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A READER'S JOURNAL

Necessity and Freedom, GA# 166

by

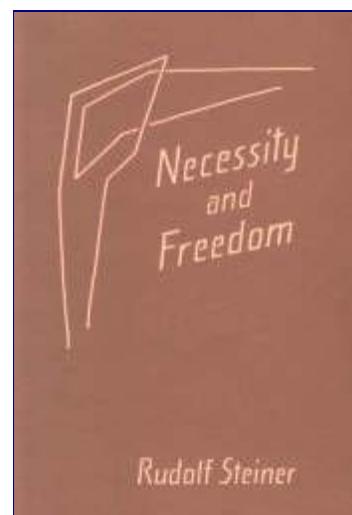
Rudolf Steiner

Five Lectures, Berlin, Jan-Feb 1916

Translated by Pauline Wehrle

Published by The Rudolf Steiner Press
in 1988

A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2001



Having just completed his eight lectures on [chance](#), [providence](#), and [necessity](#) in Dornach during August

and September of the previous year, one could wonder what more Steiner had to say on the subject. I did. And I was not disappointed in the least. Even lectures on the same subject when Steiner gives them are never repetitious. When he covers the same ground it is with new insights and perspectives that enlivens both sets of lectures. Here how he summarizes the subject of this set of lectures from the first paragraph of Lecture I:

[page 1] If I had to summarize in a few words what I am going to speak about, I would say "necessity in world events and in human actions" and "human freedom in these two domains."

Are we cogs in the great machine of existence or do we have freedom of human action? If I may dare to summarize Steiner's view: we are free agents engaging in designing the software of the machine of existence, but the software as it exists at any one point in time operates out of necessity of the current state of its development. The past is of the realm of necessity and the future of the realm of freedom. He explains how Kant set up a logical chart with directly opposing views and then argued each side of the views showing that one side could be proven as easily as the other. Humans philosophize in this manner all the time, and this type of thinking leads to no end of confusion.

[page 8] So let us tackle the question today, "Why is it that when we transcend the sense world our thinking gets so confused?" And we will now look at the question in a way which will bring us closer to an answer. How does it happen that two contradictory statements can both be proved right? We will find that this has to do with the fact that human life is in a kind of central position, a point of balance between two polar opposite forces, the ahrimanic and luciferic.

If we take the mechanistic position of the argument, we move in the direction of ahrimanic necessity, and if we take the contrary position of indeterminism, we move in the direction of luciferic freedom. If we are on a seesaw and don't know it, we may be confused as to why the world keeps moving up and down. To illustrate this alternating of ahrimanic and luciferic forces, Steiner relates the story of the Prague town hall's clock, a fantastic clock that could keep time, foretell sun and moon eclipses, and even point to movable feasts such as Easter. The clockmaker was truly gifted by heaven to create such a clock. The governor wished to keep this clock only in Prague, and ordered the clockmaker blinded when he completed the clock so he would never build another one elsewhere. Shortly before his death the clockmaker asked for a moment to set his clock right again, and in that moment "put the clock into such a disorder that nobody could ever put it right again." There was no trace of egotism in the man's soul as he was divinely inspired, but the governor was controlled by luciferic forces and wanted the clock to himself

and had the clockmaker blinded. Then the ahrimanic forces arose in the clockmaker that caused him to destroy his own creation. The seesaw effect is clearly illustrated in the story: a balance tilted by Lucifer, then opposed by Ahriman to offset the imbalance.

The next example involves a driver who delays for five minutes setting off on a journey and then a large boulder falls on the carriage killing the passengers. Is the driver responsible for the deaths? Or was the delay a part of the necessity of the matter? To look at this situation Steiner directs our attention to our physical body and etheric body — two parallel bodies, one residing in the physical world and one in the elemental world. In each world there are forces at work, but with our senses we can only access the physical world's forces directly, up until now.

