hold sway is in itself a destiny signifying a trial. Above all it should be accepted and recognized as a trial. Later it will become apparent to what extent it is necessary for those who — so it is said — are guilty, to suffer together with those who are blameless. For after all, during the course of karma all these things are balanced out. You cannot say: Are not the good spirits going to intervene? They do intervene to the extent that we open ourselves to them, if we have the courage to do so. But first of all we must be serious about understanding things; we must be deeply serious about trying to understand.

Just as the Archangel Mi-cha-el has his foot on the neck of the serpent with the intent of dispatching the dark forces from our world, there are those who have their foot on the neck of spiritual endeavor with the intent of dispatching it from their world. With which side are you aligned? With those of the dark forces whose kingdom is the materialistic world? Or with the light forces of Mi-cha-el whose kingdom is the spiritual world? The choice of either side can be made in freedom, but only one side in light. Mi-cha-el empowers us to choose "in freedom and light".

[page 133] [Those whose] aim is to send a wave of materialism over the earth and make the physical plane the only valid one . . . must be opposed by the endeavors of those who understand the necessity of a spiritual life on earth. Looked at from this point of view, you can express this counter-force in two sentences. One of these is well-known to you, but it does not yet come fully out of the hearts and souls of human beings: 'My kingdom is not of this world.' The sentence 'My kingdom is not of this world' must sound forth against that kingdom which is to be spread over the physical plane, that kingdom which is only of this world, that kingdom of commercial and industrial materialism.

Everyone knows France is a republic, but Steiner sees the monarchial element prevalent in the French Republic. Even though he is talking about the French president in 1917, it applies especially well to the current president Jacques Chirac, whose monetary shenanigans and political positions in regard to Iraq were as imperious as if he were actually the King of France rather than her President.

[page 134] The actual character of the French state corresponds solely to the monarchic principle, so that even now France is a Republic in name only. In reality she is ruled by

a king It is not a question of terminology but of facts. What is so terrible today is the way people allow themselves to be so easily intoxicated by words. If somebody is called a president it does not necessarily mean that he is a president, for what matters is the actual situation.

Steiner was thrown out of a Socialist school in Germany for daring to suggest the need for a theory of freedom. He soon found out that freedom and socialism are orthogonal to one another. Rightly understood, the difference between "reasoned persuasion" and "coercion" is indistinguishable when such "persuasion" is applied by someone in power.

[page 134] Social conditions in Germany do not correspond in any way to the German theory of Socialism! For instance, it is quite comprehensible that, after teaching in a Socialist school for a while, I should have been banned from teaching there, after I said that it ought to be in keeping with Socialism to develop a theory of freedom. On behalf of the leader of the Social Democrats I was told: It is not freedom that matters, but *reasoned persuasion!* [RJM: italics added] Socialist theory does not fit in with social conditions. In other words, social theory ought to be developed on the basis of the evolution of mankind. On this basis its three great principles are developed: Firstly the principle of the materialistic view of history, secondly the principle of added value, and thirdly the principle of class war.

In Lecture Twenty Steiner identifies four castes:

- 1. Priests**
- 2. King**
- 3. Commerce**
- 4. Human Element**

Of the fourth caste, the Human Element, he says:

[page 135] It is interesting that no theory has been worked out for the general human element, the fourth caste or class. In this element there can be no question of dominance, for there is nothing below it over which dominance might be exercised; it is solely a matter of laying the foundation for human beings to relate with one another.

What is the foundation for human beings to relate to one another in the absence of "reasoned persuasion" by persons or congresses in possession of coercive power? Steiner knew of no such theory laid out for us when he was giving this lecture in 1917, but since then a remarkable man from Central Europe, Andrew Joseph Galambos, has laid out such a theory called [Volitional Science](#) which demonstrates how humans can relate to one another without coercion — without ceding their essential human element of freedom to some king or president or assembly of elected representatives.

This next passage again calls to mind recent events in which several countries were attacked by terrorists, prominently the USA on September 11, 2001 during which almost 3,000 civilians were killed in four separate attacks. Once the USA proceeded to form a coalition to defend itself from future attacks, it was labeled an aggressor. It is understandable during a football game when the first attack by a player on the field against another player is not seen by the officials, but once the defensive counter-attack is launched, the defending player is cited for a penalty. It is *not* understandable, however, when the first attack is obvious and public knowledge to everyone. In that case we suspect that those slinging the label of aggressor against the defensive party must have an axe to grind. In other words, they are benefitting from the status quo, as the French and the Germans in their lucrative *sub rosa* dealings with Iraq recently. They apparently wished to continue to profit from the dictator in Iraq and to keep the USA from defending itself from future attacks from the terrorists harbored by and funded by Iraq's dictator. Steiner is talking about events over 80 years ago, but it sounds like current events, indicating that the world has not changed much for the better in the meantime.

[page 137] So it became necessary to defend ourselves. And the present time is proving most opportune for those who want to point fingers at us and say: See what attacks they are making; that shows who is the aggressor! . . . First you force the other fellow to defend himself and then you treat him as the aggressor. It is a very effective method and one that plays an enormously strong role in the world today. The attacker hides behind the clamor he raises after he has forced the other to defend himself by labeling him the aggressor.

In ancient times the knowledge of life after death was circadian knowledge — no one could deny something they experienced on a daily basis. They were linked directly to the spiritual world in a way that has faded for the period we find ourselves within. Today's humans are more awake than those earlier humans, but we are awake only to the sensory world around us. We lack the third condition of perceiving the spiritual world in addition to our waking and sleeping states.

[page 139, 140] In today's state of being entirely awake, human beings are restricted entirely to the physical world which they can perceive with their senses; they live between birth and death in a world which they can experience through their senses and through their understanding which is bounded by the brain. And in sleep they are unconscious. The entities of ego and astral body in which they live between falling asleep and waking up are not yet strong enough to supply them with a comparable consciousness. We know that the astral body has only been developing since the time of ancient Moon and the ego only since the beginning of Earth evolution. Both are young measured against cosmic evolution and they are not yet strong enough to achieve consciousness when left to themselves between going to sleep and waking up.

If one is put off by the statement "our brain impedes our understanding", one betrays one's materialistic understanding which holds our brain to be the source of all our understanding and thoughts. If that were so, there would be no spiritual world to comprehend and we would never encounter the paradox that thinking is easy and comprehension is hard as we do when reading and studying Steiner's spiritual science. If we persist in our studies and succeed with our comprehension, we enter the world of Imagination, "a world of mobile, subtle pictures and ideas, and that is significant."

[page 141] It is difficult to describe these things in words because our language has been coined for the external, physical plane, so we have to exert ourselves when applying it to supersensible conditions. You could say that everything to which we ordinarily apply our understanding lives coarsely, densely in our soul because our brain is always at our disposal and is trained to deal with ideas and concepts relating to the physical plane. But to explain things which do not relate to the physical plane we have to exert our soul to such an extent that, when we study spiritual science, our brain plays an ever-decreasing part. When we experience difficulties in understanding what spiritual science gives us, this is only because our brain impedes our understanding. Our brain is adjusted and adapted to the coarse concepts of the physical plane and we have to exert ourselves to acquire the subtler concepts — subtler only in so far as human comprehension is concerned of the spiritual world. This exertion is entirely healthy, it is certainly good, because with spiritual science we then live in our soul in a new way, quite different from that required by physical knowledge and understanding and ideas. We transport ourselves into a world of mobile, subtle pictures and ideas, and that is significant.

