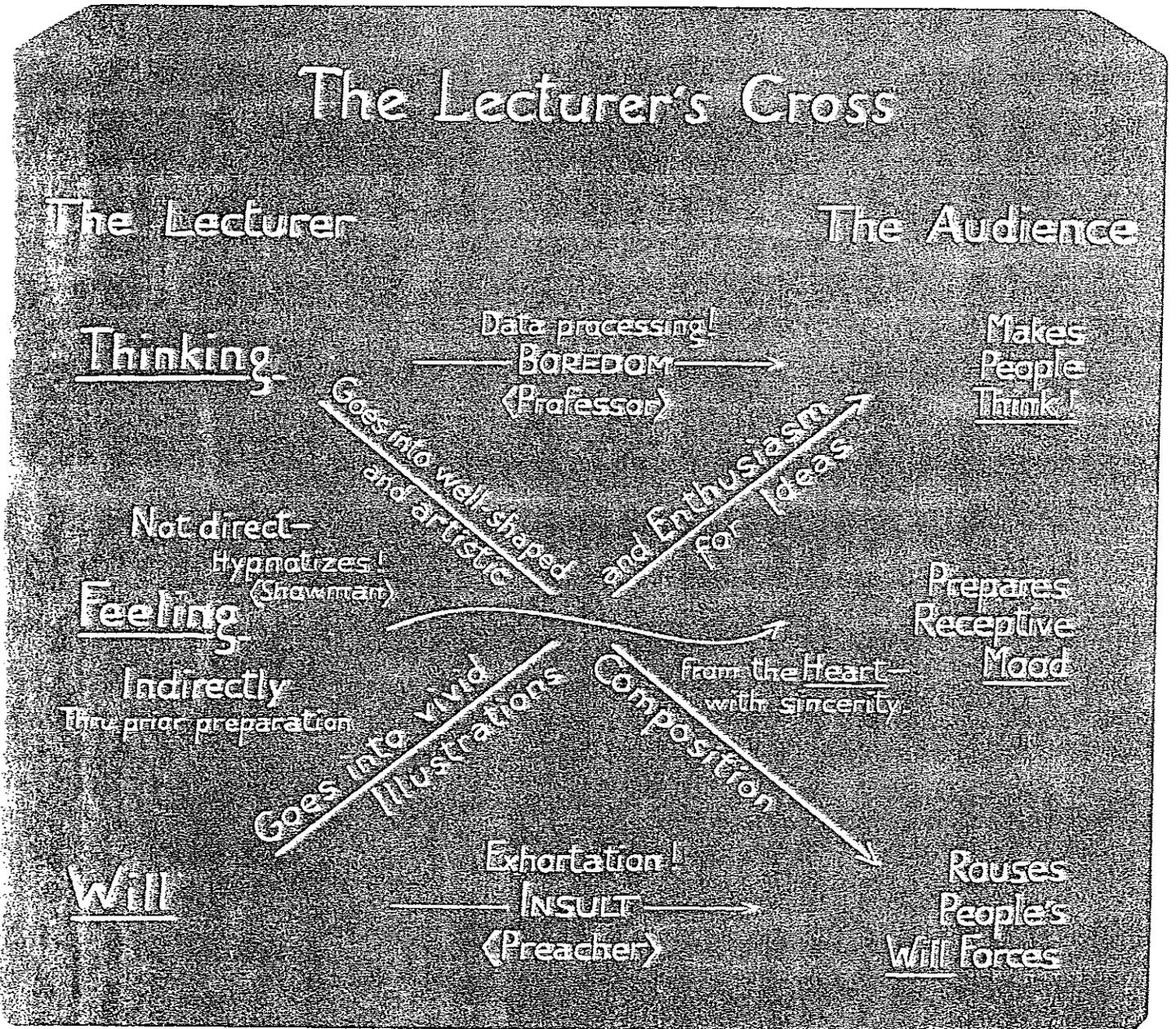


AN OUTLINE OF THE PRECEDING LECTURE

by GEORGE O'NEIL

This outline of the preceding lecture was prepared for the Speakers' Group of the New York Branch, to emphasize the main points.



Your *thought-work* goes into composition: creating an art-form.
This works on the audience's will. — "So clear I could do it myself."

Your *will effort* pours into your enthusiasm, into good illustrations.
This makes people think. They remember your stories and talk about it.

Feelings are to be roused on the thought-content presented.
— Never directly, by voice, gesture or display.



Leitmotif—

For him who will's to work
with those who guide
the future of mankind:

Bring forth
Spirit-Potentials
within yourself—

And so achieve
the power to awaken
dormant faculties
in others.

Cultivate the seed-points
Foster forces of growth
Recognize futurity.

it lives, even though it may take lifetimes to ripen, it will be a force, a social leaven. Much that now seems hopeless may prove possible because it is there.

