Introduction

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On the Focus of this Introductory Guide

This series of twelve lectures by Rudolf Steiner provides a basis for an entirely new psychology.

The first four lectures (on “Anthroposophy”) provide a precise, dynamic understanding of the human soul in relation to the activity of sensing and to the subtle processes that structure and form the human body.

The next four lectures (on “Psychosophy”) focus on what we can know of the human soul on the basis of direct observation alone. No theorizing takes place; no special faculties are employed. Steiner was a disciplined clairvoyant but here he seeks to show what can be known of soul life through the immediacy of engaged observation of oneself and others. Therefore he refrains here from using his higher capacities, relying only on unmediated observation to form a picture of the activity of soul life. The particular nature of this kind of unmediated observation is important and will be addressed in this introduction.

Finally, the concluding lectures (on “Pneumatosophy”) portray the relationship of soul life to spirit life, particularly with regard to how to awaken individual spirit life and how to distinguish between illusory and genuine spiritual experiences.

Although the content of these lectures ranges far beyond the usual subject matter of ordinary psychology, it is here perhaps more than anywhere else in Rudolf Steiner’s work that the foundations of a psychology rooted in anthroposophy may be found. This is especially true of the middle set
of lectures on “Psychosophy.” These not only exemplify the content that any true psychology must encounter and struggle with when it tries to understand the life of the soul, but also illustrate a specifically psychological mode of thinking. Deep study of these lectures will result in ways of understanding soul life that one will not find expressed anywhere else in the whole discipline of psychology. More than that, anyone who works carefully with these lectures will find that the beginning of an increasingly conscious soul life becomes possible.

I suggest that readers start by reading the four “Psychosophy” lectures. This allows one to begin by concentrating on what is most important for psychology—a psychological point of view. One can then move on to the four “Pneumatosophy” lectures to see what might, from this point of view, constitute “a psychology of spirit.” Finally, turning to the opening four “Anthroposophy” lectures, one can then read those with a view to discovering what might constitute “a psychology of body.” This introductory guide follows that order.

(If you choose to read the text straight through, a different and perhaps equally important imagination develops. First, in the “anthroposophy” lectures, a picture of the whole human being unfolds from an inner standpoint. This leads into a deep consideration of the life of the soul: “psychosophy.” And then in the last section, we see how soul life can be employed to perceive specifically spiritual realms: “pneumatosophy.” My attempt here, however, will be to try to free the psychology implicit in the text and thereby begin to make explicit at least the foundations of a spiritual psychology. For this purpose, I shall follow the order suggested above.)

The lectures took place over a period of three years, from 1909 to 1911, almost a century ago. One might be tempted to think that whatever they have to say about psychology must be dated, and that if it is relevant to the field of psychology at all, it must be only to its history or early development. It is also tempting to think that, since Rudolf Steiner is not usually regarded as one of the founders of modern psychology, his efforts in this direction must be considered, at most, an interesting aside. But a very good argument can be made that these lectures are, in fact, a
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wellspring for the true stream of psychology, and that all that presently passes as psychology are but wandering tributaries.

I repeat: these lectures form a new foundation for psychology. I say this because the view of the soul presented here has a wider, fuller, deeper, and higher context than is present in any existing psychology. Steiner presents a context for considering individual soul life that includes the forces that actively form the human body and extends to the interplay of the living body with the surrounding world. These relationships are in turn embraced by the ongoing creative and dynamic activity of the cosmos, which is not here considered in the abstract but as consisting of regions of spirit beings. Furthermore, these realms and their interrelationships are considered in terms of their inner form and activity. This context itself forms the field, the enterprise, of anthroposophy, begun by Rudolf Steiner. Something of the nature and perspective of this context, that is, of “anthroposophy,” is presented in the first lecture.

My introduction will not compare what Steiner presents with all or even with several other schools of psychology. To do so would lead us far away from the text instead of into it. I mention Steiner’s relation to the field of psychology only to alert readers who approach this work from a background of the psychological disciplines to its contemporary importance. This book is not just another psychology to be put alongside all the others. Rather, it presents a possible future for the discipline as a whole.

Anthroposophy and Psychology

A Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit may be read not only by those with an interest in psychology but also by those with an interest in further developing the practice of anthroposophy. If the text is really worked with, the way one reads and studies any of Steiner’s other works will be radically transformed. At the same time, the very practice of any aspect of anthroposophy will also develop in new ways. Whether one’s field is education, medicine, art, drama, eurythmy, economy, or business—no matter what practical form one’s spiritual work assumes—the perspective this book offers has the potential to restore the often missing
soul element. Because this element is often lacking in anthroposophical work, much of the good that anthroposophical enterprises could bring into the world is unfortunately undermined by the dysfunctional soul life of those involved. The horror stories of those who have been subjected to the “help” of less than healthy anthroposophists could fill several volumes, and probably should be documented.

The soul element in anthroposophical work is often said to reside in artistic endeavors—painting, music, eurythmy, and so on. This point of view is true, however, only insofar as the artistic work is done from a real, conscious presence to the actual processes involved in soul life and does not merely follow formulas for what a particular color, movement, or tone does in the soul. Soul life is certainly not limited only to artistic work, and formalized soul must be understood as something quite different from living soul.

Attempts to develop a spiritual life without developing a consciousness of the fullness, depth, and particularity of soul life—which must be entered into not just as preliminary to something else, but as an ongoing task—typically result in living the abstract ideas of spirituality, not its actuality. The instances of abuse wrought by such ignorance, regardless of the spiritual or religious practices involved, are well known. What makes anthroposophy unique, however, is that Steiner did not bypass the soul realm and shoot directly for the spirit. The decided lack of soul knowledge and soul work within anthroposophy cannot be attributed to an oversight by its founder. From this point of view, even though this particular series of lectures occurred fairly early in the corpus of anthroposophy, it may well be the most central work, not only to read, but to take seriously as the foundation for a true renewal of the anthroposophical movement.

When this book is read—deeply read—it is impossible to come away from that encounter without realizing that the modern initiatory path of anthroposophy is a spiritual-psychological endeavor. This realization means that the whole of anthroposophy must be studied and practiced in a spiritual-psychological manner. By coupling the terms spiritual and psychological, I mean to convey the possibility of a spirituality practiced out of a deep, abiding, and very particular, rather than general, aware-
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Soul Life as the Subject Matter of Psychology

Soul life, as Steiner shows vividly in the four lectures entitled “Psychosophy” (the “wisdom of the soul”), humbles us, because we do not, and cannot, control it. Could anything restrain us more from controlling others than the realization that our own soul life largely controls us and that we have plenty to do to learn to submit to the wisdom of the soul? And what greater deviation from soul life could there be than to think that, from some imagined superior spiritual position, it is our duty to control others?