We enter a world of objective thoughts which float about the universe and enter us. We begin to understand that our brains are tools which allow us to grapple with ideas and thoughts which enter us, and it is only through such grappling that we may be said to comprehend the thoughts, to grasp hold of them and make them our own. The next step is to enter into communication with living spirits of "the dead with whom we are karmically related." (Page 141, 142)

Those spirits of the dead always surround us, but they will not enter our consciousness unless we attune ourselves to them by actually living in the Imaginations of the spiritual world. They can gain entry to our souls, but cannot enter our bodily aspects especially those thoughts which come from our materialistic-thinking brain. Steiner's spiritual science creates a bridge between the material world and the supersensible world which is there for everyone who will avail themselves of it. (Page 142, 143)

[page 143] I have often stressed that what spiritual science has to say about the supersensible world, the concepts and ideas we develop — all of this is there for both the living *and* the dead. That is why I have recommended the practice of reading to the dead: that is, of unfolding thoughts orientated to them which refer to the supersensible world. Doing this is a way of offering them a bridge and it is one which can reach not only those who have died recently, but all those who have died, even a very long time ago.

And not only does this process allow we-the-living to contact the dead among us, but also the dead to contact us. With our fall into materialism, we have progressively blocked participation in the physical world by the dead among us. With the advent of Steiner's spiritual science we are able to open up two-way communication once more.

[page 143, 144] Active communication must once more be established between the living and the dead. Those who have died must become able to work into the physical world, so that what takes place there no longer goes on solely under the influence of conception which arise in this physical world.

So our pursuit of spiritual science is indeed intimately bound up with giving the dead an opportunity to work here in the physical world.

Our way of thinking, our way of speaking, our way of perceiving only things of the physical world, and especially our untruthfulness create a tremendous fog through which the dead cannot penetrate.

[page 145] This thick fog contains all that black rubbish which comes, for instance — to name only one source — from today's journalism, in the form of untruths which are printed and repeated, creating an aura of untruthfulness spanning the earth. It is no exaggeration to say that it is exceedingly difficult for the dead to penetrate this black fog. Therefore, with the help of ideas such as those we have been developing concerning the absolutely concrete untruthfulness buzzing about in the world, it is necessary to endeavor to reach clarity, to really make the effort in this field to recognize the purely external truth of the physical plane in so far as this can become accessible to us, in order not to cover our soul with a dense fog through which the spiritual world simply cannot penetrate. You will understand how very necessary this is.

Steiner next explains how secret societies with their rites and ceremonies can create a super-materialism which affects both the living and the dead. He does not specifically identify the secret societies but gives us enough data so that we could identify one by their practices.

[page 146] Imagine certain secret societies carrying on a form of ceremonial magic directed towards its grey or black aspects. Imagine they influence their members in a way that affects even their physical body, even the delicate vibrations and weavings of their physical body, so that something spiritual flows into this physical body.

What is the consequence? The consequence is that something now comes about which was suitable in earlier periods of human evolution but is no longer permissible today. Such procedures make it possible for the spiritual world to influence those human beings who participate, even though they do not turn towards it along the path I have described. This means that it becomes possible for the dead, as well as other spirits, to influence the members of a circle created by ceremonial magic. In this way today's

materialism can be made hypermaterialistic.

The danger from this hypermaterialism is that one can gain counterfeit or ahrimanic immortality at loss of true immortality.

[page 148] This is that the more a person gains by way of materialistic immortality, or rather ahrimanic immortality, the more he loses of the consciousness of true, genuine immortality. Yet materialism has taken such a hold on many souls today that they remain unconcerned about this and are tricked into striving for ahrimanic immortality. It could indeed be said that societies exist today which, from a spiritual or occult point of view, could be called 'insurance companies for ahrimanic immortality'!

One could say, "What's the danger? These people willingly enter such societies." Yes, they do, but only a few at the top of the hierarchy of the society know about what is really happening. This is one of the keys that should alert anyone to the true nature of a society.

[page 148] It is only a small number of people in each case who understand all these things. For as a rule these societies are organized in such a way that the ceremonial magic they practice influences only those who are unaware of the implications, merely desiring to make contact with the spiritual world by means of symbolic ceremonies. There are many such people. And those who have this desire are by no means necessarily the worst. They are accepted as members of the circle of ceremonial magic among whom there are then a few who simply use the rest of the members as instruments. Therefore one should beware of all secret societies administered by so-called higher grades whose aims are kept hidden from the lower grades. These administrative grades usually comprise those who have been initiated to a stage at which they only have a vague idea of what I have just been explaining to you. They comprise those who are to work positively in connection with certain goals and aims which are then realized by the wider group of those who have been merely inveigled into the circle of ceremonial magic. Everything these people do is done in such a way that it leads in the direction required by the higher grades but is strengthened by the forces which come from ceremonial magic.

These societies, rightly understood are the source of many of the untruths which fill the karma of the world yet today. And there is no doubt these untruths parading as truths strengthen much of the evil in the world.

[page 150] For in this working of the 'untruth in what is true' lies one of the mighty strengths of evil.

Steiner tells us that our head in this incarnation came from our body in the previous incarnation, and thus our head in this incarnation will fall away and our body will become our head in the next incarnation. First, let me offer a simple automotive analogy. Bring to mind the very first mass-produced automobile, the Ford Model T. You had to walk to the front of the auto and turn a crank to start it. In a later model you could start it from inside the car. If you examine successive models of automobiles over the decades, you'll find that the instrument cluster on the dashboard grew with each new model. Instead of running a dipstick to check oil level, a warning light lit on the dashboard. Now low pressure levels in tires are displayed on some cars. What was formerly only in the body of the car moves into the head of the car (dashboard) with each successive model. This is admittedly a simple mechanical analogy.

Steiner offers a comprehensive analogy from Goethe's theory of metamorphosis, but it is presented in such brevity as to beg for some explication. He said (page 153), "And our body transforms itself, metamorphoses itself — as does leaf to petal in Goethe's theory of metamorphosis — in our head in our next incarnation." To understand this requires one develop a fluid way of visualizing what happens as a leaf changes into a flower. Here is a leaf newly springing from the ground on a seedling — it is flat, it is green, and in no way resembles a flower. As the plant grows, imagine it now growing in your imagination,

the leaf at the very top of the plant begins to change shape and color and to enclose a flower bud, the bud opens into a brightly colored bloom which soon is pollinated and creates a seed which falls to the ground to begin a new plant in a new season. The change from that early seed to the enclosed flower bud and seed is what happens to the human's torso and limbs between incarnations. What was previously torso and limbs transform, metamorphose, into the head of the human being in a new body, just as the leaf metamorphosed into a flower bud and seed. "That is why," Steiner tells us further, "even in the embryo, the head appears before anything else in its complete form . . ." (Page 153)

Art can be only be understood by fluid, mobile concepts that are dramatically unlike the sharply defined concepts of the physical world. Since I began my career as a physicist who dealt with hard-edge abstract concepts, it took me some time to assimilate the "squishy" concepts of art, as I would have called them at the time. Now I recognize that the essential nature of art is in its fluid and mobile concepts. In calling art "squishy" I was acknowledging that I had been under the influence of similar hard-edge abstract concepts that art has incorporated into itself in recent years. These concepts are discussed by Tom Wolfe in his book, "The Painted Word" (1975), and the use of those abstract, word-based concepts was already well underway when Steiner was speaking in 1917.

[page 160] There exist today many concepts and ideas which have to be very definite if they are to be of any use. Modern, more mercantile, life demands clearly defined concepts based on calculations. Science has become accustomed to this, but so has art. Think of the development art has undergone in this connection! It is not so long ago that art was concerned with great ideals on a wide scale, when, thank goodness, concepts were insufficient for an easy interpretation of great works which were full of meaning. This is no longer the case to the same extent. Today, art strives for naturalism, and concepts can easily encompass works of art because now they have often arisen merely from concepts instead of from an elemental, all-embracing world of feeling. Mankind is today filled to the brim with commonplace, naturalistic concepts which are determined by the fact that they have been conceived entirely in relation to the physical plane where it is in the nature of things to be sharply defined and individualized.

