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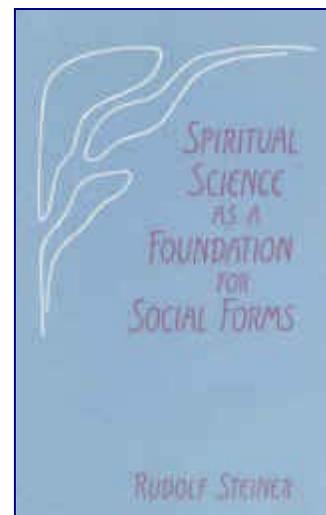
*A READER'S JOURNAL*

**Spiritual Science as a Foundation for Social Forms,  
GA# 199**

by  
**Rudolf Steiner**  
**18 Lectures Aug-Sept, 1920**

Translated by Maria St. Goar  
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ABook Review by Bobby Matherne ©2005



"It's difficult to judge a book by its cover" and books by Rudolf Steiner are the most difficult because one cannot tell from the cover whether it contains material written originally in book form or whether it contains a series of lectures combined into a book. The cover of this book and the cover of [Towards Social Renewal](#) are cases in point. One cannot tell by looking at their covers that the similarity of the titles disguises the fact that this book contains a series of lectures given in 1920 and [Towards Social Renewal](#) contains a book published in 1919. There is one sure way, other than by opening the book and inspecting the title pages, and that is this: if you're reading a book of transcribed lectures, and in the lecture, Steiner refers to [Towards Social Renewal](#), then you can be sure the referenced volume contains a book, since books of Steiner's lectures were not published until after his death and the titles were added by the editors at the time of publication.

With both of these books in question on my shelf, it was by chance I began reading this one first. On page 90 I first noted a reference to his book, [Towards Social Renewal](#), and then, when I reached page 124 of this book, I found the following passage, and I finally came to the realization that it was a book!

**[page 124] . . . if the social life is studied, one arrives at the threefold order as developed in my book, [Towards Social Renewal](#).**

I dog eared page 124, walked down the library hall, picked [Towards Social Renewal](#) off the shelf and immediately began reading it. It made no sense to me to read lectures about a subject which is treated in detail in a book without reading the book first. After I finished reading and reviewing [Towards Social Renewal](#), I began in earnest to finish reading the lectures in this book.

With that prefatory information, one may expect that I will not duplicate information contained in [Towards Social Renewal](#). In addition, if you are reading this review before reading the review of [Towards Social Renewal](#), I suggest you immediately link to said review and return to this review later.

With the current popularity of Waldorf Schools as an alternative for the deadening effects of the so-called "free" public schools, it is well to look at Steiner's intention in founding the Waldorf educational system. He states clearly in the first lecture of this book that the Waldorf system's "basis in anthroposophy should not produce a school that teaches a certain world view, a school in which anthroposophy would be taught."

**[page 2] That was never the intention. . . . we certainly never considered the founding of**

**an institution that teaches a specific world outlook. All efforts were directed toward the creation of a school in which the practical teaching impulses arising from the viewpoint and will of our spiritual science could for once be directly applied in the education and instruction of youth. It was our aim that the anthroposophic impetus should be expressed not in the content of the classes but in the way classes were taught, in the manner in which the whole school system was handled; that this impetus be manifested in the specific kind, and the different methods, of instruction. Once an anthroposophist has stimulated his classes through his anthroposophic will, the fertilization of the teaching process shows precisely what a vitalizing effect anthroposophy has when it is implemented in this way.**

Any opposition to such an approach can only come from those who have no idea what the phrase "anthroposophic will" communicates and thus their objections have no substance apart from their own dislike of what they do not understand which keeps them from such understanding. I mention this so that those of you who are reading this will have a basis for disregarding any comments made against the Waldorf Schools. What Steiner initiated was an educational system based on a pedagogy which enlivens its students. It is the process that is vitalizing, not the content. Waldorf Schools teach the same subjects as other schools, but in a manner that attracts and keeps the students's interest. Pedagogy comes from the two Greek words of *paida* and *gogue* which two words mean *child* and *slave*. Thus a *pedagogue* in ancient Greece was a slave who took the children to their lessons. Teachers in most schools today carry on the tradition of the slave who makes the children do their lessons and the children resent such forced feeding of their lessons. In Waldorf Schools the teacher is a learner first — someone who is there is learn the subject along with the children. The "anthroposophic will" if it can be detected at all in a Waldorf teacher can be detected in their attitude towards the mystery of teaching and learning as a reciprocal process in which both the teacher and the students participate. This *will* cannot be seen by those who would snoop around the Waldorf Schools, because it does not exist as a thing, but rather as a *spirit* which infuses the whole pedagogical process and life of the school.

For example, it shows up in the report cards the students receive. The teacher is encouraged to "intimately deepen their understanding of every child's soul" so as to be "able to write into the report card an accompanying verse suited to each recipient's individual character." (Page 4) This manner of replacing deadening number or letter grades by insight into the student's soul shows how Waldorf teachers free themselves and their pupils from the devitalizing straits of the typical public educational systems where every aspect is carefully defined for administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

**[page 4] When one attempts to express certain aspects of psychology, trying to define them in so many words, he is then already past the point that really matters. It is just the predominant and nonsensical custom of our time that one attempts to express things too rigidly in words. One cannot study matters thoroughly if one wants to express them in this constrictive word structure. One must be aware that by expressing things in this manner they can only be indicated approximately.**

It is a paradox that the materialist, lacking an anthroposophical will, uses cleverly constructed definitions of words to express psychological concepts that "can only be indicated approximately." And, as ridiculous as this is, it is the usual tendency we find everywhere, even more so now over eighty years after Steiner spoke the above words.

This tendency shows up dramatically in ideologies which are constantly attempting to prove one way of thinking is correct and another one is wrong. A spiritualist is someone who strives to prove the existence of a spiritual world using manifestations in the material world, such as table tapping, seances, Ouija board, channeling, etc. Steiner has us observe what happens when a spiritualist meets a materialist.

**[page 7] Let us begin with a specific case. When speaking about any ideology today, it is designated by an abstract name: materialism, idealism, spiritualism, and so forth, and**

**people are quite sure that they can say which is correct, and which is incorrect. A materialist comes to a spiritualist, for example, and explains to him his way of thinking, how he sees man's thoughts and feelings as products of the brain. The spiritualist answers, "You think incorrectly. I can refute that logically!" Or, perhaps, "That is contradicted by the facts!" In short, the crux of the matter is that today, when people talk about issues concerning world views, one ideology is said to be right and the other one wrong. The spiritualist presumes that only he has the correct philosophy, and wishes to prove the materialist wrong and convince him that he would be better off if he became a spiritualist.**

And neither one is better off for having met the other one — a sure sign that both are dining on half-truths and starving for nutrition. Steiner's anthroposophy — knowledge of the full human being of body, soul, and spirit — is a spiritual science which will have nothing to do with convincing other people that their way of thinking is wrong, but rather has much to do with providing insight that may be useful to materialist and spiritualist alike.

**[page 7] Spiritual science has nothing to do with such a way of proceeding. It does not wish to lead to a different logical insight from that of other world views. Spiritual science, if it really fulfills its task, must become action based on insight. In spiritual science, knowledge must turn into action, action in the whole cosmic world context.**

On the other hand, materialistic science leads people to believe more in the senses of touch than in apparitions such as the rainbow which they can never touch. But whenever we inspect the world through our senses, the world always enters us through one or more of our senses and we deal only with a world of phenomena. No matter which materialistic science you study, you are dealing with the world of phenomena. Only in the study of spiritual science can one deal directly with reality, rightly understood.

Consider atomic physics where atoms are treated as tiny pellets or localized concentrations of energy or mathematical fictions.

**[page 9, 10] What is important, however, is not whether one thinks of them as small pellets, sources of energy, or mathematical fiction, but whether one thinks of the external world in atomistic terms. This is what is important. For a spiritual scientist, however, it is not merely wrong to think atomistically. The kind of concept determining rightness or wrongness may be sound logic, but it is abstract, and spiritual science has to do with realities. I urge you to take it very seriously when I say that spiritual science has to do with realities!**

In this next passage, Steiner anticipates Alfred O. Korzybski's classic landmark in the history of science, [Science and Sanity](#), published in 1933. Korzybski points to the levels of abstraction that we all use, whether in everyday talking or in scientific treatises. He shows that unconscious abstractions lead to un-sane semantic reactions and that a careful understanding of how we abstract is a prime requirement for healthy and sane thinking processes. His work became embodied in the field called "General Semantics" and has been helpful to many for dealing with the realities of life. While Korzybski never used the phrase "atomistic thinking", I suspect he would agree wholeheartedly with Steiner's thesis below about the unhealthy nature of such un-sane thinking.

**[page 10] This is why certain concepts that have become merely logical categories for today's abstract world-view must be replaced by something real. This is why, in spiritual science, we not only say that one who seeks atoms or molecules in the external world thinks in the wrong way; we must consider this manner of thinking an unhealthy, sick thinking. We must replace the merely logical concept of wrongness with the realistic concept of sickness, of unhealthiness. We must point to a definite sickness of soul — regardless of how many people it has seized -- which expresses itself in atomistic**

**thinking. This condition is one of feeble-mindedness. It is not merely logically wrong for us, it is an expression of feeble-mindedness to think atomistically; in other words, it is feeble-minded to seek in the external world something other than phenomena which, when it comes right down to it, are on a par with the phenomenon of the rainbow. It is relatively easy for people with other world outlooks to set things straight: they do it by refutation. To have been able to refute something is considered an accomplishment. Yet, in a spiritual-scientific sense, no final conclusion has been reached by refutation; it is important to refer to the healthy or unhealthy soul life, to actual processes expressed in man's whole physical, soul and spiritual being. To think atomistically is to think unhealthily, not merely erroneously. An actual unhealthy process takes place in the human organism when we think atomistically. This is one thing we must become clear about regarding the phenomena of the external world and its character of appearance.**

Reading Steiner's words is not easy, as anyone can attest who has read and comprehended the previous passage, for example. Steiner tells us on page 84, "We cannot speak about man's faculties between death and a new birth if we do not become accustomed to using words in a way differing entirely from how it is done in today's spoken language. This is why people who wish to hear only what they already know will always find the language of spiritual science unintelligible." If one can only think thoughts derived from the material world, thoughts that are brain-bound thoughts, one will find it especially difficult to read Steiner's words.

**[page 30] This is because the moment they are called upon to think these thoughts they have to make a strenuous effort. They have to break free in their thinking, but they wish to think these thoughts with their brain. Yet, with the brain, one can only think the external physical thoughts, thoughts about the physical realm. One can think about atoms and molecules quite well with this brain in the feeble-minded manner I outlined yesterday. By means of this brain, however, it is not possible to think the thoughts presented in such a book as *Occult Science, an Outline*. Thus, anthroposophy is regarded as sheer fantasy. A considerable effort of will must be made to free the soul-spiritual. Then, one can think those thoughts and no longer finds them absurd or fantastic, but in full harmony with life.**

And yet no materialistic scientist can claim that a colleague is endowed with soul and spirit — all he can claim is that "a brain is thinking automatically." Human beings have reached the stage of evolution where their thinking has become body-bound. As such spiritual science cannot say that materialism is incorrect as is the fashion in our age of abstraction today. (Paraphrased from page 31)

**[page 31, 32] Instead, it is a matter of motivating people to shake themselves free of the bonds of materiality and to nurture and cultivate thoughts that follow the course of supersensible results of research. Materialism is not to be disproved, it is to be overcome! Human beings must once again become soul-spiritual by awakening their own soul-spiritual being. It must be through action that real materialism is overcome; not through some sort of erroneous refutation. The sad fact is that materialism is a mistaken world-view. But it has become right for the recent cultural development. It therefore cannot be a matter of contradicting a false world-view. Rather, it is a matter of giving human beings the means whereby they may perform soul deeds that overcome the body-bound condition of humanity so that they break free of materiality. The knowledge referred to here must be action, not mere logic. That is the issue.**

In the French Academy of Science one day an argument ensued on the subject of whether a bear can dance or not. Learned professors of natural science stated the case for bears dancing only to be replaced on the podium by other equally learned professors stating their reasons why bears cannot dance. While this debate was going on a janitor was sweeping the floor near the window and looked out into the street to see a gypsy playing an accordion while a bear on a leash was dancing. Arguing who is right in a matter of the

materialistic viewpoint or the spiritual science viewpoint is similar to the case of the dancing bears. One need only point out the window to reality.

