

## Colour

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Section Begins

Lecture I

### Colour-Experience

*(Erlebnis)*

Colour, the subject of these three lectures, interests the physicist and — though we shall not speak of it from this aspect today — it interests also — or should do — the psychologist; more than all these, it must interest the artist, the painter. In a survey of the modern idea of the world of colour, we notice that although the psychologist may, admittedly, have something to say about the subjective experience of colour this is nevertheless of no value for the knowledge of the objective nature of the world of colour — a knowledge which really lies only in the province of the physicist. In the first place, Art is not allowed to decide anything at all about the nature of colour and its quality in the objective sense. At the present time people are very far from what Goethe intended in his oft-repeated utterance: “The man to whom Nature begins to reveal her open secret feels an irresistible longing for her most worthy interpreter — Art.”

Any one who, like Goethe, really lives in art, can never doubt that what the artist has to say about the world of colour must be bound up with the nature of colour. In ordinary life colour is dealt with according to the surface of the objects presenting themselves to us as coloured, according to the impressions received through the nature of the coloured object. We obtain the colour fluctuating, in a sense, varying, as it were, through the well-known prismatic experiment, and we look into, or try to look into the world of colour in many ways. In so doing we have always in mind the idea that we ought to estimate colour according to subjective impressions. For a long time it has been the custom — we might say, the mischievous custom — in some places, to contend that what we perceive as a coloured world really exists only for our senses, whereas in the world outside, objective colour presents nothing but certain undulatory movements of the very finest substance, known as ether. Any one who wishes to form an idea from definitions and explanations such as these is able to make nothing of the concept that what he knows as colour-impressions, his personal experience of colour, has to do with some kind of ether in motion. Yet when people speak of the quality of colour, they really have only the subjective impression in mind, and seek for something objective. They then wander away from colour, however, for in all the vibrations of ether which are thought out, there is really nothing further from the content of our real world of colour. In order to arrive at the objective nature of colour we must try to keep to the world of colour itself and not leave it; then we may hope to fathom its real nature.

Let us try for a while to sink ourselves into something which can be given us from the whole wide, varied world of colour. Then in order to penetrate into the nature of colour, we must experience something in regard to it which raises the whole consideration into our life of feeling. We must try to question our feeling as to what colour is in our surrounding world. In a sense we shall best proceed by means of an inward experiment, so that we may have before us not only the processes which on the whole are difficult to

analyze and are not easily seen, but we will proceed at once to the essential thing. Suppose we colour a flat surface green. We shall only sketch this roughly. (see Diagram 1) If we simply allow the colour to stimulate our feelings, we can experience something in green as such, something which we need not define further. No one will doubt that we can *experience* the same thing when gazing on the green plant-covering of the earth; we must do so, of course, because it is green. We *must* disregard everything else offered by the plants, as we only wish to look at the greenness. Let us suppose we have this greenness before our mental eyes.

Diagram 1  
Click image for large view

When painting, we can introduce different colours into this greenness. Let us picture three. We have before us three green surfaces. Into the first we will introduce red; into the second, peach-blossom colour; into the third, blue.

You must admit that the sensation aroused is very different in the three cases, that there is a certain quality of sensation when red, peach-blossom colour, or blue forms are pictured in the green. It is now a question of expressing in some way the content of the sensation thus presented to our soul.

If we wish to express such a thing as this, we must try to characterize it, for extremely little can be attained by abstract definitions. We must try to describe it somehow. Let us try to do so by bringing a little imagination into what we have painted before us. Suppose we really wish to produce the sensation of a green surface in the first place, and in it we paint red figures. Whether we give them red faces and red skin, or whether we paint them entirely red, is immaterial. In the first example we paint red figures; in the second, peach-blossom colour — which would approximate human flesh-colour — and on the third green surface we paint blue figures. We are not copying Nature in this experiment, but placing something before the soul in order to bring a complex of sensation into discussion. Suppose we have before us this landscape: Across a green meadow red, peach-blossom colour or blue figures are passing; in each of the three cases we have an utterly different complex of sensation. If we look at the first we shall say: These red figures in the green meadow enliven the whole of it. The meadow is greener because of them; it becomes still more saturated with green, more vivid because red figures are there, and we ought to be enraged on seeing these red figures. We may say: That is really nonsense, an impossible case. I should really have to make the red figures like lightning, they must be *moving*. Red figures at rest in a green meadow act disturbingly in their repose, for they are already in motion by reason of their red colour; they produce something in the meadow which it is really impossible to picture at rest. We must come into a very definite complex of feeling if we wish to make such a concept at all.

The second example is harmonious. The peach-blossom coloured figures can stand there indefinitely; if they stand there for an hour it does not trouble us. Our sensation tells us that these peach-blossom coloured figures have really no special conditions; they do not disturb the meadow, they do not enhance its greenness, they are quite neutral. They may stand where they will, it does not trouble us. They suit the meadow everywhere; they have no inner connection with the green meadow.

We pass on to the third; we look at the blue figures in the green meadow. That does not last long, for the blue figures deaden the green meadow to us. The greenness of the meadow is weakened. It does not remain green. Let us try to realize the right imagination of blue figures walking over a green meadow; or blue beings generally, they might be blue spirits. The meadow ceases to be green, it takes on some of the blueness, it becomes itself bluish, it ceases to be green. If the figures stay there long we can no longer picture them at all; we have the idea that there must be somewhere an abyss, and that the blue figures take the meadow from us, carry it away and cast it into the abyss. It becomes impossible; for a green meadow cannot remain if blue figures stand there; they take it away with them. That is colour-experience. It must be possible to have it, otherwise we shall not understand the world of colour. If we wish to acquaint ourselves with something which finds its most beautiful and significant application in imagination, we must be able to experiment in that sphere. We must be able to ask ourselves: What happens to a green meadow when red figures walk therein? It becomes still greener; it becomes very real in its greenness. The green begins veritably to burn. The red figures bring so much life into the greenness that we cannot think of them in repose. They must really be running about. If we wish to portray it exactly and to paint the true picture of the meadow, we should not paint red figures standing quietly in it; they must be seen dancing in a ring. A ring of red dancers would be permissible in a green meadow.

On the other hand, people clothed not in red but entirely in flesh-colour might stand for all eternity in a green meadow. They are quite neutral to the green; they are absolutely indifferent to the meadow; it remains as it is, not the slightest tint is altered.