My essay, [Art is the Process of Destruction](#), is my attempt to break out of the sharply defined strictures of what constituted art. In fact, my essay is a destruction or "breaking out" of the sameness of any "sharply defined" concepts about what characterizes a true work of art. My thesis is that any field of art which is sharply defined or individualized represents a field devoid of creativity and filled instead with replication. To produce an "artwork" according to sharply defined specifications is to replicate or mass produce a form that is already established and places the results in the realm of "mall art" or hobby crafts. And that is not true art. True art can be seen and experienced, but not talked about. True art breaks the mold. True art dances around sharply defined concepts. True art plays with the mind. True art cannot be put into words because it breaks with all traditions. True art cannot be pigeonholed, because no art like it has existed before. True art displays the process described in [Matherne's Rule #8: It Always Happens Before You Know It](#).

Steiner understands this unique aspect of art as he admits his struggles to communicate his fluid understanding through words which must necessarily express what seems like hard-edged or "close-textured" concepts.

[page 160, 161] I have been endeavoring to find concepts for all kinds of artistic phenomena. To communicate through speech one has to find concepts. Yet I have constantly felt the need to avoid firm, clearly defined concepts for artistic matters. Of course, for the lectures I had to attempt to define the concepts as far as possible, for they have to be defined if they are to be put into words. But while I was preparing the lectures and formulating the concepts I must say I had a certain aversion, if I may use this word, to expressing what had to be said in such meager concepts as have to be used if things are to be expressed in words. Indeed, we shall only understand one another in

these realms if you translate what has been expressed in close-textured concepts back into concepts of which the texture is less clearly defined.

Why this aspect of art is important to us has to do with how the living spirits of the "so-called dead" have problems with any sharply defined concept: it makes them feel as if nailed to a cross. They prefer the freedom of movement they experience in the spiritual world. Thus, when one contemplates a work of true art, one can come into intimate contact with those living souls which fill the world around us. Spiritual science with its flowing concepts is also attractive to these living souls.

All these considerations illuminate why spiritual science receives from time to time vehement attacks from materialistic narrowminded critics — these critics rightly attack the lack of sharply defined concepts in spiritual science. But what they attack is the absence of the very thing which if present would neuter spiritual science and render it ineffectual! Unable to generate the flowing views from different perspectives, the critics attack what appear to them as contradictions — which are not there but only apparently there — because of their own penchant for converting everything into sharply defined concepts. And most importantly, those who have the greatest difficulty with those critics are those who try to defend spiritual science using sharply defined concepts! A tug-of-war ensues which can be avoided simply by dropping one end of the rope [\(2\)](#).

[page 161] Therefore it is important that we occupy ourselves with spiritual science so that we may enter those intimate spheres of experience where, as was said yesterday, the living can encounter the dead; because the concepts of spiritual science cannot be as closely defined as can those of the physical plane. That is why malevolent or narrowminded people can easily discover contradictions in the concepts of spiritual science. The concepts are alive, and what is alive is mobile, though it does not, in fact, harbor contradictions. We can achieve this by concerning ourselves with spiritual matters, and to do so we have to approach things from various sides. And approaching things from various sides really does bring us close to the spiritual world. That is why the dead feel comfortable when they enter a realm of human concepts which are mobile and not pedantically defined.

"Mobile concepts cannot be pedantically defined." Long before I ever read Steiner or encountered this thought about mobile concepts, I put together a series of mobile concepts into a list which, for lack of a better name, is called [Matherne's Rules](#). They sound a little strange when you first read them: "Free yourself from thinking. Once in a row is enough. All meanings are true. There's always even more. Do it right away, kid! It always happens before you know it. This is the first time you have read Matherne's Rules, up until now. Free yourself from rules." These are a few examples of Matherne's Rules. They are mobile concepts which cannot be fit into sharply defined concepts. I have attempted to describe some of the implications or various perspectives from which each rule can be viewed, understood, or applied, but the descriptions are always incomplete, as *there is always even more* to say about Matherne's Rules, at *all times* and in *all ways*, which two of the meanings of the coined word (not a typo) "always" whenever and wherever it appears, i.e., *always*.

If you read the description of [Matherne's Rule #9](#) you'll find the rule is an example of the application of the "limitation eraser" which you may not have heard of, up until now. If you will openly and correctly apply the limitation eraser to the end of any thought or sentence you think, speak, or write, you will experience yourself becoming freed of any hard-edge, immobile concepts which you had attempted to encapsulate within yourself, up until then. Given the insights provided by Steiner in Lecture Twenty-two which we have been discussing, we can intimate that the living spirits of the so-called dead would feel very comfortable among those people who frequently use the limitation eraser. "For the dead love mobile concepts."

[page 161, 162] Indeed, the dead feel most ill at ease of all when they enter the realm of the most pedantic concepts. These are the ones that have recently come to be defined in

relation to the spiritual world for those people who do not want to live in anything spiritual, but who want the concepts for sense-perceptible things to apply to the spiritual world as well. These people conduct spiritualistic experiments in order to imprison spiritual concepts in the world perceptible to the senses. They are, in fact, more materialistic than any others. They seek rigid concepts in order to hold commerce with the dead. Thus they torture the dead most of all, for if they want to approach they force them to enter the very realm most disliked by them. The dead love mobile concepts, not rigid ones.

Our physical body is the oldest portion of the human being, it dates back to the Old Saturn phase of human evolution. With its mineral infusion into the phantom of the physical body, it is the densest part of the four-part human being which consists of physical, etheric, astral, and Ego bodies. Being so densely packed it is able to grab light waves and other sensory data which reach it about the physical world. The popular science fiction concept of the invisible man has a flaw which is seldom noticed: a truly invisible man would be completely blind! The light waves which pass untouched through his body would likewise pass untouched through the retina of his eyes and he would lack any possibility of receiving information from them! He would be totally and completely blind. This illustrates that the less attenuated a body is, the more it is able to grasp information from its milieu.

By the end of the period of human evolution following Old Saturn called Old Sun, the etheric body was formed as a very attenuated body. With each period of evolution, it grew less attenuated and thus more able to grasp information from the spiritual world in which it exists. Similarly the astral body which was formed during the Old Moon period is more attenuated than the etheric body, but is less attenuated than the Ego body which formed only at the beginning of the current Earth period of evolution of which we are in the middle at this time. Lacking fully conscious senses in the etheric, astral, and Ego bodies, we are able to press our senses and our brain into service to attain waking experiences in our soul.

[page 166] Here on earth, bound to our physical body as we are between waking up and going to sleep, using this physical body as a tool for our experiences in the world, we feel a lack of ability to comprehend the spiritual world and grasp its revelations. As long as we are enclosed within our physical body, and in order to perceive anything, we have to use the rough and ready instruments of this physical body. We cannot avoid using them. And when we are unable to use them, as is the case between going to sleep and waking up, our astral body and our ego-being — which are recent additions from the time of ancient Moon and the earlier periods of Earth — are too attenuated, too intimate, to detect anything. Of course the spiritual world is ever about us, just as the air surrounds us constantly. And if our astral body and our ego-being were — let me say — sufficiently dense, we should always be able to perceive, to grasp, what is all around us in the spiritual world. We cannot do so because in our astral body and our ego-being we are too attenuated; they are not yet fully-formed instruments, like the physical senses or the brain, which our capacity for forming ideas uses in order to attain waking experiences in the soul.

Our senses provide us the instruments for grasping the physical world in our waking life. Likewise we need an instrument for grasping the world between death and a new birth. To understand how this works, let's review the spiritual hierarchy called *angeloi* or simply angels. Each human has one angel assigned individually — what is commonly called a "guardian angel" — who follows the assigned human through every incarnation upon Earth. One might imagine this angel to be one's personal bodyguard or more specifically, a *spiritguard*. In addition to the guarding duties, the angel provides another valuable service as the gateway to perceptions of the spiritual world in the time between death and a new birth. I imagine it to be like this: our spiritguard communicates directly with other spiritguards and when it becomes an integral part of our spirit after death, this network of spiritguards provides us communication with other spirits like ourselves.