Steiner indicates why we are unable to control our own soul life and why, instead of trying to control it, we must come to know and follow its ways. The reasons have to do with the origin of soul life itself, and as well with the ongoing content of soul experience. Steiner describes the origin of soul experience as the life of desire. Wisely, he does not define desire, just as he does not define soul. Rather, he points out that desire does not originate within the soul but within the world. Elsewhere, he refers in passing to a second origin of desire: “Boredom causes desire in the soul. It gives birth to a longing for impressions,
and the soul life is surrendered to it, yet there is nothing to satisfy that
desire.” In another place, he speaks of yet another way of considering
desire—as the astral, future-time current flowing into the soul. More
will be said of this current.

The flow of desire shows up as the most basic polar continuum of
forces within the soul—the dramatic, conflicting forces of love and hate.
Desire, we could say, expresses itself as the urge toward unity, sought
either through the bridging of differences through love or the annihi-
lation of differences through hate. Such differences exist both within our-
selves and in our relationships with others. Desire, which may be
understood as the deepest unsatisfied longing imaginable—a longing
with no object—and its bifurcation into a tension of the opposites of
love and hate, gives the soul its dramatic character, and constitutes a
built-in urgency toward development—provided, of course, that one
remains present to the tensions of inner life.

Because we are so steeped in the pop culture of psychology, which
maintains that anyone at all can understand psychology without under-
going a rigorous inner training, such key words may easily be misunder-
stood. These key words—desire, love, and hate—do not have the sense
and meaning for psychology that they do for ordinary experience. First,
they must be understood within the context of the whole life of the soul
as described by Steiner. They have little to do with a subjective senses of
desire, love, or hate. The desire, the love, and the hate spoken of here are
autonomous, inner, dynamic qualities; they do not refer directly to what
our habitual “ego” might desire, love, or hate. Even the word inner has to
be qualified, for it does not mean “subjective,” nor does it mean “per-
sonal.” Inner must be understood in a much more metaphorical way, as
the dimension that gives life experiences the quality of intimate engage-
ment rather than of a mere string of events.

A constant confusion, present in the very heart of the discipline of
psychology, has to do with the assumption that psychology is concerned
with the personality and that when we do psychology we are concerned
with what goes on “inside” a person. Before psychology even starts,
therefore, “interiority,” the necessary standpoint for the discipline of
psychology, is converted into the idea of literal things going on inside people. In other words, we consider a person’s “psychology” without ever having developed a truly psychological mode of thinking about soul life itself. Psychology is usually practiced out of the same mode of consciousness we live in everyday life. However, when Steiner speaks of the soul, of desire, of love and hate, he is not speaking of something going on subjectively in some imaginary “everyone.” He is speaking of the soul from the place of soul—which is the only true and valid subject matter of psychology. In order to understand this book as a whole, then, it is necessary to realize—and to realize deeply—that what is being discussed as “soul” is not an entity of any type, not even an invisible entity. Nor does what is being discussed have to do with some literal content of a supposed invisible entity. When Steiner speaks of “soul” he is speaking a language of form. Let me try to express more fully what I mean by “form.”

When Steiner describes the inner quality of soul life as a “love-hate tension,” this cannot be understood positivistically, as though, somewhere within us, a subjective experience of a tension occurs, or a constant conflict between wanting to love and wanting to hate someone or something. Such an understanding turns the language of form or process into a language of content or stuff. In the language of form, words are used, in order, through words, to go beyond words. The polarity serves to awaken the thought-quality that soul is not some kind of container but rather an inner, dynamic, mobile, developing, regressing, conflictual, flowing, relationship. A relationship with what? The soul is “in relation” with desire, with the body, with the spirit—none of which, incidentally, can themselves be considered to utilize the language of content without degrading what they are about.

A reader might well ask why this text is so difficult to read. It is difficult because it is not presented out of ordinary consciousness. But neither is it presented out of clairvoyant consciousness. Instead, it arises out of soul-consciousness. The lectures on soul life are certainly given to us from soul-consciousness, and to do psychology we must be able to enter soul-consciousness. Otherwise, we are really not doing psychology at all,
but only talking about psychology from the safety of ordinary consciousness. The text is not presented from the viewpoint of Steiner’s ego-personality. In fact, it is impossible to do psychology from the viewpoint of ego-personality, although most psychology tries to do just that. Therefore, nearly all psychology is in fact pathological. It is pathological because its very language prohibits entry to the life of the soul.

*A Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit* does not operate within the popular deception that makes many people go looking for the “archetypes within,” their “inner child,” their “true self,” and all the rest. You must understand that the work you are about to read, in being true to soul, puts a deterrent before us: it cannot be understood simplistically or easily. This deterrent, however, is at the same time a doorway through which we may awaken to soul life. Psychology, as practiced in this text, forms an integral part of the work of initiation. All psychology ought to do the same, but it has sold its soul.

Something else brings home my point about the way to approach this work. This has to do with the second intrinsic aspect of soul life described by Steiner. Steiner calls this quality of soul life “judgment.” He also says that his meaning of this term must be understood in a “verb” rather than a “noun” sense—*judging* rather than *judgment*. He then further qualifies the term by saying that he is referring to something like “reflection,” “mirroring,” “pondering,” or “mulling over.” Thus, what initially seems to be a kind of content, or cognitive act in its concluding stages, is in fact much more subtle. Here the word *judgment* refers, really, to the momentary, provisional end-points of a qualitative, always, at every moment, ongoing soul process. Only in this latter sense does judgment belong to soul life. The word *judgment* generally carries the notion of something that has already happened, a conclusion that has been reached, but in the context of describing the most basic qualities of ongoing soul life, it would be quite incorrect to understand “judgement” in this sense. Even if we add the qualifiers (reflection, mirroring, pondering, mulling over) we still risk making the error of understanding these terms in the everyday sense as something we do. We think about things, ponder them, mull them over. The soul’s engagement in such activity
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You will notice—at specific places in the text, but really in the book as a whole—that words are used to describe soul life, while at the same time these very words seem to have to be erased. For example, judgment connotes one thing: an attempt to reach a final conclusion. But, as soon as you think you understand that concept, the term is reintroduced, but is now said to mean “mulling over.” “Mulling over” doesn’t really go anywhere, except over the same territory again and again. So, what kind of soul quality is being described? It is a quality that can be imagined as a kind of intensive experiencing—living experience, not having experience. Soul experience is something like the reintensifying of what we encounter in inner and outer ways. Such reintensification never comes to a conclusion, not in soul life. There are provisional conclusions, and these are what we experience as mental images. The soul quality described as “judging” can be understood to mean that we relive our life at the same time as we are living it. And this reliving, which happens simultaneously with living, consists of the upsurge of personal and even collective past, of waves of emotion, feeling, attention, memory, desire, even past lives, and many other qualities that qualify any moment as not something just gone through, but gone through with multileveled meaning.

