

The Upper and Lower System in Man

Course handout

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* Sections marked with a star are only to be found in the handout and not on the website.

I am two*

Every person knows that we consist of two people, that we have an I *and* an I. We often say it but don't bring it to consciousness:

I wash **myself**.
 I undress **myself**.
 I don't know what I want.
 I can't forgive **myself**.
 I don't like it that I am so fat.
 I suffer under the fact that I eat so much chocolate.
 I feel good about **myself**.
 Ich fühle **mich** heute gar nicht gut.

I ... myself ... ? What is the issue here? If we ask, then generally the answer is that one experiences oneself as a whole with which one identifies oneself. Despite this, each person speaks of the self as a subject that acts and simultaneously as an object that is treated, that is asked, etc. Each person experiences him or herself as double, irrespective of language. But nobody comes to consciousness about what one is saying about one's self.



(From: Vom Ort zum Wort)

Spirit and body – two sides of the same coin *

In these videos we would like to invite you to look at the human being in a different way than you are probably used to.

Sure, the human body is made of matter. But the human body also has a spiritual content, such as laws of nature, self-regulatory mechanisms, emotional memories, and life experience. Without spirit, matter would not be held together, the body would dissolve. The more spirited my body is, the better it can react to mental concepts and implement my personal intentions. This is the prerequisite for the feeling that my body belongs to me and that I feel connected to it.

This does not mean that in addition to the genetic, biological, chemical and physical laws, there is an independent system that would control the material processes from the outside. Mind and matter are not two different things, but two sides of the same thing.

*Consciously moving the ether **

Thinking and consciousness are an activity of the I. Tonus is a product of the astral body. The etheric reacts to both: to tonus and thought-filled consciousness. If I bring tonus into the arms and hands, then I astralise these and in so doing change the space that is filled by the etheric body. In this manner I can for example, widen the etheric space a little towards the front and in so doing enlarge the distance between the physical and etheric body.

The etheric body, which has the function of caring for and surrounding the physical body, experiences the tension as unharmonious. It tries to reestablish the initial unity by encouraging the body to move forwards to decrease the distance again. That we experience as a slight suction, as a support of the movement forwards etc. This forwards component remains as long as I keep the expansion of space upright with my astral manipulation.

The resulting movement is reliant on two factors. The tonus and the placement of the hands decide the adjustment of the etheric space from its harmonious normal position. My perceptive presence in my body decides whether I am able to perceive the signals of the etheric body and am able to follow them or not. Here the interwoven active activity of the I on the one hand, and the wakeful perceptive presence of the I on the other work together, even though with the clear addition of the astral component. The more active here or more perceptive there, the more intensive the resulting movement.

(From: Heileurythmie Quo Vadis)

The Lower System - a Bundle of Energy

Our body is created and optimized for its vital life processes and self-preservation. But it is also a picture of the forces that create and sustain it.

The organs that are situated higher up in the body are more affected by the upper system. When we connect ourselves with the forces of the upper system the arms are an important means of expression. The organs that work lower down in the body are more under the influence of the lower system. In this realm it isn't that important for us to express ourselves. Here we long for movement and want to use our legs.

The upper system is home to our consciousness. The lower system is home to our life forces.

Questions and Tips

Can you distinguish whether you are activating the upper or lower system?

- Can you also do it in daily life?

In our video we make a statement that your steps become more lively and shorter when you allow the lower system to carry you.

- How is this for you, and is it always true?
- Did the video help you to develop a feeling for the lower system?
- Have you already tried out funny, practical occasions to use the forces of your lower system?

The Upper System Moves Backwards

In the perceptively carried movement, the arms are light, moving in an alert atmosphere as if carried by invisible threads. When I lift the arms into this upper zone, my connection to the zone behind me becomes palpable. Moving backwards in this manner is usually experienced as very pleasant, as if returning home or being received by one's angel.

The upper system is an image of the individual cosmic human being. It brings structure which can cause us to become cramped when it becomes too much. In the body the upper system reaches down into the feet. Sometimes more and sometimes less. If less present, then I fall over my dancing partner's feet, or can't get the rhythm into my legs.

When the upper system dominates then the person becomes more open to sensory-perception. These people are often experienced as over-sensitive because things often "get under their skin". As the perceptions are experienced as objective facts, they tempt us to judge and criticise.

Even though the upper system's goal is life, the meaning of its incarnation, it can make a person unrealistic.

It knows fear, as it knows what can happen. As the spirit manifests itself in the space above and behind ourselves, this system rather moves backwards than forwards. Rather goes there where it comes from.

Excerpt from: "Heileurythmie - Quo vadis?" by Theodor Hundhammer

Questions and Tips

In the video you learn to use the forces of the upper body to go backwards in such a manner that it feels as if the body does it by itself.

But lifting and raying through the arms and fingers can have an incarnating effect simultaneously working on the upper system in a hardening manner:

- Do you notice that the penetration of the fingers even amplifies this effect?
- However, if you do not indulge yourself completely, but feel yourself in the body at the same time, you can even increase contact with the floor by shining through your fingers.

Changing directions from front to back and vice versa.