CORRELATING CONFIGURATION WITH CONTEXT

THE LANGUAGE OF FORMS

by GEORGE O'NEIL

"What comes forth in graphic forms can, for impetus in art seen by and large, be the same as that expressed in thoughts, only the thoughts then must be saturated with life, and the forms must breathe spirit."

IN ESSENCE the anthroposophic graphic forms are meditative 'Sinnbilder', meaningful images in modern guise. They speak to the soul, spiritually awake. They cannot appeal directly to the intellect, they depict nothing naturalistic. They mean nothing or anything to thinking dependent on representations derived from the senses. They, however, can do something. In so far as they breathe spirit they bear within them meaning of a higher kind. Once this works deeply into the aetheric life of the observer, they ray out an ideal magical power.

How to approach this inner living spirit, in these new art forms, is the question. Rudolf Steiner in the above quotation (from 'Illustrierende Kuenstler', p.29) makes a suggestion. Thoughts genuinely saturated with life, living thoughts, exist in the same sphere of reality where these spirit-permeated forms have their being.

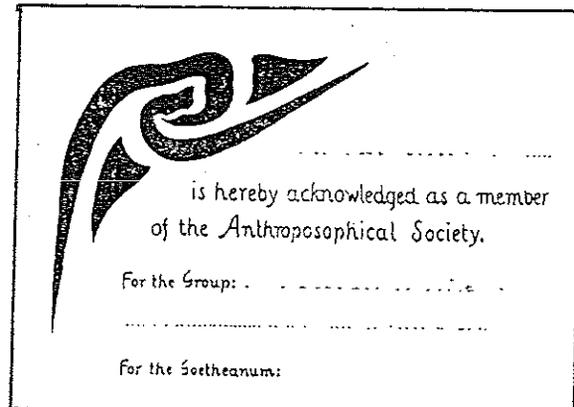
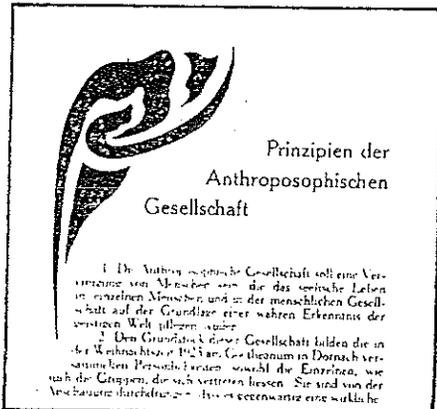
Much discussion has revolved about the nature of living-thinking. Much confusion also and lip service. Life-imbued thought is surely the very heart-force of the new spirit stream from which anthroposophy emerges. To those of us whose thoughts are admittedly abstract and lifeless, however pertinent, clear, and ordered, this offers many frustrating problems. Through what powers then can thinking be reborn, imbued again with its own life? How can the logos-force transform our dry logic-light of words?

Again and again in the literature this living-thinking is characterized: its shape-producing force, its metamorphic traits, its laws of polarity and enhancement. It is the WAY beyond the WHAT, it is said, the meta-hodus, the method in which thought-pictures are form-ulated, articulated into words, that charms forth life. Livingness in thinking must manifest shape and organism. And, as seen in living nature, where in the magical array of forms we discover the key to life, so also must it be in literature and in the imagistic arts.

When the living significance breathing through these Goetheanum art-forms is once experienced, their power to awaken an artistic sense

for spirit-substance of that for which they were composed to illustrate, is set free to work. Be it a Society Idea, a Branch Ideal, or a dynamic motif for a School of Spirit Science.

THE SOCIETY IDEA



Observe the form appearing on the cover of the Principles of the Society, and on the card acknowledging membership. The one is vertical in black and white, the other is horizontal in complementary green on rose. One is classic, severe, more apollinian, the other dynamic, dionysian, a polarity of thought and will, of understanding and commitment.