**[page 32] However, people have a hard time comprehending the difference between mere bantering in negations or affirmations while remaining in the sphere of abstract concepts, and the element of action that flows directly from the wellspring of the spirit. Just try to clarify to yourselves that it is one thing merely to refute materialism logically because you are of the opinion that it is wrong, and quite another to facilitate the healing process through spirituality by overcoming the quite real materialism which has gripped mankind as a disease. This difference must be recognized, for what matters today is that spiritual deeds are accomplished and carried into social life as well. There is a fundamental difference between self-satisfaction in a theoretical worldview and the active involvement in knowledge that turns into action.**

In the diagram of the Twelve Senses shown below, Steiner outlines for us the manifold senses of the human being and shows us how some of our senses are related to supersensible processes of Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition. Materialistic science recognizes only officially five senses, hearing(4), sight(6), taste(7), smell(8), and touch(9) and these are naturally found among the twelve in the diagram. The remainder of the senses require some exposition and Steiner provides that in Lecture III. He explains that our usual concept of the senses "lacks coherence and inner integration" and he provides us that coherence and inner integration in this lecture, showing how seven of our senses are directed out of us and five remain internal to us.

Those that remain inside of us are our senses of smell, touch, balance, movement, and life sense. These are summarized in a table on page 50 thusly:

5.	Sense of Smell	—	mystical union with God
4.	Sense of Touch	—	permeation by feeling of God
3.	Sense of Balance	—	inner rest, feeling onself as spirit
2.	Sense of Movement	—	experience of one's own soul nature
1.	Sense of Life	—	feeling of well-being

The senses of smell and touch that Steiner relates to union with God is illustrated in this [true story](#) of a baby which was born premature weighing less than two pounds and was unable to be held by anyone for two months till her skin matured. Here's how this infant, Dana Blessing, described a certain smell to her mother, Diana, one day when she grew to be five years old:

**Dana closed her eyes and again asked, "Do you smell that?"**

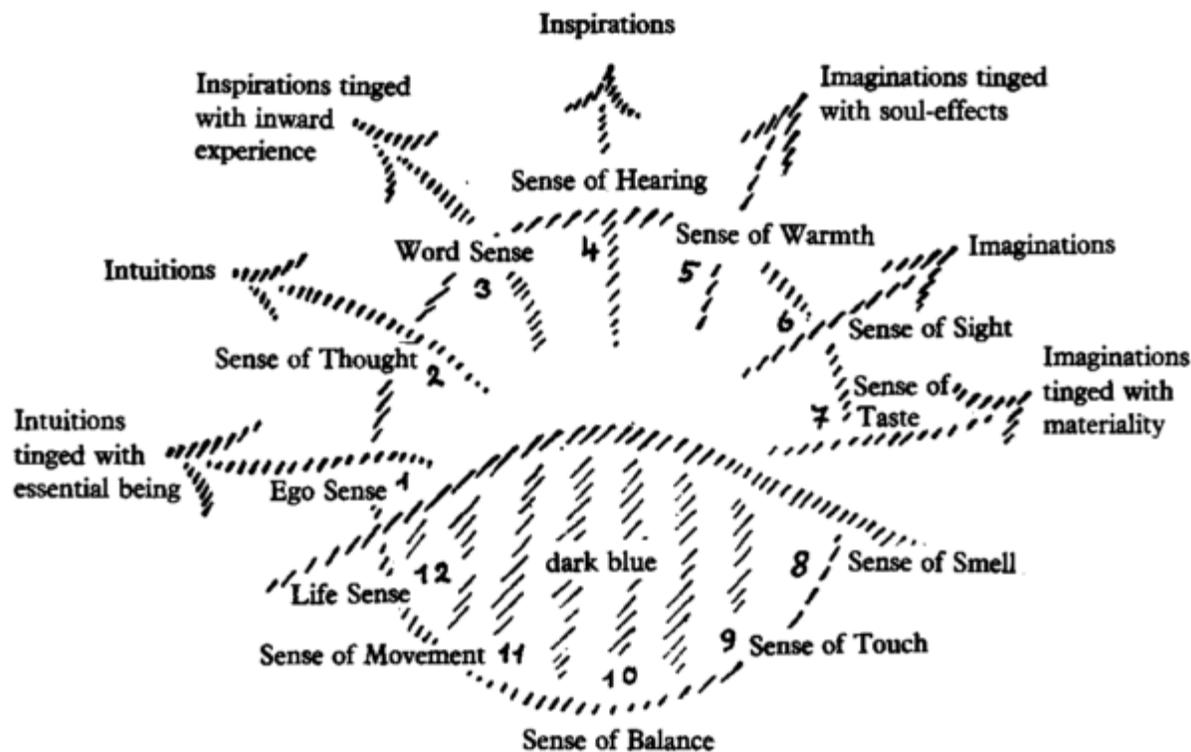
**Once again, her mother replied, "Yes, I think we're about to get wet. It smells like rain."**

**Still caught in the moment, Dana shook her head, patted her thin shoulders with her small hands and loudly announced, "No, it smells like Him. It smells like God when you lay your head on His chest."**

**Tears blurred Diana's eyes as Dana happily hopped down to play with the other children.**

**Before the rain came, her daughter's words confirmed what Diana and all the members of the extended Blessing family had known, at least in their hearts, all along. During those long days and nights of her first two months of her life, when her nerves were too sensitive for them to touch her, God was holding Dana on His chest and it is His loving scent that she remembers so well.**

Our sense of sight(6) gives us information about the surface of material reality in color, brightness, darkness, etc. But we are also capable of perceiving the inside of an object as anyone who has seen a body laid out in a coffin can attest — we perceive immediately that there is no source of warmth inside of the corpse — we perceive that with our sense of warmth (5). The sense of hearing(4) also allows us to perceive the inner nature of an object such as when we drop a silver fork and hear its distinctive ring, or we strike a watermelon and hear its thud. Taste(7) is close to an inner experience because our secretions are stimulated by the objects we eat and unite superficially with our inner selves, going no deeper than the surface of our tongue. Smell(8) is a deep inner experience as the mucous membrane of the nose is more inwardly organized than our taste buds are and the molecules of scent are deeply incorporated into the membrane.



Our sense of touch (9) is more deeply inward because when we touch objects we experience only ourselves — we experience the way the object we touch affects us internally and ascribe those characteristic feelings to the object itself, but it is our internal reactions we are experiencing when we touch something. With our sense of balance(10) we go further into ourselves and experience our own equilibrium — whether we are lying down or erect is a basic sense everyone has and it is entirely internal.

While we can hear with our ears, we need the assistance of our organs of speech in order to perceive words. Ever notice that when you're learning a new language, you have a harder time understanding words that you have never spoken than words you have? It's because when you hear, your speech organs subliminally form the words, and this process of word formation allows you to recognize the words. This complicated process of hearing/speaking combines to form the sense of word or word sense(3).

To penetrate further into the external world than our word sense allows, we need our sense of thought(2). We need our sense of thought in order to perceive the thoughts of another human being. The furthest we can go out of ourselves is when we penetrate the ego of another person with our perception, our sense of ego or ego sense(12). When you meet someone you haven't seen since you were both children over 40 years ago or more, what is the most likely way you will recognize them? Through their eyes. You look into their eyes with your ego sense and will eventually come to recognize them through their unique ego which you spent time with as a child. Once you recognize a person using your ego sense this way, the rest of their face will begin to be recognizable.

As we penetrate deeper in ourselves, we discover a sense of movement(11). This is the generalized sense that medical scientists call our proprioceptive sense. Through it we can tell if we are in motion and where our limbs are located in space in relation to our body. The furthest we can penetrate into ourselves is when we perceive that we *are*. This happens through our sense of life (12) when we experience ourselves inwardly. This shows up as our sense of well-being after a good meal and distress when we are hungry.

Now Steiner takes us through what we experience when we take leave of our senses or rather *take leave of our body* through our senses. This is another way of talking about achieving perceptions of the supersensible world. He is referring to the drawing of the Twelve Senses above.

**[page 43] Here, for example (indicating the drawing), we pass outward by the sense sight. It signifies that we penetrate outward with our soul-spiritual being by leaving behind our organs of sight. Particularly, when we leave our corporeality through our eyes and move about the world, seeing with our soul eyes, yet leaving the physical eyes behind, we arrive in that region where Imagination holds sway (see drawing).**

**[page 44] When we pass out through the organ of taste, the pictures appear tinged with the last remnants of material existence. We can say that the imaginations are then colored, literally touched here and there with materiality. We do not have pure images as in the rainbow; we get something that is tinged, containing in a kind of image something like a last residue of material substance. We come to ghosts, real specters, when we depart the physical body through the organ of taste.**

When we leave our body through the ear via our sense of hearing we emerge in the soul-spiritual world of Inspiration. Similarly when we leave our body through the word sense or sense of speech we enter Inspiration. When we leave our body through the sense of thinking, we enter the world of Intuition and when we leave our body through the ego sense, the Intuitions are tinged by the spiritual world.

What is behind our senses we only perceive when we leave our body with our soul-spiritual being. (Summarized from pages 43, 44)

**[page 44] What is perceived, however, is molded by the senses. Intuitions appear through the ego sense and the sense of thinking but only as impressions of intuitions; inspirations appear as impressions through the word sense and sense of hearing; imaginations appear through the sense of warmth and sight and, to a lesser degree, through the sense of taste, but toned down, takes and transformed into the sensory element.**

My father in his 80s told me one day, "I can't see very well, taste, hear, or smell anymore. I seem to be losing all my senses." I replied, "Well, Dad, you still have your sense of humor." He laughed, which proved me correct in my assessment. The sense of humor is not one of Steiner's official senses that humans have as a way of accessing the world, but Steiner certainly holds that possessing a sense of humor is important in our time.

**[page 87] It is also particularly important that mankind cultivate a certain sense of humor on its path to spirituality. The world is far removed from such humor today.**

Spiritual science enriches our world of ideas by allowing us to send our thoughts into the world between death and a new birth. We can receive one important concept which we may find uncomfortable while profound.

**[page 96] It is this: When we have absolved the life between death and birth, we incarnate here into space. We penetrate into space out a condition that is not spatial. Space has significance only for our experiences between birth and death. Again, it is important to know that when we pass through the portal of death, not only do we leave**

**the body with our soul, we also leave space behind.**

We must develop a completely novel way of thinking about the spiritual world and leave our ways of thinking about the spatial world behind. Since we humans do not live in relationship to each other in purely spatial relationships, we err greatly if we attempt to shape our social conditions using the techniques of materialistic science. (Page 98)

**[page 99] Not until people are willing to penetrate spiritual science will it become possible again to think of the social life in the manner it has to be conceived if further decline is to be halted and, instead, progress is to ensue. . . . Things . . . must be expressed in a certain manner if one doesn't want to fantasize but to speak of realities, as I have done in our anthroposophical presentations as well as in my book, [Towards Social Renewal](#).**

As I mentioned earlier, now would be a good time to read my review of this book to get the scope of what Steiner is pointing to about the social life. It is not a theory, but rather a way of approaching the three components of society in a way which allows human beings to prosper spiritually, economically, and socially.

