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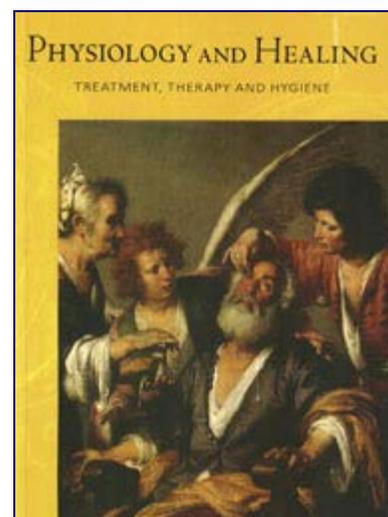
A READER'S JOURNAL

Physiology and Healing, GA#314 Treatment, Therapy and Hygiene 13 Lectures, Q&A, 1920-24

by
Rudolf Steiner

ARJ2 Chapter: Spiritual Science
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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2014



This volume contains an excellent summary of Medical Courses in English Translation by both Rudolf Steiner Press in the UK and SteinerBooks in the US. I have added GA#107 to its list and appended it to the bottom of my Medical Course reviews (including this one) and to ones I am planning to review. For convenience of reading in the order in which Steiner gave these lectures, I will here list the GA#s in chronological sequence with the approximate dates of the lectures: #107 (1908), #312 (March, 1920), #313 (April, 1921), #314 (1920-24), #315 (April, 1921), #316 (April, 1924), #317 (June, 1924) and #318 (Sept. 1924). There will be an overlap due to some books covering multiple years.

As most of these lectures were given during the last five years of his life, one will benefit most by reading them only after obtaining a good grounding in Rudolf Steiner's basic works. I have learned, however, that one can indeed receive some benefit from reading any Steiner lectures, whatever one's level of exposure to his works. One can later revisit a book that one had read earlier to expand one's own understanding of it in significant ways.

As a student of Rudolf Steiner's works more than a student of medicine, I have found myself keeping a medical dictionary at my side while reading his medical lectures because of the frequent appearance of terms unfamiliar to me, up until now. Some examples from my reading yesterday in GA#313, [Illness and Therapy](#): dropsy, pyretic, decoction, and infusion. Join me now in my adventure in finding "the courage to heal" in the lectures in these books. The Introduction by Andrew Maendl, MD, and Matthew Barton says it well:

[page xxi] The range of Steiner's observations in these lectures is staggering. It is as if we are asked to look up from the small focus of the microscope and the narrow field of view of a particular medical specialism and encompass in inner vision a far broader panorama of human nature, though without for a moment relinquishing attention to the tiniest detail. This stand is, indeed, part of what Steiner calls the 'courage to heal': the capacity to observe the whole cosmos of the human being, all the varied and interacting laws at work in us, in order then to intervene with detailed understanding, with loving compassion and respect for each human biography. A daunting challenge, but surely the true task of medicine.

Doctors generally study the sciences of biology and physiology, then focus on pathology, and only then on

therapy. They tend to focus on knowledge rather than treatment, on pathology rather than how to restore the normal processes of health to an ailing individual. Doctors can become like engineers who, when they walk into a new building only see what's wrong with the building; doctors, too, tend to focus on what's wrong, and, like engineers, try to fix the problem where it appears. But the human being is not like a fixed building, but is instead a unified organism, with all parts connected at some level to other parts. This results, e.g., in a problem appearing in the digestion which may have its origin in the head. Steiner calls this restricted view fostered by modern medicine's skewed focus on knowledge over treatment, "therapeutic nihilism." (Page 5) Studying Steiner's lectures on medicine can help greatly doctors to understand the diverse interconnections between the various dynamic organs of the body, interconnections which can help doctors to apply therapeutic corrections to their patients not otherwise possible in this age of therapeutic nihilism.

[page 5] For in the study of diseases, albeit from the point of view of a natural science based on materialistic thinking, an extraordinary degree of perfection has been achieved in this age of therapeutic nihilism. At this point I'd also warn you against the potential misconception that in Dornach and in spiritual science with anthroposophical orientation we fail to recognize and tend to underestimate the full significance of modern science. That is not at all the case. Someone who has taken even just a brief look at the methods of investigation in pathology in the second half of the nineteenth century and how they have developed can only do so in amazement and admiration for the brilliant, tremendous progress made. Yet beyond this he must also make a very different admission. He has to say to himself: Yes, materialism has arrived. But it cannot meet certain needs in the human heart and mind; nor can it cast an adequate light on vast areas of human insight.

