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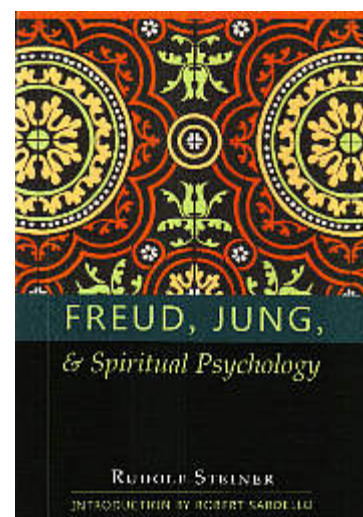
Rudolf Steiner

Five Lectures from 1912 to 1921

Introduction by Robert Sardello

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2013



Many of the modern publications of Steiner's lectures in book form have small introductions that add thoughtful insight to the content of book. This is the first one that I've read where the introduction is long and detracts from the lectures by Steiner that appear in the book. The author of the introduction, Robert Sardello, purports to speak definitively about Carl Jung's works in depth psychology, but his writing reveals him to be an epigone with an axe to grind. He claims on page 11, "The psychology of Jung, therefore, does not open perception to spiritual reality; it stops short." But the record shows that Carl Jung himself did *not* stop short. In a filmed interview in the last years of his life, he said when asked if he believed in God, "I do not *believe*, I *know*!"

Jung may have stopped short in his writings on psychology, but he didn't stop short in his life. In a recent article, a friend of Jung's revealed that Jung had told him that he had come to understand that his archetypes are spiritual beings, but thought it best not to reveal it publicly. If the "legacy of Jung has led to a psychology of abstractions" as Sardello claims, perhaps it was Jung's way of pulling otherwise materialistic psychotherapists into viewing the non-material or spiritual world for the first time — quite a legacy for one man. By not distinguishing the legacy of Jungians from the legacy of Jung, Sardello blames Jung for the excesses of his well-meaning followers. Carl Jung once said, "I would not be a Jungian." Jung was able to distinguish the dance students from the dance.

Sardello quotes Steiner on page 13 as saying that "Wagner allowed Nietzsche to become mentally deranged to protect him from entering consciously into dangerous regions of spirit." Then Sardello asks what might have happened if Nietzsche had the benefit of psychotherapy. This insanity would certainly fall into the category of a circumstance that Nietzsche did not wish to happen, so Wagner played the role of the agent that helped bring about that circumstance. Yet Sardello asks, "Is it not hubris when the analyst determines that what the patient is given to confront in life is the wrong thing for that person to confront?" Was not Wagner acting as an analyst when he made just such a decision for Nietzsche?

In the next passage I found a statement of Sardello's I could agree with:

[page 13] In truth, the psychotherapist has not the faintest notion of what he is dealing with nor of how very simplistic even the most complex of psychological theories really are because of the failure to recognize the reality of the spiritual worlds.

This is an indictment with which I heartily concur, an indictment not of Jung, but of many Jungians, even Jung's closest associates such as C. A. Meier, as I point out in my ARJ review of Meier's book, [The Unconscious in Its Empirical Manifestations](#). In his book, Meier quotes Wieland saying, "He that has dared to break new ground / a nest of scholarly wasps has found." If Sardello is a "scholarly wasp," in the

page 13 passage above, his sting is well-placed.

After the very long introduction, lasting until page 29, Steiner's actual lectures finally begin.

[page 58] First of all, I would like to point out that the facts available to psychoanalysts are really suited to lead them to a spiritual realm modern people do not wish to enter at least not in an accurate manner. Rather, they would prefer to leave it as a sort of nebulous, unconscious region, for our current outlook, ailing with materialism even in this domain, loves nothing more than a vague, mystical floating among all sorts of unexplained, undefined concepts.

There was a popular TV program called X-Files that seemed to me to attract exactly those "modern people" to be its viewers. Carl Jung uncovered so many of those psychological facts, that by the end of his life he understood what others called "psychology abstractions" were actually spiritual realities. Jung's life should be considered as a paradigm for how a modern person comes to the spiritual world rather than an example of a path to be avoided.

One of the critics of Steiner's works, a man named Max Dessoir, gave this revealing information about himself that Steiner shares with us. It reminds me of a time when I was reading to my wife a passage of something I had just written — it was difficult material, but she followed me just fine until some point at which she stopped me and said, "I don't understand that last sentence." I realized that during the reading of the previous sentence I had noted a minor change that would improve the passage, in other words, my soul was no longer present in my words as I read them. I apologized, backed up, read the exact same words with full attention to my understanding of them as I read them, and she had no problem following them. I realized that she was informing herself with my soul's understanding, a direct understanding-transfer from me, and that the words I read were only a *glide path* that took me through my understanding.

