



Waldorf Journal Project #3
June 2004
AWSNA

Life's Anxieties – Life's Opportunities

Anxiety and Its Importance to Inner Development

Two Essays

by

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Printed with support from the Waldorf Curriculum Fund

Published by:

AWSNA Publications
The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America
3911 Bannister Road
Fair Oaks, CA 95628

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Title: *Life's Anxieties – Life's Opportunities*
Anxiety and Its Importance to Inner Development

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Translator: Nina Kuettel

Editor: David Mitchell

Proofreader: Ann Erwin

German title: *Lebensängst – Lebenschancen*

Gratitude expressed to Peter Lang, Internationale Vereinigung der Waldorfkindergärten e.V., Stuttgart, and to Verein für erweiteres Heilwesen e.V., Bad Liebenzell for permissions granted to translate the essays.

Foreword

Rudolf Steiner characterized what the results of the materialistic world view of the nineteenth century would be if, during the course of the twentieth century, this world view was not redeemed by a conscious, spiritual impulse. In a lecture series titled *Becoming Human, World Soul, and World Spirit*, he foretold that if a turning-toward the spiritual did not take place, there would be a “war of all against all” in the future. Steiner stated that during the time when materialistic intellectualism would bring imaginative life to its “highest level,” also raging within humankind’s subconscious would be that which “enslaved people in their instincts.”¹

How can knowledge and insight of spiritual connections be gained? In a lecture given at Easter time on March 27, 1921, Steiner explained that this path can only be found through pain and suffering. With this foundation it is easy to understand that the present human situation is, in many ways, fear-provoking.

Only a spiritual world view in opposition to materialism can free us from the present condition. Only a world view that embraces the reality of the spiritual can counterbalance the destructive effects of a materialistic world view. There must be a turnaround that works on all of us since we are all permeated by materialistic beliefs.

The following article is a combination of two lectures were given by Felicitas Vogt and Pietro Archiati in the spring of 1996 at the delegate’s conference for the Anthroposophical Medical Society. The theme of these essays is the justification and the task of fear in our time.

—*Felicitas Vogt*

ESSAY 1

Living Fearlessly with Anxiety: The Therapeutic Mission of Fear in Human Development

by

Pietro Archiati

If we observe the behavior of a small child and ask the questions: Does the child have *angst* about one thing or another? Is he afraid that today, as an exception, he will not get any nourishment or will not be able to fall asleep? Is the child perhaps afraid of losing his parents or of becoming ill? From our own life experience we would, of course, know that all of these questions are superfluous. The small child has no anxiety because he can not yet have fear; he is not yet capable of angst. Something basic to being a child is that the capacity to have anxiety is not yet present. Our thoughts flow out of the conclusion that only adults are capable of angst.

Let us look back at development thousands of years ago around the fifth or sixth millennium before Christ. If we practice this possibility of soul metamorphosis and transplant ourselves into the spiritual situation of people living at that time, we find something similar to the small child. To our amazement, in the ancient Indian or Persian cultures if one spoke of angst, they would not know what was meant. They did not know anxiety.

Angst came about during human development just as it develops during the course of a human life. It is dependent upon development. Children experience natural fear but this is different from existential anxiety. Existential anxiety and fear have to do with consciousness and can therefore not be present in a small child because that which we call consciousness, the ability to be conscious of one's own self, is not yet present in a small child. That is why the entire phenomenon of angst and fear that so very much preoccupies humankind today, and will continue to do so, can be appropriately considered only from the perspective of development.

Taking Development Seriously

Here, it should be pointed out that in the Spiritual Science of Rudolf Steiner, the methodically considered perspective of development is the most important. All phenomena can be understood only if we embed them within the course of development. We must ask what it means that anxiety is a

developmental, modern phenomena of our times, what it means to live in a time when fear and anxiety have become illnesses.

