

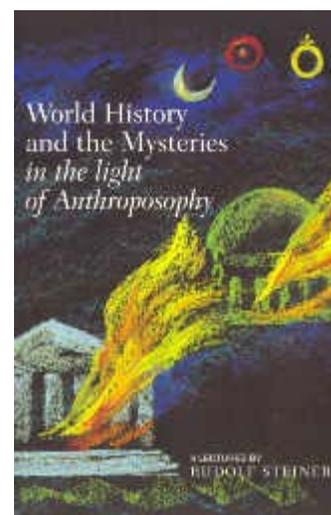
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World History and the Mysteries by **Rudolf Steiner**

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Chapter: Spiritual Science



Two salient conceptions stand out for me after reading these lectures. The first one is the

synchronicity of the burning of the Temple of Ephesus and the burning of the first Goetheanum, both of which are represented in the color drawing which graces the cover of this book. The Greek Temple of Ephesus is the peaked roof one at left and Steiner's Goetheanum is domed one at the right. I will cover a bit of what Steiner says about how these two resonate with each other over the millennia which separate and join them.

The other conception is of three types of memory: *Localized memory*, *Rhythmic memory*, and *Temporal memory*. Steiner shows us how these are placed in the historical evolution of consciousness of humankind, and how they show up in our life today.

Localized memory shows up today in memorials we place anchored in the Earth, such as tombstones, which when we visit them conjure up memories of our loved one commemorated there. More frequently, it seems, elaborate crosses are appearing along highways to commemorate the person who died there. Once when I was only 17 or so, I witnessed a man's body being pulled up from the muck where his car had run off the road, and frequently when I pass that spot, the memory of that scene comes to me without need for any other reminder. That is *localized* memory.

Rhythmic memory is best characterized by our small children who call us da-da or ma-ma, and a cow might be a moo-moo, a dog an arf-arf-arf, etc. This type of memory shows up today in our popular songs, poetry, jazz, classical, and all types of music and rhythmic performances. This helps explain why listening to music makes us want to move around and jump up and down as if we were kids again. In a sense, we are, for the moment.

Temporal memory is the highest type of memory we have today, e. g., when we can conjure up a memory for July 20, 1969, the night Man landed on the Moon for first time. If someone but mentions that date, a flood of memories may arise in us. I don't remember the date of the man whose body I saw pulled up from the side of the road — I have only *localized* memory of that. Each of us have passed in childhood through a *rhythmic* stage when the "E-I, E-I, O" of "Old MacDonald Had A Farm" ran through our heads and mouths as we recited it. Plus other nursery rhymes we recited or books we read such as Dr. Seuss with his wonderful repetition of the rhythms children love to hear and read aloud.

Human beings go through these three phases of memory capability during childhood. In the localized

memory stage, psychologists can demonstrate that if they move a box in front of a glass and ask where the glass is, children up to a certain age say the glass went away, and after that age, they say the glass is in the back of the box even though they can no longer see it. After localized memory comes rhythmic memory when the child remembers things best by repeating the name. Later, in the third or temporal memory phase, one can ask the child where he left his bicycle, and he will tell you both where and when, "I put it in the garage when I came home from school." One cannot say that without fully developed temporal memory.

The maturation of a single human being as a child goes through the three stages of local, rhythm, and temporal memory. During historical times adult human beings first had only localized memory, then later, as the evolution of consciousness proceeded, adult humans had rhythmic memory, and finally we reached our current stage of temporal memory. Human beings back then, i. e., went through the same three stages as a typical human child goes through during its first five years of life.

For example, the adult human beings in ancient times who had only localized memory capability were given to making rock cairns along walking routes as a means of remembering some event which happened on the road, such as "I saw a man's chariot lose a wheel here." They lacked *temporal memory*, and they had no way of writing anything down to take the memory with them, but they knew that the Earth held the memory itself so they marked the location of the event to be memorialized.

Then humans evolved to the stage where oral poetry was memorized, with its rhythmic passages which could hold long epic sagas, such Gilgamesh or the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer. Only after the advent of writing did these sagas get written down at a time when the highest memory capability, rhythmic memory, was being supplanted by the beginning of temporal memory. Nowadays we have the use of all three types of memory available to us, which makes it difficult for us to imagine life in times when people had only *localized* memory or solely the combination of *localized* and *rhythmic* memories.

