

MATTHIAS GIRKE

# Internal Medicine

Foundations and therapeutic concepts of  
Anthroposophic Medicine

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# Prologue

This textbook of internal medicine is aimed at colleagues, medical students and other therapeutic professionals, who, like the author himself, are looking for a healing art with an *understanding of man's body, soul and mind*. Presently, medical practice is dominated by a pathophysiologically oriented understanding of disease, in which the essence of sick people is not captured. Of course, we try to maintain a sympathetic doctor-patient relationship and to respect the autonomy of the patient and his values. Notwithstanding this, however, the current disease conceptions do not reach the mental and spiritual levels: What relationship does the malignant transformation of a cell or the lack of insulin in type 1 diabetes have to the mental and spiritual nature of the patient? Our pathophysio-logically oriented perspectives exclude these levels. The patient thereby experiences a medical diagnosis that fails to reach him as a human. The same applies to the therapeutic measures: Interventional and drug therapies alter the pathophysiology without affecting the inner being of the patient. In contrast, the human being experiences the intense interactions and relationships of his psycho-spiritual being with the body in healthy and sick days: Sensations such as joy, but also tension and fear, can raise blood pressure, while rest and mental relaxation lower it. Anti-hypertensives, in contrast, affect only the pathophysiological "final stretch". The patient wants to be perceived as a whole person and supported by the healing art with its healing powers and salutogenetic resources.

Medicine is therefore dependent on the underlying *image of man*, as well as his anthropology. When the human is regarded as a scientific object with a causal, analytically oriented discovery methodology, the result is a detailed and nuanced picture of the human body and its functions. The degree of complexity of the small world (microcosm) seems to be in no way inferior to that of the big world (macrocosm). This way of looking at man leads to an abundance of details, but it shuts out the *inner nature* of man.

Medicine is clearly more than just a natural science and needs the *spiritual humanistic supplement*, in the case of Anthroposophic Medicine *anthroposopitv* as anthropology. The intangible dimensions of the living, mental and spiritual nature of man can be included through an adequate method. The result is a medicine that is based on a *holistic understanding of man* and the therapeutic instruments of which consider man as a whole being. The practising physician needs an *ability to change perspective*, which leads to the other dimensions of man through the somatic-oriented approach.

*Anthroposophic Medicine* regards itself as a *medical therapy direction*, which is founded on a *holistic, body, soul and mind differentiated understanding of man*.

This approach is equally challenging as it is unfamiliar and thus exposed to *misunderstandings*. First, Anthroposophic Medicine is often misunderstood as alternative medicine. However, the applied perspective refers to the spiritual humanistic element supplementing the scientific focus of the patient and not as an alternative to this competitive system of medicine.

Another misconception concerns *traceability*: Conventional scientific medicine is supposed to be comprehensibly traceable, while Anthroposophic Medicine, in contrast, is rationally inaccessible. In fact, the holistic knowledge approach to man demands major efforts, just like the scientific-causal analytical approach. A medicine with a body, soul and spiritual understanding of man is a challenging task, which requires intensive work on the fundamental questions of human nature. Anthroposophic Medicine arises only when the dimensions of the physical, living, mental and spiritual being are considered on an intellectually comprehensible foundation in understanding disease and therapy. The embryonic beginning of this path of knowledge in the medical profession stands against currently more widely adopted claims of medicine. The patient-physician relationship, however, changes immediately when the first steps in the sense of this expansion of understanding of man are taken.

*Rudolf Steiner* has provided much helpful insight in his extensive body of work, from which he expected 100 years ago, that it would be independently developed and therefore become effective. The terminology used then, and still frequently today, is subordinate to the content they designate. It is therefore maintained in the present textbook to ensure that access to the body of work of Steiner remains possible.

A third often asked question concerns the *scientific nature* of Anthroposophic Medicine, which currently refers primarily to the *evidence of efficacy*. Anthroposophic Medicine regards itself as a research-based system. It encompasses the spiritual-scientific-conceptual research on disease understanding and therapy concepts, the methods of proof of efficacy in the individual therapy of unique patients, and different, query-based study designs. The Scientific approach of a medical system presupposes

- conceptual depiction,
- readiness for dialogue (ability to change perspective),
- and willingness for scientific evaluation.

Anthroposophic Medicine has its own work priorities in all of these three areas.

This book on *Interim? Medicine* includes the representation of *clinical conditions* in the context of the physical, living, mental, spiritual and individual nature of man. From this representation, pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical therapies are derived. The pharmaceutical indications are on one hand explained conceptually; on the other hand, they are based on reports from literature as well as own therapeutic experience from a more than 20-year-old medical practice. In this context, it is important to point to the "Vademecum Anthroposophic Medicinal Products"<sup>1</sup> in which the therapeutic experience of 210 anthroposophic doctors from 17 countries have been incorporated. Recommendations relevant to the Internal Medicine were included in this presentation. Moreover, the present studies on Anthroposophic Medicine were included.<sup>2</sup> Anthroposophic Medicine is not a traditional, complete system, but is in constant development. To that extent, the representations in this textbook about Internal Medicine reflect the current state of knowledge of the author.

The use and application of the pharmaceutical products and therapeutic methods of Anthroposophic Medicine presuppose an informed clinical diagnosis with knowledge of the various therapeutic options and salutogenetic resources of the patient as well as the careful evaluation of the clinical course. An anthroposophic physician consequently needs a solid knowledge base and proficiency in the pathogenetically oriented "conventional medicine" practices, which also derive their evaluation and practical significance from the body, soul and mind understanding of man. This allows them to provide useful support to the therapeutic goal, which conceives healing not as repair, but as a development process.

A special thanks goes to all patients, to whom I owe many insights about disease and healing processes and whose clinical courses provided information about the pharmaceutical efficacies. However, all observations require conceptual analysis and evaluation;

otherwise, one would carelessly miss many items. I owe the basic fundamentals to the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner and also my teachers, such as Jürgen Smit (1916-1991), who pioneered anthroposophy as discourse capable spiritual science and as a path of knowledge and discovery. The contents of this book have been presented in numerous lectures and courses. I have taken many helpful suggestions from the subsequent conversations and discussions from these.

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I thank my wife Anja Girke and my two daughters Johanna and Natalie for their support, loving concern and for their patience for any absence throughout the course of this undertaking.

I hope that *the reader* of this book can draw help from it at different levels in their practical work with patients. Because of its subdivisions, it can be used for the discovery of new methods of therapy, but also introduce the basic ideas and concepts of understanding of man, which is the underlying concept of Anthroposophic Medicine. To be a physician requires a willingness to constantly learn and develop. To that extent, I hope that the presentations in this book inspire and that they find their way into practical applications.

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Linguistic differences may arise due to different translators.

# The Concept of the Human Being

The concept of the human being in Anthroposophical Medicine contains the *different dimensions of being* ('constituent elements') of a person and their *functional interaction* with the human organism ('threefold function'). This leads to a comprehension of illness

- that includes the person and his or her whole nature and accounts for the therapeutic procedures in medicinal therapy, anthroposophical physiotherapy, eurythmy therapy, art therapy, and in anthroposophical nursing.

### 1. The four constituent elements

#### 1.1 Experiencing the constituent elements

By *looking into a human face*, various levels of the person are experienced. Initially, it is the physical appearance of the face that reveals itself to the vision. The colour of the skin tones, the eyes and hair are experienced, and the play of light is recognized in the brightness and shadows on the face. Beyond this, its characteristic expression of form appears. The other senses are experienced according to their own sensory modality. It is the physical appearance that we perceive with our senses.

Through *temporal transformation*, *life processes* are revealed to thoughtful observation. The physical gestalt has not only come into being, but shows change in anabolic and catabolic processes. If one looks at a number of childhood photos of a person and views them together with the current appearance of the person, the power that forms and transforms the physical body becomes apparent. This power can no longer be experienced with the senses but indicates the temporal dimension in contrast to the spatial form in which the physical body appears and which is accessible to the senses.

To the observer, a differentiated *image* of the *soul* and *inner life* appears in the *facial expression*. Joy, sorrow and also the other multicoloured shades of the soul life create their image in the facial expression. It is a kind of imagination of the human soul that is revealed in the eyes.

The *Ego* of the other person can be ultimately sensed in the *look* of the eyes. Sometimes we experience the empty look of a tired person who may be awake but very obviously not present with his or her essence. If one addresses this person, sometimes the vacant look instantly fills with the full power of the individuality. Even when a person concentrates and contemplates, the Ego-strength can disappear from the look and appear as if directed inwards. If the perceiving power of the Ego turns its attention to the other person, this other person feels the 'you evidence', the presence of the other Ego.

This points to four different areas of the human being that Rudolf Steiner differentiates as 'constituent elements 1.2

Their characteristic must not be misunderstood in the sense of an established definition. As clearly as the concept of a circle can be defined, as difficult it is, for example, to define the essence of a person. Each attempt will only be able to include and comprehend individual parts of his or her nature. One can characterize it and thus point to an essential quality which, little by little, develops into a more comprehensive 'description'.

Such lively and dynamic concept formation should be demanded for the constituent elements of the human being that starts as a germinal idea 'on a small scale' and gains substantial content in the further course of endeavours for a comprehensive understanding.

It becomes clear already that these different constituent elements each demand their own access to cognition. After all, even the most accurate description of the facial anatomy cannot say anything about its life or find out about its ensouled-spiritual essence.

For our daily awareness, individual objects are differentiated within the complex perceptual context and through this we learn to distinguish them from each other and view them in a causal-analytical way in the sense of cause-effect relationships. Because of this, the daily cognition of the world can be termed as '*concrete cognition*'. However, life itself evades this concreteness of the world of experience. Life does not know the unchangeable 'static' existence of objects rather it leads to differentiated life processes and changes in gestalt. The spatial existence of objects is different from life processes that occur over the course of time.

Therefore, to understand the living, the description of the state of the object at a particular moment is not sufficient: rather it is the *changes of state in* the organism that occurs over time. To understand the effect of life, the before, the now and also, in perspective, the after have to join as an image through mental activity. Similarly, just as the words of a sentence have to be combined from a sequential order and their individual meaning into an overall 'sense', so the individual forms of appearance of the living also have to be connected. In contrast to concrete cognition, one can talk here about '*gestalt cognition*'.

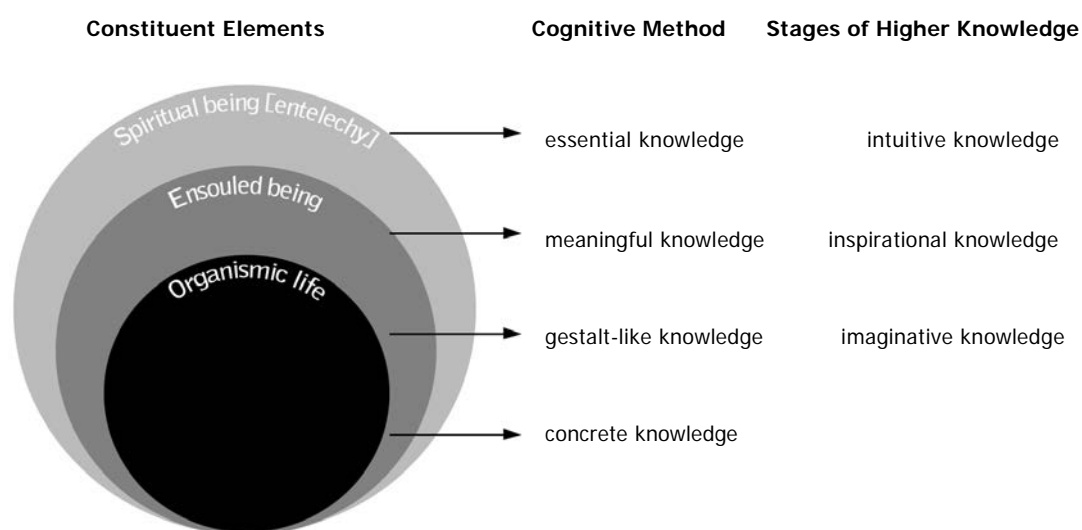
Gestalt cognition is different from the exclusively descriptive knowledge of objects. The face of another human being is not determined according to the measurements of the eye distance and length of nose, but rather recognized as 'gestalt'. This gestalt is the basis of all *formative processes* of the face, as these only create the current facial form. The proliferation and growth processes of various tissues which participate in the formation of the face, such as bones, connective tissue, muscles, fat tissue and skin, follow this common *gestalt principle* and thus are brought together into an order which goes beyond the individual tissues. In medicine we forget to be amazed by these coordinated growth processes in the organism that are all attuned to each other and follow common gestalt-creating natural laws. The concrete form appears as if 'coagulated' from the life processes which are effective in the organism by forming a gestalt like a 'snapshot' in a process changing over time. For the understanding of the life processes, therefore, a gestalt-like insight is necessary. This starts with the animated thinking activity that understands change processes by 'recreating' them. Its intensification to a so-called *imaginative cognition* which adds the quality of perception to the concreteness of thinking is fundamentally described by Steiner, particularly in his book 'The Stages of Higher Knowledge':<sup>3</sup>

The *nature of the soul* eludes these two cognition processes. The facial expression of the other person expresses his or her soul experience that can neither be experienced through the anatomical examination of the face nor through the knowledge of its formative processes. The facial expression is like an inaudible language that communicates something about the ensouled 'inner world' of the other person. As all processes in the human organism are 'modulated' by the nature of its soul and thus become its 'language', a further cognitive method is necessary for that sphere that makes the physical the expression of the soul. Now the world of experiences becomes the 'script' or 'language' that, through the phenomena, reveals the effect of the soul and makes it 'audible'. Here



one can talk about the '*meaningful cognition*', a precursor of *inspirational cognition* as described by Steiner. For the medical view it is remarkably instructive to examine the different observations in anatomy (for example, the form expression of the face), biochemistry (for example, metabolism of the thyroid hormones) and physiology (for example, the physiology of movement) from this viewpoint of the soul and thus make the external phenomenology the language and revelation of the inner nature of the human being. Many conclusions regarding the effect of the soul nature in the different diseases and also in the healing processes are developed through this way of observation.