Once we understand the term judging in this way, it becomes clear why Steiner says that not all experience is soul experience. We may, for example, perceive a rose, but that experience is not necessarily a soul experience. Only when it is relived—not necessarily after the fact, but at the moment it occurs—is the experience a soul experience. Such reliving, contemporaneous with living, describes a basic function of soul life. Soul life gives interiority to experience.

Psychology as Psychological Thinking

What is the nature, or method, of observation employed by Steiner to come to this understanding of soul life? This is an important question to carry with us while reading and studying this book, particularly the
section concerned specifically with soul life. Steiner does not give any direct indication of his method. He says only that "psychosophy is to be a deliberation on the human soul." He then goes on to tell us what will be considered. Or, he says, “What is soul life when we contemplate it as such, within the limits just spoken of?” Not much to go on; we must consider the text as a whole.

Steiner’s presentation of soul life is not just his opinions about the soul. The language of the text is not didactic or dogmatic. It does not conform to the style of pronouncements. We may conclude that he derived a great deal from the work of Franz Brentano, since he considers Brentano’s views and limitations in some detail (lecture one of “Pneumatosophy”). But he surely does not merely repeat Brentano’s findings, though Brentano’s phenomenological method certainly forms one aspect of Steiner’s style of observation. Steiner’s method attempts to describe faithfully the essential qualities of any experience. The method is not introspection, which is a peculiar kind of observation that “looks” inward. In other words, introspection turns an inner experience into naturalistic observation, converting the “inner” into the “outer.” We may also be sure that Steiner’s method is not empirical in the usual sense. What he has to say does not derive from conducting a series of inquiries about certain matters and then arriving at conclusions.

How does one observe the life of the soul? If we meditate on this question and consider it in light of Steiner’s text, we come to an understanding of the nature of the field of psychology: before you can do psychology, you must already be able to stand within soul life in a conscious way. The question of method cannot be approached from the outside, searching through all the possible, known methods to see which one fits. It may therefore be more helpful to rephrase the question by asking not what method is used to do genuine psychology but, “What aspect of me is allowed to do psychology?” We may be sure that it is not the ego-personality or the ordinary self that does psychology. The ego-personality could not produce the text you are about to read; that would be impossible. The ordinary ego-personality could, at best, only preach about the values of soul, or about the values of spirit, or even the values of anthroposophy.
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There is not a trace of preaching in this text, because it is not about soul as viewed from some external perspective. If the text were about soul rather than a speaking within soul, we would be presented not with a psychology but with a belief system about psychology.

This question of method is so important, because our answer to it determines how we read this book; and it also determines how, beyond the work of reading and study, we go about doing psychology. The requirement for reading this book is to read or hear the text as the soul that is spoken of. The text is spoken from the viewpoint of the soul and is addressed to the soul. There is no other possible way to do psychology. Entering this text requires a complete change, and there is no way to do it but to just do it—to plunge in. There is really no way to prepare; it is not a matter of simple transition or gradually growing toward it by developing and harmoniously expanding the habitual self. The method is really quite simple. Steiner does not talk about soul; he speaks from soul. That is the entire method. There is, however, an entrance fee for doing psychology. The fee is that you need to leave behind your well-known-to-you self-identity. You must suffer the experience of leaving behind not only what you know, but also what you think you know of yourself. This requirement qualifies psychology as integral to the work of initiation.

Another aspect of method seems worth mentioning. Reading this book, you will necessarily experience a rupture from your ordinary ego-personality, which would like to understand the text by the logical means of everyday thinking. This brings you into a new way of thinking. It takes a different frame of mind to cross the waters and engage in the psychological work of reading this writing. Thus, just as this book cannot be approached from within our usual self-identity, neither can it be approached out of our usual structures of thought. To do so would completely miss another basic requirement of doing psychology. An intellectual training is required, one not necessarily acquired prior to reading and studying this work, but acquired through the intellectual effort required to read, study, contemplate, and meditate on it.

This intellectual training, it must be emphasized, is not specialized nor acquired through specialist training. In fact, this training takes the
opposite direction. This does not, however, mean sinking more deeply into everyday intellectuality. Specialist intellectuality hones the ability to observe the objects of interest, albeit more closely and finely than in daily life, utilizing what we might call “spectator consciousness.” If psychology goes in that direction the only conceivable outcome is either trivial nonsense or technologies of behavior control based on technical modes of thought. Assuredly, such a misuse of psychology does occur, even in the work of those who purport to be doing soul psychology; it is not exclusive to behaviorism. On the other hand, working from a non-specialist intellectual stance that can be immediately understood, psychology often becomes negligible, inconsequential.

The third alternative presented in this series of lectures is that one conceives of a psychological mode of thought—a psychological intellectuality, as it were. The “Psychosophy” lectures most exemplify that mode of intellectuality in this book. Psychological thinking extends outward—on one side toward the body and sensing, and on the other toward the life of spirit. Notice the extreme difference between the psychological mode of thinking exemplified by Steiner and the kinds of intellectual categories usually associated with psychology. I mean categories such as myths, symbols, empathy, confessional reporting, biography work, dream interpretation, case histories, theories of the self, trauma, abuse, analysis, visualization. For the present-day soul, such categories are passé, because they have been usurped by ego-personality and, rather than serving the soul, serve narcissism. They are categories that belong to dead thinking: one can no longer catch sight of the soul through them. When used by psychology, these categories, unless they are used to say what cannot be spoken and not as literal content, become manipulative tools. Sadly, this is all too often the case because almost no psychologist today understands this art of psychological thinking.

By calling into question the present categories of psychology, I am not saying that abuse is invented or that there is no psychological trauma, or that dream interpretation is not helpful, and so on. But when the therapeutic endeavor lacks the capacity to address soul life, remaining instead on the surface, it can, at best, merely make adjustment and adaptation
somewhat easier. Yet in so doing, the soul becomes even further walled in and incapable of the transformations it needs to meet and develop the challenges that karma and destiny set for it. The fact is that when the lazy mind takes the phenomena psychology addresses to be some positive content, the soul is left out of psychological categories. When, for example, the events of a person’s life are organized in a well-ordered biography—fixed into time periods that make it look as if the events of life are pat and nailed down—then the soul is abandoned by the very endeavor whose work is to care for soul. The soul cannot shine through these categories of time periods, primarily because the principle mode through which soul can shine through in our time is thinking. Not just any kind of thinking, but living, psychological thinking! In other words, lazy thought approaches psychological phenomena with the same attitude of consciousness with which it approaches the phenomena of the sense world, unaware that such naturalistic thinking does not apply. The soul cannot be perceived. However, in thinking, and only in thinking, it may be apperceived.