Steiner urges us to respect the findings of materialistic science and medicine, but to add to it the findings of spiritual-science to obtain a view and understanding of the full human being, something which materialistic science unknowingly and erroneously pretends is its exclusive domain.

Doctors are constantly making hypotheses about relationships which they cannot confirm, but which seem to be connected. [Shingles](#) and its relationship to the chicken pox virus is one of those hypotheses. When someone has shingles at age 51, for example, doctors claim it is due to a chicken pox virus that has remained dormant in them since childhood. What if shingles is due to the healing states of chicken pox in childhood being exhibited by an adult, in the absence of the chicken pox virus? Most things we call diseases are actually the healing state of some bug or toxin that got into us. We can't see the agent which causes the disease, so we give a name to its effects upon us, and call its effects *the disease*. Our research in doyletics has shown us conclusively that these healing effects can be triggered later in life if they were first encountered before the age of five. If you had the flu at age 2 while visiting a place with rotten-egg-tasting water and then later you return to a place with such water at age 47, you may find yourself getting flu symptoms every night in the absence of any flu bug! A simple trace can convert the flu symptoms (bodily-formed healing states) into declarative memory and the flu symptoms will not return. The science of doyletics is based on hypotheses formed from after twenty-five years of tracing away such unwanted bodily states; it provides a theory which explains the phenomenon and a means of removing such unwanted bodily states, the Speed Trace, which works in a few minutes. Steiner gives an example of the misleading usage of hypotheses.

[page 6] What is a hypothesis? Well, let us take a perfectly ordinary thing from everyday life. When I have walked along a road and seen someone along this road and walked on and then did not see him any more I am unlikely to assume at first that this person has disappeared into the ground, something most unlikely to happen. No, I'll look around and perhaps see a house. I can limit my ideas and say to myself: Well, he's gone into that house. I don't see him now, but he's in there.

If later the man appears, we can say, "He has come out of that house," even if we did not see him emerge

from the house. This is an unwarranted hypothesis, similar to the one doctors make when they claim that the chicken pox virus hides in our body and emerges later in life as shingles. This is not based on direct phenomenon, but upon a hypothesis, which may or may not be justified, especially if a different hypothesis explains the same events, but has observable healing effects that accompany the testing of the hypothesis. The doyletics hypothesis of shingles as recapitulated healing states can be tested by a simple Speed Trace which will prevent recurrence of its often painful shingle lesions. Unfortunately medical doctors accept their virus hypothesis as the cause of shingles because they have not learned to perceive shingles as the healing states of an early case of chicken pox which are stored in bodily memory (doyles) which can be triggered later. The later triggering of these healing states produce effects which we call the disease of shingles. Abraham Lincoln was asked, "If you call a tail a leg, does a dog have five legs?" Abe answered wisely, "Calling a tail a leg does *not* make it a leg." Calling the appearance of shingles "due to a hidden chicken pox virus" does *not* make it so, but merely advertizes one's ignorance of the true etiology of shingles.

Another hypothesis by doctors is that one cannot have "red measles" a second time. This one may not be true, if we accept that having the healing states of red measles is equivalent to having red measles. This second case of red measles actually happened to me at age 35 when I was diagnosed by two internists as having red measles. I explained to them that my mother said that I had red measles as a child and she raised four boys and should have known what red measles were. The timing of my "red measles" episode required me to stay home for a week and discover things going on in my marriage. It was very fortuitous and turned my life to a better direction. Once again, the evidence of a healing state which can be stored and re-triggered later is a directly observable phenomenon, whereas the hypotheses of both shingles and red measles are logical constructs which only explain the simplest cases and obstructs us from seeing them as healing states, up until now.

The next topic is the balancing of catabolic and anabolic processes in the human organism. I first encountered the essence of these processes of annihilation and proliferation in G. Spencer Brown's [Laws of Form](#), albeit in a completely abstract logical sense. His first two Laws of Form are anabolic (replication) and catabolic (killing). Steiner leads us to see our catabolic nervous system which can only be balanced by our anabolic rhythmic system.

