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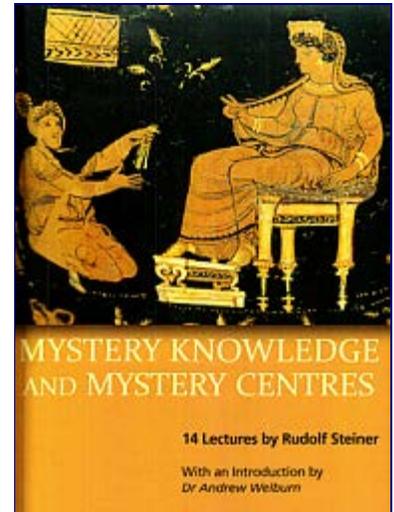
by

Rudolf Steiner

Introduction by Andrew Welburn

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2018



What were the "mysteries" that Mystery Centers provided knowledge of over the centuries going

back long before birth of Jesus who became the Christ incarnate? Andrew Welburn explains it the mystery of the Mysteries in his Introduction this way:

[page 2] The Mysteries have been since ancient times an expression of the inner triumphing over external forces. In Antiquity thy played the role especially of preserving a link with the 'time of the gods', of the primordial revelation. Not in a static way, but by bringing the chosen leaders, prophets or priests to confront the power of life and death, to discover the deeper needs and potential of the human spirit, the Mysteries had kept humanity in touch with the living foundations of experience.

As a trained physicist, I was intrigued to find the root of the word *theory* to be *theos*, referred originally to a divine oracle or god and also to learn the basis of Free Masons was that they were free from having to build things as the original masons did. They were instead to speculate, to build using philosophical ideas instead of hard bricks. Welburn also reveals the connection of Archangel Mi-cha-el slaying the Dragon to Apollo defeating the Python, "The dragon to be slain is precisely the hardening of knowledge into forms that were once appropriate but are no longer right." (Page 19) In ancient times Apollo was petitioned to give out new responses to difficult situations, but in recent times Mi-cha-el prompts us to experience new responses in our inner thoughts as Steiner describes in his *Philosophy of Freedom*.

[page 28] This may be putting it simply, but what is meant is that when one experiences thinking in the real sense one no longer feels outside the mystery of universal existence but within it. If one grasps the reality of thinking within oneself, one grasps the divine element within oneself.

Steiner expounds on "The Life of the Human Soul" in Lecture 1, especially how we can acquire the feeling of traveling with the Sun and then observe that the flowers take on a spiritual color that goes through the surface which has become transparent and unites with your soul.

[page 33] You feel one with the whole world, with the etheric element of the world. But as you stand here on the earth you feel that your feet and legs are drawn down by the earth;'s gravity; you feel that your whole being is bound firmly to the earth. The moment you have this experience of thinking, you no longer feel bound to the earth; you feel dependent on the wide expanses of the cosmic sphere. Everything comes in from the expanses, not from below, as it were from the center of the earth upwards, but from the cosmic expanses. And you feel that to understand the human being this feeling that there is a streaming in from the cosmic expanses must be present.

Once you feel united with these cosmic expanses, you have experienced what the Third Hierarchy does: the angels, archangels, and archai who live through a thinking experience instead of trudging around the surface of the Earth as we humans do.

In our experience of memory we can see right through objects, into the very essence of things, their spiritual element. In memory we find ourselves in the presence of the Second Hierarchy. Steiner gives an example of this reveals itself in a person's life.

[page 35] There is of course something in the life of the human soul that reaches beyond memory. Let us see what it is. Memory gives our soul its special coloring. Suppose we come across a person who criticizes everything, who reacts with bitterness to everything we say to him, who, whenever we tell him about something that is really pleasing, at once speaks of something unpleasant. In such a case we may know with certainty that this characteristic is connected with his memory. Memory gives the soul its coloring.

There is yet one more step which leads us into the First Hierarchy: gestures. There is a saying that you cannot give away a smile because when you smile, you lead others around to smile back at you. If you talk to an audience, as Steiner discovered, some faces in the audience may have cheerful expressions and others will have wrinkled foreheads, some blank faces and others open and expressive faces. These various expressions are evidence of physical body states or *doyles* that are mostly stored in the person's body before the age of five years old.⁽¹⁾ Doyles which have been stored in one person's body for decades tends to become part of the person's physiognomy and their characteristic gestures.

Steiner says on page 36 that we can achieve something at age 50 if we play games that we played in childhood. I agree. I had exactly that experience when I was working in a plant and the local intranet first came on-line. In my work group we found it possible to play a video game in which three of our buddies were visible and we could chase them around, pop out of hiding to surprise them, and frag them. This was very much like my three brothers and I playing cops and robbers in our yard at night: nobody got hurt and everyone had fun. The first one to shoot the other won and the shot bad guy rose up and began chasing you. No one who played this game ever wanted to do it with real guns when they grew up, so far as I know. At the plant we were only able to do this during our half-hour lunch break, so we ate quickly in five minutes and played this kid game with each other for the rest of the break. The heart-pumping excitement and adrenaline rush lasted the entire time and I felt like I had just transposed myself into being a 11-year-old boy again for a half hour.

[page 36, 37] If he can transpose himself back into the actual gesture or posture of that moment, he will again find that something is brought into his life whereby he is led to the conviction that the outer world is the inner world and the inner world is the outer one. . . . You cannot with your full consciousness inwardly apprehend the gesture you made perhaps 20 years ago in response to some outer provocation without realizing, with the greatest inner depth and reverence, the union of the physical and the spiritual in all things. But then you will have arrived at the experience of the First Hierarchy.