I have tried to demonstrate that Steiner demonstrates a psychological mode of thinking. The literalist, approaching this work from outmoded categories of psychological thought, will argue that if this text is a model of psychological thinking, then psychology is really in trouble. The text is so difficult, so elusive, so hard to get hold of, that this mode of thinking could not possibly be brought to bear in actual situations with other people. Of course, that is literally so. The aim while doing therapy would not be to think what Steiner presents here, but to think as he thinks here. We need a psychological thinking that evokes rather than nails down. We need ways of thinking that, at any given time, address one aspect of the soul’s life, and do so in a way that conveys that the reality being addressed is inexhaustible. We need thinking that surrounds and protects the inner life of soul. At the same time, we need this thinking to be clear and precise, not inflated, emotional, sentimental, and full of mystifications. This text, it is easy to see, serves as a model of psychological thinking.
Soul Time

*A Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit* serves not only as a deep source for the renewal and total re-imagining of the field of psychology; it also proposes including within such re-visioning a dimension of psychology that, as far as I know, has *never* been addressed before. This dimension is brought forth in the “Psychosophy” lectures. It has to do with time and the soul. Steiner carefully describes how the soul lives within an actual current of time, which comes to the soul not only from the past but from the future as well. A consideration of this quality changes the way we view the whole of psychology! Certainly, the whole of therapeutic psychology is changed by this astute observation.

There is a huge bias in psychology which advocates understanding the reasons for our present behavior in terms of what happened to us in the past. The bias takes many different forms. For Freud, it was the personal traumas of the past; for Jung, it was both the personal and the collective past. Each psychology has its own version of the past as determinant. Steiner, too, recognizes this factor of the past as important, but he approaches it in a very different manner. For Steiner, certain aspects of the past exist within soul life as autonomous desires, longings, urges, and memories—aspects that were never satisfied, may not be conscious, have no world to relate to, and, most significantly, have no future. It is not a matter of giving such autonomous factors a future, since they can never have that. Rather, his approach is twofold. First, some way is found to give these factors a world. He suggests, for example the procedure of eliciting associations, which can be healing for all such factors of the past—except for sexual matters. More important by far, however, is the strengthening of our sensitization to the time current from the future. But what does this mean?

The time current from the future, which is real and actual, moves in the reverse direction of the time current that moves from the past toward the future. Jung’s psychology as well as the existential psychology of Maslow and others all focus on the importance of what we can become rather than what we are due to past circumstances. These theories,
however, utilize a teleological imagination of the future. There is an
understanding that we are moving toward something and not merely
being pushed from behind. Steiner has a very different sense of the time
current from the future, which he hesitantly calls the “astral body” of
the soul. It is the “not-yet” and it plays an enormous role in our soul life.
This future time current has nothing to do with literal clock time—it is
not in linear time. One can begin to actually experience such a current
by imagining, at the end of each day, the events of the day in reverse
order. One could also write one’s biography in reverse order or simply
perform a certain task in reverse every day. After a while, a new sensibil-
ity will dawn. It involves living a sense of possibility, as though we are
drawn toward something, or the sense of the “not-yet” as a powerful
force. This aspect of soul life reverberates into life as openness, as a con-
stantly creative factor, and as real life movement.

The soul has no means of registering the content of its future time
current except as it overlaps the time current from the past. Nonethe-
less, the effort to make this current conscious is experienced as an
expansion of soul life. It is experienced as a capacity to live consciously
in “not-knowing.” This is the capacity to experience the activity of cre-
ating our responses to each moment. Becoming aware of this current
radically alters the soul qualities of past events as these continue to influ-
ence the life of the soul. The two time currents, past and future, overlap;
and feeling the not-yet quality (that sense of “not-knowing”), a con-
scious and creative “not-knowing,” also brings the substantial feeling of
the possibilities present within the past that affects us. This is the past
not only as determiner but as “possibilizer.”

Imagine, for example, rewriting your biography. Usually, we consider
our biography to be our life story, a life review. We look at our past in
order to see how at each moment that past enters the present. Something
very different would result, however, if you wrote your biography while
paying attention to the open possibilities that attend each past event.
Your biography then is not only what has already happened; it also in-
timates the coming-to-be that accompanies each event you have lived
through. Learning to listen for this aspect of the past creates an imaginal
biography, a past that is truly worth paying attention to, because at each place along the way one could get a feeling for the future. Not the literal future, but the ongoing “not-yet” that one is in each of life’s events. Neglecting this dimension of soul life, a whole half of psychology and of our understanding of the life of the soul has been neglected.

**Toward a Psychology of Spirit**

The sections of this book are arranged so that each set of lectures—those on the body and sensing, those on soul life, and those on spirit life—can be read more or less independently. Nevertheless, I wish to present a view of the book that emphasizes soul and the inherent foundation for a new psychology. Thus far, I have touched upon the qualities inherent within soul life. Many other extremely valuable considerations concerning the phenomena that derive from these qualities may also be found in the text. Phenomena such as attention, boredom, emotion, aesthetic feeling, and the dramatic character of soul life are all addressed. These phenomena, too, must not be considered with the understanding of ordinary consciousness. Rather than understood through the static ideas of our habitual intellect, they must be worked with in such a way that the continuous, dynamic quality of soul is felt.

In addition to the qualities inherent in soul life, Steiner gives detailed pictures of the relationship of the boundaries of soul life with the body, as well as with the spirit. Body and spirit are both intimately bound up with soul life. Yet, at the same time, they must also be considered on their own terms. The lectures on the senses and the body, and the lectures on spirit, express these dual concerns. In his book *Anthroposophy (A Fragment)*, based on the first set of lectures printed here, Steiner considers in detail the life of sensing and how the currents involved in sensing constitute the formative forces of the human body.¹ The autonomous nature of spirit and the healthy way of developing the soul

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¹. *Anthroposophy (A Fragment)* was the result of Rudolf Steiner’s attempt in 1910 to write out what he had tried to convey in “Anthroposophy,” the first course of the present lectures. See “Further Reading” for this and other books mentioned.
as an organ for perceiving the spiritual worlds is basic to the work of Steiner. It is the subject of his central book, *How to Know Higher Worlds*. To some extent, these two works, *Anthroposophy (A Fragment)* and *How to Know Higher Worlds*, go into the matters of body and spirit in greater detail than the present work which, however, is most valuable for understanding the soul’s relationship to body and to spirit. It is this aspect that I wish to emphasize as a ground for re-visioning psychology.

The psychology of spirit inherent in *A Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit* may be seen as proceeding in two directions. First, there are the considerations of the spirit as it lives in the life of the soul. These considerations have to do with the quality of soul life that we experience as the sense of the “I.” Our capacity to arrive at the realization “I am” is not, however, inherent in soul life. And yet, paradoxically, once installed in the soul, experiencing and living “I am” (the judging quality, described above) does belong to soul life in an ongoing way. But originally it must come from elsewhere—it is not given. The “I” experience does not enter the soul through our sensory relation with the world. There is nothing in the outer world that could lead to the inner capacity of a first experiencing of the “I.” The “I” is not of a sensory nature; we do not learn it from experiencing the world. It is an element that differs equally from the current of mental images from the past and from the current of desires from the future. Rather, it is the element that makes it possible to receive the past in an individual way and face the future in an individual way. The sense of the “I” enters soul life from the spiritual world. Within soul life as such, once “I”-being has awakened, we experience a definite “I”-consciousness.