[page 17] If we see a party of people setting off by coach and taking a drive, and a piece of rock falls and crushes them, that is the physical occurrence. Parallel with this physical event, that is to say, within it in the same way as our etheric body is within us, there is a supersensible occurrence. And we have to recognize that this may be the exact opposite of what is happening here on the physical plane. In fact it is very frequently the exact opposite.

Perhaps a clairvoyant may have seen the event of the coach ride as a joyful event and then later found out that the occupants had perished. This can easily happen Steiner tells us if what the clairvoyant had seen was the event transpiring on the astral plane.

[page 17-18] . . . for the moment these people left the physical plane they may well have been called to something special in the spiritual world, something filled them with an abundance of new life in the spiritual world.

In the spiritual world things are often the reverse of things in the physical world. If we contact another ball with a cue ball on a pool table we can predict exactly where the ball will travel using the Newtonian laws of action and reaction no matter who happens to come into view to observe the balls in motion. In science, where extraneous influences can be ruled out⁽¹⁾, cause and effect rules the day. In the spiritual world where cause and effect are meaningless, who is present is all important.

[page 20-21] There, everything is based on beings. You cannot link everything together with your concepts in the same way as you can on the physical plane. That is quite impossible. There, you cannot explain one thing following from another on the basis of concepts. Things work together in an entirely different manner in the spiritual world, in the series or stream of spiritual happenings running parallel with physical happenings. . . Thus we see that two worlds interpenetrate; one of them can be grasped with concepts and the other cannot, but can only be perceived.

This reminds me of a thought I had recently: that things of the physical world cannot attract spirits, only things of the spiritual world. Human beings and their thoughts exist in the realm of the spiritual world, whereas things do not, so human beings may attract spiritual beings to themselves by their thoughts. Therefore the thought of a loved one may attract them to where you are in the physical world. This first came to me as I was visiting Rome for the first time. My mother had never been to Rome, so I lighted candles to the various churches I visited so that, as I thought of my mother, she could come to where I was and enjoy the beautiful church. The fire and smoke from the candle would allow her to remain in the church as long as it burned as the candle had been touched by my hands and the fire lit by my touch. I felt for the first time that I had understood the meaning of the candles that are provided for parishioners in Catholic churches.

On a related subject, a friend on mine asked me the other day to explain why Catholics venerated saints and prayed to them. I didn't give him much of an answer then, but his question remained in my mind as an unanswered question until this morning as I was burnishing my statue of St. Francis of Assisi and placing

it in our kitchen garden at Timberlane. It suddenly occurred to me that St. Francis would not visit my garden by the simple physical act of placing a physical object in his image in my garden, no, his spirit would visit my garden whenever someone observed the physical replica of him and thought of him. Then St. Francis would come, observe his image, observe the person observing it and hang around for a bit to tidy things up, perhaps, in a spiritual way.

Steiner was speaking as the Great War later called World War I was raging all over Europe, and the aspects of the parallels in the physical and spiritual worlds weighed heavily on him as he talked. He wanted his audience to become aware of the spiritual fruits that were arising from the immense loss of human life that was happening in the trenches of the war. He ends Lecture I with this paean to those who suffered in the battles and back home: [italics added]

**[page 24] Out of the courage of the fighters,
Out of the blood of battles,
Out of the grief of the bereaved,
Out of the peoples' deeds of sacrifice
There shall arise *spirit fruit*
If only souls, in spirit-mindfulness,
Will reach out to the spirits' realm.**

Returning to the Prague clock in the next lecture, Steiner tells us of two figures on one side of the clock: one is of a man holding a mirror to his face and the other of a man with a money bag jingling his coins. Isn't that a lovely metaphor for the state of modern society where fifteen minutes of fame or winning a jackpot on a slot machine seem to be the primary goals of many people? Quick fame or quick riches. Lucifer or Ahriman. On the other side of the clock is "Death the balancer, put there as a reminder that through the constant alternation of life between death and birth and between birth and death human beings rise above the sphere in which Ahriman and Lucifer are active." (page 28)

Steiner likens luciferic forces and ahrimanic forces to positive and negative electricity — one cannot get very far with electricity unless one is willing to harness both the positive and the negative. Likewise he says that luciferic forces comprise the spiritual reality behind any expression of sympathy, and ahrimanic forces behind antipathy, that we cannot avoid both forces without leaving the world, and that we must learn to keep them in balance. He gives us as an example *art*:

[page 40] For instance, without Lucifer art would not exist. What matters is that we create art that is not purely luciferic.