Suddenly I had a new way of understanding what teachers do when preparing a lesson plan the night before giving a class. They must first understand the material, then organize a glide path through their understanding to use during the class on the next day. Thus if a teacher chooses to read material to the class that the teacher does not fully understand, the class will lose interest for the simple reason that no understanding is being transferred. This is a process whose existence has not been expressly communicated so far as I know, up until now. (Note: Later I incorporated this thought in my Final Paper [Teaching and Learning in the College Classroom](#).)

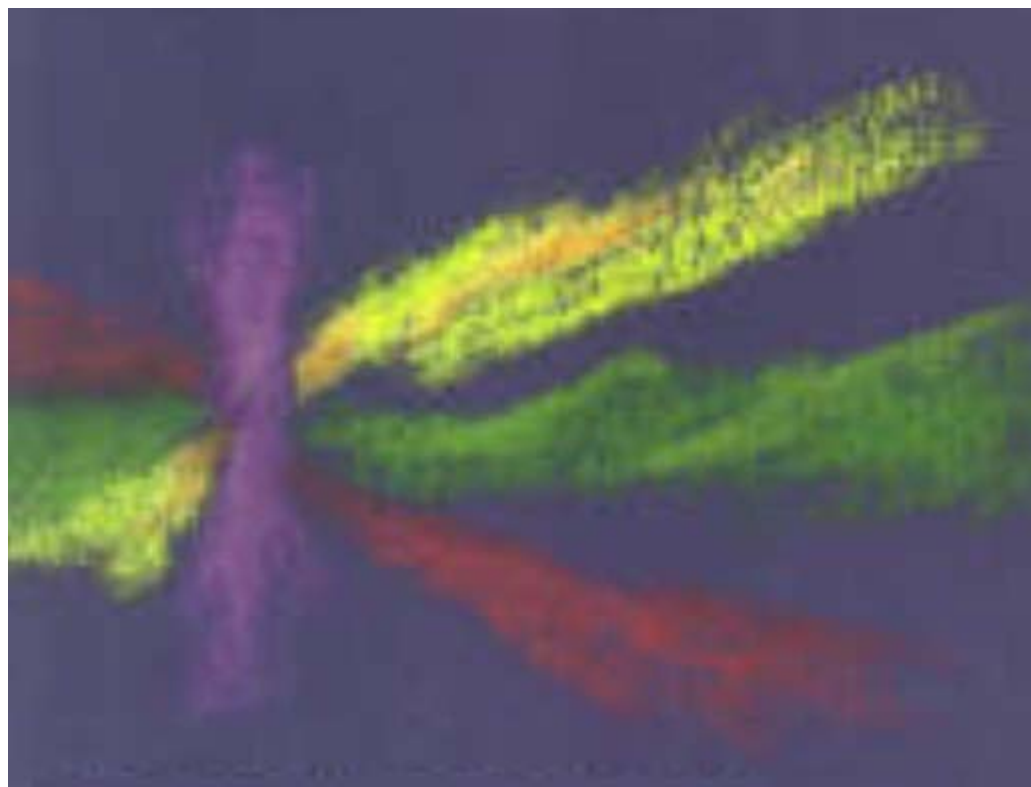
In an oblique fashion Max Dessoir describes what seems to me to be a similar process that occasionally occurred to him during his lectures :

[page 65] Grotesquely enough, [Max Dessoir] relates that when he is lecturing it sometimes happens that his thoughts go on even though his soul is no longer present with them. He thus continues to speak for a while, until he realizes from the reaction of his audience that his thoughts have gone in one direction and his attention in another.