From the point of view of psychology, the experience of the “I” makes certain soul experiences possible. It makes possible, for instance, the free remembering of something from the past. Memory is also evoked by the presence of something in the physical world that touches off remembrances of past occurrences. Here, we have a soul-body relationship. To remember something from the past freely, however, is different. Yet the capacity to do so is crucial for a healthy soul life. This capacity can be developed by the practice of doing some task in the opposite order than
we usually do. In fact, this is the same kind of practice we need to do to become aware of the time current from the future. The two capacities are related. As we tap into the reversed time current, we strengthen the capacity of the “I” to freely remember events of the past.

“I”-consciousness is not a familiar term in psychology. “I”-consciousness is not the same as ego-personality, though a relationship exists between them. However, the possibility of developing a more fully conscious soul life depends on “I”-consciousness within soul life, that is, on the spiritual aspect of soul life. When the “I,” in effect, reflects only the past—as happens when there is no feeling for the time (or future) current—then we have what psychology generally speaks of as ego-consciousness, and its attendant egotism. As Steiner says: “I”-image, or “I”-awareness, has a certain characteristic. It is taken hold of powerfully by all interests and desires, for they anchor themselves firmly in the “I”. Despite the egoism represented by such interests and desires, there is certainly something very unique about this self-perceiving of the “I.” Steiner adds that the “I” does not belong to the soul current flowing from the future.

So, whereas ego-consciousness is really the accumulation of past experiences reflected by the “I,” and such consciousness is (in more usual psychological terms) the ego, the “I” is more than this. The “more” consists of “I”-consciousness reflecting, within soul life, the individual spirit nature.

This individual spirit nature is what Steiner means when he says that there is something unique to the “I.” Now the term “I” is used throughout Steiner’s texts, and the specific manner in which he uses the term has to be determined by its context. Anthroposophists often fail to make the fine but extremely important distinction between “ego” and “I.” Consequently, they often do not differentiate between egotism and individual spirit. Even more often, psychologists fail to make such a distinction, and in depth psychology, for example, there is a bias against the “ego,” which is, unwittingly, a bias against spirit (the “I”).

Steiner recognizes the unique qualities of the “I” and gives detailed descriptions of the interplay between “I”-consciousness and soul life as a whole. If these factors are taken into account, all psychology must, in fact,
be spiritual psychology. Furthermore, when these factors are taken into account, spiritual psychology assumes a clear, definite, and precise meaning—it becomes a discipline concerned with the whole of soul life, which includes the dimension of spirit.

I have said that the psychology of spirit, as developed by Steiner in this book, proceeds in two directions. The second direction is developed in the series of four lectures entitled “Pneumatosophy,” a term meaning the “wisdom of spirit.” If, when reading and studying the “Psychosophy” lectures, there are persistent questions about what is meant by “spirit” and what the basis might be for saying that the “I” relates to the spirit aspect of our being, these concerns can be clarified by studying the “Pneumatosophy” lectures.

The “Pneumatosophy” lectures develop the aspect of the psychology of spirit that deals with developing the soul as the perceiving organ for spiritual realities. This path of soul development is well known in anthroposophy, but not enough attention is usually given to exactly what is meant by it. Let us start at the beginning. The reality of spiritual worlds cannot become known to us in a healthy way unless we work toward those worlds through the soul. The method requires the repeated and regular formation of an inner, symbolic image that, as far as the physical world is concerned, is an incorrect—an erroneous—picture. A well-known example involves developing an image-based meditation of the Rose Cross. Steiner gives the details of this particular meditation in An Outline of Esoteric Science. There is nothing in the perceptual world that has the nature of a black wooden cross with a circle of roses. In A Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit, Steiner indicates repeatedly that an absolute requirement for this meditative exercise has to do with certain moral qualities of soul. This is the second, crucial aspect of a psychology of spirit. The principle may be stated thus: The psychological foundation of conscious spiritual experience is the contemplation of images without in any way basing such contemplation on self-interest, curiosity, or a desire to achieve something for oneself—not even a higher state of consciousness.

An even deeper aspect of the psychology of spirit is contained in the method of concentration and meditation that is necessary for the soul to
develop into an organ of spiritual perception. We must ask: What in us allows us to consciously make and concentrate on a symbolic image? And there is another question related to the first: Why does Steiner emphasize the erroneous nature of the images to be contemplated? Indeed, why does he not recommend contemplating a “real” spiritual image, such as the image of an angel?

Steiner’s response to these questions is quite startling: error originates in the spiritual world, and our stepping stone to this realm is through this aspect of the spiritual world itself! Thus, our first access to the spiritual world is through error. But we must recognize this error consciously. And, in addition to recognizing it, we must have the inner moral force not to be taken into the error: we must be able to utilize the inherent spiritual forces to bootstrap, as it were—or perhaps better said, “soulstrap”—ourselves into the spiritual world. If one were to contemplate, say, an inner image of an angel, the difficulty would be that it is unlikely we would recognize this image, too, as an error. No inner image of an angel accurately portrays in any way the nature of an angel.

The precise nature of the moral quality of soul must also be made clear, for only through this moral quality is it possible to use the soul to perceive into the spiritual worlds without coming to any harm. The moral quality, as described by Steiner and worth much contemplation, can be discovered by imagining first that human beings are presently unable to affirm their true and full nature, and then imagining human beings in the future who have the capacity to attain a higher nature. By carefully practicing such an imagination—not just once, but repeatedly—it becomes possible to use the error of inner images to overcome that error and develop toward new capacities. The implication of this procedure is that the psychology of spirit is a practical tool that is concerned not with the present but with the highest possibilities of human reality in the future. The psychology of spirit is the psychology of the future human being.

Certain kinds of psychology and so-called spiritual psychology make use of techniques of imagination. The psychology of spirit developed by Steiner, however, throws a whole new light on the use of such techniques. Visualization practices, active imagination practices, shamanic
practices adapted for weekend use by spiritual seekers, the use of altered states of consciousness for healing, guided imagery practices—none of these can be accepted at face value as being helpful. In Steiner’s terms, such practices all come under the rubric of spiritually illusory practices. They might take one into spiritual realms, but without exception these would be, in Steiner’s terms, “Luciferic” spiritual realms. No judgment is made against these realms by Steiner; in fact, his whole method of the psychology of spirit makes use of these very same realms. Nevertheless, what is brought to bear in the methods he suggests is a clear cognizance of the error involved and the attendant moral soul force that can cancel out the destructive effects of making use of spiritual error.