As little as one thousand years ago it would have been impossible to bring up angst as a theme. We would have searched fruitlessly for such a phenomenon. For instance, if we opened up a lexicon used during Goethe's time, we would find, surprisingly, that the word "angst" was hardly used at that time in the German language; there are only the words "*angst sein*" (to be fearful), but under "angst" there is nothing. The word "*Sorge*" is found in German which means "care, trouble, or sorrow. In *Faust*, it is the impulse of *Sorge* which makes him go blind; and Faust overcomes his trouble through the knowledge that he is blind in the physical world but he will see in the spiritual world. Goethe intuited something very profound: People must have angst because they have become blind to the extrasensory, the spiritual, and they no longer know by what powers and forces they are being supported. They have become boxed into the physical-material. Existential anxiety comes about by "seeing" only the material because one no longer knows anything about the essence of the spiritual world. One is no longer conscious of it and that it is full of positive forces and carries us daily.

If we very consciously consider anxiety by means of the perspective of development we find in the Spiritual Science of Rudolf Steiner an important statement that is also the central declaration about the meaning of development. Anxiety has arisen; it had to arise and it definitely belongs to development because anxiety goes hand in hand with the narrowing of consciousness. In order to become an individual each one of us must separate ourselves from the whole. A small child does not have existential anxiety because it "goes with the flow" and does not yet have the capability to become separate, to go into isolation and therefore into anxiety, to feel abandoned by everyone else. Anxiety has to do with the fact that none of us may be identified with the whole any longer. Because of the fall of man—in this case a fall into separateness; i.e. not a fall in the moral sense, but a primal necessity of development—everyone stands alone. This "being alone" is the source of existential anxiety.

Narrowness within the "I" Creates Anxiety

Anxiety comes from constriction. It comes about when people have so constricted themselves that they stand completely alone and no longer intrinsically experience communion with the whole. They are fearful of being alone, of being abandoned. Today, it is not only the fact that people who share the burden are leaving. There is a double burden. Anxiety does not come only from being alone, not only from fear of being without another, but also from being against another.

This splitting, or atomizing, of humankind necessarily bears a certain amount of anxiety with it through the fact that I want to assert myself as an

independent person compared to all the others. I can not experience my independence without asserting myself against all the factors that want to “swallow” me. This need for self-assertion against all that which wants to take me in creates a state of conflict with others.

This conflict situation is the last radicalization of anxiety: It is not enough that I have lost companionship with all the other people, but, on top of that, I have the anxiety that I will not be able to assert myself against everyone else and will have them against me because they also are full of anxiety. That is why I am always trying to fight them or control them. I must experience others in this way since they are also trying to repel me and assert themselves.

That which we experience internally is outwardly expressed in business, in the area of competition, for example, an unmerciful conflict. If we were to generalize and deepen this phenomenon, we can see within it an absolute, basic feature of the developmental necessity of the individualization of every person. The fear is two-fold that each person will be left standing alone, hemmed-in, in their isolated being. By understanding anxiety as a polarity, and, we can once again survey the task of freedom: we are shown that in the course of development two one-sided aspects appeared in succession that are still apparent today.

Expulsion from Anxiety-free Paradise

The initial one-sided aspect was Paradise: a beautiful image that in reality symbolizes a stage of development. There was communion in Paradise, without self-consciousness, without individualization. Now, in a middle stage of development, we experience the second one-sided aspect: humankind atomized through the loss of the original oneness.

The great myths speak of this atomization of humans: the image of the fall of man in Genesis, the myths of Osiris or Dionysus whose bodies were split. Humankind, unified in the beginning, is symbolized with these images. We had to split apart in order for the individual “I” to come about. An individual’s dignity arises when one is able to experience oneself as an independent individuality. This individualizing and splitting through extensive loss of being one with another, communion, we clarify with the term “egoism.”

Steiner warned us many times against proscribing egoism because we must accept it as an impulse that is necessary to development just like angst. The task of the future, the task of free consciousness will be to reconcile these two one-sided aspects that we have successively experienced: communion without individuality and present individualization through the loss of communion.

