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## *A READER'S JOURNAL*

**Transforming the Soul, Volume 2  
9 Lectures in Berlin, Jan-May 1910, GA#59**

**by**

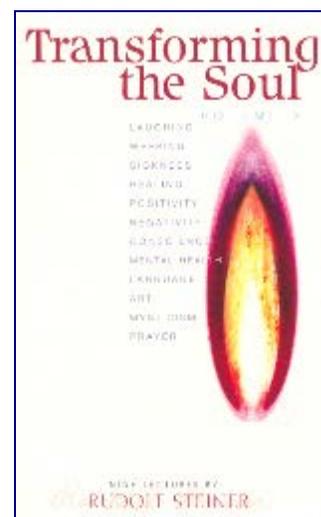
**Rudolf Steiner**

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2012

Chapter: Spiritual Science



In the first lecture on "Spiritual Science and Language", Steiner calls our attention to words which become a map of the territory, but which we can confuse with the territory. In the Norwegian Boy Scout Handbook in the section on Map Reading is the statement, "When the terrain differs from the map, believe the terrain." This wise advice was given me in 1974 by my supervisor, Per Holst, who was earlier a Boy Scout in Norway. Per's words rang in my ears as I encountered the work of Alfred Korzybski who famously wrote, "The map is not the territory", and I went on to read and study Korzybski's foundational work in General Semantics, [Science and Sanity](#), in 1977(1). Over the years, I have noticed how some people, after a beautiful and intricate territory I have described to them, will facilely respond, "I know that." They had only absorbed what I related to them on the level of words, but they had blithely evinced the confidence of knowing everything about something that I had merely described to them, myself not fully understanding it and still holding unanswered questions about it in my own mind. Here is how Steiner describes such people.

**[page 2] Our concepts frequently cling to words, and when not fully mature a person will easily confuse a word, and or what the word has instilled into him, with the concept. Hence the inability of some people to construct for themselves a conceptual framework that reaches beyond what is contained in the words commonly used in their environment.**

Steiner uses the wonderful metaphor, *will-o'-the-wisp* thinking and explains how the work of the I ( *i.e.*, ego) on the astral body helps to corral such flighty thinking.

**[page 5] If the ego has still not done much work on the astral body human beings are slaves to their instincts and desires; but when they purify these and transform them into virtues, when they have brought logical order into their will-o'-the-wisp thinking, then a part of the astral body has been transformed, and has changed from a product in which the ego takes no part into a product of the ego.**

The simple change from "I know that" to "I have heard something about that" can be the first step in allowing the ego to work on one's astral instincts, but it requires an effort of the ego to make the first step whereas an immediate "I know that" comeback can dismiss the possibility

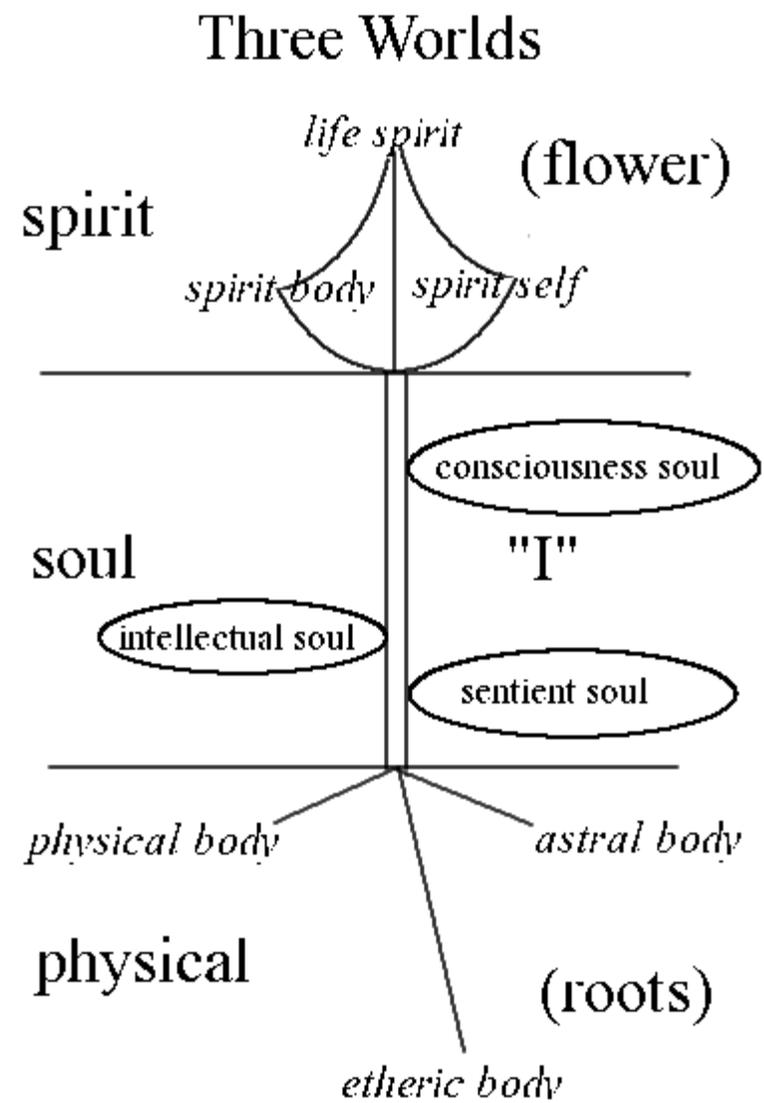
that one's astral instincts can be wrong. Good listeners never have facile comebacks because they have learned to ask open-ended questions and always assume there is more for them to learn in any situation.

In my review of Jung & Steiner, I created the diagram at right to show how the seven-fold human being can be related to the living plant which exists in three worlds, the underground roots, the stem with leaves climbing into the air, and the leaves-turned-into-flowers producing fruit and seeds for a future incarnation. For humans, the three bodies of spirit self, life spirit, and spirit body will appear fully only in the distant future when humankind, like the plant which has produced its flowers and seeds, is ready to die to its earthly condition. These three bodies require work by the I on the three root-bodies of astral, etheric, and physical, and the work proceeds in that direction, with astral being the first and easiest, then etheric, and lastly the physical body. When the work on the physical body is completed, the spirit body replaces it, and the physical body is no longer necessary. That is my understanding of the completion of the evolution of

humankind facing each and every one of us. Which leads to a question for you, dear Reader, do you begin today to exercise your I to work on your astral instincts and desires, to purify them by burning the dross aspects in this lifetime? If you choose not to, which is your option, you will be faced with doing so in your next lifetime. Similarly we will go through purifying the etheric body and physical body in turn.

Where are we now? The purification of our three root bodies to create our three spirit bodies requires a conscious effort of our I, an ongoing effort which will last far into the future. The purification of our three root bodies to create our three soul bodies, the stem section of the Three Worlds plant diagram, has already been mostly completed unconsciously by our I, and thus each of us possesses to various degrees the three soul components of *sentient soul*, *intellectual soul*, and *consciousness soul*, shown as leaves on the stem of plant. This is the big picture of our progress to date, and progression into the future as human beings.

What does all this mean to me today as a human being? As Steiner gives his overview below, of this progression from the past to the future, note how he describes the various functions of each body are augmented by the work of the I: how the astral body's desire is morphed into gratification via the sentient body, the intellectual soul yields memory and rationality functions, and the consciousness soul our day-time consciousness, all a result of work by our I on our various bodies.



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[page 6, 7] Initially then, we see the human being as a four-membered being consisting of physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego. And just as we have three members of our being deriving from the past, we are also able to speak of three members of the human being developing in the future, created by the work of the ego. We can therefore speak of a seven-membered human being by adding to the physical body the etheric body, the astral body and the ego, the spirit self, life spirit and spirit man. But when we regard these last three members as something distant, belonging to the future evolution of humankind, we have to add that the human being is to a certain extent already at present preparing for such a development. Consciously the human being will work with his ego on the physical, etheric and astral body only in the far distant future. But in the subconscious, that is, out of a dimly conscious activity, the ego has already transformed these three members of its being. The results are already in existence. The inner members of the human being that we described in previous lectures were only able to come about because of the work the ego did on them. From the astral body it fashioned the sentient soul as a kind of inner mirror image of the sentient body. While the sentient body transmits what we call gratification (as far as man is concerned sentient body and astral body are synonymous, and without the sentient body we would have no gratification), this is mirrored internally in the soul as desire, so we ascribe desire to the soul. So the two things, that is, the astral body and the transformed astral body or sentient body, belong together, just as gratification and desire belong together. In the past the ego worked similarly on the etheric body. This led to human beings acquiring within them, in their souls, the intellectual soul, so that the intellectual soul, which is at the same time the bearer of memory, is connected with a subconscious transformation performed by the ego in the etheric body. And finally, the ego also already worked in the past on the transformation of the physical body, so as to enable human beings to have their present form. And what resulted from this transformation is what we call the consciousness soul, by means of which human beings can acquire knowledge of the outer world. In this way too we can speak of a seven-membered being, for through the preparatory, subconscious work of the ego there arose the three soul members: the sentient soul, intellectual soul and consciousness soul. But all this was done by an unconscious or subconscious activity of the ego on its sheaths.

"Everything which lives must come from something living" is a strong principle of Steiner's anthroposophy. One need not believe this to begin a study of his work, but it will become clear the further one progresses in the study. One will also come to understand intellectually the salient difference between humans and animals — which animal activists have yet to learn — that human beings each possess an individual spirit, an I, which animals do not possess, depending as they must on a species-level spirit, or Group Soul.(2) The Group Soul was a stage humans went through during the Old Moon stage of cosmic evolution, when animals of that stage were still at the plant stage of evolution, in effect, growing out of the vegetative stage of the Moon-Earth(3).