What kind of harm and destructiveness could Steiner have in mind when he speaks of the dire effects of using soul life to develop spiritual capacities without moral balance? He presents those effects in some detail in *How to Know Higher Worlds* and in other writings and lectures. At the very least, it leads to increased egotism—or increased self-absorption—now placed under the mantle of spirituality. The more dire effects include inflation and depression, even psychosis.

It needs to be strongly emphasized that the possibility of taking up the practices offered by Steiner for becoming present to true imagination rather than illusory fantasy depends completely on an ongoing presence, as consciously as possible, to soul life as I have previously described it. Since the soul becomes the medium through which spiritual experience becomes possible, it becomes imperative to be able to face even the darkest, most shadow sides of our soul life, over and over again, and more and more deeply. We are never finished with the soul. Any attempts to engage in spiritual practices, such as those described here by Steiner—*while bypassing the soul or feeling that one has, after all, already done all that*—can result only in destructive spiritual practices.

A third aspect of the psychology of spirit developed by Steiner, which is really a kind of subset of the second aspect—the development of healthy spirit imagination—concerns the creative imagination. The creative imagination belongs to the domain of phenomena considered by a psychology of spirit. It is important to emphasize this aspect of the
psychology of spirit, because creative imagination is often considered a function of soul life alone. In Jung’s psychology as currently practiced, for example, creativity is considered in this way. As described by Steiner, however, the creative imagination consists of currents intruding from the spiritual worlds into soul life and experienced as autonomous images. Steiner speaks of such images as genuine creative fantasy, occurring midway between mental picturing and fully conscious spiritual imagination. Creative imagination, then, is a central phenomenon of the psychology of spirit. In spite of all of its richness, complexity, and depth, creativity in itself does not belong to the realm of the soul.

Strictly speaking, the psychology of spirit must be differentiated from the investigations of spiritual worlds that become possible when we use the life of the soul to develop spiritual perception. In order to remain true to the discipline of psychology, true psychology of spirit will always stay close to the soul realm. Such a psychology is interested above all in the kinds of border phenomena that occur when spiritual worlds touch the soul realms. It is interested especially in how these border phenomena occur in daily life—how they are a healthy part of soul life, and how they give indications of movement toward or away from a healthy spiritual life. In the lectures on “Pneumatosophy,” Steiner goes beyond these considerations, but in this introduction we are concerned only with spiritual psychology as such.

Let us consider imagination more closely. When working with soul qualities to move toward perception of the spiritual worlds, images are used to enter the world of imagination. Imagination, for Steiner, is characterized by a particular quality of experience—the presence of inner images that have a distinctly autonomous life of their own. Psychologically considered, when such images occur in life (and indeed they can occur without the specific practices outlined by Steiner), the spiritual worlds have intruded into soul life. Whether such intrusions are helpful

2. Rudolf Steiner uses the terms imagination, inspiration, and intuition in an extraordinary sense. Thus, throughout this book, these words are italicized when used in that way. What we ordinarily call “imagination,” might be referred to as “mental picturing” or “fantasy.” See lecture three of “Pneumatosophy.”
or harmful depends on two factors: the moral sensibility of the person experiencing such images and the degree to which that person has in some manner come to a living understanding of soul life. Often such an understanding can occur without having psychological training.

If autonomous images intrude in forceful ways when moral sensibility of the kind mentioned above is absent or weak, then images that seem intense and significant are really no more than imaginal presentations of one’s own deficient moral qualities. If, on the other hand, no real sense of soul life is present, the experience of true imagination can become overwhelming. Here, we have one basis for developing therapeutic measures that can help people who are experiencing the presence of the spiritual worlds. In present-day psychology, such awakening of imagination is often assumed to belong strictly to the soul realm. Autonomous images are said to be soul experiences, with no recognition of the involvement of spirit. There are also many practices that encourage the awakening of autonomous imagery, either taking it to be a way to stimulate individual creativity or taking all such imagery to be spiritually helpful, without any moral consideration. When this kind of imagination occurs in a spontaneous and disturbing way, psychology, as currently practiced, usually assumes that such occurrences indicate psychological imbalance. A psychology of spirit can be of the greatest assistance in understanding what is actually happening and how to work with these experiences in healthy ways. Careful work with this text will give very direct indications about the most helpful ways to work with such experiences.

A second way that the spiritual worlds enter soul life concerns the relationship between emotion and action. Emotions belong to the realm of the soul. Understanding the mysterious way that an emotion, impulse, desire, urge, or feeling transmutes from emotion into action—understanding that transition—also belongs to the psychology of spirit. In this transition, soul gets beyond itself. Steiner’s consideration of the relationship between emotion and will reveals the nature of this transition. First of all, emotion touches into the body. This is the only way, in fact, that emotion can act in the world. Saying that the body is involved, however, does not clarify any of the process involved. But, if we could be aware of
that process, Steiner indicates that we would, in a soul manner, be aware of *intuition*. We can begin to be aware of *intuition* when we begin to realize that what lives in our consciousness—deeply felt and experienced not only as knowledge but also as bodily feeling—is the activity of something that goes beyond our own soul life. Our will is not completely our own; it is the cooperation of soul life, through embodied emotion, with actual spiritual forces.

In addition to imagination and *intuition*, the psychology of spirit also concerns a third element, *inspiration*. *Inspiration* is closer in content to spiritual *imagination* than it is to spiritual *intuition*. Whereas spiritual *intuition* is related to the soul activity of emotion working into the body as forces of will, spiritual *inspiration* for Steiner has to do with the soul’s experience of the autonomous images of spiritual *imagination* as more-than-autonomous inner pictures. Spiritual *inspiration* perceives that these autonomous images are the spiritual deeds of beings of the spiritual worlds. Spiritual *inspiration* consists of forming the thought that the images are indeed the acts of beings. It is difficult for language to describe precisely the nature of this realm. We might, however, express it thus: *inspiration* is the actively-coming-to-form-thought of the reality of spiritual beings revealing themselves through autonomous imagery.

In spiritual work, it is important to recognize the qualities of *inspiration*. Without such recognition, we may be captivated by the play of all sorts of images. These may fascinate us so that we lack a deep respect and reverence for the realms that have opened. One can easily miss the possibility of giving those worlds their proper meaning. Considered in a more psychological way, on the other hand, when one has no understanding of the nature of the spiritual worlds—and has not gone through the kind of careful movement of soul toward those worlds as described by Steiner—then, when *inspirations* enter, sensing the reality of spiritual beings can be extremely frightening. The usual sense of the word “inspiration” must therefore be put aside. As developed by Steiner, *inspiration* does not necessarily mean that one is able to utilize these experiences in an act of creating something in the world. That may happen, but *inspiration* can just as well be a terribly frightening feeling of
being invaded.