[page 30] You cannot encompass the human organism with the static, abstract ideas people want to have in modern physiology and pathology. We have to grasp it in ideas that move, ideas that truly enter into the action of something that is inwardly mobile and certainly not mere mechanical interactions among organs that are at rest. We thus begin to see that essentially there is constant interaction in the human organism between catabolic processes, killing processes, and the anabolic processes of growth, processes of proliferation, and so on. We cannot comprehend the human organism unless we proceed in this way.

Steiner brings into sharp focus here how the nervous system, the head system of the human being acts destructively in our body. We come to see the destructive head system acts to poison our metabolism and limbs, and our rhythmic system provides anabolic constructive forces to counteract the destructive head system. We are like "mugwumps" with our mug on one side of the fence balanced by our "wump" on the other side of the fence, each fighting the other and maintaining a healthy balance in the process.

[page 30, 31] We are not looking into a natural process of the kind one would generally like to have, a process going in a particular direction — easily understood direction, I'd like to say — so that we may simply refer to the healthy processes as normal. No, we are looking into two processes acting in opposite directions, with the one definitely harmful to the other, and we actually cannot live in our physical organism without our system of limbs and metabolism continually exposed to the causes of sickness from the head system, and the head system to the causes of sickness from the metabolic system. Just as scales that are not balanced go to one side, wholly according to natural laws, with the

beam not in the horizontal, the state of balance that exists in life is unstable, not static, and may go in the one direction or the other, leading to irregularity.

We can maintain a balance in ease, or suffer an imbalance in dis-ease. When we find disease, our aim should be to restore the balance, bring both sides into equilibrium, and definitely should not be to move unilaterally in the opposite of the currently skewed direction. Anyone who has measured using balance scales knows one does best to make a change which only slight overshoots in the other direction and a smaller change to move back until a balance is achieved. The process is like mortar sighting, in which one always overshoots on the first lob and then undershoots until the target is reached, a process called bracketing. In software search algorithms, the binary search technique, based on bracketing, has been proven to be the most efficient process for locating an unknown target. Finding a cure for a disease is like moving in on an unknown target of balance between the opposing systems.

[page 31] To cure is simply that when the actions of a head system are too toxic for the metabolic system you relieve the head of its toxic action, taking it away. Or conversely, if the actions of the system of limbs and metabolism are too toxic for the head system, causing proliferation, the former must be relieved of its toxic action.

The human being has forces in it which operate in opposite direction to those in plants. In plants the catabolic forces act in an upward direction from root to flower, and anabolic forces act downward towards the plant's roots. In humans, the directions are reversed and the catabolic forces act downward while the anabolic forces act upward. If one knows that gout is caused by the formation of uric salts in the limbs, one can understand that gout occurs when the head's catabolic forces are overcoming the limbs' anabolic forces, forcing salts to form in the limbs which would otherwise flow as uric acid towards the head. A cure can be achieved by decreasing the head forces and thus restoring the natural balance of catabolic and anabolic forces.

[page 32] We then return to the human being and consider the catabolic process which acts from above downwards. We see that basically, let us say, human beings have the kind of forces in them which in plants act from below upwards. Looking at the forces that act down from the head system towards the system of limbs and metabolism, we are, as it were, seeing the forces acting downwards which in plant development were being sent up from below. If someone blocks this plant development active in him, doing so in the wrong way, so that the process is not coming from the sphere of head activity — the astral, I nature — to penetrate bodily nature in the right way, and the penetration comes to expression within the living body, we have something which is blocked, though it should take its course in the human organism. This is a pathological phenomenon which we see, for instance, when rheumatic disease or gout develops.

In the text Steiner explains how birch leaves have the necessary protein-forming (albuminization) anabolic forces which can effect a cure of rheumatic disease and gout. (Page 32, 33)

[page 33] Looking from the inner organism, let us say, to a process in plant development like the one we found in silver birch, we learn the following. On the one hand we are considering what happens when salts form, and on the other when protein forms. If we understand the process of protein synthesis properly we find in there a process which is the opposite to the situation where something is blocked. The process is held up in the organism which should run in a way similar to the process which runs properly as albuminization in birch leaves. We thus see a connection between the processes found in birch leaves, for instance, and the processes in the organism. If we use the principle found in birch leaves to produce medicines which we give to people these will be therapeutic because they are correctly counteracting this blocking process which leads to rheumatic disease and gout.