Here's a summary of the types of experience associated with each of the hierarchies:

[page 38]

**Thinking Experience: Third Hierarchy
Memory Experience: Second Hierarchy
Gesture Experience: First Hierarchy**

In all that I have been describing to you today my aim has been to indicate how, by simply following the course of the soul from thinking to thought-filled, soul-imbued gesture, the human being can develop feelings — to begin with no more than feeling — of the spiritual foundations of the world right up to the sphere of the seraphim.

If you understand rightly the conditions after death, you could say, "Everyone is a good poker player after death." Why is that? Because a person after death cannot conceal the actions in their soul: it is written on their outer shape, just as good poker players can tell by looking if a person is bluffing when raising with a poor hand. After death, a person cannot lie about his life on earth because his very form reveals the truth.

[page 42] The form (of a person who has died) is a kind of physiognomical expression of his life on earth; it is a faithful portrayal of the manifestations of the good and evil of which he was responsible in his physical life on earth.

The psychological process of *projection* says that we *project* upon others the faults we have within ourselves. It seems easier to understand projection if you realize the very process of perception is one of producing what is perceived in oneself. Steiner explains it this way:

[page 42, 43] A human being who carries through the gate of death some moral evil inherent in his soul will bear a physiognomy in which there is an outer resemblance to ahrimanic (devilish) forms. During the first period after death it is a fact that a person's feeling and perception are dependent on what he can reproduce in his own being. If he has a physiognomical resemblance to Ahriman because he has carried some moral evil with him through the gate of death, he can reproduce in himself — which means he can *perceive* — only things that resemble Ahriman, and he is as it were blind to those human souls who passed through the gate of death with a sound and good moral disposition . . . He can reproduce in his own being only the physiognomy of other evil people.

Consider how EAT-O-TWIST predicts this when it says Everything Always Turns - Out - The Way It's Supposed To. You see only other good or evil people as you supposed there to be before you died.

One surprising revelation from Steiner is that both the ahrimanic and luciferic beings work with the spirit of human beings.

[page 43, 44] But while the luciferic beings want to draw the soul and spirit out of human beings so that they would cease to concern themselves with their earthly incarnations but would prefer living as beings of soul and spirit only, the ahrimanic beings would like to disregard soul and spirit entirely and detach from human beings what has been given them as a sheath, a covering, an instrument in the physical and etheric realm, and bring it all into their own realm.

This is a dilemma that we as humans have ever to face: succumb to ahrimanic forces which tug us to subhuman realms or succumb to luciferic forces which tug us away from our human incarnations. If you have only one choice in any situation, you are stuck; if you have two choices, you have a dilemma; only if you have three choices can you have an option. The third option for humans is rising above the Tug-of-War. And only the Christ spirit can assist us, can help keep us balanced, can keep us from being pulled irretrievably to the light, etheric side of Lucifer or pulled to the dark, dense side of Ahriman.

There are two stories I recall which illumine the difference between a Northerner and a Southerner. You get lost on a country road in Maine and stop to ask directions from a farmer leaning on his fence, "Do you know where the center of town is?" "Ay, yup." the farmer replies and says nothing else. "Well, can you tell me how to get there?" you reply. "Ay, yup, didn't ask me how, jest asked me if I knew." Short replies, little information. The other story was related to me by a friend, a Northerner, trying to find the route to a paper mill in a Southern town. The local talked up a storm, finally telling him, "Now you go down this road and take a right turn just before where the old schoolhouse used to be." Of course my friend had no idea where the old schoolhouse just to be. Long reply, little information. Steiner explains the relationship between humans and their environment:

[page 47] Southerners who are exposed to the maximum of sun influences gesticulate a

great deal and are talkative; their speech is melodious because there is a connection between their own warmth and the warmth outside. Northerners, on the other hand, are not talkative because they have to hold on to the stimulus their body warmth gives them.

Paul Watzlawick famously wrote that when faced with a dire circumstance, the Northerner will say "the situation is serious, but not hopeless" and the Southerner will say, "the situation is hopeless, but not serious."⁽²⁾ It is as equally true of Berliners and Bavarians as it is of Maine farmers and Texas ranchers. The Northern one is taciturn and the Southern one is garrulous.

The title of Lecture 3 tells us how Steiner reveals "the path to the inner core of Nature through thinking and will". We humans arrive at birth with a fixed heredity, but with an incredible adaptability, both of which we owe respectively to ahrimanic and luciferic forces.

[page 55] Yesterday I was speaking to you of how human beings are subject to what natural science generally calls heredity, and also of how they are subject to the influences of the external world and adaptation to it. I also said that everything relating to heredity is connected with the ahrimanic forces, and adaptation in the widest sense with the luciferic forces. But I also told you how, in the realm of the spiritual beings that form the basis of the cosmos, provision has been made to enable the luciferic and ahrimanic forces to play a lawful part in human life.

Here we should be admonished against considering view ahrimanic and luciferic forces as mere devilish forces, but instead encouraged to see them as two opposing forces which we should do our best to balance in our own lives. Our experiences leave traces in our memories and helps form our individual souls as we live and grow in strength and knowledge, especially our earliest experiences.

[page 55, 56] Our soul has been shaped by the process whereby our experiences have become memories; we are the product of our life of memory to a greater extent than we think. And anyone who is capable of exercising even enough self-observation to enable him to penetrate into his store of memories will realize how particularly important a part is played throughout earthly life by the impressions of childhood. The kind of life we spent in childhood (which really does not loom large in our consciousness), the period in which we learnt to speak, to walk and in which we got our first inherited teeth, the impressions made on us during these periods of development — all these play an important part in the life of soul throughout our life on earth.

Our outer impressions and our inner memories may bring us happiness or sorrow during our waking time and these all pass into our astral body when we are asleep. Steiner could perceive the astral swirl of these memories during a person's sleep.