In the lectures on “Pneumatosophy,” Steiner focuses on the necessary procedures for using soul experience to develop the capacities for experiencing the spiritual worlds. I have tried to emphasize the psychology of spirit implicit in the practices described by Steiner. In order to remain psychological, a psychology of spirit must stay strongly on the side of the soul. The boundary where soul and spirit touch must be described from that point of view. Thus, as I have indicated, a psychology of spirit also involves the careful work of understanding how what occurs at this border may or may not be healthy. This allows one to begin to recognize that there are enormous differences between soul pathologies and soul-spirit pathologies. Ordinary psychology does not recognize these differences, and I have barely touched on them here. However, the sufferings of soul and the sufferings that may accompany arrival at the soul-spirit boundary must be differentiated. Each must be worked with in a different way. A therapeutic psychology based on a clear sense of soul does not proceed in the same way as a therapeutic psychology of soul-spirit. Such concerns go beyond the scope of this text, though hopefully it can open up these differences for research.

**Soul and Embodiment**

The most difficult lectures in this book are the ones that come first, the four lectures that are entitled “Anthroposophy.” These deal primarily with sensing and the body. My reflections on these lectures will focus on the kinds of experiences and phenomena characteristic of the soul-body boundary. Thus they will begin to outline a “psychology of the body.” The four lectures do more, however, than merely develop a “psychology of the body.” They differentiate “anthropology” from “anthroposophy” and “anthroposophy” from “theosophy.” Steiner alludes in a sketchy outline to the long evolution of the human body. This is done to help us understand that the human physical body is intimately interwoven with the whole cosmos. He then presents a way of understanding the human senses—first in an enumerative way, and
then more deeply from the perspective of spiritual science. At the time of these lectures, Steiner described ten senses. Later, he spoke of twelve distinct senses.3

Steiner first considers sensing through careful attention and observation of ordinary consciousness. Anyone can repeat his observations. As we do so, we come to realize the complexity of sensing. By the way Steiner arranges his presentation, we realize that each different sense provides a particular form of knowledge without the intervention of thought. The first description of the senses, however, does not touch on the soul-body relation, and is thus only a preparation for such a consideration.

The second description of the senses goes deeply into the spiritual question: What makes sensing possible? Here, sensing is considered by way of clairvoyant consciousness. Steiner develops dynamic pictures of the interplay between spiritual forces and the etheric and astral bodies, which is different for each of the senses. We take a very large leap from the first to this second description of sensing. By carefully following through this spiritual understanding of sensing, we begin to dissolve our notion of the human body as a physical organism that happens to be formed in such a way that it contains a number of sense organs. Even if we do not fully understand the meaning of Atma, Buddhi, and Manas or the meaning of the etheric and astral bodies, we are nonetheless alerted to the fact that the human body, the living human body, must be understood as the confluence of the activity of high spiritual beings—subtle life-forming and soul-forming forces—with physical matter.4 The second and third lectures in the section on “Anthroposophy” develop this spiritual understanding of each of the senses. Indeed, these lectures offer what amounts to a short course in the whole of anthroposophy. Fortunately, the editors have provided footnotes throughout, indicating where

4. Atma (spirit body, or spirit human being), Buddhi (life spirit), and Manas (spirit self) as well as the other aspects of the human being are discussed in detail by Steiner in the first chapter of both Theosophy and An Outline of Esoteric Science.
many of the concepts presented here can be followed up in greater detail in Steiner’s other writings and lectures.

Let me now present keys that might be helpful in understanding the importance of Steiner’s view of sensing and show how, on this basis, he develops a radically new approach to the human body. It is this new view that I believe to be of the utmost importance for the “psychology of the body.”

Steiner describes the human body from an inner perspective. This inner standpoint indicates the capacity to observe and describe the senses and the body from the perspective of consciously developed imagination, inspiration, and intuition. He states, for example, that a true understanding of the human organism “requires the development of a spiritual-scientific ability to observe and grasp the whole human being from within.” We are used to conceiving of the body as viewed from spectator consciousness. This ordinary conception of the body—as currently understood by science and medicine, for example—views the human organism as a closed system. The body that we are, however, is not a closed system as such. The living body is an open field, a locus for the convergence of relationships with the physical world and for more complex relationships with the spiritual worlds.

An example of the human body as an open, dynamic, and interactive field may be seen in Steiner’s description of one of the senses—the life sense. In the first lecture, which lists and describes the senses, we learn that the life sense is experienced as a feeling for the body’s well-being. In fact, we experience the life sense only when there is some disharmony among the inner organs of the body. We experience hunger, thirst, tiredness, or a feeling of energy. The life sense is one of four senses through which we become aware of ourselves as bodily beings. The other physical senses are touch, movement, and balance (though touch is not considered as a separate sense in these lectures). The life sense gives the particular experience of the wholeness of the body.

The second of the four lectures on “Anthroposophy” presents a second description of this life sense from the point of view of clairvoyant perception. This description uses the more specialized language of anthro-
posophy. There is, for example, a high spiritual being, *Atma*. At some time in the future, human beings will have this spirit being as part of their makeup. But for now it is lent to us. *Atma* suffuses the etheric body and brings a kind of cramping or a frozen quality to it. This contraction of the etheric body causes the astral body to be “squeezed out.” The astral body is the source of experiences such as pleasure, conflict, and tension. This “squeezing out” of the astral body is the process that is lived as our experience of the life sense.

The first description, given from ordinary consciousness, can be comprehended quite easily. The second description, on the other hand, has real meaning only for those who have clairvoyant capacities and—to some extent—for those who accept what Steiner says as true, while others, of course, may take it as equivalent to an abstract theory of the action of the life sense. But there is a third way of working with this description. The description can become the focus of sustained image meditations, from an inner perspective, of a particular functioning of the body. Approached in this way, we can begin to develop an entirely new imagination of the body. We then proceed similarly through all the senses. With regard to the life sense, for example, we can gradually come to a most interesting conclusion. The body itself feels qualities such as pleasure, aversion, pain, joy. But these qualities are not feelings I have; they are the body’s ongoing relationship with a spiritual being, the being that provides for us the sense we have of being a body. This is the body as a whole experience, not as a conglomeration of anatomical parts, organs, and physiology. Physiology does not give us an experience of the body at all; it gives us only concepts about the body.

We can get to the point of experiencing a strong sense of this quality of bodily life without having developed clairvoyant capacities. As the first step toward developing a “psychology of the body,” I would suggest working through each of the senses in image meditations drawn from Steiner’s descriptions. Even anthroposophists who work with the senses do not really practice the kind of imaginative procedure that will result in a new imagination of the body—a true spiritual “psychology of the body.” Albert Soesman, for example, has written, from other standpoints, a fine
book on the twelve senses (*Our Twelve Senses: Wellsprings of the Soul*). But he never mentions the fact that the body is not a product, or something completed, but a dynamic, open relationship with the spiritual worlds.

