

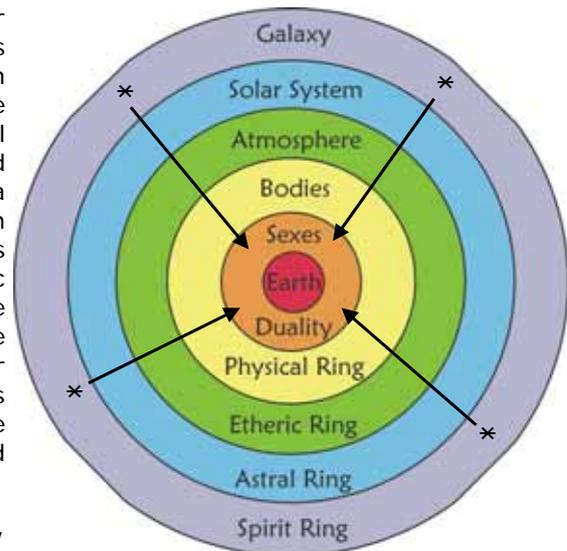
# 'AGRICULTURE' 1938 Reworked—Intro

It is stating the obvious to say that this course of lectures is difficult. It was a lecture series given to specialists in their field, with one of the criteria being an understanding of Dr Steiner's underlying philosophy. There is therefore much that appears to be left unsaid to the new reader. On top of this, the concepts are presented in an uncommon language and in a somewhat scattered manner. I have long felt that if the Agriculture Course, could be presented in an order that more efficiently facilitates its understanding, more of its essential message would be grasped and put to useful applications. The original ordering, was presented as a series of lectures, given over a period of 10 days, and in their reading it is difficult to remember what was said in one lecture about specific details, and what is said on the same topic, a week later. I am not suggesting alteration of the basic text in a dramatic manner or what is said, just that the order in which it is said, can be altered. A few 'joining' statements, (which appear in italics) could also be useful.

Within the course there appears to be two primary stories being told. One is how the energetic activities - of Spirit , Astral, Etheric and Physical — work together to facilitate life forms, and the second is a more detailed story of how these processes are facilitated into manifestation by the elements of Calcium and Silica. Ultimately these two stories are parts of the one whole, multi layered story, however Dr Steiner has not clearly defined their interactions, and so initially it appears useful to separate them. This allows the reader to see what each story is saying, in the details of their individual stories. They can then be put back together, so as to see how they relate to one another. Some prior introduction though may be useful.

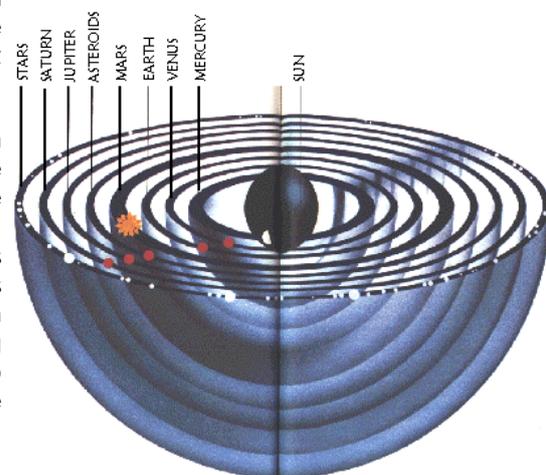
The first story regarding the workings of the spiritual / energetic bodies is worthy of some introduction. ( A long version of this story is available in the Introduction to Biodynamic Chemistry.<http://rimu.geek.nz/garuda/Periodic/BD%20Chemistry%20Bk%20intro.pdf>)

These 'bodies' are not abstract imaginations, or beliefs. Dr Rudolf Steiner (RS) describes them as active expressions of the macrocosmic spheres in which we live. The formative activities of 'spirit' are the manifestation in our sphere, of the very real activities of the stars, found within our Galaxy, and those also beyond it. These stars continually emit a wide spectrum of electromagnetic forces, which continually beam across the galaxy. These forces move through the Suns 'onion like' electro magnetic field, in which the planets manifest. As they move through these ringed fields they activate the planetary spheres and 'take up' some of their energetic nature. In turn these combined forces move through the electro magnetic fields of the Earth, within which our atmosphere manifests, and ultimately onto and into the Earth itself.