If you haven't heard or seen any educational channels talking about this kind of evolution of consciousness, that is because establishment science considers such evolution to be almost nil, up until now. So-called scientists are predisposed to treat events in history, even ancient history, as if the humans of those times felt, remembered, and thought the same way we do today. This leads scientists to conclusions that can be very far afield from reality, with no possibility of receiving reproof for their errors from fellow scientists. With his delineation of these three types of memory, Rudolf Steiner lays out evidence for the evolution of consciousness and allows us to corroborate what he says from what scant historical records we have. But mostly, it allows us to understand how we ourselves have come to have all three types of memory, localized, rhythmic, and temporal today because ancient humans who first possessed them have handed them down to us.[\(1\)](#)

On page 7 Steiner begins his first lecture by asking, "How has the present configuration, the present make-up of the human soul arisen? How has it come about through the long course of evolution?" For our hard-brained materialistic scientists, these two question make no sense. Although they spend billions trying to learn about the Big Bang Theory of how our universe has arisen, to even consider that these might be powerful unanswered questions worthy of their investigation, they won't spend a few minutes, up until now. Steiner explains why this is so:

[page 7] The present age is however one that is peculiarly prejudiced in its thought about the evolution of man and of mankind. It is commonly believed that, as regards his life of soul and spirit, man has always been essentially the same as he is today throughout the whole of the time that we call history. True, in respect of knowledge, it is imagined that in ancient times human beings were childlike, that they believed in all kinds of fancies, and that man has only really become clever in the scientific sense in modern times; but if we look away from the actual sphere of knowledge, it is generally held that the soul-constitution which man has today was also possessed by the ancient Greek and by the

ancient Oriental. Even though it be admitted that modifications may have occurred in detail, yet on the whole it is supposed that throughout the historical period everything in the life of the soul has been as it is today.

What is soul-life or soul-constitution? What is the soul itself for that matter? The answer is very simple, so simple it's possible to complicate it by explanation. Let us keep it as simple as possible. You have an experience, and while you can explain to me what happened to you, you can never really enable me to have the experience you had — I can have your explanation as my experience and what happened inside of me as you gave me your explanation. Plus, what happens inside of me as you explain is something that you can never experience either. So each event you experience is stored inside of you and is ineffable, no matter how mundane an experience it is. Two people can be said to have the *same* experience, but the adjective *same* conceals more than it reveals. There is no way of ever confirming, for example, whether two people see the same color they would both call red, even if neither is color-blind. They can look at the color of a tomato, agree it is red, but neither of them can take the color red inside of them and show the other person. They can only agree that some object is red, but cannot share color of the object they seen inside of themselves, only talk about some external presence of red.⁽²⁾ These experiences unique to an individual are soul experiences, part of our soul-life, our soul-constitution. The soul holds all these unique experiences of our entire life.

One of those soul experiences is the ability to remember things. At one point in ancient times, the only way humans could remember an event was to mark the place it occurred, perhaps by a pile of rocks, a stone cairn. These ancients allowed the Earth to hold the memory of the event. The Earth was in effect their memory, their "writing pad" at a time when writing was unknown because the soul-constitution of humans at the time had only localized memory, no rhythmical memory, no temporal memory. In the Stone Age, it was fitting that the only writing *per se* was a stack of stones placed on the Earth as localized memory. The Earth acted as their memory, in effect, their head!⁽³⁾

[page 9, 10] Now let us jump a long way back in human evolution, and consider the early population of the Orient, of which the Chinese and Indians as we know them in history were only the late descendants: that is, let us go back really thousands of years. Then, if we contemplate a human being of that ancient epoch, we find that he did not live in such a way as to say: "I have in my head the memory of something I have experienced, something I have undergone, in external life." He had no such inner feeling or experience; it simply did not exist for him. His head was not filled with thoughts and ideas. The present-day man thinks in his superficial way that as we today have ideas, thoughts, and concepts, so human beings always possessed these, as far back as history records; but that is not the case. If with spiritual insight we go back far enough, we meet with human beings who did not have ideas, concepts, thoughts at all in their head, who did not experience any such abstract content of the head, but, strange as it may seem, experienced the whole head; they perceived and felt their whole head. These men did not give themselves up to abstractions as we do. To experience ideas in the head was something quite foreign to them, but they knew how to experience their own head. And as you, when you have a memory-picture, refer the memory-picture to an experience, as a relationship exists between your memory-picture and the experience, similarly these men related the experience of their head to the Earth, to the whole Earth. They said: — "There exists in the Cosmos the Earth. And there exists in the Cosmos I myself, and as a part of me, my head; and the head which I carry on my shoulders is the cosmic memory of the Earth. The Earth existed earlier; my head later. That I have a head is due to the memory, the cosmic memory of earthly existence. The earthly existence is always there. But the whole configuration, the whole shape of the human head, is in relation to the whole Earth." Thus an ancient Eastern felt in his own head the being of the Earth-planet itself. He said: "Out of the whole great cosmic existence the Gods have created, have generated the Earth with its kingdoms of Nature, the Earth with its rivers and

mountains. I carry on my shoulders my head; and this head of mine is a true picture of the Earth. This head, with the blood flowing in it, is a true picture of the Earth with the land and water coursing over it. The configuration of mountains on the Earth repeats itself in my head in the configurations of my brain; I carry on my shoulders my own image of the Earth-planet."

