

I am including a letter from a friend of NSS, Richard Katz.

Some weeks ago, I received emails with link to a talk by Dr. Thomas Cowan with the message that COVID-19 is not infectious, but instead is caused by 5G. Some people pointed to his connection to Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophic medicine.

After examining the claims in Dr. Cowan's "viral" [video from his March 12 talk on 5G and Covid-19](#), and studying the references and claims he gave in his follow-up [March 26 webinar](#), here is what I discovered:

Misquoting Steiner

Cowan starts his segment on COVID-19 by stating that Rudolf Steiner was asked in 1918 about the flu pandemic and said in response, "Viruses are simply excretions of a toxic cell." Cowan then goes on to say "Viruses have nothing to do with it."

In the March 26 Webinar Cowan gives the lecture series, "*Cosmic Workings of Earth and Man*" as the source for the quote from Steiner. This series is part of the lectures to the Goetheanum Workmen given in late 1923 and early 1924. The only lecture in that series that I see that mentions viruses and poisons is the one given [January 19, 1924 in Dornach](#). There is one paragraph near the end that mentions viruses and poisons, but in a totally different context. As far as I can see this is not a comment in response to the flu pandemic, certainly not made in 1918, and it is not discussing the kind of viruses involved in the influenza pandemic of 1918 or the current COVID-19 pandemic. The relationship between "poisons" and the various bodies of the human beings is quite nuanced in the lecture, and it is not the direct quote that Cowan offers, nor does it support the conclusion he draws from it.

Dr. Cowan has a connection to Anthroposophic Medicine, so when he references Rudolf Steiner to back up his medical opinions, it is natural to give credence to what he says. I checked with Drs. Matthias Girke and Georg Soldner, the Head and Deputy Head of the Medical Section at the Goetheanum (Anthroposophic Society headquarters in Switzerland), and they confirmed that Rudolf Steiner never made the statement that Dr. Cowan attributes to him. They also had Peter Selg, biographer of Rudolf Steiner, confirmed that it is not anything that Rudolf Steiner said.

What Steiner says

From the lectures of Steiner I have read, my impression is that Steiner's main focus about infectious diseases was with the influence of malevolent spiritual beings (Ahrimanic beings), who have access to the human organism through the materialism of our time. Steiner was pointing to another dimension involved with infectious diseases. He did not dispute the existence of infection by bacteria or viruses. For example, in a lecture entitled [Issues of Health in the Light of Spiritual Science](#) Steiner discussed the progress humanity had made against communicable diseases through the

improvements in hygiene. Steiner argues we should not only consider the pathogen, we should also consider our life-style and conditions that make us susceptible to infection. Steiner never gives us simplistic answers.

Near the end of the 10-minute March 12 lecture segment, Dr. Cowan quotes Steiner as saying, "In times when there were no electrical currents, when the air was not swarming with electrical influences, it was easier to be human. . . . For this reason, in order to be human at all today, it is necessary to expend much stronger spiritual capacities than was necessary a century ago." I was able to source this quote from July 11, 1923, Die menschliche Seele in ihrem Zusammenhang mit göttlich-geistigen Individualität (GA 224) translated by Malcolm Gardner as cited in [this article](#).

We can agree that electrical fields are a challenge to our humanity, but what Steiner tells us here and in many other contexts, is that the way we must deal with such "fallen ethers" ruled by Ahriman is to strengthen our own spiritual forces. Steiner goes on to say the following after the quotation that Cowan read: "But it does not occur to me to be reactionary and say something like: Well then, we must banish all these modern achievements! That's not the objective. Modern human beings need the access to the spirit that spiritual science provides, so that through this strong experience of the spirit they can also become stronger in relation to the forces that accompany modern culture, the forces that harden our physical body and take it away from us."

That's not an argument to accept 5G, in my opinion, but it is guidance as to the realm where the real battle is fought.

Anthroposophic approach to Covid-19

I recommended [the recent posting from Drs. Girke and Soldner](#) for a nuanced and holistic Anthroposophic view of the current Covid-19 pandemic.