[page 56] During sleep the etheric body and the physical body are still enclosed within the skin and the astral body is outside — I will speak of the ego later on. This astral body is seen virtually to consist of the person's memories. However, these memories in the astral body, which is now outside the physical body, are seen to be swirling in and through one another in a kind of eddy. Experiences that were widely separated in time and space are now in juxtaposition; parts of the content of certain experiences are eliminated, so that the whole life of memory is transformed during sleep. And when a person dreams he is becoming conscious of this transformed life of memory. And in the character and makeup of the dream he can be inwardly aware of the swirling eddy of memories which imaginative clairvoyance can perceive from outside.

The seemingly chaotic nature of dreams can be understood as a vortex of impressions from various times and places all mixing together as if in a blender to create the seed of adaptability we need as human beings. When we tell someone who presents us with a problem, "I'll sleep on it", we are saying we want to run all our impressions of the problem through this magic blender to come up with a unique and fitting

solution. Kekule did this when searching for the molecular structure of benzene; in a dream he envisioned a snake biting its tail. This led him to propose a ring structure for benzene which proved to be correct. Kekule was able to perceive the forces lying within the liquid benzene and laid the basis for organic chemistry.

[page 56] These memories, which from the time of going to sleep until waking form the main content of the life of the human soul, unite during sleep with the forces behind the phenomena of nature. It may therefore be said that all that lives as astral body in our memories enters into connection with the forces that lie behind, or rather lie *within*, the minerals, within the plants, behind the clouds, and so on.

The materialistic scientist, who eschews the possibility of spiritual forces, sees only material atoms in the phenomenon of nature, and cannot explain how Kekule could have dreamed up the unique structure of the benzene molecule while experiencing the spiritual forces in the vortex of astral forces while he was asleep!

[page 57, *italics added*] Those who recognize this truth find it horrifying when people come and say that material atoms are behind the phenomena of nature. The fact is that our memories do not unite with material atoms during sleep but with the spiritual forces *behind* the phenomena of nature. This is where our memories reside during sleep.

One of the first poems I wrote was in grade school about a rose. It began, "A pink rose so pure beside my garden grows." I had no idea where that rose came from, as there were no roses planted that I can recall on the grounds of our first house. Yet there was the poem.

[page 57] There is perhaps no more beautiful feeling for nature than to have not merely an external relation to a rose bush but realize that you love it because a rose bush harbors the first memories of childhood. Space play no part at all. However far away the rose bush may be, during sleep we find the way to it. The reason why people love roses — only they do not know it — is that roses receive and harbor the very first memories of childhood.

You can learn a lot about a person by observing the fixed lines on their face and various facial expressions they make in conversation. Like a phonograph needle scratches into the vinyl disk all the sounds made through the microphone, a person's face records their reaction to all the impressions the world made on them plus all the expressions they created in response to the world. Unlike a vinyl disk which is a one-time record of an event, one's face is a palimpsest of a life-time of impressions and expressions, all of which can be read by an observer. While memories live in our astral body during sleep, it is these impressions (physiognomy) and gestures (expressions) which lives in our ego (our I) when we are asleep and are in that process written upon our faces and living gestures.

[page 59] Thus those human beings who are able to put a great deal of their inner nature into their facial expression or their gestures have shining, radiant egos.

In a recent film documentary of Bob Hope⁽³⁾, one can see him as a man who put a lot of his inner nature into facial expression and gestures. In his eyes especially, one can see directly his shining, radiant ego.

The materialist is adamant that we cannot enter into the inner core of nature, but is that true or merely a materialistic fable about reality? Goethe encountered such a materialist in Albrecht von Haller who wrote his thoughts in verse:

**[page 60]
'Into the inner core of nature
no earthly creature can go.
Happiness enough is yours,**

that she her outer trappings doth show!'

Goethe hated that remark and inwardly cursed it for years before he came back with a powerful retort:

[page 60] 'O, you philistine!

We are within her being wherever we look.

Nothing is only inside or outside,

for what is inside is outside,

and what is outside is inside.

Ask yourself first of all whether you are core or shell.'

Goethe seems to aver that if Haller is a *shell*, he cannot penetrate his inner core, but if he is in fact *core*, he already exists within every aspect of his being. Christ Jesus said in one of the Gospels, "Knock, and the door will be opened." Steiner we do not knock in vain, and puts the matter this way, dissolving the spurious claim of Haller in the process:

[page 60] [Haller] shows he knows nothing of the fact that human beings, simply because they are beings with a memory, beings with physiognomy and gestures, continually penetrate into the inner being of nature. We are not creatures who stand at nature's door and knock in vain. Through our own core of being we are connected by intimate ties with the innermost essence of nature.

And when in our lives are we most directly connected to the innermost essence of nature? When we are very young children. It is only after teeth change that children are most amenable to learning about the secrets of nature, especially in fairy tales. Elves, gnomes, and elemental beings only appear to children under the age of teeth change, and afterward, when they are told fairy tales after teeth change, they remember the beings they experienced directly at an early age.

[page 61] It is only after the change of teeth that children gradually 'grow into' nature, and then their thoughts can in course of time comprehend thoughts of nature. Fundamentally speaking life from the seventh to the fourteenth year is a period during which children 'grow into nature', for in this period, in addition to their memories, they also carry into the realm of nature their gestures and physiognomy. And this then continues throughout the whole of life. It is not until the change of teeth that, as far as the inner core of nature is concerned, we are 'born' as separate human individuals.

Before this 'birth' the child exists in another world from the nature spirits, gnomes, undines, etal. So you can understand that they are puzzled by these beings, our children, who suddenly appear to them as completed beings. This leads these nature spirits to be very interested in young children, especially in someone who can tell them stories involving children, like fairy tales. This will seem fantastic to some of you readers, but perhaps you have heard the story of Beatrice Potter holding conversations with nature spirits as she was typing up the stories of Peter Rabbit. She even describes how irascible these spirits could be at times if she didn't answer their questions.

