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Colour and the Human Races

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Now, Gentlemen, I have not yet fully answered the last question about colors. We will take it a little further or complete it.

First of all, today we have to consider a most interesting question, namely, the human color itself. You know, of course, that over the face of the earth are people showing skins differing in color. The Europeans to whom we belong are called the “White Race.” Well, we know indeed that a man in Europe is not quite healthy when he is cheese-white. He is healthy when he shows his natural, fresh color, created by himself inwardly, through the white.

But now besides this European coloring we have four other principal colors of the skin. We will consider this a little today because one actually understands the whole of history and the whole social life, even modern social life, only if one can turn to the race-characteristics of humanity [see drawings]. Only then can one rightly understand the spiritual element if one first studies how the spirit works in man precisely through the skin-color.

I should now like to put the racial color before you in this way. Let us start from Europe where we ourselves are living. Here we have therefore—I can draw it for you only roughly—first Europe; bordering on Europe: Asia, England, Ireland; here Japan, China; further India, India proper, Arabia; here we have Africa. Thus: Europe, Asia, Africa.

Now we will sketch in the men as they are in the corresponding regions. We call ourselves in Europe the white race. If we go over to Asia we have the yellow race, principally in Asia. And when we go over to Africa there we have the black race. Those are the original races. All others living in these regions are the consequence of migration.

So if we ask: What races belong to these parts of the earth?—Then we must say: To Asia belongs the yellow race, the Mongolian; to Europe belongs the white race or the Caucasian race, and to

Africa belongs the black or Negro race. The Negro race does not belong to Europe and it is naturally only mischievous that it now plays so great a role in Europe. These races are, as it were, at home in these three parts of the earth.

Now we will consider the color of these three races. I have already told you that color has to do with light. When one sees the black of universal space through the illumined universe, then it appears blue. When one sees light, illumination through the dark air, it appears reddish, as in the glow of morning and evening.

Let us just simply consider colors on ordinary objects. You first distinguish—let us say—black and white. These are the most striking colors, black and white. What is the position then with a black body? A black body assimilates in itself all the light that falls upon it and mirrors back none at all.

So if you have a black body, it takes the light that falls on it, absorbs everything into itself, and gives none back. It therefore appears black because it reflects no light.

When you have a white body it says: I do not need the light, I will only use what is in myself, I send all the light back. It is therefore white.

Thus a white body sends back all light and we see its surface light, white. A dark body absorbs all the light and also all the warmth and throws back no light, no warmth at all, and therefore appears black.

You can study that more closely if you consider the following. Suppose there is some object on the earth which takes up all light. In the first place it gives back a little light and so appears bright. But it allows itself time and takes up the most light possible. When it can take up no more and one brings it into the light, then it appears black.

Now, suppose there is a tree. It stands at first on the earth's surface and takes up a certain amount of light. But it absorbs a good deal of both light and warmth. That goes on until the time when it falls below the earth. When, for a length of time,—but that means thousands or millions of years—it has remained beneath the earth, what does it become? Black coal. It becomes black because it took up light and warmth into itself when it was a tree. It does not give that out unless we destroy it. If we burn it then it yields it, but if we only bring it into the air for a time it keeps it. It has taken up so much light and warmth that it gives nothing out—we must destroy it. That is the condition of coal.

Let us suppose that the object does not take up further light, it sends all back again, then something of such a nature will be white. That is the snow in winter. It reflects all light, it takes up no light and no warmth and thus becomes white. You see by this difference between coal and snow the relation that exists between objects on earth and universal space.

Let us apply that to man in universal space. Let us look just at the blacks in Africa. These blacks in Africa have the characteristic of absorbing from the universe all light and all warmth. They take it up. Now this light and this warmth in the universe cannot go through the whole body because a human being is always a human being even if he is a black one. It does not go through the whole body but stops short on the surface of the skin, and therefore the skin itself becomes black.