In the case of the blue figures, however, they run from us with the meadow, for the entire meadow loses its greenness because of them. We must, of course, speak comparatively when speaking of experiences in colour. We cannot talk like pedants about colour-experiences, for we cannot approach them so. We must speak in analogy — not, indeed, as those who say that one billiard ball pushes another; stags push, also bullocks and buffaloes, but not billiard balls in actual fact. Nevertheless, in Physics we speak of a “thrust” because everywhere we need the support of analogy if we are to begin to speak at all.

Now this makes it possible to see something in the world of colour itself, as such. There is something in that world which we shall have to seek as the nature of colour. Let us take a very characteristic colour, one we have already in mind, the colour which meets us everywhere in summer as the most attractive — green. We find it in plants; we are accustomed to regard it as characteristic of them. There is no other such intimate connection as that of greenness with the plant. We do not feel it as a necessity that certain animals which are green could *only* be green; we have always the subconscious thought that they might be some other colour; but as regards the plants our idea is that greenness belongs to them, that it is something peculiarly their own. Let us endeavour by means of the plants to penetrate into the objective nature of colour — as a rule the subjective nature alone is sought.

What is the plant, which thus, as it were, presents green to us? We know from Spiritual Science that the plant owes its existence to the fact that it has an etheric body in addition to its physical body. It is this etheric body which really lives in the plant; but the etheric body is not itself green. The element which gives the plant its greenness is, indeed, in its physical body, making green peculiar to the plant, but in reality it cannot be the essential

nature of the plant, for that lies in the etheric body. If the plant had no etheric body it would be a mineral. In its mineral nature the plant manifests itself through green. The etheric body is quite a different colour, but it presents itself to us by means of the mineral green of the plant. If we study the plant in relation to its etheric body, if we study its greenness in this connection, we must say: if we set on the one hand the essential nature of the plant, and on the other the greenness, dividing it abstractly, taking the greenness from the plant, it is really as though we simply made an image of something; in the greenness withdrawn from the etheric we have really only an image of the plant, and this image peculiar to it is necessarily green. We really find in greenness the image of the plant. While we ascribe the colour green very positively to the plant, we must ascribe greenness to the *image* of the plant and must seek in the greenness the special nature of the plant-image.

Here we come to something very important. Anyone entering the portrait gallery of some ancient castle — such as may still frequently be seen — will not fail to say that the portraits are only the portraits of the ancestors, not the ancestors themselves. As a rule, the ancestors are not there, only their portraits are to be found. In the same way, we no more have the entity of the plant in the green than we have the ancestors in the portraits. Now let us reflect that the greenness is characteristic of the plant, and that of all beings the plant is the being of *life*. The animal possesses a soul; man has both spirit and soul. The mineral has no life. The plant is a being of which life is the special characteristic. The animal has, in addition, a soul. The mineral has as yet no soul. Man has, in addition to the soul, a spirit. We cannot say of man, of the animal or of the mineral, that its peculiar feature is life; it is something else. In the case of the plant its characteristic is life. The green colour is the image. Thus we remain entirely within the world of objective fact in saying that green represents the lifeless image of life.

We have now — we will proceed *inductively*, if we wish to express ourselves in a scholarly way — we have now gained something by means of which we can place this colour objectively in the world. When I receive a photograph I can say that it is a portrait of Mr. N. In the same way we can say that green is the lifeless image of life. We do not now think merely of the subjective impression, but we realize that green is the lifeless image of life.

Let us now take peach-blossom colour. More exactly, let us call it the colour of the human skin; of course, it is not the same for all people, but this colour, speaking generally, is that of the human skin. Let us endeavour to arrive at its essential nature. As a rule we see this human skin-colour only from outside. The question now arises as to whether a consciousness of it, a knowledge of it, can be gained from within, as we did in relation to the green of the plant. It can, indeed, be done in the following way.

If a man really tries to imagine himself inwardly ensouled, and thinks of this ensouling as passing into his physical bodily form, he can imagine that in some way that which ensouls him flows into this form. He expresses himself by pouring his soul-nature into his form in the flesh-colour. What this means can best be realized by looking at a man in whom the psychic nature is withdrawn somewhat and does not ensoul the outer form. What colour does he then become? Green; he becomes green. Life is there, but he becomes green. We speak of green men; we know the peculiar green of the complexion when the soul is withdrawn; we can see this very well by the colour of the complexion. On the other hand, the more a person assumes the special florid tint, the more we shall notice his experience

of this tint. If you observe the constitutional humour in a green person and in one who has a really fresh flesh-colour, you will see that the soul experiences itself in the flesh-colour. That which rays outwards in the colour of the skin is none other than the man's self-experience. We may say that in flesh-colour we have before us the image of the soul, really the image of the soul. If, however, we go far into the world around, we must select the lifeless peach-blossom colour for that which appears as human flesh-colour. We do not really find it in external objects. What appears as human flesh-colour we can only attain by various tricks of painting. It is the image of the soul-nature, but it is not the soul itself; there can be no doubt about that. It is the living image of the soul. The soul experiences itself in flesh-colour. It is not lifeless like the green of the plant, for if a man withdraws his soul more and more he becomes green. He can become a corpse. In flesh-colour we have the living. Thus peach-blossom colour represents the living image of the soul.

We have now passed on to another colour. We endeavour to keep objectively to the colour, not merely to reflect upon the subjective impression and then to invent some kind of undulations which are then supposed to be objective. It is palpable that it is an absurdity to separate human experience from flesh-colour. The experience in the body is quite different when the colour of the flesh is ruddy and when it is greenish. There is an inward entity which really presents itself in the colour.

We now pass on to the third colour, blue, and say: We cannot in the first place find a being to which blue is peculiar as green is to the plant. Nor can we speak of blue as we have spoken of the peach-blossom-like flesh-colour of man. In the case of animals we do not find a colour as innate to the animal as green is to the plant and flesh-colour to man. We cannot in this way start from blue in regard to Nature. We nevertheless wish to go forward; we will see whether we can proceed still further in our search into the essential nature of colour. We cannot continue by way of blue, but it is possible to proceed first of all to the light colours; we shall, however, progress more easily and quickly if we take the colour known as white. We cannot say that white is peculiar to any being in the outer world. We might turn to the mineral kingdom, but we will try in another way to form an objective idea of white. If we have white before us and expose it to the light, if we simply throw light upon it, we feel that it has a certain relationship to light. At first this remains a feeling. It will at once become more than a feeling if we turn to the sun, which appears tinged quite distinctly in the direction of white, and to which we must trace back all the natural illumination of our world.