I would like to call your attention particularly to this statement: "the content of our consciousness is also important: if we approach truth, we experience the connection of our being with the spiritual world. Recognising truth can awaken joy, confidence, trust and fulfilment. We encounter a quality which gives necessary orientation, frees the human being from tension and insecurity and thus strengthens the healing forces of the body. In contrast, untruths and lies make us ill: they separate human beings from the spiritual world of truth, isolate them and impede the healing forces which flow from truth."

Dr. Cowan is unfortunately spreading untruth when he cites Rudolf Steiner for his claims that viruses are not infectious.

Specious arguments against viral transmission of COVID-19

I am not a medical expert, and even experts are puzzled by this disease. However, I have examined Dr. Cowan's claims that lead people to the conclusion that COVID-19 is

not infectious, and I find that are not convincing, however persuasive they might seem at first glance.

With plenty of evidence that this coronavirus is highly infectious, and out of an abundance of caution, I believe it is best that we treat this disease as having a major component of infectious transmission, and act accordingly.

Here are some of Dr. Cowan's main points and my comments:

The Simplistic Claim that Electrical fields cause pandemics, 5-G caused Covid-19

This evidence is taken from *The Invisible Rainbow*, by Arthur Firstenberg. One can accept that electromagnetic fields have negative impacts on health, and that 5-G is extremely detrimental, without making it the sole cause of disease, including COVID-19. There are many factors that can make people susceptible to disease, such as air pollution and other environmental stresses, unhealthy food, overuse of pharmaceutical drugs, stressful lifestyles, disconnection from Nature and our own bodies, toxic emotions (fear, hatred, etc.), lack of spirituality. The 19th century dispute about whether it is the "germ" or the "terrain" (inner environment) that causes disease can be resolved by understanding that it is the *relationship* between pathogen and host that is involved. It's not a binary choice of either infection or environmental toxicity, for example.

Consider the following:

1. There were many infectious pandemics throughout history long before electricity.
2. Firstenberg cites the introduction of radio towers near military installations as the cause of the 1918 flu pandemic. Could there also be influences from years of devastating war, soldiers uprooted from their communities, crammed into barracks or ships, and fearful of being sent off to their slaughter, which made them susceptible to disease? Then on the battlefield they were lying wounded and hungry in cold, damp trenches for days on end with artillery shells raining down on them.
3. Firstenberg cites a study in which the flu was not able to be transmitted experimentally to volunteers. (I verified that there was such a study.) That's puzzling. But then look at this [New York Times article](#) about how the flu spread rapidly from sailors that landed in Philadelphia followed by a parade attended by 200,000 people. That sounds like transmission to me. The flu did not infect everyone who was exposed. That's a historical fact. But that doesn't mean there was no transmission. Dr. Edward Bach, who treated war wounded and victims of the 1918 pandemic, wrote that fear of disease opens us up to the disease that we fear. Perhaps the volunteers in that experiment went into it with such selfless courage that they were not affected. I don't

know. The experiment only shows that they were not able to simulate the natural transmission of infection.

4. Wuhan is a 5G hot spot. That's where COVID-19 started. Cowan cites that as proof that 5G is the cause of COVID-19. But South Korea was one of the leading implementors of 5G, some months before China brought 5G to Wuhan and before the outbreak of COVID-19. South Korea controlled the epidemic early by extensive testing, quarantine of those who were infected and contact tracing. That seems to be good evidence that transmission is involved and social distancing and quarantine methods can make a difference in limiting the spread.

Cowan cites outdated testing criteria to cast doubt that there really is an infectious disease

According to the Koch postulates from the 19th century one can only prove that a pathogen causes a disease if everyone who has the disease shows the same symptoms and has the same pathogen present, and no one who does not have the disease symptoms has the pathogen present. Then one must be able to isolate the pathogen from the diseased people and infect others with the disease. Since COVID-19 was not tested according to those criteria, Cowan contends, there is no evidence that it is caused by the coronavirus. However, when I looked up the [Koch Postulates](#), it turned out the even in his lifetime Robert Koch disavowed this extreme version of his postulates, because of the discovery of infected people who are asymptomatic. This is a complex subject, and that is the point. Louis Pasteur's original germ theory that disease is caused solely by an outside pathogen invading a healthy body is overly simplistic. It is also simplistic to use that criteria to say that there is no infectious component to disease.