In computer systems there is an equivalent principle of living coming from living: the bootstrap principle. To get a working program (i.e., living one) into a computer there must already be a working program (living one) in the computer. If there were not, the computer could never work! Starting a computer is like lifting yourself by your own bootstraps or shoestrings. Ever tried it? Won't work, right? It just makes sense that you can't do it. So, you have no problem understanding that a non-working computer must be "booted up", right? Booting means overcoming the bootstrapping paradox, i.e., running that one program which can *not* be loaded into the computer by the computer, the bootstrap program. That bootstrap program must be coded by a human mind, and loaded by human hands into the hardware of every new computer at the factory, at least once for every new model computer(4). Then it can be replicated into every replica of the new model computer, like one Group Soul goes into every animal of a species, making computers, if you will, into the level of animals at some level, but never will they reach the level of

humans, lacking an individual spirit. Artificial Intelligence experts seem to be oblivious to the basic requirement for human intelligence and all their failures will continue to demonstrate their misunderstanding of human intelligence. The best they will be able to do is imitate animal intelligence, but never human intelligence.

The human mind which designs and installs the bootstrap program in computers must necessarily be outside of the computer and involved in its design. Now, switch to thinking of human beings who are alive, how did our *living* get installed into us? What living beings were responsible for our living? Our parents, that's an easy answer. But track back to the beginning, and you will logically find that it must have come from living beings before there were human beings, makes sense? The answers to this question of human bootstrapping requires a study of cosmic and human evolution, and can be found in Steiner's [The Outline of Occult Science](#).

In this next passage, one can begin to see how spirituals beings operated on human beings to install the bootstraps which brought life into us.

**[page 8] Now if we realize that everything we have around us in the outer world is spirit, that there is a spiritual foundation to everything material, etheric and astral, as we have emphasized so often, then we have to acknowledge that just as the ego itself works as a spiritual force from the inside outwards in the course of the development of the three sheaths, so must spiritual beings — or we could equally well call them spiritual activities — have worked on our physical body, etheric body and astral body before the ego became operative and took the work further(5). We are looking back at a time in which so to speak active work was being done on our astral body, etheric body and physical body of a similar kind to the work the ego does on these three sheaths. That is to say, spiritual creativity, spiritual activity worked on our sheaths, giving them form, movement and configuration, until the ego was ready to become established within them. We have to speak of there being spiritual participation in human development until the before the ego could take over.**

In the next passage Steiner reveals how humans have passed through the Group Soul stage that animals are currently living through. That humans can speak and animals cannot is a direct consequence of the second level of bootstrapping via the spiritual world which humans have proceeded through and animals have not.

**[page 9] This is why in spiritual science we speak of human beings as they are today as having an individual soul, a soul interwoven with an ego, which makes every human being into a self-contained individuality. But before this happened human beings issued from a group soul, a soul entity such as we still refer to today in the animal world as group soul. What we address in each person as the individual soul we find in animals as the foundation of a whole species or kind. A whole animal species has one animal group soul in common. Whereas each human being has an individual soul, animals share one group soul. So before human beings became individual souls, another soul was working in the three sheaths of their being of which we have knowledge today only through spiritual science, a soul that was the precursor of our individual ego. And this precursor of our ego, this soul of a species, this group soul of human beings, which then passed on to the ego the three sheaths they had been working on, the physical body, etheric body and astral body, so that the ego might continue to transform them, this group soul being also transformed from within itself the physical body, etheric body and astral body and ordered them according to itself. And the final activity, fundamental to us human beings before we were endowed with an ego, forms the basis of what we call human speech. When we therefore consider what preceded the life of our consciousness soul, our rational or perceptive soul and our sentient soul, we arrive at work performed on our soul before it was interwoven with the ego, the result of which is laid down in what is**

**expressed today in speech.**

You may be thinking "I don't have an etheric body; if I did I would know it." and similar thoughts about the astral body and I. But have you ever had swollen glands, felt nervous about an upcoming task, or flushed red with embarrassment or paled in fright? Would you accept the presence of the three above bodies if you knew that these were the visible signs of their otherwise mostly invisible presence? The physical body you know about because in this Earth stage of evolution it contains minerals which makes it visible to the eyes and solid to our touch.

**[page 10] What is the outer expression of what we call the four members of the human being based on? Purely externally how is this expressed in the physical body? The physical body of a plant looks different from the physical body of a human being. Why? Because in a plant only the physical body and the etheric body are present, whereas in the human physical body the astral body and the ego are also active. What is active inwardly also refashions the physical body accordingly. What effect did it have on the physical body that an etheric body permeated it?**

**The glandular system is the outer physical expression in man and animal of the etheric body, meaning that the etheric body is the architect or sculptor of what we call the glandular system. The astral body is the creator of what we call the nervous system. That is why we only have the right to speak of a nervous system in those beings in which an astral body is present. What is the expression in a human being of his ego? It is the blood system, and specifically when the blood is under the influence of the warmth of inner life. All the activity the ego expends on human beings when the result is to be incorporated into the physical body is channeled via the blood. This is why blood is such a 'special fluid' (to quote from Goethe's Faust). When the ego elaborates the sentient soul, the rational soul and the consciousness soul, its achievements only penetrate into the physical body because the ego has the ability to affect the physical body via the blood. Our blood is the mediator for the astral body and ego and all their activities.**

If so much of our body and its effects as we know result from invisible spiritual bodies, how about the ideas which pop into our brain unexpectedly? Can they come from equally spiritual origins?

**[page 11, 12] Anyone who claims that concepts and ideas could arise in us even if there were no ideas out there might just as well claim that they can drink from an empty glass. Our ideas would be nothing else than froth and bubble unless they were the very thing that also lives in things outside us as their inherent law. What we bring alive again in ourselves we get from our environment. That is why we can say that everything that surrounds us materially is interwoven with spiritual beings.**

The rest of this first lecture is devoted to language and art, and is worth reading in its entirety. One thought, however, for you Readers who may have wondered as I have about Hamlet's famous soliloquy which begins, "To be or not to be". Whatever could that droll iambic trimeter be referring to? One possibility is the difference between languages which have the verb "to be" and those which do not. In a standard European language we can say "God is good", but in Hebrew the same thought would be said "God the good" as Hebrew lacks the concept of "to be", which is a concept which opposes the astral body and the material world, instead they use the simpler concept *identification* by the etheric body which produces "God the good".

Steiner shows us this key difference between Indo-Germanic languages and the Hebrew language.

**[page 20, 21] . . . all the words of the Hebrew language are formed in principle in such a way that they relate to things in the environment in the way symbols do.**

**In contrast, everything occurring in Indo-Germanic languages is prompted more by what we have called the inner expression of the astral body, the speaker's inner being.**

**The astral body is something that is already connected with consciousness. When people confront the outer world they distinguish themselves from it. If people face the world from the point of view of the etheric body they fuse with it, become one with it. Not until things are mirrored in our [Germanic] consciousness do we distinguish ourselves from them. This whole working of the astral body with its inner experiences is, in contrast to the Semitic languages, expressed in such a wonderful way in the Indo-Germanic languages, in that they have the verb 'to be', the establishing of the fact that there is an existence outside themselves. This is possible because, with our consciousness, we distinguish ourselves from what makes an impression on us from outside. Therefore, if people wanted to say in Hebrew 'God is good' they could not do so directly, for they cannot reproduce the word 'is' as an expression of being, because this arises out of the opposition of the astral body and the outer world. The etheric body makes simple statements. This is why in the Hebrew language you would have to say 'God the good'. It is not confrontation of subject and object that is being described. The Indo-Germanic languages in particular are the ones that show a confrontation with the outer world, ones whose main characteristic is the perception of the outer world.**

We have language and we expect to use it to communicate with others, but with our words can we help others gain access to spiritual worlds? Steiner answers his question with a mighty *Yes!* in this lecture and ends it with a quote from Schiller (page 24):

*Immeasurably deep is the thought;  
And its winged agent is the word!*

In his lectures in [Toward Imagination](#), GA#169, he says on page 55:

**[Page 55] For this psychology claims we do not see into the soul of another person but can only guess at it by interpreting what that person says. In other words, we are supposed to interpret the state of another's soul based on his or her utterances. When someone speaks kindly to you, you are supposed to interpret it! Can this be true? No, indeed it is not true!**

**The kind words spoken to us have a direct effect on us, just as color affects our eyes directly. *The love living in the other's soul is borne into your soul on the wings of the words.* This is direct perception; there can be no question here of interpretation.**

The above text helped me to understand that words can be the vehicle which carries soul meanings from one person to another and led me to write my poem, "On the Wings of Words" contained in the body of my review of [Toward Imagination](#), which ends with this stanza:

*Fill your words with Love  
and send them flying o'er  
For  
Love is borne from soul to soul  
on the wings of words.*

Each lecture, each chapter of each book of Steiner's that I read invariably reveals some mind-boggling aspect of life, shedding light on something familiar, on something about which I might have said blithely, "I know that" before studying Steiner, a study that always takes me from the familiar to the unfamiliar, in a very healthy way. (Page 25) It happens again in his next lecture which deals with "Laughing and Weeping". To show that neither is a commonplace thing, Steiner begins with Zarathustra with a broad smile from birth and a face shining with a divine glow, and segues to Faust who was ready to kill himself when he heard Easter bells and began weeping, feeling a strong pull toward life again.

Directly upon beginning my review of this lecture, I was reminded of Kahlil Gibran who wrote a book entitled, *A Tear and a Smile*, with its first chapter comprising a poem of the same name that begins:

*I would not exchange the sorrows of my heart for the joys of the multitude.  
And I would not have the tears that sadness  
makes to flow from my every pore turn into laughter.  
I would that my life remain a tear and a smile.*

Our ego, our I, residing as it does in the deepest part of spiritual being, does not remain indifferent to the things around us, but instead reacts either with pleasure or displeasure, attraction or repulsion. Perhaps something similar to this has happened to you: you go to some party and dance with a stranger and suddenly feel a warmth and attraction which will not go away but which follows you around wherever you go. Months or years later you talk to that person and find that the feeling was mutual, that both of you were feeling a similar warmth and attraction.