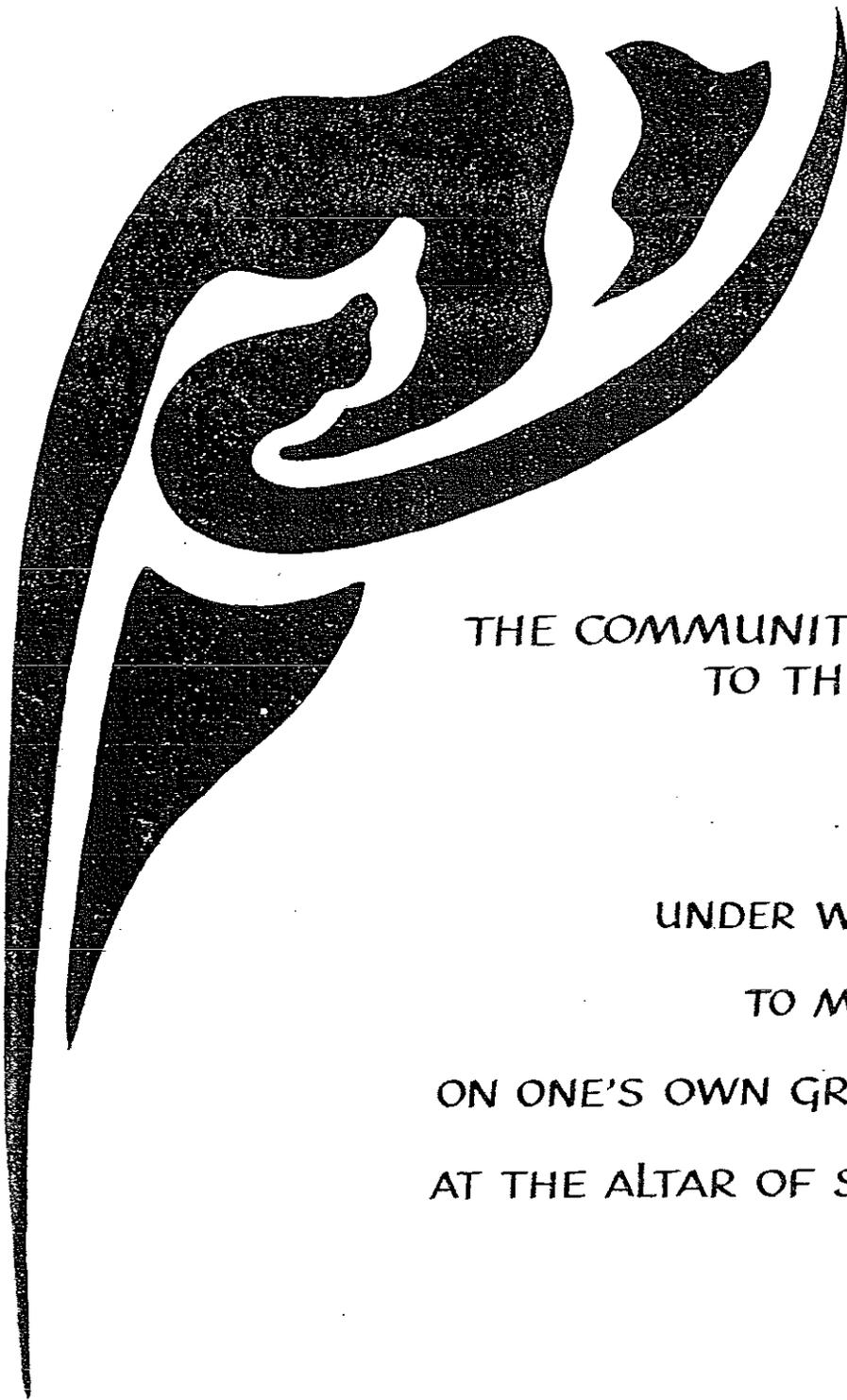
Much can be read in the literature on the meaning of membership and the task of the Society. The 'Letters to Members' for one; but of long tradition are the pictures from Goethe's Green Serpent Tale, presumably a ray of inspiration from the closing festival of Michael's heavenly school. Later to be a crystalizing seed for the Mystery Dramas. The taming and transmutation of the Green Snake forces in everyman's instinctive nature is an old, old Mystery Glyph.

Four elements are seen. Entering into them, they appear as: a base, an active form, one acted upon, and another looking on. Together they read: a place of enactment of a higher upon a lower under guiding awareness. Gradually emerges a figure of head, shoulders, and two arms; a plump and not unkindly serpent with a bump on its nose; with an angelic shape admonishing; over an altar place.

The society-membership process is evidently a self-transformation of the instinctive personality forces. In a place where soul and spirit experience is sought, people come closer than in outer life. Rough edges are chastened, corner lopped, destinies accelerated. People wake up on each other. The anguish of self-knowledge becomes inescapable. The doing something about yourself becomes a way of life.

The image then speaks -- a clear, an unequivocal word - SELFLESSNESS - the individual freeing himself from the personal and the calculating serpentine, the ambitious Lucifer in the astral soul.

This would be the Society hope, the idea of membership.