**[page 100, 101] What has actually been produced from spiritual-scientific foundations in [Towards Social Renewal](#) truly has not been created out of some theory but out of the whole breadth of life, with the difference that this life is viewed spiritually. Mankind today cannot progress if people do not adjust to such a view of life.**

Steiner points out how people of his day formed their opinions from reading books or watching stage plays about the life of workers rather than from life itself. We find a similar process occurring with Hollywood movies today. Can one think of a single movie today in which large corporations are portrayed as anything but greedy social pariahs?

**[page 103] It was a life which they knew only from Ibsen or Dostoevsky, or a life they knew in a manner that frequently could not help becoming quite obnoxious to a person when, in all the big cities of Europe, Hauptmann's "Weber" (weavers), for example, was being performed. The lifestyle of weavers appeared on stage. People with no idea of what transpires in life, having seen only its caricature on the stage, observing the misery of weavers on stage, and because it was a time of social involvement — began talking about all sorts of social questions, having become acquainted with these matters only in this way. Basically, they are all people who do not know life except vicariously from newspapers or books such as exist today. I have nothing against the books; one must be familiar with them, but one must read them in such a manner that through them one is able to perceive life. The problem is that we live in an age of abstraction today, abstract demands by political parties, societies, and so on.**

On the other hand, you can read the books of Spencer Heath and Andrew J. Galambos who all drew their concepts from practical life which is what makes their arguments so powerful and convincing. To read the popular impression of mediaeval England one would never know that a proprietary form of government was in place there for hundreds of years with minimal taxes and no coercion at any level — I didn't until I read Spencer Heath's [Citadel, Market, and Altar](#) — which allowed me to share my insights in my review of Steiner's [Towards Social Renewal](#) . Heath's book along with Galambos's book [Sic Itur Ad Astra](#) came as a salvation to me in understanding the roots of our economic, social, and political problems today.

Steiner received a letter from a gentleman "fully grounded in life, who has experienced precisely what can be experienced today in order to form an opinion of the social condition . . ." and tells us what this man said.

**[page 104] He wrote that my book, [Towards Social Renewal](#), had become a sort of**

**salvation for him. This man, who has worked in a weaving mill, was thoroughly familiar with the practical aspects.**

The concepts of a threefold society which Steiner presents in his book are based on practical realities, but it lacked a practical means of arriving at its goal. The forces of coercion are weak, but so long as people accept coercion as a necessity, those forces will mix together inextricably the three folds of society which Steiner claims must be kept separate. The plan for creating a three fold society on a large scale basis *cannot* proceed inside a country or a world in which "government" and "coercion" are considered as synonymous with one another — like the song claims about "love" and "marriage" — that you can't have one without the other. Often love exists outside of marriage — it certainly begins outside of marriage today. On the other hand, few people even imagine that there can be any government outside of coercion — especially in modern times — up until now.

**[page 104] One will only grasp what is meant with the book, [Towards Social Renewal](#), when one judges it from the standpoint of practical life. It is a book depicting reality, but derived completely from the spiritual world, as must be the case with anything that is to serve life today. One will only know what is meant if one understands that every line, every word of this book is in no way theoretical, but taken straight from practical life; when one realizes that it is a book for those who wish to intervene actively in life, not for those who want to engage in socialistic chatter and babble about life.**

**[page 104] Everything depends on our acquiring thought forms that are suitable tools for the comprehension of the spiritual life, for in reality spiritual life is everywhere. We have spiritual realities here in our surroundings as well as from beyond the sense world. It is out of these spiritual realities that social reconstruction must come about, not out of the empty talk appearing in Leninism and Trotskyism, which is nothing but the squeezed-out lemon of old commonplace Western views that have no power to produce any viable kind of social idea. One may well ask: Where are the human beings today who are prepared to comprehend life with the necessary intensity?**

One might well answer that Spencer Heath and Andrew Galambos are two human beings in our time who comprehended life with the necessary intensity. Each man laid out the case for a society consisting of a proprietary government — a government without coercion — which would lead to a natural unfolding of the three folds of society into separate and autonomous forces. The citadel or state would be separate from the market or economy and both would be separate from the altar or spiritual folds of society. In Lecture VII Steiner describes how these three folds are associated with the areas of the world and the human being.

WEST	MIDDLE	EAST
Economy	State	Spiritual
<i>Head</i>	<i>Rhythmic</i>	<i>Limbs &amp; Metabolic</i>

He describes how the impulses of each region flows into the others, mainly the influence of the Western economy-forces which flows into the Middle region of Central Europe and into the Eastern regions of Asia. Note the examples he gives us back in 1920 seem prophetic today because the events he predicts have all come to pass.

**[page 109] These more delicate relationships are not discerned. That is the reason why nobody even thinks of characterizing in a deep and exhaustive manner the essential feature of what arises from the spirit of the various nationalities. For it is all inundated today by what arises from the West. In Central Europe, in the East, people imagine that they are thinking along their own ethnic lines. This is not the case, they think in**

**accordance with what they have adopted from the West.**

**In what I am now saying lies the key to much of what is really the riddle of the present age. This riddle can be solved only when we become aware of the specific qualities arising from the various regions of the world. There is, first of all, the East that today certainly offers us no true picture of itself. If untruthfulness were not the underlying characteristic of all public life in our time, the world would not be so ignorant of the fact that what we call Bolshevism is spreading rapidly throughout the East and into Asia; that it has gone far already. People have a great desire to sleep through the actual events, and are glad to be kept in ignorance. It is therefore easy to withhold from them what is really taking place. Thus, people will live to see the East and the whole of Asia inundated by the most extreme, radical product of Western thought, namely Bolshevism, an element utterly foreign to these people.**

The people of the East have long been concerned with the life preceding the one they find themselves in — what might be called "unbornness", whereas the people of the West are concerned with "immortality" or the life following the one they find themselves in. Note how the concept of unbornness leads to reincarnation but the concept of immortality does not. By analyzing the nature of each of the three regions of the Earth and how they are related to the threefold nature of the human being: head, rhythmic, and limbs & metabolism, Steiner is able to show how the three folds of economy, state, and spiritual correspond to world regions of West, Middle, and East (summarized above in a table).

**[page 124] By thus studying the life of mankind throughout the earth, we come to the realization that there is one part with a special disposition for the economy; there is another with a special aptitude for organizing the state; and yet another with a specific inclination towards the spiritual life. A threefold structure can then be created by taking the actual economy from the West, the state from the Middle, and from the East — naturally in a renewed form, as I have often said — the spiritual life. Here you have the state, here the economic life and here the spiritual life (see above table); the two others have to be taken across from here. In this way, all humanity has to work together, for the origins of these three members of the social organism are found in different regions of the earth, and therefore must be kept properly apart everywhere. If, in the old manner, human beings wish to mix up in a unified state what is striving to be threefold, nothing will result from it except that in the West the state will be a unity where the economic life overwhelms the whole, and everything else is only submerged into it.**

What's the matter? Why is matter viewed so differently by the West and the East? In the West the consummate spirit is matter and in the East the consummate matter is spirit. As Steiner says it, we in the West, "know that behind this outer sense world there is spirit. In reality, we consume spirit and the consumed spirit *becomes* matter first within us. Yet, what we consume in this manner produced spirit in the Oriental even after it had been consumed."

This distinction is so prevalent in the East that it shows up clearly in their languages. Take the Japanese language — it has one word for the blossom of a tree, but two words for the fruit of a tree. I first became aware of this idiosyncrasy of Eastern languages when I read [A Zen Wave](#) in which the author, Robert Aitken, provided word for word translations of *haiku* from Japanese into English. There they were one word for cherry blossom, peach blossom, and pear blossom. And I realized that when we say the names of the tree which produce these same blossoms, we use only one word, namely, cherry, peach, and pear. Now I see the significance of this difference in the two languages as revealing a difference in the natures of the two regions of the world in which the native peoples evolved the two languages.

**[page 128] Thus, a person who understands these things views the remarkable poetic achievements of the Vedas, the greatness of the Bhagavad Gita, the profound philosophy of the Vedas and Vedanta and the Indian philosophy of Yoga without admiring them any less — because he know that they have emerged from the inner process as a product**

**of metabolism, just like the blossoms of a tree are the result of its metabolism. Just as we look at the tree and see in its blossoms what the earth pushes toward air and light, so we view what human beings in ancient India produced in the Vedas, in the Vedanta and Yoga philosophies, as a blossom of earthly existence itself.**

For us in the West, the consummate spirit appears in the matter of the tree or its fruit so we have one word for that tree or its fruit, whereas in the East, the consummate matter is the spirit of the tree which appears in its blossoms so they have one word for the blossoms. As Aitken describes the importance of cherry blossoms to Japanese life, one hear echoes of the metabolism of the human being described, "Instilled in the Japanese mind is the association of the ephemerality of the cherry blossoms with the brevity of human life. Blooming for so short a time, and then casting loose in a shower of lovely petals in the early April wind, cherry blossoms symbolize an attitude of nonattachment much admired in Japanese culture." This came to be instilled in the Japanese mind from processes of understanding the world which began in ancient India. Steiner shows us clearly the connection of the East with the processes of metabolism.

**[page 129] The ancient Indian perceived the air as the process which occurs when the element derived from the metabolism unites in the human being with what is inhaled and is then absorbed. When he fulfilled his ideal inherent in Yoga philosophy, the ancient Indian perceived in the blood circulation the mysteries of the air, that is, what exists spiritually in the air. Through Yoga philosophy he became acquainted with what is spiritual in the air. What does one learn to know there? One comes to recognize what has come into us, insofar as we have become beings that breathe. We learn to perceive what entered into us when we descended from spiritual worlds into this physical body. Knowledge of preexistence, of life before birth, is then cultivated. Therefore, it was in a sense the secret of those who practiced Yoga to penetrate the mystery of life before birth.**

From Asia, as we move towards Central Europe, we find the processes of the rhythmic system predominate.

**[page 130] Going from Asia to Central Europe, we find that the European, provided that he really is one, can be characterized as in Fichte's statement which I pointed out to you yesterday: "The external material world is the substance of my duty become visible; on its own, it has no existence. It is there only so that I might have something with which to fulfill my duty." The human being who lived and lives in the central regions of the earth on this basis, dwells in the rhythmic system, just as the ancient Indian lived in the metabolic system. One remains unconscious of the element in which one lives. The Indian still strove upward to the rhythmic system as to an ideal, and he became aware of it. The Central European lives in the rhythmic system and is not conscious of it. Dwelling in this way in the rhythmic system, he brings about all that belongs to the legal, democratic governmental element in the social organization. He forms it in a one-sided way, but he forms it in the sense I indicated yesterday, because he is especially talented in shaping matters dealing with relationships between people, and between a person and his environment.**

The threefold nature of the world we live in is summarized in this next passage by Steiner. He shows not only the three regions of the world, but how each region strive for the next higher region.