**[page 27, 28] From our observations of the ego's activities between waking and sleeping we can see how it tries to bring itself into harmony with the outer world. If a particular object pleases it, and we have the feeling of being warmed by it, then a bond is formed between us and the object, a part of us wraps itself around it. Basically, this is what we do with our whole environment. Our entire waking life, as regards our inner soul processes, appears to us as the creation of a harmony between our ego and the rest of the world.**

Sometimes the ego fails to achieve harmony, encountering something it doesn't understand, trying in vain to create a relationship to it. We then withdraw our astral body from our physical and etheric body as protection from the thing or person. Steiner explains that during these special times, our astral body goes slack and expands, and as a consequence we smile or laugh.

**[page 30] This withdrawal of the astral body, which would otherwise expend its energies in the physical body to keep its forces together, appears to clairvoyant observation as though the astral body were expanding; when it is liberated like this it spreads out as it were. When we raise ourselves above another being we make our astral body expand like elastic and go slack, whereas it is normally in a state of tension. By doing this we liberate ourselves from a bond of any kind with the other being; we withdraw into ourselves as it were, and raise ourselves above the whole situation. And because everything that happens in the astral body comes to expression in the physical, the physical expression of this expansion of the astral body is laughing or smiling. Every time we laugh or smile in this sort of situation it is connected with an elastic expansion of the astral body.**

When we lose something or someone that has been a vital part of our life, our astral body goes seeking for it, and unable to find it, it contracts, and this leads to weeping.

**[page 31] It may happen, however, that we cannot find the relationship to our environment that our soul needs. Suppose that for some time we have loved someone who is not only closely associated with our daily life but whose very presence is indispensable to our inner life. Then this person is snatched away from us for a time, and with the loss of the person a part of our soul life falls away; a bond between ourselves and a being in the outer world is broken. Because of the attachment that has arisen through this relationship the soul is justified in going in search of this bond. Something has been torn out of the ego, and the effect on the ego is passed on to the astral body. Now because the astral body cannot find what it is looking for it contracts, or more explicitly the ego compresses the astral body.**

Recently I had a chance to meet Annette, the wife of my second cousin, Curtis Matherne. When I realized that I was going to hug an Annette Matherne, a woman with the same name as my transited mother, I was overwhelmed with emotion to the point of tears. I was made aware dramatically of the loss of my mother

some ten years earlier and that brought me to tears.

**[page 32] In its grief the ego has lost something. It contracts because it has become depleted and feels its selfhood less strongly than before; for its unique strength is all the stronger the richer the experiences are that it gathers from the outer world. Not only do we give something to those we love but enrich our own souls by doing so. And when the experiences love gives us are torn from us and the astral body receives gaps and contracts, it tries to regain the forces it has lost by putting pressure on itself. It tries to counteract its depletion by making itself richer again. The tears are not merely an outflow, they are a sort of compensation for the depleted ego. Whereas the ego formerly felt enriched by the outer world, now it feels strengthened in that it produces the tears itself. What people lose in ego-consciousness on a spiritual level they try to compensate for by spurring themselves on to an act of producing something in themselves, the shedding of tears.**

Thus laughter and tears are two prime indications of the presence of the "I" or ego in a human being. Both physiological responses are an adjustment of the ego to its temporarily skewed relationship to the outside world, its best effort to restore a balance.

**[page 32, 33] So we see that it is the ego, the center of the human being, that cannot achieve a satisfying relationship with the outer world, and then either raises itself to inner freedom through laughter or submerges itself in order to gain strength, after a deprivation, through tears. Therefore we will find it comprehensible that the having of an ego, which is what makes us human, is from a certain point of view a requisite for laughter and tears.**

Animals cannot laugh or weep; neither can newborn children. Children are seldom seen to laugh or weep for the first month after birth.

**[page 34] Before the child has acquired the individual character that is uniquely its own it is impossible that its ego can give vent to any relationship with regard to the outer world by way of laughing or crying. For this requires the ego, the most individual part of us, as it seeks for a connecting link to bring it into harmony with its environment. Only the ego can express itself in laughter or tears. For when we consider laughing and weeping we are dealing with the deepest and most inward spirituality in man.**

**Those who refuse to admit any real difference between man and animal will of course find analogies to laughing and weeping in the animal kingdom. But anyone who understands these things properly will agree with the German poet who says that the closest an animal gets to weeping is howling and the nearest thing in the animal world to laughing is grinning.**

Individual humans can be as different from one another, even siblings, as different species of animals. We each have our own biography, but for an animal, the only biography possible is that of its species.

**[page 35] Individual biography is significant for human beings but not for animals, for the essential part of human beings is the individuality which moves on and develops from life to life, whereas in animals it is the species that lives on and evolves. Where there is reluctance to admit to the importance of the biographical element, this is not because the significance that attaches to it is any less than is given to natural-scientific laws belonging to the outer world, but because the person who refuses to admit it cannot feel the importance of phenomena of any kind.**

To summarize: seeking something and finding it (like discovering a story is really a joke) leads to release of the ego and astral body which leads to laughter. Seeking something and not finding it (like a lost loved one) leads to compression of ego and astral body which leads to tears. (Page 39)

Certain people laugh all the time, especially around people they cannot understand, e. g., comic sidekicks in movies and sitcoms. Perhaps you have a friend who is always laughing, as if everything were a joke, using their guffawing as a way of avoiding having to understand anything, especially anything new to them. It is difficult to hold a serious conversation with them, because they have built an impenetrable defense against seriousness.

**[page 39, 40] This is always the case when an immature person laughs at someone else because he cannot understand him. If an immature human being fails to find in the other person the ordinary, limited qualities he expects to find, he does not think it necessary to apply understanding, so he tries to free himself from it, perhaps just because he does not want to understand it. This can easily lead to the habit of becoming free of everything by laughing. In fact certain people often get like this. They laugh or grouse about everything; they do not want to understand anything, so they puff up their astral body and are forever laughing.**

On a recent cruise we had a chance to observe the cruise director over a period of 24 days who continually said the command, "Put your hands together for X" to induce the audience to clap for an entertainer about to perform, one who has just performed, or when introducing some member of the crew that few members of the audience had heard of before. She was forcing an act, namely, applause, that can only and rightly be given after some performance and spontaneously! She created the semblance of spontaneous applause without any heartfelt sentiment behind it. The cruise director had turned herself into a trivial auditory applause sign. She was appealing to applause the way some low comics appeal to laughter, and that's not funny.

**[page 40, 41] For anyone who appeals to laughter is evoking a response which is intended to lift his audience above themselves. But if he presents the matter in such a way that his hearers need not try to understand it but can laugh at it only because it has been brought down to a level where it appears trivial, then he is counting on human vanity — even though his listeners may not be aware of it.**

It is not surprising that the two masks associated with drama are laughter and weeping, smiling and frowning, and that drama has been so popular with every culture since its very beginnings in ancient Greece. Both laughter and weeping are ways people have of strengthening their soul forces. Whether they know that to be the case or not, people are drawn to comedies and tragedies, sitcoms and serious stories, mysteries and thrillers, all of which act to bolster the forces of their I's (egos) and astral bodies.

**[page 41, 42] It is no wonder, then, that we rank among the great sources of education for human development those dramatic creations, the effect of which is to stimulate the soul forces that find expression in laughter and tears. Tragedy presents us with a spectacle that does indeed contract the astral body and so impart firmness and inner cohesion to the ego. Comedy, on the other hand, expands the astral body in as much as people raise themselves above follies and coincidences, and it thereby encourages the liberation of the ego. We can see, now, the connection there is with human development, when tragedies and comedies are brought before us in artistic form.**

Steiner makes the point that during laughing and weeping "the world's secrets are made manifest." Any mature person will have learned that someone who neither laughs nor cries but rather keeps their emotions all bottled up inside will have secrets they have never revealed to anyone. On Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) in New Orleans, one of the joys is walking down the streets where most everyone is smiling and laughing. All the things of the world they may be entangled in on normal Tuesdays are all gone away — they are liberated from their cares for this one special day.

**[page 42, 43] If we ask what a laugh expressed by the human face actually is we now**

**know that it is the spirit telling us that here we see human beings endeavoring to find liberation from being entangled in things unworthy of them, and raising themselves with a smile above the things they may never allow to enslave them.**

In his lecture on mysticism, Steiner warns about the mystical path to the spiritual world, one that might endanger the unprepared human being. It is a path to be taken seriously and not without an experienced guide.

**[page 62] Mysticism is thus an enterprise that springs from a justified urge in the human soul, one that is right in principle, but which should be undertaken only after the soul has first endeavored to make progress in imaginative cognition.**

Steiner word for "imaginative cognition" is Imagination, a process undertaken with careful preparation in full consciousness as the first step in attaining supersensible perception.

**[page 63] So we can finally say that the question 'What is mysticism?' can be answered by stating that mysticism is a venture of the human soul that is often carried out too early in the course of development. So we need not say much about the dangers a premature practice of mysticism can incur. It involves a descent into the depths of the human soul before the mystic has prepared himself in such a way that his inner being can become one with the outer world. He will then often be inclined to shut himself off from the outer world, and fundamentally this is only a subtle, superior kind of egoism. This often applies to mystics who turn away from the outer world and indulge in those feelings of rapture, exaltation and liberation which flood into their souls when this blissful mood pervades their inner life. This egotism can be overcome, however, if the ego is constrained to go forth and let its activity flow into the creating of symbols connected with the outer world. Then a symbol formed on the imaginative level can lead to a truth that removes egoism.**

In the next lecture on Prayer, Steiner explains that a mystic may develop a small flame and allow it to grow on its own, but a spiritual researcher would use their capacities and wisdom to create a brighter flame.

Prayer, Steiner says, cannot be filled with egoism, and he strives "to study prayer absolutely independently of any sectarian or other influence, and entirely in the light of spiritual science." (Page 67) He reminds us of the words of Heraclitus, "Never will you find the boundaries of the soul, by whatever paths you search, so all-embracing are the soul's secrets." If we to are pray, we do best to recognize the "infinite expanses of the life of the soul." (Page 69) Part of the capabilities of the soul is its ability to provide us with data from the past and even the future.