Thus a black man in Africa is one who absorbs the most possible warmth and light from the universe and assimilates it in himself. Through the fact that he does this the forces of the cosmos work over the whole man like this [see drawing]. He takes up light and warmth everywhere and uses it in himself. Now there must be something which helps him in this assimilation.

Well, you see, what helps him in particular is his posterior brain. In the Negro the posterior brain is specially developed. That goes through the spinal cord and can work over all the light and warmth that is in him.

Hence all that is connected with the body and metabolism is strongly developed in the Negro. He has, as one says, a strong desire-life, instinctive life [see drawing]. And since he actually has the sun-like, light and warmth, on the surface of his skin, his whole metabolism proceeds as if there

were a cooking by the sun itself in his interior. Hence comes his desire-life. There is really a continuous cooking going on within him, and what stokes the fire is the posterior brain.

Sometimes man's organization throws off further byproducts. That is to be seen just in the Negro. The Negro not only has this cooking in his organism, it not only boils there, but he also has a frightfully crafty and observant eye. He peers craftily and very observantly. You can easily take this as a contradiction. But it is like this: If there in front is the nerve of the eye [see drawing], the nerves go just into the posterior brain; they cross there [see drawing]. The nerve goes into the posterior brain, and since that is specially developed in the Negro therefore he peeps out so craftily, is such a sly observer of the world. If one begins to understand the matter, it all becomes clear. But modern science does not make such studies as we do and so it knows nothing about these things.

Let us now pass over from the black to the yellow man. Yellow is already related to the red, and so light is reflected to some extent but much is absorbed. However, the yellow man throws back more light than a black. The black man is an egoist, he takes up all light and all warmth. The yellow Mongolian gives indeed some light back, but he absorbs a great deal. That makes him what he is [see drawing]. Thus he takes up much light but gives some back. He contents himself with less. This less amount of light cannot work in the whole metabolism, and so the metabolism must be referred to its own force. That works chiefly in the breathing and blood-circulation.

Thus in the yellow race—Japanese, Chinese—the light and warmth work principally in breathing and blood-circulation. If you have ever met a Japanese, you will have noticed how he pays attention to his breathing. When he talks to you he keeps himself under restraint so that his breathing may be in good order. He has a certain feeling of well-being in breathing.

This means that less is worked over in his interior, it is principally worked upon in the breast [see drawing]. This causes the yellow man to develop strongly, not the posterior brain, but the middle brain. It is there that his breath and blood-circulation are maintained. The yellow Asiatic lives rather less in the metabolism.

You can notice that too by his walking. He has a less energetic walk. He does not work so strongly with the limbs and the metabolism. The Negro is more to the fore in racing and outer movement that is governed by desires. The Asiatic, yellow man, develops more an inner dream life and therefore the whole Asiatic civilization has this dreamer-element.

Thus he is not only living more in himself; he absorbs something from the universe. And so it comes about that the Asians have such wonderful poems about the whole universe. The Negro has not got this quality. He takes everything into his metabolism and really he only digests the universe.

The Asiatic *breathes* it into himself, has it in his blood-circulation. And so he can also give it out from himself when awake. For speech is in fact only a metamorphosed breathing. Yes. Gentlemen, they are beautiful, wonderful poems. The Asians are altogether an inward people. They scorn the European today because they say: They are external people. We shall see why immediately. That then is the yellow race [see drawing] and it is connected with color in the way I have told you.

Now let us look at ourselves in Europe. We are a white race in regard to the universe, for we must give back all external light. We give back all light and, in fact, all warmth too. The warmth has to be very powerful if we want to take it into us. And when it is not there we are stunted, as we see by the Eskimos. There is the human being [see drawing] of such a nature that he throws back all light and warmth. He absorbs them only when they become powerful. He throws them back and develops only the light and warmth that arise in his inner being through his own inner activity.