Not everyone can be an artist in this life, but everyone gets up in the morning. Steiner weaves this mundane fact into the fabric of a spiritual truth that illustrates the theme of this book, necessity and freedom:

[page 43] Some people drag themselves out of bed with the help of strong determination, while others enjoy getting up. We could easily say that this shows us that the existing prior conditions signify that the one was brought up well and the other badly. We can see a certain necessity there, yet it is always a free decision. Thus we see in one and the same fact, in the fact of getting up free will and necessity interwoven, thoroughly interwoven. One and the same thing contain freedom and necessity.

"The past works in us as necessity," Steiner tells us, and says that this is of tremendous significance. We have experienced something, the experience was stored in our souls, and then works on us as necessity. If that is so, then how can freedom arise in us? It must be something that operates in the present. Like the man who can't bear to get up in the morning — his bad training as a child to sleep as late as he wanted bears down on him with necessity every morning and every morning in the present moment he has a chance to arise in complete freedom by his own will. "The past works into the present and combines with freedom." (page 43) This is so on an individual human basis and it is also true on a cosmic basis.

[page 44] All of present nature that you understand with its necessity was once in a state of freedom, a free deed of the gods. Only because it is past, because what developed in Saturn, sun, and moon has come to us in the same way as our childhood thoughts continue to work in us, the thoughts of the gods during Saturn, sun, and moon continue their existence on earth. And because they are past thoughts, they appear to us as necessity.

In Lecture III, Steiner tells us of three teachers who each have a different approach to teaching. In the description of the three teachers, see if you can discover your own approach to teaching and what the approach of the school you teach at (or have had children taught at) might be.

Teacher 1: looked at things that had worked in the past and designed lesson plans for the next year upon those strong points.

Teacher 2: brooded over mistakes and designed a lesson to avoid those mistakes in the future.

Teacher 3: had no lesson plans in advance but rather designed lessons based on what the students were like after they showed up in class.

When the administrator of the school with these three teachers traced the lives of the pupils of the three teachers, here's what happened:

[page 55] He then discovered that those taught by the first two teachers, with a few exceptions naturally, had all become respectable citizens, yet they had achieved nothing outstanding. Among the pupils taught by the third teacher, however, were people of considerable importance, who accomplished things of far greater significance than the pupils of the others.

Surprised? In the first teacher we find an ahrimanic approach based on what had worked well in the past and projected this onto the new students. In the second teacher we find a luciferic approach in which brooding over past mistakes is used to calculate how to proceed in the future. In both of these ways, there is an element of egotism, Steiner tells us. What about the third teacher, the one who would likely have been fired in any present school systems for being so unprepared at the beginning of each year?

[page 57-58] The third teacher was, I would say, filled with the forces of divine beings who are progressing in a normal way, whose correct divine principle is expressed right at the beginning of the Bible, where we are told that the Elohim first of all create and then they see that their creation was good. They do not look upon it egotistically as though they were superior beings for having made a good creation, but they admit that it is good in order to continue creating. They incorporate it into their evolution. They live and work in the element of life. What is important is that we realize that we ourselves are living beings and a part of the living world.