Steiner calls the Star forces—Spirit, the planetary forces - Astral, the atmospheric forces - Etheric and the Earth forces— Physical. We have to appreciate that these names come from cultures who did not have the language of electro magnetism.

These four activities, arising from the macrocosm become the basis for all the manifestations of life we find on Earth. In their combination, we have the minerals manifesting just as physical forms, however the plants use the life producing qualities we find in the oxygen of our atmosphere, to lift this physical substance into space. The animal kingdom takes this living matter further, by incorporating the ever moving planetary activities into proteinaceous flesh imbued with sensation, while we humans add the activity of the 'individual' stars, to bring about our independent thinking capacities.



The Solar System Onion

The various kingdoms of nature do not internalise all the activities. This does not mean those activities are not active for that kingdom. Just that they work upon the kingdom directly from outside, onto the internalised bodies.

Thus these four activities are THE main players in the game of manifestation. All the terminology Dr Steiner uses throughout the course such as Cosmic Substance, Bound light ether and so on are all attempts to identify the manifestation of the various bodies interaction with each other. For example 'Bound light ether' can be re stated as internalised astral activity within the etheric body. 'Cosmic Substance' is internalised astral activity within the physical body. Why Dr Steiner did not choose to use a consistent language of the energetic activities is unknown. Whatever the reason we are left with the task of understanding his language. In this regard I have a picture, that provides a glossary of the spiritual activities of the Agriculture course terminology, available at <http://rimu.geek.nz/garuda/Pictures/BDchemsml.pdf> - a shorter version is on the next page.

Dr Steiner has said many things about the energetic bodies interaction, however they are scattered throughout many lectures and books. I would like to present just a few examples to give a sense of how they interact.

Within the Agriculture course there are many references to the way the bodies work with plants and animals, however IMO the images for humans provides the best way of gaining a simple picture of their relationship, as this is the same as they act in the external environment. From there one can then look at the more unusual relationships of plants and animals.