The use of aromatherapy is becoming popular in the first decades of the new millennium, but its usage to prevent diabetes was prescribed by Rudolf Steiner back in the 1920s. Here is how he describes the etiology of diabetes.

[page 44] Take a condition, for instance, that may also prove to be a major headache for physicians — diabetes. We must again consider the relationship between mind and soul — the conscious mind and soul imbued with I on the one hand, and the physical vehicle for this I activity on the other. . . Let us assume this I activity gets excessive in the human organism. It goes beyond its boundaries. Abnormal eliminatory processes like those seen in diabetics may then occur.

Once a doctor has understood the origin of diabetes in this fashion, he can now find plant essences which are able to act in a fashion so as to reverse the tendency of the human body towards diabetes.

[page 45] When we are able to observe what is really going on in the plant as it grows in the direction which is the opposite in human beings, developing the I from above downwards, we find that something arises in the plant which can indeed have an inner connection to this inner I activity because it also has something to do with combustibility. I spoke of combustible substances before. Now we see combustible, volatile substance close to combustibility develop in the volatile or essential oils of the plant. When we see volatile oils develop in certain plants the kind of view to which I have just been referring shows that this is an activity opposite to the one performed by I activity pressed into the human organism which leads to diabetes. We can then combat diabetes by treating the individual concerned in the right way with something which is the opposite in the world outside.

In other words, he is prescribing what is now called aromatherapy. Back twenty or so years ago, I began using a homemade soap by a chemist, Lee Don Bienski, who created essential oils from plants he grew biodynamically. I tested two kinds of soap and found that I preferred his Purple & Gold Alchemy soap. It is indeed *aromatherapy* in a bar of soap. The aroma from the soap fills my nostrils and my shower stall in the morning. I use it both as a shampoo for my hair as well as a cleanser for my face and neck and it works marvelously. Knowing now that it is a preventative for diabetes is an extra bonus.

There are few men who mature without feeling at some point that women act like aliens, like they are from outer space. Steiner explains what's at the root of this familiar male feeling. Men are more connected to Earth, while women are more connected with extra-terrestrial forces, particularly when it comes to procreation.

[page 46] Human beings have been created to be different. We find, for instance, that the female organism is made to be such, let us say, out of nature or the cosmos, that the forces are more to the fore which are less bound up with the forces of earth, as it were. The female organism has a powerful extraterrestrial element to it. The forces which predominate in the male organism are more connected with life on earth. This does not mean so much in everyday life, but it does play a role in procreation. The forces active in the female organism that play a role in procreation are really and truly a transmission of the extraterrestrial aspect in the whole of essential human nature. The principle which brings human beings down into the earthly world is mainly organized in the male organism. Let us consider the aspect of human beings which really is in them because of their earthly environment. The most obvious part of it is I activity. I activity actually gives human evolution on earth its full meaning. We have to find our way from other worlds into the earthly world so that we may fully develop I activity in mind and soul. I have shown you how this I activity is bound to the scaffolding of powers mediated by the blood. We would therefore have to say that the principle which is predominantly organized into the blood, acting predominantly towards I activity, is in procreation

brought about by the male individual. The element which mainly organizes the extraterrestrial in us and must first be imbued with I activity comes more from the female side.

To many people some of the findings of spiritual science are hard to believe in, but *believing* is exactly the wrong approach to take. Instead we are asked to accept them without rejecting them, and test them against our individual world. When I did this, I soon found that they stood up to this test against all the aspects of the world quite well, all the while expanding my view of the realities of the world. I found that no amount of belief was necessary because **I** was able to confirm the realities described in my own life. Granted there is a bootstrap process one must go through before one can begin to understand the realities well enough to confirm them — this boot-up process may require some measure of belief, but the confirmation will come soon enough, and the results will justify the work required to arrive there.

[page 48] The point is that we can accept the spiritual-scientific results, I'd say, without being dogmatic about it or belief in authority, and on the other hand also without predetermined scepticism, full of prejudice. We simply take them in. We do not immediately say: I believe them, but we also do not reject them out of hand. We take them and test them against the reality of the world we live.