[page 167] Let me put it like this: Just as here our senses link us to the external world, so the condition of being embedded in the world of the angeloi links us to the spiritual beings, including human beings, whom we find in the spiritual world. Just as here in the physical world, in accordance with the prevailing conditions, we receive an organism which is organized in a certain way, so do we receive an organism of spirit which is brought into being by this networked of angeloi substances. How this network of angeloi substances is structured, however, depends very much on the manner in which we work our way up to the spiritual world. If we work our way up in such a way that we have little sensitivity for the spiritual world because we have far too many echoes of physical pleasures, urges and instincts, physical sympathies and antipathies, then the formation of our angeloi organism is difficult. This is why we tarry for a while in the soul world, as we called it, so that we can free ourselves from all that permeates us from the physical world and prevents us from forming our angeloi organism properly.

This sounds to me like what in catechism is called our time in Purgatory — a place where we purge from our soul the remnants of earthly wants and desires. Steiner tells us that these desires are like dross which must be burnt away before we can proceed upward in the spiritual world. These desires cause us suffering similar to having a thirst and being unable to quench it — what we thirst for is something that requires the physical body which we no longer possess. The movie "Ghost" from the last decade of the former century described this process quite well. A man who had just died wanted to feel, to hold, to touch, to talk to the woman he loved deeply, and suffered much pain because he was unable to do these things. He was only able to proceed higher in the spiritual world when he became willing to give her up.

[page 169] Perception of all that exists in the mineral kingdom is lost almost as soon as we step through the portal of death. Here in the physical world, because we have senses, our capacity for perception is greatest with regard to the mineral kingdom. Indeed, we could almost say it is virtually exclusive, for other than the mineral kingdom there is not much that we can perceive as long as we are confined to our senses.

Once we enter the world between death and a new birth, the mineral kingdom disappears from our view. What remains is our ability to see how humans react to the physical world. Steiner uses the example of salt in a salt shaker, something we see everyday now, but then we will see neither the salt nor the salt shaker (aka salt-cellar). Instead if someone takes some salt into his mouth or sips soup into which the salt has been sprinkled, we experience the influence the salt makes inside his body. In addition we will experience any human thoughts that became attached to the salt shaker or salt during its manufacture.

[page 170] One thing, however, always remains perceptible to the dead, and it is important to pay attention to this. It is whatever has been filled with human thoughts and feelings; it is the human thoughts which are perceived. Salt in a salt-cellar, as a product of nature, is not perceived by the dead. Nor do they perceive the salt-cellar, whether it is made of glass or any other material. But in so far as human thoughts have come to rest in the salt-cellar during the process of its manufacture, these human thoughts are perceived by the dead. When you consider how everything around us, except what is purely the product of nature, bears the signature of human thoughts, you will have a good idea of what the dead can perceive. They also perceive all relationships between beings, including those between human beings. All this is alive for them.

There are some experiences we have in life now that we would like to forget then as soon as possible, especially the thoughts attached to manufactured things. During the time between death and a new birth and we require help from the next higher beings above the angeloi, the archangeloi or archangels, in order to forget these things.

[page 170] There are certain things in the physical world, however, of which the dead endeavor to rid themselves; they want to expel them from their ideas and soul

experiences — as it were, wipe them out. Their desire to do this is comparable to the longing on the part of human beings here on earth to gain certain insights about the world beyond. Here we long to achieve ideas about the next world. After death, as regards certain human matters here on earth — the world beyond, from the viewpoint of the dead — we long to extinguish them, to wipe them away. But to do this it is necessary to be filled with the substances of the higher hierarchies of *angeloi* and *archangeloi*. Once the dead are filled with these substances they can extinguish from their consciousness what must be extinguished.

Another obstacle to developing consciousness in the spiritual world during this time is language. Language prevents us from growing into the realm of the archangels, and this is especially so for those who are so materialistic that virtually all of their thinking is contained in language. Anyone who believes that thought without language is impossible will have the utmost difficulty overcoming this obstacle to progressing to the level of the archangeloi.

[page 171] Strange though it may sound from our standpoint here on earth, there is an obstacle to growing into what gives us a clear, enlightened consciousness in the spiritual world. This obstacle standing in the way of growing easily into the spiritual world is, strangely enough, human language, the language we use here on earth for the purpose of a physical understanding from one human being to another. The dead have to gradually grow away from language, otherwise they would remain stuck in the affinities which bind them to language and which would prevent them from growing into the kingdom of the archangeloi. Language is definitely only suitable for earthly conditions. And within earthly conditions the human being has, in his soul, become very strongly linked with language. For many people, especially now in this materialistic age, thinking has come to be virtually contained in language. People today think hardly at all in thoughts but very strongly indeed in language, in words. That is why they find it so satisfying to find the right term for something. But such terms, such definitions in words, are only valid here in physical life, and after death our task is to extricate ourselves from definitions in words.

About twenty-five years ago, I was introduced to the Sufis and began studying their writings in earnest. [Hazrat Inayat Khan](#) and [Idries Shah](#) were two of the prominent Sufis whose works I studied. Sufis are amazing — are highly spiritual, but belong to no organized religion. They are typically ordinary people on an extraordinary mission. I learned about Sufis from these two well-educated men, Khan and Shah, who spoke of Sufis who wandered around, taught others in paradoxical ways, and were always breaking the hard-edged conceptual frame of anyone who insisted on looking at the world in one specific hard-edged way.

A few of my favorite Sufi stories:

Nasruddin was appointed judge for a day. The first case was brought to him and the prosecutor described in intricate details the wrongs that the defendant had done, ending with the statement, "This man is guilty!" to which Nasruddin declared, "I do believe you are right!" The bailiff rushed to Nasruddin's side and whispered to him, "Judge, you haven't heard the defense's case, yet." So Nasruddin called the defense attorney up and he eloquently pleaded the case that his client was innocent, finishing up with the statement, "And, so, your honor, as you can easily see, my client is innocent!" To which, Judge Nasruddin declared, "I do believe you are right!" Quickly the bailiff rushed to the judge's side and said, "Judge Nasruddin, they *can't* both be right!" To which Nasruddin declared, "I do believe you are right!"

Five blind men are brought before a Sufi and he asked each one of them to inspect an object and report to him what it is. The first came and said, "The object is a large

snake." The second reported, "The object is a wall." The third, "The object is a rope." The fourth, "The object is a tree trunk." And the fifth, "The object is a large leaf on a tree." The object which each one had inspected was an elephant.

Nasruddin was on his knees on the ground under the street light in front of his house. His friend came along, and seeing him searching, joined him on his knees. "What are you looking for, Nasruddin?" he asked. "My keys," Nasruddin replied. They both searched for an hour with no success. His friend, growing tired, asked him, "Exactly where did you lose your keys, Nasruddin?" "In the house," Nasruddin replied. "In the house! Then why on Earth are you looking for them out here under the street light?" his friend cried out. "Because," Nasruddin said, "there is more light out here."

Now read as Steiner tells us how spiritual science helps us to feel our way around actual words and free ourselves from thinking in language and sharply defined concepts which would bar us from communion with the living souls of the so-called dead around us.

[page 171] In such matters, too, spiritual science gives us a certain possibility to find our way into the realm of the supersensible. How often do I say to you that to reach a genuine concept we can only approximate; we can only, so to speak, feel our way all around the actual words. How often have I not shown you how we have to endeavor to reach the concept by approaching it from all sides, by experimenting with the use of different expressions in order to free ourselves of the actual words. Spiritual science in a certain sense emancipates us from language. Indeed it does this very fully, thus bringing us into the sphere which we share with the dead.

Earlier I pointed out that Steiner's spiritual science creates a bridge between the material world and the supersensible world by recommending we do spiritual readings to the so-called dead. Another way of creating a bridge is by loosening the grip language has on us in the physical world. What I learned from my studies of the Sufis, their teachings, and especially their stories was not so much concepts, but I underwent a process in which language loosened its grip on me.