We might say that what appears to us as sun, what manifests itself as white — which at the same time shows an inner relationship to light — has the peculiarity that of itself it does not appear to us at all in the same way as an external colour. An external colour appears to us upon the object. Such a thing as the white of the sun, which for us represents light, does not appear to us directly on objects. Later on we shall consider the kind of colour which we may call the white of paper, chalk and the like, but to do this we shall have to enter upon a bypath. To being with, if we venture to approach white, we must say that we are led by white first of all to light as such. In order fully to develop this feeling, we need do no more than say to ourselves that the polar opposite of white is black. That black is darkness, we no longer doubt; so we can very easily identify white with brightness, with light as such. In short, if we raise the whole consideration into feeling, we shall find the inner connection between white and light. We shall go more fully into this question later.

If we reflect upon light itself, and are not tempted to cling to the Newtonian fallacy; if we observe these things without prejudice, we shall say to ourselves that we actually see colours.

Between white, which appears as colour, and light there must be a special relation. We will therefore first of all exclude true white. We know of light as such, not in the same way as other colours. Do we really perceive light? We should not perceive colours at all if we were not in an illuminated space. Light makes colours perceptible to us, but we cannot say we perceive light just as we do colours. Light is indeed, in the space where we perceive a colour, but it is in the nature of light to make the colours perceptible. We do not see light as we see red, yellow, blue, etc. Light is everywhere where it is bright, but we do not see it. Light must be fixed to something if we are to perceive it. It must be caught and reflected. Colour is on the surface of objects; but we cannot say that light belongs to something, it is wholly fluctuating. We ourselves, however, on awakening in the morning when the light streams upon us and through us, feel ourselves in our true being; we feel an inner relationship between the light and our essential being. At night, if we awake in dense darkness, we feel we cannot reach our real being; we are then, indeed, in a sense withdrawn into ourselves, but through the conditions we have become something which does not feel in its element. We know, too, that what we have from the light is a "coming to ourselves." That the blind do not have it, is no contradiction; they are organized for this, and the organization is the essential point. We bear to the light the same relationship as that of our ego to the world, yet, again, not the same; for we cannot say that when the light fills us we gain the ego. Nevertheless, for us to gain this ego, light is essential, if we are beings which see.

What underlies this fact? In light we have what is represented in white — we have yet to learn the inner connection — we have in light what really fills us with spirit, brings to us our own spirit. Our ego, that is, our spiritual entity, is connected with this condition of illumination. If we consider this feeling — all that lives in light and colour must first be grasped as feeling — if we consider this feeling we shall say: There is a distinction between light and that which manifests itself as spirit in the ego, in the "I." Nevertheless, the light gives us something of our own spirit. We shall have an experience through the light in such a way that by means of the light the ego really experiences itself inwardly. If we sum up all this, we cannot but say that the ego is spiritual and must experience itself in the soul; this it does when it feels itself filled with light. Reduced to a formula, it may be expressed in the words: White or light represents the psychic image of the spirit.

It is natural that we should have to construct this third stage from pure feeling; but if you try to sink yourselves deeply into the matter according to these formulae, you will see that a great deal is contained in them:

*Green* represents the lifeless image of Life.

*Peach-blossom colour* represents the living image of the Soul.

*White* or Light represents the psychic image of the Spirit.

Let us now pass on to *black* or darkness. We see that we can speak of white or light, brightness, in connection with the relation which exists between darkness and blackness. Let us now take black, and try to connect something with a black darkness. We can do so. Certainly black is easy to find as a characteristic of something even in Nature, just as green is an essential peculiarity of the plants. We need only look at carbon. In order to represent more clearly that black has something to do with carbon, let us realize that carbon can

also be quite clear and transparent; but then it is a diamond. Black, however, is so characteristic of carbon that if it were not black, if it were white and transparent, it would be a diamond. Black is so integral a part of carbon that the latter really owed its whole existence to the blackness. Thus carbon owes its dark, black, carbon-existence to the dark blackness in which it appears; just as the plant has its image somehow in green, so carbon has its image in black.

Let us place ourselves in blackness, absolute black around us, black darkness — in black darkness no physical being can do anything. Life is driven out of the plants when they become charcoal, carbon or coal. Thus black shows itself to be foreign in life, hostile to life. We see this in carbon, for when plants are carbonized they turn black; Life, then, can do nothing in blackness. Soul — the soul slips away from us when awful blackness is within us. The spirit, however, flourishes; the spirit can penetrate the blackness and make its influence felt within it. We may therefore say that in blackness — and if we endeavour to investigate the art of black and white, light and shade on a surface — we shall return to this later — then, by drawing with black on a white surface we bring spirit into the white surface by means of the black strokes; in the black surface the white is spiritualized. The spirit can be brought into the black. It is, however, the only thing that can be brought into black. Therefore we obtain the formula:

*Black* represents the spiritual image of the lifeless.

We have now obtained a remarkable circle respecting the objective nature of colour. In this circle we have in each colour an image of something. In all circumstances colour is not a reality, it is an *image*. In one case we have the image of the lifeless, in another the image of life, in another the image of the soul, and the image of the spirit (see Diagram 2). As we go around the circle, we have black, the image of the lifeless; green, the image of life; peach-blossom colour, the image of the soul; white, the image of the spirit. If we wish to have the adjective, we must start from the previous, thus: Black is the spiritual image of the lifeless; Green is the lifeless image of life; Peach-blossom colour is the living image of the soul; White is the psychic image of the spirit.

## Diagram 2

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In this circle we can indicate certain fundamental colours, Black, White, Green and Peach-blossom colour, while always the previous word indicates the adjective for the next one; Black is the spiritual image of the Lifeless; Green is the lifeless image of the Living; Peach-blossom colour is the living image of the Soul; White is the psychic image of the Spirit.

If we take the kingdoms of Nature in this way — the lifeless kingdom, the living kingdom, the ensouled kingdom, the spiritual kingdom, we ascent — precisely as we ascend from the lifeless to the living, to the ensouled, to that possessing spirit — from black to green, to peach-blossom colour, white. As truly as I can ascend from the lifeless, through the living, to the psychic, to the spiritual as truly as I have there the world which surrounds me, so truly have I the world around me in its images when I ascend from black to green, peach-blossom colour, white. As truly as Constantine, Ferdinand, Felix, etc. are the real ancestors, and I can ascend through this ancestral line, so truly can I go through these

portraits and have the portraits of this line of ancestry. I have before me a world; the mineral, plant, animal and spiritual kingdom — in as far as man is the spiritual. I ascent through the realities; but Nature gives me only the images of these realities. Nature is reflected. The world of colour is not a reality; even in nature itself it is only image; the image of the lifeless is black; that of the living is green; that of the psychic, peach-blossom colour; and the image of the spirit is white.