Yes, neither breathing nor blood-circulation comes to help him, nor the creation of warmth; but he must himself work out light and warmth through his brain, that is, through his head. We actually throw back all external light and warmth. We ourselves must give the color to our blood. That then presses through the white and so we obtain the human color of the Europeans. It is from within.

And so indeed we are such a white body as assimilates everything within and throws back all light and warmth.

And whereas the Mongolian mainly needs the middle brain, we Europeans use the frontal brain, the anterior brain. Through this fact the following is shown. The man with the posterior brain has mainly the desire-life, life of instinct: the one here with the middle brain has the feeling life, situated in the breast; and we Europeans, we poor Europeans, have the thought-life that sits in the head. Thereby, as it were, we do not feel our inner man at all. For we feel the head only when it is ill. Otherwise we do not feel it.

But this makes us aware of the whole outer world and we easily become materialists. The Negro becomes no materialist, he remains man inwardly, only he develops the inner desire-life. Nor does the Asiatic become materialist, he remains at the feeling-life, he does not bother about external life as the European does. Of the latter he says: He is only an engineer, concerning himself only with outer life.—He is, in fact, since he must develop his frontal brain, assigned to the outer world, and everything is connected with that.

Thus we are the white race, inwardly the white is colored through our blood. Then there is the Mongolian, the yellow race; and then there is the black race. And we can understand that quite well when we start from the colors—then the whole thing is explained.

Now you only need to consider how that is. The Negroes live on a part of the earth where the sun oppresses them very much indeed, penetrates into them. So they give themselves up to it, absorb it fully into their bodies, become friendly with it, reject nothing.

With the Asians—more comes to them from the heat of the earth. They do not give so much back. They are no longer so friendly with the sun.

And with the Europeans—here the fact is that they would actually obtain nothing from the sun if they did not evolve their own human element. Europe has therefore always been the starting point for all that develops the human element in connection with the outside world.

Inventions have very seldom been made in Asia. They can be assimilated, but inventions themselves, by which the Asians can apply what is produced through practical experience with the outer world—these the Asians cannot make.

For instance, this is what once happened with a screw-steamer. Some Japanese had learnt about it through stealthily watching Europeans, and they also wanted to manage it alone. Previously the Europeans had always been in charge and directed things. Now the Japanese wanted to manage the steamer alone. The English remained behind on the shore. Suddenly the Japanese who were on board fell into evident despair, for the steamer continually revolved round itself. They could not make out how to bring the proper forward motion to the revolving movement. The Europeans who knew how to do it naturally grinned tremendously on the shore. This independent thought which the European develops in familiarity with the environment is not possessed by the Asiatic peoples. The Japanese will therefore develop all European inventions, but they will not think out something by themselves.

As regards the human race, men all over the earth are actually dependent on one another. They must help each other. That is a consequence of their natural ability. That is connected, you see, with the whole of man's development. Think for a moment of a black man; his desire-life is especially evolved, all that boils in the interior. This gives much ash, and the ash is deposited in the bones. He is therefore more developed in his bones than a man of the white race. The latter rather directs to the blood what he has inwardly and his bones are more finely developed. Thus the Negro has coarsely developed bones, the European has more finely developed bones. And the Asiatics, the yellow race, stand in between.

You can observe by the manner in which a Japanese stands and walks that in his bone-structure he stands between the European and the African. The Africans have these strong bones continuously in

movement. The European has more the blood system. The Japanese has all that acts on the breathing and from the breath on the blood-circulation.

But now, Gentlemen, men on earth do not simply remain where they are. If one were to go back into ancient times, one would already find that the yellow race belonged to Asia, the white race to Europe and the black race to Africa. But it has also always happened that people have wandered out. And it can happen that either the yellow wander to the East or the blacks wander to the West. And that was once done. The yellow have always wandered eastwards. There they have come to those islands which lie between Asia and Australia [see scheme]. When the yellow wander over to the East they become brown. There arose the Malaysians who became brown. Why?