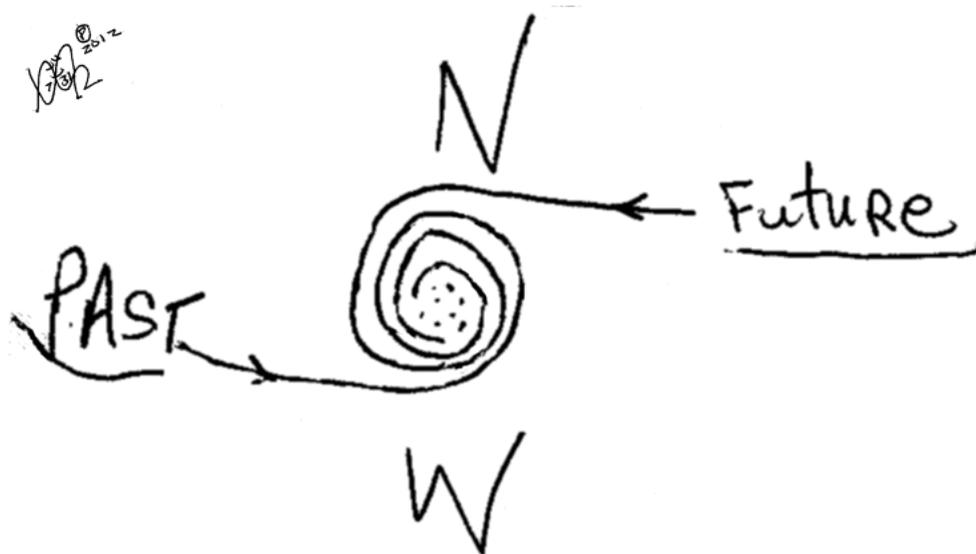
**[page 68] We have to come to realize that the soul is involved in a process of living evolution, and it not only comes from the past and progresses into the future but at every moment of its life in the present it contains something of the past — and even, in a way, of the future. The effects of the past and the effects coming towards us as though from the future reach into the now, especially where our soul's life is concerned. It will seem to anyone who looks more deeply into the life of the soul that two streams, one from the past and one from the future, are continually meeting there.**

In an insight I had years ago, I wrote the following rule, "Remember the Future; it hums in the Present." This rule was intended to remind me that future events give evidence of their coming by some feeling which can arise in the present and humming is definitely an example of a feeling. The feeling might be anything: a feeling of awe, of excitement, of warmth, etc. The feeling one gets when one meets someone who will become an important person in one's life, the feeling we associate with "love at first sight" — here is a person in front of us whom we will enjoy years of marvelous times together and the feeling is like all those marvelous times are distilled into a single feeling, here in the present moment, now, as we

gaze upon this wonderful beauty. We may not know we're in love, because all we have is this ineffable feeling, but it's enough to cause us to pay attention to this person and get closer to them in any way we can.

After I had written down this rule, I watched for examples of it in action and wrote those various examples here: <http://www.doyletics.com/mrules.shtml#mrn36> where you can read them for yourself, but it would be far better if you simply began looking for examples of the process in your own life. Remember this: It is a poor memory which only works in one direction.

Our memories come into us from the past and into us from the future, if only we will notice it from now on. While reading Lecture 4, I penned the diagram at right to show graphically how our present, our NOW, comprises events which flow to us from the PAST and from the FUTURE. They spiral around each other and form the substance of our thoughts and feelings in the *ever-with-us eternity* we live in that we call NOW. To wait anxiously for the future or yearn for the long-gone



past is truly a waste of valuable time we have in the now and belies the inputs flowing into us from both the past and future, inputs which would be blocked otherwise by our anxiety and yearning. Open yourself to the NOW existing in you and accept the thoughts of the PAST and the feelings of the FUTURE in a prayerful attitude. That is my suggestion. Do it good just once in the NOW and the process will remain with you in every moment from now on.

Here is the text which inspired the two streams diagram for me:

[page 69, *italics added* ] Thus there are two streams, one from the past and one from the future, which come together in the soul (will any and everyone who observes themselves deny that?) and produce a kind of whirlpool comparable to the confluence of two rivers. Close observation shows that the effects of the impressions left on us by past experience have made the soul what it is. We are the result of the way we have applied our experiences of the past; we bear within ourselves the legacy of our past doing, feeling and thinking. If we look back over these past experiences, especially those in which we played an active part, we shall very often be impelled to judge ourselves. And we shall realize that we are capable, from our present standpoint, of not approving of every result but of disagreeing with some of our past actions, of even being ashamed of them. If we now look at our present alongside our past we shall have the sneaking feeling that within us there is something far richer and significant than what we have made of ourselves through our individual powers. For if there were not something that extended beyond our conscious selves we should be unable to reproach ourselves, or even to know ourselves. We must admit that we have within ourselves something that surpasses anything we have made use of in ourselves *up to now!*

Here is an example of Steiner using what I call the limitation eraser in the italicized phrase at the end of the sentence above. My model of usage is: You may have never seen the limitation eraser, **up until now**. The bolded phrase at the end of the sentence comprises the limitation eraser. The comma is essential to the limitation eraser because it signals a requirement to *pause*, to take a *deep breath*, and only then *complete the phrase*. If you are skeptical about the need for the comma and its accompanying pause, try this experiment: Read this sentence aloud without pausing between *ourselves* and *up*: "We have something that surpasses anything we have made use of in ourselves up to now!" Completely flat affect, is it not?(6) Now, try it with the comma in place, change *to* to *until*, and take a deep breath at the comma: "We have something that surpasses anything we have made use of in ourselves, up until now!" If you were able to feel the difference, it came to you as an uplifting time-wave from the future! Why? Because you will begin to append the limitation eraser every time you find yourself expressing a limitation *from now on!*

**[page 70] And this intimation of there being something greater within ourselves is the first awakening of God within us; a feeling that something is living in us that is greater than everything within the present scope of our will. And thus we are led to look beyond our limited ego towards a divine/spiritual ego. This is the outcome of a contemplation of the past transformed into perceptive feeling.**

Steiner goes on to explain two moods, one dealing with the past and one dealing with the future. The mood dealing with the past requires holding this question he poses on page 71 as an unanswered question: "How can I acquire the power which has, although unknown to me, lived in all my deeds and experiences?"

**[page 71] Out of this mood, whether expressed by a feeling, a word or an idea, comes the prayer directed at the past. This is one of the devotional paths we can follow in seeking for the divine.**

Note how a mood is a continuous state of being, a process we remain within for some period of time, an expectancy of receiving an answer to the question we asked. This is what I call the "power of the unanswered question" as described here: <http://www.doyletics.com/mrules.shtml#mrn25> — the power is in the posing of a powerful question and waiting patiently for its answer in a mood of expectancy.

The next mood he discusses deals with the future. How can we overcome the distress and anxiety we feel about the future?

You can use the limitation eraser to remove your anxiety and fear and wait in calm patience for the future to unfold for you. Okay, this sounds too simplistic, doesn't it? "Just submission ain't gonna do it for me(7)" — you may be thinking. Well, Steiner has a message for you about the important process you are activating while holding onto your anxiety and fear:

**[page 72] Those who harbor anxiety and fear for what the future may bring might hinder their development, hamper the free unfolding of their soul forces. In fact nothing obstructs this development more than fear and anxiety in face of the unknown future.**

So how do we get rid of our fear and anxiety? We can't, not alone we can't; we need help. The help comes in the form of "Not mine, but Thy will be done." This thought, which when expressed, is the greatest short prayer. The rest of the prayer is the only prayer Christ Jesus taught us, the Lord's Prayer. At times of distress we do best to say, "God — Fill us with your Divine Presence!"

**[page 74, italics added] If the past has taught us that we have more within us than we have ever put to use, then prayer is a cry to the *divine that it may fill us with its presence*. When we have found our way to this knowledge with the feelings of our heart, we can count prayer among the forces that will aid development of the ego.**

Are prayers forces? The skeptical will think not, most of them never having tried prayer, simply avoiding it as mystical mumbo-jumbo. Those skeptics who have tried prayer and given up did so before there was any noticeable effect. I have done this experiment proposed by Steiner and could see the effects on my life.

**[page 83] Those who do recognize [the power of prayer] might try the following experiment. Let them look back over a period of ten years during which they scorned prayer, and then over a second period of ten years during which they recognized its power. If they then compare the two periods they will see that the course of their lives changed under the influence of the forces that enlivened their souls through prayer. Forces can be seen through their effects. It is easy to deny the existence of forces if one does nothing to activate them. What right do people have to deny the power of prayer if they have never tried to bring it to effect in themselves? It is only by putting a force to use that we shall discover its effect.**

When we pray, must we do so inside a church? Steiner asks the following question on Page 85, "Who would deny that a magnificent, gigantic cathedral is like a solidified prayer reaching up to heaven?" He closes with these beautiful lines by Angelus Silesius which should place each of us in the middle of the NOW diagram with time-waves from the Past and Future flowing into us:

*Forsaking time, I am myself eternity,  
Then I am one with God, God one with me.*

The next lecture deals with Sickness and Healing, continuing a theme of this series of lectures of handling dichotomies, dealing with what Steiner calls "radical questions of the soul", going into "significantly deeper questions" about sickness and healing than previous lectures on the subject. (Page 86) Sickness he says can result in either a cure or death, hinting that all events resulting from an illness may advance or retard our development. (Page 87)

Of our four human bodies, the physical is experienced externally and the astral is experienced, *sans* clairvoyance, only internally, in our various desires, pleasures, pain, joy and sadness. The etheric body is also internal; it mediates between the astral and physical body, transferring the astral body's actions to the physical body. Thus while the astral body acts inward, it thrusts the inward feelings towards the etheric body which acts outward, transferring what it receives from the astral body to the physical body. The I (ego) influences the astral body so that we humans may acquire information and knowledge of our physical environment. (Page 88) One might think that animals also acquire knowledge of their physical environment, but lacking an I, they are not able to do so.