**[page 134] It is the nature of the Oriental to live in his metabolic system. It is the Central European's nature to live in the rhythmic system. It is Western man's nature to live in the nerves-and-senses system. The Oriental lives in the metabolism; he strives upward, trying to attain to the rhythmic system. The Central European lives in the rhythmic system. He strives towards the nerves-and-senses system. Western man already lives in the latter. Where does he wish to ascend? He is not yet there, but he has the impulse to strive upwards beyond himself. It appears at first in a caricatured form, which I**

**characterized for you yesterday as the denial of matter and the autosuggestion of the human being in Mrs. Eddy's Christian Science. Despite the fact that this is as yet a caricature, it is nevertheless a forerunner of what Western man must aim for. The aim must be something superhuman . . .**

What he means is a new initiation via his spiritual science by which humans may achieve something that can come neither from the East, the Middle, nor the West. This unity of the three regions means we must achieve a proper threefold society of economics, political, and cultural organizations which are independent of each other while cooperating with each other.

**[page 139] It can only come through the new initiation, through the new spiritual science. It is brought about by our ascending from the most current form of thinking, trained by natural science and the nerves-and-senses being, to the science of the new initiation; acquiring from this new initiation the ways and means for bringing about cooperation between what was once the nature of the ancient Orient, later that of the Middle and now that of the West. We need a new science of initiation that can bring about a unity of these three, a living unity. In this modern age, we will not arrive at a cultural life if we do not strive for this new initiation science. We will have no proper politics, no life of the state, if we just continue in the same old way, if we do not turn to those scientific branches born of the new initiation and inquire how the politics of the future must be shaped.**

In Steiner's Goetheanum he sculpted a large wooden statue to represent the full human condition. In this next passage he describes the statue to us. I include an image of the statue from my review of [Reminiscences](#) so you can locate the figures on the sculpture as he discusses them.

**[page 150, 151] Look at our building [the [Goetheanum](#)] here. It is intended to have as the central group in the middle of the eastern end a kind of Christ figure, with Lucifer rising above it, and below Ahriman, as though being thrust into the earth by the Representative of Humanity, who inwardly preserves**



*The Group, Rudolf Steiner's Woodcarving*

**complete balance of soul. The intention is to represent the full human condition in this group. In reality, man is, after all, that being who must seek the balance between what tries to rise above the human being and what draws him down into the ground — the balance between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic nature.**

Next he gives us the icy-hot characteristics of Ahriman-Lucifer as it shows up in human beings in tendencies to certain diseases.

**[page 151] Physiologically, physically speaking, the Luciferic force is that element in us which brings about fever, pleurisy, which brings man into conditions of warmth that tend to dissolve him, cause him to be dissipated in the world; the Ahrimanic force brings about ossification, calcification.**

There is also a awake-sleepiness spectrum of Ahriman-Lucifer which he notes. If you listen to an Ahrimanic lecturer, you will find yourself at times jolted awake, and if you listen to a sermon or lecture by a Luciferian speaker you will soon be droned to sleep. As humans we must find the balance point between the various extremes of Lucifer and Ahriman, with Christ's help. Christ is the balance point in Steiner's Representative of Man statue and He is ever ready to be the balance point in helping us to choose between the two extremes.

**[page 151] Spiritually speaking, man must hold the balance between the Luciferic force always wishing to lull him to sleep, always tempting him to yield himself up to the universal all, and the Ahrimanic force that shocks him awake again and again, striking through him with a violence that does not let him sleep. One does not comprehend the nature of the human being if one cannot place it in the middle between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic force.**

When I read a materialistic scientist's exposition of the evolution of the cosmos, the biggest questions are always left unasked and unanswered. What happened before the Big Bang? Or the answers provided always fall short of making good sense. Why does the Moon have such a dramatic effect on humans? How did humans evolve? Where does religion fit into the scheme of things? Is there a spiritual world and if so where does it exist? In this next passage Steiner explains why this is so: since the fifteenth century humankind has produced a civilization based on a way of thinking which emerges only out of the human being and not out of the cosmos in which humans are immersed. The result is a tapestry of half-truths which hides more than it reveals. The walls of reality are hidden behind a man-made veil of maps of reality which explains only the things displayed on the tapestry, and omits the reality which awaits anyone who will lift the tapestry and gaze behind it. The time to do this is now, and Steiner is the way-shower to assist us in lifting the skirt of the material world to see the wonders hidden from our eyes, up until now.

**[page 163] I have often had to mention here that the science of initiation is required for the forces that are to bring about a reconstruction of declining civilization; that it is necessary to know what can be gained from beyond the threshold of the supersensible world. One can say that the spiritual evolution of humanity has proceeded from a knowledge and corresponding attitude, feeling and will that were drawn from beyond this threshold. Everything that is discovered when we go back to mankind's primordial treasures of wisdom becomes intelligible when we can trace this original wisdom to the revelations derived from mystery knowledge; when we can assume that, to begin with, sources of knowledge, of feeling and will, were accessible to humanity in its earth evolution that are not accessible by means of the purely human forces known to people today. As evolution progressed, human beings increasingly had to depend on what can be derived from the human being himself. This then is essentially the content of the forces that have been active during recent centuries in the development of civilization.**

**These forces that have emerged out of man himself up to now have produced a condition of civilization which, if left to its own devices, would inevitably lead to its own**

**downfall. The majority of people today do not believe this as yet.**

What is the tapestry I talked about above? It is the tapestry of the senses which acts as the temple veil did to shield the holy secrets from the congregation in Jesus's time. The event of the rending of the temple veil during the time of the Mystery of Golgotha was a harbinger of the returning ability of humans to once more view the holy secrets of the spiritual world directly and on an individual basis — that it would no longer be a right reserved only for rabbis, priests, and prophets. The tapestry of the senses acts as a threshold into the spiritual world and when one lifts that tapestry, no world of substance shows itself. We learn that the so-called real world of our senses was only *maya* or a deep illusion which had deluded us into believing *it* was the only world there was.

**[page 164] From the other side of the threshold, no such world of substance is disclosed. If a person penetrates only a little way into the region beyond the threshold, it is immediately obvious that a certain region of the spiritual world lies behind the tapestry of the senses; meaning, we are essentially dealing with a world of spirit which is located behind this sensory world.**

Words are such limited things. Take the word "behind" as in this phrase, "a world of spirit which is located behind this sensory world." The word leads us to envision the temple veil which separates the spiritual world from the material world, but it is only a metaphor. If we metaphorically lift the veil, what do we find? The spiritual world co-exists with the physical world. The veil or tapestry is just a metaphor which seems to divide space into physical world and spiritual world, but they exist co-terminably, simultaneously, inside of one another. With our physical eyes we view the surfaces of things; with our spiritual eyes we view the spiritual realities which permeates things.

If we wish to understand the human being fully, we must learn about the [evolution of the cosmos](#) because inside of each human being the great phases of the cosmos are found. The physical body's phantom which hold the minerals in place during our phase of evolution was formed during the Old Saturn phase of evolution. The etheric or life body which fills the physical body and keeps it alive during our time between birth and death was formed during the Old Sun phase. The astral body which brings us wants, desires, passions, and zest for life was formed during the Old Moon phase. And the I Am, the Ego, which is our unique gift of individuality residing inside of us, was formed and is developing to maturity, with our help, during the current Earth phase of evolution.

**[page 165] When we take into consideration that the human being consists of the ego, the astral, the etheric, and physical bodies, we have to say that when man is awake, meaning, when he is immersed in his organism with his ego and astral body, he has no share in the spirit region behind the tapestry of the senses. In sleep, on the other hand, having drawn his ego and astral body out of his physical organism, man dwells within this (upper) region of the spirit world with ego and astral body. From the time he falls asleep until he awakens, man participates in the region lying, as it were, behind nature in a spirit-nature world. One could also say that it is the world to which man belongs for this period; a certain part of the spiritual is in fact allotted to him for this state of sleep.**

Inside our human bodies is the only full extent of earth-substance found. In all the other substances we find around us on Earth, from minerals, to plants, to animals of every kind, each one existed during previous phases of evolution. Only the substance of the human-body can truly be called earth-substance. Animals contain moon-substance, plants, sun-substance, and minerals saturn-substance, but only humans contain earth-substance. This is a distinction which is clearly lost on materialistic scientists who deem the human being to be just another animal.

**[page 167] Strange as this sounds, the truth must be grasped at this point. What establishes itself there is, first of all, actual earthly substance, the element, in fact, that constitutes earthly matter. We do not find earthly matter in the outer world; it is found**

**within the human skin. Again, this whole inner structure of man's organs is none other than something that is being pressed in a sense out of another spiritual region.**

And that inner structure has a threefold nature of head , rhythmic system, and limbs. Unless we live in a society that is structured freely in a threefold nature as the human being is, the society is doomed to failure. If one were to even think, "Well, society outlives any human being," that would be a mistaken materialistic simplification which ignores the multi-ordinal structure of the human being as body, soul, and spirit which evolves over many lifetimes.

**[page 168] In fact, man is not a unity at all. He is the confluence of the spiritually active forces from the two regions I have indicated to you. The forces that live in our eyes or in our ears, for example, are of quite another origin than those that develop when we put one foot before the other, or move our arms. One cannot harbor such a concept without realizing that man is embedded, as it were, in the whole cosmos, that owing to his senses he belongs to one particular spirit region of the cosmos and through his limbs to another. Only what lives approximately in the middle — the rhythmic man, the system of the lungs and the heart and all that is connected with it — is actually of earthly origin; it is woven, as it were, out of a kind of world in the middle. Thus, man himself is a threefold being. Without understanding this threefoldness, we cannot comprehend man. I said that this is how the human being appears when we view him from beyond the threshold. We learn to see him as a member of the whole cosmos. One becomes aware through spiritual science how man lives in the whole cosmos and is fashioned out of it. One is then no longer ignorant of the truth that must be perceived, namely, that man's task is not merely comprised of what he accomplishes here on earth; he has tasks to fulfill in the whole of cosmic evolution. He represents an essential factor, to be reckoned with in the whole spiritual cosmic evolution.**

Notice the grand image Steiner paints for us of the human being compared with the puny image of us as an advanced ape painted by materialistic intellectuals. Paying attention only to the reality that exists between birth and death, they ignore fully half of the potential of the human being. What these intellectuals *do* pay attention to is important, so far as it goes, — which is *less than halfway* to understanding the full human being. Understanding the *anthropos* or full human being requires a knowledge or *sophy* of both halves of the human as a being alive in waking *and* sleeping, a being alive in the time between birth and death *and* the time between death and a new birth. That is what *anthroposophy* provides to those who would study it.

**[page 168, 169] Thus, one can say that spiritual science opens our eyes to what man represents as a member of the cosmos. Compared to this, just picture how liliputian the ideas appear that people today think up concerning the human being. Nowadays matters have reached the point where a person will only accept as knowledge something derived from this side of the threshold. He only looks at what is revealed to him between awakening and falling asleep, between birth and death. Moreover, he would like to construe all the tasks that the human being can accomplish here on earth from the concepts and ideas derived from this liliputian comprehension of man. We make no progress this way. We move closer and closer towards total decline precisely because our intellectuals will not venture to construe the tasks in this world by utilizing ideas other than those gained from waking life, from what lies between birth and death. What man accomplishes, however, is of an essentially much vaster scope. This can only be understood when the insights gained by ordinary observation of life are illumined and fructified with those that can be known by means of viewing the world from beyond the threshold. There can be absolutely no improvement in the development of civilization in the world if we do not accept what can be attained for human knowledge, feeling and will from beyond the threshold.**

What we get from intellectuals who are theologians and religious leaders in our time is an abstract of mostly dry intellectual concepts derived directly from the textual material found in certain traditional religious tracts. Not surprisingly, people currently stay away in droves from such intellectuals, congregations, and tracts.