When we want to walk, when we *will* to walk, we walk. We take our modern *willing* ability for granted and scientists cannot imagine a time when willing came from outside the human being. If they ever encounter a hint at such a reality in some ancient's writings, they ascribe it to childish astrological fantasies. But let's listen to Steiner describe how ancient men experienced their willing as outside forces. We have just read how the Earth-planet was so powerful in the humans, what about the Mars-planet, Venus-planet, and Mercury-planet — didn't they have an effect also? Are they not part of our cosmos?

For the ancient Man, he felt "Mars moves me."

[page 13] Again, we say today: I will walk. We know that our will lives in our limbs. The ancient man of the East had an essentially different experience. What we call "will" was quite unknown to him. We judge quite wrongly when we believe that what we call thinking, feeling and willing were present among the the case. They had head experiences, which were Earth experiences. They had chest or heart experiences, which were experiences of the environment of the Earth as far out as the Sun. The Sun corresponds to the heart experience. Then they had a further experience, a feeling of expanding and stretching out into their limbs. They became conscious and aware of their own humanity in the movement of their legs and feet, or of their arms and hands. They themselves were within the movements. And in this expansion of the inner being into the limbs, they felt a direct picture of their connection with the starry worlds. (See Drawing) "In my head I have a picture of the Earth. Where my head opens freely downwards into the chest and reaches down to my heart, I have a picture of what lives in the Earth's environment. In what I experience as the forces of my arms and hands, of my feet and legs, I have something which represents the relation the Earth bears to the stars that live far out there in cosmic space.

When therefore man wanted to express the experience he had as "willing" human being — to use the language of today, — he did not say: I walk. We can see that from the very words that he used. Nor did he say: I sit down. If we investigate the ancient languages in respect of their finer content, we find everywhere that for the action which we describe by saying: I walk, the ancient Oriental would have said: Mars impels me, Mars is active in me. Going forward was felt as a Mars impulse in the legs.

What else do we do as humans? We grasp, we point at something, we sit down, we lie down to rest, and ancient humans felt the rest of the planets working in them as they performed these activities.

[page 14] Grasping hold of something, feeling and touching with the hands, was expressed by saying: Venus works in me. Pointing out something to another person was expressed by saying: Mercury works in me. Even when a rude person called some one's attention by giving him a push or a kick, the action would be described by saying: Mercury was working in that person. Sitting down was a Jupiter activity, and lying down, whether for rest or from sheer laziness, was expressed by saying: I give myself over to the impulses of Saturn. Thus man felt in his limbs the wide spaces of the Cosmos out beyond. He knew that when he went a way from the Earth out into cosmic space, he came into the Earth's environment and then into the starry spheres. If he went downwards from his head, he passed through the very same experience, only this time within his own being. In his head he was in the Earth, in his chest and heart he was in the environment of the Earth, in his limbs he was in the starry Cosmos beyond.

Rightly understood, it is Modern Man not Ancient Man who is childish in his understanding of how we operate in relationship to the Cosmos in which we live, move, and have our being. If by being, we take that to refer to only the mineral-based body which temporarily houses our soul and spirit, then, yes, our relationship to the Cosmos is mere observers with our eyes and telescopes. But, if we are star-stuff, and we act as if we are but mere animals bound to the Earth, we are *blinding* ourselves to the very core of the reality in which we truly live, move, and have our being in body, soul, and spirit. We treat ourselves as some higher primate animal instead of a full human being. We limit ourselves to viewing the Sun as a thermonuclear furnace whose entire reality is explained by human-made physics, and we treat our body as mere flesh and bones entirely explained by modern physiology. We treat ourselves not as star-stuff, but *dust-stuff*, and the difference between those two concepts makes all the difference in the world to a human being; it makes the difference between wanting to live, to thrive, and wanting to kill oneself because of the meaninglessness of existence. It makes the difference between animation and anomie, between living spirit and dead flesh.

Listen how Ancient Man understood the world and his relationship to it.

[page 14, 15] There was once a time on the Earth when man was not merely conscious as we are of thoughts lying around, so to speak, but was conscious of his own head; he felt the head as the image of the Earth, and he felt this or that part of the head — let us say, the optic thalamus or the *corpora quadrigemina* — as the image of a certain, physical mountainous configuration of the Earth. He did not then merely relate his heart to the Sun in accordance with some abstract theory, he felt: "My head stands in the same relation to my chest, to my heart, as the Earth does to the Sun." That was the time when man had grown together, in his whole life, with the Cosmic Universe; he had become one with the Cosmos. And this found expression in his whole life.

In this next passage, Steiner gives examples of how localized memory showed up in ancient peoples as rock cairns and other markers or signs. It is interesting to notice that the notebooks Steiner is referring to becoming necessary are ubiquitous already as computerized notebooks, in the form of laptops and cell phone-based devices.

