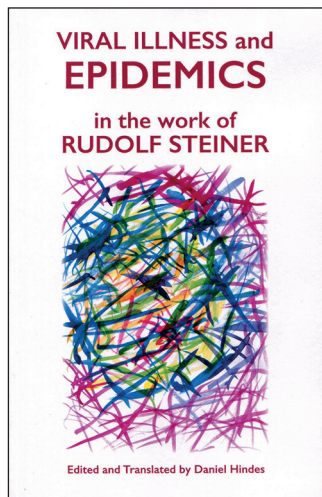


# Rudolf Steiner's Insights on Viral Illness and Epidemics in the Context of Materialistic and Spiritual Science

by Richard House



## Viral Illness and Epidemics in the Work of Rudolf Steiner

Ed. & trans. Daniel Hindes

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*“If you look at today’s allopathic medicine, you can see the same thing everywhere: the tendency*

*to judge a sick person according to certain side effects of the illness. These side effects, which are surfaced by germ theory, are the secondary causes and are a distraction.... Every time microorganisms find suitable conditions in the body for their development, these suitable conditions have already been created by the actual primary cause [of the illness].... Without going back to the spiritual causes, we will not be able to solve this riddle.”* (emphasis added).

Rudolf Steiner,

9 April 1920 and 7 April 1920 (CW 312)

*“[I]nfection has taken place in numerous people without leading to illness.... [A]n infection can only produce its deadly effect when it encounters an organism which is predisposed to disease.”*

Rudolf Steiner,

1898 (CW 30)

*“[Germs] are never actually the real cause of illness, but they are always merely indicators that the patient bears the actual causative process within them.... The actual organic causes lie in the human beings themselves.... The germs do not bring the flu; but they are where the flu is, just as the frogs inexplicably come out when the rain comes.”*

Rudolf Steiner,

13 April 1921 (CW 313)  
and 23 December 1922 (CW 348)

*“Our ordinary physical life consists of continually getting a little bit sick and healing ourselves a little bit.”*

Rudolf Steiner,

27 December 1922 (CW 348)

Like many people, and no doubt many readers of this magazine, the recent drive to ‘vaccinate the world’ against Covid-19 has led me to take a greater interest in both vaccination in general and the nature of illness in particular. At the end of last year I was enthralled by an article on the Germ Theory vs Terrain Theory of illness that appeared in *The Light* newspaper,<sup>1</sup> hot on the heels of which I was introduced to a book on the nature of illness that challenges many of the taken-for-granted assumptions of allopathic medicine,<sup>2</sup> and then two more key books in casting light on the illness question.<sup>3,4</sup>

In her December 2020 article in *The Light*, Louize Small pointed out that Terrain Theory forms the basis for most ancient healing systems and is based on strengthening the environment such that disease cannot flourish in a healthy body. Better to clean the water that a fish swims in than treat the symptoms of the fish and ignore the dirty water. Treating the symptoms in this latter way is the medical response that Germ Theory generates – and modern Western medicine is based on Germ Theory. Until recently, comparatively few of us have considered any alternative explanation to account for illness. Yet as early as March 1906, Rudolf Steiner was strongly intimating a Terrain Theory viewpoint when he said that “one person can move among all kinds of people in a place where there are epidemics or contagious diseases without endangering himself or getting these diseases. Another person gets infected just walking down the street. *It depends solely on your disposition whether you are infected or not*”. [emphasis added] And he returned to this theme fourteen years later, when he said that “as far as being ill [is concerned], [the micro-organism associated with a given disease] has no other meaning beyond being an identifying marker, a distinguishing mark.... You discover a landscape in which you find a number of well-fed and good-looking cows.... [I]t would not occur to you to say, ‘What is happening is because the landscape has been infected by the arrival of well-kept cows.’” And on 7 April 1920, Steiner referred to “the modern superstition that

germs and bacteria move in and out of people and cause diseases.”