**[page 169] Religious denominations exist today which, at least textually, trace their faith to earlier ages, to times when ancient mystery knowledge was still alive. Their creed is no longer understood in these religious groups. It is only textual tradition, everything else has been squeezed out like a dry lemon. It is in fact no longer there, though in a certain sense one or the other person can penetrate to an understanding of it, particularly if he presses forward to what is usually prohibited by his church. Then a person can acquire a good deal from the traditional knowledge of the confessions.**

The term confessions refers to the creeds of the various churches or religious denominations. Through these creeds the religious and laity are directed as to how they are to consider certain elements of their faith.

**[page 169, 170] For instance, if, independent of what is prescribed for him, a Catholic reflects upon the Trinity and the Incarnation, he can arrive at significant insights. Indeed, it would be more sensible in many respects to reflect upon the Trinity or the Creed than to patronize all the movements that emerge today and forge a new creed and knowledge out of the modern truncated torso of learning. For what mankind has accumulated in recent centuries and utilizes today in order to launch into movements that introduce apparent improvements in the world is far short of what has remained from antiquity in tradition, even though it has been deformed by the confessions.**

As I grew up as a member of the Catholic faith I began to feel that the Church was lagging behind the insights I had accumulated about the world. Luckily Steiner found me before I began to take those immature ideas and shape them into reformatory ideas. Instead, as I studied Steiner's works more and more deeply, a new respect for the rites of my Catholic faith grew inside of me and I found it possible to foster that respect by attending church regularly again, not as a robot in the pews, but as someone who fully appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as a human being.

**[page 170] If a person has grown up in a movement, in some party, he generally feels that this party has not yet reached just that particular insight which he, based on his viewpoint in life, has attained on his own, and so he sets about reforming it. It is the regrettable fact of the present day that so much immature nonsense appears as reformatory ideas. Truly fruitful things can only be accomplished if these movements that hope to shake the world will allow the influx of all that can be investigated beyond the threshold of the sense world. For, you see, there is a certain domain of the spirit out there beyond the tapestry of the sensory world. What purpose does it serve? Just think, this spirit region is the very world we are in when we are awake, albeit not consciously, but in reality we are in it with our whole organism; for, as we stand, as we walk, we are within this world, we just do not see it. We continually move through this world, we are in it; we accomplish our actions in it.**

Everyone has seen movies recently in which slight female actresses disarm burly men, taking away weapons from them, kicking them silly, and then standing over them with their foot over their throats. *Batwoman*, *Laura Croft and the Tomb Raiders*, Trinity in *The Matrix*, and Rene Russo in *Lethal Weapon* are just a few of these movies which portray this kind of aggressive behavior where a smaller woman overcomes a larger man. In fact, if one is watching a movie in which a man attacks a woman today, it is almost always the man who gets the worst end of the deal due to some amazingly deft athletic prowess on the part of the female. Hollywood seems to give the message that woman are stronger, smarter, and more powerful than men and ought to look down on men as inferior.

In recent weeks a prisoner named Brian Wilson was escorted into a courtroom by a woman police officer who was rather smaller in size and weight than her charge. Wilson broke loose from the officer, took her handgun forcibly, and killed the judge and others, severely injuring the female officer who was trained to prevent exactly such a turnabout. Unfortunately this was real life, not a Hollywood script. After the event, in this time of political correctness run amuck, news anchors were tongue-tied trying to express their opinion that perhaps having a slight-built woman escort a dangerous male prisoner was inadvisable. They couldn't express that opinion without specifying that the officer was female, which is currently a no-no. This would be like calling someone a *policeman* instead of police officer, even if he *is* male. The culture which holds such doublespeak to be necessary created a dangerous situation which resulted in grievous injury to people in the courtroom, including the death of the judge who could have noticed the inequity of the prisoner/officer size and ordered additional support — but didn't. It was a fatal mistake for the judge. This is a classic case of a reformatory idea implemented immaturely which backfired on the society which believed in it and even encouraged it.

In this next passage Steiner seems to be saying that our intellectuals in all parties and movements "will not venture to construe the tasks in this world by utilizing ideas other than those gained from waking life." Thus they only throw talk at the questions of reality that are important.

**[page 170] It is lamentable to see how all sorts of scholastic or women's movements, fabricated out of the truncated knowledge of the last few centuries, believe that they can stir the world, whereas they only talk around the real questions.**

People today are like the Bolsheviks in Steiner's time. They wish to construct a world out of what they see, but the greater portion of the real world that lies behind the tapestry of the senses is there to greet them with all kinds of surprises.

**[page 171] The Bolsheviks only wish to construct a world out of what they see, but they are not in the world that they see — they are in the world that lies beyond the tapestry of the sense world. When women's movements appear today and make all sorts of demands, they do this based on what they see, but they make these demands for the world that they do not perceive. It therefore always backfires out of the world we are in, which in reality is there, but is not present in the demands that are raised, because people stand firm against receiving anything from the spiritual world.**

When we wish to communicate with the world today, we can pick up a telephone or send an email via the Internet. If we want to see what is going on in another part of the world, we can turn on our TV set. These are all creations of ours which help us to see the world around and communicate with that world which includes human beings. In a real sense, when we understand how the spiritual beings of the nine hierarchies, which can be collectively called the gods, were actively and intimately involved in the evolution of the cosmos, we may come to say that we are creations of the gods. Would it sound strange, given that fact, to hear that the gods use their creation to communicate with the world of the physical that we inhabit?

**[page 171] When you live in a house and wish to have contact with the outer world without actually stepping outside, you must look out of the window. When the gods of the nine hierarchies wish to communicate with this world, they must do so through man. They cannot do it directly, they must do it *through* man. It is a region of the world that can be contemplated by the gods only by means of human beings. Man must enter the physical world from the world he inhabits between death and rebirth in order to bring about a reciprocal intercourse for the gods with the world evolving here.**

If we refuse to act as a window to the hierarchies of the Angels, Archangels, and higher, then we interfere with the evolution of humanity and the gods. We have closed the human window to the spiritual hierarchies during the centuries since 1453 A. D. for the good purpose of learning as much as there is of

the physical world in which we find ourselves between birth and death, but we must now begin to re-focus on the time we spend between sleeping and awaking, between death and a new birth in order to move the process of the evolution of the cosmos back on its upward climb into the spiritual world. If we do not, this life we know between birth and death will fall into icy disintegration. Lacking knowledge and focus on the spiritual half of our human reality we will have lost both halves.

**[page 174, 175] In the last three to four centuries, the whole of civilized mankind has fallen in a way out of its celestial sphere. It has occupied itself merely with what happens from birth to death and between waking up and falling asleep. The whole of modern life is composed only of this. *This* life, however, is doomed to death; this life is a gradually dying life. Place into it as many socialistic theories as you like as well as their metamorphoses into so-called actions; they will only hasten the decline. Bring any number of women's movements into this life and do not allow them to be fructified by a new spiritual science, and it will be less and less possible to attain what is actually instinctively desired by means of such feminist movements and the like.**

Building a materialistic dogma will not suffice, no matter how ingeniously created and spiritually presented it may be. I never heard of Leadbeater's permanent atom but apparently his dogma about this was popular with the Theosophical Society in Steiner's time. One can catch a glimpse of Steiner's rare expression of humor when he refers to this atom as a "drop of fat" on a soup, a soupçon of tasty nourishment in an otherwise watery gruel of the Theosophical Society.

**[page 176, 177] This Mr. Leadbeater has become acquainted with the materialistic chemistry of the present with its molecules and atoms. This materialistic chemistry of today with its molecules and atoms describes oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, iron oxide, sodium acetate, and so on, building them up from these molecules and atoms. Out of such atoms, Leadbeater builds up the spiritual worlds, the spirits and the angels. He creates a spiritualism out of materialism. I have seen people who went about nearly enchanted when, among many things, the so-called "permanent atom" once swam around like a drop of fat on the soup of the Theosophical Society — such drops of fat sometimes did swim about, didn't they? This permanent atom — a remarkable thing! The human being dies; returns to earth again. What is it that has here endured? Of course, people could not imagine that the human organism is constituted of forces. It would be an actual impossibility for them to picture how the human limb system organizes itself from one life to the next, how the head is structured out of the previous incarnation. For in regard to the head and the limbs, these people only conceive of something grossly material which is naturally placed into the grave. They cannot imagine that forces are contained within, and that one is actually referring to these forces when speaking in this way. After all, something must pass over from one life into the next! There is *one* atom among the millions and billions of atoms; this one atom passes through the spiritual world, then the atoms of the subsequent organism group themselves around this one atom, the permanent atom. It was the delight of theosophical folk to see how this drop of fat, the permanent atom, floated on the water soup of the Theosophical Society -- the spiritual water soup, that is.**

Steiner discussed the issue of the permanent atom in order to demonstrate how pervasive the culture of materialistic thinking is — if it can even invade otherwise spiritual endeavors and become popular in addition. It almost seems as if humankind is hankering for its fall into materialism — a fall which, like a snowball rolling downhill, gets bigger and rolls faster absorbing everything which gets into its way.

Insects flying around a fire outdoors is the metaphor Steiner calls to mind. See how they dive into the flame? "Consider such a phenomenon," he tells us, and you will have a picture of the mood of modern humanity."

In the movie, "When Human Voices Wake Us" (2002) one of the characters asks, "Why do insects dive into lights at night and not during the day?" And the answer came, "Because light dives into them during the day." In ancient times, it was as if it were day time for humankind and light dove into it every day. Since the fifteenth century we have entered a period of night time, and, in the darkness, humans are diving *en masse* into artificial lights wherever and whenever they find them.

Steiner explains with great delight in the text how the spiritual realm is an icy world to which the goal of humankind is to bring love to warm it up.

**[page 178] I stressed that this spiritual realm is a chilly, cold world. We are within this domain unconsciously as you know, between falling asleep and waking, but in reality we then dwell in it without experiencing its actual character. We then mediate the spiritual world's intercourse with this domain by carrying warmth-bestowing love into it.**

We exist within a nexus of the hierarchies of spiritual beings with a relationship like this:

**[page 179] One would like to put it like this: The gods encounter each other through the human being.**

This next sentence would make a fitting insert into the apocryphal New Age prayer *Desiderata* right after these words, "I am a child of the Universe no less than the trees and the stars; I have a right to be here."

**[page 180] "I am here for the sake of cosmic evolution; through me passes the stream of cosmic events."**

What all this amounts to is a complete reversal which must take place in human souls.

**[page 181] The human being must again become aware that he represents a channel for divine forces, that in a way he is the stage on which hierarchies encounter each other so that they may work together in the universe. Man should also know that when he has a low opinion of himself, he will not be a mediator between the higher and the lower worlds. Man must learn to think of himself as a being that belongs to the cosmos. Divine beings who serve the centrifugal motive powers and divine beings serving the centripetal powers meet each other in man.**

And to nurture that meeting, humankind must prepare itself by the study of and the active utilization of the processes of spiritual science, otherwise known as initiation science in our day. This amounts to the attainment of a new consciousness.

**[page 182] This attainment of a certain consciousness of humanity is what is so urgently required. For what is the reason that mankind has fallen into such chaos today, the chaos into which, all over our civilized world, the social order has partly disintegrated already, and in part threatens to disintegrate? The reason is that the human being has forgotten his position in the cosmos; he wishes to know nothing of it. A person who does sense his link with the cosmos will realize that world evolution cannot be depicted as proceeding merely from causes outside man. He will know that it is primarily the forces in man himself that have caused the earth's origin and that will bring about its end, carrying it over into other metamorphoses of universal formation. It is in the human being that we above all must seek for what we should know and feel, and through which we are intended to shape our will.**

What convinced me of the worth of Rudolf Steiner's work was the multi-ordinal approach to the subjects he covered until finally my conviction was certain.