The *look* of the other person reveals his or her nature. None of the previously mentioned stages of knowledge reach this essential quality in the phenomenal world. By recognizing the other person, the differences between subject and object disappear. When in the moment of cognition something becomes obvious, 'the penny drops', 'a light goes on', and therefore an inner supersensible experience that is essential as it is about 'true' and 'false' fills the awareness, then in this moment there is no difference between the one who knows and the 'object' of cognition. Rather, the essentiality now completes the whole cognition process. This form of knowledge can be called the *essential cognition*, as it understands the essence in the appearance. This again is a precursor to the *intuitive cognition* described by Steiner.



Constituent elements of the human being and the cognitive methodology pertaining to them

*Concrete knowledge* brings reality into a subject-object-relation and consequently brings the objects into the position of opposition to the subject. The objects of observation are analyzed according to their composition (glucose consists of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen [C6H12O6]) and are exposed to a dissecting methodology. Life cannot be comprehended by this methodology as it dissolves the organismic cohesion with the material analysis and therefore kills life.

In intuitive knowledge we find the contrasting quality. This knowledge does not confront the objects in the position of an 'external observer' but 'merges' with them in the moment of cognition. The essential nature is instantaneously and as a whole experienced without being dissected.

Methodologically, concrete knowledge develops, for example, through exact anatomical study. Conversely, to understand the living it is not the dissecting methodology but the lively understanding of organ formation, for example by *plasticizing the organ forms*, that is useful. Through this activity, a direct connection develops from the plasticizing



reproduction to the organismic formative forces and their gestalt-shaping effect. The study of the soul's natural laws, which express themselves on the organic level, lead to the soul level and provide the basis as 'soul organization'. Through the *musical comprehension* of proportions and the manifold numerical ratios in the gestalt of the organism with its structured and rhythmically operating functions, the ensouled-astral essence can be perceived through the organic phenomenology. Finally, the *study of language formation* leads to the impact of the individuality. Only an ego-endowed being is capable of language formation. This plasticizing-musical-oral based knowledge of the human being — building on the ideas of Steiner — has in the meantime been further developed and has been extensively discussed.<sup>4</sup>

*Medicine* requires a *perspectival mindset* that dedicates itself to the different spheres of human existence with an *adequate methodology*.

It starts with finding the *necessary perspectives* that differ depending on, for example, whether the anatomical view is chosen, or a viewpoint that addresses the life processes of the organism. It becomes immediately understandable that the complex human nature is not exclusively accessible through experience with the senses. Even concepts like 'energy' or 'membrane potential of the cell' indicate realities that are certainly measurable but not directly visible. Notably more hidden are the effects of the living, the ensouled and the spiritual. In this respect the question arises about the development of human cognition in relation to the comprehension of these 'supersensible' qualities.<sup>5</sup> This is not about additional 'knowledge' that 'adds to' the existing one but about a *development of human knowledge* that cannot be separated from the inner development of the person seeking knowledge. The perspectives, which come from a holistic view of human beings, result from conceptual definition of their constituent elements that will be characterized in the following text.

## 1.2 The physical body

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The *physical body* appears as the *body of the human being*. It is about the *solid, spatial human gestalt* that is accessible to anatomical observation.

The physical body appears to the observation with the senses and the mental activity supported by it. Anatomy and histology describe its reality characterized by measures, numbers and weights. At the moment of death this body becomes for a moment 'visible' in its own gestalt as the vitality and the expressions of the ensouled and spiritual human being have just departed. The material body that still carries the form and gestalt remains. 'Within the manifest world the physical human body is the one wherein the human being resembles the mineral world ... for an impartial contemplation the important fact is that the part of the human essence which equals the mineral world is revealed when death has occurred.'<sup>6</sup>

Thus the *physical body's connection* to the *solid and mineral dimension* appears, which fills it as an *entity of form* and makes it visible.

### 1.3 The etheric body

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The phenomenon of *death* now points to those processes which throughout life continually preserve the body *from* disintegration and which constantly give the body form and *structure*. Form is a 'supercellular' phenomenon.<sup>7</sup> Note the different tissues and cells that constitute a hand and follow a common, higher form principle. The same applies impressively for wound healing: a multitude of different cells follow a forming principle that goes beyond the individual cells.

Currently, the tendency is to interpret form and gestalt as qualities which can be traced back to the genome. Apart from the yet unsolved riddle of how 'form' is genetically 'coded'<sup>8</sup>, a problem which is old in terms of history and philosophy gets thus overlooked. Form, gestalt or, abstractly said, 'information', are not material entities anymore than the meaning of a written text is identical with printer's ink and the paper. They are *qualities* that indicate something *imponderable* and supersensible which initially reveals itself as spiritual to the mind. Supersensible form, gestalt and natural law are the basis of the organism both on a large and a small scale and they have to be differentiated from the materiality that fills them.

This structuring, spiritual entity is also recognizable at the *DNA* level — however, it is often 'objectified' in an unthinking way as the material element is identified with the spiritual organization principle based upon it. This immaterial, literally supersensible formation is not completed and finished in the living organism.

In contrast to the *inanimate* dimension, which shows unchangeable and comparatively durable forms, 'supercellular' formative and life processes that develop and transform the form and the gestalt are found in the living organism.. They constitute the *etheric organization*.

The embryonic morphogenesis does not show 'dead', unchangeable formations but 'creative' *formative principles* that occur over a time period and give rise to a formation that can be described spatially. In the thoughtful contemplation of the life processes that... humans have in common with the living plant world, this non-material but supersensible principle appears which consists of creative and formative forces and which can be called 'life'. The mental experience of this first supersensible constituent element of the human being can be condensed into an imaginative insight during the course of the anthroposophical path of knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

In view of the decomposition processes that begin at the moment of death, the attention can be directed to that organization which, during life, prevents *decomposition*... and *breakdown* and which gives the supersensible form to the physical body through comprehensive formative processes.

Although the hidden quality that fights off the disintegration of the physical body is only visible to higher sight, *its effects* are clearly apparent to a faculty of judgement restricted to manifest phenomena. These effects express themselves in the form or gestalt that the physical body's mineral substances and forces share during life. Once death occurs, this form gradually disappears and the physical body becomes part of the rest of the mineral kingdom. However, what prevents the physical substances and forces from acting independently during life, which would cause the physical body to disintegrate, can be observed by supersensible perception as an independent part of the human essence. This independent element will be called the "etheric body" or "life body" ... It will be applied to this entity that is accessible to higher sight but recognizable to sensory perception only because of its effects — that is, because it is capable of giving a particular form or gestalt to the mineral substances and forces in the physical body:<sup>10</sup>

The life processes cannot unfold in the mineral sphere of the physical body but only in the fluid organism that is differentiated into the intracellular and extracellular liquid that is closely related to the life processes.

*The formative processes* do not unfold in the solid dimension that reveals the manifest structure. The *differentiated fluid organism* is the *fundamental requirement* for them to be *effective*.

The etheric element as the 'emerging' is in opposition to the 'manifested' of the physical body. For example, if there is wound healing after an injury, it is the etheric body that reveals itself in the healing processes.

The etheric forces are the basis for *all healing, regaining of health*, and for the *salutogenic faculty* of the human being.

As described in more detail in f—P M. 2. Disease tendencies in the human organism] the etheric forces do not only appear in the domain of the organic formative processes. They can detach themselves from their organic effect and metamorphose into mental forces.

#### 1.4 The astral body

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The physical organism shows the manifested spatial form and gestalt, the etheric organization shows its emerging and its temporal development. A completely new dimension is reached with the *development of consciousness*, the *faculty of feeling* and the internal *impulse force*. The human organism is not only alive but it becomes the basis of the *feeling human nature* — it reveals the person's *soul*. "That which repeatedly awakens the life from the state of unconsciousness is, in the sense of supersensible knowledge, the third part of the human essence. One can call it the *astral body*:"

The astral body carries the ensouled inner world of the human being.

A differentiated effect in the organism that bestows new qualities to the living organism connects itself with the astral body as the bearer of the world of consciousness and the soul life of the human being.

As a way to understand this supersensible physicality, one should bring to mind the eye organization - from the eye to the tractus opticus to the visual cortex. The physicality of the light sense organization, which appears in the spatial world, is visible in these structures. The preceding formative processes and their continuing regenerative processes point to the etheric body and its temporal effect. It is not possible to reach the feeling level through any exploration restricted to these levels. With the exact analysis of the physical organization and its functions, differentiated details become describable. These, however, do not progress to the colour sensations; rather they withdraw themselves from this layer of existence of the human being. With the colour sensations which reveal themselves in connection with the visual sense, a totally new sphere is entered which is, in regard to its quality, fundamentally different from the previous constituent elements. Dimensions like spatiality (measurement), number and weight do not have the same meaning for this sphere and thus show it as belonging to a different order.

Currently, the 'subjective' dimensions of the inner human world are only understood as epiphenomena of neuronal functions and an own existing dimension is not allocated to them. According to the already mentioned 'mere-principle', it is about 'merely' unreal surrogates of neurophysiology. Interestingly, the authors of such a view receive their information via what is assumed to be an objective and real somatic dimension by means of their 'subjectively' experienced and perceived world that is understood as an unreal epiphenomenon — a contradiction to which Rudolf Steiner has already drawn attention in his 'Philosophy of Freedom'.<sup>12</sup>

There is no view that results from the world of perception that can categorize the *world of the human soul* as 'more unreal' than the physical one. It rather should be given its *own dimension of existence*, similar to the previously mentioned constituent elements.

the astral body leads the living organism to the *development of consciousness*. This occurs on the *basis of catabolic processes* that lead to disease if they prevail [III. 2. Disease tendencies in the human organism].

The *astral body* forms an 'inner world' which can separate itself from the 'outside world'. The ensoulment of a living being shows itself in the relationship of this inner world to the outside world and therefore in all processes which are associated with respiration. The phylogenetic development of *respiration* — starting with gill breathing with its evolutionary metamorphosis into lung breathing — will be dealt with in connection with the 'astralization' of a living being in [ VI. 2.1 Breathing and the soul].

The *astral organization* is connected with air.

Just as the association with the fluid organism shows itself in the connection to the etheric effect and with the physical body the connection to the mineral realm ensues, so is the astral dimension connected to the air organism. To this air organism belongs not only the rhythmically characterized *lung breathing*, but also *tissue breathing* and the air-like processes in the human being like the *nitrogen monoxide formation* VIII. Arterial Hypertension].

the living being endowed with an astral body — therefore not only the human being but also the animal — develops *the (acuity of movement)*.