This is what the third teacher did: surrendered to the spirit of becoming, and unfettered by earlier predictions made egotistically from the past, this teacher was able to work the past into the present of the pupils and combine it in freedom to achieve outstanding results. The first two teachers put the horse before the cart and allowed the horse of past and necessity to pull the cart. The third teacher recognized that although the horse of the past and necessity pulled the cart, the teacher as driver chose the path for the horse and the cart to go in the present. (from page 60)

How does all this affect you and me? Science shows us that every event has a preceding event that causes it. Isn't that the basis of real science, cause and effect? Yes, that is it exactly, but in the world that we live in, elements from the spiritual world can intercede and reverse the situation. In the example of the horse and the cart, science can prove that the horse pulls the cart, but the thoughts and ideas of the driver in the

cart, which exist in a world unavailable to science, can determine the path of the horse at any moment, thus placing the cart before the horse in the scheme of things. The third teacher was successful because of recognizing the controlling force did not lie in the things of the past but in the power of the forces of freedom in the present.

What if the man in the cart were a mailman and directed the horse and cart along his route every day? His route is one of necessity, one that he must follow every day. Suppose a young man chooses to accompany him on his route. Each one travels the same route, but the mailman does it out of necessity, and the younger man does it out of freedom. In this example concocted by Steiner, we see freedom and necessity overlapping. This younger man is like the second self that lives in us, our actual soul nature that accompanies us in the physical world. Our physical body comes into being as a result of generations of heredity and its soul companion brings with it causes laid down centuries before. Together they form a team in which while the mailman makes mistakes, the companion will learn from those mistakes in a living way.

Steiner returns to the three teacher metaphor talking more in general now about three people with different approaches to living. "The first person plunges straight into action. At a certain point in his life, he feels the urge to acquire self-knowledge. So he looks at the things he has always done well." Sounds like the first teacher, doesn't it? The second person is inclined to look at his faults and failings. "If he can get over his hypochondria and his failings at all, he will get to the point of avoiding them."

[page 67] But he will not attain what a third could attain who says to himself, "What has happened was necessary, but at the same time, it is a basis for learning, learning through observation, not useless criticism." He will set to work in a living way, not perpetuating what has already happened and simply carrying the past into the future, but will strengthen and steel the companion part of himself and carry it livingly into the future. He will not merely repeat what he did well and avoid what he did badly, but by taking both the good and the bad into himself and simply letting it rest there, he will be strengthening and steeling it.

At this point Steiner calls up a powerful metaphor of seeing one's eyes. You can only see your eyes by reflection in a mirror. When you look into your eyes the mirror you hold in front of yourself blocks your view of the world behind the mirror. This simple insight plays out with deep meaning that is worth your meditation upon. All knowledge comes to us by means of reflection. If we look on our past actions, we say that "we reflect upon our past." But note that we have put up a mirror between the actions and ourselves in that process of reflection. There are times when putting up that mirror is useful, but the knowledge we gain will not be useful unless we are able to remove the mirror, take away the mirror that holds the maps we made of our past experience and blocks our view of the now reality of ourselves and our living experience.

[page 68] The moment we take the mirror away we no longer see ourselves and our past actions, but it is only then that they can enter into us and become one with us. . . . Please take this illustration to heart, the illustration of seeing one's own eyes only if one renounces seeing something else, and of the fact that if one wants to see something else, one must renounce seeing one's own eyes.

If we are always looking in the mirror of our past we will miss the forces entering into the stream of events in the physical world from the spiritual world. Those forces will never appear in the mirror of our past, only in our present reality. In a small way I discovered this for myself when I felt the power of a little linguistic tool that I call my *limitation eraser*. It works like this: whenever I hear myself stating a limitation, in the very process of verbalizing the limitation in a sentence, I plan to end it with the following phrase "up until now." This is the first time many of you have read about the limitation eraser, up until now. That previous sentence was a demonstration of how I use the [limitation eraser](#). Since we can only state a limitation by calling up our knowledge of the past, whenever we do so we are in effect placing