[page 15] If in that time of which I have spoken one were to enter the region inhabited by people who were still conscious of their head, chest, heart and limbs, one would see on every hand small pegs placed in the earth and marked With some sign. Or here and there a sign made upon a wall. Such memorials were to be found scattered over all inhabited regions. Wherever anything happened, a man would set up some kind of memorial, and when he came back to the place, he lived through the event over again in the memorial he had made. Man had grown together with the earth, he had become one with it with his head. Today he merely makes a note of some event in his head. As I have pointed out already, we are beginning once more to find it necessary to make notes not only in our head but also in a note-book; this is due as I said, to slovenliness of soul, but we shall nevertheless require to do it more and more. At that time however there was no such thing as making notes even in one's head, because thoughts and ideas were simply nonexistent. Instead, the land was dotted over with signs.

In my dolphin novel, [The Spizznet File](#), I imagined that dolphins wrote down their memories in coral structures and sand dollars, once living structures which were then dormant. Little did I suspect that was a method used by ancient humans to hold memories in rock-based memorials. We put them up by long habit, but they put them for necessity. In the course of evolution, we see this repeated pattern: what was a necessity for one millennium becomes an optional or habitual behavior for the next.

[page 16] Everything that has happened in the historical evolution of mankind has its origin and cause in the inner being of man. If we were but honest, we should have to admit that we modern men have not the faintest knowledge of the deeper basis of this

custom of erecting memorials. We set them up from habit. They are however the relics of the ancient monuments and signs put up by man in a time when he had no memory such as we have today but was taught, in any place where he had some experience, there to set up a memorial, so that when he came that way again he might re-experience the event in his head; for the head can call up again everything that has connection with the earth." We give over to the earth what our head has experienced" — was a principle of olden times.

Our refrigerator is usually covered with photos and artifacts of trips or experiences we had. The magnets which hold the photos of our offspring might be a wooden moosehead from Whistler, British Columbia, or a bas-relief of the Bronze Horseman statue in St. Petersburg, Russia, for example. Recently we moved to a new home and when Del removed all the images from the refrigerator, I was taken aback. The fridge was naked! The subtle but real soul experiences that each little item created in me were suddenly and *en masse* gone! I felt it in my soul as a huge vacuum. This illustrates how soul experiences occur in our lives, often subtly without notice, until some accumulation happens without warning, and we feel a dramatic impact.

[page 16] Even today it is still of no small value for a man's spiritual evolution that he should sometimes make use of his capacity for this kind of memory, for a memory that is not within him but is unfolded in connection with the outer world. It is good sometimes to say: I will not *remember* this or that, but I will set here or there a *sign*, or token; or, I will let my soul unfold an experience about certain things, only in connection with signs or tokens.

Growing up in the New Orleans area, I took for granted the Madonna statues and grottos with the Blessed Mother which dot the front yards of residents here. These are another form of localized memory which was carried by immigrants from Central Europe to our area. Steiner explains how this first stage of memory, localized memory works yet today in our lives.

[page 16, 17] I will, for instance, hang a picture of the Madonna in a corner of my room, and when the picture is before me, I will experience in my soul all that I can experience by turning with my whole soul to the Madonna. For there is a subtle relation to a thing belonging so intimately to the home as does the picture of the Madonna that we meet with in the homes of the people, when we go a little way eastwards in Europe; we have not even to go as far as Russia, we find them everywhere in Central Europe. All experience of this nature is in reality a relic of the epoch of localized memory. The memory is outside, it attaches to the place.

The next stage is rhythmic memory. We mentioned how it appears in children yet today, but Steiner explains how ancient Man developed a need for moving from only localized memory to rhythmic memory as well.

[page 17] We have now come to the time when, not from any conscious, subtle finesse, but right out of his own inner being, man had developed the need of living in rhythm. He felt a need so to reproduce, within himself, what he heard that a rhythm was formed. If his experience of a cow, for instance, suggested "moo," he did. not simply call her "moo," but , moo-moo," — perhaps, in very ancient times, "moo-moo-moo." That is to say, the perception was as it were piled up in repetition, so as to produce rhythm. . . . There had to be at any rate some similarity between a sequence of words. "Might and main," "stock and stone" — such setting of experience in rhythmic sequence is a last relic of an extreme longing to bring everything into rhythm; for in this second epoch, that followed the epoch of localized memory, what was not set into rhythm was not retained. It is from this rhythmic memory that the whole ancient art of verse developed — indeed all metrical poetry.

The last of the three stages is temporal memory, the most abstract form of memory which appeared only in historical times. I say historical times, because what makes an era historical is that we have some written record of. The appearance of a written record presupposes the ability of the human writing the record to hold a memory of an event in mind while creating a permanent record of it, whether on clay tablets, papyrus, or parchment. The epics of Homer were not written down initially, but existed in *rhythmic memory* by means of which troubadours sang and recited the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and other long tales. At some point, the onset of temporal memory capability allowed scribes to record in writing the long oral epics and those early records were basically prehistorical events which were written down during historical times.