Thus, the whole task of the future consists of weaving together the two primal dimensions of humanity: the state of being for one another, that is, intertwined with another, and independence of every individual. This is the concept of the organism: Human beings are, in actual fact, a single spiritual organism. This image has always been used in holy writings and scriptures to represent humanity’s task for the future. In a physical organism (let us

think specifically of the human body), these two primal dimensions have been perfectly reconciled to one another. An organism is ruled by perfect unity; otherwise it would be ill or dead. It is a unified whole in which all the members are simultaneously intertwined and individually independent. Thus, the heart has a different task than the lungs or liver; otherwise it would not be an organism. This is an image of the future task of all of humanity: individuals merging together again and building up the spiritual body of Christ.

It is our further task that this building-up of the unified spiritual body of Christ in which humanity will again become a unified entity occurs in such a way that the individuality, the uniqueness of each person, is not lost. Otherwise, we would again have oneness without diversity, i.e. monotony. Oneness within diversity, individuality within the contributions and the being of every member, is what creates the beauty of the organism. If this is the whole task of the future, that one person is perfected thanks to another person so that communion becomes perfect because every individual contributes something new to it and every individuality perfects itself through it, that they integrate themselves into the whole and obtain their identity from the whole, then communion and individuality will no longer be experienced as polar opposites but rather much more as a reciprocal deepening. Communion deepens the individuality of every person and, conversely, individuality enriches communion and makes it ever truer.

Anxiety about Having Something or Not Having Something

If this is the two-fold task of humanity, then angst will become more strongly radicalized in the future because evil will also radicalize itself and will two-fold as well: On the one hand, fear that individualism will cause a loss of connection, and on the other hand fear of becoming totally merged into the community, i.e. being absorbed and losing one's own individuality, one's own uniqueness.

If we view angst as such a polarity between individuality and community, then individuality and communion are, on one side, the two most valuable and comprehensive assets of humanity and, on the other side, the loss which human beings must fear the most.

We can understand anxiety better if we stay away from moralization and place it in context with the largest accomplishments of development. Angst is fear of missing these accomplishments. In other words, we begin to understand anxiety from the side the two-fold possibility of missing the mark, so to speak. Thus, if we understand anxiety from this aspect, we stop moralizing because we see a two-fold task of development in a positive light; namely, to reach perfect individuality and complete communion. Anxiety does not consist of something evil that is real because there is no real evil; if it were real, that would be good.

In summary we can say: Either a person has anxiety about losing his or her individuality in some way or anxiety about missing out on community, being for and with each other.

Aspects of individuality such as angst and fear of missing something are just as endless as aspects of communion. However, precisely because these phenomena have proven to be so complex, it makes sense, as a foundation, to connect this entire complexity to the primordial polarity. That allows us a methodical thought orientation so that we can ask ourselves again and again: Of what am I afraid? Am I afraid of losing my own, original, individuality or of not being able to realize it? Or, am I perhaps afraid of being absorbed into the community which may prevent me from realizing my own self?

As I have in the example of an organism we really only lose both together and can only realize both together. Either both dimensions are present or both are lost.

Do not Be Afraid of Fear!

The fundamental step toward overcoming fear and anxiety is accepting fear and anxiety as necessary to development. At the beginning of this article I stated that we would be as children if it were not for fear. Without angst there would be neither fear of failure, freedom without failure is no freedom, individually or in the community. Individuals must have anxiety, in the healthy, positive sense, in order to remain alert and vigilant; they know that individuality and communion do not find a balance without each the other.

People must learn this and practice it daily because they will not be able to do it at the drop of a hat once they accept it. Steiner outlined the ways in which a person should handle themselves in regard to this theme in the six basic training exercises known as the “auxiliary exercises.”