From Lecture 6

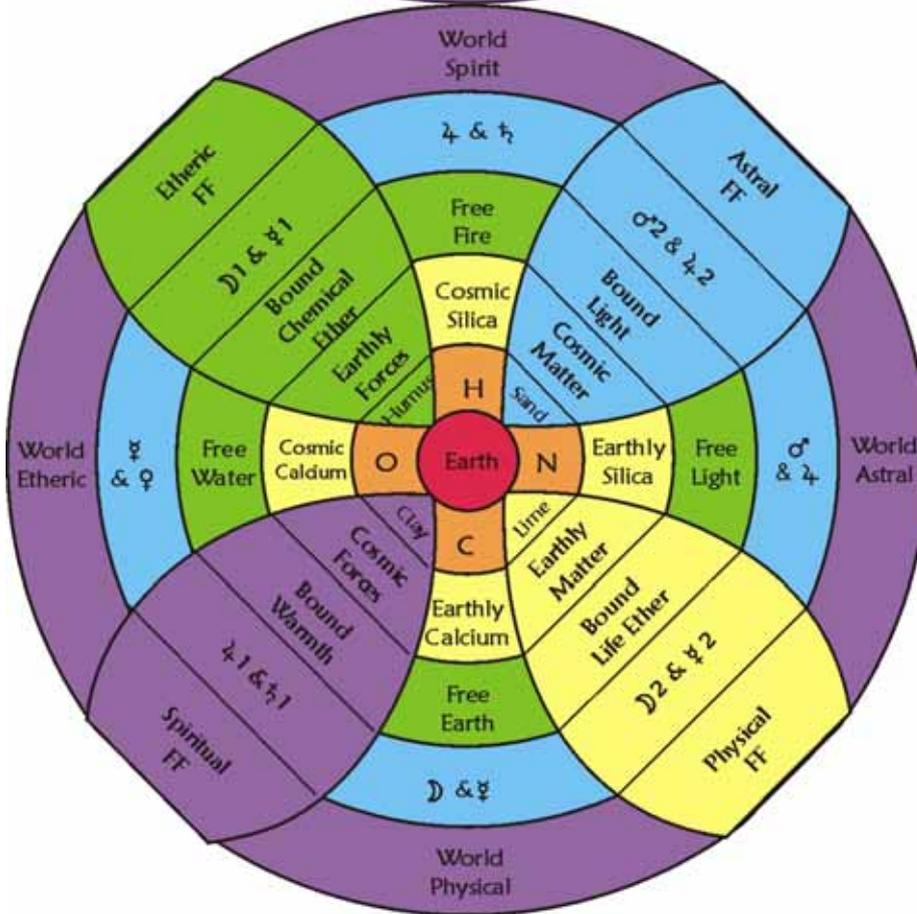
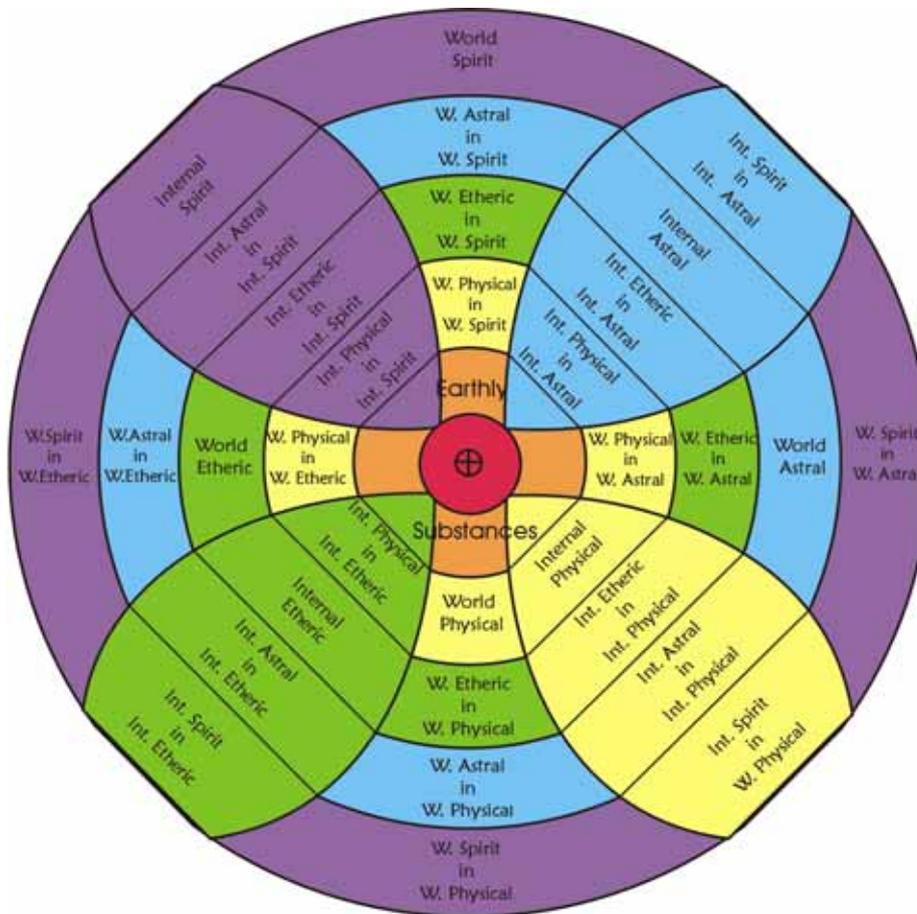
"There remains for us one more subject to consider: the so-called plant diseases. Actually this is not the right word to use. The abnormal processes in plants to which it refers are not "diseases" in the same sense as are those illnesses which afflict animals. When we come later on to discuss the animal kingdom, we shall see this difference more clearly. Above all, there are not processes such as take place in a sick human being. **For actual disease is not possible without the presence of an astral body. In man and animals, the astral body is connected with the physical body through the etheric body and a certain connection is the normal state. Sometimes, however, the connection between the astral body and the physical body (or one of the physical organs) is closer than would normally be the case; so if the etheric body does not form a proper "cushion" between them, the astral intrudes itself too strongly into the physical body. It is from this that most diseases arise.**