THE COMMUNITY CHALLENGE
TO THE INDIVIDUAL

UNDER WISE GUIDANCE
TO MAKE A FRIEND
ON ONE'S OWN GREEN SERPENT
AT THE ALTAR OF SELFLESSNESS

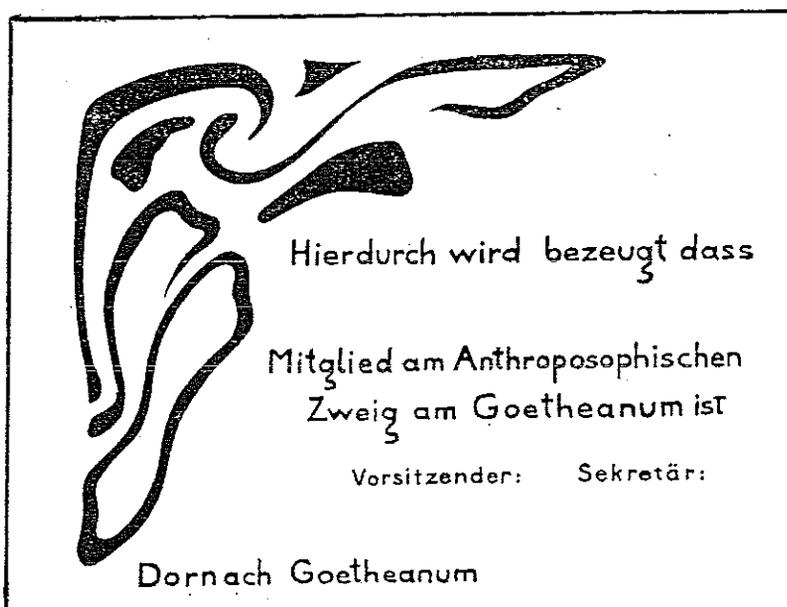
The Cover Design for the Principles of the Society - 1924

THE BRANCH IDEAL

UNDERSTANDING the social unit within a spiritually oriented Society is quite simple. Individuals of varying skills, aptitudes, and maturity, band together to teach and to provide avenues of interchange between men and hierarchical beings. The difficulty arises in PRACTICE. Without recognition of one's own limitations and right evaluation of the capacities and functions of others, no vision of the whole can be held. The whole falls prey to the foibles of the parts.

But the word spoken by the Branch form, if allowed to echo in the hearts of the participants, can become an awakening power. Self-knowledge and self-dedication can be its fruits.

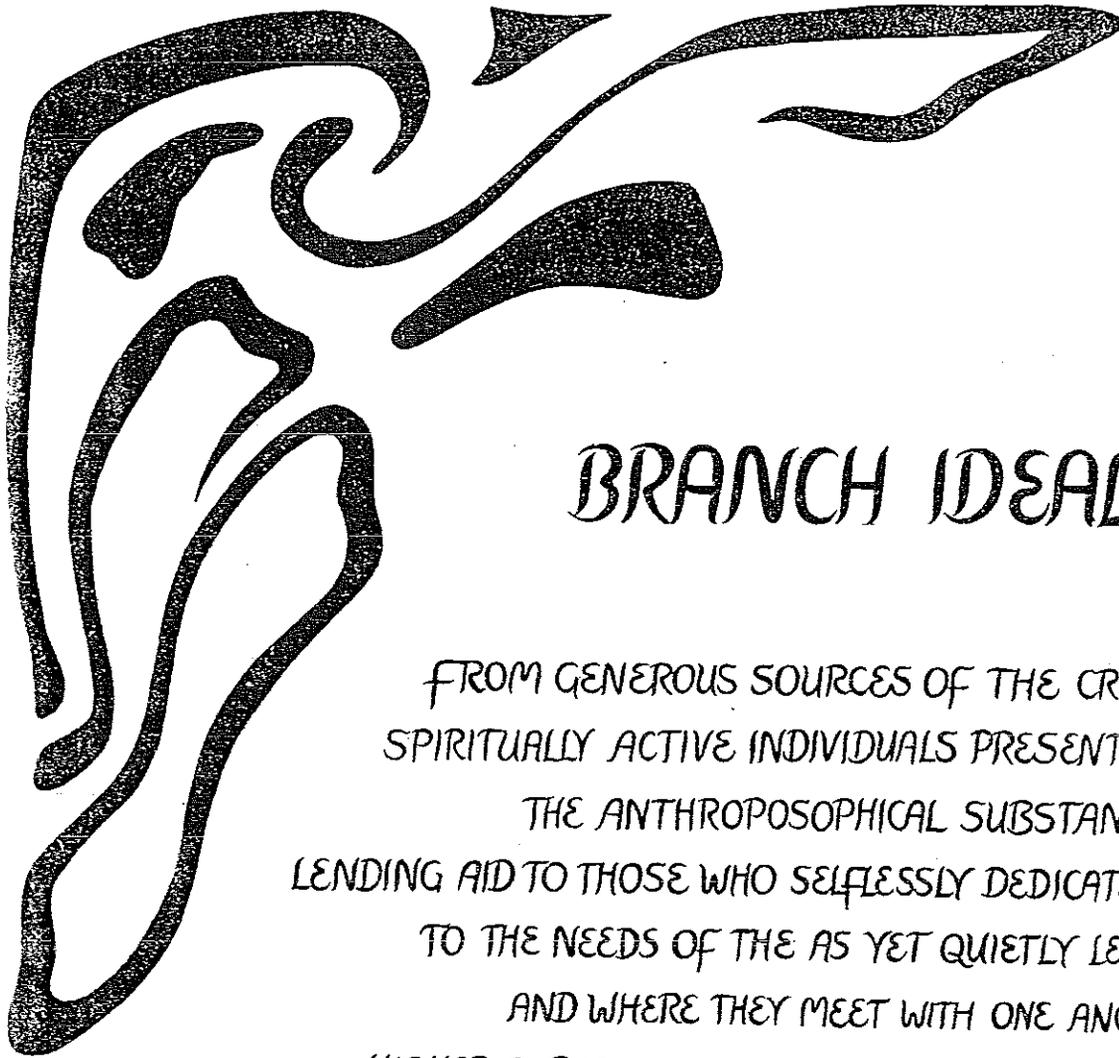
The context of course is work within the Society, work on the anthroposophical substance itself, in that idea form that speaks to modern consciousness. Practical applications, all the wondrous 'doings' of anthroposophy once achieved, as human capacity, fall outside the essential scope of Branch life. The ideal here is an intentional interplay between humans and guiding forces.