a mirror in front of our eyes and looking only into our eyes and our past. By deft application of the limitation eraser we can remove the blinders of the mirror by the end of a sentence in which we find ourselves stating a limitation from now on. Three important things to remember about your application of the limitation eraser the comma before the phrase "up until now" is *essential!* I discovered this by listening to new users apply it and they would go quickly non-stop to the end of the sentence and add "up until now" without pausing. Then they say something like, "Okay, I did it. So what?" They had completely missed the point. When you want it to work for you, pause at the comma, take a deep breath the first time you do it, and then say "up until now." You'll feel the effect in you. The second thing is always place it at the *end of the sentence!* If you place it at the beginning, you'll end the sentence feeling the limitation back in place after removing it at the beginning of the sentence. This is like taking the mirror away for a second and quickly placing it back up before anything real can happen. The third way of doing it wrong is simply to use on something other than a limitation, e.g., "I really have enjoyed meeting you, up until now." The sentence was not a statement of a limitation at all, but the beginning of a friendship perhaps which the sentence seems to cut short by the ill-advised use of the limitation eraser. These three ways are ones that I've heard others use in order to keep their limitations, up until now. The choice is yours from now on.

The next topic is as difficult as it is important: How do we distinguish from deeds that have been unsuccessful and deeds that have been morally bad? Steiner says on page 75, "This distinction is an extraordinarily important one."

We humans travel through cosmic space on the surface of the Earth and we are not at all aware or conscious of the flying at any moment. Those processes subject to necessity, such as our flying through space, happen completely to us out of awareness or completely unconsciously. "On the contrary," Steiner tells us, "in all matters where we are absolutely conscious, our actions cannot be other than free." As soon as a deed is over, it is in the realm of necessity. We might have wished that it had turned out differently, that instead of being fired from a job, we had gone on to a long career in a certain industry. We feel remorse because we were not up to the challenges of that job. Steiner tells us that is egotism and must be rooted out if our soul is to develop.

What about the bad deeds, the ones that were morally wrong? Someone steals something, the deed is done, it has entered the realm of necessity, is the remorse of the person's bad deed something that must be also rooted out? No. Why not? "For the very simple reason that he did not seriously want to steal, but only wanted to possess what he stole." He was not conscious of the badness of the deed during its performance, only of his wanting the thing immediately.

[page 76-77] When the deed happened, the awareness was taken up by the motive on account of which the bad deed was done. A bad deed is not willed. And repenting means that the perpetrator becomes aware that he allowed his consciousness to be dulled at the time the bad deed was done. Whenever anyone does a bad deed, it always a matter of his consciousness of the deed being dulled, and of his having to acquire an awareness of cases like the one in which his consciousness was dimmed. The whole point of punishment is to awaken forces in the soul that will enable consciousness to extend to the kind of situations that previously produced an elimination of consciousness.

Parents would do well to remember Steiner's words that the "whole point of punishment is to awaken forces" in the souls of their children to enable them to become conscious of situations during which previously they were unconscious. Any punishment that falls short of creating such consciousness will have no lasting effect on either the child in the home or an adult in prison. On the other hand, if one broods over a past failing, no such consciousness can arise because one is holding a mirror in front of one's face and looking into one's own eyes. One cannot see the real facts unless one puts down the mirror and looks directly at the real facts. "The facts then continue their work in the soul." (page 78)

Earlier in the lectures Steiner had posed a question about Goethe. It is a question that puzzle many of us today. If Napoleon were alive today, would he conquer Europe? In other words, take some historical

figure, move him to another time frame and ask if he would have achieved the same great deeds. Steiner used Goethe and his great work *Faust* as an example. The issue is a general one about the necessity and freedom of human deeds, not just about one man or his work.

[page 81] Thus we can now ask the question, "Did Goethe produce his *Faust* or any of his life's work out of freedom, or was it a question of absolute necessity?" The greatest freedom of all is to obey historical necessity!

In Goethe's lifetime, the time was ripe for the work that he created in *Faust*. Others had attempted similar works based on the Faust story, but to Goethe it was given the opportunity, the deed, to bring the story to its fruition, to its finest hour. Steiner points out that had Goethe lived in the 14th Century, he could not have written *Faust* because there was no empty space in world events for it to fill. He conjures up the metaphor of a cask and says that ages are like casks: we can't add anything to an already full cask. Like sound waves are compressible waves and have alternations of fullness and emptiness, so are ages in history.