Now the plant does not actually possess an astral body of its own. It does not therefore suffer from the specific forms of disease that occur in men and animals. This is the first point. The next point is to ascertain what actually causes the plant to be diseased. "

In lecture two of the **Pastoral Medicine** course given in September 1924 — from the RS archive

"The forces that build the physical organism in the first seven years of human life are the same forces by which we think later. So it is important to consider certain phenomena, not in the customary manner but in a really appropriate way. We will not be regarding them as pathological (although they will lead us into aspects of pathology) but rather will be using them to obtain a view of human life itself."

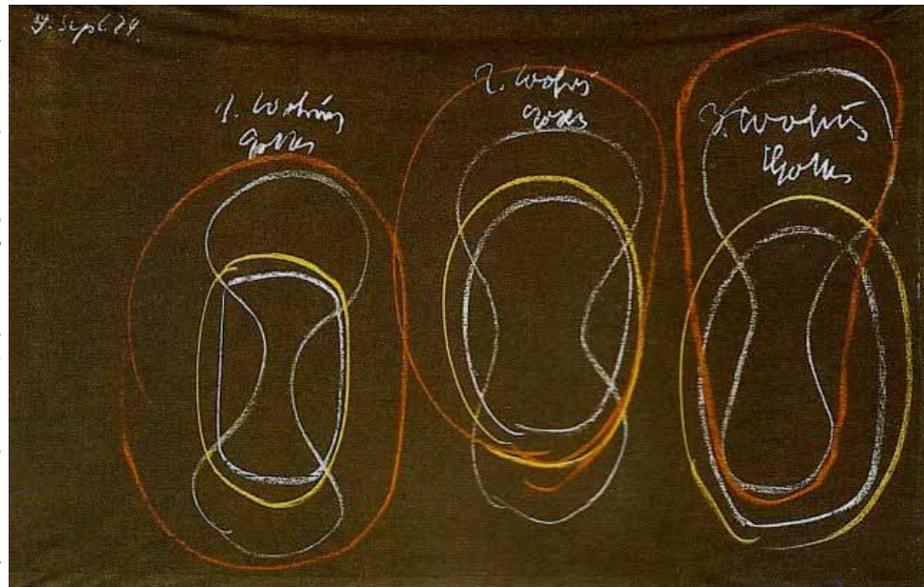
"Let us for a moment review the picture of a human being that Anthroposophy gives us. The human being stands before us in a physical body, which has a long evolution behind it, three preparatory stages before it became an earthly body — as is described in my book *An Outline of Esoteric Science*. [Note 2] This earthly body needs to be understood much more than it is by today's anatomy and physiology. For the human physical body as it is today is a true image of the etheric body, which is in its third stage of development, and of the astral body, which is in its second stage, and even to a certain degree of the ego organization that humans first received on earth, which therefore is in its first stage of development. All of this is stamped like the stamp of a seal upon the physical body — which makes the physical body extraordinarily complicated. Only its purely mineral and physical nature can be understood with the methods of knowledge that are brought to it today. What the etheric body impresses upon it is not to be reached at all by those methods. It has to be observed with the eye of a sculptor so that one obtains pictorial images of cosmic forces, images that can then be recognized again in the form of the entire human being and in the forms of the single organs.