[page 17, 18] Only in the third stage does that develop which we still know today, — temporal memory, when we no longer have a point in space to which memory attaches, nor are any longer dependent on rhythm, but when that which is inserted into the course of time can be evoked again later. This quite abstract memory of ours is the third stage in the evolution of memory.

To summarize: the ancient people had only localized memory, but during their fleeing from the Atlantean flood towards Asia they developed rhythmic memory which flourished in the Far East and can be still heard in their rhythmic chants and music for which rhythm is the primarily element. Thousands of years later, the migration of these rhythmic people back towards the West marked the transition from rhythmic to temporal memory about the time they colonized Greece. The flourishing of thought and writing in classical Greek times is our record of this amazing transition in human capabilities. In these three types of memory are held the history of Man from earliest post-Atlantean times to classical Greek times. We cannot rightly understand world history, especially the origin of modern civilization, without knowledge of these three types of memory.

[page 19, 20] The migration of the Atlantean peoples to Asia marks the transition from localized memory to rhythmic memory, which latter finds its completion in the spiritual life of Asia. The colonization of Greece marks the transition from rhythmic memory to temporal memory — the memory that we still carry within us today.

- 1. Localized Memory.**
- 2. Rhythmic Memory.**
- 3. Temporal Memory.**

And within this evolution of memory lies the whole development of civilization between the Atlantean catastrophe and the rise of Greece, — all that resounds to us from ancient Asia, coming to us in the form of legend and saga rather than as history. We shall arrive at no understanding of the evolution of humanity on the Earth by looking principally to the external phenomena, by investigating the external documents; rather do we need to fix our attention on the evolution of what is within man; we must consider how such a thing as the faculty of memory has developed, passing in its development from without into the inner being of man.

What does any of this talk about memory have to do with the Mysteries? Good unanswered question to hold as we examine the next lecture. The term Mysteries refers to schools of Initiates which accept pupils and train them to become Initiates. An Initiate is someone with an advanced development of consciousness relative to the current time. Rudolf Steiner was such an Initiative in our time. What can we say about the Initiates in the ancient Orient who lived in a time when only localized and rhythmic memory constituted the highest form of memory for the average person who could neither read nor write? The Initiates could, only be dint of their Mystery school training, read and write!

[page 28] And the Initiates in the Mysteries, — they received a still further degree of consciousness. Of what nature was this? The answer is astonishing; for the fact is, the

Initiate of the ancient East acquired the same consciousness that you know by day! You develop it in a perfectly natural way in your second or third year of life. No ancient Oriental ever attained this state of consciousness in a natural way; he had to develop it artificially in himself. He had to develop it out of the waking-dreaming, dreaming-waking. As long as he went about with this waking-dreaming, dreaming-waking, he saw everywhere pictures, rendering only in more or less symbolic fashion what we see to-day in clear sharp outlines; as an Initiate however he attained to see things as we see them to-day in our ordinary consciousness. The Initiates, by means of their developed consciousness, attained to learn what every boy and girl learns at school to-day.

When we read Steiner in other places talking about the capabilities of future humans to see directly into the spiritual world while yet conscious, we can realize that he can predict this for the very reason that all throughout history and pre-history, what Initiates could do during one epoch became the normal abilities of all humans during a succeeding epoch! What requires waking-dreaming for the average human today will one day become a conscious, fully awake condition of all of humanity.

Do you know any Initiates personally? I cannot say for sure that I do. It is not safe for Initiates to reveal themselves — they will be reviled and exiled, being considered too dangerous to allow to live. "People just shouldn't know these things," will be what the masses will say and think about these Initiates.

Surely you're joking, you may be thinking! How could an ancient become upset just because a person of today can read and write? Surely they would understand the importance of reading and writing, wouldn't they? Read Steiner's description of what would happen if an average high school graduate of today were to meet an average human from this ancient time.

[page 28, 29] Supposing that somewhere or other this world of the ancient East were to re-appear, inhabited by human beings having the kind of consciousness they had in those olden times, and you were to come among them with your consciousness of the present day, then for them you would all be initiates. The difference does not lie in the content of consciousness. You would be initiates. But the moment the people recognized you as initiates, they would immediately drive you out of the land by every means in their power; for it would be quite clear to them that an initiated person ought not to know things in the way we know them to-day. He ought not, for example, to be able to write as we are able to write to-day. If I were to transport myself into the mind of a man of that time, and were to meet such a pseudo-initiate, that is to say, an ordinary clever man of the present day, I should find myself saying of him : He can write, he makes signs on paper that mean something, and he has no idea how devilish it is to do such a thing without carrying in him the consciousness that it may only be done in the service of divine cosmic consciousness; he does not know that a man may only make such signs on paper when he can feel how God works in his hand, in his very fingers, works in his soul, enabling it to express itself through these letters. Therein lies the whole difference between the initiates of olden time and the ordinary man of the present day. It is not a difference in the content of consciousness, but in the way of comprehending and understanding the thing. Read my book *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, of which a new edition has recently appeared, and you will find right at the beginning the same indication as to the essential nature of the initiate of olden times. It is in point of fact always so in the course of world-evolution. That which develops in man at a later period in a natural way had in former epochs to be won through initiation.