Seen on the Branch membership card is a seven-fold form. Four flowing and interrelating ones and three provisional shapes, picturing the condition of man as he is so far.

An enclosed, self-enveloped form on the left is ministered to by a more active gesturing one, which in turn receives its impulses from a dynamic corner form, that reaches yet higher into the hand of the free swirling shape at the top. A continual interplay of giving and receiving. And at those mysterious interfaces of meeting souls, where two are gathered, there angels play into destiny, there the magic of insight, love, and sacrifice, enters the community of man.

The Branch Ideal of the living centers of temples to be, was conceived as the well-spring of those mighty powers required by men who would carry a heavenly movement, spirit-born, into a world of kingdoms, of demons, and of men; where past and future now seethe in turmoil.



BRANCH IDEAL

FROM GENEROUS SOURCES OF THE CREATIVE ONES -
SPIRITUALLY ACTIVE INDIVIDUALS PRESENT AND DEFEND
THE ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SUBSTANCE RECEIVED -
LENDING AID TO THOSE WHO SELFLESSLY DEDICATE THEMSELVES
TO THE NEEDS OF THE AS YET QUIETLY LEARNING ONES -
AND WHERE THEY MEET WITH ONE ANOTHER, THERE
HIGHER FORCES MINISTRATE LIGHT - WARMTH - DEVOTION

Graphic Form: Goetheanum Branch by R. Steiner

The Language of Graphic Forms* On Reading the Script

by GEORGE O'NEIL

PART ONE

1. CONTEXT AS ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

A thing out of place is either lost, worthless, or becomes a curiosity. A tool increases in value as it nears the place where it can serve. So it is with a word or symbol. Their innate power manifests fully *only* in that place from which they spring. A cryptic title lights up on the cover of a book for which it was composed. There it stirs the fantasy. Likewise, a color-form, a line-shape, epitomizing the *idea* an author has been wrestling to convey. After reading such a book, the cover-design works deeply in the subconscious, summarizing the message as a whole.

But *out of place* is the essence of falsity. Dislocated symbols not only are sterile, they become outright distortions. Ancient temples are infested by demons. However fascinating to the aesthetic eye, a holy thing, once resounding with spiritual life, can become a force of evil when wrongly ensconced. Decadent symbols stare at us from everywhere: pyramids on money, swastikas on flags, fluted columns on houses of commerce!

And these new kinds of graphic form have their right and proper settings. Born as it were, out of a spiritualization of sense experience by a sublimation, for example of the human experience in our *Branch Work*, in our life together in the *Society*, or the ideal inherent in the *School for Spirit Science*, they have their living place of origin wherein their influence lies. Used unguardedly, wrongly placed, they may become a subtle source of discord.

Meaning and power, the life of the word, lie in *context*—not in the symbolizing thing.

2. ON ORIGINS, RECEPTION, AND SUBSEQUENT FATE

In 1919 a book cover carried a simple three-line corner form. By 1924 the *graphical forms* were the recognition mark of anthroposophical books.

Little has been said about them. Little was understood. Perhaps little was asked. To no question, Parcival got no answer. L'Art Nouveau was current at the time. A

*This article was originally published in the NEWSLETTER, Winter '74, in ordinary typescript. It has been long out of print so that frequent requests for additional copies could not be met. The art work was done by Peter Stebbing.

resemblance was there, the element of motion and life seemed common to both. The *forms* were taken aesthetically as insignia, as decor. Their use became arbitrary: on programs, on leaflets, interchangeably on this cover or that, and imitations multiplied.