There is, for example, his lecture about equanimity. We could take equanimity as a counter to anxiety, anxiety as a deficiency of equanimity and equanimity as the overcoming of anxiety. However, Rudolf Steiner stressed that a person who exhibits calm and composure at the outset is an indifferent person but not a person of equanimity. Equanimity is always overcoming “non-equanimity.” In other words, it is all right if anxiety crops up again and again. Our task is to overcome it again and again so that equanimity can be achieved. Only achieved equanimity is true equanimity.

This is the first way in which we can accept anxiety as a therapeutic impulse for the development of humanity, anxiety as having a central and continuous function in working on ourselves. If a person never experiences anxiety, then he or she has nothing to work on in themselves. This would not be for the best but for the worst because he or she could imagine that he or she had to work only on others! Because circumstances in the world and life will always provide us with an ample supply of anxieties, each one of us

has enough to work on with ourselves. This task of working on oneself is most important.

Anxiety and Egoism are Necessary for Development

We must consider egoism and anxiety in a similar way. It would be a grave mistake to think that it would be better not to have egoism, that it is too bad egoism has come about in the course of development. Egoism also gives us the opportunity to work on ourselves: Egoism exists to be transformed.

In order to overcome egoism it is necessary to bring it to the forefront. How can one overcome what one does not have? (This goes for anxiety as well.) The most important requirement for enjoying the experience of overcoming anxiety is to have anxiety again and again. It is completely all right if angst appears over and over again. Someone who becomes angry about his or her anxiety is basically a lazy person who does not want to have anything to do.

The good in life does not come about through an absence of anxiety, but rather that I daily, joyfully, work on my anxiety and find the reasons for it and the strength to overcome it, and to find a connection to that which is in me that can overcome my anxieties anew. Forbidding anxiety is just as much an act of moralizing as forbidding egoism. In that case, one does not want to see the absolutely positive aspect—that this narrowness, the anxiety that comes from it, where each one is alone and separated from all others, occurred for a reason—to present humanity with the constant positive task of working on their anxieties from new perspectives, so that life's anxieties can be overcome.

Materialism as a Deeper Source of Anxiety

I would like to go a step further and speak about another over-all source of anxiety from another perspective: materialism. Why is materialism an over-all cause of anxiety? As has already been mentioned, materialism consists in the fact that human beings live, in their thinking, feeling, and willing, as if the spiritual, the supernatural, did not exist. Perhaps someone knows theoretically that he has a guardian angel, for example, or perhaps he even denies it. Materialism can be a way of life as well as a scientific theory. Theoretical materialism reached its highpoint in the nineteenth century and practical materialism became a marked feature of the twentieth century in which people lived as though the spiritual did not exist. People no longer even try to find a theoretical justification for their assertions. What is the result of such a denial or disavowal of the spiritual? We would have nothing to fear. Let me put it this way: Since we are getting to know the material world better scientifically and are better able to master it technically, we

have nothing to fear from the assumption that the spiritual does not exist because we are managing the physical world better and better all the time.

It may become clear (do not take this as philosophical proof, it is more of a substantiation from practical life) that anxiety is rooted in the fact that we ignore an entire world that does exist, that we do not take this world into consideration. The narrowness within humanity, the atomization, is due to the fact that human beings have had to lose every direct connection with the spiritual. If we had not lost this direct connection we could not experience ourselves as single individualities separate from all others. That means individualization is only possible through materialism. The dry-spell of materialism is there to be overcome in the course of development. Ironically, this is exactly what we ignore through our materialism!

The True “I” Has no Fear

We experience, for example, only the lower “I” and ignore our higher “I.” Since today everyone ignores their higher “I,” they ignore the fact that everything they encounter (which we call karma or destiny), whether good or bad fortune, an illness, or a happy meeting, is chosen, planned, and yearned-for. Everything that happens to me is longed-for by my higher “I” with a view to the positive that can grow from it, and only the positive! My higher “I,” from which I am separated in my normal consciousness, carries within it an indestructible, complete trust in karma because it knows that it is supported by karma. Even while immersed in the pain of an accident, the higher “I” knows why even this was desired with joy and gratitude, knowing full well that this accident could make possible certain strides in development which would have been impossible if things had been easier.