Yes, why do they become brown? What does it mean to become brown? Well, when they are yellow they throw back a definite degree of light; the rest they absorb. When they become brown through the different way in which they now live in the sun—for they come from another part of the earth—then they throw back, reflect, less light. They take more light into themselves. So these brown Malaysians are migrated Mongolians, but who now, since the sun works on them differently, accustom themselves to absorb more light and more warmth.

But consider how they have not the nature for this. They have already accustomed themselves to have a bony structure which limits them to a definite degree of warmth. They have not the right nature for taking up so much warmth as they now take up as Malaysians.

The result of this is that they begin to become unusable people, people who break to pieces in the body, whose body dies away. This is in fact the case with the Malaysian population. They die of the sun. They die of the East. One can say that whereas the yellow, the Mongolians, are still men in full strength, the Malaysians are already a dying race. They are dying out.

In ancient times the Negroes wandered over to the West—today circumstances are different, they can do it less—but they wandered westwards in ancient times; there had always been a ship passage, and there were still islands over the whole Atlantic Ocean, for earlier this was in fact a continent. Now when the blacks wandered west they could no longer absorb so much light and warmth as in their native Africa. Less light and warmth reaches them. What is the result? Their nature is organized to take up as much as possible of light and warmth and actually in that way to become black. Now they do not get as much light and warmth as they need in order to become black. So they become copper-red, become Indians. That comes from the fact that they are obliged to reflect something of light and warmth. That gleams a copper-red. Copper is itself a body which must reflect a little light and warmth.

They cannot hold out against this and so die in the West as Indians. They are again a race that is going under, they die from their own nature which gets too little light and warmth. They die from the earthly, and the earthly element of their nature is their desire-life. They can no longer develop that properly, whereas they still get strong bones. Since much ash goes into their bones these Indians can no longer hold out against it. Their bones become frightfully strong, but so strong that the whole man goes to pieces by reason of his bones.

You see, this is how things have developed, so that these five races have come about. One might say: Black, yellow, white in the center: as a side-branch of the black the copper-red, and as a side-branch of the yellow the brown: those are always the dying-out parts.

The whites are actually those who evolve the human element and so they are assigned to themselves. When they migrate they somewhat take on the characteristics of the other regions, yet they do not go to pieces as a race, but rather as individuals. But instead they do something else altogether.

You see, all that I have been describing to you are things that go on in man's body, and the soul and spirit are more independent of it. And so soul and spirit can be most active in the European, since they make most claim on him. He can more easily bear going into different parts of the earth.

Hence it also once came about that starting from up above there [see scheme] a great migration of people went over as far as India. A stream of white people struck into a region where the population was yellow. Thus arose the Hindus, a mixture of Mongolian and Caucasian. Hence came the very beautiful Indian poetry, the most beautiful in existence. But again at the same time something of which one notes that it has already become inert, because the white element is not in its own territory.

And so one can say that the white man can go everywhere, today even to America—and all the white inhabitants of America have come from Europe. The white element therefore comes into American regions, but something happens to man when he comes to America from the Europe for which he is naturally constituted. It means that some demand must be made on the posterior brain. As European in Europe he has made demands chiefly on his frontal brain. Now in America there flourish those people who were once actually decadent Negroes—that is to say, they do not flourish, they are going to pieces—the Red Indians. When one comes there a conflict always arises in the head between the anterior and the posterior brain.

It is found that if a family moves to America and settles there, then the descendants have the peculiarity of acquiring somewhat longer arms. The arms and legs grow rather more when the European settles in America—not in himself, of course, but in his descendants. That comes from the fact that things move over through the middle brain to the posterior brain when as European one comes to America.