**[page 208] Yesterday, I tried from a certain angle to point out the need for a structural**

**organization of the social order. At the same time I drew attention to the fact that what in spiritual science may be termed presentation of proof consists in recognizing that these facts under discussion are supported from the most varied aspects; finally, that the degree of conviction increases in proportion to the amount of such support.**

One area of observation by Steiner is the distinction he makes between the human being and the animal kingdom. It is worthwhile to note this difference as it is too often glossed over or misstated by those who are confused by the tenets of materialistic science.

**[page 209] We must indeed be clear about one thing. Let us take the physical body of man. It stands as a unique phenomenon within the natural order. In a way, it is lifted out of this natural order. If we are sufficiently observant of the strong differentiation existing between the human being and the various species of the animal kingdom, we cannot help but say that the human being should not simply be placed at the end of the animal kingdom as the evolution theorists would have it. He is not only a composite of all animal forms in the entire animal kingdom; his is also a composite at a higher stage. Therefore, we can class this physical body of man with nothing but itself. In all that surrounds us, in all our natural environment, we are unable to find anything that could be placed in the same category with the physical body of the human being. This human physical body, then, stands by itself.**

In this next section, Steiner introduces something new — a relationship I have not encountered previously between the etheric body and animal world, between the astral body and plants, and between the Ego and the mineral world. If this sounds difficult to remember, Steiner offers us the charming image of a donkey eating thistles as a mnemonic: the ether body tries to imitate the donkey and the astral body the thistles. Check it out for yourself — have you ever seen a cat sleeping and felt within you a sense of its peaceful sleep? You were feeling the molding of your etheric body with the cat's body.

**[page 210] In a way that some of you may feel is peculiar, I have already described to you the extent of the etheric body's mobility. It has the tendency to confront the animal world in a certain way, having a particular affinity with this realm. I have said that when we confront an elephant, a donkey, a calf, or other animal shapes, our etheric body has the inner tendency to imitate the given form, to become similar to it. It is prevented from carrying this out entirely, but it has the inner tendency to assume these animal forms. It has a special kinship with them. Due to the forces concentrated in the physical body, the etheric body is prevented from realizing these tendencies, but it strives to do so. One of the first experiences of initiation is the emergence of this inner tension and urge in regard to the animal world, of wishing to become like the animals. Thus we can say that concerning his physical body the human being is *not* related to the animal world, but his etheric body displays a quite decided kinship with that world.**

**We now advance to the astral body. Here we come across a similar inner relationship to the plant world. When the astral body faces the plant kingdom, it has the tendency to become plantlike, that is, to become like the particular plant it confronts. I said to you yesterday, rather as an aid for your memory, that if we stand in front of a donkey that is eating thistles, our etheric body desires to resemble the donkey and the astral body the thistle. This is a fact. In this way, we are related to the kingdoms of nature surrounding us. With our astral body, we are related to the plant world.**

**[page 211] I also told you that the human being works on his ego. Throughout his repeated earth lives he develops his ego. He thus transforms the content born out of the mineral kingdom. He creates from it his science, his art, and his religion. Everything ,that in this way appears as the content of culture and civilization is, basically speaking, transformed mineral kingdom.**

Building on these relationships, Steiner now shows us that the Ego is related to the Cultural fold of the threefold society (Altar), the astral body is related to the Rights fold (Citadel), and the etheric body to the Economics fold (Market). The three bodies of the human are presented here in the order of decreasing consciousness.

**[page 212, EGO, Cultural ] I also told you that the human being works on his ego. Throughout his repeated earth lives he develops his ego. He thus transforms the content born out of the mineral kingdom. He creates from it his science, his art, and his religion. Everything ,that in this way appears as the content of culture and civilization is, basically speaking, transformed mineral kingdom. . . . Here you have, then, the possibility of strictly deeming the spiritual or cultural domain of the threefold social organism. Such a spiritual domain would not exist at all were the ego not to transform its own being so that it can work artistically, religiously and scientifically on what is derived from the mineral kingdom.**

**[page 212, ASTRAL, Rights] We transform our astral body, too, though not in the same conscious manner in which we transform our ego. If we survey the content of our culture, we find its most conscious component parts to be those from the spiritual domain just characterized. Only half conscious are the concepts that regulate the life between man and man (although here they have come into existence most poignantly) and comprise the life of rights and all that pertains to the sphere of rights, namely, the relationships between man and man. Anyone who cannot comprehend the difference between a concept belonging to the religious, scientific or artistic sphere with one pertaining to the sphere of rights, of the state, is without doubt not a good psychologist or observer of the soul. In a very different way do we regulate the relations, the dim awareness between people: What is my duty to the other person? What are his rights and what are mine? All these questions playing between man and man issue from a much dimmer consciousness than that which deals with science, religion and art. The realm of interplay between man and man, where matters cannot be decided by individuals as in science, art or religion, which can be determined only by human social life, by agreement and reciprocal understanding, is the realm that comprises the life of jurisprudence or the state, the sphere of rights of the threefold social organism.**

In Steiner's lectures on the [Lord's prayer](#) he describes how the etheric body is related to the passage which goes, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." The dents in one's etheric body when someone trespasses on one's property at any level causes one pain and requires compensation. It is in the economics sphere of human to human relationships where appropriate compensation can be expeditiously provided.

**[page 213, 214 ETHERIC, Economics] We experience with an even duller consciousness a third domain that comes into existence because we transform our etheric body. This is a domain of which we acquire an awareness in a most indirect manner through all kinds of vague dietetic rules and so forth. It is a domain which we experience almost in a state of sleep and which sends its effects into full consciousness to such a slight degree that not even the relations between people can throw light on it. . . . In the etheric body where etheric processes run their course, it is not enough if man as an individual confronts another individual. Where man as an individual confronts mankind as a whole, it is necessary to form associations; it is necessary that judgments or decisions be formulated by individuals in association, hence, that individuals pool their experiences. Deeds and accomplishments then must spring from associations, not from individual personalities. Here we are referred to a life where the individual person can do nothing by himself, where he can accomplish something only when he is part of an association, and where the association enters into reciprocal relationships with another association. In short, we are directed to what really takes place within the human social community in this duller**

## **consciousness — the economic sphere of the social organism.**

Everywhere one looks today, especially in Hollywood movies as I mentioned earlier, we find the economic life derogated. Rich people are blasted just for being rich. Their taxes are raised just because they have more money — with complete disregard to the deleterious consequences this has for the poor people who require the very jobs which dry up when those with money are subjected to onerous taxation. Large corporations are deemed to be bad and evil just because they are large. They are accused of a rapacious appetite which eats up natural resources and pollutes the land, whether or not any of those accusations are true for the particular corporation under discussion. Everywhere we look we find this process which Steiner calls "false abnegation."

**[page 223] What counts is not that we confront the economic life in false abnegation, that we scorn and slight it, but that we shape the economic life so that it bears the impression of the spirit everywhere, that this economic member of the social organism becomes a sphere molded and impregnated with the spirit by man. This is what is essentially decisive for the future.**

But, Steiner urges us, we must find a way to create an economic sphere of life which bears the spirit. Some forty-eight years after Steiner spoke these words, a European transplanted to California left a large aerospace corporation in disgust after his boss trespassed on his innovative rocket engine design, claimed it as his own, and got promoted. Dr. Galambos said that he knew he could never help man get to the Moon unless something were done to bring equity to economics sphere so that such abhorrent behavior as his boss showed could no more be rewarded or tolerated. He began to design and teach a new Volitional Science. The first course was titled V50 and people came from all over to learn that respect for other people's ideas was as essential as respect for their material goods or their life. That course was taught to over 35,000 people around the world, by my estimate, and is now available in an epoch-making book, [Sicutur Ad Astra](#). Anyone who makes the not inconsiderable effort to read and study this book will find that what Steiner said was "essentially decisive" for the future of humankind in the economic life is carefully laid out in Galambos' [book](#). It is ready for immediate incorporation into the processes of one's life. Its principles of freedom are consonant also with Steiner's principles of freedom laid out in his book, [Philosophy of Freedom](#).

About forty years ago, I stumbled onto a concept with the help of a co-worker named Gary Booth. I remember so well that day, when sitting across from Gary in the cafeteria of Lockheed Electronics, I complained about the Dr. Smith on the TV series "Lost in Space". "Can you imagine that guy? He's constantly whining about one thing or another." Gary looked at me thoughtfully and said, "Bob, sometimes the things we most dislike about others are things we ourselves do to others out of our awareness." I remember myself heating up indignantly and going, "But. . . but . . . but . . ." I was unable to finish my thought — with each *but* I realized that I could not be upset if what Gary had told me were not the truth. It was the closest to an immediately self-evident truth that I have ever encountered. I later called this process the "Mirror Whammy". It's the process by which you are upset by things that you perceive others doing that you are doing out of your own awareness. This is an essential tool for anyone wishing to learn more about one's unconscious processes.

Steiner explains below how the Mirror Whammy works on mystics and idealists who consider themselves to be appalled by materialism.

**[page 223] These are facts that in some degree are connected with the state of mind so easily arising in idealists and mystics. Matter is scorned rather than spiritualized. Where does this contempt for matter come from? It arises because today's idealists and mystics are frequently the greatest materialists, because they are so controlled by matter that they can resist it in no other way than by dreaming themselves into a contempt of it. Their contempt, however, is only imagined. They despise matter, because they themselves cannot cope with it. They are too deeply immersed in it.**

Until recent centuries humans found themselves surrounded with an environment, weather conditions, and a cultural life which was already laid out for them by the great teachers, prophets, and the gods (spiritual beings) who taught them and led them. One can find ample examples of these great humans in the Bible and other ancient texts. But with the advent of our materialistic science around 1453 A. D., humans began to take charge of the world they found themselves in, and no longer believed in those gods which their forebears looked to for guidance. Humans began to provide their own guidance, to draw out of themselves what formerly they had drawn out of the gods. Whereas Homer could write, "Speak to me, O Muse, of the wrath of Achilles" in the opening lines of the *Iliad*, now writers speak and write out of their own voices.

**[page 224] Actually, man has been able to arrive at a certain point in his evolution because he did not have to contribute anything to it. In the course of earth's evolution, we have proceeded from the beginning of earthly existence itself. In the beginning of earth evolution divine spiritual beings provided for us; they incorporated into the earth's organization the soil, the climate, finally even the cultural life. You know that there were great teachers in the mystery centers whose teachers were in turn the gods themselves. Thus, nothing human had been stored up; instead, the divine had been taken over. The gods had provided for mankind everything that was at hand in good order. This has essentially vanished in our time; I have shown you this in the most varied connections. The catastrophic character of our age is connected with this dissipation of the primeval, divine content and the creation of a new content by human beings on their own. They then create this new content not merely for human life in the cultural, political and economic sphere, but also for what issues forth from these domains into the life of nature; and the future of the earth must be man's own creation, his own concern.**

We must raise an alarm to alert all of humankind of the tests we are faced with. We must alert humans everywhere that the future of human and cosmic evolution depend on them. If they continue sleep through this time, they will bear the bitter fruit of lost opportunity. Only a fully awake human being can properly work for the cosmic evolution which we will all face.