[page 61, 62] It would, however, be immensely stimulating for pedagogical imagination if, through absorbing spiritual knowledge, a human being could really participate in a dialogue with the nature spirits, if he could transport himself into the soul of the nature spirits in order to obtain their views about what he can tell them about children. This would produce the most wonderful fairy-tale imagination. And if in olden times fairy-tales were so wonderfully vivid and full of content it was because the storytellers could actually converse with gnomes and undines and not merely hear something from them. These nature spirits are sometimes very egoistic. They become taciturn if they are not told things they are curious to know. Their favorite stories are those about the things babies do. Then one learns a great many things from them that can create the atmosphere of a fairy-tale. What seems utterly fantastic to people today can be very

important for the practical application of spiritual life. It is an actual fact that because of the circumstances I have told you about, these dialogues with the nature spirits can be extremely instructive for both sides.

Two enigmatic passages in the Bible from John 1 and 14, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." and "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us". In the Ephesian Artemis Mysteries, the Initiate was taught to focus on his speech, to note the word, and through this process was able to feel the word move into his being, his very flesh, just as the cosmos moved over aeons into human flesh.

[page 104] The processes at work in speech elude crude perception, for they are delicate and intimate. But let us consider first of all the external aspect of speech, for it was from this that the instruction given in these Mysteries took its start. The attention of the pupil was first directed to the way in which the word sounds forth from the mouth. He was told over and over again: 'Mark well what you feel when the word sounds forth from your mouth!' He was then taught to notice how something of the spoken word turns upwards in order to receive the thought in the head, while something from the same word turns downwards in order that the feeling content may be inwardly experienced.

Again and again the pupil was instructed to push through his throat the utmost extremes of speech, and thereby perceive the ebb and flow manifest in the word as it is uttered. 'I am, I am not' — a positive and a negative assertion — these he had to utter as articulately as possible, and then observe how in the words 'I am' the upward ascent is felt, while in the 'I am not' there is more the feeling of pressing downwards.

Soon the attention of the pupil, the initiate, was turned to the warmth rising upwards to the head and the watery element flowing downward like glandular secretions.

[page 105] Thus it was made clear to the pupils in the Ephesian Mysteries that human beings make use of the air in order for the word to sound forth, but in the act of speaking the air changes into the next element, into fire, warmth, drawing the thought down from the heights of the head, embodying it in itself. And there occurs as alternating conditions first a sending upwards of fire, then a sending downwards, as the air in the word trickles down like a glandular secretion in the form of water, of fluid. By means of this latter process human beings can feel the word inwardly.

The pupil was brought to feel that his "own body was a kind of sheath for the cosmic mystery that sounded from his rhythmic system and lived in his speech." (Page 106) All this led him to feel deeply that his own humanness was connected to the evolution of the cosmos. The great saying over the Temple of Apollo was "Know Yourself!" and the pupil got a deep appreciation for its meaning. Know and experience yourself as a being who evolved in parallel with the cosmos around you.

The final step in human evolution involved the shaping and forming of the physical body into a bony structure which began first with a chalky substance which mixed into liquid albumen and finally solidified into bones(4).

[page 107] The earth was in the condition when it contained as a substance essential for that stage of evolution what we now know as common chalk, such as is found in the Jura Mountains. In the chalk mountains, in the chalk of the earth today, we find the substance we want to study with regard to its function in those ancient times, when the earth was surrounded by what I called fluid albumen. We know that cosmic forces worked into the fluid albumen, causing it to coagulate into certain definite forms; and while the earth was in this condition a process took place resembling in a higher degree and in a denser substance what we know today as the rising of the mist and the falling of the rain. The chalky element rose upwards and permeated what had hardened in the

fluid albumen, so that these forms acquired a bony content and the animal kingdom began to evolve. Through the spirituality contained in the chalk the animals were drawn down as it were, out of the atmosphere which was still albuminous.

Writing is a very new way of representing words, going back only several thousand years. Homer's epic were spoken for centuries before the invention of writing. The mystery of evolution was an audible mystery, rightly understood.

[page 108] The processes described in the last lecture were felt by the human being to be taking place *in himself*. But how? Everything I have described to you here as the rising of the chalk, the uniting of this chalk with the coagulated albumen and then the descent of animality onto the earth — all this was experienced by the human being of that time in such a way that he *heard* it. The forms that arose when the chalk filled out the coagulated albumen and made it bony and gristly, all that then took shape, was 'felt' in the ear — it was audible. The cosmic mystery was *heard*.

An old spiritual called "Dem Bones" goes like this, "the thigh bone's connected to the hip bone, the hip bone's connected to the back bone, now hear the word of the Lord." [\(5\)](#) Ezekiel connected dem bones together according to the song. Steiner explains how we should understand the bones of our skeleton by listening to them.

[page 109] Confronted with this mystery of the skeleton we can do no other than say to ourselves, 'Do not merely look but *listen*, Listen to how one bone transforms itself into another. Listen — for it speaks!'

He suggests we visit a Natural History Museum with its mighty orchestra of bones on display for us to see and hear. He visited one in Trieste and reports:

[page 109] One could certainly feel the connection between the skeleton — the bony system living in the chalk — and that which once upon a time spoke to the human being out of the flowing forces of the cosmos, when he himself was one with the cosmos, with the secret of the cosmos, which is at the same time the secret of the human being himself.

It is now possible to understand the origin of John 1's passage, how the macrocosm appeared in the microcosm of human speech.

[page 111] And it is to this macrocosmic mystery — the translation into maya, into the big world — that the beginning of St. John's Gospel refers: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' For that was still a living tradition in Ephesus at the time when the evangelist, the writer of St. John's Gospel, could read there in the Akashic Record that for which his heart yearned, namely, the right form in which to clothe what he had to say to mankind concerning the secret of cosmic evolution.