Germ Theory, then, assumes that we become ill when infected by micro-organisms in our external environment. Yet we read further that Germ Theory was actually debunked in 1918 – when Steiner was at the height of his powers in speaking about these questions – when the Boston Health Department failed to infect 300 healthy patients with the Spanish Flu, discovering that they couldn’t intentionally replicate the virus.

Collected in the book under review are all of Steiner’s statements on viral illnesses and epidemics, spanning over forty years and reproduced in chronological order. The 48 distinct excerpts are drawn from 35 separate volumes of Steiner’s Collected Works, and several of these statements have never before been published in English translation and are newly translated from the latest German editions. Steiner’s detailed views on health and illness in relation to pathogens and infectious diseases could hardly have been published at a more apposite time than in the middle of the Covid-19 global crisis. In the review that follows, my presentation will be part chronological, and part thematic.

In a very useful foreword, the editor of the book, Daniel Hindes is careful to point out that these excerpts do not constitute a “comprehensive discussion: rather, they are just one aspect of Steiner’s wider project of ‘helping modern culture reorient its thinking away from purely materialistic explanations... to a viewpoint that sees the spirit actively working in everything that happens...”. In the 48 excerpts that follow, we find discussions of “typhus, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, smallpox, leprosy, yellow fever, malaria, encephalitis lethargica, meningococcal meningitis, and bubonic plague”. (An important note also on the status of these excerpts: Prior to 1913, they were based on notes made by audience members and so they are very much a *reconstruction* of what Steiner actually said – of his “themes into sentences and paragraphs that have, at best, a general correspondence with the words Steiner spoke on that day”. From 1913 onwards, however, the excerpts were usually stenographically recorded, word-for-word, and are therefore more faithful to what Steiner actually said.) We are also informed that presenting Steiner’s references to these themes chronologically inevitably leads to some repetition, and also to an absence of ordering in the subjects that are addressed. Hindes is also careful to outline in detail the procedure he followed in making translations from German to English. Note, finally, whilst there is no index, Hindes offers useful contextualising introductions to each excerpt together with a list of the 34 volumes appearing in the book, listed by Collected Works (GA) number and with the German book title.

I found this book enthralling from start to finish and it gave me yet another experience of Steiner’s

extraordinary capacity to sound as if he were speaking directly to our contemporary concerns – except that he was speaking a century ago or more! Hindes emphasises how Steiner was an avid reader and was able to keep up with the latest work and advances across all fields. He also points out that the limits of germ theory were being broadly debated in Steiner’s day (which, alas, is far from the case today), and there was clearly then a realisation that germs were present everywhere, and yet most people were not ill. Steiner’s thought was, then, considerably influenced by the great debate that was happening between ‘the pathogenic view’ (i.e. Germ Theory) and the ‘focus on susceptibility’ (Terrain Theory), a debate traceable right back to Pasteur’s findings. As Hindes puts it, “a recurring theme in Steiner’s approach to infectious diseases [is] that a person requires susceptibility in addition to the presence of the pathogen in the environment in order to become sick with a disease”. And as we will see, for Steiner, a critique of one-sided materialism and its role in illness (susceptibility) is a recurrent focus: for “The materialist is naturally inclined to attribute... a contagious disease to germs, but the physical cause is not the only factor... Disease has..., besides the materialistic cause in the germs, a spiritual one” (22 June 1907).

However, it would be wrong to see Steiner as a simplistic denouncer of Germ Theory; for as always, his expressed viewpoint was subtle and nuanced. Thus on 7 April 1920, he wrote that “I am really not speaking from a place of antipathy to germ theory. I do understand the reasons that people who believe in the germ theory give.... This is really not an everyday denunciation of germ theory”. And on 28 August 1923, he also said, “Let nothing be said here against germ theory. Germ theory is very useful.... I do not want to go against official medicine at all, but rather to continue it where it reaches certain limits”.