Our experience shows that most people pull the lifted arms backwards and that the "being pulled forwards" first has to be practiced.

- What do you have to do so that your raised arms pull you forwards instead of back?
- Do you do it with the fine musculature of your chest, with the arms or do you have another method? What is the most pleasant?

Physiological effect:

- The influence of the raised arms pulling me backwards on lungs and breath is rather obvious.
- Can you also perceive an effect on the kidneys?

The Lower System Moves Forwards

The lower system is full of vitality. Our life force, which is responsible for our health and controls all processes of destruction, works within it. It takes up impulses from the upper system and carries them out. Nothing is possible in the physical body without the support of the lower system. It is spoken of as the lower system even though its sphere of activity reaches from the head to the toes.

The lower system is our system of feeling. Feelings are subjective, have intuitive or will-like character, and are not based on thinking. Feeling-filled people are generally experienced as warm, sensuous and brave. The lower system as such knows no fear. It wishes to engage in life and that lies in front of it. For this reason, it also prefers to move forwards, instead of backwards. (This does not apply to a person who suffers from trauma.)

For beginners the observed effect is stronger when carrying out the movements with the hands in the zone of the lower system (eg. allowing oneself to be pushed or pulled). The lower system then understands better that it is being asked. (It has to perform the movement after all.) In principle the exercise functions in either zone.

Excerpt from: "Heileurythmie - Quo vadis?"

Questions and Tips

In this Video you learn to move your energy with the help of your arms. As soon as you learn to do this you can also do it without arms.

How long does it take for you to become comfortably light in your body when standing upright and how do you achieve it?

- Do you use your feeling perception?
- Or do you rather use the fine currents of your micro-muscles?
- Or do you achieve it just by concentration and waiting for the effect to come about?

Do you have an idea about what we might mean with "Thinking with the body?"

- How do produce this effect and how do you experience it?
- What is the difference between thinking with the body or thinking with the brain?

Activating the lower system can become very speedy and even funny.

- How do you experience this effect on your inner being?
- Does it make you nervous and exhausted?
- Or can you stay inwardly relaxed and arrive calm at the end?

Swimming with the Stream

Carried by the stream - Creative forces behind the L-Gesture.

In the exercise "Swimming with the stream" the circulation that carries one forward from below and back from above, comes close to that which is the L-gesture in eurythmy. When the arms have come forward with the lower stream, and the astral component is released, then the arms and hands rise

up in front of the body in a narrow gesture. Carried down behind by the stream of the upper system, they become wide, letting go on the outside and below taking hold of the lower stream again. It's like sitting in a river, dipping the hand into the water, feeling the current and being carried along by it. A swimming along with and joining with the natural stream of the life forces.

Questions and Tips

In this video you learn how the upper and lower forces in the system work together and communally build the basis for the eurythmic L- gesture.

Do you sense when the stream starts pulling?

- In Eurythmy it is important to learn to wait. Don't start a movement immediately.
- Wait until the movement comes into being. Create it with the help of your intentions and your body consciousness.
- How long does it take until your body reacts when the current forwards or backwards starts to pull?
- Dare to wait. Be lazy!

What helps you to alternate between the upper and the lower force systems?

- Do you take enough time to connect with one system and let it pull you?
- Do you experiment with different possibilities to let your arms rise in front and sink in the back (e.g. variation of your tension in the arms, in the body, your body awareness and thoughts)?
- Do you feel a change in your sensation of the arms, when they are taken over by the other force field?

Swimming against the stream.

Becoming refreshed– The play of forces of the R-gesture

The exercise «Swimming against the stream» is the exact opposite of “swimming with the stream”. The circulation that carries us backwards from below and forwards above is contrary to the natural movement of the upper and lower system. It is similar to sitting in a river and moving one's hand or a stick against the current, and thereby feel it's power. The hand is shaken, the water bubbles and becomes aerated and enlivened. One loves doing this. This comes close to that which is the R-gesture in eurythmy. Practicing an R in this manner is palpably refreshing.

Soon it is no longer necessary to control the movement through the manipulative element of the astral body (tonus, arm position or spreading of the fingers). One stands, replacing the manipulation with the joy of doing the L or R movement, and starts. The movement takes place almost by itself, one goes along and can enjoy it. The etheric understands my thoughts. Etheric body and thinking are one!

Comment: This movement sequence is naturally not the whole R gesture. This lives in the polarity of condensing and expanding. That R is an active movement against the stream, sounds through the active colours of the eurythmy figure. Condensing in the lower stream, as red movement, releasing in the upper stream, as yellow veil.

Questions and Tips

In this video you learn to swim against the stream and how refreshing that can be. And we show you how the basic currents of the upper and lower system contribute to the eurythmic gesture of the sound R. You work with two different currents: One pulls backwards, the other forwards

- Do you experience it as a square: back – up – forward – down?
- How do you make this square, angular movement to a continuously circling experience?
- What inner activity, which consciousness is needed, to create the transitions, to make it a circulation.

What does the continuous movement of the swimming against the stream do to your body?

- Can you perceive a feeling of gentleness arising when reactivating the memory of the forces and currents after letting go?
- How do you experience the difference of the aftereffect compared to the swimming with the stream exercise?