On page 114 and 115 Steiner relates the burning down of the Goetheanum to the earlier burning down of the Temple of Ephesus. Elsewhere we can discover that Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman in previous incarnations were priests who witnessed the flames of the Temple of Ephesus. (See [Rudolf Steiner's Mission and Ita Wegman](#).) As he spoke about the colorful flames of the Goetheanum, he was reminded of the earlier conflagration.

[page 115] Auspicious colors, colors akin to the metals! And through this connection with the metallic element there rises up within us something that is like memory in the early sphere. And what it reminds us of is what went up in flames with the Temple of Ephesus. Then, even as there is a connection between those two fires, so the longing to probe further into something of the nature of 'In the beginning was the Word, and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God' can link us to what was brought home again and again to the pupil at Ephesus: 'Study the mystery of man in the small word, the micrologos, in order to make yourself ripe to experience within your self the mystery of the macrologos!'

In Lecture 7 on the Hibernia Mystery Centers, we learn how their initiates learned to experience the complete scale of feelings which an initiate today would also have to experience.

[page 122] There is still something a modern person can learn from these experiences which in earlier times were presented in a perceptible form but no longer can or need be so presented for the purpose of initiation. He can learn how wide a gamut of feelings must be passed through in order to approach the truth which then leads to cosmic mysteries. For although it is right for the pupil of today to develop along an inner path that is not dependent on outer perception, nevertheless he must still pass through the same gamut of feelings, must experience them through intense meditative effort. So the scale of feelings to be lived through today can be ascertained from knowledge of the experiences undergone in the ancient rites by those who were undergoing initiation.

In my childhood I wanted to find out how the world worked. This earnest desire led to do a lot of reading of science fiction and the lives of great inventors. Therein I found only more questions and decided to study physics as my best chance of learning how the world worked. After graduation I worked for a while as a physicist, then got into computer programming and learning how computers worked. The more I learned about computers the more I realized the way computers worked revealed the way the human brain worked: the brain has hardware (its various lobes and structures) and software which comprise our thoughts. In real-time computers with multiple programs working alongside each other at the same time, I found an explanation of how humans are able to do more than one thing at the same time. But soon my questions outstripped my computer model of the human brain. We know where computers come from: they are designed by the human mind. Their software is created by the human minds of programmers. New computers must have a bootstrap program built into them to get the first piece software loaded. Human engineers do this job. Who does the job of getting the human being to bootstrap into existence? We know where computers come from and where they go to when they die or become obsolete, but what do we know about where a human being comes from and where this being goes after death? Does our software, our mind, soul, and spirit disappear when our body dies?

I began to see human life as a puzzle with an enigma on each end: where did we exist before this life and where will we exist after this life? I searched for decades until I stumbled upon Rudolf Steiner who was able to share with me the answers to these two important questions. These answers come to the initiate of ancient times and today, but today we have Rudolf Steiner's revelations to assist in our quest for this knowledge. It was this very knowledge which was kept hidden in various Mystery Centers until a suitable initiate had undergone rigorous training to develop the ability to see directly into the spiritual world and learn for oneself. Along the way of my seeking, I switched from studying Science to studying the Arts. I came to know that *experiencing feelings* for learning spiritual realities was equally as important as *acquiring knowledge* for learning physical realities.

In Hibernia mystery centers students or initiates were taken through a similar process of learning about Knowledge and about Fantasy. They saw two statues. The first spoke to them:

[page 126]

I am Knowledge.

But what I am is not real being.

I had learned knowledge myself and found it lacking in substance and real being.

The other statue spoke this way:

[page 127]

**I am Fantasy.
But what I am has no truth.**

I had fought to find real being and truth and seemed to have found neither, until I discovered Rudolf Steiner. It was after the Internet came into being that I asked, "Who is Rudolf Steiner and what of his work should I read first?" Answers flooded in and I was off to the races: my studies of his work involved intense study comparable to that of Hibernian initiate, so far as I can tell, and I expect this work of mine has several decades left to run.

As an undergraduate I studied Science, and as a post-graduate, I studied Art, seeking to find some truth and some real being in the world. I had reached what the Hibernian initiates did: seeing the words SCIENCE and ART written in flames above the two statues that had earlier spoken to them the above words on pages 126, 127. I knew that I needed to study the arts as much as I had earlier focused only upon the sciences.

[page 127] All these experiences were lived through by each individual pupil in absolute isolation. The experience became so intense that the pupil's power of sight ceased to function, and after a time he no longer saw the statues. But in the direction where he had been looking he read as though written in flames something which was not physically there but which he nevertheless perceived with utmost clarity. Where he had previously seen the head of the statue of knowledge he read the word SCIENCE and where he had seen the head of the other statue he read the word ART.

The most amazing aspect of my studying Steiner's works came when I found the reverence he had for Christ. Steiner had already established credibility in my mind for his explanation of how the human being evolved in parallel with the Cosmos in which we lived, and that added credence to his writings about Christ Jesus. What I found especially important was how Steiner stressed the importance of the Deed of Christ Jesus on Golgotha, how His Deed changed the entire world, bringing it back from the precipice of an utter, irretrievable plunge into materialism.

Here is Steiner's description of how the Hibernian initiate was shown the way to Christ.

[page 127, 128] After this he was taken out of the temple again, and beside the exit stood the two initiators. One of them took the pupil's head in his hands and turned it towards something to which the other initiator was pointing: the figure of Christ. And this second initiator impressed upon him the following words:

**Open your heart
To the Word and the Power of this Being.**

And the other priest said:

**And receive from Him
What the two statues wished to give you:
Science and art.**

These were the first two acts as it were in the Hibernian initiation, the special way in which the pupils in Hibernia were guided to a real feeling for the innermost nature of Christianity. This experience impressed itself deeply on the minds and hearts of these pupils, and now they could start on their further path of knowledge.