[page82-83] Evolution really does proceed in waves: emptiness — a state of fulness to the point of completion — an ebbing — emptiness again. Then something new can come.

Earlier we discovered that criminals perform deeds in a state of dimmed consciousness. Isn't it interesting that we say of persons who committed a foul deed, "They acted like an animal!" Animals have a dimmed consciousness by virtue of their lower level of evolution compared to humans. Animals are seeking to create an "I" for themselves during the Earth epoch of evolution and only with that "I" in place will animals have risen to full consciousness such as humans are capable of currently in this epoch. During this epoch humans have a lower consciousness than the Angeloi or hierarchy of angels. As humans we aim for something and if we fail, we say we made a mistake.

[page 85] But not in the case of angels. Their intention is everything. An angel's intention can be carried out in many different ways and the effect can still be exactly the same.

Steiner tells us that artists are like angels in their intentions. Something completely different than the artist intended may occur and the artist will pronounce it as good. (Try to find an engineer who would have that attitude.) Thus an angel like an artist will not say, "It has to look like this." Not in the least; instead Steiner says, "He will not know what it looks like until it has happened." (page 85)

About seven years ago we went to a Halloween Dance at Harmony Hall to benefit a ballet company and they had a silent auction. My wife, Del, was attracted to a painting of an angel, all in white, that was listed for auction. She bid on the angel and won the bid. We went to collect the artwork and were told that the painting displayed of the angel in white was *not* what we had purchased! We were aghast, until we heard the explanation. The artist, Jim Leasure, owned the white angel painting and it was merely a display of a painting of one of his angels he had painted for someone else. What Del had bought was a personal sitting with Jim during which he looked at photos of her and me and other important family members. He asked her a little about herself. They bowed their heads and meditated together. He said he was getting colors, a sense of colors. That was what usually came first. He said a brief prayer. He added that he would meditate on it some more and call her when the painting would be ready. As Del was leaving, he said, "It will be a few weeks." The result of Jim Leasure's work was an Aries Angel for Del, in bright, deep colors, not at all like the White Angel Del thought she was buying. Here was an artist that operated exactly like an angel in producing his marvelous paintings of angels!



Hazrat Inayat Khan the famous Sufi writer quoted the poet Rumi as saying, "O sleep, every night thou freest the prisoner from his bonds." In a popular song of the previous century there lyrics to effect, "O if I had the wings of an angel, over these prison walls I would fly." In the words of both artists one is given the sense a freedom that accompanies the rigid necessity of one's physical body being constrained in a prison. Steiner says that the two are complementary: when the physical body has the most freedom the etheric body is constrained by necessity and when the physical body is constrained by necessity, the etheric experiences the most freedom. What is the necessity that the etheric body has to recognize when the physical body has the most freedom? Paradoxically, it is "its self-chosen karmic involvement in the events of the physical plane."

[page 90] In this way we see the physical part of human beings, free in bondage, and the spiritual-soul part, bound in freedom, interacting organically. Freedom and necessity always interweave. . . . We do become unconscious to the extent that we undertake to develop our consciousness to the point where we reach the gate through which streams and radiates what is to come from the spiritual world. We then receive this, and bend to the powerful forces coming to meet us from the spirit world. This is why in connection with working our way into spiritual necessity we speak of working our way up to the beings who bend down toward us.

If we think of this reaching up to those being who bend down from above, it is what we all do with our house pets. I see it everyday in our Schnauzer who comes to my chair and looks up me, puts his paw on my arm, and pulls it toward him to get and keep my attention. We are not pets to the angels, we are humans to them. When my Schnauzer is operating at his highest level, he is looking up to me to gaze deeply into my "I" as the best method available for working on his "I" for his next stage of evolution. "He looks so human," one friend told me at such a time. When we reach up to the spiritual beings that bend down to us, we do so with our "I", not "I"-less like my Schnauzer, and we do so as human beings, not as animals or pets.