This leads us to the objective nature of colour. This we had to set forth today, since we wish to penetrate further into the nature, the peculiar feature of colour; for it avails us nothing to say that colour is a subjective impression. That is a matter of absolute indifference to colour. To green it is immaterial whether we pass by and stare at it; but it is not a matter of indifference that, if the living gives itself its own colour, if it is not tinged by the mineral and appears coloured in the flower, etc., if the living appear in its own colour, it must image itself outwardly as green. That is something objective. Whether or not we gaze at it, it is entirely subjective. The living, however, if it appear as a living being, must appear green, it must image itself in green; that is something objective.

- See more at: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA291/English/RSPC1935/19210506p01.html#sthash.Vxv0PGUT.dpuf>

## **Colour**

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Section Begins

Lecture II

### **The Luminous and Pictorial Nature of Colours**

We tried yesterday to understand the nature of colour from a certain point of view and found on the way — white, black, green, peach-blossom colour; and in such a manner that we were able to say: these colours are images or pictures, they are already present in the world with the character of pictures; but we saw also that something essential proceeded from something else giving rise to the pictorial character of the colour. We saw, for example, that the living must proceed from the lifeless, and that in the lifeless the image of the living, the green arises. I shall continue today from our yesterday's experience, and in such a way as to differentiate between, so to speak, the receiver and the give, between that in which the picture is formed, and the originator of it. Then I shall be able to put the following division before you: I differentiate (you will understand the expression if you take the whole of what we did yesterday) — I differentiate the shadow-thrower from the Illuminant. If the shadow-thrower is the spirit, the spirit receives that which is thrown upon it; if the shadow-thrower is the spirit and if the illuminant (it is an apparent contradiction, but not a real one) is the dead, then black is pictured in the spirit as the image of the dead, as we say yesterday.

If the shadow-thrower is the dead, and the illuminant the living, as in the case of the plant, then, as we saw, you have green. If the shadow-thrower is the living and the illuminant the psychic, then, as we saw, you get the image of peach-colour. If the shadow-thrower is the psychic and the illuminant the spirit, you get white as the image.

So you see, we have got these four colours with the pictorial character. We can therefore say: with a shadow-thrower and an illuminant, we get a picture. So we get here four



colours — but you must reckon black and white among the colours — with the picture-character: black, white, green, peach-colour.  
When the lifeless appears in the Spirit you get black.

SHADOW THROWER

ILLUMINANT

PICTURE

The Spirit

The dead

black

The dead

The living

green

The living

The psychic

peach-colour

The psychic

The spirit

white

Now, as you know, there are other so-called colours, and we have to search also for their natures. We shall not search for them through abstract concepts any more than before, but approach the matter according to feeling, and then you will see that we come to a certain understanding of the colours if we put the following before our eyes.

Think of a quiescent white. Then we will let beams of different colours from opposite sides play on to this quiescent white — it can be a quiet white room — from one side yellow and from the other blue. We then get green.

In this way therefore we got green. We have to visualize exactly what happens: we have a quiescent white, into which we throw rays of colour from both sides, one yellow and other blue and we get the green we have already found from another point of view.

You see, we cannot look for the peach-colour as we looked for the green, if we confine ourselves to the living production of colour. We must seek it in another way, as follows: Imagine I paint here a black, below it a white, another black, below it a white and so on — black and white alternately — now imagine that this black and white was not quiescent — they would vibrate, as it were. In fact, it is the opposite of what we had up here: here was had a quiescent white and let beams of colour into it from both sides in a continuous process, yellow and blue from left to right. Now I take black and white; I cannot of course paint that at the moment, but imagine these undulating through each other; and just as I let in yellow and blue before, allow now this undulation, with its continual interplay of black and white, to be shone through, pierced with red: if I could select the right shade, I should, through this play of black and white into which I let the red shine, get peach-colour.

Notice how we must resort to quite different methods of producing colours. With one we must take a quiescent white — and thus we must destroy one of the picture-colours in the scale we already have here — and let two other colours which we have not yet got play upon it. But here we have to go about it differently; here we have to take two of the colours we have, black and white, we must instill movement into them, take a colour we have not yet got, namely red, and let it shine through the moving white and black. You

will also see something which will strike you if you observe life: green you have in nature; peach-colour you have (as I explained yesterday, in my sense) only in a fully healthy man. And, I said, the possibility is not easily present of reproducing this shade of colour. For one could really reproduce it only if one could represent white and black in motion and then let fall on them the beam of red. One would really have to produce a circumstance — it is after all present in the human organism — in which there was always motion. Everything is in movement and from that fact arises this colour of which we are speaking. So that we can get this colour only in a roundabout way, and for this reason the majority of portraits are really only masks, because flesh-colour can be realized only by means of all sorts of approximations. It could be achieved only, you see, if we had a continual wave movement of black and white, with red rays through it.

I have here pointed out to you from the nature of things a certain difference in relation to colour. I have shown you how to use the colours which we get as pictorial colours, how in one case we used white, in a condition of rest, and by throwing upon it two colours which we have not yet got, we obtained another pictorial colour, namely, green.

Again, we take two colours, black and white, in a scale of reciprocated movement, and let them be penetrated or illuminated by a new colour, that we have not yet got, and the result is another colour — peach-colour. We get peach-colour and green, therefore, in quite different ways. In one case we required red, in the other yellow and blue. Now we shall be able to go a step further towards the nature of colour if we consider another thing. Taking the colours we found yesterday, we may say as follows: By its own nature green always allows us to make it with definite limits. Green can be enclosed or limited: in other words it is not unpleasant to us if we paint a surface green and give it a circumscribed area. But just imagine this is the case of peach-colour. It does not agree with our artistic sense. Peach-colour can be represented really only as a mood, without reference to a defined area, without expecting one. If you have a sense of colour, you can feel that. If, for instance, you think of a green — you can easily think of green card-tables. Because a game is a limited pedantic activity, something very Philistine, one can think of such an arrangement — a room with card-tables covered in green. What I mean is that it would be enough to make you run away, if you were invited to play cards on mauve tables. On the other hand, a lilac coloured room, or a room furnished throughout in mauve, would lend itself very well, shall we say, to mystical conversation, in the best and the very worst sense. It is true, the colours in this respect are not anti-moral, but amoral. Thus we note that as a result of its own nature, colour has an inner character; whereby green allows itself to be defined, lilac and peach or flesh-colour tend to spread into vagueness.