The three basic tools of spiritual sight are Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition. Steiner always capitalizes these three processes to distinguish them from the common nouns. The first, Imagination, refers to pictorial insight (something we see in our mind), the second, Inspiration, to inspired insight (something we feel in our heart), and the third, Intuition, to a deep intuitive insight (something we feel in our bones). Steiner summarizes these in this next passage:

[page 67, 68] All the functions to be found in human beings really consist in these three: the neurosensory process, the rhythmic processes — breathing and the circulation of the blood — and the metabolic processes. The human being thus is really insight brought to realization and made physical, i.e., what we see initially when looking at it from outside or investigating by dissection. Limiting ourselves to the human head we come to realize what is really going on in the head if we know that there is such a thing insight based on images. Looking at the rhythmic human being — what is really going on there becomes evident if we know that there is inspired insight. Looking at the metabolic processes — we realize what is going on there if we know what an intuitive insight is. The reality principles in the human being thus lie one in the other. Look at the organs, for instance, that are wholly organs of the will and only intuitive insight will make it possible to understand them.

The kidney and the liver can both be seen as excretory processes, but Steiner points out an important difference between the two kinds of organs. The kidneys communicate with our outside world and the liver communicates with our inside world.

[page 70] The kidneys are organs of elimination. The question is, however: If in the sensory experience of empiricism they are initially organs of elimination, do they not also have significance for the human constitution? Is there not something other than this eliminatory function, something which makes the kidneys more important in building up the human being? If we trace the functions further and move, say, from the kidney to the liver, we have the following interesting phenomenon. The kidney ultimately discharges matter to the outside; the liver secretes to the inside. The question arises as to what it means for the relationship of the liver process to the kidney process that the kidney relatively discharges its secreted products to the outside and the liver to the inside. The human being is thus communicating with the outside world in the one case and with itself in the other.

What is the etheric body of a human being? Basically it fills the fluid that comprises over 80% of our bodily mass and *enlivens* it. The fluid itself is full of life and is rightly called the *life body*. One can follow the rules of materialistic evidence with the mass enveloped in fluids but not with the living fluids and the living cells immersed in them.

[page 75] This is the same as saying: The human being has an ether body! We therefore have to see everything solid as embedded in fluid. This immediately gives us the contrast. Everything known by way of laws and ideas in the inorganic world is also applied to the solid parts of the human being, and not only the cells as the smallest organisms found in the human being are believed to have life but the totality of fluid elements in the human being is considered to be full of life.

We have now gone from solid body to etheric body, from earth to water, and we can expect the next body will be an air or gaseous body, our *astral body*.

[page 75] What is more, when we then come to the gaseous element in the human being we find that everything of that nature is in a continuous exchange process. We will have to make it clear during these days that the exchange is not merely inorganic, nor is it mediated merely by the solid organs. The human organism has its own laws to govern the swirl of one into the other in the internal exchange of gases. We have inner laws relating to the solid element, reflected in the relationship between kidneys and heart, and we also have to accept a set of laws within this organism of gases or air, if I may call it that, which is not limited to the laws of solid physical organs. The laws which directly govern the organism of gases or air are in anthroposophy called the astral laws for the human being, the *astral organization*. They would not exist in human beings if these had not brought the aeriform organization into their solid and fluid organization.

Having progressed through earth, water, and air, we should expect to come to deal with the fourth basic element of existence, fire, and sure enough, fire appears as the substance called warmth in which the fourth principle of the full human being exists, our I, I am, or Ego. One can easily confirm the connection of one's I and warmth: if one's Ego is activated by some event, one becomes flushed with warmth, if one encounters a sudden fright, one grows pale and feels cold instantly. This also reveals the deep connection our I has with the blood: when we flush, blood rushes to our face, when we pale in fright, it rushes away from our face. The I is the controller of the temperature of every portion of our body.

[page 76] It only intervenes directly in the differentiations between temperatures in the human organism, so that we may speak of a warmth organism, a human being of warmth. The I organization influences this human being directly; being supersensible it effects the differentiations in temperature and above all also perceives them, lives in them. There the I organization lives directly; it does so indirectly in the rest of the organism in that the warmth influences all gaseous, fluid and solid organization.

Human beings are not animals because we have an I and because we convert inorganic matter into living organic matter before we have finished digesting it. Materialists, who love to claim that humans are simply a higher primate, have little knowledge of what makes up the *uniqueness* of the human being.