[page 171, 172] Emancipation from language is intimately bound up with the way the dead grow into the substance of the archangeloi. By emancipating ourselves from language in spiritual science, by creating concepts in spiritual science which are more or less independent of language, we build a bridge between the physical and the spiritual world.

The secret societies or brotherhoods that Steiner mentioned earlier have another goal having to do with language which has tremendous implications for humankind. They wish for us to have a complete immersion in the English language. This goes counter to what is required if humans are to be able to merge with the archangeloi in the spirit world.

[page 172] This involves something extremely important from the spiritual point of view. It means that their intention is nothing less than the aim of influencing not only human individuals while they are incarnated in physical bodies between birth and death, but indeed all human individuals, including those who are living between death and a new birth. They are striving to let human individualities enter into the spiritual world and become immersed in the hierarchy of the angeloi, but then to prevent them from becoming immersed in turn in the hierarchy of the archangeloi. The aim is, one could say, to depose the hierarchy of the archangeloi from the evolution of mankind!

If you wish for some evidence of such an aim, Steiner obliges by giving an example from inside the Theosophical Society itself, "Mr Leadbeater, said in so many words that in many ways the life between death and a new birth was a kind of dream-life." Note that the phrase dream-life refers to a life of Imagination which refers to the level of the angeloi, which if one stays at that level, will prevent one from

merging with the archangeloi, and thus one would remain forever tied to the thoughts of the ahrimanic materialistic objects of one's previous earthly existence.

[page 172] . . . some souls, who had been successfully influenced in this way and who were found by Leadbeater in the spiritual world, this had actually happened. These souls had indeed been prevented from contact with the world of the archangeloi and they therefore lacked any strong, clear consciousness. So in his way Leadbeater was observing souls who had fallen prey to the machinations of those brotherhoods, only he did not go so far as to observe what became of those souls after a while. Such souls cannot spend their whole time between death and a new birth without the ingredients which would normally be given to them by the world of the archangeloi, so they have to receive something else instead. And they do indeed receive something that is an equivalent; they are indeed permeated by something; but what? They are permeated by something that comes from archai who have remained behind at the stage of the archangeloi. So, instead of being permeated by the substance of the real archangeloi — as would be normal -- they are permeated by archai, by time spirits, but by those who have not ascended to the level of the time spirits but have remained behind at the level of the archangeloi. They would have become archai if they had evolved normally, but they have remained behind at the level of the archangeloi. That means that these souls' are permeated by ahrimanic influences in the strongest manner.

The amazing part is that these secret societies can have drastic effects, not only on one's life on Earth, but on one's life between death and a new birth. Another way of affecting the so-called dead is to torture them by attempting to contact them with languages and forcing them to respond in kind. Seances, table-tapping, channeling, Ouija boards, and such techniques which require communication in language are experienced by them as a hot branding iron to the chest would be to us. If you love someone who has died, do you think it would be a loving deed to torture them by trying to contact them with such techniques?

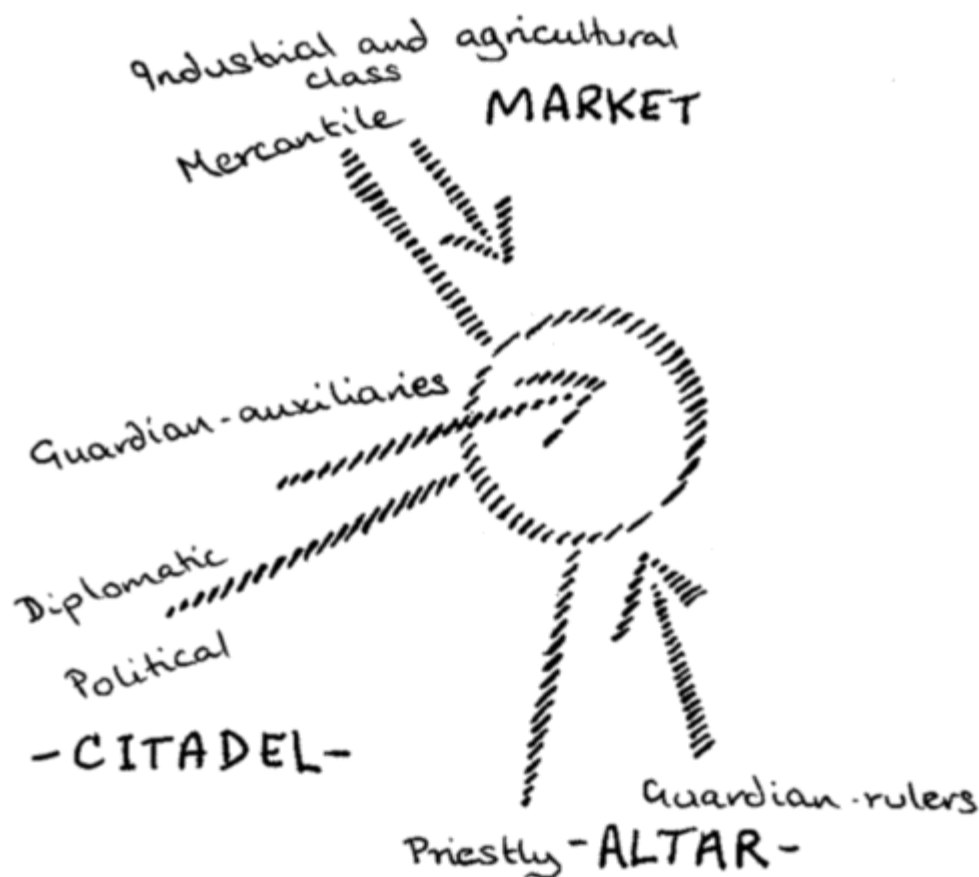
[page 176] Let us now take up something we have already discussed from a certain viewpoint. Here on this globe, in the Europe we inhabit, the relationships between nations are spoken about in a way that inflicts utter torture on the dead, for all the ideas and concepts are based on the peculiarities of language. By forming concepts about nationality based on the peculiarities of language, people persistently torture the dead. One way of torturing the dead, one way of failing to show them love, is to participate in spiritualist seances. For this forces them to manifest in a particular language. The dead person is expected to speak a particular language, for even with table-rapping the signs have to refer to a particular language. What is done to the dead by forcing them to express themselves in a particular language might very well be compared with pinching someone living in the flesh with red-hot tongs. So painful for the dead are spiritualist seances which expect them to express themselves in a particular language. For in their normal life the dead are striving to free themselves from the differentiations between languages.

In an aside Steiner tells us something about the German people that is not very well known. Everyone has likely heard the famous slogan of WWII, "Deutschland Über Alles", even though few foreigners understood that it referred to a deep instinct about the deutsche Volk (German people). What it did *not* mean was that the Deutsche people wished to conquer the world, but it was easy for outsiders to attribute that meaning given the other events occurring at the time. But why are the Deutsche people not referred to by the name Deutsche? The name Germany I came to understand when I saw the statue of Germanie in the Rheingau a few years back. It showed a large female figure with an ample body. I learned that female immigrants from Deutschland often looked this way and were called "Germanies", pronounced with a hard "G". These Germanies could plausibly be from a country called, "Germany", couldn't they? But the more I found out about Deutschland, the more puzzled I became. Why we don't call it Deutschland instead of Germany? Steiner tells us that no Western language calls it Deutschland except the country itself and the

deutsche Volk (German people) who *sprechen Deutsche* (speak German).