Forgotten was the possibility that these creations by Rudolf Steiner, at a time when a new impulse was entering the movement, might have the power of speech.

It would seem so obvious that such spirit-imbued forms must be an earthly equivalent of what the seer experiences in higher realms. That they must be a translation into the sense-perceptible artistic, just so far, as to be grasped as gesture-meaning, yet not so far, as to be grasped as concept, as nerve-bound meaning necessary for the printed page.

The day has yet to come, when like the Sphinxes in the Temple Scene, to the consternation of the Hierophants, Goetheanum forms *will speak*. Until then they suffer silently, remaining dumb.

As to what has followed after, of the forms created today, some indeed are genuine, their makers having touched the source, for they do awaken wonder and awe. Of the welter of imitations, perhaps the less said, the better. Obvious it is, they spring from other consciousnesses. And which are these? Anyone who has seriously tried, can observe the dangers of what lurks below the threshold, welling up. Semi-conscious associations, this-es and thats from the storeroom of forgotten things. And coupled with pride and ingenuity, this can produce a catchy clever rendering of a special theme. At worst, sick inspirations, the work of goblins. Even perverse demonic doodles and batwings! And who is there to assume critical responsibility? Who shall set criteria?

3. THE SYMBOL'S POWER TO CHARM FORTH THE WORD

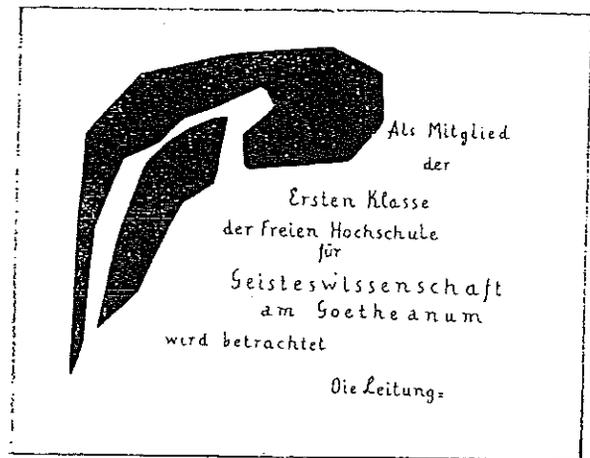
THE SECRET OF THE INTERSPACES

But what of reading? Wherein lies the power of a sign to awaken the word, call forth the picture? Certainly not within the sign or letters themselves. They are scarcely noted by the eye in its rapid course.

Reading, in a higher sense, is certainly a spiritual process. An interpretation of the inner motions of one's own gesture organism. The *word* resounds from within, as response to what is being done. The *shape* itself is the magical agent, the *doer*.

And the *action* lies not in the form itself but in the relationships, the subtle interplays, in the spaces in between. These are felt as filled with tensions, openings, and holdings. Even attentions, or points of consciousness, picked up by the eye.

A comparison of transformations, of two metamorphic forms, can be especially fruitful. For between two such forms, whole worlds of imagination pour forth.



4. DESCRIBE AND COMPARE

Observe the *masthead form* (left), in vivid black, intensified by a contrasting background-white. Vertical, balanced, poised. Cognitive in character. Apollonian. A great form enveloping a lesser, with a mighty gesture above, drawing upward, protecting and guiding.

Observe the *blue card form* (right), in antique gold, shimmered over by an etheric orange from the complementary light-blue background. The guiding form now grown mightier on the right, horizontally working, off balance, in motion, a dynamic of will. Dionysian.

Consider now the shapes themselves: the lesser having the aspect of a shoot, a sprout, a germinating seedling. A thing in its beginning, a striving force. Its point of consciousness above, reaching. The greater has its point of consciousness midway, between two arms as it were, one positional, the other massive with intent.

To the onlooker, mirrored as things are in fantasy and in spirit, the greater form would picture the experience of Self within the limits of clear awareness, in the motions of our own two arms and head. (An impression similar arises for the eurythmist in gesturing with the arms.) To heightened imagination, a hint is given of Spherical Man, a reflected image of the Spirit "I" at work upon a lesser form—an other being in process of becoming.

And thus there stirs a sense of *the riddle*: how to read, how to interpret? What of the black and the gold? Of the context: Goetheanum School and Class? What was the message intended?

5. ON LOOKING BACK

The crisis that led to the establishment of the present organization of the Society arose out of a sudden growth after the first War, and a fervid expansion into practical fields. Irreconcilable differences arose between the old and new, between age and youth, esotericists and exotericists. Those who had built the Old Goetheanum, per-

formed on the stage, created in the arts, stood in contrast to those absorbed in the sciences, in medicine, in pharmacy, or farming. In addition there were those school teachers with their flocks, and the priests with theirs! And those philosophers, poets, and literary enthusiasts as well. And indeed many more.