Ensouled beings are not only capable of inner movement but also of external movement and they generally have a movement organization (muscular system). In this sense, the astral body forms its *physical instrument*. One can be repeatedly amazed at how the *protein substance* assimilates these different effects of the constituent elements. As a collagenous substance it serves the build-up of the physicality. As a processually effective substance it finds, for example, within the enzymes access to the effects of the etheric dimension. As a substance capable of movement it is formed by the astral essence as muscle protein with its actin and myosin filaments. As an individually formed substance it points to the Ego-organization.

## 1.5 The Ego

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The Ego appears in the *world of consciousness* as its active *centre*, as the 'core' of the *soul*.

Everything *perceivable* in the world is, in the final instance, experienced by the Ego. Just as the experienced world, and therefore the environment of humans, is real, equally so must this centre which perceives everything be real. The Ego belongs to that which is most hidden in a person. Though the internal health is dependent upon the knowledge of the individual existence, this Ego nature of a person and its relationship to the world are hidden behind many 'veils'. To penetrate these requires a long journey of self-knowledge. According to *Fichte*, the following exercise can guide the attention to this inner nature of a person: one should look at an object and memorize its external image. Then, with closed eyes, one should try to vividly remember this object and think about it. Finally, one should reflect on this activity and think of the one who thinks about the object! As difficult as it is to follow this request, and to enter this 'most sacred part' of the individuality, as certain — on the other hand — is its existence.

According to inner experience, the Ego nature of a person is neither subject to transience nor to temporality. In our consciousness we are familiar with subject matters that are clearly *temporal* and transient and matters that stand out from these. For example, mathematical laws have no 'expiry date' — as an inner experience they show no features that are time-related. The 'immortal' concepts indicate the essence of things, which itself is not time-related, and only reveals itself in 'fleeting' forms. Thus, the essence of a rose survives its mortal form and reappears in a different shape. Correspondingly, the essence of a person 'survives' its respective 'manifestations'. That is why an older person experiences his or her inner nature as much 'younger'. The biological age of the physical form is in vivid contrast to the experience of the person's inner nature. Many different life phases and biographical 'manifestations' come and go: the inner nature does not follow their 'death' but persists as an entity and continues to develop.

We experience *impressions* in our soul, some of which pass quickly and some of which have a rather permanent character. If we only had an ephemeral image in our soul, each impression would be like a new one and no 'feeling of self' could develop. We would have awareness, but no *self-awareness*. Only through something which is permanent in the *memory*, that is capable of linking past and present, can a feeling for our *Ego-nature* begin to dawn.

'Here it is not permanence as such that is described as "Ego" but the one that experiences this permanence:<sup>13</sup> This indicates **the** eternal spiritual nature of the human being that leaves its tracks in the biography and that bears fruit for its further development through all experiences of joy and sorrow. The journey through *illnesses* also serves this *development of individuality*. long-term illnesses, in particular, are apprenticeship years in the art of living and cultivation of the mind. We should seek to utilize them through daily note taking. Is then the life of an educated person a constant challenge for learning? ... The ideal of perfect health is only interesting for science. Illness and individualization belong together.'<sup>14</sup>

The Ego-nature of the human being is designed for development.

Our everyday lives are already an impressive illustration of this need for development. How little of what we do is the result of the activity of the personality and how many of the actions are determined by 'external influences'? Poor mental concentration, dependency of our disposition on depressive feelings and moods, for example, and finally a weakness of will which does not progress from wishing to willing indicate the limited and endangered self-efficacy of the Ego-nature. The Ego is confronted with the most diverse dynamics of the soul and the body. They can 'obscure' the Ego in a way that the real nature of the human being is barely recognizable. An *inner development* and an acquisition of skills are required to unfold this efficacy of the Ego. Looked at from this

point of view, self-knowledge does not mean brooding immersion in one's own nature, but rather one's continuous development so as to become more and more human, For an Anthroposophical Medicine this development is inseparably linked with *repeated earth lives*. Through this, individuality matures and finds its destiny by interacting with other humans. Therefore, the basis of Central European understanding of repeated earth lives is not the concept of redemption but the concept of development. The challenge now for the doctor consists in acknowledging this concept so that it can be changed from a hypothetical to a 'potential' one. In further interactions it can change from an initially theoretical comprehension to a deep-rooted life conviction. It is astonishing how many patients describe experiences that not only allude to the afterlife but also experiences which become significantly clear through the concept of repeated earth lives (there is no place for this in an institutionalized Christianity; the Cathars who were cruelly persecuted by the inquisition were still familiar with the concept of reincarnation). Many diseases of the young person, who could not yet have experienced a long biography with its potential consequences of illness, are placed in a larger context against background. It is the key idea that belongs to the genetic view with its assumed randomness of genomic mutations that opens up the necessary ethical dimensions.

*Benjamin Franklin* (1706-1790) as a 23-year-old described the concept of repeated -earth lives in an epitaph designed by him in the following way: The body of B. Franklin, printer, like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out, and stripped of its lettering & gilding, lies here, food for worms. But the work shall not be lost: for it will as he believ'd appear once more in a new & more elegant edition, corrected and improved by the author.'<sup>15</sup>

The 19-year-old *Christian Morgenstern* described it in poetic words:

*How often already might I have walked  
On this globe of sorrow  
How often might I have changed  
The substance, the form of the costume of life?*

*How often might I have already gone  
Through this world, out of this world  
To start eternally again  
filled with fresh desire of hope*

*The wave rises, the wave recedes  
So too do we live without calm  
Impossible that the wave would spring aloft  
And not return — to the ground.*

Emil Bock concludes his important book on the repeated earth lives<sup>6</sup> with Christian Morgenstern's diary note:

'Humankind has already a long time ago received all that can be received. But humankind has to receive and process it repeatedly anew. The teaching of reincarnation, for example, has existed for a long time. But it had to be disregarded for a while — all of European civilization goes back to this omission. Now this cycle has fulfilled its own, now reincarnation is allowed, as an immense relief, to re-enter the course of western development. In this sense, which only now is possible 2000

years after the appearance of Christ, it will stimulate, illuminate, redeem humankind anew in a totally different light than ever before:<sup>17</sup>

On the one hand, the Ego as the spiritual essence of the human being is independent from its physical instrument. On the other hand, the Ego can 'use' the physical instrument and bond with it. The connection of the Ego with the body occurs via *warmth*. A frozen hand is experienced as foreign and as not belonging any more to the organism. With the incoming warmth, the human individuality joins with its body. In this respect an image of the effect of the Ego emerges in the differentiations of the warmth organism. The daily incarnation and excarnation rhythm, which occurs when waking up and falling asleep, is reflected in the circadian rhythm of the core temperature.

The Ego of the person is linked with warmth.

There is not only this *physical* warmth but also a *soul warmth*. In the sphere of the soul, this inner warmth quality also indicates the Ego-presence of the human being. However, also the warmth of enthusiasm that already by this term indicates a source of warmth close to the spirit (*spiritual warmth*) can complement the effect of the Ego. The internal volition processes, which are associated with the Ego, and without which an Ego would not be conceivable, are also warmth processes.

Constituent Elements	Relationship to	Basis for	Connection to
Ego - organization	individuality, spirit	self-awareness, self-determined experience and action	warmth
Astral organization	soul	consciousness development ability to feel, movement catabolic metabolism processes	air
Etheric organization	formative and life processes	growth regeneration, healing salutogenetic faculty, anabolic metabolism processes	liquid
Physical organization	body, gestalt	spatial gestalt	solid, mineral

The four constituent elements

The term 'organization' relates to the physically oriented effect of the constituent elements. Just as the light in the eye creates an organization that is structured by its nature and its natural laws [ 1.7.3 Interrelation of the day and night effect of the constituent elements], SO the Ego-nature of the human being moulds his or her body. In this respect one can distinguish between the Ego-nature of the human being as its intrinsic entelechia and its physically oriented effect (Ego-organization). Accordingly, this also applies to the other constituent elements.



## 1.6 The action of the constituent elements in disease

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The effect of the constituent elements can become visible in different *diseases*. When, for example, concretions develop in the context of cholelithiasis, or calcifications in connection with a painful stiff shoulder are detected through x-rays, then physical matter dominates in the regular functioning of the life processes. Substances do not integrate any more into the functional context of the human organism but follow their own laws.

*Disease* appears as an event that lets *processes of non-human nature* occur in the human being. Therefore, *healing* would be a '*re-transformation into humanness*' of those areas of the *organism* that are at risk of becoming 'nature'.

Many *sclerotic processes* lead to a prevailing of the physical body that, in its increasing solidification, cannot be grasped anymore by the transforming forces of vitality and thus needs therapeutic support.

However, the vitality level can also develop in a pathological way and appear to be no longer sufficiently guided by the archetypical natural laws that are related to the astral body [1.7.1 The night effect of the constituent elements]. When a polyp develops in a formerly healthy colon mucosa, forces become effective which are no longer sufficiently characterized by the existing physiological order and structure, instead they remove themselves from it. The histological gestalt of a tubular or villous adenoma impressively reveals other form principles until finally, against the background of increasing dysplasia and *loss of differentiation*, the forming quality gradually disappears and the cell principle that isolates itself from the overall situation prevails. The carcinoma that has occasionally been characterized as a 'catastrophe of the form' appears to depart in its increasing loss of differentiation from its forming archetype to implement other rules.

Currently, in view of the 'decoding of the human genome' one tends to identify the form giving natural laws with the genome level. This attempt at 'explanation' cannot give a satisfying answer in the end and it shifts the existing problem from the macro level to the micro level. Here, too, the question arises in the same way regarding the organizing law that, as spiritual content, becomes the handwriting in the genome. What is thought of as substance is not identical with those realities — not accessible to sensory experience — that are manifested in the vital processes as spiritual laws and 'archetypes' and become visible in the physical gestalt.

The *astral body* can also remove itself from its physiological action. In the *overactive thyroid* appears a restless, urging-to-wake astral dynamic that can no longer be sufficiently guided by the essence of the self. The waking consciousness is, in contrast to the anabolic and regenerative sleep, characterized by catabolic processes and can lead to disease because of its one-sidedness. This indicates a fundamental connection that is the basis for a large group of diseases:

'In the *spirit and soul faculty* lie the *causes* of the **human being becoming**

The human self does not know disease. As a being set for development it acquires in the *destiny of disease new faculties* that it gains as the fruit of the disease.

Especially in the case of *psychiatric diseases* it is very important to repeatedly make oneself aware of this view.

The *spiritual essence* of the human being can be *obstructed, obscured, 'deranged'* but it can *never be seized* or even *destroyed* by *disease processes*.



Just as the sun is not visible on a foggy day, so can the human self be veiled in mist in cases of psychiatric illness, *dementia-type diseases* or *organic psychosyndromes* and because of this become virtually 'invisible'. In this context one talks in an incorrect way occasionally about 'change of character' or 'personality disorder'. These expressions only relate to the changed revelation of the person not to his or her real spiritual nature. The term 'disability' suits this fact better, as it is literally assumed that something can be disabled which is healthy according to its real nature.

### 1.7.1 The day and night effect of the constituent elements

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In the human organism, the catabolic metabolism processes are in opposition to the anabolic metabolism processes.

Whereas the *catabolic metabolism processes* belong to the *functional metabolism* and are connected with the '*day activity*' of the ensouled-spiritual being, the *anabolic metabolism processes* are related to the *maintenance and regeneration metabolism* that connects to the *anabolic processes* during *sleep* and in the *night*.

A different mode of action of the constituent elements forms the basis for waking and sleeping. During waking the spiritual-ensouled being is connected with the organism, during sleep it is disconnected from it. With each waking the soul and the spirit once more connect with their physical instrument and contribute to the 'refreshment' gained from a healthy sleep XVII [Sleep Medicine].

### 1.7.1 The night effect of the constituent elements

The conscious person experiences their inner soul world and understands himself or herself as Ego through self-awareness. For the person who is in a dreamless sleep these inner experiences disappear to a large degree. How do the constituent elements of the human being act during sleep and therefore in the night? The following comparison can clarify their anabolic night effect:

Through artistic plasticizing emerges — accessible to sensory perception — the external appearance of the plastic in space. This plastic undergoes, during the time it is worked on, a constant transformation; the momentary spatial gestalt is the result of the continuing effective formative forces of the artist. The plasticizing powers of the artist's hands do not have a 'lawless' effect, but follow the artist's inspiration. Plasticizing hands can give rise to the most diverse shapes, therefore they need, to be effective, the lawful guidance which transcends them and which in terms of time already exists before the unfolding of their effect. When the physical gestalt reveals itself in space and the effect of the formative forces reveals itself in time then, with the archetypical natural laws, these dimensions are left. The law, for example, of a cube or a pentagonal dodecahedron, is not dependent on the current plasticizing activity which only guides and structures nor is the law identical with the later completed shape in which it only finds its appearance. It is a spiritual dimension of natural laws that is different from the level of forces and concreteness. A further level now points beyond the spiritual dimension: the essence of the artist as the origin and point of departure of the whole activity. The artist creates in his

or her soul the inspiration that is then realized through the plasticizing powers of the hands.