Let us try to get at the colours which we did not have yesterday, from this point of view. Let us take yellow, the whole inner nature of yellow, if we make here a yellow surface. Yes, you see, a defined surface of yellow is something disagreeable; it is ultimately intolerable for someone with artistic feeling. The soul cannot bear a yellow surface which is limited and defined in extent. So we must make the yellow paler towards the edges, and then still paler. In short we must have a full yellow in the centre and from there it must shade off to pale yellow. You cannot picture yellow in any other way, if you want to feel it with your own being. Yellow must radiate, getting paler all the time. That is what I might call the secret of yellow. And if you hem in the yellow, it is in fact as if you laughed at it. You always see the human factor in it, which has bounded the yellow. Yellow does not speak

when it is bounded, for it refuses to be bounded, it wants to radiate in some direction or other.

We shall see a case in a moment, where yellow consents to be bounded, but it will just go to show how impossible it is, considering its real inner nature. It *wants* to radiate. Let us take blue on the other hand. Imagine a surface covered equally with blue. One can imagine it, but it has something super-human. When Fra Angelico paints equal blue surfaces, he summons, as it were, something super-terrestrial into the terrestrial sphere. He allows himself to paint an equal blue when he brings super-terrestrial things into the terrestrial sphere. In the human sphere he would not do it, for blue as such, because of its own nature, does not permit a smooth surface. Blue by its inner nature demands the exact opposite of yellow. It demands that the colour is intensified on the circumference and shades off towards the center. It demands to be strongest at the edges and palest in the middle. Then blue is in its element. By this it is differentiated from yellow. Yellow insists on being strongest in the center, and then paling off. Blue piles itself up at the edges and flows together, to make a piled-up wave, as it were, round a lighter blue. Then it shows itself in its very own nature.

We arrive therefore on all sides at what I might call the feeling or longing of the soul in face of colours. And these are fulfilled; that is, the painter really responds to them, if he paints in accordance with what the colour itself demands. If he consciously thinks — now I've dipped my brush in the green, now I must be a bit of a Philistine and give the green a sharp outline; if he thinks: now I am painting yellow — I must make that radiate, I must imagine myself the spirit of radiation; and if he thinks when painting blue: I draw myself in, into my innermost self and build, as it were, a crust round me, and so I must also paint by giving the blue a kind of crust: then he lives in his colour and paints in his picture what the soul really must want if it yields itself to the nature of colour.

Of course, as soon as we touch upon art, a factor comes in which modifies the whole thing. I'll make circles here for you which I fill in with colour. (Diagram 1)

#### Diagram 1

[Click image for large view](#)

One can of course have other figures than these; but the yellow must always radiate in some direction and the blue must always contract, as it were, into itself.

The red I might call the balance between them. We can accept the red completely as a surface. We understand it best if we differentiate it from peach-colour, in which it is, you remember, incorporated as an illuminant. Take the two shades side by side, red and peach-colour. What happens when you let the red really influence your soul? You say, this red affects me as a quiet redness. It is not the case with peach-colour. That wants to split up, to spread. It is a nice difference between red and peach-colour. Peach-colour wants to disintegrate, it wants to get ever thinner and thinner till it has disappeared. The red remains, but its effect is one of surface. It does not want to radiate or pile itself up, or to escape; it asserts itself. Lilac, peach-colour, flesh-colour, do not really assert themselves: they want always to change their form, because they want to escape. That is the difference between this colour, peach, which we already have, and red, which belongs to those

colours which we have not yet got. But we have not three colours together: blue, red and yellow.

Yesterday we found the four colours: black, white, peach-colour and green; now red, blue and yellow are before us and we have tried to get inside these three colours with our feeling, to see how they interplay with the others. We let the red interplay with a motionless white and we shall easily find the distinction if we now examine what we have brought before the soul. We cannot make such a distinction in the colours we found yesterday as we now have made between yellow, blue and red. We were compelled today to let black and white move in and out of each other when we produced peach-colour.

Black and white are "picture-colours" which can do this; let us leave it at that.

Peach-colour we must also leave; it disappears of its own accord, we cannot do anything with it, we are powerless against it. Nor can it help itself, it is its nature to disappear.

Green outlines itself, that is its nature. But peach-colour does not demand to be differentiated in itself, but to be uniform, like red; if it were differentiated it would level itself out at once. Just imagine a peach-coloured surface with lumps in it! It would be awful. It would promptly dissolve the lumps, for it always strives for uniformity. If you have an extra green on green, that is a different matter; green has to be applied evenly and has to be outlined. We cannot imagine a radiating green. You can imagine a twinkling star, can't you; but hardly a twinkling tree-frog. It would be a contradiction for a tree-frog to twinkle. Well — that is the case also with peach-colour and green.

If we want to bring black and white together at all we must make them undulate into each other as pictures, even if as moving pictures. But it is different with the three colours we have found today.

We saw that yellow wants, of its own nature, to get paler and paler towards the edges; it wants to radiate; blue wants to heap itself up, to intensify itself, and red wants to be evenly distributed without outline. It wants to hold the middle place between radiating and concentrating; that is red's nature. So you see there is a fundamental difference between colours that are in themselves quiet or mobile, quiet as green, or mobile as mauve, or isolated like black and white. If we want to bring these colours together, it must be as pictures. And red, yellow and blue, in accordance with their inner activity, their inner mobility, are distinguished from the inner mobility of lilac. Lilac tends to dissolve — that is not an inner mobility — it tends to evaporate; red is quiet — it is movement come to rest — but, when we look at it, we cannot rest at one point: we want to have it as an even surface, which, however, is unlimited. With yellow and blue we saw the tendency to vary. Red, yellow and blue differ from black, white, green and peach-colour. You see it from this: Red, yellow and blue have, in contrast to those other colours which have pictorial qualities, another character and if you consider what I have said about them you will find the term I apply to this different character justified. I have called the colours black, white, green and peach-colour pictures — "pictorial colours" (Bildfarben,) I call the colours yellow, red and blue "lusters" — luster colours. (Blanz-farben,) in yellow, red and blue, objects glisten: they show their surfaces outwards, they shine or glisten.