By what magical spell could order and harmony and common accord be established among such diverse array? One and all, separately, were devoted to anthropology and to the man, Rudolf Steiner, but not together! An archetypal human situation. Human that is, cum Lucifer, untransmuted.

On looking back, isn't it interestingly symptomatic, that during this very period, the graphic forms started appearing on the myriad papers circulating among members. Newspapers, weeklies, monthlies, book covers, letter-heads, programs, even street posters! All blossoming forth with distinctive markings. To the spectator, there was no question: it was "anthroposophisch"! The source was clear. What a powerful *external* identifying force! We are one, it said. A force that worked all the stronger, so little being said or explained. But how was this craftsman of the forms who had chosen the role of teacher, and had kept himself strictly aloof for a decade from all administration, how was he to bring *inner* unity into this wayward human diversity? By what miracle of organization could it be done?

6. ANCIENT ORDERS OF BODY AND SOUL

A moment's reflection on an earlier structure can cast some light: *the Monastic Orders*. The Dominicans, a teaching youth-movement in Aquinas' time, and the Cistercians dedicated to the land, each highly diversified within themselves, scattered widely, with complex administrative responsibilities!

What miraculous matrix kept these Orders intact for hundreds of years? Scarcely conceivable to us individualists today, it was the power of the *robe*, the *vow*, and the *ritual*. Members were first of all *united in devotion*—only

secondarily *specialists in their fields*. Such a communal principle, based on unions of body and unions of soul; could still be effective at the end of the fourth epoch, no longer, by and large, for the consciousness of the fifth, in our time. A throwback was out of the question, yet an equivalent had to be found.

The above is relevant, inasmuch as oral tradition has it: the formation of "an Order" was one possibility envisioned.

7. CULTUS OF GOD AND CULTUS OF MAN

The community-building power of the cultic enactment, the church rituals, was a theme that came to expression when the Community for Religious Renewal was formed and was finding its place in the movement. At that time an even greater power was pointed to: a unifying principle working spiritually in the shared act of cognition itself: the cognitive ritual.

One brought down spirit-substance and life visibly before the eyes of men; the other raised spirit-realities experienced in life by men, up into the sphere of the Angeloi.

One was the opposite of the other. The latter came to be known as the "Umgekehrte Kultus," the ritual in reverse. It was the group experience of the Idea as organic Gestalt—a thought-drama so intense as to have seemingly taken on a reality whose presence could be felt. Two *Wahrspruchworte* embody this:

"Truths experienced together are forces of life for striving men. . . ."

"Becoming aware of the Idea in reality is the true communion of man."

Later, in those epistles to the Branches, the Letters to Members, this theme pervades the messages, calling for *more* Anthroposophy, a living interplay of thought between participants, to evoke in the room the *atmosphere* of wonder and awe, that magical "Schwellenluft," or the breeze-off-the-threshold (as Hermann Poppebaum was used to call it). This was *ritual of man*, a spiritualization of human experience, with the wondrous gift of uniting in insight those separate and alone.

But again how indeed, was this principle to be incorporated in a vast and dispersed Society?

8. THE NEW DIRECTION: THE IDEA AND THE IDEAL

An answer came Christmas of twenty-three, when an esoteric School was formed whose directors were to administer a world-wide Society, open to all of good will.

Each of the diverse fields of endeavor to be centered in that School, each with its Section and its Head. These in turn were to be united in a central body, devoted to a common striving. Cultivation of *the way*, the path of

knowledge, a common spiritual goal. Classes, as they were called, would present the experiences of *man on the path*, not in purely conceptual form, as depicted in such writings as *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, but in a form more imaginative, more closely approximating, what the seer himself encounters and must then translate into idea-form to communicate to others. This shared experience of the Class was to be the bonding force, a karma-building, cognitive enactment, nearing in character the Imaginative, Inspirational, and Intuitive reality of the *way of initiation*.

The *striving will* to tread the path by mastery first of the basic teachings in conceptual thought was the presumed condition for membership in this inner Order of Brothers on the Path. And time would show who among these could bear the responsibility of carrying the message abroad, who had understood the *task*, and had insight into the needs of the *times*. At first there were only a few who received a certificate signed by Rudolf Steiner, authorizing them to speak to the public in the name of the Anthroposophical Society! This then was the reservoir of growing talent from which people were to emerge to administer the affairs of the Society, to work in the circles wherever members came together, and to transform their practical fields of endeavour.

Such was the archetype, the *idea in form to be*. Its realization as effective *ideal* was to take years maturing. These years were not at hand. The nine months left were insufficient but to build a scaffolding. The uniting flow of energy was never released. By the following year the administrators of the Society and of the School were on their own. And the history of the Society is witness to the strivings of men, challenged to work together and having to find their ways alone.