[page 78] If you study the anatomy and physiology of animals you will find that animals do not remove the constitution of material that passes into their body to the same degree. It is another matter with their products of elimination. The matter which passes into the body is more similar to its outer organization in animals than it is in humans, that is, more similar to the vegetable and animal nature, continuing on into the bloodstream according to its external constitution in its inner laws. In human beings the organization has advanced so far that human beings have made the chyme(1) as inorganic as possible when it is allowed to pass the intestinal wall. There the purely physical human being is

really present in the region where the chyme passes from the intestine into the organization of heart and lung, if I may put it like that.

This difference in human physiology is what allows us to convert external substances into living matter before we are finished our digestion process.

[page 79] As human beings — it is not at the same level in animals, where it is less clear-cut — we thus have a process of vitalization, catching the inorganic and taking it into the organic, into the vital sphere in a process taking place in the system of heart and lungs.

Human beings are not animals, but exist an evolutionary step above animals. We are also not angels, existing an evolutionary step below angels, but because we breathe and convert oxygen, we are able to walk upon the Earth. Note: anyone who portrays angels in an artwork as having feet does not understand this reality of angels, how different they are from human beings in that they have never walked upon the Earth (which is why angels are often visualized with wings, which they also have no need for). In the following paragraph, Steiner summarizes how the elements Carbon, Oxygen, Nitrogen, and Hydrogen are connected to our physical, etheric, astral, and I organizations.

[page 84] You'll see that, in the same way as the physical organization is connected with carbon, the etheric organization with oxygen, the astral organization with nitrogen, and I organization with hydrogen.

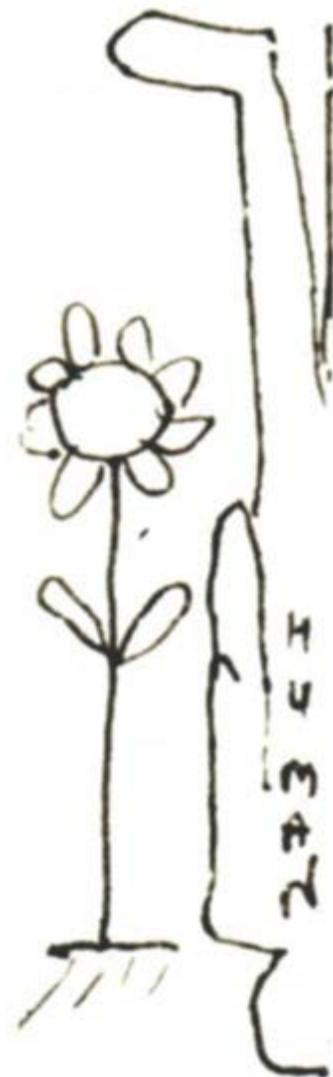
On page 85 Steiner points out that we must consider the plant growing this year to be taking its forces that the Sun had given to the soil during the previous summer. We are always planting in last year's soil! With the leaves, they grow from a mixture of last year's soil and this year's soil. The petals of the flowers, however, are truly from this year.

[page 105] The vitality is sucked out of last year's summer warmth stored in the soil, out of last year's power of sunlight. The greatest vitality is in the root element. We have a gradual devitalization process from below upwards, and when we come to the petals, especially petals containing much volatile oil, we also have the power devitalization process in those plants.

If you would like a quick summary of how different parts of the plant affect our bodies, consider the diagram at right of the upside human and note where the flowers, leaves, and roots are located next to the human. Flower and leaf teas will aid digestion, root vegetables will aid head processes such as thinking.

[page 86, 87] Everything connected with the digestive tract is greatly influenced by what we get when we make a tea of petals. A decoction of root and seed influences the activity which follows — into the vascular system and as far as the nervous system.

When we eat something we poison ourselves, that is, we ingest a food substance which would kill us immediately if it were introduced directly into our bloodstream, but with careful processing by our organs and digestive system, its poisonous qualities are removed as it is turned into enlivened nutrients ready for our bloodstream.



[page 106] Looking in an unbiased way at human nutrition we cannot but say to ourselves: With every food we are actually introducing something into the human organism which needs to be thoroughly reversed. Essentially, taking nourishment is always a first step towards poisoning ourselves. When we speak of actual poisoning we have to be clear in our minds that this is merely a metamorphosis — greatly tending to be radical — of something which happens a little bit when we are altogether taking food into the ptyalin, let us say. And the further stages of digestion, especially in the renal function of which I spoke, absolutely are always a process of detoxification.