The higher “I” lives in a world of positive forces: karma. Karma is purely positive. The lower “I” experiences anxiety because it perceives this positive as a negative because it shrinks from the task of overcoming oneself. Because materialistic people of today are no longer consciously connected with their higher “I,” this trustworthy and supportive karma, they no longer consider how all people are interwoven together nor do they know of the way in which all people’s higher egos, in their pure substance, really only want to mutually assist one another.

Steiner said that the true “I” of every person is a part of the Christ Being, and this higher ego, the will of the higher ego, is pure goodness, pure love. The higher “I” can not will anything other than good and loving things for itself and for others. In the same measure that a person submits himself to his destiny in which karma is active, in that measure he will overcome the illusion of being alone and immerse himself into the forces that weave us together and support all of us.

Material Separates – Spirit Unifies

The fundamental law of material is exclusion. The fundamental law of spirit is inclusion. Therefore we must have angst in the material world because things there are mutually exclusive: What I have you can not have at the same time, what I drink now you can not drink at the same time, where I am physically occupying space you can not occupy that space at the same time. The basic law of material is exclusion and that instills in us anxiety. Inclusion, as the primal law of spirit, awakens in us trust and allows us to experience togetherness with others. Another person can also learn and understand what I learn and understand, maybe even better than myself. A work of art that I enjoy can be enjoyed at the same time by another. When we gather knowledge together, my progress does not exclude the progress of another, but rather has the effect of mutual stimulation in the spiritual aspect.

Actually, we can understand the entire angst phenomena when we look at it as a mental mirroring of the spiritual state of materialism. Materialism is the primary spiritual phenomenon of our time, and anxiety is the primary soul phenomenon of our time. An example of the physical mirroring of materialism in our time is the AIDS phenomena in which the so-called material cause, whether in the form of microbes, viruses, or bacteria, is difficult to detect and also controversial. Basically, it is a complete breakdown of the physical, just as anxiety is a complete breakdown of soul forces. And materialism completely eclipses the human spirit. Materialism has to do with global, not limited, phenomena, as perceived mentally in the form of anxiety and physically in the form of AIDS, which are related to some physical organ or some partial occurrence. Positive can come about if one daily overcomes angst as well as materialism just as physical breakdown can be halted by rebuilding with the help of soul and spirit forces.

Overcoming anxiety the first time always requires a firm grasp of the meaning of the situation. Anxiety has its roots in a lack of meaning. For this reason I have described angst as a phenomenon of consciousness. A child with an undeveloped consciousness can have no anxiety. Anxiety always proves itself to be some aspect of a lack of meaning.

Two-Fold Initiation: Mysticism and Ecstasy

Steiner depicted that, especially before Christ, there were two kinds of initiation. Within the Northern folk groups such as the Persians or the Germanic people, we find an initiation into the macro cosmos, and within the Southern folk groups such as the Indians or the Egyptians, we find an initiation into the micro cosmos. The Christ mystery, Christianity, held the task of bringing this two-fold initiation back into a synthesis. In Greece we also see both together; the Greek cultural epoch fell within the time of the Mystery at Golgotha. The Dionysius initiation had more to do with the microcosmic human and the Apollo initiation the macrocosmic. Initiation

into the micro cosmos was called mysticism and the other initiation was called ecstasy, the ecstatic going-out into the macro cosmos.

In light of the two-fold quality of initiation, we can perhaps understand the origins of anxiety in a deeper way. What do people find when they go deeply inside themselves? They find in their internal selves all the impulses of egoism. This place of egoism, the evil in humans that exists in everyone, was identified by Steiner as malice, betrayal, and murder.