The physical body is, in its shape and gestalt, brought to life and formed by plasticizing powers (etheric organization) that are archetypically guided by natural laws (astral organization) and oriented towards the Ego-organization. The *embryogenesis* and all *regenerative processes* of the organism are characterized by this anabolic effect of the constituent elements which is remote from consciousness.<sup>19</sup> When the person awakes from a deep sleep these *archetypes* are engraved *on the life organization*. The feeling of refreshment and stimulation that follow a restful sleep indicates the wealth of the astral body that it has taken up during sleep in the shape of formative archetypes?)

#### 1.7.2 The day effect of the constituent elements

For the *awakening* of the soul other conditions are now found. Catabolic processes accompany the awakening of the consciousness and ultimately demand compensation during the next sleep. The longing of the astral body to be able to reconnect with the archetypical world is expressed in all states of tiredness.<sup>21</sup>

For the awakening of the soul, a different picture results which accompanies the plasticizing artist. When a violin resounds in a room, the sound is released from the instrument. The violin maker has created the instrument according to the natural laws of the auditory world. The instrument 'contains' at this point in time music that cannot yet be heard by the physical ears. The natural laws of this music are embodied in the nascent instrument and are determined by the selection of the materials. The instrument formed 'in and for' the sound world can now make this into a listening experience. The physical body (the violin) is seized by a 'functional metabolism' through the activity of the artist who releases the sound and reveals the essence of the music. The whole process is again guided by the individuality of the artist.

#### 1.7.3 Interrelation of the day and night effect of the constituent elements

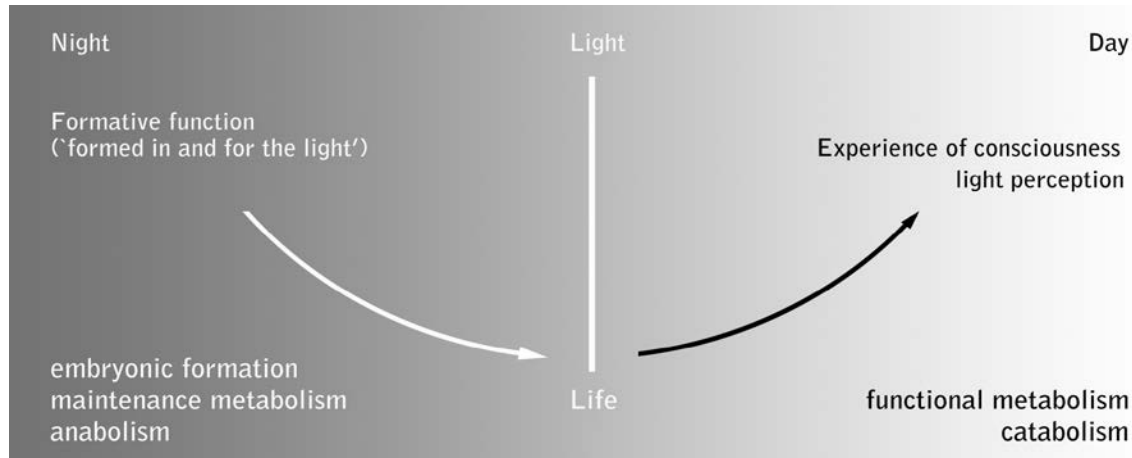
The *anabolic night effect* is in opposition to the *catabolic day effect* of the constituent elements

Their functional connection can be illuminated by the observation of the human *eye*. The embryonic development and the later function of the eye are marked by the natural laws of light. The eye is, to characterize it with Goethe's wording<sup>22</sup>, formed in and for the *light*. The natural laws of optical physics determine its structure. Its physical organization gains light transparency and light sensitivity in the central structures. Here, the natural laws of light characterize the life processes\_

The conscious perception of the world illuminated by light therefore develops not on the basis of anabolic, rather *catabolic metabolism processes* (functional metabolism). *Forces of vitality* become *forces of consciousness* [see Fig.].

Thus, the *light* in the soul indicates a twofold situation: on the one hand are its spiritual laws which create and shape the life processes and which, during the darkness of the embryonic period, let the eye evolve. This is the light's anabolic (night) effect that is removed from consciousness. On the other hand light illuminates the consciousness and

leads to the different sensory perceptions. With this, it contributes to the unfolding of consciousness through which the world is perceived (day effect).



The natural laws of the light in the embryonic development of the eye; light perception of the functioning eye

The human being can, at least initially, encounter both aspects of the light. When one's gaze falls onto the shining blue sky, the illuminating day side of light reveals itself. When one then succeeds by looking at the blueness of the sky to let the fixed thoughts be silent and to enter into the flow of the soul forces, then the soul expands into the blueness of the sky until that moment when the dreaming sensation almost merges with sleep.

At this threshold, which is normally only crossed while sleeping, the soul approaches the hidden, spiritual side of light which fills the universe as the light of the sun and the stars. It is here that one should search the cosmic home for the natural laws and archetypes that form the life processes. Because of this, Rudolf Steiner called the constituent element that connects to this cosmic world during sleep and becomes the bearer of earthly consciousness during waking the body of stars or astral body.

The *astral body* leads the organism, on the one hand, to *consciousness* (*catabolic day effect*); on the other hand, it carries the *archetypes* into the etheric organization (*anabolic night effect*).

These effects of the constituent elements depicted in the example of the eye are correspondingly valid for the other areas of the human organism. For example, the *nervous system* can appear as being formed with and for' thinking that creates for itself the brain as the organ which makes the mental capacities appear as thoughts of waking consciousness. Here, too, the natural laws of thinking define the developing physical organization. The same goes for the other qualities of the spiritual-ensouled human being:

The *body* appears in all details as the *instrument of the human soul and spirit*. The *anabolic night effect* of the constituent elements forms the basis of *regeneration, growth, and maintenance metabolism*, their *day effect* forms the basis of the *catabolic functional metabolism*.

Already in the 19th century these two polarities were pointed out. Arnold Rudolf Karl Fortlage (1806-1881) explained the following in his Psychological Lectures from the year 1869:

‘When we call ourselves living beings and thus attribute ourselves with a quality we share with animals and plants, we understand the living state as inevitably something which never leaves us and always continues within us in sleep as well as in waking. This is the vegetative life of sustenance of our [organism](#), an unconscious life, a life of sleep. The brain makes an exception insofar that this life of sustenance, this sleeping Life, is outweighed during the waking periods by the life of consumption. In these intervals, the brain is exposed to a prevailing consumption and consequently gets into a state that, if it would extend to the rest of the organs, brings about total weakening of the body or death ... Consciousness is a small and partial death; death is a large and total consciousness, an awakening of the whole being in its innermost depths.’<sup>23</sup>

## 2. The functional threefold order of the human being

### 2.1 Central ideas

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In 1917, *Rudolf Steiner* published the results of his thirty-year long research of spiritual science that referred to the relationship between the soul and physicality.<sup>24</sup> The *functional threefold order of the human being* that was developed and later characterized by this research belongs to the core foundations of Anthroposophical Medicine. On the basis of the polarity expressed in it, a comprehensive concept of disease development that embraces the human soul-spirit essence layer becomes discernable. On the other hand, insights into the *healing, recovering powers* of the human organism develop from the threefold understanding of the human essence; these powers oppose a one-sidedness in the occurrence of disease and can be supported by therapeutic procedure.

The healer should then accommodate such a revolutionary principle in the human organism and

*healing* consists precisely in supporting through external means the *original healing power that already exists* in the human organism.<sup>25</sup>

*Pathogenetic models* belong to the essential foundations of the current understanding of disease. They try to explain *disease symptoms* with the psychological pressure for the patient against the background of the different pathogenetically effective factors. We owe significant medical achievements to this concept.

The *disease-causing powers (pathogenesis)* are in opposition to the *disease overcoming, healing powers (salutogenesis)* that, largely unnoticed by the human consciousness, promote *recovery*,

The *wound* that heals after an injury indicates this unconscious level of healing. The preceding inflammatory reaction, which possibly leads to the suppurative expulsion of the foreign body that caused it, appears at first glance as a disease phenomenon, yet it is the prerequisite for the later closing of the wound. Inflammation with this objective can appear as a salutogenetic principle.

The inverse correlation of *febrile diseases* to malignant neoplasias occurring later in life indicates a similar direction XIV. 2.4.4 The biographic connection between inflammation and carcinoma] and therefore leads to the question to what extent a disease that has been overcome has a salutogenetic significance. Alongside these phenomena observable in the living organism, the soul and spiritual essence of the human being belongs to *salutogenesis*.<sup>26</sup> The unfolding of consciousness initially appears as a life-consuming and catabolic, disease-causing quality which opposes restful sleep. Therefore, one has to look for the origin of being sick in the spiritual and soul faculty, as Rudolf Steiner has summarized for one type of illness.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, he points to the recovering quality of a spiritual and soul activity and, therefore, to areas which, at the end of the 20th century, gained significance in *salutogenetic research* and experienced a special consideration in the life work of a father of modern salutogenetic research, Aaron Antonovsky (1923-1994). The trust in the strength of individuality, the mastering of disease and difficult life events, even recognizing a meaning in them which puts them into a wider context of order and fate, are the essential qualities found in the 'sense of coherence' described by Antonovsky. In Antonovsky's year of birth, Rudolf Steiner refers to the necessity of a medicine that supports the healing powers within the human organism and therefore is salutogenetically effective.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.2 The functional threefold order

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The soul and spiritual essence layer of the human being knows *two polar orientations* to the physical organization. When we are focused in our powers of consciousness and follow a spiritual content in a dear waking consciousness, we experience the *concentration* of this activity in the *upper human being* and the head organization while our behaviour of movement and other motor activity instantaneously come to rest. The suddenly retained thought during a walk thus leads to the interruption of walking and directs all forces towards the newly gained spiritual content.

In contrast, during intensive physical activity, in which the soul unfolds through the emphasis of the will, we do not experience the necessary rest for concentrated mental work. In this case, the soul-spiritual human nature turns to the *movement organization*, the *lower human being*.

At first, a *double orientation* of the soul sphere appears: its shift to the imagining consciousness on the one hand and its development of will in the movements on the other hand and, accordingly, its awakening within the *nerve and sense organization* and its becoming effective within the *metabolism-limb organization* of the human organism. These polar orientations are mediated by the *rhythmic system*. In Rudolf Steiner's summary, this rhythmic system appears connected in a similar way with the feelings of humans as their imagination and thought are based on the nerve-sense system and their will based on the metabolism-movement system.<sup>29</sup>