Pardon me if I say that we think, not with *gravity*, but with *levity*. This is no joking matter. I say this because our 1500 gram brain is levitated or floated in the cranial fluid so that it exerts only about 20 grams of weight; this floating allows the jelly-like substance of our brain to retain its shape instead of collapsing into mush by its own weight.

[page 107] With our I and our thoughts we are not living in gravity but indeed in buoyancy.

The deeper into Steiner's medical courses I go, the more I am beginning to understand what it means for one of four organizations, the physical, the etheric, the astral, or the I, to get out of whack, how to recognize when that happens, and often how to correct the situation to restore a balance. Here's an example of how hemorrhoids and heavy menstrual flows result from a weak renal (kidney) function resulting from an under-performing astral body.

[page 115] The matter [RJM: circulating food] drops down, as it were. Hemorrhoids and heavy periods develop. There is no contact, and the metabolism deteriorates in itself. When this situation exists in the organism, a kind of occult febrile condition may very easily develop, and even intermittent fevers. . . . to deal with such a syndrome . . . we can actually regulate it in very many cases by regulating the iron level in the organism. The iron level regulates the circulation in that it now actually provokes powerful inner renal activity.

Steiner exhorts the doctors in the audience of these lectures to strive to stimulate the patient into self-healing rather than doing all the healing. He blatantly advises that the human organism does *not want to be fully healed*.

[page 119] This is enormously important. In sickness, the human organism really wants to be stimulated to heal itself. To make the cure a lasting one we really have to limit ourselves to providing the necessary stimulus. A cure that seems to proceed smoothly will more easily lead to relapses than a disease that is stimulated to heal, [RJM: that is, the] organism has initially got used to the healing process and continues with it by its own activity.

One of the key therapies innovated by Rudolf Steiner is a form of dance with wordless speech called *Eurythmy*. The below definition he gives for eurythmy is near-perfect and reveals how a therapeutic effect can be achieved in a general fashion.

[page 123] In eurythmy, we exclude the principle of ideation as such as far as possible and let the will principle take effect. With this, ordinary speech sound metamorphoses into movements of the whole human organism. We thus enhance the one component, which is the will principle or the metabolic principle, weaken the ideation principle or neurosensory principle, and eurythmy will be the result. This truly enables us to create human movement correlates for individual sounds, be they vowels or consonants.

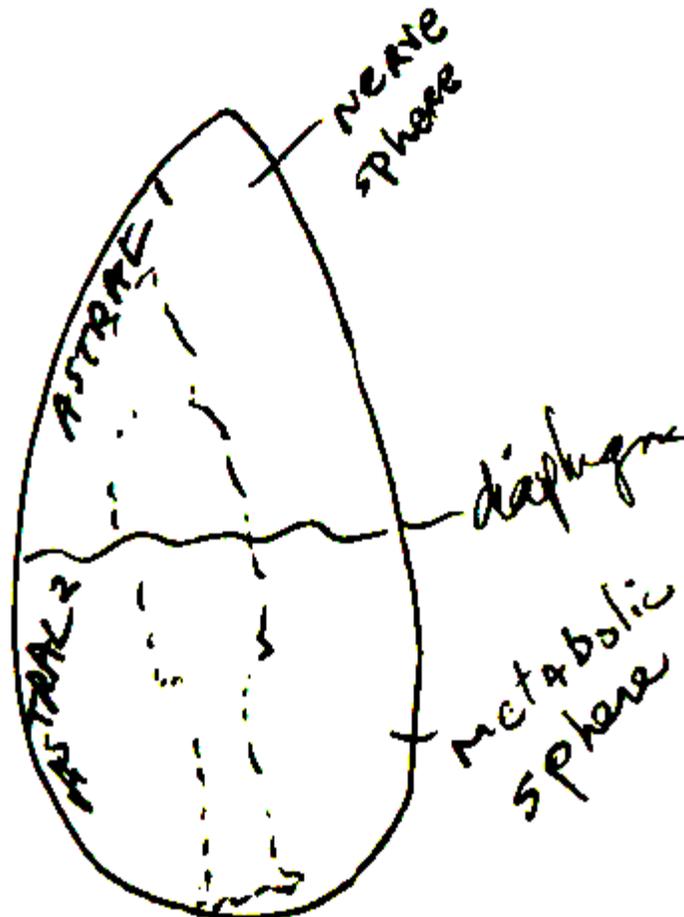
Since eurythmy is also a performance art, Steiner felt the need to point out that it will have energizing

effects on the audience, something any worthwhile performance ought to have.