Evolution of consciousness is not a change in *content*, but rather a change in *process*, which, as I understand it, is what Steiner means when he says, "It is not a difference in the content of consciousness, but in the way of comprehending and understanding the thing." A *process* is the way in which something happens and what happens in consciousness is the process of comprehending and understanding. Anyone trying to understand the difference in ancient humans and today's humans by examining the differences in

the *content* of their consciousness will miss the essence of the evolution of consciousness which occurred between then and now.

An evolution or difference in the process of consciousness can not only exist in time but also in space. In other words, there can be differences between Men separated by long periods of time and differences between Men separated by long distances. The Greeks and the Trojans during their long war were such an example of Men separated by distance who had different processes of consciousness. How do people learn from each other? Through extensive and intimate contact. Trade is one way, but the most common ways in ancient times were slavery and war.

Young, hot-blooded cultures strove for conquest over older culture possessed of greater powers of reflection. In the course of conquest they acquired slaves who came into close contact with them and learned from the slaves.

[page 32] The younger nation went out against the older and brought it into subjection. It was not necessary that a blood-bond should be established between conquerors and enslaved. That which worked unconsciously in the soul between them worked in a rejuvenating way; it worked on the reflective faculties. What the conqueror required from the slaves whom he now had in his court was influence upon his consciousness. He had only to turn his attention to these slaves and the longing for unconsciousness was quenched in his soul, reflective consciousness began to dawn.

What we have to attain to-day as individuals was attained at that time by living together with others. A people who faced the world as conquerors and lords, a young people, not possessed of full powers of reflection, needed around it, so to say, a people that had in it more of the forces of death. In overcoming another people, it won through to what it needed for its own evolution.

And so we find that these Oriental conflicts, often so terrible and presenting to us such a barbarous aspect, are in reality nothing else than the impulses of human evolution. They had to take place. Mankind would not have been able to develop on the earth, had it not been for these terrible wars and struggles that seem to us so barbarous.

We can learn from Steiner's analysis that war stems from a mixture of old and young cultures learning from each other, and mostly it is the conqueror who learns from the conquered. The process seem similar to me as that of marriage: a mixture of male and female in the male wins the female's heart and learns from her what it is to have a heart in himself.

[page 34] . . . the driving force for further evolution lies in the search for an adjustment between young races and old races, so that the young races may mature through association with the old, with the souls of those whom they have brought into subjection. However far, back we look into Asia, everywhere we find how the young races who cannot of themselves develop the reflective faculties, set out to find these in wars of aggression.

In the time of the Trojan War, the Greeks did not feel a need for reflective faculties — having already acquired them — but rather experienced an "apprehension and fear of death".

[page 35] Such a fear of death was not felt by the young Eastern races; they went out to make conquests, when as a race they found themselves unable to experience death in the right way. The inner conflict, however, which the Greeks experienced with death became in its turn an inner impulse compelling humanity, and led to what we know as the Trojan War. The Greeks had no need to seek death at the hands of a foreign race in order to acquire the power of reflection. The Greeks needed to come into a right relation with what they felt and experienced of death, they needed to find the inner living mystery of death. And this led to that great conflict between the Greeks and the people

in Asia from whom they had originated. The Trojan war is a war of sorrow, a war of apprehension and fear. We see facing one another the Greeks, who felt death within them but did not know, as it were, what to do with it, and the Oriental races who were bent on conquest, who wanted death and had it not. The Greeks had death, but were at a loss how to adapt themselves to it. They needed the infusion of another element, before they could discover its secret. Achilles, Agamemnon — all these men bore death within them, but could not adapt themselves to it. They look across to Asia. There in Asia they see a people who are in the reverse position, who are suffering under the direct influence of the opposite condition. Over there are men who do not feel death in the intense way it is felt by the Greeks themselves, over there are men to whom death is something abounding in life.

Steiner points out in Lecture III (Page 38) that temporal memory came into existence as humankind entered the fourth Post-Atlantean cultural epoch, the Greco-Roman epoch. This means that the earliest Greeks were just beginning to learn about temporal memory and would have needed a lot of techniques to assist them. One of their techniques, I first learned about in a memory course I took from Don Robinson in Los Angeles about 1970, the method of *loci*. He explained that this was a technique used by classical Greeks to aid in remembering. How it works: if you have a lot of objects to remember, simply imagine putting each one in a room in a building you are very familiar with. Then to recall the set of objects, you simply walk through the building, your home probably, and see what objects are stored in each room. Clearly, this was a technique which helped the Greeks to bridge the gap from localized memory to temporal memory. Instead of physically walking through the house to collect the objects, one walked in one's memory to fetch them.