Yet in the 7 April 1920 lecture, he had also said that “To explain typhoid fever, you need to do a lot more than just refer to the typhoid bacteria.... [T]he conditions for their existence in the body... are... the reason for the presence of typhoid bacteria.... [I]t is very easy to confuse what is secondary with the actual original clinical picture”. And just two days later on 9 April 1920, Steiner said that “[this tendency to mistake the secondary for the primary] is what underlies germ theory in allopathic medicine, [and] is also contained in their whole way of looking at things and thereby causes much damage”. Perhaps we can say, then, that for Steiner, Germ Theory isn’t wrong per se; but it is only a very partial view of the whole illness picture. As he said on 23 December 1922, “It is... very useful to know that people are exposed to the disease.... [Y]ou should not throw the baby out with the bathwater and say that it is unnecessary to examine the pathogens. But... you must know that the pathogens do not cause

the disease.... *People do not want to investigate the real causes of the disease.*" (my emphasis) This viewpoint will become clearer in what follows.

Note also that in Steiner's day, it was not yet fully clear what the difference was between bacteria and viruses, with the latter not yet having been fully established as a different class of organism. Thus, all infectious micro-organisms tended to be termed 'bacilli' in Steiner's day and Hinde makes the case for using the term 'germs' as the translation of Steiner's term *Bazillen*.

The first excerpt is from 1892 and the final one from 1924. As early as 1892, Steiner is already championing a susceptibility model of illness when he states in a private letter that in the case of cholera, "Poor public hygiene led to regular outbreaks throughout Europe until improved sanitation, and in particular the introduction of sewer systems and later wastewater treatment plants, eliminated them". It was over 80 years later that historians systematically confirmed this crucial insight.<sup>5</sup> And in several telling comments that perhaps contain a vital insight into susceptibility to the current Covid-19 virus, Steiner writes that "*I'm not worried about cholera....* [N]o-one can be affected who lives a sensible life" (my emphasis); and on 7 April 1920, "people who... are easily inclined towards injury in their head-chest rhythm – which has the greatest impact on their respiratory rhythm – have a disposition to let certain atmospheric phenomena... have a strong effect on them. Others... equipped with a healthy constitution in regard to their respiratory system possess a resistance against such influences" (Terrain Theory again).

In 1905, Steiner speaks of germs as "living beings incarnated just as humans are" – for we must ask where germs themselves come from. He also introduces an historical and karmic perspective, with actions in one's life leading to a predisposition to infectious disease in the next. Steiner maintains that the plague of mediaeval leprosy stemmed from the "transformed forces of decay caused by the Mongolian peoples", who "clashed with the European peoples and spread fear and terror before them" – with "fear, hate and terror preserv[ing] such spiritual entities made of decaying forces" and with germs then finding this to be fertile ground. Steiner is emphatic that in Europe's esoteric schools, infectious diseases are traced back to their spiritual origin – for "there is nothing material that did not originate in the spiritual".

In the following year, on 14 March 1906, Steiner maintains that *folk karma* as well as individual karma influences people's susceptibility to disease, with folk karma affecting "certain health conditions of whole peoples"; and in a short essay the same year, he writes that "Health is generally the effect of good, meaningful habits in a previous life". Steiner deepens this perspective in October 1906, when he says "Certain dispositions to disease always lead back to certain

character and temperamental traits in the previous life"; and "A person who was endowed with healthy characteristics, with an efficient temperament, is reborn with a body that can be exposed to all kinds of epidemics without being infected and vice versa". And again in relation to folk karma, on 30 May 1907 he says that "A nervous age such as ours is the result of the materialistic disposition of the last century". According to Hinde, Steiner's view of karma is "quite flexible... and not at all deterministic". Later, on 22 May 1910, we find Steiner saying that "[People] can be drawn to a place where they can, for example, get an infection in order to experience the balancing effects for an embodied karmic cause". And the great subtlety and complexity of Steiner's thought is very apparent here; for not only do we need to think carefully about the karmic dimension of the public-health improvements that Steiner referred to in 1892, but "in an earlier period mankind *needed* the epidemics that are now to be eliminated by public health measures" (from 22 May 1910); and