The area of Hibernia had no knowledge of the events going on in Palestine during the time of Christ Jesus, and yet these Hibernian initiates celebrated the Mystery of Golgotha as it was happening thousands of miles away(6).

[page 161] Over in Hibernia were initiates with their pupils, and there, without any means of physical perception of the Mystery of Golgotha, and without any possibility of receiving information of the event, the Mystery was nonetheless celebrated simultaneously with all solemnity, because the initiates knew from their own insight that the Mystery of Golgotha was happening — out there — at that very time.

Over the course of centuries, the spiritual perception of the average human faded, gradually replacing the spiritual knowledge of the Mystery of Golgotha with a simple recounting of recorded events in the Gospels and a sense developed that Jesus must have been a mere human, one with special teaching gifts.

[page 162] In general a knowledge of these events, of a kind for which no direct spiritual perception was required, spread over Europe. People turned to historical tradition, which simply told of the physical events that took place in Palestine at the beginning of our era. And from this stream proceeded that attitude to history which takes account only of what happens in physical life. Humanity in general was less and less able to perceive the colossal contradiction that lies in the fact that the Mystery of Golgotha, an event which is comprehensible only by means of the deepest spiritual activity, should be referred only to an external phenomenon, perceptible to the physical senses. But this was, after all, the path which cultural development in Europe had to take.

In Lecture 10 dealing with "The Chthonic(7) and Eleusian Mysteries", Steiner explains how the teachings of Plato flowed into Aristotle, then into Alexander the Great who spread it to all the lands he conquered, especially into the Arabs, then it flowed into Spain, which began its return into Europe. No one should naively assume that the thoughts of Plato went directly north and west into Central Europe, but instead they circumnavigated their way around the Mediterranean Sea before arriving back in Europe and influencing European thought. (Pages 178, 179)

Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, rightly understood, is the science of the full human being in body, soul, and spirit. As he explains Aristotle's method of education, it likewise involved the full human being, a process which changed the human being entirely. Note: the process of retrodiction is described by Steiner as a 'continuation of the present back into earlier times, and it is utterly unreal'. Much of the confusion created by modern historians, geologists, archaeologists, anthropologists, and other scientists is due to invasive presence of retrodiction in their thoughts and deductions.

[page 182, 183, *italics added*] What we think of today as 'knowledge' was really of little account in those ancient times, even as late as the days of Aristotle. And if a modern historian of some particular science wants to give an account of the progress in thought in his domain he should really begin with Copernicus or Galileo, for anything he may add to his account by going further back is beside the point. And if he goes back as far as the knowledge of Greek times, what he says is mere fantasy. It is *a continuation of the present back into earlier times, and it is utterly unreal*. For even in the time of Aristotle any education that \ was taken seriously involved a complete change in the very \ nature of the pupil, for it made an appeal not merely to thought and observation but to the whole life of the human being. The acquisition of knowledge was meant to bring about a change, the essential thing in the Mysteries being that *the human being should become through his education an altogether different being from what he was before*. And in Aristotle's time in particular, the endeavor was made to bring about this transformation by subjecting the soul to two diametrically opposite impressions.

What were these two ways? The first is the way of modern physics, chemistry, physiology, and such which deals only with observable properties of material substances:

[page 183] A teacher of those olden times did not try to make the connection with nature by saying: 'Here is a body which has such and such a temperature. I heat it in a retort

and it undergoes such and such a change.'

Instead a teacher led pupils to acquire a human knowledge of their environment with instructions such as this: 'Look, you breathe the air. In summer the air you breathe is warm, while in winter it is cold. In winter you can perceive your own breath in the form of vapor, but it is invisible when you breathe the warm air in summertime.' One can hardly imagine a grade school science teacher of today beginning a science class in such a fashion by bringing their pupils into direct contact with nature(8). A teacher in Aristotle's time subjected a student to this second way of acquiring knowledge. He did not talk about measuring and manipulating temperatures.

[page 183] No, he brought nature into direct contact with the human being himself, by making him attentive to the feeling he experienced in connection with the breathing process. And the pupil learnt to develop a true feeling on the one hand of the warmed air. 'Picture to yourself,' said the teacher, 'what it really means -- warmed air. It wants to rise; and you must feel, when the warmed air comes towards you, that something is trying to carry you out into far spaces. And now feel, in contrast to this, cold water in some form or other. Just feel it. You actually do not feel at home in it. In the warm air you feel at home, so much at home that the warm air tries to carry you out into far spaces. In cold water you feel unnatural and not at home. And you feel that if you go away from the cold water and leave it to do what it wants to do out of its own nature, it will do something that has meaning for you and turn into snow crystals which fall to earth. You feel in your right place *outside* the snow crystals, watching them from outside. The warm air you can only feel *inside* you, and you would gladly let yourself be carried by the warm, ascending air into the far spaces of the cosmos. You can actually only feel the cold water outside you, and in order to have a relationship to it you would prefer observing what it does by means of your senses.'

Lecture 11 promises to tell us "The Secret of Plants, Metals, and Human Beings" and we might prepare to read this lecture by recalling "The Fox's Secret" from Antoine Saint-Exupéry's classic novel, "The Little Prince". In the book, the Fox tells the little Prince, "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." A teacher taught a pupil to experience what the flowers told him, which spoke as the Rose who spoke to the little Prince.

[page 186] For the flowers did not tell him the same thing every night! What the flowers said when the moon stood in front of Leo was different from what they said when it stood in front of Virgo or Scorpio. For the flowers of the earth told of what the moon experienced as it revolved around the zodiac. The secrets and mysteries of the cosmos out there — it was of these that the flowers of earth told. It was indeed true that through these things brought to the pupil he was able to say out of the depths of his heart:

I look into the flowers.

They reveal to me their kinship with the moon.

Captives on earth are they,

For they are beings born of water.