[page 177] Taking our departure from what we have said so far, we could state that in Central Europe there existed what we might call the 'primordial soup' for what later streamed out to the periphery, particularly towards the West. Let us take a closer look at this 'primordial soup' (see diagram page 179 See Left Below). For a very long time it has been customary for the nation which represents this 'primordial soup' to call itself 'das deutsche Volk'. The peoples of the West have exercised a kind of revenge on this nation by refusing to call them by the name they have chosen for themselves, a name which signifies a profound

instinct. They are called 'Teutons', 'Allemands', 'Germans', all kinds of things, but never, by those who speak a western language, 'Deutsche'. Yet this is the very name that has deep links with the nature of this people which is, in a way, the 'primordial soup'.

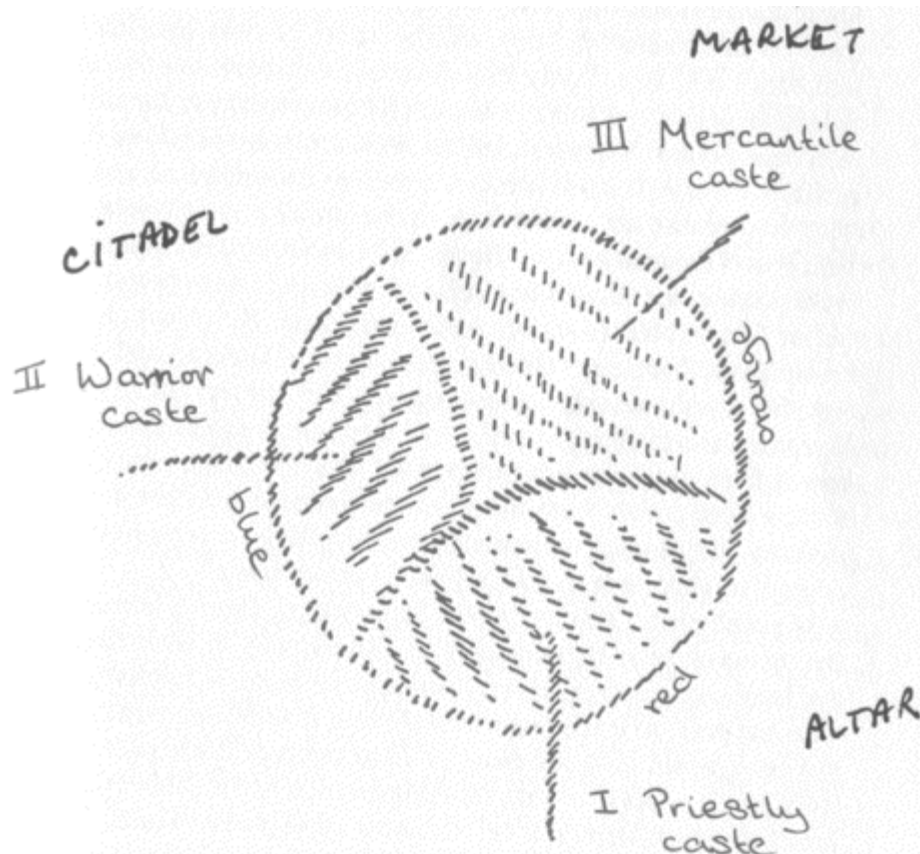


Steiner introduces the concept of three castes of Priests, Warriors, and Merchants at this point (Upper left diagram). These three castes mirror exactly the divisions of society that Spencer Heath described in his book, [Citadel, Market, and Altar](#). One can also see the [Threefold order](#) of Rudolf Steiner in the diagram. He is talking about the "primordial soup" of Deutsche-speaking peoples (often called "barbarians" by the late Roman period of history) who migrated over the centuries in three basic directions: West, South, and Northwest as shown in the above diagram to the right.

[page 178] The undifferentiated 'primordial soup' of humanity was not quite without structure, even though it was undifferentiated. It is right to distinguish between what was at first undifferentiated and what later became differentiated. The 'primordial soup' contains what migrated down towards the south; it is there as one of the parts. This part (red in the diagram) migrated southwards with all its one-sidedness. Drawing an analogy to what people meant by the ancient castes, we could say that a caste migrated southwards, a caste with a capacity for priestly things — a priestly caste. Since then a priestly element has always emanated from that part of the periphery.

[page 179] The second element migrated westwards: the warrior caste, the kingly caste, the element of kingship. We have spoken of this, too. This western part only fell into republicanism because of an anomaly. In actual fact it is inwardly structured through and through in a warlike, kingly manner and it will ever and again fall back into this warlike, kingly element. Again we have something that has streamed out, so that a part of this element which has streamed out towards the West has also remained in the

'primordial soup' and will in turn have to provide the opposition to what takes place in the West (blue).



[page 179, 180] And north-westwards went the mercantile element. It, too, remains as a part (orange) and will have to stand in opposition to what has developed one-sidedly. No moral evaluation is meant by this, for let no one believe that I in any way share the opinion, expressed so frequently, that the mercantile element is something despicable in comparison with the priestly element. All these things must be seen in their dissimilarity, but they must not be labeled and

evaluated. Indeed; for the fifth post-Atlantean period, as we have seen, the mercantile element is something utterly essential. But we really must see the realities as they exist. If people cannot see them now, then they will come to see them in the future.

In Lecture Twenty-Four, Steiner discusses the relationship of our breathing rate to the Platonic Great Year and reveals how we human beings in microcosm reflect the macrocosm in which we find ourselves, how our human breathing cycles and life cycles are related to the breathing and life cycles of the Earth, Sun, and cosmos.

Here I will summarize the material Steiner presents of pages 188 through 194. Let us call our normal breath an "astral breath", our daily breathing in and out of our etheric body into our head an "etheric breath", and our breathing into and out of our incarnation as a "physical breath". Our astral breath occurs about once every 3.3 seconds or 18 times a minute. Our etheric breath once a day. Our physical breath is the length of our normal lifetime on Earth or about 72 years. If we do the math, we find that we experience 25,920 astral breaths during a day and 25,920 etheric breaths in a normal lifetime. If we call a human lifetime a Sun Day, then we find that a Sun Year would contain 25,920 years which corresponds to Plato's Great Year or one complete cycle of the precession of the equinoxes.

The human being consists of four basic interlaced components: Ego, astral body, etheric body, and physical body. The etheric body is pushed down from the head into the torso when we awake so that we may begin thinking and become consciously awake. Then when we go to sleep, the etheric or life body moves up into the brain/head area to begin refreshing and repairing the destruction caused during the day by our thinking processes. This cycling of the etheric on a daily basis we can call the "etheric breath". The cycle is thus, for everyone, 24 hours or 1 day. The human being thus has 25,920 etheric breaths during an average human life time. If you use 72 years and 360 days/year, you get exactly 25,920, but if you use 365.25 and 70.96 years you get the same number, but it's not as cleanly delineated.

The etheric breath can also be considered an Earth breath because during the course of a day, the Earth breathes in and out the astral and Ego bodies of human beings. At night when we sleep these two components are breathed out from sleeping humans which retain only their physical and etheric bodies. During waking the astral body and Ego are breathed back in. During the run of 25,920 of these "Earth breaths", the physical body life completes one human life time.

The physical body wears out in about 72 years, though many live longer than that. That 72 year period can be considered a single breath of the Sun into which and out of which our Ego or immortal spirit ventures after our life on Earth. If we call a single human lifetime a "Sun Day", how long would a "Sun Year" be? $360 \times 72 = 25,920$ years a Platonic Great Year, which corresponds to length of time of the precession of the equinoxes. According to a [new theory](#) by Walter Cruttenden, etal, the precession of the equinoxes is a result of our Sun revolving in a large elliptical orbit around a companion star, which orbit has a period of 25,920 years. This length of time it takes the Sun to complete a rotation around its sun — its companion binary star, probably Sirius — we might call, by analogy to the time the Earth takes to revolve around its sun, a *Sun Year*. This analysis allows us to see the human being as a microcosm in relation to the macrocosm, and to give the proper name to the 25,920 year period, a Sun Year.