[page 124] With ordinary eurythmy as an art form there is no other physiological consequence but that ordinarily the eurythmy will energetically harmonize the human functions, doing so in so far as they are a complete whole in the human organism.

In the diagram, I am attempting to illustrate the key aspect of the astral body as it is divided by the diaphragm into an upper or *nerve sphere* and a lower or *metabolic sphere*. (See page 125) This is important when giving preparations to a patient.

[page 151] If you give preparations made from the volatile oil obtained from a flower, for instance, you do not take them from the lower part of the astral organism into the upper. They can only be used to evoke some processes or other in the lower part, in the actual metabolic tract. The moment you use anything obtained from the root of a plant, this pushes through from the lower to upper tract of the astral body, and you have it in there because it acts back again from the head onto the organism. You have it in the whole of the organism.



How does a doctor become a materialist? We suspect this is ingrained in them through their studies which focus primarily upon material substances and materials processes. Rarely do students of medicine study live humans until they are almost completed their medical career and are working as interns. It must come as a bit of jolt for an intern to go from dissecting corpses in anatomy class to cutting into a live human being for the first time. Recall that Steiner is giving the material in this book to practicing doctors.

[page 185] What makes you into a materialist is that the spirit is not with you when you study material processes, that you look into the world of matter and see nothing but matter and material processes.

This is what the science of the spirit must show — I can only speak of this in summary form today — that wherever material processes become evident to the senses (the only processes which are accepted as observable and exact in modern science), they are always mere external signs, the external revelation of spiritual forces and powers at work behind them and within them.

Steiner urges the doctors present to understand that in material medicine, they are taught to deal with pieces of a human body, but in anthroposophical medicine, they are taught to deal with the whole living

breathing human being, and to deal with it in loving dignity.

Although Steiner, to my knowledge, has never innovated a school of posture, one can guess from this short passage, that he could have developed such a school, and may have done so in the Waldorf School system he helped to get started. Look at children in grade schools today and ask yourself if the following practices prevail. Where, for example, on any of the highly touted testing procedures, do they test for proper breathing and speaking loudly and clearly?

[page 193] Unless you have truly comprehensive insight into the human being you cannot really judge what it means when children sit in class, their back bent, so that their breathing is always impeded, or when they are not taught to speak loudly and clearly, enunciating vowels and consonants clearly. All their later life essentially depends on whether they breathe properly in school and are taught to speak loudly and clearly, articulating well.

People, who are afraid of Waldorf Schools because their children will be taught airy-fairy mysticism, are wrong. Children are taught only normal school subjects, but in a way that they will learn to become strong healthy human beings. Steiner talks of his early lectures in Stuttgart on Waldorf School education.

[page 194] Everything said there as art of education and didactics was said with the aim of making the children into people who have been taught as children to perform the functions of life in the right way and would therefore have sound lungs and livers and hearts and stomachs, because their minds and souls would have worked on them in the right way.

Speaking of testing procedures in schools today, especially the egregious governmental standards meant to apply to all students, those who support such standards would do well to consider what Steiner said on the matter of standards some ninety years ago:

[page 198] Anything an individual can do for the benefit of others must come wholly from his own abilities, there can be no governmental standards, nor dependence on economic powers; it must be within the personal dependency sphere of the individual and also within the trust and understanding which others who depend on his skills have for that capable individual. We need a cultural life independent of all authorities, government, and economic life, a cultural life with its own expertise gained solely from the powers of the mind.

If you came to this review to learn about physiology and healing, I expect you might be disappointed with the sparse information provided on those two subjects. But if you came with a knowledge of physiology and healing based solely on materialistic medicine, you have perhaps been left with a lot of unanswered questions to ponder and topics to investigate further. If you leave with a respect for anthroposophical medicine and an earnest desire to learn more, then you have indeed blessed yourself and this striving writer.

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

Footnote 1. From Wikipedia: Chyme is the semifluid mass of partly digested food expelled by the stomach into the duodenum, the first section of the small intestine.

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

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