In the 1960's there appeared a science series on television that lives on in syndication even today forty years later, *Star Trek*. I was taking a basic course in metaphysics about 1977 and began watching the series for the first time, it was in its first reruns and appeared every night at ten o'clock. As I watched intensely it became obvious to me that Scotty the engineer was the Willing function as he carried out the orders of the Captain. Mr. Spock the science officer was the Thinking function and whenever the Captain needed data, it was Mr. Spock he requested it from. Dr. McCoy, or Bones, was the Feeling function and whenever the Captain needed information involving how to deal with human beings, it was Bones he turned to for help. The trio of Scotty, Spock, and Bones would have disputes over which course to take because each of them saw the situation from different points of view. Scotty recommended a potential course of action depending on how it affected the Starship Enterprise. Bones spoke from the human equation and his recommendations considered the emotional effects on the crew. Spock read data from the ship's computer and outlined a logical course of action that was based solely on the data. This led to

Spock's being ridiculed by Bones for being an "unfeeling automaton" at times. How in the world could any reasonable course of action be plotted by any one of the trio? It required a fourth party, the Captain, in the form of James Tiberius Kirk, to formulate a plan that took all three aspects into account plus his own direct intuitions of the situation. Clearly Kirk was the I of the quartet of crew members, the Ego. Reading Steiner's words below one cannot help but hear him talking about the Star Trek crew.

[page 68] When our I is healthy, when it has perfect soul health, then the interaction of thinking, feeling, and willing is so regulated that they do not merge but only mutually influence each other. This is the essential secret of our I: it keeps thinking, feeling, and willing side by side so that they affect each other in the right way, but do not merge.



Consider these two examples. First, we walk into a room, and we are not aware of our body.

Second, we walk toward a mirror, and we see our body and observe the way we look and walk. The first example is similar to being unconscious or sleeping. The second example is like being awake.

[page 79] It is the same with the contents of our ordinary consciousness. they exist continually within us, and as such they have nothing whatsoever to do with the physical body — as little as we ourselves have to do with the mirror mentioned above.

The materialistic theory concerning this is simply nonsense; it is not even a possible hypothesis. For what the materialists claim can only be compared with people saying that because they can see themselves in the mirror, the mirror has created them.

Our unconscious contents persist even when there is no mirror of consciousness, and Steiner says that we can develop the ability to perceive these enduring contents. These exist in the hidden realms of the soul, that deep well from which poets and artists draw their inspirations.

If the trio of Spock, Bones, and Scotty were to go through an episode of Star Trek where all their interactions with Kirk were unconscious to them, they would be at a loss to explain their actions. Why, Scotty might ask, did I drive the Enterprise to Warp 10, which nearly destroyed her hull? Why, Bones, might ask, did I leave a wounded crew member on the ground and beam up to the ship? Why, Spock, might ask, did we tell the alien vessel that the Enterprise contained an element called Corbomite when that is simply untrue and illogical? But when the alien vessel released the tractor beam and set the Enterprise free, that illogical description saved the entire ship and crew from imminent destruction. To understand this, the trio might try an exercise that Steiner proposes that each of us attempt in our own lives. They

might postulate an imaginary Captain who had access to information that they didn't and who gave the orders that resulted in their successfully escaping sure destruction at the hands of the alien ship. (See Star Trek Episode, *The Corbomite Maneuver*.)

[page 87] And now we can make the following experiment: We construct in our mind an artificial human being, so to speak, who through his own abilities brought about all those of our successes we cannot explain.

If the trio were to do that they would create for their imaginary being an excellent replica of Captain Kirk, because it is clear that it was the Captain who did make the decisions that neither of the trio would have done using each of their unique talents. If each of us were to attempt such an experiment in our lives, we would begin to understand our world and our lives in a new and meaningful way. We would learn to "take destiny calmly upon us."

[page 89] Then we get the feeling that we really have something to do with events that seem to have no cause in real life. In this way, we get a sense for our connection with our destiny, with what is called *karma*.

Persons who do not take their destiny calmly, but become maniacally enraged, are acting out a karmic force destined for their next incarnations. (Page 131 paraphrase) We should be reminded here, dear Reader, of what Steiner says about evil, "It is a good before its time." The evils performed in maniacal rages are gifts of Lucifer, who knows something about obtaining a good before its time, as that is an excellent description of what led to the fall of Lucifer from Grace. Lucifer took what light he could with him and turned his back on the continuous source of Light from God. Then he descended to the Earth to convince us that such premature takings are the soul of wisdom and we are doomed to discover that the opposite is true if we accept such ersatz wisdom for spiritual truth.

In the last paragraph of the book, Steiner says that "the law of conservation of energy is the most false" law imaginable. Yet Robert Mayer, as I pointed out in my review of Meier's [*The Unconscious in Its Empirical Manifestations*](#) got the insight that led to his formulation of the conservation of energy law from a blazing revelation of the spiritual Christ in the Sun. Nevertheless, Steiner reminds us of these fateful words of the Bible and suggests we base our ascent into the spiritual world on them, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

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