In Lecture V, Steiner adds some insight to the concept that history began coincident with the onset of temporal memory and the invention of writing by revealing how humans remembered things before writing came into being. The shadow pictures he refers to are the images of the spiritual world, the Akashic Record, which were yet accessible into earliest Grecian times, but faded mostly away by classical Greek times, to be replaced by temporal memory and writing.

[page 84, 85] In the older Grecian time there was no need to make written history. Why was this? Because men had the living shadow of everything of importance that had happened in the past. History could be read in what came to view in the Mysteries. There one had the shadow-pictures, the living shadow-pictures. What was there then to write down as history ?

The Greeks, in other words, could yet see the gods, as they called the Spiritual Beings they viewed in the shadow-pictures. But with the loss of this spiritual vision the onset of temporal memory and written history began, and a fall into purely earthly materialism which continues, up until now.

[page 85] But now came the time when the shadow pictures became submerged in the lower world, when human consciousness could no longer perceive them. Then came the impulse to make records. Herodotus, the first prose historian, appeared. And from this time onward, many could be named who followed him, the same impulse working in them all, — to tear mankind away from the Divine-Spiritual and to set him down in the purely earthly. Nevertheless, as long as Greek culture and civilization lasted, there is a splendor and a light shed abroad over this earth-directed tendency, a light of which we shall hear to-morrow that it did not pass over to Rome nor to the Middle Ages. In Greece, a light was there. Of the shadow-pictures, even the fading shadow-pictures of the evening twilight of Greek civilization, man still felt that they were divine in their origin.

What happened on the day Alexander the Great was born which infused him with a desire to conquer the world? The temple with the peaked roof shown on the cover of this book was torched and lit up the sky,

an event to be reiterated in Steiner's current lifetime when the original wooden Goetheanum went up in flames on a New Year's Eve. In several places I have read others talking about Steiner being the same great spirit who inhabited Gilgamesh's friend, Enkidu (aka *Eabani*) and who later inhabited Alexander the Great's teacher, Aristotle. Reading the details that Steiner gives about Gilgamesh and Alexander in these lectures indicates he had, in previous incarnations, an intimate link to these two great personalities. Here he discusses the connection between Gilgamesh and Alexander:

[page 86] We must remember that in the two souls who afterwards became Aristotle and Alexander the Great, there was living in the first place all that they had received in a far-off time in the past and had subsequently elaborated and pondered. And then there was also living in their souls the treasure of untold value that had come to them in Ephesus. We might say that the whole of Asia — in the form that it had assumed in Greece, and in Ephesus in particular — was living in these two, and more especially in the soul of Alexander the Great, that is to say, of him who afterwards became Alexander the Great.

Picture to yourselves the part played by this personality. I described him for you as he was in the Gilgamesh time; and now you must imagine how the knowledge that belonged to the ancient East and to Ephesus, a knowledge which we may also call a "beholding," a "perceiving," — this knowledge was called up again in the intercourse between Alexander the Great and Aristotle, in a new form. Picture this to yourselves; and then think what would have happened if Alexander, in his incarnation as Alexander, had come again into contact with the Mystery of Ephesus, bearing with him in his soul the gigantic document of the Mystery of Ephesus, for this majestic document of knowledge lived with extraordinary intensity in the souls of these two.

And now he reveals the great cosmic synchronicity of the Burning of the Temple of Ephesus and the birth of Alexander with his great mission.

[page 86] If we can form a idea of this, we can rightly estimate the fact that on the day on which Alexander was born, Herostratus threw the flaming torch into the Sanctuary of Ephesus; on the very day on which Alexander was born, the Temple of Diana of Ephesus was treacherously burnt to the ground. It was gone, never to return. Its monumental document, with all that belonged to it, was no longer there. It existed only as a historical mission in the soul of Alexander and in his teacher Aristotle.