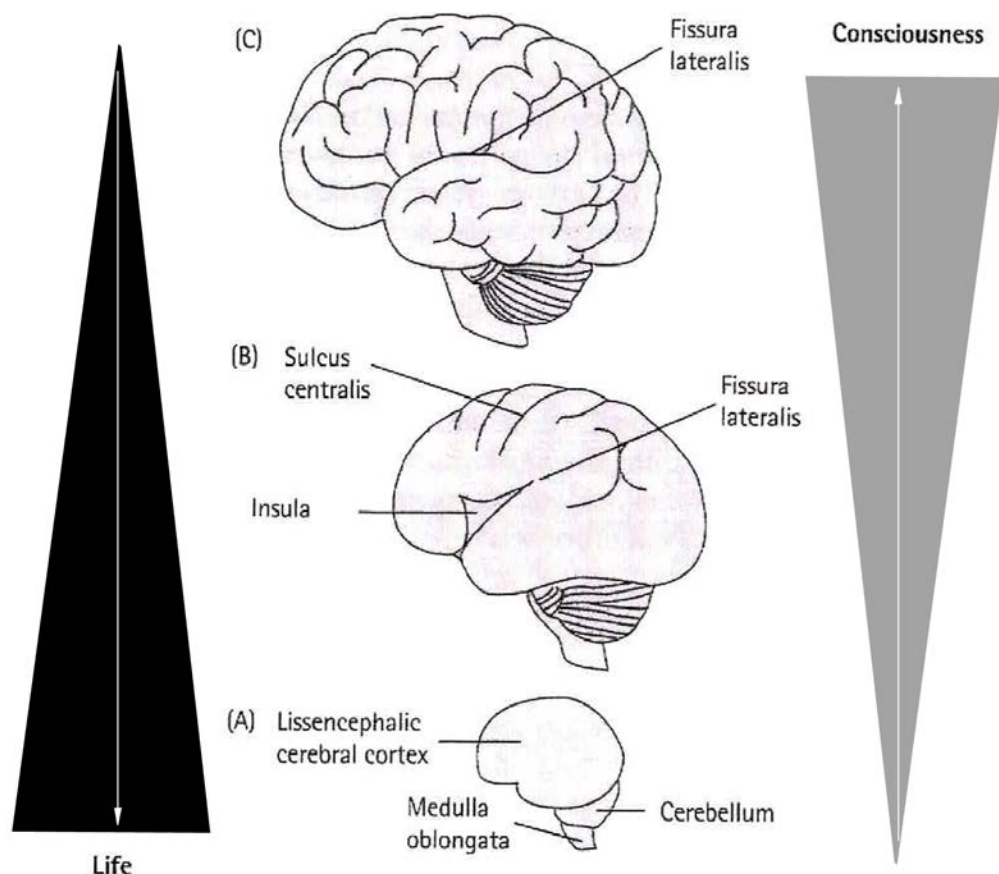
### 2.2.1 The nerve-sense system

The nerve-sense organization, as the place of the awakening of the soul, is characterized by the development of a *differentiated neuronal structure* that encloses itself in the bony formation of the skullcap and the spinal canal and therefore searches the quality of hardening and mineralization as an accompanying phenomenon. This indicates an interrelation in which an inner experience, namely the wakeful consciousness, connects with an

organically occurring hardening and sclerotic quality. As the following text explains with further examples, this connection between consciousness development and sclerosis can be shown clearly in numerous phenomena.

Which correlation results now for the *manifestations of life* and the *consciousness* of the human being? The embryonic development of the nerve organization is characterized by extensive proliferation processes that reveal distinctive anabolic vitality. This phase, as well as the first post-partum weeks of life, is at the same time enveloped in a consciousness close to sleep. With the gradual awakening of the consciousness the proliferative anabolic activities withdraw. Organic vitality decreases whereas the development of consciousness increases. This inverse correlation between life and consciousness, as mentioned above, was elaborated by the psychologist *Karl Fortlage* from Jena. Furthermore, *Rudolf Steiner* showed its central significance for medicine and education and he drew, for the first time, attention to the affinity between life forces and thinking forces. It is of the utmost significance to know that the common mental powers of the human being are the refined formative and growth powers. In the growth and formation of the human organism a spiritual quality is revealed. This spiritual quality then appears during the course of life as the spiritual power of thought:<sup>30</sup>

From the description emerges an initial impression of that organization which, as nerve-sense system, serves the awakening of the human being [see fig.]:



The inverse relationship between life and consciousness in the example of the development of the human brain<sup>31</sup>; A) 13-week old embryo, B) 26-week old embryo, C) newborn (according to K. Moore)

*Nerve-sense system*: the emphasis on *structure* and *form* is found on the *physical level* of the nerve organization, which is surrounded by a bony formation. *Vitality* has been exhausted: the nerve organization, which serves the wakeful consciousness, lacks a clearly distinct regenerative potency. These life forces appear metamorphosed as mental *powers* and become the basis of the world of consciousness that is supported by ideas and thoughts. In this *world of consciousness* the human being will not only experience the world through the senses but the knowledge about one's own *personality*, the *Ego-consciousness*, develops as well.

In the nerve organization are *two polar types of functions* that should be differentiated:

Initially, the *nerve organization* is associated with the *metamorphosis of forces of vitality* into *forces of consciousness*.

This *transformation* occurs through *warmth-related processes*. The warmth of the nervous system has a predominately catabolic quality and is therefore in opposition to the anabolic warmth that is associated with regenerative processes. Through this the etheric forces liberate themselves from their organic effect and become forces of consciousness. However, these cannot yet be experienced by the consciousness but still reside on the threshold of the dawning of consciousness that is only crossed when thoughts are formed [Hai. 2. Disease tendencies in the human organism]. The wakeful conscious thought as the basis of the human being's world of consciousness only develops through 'mirroring' at the nerve organization.

With this, the *second type of function* of the nerve organization is touched. It serves the *formation* and creation of the living *mental stream* for the contoured, waking conscious *world of thought* of the human being. The nervous system already carries this formative quality in its differentiated microscopic structure. It also has a functionally formative and differentiating effect on the organism beyond this morphological level. It conveys to the anabolic life processes the archetypical formative impulses or acts as a modulating formative quality in the different functional cycles of the human organism. On this level the nervous system has long since left the sphere of consciousness, its 'day side', and has reached the formative effect, its 'night side'. Thus, the actions of the nerve-sense system extend from its conscious functions through to its formative functions that can be, in its metamorphosis, traced to the neuronal modulation, neuroimmunology and endocrine regulation of metabolism and movement processes.

Through the nerve-sense system, form and gestalt are imprinted in the organism

### 2.2.2 The metabolism-limb system

Which situation arises now for the other side of the soul-spiritual effect, that seizes the organism in its *movement*?

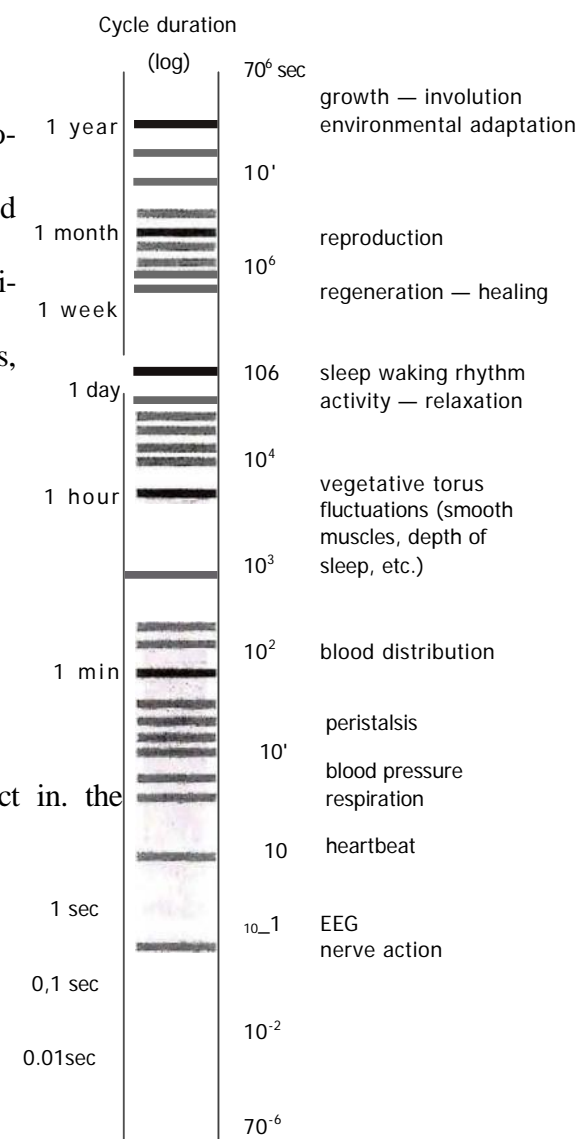
In contrast to the gesture of function described above, the level of the waking consciousness is now abandoned. Initially, this may sound surprising — the human being, as a rule, knows exactly what he or she wants to do or not do. Here, a brief contemplation can give the necessary distinction: in the waking consciousness, *action* appears only as an idea of action, hence as the planned goal of the action. How this transforms itself into the executing movement of human will cannot be consciously experienced.

In regard to the waking consciousness, the ensouled-spiritual being 'falls asleep' in this course of action in order to now, wrapped in sleep consciousness, live and reveal itself in the movement. One could think, for example, about the different movement qualities of the hands, from the violent hand to the loving, touching hand to the blessing hand to get an image of the effect of the ensouled-spiritual nature in human movement.

The *Ego* and the *astral body* connect with each other in the *movement* with the *metabolism-limb* system. Intensive *metabolic processes* accompany this *unfolding* of the *will* in the *movement organization*.

Initially one thinks about the metabolic processes of the muscles, however, these soon point additionally to extensive movements of the substrate which affect wide areas of the human organization. For example, the liver metabolism, via glucose release, is directly linked to muscular activity and finely tuned to it [H xu. Diabetology]. The metabolism organization is shown in these and similar phenomena to be in a close relationship with the limb activity and indicates therefore already the inner connection termed by Rudolf Steiner as the 'metabolism-limb system' or also as the 'metabolism-movement system'.

The *central organs* of the metabolism system unfold their activity far removed from the human waking state of consciousness. Here, the forces of vitality have not experienced a metamorphosis into the forces of consciousness, but they can show some impressive regenerative processes. For example, the regenerative ability of the liver after a wedge resection is a phenomenon often marvelled at. With the falling asleep of the soul in the metabolic system, anabolic vitality processes can unfold which serve the preservation of tissue, its growth and regeneration, and which vividly contrast with the fading vitality of the nervous system. The constituent elements, which have a dynamic effect in the metabolism-limb system, form their physical instrument. The muscle hypertrophy that occurs through movement, or the increase of bone density in the axial and limb skeleton that can also be realized through movement, show this link clearly. Contrary to this, muscular inactivity and immobilization lead to muscular atrophy and decrease of bone density. Therefore, the function characterizes the physical body.



Hierarchical order and harmonical dependencies in the rhythmic system<sup>32</sup> (according to Hildebrandt)



*Metabolism-limb system:* the *physical organization* is determined by metabolism and movement processes. On the *etheric level*, the *catabolic processes* can be distinguished from the *anabolic regenerative processes* (*functional or maintenance metabolism*). The *astral body* has a dynamic effect through *movement*, modulates the metabolism processes in the organism and experiences intentional guidance through the *Ego*.

The soul-astral organization is effective in *movement*. Each time the organism falls asleep, it returns to rest, when waking up it develops again its movement activity. Also, the pathology of movement (for example, the tremor of a Parkinson's patient) can disappear when falling asleep. Additionally, in the movement the Ego can act with will and intention. Thus movements, in which one is 'not present' and which are, for example, carried out automatically, and those that are supported by the intentional effect of the Ego are easily distinguishable. However, not only in movement but also in the metabolism processes is the astral organization effective. For example, the *digestive functions* are in a close functional relationship with the soul dimension: with appetite 'the mouth is watering'. Through the connection of the ensouled-spiritual nature with the body during the waking state, changes of numerous metabolism processes occur that withdraw again with the disengagement of the constituent elements during sleep. The metabolism processes of the organism, that can be described biochemically, are not only established in the vitality of the organism but are also permeated by the ensouled-spiritual nature of the human being. The Ego-effect in the organism consists of the integration of the separate metabolism and movement processes into an overall context that makes the body into an instrument of individuality.

In contrast to the effect of the nerve-sense system that carries form and structure into the organism and develops a guiding, regulatory function in the metabolism, the effect of the metabolism-limb system is dynamic, processual and actively mobile. Its effect will therefore not 'congeal' into form and structure but rather change these or even dissolve them.

*The metabolism-limb system is not characterized by form and structure but by the processes of metabolism and movement.*

Hence, in relation to the nerve-sense system and the metabolism-limb system, *form and process* are in opposition to each other and demand mediation.