Curving around the Room

Lower, upper and middle system in action.

As we showed you in the videos to the lower system, you can use the lower system to be moved forwards and pushed back. Now we use the hands in a differentiated manner and you will see, that the upper and lower system are two very different force systems which are very dynamic but can also become one sided.

In eurythmy we seek the forces that can work through these systems and connect them creatively. These are the gestures for the sounds of the alphabet.

Questions and Tips

Speeding up

- Are you still attentive to staying rooted and earthed in your body when activating the forces of your upper system?
- Did you have fun curving, led by the tension in your hands? Could you accelerate, spiral in and out or even change direction just by changing the tension in your hands, arms and consciousness?

Creating movement through Eu-tension:

- Be careful, that you don't overdo it. Don't become tense in your muscles.
- Have in mind that we are looking for the Eu-tension in our body, not for a physical tension (see our video on Eu-tension)
- Are you able to create ethereal currents with the Eu-tension in your body and only let the body follow passively even at high tempo?

Changing between lower and upper system while walking curves with the help of the O gesture.

- Do you manage to use the tension in your rounded arm in such a way, that the arm leads you around the circle in the direction it is pointing? Then you are using your lower system.
- Do you manage to use the tension in your rounded arm in such a way, that you are led around the circle in the opposite direction? Then you are using your upper system.

Being in Front - Being Behind

I'm here already!

The exercise “Being in front – Being behind” deals with the co-operation of I, astral body and etheric body out of the perspective of the I. Only the I can be in two places simultaneously.



The hare and the porcupine, by Wilhelm Schröder, 1840: “I’m here already!”

In astrally pushing the etheric body out with the hands, something has to happen; the body has to follow in order to feel well again. Setting the “second column” out is an activity of the I. That is why it is not compulsive. The “second column” is not pushed across, but comes into being, is suddenly there. Setting it out and standing opposite it, has something surprising and creates joy. It has the character of a meeting.

The movement between the two columns comes about through one being attracted by them. Through this the movement becomes even freer and has more breath than for example in the streaming exercises for the L and R principle. There the connection between the own body and the forces of movement is highlighted. Here we are more concerned with the principle of being moved itself.

Despite the acceleration one can experience a kind of witty calm. I don’t have to do anything to arrive in front and then behind again. In the tale of “The race between the hare and the porcupine” by Wilhelm Schröder this capability of the I is represented by the two porcupines. At the beginning and end of the field these two porcupines quite comfortably say, “I’m here already!” to the astral body (the hare) and allow him to run loose again.

Questions and Tips

In this video the object of the exercise is not the same as in the other videos where we tried to move the lower system and then reunite with it or to perceive into the upper system and allow ourselves to be taken along by it. Here we ourselves are in focus.

Could you escape the temptation to manipulate the movement?

- Did you manage to wait until you were pulled forwards or backwards?
- Did your body stop by itself or did you have to stop the movement yourself?
- Did it stop where you had placed the column?
- Be aware that a little bit of “cheating” is allowed as long as you are aware of it.
- This will help you to gradually develop the desired abilities in your body’s consciousness.

When continuously moving forward and backwards - when does the column behind (or in front) come into existence.

- On the way forward?
- When you arrive in front?
- After you have arrived in front?

How is it for you to be active on two or more levels at the same time?

- What are your main observations while practicing the exercise very slowly?

In our other videos about Eurythmy we focus very much on

- creating currents or countercurrents through the quality of streaming
- raying from the heart through our gestures and limbs,
- connecting our center and our periphery.
- How would you describe the activity we emphasize in this video?
- What are the after effects of this exercise?

Feedback und suggestions

We hope that you liked this course and that it gave you new suggestions.

We would be happy if you would take some time to give us your feedback.

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Literature

Further explanations to the anthropological aspects of the upper and lower systems out of the perspective of eurythmy can be found in the three books of Theodor Hundhammer below (in German only):

Vom Ort zum Wort - ein Weg zu den Potentialen der Heileurythmie

(From Place to Space - A Path to the Potentials of Eurythmy Therapy)

The connections between the cosmological concepts of traditional occidental medicine and the structure of our body and their application in the field of eurythmy and eurythmy therapy.

Heileurythmie - Quo Vadis? Thesen und Denkansätze, Visionen und Aktionen

(Eurythmy Therapy – Quo vadis? Theses and Ideas, Visions and Actions)

After practically 90 years of practical work with and in development of Eurythmy Therapy the question may be posed: Quo vadis – Where are you going to? Unknown content and unexpected twists activate our thinking and reflection. The book opens perspectives and could awaken the desire to do Eurythmy Therapy.

Eurythmie auf Skiern, Das erste Multimedia-Step-by-Step-Eurythmie-Lehrbuch der Welt

(Eurythmy on skis, The first multimedia Step-by-step-Eurythmy-Training-Manual on Earth)

How eurythmy can deepen your connection to the slope, your body, yourself and the surrounding nature and enrich your skiing experience. A training manual about the sound gestures of eurythmy. The entire text and the videos are to be found on www.skieurythmie.ch.