That is the nature and the difference in coloured things. Black, white, green, peach-colour have a pictorial colour, they take their colour from something; in yellow, blue and red there is an inherent luster. Yellow, blue, red are external to something essential. The others are always projected pictures, always something shadowy. We can call them the shadow-colours. The shadow of the spiritual on the psychic is white. The shadow of the lifeless on

the spirit is black. The shadow of the living on the lifeless is green. The shadow of the psychic on the living is peach-colour. "Shadow" and "picture or image" are akin. On the other hand with blue, red and yellow we have to do with something luminous, not with shadow, but with that by which the nature advertises itself outwardly. So that we have in the one case pictures or shadows and in the other, in the colours red, blue and yellow we have what are modifications of illuminants. Therefore I call them lustrous. The things shine, they throw off colour in a way; and therefore these colours have of their own accord the nature of radiation: yellow radiating outwards, blue radiating inwards, and red the balance of the two, radiating evenly. This even radiation shining on and through the combination of white and black in motion produces peach-colour.

Letting yellow flash from one side on to stationary white and blue from the other side, produces green.

You will observe, we come here upon things which upset Physics completely — you can take everything known today in Physics about colours. There one just writes down the scale: Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. One does not mention the reciprocal interplay. Let us run along the scale. You will see that starting with the luster red, the lustrous property ceases more and more till we come to a colour in picture, in shadow-colour, to green. Then we come again to a lustrous colour of an opposite kind to the former, we come to blue, the concentrated luster-colour. Then we must leave the usual physical colour-scale entirely in order to get to the colour which can really not be represented at all except in a state of movement. White and black, pierced by rays of red give peach-colour. If you take the ordinary scheme of the physicist, all you can say is: All right — red, orange, yellow, green blue, indigo, violet ...

Notice I start from a luster, go on to what is properly a colour, on again to a luster and only then come to a colour.

Now, if I did not do that as it is on the physical plane, but were to turn it as it is in the next higher world, if I were to bend the warm side of the spectrum and the cold side so that I drew it like this (Diagram 2) red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet; if I were to bend this stretched-out line of colour into a circle, then I should get my peach-colour up here at the top.

Thus I return again to colour. Colour I and Colour II to and bottom, Luster III and Luster IV left and right. Now there still lurks hidden only that other colour — white and black. You see, if I go up here with the white (from the bottom upwards) it would stick in the green, so the black comes down here to meet it (from the top downwards,) and here at V they begin to overlap; thus, together with the rays from the red, they produce the peach-colour. I have therefore to imagine a white and a black, overlapping and interplaying (See Diagram 2) and in this way I get a complex colour combination, which however corresponds more closely to the nature of colours than anything you see in the books on Physics.

#### Diagram 2

[Click image for large view](#)

Now, let us take luster: but luster means that something shines. What shines? If you take the yellow (and you must take it with your feeling and colour-sense, not with the abstract-

loving understanding,) you need only say: In receiving the impression of yellow, I am really so moved by it that it lives on within me, as it were. Just think, yellow makes us gay; but being gay means, really, being filled with a greater vitality of soul. We are therefore more attuned to the ego through yellow, in other words we are spiritualized. So, if you take yellow in its original nature, that is, fading outwards, and think of it shining within you, because it is a luster-colour, you will have to agree: Yellow is the luster of the spirit. Blue, concentrating, intensifying itself outwards, is the luster of the psychic. Red, filling space evenly, is the luster of the living. Green is the picture of the living; red, the luster. You can see this very well if you try to look at a fairly strong red on a white surface; if you look away quickly, you see green as the after-image, and the same surface as a green after-image. The image of the living is the green. No wonder that red luster produces the green as its image when it shines into you.

Thus we get these three colour-natures of quite different kinds. They are the active colour-natures. It is the thing that shines which contains the differentiation; the other colours are quiescent images. We have something here which has its analogy in the Cosmos. We have in the Cosmos the contrast of the *Signs of the Zodiac*, which are quiescent images, and *that which differentiates the Cosmos in the Planets*. It is only a comparison, but one which is founded on fact. We may say that we have in black, white, green and peach-colour something whose effect is static; even when it is in movement; something of the fixed stars. And in red, yellow and blue we have something essentially in motion, something planetary. Yellow, blue, red give a nuance to the other colours; yellow and blue tinge white to green, red gives peach colour when it shines into the combined black and white. Here you see the *Colour-Cosmos*. You see the world in its inter-action, and you see that we really have to go to colour if we want to study the laws of coloured things. We must not go from colours to something else, we must remain in the colours themselves. And when we have a grasp of colours, we come to see in them what is their mutual relationship, what is the lustrous, the luminous, and what is the shadow-giving, the image-producing element in them.

Just think what this means to Art. The artist knows if he is dealing with yellow, blue and red that he must conjure into his picture something that has a dynamic character, that itself gives character. When he works with peach-colour and green on black and white, he knows that the picture-quality is already there. Such a colour-theory is inherently so completely living that it can be transferred directly from the psychic into the artistic. And if you so understand the nature of the colours that you recognize, as it were, what each colour wants — that yellow wants to be stronger in the middle and to pale off towards the edge, because that is the inherent quality of yellow — then you must do something if you want to fix the yellow, if you want to have a smooth, even yellow surface somewhere. What does one do then? Something must be put into the yellow which deprives it of its own character, of its own will. The yellow has to be made *heavy*. How can this be done? By putting something into the yellow which gives it weight, so that it becomes gilded. There you have yellow *without* the yellow, left yellow to a certain extent, but deprived of its nature. You can make an even gold background to a picture, but you have given weight to the yellow, inherent weight; you have taken away its own will; you hold it fast. Hence the old painters who had a susceptibility to such things found that in yellow they have the luster of the spirit. They looked up to the spiritual, to the light of the spirit in yellow; but they wanted to have the spirit here on earth. They had to give it weight,

therefore. If they made a gold background, like Cimabue, they gave the spirit habitation on earth, they evoked the heavenly in their picture. And the figures could stand out of the background of gold, could grow as creations of the spiritual. These things have an inherent conformity to law. You observe, therefore, if we deal with yellow as a colour, of it sown accord it wants to be strong in the centre and shade off outwards. If we want to retain it on an evenly-coloured surface, it is necessary to metallize it. And so we come to the concept of metallized colour, and to the concept of colour retained in matter, of which we shall say more tomorrow.