The pupil was able to have this feeling because he had previously experienced the impression made on him by the chilling water. That experience enabled him now to acquire this knowledge from the flowers.

A materialistic scientist works today only with the corpses of reality, not the fully living reality experienced by the full human being. The very idea that artificial intelligence can surpass the abilities of the full human being is laughable, but few modern scientists are capable of understanding why their attempt to surpass human abilities is risible. Alexander did not set out to conquer the world, but rather to understand the other half of the world and to infuse the secrets of flowers, plants, metals, and human

beings into the people of Asia, because only the *corpses* of these secrets could be brought to Europe thinkers during his time, and it is still mostly so, full of abstract thought and logic they were, up until now. Steiner is a modern Alexander who is bringing much-needed living knowledge to European-based civilizations today.

[page 194, 195] Now the time has come, however, when these other things have waited long enough and they must be rediscovered as the sum of the natural sciences. Alexander had, fundamentally speaking, to bury these secrets of nature in Asia for the time being, for only their corpses were brought across to Europe. It is not our task to galvanize these corpses but to rediscover the original living truth. And we shall only really find the necessary enthusiasm for such a task when we can develop a warm feeling for what existed at that turning-point of time, when we can perceive and appreciate the real purpose of Alexander's campaigns. For only to outward appearance were they campaigns of conquest: in reality their object was to find the other side of the compass, to unravel the mystery of the other half of the world. They were also most certainly a search for a personal experience. A certain discomfort and lack of satisfaction was felt in the milieu restricted to cold and moist and warm and moist, and the feeling of the other half of the compass was needed to create wholeness.

"Look at how dumb the scientists of the Middle Ages were: they only saw four elements, earth, water, air, and fire!" This is the mantra of so-called modern scientists as their inbred retrodiction blinds them to earlier realities of human thought. Yet this was the view of the ancients into the Middle Ages. They saw everything on earth from the point of view of the surrounding atmosphere, from a heavenly aspect. (Page 208)

[page 208] They went on from this to speaking of what exists between the encircling round and the earth, namely, the earth itself, below, then the watery element, the element of air, and the element of fire. Thus the ancients saw everything on the earth from the point of view' of the heavens, and the people of the Middle Ages, which did not come to an end until the first third of the fourteenth century, saw everything from the point of view of the surrounding atmosphere. Then, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, came the great turning-point. The human being and his outlook fell right down onto the earth. And now, with regard to his consciousness, the elements of water, air and fire were broken down and split up into sulphur, carbon, hydrogen. Human beings saw everything from the earthly point of view.

Humans could no longer incorporate any spiritual elements in their thoughts and ideas. They had lost the living being of their humanity. How could an individual regain this living spirit? The Rosicrucian initiation provided a way.

[page 209, 210, *italics added*] The pupil became — not abstractly, but inwardly — illumined to perceive: as a modern human being you can penetrate only to the world of ideas; thereby, however, you lose the living being of *this* your humanity.

And the pupil felt that what the new age was giving him could not lead him to the essence of his real being. He felt either you must despair of knowledge or you must go through a kind of mortification of the arrogance of abstraction.

In the NCIS television series, a character named DiNozzo would occasionally receive a mild slap on back of his lower head from his boss Gibbs. It always seemed to happen at an appropriate time, but created an unanswered question in me, "Why was this necessary and what function did this slap perform?" I finally found an answer in this passage.

[page 209, 210, *italics added*] The Rosicrucian pupil — the true Rosicrucian pupil — felt as though *his master had given him a blow on the back of his neck* to indicate to him that

the abstractions of the modern brain are not suited to entering the spiritual worlds, and that he must renounce mere abstraction to enter them.

That was indeed a tremendous preparatory moment for what we may call the Rosicrucian initiation.

Suddenly it became clear to me what Gibbs was doing; his slap was telling DiNozzo non-verbally, "Get out of your thinking head, DiNozzo, and experience the feeling realities around you." Often, the slap was replaced by a perfunctory, "You think, DiNozzo?" which had a similar effect. Feeling realities are spiritual realities which thinkers miss by reflexively over-thinking a situation.

Anyone coming new to Rudolf Steiner's work will wonder, "Why does he refer to Christ Jesus' death on the cross as 'The Mystery of Golgotha'?" It was Steiner's way of pointing to the earlier mysteries, such as the ones he has detailed in these lectures. By contrasting he is able to explain to us the *one important difference* between them and the Mystery of Golgotha. These ancient mysteries were played out in the inner sanctum of initiates over the ages, whereas this most recent mystery was played out on the World Stage for all to see. This enabled every human being to become an initiate from then on.

[page 211] From my book *Christianity as Mystical Fact* you can see that what happened on Golgotha united in a certain sense what had previously been distributed over the various Mysteries throughout the world. The Mystery of Golgotha, however, differed from all the other Mysteries I have been describing in that it was presented so to say on the stage of history before the eyes of the world, while the older Mysteries were enacted in the obscurity of the inner temples, and they sent out their impulses from the dim twilight of these inner temples.

What do you see when you look deeply into a person's eyes? Unless you are an eye doctor, you see the person's soul and spirit, don't you? You go to a reunion and see former classmates you haven't seen in over 60 years. You recognize them in their eyes even though all the rest of their bodies had changed as they aged. Others can observe our spirit in our eyes, just as the ancients could observe the gods in nature. How can one accept the reality of the spirit in a human being and ignore the reality of the spirit in the natural phenomena of the Earth? Oh, that's different, some of you may be thinking, but, rightly understood, it is a difference without a distinction.