A glossary to  
**R. Steiner's Agriculture Course**  
 Glen Atkinson

Out of the knowledge that Anthroposophy gives us, we can say that the human being stands before us in physical, etheric and astral bodies, and an ego organization. In waking life these four members of the human organization are in close connection. In sleep the physical body and etheric body are together on one side, and the ego organization and astral body on the other side. With knowledge of this fact we are then able to say that the greatest variety of irregularities can appear in the connection of ego organization and astral body with etheric body and physical body. For instance, we can have: physical body, etheric body, astral body, ego organization. (Plate I, 1) Then, in the waking state, the so-called normal relation prevails among these four members of the human organization.

But it can also happen that the physical body and etheric body are in some kind of normal connection and that the astral body sits within them comparatively normally, but that the ego organization is somehow not properly sitting within the astral body. (Plate I, 2) Then we have an irregularity that in the first place confronts us in the waking condition. Such people are unable to come with their ego organization properly into their astral body; therefore their feeling life is very much



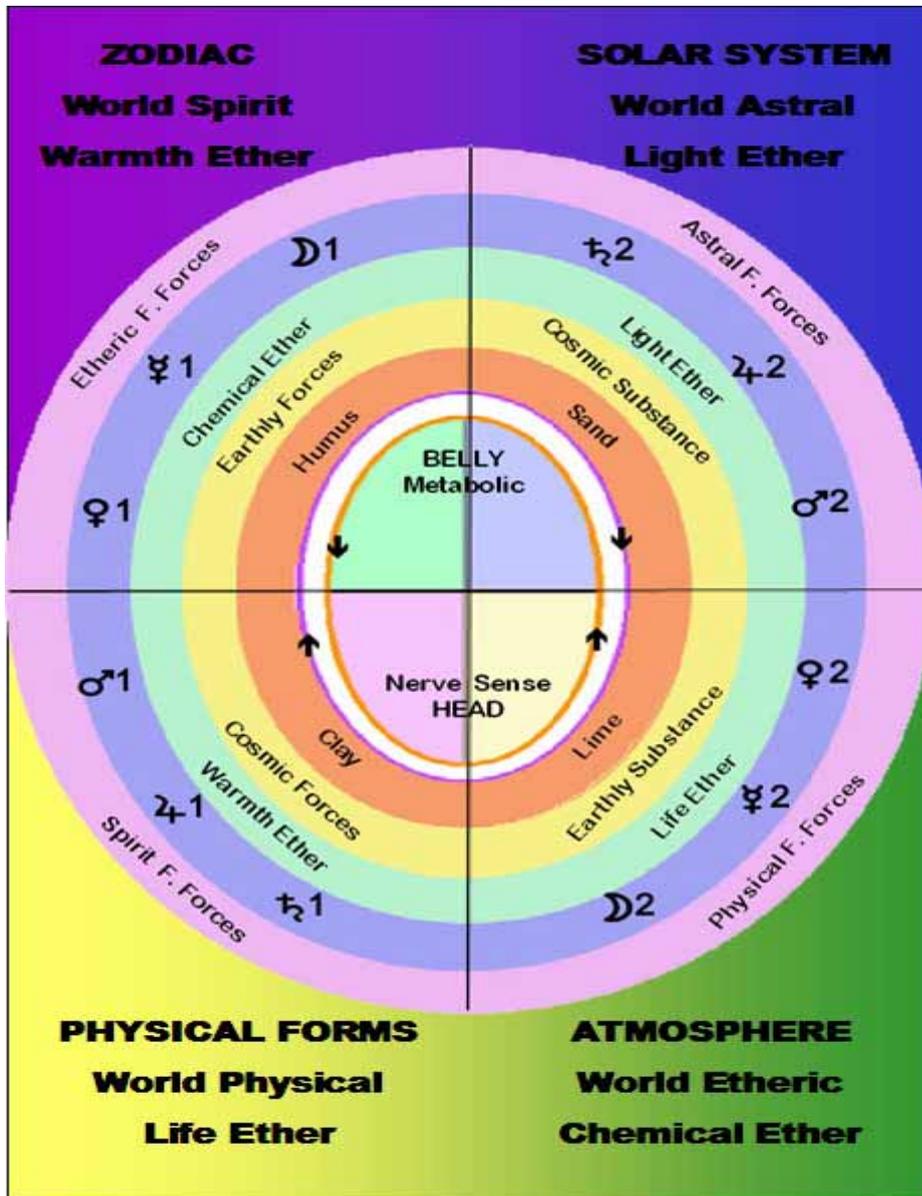
disturbed. They can even form quite lively thoughts. For thoughts depend, in the main, upon a normal connection of the astral body with the other bodies. But whether the sense impressions will be grasped appropriately by the thoughts depends upon whether the ego organization is united with the other parts in a normal fashion. If not, the sense impressions become dim. And in the same measure that the sense impressions fade, the thoughts become livelier. Sense impressions can appear almost ghostly, not clear as we normally have them. The soul-life of such people is flowing away; their sense impressions have something misty about them, they seem to be continually vanishing. At the same time their thoughts have a lively quality and tend to become more intense, more colored, almost as if they were sense impressions themselves.