Humans are denied access to their internal selves initially because they would perish from shame and horror if they were actually confronted with what forces must come about internally in order to separate themselves from all other beings, in order to stand before the entire world as an independent individual. Every person, no matter whether he realizes it or not, unconditionally carries within himself the impulse for malice, that is, the negative aspect of thinking; being against another in thinking. In his feeling nature, his heart, he carries the forces of betrayal, that is, hate. And the impulse for murder, which is opposing another in the will, must be carried by every person because the only way we can contain ourselves within ourselves, is to have “murdered” every other being within us.

Fear of Oneself (Micro Cosmos)

This is a reality, a necessity for development. Let us assume that the ego (“I”) is a point at the beginning of development. All the beings in the world have held sway over this ego; this was the original paradise. In order to become ego-like, human beings (all of us carry these will impulses in our being) had to choose and take part in the denying of all other beings within themselves. Acknowledgement of this is a task of consciousness. Every person carries within themselves the tendency to kill another which is initially, justified. It becomes excessive when one physically kills another. Not only may you not work in me without my permission, but also I want to cut you down!

The mystery of the Apostle *Peter* presents us with the image of primal malice; denial of association with other people. We have the *Judas* mystery as a primal image of betrayal. He sought to turn over others through traitorous action. And, as a primal image of murder, we have the mystery of *Cain* who not only murdered the other in his own being but also in physical reality. Steiner stressed how astute Shakespeare was in his assertion that a person who can not appreciate and enjoy music is a person who is capable of malice, betrayal, and murder. The impulse for malice is overcome through the melody, the telling of the truth. The impulse for betrayal is overcome through the harmony, the togetherness of the tones. The impulse for murder is overcome through rhythm. This parallel also helps to illustrate Steiner’s considerations in regard to the task of art.

If we are courageous enough to admit that we not only carry all this within us, but that we must do so as a result of our development up to this day, then we can begin to not only better understand anxiety, but also overcome it.

Fear of “The Greater World” (Macro Cosmos)

What happened to the Northern people who were initiated into the macro cosmos? There were twelve initiators who helped the initiates because through this form of initiation another primal form of anxiety came about. As the individual began to penetrate into the endlessly complex macro cosmos, he would lose himself, feel faint, fear that he would melt into nothingness. Just as the Southern people’s task was to overcome egoism through sympathy and love, overcoming the fear of losing oneself in the vast expanses of the cosmos consisted of exercises in versatility and all-roundedness. The human being wants to imitate the Sun which has not just one position, but rather goes through all twelve signs of the zodiac. It is the primal image of the “I” part of human beings: Creative freedom is experienced because the “I” is able to experience twelve viewpoints of one phenomenon.

Each phenomenon can be viewed from at least twelve characteristic positions. Add to that a seven-fold aspect of soul experiences. Steiner explained this mystery of the twelve-fold, seven-fold, and three-fold, or single-fold, as the case may be, in a booklet titled *Human and Cosmic Thought*. In ancient times initiators had to be present to prevent a person from losing himself. The initiator had to look at things one time from the viewpoint of Aries, one time from the viewpoint of Sagittarius, and so forth. In today’s humanity, the task of practicing all-rounded versatility out of our own forces has grown so that we can overcome anxiety in light of the complexity of reality.

The original form of anxiety is the fear of egoism, of mine and of others, the fact that I carry the impulse within myself to kill another and vice versa. The second form of anxiety is the fear of the complexity of reality, the fear of the macro cosmos. One can master this fear only by daily practicing all-rounded versatility. To pursue this mastery, humanity was given spiritual science.

Anxiety will ever lesson just because one knows that matters can always be looked at from totally new viewpoints. But one also knows that one has the power; therein exists the ego-force, the Sun-force that visits all twelve signs of the zodiac, i.e. the force to look at things from ever new aspects. Through this one overcomes angst: I can understand it like this. Or, if it is presented another way, I can understand it in another way. I am not really at all inflexible and one-sided. Why should a person be immovable when he has an “I” (ego) and is capable of thinking? One must only practice and within the practice of thinking lies the overcoming of angst. Anxiety comes about when thinking is not exercised. In that case, one will be fearful of not

understanding things. People of today are not aware enough of how much anxiety comes about because things are not penetrated enough by thought. What I do not understand must make me afraid and what I do understand relieves anxiety in me because I know how to proceed.