[page 194] Herein you have an analogy for an ancient assertion, for something that was called the 'days and nights of Brahma'. Think of a spiritual being for whom our seventy-one years are as is a single breath for us. We find we are a single breath for that being. When we enter the world as a tiny baby, that being for whom the Platonic Year is one year breathes us out. It breathes us out into the cosmos, and when we die it breathes us in again; we are breathed out and we are breathed in. Now turn to the earth: It breathes us out and in again in one day. Now turn to the air, which is a part of the earth: It breathes us out and in again in an eighteenth of a minute. Whichever way we look at it, the number 25,920 represents the return to the starting point. This is a regular rhythm; it gives us the feeling of being embedded in the cosmos; it teaches us that the span of a human life, and one day in a human life, are indeed, for greater, more all-embracing beings, the same as is one breath for us. If we can transform this knowledge into feeling, then the expression 'resting in the world-all' assumes immense significance.

In this next passage Steiner, in a sense, reveals the importance of morning and evening prayers. Note especially the importance of morning prayers as we may receive guidance which we are able to retain as we gradually rise to consciousness, something that is not easy to do in the evening because we drop off into unconsciousness or fall asleep immediately after receiving such insights or guidance.

[page 195] That is why it is so important for one striving for initiation to learn to sense within himself the great significance of the transitions of going to sleep and waking up. In going to sleep and in waking up, in this transition, we are most likely to sense how spiritual beings mysteriously speak with us. Later we can then gain some control over this. If you seek entry into the world inhabited by the dead, it is good to be aware that the dead are most likely to speak at the moment of going to sleep and the moment of waking up. The moment of going to sleep is more difficult, because here we usually become immediately unconscious and fail to perceive what the dead have said. But in waking up, if we succeed in becoming fully aware of the moment of waking up, that is when the dead are most likely to communicate with us. But we must seek to gain a firm hold of the moment of waking up. This means that we must endeavor to wake up without immediately entering into the light of day. You know that there is a — shall we say — superstitious rule, that if we want to hold on to a dream we must not look at the window or the light because if we do, we will forget easily. This applies just as much to the delicate observations which flow to us from the spiritual world. We must endeavor to wake up in the dark, in darkness which we wilfully create by not listening to noises, by not opening our eyes, by waking up consciously while not yet going out to meet the day. That is when we best notice the approach of communications from the spiritual world.

If we recall only a few messages given to us in the morning, we shouldn't despair about losing all the other messages. These are recorded into the etheric body of the Earth and are available for later study. Likewise we can study the communications from the spiritual being whose breath is a single human life for they are recorded into the sun-ether which fills the whole world. Steiner directs us to his book, [Knowledge of the Higher Worlds](#), for more information on this. (Paraphrased from page 196)

Steiner tells us that the postulation of the existence of the atom was not bad in itself, it was the subsequent denial that anything but the atom existed. (Page 205) Thus the word ATOM can be thought as an acronym for All Things Owed to Materialism or perhaps the Ahrimanic Thrust of Materialism.

If this arhimanic thrust of materialism were to continue we would find ourselves in a waking nightmare where we are unable to understand the world about us. He offers us a solution in the concepts of his spiritual science:

[page 207, 208] The only antidote to this is to plant, in human souls, concepts which stem from spiritual science. Without these . . . [Christ and] other phenomena in the etheric world, which human beings ought to see, will withdraw from man, will go past unnoticed. Not only will this be a great loss, but human beings will also have to develop pathological substitute forces for those which ought to have developed in a healthy way.

Lacking powerful spiritual science concepts, humans will accept weak substitutes, such as the flood of theosophical material which poured out during Steiner's time. Many people, then and since, have deemed this shallow material to be full of sage wisdom.

[page 208, 209] . . . those things which are held to be so marvelously wise are nothing more than trivia, utter trivia. Someone who has absorbed the spirit of Goethe can regard even a work like such as *Light on the Path* [RJM: theosophical work by Mabel Collins] as no more than commonplace. This ought not to be forgotten. To those who have absorbed the inspiration of Novalis or Friedrich Schlegel, or enjoyed Schelling's *Bruno*, all this theosophical literature can seem no more than vulgar and ordinary. Hence the peculiar phenomenon that there were many people who had the earnest, honest desire to reach a spiritual life but who, because of their mental make-up were, in the end, to some degree satisfied with the superficial literature described.

Steiner was trained in the sciences and knew personally that this aspect of his education was vital to his ability both to understand the spiritual world as well as to communicate his understanding to other. With the advent of rampant materialism during his time, however, there were few scientifically trained scientists who were interested in spiritual science then, and that remains to be the case, up until now.

[page 208] The consequence was this peculiar phenomenon: It was not possible to bring about a situation — which would have been desirable — in which a number of scientifically educated people, however small, could have worked out their scientific concepts in such a way that they could have made a bridge to spiritual science. No such people were to be found. This is a difficulty that still exists and of which we must be very much aware.

Thomas Kuhn in his landmark book, [The Structure of Scientific Revolutions](#), explains how scientists are reluctant to question the theories that they are taught in school even when faced with evidence of anomalies or defects in those theories. Rather they would cover up the defect with some explanation so as to fortify the theory. He called the result of this process of shoring up a theory, a *paradigm*. The resulting paradigm becomes like a dam holding back the floodgates of heresy or like a stone wall which prevents the arrows of anomalies from penetrating the theory's sanctum sanctorum. While a paradigm can lubricate the everyday processes of science, it can also prevent any paradigmatic anomalies or deviancies from ever leading to a newer and more robust science. A paradigm can be a *boon* or a *boner*, a safe haven for

productive work *or* a neurotic shelter from the real world. Safely ensconced inside their paradigms, academically trained professionals in all fields risk their reputations and even their livelihood if they dare to study a field so far from what they were taught as spiritual science would be.

[page 209, 210] Supposing we were to approach those who have undergone a scientific education, with the intention of introducing them to Anthroposophy: lawyers, doctors, philologists — not to mention theologians -- when they have finished their academic education and reached a certain stage in life at which it is necessary for them, in accordance with life's demands, to make use of what they have absorbed, not to say, have learnt. They then no longer have either the inclination or the mobility to extricate themselves from their concepts and to seek for others. That is why scientifically-educated people are the most inclined to reject Anthroposophy, although it would only be a small step for a modern scientist to build a bridge. But he does not want to do so. It confuses him. What does he need it for? He has learnt what life demands of him and, so he believes, he does not want things which only serve to confuse him and undermine his confidence. It is going to take some considerable time before these people who have gone through the education of their day start to build bridges in any great numbers. We shall have to be patient. It will not come about easily, especially in certain fields. And when the building of bridges is seriously tackled in a particular field, great obstacles and hindrances will be encountered. It will be necessary above all to build bridges in the fields encompassed by the various faculties . . .

Here are some of the fields where bridges need to be built.

Law: [page 210] In the field of law the concepts being worked out are becoming more and more stereotyped and quite unsuitable for the regulation of real life. But they do regulate it because life on the physical plane is maya; if it were not maya, they would be incapable of regulating it. As it is, their application is bringing more and more confusion into the world.

Technology: [pag 210, 211] In technology — although it may appear to be furthest away from the spirit — it is above all necessary that bridges should be built to the life of the spirit, out of direct practical life. . . . From machines, in particular, a path will truly have to be found into the spiritual world.

Medicine: [page 210] In the field of medicine the situation is more serious. If medicine continues to develop in the wake of materialism as it has been doing since the second third of the nineteenth century, it will eventually reach an utterly nonsensical situation, for it will end up in absurd medical specializations. The situation is more serious here because this tendency was, in fact, necessary and a good thing. But now it is time for it to be overcome. The materialistic tendency in medicine meant that surgery has reached a high degree of specialization, which was only possible because of this one-sided tendency. But medicine as such has suffered as a result. So now it needs to turn around completely and look towards a real spirituality — but the resistance to this is enormous.