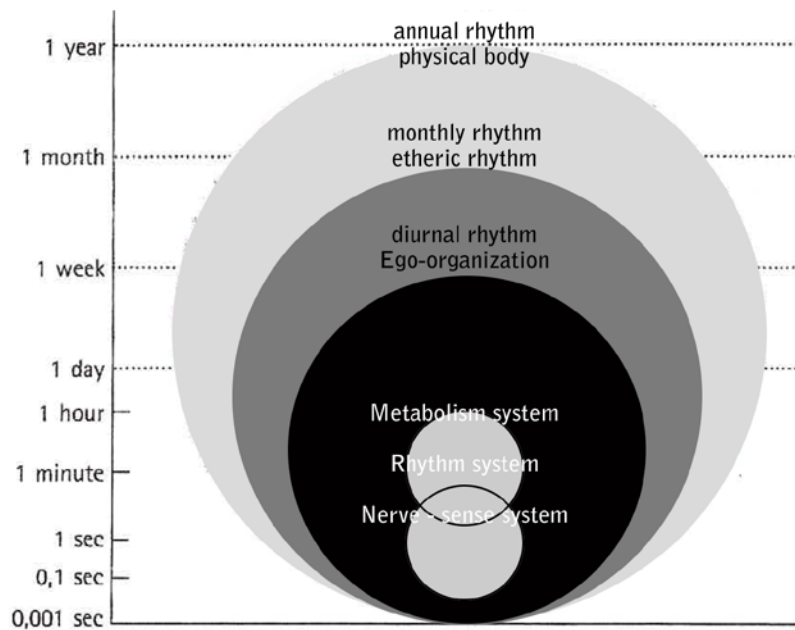
### 2.2.3 The rhythmic system

The *awakening of the soul* as the functional purpose of the nerve-sense system, and its falling asleep in the movement and metabolism system, are not side-by-side without connection but experience their connection in the different *rhythms*.

Here Rudolf Steiner describes the autonomy of a *rhythmic system* that is recognizable in the variety of chronobiological processes. One becomes aware of a hierarchical order with harmonical dependencies that have been researched in particular by G. Hildebrandt and his team. The rhythmic processes of the organism cannot only be characterized according to their different frequency and modulation but are in many ways in phase-coordinated relations with each other. Because of this they become a rhythmically structured system.

The task of the rhythmic system, which mediates between two functional gestures, is clearly shown by the *rhythm of breathing*. Inspiration, with the accompanying activation of the sympathetic nervous system, leads to awakening, whereas expiration shows the

opposite characteristic. From a biographical view, the first inspiration with the incarnation of the ensouled-spiritual being and the last expiration with the moment of death, and therefore with the disengagement of the body, are associated with each other.



Cycle duration (log)

Schematic illustration of the interaction of the cosmically determined long-wave rhythms in the human being<sup>33</sup> (according to Hildebrandt)

Nerve - sense system	Form	Thought
	structure regulation modulation	efficiency of the constituent elements liberated from the body
Rhythmic Sense	Rhythmic temporal gestalt	Feeling
Metabolism-limb system	Process	Volition
	metabolism processes movement	body-oriented efficiency of the constituent elements

The functional threefold order

Furthermore, respiration clearly shows the link with *human feelings*. In their modulation live directly the emotions of the human being that, through the sensory perceptions and ideas that are based on the nervous system, are internally learned and experienced. When, in the logically guided mind, the inner reference to the stages of reasoning can be explained, then the feelings that to some extent fundamentally unfold in the soul often emerge from unknown depths that are not necessarily accessible to the inquisitive mind.

They resemble in this quality some dream image that is similarly mysterious in terms of its origin.

Rudolf Steiner characterizes this other degree of consciousness of feelings, which differ from the waking conscious thoughts, as *dream conscious*. When one looks for the connection of the feeling world with the threefold organism, then one is directed to the rhythmic system. One can, for example, compare the steady breathing during a healthy sleep with the breathing of the awake person. The different soul experiences of the day, laughing as well as crying, lead to a differentiated modulation of the breathing rhythm. It is similarly comparable also for the heart frequency. Accordingly, in the rhythmical processes of the human being, the view opens up to his or her feeling soul.

*Rhythmic system:* The *polarity* between the *nerve-sense system* and the *metabolism-limb system* is mediated by the *rhythmic system*. Yet the rhythmic order of the organism is not a result that comes from the polarity of its threefold order, but *an autonomous quality* that coordinates the *interaction* of the polar systems.

In summary, a differentiated image of the association of the inner *soul-spiritual human layers* of *being* with the organism arises. The *body-soul dualism* that has for a long time characterized the image of the human being in medicine has been increasingly restricted to a dualism of soul and brain. By that it is postulated that the whole complexity of the soul is only related to the brain and the remaining part of the organism can be thought of as being without a soul. Only such a worldview could have introduced the concept of 'brain death' and equated it with human death.<sup>34</sup> In contrast to this, the image of the human being that has been developed here shows its ensouled-spiritual nature in a differentiated connection with the living organism. At the same time, the described threefold order of the human organism must not be misunderstood as an attempt to describe an anatomical classification. It is about functional gestures that include the ensouled-spiritual nature of the human being. They can be recognized in the individual organization areas, in diseases as well as in healing processes.

In all events in the organism, the level of processes has to be distinguished from their control, form, structure, and formation (regulation) as qualities of the metabolism-movement system or the nerve-sense system. Both levels are mediated by the rhythmic system. Each inflammation, as a metabolic process, needs its control and modulation, each proliferative growth demands formation and form.

*Form* and *process* as qualities of the *nerve-sense system* and the *metabolism-limb system* are in opposition to each other.

*Form* comes into being when processes have come to an end, when tranquility results from movement and structure develops. On the other hand, form and structure, which tend to rigidity and solidification, are dissolved in the processes and are led to the dynamic of metabolism processes. Rhythm takes a mediating, joining quality between these poles of form and process. In the temporal patterns of organismic processes, acceleration and deceleration alternate with each other. In this sense rhythm is not the metronomic repetition of the same. Already the breathing rhythm does not show synchronized inspiration and expiration phases, but consists of a shorter inspiration and a longer expiration, therefore rhythmically seen as an iambic (short-long) rhythm. In this instance, deceleration is associated with the form pole (nerve-sense system). All movements come to rest finally in form and structure. In contrast, the accelerating quality is associated with the process pole (metabolism-limb system). In the creation of form, the constituent elements progressively liberate themselves from their body-oriented action; the sculptor has

completed his or her work. In contrast, in the processes the constituent elements develop their body-oriented action. Both polar domains need each other and are dependent on the mediation of the rhythmic system [see fig.]. One-sidedness leads to imbalance and therefore to the functional dominance of one of the systems: from the physiology of the threefold order develops the pathology [III. 2. Disease tendencies in the human organism].

### 2.3 The polar action of the constituent elements in the threefold organism

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The effect of the *constituent elements* is differentiated in a polar way against the background of the functional *threefold order* of the human being. Because of this, a polarity of the *upper and lower human being* develops which determines different diseases, whereby here the term only indicates the main orientations of these polar types of effect.

The *physical organization* indicates a polar differentiation. Its mineral formation is most clearly readable in the *skeletal system*. It develops in the *upper human being* as the skullcap through the fibrous desmal ossification. Here develops the spherical shaped bone. On the other hand, in the lower human being an axial skeleton develops through enchondral ossification in the limb organization. An invading blood quality breaks down a pre-formed cartilage skeleton and leads to enchondral ossification. The spherical bone develops its closeness to the nervous system and, with the same gesture, circularly encloses the spinal nervous system as the vertebral arch. In contrast, the axial bone is intensively seized by the striated muscles and depends on their function and movement for its development [- XXIV. Rheumatology].

Function determines the developing physical organization. In the upper human being it is characterized by the soul-spirit entity, which is developing towards the waking consciousness, in the lower human being by its effect that is directed by volition.

Within the *skeletal system*, the *axial (tubular) bone* is in opposition to the *spherical (flat) bone*. The spherical bone originates embryologically through desmal ossification, the flat bone through enchondral ossification. The *skullcap* is related to the *nervous system*, the *tubular bone* to the *striated muscles* of the *limb system*. The *bone system* is differentiated within the *threefold organism*.

A corresponding polar effect results for the etheric body. It develops an intensive proliferative *vitality* in the lower human being of which liver regeneration is an example. In contrast to this, vitality diminishes in the nervous system. Here, vital forces change into those forces that are the basis for the world of consciousness and especially for the mental sphere. This activity; which transfers one idea into another or links one thought with another is, as a processual *mental activity*, the active element in the human world of consciousness. One can approach it with simple concentration exercises.

With a bit of practice one succeeds in expanding an imagined spot alternately into a circle or 'reducing' it again to a spot. When, after some practice, the attention is not directed to the individual circle or spot, but to the transforming activity that makes the spot into a circle or vice versa, then it becomes possible to experience the actual lively mental activity in its initial phase. It is the nascent activity that is opposite to the manifest thoughts. It belongs to the unobserved domains of the soul that create the world of consciousness. Figuratively speaking, the actual lively mental activity is the running water from which the contoured thoughts of the waking consciousness appear like ice crystals.

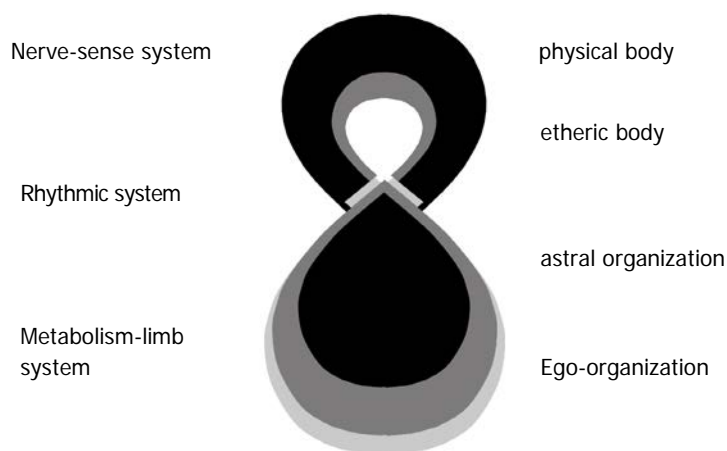
This *mental activity* does not belong any more to the human consciousness that depends on the physical organization, but to the etheric body. It is an etheric force which does not realize itself in the formative life processes of the organism — as in liver regeneration — but develops as an inner vitality of our thoughts in regard to its productivity, its power of growth and its wealth of creation. In this respect, the life of the etheric organism in the lower human being becomes the light that is the basis of our world of consciousness. The essence of language indicates this light-related quality of our consciousness in phrases like 'to be clear' or 'a light goes on':

The etheric organisation shows a *polar differentiation*: in the *lower human being* it appears in the *regeneration and growth processes*, in the *upper human being* it metamorphoses into the *powers of thought*.

The *astral organization* also shows a polar effect in the upper and lower human being. The *faculty of movement* characterizes the transition from the living plant to the soul-endowed animal. The motion phenomena of the human organism express themselves in their astral nature. The moving, strong-willed soul finds its instrument in the muscles and thus in the lower human being.

On the other hand, the astral body becomes the bearer of consciousness on the basis of the nerve organization. Through the astral body the lively, mental activity is developed and formed into conscious thought. The thought that suddenly becomes conscious is, according to its quality, solidifying, in so far that it coagulates from the lively thinking into a contoured form. For finer perception, a kind of 'fright' is associated with each thought creation that leads to immediate solidification in the soul. The facial expression of a person to whom a thought suddenly occurs can express this 'jumpiness'. Each facial expression then becomes 'rigid' for that short moment while the thought is formed.

*Movement and consciousness* are facing each other as a *polarity of the astral effect* in the *lower* and the *upper human being*.



Effect of the constituent elements in the nerve-sense system, rhythmic system and the metabolism-limb system. Consciousness orientation of the constituent elements in the nerve-sense system — mainly represented in the upper human being, feeling in the rhythmic system — mainly represented in the middle human being, and development of will in the metabolism-limb system — mainly represented in the lower human being.

A polar effect also arises for *individuality*. Consciousness can condense from an attentive experiencing of the world to one's *own awareness or self-awareness (Ego-awareness)*.

The core of the human being initially illuminates as the content of consciousness. As natural as an Ego-consciousness is accessible to the human being, so is it clear that this consciousness is only the 'veil of Isis' behind which the real Ego essence hides. Already the question concerning the 'from where' and 'where to' of one's own individuality, and about the previous or future earthly existences shows which dimensions, that are far from the 'temporary' Ego-consciousness, are connected with one's own being. It is the task of a path of knowledge to come to a genuine self-awareness that leads to knowledge of the world.

On the other hand, the Ego has an effect on the *intentions of the will*. We perform all sorts of movements without 'really being present'. They are movements that are, for the most part, related to our astral body and naturally stop when the astral body disengages from the organism during sleep. Opposing them are the *self-guided movements*. When one tries to throw an object accurately, it demands the complete presence of the Ego that now has a guiding effect on the course of movement. It is the intentional effect of the Ego that reveals itself in will and movement.

*Individuality* awakes in the *upper human being* to the *Ego or self-awareness* and realizes itself in the *lower human being* as *intentionally directed movements*.