**[page 89] Animal life proceeds without any individual, personal knowledge of itself, because the animal does not have a personal ego. Animals experience within themselves what goes on in the astral body, but they do not make use of their pleasure and sadness, sympathy and antipathy to gain knowledge of the outer world. What we call pleasure and sadness, joy and pain, sympathy and antipathy are in animals all expressions of the astral body, but animals do not turn their pleasure into a celebration of the beauty of the world, but remain within the element that brings about their well-being. And animals live immediately within their pain, whereas pain leads human beings out and beyond themselves into an enlightenment with regard to the world, because the ego takes them out of themselves again and unites them with the outer world. So we see how on the one hand the etheric body points inwards to the astral body, whereas the ego leads into the outside world, into our surrounding physical environment.**

Steiner calls the physical and etheric bodies, which remain together while we sleep, the "outer human being" and the I and astral body as the "inner human being" which leaves the outer human being while we sleep, only to return upon awakening. The etheric body acts as the mediator between the inner and outer

human beings. Why do the inner and outer human beings separate at night?

**[page 91] The reason is that the astral body and ego, although they are the bearer of these experiences, do not have these experiences coming to them directly. In living our life the astral body and ego are, under normal conditions, dependent on being in the physical and etheric body in order to have an awareness of these experiences. Our astral body does not experience our soul life directly, for if it were so, then we would also experience it at night when we remain united with our astral body. Our daytime soul life is like an echo or a mirror image. The physical and etheric body reflect for us the experiences of our astral body. Our soul can conjure up for us all that it does, from the moment of waking until we fall asleep, only because it sees its own experiences in the mirror of the physical and etheric body. The moment we leave the physical and etheric body at night, although we still have in us all the experiences of the astral body, we are no longer conscious of them because in order to be conscious of them the reflecting effect of the physical and etheric body is required.**

During the day the inner human streams soul forces to the outer human and by the end of the day, a fatigue sets in and the soul forces need to be refreshed in order to continue the next day, and that requires a separation of the inner and outer humans.

**[page 92] All day long there is active work going on in the soul, constant interaction, and a streaming outwards towards the physical and etheric body. But as evening approaches we see these soul forces passing into the state we call 'tiredness'. They become run down, used up. And we would be unable to go on living if we were not in a position to go, each night, to a world different from the one we inhabit from morning till evening. In the world we live in from morning till evening we can so to speak display our soul life, conjure it up before us. The forces of the astral body enable us to do this. But we exhaust them in the process, and cannot replenish them out of our waking life. We can only replenish them from out of the spiritual world, to which we return every night; and that is why we go to sleep. We could not stay alive without returning to the world of night and fetching the forces which we use up between morning and evening.**

In addition to being a time of refreshment of soul forces, it is also a time during which our daily experiences are transformed into abilities and wisdom. Take the simple act of writing. Do you know anyone who learned to write during one day easily, successfully, and with penmanship without having one or many nights to sleep on it?

**[page 93] When we put pen to paper to express our thoughts we practice the art of writing. We can write, but what were the conditions that enabled us to do so? These necessitated that during a certain period of our lives we went through a whole series of experiences. Just think of all the things you went through as a child, from the first clumsy attempts to hold the pen, put it to paper, and so on, in order to become capable of writing down what you wanted to convey. You may well say thank God you do not have to remember all you went through! For it would be dreadful if every time we did some writing we had to recall all the unsuccessful attempts at doing the strokes, perhaps also the punishments we were given, in order to acquire the art of writing. What has actually occurred? We have been through a real process of development and had a whole series of experiences. These experiences went on over a long time, but they then flow together, form an extract which we call the 'ability' to write, and the rest of them sink down into the indeterminate shadow of forgetfulness. But there is no need to remember them, because our soul has gone up a level in the process. This is one example of how our memories flow together into extracts, essences, which appear in life as our competence, our skills and abilities. This is the way we develop in the course of life. Experiences are transformed initially into abilities of the soul, which can then of course be expressed**

**through the instrumentation of our physical body. All our personal experiences throughout our life take place in such a manner that they are transformed into abilities, or also into what we call wisdom.**

**[page 94] Any observer of life knows that if we are to master a series of experiences and coordinate them into a particular activity it is necessary to transform these experiences in periods of sleep. For example, a thing is best learnt by heart by learning it, sleeping on it, learning it again and sleeping on it again. If we are not able to immerse the experiences in sleep so that they can emerge as abilities or in the form of wisdom or art, then they will not be developed.**

There is what may seem to many a silly episode in Homer's *Odyssey* in which Penelope — to keep her suitors at bay while waiting 20 years for Odysseus, not knowing if he will ever return from the Trojan War — knits a death shroud for her father-in-law. She tells her impatient suitors that she will choose one of them for her husband as soon as the shroud is done, but to ensure it never gets completed, each night she unravels a portion of the shroud. Falling in love is like the weaving of a piece of cloth: unless we unravel *every night* what happens during the day with that special person, gradually we will fall in love.

Steiner mentions in several places how an eminent scientist Francesco Redi in the 17th century proclaimed to be a fact what few eminent materialistic scientists would aver today, "Life can only arise from life!" That statement nearly got Redi burnt at the stake. Steiner calls this a self-evident truth (Page 98) and I would agree with him. A simple understanding of the bootstrap paradox ought to convince any right-thinking scientist that life must come from life; life is like a computer program which cannot load itself into an empty computer! There must be already a program in the computer before any program can be loaded because the program loader is a program itself. Life can only arise from life just as the first computer program can only be loaded by a live person. Life can arise from life means that the hypothetical primordial soup creating life is an abstract logical concept with no possibility of ever being found true, no matter how many materialists can fit on the head of a pin.

**[page 98] It is always like this with such truths. At first those that proclaimed them were branded as heretics and fell prey to the Inquisition. In those times people were burnt or threatened with burning. Nowadays this has been given up and people are no longer burnt. But those who sit on the curule chair of science regard as fools and dreamers all those who proclaim a new truth which is on a higher level than [their own]. People who today present in a new form the axiom regarding living things which Francesco Redi put forward in the seventeenth century are indeed considered mad.**

Anyone who believes that science is a field of monotonically increasing knowledge will quickly be disabused of their confidence if they will study the history of science. Every new discovery invariably brings ridicule upon the reprobate who would dare to challenge the ruling chair of science. Only after years or decades when those who oppose the new knowledge have faded away and the newcomers recognize it as self-evident will a new paradigm arise. The playing field of science is littered with the bodies of innovators and few of the dead are given the honor of credit for their discovery(8).

Redi's principle applies to every human being.

**[page 98, 99] And in a similar way someone who speaks from spiritual science must show that the soul/spiritual part of us that enters existence at birth must originate from the element of soul and spirit, and is not just assembled out of inherited characteristics. . . . if we follow the soul/spiritual kernel of the human being back from whence it came, we arrive at an earlier soul and spirit being which existed before birth and which has nothing to do with heredity. The axiom that soul/spiritual element can only arise from the soul/spiritual element entails in the last instance the axiom of repeated earth lives, of**

**which a close study of spiritual science can convince us. Our life between birth and death leads us back to other lives which we went through in earlier times. Soul and spirit comes from soul and spirit, and the causes of our present experiences between birth and death lie in what took place in soul and spirit in the past. And when we pass through the gate of death we take with us what we assimilated in this life as the transformation of causes into abilities. This we return with when we enter a future existence through birth.**

We enter the spiritual world each evening, but it involves different circumstances than the spiritual world we reside in between death and a new birth.

**[page 99] When we wake up in the morning we find our physical and etheric bodies as we left them the previous evening. We cannot weave into them the experiences we have in our daily life because, in their state of being complete, they present a barrier to this. But when we enter the spiritual world through death we lay aside the physical and etheric body, retaining only the essence of the etheric body. Now we are no longer under the necessity of taking account of an existing physical and etheric body, and during the whole period between death and rebirth we can work with purely spiritual forces, in a world of spiritual substance. We take from the spiritual world what we require to create the archetype of our new physical and etheric body, and into these we weave all the things we could not weave into our previous physical and etheric body. Then the moment arrives when this archetype is completed and we have the ability to introduce into our new physical and etheric body what we have prepared in our archetypal image. The archetypal image will then continue to work during the periods of sleep.**

Birth is similar to waking up from overnight sleep, but with a salient difference. Because we leave our physical and etheric bodies on the bed when we enter the spiritual world with our astral body and I at night, we cannot work on them during the night. But arriving at birth we find a new physical and etheric body ready to receive the forces we have developed during our time between death and a new birth. This should give heart to those who are afraid of death.

**[page 100, 101] If the physical and etheric body could not be destroyed, and the physical body were unable to go through death, we could not include our experiences in our development. However much we regard death with fear and horror and feel anxious and fearful about our own death, an objective view of the world teaches us that we should actually want it to happen! For death alone gives us the opportunity for the body to be destroyed so that we can build up a new one in the next incarnation, and can bring into our lives all the fruits of our earthly existence.**

It is good to strive to be harmonious, but anyone who wished to create an entirely harmonious life would greatly err, according to Steiner, and disharmony is important because our human development depends on it. Yet, when the astral body and ego breach the limits of the physical body, the human body falls into the disorganized states we know as illness and disease. (Page 103)

**[page 105] Fundamentally every illness is a disharmony between — a breaching of — the division between the inner and the outer man. What is created by the continual breaching of these divisions will become harmony only in the far distant future, and this remains an abstraction if our thinking tries to impose it upon life. This is true not only of the ego but also of the astral body. Those things that are penetrated by the ego are experienced by human beings between waking up and going to sleep, whereas the way, their astral body is able to breach its limits and is impotent to create proper harmony between the inner and the outer man, lies outside normal human consciousness. But it is present nevertheless. All these things give rise to the deeper inner nature of illness.**

Basically, Steiner is saying that we can experience what our I (ego) does, but with our normal

consciousness we can not experience our astral body when it exceeds its limits. This imbalance between our inner and outer human is what leads to illness.