Angels act out of a confidence like Jim Leasure did when he signed a contract to paint Del's angel. He knew that if he had the right intentions, the right things would come out of him, just like angels do.

[page 92] These right intentions, however, can only be grasped spiritually. And only through thinking in the way of spiritual science can we find the way to grasp something spiritually, as we have endeavoured to do.

What does it mean that my Schnauzer does not have an "I"? When we humans have an "I" it means that we have a name that no one else can call us, a name that can only be used by ourselves to refer to ourselves. I could name my dog "I" and he would respond to that name. If a man calls you "I", you do not think that he is talking about you — your "I" — but about himself — his own "I." The things that we cannot name from the outside we are unconscious of, up until now.

[page 93-94] Yet it is obvious that we know something about it [our "I"]. We name it from within. . . . it remains a fact that the I cannot be seen in the same way as the physical body or any other physical object. It cannot be perceived at all by the senses.

A new movie from Dreamworks called "AI" which stands for Artificial Intelligence portrays a scene which takes place about 2,000 years in the future. It shows us a monochromatic world devoid of human expressions in the robot-like creatures that inhabit it. It fits very well with Steiner's predictions for that [time period](#) which begins in 3573 A.D. [*italics mine*]

[page 99] We are moving toward a time when the outer world will be far more *bleak and empty*. Nowadays when a person looks at nature, he believes it to be green and the vault of the heaven to be blue. He sees nature in such a way that he believes the colors to be the outcome of a natural process. In the sixth post-Atlantean epoch he will no longer be able to believe in the colors of nature.

The process begun by Isaac Newton, when he placed a prism in the path of a light beam in a darkened room and said, "See, there are colors stored in the light beam," will have reached its ultimate conclusion. The physicists who have since Newton proclaimed that colors are nothing but vibrations will have their predictions come true as colors disappear and only monochromatic vibrations remain. It is in this light that one can best understand the spectacular insight of Goethe in his color theory that proclaims that color is the result of the path that the light beam takes before it reaches the eye. Newton's theory leads inevitably to a monochromatic world, and Goethe to a color-filled world. One can choose which path to take once one recognizes the choice is available.

My training was in physics and I know from personal experience that physicists carry out experiments and describe them. We read the data from our instruments and record them. More and more modern physicists are attempting to understand more deeply the processes that the data from their experiments reveal. They envision huge black holes that no one has seen, but their theory predicts. That was not so much the case in Steiner's time eighty-five years ago.

[page 103] Physicists carry out experiments and then describe them. But they do not venture to fathom the mysteries of what they are describing. They do not feel able to search more deeply into the processes the experiments reveal. They remain on the surface. In relation to the outer world they are in exactly the same situation as you are when you are on a different plane while dreaming. You dream because your etheric body radiates the experiences of the astral body back to you. Anyone observing nature or making an experiment nowadays also observes what it radiates back to him, what it presents to him. He only dreams of nature. The moment he were to approach nature as spiritual science does, he would wake up. But he does not want to.

What does all this mean to us on a practical level? It means that when a scientist such as a medical researcher draws conclusion about a human's physical body, she is only dreaming, using what Steiner calls "dream-logic," and has no inkling that there is an etheric or astral body or an "I" present in that body. One can hear doctors in operating rooms talking about the person on the table as they would of a mere thing to be cut up and sewn back together. They are sleepwalking through life like a somnambulist, and if we attempt to awaken a sleepwalker, we know that they will usually fall down right away.

[page 104] The modern physicist or physiologist feels like a somnambulist. He is dreaming and if someone shouts at him, which happens if someone talks to him about spiritual science, he falls down just like a somnambulist who is shouted at. And the impression he has is, "I am now in a void!" He cannot change immediately and has to go on dreaming. Just when he thinks he is most awake in relation to nature he is dreaming most of all.