With that results a polar effect of the constituent elements in the upper and lower human being [see fig.]. It is mediated by the *middle human being* which brings the *orientation of consciousness* towards the upper sphere and the *will effect* in the lower sphere into a *rhythmically formed relation*.

The rhythmic system is associated with feeling, thinking with the nerve-sense system, end volition with the metabolism-limb system.

An 'inner' and 'outer', in a sense a 'spot and orbit effect', of the constituent elements is indicated in the figure. The *head* carries especially clearly an external, enclosing bone shell as an expression of the physical body. As a fluid organization, the adjacent, also nearly spherically formed cerebrospinal fluid space points to the etheric effect [-4 VII. 2.1 The fluid organism between life and light].

The central nerve organization aligns itself inwardly as an instrument of the astral body that leads to consciousness. In the end, the Ego finds its potentiality of manifestation especially through the function of the frontal lobe and it can also lose this potentiality through disease processes localized there (frontal lobe syndromes, Pick's disease). In the world of consciousness humans experience themselves as the 'centre', to which the world is in opposition. The head appears in its anatomical structure as the vision of the effect of the constituent elements of which it is composed.

Now the reverse conditions are found in the *limb organization*. The *bone* is 'in the centre' and is surrounded by the muscles that are held by the astral body. The fluid organism nourishes the muscles. Finally, the sensitive skin points to the effect of the Ego. By touching, we experience, on the one hand, properties of the touched object. On the other hand, from touching comes an experience of the own Ego that 'encounters the world as a challenge'. In each sensory experience lives an intentional perception that can be felt as attentiveness and therefore as an activity of the Ego. Then the limb organization also becomes an image of the effect of the constituent elements that characterize this area of the human organism.

The *rhythmic system* mediates these polar constellations in the *middle human being*. The peripheral effect of the Ego-organization, that is typical for the limb system, changes

into the 'centre effect' as it can be experienced in the world of consciousness and vice versa. The *mediating gesture* leads from outside to inside and conversely again from inside to outside. It is a spiritual respiration process which occurs internally and which the external respiration follows in its rhythmical way. Also for other rhythms it will become clear how this breathing quality is also the basis for them [ . VII. 4.5 Cardiac dysrhythmias].

## 2.4 Functional gestures of the threefold organism in the day *and* night rhythm

In the morning, the *waking consciousness* evolves. *Concentrated thinking* is particularly easy in the morning hours. With the evolvement of the waking consciousness, the organism is permeated by a hardening quality and 'sclerosis'. Thus, an increased tendency of the thrombocytes to aggregate is observed and additionally, the plasminogen activator inhibitor (PAI) reaches its maximum and contributes to the procoagulant constellation that exists in the morning. Further phenomena like the elevated fibrinogen concentration and plasma viscosity point in the same direction:

The evolvement of the *waking consciousness* is accompanied by a *solidification tendency* in the *organism*.

hi the circadian rhythm of the body core temperature, maximum cooling down is reached in the morning hours. During the course of the day, the quality of awareness changes. After the morning hours, an emphasis on the human *will activity* develops. One observes a reduction of the 'thrombophilic' quality of the blood in the morning hours as, for example, a reduction of the PAI occurs. In the afternoon, the core temperature increases. Furthermore, in the late afternoon through to the early evening the maximum *concentration of phosphorous* (inorganic phosphate in the plasma) in connection with the dynamic effect of the constituent elements in the metabolism-limb system is reached.<sup>35</sup>

In the *morning hours*, the function of the *nerve-sense system* prevails while in the *early evening hours* it is the function of the *metabolism-limb system* that prevails.

CNS cranial nerves (1)	development of consciousness	Ego-organization	centre
Spinal nervous system (2)	rhythmic-metameric structure	astral organization	axial gestalt
Vegetative (autonomous) nervous system close to metabolism (3)	formation of vital processes	etheric organization	surface distribution, surroundings

The threefold order of the nervous system

At the same time, the relation to corresponding diseases becomes clear in this *day rhythm*. The morning is marked by increasing numbers of cardiac diseases on the grounds of a coronary sclerosis. The rheumatic person complains about morning stiffness. The depressed person experiences an inhibition of the will during the morning low. Whereas in the morning sclerosing, hardening disease symptoms prevail, in the evening the body temperature shows its maximum in numerous inflammatory diseases.



During the *course of the day*, the human being tends to experience the range of diseases of his or her life; from *sclerosing diseases*, marked by the *nerve-sense system* to *inflammatory diseases* caused by the *metabolism-limb system*.

## 2.5 The threefold structure of the human organism — its significance for the understanding of the organs, disease and healing

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The threefold structure of the human organism is *functionally* determined and must be distinguished from a purely anatomical classification. Its qualities can be found in the most different areas of the human organism — from the *microenvironment* of the cell to the individual *organs* to the *whole gestalt*.

### 2.5.1 The threefold structure of the nervous system — its significance for the understanding of the organs

The *nerve organization* shows a *threefold design* that Rudolf Steiner drew attention to in 1924.<sup>36</sup> The *cerebrum* (CNS) (1) focuses on the functions of consciousness of the human being. However, the *vegetative (autonomous) nervous system* (3), that in terms of its mass is comparable to the central nervous system, withdraws from the powers of consciousness. Rather, it focuses on the formation and differentiation of the vitality processes. Its life forces have, in contrast to the central nervous system, hardly metamorphosed into powers of consciousness.

The cerebrum layout shows an integrated organ formation whereas the autonomous nervous system develops comparably two-dimensionally and spreads mainly to the metabolism organization. Thus, the unconscious formations of the vitality processes and organ functions are in opposition to the conscious functions. In this area that is remote from consciousness — like, for example, in the vegetative ganglia — a regenerative potency can nonetheless be observed as a life phenomenon<sup>37</sup>, whereas it is normally hardly found in the area of the central nervous system.

Compared to this polarity, the *brain stem* and the *spinal nervous system* (2) present a mediating role: *rhythmic processes* can be functionally and morphologically discerned in the metameric structure of the spinal nervous system.

In summary, the qualities of the threefold order appear in the arrangement of this organization area.<sup>38</sup>

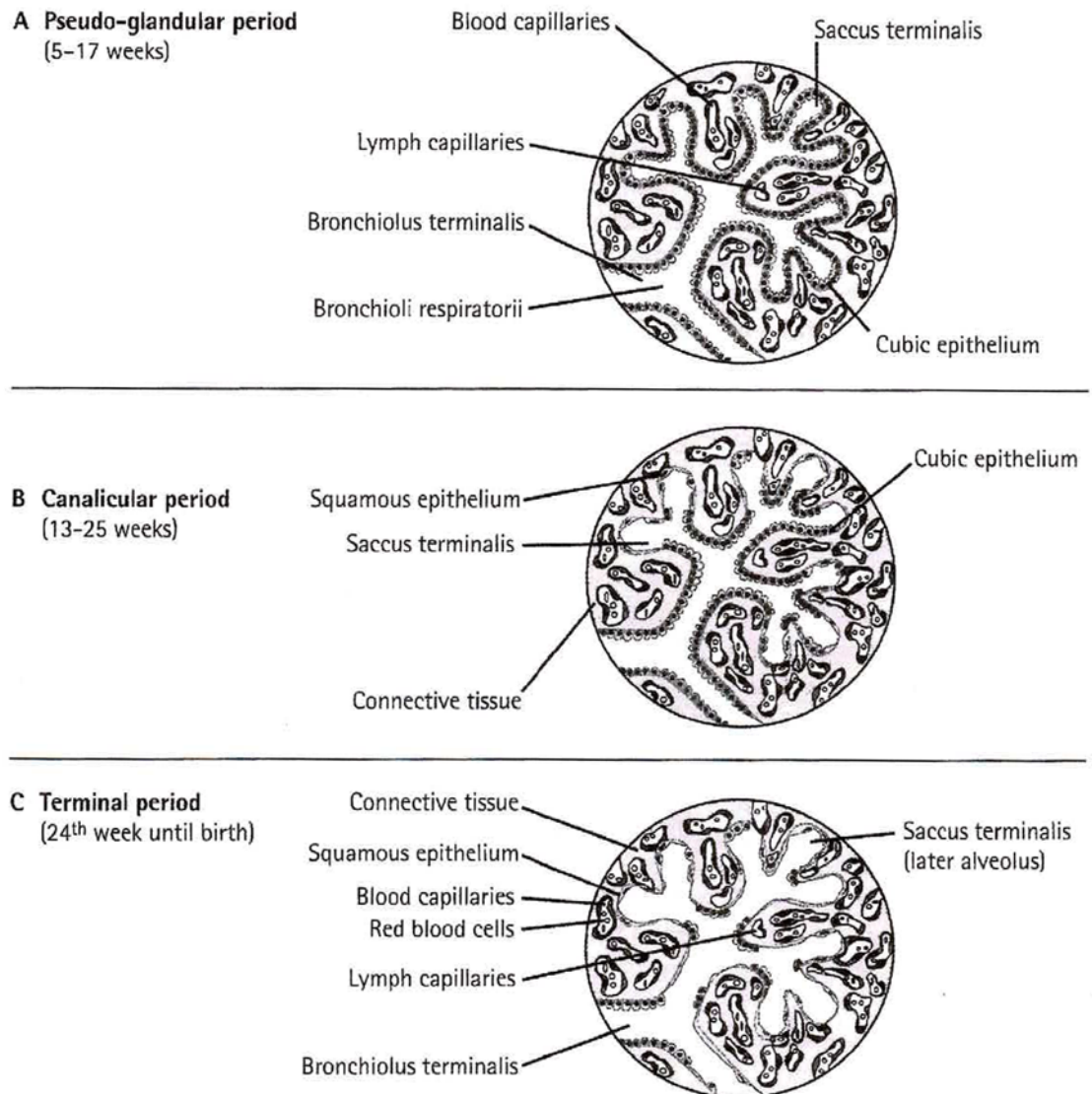
### 2.5.2 The threefold structure of the breathing organization— its significance for the understanding of disease

The *respiration* of the human being shows the *three functional gestures* of the threefold order. First of all, it is a life process which serves the human organism and its differentiated metabolic functioning — as can be observed in the sleeping person. In rhythm and articulation, respiration additionally reveals the feeling soul. Finally, it reaches the nerve-sense system in the sensory function of smell.

The threefold order of the respiration process is found again in the ontogenesis of the lungs (·vi. 2.3 Embryology).



*Lungs capable of breathing* [see fig.] develop gradually via the canalicular, terminal and finally alveolar period, from a gland-related organ that is close to the metabolism organization (pseudo-glandular development period of lung development). Compared with the glandular layout, the lungs have now assimilated the natural laws of air.

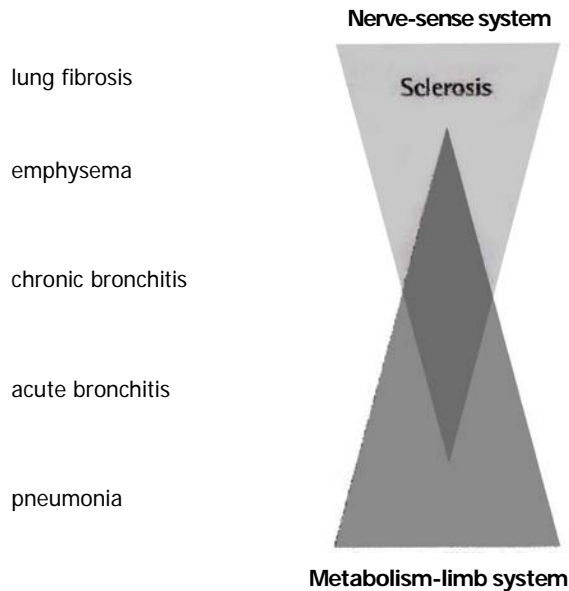


Metamorphosis of the respiratory epithelium into the epithelium of the regio olfactoria. The cilia of the epithelium of the respiratory tract are in metamorphic association with the 'sensory cilia of the olfactory epithelium!' <sup>59</sup> (according to **K. Moore**)

In the *upper human being* the respiratory tract finally develops towards the sense-organization. The upper respiratory tract is connected to the sensory function of hearing via the tuba eustachii.