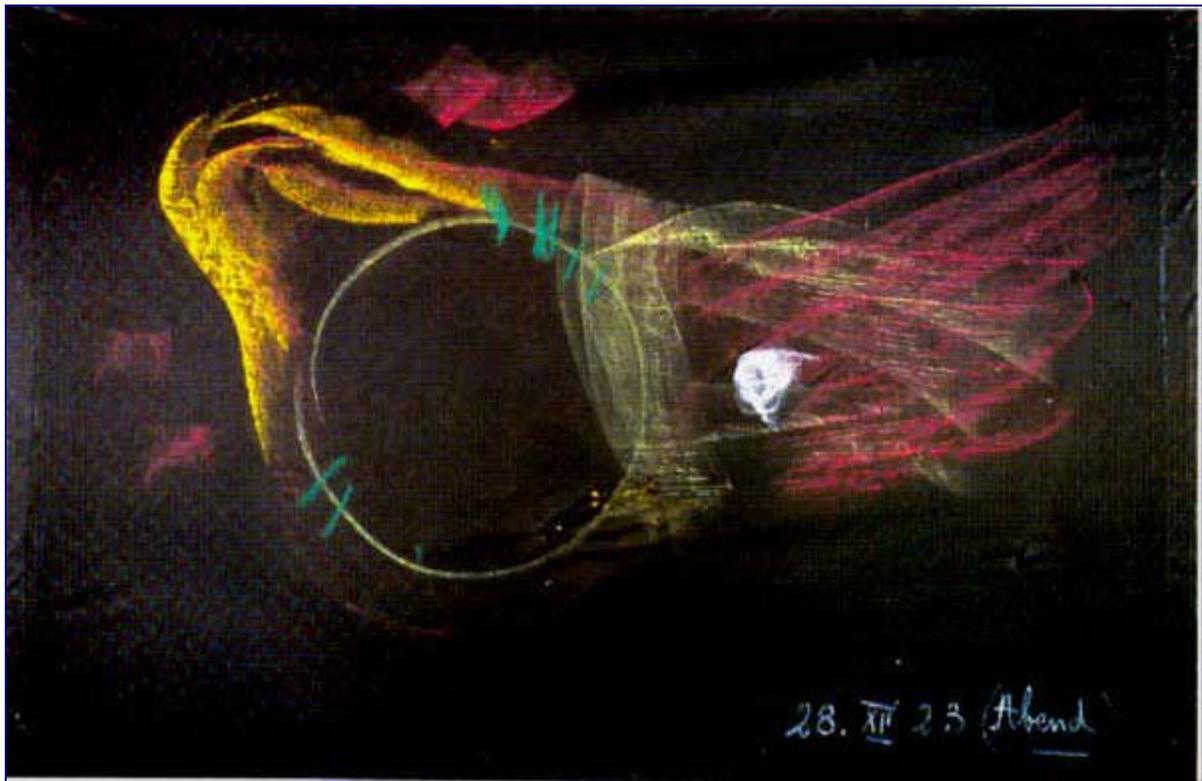
Those who blithely think that Alexander was bent solely on conquest are badly misled. Alexander did not place his own commanders in charge of every land he conquered. He did not require these lands to change their religious practices, in fact, Alexander was often severely criticized by his own advisors for adopting the local customs and dress of the Eastern peoples he conquered. He seemed less a conqueror at times, and more of a savior.

[page 87] You will now be in a position to appreciate the resolve that Alexander made in his soul: to restore to the East what she had lost; to restore it at least in the form in which it was preserved in Greece, in the phantom or shadow-picture. Hence his idea of making an expedition into Asia, going as far as it was possible to go, in order to bring to the East once more — albeit in the shadow form in which it still existed in the Grecian culture — what she had lost.

And now we see what Alexander the Great is really doing, and doing in a most wonderful way, when he makes this expedition. He is not bent on the conquest of existing cultures, he is not trying to bring Hellenism to the East in any external sense. Wherever he goes, Alexander the Great not only adopts the customs of the land, but is able too to enter right into the minds and hearts of the human beings who are living there, and to think their thoughts. When he comes to Egypt, to Memphis, he is hailed as a savior and deliverer from the spiritual fetters that have hitherto bound the people. He permeates

the kingdom of Persia with a culture and civilization which the Persians themselves could never have produced. He penetrates as far as India.

The color diagram at right was drawn by Rudolf Steiner to illustrate the next passage:



[page 88, 89] The mission of Alexander was founded, more or less unconsciously, upon this fact: the waves of civilization had advanced in Greece in a Luciferian manner, whilst in Asia they had remained behind in an Ahrimanic manner. In Ephesus was the balance. And Alexander, on the day of whose birth the physical Ephesus had fallen, resolved to found a spiritual Ephesus that should send its Sun-rays far out to East and West. It was in very truth this purpose that lay at the root of all he undertook: to found a spiritual Ephesus, reaching out across Asia Minor eastward to India, covering also Egyptian Africa and the East of Europe.

The evolution of consciousness is not something that happened once in history and we are done with it. No, the evolution goes on every day into the future. Rightly understood, every age we live within is an age of transition. Steiner says it this way, ". . . every period marks a transition from what comes earlier to what comes later. The point is that we should recognize for each period the nature of the transition." (Page 99)

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Footnote 1. We inherited these three types of memory from our distant ancestors because our brain grows by adding new functions without deleting the older functions. The likely locations of the three memories would correspond to the evolutionary progress of the brain: the localized memory in the root brain, the rhythmic memory in the limbic region, and the temporal memory in the neocortex.

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

Footnote 2. [Seeing Red](#) is a marvelous book by philosophy Nicholas Humphrey in he describes this conundrum of the color red.

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

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**Footnote 3.** One of the first writing methods, cuneiform writing, utilized the pressing of marks into earth. The earth was in the form of clay tablets which could be fired and hardened and moved from place to place. In this form of writing, we see a natural evolution from markers on earth to markers in earth.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)

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