**[page 105, 106] What are the two possible outcomes of illness? Either a healing comes about or the illness terminates in death. In the way we regard the normal course of life we can place death on one side and healing on the other. What does healing signify for the whole development of a human being? First of all we must clarify what sickness means in a person's whole evolution.**

**Sickness represent disharmony between the inner and the outer man; when there is illness the inner man cannot achieve harmony with the outer man. The inner man withdraws in a way from the outer one. The simplest example of this is cutting a finger. We can only cut the physical body, not the astral. But the astral body is constantly engaged in the usual activities taking place in the body, and in consequence of the cut the astral body does not find what it would expect to find when it tries to penetrate into the minutest parts. It feels pushed out. That, in essence, is how it is with a whole number of illnesses; the inner man feels pushed back from the outer part and cannot engage in its life because the damage that has been done to it bars its way. Then a connection between inside and outside will be restored to a lesser or greater extent, meaning that the inner man will find the degree to which it can work again in the mended outer part.**

When we cut our finger, or bruise our knee after a fall, the pain we feel in the area is a consequence of the displacement of the astral body from the affected area. This process of astral body displacement helps us to understand what happens when a mother sees her young son's cut or bruise and stoops to kiss it better, i. e., her astral body temporarily fills in the spot where the boy's astral body has been displaced and he feels immediately better. A similar thing happens with the laying on of hands on humans of all ages. The filling in of an area vacated by the injured or ill person's astral body seems to ease the pain and promote healing, as I see it.

**[page 106, 107] Healing is something we can look back on with satisfaction because in a similar manner that sleep helps our inner being to progress, healing gives us something that enables our inner man to progress. Even if it is not immediately visible, our inner soul being makes progress in every instance where there is a cure. . . . But what spiritual science shows us is that we have to be thankful each time we are healed, for each cure signifies an enhancement of our inner being which can only be achieved by way of the forces we have assimilated inwardly.**

What happens if we are not able to enhance our inner being, if we are unable to assimilate these forces inwardly? We die, encountering an illness which terminates in death.

**[page 107, 108] The healthy body remains as it is and receives us in the morning; the damaged body can no longer receive us and we have to end in death. We have to leave the body because we are no longer able to re-establish its harmony. On the other hand we can now take our experiences into the spiritual world without them having to pass through the outer body. The fruits that we gain as a result of our damaged body no longer receiving us become an enrichment for our life between death and a new birth. So we have also to be grateful to an illness which ends in death because it gives us the opportunity to enhance the life between death and a new birth and to gather together the forces and the experiences which can only mature during that period.**

Spiritual science urges healing using every means available to restore a person to health, but the truth is, when viewed from the standpoint of the spiritual realities, when death occurs as result of illness, "death is beneficial for overall human development".

**[page 109, 110] Normal life moves on in such a way that we form abilities from our**

**experiences, and the thing we cannot assimilate between birth and death we weave into a fabric which we can then assimilate between death and a new birth. Healing and terminal illness intertwine with our normal course of life in such a manner that every cure is a contribution to raising human beings to higher levels, and every fatal illness, too, leads a human being to a higher level, in the one case with regard to the inner man and in the other with regard to the outer man. . . . [Without these two streams of healing and terminal illness] human beings would never be able to harvest the fruits of their own efforts in the course of world evolution.**

If this sounds like trial and error to you, you're right. Steiner sees error as the seed bed of our human development.

**[page 110] To acquire truth in such a way that it activates the soul and influences our development can happen only if it is extracted from the native soil of error. . . . That is, human beings learn on the one hand to overcome their actual mistakes and errors through being healed, and on the other hand, in the life between death and a rebirth by knocking up against just those mistakes that they were not able to rectify in one life; they learn to put these right in their next life.**

Make your biggest mistake first is one of my rules, having learned that to err is the quickest and surest way to truth. The young man who has parents who make sure their son's path is smooth and error-free will soon find their son unable to cope with the exigencies of life once he is on his own, perhaps turning to dangerous behaviors like alcohols, drugs, extreme sports, etc., to find challenges which he missed by dint of his parents' overindulgence in clearing away sources of error from their son's early path. With the bureaucracy of our United States now presuming upon itself the role of extended nanny for all citizens into maturity and beyond, it is no wonder that such dangerous activities listed above have become rampant, up until now. Parents would do well to heed Steiner's advice that the *striving human errs*, and allow their offspring to make their mistakes and learn from them early so that they enter maturity having made enough errors that they have no need to go to dangerous extremes as adults, blithely imagining they will continue to be free from error in any event they attempt.

This leads us into Lecture 6, "A Positive and Negative Frame of Mind", and it is worth our study of what Steiner says about the two types of people who possess these frames of mind. First, the positive frame of mind:

**[page 113] From the point of view of a genuine and penetrating study of the human psyche we can call people positive if, in face of all the impressions pouring in on them from the outer world, they are able to stay firm and sure of themselves to the extent that they are not thrown by outer circumstances but can hang on to their clear-cut ideas, their sympathies and antipathies and their usual way of behaving. Their actions follow certain urges and impulses which will not be affected by whatever transient impression may come to them from daily life.**

If a person has led an error-free life, any transient impression can derail them and lead them to following the activities of their friends in an effort to avoid the error again, rather than sticking their own life-tested urges and impulses and striving to overcome their error using their own resources and increasing their own self-confidence in the process.

**[page 113, 114] On the other hand people can be called negative if they are easily swayed to submit to changing impressions, and are strongly influenced by ideas brought to them by other people or in gatherings of people. They are easily inclined to change the way they have thought and felt about something and take something else on board. It is a negative trait, too, to allow all kinds of suggestions to alter their usual way of setting about doing things.**

This is problem encountered by the spoiled or overindulged child as it grows up, isn't it? Their usual way of setting about doing things is to take their parents's advice, and then other people's advice, having never formed by adulthood, an individualistic way of proceeding, a way which invariably would have led them into error, but would have bolstered a self-confidence to proceed and learn by striving and error *not* by striving to avoid error.

In this next passage Steiner shows us the difference in approach by the negative and positive people. First the negative type:

**[page 115] We could call negative those people who have learnt so much that their judgment has become uncertain on every subject. They no longer know what is right or wrong, and begin to be altogether skeptical about life and knowledge.**

Second the positive type:

**[page 115] Others might absorb just as many of these same impressions, but they work on them and know how to fit them into the whole of their acquired wisdom. They would be positive people in the best sense of the word. A child can, in response to grown-ups, be positive to the point of tyranny, by asserting its own inherent nature and trying to reject everything that contradicts it.**

To help us sort out the chaos, Steiner divides the soul into three parts, each of which we have to some extent developed in our individual selves. These are the sentient soul, the intellectual soul, and the consciousness soul. The sentient soul rides on the bumpy sea of passions, desires, likes, dislikes, and "is a slave to every storm sweeping through the soul." (Page 117) The intellectual soul — which this translator likes to refer to as the rational soul, perceptive soul, or both — is the modulator, the captain of the ship (our I or ego) which steers as smooth a path as possible through the stormy sea, sometimes choosing a path through the highest waves to escape the coming brunt of the storm. In the third part, the **I** becomes most obvious, in our consciousness soul.

**[page 117] At this point the inner life turns outwards again, and its conceptual images and ideas are now not only there to control a person's passions, but at this stage the entire inner life of the soul is directed by the ego, so that it becomes a knowledgeable mirror of the outside world. When human beings rise to a knowledge of the outside world it means that the consciousness soul has acquired supremacy in their life of soul. These three soul members exists in each one of us, but in each person one of them predominates.**

But this predomination changes as a person goes through the stages of life. One may be very positive early in life while their ego center is barely functioning, but unless they become negative, they will not be able to develop properly, unable to receive new impressions.

**[page 120] If they are not prepared to suppress certain positive qualities in their souls so that new impressions can flow in and become part of them, or people are not capable of raising themselves out of a certain level of positivity given them by nature and acquiring a certain negativity so that they can receive new impressions, they will not progress.**

If we are to progress, we must suppress something positive. To be a spiritual researcher, to attain supersensible knowledge, one must force oneself to become negative. The exercises in Steiner's book, [Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment](#), give one a procedure to follow by which one becomes artificially negative, receiving no more stimuli from the external world while remaining fully conscious to the stimuli appearing from the inner world.

**[page 122, 123] . . . they must be able to open their soul to impressions which at first, if they are still beginners, will be quite new to them; and this means making themselves as**

**negative as possible. Everything in mystical life and knowledge of higher worlds that we call inner vision, inner contemplation, does in fact fundamentally bring about negative moods in the soul. There is no avoiding this. When people suppress all stimuli from the outer world and consciously achieve a condition in which they are entirely concentrated in themselves, allowing nothing to come in of the kind that was in them when they were positive people, then their condition will be a negative one.**

In this next passage Steiner says something humorous, "We cannot eat ourselves to supersensible vision!" Such people confuse a concomitant process to the successful attainment of spiritual sight, with the main process itself.

**[page 123] Something similar can also occur if we employ an easier external method which cannot of itself lead to a higher life but can give us some support in our ascent — if we turn from foods that stimulate positive impulses in a sort of animal fashion, to a special diet, vegetarian or the like. We cannot bring about our ascent into higher worlds by vegetarianism or by not eating this or that; it would be altogether too easy if we could eat our way up to those heights! What actually does lead us to higher worlds is our work on our own souls.**

A report exists that after a meeting with students one night, Steiner joined them for dinner in a small café. The owner came over to take their order and each student in turn hassled the owner, trying to get something without meat in it. When he came to the last person, Steiner said simply, "I'll have the special." The owner must have let out a sigh of relief and probably turned back to the kitchen, missing the students gasping and looking at each other in wonderment. Their teacher had punctured their attempts to impress him by ordering something without meat (which the special definitely had in it). Why did Steiner do this? He gives us a hint above, but below he lays out the danger of his students' approach:

**[page 124] If we become vegetarians just to be awkward and without a proper reason, or as a matter of principle without changing our way of dealing with life, this change to a vegetarian diet may possibly have a seriously weakening effect on our ability to resist bad influences, and particularly where certain physical aspects are concerned we might get run down.**

There was a newspaper report recently with the headline, "People get burnt feet from walking barefoot on hot coals". Whatever the reasoning used by the leader, the group clearly were impressed enough to walk over the hot coals. This recent episode is reminiscent of the huge wave of people who paid good money and lined up to be loudly berated and insulted in the *est seminars* of the 1970s and 80s.