Cowan claims that modern research shows that “exosomes,” excretions of a toxic cell, are “another name” for viruses

This is a complex and fascinating subject, which says to me that we have a lot to learn about viruses. I don't pretend to have a comprehensive knowledge.

However, I have examined Dr. Cowan's rather categorical statements, and I don't see that they fairly represent the complexity of the subject.

Cowan says poisoned cells “excrete debris, which we call viruses” and the latest research on exosomes and viruses says exactly that.

Cowan cites a talk by the Director of the NIH (National Institutes of Health) on “the complexity of viruses,” but I have not found such a talk.

The only NIH studies I have found related to viruses and exosomes and extracellular vesicles describe how viruses use these excretions to penetrate cells and travel from

cell to cell, but that's not the equivalent of saying the virus are the same thing as exosomes. Exosomes are also associated with (non-infectious) degenerative diseases. None of the proves that infectious viruses don't exist. There is definitely a *relationship* between cellular excretions and viruses, but there does not appear to be a reductionistic identity.

[Exosomes in Toxicology: Relevance to Chemical Exposure and Pathogenesis of Environmentally Linked Diseases](#) July, 2017

[Extracellular vesicles are the Trojan horses of viral infection](#) 2016

[Exosomes in viral disease](#) 2016

[Extracellular vesicles and viruses: Are they close relatives?](#) 2016

[The Role of Extracellular Vesicles in Viral Infection and Transmission](#) 2019

Dr Cowan cites talk on the human virome to show that viruses are internally generated

In his March 26 webinar, Cowan refers to a 2015 NIH talk by Dr. Herbert (Skip) Virgin. "[The mammalian virome in genetic analysis in health and disease pathogenesis.](#)" One takeaway from this talk is that there exists a human "virome," an ecology of viruses co-existing with the human organism in a similar way that bacteria make up our "microbiome." Another takeaway is that this is a very complex situation, in which some genetic material from viruses becomes embedded in our own genetic material. Many of the internal viruses that Dr. Virgin describes are bacteriophages, viruses that attack bacteria, which can be either helpful or not. It appears that just as there are beneficial bacteria and harmful bacteria, the same can be said for these viruses. So, that begs the question if disease viruses are invaders from the outside or already exist in the human body. Dr. Cowan concedes that either or both could be true, but then he concludes that the tests for the virus associated with COVID-19 must be bogus because the genetic material it tests must already be present in everyone. I don't see that Dr. Virgin's talk supports that conclusion. I don't know how reliable the tests are. But that is not proof that there is no infection.

Dr. Cowan then moves to the idea that viruses are internally-generated "messengers" from the cells to alert others cells or organisms to some toxic situation. That's an interesting hypothesis, and it might well be part of the disease phenomena. But it doesn't prove that the disease is not infectious. It is simply another explanation of disease transmission.

Conclusion

We are understandably suspicious of "official" information from mass media, the government and pharma. We know that conventional medical science has a very limited and one-sided view of health and disease. However, we need to use our critical thinking (as Rudolf Steiner admonished us) to avoid overly simplistic and one-sided thinking in reaction. Dr. Cowan asks some important questions and has offered many helpful

insights for creating health, but he undermines his case by the distortions I have described.

There is no contradiction between being concerned about the effects of 5G and other environmental stresses and acknowledging that it is highly likely that COVID-19 is infectious and measures to limit its spread are important. We can follow public health guidelines, while at the same time considering all the other health factors that help us maintain our integrity in face of environmental stress, enhance our life forces, create emotional balance, and access our inner sources of spiritual strength, and dealing with the massive social, political and economic crises as much as we are able..

You might be interested in a [blog post](#) I made several weeks ago about some of the psychological and spiritual issues related to Dr. Bach's work and flower essences in times of crisis like these.

Wishing you wellness and inner strength to face today's challenges.

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PS: I welcome comments and feel free to share this.