**[page 224, 225] In regard to humanity's present mentality, therefore, the views of a person like *Spengler* are quite correct, unless men awaken that inner fountain which can give rise not only to creative impulses for the activities of the cultural, political and economic spheres, but which must act creatively out of these spheres for all of earth life, including the life of nature itself. For civilization will not only pass over into barbarism, as *Spengler* has already proven scientifically, but the whole earth will approach its doom, will never reach its goal. If only people would imbue themselves with this awareness that the future events of earth evolution depend on humanity itself! For then, out of this feeling, the powerful impulse could emerge that we need today in order to lead the obviously declining order of the world again into an ascending direction, in order to challenge the drowsy souls who refuse to see what is actually happening, in order to transform these sleepy souls into awakened ones. We need an alert humanity today. Only a watchful mankind can survey what occurs around it and know the tasks placed upon it by the course of human evolution, in regard to which present mankind is being confronted with severe tests.**

Not only are the majority of souls today drowsy, but they do not seem to have an enthusiasm for revitalizing their spiritual life. Steiner likens them to expectant parents who would wish for stillborn children — instead of live children who would bring a spark of life into their world. Come to think of it, every abortion performed by a doctor accomplishes the elimination of a spark of life into the world of its parents, so one could consider the prevalence of abortion in our culture today versus its rarity in Steiner's day as a sign of a decrease in the vivification of the spiritual sphere in the past 80 years.

**[page 234] You see from this that what we draw forth from spiritual science for everyday life has to do most intensely with realities. One could really despair when one sees how**

**little actual energy and enthusiasm is generated in humanity for this vivification of the spiritual sphere. One feels as though humanity were imbued by the same attitude of mind as is a person who desires to see only stillborn children brought into the world, and who does not wish the spark of life to enter the body that otherwise would come into the world dead. This is how one feels about modern mankind. Humanity sits upon a dead culture, as if stuck with pitch to comfortable seats, not willing to rise to the enthusiasm of vivifying the spiritual life. Enthusiasm is what we need above all else, for this spiritual life will not be revitalized out of its dead traditions.**

Steiner mentions in several other places that thinking in the brain parallels the elimination function of the digestive system. This is a difficult process to comprehend for materialistic people who have accepted as fact that their brain thinks out of a creative process — to ask them to accept that their brain thinks out of a destructive process is quite a jolt.

**[page 252] Here, not only upbuilding, but disintegrating processes are at work; matter is forever falling out into nothingness. Thus, we are not dealing with an upbuilding in the brain. Any constructive process only serves to nourish the brain, not to produce thinking. If you wish to focus on those brain processes that have something to do with thinking, and you wish to compare them to the remaining organism, you must not compare them to the constructive processes, the processes of growth, but to the processes of elimination. The brain is constantly involved in elimination, and, as I said, the processes of destruction, of disintegration, of death, are the accompanying phenomena of intelligence. If our brain were incapable of elimination, we would be unable to think. If our brain would only contain upbuilding processes, we would exist in a dull, instinctive condition; at most, we could attain to quite dim dreams. We arrive at light-filled clear thinking precisely because the brain secretes and eliminates substances. Thinking only functions parallel to processes of elimination. It is only because the human organization eliminates what is useless to it that thinking establishes itself out of the spiritual world.**

But it is certainly clear that if we build a culture out of our brain-based thinking it will be something destructive. One can certainly point to the French Revolution's aftermath and the Soviet Union as two prominent examples where the best efforts of humankind to build a society based on human thinking wreaked destruction upon its people. Steiner asks us to think about Trotsky or Lenin traveling to Russia to create a society based on the natural scientific thinking of their time. Eighty-five years later, we already know the answer to the question that begins the next passage.

**[page 253] What kind of a social order will that turn out to be? It will be a reproduction of what takes place within the brain during the thinking processes. Do not think that what we develop without is different from what we develop within, if the only processes employed are thinking processes! If you try to establish a social order with them, it will be something destructive, just as thinking processes in the brain cause destruction — exactly the same thing. Thinking, applied to reality, destroys. One can gain insight into such matters only when one looks into the deeper secrets of the being of man and the whole world. This is why humanity needs to pay attention to these things if any sort of valid judgment concerning public affairs is to be rendered. It does no good at all today to base discussions about any social concerns on the suppositions of the past few centuries, for they no longer hold water.**

When we tell a friend that we went to see Bill Miller, he does not expect from that statement that we brought grain to be milled. Names like Miller, Smith, Cooper, Clark used to be words that specified certain occupations. Today the proper name no longer points to an occupation, but merely to a specific person. Steiner tells us that all words, not just those representing occupations, will be changed in a similar fashion over the next few millennia. Words will soon resemble gestures which point to reality rather than reality itself. [Alfred O. Korzybski](#) led the way in the past century to our understanding this aspect of reality

vis-a-vis words by telling us that the map is *not* the territory, it cannot represent all the territory. Words are abstractions equivalent to maps. To equate a map with the territory it represents leads to serious semantic reactions which create problems ranging from minor inconvenience to severe insanity in the extreme. Some have even proposed the convention of English Prime or *E'* — a usage of English in which one avoids the use of the verb *to be* for stating an identity, except in its negation, as in "the map is *not* the territory." This mirrors the direction that Steiner tells us in the next passage that the laws of human evolution point to.

**[page 259] They indicate that man's whole conception, his whole soul life, is becoming emancipated from words. Words are gradually becoming mere gestures that simply indicate the being or thing in question, no longer designating and explaining anything fully. . . . if one sets forth spiritual-scientific facts, one is above all presenting facts of the future; something is represented that in future time will have to become the possession of mankind.**

The future does not exist now, but will come into being based on processes that exist in the present. Consider putting a program into a computer — one needs to have a program which loads the program in. How does that program get in if unless there is already a program loader within the computer? This leads to the bootstrap paradox which gives us the word "boot" up a computer or rebooting a computer. The future can only enter the world via the processes (program loaders) which exist in the present.

Consider how a paradigm change which occurs in the world. One of the major difficulties of entering a new paradigm is that we must talk of the new paradigm with the concepts and constructs of the old paradigm. When we study a new foreign language, we must use our native language until we are able to converse in the new language. When we build robots, we must use hand tools until we are able to use the robotic tools to build robots(1). Thus as our own native language changes over the next several thousand years, we will have to learn to express the new gesture-based pointing-to nature of the new language forms using the specific-word language forms of today. Reading Rudolf Steiner's works is good practice in learning to read and write in this new fashion as his very subject requires him to do so, and he does so consciously(2). One technique he uses is to use two sentences instead of one to give a multi-ordinal view of the situation.

**[page 260] One who follows my descriptions in the various fields of spiritual science, including the recent ones into the field of social life, will find that I am always at pains to describe a matter from many different sides. As a rule, I use two sentences instead of one, because the first sentence indicates the matter from one side, the other one from the other side. This is then supposed to call forth a desire in the listener or reader to approach the matter by transcending the words and sentences, as it were.**

One of the handicaps to modern human beings in understanding aspects of the world is the prevalent lack of understanding of the process of reincarnation. Locked into a view of immortality that excludes unbornness prevents one from understanding great events in human history such as the Renaissance.

**[page 262] When we move in ordinary life from one locality to another, we take with us not only our clothes but also our soul-spiritual belongings. In like manner, one brings along into this world through conception and birth the consequences and effects of what has been undergone in the spiritual world. In the period that mankind has presently lived through, concerning which we know that it began around the middle of the fifteenth century A.D., man, through his spirit-soul entity, brought along forces of the soul life devoid of images, forces containing no pictures. It is for this reason that, above all, the intellectual life has arisen and has flourished. During this period, prior to descending through conception and birth into physical existence, the human being was endowed in a sense with something lacking in capacities, lacking in images. This explains**

**the slight inclination mankind had for developing original creations of fantasy since the middle of the fifteenth century. Human fantasy is, in truth, only a terrestrial reflection of super-earthly imagination. The Renaissance does not contradict this, for just the fact that one had to resort to a "renaissance," not a "naissance," clearly shows that original forces of imagination were not present, only a fantasy that required fructification from earlier periods. In short, the fact is that the human soul was permeated in a certain sense with forces that are devoid of images.**

But human evolution has progressed since the fifteenth century and new forces are appearing as a result of the souls being incarnated into our time who are bringing along images from the spiritual world. This is a primary cause for the unsettled nature of the times we live in, but it is a time full of artistic productions of these images as any visit to a modern art gallery or museum will provide ample evidence. When artists allow these images imbedded in their astral body to come out in the form of external artworks, the egos of their patrons are often upset and cannot accept these new artworks as worthy or useful. They will often reject them outright. This shows us that the prevalent egos (especially non-artistic egos) today lack the element which would unite them with images.

**[page 263] When pictures are brought along out of spiritual existence into physical life, and if salvation is to arise for the human being and his social life, they must under all circumstances be united with the astral body, whereas the element lacking images only unites with the ego. It is predominantly the unfolding of the ego which has blossomed in humanity since the fifteenth century.**

**Now, however, the time is beginning when man has to feel: Within me there live pictures from my prenatal existence; during my earthly life, I have to make them come alive. I cannot accomplish this merely with my ego; I must work deeper into myself, and this must reach as far as my astral body.**

How does someone appear who resists the images indwelling in their astral body — those image from a previous lifetime? Steiner tells us that they are "insipid, dry people who would really like to exclude any education by means of fairy tales, legends and anything illuminated by imagination."

**[page 263, 264] In our Waldorf School system, we have made it our priority that the lessons and instruction of the children entering primary education will proceed from pictorial descriptions, from the life-filled presentation of images, from elements taken from legends and fairy tales. Even what the children are initially suppose to learn about the nature and processes of the animal kingdom, the plant and mineral kingdoms, is not supposed to be expressed in a dray, matter-of-fact manner; it is suppose to be clothed in imaginative, legendary, fairy tale-like elements. For what is seated deep within the child's soul are the imaginations that have been received in the spiritual world. They seek to come to the surface. The teacher or educator adopts the right attitude towards the child if he confronts the child with pictures. By placing images before the child's soul, there flash up from its soul those images, or, strictly speaking, those forces of pictorialized representation which have been received before birth or, let us say, prior to conception.**

My wife and I have seventeen grandchildren currently and I buy about a hundred or so children's books each year for birthday and Christmas presents. I am always on the lookout for legends and fairy tales, because the well-known ones are tried and true ways of inspiring the vivid imaginations of children. Children not only have a way of vividly imagining stories, but the archetypal images which confront them from classic fairy tales and legends trigger specific imaginations which each child has brought into this lifetime — if these imaginations are not stimulated before the child reaches five years old, a window of opportunity may be lost for an entire lifetime.

If you doubt what Steiner says about images called up from one life prior to conception, read my [Childhood of Humanity](#) essay and pay particular attention to the material about and by William

Wordsworth, the famous English poet. When he says that we come to Earth and find everything around us "appareled in celestial light", he is talking about pictorial imaginations from before conception, which can easily be called to mind only if one is younger than five. We soon forget the images unless some caregiver has assisted us in calling them to mind before we pass five years of age.

As a young adult raising children, I thought the alphabet books with the pictures representing each letter, as in A is for Apple with a drawing of an apple, G is for Goose, etc., were too childish for my children. Now I read Steiner telling me that I was wrong. I was, in fact, one of those dry, prosaic people guiding the education of my children. Luckily I was too busy working to do them any harm so far as I know.

**[page 264] If these forces are suppressed, if the dry, prosaic person guides the education of the child today, he confronts the child from earliest childhood with something that is actually not at all related to the child, namely, the letters of the alphabet. For our present letters have nothing to do anymore with the letters of earlier pictorial scripts. They are really something that is alien to the child; a letter should first be drawn out of a picture, as we try to do it in the Waldorf School. The child is confronted today with something devoid of a pictorial element; the young person, on the other hand, possesses forces in his body — naturally, I am referring to the soul when I am now speaking of "body," for after all, we also speak of the "astral body" — forces seated in his body that will burst out elsewhere if they are not brought to the surface in pictorial representation.**

Here's another spot where I ask you to ask yourself how you might know if what Steiner is saying here makes sense? What if he were to make a prediction about what societal conditions were to result from such attitudes and educational processes as used in our often dry and prosaic public schools? Then you would be able to tell if his prediction has come true in our time, a full eighty-five years later, wouldn't you? Here's his prediction.