The *threefold* order of the *respiratory organization* is also shown in its *range of diseases*. Pneumonia is characterized by the dominance of metabolic processes in an acute inflammation. Macroscopically, the lungs will appear like a liver in their red, grey and yellow hepatisation. It is the *dominance* of the *metabolism-limb system* that is accompanied by *inflammatory processes* and leads to pneumonic diseases. Opposing them at the other end of the spectrum is emphysema. Here the lungs appear overinflated; a head-like domed and rigid thorax develops which barely allows any breathing movements. As a

result of the concomitant dyspnoea, often an agonizing awakening of the soul develops, which is in impressive contrast with the sleep tendency of the person acutely ill with pneumonia. In contrast to pneumonia, *sclerosing processes* rather than inflammatory processes characterize emphysema. Here the dominance of the *nerve-sense system* in the area of the breathing organization is shown [see fig.].



Inflammatory and sclerosing lung diseases against the background of the threefold order

Dominance within the threefold order leads to the most diverse forms of organ diseases. As shown here as an example for the breathing organization, corresponding relationships are also valid for the other organ systems of the human organism m. 2. Disease tendencies in the human organism]. The liver, too, becomes diseased when, as an expression of the dominance of the nerve-sense system, it is led into hardening and sclerosis (liver cirrhosis). Inflammatory diseases — like acute hepatitis — show the dominance of the metabolism-limb system.

### 2.5.3 The threefold order in the metabolism organization — its significance for the understanding of pathogenesis and salutogenesis

The threefold order is not only for the understanding of disease an indispensable basis. It becomes also essential for the comprehension of healing, salutogenetic processes in the human organism. Thus, the pathogenetic processes that lead to the disease are opposed by the polar salutogenetic processes that derive from the viewpoint of the threefold order. Their interaction can be shown clearly in the example of diseases and healing processes of the stomach organization.

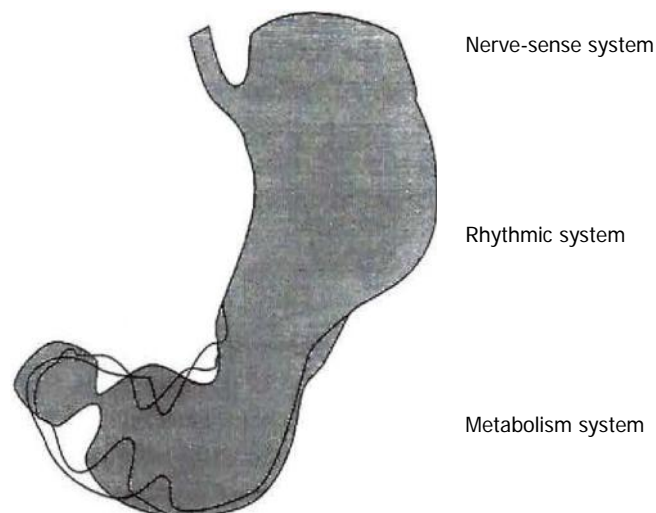
In the *stomach* the *functional gestures of the threefold order* can be found again: The *dome of the gastric fundus* is a head-like, spherically enclosed cavity, partly unfolded by air. On the level of its muscles it shows a tonic quality with a tendency to tightening and hardening. One finds here an aggressively catabolic metabolism effect, consisting of acid formation and pepsin secretion. It is in vivid contrast to the anabolic vitality processes of the gastrointestinal tract and the protective factors of the stomach lining as they prevail in the antrum. Whereas these develop unnoticed by the awareness of the

human being, the catabolic metabolism processes develop an immediate relation to the awakening soul: the gastric secretion is accompanied by sensations like appetite and feeling of hunger; occasionally one calls it the appetite juice — hereby linguistically uniting both these levels. The term cephalic phase of digestion further points to the functional association with the nerve-sense system.

The *antrum* and the *pylorus region* are opposite the *upper stomach section*, which is believed to still have taste buds in the early human development phases as a direct relation to the sense organization. Here a clear increase in the wall muscles is recognizable. In contrast to the tonic contraction of the upper stomach section, an intensive motion is found in the antrum that shows a distally advancing and spreading movement, described as 'antrum mill: Opposite to the quality of rest of the corpus is the motion phenomenology of the antrum. In contrast to the fundus, less densely packed glands are observed in the antrum. Their mucus production is no longer of a catabolic nature, but rather of a protective nature [see fig.].

Opposite the catabolic function is the protective and anabolic mucus production of the metabolism-limb system within the threefold stomach organization.

Both these polar orientations in the stomach function are especially illuminated by an observation from the animal realm. In the frog species *Rheobatrachus silus*, the female swallows the eggs whereby the stomach transforms itself into a protective birth cavity that encloses the now beginning anabolic and vitality processes. The eggs are embedded in bicarbonate-saturated mucus. When all frogs have hatched and crawled out of the mother's mouth, the birth cavity becomes again, within a short time, the acid-active digestion cavity. Thus, in an organ which serves mainly an aggressive catabolic function, develop intermittently anabolic, building-up functions.



The threefold order of the stomach<sup>40</sup>

The *polar functional structure of the stomach is mediated by the rhythmic system* as it appears particularly vividly in the *rhythmical sequences of motion*. For *healthy stomach function*, the *rhythmically alternating prevailing of the upper stomach region*, which belongs to the *nerve-sense system*, or the *rhythmically alternating prevailing of the lower stomach region*, which belongs to the *metabolism-limb system*, is necessary. In contrast, restrictions in the *rhythmic organization*, that connects the polar functions, can lead to different *diseases of the stomach*.

In the differentiated sensations that accompany many stomach diseases such as cramp-like or burning pains, nausea, loss of appetite or feeling of fullness, the awakening feeling organization, and with it a functional gesture that belongs to the *nerve-sense system*, becomes noticeable. Conversely, the healing processes that are unnoticed by the consciousness show the anabolic effect of the life organisation as a functional gesture that belongs to the *metabolism-limb system*.

In the case of a *peptic ulcer*, a catabolic function that belongs to the upper stomach invades the region of the metabolism and movement organization of the stomach. In the context of an ulcer pain with florid ulceration and further symptoms, awareness, that can be accompanied by a circular spasm and therefore a hardening quality that terminates any peristaltic contraction, occurs in the wrong area.<sup>c</sup> This hardening quality becomes visible in the coarse, callous ulceration.

An *inflammatory process* sets itself against this initial *dominance of the nerve-sense system* in the threefold stomach function. When it cannot achieve its saluto genetic effect, a chronic gastritis that is unable to be healed ensues and leads to an erosive and ulcerative mucous membrane lesion. Finally, a maltoma or also a gastric cancer can develop on the basis of a chronic inflammation. The rediscovered significance of the *Helicobacter* colonization is, from this perspective, not the only cause. As an exclusive pathogenetic concept of ulcer disease, it shows equally the unbalanced somatization just as previous decades favoured unilaterally the psychosomatic genesis. Rather, also in this situation, disposition is the determining factor which is characterized by an imbalance in the threefold structure.

When the Ego works on a conflict situation, it can keep it in a place that has not yet a disease-making effect on the organism. If a burdensome, problematic situation sinks deeper into the regions of the soul that cannot be reached by the Ego then it has a catabolic and debilitating effect on the life organization and the functional organ level. Finally, a disease process follows which leads to physical disease manifestation, but also calls upon the inflammatory processes that oppose the disease situation.

A very instructive example for such interrelations of the impact of emotional experiences on the organic functionality is a patient who has been observed in a subtle way over several years by Wolf and Wolf; this patient had a gastric fistula. Schiffter<sup>42</sup> summarizes the observations: 'The mucous membrane of the gastrotomy showed characteristic changes according to the psychological state of the patient. In tense, disturbing, ambivalent situations, persistent ill humour, annoyance, antipathy or aversion the gastric lining darkened ... and secretion and peristalsis increased ... It was partly oedematously swollen and easily damaged. At the same time it came to spontaneous erosions and small but typical ulcers when there was anxiousness, fearfulness and depression the gastric lining turned pale, and secretion and motility clearly reduced:

The Hp-associated *gastritis* is shown in a different light when one sees in the *inflammation a process* that is opposing a foreign quality in order to restore the disturbed integrity of an organization area. In its acute progression, it is the attempt of the metabolism-limb system to overcome the excessive effect of the nerve-sense system. In rather rare cases it will come to a complete recovery of an Hp-associated gastritis, often a chronic gastritis of a different grade of activity finally develops, on the basis of which erosive or ulcerous mucosal lesions can originate.

On the other hand, the coming and going of an ulcer disease with persistent *Helicobacter* infection points to the *salutogenetic potency* in context with the *Helicobacter* infection. In this situation, the healing qualities, as they connect with the metabolism-limb system of the stomach organization, appear to be the decisive factor by opposing the dominant effect of the nerve-sense system.

In these processes a 'salutogenetic objective' can be recognized which demands therapeutic support [- XVIII. 4. The stomach diseases and therapies?.

The *salutogenetic concept*, which receives its *orientation* through the *willingness of the organism to heal*, is in opposition to the *pathogenetic concept* that is focused on *eradication*.

In view of the yet very preliminary therapeutic approaches that have already been proposed for this, currently more questions arise than answers — questions, however, in the answers to which lie essential future prospects for the art of healing. Thus, to the therapeutic approaches that justifiably relate to a comprehensively conceived pathogenesis, which includes the soul-spirit nature of the human being, are added those approaches that support the healing powers in the human organism.

## 2.6 Salutogenesis and threefold structure — therapeutic procedures of Anthroposophical Medicine

Under these aspects, *health does not appear as a guaranteed normal state* that the patients fall out of because of their illness, rather as *a quality* that must be constantly *achieved* through the interaction of the polar types of function.

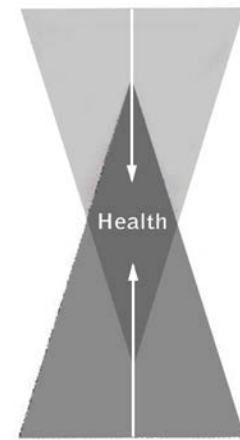
‘The health of a human being is ... not just a chapter which one can deplete but health only really exists where it is generated in every moment.’<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, health is *not in opposition* to sickness. Rather the *healing, salutogenetic powers* of the human being counter the *pathogenetic processes* to transform them and to *give rise to health* [see fig.]. Consequently, health is conceived as a faculty of the human being to actively produce a *balance of polarprocesses*.<sup>44</sup>

In contrast to a concept of normal health, every person carries inside his or her own self the *individual potential of being healthy*. This embraces four levels that have been worked out by W. Schäd.

On the physical, somatic level health can be described as a state of physical integrity [see table [1]]. A further level concerns the faculty of the organism to regenerate due to the etheric organization [see table [2]]. A third level concerns the health of the soul [see table [3]]. Its expression is the 'psychological wealth' of the human being. Finally, a fourth level of

Pathogenetic processes  
(for example, carcinogenesis)



Salutogenetic processes  
(for example, inflammation)

**Dynamic** concept of health as an equilibrium of polar processes

health is characterized by spiritual productivity [see Table [41] that can be limited in the case of disease.

- 1 Physical integrity
- 2 Physiological resilience/vitality
- 3 Psychological wealth
- 4 Spiritual productivity

Four dimensions of health

### 2.6.1 Therapeutic procedures of Anthroposophical Medicine

The healing principle, which is in opposition to the pathogenetically effective imbalance in the threefold structure of the human organism, *can be therapeutically supported* on various levels [see fig.]. *Medicinal drug therapy* is not going to eliminate or suppress the pathogenetic factors as a matter of priority but it will have the support of the *healing processes* as an objective. Multiple approaches result from the *eurythmic therapy* and the *artistic therapies* of Anthroposophical Medicine. Hereby, the connection between the living aspect and the soul aspect of the human being is essential because it shows the direct meaning of the soul-spirit activity of the human being for his or her life processes and therefore those events which are the basis for healing. Finally, belonging to this is the activity of the human individuality which, through the 'will to become healthy', attends to the tasks posed by the disease. Questions regarding the meaning of disease now gain importance and can indicate how sickness becomes the labour pains of a stage of development.

The different procedures do not join together 'additively' but are guided in the medical indication and implementation by the understanding of the disease as well as the understanding of the healing processes.

- Medicinal drug therapy
- Physiotherapy (rhythmic massage, Pressel massage, topical applications, oil dispersion baths)
- Therapeutic procedures of anthroposophical nursing
- Eurythmy therapy
- Art therapy
- Psychotherapy, communication therapy (biography, support with the analysis of the disease, internal support of the healing processes [inner development and meditation])
- Development of a patient-doctor/therapist relationship that matches the ill person and the different disease stages

Therapeutic procedures of Anthroposophical Medicine