**[page 128] Close observation shows us again and again that relatively stupid people, if they have positive qualities, can have a stronger effect on people more intelligent than themselves if the latter are easily impressed by anything emerging from obscure depths. So we can understand how it happens in life that persons with finer natures and well-developed reasoning powers are at the mercy of robust characters with vivid minds whose assertions derive solely from their own instincts and inclinations.**

Spiritual science is drastically different from any other method or process of teaching. Whatever teaching method is used, the participants are constantly reminded that what happens within their soul is the most important thing. Lectures and reading can be useful prologues, but the real work happens in the soul of the individuals.

**[page 132] They are therefore advised to do active work in their soul so as to bring out its most positive qualities. In fact spiritual science is eminently suited to cultivate this positive frame of mind. This is what is so healthy about its world outlook, that it makes no claims except to arouse the forces sleeping in the soul. By appealing to the autonomous forces in every soul anthroposophy calls forth its hidden forces, so that they**

**may enliven all the juices and energies of the body, having the best possible health-giving effect on the whole person. And because anthroposophy appeals to sound reason only, which cannot be evoked by mass-suggestion but only through individual understanding, and because it renounces everything that mass-suggestion can evoke, it reckons par excellence with the positive qualities of the human soul.**

People who are overwhelmingly positive enter a movie and are confronted by people whose lives mean nothing to them at first, but if the movie is gripping, soon the positive mood of these people turns to negative as they begin to feel sympathy and empathy for the people portrayed on the screen.

**[page 133] Sympathy and fear make us negative. But so that we can become positive again a tragedy sets before us a hero whose actions are meant to provoke our sympathy, and whose fate calls out our fear. However, the course of the dramatic action gives us the kind of picture of the hero through which our fear and pity are purified, and they are transformed from negative qualities into the kind of harmonious satisfaction we have in a work of art, and we are lifted up once more into a positive state.**

A negative person would despair over Heraclitus's statement that "We can never find the boundaries of our soul" while a positive person would add:

**[page 134] 'Thank God the life of the soul is so vast that knowledge can never encompass it. For this means that everything we comprehend today we shall be able to surpass tomorrow, and thus hasten towards higher levels!'**

The Earth itself seems to have been explored to every far corner, so that little mystery remains, few undiscovered countries remain to be penetrated, but the soul can never reach such a state of discovery; it is the ultimate undiscovered country and each of us can in a single moment become its explorer, and enjoy many lifetimes of exploring.

"Error and Mental Disorder" is the topic of Lecture 7. He explains the reason why the lecture "Conscience" follows this lecture.

**[page 136] Today, let us observe an area of human life which can take us deeply into human misery, suffering, and perhaps even as far as losing hope. To make up for this we shall then, in the following lecture, touch on an area entitled 'Conscience', which will take us back again to the heights where human dignity and human value, the strength of human awareness, can appear at their best.**

As a physicist, I was taught the importance of boundary conditions, that physical quantities are only valid between certain values or boundaries which means we must specify those values or any statement made about the quantities may be erroneous.

**[page 138] This is the reason why in general not much is achieved if we know that a truth exists; the important thing is that to really know a thing we should take note of the limits within which that knowledge is valid.**

As Korzybski said, "The map is not the territory; it does not describe all the territory." If we keep this as a guiding principle, whatever anyone tells us, we accept it only as a tentative map and proceed with caution. This is especially important when dealing error and mental disorders, is it not?

**[page 138, 139] Who would deny that it belongs to a pathological condition that can be put under the heading of 'mental disorder' when someone is incapable of linking one comprehended concept at the right moment with a second one, so that he applies the first one in a new and completely inappropriate situation, and acts on the basis of an idea that was correct for an earlier situation but not for a later one? Who would deny that**

**this could border on the pathological? If it happens sufficiently often it is absolutely a symptom of mental disorder. But who, on the other hand, would deny that there are people who are unable to advance in their work because they are so long-winded, so fussy? It can happen in normal life that someone gets stuck with one idea; then there comes the point where we have to stop talking about them being in error, and have to start speaking of a pathological mental state.**

In this next passage "the soul and the sentient body" seems to refer (See [Three Worlds diagram](#)) to the sentient soul and the astral body.

**[page 146] Thus we have two three-membered entities of human nature which correspond to one another: the soul and the sentient body; the intellectual soul and the etheric body; and the consciousness soul and the physical body. This correspondence is precisely what can throw light on the threads linking the inner and the outer man and show us how normal soul life is disturbed if these links do not function properly. Why does this happen?**

Anything that disrupts the connection between the between the three pairs will lead to errors and mental disorders.

**[page 146] The sentient soul is in a certain way dependent on the effects the sentient body has on it; so if the interrelation between the two is not right then the healthy soul-life of the sentient soul is disrupted. A similar thing occurs when the intellectual soul cannot regulate the etheric body as it should, to make it a proper instrument for the intellectual soul. And the soul-life of the consciousness soul will appear abnormal if the physical body is a hindrance as a normal means of expression. If we look at the human being systematically in this way, we can recognize that a regular interrelationship is essential for a healthy soul-life and understand, too, that all sorts of interruptions can occur in the interrelating of the sentient soul and the sentient body, the intellectual soul and etheric body and the consciousness soul and physical body. And only if we can recognize the threads running through this intricate organism and the irregularities that can occur will we be able to recognize what is happening when a force in the soul becomes unhealthy. This happens only when there is disharmony between the inner and the outer man.**

There was a time when a doctor studied both the inner and outer man: the time the doctor spent talking in the office with his patient, as he studied the inner man, was as important as the time the doctor spent looking at the results of tests made on the outer man. Today the typical patient is greeted by nurses who run tests and the doctor comes in with the tests and explains what's wrong with the outer patient and the inner patient is never interviewed at all. She leaves wondering if the doctor really understands her condition or wondering if the doctor has the attitude that what she feels is not as important as what the tests show. The disharmony between the inner and outer man is never investigated except when disorders show up in the outer man, by which time it may be too late for physical medicine and surgical intervention to do much to establish an efficient and effective healing.

As the disruption moves up from sentient soul level to intellectual soul level to consciousness soul level, things get more difficult, as Steiner shows and gives detailed examples of each in the Lecture (which examples are not included in this review). Next he covers disruptions between the intellectual soul and the etheric body, and how proper logic use fails under those conditions(9):

**[page 147, 148] When such a split occurs in respect of the intellectual soul and the etheric body then the situation is a much more difficult one. Then we go deeply into those states that verge on the pathological. Nevertheless in these cases it is much more difficult to distinguish where a healthy condition ends and a pathological one begins. An**

**odd example will make clear how difficult it is to maintain the experiences of the intellectual soul in complete independence when the etheric body goes on strike, refusing to be merely a tool of our thinking. When the etheric body goes independent and resists the intellectual soul, it prevents the thoughts from coming to full expression, and the thoughts become stuck halfway and cannot be completed. This can happen with the cleverest people.**

And next he covers a disruption in the consciousness soul and physical body interrelationship.

**[page 152, 153] Now, a similar disharmony can arise between our consciousness soul, which is the basis of our ego-consciousness, and our physical body. Then, not only do these characteristics appear in our physical body for which we are responsible from earlier incarnations, but also those in our line of heredity. But, here, too, the principle is the same; what is going on in the consciousness soul can be hindered by the laws at work in the physical body. And when this happens, then all those things arise which appear in such dreadful forms in the symptoms of mental disorder. This is the very place where all the worst aspects of a particular organ appear when that one becomes especially conspicuous. When the organs of our physical body work properly together and none of them predominates over the others, our physical body is a proper instrument for our consciousness soul, and is no obstacle for us, and more than a healthy eye is an obstacle to seeing.**

Our I (ego), in order to function properly requires all the organs in our body to be functioning and relating with each other normally. If they do not, then various mental disorders may appear. From various crimes shown on TV, one can frequently see a persecution complex appearing in certain drug abusers due to this kind of disruption.

**[page 153] But if an open exchange with the outer world is obstructed and we do not notice the obstacle in our consciousness, then ideas of megalomania and persecution mania appear as symptoms of the actual more deeply seated sickness.**

This next passage is rather amazing, given that Steiner was speaking over a century ago. People exercise and train today as if their bodies were machines and as if improving the functioning of their machines will lead them to healthy lives.

**[page 155] At the present time [1910] there is little understanding for what is meant by developing the soul-life. It has been mentioned, when similar opportunities offered themselves, that nowadays people attach great importance to physical education, walking and jogging, and extensive P. E. I am not saying anything against the principle of the matter; these things can be good for the health. But they most certainly do not lead to good results if attention is given solely to the outer man as though it were a machine, and people do exercises aimed only at strengthening them physiologically. . . . care should be taken that each exercise provokes inner joy, and that impetus for every exercise comes from an inner feeling of well-being. The impulses for doing the exercises should come from the soul.**

Lecture 8 deals with Conscience and we can best understand what he means by that in a statement Steiner repeats several times in the lecture, "What speaks as conscience in the human soul is the voice of God!" How did we as humans evolve to having a voice speaking within us? In ancient days when a primitive clairvoyance still burned in every human being, if someone committed an evil deed, there was no voice chiding them, but instead a ghostly vision arose of the horrible event and haunted the person.

**[page 175] The deed did not present itself to them as something they could inwardly assess. They beheld it with all its harmfulness and shamefulness as a ghostly vision. And**

**when the feeling of it arose in their soul the shamefulness of it came before them as a spiritual reality, so that they were as though surrounded by the sight of the evil they had committed.**

Often in movies after someone without a visibly-operating conscience does some horrible deed, they are visited by the kinds of visions that beset the ancients; it is as though the visions are a fall-back option for humans who have stumbled into the twenty-first century *sans* conscience. If we follow the progression of human evolution through the centuries, we observe the ancient clairvoyance fading and something arising to replace it, a modern invention of the human soul, conscience.