But at the same time something very peculiar comes about in the American. Now the European lives entirely in his inner being, does he not—especially if he is a thinker. If he is no thinker, he barely reflects at all, but that produces a life which is not quite filled up. But as soon as the European settles in America he no longer is such a brooder. So the following arises: When you read a European book, things are always proved. One cannot get away from the proving. One reads through a whole book, reads through 400 pages, only proofs. Even if it is a novel there is always proving. For the most part, nothing is proved at the end on the 400th page.

The American does not do that. When you read an American book everything is put forward as a statement. There again it is a going-back, nourished by the instinct. The animal proves nothing; the lion does not prove that he will devour another animal, he will devour it. If the European wants to do anything, it must first be proved. Today that is the great difference between the European and the American. Europeans prove, Americans affirm.

But that is not to say that what they affirm cannot be just as true, it is even realized more through the whole man. The Americans have that in advance of the European. On the one hand they approach decadence—the American Indian is decadent—but when one begins to go to pieces one becomes clever. So the Europeans become clever when they go over: they disaccustom themselves from the proving. This wanting to prove is not exactly a quality to bring one forward. If one is to do something in the morning, one can begin with proving, and at night on going to sleep one can still not do it, because one still must prove. The American will not do that, because he has not been trained at all to prove. And so it comes that America will quite certainly go ahead of Germany in some things. One can make quite interesting observations. If one takes up a European book it proves somewhat as follows—let us say it is a book about the digestive system of the cockchafer—such books are indeed written. It begins by proving: “The animal species of the cockchafer contains also digestive organs, they only withdraw from ordinary observation, one must penetrate deeper into the whole organization of the cockchafer.”—Well, so it goes on. One has to prove everything.

The American begins with: “When one dismembers a cockchafer then one finds in it that and that”—he affirms as he observes.

And so you see in the case of the Europeans: they no longer develop their racial character on behalf of their whole organization. They develop rather the qualities of soul and spirit. For this reason they can penetrate into all other parts of the world. The process of becoming decadent is naturally a slow one.

The sun always sends more or less of warmth and light down to the earth. Now we have the Vernal Point in the Fishes, as I have told you. Previously it was in the Ram, Aries. After some time it will be in Aquarius: only then will the true American civilization come.

Before then civilization will go more and more over to America. One who will, can already see today how powerful the Americans are becoming and how Europe is getting increasingly impotent. And the reason why no kind of peace can now come to Europe is because Europe no longer actually understands its own land.

Now all civilization moves over to America; it will take a long time, but when the sun's vernal point has entered the Sign of Aquarius then it will send down its rays to earth just in such a favorable way that the American culture and civilization will be especially powerful. That is already to be seen today.

It is very remarkable: In Europe over here what we call Anthroposophy can be developed. It must be developed out of the Spirit—that does not come at all out of racial characteristics. It must be developed out of the Spirit. And the men who are unwilling to approach the Spirit will plunge Europe into disaster.

The Americans do not yet need it, especially those who travel over there. For they can still maintain themselves on racial characteristics. And so over in America, curiously enough, arises something remarkable. Anyone who reads American books really attentively, who reads parliamentary speeches, one who takes a general interest in what goes on in America today, will say to himself: Good gracious! That is very remarkable. We in Europe develop Anthroposophy out of the Spirit. Over there they develop something that is a kind of wooden doll of Anthroposophy. Everything becomes materialistic.

But for one who is not a fanatic, there is something similar in American culture to what is anthroposophical science in Europe. Only everything there is wooden, it is not yet alive. We can make it alive in Europe out of the Spirit: those over there take it out of instinct.

You see, one can notice that in all detail. The time will one day come when this American “wooden man”—which actually everyone is still—when he will begin to speak. Then he will have something to say very similar to European Anthroposophy.

One can say that we in Europe develop Anthroposophy in a spiritual way; the American develops it in a natural way. Therefore when I explain anthroposophical matters I can so often point out: Well, that is how it is anthroposophically, and that is the American caricature of it [sketch]. That is the caricature of it.