But you will notice one must first understand colours in their fleeting character before one can understand them in solid substantial form. We shall proceed to this tomorrow. We come in this to what ordinary people — and “extraordinary” people, for that matter — alone call colour. For they know only the colours which are present in solid bodies, and therefore they say — “If one speaks of the spirit, as, for instance, of thought (pretty sentence, isn't it?), then the spirit either is coloured — or not coloured.” Well, then, in this case there is not the least possibility of rising to the volatility of colour!

You will observe that what I have been explaining provides a way to recognize the materialization of the colours in the physical colour-spectrum. It stretches right and left endlessly, that is indefinitely; in the spirit and in the psychic realm, everything is joined up. We must join up the colour-spectrum. And if we train ourselves to see not only peach-colour, but the movement in it; if we train ourselves not only to see flesh-colour in man, but also to live in it; if we feel that our bodies are the dwelling-place of our souls as flesh-colour, then this is the entrance, the gateway into a spiritual world. Colour is that thing which descends as far as the body's surface; it is also that which raises man from the material and leads him into the spiritual.

- See more at: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA291/English/RSPC1935/19210507p01.html#sthash.l1zPPSIH.dpuf>

## **Colour**

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Section Begins

Lecture III

### **The Phenomenon of Colour in Material Nature**

We have differentiated colours in that out of their own nature we have got black, white, green and peach-colour as *images*, and from this pictorial character of colours we had to differentiate what I called the luminous nature of colours which we meet in blue, yellow and red. And we saw that just these colours, blue, yellow and red, possess what I might call certain properties of will, by reason of their being luminous. As you know, one perceives a colour as a so-called colour of the spectrum, such as we see in the rainbow, and we perceive colour in solid bodies. And we know also that we must make use of bodies as painting-colours, their bodily composition, mixture, etc., if we want to practice the art of colour which is painting. Here we are brought to the important question, the answer to which in the state of present-day knowledge, is nowhere to be found, the question namely: What is the relation of colour as such, which we have got to know as something volatile and fleeting, either as image or luster, to solid body, to matter? What

makes matter as such appear to us coloured? Those who have looked into Goethe's *Theory of Colour*, will perhaps know that there, this question is not touched upon, from a certain intellectual honesty of Goethe, because from the means at his disposal he simply was not capable of getting as far as the problem — how is colour applied to solid matter?

Moreover this is a question, in the highest sense, for the Art of Painting. For in painting we practice this phenomenon, at any rate for the purpose of outward appearance. We apply colour and through its application we try to call forth the impression of something painted.

So, if we want to raise the study of the nature of colour to the plane of painting, we must be interested in this coloured appearance of material nature. Now since in recent times the physicists of colour have regarded the theory of colour as a part of Optics, we find also explanations of the colour of solids worthy of the new physics. We find, for example, the characteristic explanation of the question, Why is a body red? A body is red because it absorbs all other colours and reflects only red. This is the explanation so characteristic of the new Physics, for it is based approximately on the logical formula: Why is a man

stupid? He is stupid because he absorbs all cleverness and radiates only stupidity outwards. If one applies this logical principle so common in colour-theory everywhere to the rest of life, you see what interesting things result. He pursued his problem as far as his means allowed him. Then he stopped in front of the question: How is matter coloured? Now let us recall how we first got the pictorial character of the first four colours we dealt with. We saw that we there have a property which produces on a medium its shadow or its image. We saw how the living forms its image or shadow in the lifeless and how thereby green results. We saw then how the psychic forms its image in the living and produces thereby peach-colour. We saw how the spiritual forms its image in the psychic, and thereby white is the result, and finally how the lifeless reflects its image or shadow in the spiritual and produces black.

There we have all the colours which have a pictorial or *image* character. The rest have the luster or *luminous* character. The pictorial character we meet most visibly in the objective world is green. Black and white are to a certain extent frontier-colours and are for this reason no more regarded as colours. Peach-colour, we have seen, is to be understood really only in movement. So that green is the most typical. And this would be the colour applied to the external world, or, as we say, applied to the Vegetable Kingdom. And so in the Vegetable Kingdom we have expressed the real origin of applied colour as image. Now it is a question perhaps of examining this vegetable green in order to find the character, the essence of green. And here we must enlarge the problem contrary to what is usually recognized today.

We know from our *Occult Science* that the Vegetable Kingdom was formed during the previous metamorphosis-condition of our earth. But we also know that at that time there was as yet no solid matter. We know it has been transformed during the evolution of our earth, and must have been made, during the evolution of the old moon, in a fluid state, for there existed nothing solid then. We can speak of colour matter floating in this fluid and permeating it. It need not be attached to anything, or at the most, to the surface. Only on the surface does the fluid matter tend to become solid. And so, if we look back at this stage of evolution, we might say: in the formation of vegetation we have to do with a fluid green, or, in act, with fluid colour-matter, and with something that is really a fluid element. And plants — as you can see in my *Occult Science* — could not have assumed their firm shape, could not have put on their mineral form, till the period of earth-evolution. It is



possible that something was formed in vegetation which made it definite, and not fluid. So that what we call plants first appeared during the formation of the earth. It was then that colour must have taken on the character in plants such as we perceive today; it was then that it became a permanent green.

Now a plant does not wear only this green — at least generally, — for you are aware how a plant in the course of its metamorphosis merges into other colours, as a plant has yellow, blue or red flowers, and as a green fruit — take for example, a melon, merges into yellow. A superficial observation shows you what is at work there when a plant takes on a colour other than green. When this happens — you can easily prove it — the sun is essential to the circumstances connected with the growth of these other colours, — direct sunlight. Just consider how plants, if they cannot hold up their flowers to the sunlight, in fact hide themselves, curl up, etc. And we shall find a connection, — superficially a connection, — between the absence of green colour in certain plant parts and the sun. The sun metamorphoses, one might say, the green. It brings the green to another condition. If we bring the manifold colouring of vegetation into relation with a heavenly body — as already said, in a superficial study — we shall not find it difficult to consult the statements of *Occult Science*, and to ask: What has it, from its observations, to say concerning possible other relationships of coloured plant-life to the stars?

And here we have to ask ourselves the question: What kind of starry phenomenon is of the greatest effect on earth? What heavenly body is there whose influence would be contrary to the sun's, and could produce that in plant-nature which sunlight as it were metamorphoses, destroys, changes to other colours? What is there that can produce the green in the vegetable world?