9. QUO VADIS?

By way of many biographic incidents, one can observe these two life principles pervading the life of the man himself, Rudolf Steiner:

Cultivate your own spiritual potentials brought with you or bestowed upon you, in order that destiny may permit you to be of help in the strivings of others. Be not dismayed by the accidental, go for the hearts of people and events, where the future is burgeoning. Reach for the inner realities!

In the depth of being, all men have this striving in common. It is the spiritual bond coming with the karma of the past, and forming the karma to be, that really can unite the Spirit-Soul race. We were together once, we've participated in heavenly schoolings, the future was there potentially implanted, that world of living spiritual thoughts is here, today, now—the great awakener, the creator of spirit-community, for those with inner initiative.

Such vision, such words here touched on so hesitatingly, so unsurely, seem to arise as nimbus about the dynamic motif of the Class and School; for whose existence the man through whom the teachings flowed, gave

of his own life substance. They stand as challenge to everyone of us, they speak to each of us: Will you too, not strengthen what has been given you, that you too, may be called by destiny to create. . . .

PUBLICATIONS

THE STAGES OF HIGHER KNOWLEDGE by Rudolf Steiner. Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, N.Y. Third printing 1981; 58 pages; \$4.50.

THEOSOPHY OF THE ROSICRUCIAN by Rudolf Steiner; 14 lectures given in Munich, from 22nd May to 6th June 1907. Reprinted by Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1981; 168 pages; \$11.95.

The Stages of Higher Knowledge was planned as a sequel to the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*. In the sequel, three stages of cognition beyond our ordinary knowledge are distinguished and described. These higher stages are given the names Imaginative, Inspirational, and Intuitive Knowledge.

The text is carefully introduced by prefaces and notes. Marie Steiner's introduction describes with clarity the historical position of this text, both in the development of mankind's striving for a conscious connection with the spiritual world and in the biographical evolution of Rudolf Steiner's work. She also reviews the change in the role of the esoteric teacher toward the searching soul. She describes the historic metamorphosis from the authoritative hierophant and his neophyte in the ancient Mysteries, to the freedom and self-reliance of the modern seeker on the Christian path.

The Translator's Note points out two problems of which the English reader should be aware. One concerns the difficult translation of the philosophical term *Vorstellung*. The other explains why Rudolf Steiner's original, rather lengthy paragraphing has been retained in the English edition. The structure of this paragraphing reveals a rhythmical repetition of introductions, high points, and echoing relationships, which subtly enhance the development of the theme.

The book remains a fragment. It ends with a short outline of Intuitive cognition. However, in the four chapters which this book comprises, the challenges and the risks of this path to the higher stages of knowledge are clearly spelled out.

In lectures given in 1923, Rudolf Steiner pictured the early years of the anthroposophic movement at the beginning of the century with these words: "the fresh, new, burgeoning, sprouting life of the movement's first phase." *The Stages of Higher Knowledge* is an early book of Rudolf Steiner. It breathes the life of the movement's first phase.

—Dora Kimmich, *Spring Valley, NY*

Of the period in his life when this cycle of lectures was given, Rudolf Steiner wrote that it was "a time in which I stood with all the forces of the soul under the impression of the facts and Beings of the spiritual world that were drawing close to me. Out of the experience of the spiritual world in general, there developed specific details of knowledge."

The 14 lectures in this cycle provide an abundance of these "specific details of knowledge." They are not presented, of course, simply to provide facts that can be absorbed in a self-satisfying way, but to offer material that the conscientious seeker can use in furthering spiritual development. The title *Theosophy of the Rosicrucian* might mislead some. One finds in the lectures many insights that go far beyond what is to be found in conventional theosophy, and they have little to do with popularized or historic Rosicrucianism. Nevertheless, Rudolf Steiner states clearly that the study of the spiritual knowledge he presents is a first stage toward a Rosicrucian initiation, appropriate for our times. He says, "It is the instrument which is to work creatively for future civilization." And again, "Rosicrucian theosophy does not try to arouse the feelings, but through the stupendous facts of the spiritual worlds to let the feelings themselves begin to resound."

The polarity of Man and World comes to expression in the two halves of the cycle. The first seven lectures deal with the constitution of man, his experience after death, his rebirth, and the laws of destiny and karma. Rudolf Steiner answers the question of whether acceptance of karma implies fatalism by saying, "We are the slaves of the past, but we are the lords of the future."

The second seven lectures trace the evolution of man and world through seven planetary incarnations. Specific indications are given on such themes as the origin of the solar plexus, the nature of blood, and the development of future organs. In lecture 14, on "The Nature of Initiation," Rudolf Steiner discusses the fact that in our present stage of consciousness, "A longing was left in the soul to penetrate again into spiritual realms." He describes and contrasts the seven stages of the Christian path to initiation with the seven stages of the Rosicrucian path and explains why the latter is more suited to modern man.