"if we remove certain causes which would otherwise have been there and which people would have sought out due to their karmic entanglement, we are intervening in karma. This intervention does not mean that we eliminate the karmic need for balance, only that we have steered it in another direction.... Today a great deal of external influences and causes are being cleared away that would otherwise have been sought out to balance certain karmic things that humanity has been burdened with from earlier ages.... The souls which are saved in a health-related way today are thus condemned to seek this karmic balance in another way." (ibid.)

When asked a question on 7 April 1920 about the relationship between diseases and "the progress of world history", Steiner also said that "it is interesting to study the relationships between what is going on in the depths of human development and what is going on in the depths of this or that disease". Certainly, the relevance and implications of this spiritual-scientific perspective for the cultural phenomenon of mass vaccination will be obvious. (Steiner's views on vaccination will be discussed later.)

In one of his characteristically prophetic remarks, on 29 January 1906 Steiner says that "we are not so far away from the fact that strange diseases and epidemics will appear among humanity!". He goes on to say that "there will be epidemics of the soul life, diseases of the nervous system in epidemic form: – due to people "lack[ing] a spiritual core in life". And on 30 May 1907, he says, "in the future serious mental disorders, whole epidemics of madness will appear, caused by the materialistic disposition. And whole peoples will be overcome by them". And the previous year, on 28 August 1906, Steiner prophetically refers to "epidemics of mental illness".

For Steiner, it is *materialism* that "hollows out man", and "the real illness that follows [this] hollowing



*Magnolia stellata*

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out of the inner being is the spiritual epidemic we are facing”(ibid). And on 28 August 1906, he said, “if materialism continues for decades, it will have a devastating effects on people’s health.... Only... a spiritual worldview can give future generations a foundation for good health”. Then on 30 May 1907, he says that “The more humanity becomes spiritual, the more everything related to diseases of the nervous system and the soul is eradicated”. And a decade later, on 14 October 1917, Steiner was saying that “We must not allow the ahrimanic powers to gain the upper hand over us, *we must not fall in love with these ahrimanic powers*” (my emphasis). (One immediately thinks of the hold that the addictive power of smartphone technology currently has over humankind, and the unfolding technocratic agenda-cum-nightmare that it will facilitate if it continues unchecked.) Thus (Steiner again), “the danger is very real. *The danger exists that people will get stuck in materialism*, will hold on to the ahrimanic-materialistic way of thinking, will continue this ahrimanic way of thinking beyond the times when it is actually meant to exist” (my emphasis). And from 7 April 1920: “What makes you a materialist is when you ignore the spirit when you study material processes; that you look into the world of matter and see only matter and material processes”.

Another spiritually informed insight offered by Steiner is that illness and disease should also rightly be seen as a developmental *opportunity*, and not merely a ‘pathology’ to be eradicated, as in patriarchal materialistic science. For example, we read that, on 22 May 1910, Steiner said, “If an epidemic breaks out somewhere, it will bring about something that humanity is actually looking for, so that something is balanced out in us.... [W]e are driven into certain circumstances in order to experience an injury, the overcoming of which brings us closer to perfection”; for – echoing psychiatrist Scott Peck’s notion of ‘the *necessary* pain of living’ – Steiner says that “All pain is there so that we can draw from the suffering the experience of how to adapt to our ongoing divine organizations”. Then on 17 April 1912, he says “sickness, infirmity, and death are not gifts of Lucifer, but gifts of the good, wise divine powers....”. And much later in the piece from 22 May

1910, Steiner speaks of the desolation that an illness-free, hyper-controlled materialistic existence would give rise to:

“By giving people greater physical comfort through a healthier life..., the soul is influenced in such a way that it will gradually feel a certain emptiness, a dissatisfaction, an unfulfilled feeling.... [With] these general ideas [of] a purely materialistic life, such souls would have less and less incentive to progress in themselves. A parallel *desolation of souls* would arise.” (p. 54, my emphasis) In a further statement that has echoes of the late sociologist Neil Postman and his iconic book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*,<sup>6</sup> Steiner speaks of

“People living in such pleasant external conditions... rush from sensation to sensation; then, when the money is sufficient they travel from town to town to see something, or if they have to stay in the same town, they rush from pleasure to pleasure every evening. The soul, however, remains bored, and in the end no longer knows what it should seek out in the world to achieve meaning.... [L]iving in purely external, physically pleasant conditions creates a tendency only to think about the physical.... Souls cannot find satisfaction in the desolation of the impressions of an otherwise quiet pleasantly arranged outer life”.

Approximately half way through the book we find the first reference to vaccination. On 22 May 1910, Steiner perhaps surprises us with the following: “Vaccination will not harm a person who, after vaccination, receives a spiritual education in later life. But we will unbalance things too much if we only aim at one side and do not attach importance to the other... [O]ne must not take on one task without the other.” It is clear from this statement alone that Steiner would certainly have strongly rejected the ‘anti-vaxxer’ trope being applied to his spiritual-scientific approach!

Modern (allopathic) medicine certainly comes in for some withering critical attention from Steiner with a statement that has extraordinary resonances and prescience for today, over a century later; for (5 January 1911),

“[In] the field of materialistic medicine, [we see] a reign of authority that has control and increasingly asserts claims in a way that amount to something that is

much, much more horrible, more terrible than any reign of authority in the so much maligned Middle Ages.... [I]t will become stronger and stronger.... *And the fear, moreover, is only just beginning*, and it makes people, especially when it comes to health, fall into *a belief in authority that is terrible.*" (my emphases)

Steiner is extraordinarily prophetic in giving voice over a century ago, then, to a phenomenon which is today a grave concern to many – that "legitimate claims of conventional medicine can easily thwart our whole life, *which in some ways can lead to tyranny*" (14 January 1909, my emphasis). And much later, on 5 September 1919, we read that "Today's medicine... attaches too much importance to the fact that, whenever there is anything that appears [that] takes the form of an illness, science discovers the presence of a pathogen in the form of some bacillus or bacteria". His proposal, as of 7 April 1920, was for "a lively cooperation for the preservation of health between the expert and the layman who understands human nature".

Returning to vaccination, in the final excerpt in the book, from 22 April 1924, Steiner speaks of smallpox vaccination. Again he makes the point that it is not vaccination per se that does harm, but rather,

"It only harms those who grow up with predominantly materialistic thoughts. In that case the inoculation becomes a kind of ahrimanic force; the person cannot elevate themselves from a certain materialistic feeling.... [P]eople are almost being clothed in a phantom.... They become constitutionally materialistic. *They can no longer lift themselves to the spiritual. That is what is at stake with vaccination.*" (pp. 118–19, my emphasis)

And for Steiner, "With smallpox, vaccination is very much a matter of something psychological. *It cannot be ruled out that the belief that vaccination will help plays an incalculably important role.*" (my emphasis) So Steiner was also well aware of the placebo effect; and how interesting that in all the wall-to-wall media coverage on Covid-19 vaccines, we have heard little if anything about the placebo effect. Indeed, perhaps the one-sided pro-vaccine media assault has been deliberately orchestrated with a view to generating their own placebo effect around the Covid-19 roll-out. Steiner ends by making the point that "something spiritual... would work just as well to make people strong against such influences" (and of course without any collateral toxic side-effects stemming from experimental vaccines).