The Events of the Temptation and on Mount Olive

We find this two-fold aspect of anxiety, losing oneself in the cosmos and being confronted with the threat of egoism, the murderous aspect in one's own being, in the Gospels, in the primal phenomenon of humanity, the Christ event. In his second lecture of a series titled *From Jesus to Christ*, Steiner elaborated on this two-fold aspect, the two pillars of the three-year sojourn of Christ on Earth: the temptation at the beginning by delving into the inner nature of humankind and the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane on Mount Olive before rising again into the macro cosmos. The temptation in the desert right after the baptism in the Jordan represents the entire experience of becoming connected with the physical, the entire experience of becoming closed into the micro cosmos. By penetrating into the three-fold bodily nature Christ is initiated into the micro cosmos. Without this he would never have been able to experience what it means to be closed into this refuge of egoism, or "the hearth of evil" as Steiner called it, to experience it as "separateness." This is the whole experience of Christ, of his becoming human, through the temptation, initiated into the human micro cosmos. The end of the three years on earth had to do with leaving the body through death, going out again into the macro cosmos, not only as the Christ but also as a man. His becoming a human being had to do with the fact that he wanted to experience death in the same way as humans. How does one experience death? Death is a flowing out into the macro cosmos. Human beings experience death in conjunction with fear, the fear of losing one's self. And this mystery of angst, losing one's self through flowing out into the macro cosmos, is represented by the scenes in the Garden of Gethsemane and on Mount Olive.

In the ancient initiation mysteries there were two formulations for this double aspect of a primal experience. One said either: "The world is losing me" (the impulse of egoism), or one said: "I am losing myself in the world." Either humankind is losing me, I will encapsulate myself in my egoism and do nothing for anyone else, or I will become aggressive, I want to flow out, impose my being upon others, and break myself down in the process, and lose myself in the world.

Fear of the Depressive "Thief" and the Aggressive "Robber"

These two terms were summarized by Christ in a sentence found in the Gospel of John: "All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers. . . ." (John 10:8). This is a sentence that through ordinary theology we can understand only with difficulty. Christ is saying: Before the "I" force of the middle way, the mediation between extremes, has come about, everywhere

where the force of the ego is missing. A human being is either a thief (the world is losing me) or a robber (I am losing myself in the world). The thief steals away, the world loses him, while the robber hammers through and will reach his goal by force, but thereby breaks down his own self and in this way is smashed by interacting with the cosmos. Where the power of the “I,” the power of balance, is missing, a human being is either a luciferic thief or an ahrimanic robber.

Finally, one can think about the two basic disguises of angst. Anxiety disguises itself on the one hand with depression and on the other hand with aggression. Or one can describe the two basic phenomena of depression and aggression as disguised anxiety even though there are, of course, endless aspects and paths of consideration; at least twelve, as I have indicated above.

What is depression? Fear of abandonment. What is aggression? Fear of being swallowed-up. One determines the other. Individuals who have completely encapsulated themselves experience depression and those who wish to impress their being upon others experience aggression. Aggression and depression stand in polar opposition, and they evoke each other. A depressed person is potentially aggressive and an aggressive person is potentially depressed. Still, no one wishes to remain in one-sidedness. They swing again and again from one side to the other. In depression I experience the egoism of others. In aggression the others experience my egoism. This is the see-saw of life, and the art of life is finding the balance, to overcome anxiety, depression and aggression through free flexibility. No human being can exist free of depression and aggression. There is no such thing. What does exist (and this is the task) is finding the balance again. As the pendulum swings, so both sides will become ever less extreme.