But if someone is a fanatic and has come to Anthroposophy not through the inner life but through fanaticism, then he finds the very sharpest invectives for Americanism because—well, man abuses the apes chiefly—since the ape is like himself—as a caricature. And so it is really such a remarkable affair as between North and South Pole, between what we achieve spiritually in Europe and what is gained over there in America in a natural way.

Books on natural science in America do not look at all as they do in Europe. They really talk continually of Spirit, but they represent it to themselves in the crudest, most material way. Hence Spiritism has also arisen in America in recent times. For what does Spiritism do? It wants to talk of the Spirit and imagines it as cloud-phenomena, would prefer everything to be like cloud-phenomena. And so Spiritism is an American product, it aims at the Spirit but in a materialistic way.

It is in fact so interesting that in America materialism simply flourishes, but actually on the way to the Spirit; while in Europe if someone becomes a materialist he dies as human being. The American

is a young materialist. In fact, all children are at first materialistic, and then grow to what is not materialism. So too will the American blatant materialism sprout to a spiritual element. That will be when the sun rises in the Sign of Aquarius.

Now, you see, in this way we can realize what we as Europeans have as a task. Our task as Europeans is not at all always to abuse the Americans, but naturally we must found over the whole earth a civilization which is put together from the best.

If one thinks about things as the Prince of Baden does who has been taken in by the American European Wilson, then it does not do. For Wilson was not a true American. He had actually taken all his theories from Europe and therefore made things so dreadfully theoretic. But genuine Americanism will one day unite with Europeanism which will have taken a more spiritual path. When one studies something in this way one sees the attitude one should take in the world.

And so it is really quite interesting: On the one hand we have the black race, which is most of all earthly. When they go westwards, they die out. We have the yellow race, which is between earth and cosmos. When they go to the East they become brown, connect too much with the cosmos, die out. The white race is the future one, is the race creating in the Spirit. When they moved over to India they developed the inward, poetical and spiritual Indian culture. When they now go to the West they will develop a spirituality which does not so much grasp man's inner being, but turns to the spirituality of the outer world.

And so in the future, purely out of the racial characterization those things will emerge which one must know in life so that one takes the right stand. Men are getting less and less adjustment in life. They want indeed to have everything fall from the skies and not actually to learn.

This has come about through the fact that in the last third of the 19th century nothing more of a human element was provided in education, particularly in scientific education. Knowledge of man is so difficult to present nowadays. Materialistic scholars themselves realize this, they get no farther.

It was very interesting at the last Natural Science Conference. One of these scientists had especially realized it—one does not advance, one learns nothing of the human being through science today.—But he did not go on to say: “We must develop towards Anthroposophy:” he said: “Give us corpses so that we may dismember them.”

You see, that was all he could say: Give us corpses! People want to have more corpses, they want to study the dead man. That was a right catchword: Give us corpses!—Whereas we here can do without corpses, for we want to observe and study the *living* man. For that it is only necessary to open one's eyes and through one's eyes somewhat the soul, for one finds the living man everywhere. One meets nothing but living men. Only one must be able to live with them, so that they may make known to one what a human being is.

But the learned scholars of today have really quite weak eyes; they do not see man. And then they fervently beg “Give us corpses!” Then they can study them. Give us corpses! This was the position in educational centers in recent years, recent decades. People have taken in nothing there pertaining to man. And so knowledge of man has disappeared from all science.

That is why I dealt with this question in the first chapter of my “Threefold Commonwealth.” I had to show how those who had not been occupied with science but with work had advanced and now naturally wanted science. But the others, the bourgeois, could not give them this, which they appeared to have. And thus arose the great calamity in civilization. The workers demanded science and it was not there, because only a science was there that is devoid of man.

I have shown that in the first chapter of the “Threefold Commonwealth” because that must first be understood if one talks of the social question. So that it was in fact necessary for the “Threefold Commonwealth” to begin with it in the first chapter.

Now, we have dealt with colors somewhat further today.