Steiner also has extraordinary things to say about the suffering of animals in relation to the creation of disease-causing pathogens – making a connection between the way we treat animals today and parasites of the far distant future. We read that "a person has karmic consequences... for the pain they have inflicted on animals" (17 April 1912). Steiner is acutely aware of just how much pain humans have inflicted on animals during the development of humanity; he asks, "Why...

are people tormented by... species of microorganisms of various sorts? We created this fate in earlier incarnations by inflicting suffering and death on animals". And on the 9 May 1912, "Pathogens are re-embodied animals tortured and killed, consumed and eaten".

Steiner also has things to say about vegetarianism:

"The consumption of meat makes the spirit heavy and binds it to the physical.... A vegetarian diet makes greater demands on the physical body, so that it is busy and cannot hinder the spirit in its work.... The bad thing about eating meat is the lasting effect of causing pain and killing the animals." (ibid.)

Steiner also hints at what modern research is now discovering in relation to so-called 'Lockdown' – viz. that the inculcation of fear might *itself* cause greater susceptibility to infection and illness;<sup>7</sup> thus he writes on 14 March 1906 that "fear and terror are properties of the astral body that have a stimulating effect of the flourishing of certain harmful influences"; and later, he says on 5 May 1914 that one sure way to encourage germs is to "live in a state of being filled solely with a feeling of fear towards the disease". This thinking is certainly consistent with the suspicion that some people have had, that many deaths in the current Covid-19 pandemic are the result of *the fear-mongering political response* to the virus, rather than to the virus itself.

Steiner continues,

"germs are encouraged most intensively when humans take nothing but materialistic attitudes into their sleeping state. There is no better means for encouraging the harmful effects of germs than to go to sleep with only materialistic ideas.... If you can't produce anything else but the fear of the disease that is taking place all around you in an epidemic, and go to sleep with thoughts of fear at night, this creates afterimages in the soul, imaginations that are permeated by fear. And that's a good way to encourage germs". (ibid.)

And a few days later, on 9 May 1914, Steiner said,

"Fear-imaginations are what actually provide nurturing powers for the ahrimanic enemies of the human being.... [I]t is important to be able to take spiritual knowledge and the sensibility that comes from the flowing forces that come as an effect of spiritual knowledge over into the sleep life."

This relates to wider questions about the *psychological* dimension in relation to illness – covered today by the fields of psychosomatic medicine and psychoneuroimmunology. Steiner is all too aware of this, too:

"the psychological factor can also play a pronounced role in infection.... [T]he mere consciousness, the powerful consciousness of the existence of a disease in the astral body can become the cause of the disease itself. *The strong consciousness of an illness... can become the cause of the illness.*" (22 April 1924, my emphasis)

Those government statisticians and medical ‘experts’ compiling figures of ‘deaths caused by Covid-19’, please take careful note.

The issue of sleep also crops up, on 7 April 1920, when Steiner refers to the implication for epidemic diseases of “man’s abnormal relationship to waking and sleeping”. People who sleep for too long, for example, “are predisposed in a completely different way to epidemic diseases”.

The book’s editor ends with some ‘Final thoughts’, highlighting a recurrent theme in these excerpts, that of the need to resist ‘simple mechanistic and materialistic explanations for disease and epidemic outbreaks’, with his aim to “extend scientific understanding beyond the boundaries of the physical world”. Steiner was emphatically not anti-science, Hindes emphasises, but rather, sought ‘a necessary contextualization of scientific facts’. Thus we read (26 January 1912) that “One all too readily imagines that the findings of natural science are repudiated by spiritual science... it is possible to study the causes of illnesses on a purely scientific basis”. Yet over five years later, we find Steiner saying that “The scientific way of thinking is in great danger of sailing right into the ahrimanic-materialistic way of thinking as a consequence of its own consistency, indeed even because of its greatness” (14 October 1917); sentiments not unlike those that would be expressed by philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend some 70 years later.<sup>8</sup> And then a few years later, in a statement of which Feyerabend would have heartily approved: “If only people would consider applying healthy logic [cf. the recent book cited in endnote 2], we wouldn’t have the devastation of healthy thinking that emanates from mainstream science” (24 March 1920).