The Times Are Becoming Apocalyptically Close and People Fearful

Chapter 1, verse 3 in the Revelation of John begins: “The time is close,” ηο γαρ καιρος ενγυς. The German words “Enge” (closeness) and “angst” share the same root in the Greek word “ενγυς.” So the Revelation of John is saying that things are getting serious and that we may have angst because the time is “close.” The common translation of this verse is: “The time is near,” which does not make much sense. What does this mean, the time is close? Time is never close for a child. Time is experienced by a child as a progressive continuum in which the child is embedded. Time becomes close only for a being who has consciousness of the one-time opportunity for development; a being who knows when these possibilities for development have elapsed which exist only at a certain hour of one day, or in a certain year because then the world constellation is different and he might have missed this moment of possibility. The closeness of time is part of the mystery of freedom in which human beings, in accordance with their consciousness, comprehend that freedom is only possible where there is always the possibility

of missing something. And that is anxiety as the mystery of the time: Human beings must know that if the constellation of events, the constellation of world factors always returned, nothing could ever be missed because everything would be retrievable. That would mean, however, that we had no freedom.

For this reason Nietzsche held the view of eternal repetition of the same things for only a few months and then no more. He said to himself: if the same things reappear over and over, then there can be no progression to “Übermensch” (superman). Therefore, he did not speak further of the eternal reappearance of the same things. Rather, every moment is unique: “ἡο καιροσ ενγυσ.” The world constellation, the developmental factors, are, in this moment, able to offer me these specific possibilities for development. If I do not grab hold of them, it is too late because the developmental factors will never be like this again, allowing me to achieve exactly this.

Indefinable Angst and Incomprehensible Happiness

The closeness of time belongs to the mystery of freedom where people must grasp their momentary opportunities for development with spiritual presence and alertness or lose those opportunities forever. With endless complexity, but in each case one-time constellation of world factors, the hierarchies offer us this anxiety about the possibility of missing something as a healthy opportunity for development. The only way to overcome anxiety is for people to develop so much wakeful vigilance that they grasp their particular task and fulfill it. In this way they also overcome anxiety. However, this does not happen automatically. The healthy aspect of anxiety is that it makes us mentally aware of the unique tasks of the spirit.

The opposite of alertness in the spiritual-present of the moment is anxiety that is totally undefined, a widespread phenomenon today. It is the exact opposite of being focussed in the moment.

Within the domain of undefined angst, many people feel anxiety without being able to clearly say of what they are afraid. It is the emotional mirroring of what Steiner explained in the thirteenth chapter of his book *The Philosophy of Freedom* as modern human being's hunt for indefinable “happiness.” People want to be happy. However, someone who wants to be happy, in reality, wants nothing specific. And because, in his spirit, he does not want anything specific, within his soul there grows an undefined anxiety which seems to come from nothing.

Someone can overcome this life addiction, the search for happiness, if he understands that real happiness is a by-product which will be imparted to him when he stops wanting to be happy. Otherwise, he will never be happy. If I take joy in the task that is now concretely before me, my opportunity for self-realization, and if I can achieve so much love for the deed that it becomes

satisfying in and of itself, then the indefinable anxiety will cease of its own accord.

Love for the situation-appropriate action that is present at the very moment causes the hunt for happiness, which can make people unhappy, to disappear and allows them to overcome free-floating anxiety which is such a plague on human beings today.

Without Concern for Daily Cares

I would like to conclude with a phrase by Goethe which he spoke to Eckermann on August 16, 1824, about how he saw trust, giving-in to destiny, as overcoming angst. “In the morning we are the cleverest, but also the most concerned, because anxiety is also a kind of cleverness, albeit only passive. Foolishness does not know anxiety.” In other words, anxiety is cleverness from the passive side. If we are passive-clever we have cares, we have anxiety. However, when cleverness becomes active, we overcome our concerns, we overcome anxiety. Our concern makes us notice the present task.