When such people sleep, their ego organization is not properly within the astral body, so that now they have extraordinarily strong experiences, in fine detail, of the external world around them. They have experiences, with their ego and astral body both outside their physical and etheric bodies, of that part of the world in which they live — for instance, the finer details of the plants or an orchard around their house. Not what they see during the day, but the delicate flavor of the apples, and so forth. That is really what they experience. And in addition, pale thoughts that are after-effects in the astral body from their waking life.

You see, it is difficult if you have such a person before you. And you may encounter such people in all variations in the most manifold circumstances of life. You may meet them in your vocation as physician or as priest — or the whole congregation may encounter them. You can find them in endless variety, for instance, in a town. Today the physician who finds such a person in an early stage of life makes the diagnosis: psychopathological impairment. To modern physicians that person is a psychopathological impairment case who is at the borderline between health and illness; whose nervous system, for instance, can be considered to be on a pathological level. Priests, if they are well-schooled (let us say a Benedictine or Jesuit or Barnabite or the like; ordinary parish priests are sometimes not so well-schooled), will know from their esoteric background that the things such a person tells them can, if properly interpreted, give genuine revelations from the spiritual world, just as one can have from a really insane person. But the insane person is not able to interpret them; only someone who comprehends the whole situation can do so. Thus you can encounter such a person if you are a physician, and we will see how to regard this person medically from an anthroposophical point of view. Thus you can also encounter such a person if you are a priest — and even the entire congregation can have such an encounter.



To properly comprehend the Agriculture course we must appreciate the context in which it takes place. Firstly there is an external environment existing of activities arising from the Galaxy, the planets , the atmosphere and the Earth itself. Then we have the internal manifestation of these activities within the life forms . I have attempted to illustrate this in the following diagram, which is primarily for the soil and plant. The rings and more so the parts of the rings, are the internal manifestations of the energetic bodies. The parts of the rings manifest as a result of the energetic bodies interacting with each other. Cosmic Substance is manifest when the Astral activity of the planets become active within the physical body of a being.



We must continually consider both the internal and external activities when approaching what is said in the course. Dr Steiner does not give clear indications of when he changes from one to the other, however he does change the words he is using. It is helpful to remember the energetic activities are THE primary activities, AT ALL TIMES, and that the names used have a meaning related to their interaction or specific place of action. It is a good skill to keep translating the words RS uses back to the actual energetic interaction involved.

Glen Atkinson

7 January 2010