**[page 264] What will be the result of modern mistaken education? These forces do not become lost; they spread out, gain existential ground, and invade the thoughts, feelings and impulses of the will after all. And what kind of people will come into being from that? They will be rebels, revolutionaries, dissatisfied people; people who do not know what they want, because they want something that one cannot know. This is because they want something that is incompatible with any possible social order; something that they only picture to themselves, that should have entered their fantasy but did not; instead, it entered into their agitated social activities.**

When I grew up in the mid-Fifties a famous movie was "Rebel Without A Cause". Ask yourself what kind a rebel is that — a rebel with no cause. Will not such rebels be "people who do not know what they want" exactly as Steiner predicted above? Not knowing what he wanted led James Dean's character into agitated social activities that caused the death of his best friend -- plus he himself nearly got killed on several occasions. It is now fifty years later and the rebels without a cause appear daily on television when they shoot friends and relatives or strangers at a religious meeting, a office building, an elementary school or high school. What were isolated incidents back then are daily front page headlines today. It's as if the entire world were filled with rebels without any apparent causes. Steiner shows us clearly that these are not random acts of cruelty, but rather a direct consequence of our "modern mistaken education."

**[page 265] Therefore, we can say that people who, in an occult sense, do not have honest intentions in regard to their fellowmen, do not have the courage to admit to themselves: "If the world is in a state of revolt today, it is really heaven that is revolting." It means the heaven that is held back in the souls of men, which then comes to the fore, not in its own form, but in its opposite — in strife and bloodshed instead of imaginations. No wonder that the individuals who destroy the social fabric actually have the feeling that they are doing good. For what do they sense in themselves? They feel heaven within themselves; only it assumes the form of a caricature in their soul.**

What are we to do if we wish to overcome this tendency towards revolt? We must start, of course, with proper education for our children that imbues them with living imaginations from legends and fairy tales before they are five, but after that the children become adults and we, as those adults, must endeavor to permeate our lives with insight of the spiritual world. We cannot run the number some teenagers use on their parents, "I never learned math in grade school, how can you expect to do well in math in high school?"

**[page 266, 267] We have now reached the point in human evolution where, out of sleep as well, we draw imaginations that seek to indwell not only our ego, where rationality reigns supreme, but also our astral body. If we work against this, we once more reject something that is trying to rise into consciousness out of the depths of the human soul; we also work against the whole course of mankind's evolution, and what matters here is that we do not oppose humanity's development but work in harmony with it. We do this in the first place by permeating our culture once again with as many elements as possible connected in some way with the spiritual world. Naturally, in regard to external life, it is important for us to imbue ourselves with what is grasped from the spiritual world; hence, that we also imbue ourselves with a true spiritual insight, to fill ourselves with something that in this physical world cannot be comprehended in terms of the physical world.**

At a private club devoted to intellectual pursuits I recently gave a lecture on the two Jesus children. When a friend in Australia, who was familiar with the possibly strenuous objections that might be raised to such a lecture by those luciferic spirits who claim to be fundamentalist Christians, heard about my upcoming lecture, she wrote me "Who are you bringing along for protection?" My response to her was Mi-cha-el the Archangel — for the subject of the two Jesus children is one that Mi-cha-el would wish to have discussed in our time. The idea that it required two Jesus children — each born of a Joseph and Mary, one of Solomon descent and one of Nathaniel descent, to prepare one perfect Hebrew male, Jesus of Nazareth, to receive the Christ in the baptism in the Jordan — is the one alluded to by Steiner in the passage below. In short, one cannot understand why there were two Jesus children using merely the dry, prosaic thinking of an ego immersed in the material world — one must be imbued with the concepts and processes of spiritual science.

**[page 269] It is true that Christianity confronts human beings in such a way that they can only grasp its essence, especially the nature of the Mystery of Golgotha, if they come round to a comprehension of something supersensible. For one must envisage that Christ, a being Who formerly had not been connected with earth evolution, united with the human being, Jesus of Nazareth, and that supersensible events took place. One must conceive of the fact that in regard to the event of Golgotha, even birth and conception differed from the way they take place in ordinary human circumstances. In short, the demand is made by Christology to understand the Mystery of Golgotha in a supersensible sense.**

If there were two Jesus children it can only be because it was necessary to prepare one Hebrew male to receive the Christ. Many modern theologians deny the Christ in Jesus and portray what they say was the *one* Jesus who, as a humble man of Nazareth, did extraordinary but human things. All those New Testament miracles they attribute to hyperbolic prevarications by his friends and disciples. Steiner hints that this kind of theologian might be called "Jesus-ists" — were not the contracted name already taken by the order of St. Ignatius Loyola.

**[page 269] A Protestant theologian, with whom I once discussed this matter, told me after we had talked about it for some time, "Yes, we modern theologians should really not call ourselves Christians any longer, for we no longer have Christ. If the name 'Jesuit' had not been appropriated already, we should really claim it for ourselves." This is not something I am saying; it is something that a Protestant theologian of the modern**

### **school said to me as a confession of his own soul.**

To revisit the field of pedagogy, Steiner equates the teaching of children to an art which requires the highest skills of creativity and originality. Art, as I point out in my [essay](#) of the same name, is the process of the destruction of sameness wherever one finds it. No where is "sameness" found to be thicker and more prevalent than in the pedagogical edicts of the so-called educators and school board members of our time. Those edicts basically banish the possibility for a teacher to be creative and original by filling the teacher's day with required and prescribed originalities. One should appreciate the paradox of a pedagogical program which specifies how one is to be creative or original. It is as risible as the Betty Crocker Cake Mix label which proclaimed, "Be Creative! And Here's How You Do it!"

**[page 270, 271] This is the deeper reason why, in the last issue of *Soziale Zukunft* (Social Future), which is a magazine dealing with education, I described education and instruction as an art in the most eminent sense. In the field of pedagogy, teachers and educators must actually proceed in the way an artist does — indeed, they must proceed in a style surpassing that of an artist. It does not do to impose abstract principles in an abstract pedagogical sense. What matters is that one penetrates the being of man, and, through this comprehension of man's nature, arrives at the point of reading from the inner human being what one has to do in each case. An artist who is creating something cannot go by abstract rules. The purpose of aesthetics is not that of establishing rules for the artists. An artist cannot even go by what he has created yesterday when he creates something today. At every moment he must endeavor to be creative and original. This is how the teacher must be, in a still higher sense. One must not say based on a certain attitude of mind: "Well, if we are looking for teachers like that, we have to wait another three to four hundred years." The only reason that we do not have such teachers as yet is because we say things like this. We can have them the very moment that we have the strong power of faith in it; but it is the strong, not the passive, power of faith that is needed here. Therefore, what is important here is that when we return from sleep, upon awakening, we truly experience in the astral body and imprint into the etheric body what the astral body experiences from the moment of falling asleep until waking up. It can only take place through pictorializing the whole cultural life.**

Remember our earlier discussion of the deleterious effects of the verb "to be" used for identity? Here's a passage in which Steiner discusses the identical subject — the usage of the verb "is" as a copula or connecting link between two concepts that are equated as identical. Before this passage in the text Steiner had just finished reminding us of his premise that our languages are transforming words into gestures which merely point towards a reality, the same way that proper names have lost their connection to such meanings as smith or miller or cooper.

**[page 274, 275] For philosophers, I have something even better to say. Philosophers of recent times have set up any number of theories. When I say, "The child is small," they have a concept of "small;" they have a concept of "child." The "is," however, the copula of the two — what does it mean? Oh, much has been written about this copula even in the philosophical sense, not just from the grammatical or philological standpoint. Everything that has been written about it suffers from the fact that this verb, "is," no longer has the meaning of which people speak. It has already emancipated itself from its meaning and the soul content has become a different one. Thus, people in fact philosophize about something that no longer lives in the soul in an alive sense.**

Do teachers in a dry, prosaic so-called free public school understand that they are dealing with a class full of beings who have descended from a spiritual world? The very thought of that is laugh provoking, so far it is from the way most public school teachers regard their charges today. More often than not, they regard being a teacher as a job, with written specifications and work plans which have to be pre-approved by their superiors before they can proceed with the job. That strikes me as the job of a civil engineer whose

job it is to construct a building according to an established building code. What we might expect if we try to build children into functional adults as an engineer builds a skyscraper? Surely we should not be surprised if the steel girders we expect to hold our structures rigid in the children's back were to melt and many of our superb constructions were to fall into disarray and ruin?

**[page 290, 291] The awareness, possessed by the teacher, that, through the gate of the physical body, he is dealing with a being that has descended to him out of spiritual worlds, is the basis of the deep reverence the teacher has for that human being, which, as a soul-spirit being, increasingly takes on form in the physical body. One may or may not believe it today — a teacher who has this reverence for the developing human being possesses a secret power within himself by means of which he teaches and educates quite differently from a teacher who does not have this reverence, and who believes that the human being comes into existence at the moment his physical body is released from the mother's body. For one teaches and educates not only by means of concepts and ideas. Above all, one educates with the mysterious powers and forces that pass as imponderables from teacher to child.**

What might we expect if the imponderables associated with following a canned set of specifications and lesson plans for a child were passed along from the average public school teacher to the child? If the frustration with excessive paperwork and over-regulation by the school boards were to pass along? Might we not expect a rebellion by the children as they grow into adults without a clue as to what it is they are rebelling against? Just as a creative, original and nutritious meal can always be seen on the faces of those eating it, so too can the work of a creative and original teacher be seen on the faces of the students as they go excitedly through their school days and years and graduate with a sense of sadness as they leave behind the most enjoyable and interesting time of their lives. As Arthur Schopenhauer, the German Philosopher said, "Talent hits a target no one else can hit; Genius hits a target no one else can see." What we need are children to be nurtured into a maturity which allows them to hit a target no one else can see. Every child is born a genius and we need an educational system which will not stifle that genius, but rather fructify it, bring it to its fullest fruition. Educate comes from the Latin, *e-ducare*, which means to draw out as one stretches a ductile metal to create a wire — to educate means to draw out the inherent genius of each individual child and allow it flourish.

If one thinks that materialism is the way to go, one should consider the word of Christ Jesus, who said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away!" Words are not material substance, but we have it on excellent authority that they will outlast the material substance we see and touch all around us. What is one to do if the only way one used words was to name material objects, to talk about the appearance of the surface of those objects, or to discuss the sounds the objects make, and then one comes to the day when there are no such things as objects anymore, anywhere or anywhen? Is it ever too early to begin noticing that we live in a spiritual world which is only temporarily filled with material objects for us between waking and sleeping, between life and death? Tonight we will go to sleep and the objects of the material world will disappear. Tomorrow morning we will awake and those objects will re-appear to us. One day we will die and those material objects will disappear. Then some day later we will be re-born into a human body and will carry with us imaginations of the world we spent the time between death and a new birth with us. Will we not want parents, caregivers, and teachers who will cherish the unique gifts of genius we bring with us from the world of genius, who will encourage us to nurture our genius? These are my questions. The answers are up to you, in freedom and light.

~~~~~ **footnotes** ~~~~~

**Footnote 1.** This process of paradigm change is explained more fully in my review of [Language Structure and Change](#) from which the preceding two sentences have been excerpted.

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

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**Footnote 2.** Which it cannot be said that the authors of [Language Structure and Change](#) did in their book, as the letter to them contained in my review illustrates.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)

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