Education: [page 210] Education is the field which, more than any other, needs to be permeated with spirituality, as we have said often enough. Bridges need to be built everywhere.

Both medicine and education are fields in which Steiner would get personally involved in building bridges. Anthroposophical medicine and Waldorf Schools are a direct result of his involvement. In the field of agriculture, Steiner bio-dynamic principles are at work in the world producing healthier foodstuffs than even the most stringent organic farming techniques.

[Alfred Korzybski](#) showed how we proceed from reality — the *territory* — up successive levels of

abstraction to concepts — the *map* — which can represent the territory, but not all of the territory. If we manipulate abstract concepts as if they were real, we are dealing with all map, no territory — and those abstract concepts will fall through the cracks of life. Steiner was aware of this problem as he writes:

[page 214] Some people still have no idea what is meant by wrestling for reality, for they are fighting shy of understanding clearly how threadbare are the concepts with which they work today.

Here is the dilemma we face. Specialists in all fields are building castles of airy abstract concepts and shoring them up against all invaders who attack them in the name of common sense and reality. These specialists, who are like viruses who have invaded the body politic by pretending to be productive members of its constituent cells, are in reality feeding off the body of culture and rendering it progressively less healthy and more in need of healing.

[page 214] Only through the all-embracing nature of spiritual science — this must be understood — can healing come about for what lives in the culture of today.

Who pays the lion's share of taxes today? The other guy does, that's who. Huey P. Long used to say about taxing, "Don't tax you, don't tax me, tax the guy behind the tree." Steiner gives us a story about a lion who founds a new social order for the animals and we are instructed in our own social order by this parable.

[page 217] Suppose the lion were to found a social order for the animals, dividing up the kingdom of the earth in a just way. What would he do? I do not believe it would occur to him to push for a situation in which the small animals of the desert, usually eaten by the lion, would have the possibility of not being eaten by the lion! He would consider it his lion's right to eat the small animals he meets in the desert. It is conceivable, though, that for the ocean he would find it just and proper to forbid the sharks to eat the little fishes. This might very well happen. The lion might establish a tremendously just social order in the oceans, at the North Pole or wherever else he himself is not at home, giving all the animals their freedom. But whether he would be pleased to establish such an order in his own region is a question indeed. He knows very well what justice is in the social order, and he will put it into practice efficiently in the kingdom of the sharks.

Anyone who will found a new social order will design it to apply to everyone else! And the founder will get the lion's share as in Steiner's story by being exempt. He points out something that anyone can look up — in post-World War I Europe, the one country that remained intact was Hungary because the one who drew the map was from Hungary! Every worker in the United States has to pay social security taxes which can be shown to be a forced investment from which they derive a negative return — about -1.5% return on the money they pay into the program — every person except the members of Congress who enacted the law. The situation with the pyramid scheme of Social Security pensions will get worse unless the system is overhauled from a Ponzi [\(3\)](#) investment scheme into an investment scheme and soon.

We find a lot of chatter in the news media today with "talking heads," reputed experts, and studio audiences babbling about every abstract concept imaginable, never finding reality anywhere. They are content to have participated in idealistic chatter instead of substantive discussion which would require real concepts as Plato defined them.

[page 220, 221] If you apply Plato's concepts appropriately, in accordance with reality, then you will find reality everywhere, for with these concepts you will be able fully to enter into reality. Starting from the concept, you must find the way to reality, and the concept will be able to plunge down into the most concrete parts of reality. Shadowy concepts, on the other hand, never find reality, but they do lend themselves exceptionally well to idealistic chatter. With real concepts, though, you can work your way through to an understanding of reality in every detail.

Steiner could not have said the above if he *not* had ensured that his spiritual science embodied principles which lead us not to shadowy concepts but to living concepts steeped in the spirit.

[page 221] Here lies the task of spiritual science. Spiritual science leads to concepts through which you can really discover life, which of course is created by the spirit, and through which you will be able to join in a constructive way at working on the formation of this life.

Spiritual science is like a food that is readily available, but starving humans are avoiding it and complaining about the lack of food.

[page 221] Mankind must regard spiritual life as a food. It is given by the gods, but it has to be taken in by man. To say that the gods ought to intervene directly is tantamount to saying that if I refuse to eat God ought to satisfy my hunger in some other way. The wisdom-filled order of the universe ensures that what is needed for salvation is always available, but it is up to human beings to make a relationship with it. So the spiritual life necessary for the twentieth century will not enter human beings of itself. They must strive for it and take it into themselves. If they fail to take it in, times will grow more and more dismal.

In these next passages we hear Steiner bidding farewell and reminding his audience and us that thoughts are indeed realities.

[page 224] The greatest of these is to reach an understanding of what it means to base thinking on reality. Wherever we look we are confronted with the impossibility of finding a thinking which accords with reality. We shall have to enter heart and soul into this search in order not to be led astray by all kinds of egoistic distractions. This is what I wanted to say to you as my farewell today, since we are about to take leave of one another for some time. Make yourselves so strong — even if it should turn out to be unnecessary — that, even in loneliness of soul, your hearts will carry the pulse of spiritual science with which we are here concerned. Even the thought that we shall be steadfast will help a very great deal; for thoughts are realities.

[page 225] In this sense, I say farewell to you. My words are also a greeting, for in the days to come we shall meet again, though more in the spirit than on the physical plane.

As I type these words Steiner is "resting in the world-all" — the cosmos — and speaking to me and you more in the spirit than on the physical plane as I also will be someday as you read these words. In a sense, much of the subject of these lectures dealt with his attempt to make it possible for there to be living humans with whom his living spirit could communicate during the time of his lectures and now. Open your hearts and listen — not to words, for there will be none — but to feelings, those ineffable expressions which are all the more real the more they cannot be explained in words. Open your hearts and listen — and you will enter a world you will have no words to picture. A world of spirit and reality which we must endeavor to hold fast to us dearly from now on.

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

Footnote 1. Dr. Andrew Joseph Galambos brought forth the innovative idea of property as "the non-procreative derivatives of one's life". The levels of property are primordial property — one's life; primary property - one's thought and ideas; and secondary property — everything else which derives from primary property, which includes all the physical goods one may be said to own. Upon this idea he was able to produce the first effective operational definition of freedom, a definition which will eventually span the world. As powerful as this idea is, many are disinclined to accept it because of the cultural myopia which is prevalent, up until now. See [Sic Itur Ad Astra](#) for more details.

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**Footnote 2.** I am thinking here of those well-meaning materialists who criticize Waldorf Schools and the anthroposophists who tackle them in debates attempting to defend spiritual science on the battlefield laid out by the critics. On page 162, 163, Steiner says, "For the earthly realm seen spiritually — indeed the earthly realm can be seen spiritually — things appear different from what might be assumed when they are not seen spiritually. It is correct to say, as we have done many a time, that we live in the age of materialism. Why? It is because human beings in this materialistic age — human beings in general, rather than those who understand these things are too spiritual — paradoxical though this may sound. That is why they can be so easily approached by purely spiritual influences such as those of Lucifer and Ahriman. Human beings are too spiritual. Just because of this spirituality they easily become materialistic. It is so, is it not, that what the human being believes and thinks is something quite different from what he is. Those very people who are most spiritual are the ones most open to the whisperings of Ahriman, as a result of which they grow materialistic."

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Footnote 3. Ponzi originated the idea of what has since been called generically a "pyramid scheme". He accepted money for investment and paid those who invested earlier from the proceeds coming in from new investors. He never defaulted on his promise to pay, but nevertheless the "Lion" in the form of the so-called government of the USA came in and shut him down for an illegal and unsafe investment scheme. Later that same so-called government stole the idea from Ponzi and built the Social Security pension program on Ponzi's original design. The Lion (Feds) would not let the Shark (Ponzi) eat up the money of the smaller fish, but the Lion decided it would be alright for it to do exactly that.

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