**[page 175] Then, in the course of time, this ancient dreamlike clairvoyance faded and the human ego asserted itself more and more. And, in so far as people found the center of the being, the old clairvoyance disappeared and ego-consciousness became more and more distinct. And what they had previously had in the way of a vista of their bad deeds — and also of their good deeds — was transferred to their inner being, and deed once clairvoyantly beheld became mirrored within them.**

Steiner leads to see that our conscience stems from the mirroring of our own deeds within our souls. These deeds can be viewed consciously by our I, our ego, as they reflect off of our soul bodies. He adds that we "now experience this reflection as conscience watching over" us. (Page 177) The popular cartoon representation is of an imp sitting on the shoulder to represent conscience, a devilish imp on one shoulder, an angelic imp on the other shoulder.

There is a dramatic difference in the quality of the ego between the East and the West.

**[page 181] In the East the ego remains dim and unfree. In the West, by contrast, there is a development among human beings whereby the ego works its way further and further up into the consciousness soul. Even if to begin with, evolution goes in the direction of the ancient clairvoyant consciousness being extinguished, everything is after all designed to awaken the ego and to bring about the birth of the conscience as the inner voice of God, the Keeper of the ego.**

One important historical step was required for human beings to understand God in their inner being, the appearance of Christ on Earth in a human being.

**[page 181, 182] If the Christ with his divine being had not been present in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, if he had not shown once and for all that God can be grasped in our inner being, because he had once been present in a human body, if he had not appeared as the conqueror of death through the Mystery of Golgotha, human beings would never have been able to comprehend the indwelling of divinity within themselves.**

In the final lecture, "The Mission of Art", Steiner restricts his comment to the art form we know as poetry. He shows us how the ancient clairvoyance appears in modern man today in the form of poetry. What would it mean to ancient man to have clairvoyance instead of our presently evolved levels of soul? A writer would not have been able to construct a long narrative sitting alone with pen and paper, as writing had not been invented yet. So, let's call him a story-teller, someone who would have had to sit down to call up some clairvoyant vision and memorize the events which take place, for example, Homer, a prime example of a man who lived before the existence of writing. Who needs writing if an event can be recalled simply by clicking a remote and a vision from some far away time and place were immediately to appear?<sup>(10)</sup> To our best knowledge, Homer did not write down the two epics he is credited with, but he was rather the story teller with the most powerful clairvoyance during a time when this clairvoyance as a generally available power to all humans was fading. Homer could tell listeners each saga in its poetic verse from beginning to end, and since this was before the advent of writing (it not being necessary), people of the time of Homer could easily memorize the entire story. As human consciousness evolved further for

several centuries, the ability to memorize such long stories began to wane, and people began to write down the story, crediting it to Homer, who first told it an estimated 400 years earlier.

**[page 190] If we wish to trace the beginnings of art, as it first appears among humankind in the art of poetry, then according to ordinary ideas we have to go a long way back. We will start by going only as far as the extant documents will take us. We will go back to a figure often regarded as legendary — to Homer, the originator of Greek poetry, whose work has come down to us in the two great epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Whoever was the author or authors of these two poems — we will not go into that question today — the remarkable thing is that both these poetical works begin on a quite impersonal note. 'Sing, O Muse, of the wrath of Achilles. . .' is how the *Iliad*, the first of Homer's epics, begins, and 'Sing, O Muse, of a much-traveled man. . .' are the opening words of the second epic, the *Odyssey*. The author wishes to indicate that he is indebted to a higher power for the fact that the epic comes to him from elsewhere, and that he can best describe this fact — as we can realize if we have any understanding of Homer — by not referring to what he speaks out of himself but what he is inspired to say by a higher power that was not only a symbol but a real, objective being. If this invocation to the muse means nothing to modern readers the lack is not due to Homer's having made use of a mere symbol, but to the circumstance that they themselves are no longer aware of the experiences from which a poem as impersonal as Homer's could have come.**

With this amazing revelation by Steiner, we can understand the evolution of human consciousness and put a time on it. Does this impress researchers today? No way. They claim these two epics were fantastic stories such as science fiction writers might create today. The reality of the evolution of consciousness is lost on modern researchers, for the most part.

**[page 191, 192] Present-day research is actually wrong in supposing that the sagas of the different peoples were merely the product of popular fantasy. If it is thought that in the remote past the human soul functioned just as it does today, except that it was more prone to imagining things than to thinking intellectually according to fixed laws, and that the figures preserved in their sagas were a product of their imagination, that is itself the fantasy, and those who believe these things are the ones who are imagining things. Where the people of those ancient times were concerned the events described in their mythologies were realities. Myths, sagas and even fairy tales and legends were born out of a primeval faculty in the human soul.**

Why are our children interested in fairy tales today? Because our children come into this world with the same primitive clairvoyance of the ancient people and are able to see fairies and other spirit folk until the age of about three when their caregivers convince them that there are no such things, caregivers who have long forgotten their early memories of childhood. The so-called imaginary friends of children can best be understood as spiritual beings who are befriending and helping the children. When our children no longer have these imaginary friends, they have progressed in their maturation to the point that humankind had progressed in the time of Homer.

**[page 194] What has happened is that, if we look into the period just before Homer, we shall find the point in evolution where, for the people of the Greek world, clairvoyant consciousness ceased and only an echo of it remained. . . . Homer's poetry is thus directly connected with primeval myths, if these are properly understood. Looking at Homer in this way we can see something occurring in Homer as a kind of substitute for the old clairvoyance. The ruling cosmic powers, by withdrawing direct clairvoyant vision from human consciousness, closed the door to the spiritual world, but they left something in its place that could live similarly in the soul and could call forth a creative force. Poetic imagination is a compensation for the loss of ancient clairvoyance.**

A famous motto goes, "Life is short; art is long". We do well to recall this motto as it applies to all of the arts, not just poetry. Remember that Steiner chose to focus only on poetry for the convenience of one lecture, but meant his insights to apply to all of art. He ends with a powerful quote (Page 211) from Goethe's *chorus mysticus*, "Everything transient is but a parable." and adds his own amazing thought, "Art is destined to fructify the parable of transience with the message of eternity, of immortality! That is its mission."

With this, we have completed our study of the two volumes of amazing and thought-filled lectures which Rudolf Steiner gave between October, 1909 and April, 1910. Over a hundred years have passed and his words speak vibrantly to us today about key issues of soul we face in this new millennium. If you are a newcomer to the works of Steiner, you can find no better place to begin than by learning all about the importance of his work to transforming your own soul.

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**Review of Volume 1 of Transforming the Soul can be read here:**

<http://www.doyletics.com/arj/transfv1.htm>

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

**Footnote 1.** If you'll look in the upper left corner of this review page <http://www.doyletics.com/art/sciencea.htm> on-line, you'll see the words "Site Map is NOT the Territory". Reading this book took me an entire year — on a typical day, after reading about 3 pages, my mind was so full that I had to stop reading till the next day in order to absorb what I had read.

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**Footnote 2.** Be kind to your pets, but treating them as if they had an individual spark of consciousness, an I, is basically *evil*, i.e., a condition whose time will not arrive for aeons to come.

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**Footnote 3.** The *Moon made of Green Cheese* idea was a factual memory of this ancient time during the Old Moon stage; green was the color of the cheese-like structure of the vegetative Moon-Earth body before the Moon separated from the Earth.

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**Footnote 4.** In the early mini-computers I worked on in the 1960s, the bootstrap program was written on a piece of paper and stuck on the front panel of the computer for ease of entering every time there was a power failure or you powered on the computer each morning. About seven hardware instructions in hexadecimal code had to be entered before the Program Loader could be loaded to do real work. Those hardware instructions are hard-coded in permanent Read-Only Memory in PC's and know only how to

access the first sector of the primary hard drive which contains the Program Loader, which, not surprisingly, is called the Boot Sector. Lose that sector and your PC becomes what we call a Boat Anchor, merely a heavy weight, useless for much else.

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**Footnote 5.** The idea that the operating system of a computer system played the function of our ego first came to me in 1966 when I began working on real-time computers. Only one program, the Executive Control Program, ran all the time and its job was to locate some other program to transfer operation to and that other program always returned to the ECP. Clearly we have designed computers based on how we humans work, think, and live already.

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**Footnote 6.** Over many years of watching carefully how people use the limitation eraser for the first time, I have noticed how many of them slide over the comma as if it were not there, neither pausing nor taking a breath. Their feeling state never changes from the beginning to the end of the sentence, and clearly they have thereby rescued their limitation from the brink of extinction! But if they were then to say, "The limitation eraser does not work for me, (Pause, deep breath) up until now." they would learn of the power of the limitation eraser and use it every time from now on.

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**Footnote 7.** There is a kind of active submission which I call EAT-O-TWIST, or Everything Always Turns - Out - The Way It's Supposed To. See this link for more details: <http://www.doyletics.com/mrules.shtml#mrn10> and soon you'll find out for yourself that EAT-O-TWIST never breaks.

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**Footnote 8.** As one example, take the discovery of genetics by Gregor Mendel, some thirty years passed before the field of genetics was formed by William Bateson who hadn't the decent to credit Mendel by calling the new field after him, e. g., *menes* would have been as easy to remember and spell as *genes*. Another example: Nikola Tesla received no Nobel Prize for his amazing creation of the AC power systems which run our world today. [Return to text directly before Footnote 8.](#)

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**Footnote 9.** As an example of half-finished thinking ("half-assed thinking" we would call it), Steiner said, "people say, 'Prove to us what you say about repeated earth lives!' For you cannot prove it to people who refuse to think their thoughts through to the end; whole truths cannot be proved with half thoughts! They can only be proved with complete thoughts, and complete thoughts are what human beings have to develop with in themselves." (Page 158, 159)

[Return to text directly before Footnote 9.](#)

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**Footnote 10.** Here I purposely call up an image of using a TV set. A TV and a DVR allows us to do today what ancient man could do without an electronic device, using his native clairvoyance. Calling a Muse back then was equivalent to selecting a channel on a remote to call some event forward to be observed.

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