[page 213, 214] Yesterday I already drew your attention to the fact that for the people of olden times the phenomena and processes of nature were nothing less than deeds of the gods. They would as little have thought of treating a phenomenon of nature as an isolated phenomenon as we should think of considering a movement of the human eyes as a thing in itself and not as a revelation of the human soul and spirit. Natural phenomena were considered to be expressions of the gods who manifested through them. For the ancients the earth's surface was as truly the skin of the divine Earth Being as our skin is the skin of an ensouled human being. We really have not the least understanding of the mood of soul of the people of antiquity unless we know that they were speaking of the earth as a body of the gods and of the other planets of our planetary system as brothers and sisters of the earth.

One of the most impolite things you can do to a woman friend is to look through her as if she did not exist, treating her as a mere solid object or stereotype in front of you. It would feel horrible to her⁽⁹⁾. Imagine how the Earth feels with billions of humans doing essentially the same thing to it, up until now.

[page 214] But now this direct relation to the things and processes of nature, which saw in the single object or phenomenon the revelation of the divine principle, changed into a totally different one. The divine part of natural phenomena had, so to speak, withdrawn. Supposing it could happen to one of you that people saw you merely as a body — as we do the earth — neutral and soul-less. It would be absolutely horrible!

But this horrible thing has really happened where modern knowledge is concerned. And medieval scholars felt the horror of it, for from the standpoint of modern knowledge it is as though the divine principle had withdrawn from natural phenomena.

A modern chemist can put oxalic acid and glycerine into a beaker, heat it and carbon dioxide will be given off, leaving behind formic acid. A chemist in the Middle Ages saw in this reaction the human processes of digestion and understood it in a living way which is lost on modern physiologists, up until now.

[page 215, 216] A human being, however, is not a retort! The retort just demonstrates in a dead way what takes place in a human being in a living and feeling way. And this is really how it is: if a human being never produced oxalic acid in his digestive tract he would simply not be able to live. That is to say, his etheric body would have no sort of basis in his organism. If a human being did not change oxalic acid into formic acid his astral body would have no basis in his organism. Human beings need oxalic acid for their etheric body and formic acid for their astral body. Or rather, it is not the substances they need but the inner activity going on in the oxalic acid process and the formic acid process. This is of course something which a present-day physiologist has yet to discover; he still speaks of what goes on in the human being as if these were external processes.

The importance of formic acid in the life of human beings is little known. Honey is an importance nutrient, filled with constructive forces for humans as they mature, and luckily it is the one natural food substance which has an indefinite shelf life due to the tiny drop of formic acid the honeybees exude from their stingers into each hexagonal cell containing honey. Buyers of honey would be aghast if this essential ingredient were forced to be displayed on the labels of every honey jar. The life-giving properties of formic acid have been demonstrated, e.g., a person is reported to have recovered from a heart attack after being stung by a bee. The ants which annoy us by crawling over everything are actually spreading tiny amount of formic acid on the surfaces they crawl over and exuding formic acid into the air we breathe. Imagine if the Nanny State were to require a warning label, "Contains Formic Acid", to be displayed everywhere that humans breathe air.

Natural scientists of the Middle Ages sought in the human the chemical processes they observed in their laboratory retorts. They knew about the benefits formic acid gave to human beings, both inside the body and outside the body.

[page 216] This was the first question put by the student of natural science in medieval times as he sat in front of his retort. He asked himself: 'Such is the external process which I observe; now what is the nature of the similar process in the human being?'

The second question was this: 'What is the same process like in the great world of nature outside?' In the case of the example I have chosen the researcher of those days would have said as follows; 'I look out over the earth and see the world of plants. Oxalic acid is present in a marked degree in wood sorrel and in all kinds of clover. But in reality oxalic acid is contained in all vegetation, even if it is sometimes in homoeopathic doses. There is a touch of it in everything. The ants find it even in decaying wood. The swarms of ants, which we human beings often find so troublesome, get hold of the oxalic acid which occurs all over the fields and meadows and is indeed found wherever there is vegetation, and change it into formic acid. We continually breathe in the formic acid out of the air, although in very small doses, and we are indebted to the work of the insects on the plants for changing the oxalic acid into formic acid.'

At the end of this series of lectures, Steiner reveals to us the transition from ancient mysteries to the medieval mysteries to the sciences of our present time. These modern sciences eschew the presence of mysteries, claiming to be able to explain everything, while systematically ignoring or removing the spiritual realities from everything they explain. Rightly understood, all the inhumanities humans foist upon other humans can be understood as due to humans ignoring their full humanity as a being of body, soul,

and spirit.

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

Footnote 1. See the definition of a doyle here: <http://www.doyletics.com/doyletic.htm#Doyle>.

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

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**Footnote 2.** See my review of his eponymous book here: <http://www.doyletics.com/arj/sihnsrvw.shtml>.

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Footnote 3. The film is "American Masters: This is Bob Hope" (2017). It uses photos, movie clips, and Bob's own words about his life which are narrated by Billy Crystal.

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**Footnote 4.** The next passage describes the condition of the Earth during the *Old Moon* stage of evolution when humans without bony structures floated in a liquid atmosphere surrounding a vegetative globe. The legend of the Moon as made of green cheese comes from an archaic memory of this stage of human and cosmic evolution.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 4.](#)

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Footnote 5. Lyrics written by James Weldon Johnson around 1928.

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**Footnote 6.** This fact belies the scholars of today, by retrodiction, who claim only the physical facts of Jesus' life as a man are worthy of discussing, that everything else is mere fantasy made up by primitive human beings. The Hibernian initiates had no access to physical facts of Jesus, only to the spiritual realities of Christ Jesus's great deed on Golgotha.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 6.](#)

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Footnote 7. The adjective chthonic refers to things of the Earth, especially the interior of the Earth.

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Footnote 8. One might expect such a form of teaching in a Waldorf School which incorporates so many of the ideas of Rudolf Steiner.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 8.](#)

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**Footnote 9.** It seems to me that the feminist movement strives to eliminate this kind of *seeing through* women, treating them as stereotypes such as wife, mother, or servant, instead of as a unique human being.

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