While he does concede that sometimes an epidemic might not have a prior karmic cause, Steiner seeks to balance out the Germ Theory with a susceptibility approach to illness (Terrain Theory) that broadens out the possible reasons for such susceptibility to illness to include spiritual and karmic explanations. For Steiner, genetics, epigenetics and environmental influences were actually *secondary* causes, and he was more interested in why variations existed in these factors between individuals, favouring a view that encompassed “a complex interaction of a range of spiritual beings in conjunction with individual destiny and a progressive world evolution” (ibid.). And for Steiner this includes cosmological influences – for how could a truly holistic perspective not include such effects? Thus, in what Hindes refers to as a “profound passage” [that was] an aside during a lecture on 20 October 1918, Steiner said that “behind the external-physical disease manifestations we are dealing with the symptoms of cosmological events.... where it is no longer completely foolish [to see] the appearance of certain pathological impulses in the life of the temperaments [to be] related

to such cosmological phenomena as the rhythmically occurring sunspot intervals.”

And on 7 April 1920, Steiner refers to the winter constellation of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn having “a different effect than when the sun’s activity is influenced by a remote position of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. When such a winter occurs..., a strong influence is exerted on... the rhythmic activity taking place between the chest and the head and finds its greatest expression in the activity of breathing.” He continues,

“a rhythm that has already been damaged tends to be damaged further. Then all those people who possess such dispositions and live in those places on the earth where this constellation of heavens has an especially strong effect are then candidates for the so-called influenza and for flu. These conditions have to be present if the particular conditions for something like an outbreak of influenza or flu are to be created”.

If this is anything like right, then one can see the essential irrelevance of a war-mongering mass-vaccination response to such a complex field of influences and effects.

It is painfully obvious to this reviewer that the narrative being peddled by mainstream scientific, political and media sources about the Covid-19 pandemic, and the global vaccination strategy being deployed to counter it, are woefully inadequate; and this fascinating book of Steiner’s relevant insights casts much light on just why this might be so, and what might be needed in order to deepen and fructify the narrow worldview underpinning current events. One thing is clear: an exclusively materialist perspective on illness and health looks extremely limited, impoverished and even just plain wrong when one encounters and reflects open-mindedly on Steiner’s spiritual-scientific views on illness, viral disease and epidemics; and we urgently need an holistic, spiritually informed science to help us move beyond partial, positivistic, patriarchal science, if we are to make full sense of the unfolding Covid conjuncture. And the book reviewed here makes an excellent starting point for that momentous intellectual and spiritual journey.

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## Endnotes

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## Garnet

*Small coal*, fallen miles deep and raised  
In seething restlessness of tectonic shifts,  
Ready-formed among slag and ashes  
Glowing rose red, dark red, ruby red...

Granted pride of place in Noah's ark  
(Says the Talmud): sole source of light  
Across the perils of the Flood. Later:  
Crystal counterpart to the Mystery  
Of Christ's blood: rose of a new dawn  
Touching Earth to etherise, streaming  
To fill *the firmanent* according to Faustus  
In his guilty terror.

Garnet: mineral  
Gatekeeper to the memory of the Blood;  
Touchstone for scrying World Heights  
And Depths, as elemental unrest brims  
To overwhelm a World's fragile bubble  
Of comfort, convenience, self-content  
Raised on slavery: of Nature, the poor:  
Faustus's guilt come of age? Earth's  
Common wealth ransacked without  
Remorse.

Garnet, light our way!  
One more World Flood to transit?  
Precious stone of the Grail; risen life force  
To take to heart: that Self-Offering  
Still the ever-present dawn of humanity's

True unfolding.

David Donaldson