If we dream with respect to the physical world, what are we doing with respect to the part of the human body that is the farthest from the physical body, the "I"? The opposite of dream is ecstasy, Steiner tells us, and his explanation is most cogent. Without an "I" of individuality by which one is able to exert one's will, there are no bad deeds. Like pretty flowers and ugly flowers are created by nature, so good people and bad people are created by nature. To live in such an age as we do means that we cannot closely examine our will impulses for the simple reason that we are told by well-meaning public figures that we have none, it is merely our "nature" to be the way we are. (paraphrased from page 109) It is not often that Steiner offers proof for a position but on this one he does.

[page 109, 110] We can actually prove this all over again in the present time. Just try with an open mind to really listen to the way religious impulses are spoken of nowadays. People feel most comfortable if they are told nothing about why they should accept one or the other impulse, but are spoken to in such a way that they become enthusiastic, fired up, they are given ideas they cannot fully grasp and that surround them with mystery. And the most highly acclaimed speakers are the ones who fill people's souls with fire, fire, and yet more fire, and who pay least attention to whether everybody has conscious hold of himself.

In the movie of the last decade called *American Beauty* a real estate agent is portrayed driving in her car repeating aloud the words, "I am a success! I will make a sale today! I will sell this house!" One cannot say that this woman had "conscious control of herself" if she was merely repeating the words from her latest motivational sales seminar. This caricature is repeated thousands of times over every day in the United States where people pay good money to attend sales seminars where highly touted speakers fire them up to go out and do great things with their lives, great things as defined by the speaker, up until now. The other place where people are operating in drunken ecstasy is those with religious fervor so strong that they want everyone they contact to take a stiff drink of their brew. One talks spiritual science to these at their own peril as they do not wish to be awakened from their drunken ecstasy to a spiritual hangover. If they read my reviews, they want to teach me to read *their* Bible in exactly the way *they* do.

[page 111-112] But if you approach someone who does not want to awaken his soul to the ideals of spiritual science, yet you bring them to him and want him to accept them, that is to say, if you bring spiritual science to someone who is completely under the sway of modern theology, he will sober up, in a strange way, like people who have been drunk and have not quite recovered from the organic aftereffects. He gets a hangover. You can really notice it.

Steiner tells us that the topics of this book, "freedom and necessity are among the most important human concepts." One can easily see from the number of ideas he assembled in this book that is necessary to assemble a large number of ideas to come to a correct understanding of these topics. One further idea to be covered has to do with acquiring a conception of one's "I".

[page 120] You know that in Latin, which was the language of the fourth epoch, the word *ego* was only used as an exception. People then did not speak of the *I*, it was still contained in the verb. The more world evolution, and language too, approached the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, the more the *I* became separated. The Christ impulse is to help us find this *I* in the right way.

He points out that in German the word for I is "ICH" which stands for Jesus Christ, where the J in German is pronounced like an I as in "Ja" which sounds like "Ia". He says on page 120, "The *I* expresses the connection the human being has to Christ." From now on we do best to nurture a stronger and stronger memory of our past lives if we are to take hold of our *I* and bring it to life. The world will divide itself into finders and seekers and those who find their innermost soul or *I* will be led to their previous lives. The others will continue to seek for something without ever finding it.

[page 121] When we speak of these things, we are speaking of something real, absolutely real. You have to have properly taken hold of the *I* through spiritual science if you are to remember it in later earth lives. Is there anything that you can remember without making a mental picture of it? Need we wonder that people cannot yet remember the *I* when they did not have a mental picture of it in earlier epochs? Everything is understandable with true logic. But dream-logic of the so-called monism [materialistic science] of our time is obviously always going to oppose what has to come into being through the true logic of spiritual science.

footnotes

1. This goal of science, to rule out extraneous influences, has been challenged in the last quarter of the twentieth century by the field of quantum physics. In the thought experiment known as Schrödinger's Cat, the effect of the observer cannot be ruled out. My thought is that materialistic science is beginning to confront seepages of forces from the spiritual world, forces it has assiduously attempted to rule out of its data and observations from its beginning in the fifteenth century.

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