A set of meditations could be developed in relation to each of the twelve senses. For movement, it would be necessary to develop an imagination of the interplay between *Buddhi*, or life spirit, and the etheric and astral bodies. The specific ways these forces work are described in the text, and it is crucial to develop the meditations based on the specific forms of interaction. For balance, one might meditate on the specific relationship between the spirit being *Manas* and the etheric and astral bodies. These first three senses—the life sense, the sense of movement, and the sense of balance—all give us different qualities of experiencing ourselves as embodied.

The second series of four senses provides experiences of the body's interactions with the surrounding world. These take place through the senses of smell, taste, sight, and warmth. With these four senses, we are more on our own, since they do not involve a higher being, though they do involve the astral body. It may help to think of the astral body as the “soul body,” which means here that through these senses we have some bodily experience of the inner qualities of the outer world. As we work meditatively with these four senses, we gradually develop a “psychology of the body.” To do so, however, requires that we have a feeling for analogy. Smell, for example, is like the body interacting with outer substances through the will. Smell is like a struggle, or conflict, between a substance in gaseous form trying to enter the body and a counterforce of will that struggles to penetrate the interior of that substance. Taste is like the interaction of the feeling body with the feeling nature of substances. This means that taste is the body's way of experiencing the interaction of feelings. Sight, on the other hand, is analogous to thinking. It is the body's way of thinking that penetrates things of the world. For the sense of temperature, coldness is like the uninhibited flow of the soul within the body into the things of the world; warmth is like the uninhibited soul within the substance of things, flowing into the body.

With the three higher senses considered in this text—the senses of
hearing, speech, and thought—something new enters. Reading, studying, and then meditating what Steiner says concerning these senses and the interactions involved can lead to profound experiences. For here again we are not alone but constantly cared for and helped by very specific spiritual beings. With the sense of hearing we are given the help of angels, who lend their own soul substance so that we can hear. Hearing is thus a truly spiritual sense. In the case of the speech sense, we are given the help of archangels, who lend their own soul substance to help us understand human speech. And with the thought sense, it is the Christ Being, whom Steiner also calls the “Universal Human,” who makes possible our access to the thoughts of others in an immediate and sensory way.

In working toward a “psychology of the body” (which is only incipient in this text), it is necessary to understand such terms as *etheric body*, *astral body*, *sentient soul*, *comprehension soul*, *consciousness soul*, and *sentient body*, none of which are explained in the text. These terms are explained in many of Steiner’s other works, and will not be explained here. In keeping with the earlier sections of this introduction, however, it is important to refrain from a static understanding of these concepts.

Most importantly, however, it should have become apparent through these descriptive ways of speaking about the body that the body in its fullness is not something visible. The etheric body is invisible to ordinary perception, as is the astral body. These “bodies” should not be considered separate from the body we are, but as the more-than-physical aspects of embodiment. This is also true of the other terms. Furthermore, the body is not just the completed product that we see. In fact, the body-as-completed, finished organism is an illusion. The body, as considered from an inner perspective by Steiner, is at every moment in the process of coming into being and moving out of being. The same forces that form each of the sense processes at the same time form what we might term the “extended” or true body.

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5. See the chapters on the makeup of the human being in *Theosophy* and *An Outline of Esoteric Science*. 
We have come to live in our bodies according to the medical-scientific concept of the body. The medical view of the body is based on the anatomy of a corpse and on the physiology of a dismembered human body. Consequently, we must imagine soul and spirit back into our own living being. In this way, we can regain a soul-sense of embodiment. If we approach the lectures on sensing and the body with this need in mind, they can help to awaken the long-forgotten reality of our embodiment. Soul and spirit are not some kind of invisible entities lurking around as ghosts in a machine; the body is ensouled and inspirited through and through. But, to properly understand such a statement, we must keep in mind the body as more invisible than visible.

Our living body is not self-enclosed. The body opens to the surrounding world and is in a constant interchange with it. We take in the world at every moment—not only through the sense processes but also through the life processes. At every moment we return ourselves to the world—not only, for example, through breathing, but also through the activity of sensing. This activity of sensing moves from the exterior nearest the soul (i.e., the immediate body), through an increasing penetration into the world, and finally to a bodily sensing of the soul-spirit being of others. Thus, the living body is more like an open field of forces. However, we must understand such forces in terms of the soul and spirit, and not merely in terms of the physical.

Not only is the body open as a field to the earthly realm, but it is also open to the cosmic world. The body is sensible; it can be sensed in very subtle ways by others. It also senses; it is capable of great knowledge without the use of concepts. The dynamic, full soul-spirit body described by Steiner cannot be conceived of as an object in the world—for example, the way a rock exists as an object in the world. The body, in the mobility of its ongoing soul and spirit processes—its animation, its sensing, its relationship to formative forces and the spiritual worlds—is through and through a *time body*. We do not just exist in time; we are a part of the very fabric of time, and a part of the very fabric of pure spirit activity.

The body, in its relationship to the sentient body, sentient soul, con-
A Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit

Concluding Questions

You might consider A Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit to be too high, too steep for you. It may not seem to answer your immediate and pressing questions. You may ask, does this book, in fact, present any therapeutic application for understanding the body, soul, and spirit? What does any of this have to do with real people, with people who are suffering? True, this book does not suggest any technical tricks. But therapeutic psychology should not consist of concepts to be used as a bag of tools that a practitioner applies. A perceived need for such “practical” tools is simply a sign of psychological immaturity. Therapy does not, or should not, consist of doing anything. Rather, it is an act of remembering the fullness of soul life and the soul’s involvement with spirit, and remembering the fullness of the soul and spirit fabric of embodiment.

The concepts in this book cannot perhaps be brought directly into the therapeutic situation. But the real therapist in the consulting room must always be able to engage in the art of improvisation—soul in the moment. To improvise, one must really know, understand, and live soul life—one must be able to live it consciously and from within. For this, a true soul education is needed. Unfortunately, however, that kind of education has gone out of psychology. Nevertheless, this book can serve as an extremely valuable starting point for this much needed self-education.

A final question, based on the radically new insights of this book, asks: Shouldn’t we abandon the term and field of psychology altogether and start something new? We might call it “psychosophy.” Indeed, there might be a great temptation to do exactly this in some quarters of anthroposophy. I think this would be a great mistake. Anthroposophy has the opportunity, especially in the field of psychology, to engage a much wider world. It has an opportunity to bring something new and
valuable to the field of psychology. I cannot imagine that anyone would wish to confine the considerations of soul life as developed in this book to the small sector of people interested only in anthroposophy. It is more likely, on the other hand, that the understanding of soul life as presented here—if made available to all serious students of psychology—would result in a much wider interest in anthroposophy.

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