We arrive at that particular heavenly body which represents the polaric opposite of the sun, namely the moon. And Spiritual Science can establish the connection between the green of plants and this moon-nature (I will only just mention the subject today) as well as one can establish the connection of the rest of plant-life, with the sun. This it does by pointing to the properties of moonlight as opposed to sunlight, and above all, by pointing out how moon-light influences sun-darkness. If we consider vegetation, we get an interplay of lunar and solar influences. But at the same time we get an explanation why green becomes an image, and why green in plants is not luminous like the other colours. The other colours in plants are lustrous. They have a shiny character. Just look with proper understanding at the colour of flowers; they *shine* at one. Compare it with the green. It is “fixed” to the plant. You see in it nothing else but a copy of what you perceive in the Cosmos. Sunlight shines; moonlight is the pictorial image of sunlight. Thus you find again the image (or shadow, Ed.) of light, colour as the image of light, in the green of plants. And you have in the plant through the sun the colour of the luster. And you have the colour of the “fixation”; the colour of the image in the green. These things cannot be understood with the clumsy ideas of Physics. They have to be brought into the region of feeling and must be realized with spiritual sensibility. Then you automatically get what we have understood in this way, the transition into Art. Physics, with its clumsy methods of approaching the world of colour, has driven all artistic considerations from its study. So that actually the artist has not the least idea what to make of what Physics has to say concerning it.

But if we regard the colour of plants in such a way that we know that cosmic forces play a part, that we have in the colour-formation of plants a conjunction of solar and lunar

forces, we then have the first element by which we can understand how colour is attached to an object, at any rate primarily to a vegetable object, how it becomes an embodied colour. It becomes an embodied colour because it is not the luster which works on it cosmically, but already the image as such. In the plant we have to deal with that green which becomes an image because at one time in the evolution of the earth the moon was separated from this earth. In this separation we must see the real origin of the green in the vegetable world. Because of it the plant can no longer be exposed to the equivalent of lunar forces on the earth, but receives its image-character direct from the Cosmos.

Our feeling is well acquainted with this cosmic interchange of relations in respect of vegetation, and if we question our feeling we shall be able to approach this character of green and other colours from this world of feeling by means of an artistic appreciation of the nature of colours. It is, you see, something peculiar. If you go back in the history of painting you will find that the great painters of former ages paint people and human situations, but seldom paint external nature, in so far as it consists of plant-life. You can of course also easily find the explanation for it; that in older times it was not so usual to observe nature and that therefore one did not paint it. But that of course is only a superficial explanation, though people today are easily satisfied with such superficial explanations.

What lies behind it is different. Landscape painting arises really at that time in which materialism and intellectualism grip mankind, in which an abstract nature acquires more and more power over human civilization and culture. You may say that landscape painting is in fact a product of the last three or four centuries. If you take this into consideration you will have to say to yourself: only in the last three or four centuries has man reached a state of soul which enables him to comprehend the element necessary for painting nature in landscape. Why? If you look at the pictures of old times, we shall conclude that all these pictures have a quite definite character. Precisely if we differentiate (we will discuss it more exactly) in colour between the image-character and the luster-character, we find that the old artists did not make this distinction in their painting. And they paid no attention, as we had to do yesterday, to this inner will-nature of colour-luster. The old painters do not always take into consideration that yellow demands a shadowy edge. They take it into consideration when they carry their painting more into the spiritual; but not when they paint the everyday world. Nor did they pay attention to what we demanded of blue; possibly rather more so with red. You can see this in certain pictures by Leonardo, and also in others, for example, by Titian. But in general we can say that the old painters do not make this distinction between image and luster in the nature of colours. Why? They stand in a different relationship to the world of colours; they grasp what is luster in colour-nature. They grasp what is image and give it in painting an image-character. But if you give image-character to what in the world of colours is luster, if you have turned everything in the nature of colours into image, then you cannot paint a landscape of plants.

Why not?

Now suppose you want to paint a landscape of plant-life, and it is to give a real impression of life, you have to paint the plants themselves as well in their green as in their individual colours rather darker than they really are. You must make a green surface, in any case darker than it is. You must also make the red or yellow plant-life darker than reality. But then, after you have got your colour in this way in image-character, rather darker than it really is, you must cover the whole with an atmosphere, and this atmosphere must in a

certain way be yellowish-white. You must get the whole in a yellowish-white light, and only then you get in the right manner what a plant really is. You have to paint a glow over the image; and therefore you must cross over to the luster-character of colour; you must have its luster-character.

And I would ask you to look, from this point of view, at the whole effort of modern landscape painting, look how it has tried to get more and more at the secret of painting vegetation. If you paint it as it is out there, you don't get there. The picture does not create the impression of life. It does this only if you paint the trees, etc. darker in their colour than they are, and pour over them the *glow*, something yellowish-white, that is luminous.

Because the old masters did not cultivate the painting of this glow, of this lit-up atmosphere, they could not paint a landscape at all.

You notice particularly in painting towards the end of the nineteenth century, how they sought the means to comprehend landscape. Open air painting, all sorts of things have cropped up in order to comprehend landscape. They do it only if they resolve to paint the Vegetable Kingdom darker in its separate shades and then to cover it with the gleaming yellowish-white. Of course you must do this according to colour-composition, etc. Then you succeed really in painting on the canvas, or any other surface, something that gives you the impression of life. It is a matter of sensibility, and this sensibility leads you to paint in something that floods it as the expression of the shining Cosmos, of that which descends out of the universe on to earth as luster. In no other way can you get behind the secret of plant-life, that is, of nature clothed in vegetation.

If you obey this law, you will also realize that everything painting seeks to achieve must also be sought in the nature of colours itself. What are in fact the media of painting? You have the surface, canvas or paper or what not, and on the surface you have to fix in pictorial form what is there. But if something refuses to be fixed in pictorial form, such as plant-nature, you must at least pour over it the luster-character.

Observe, we have not yet reached the different coloured mineral substances, the lifeless objects. In this case particularly it is necessary to understand the matter with sensibility. The world of colour cannot be captured with the reason; we must apply our sensibility, and now I ask you to reflect if there is anything in the nature of colour itself which raises the question, when you are painting, something inorganic, i.e. walls or some other inanimate objects: is there any need to understand whatever you are painting from the colour itself? There *is* a strong necessity; for think for a moment what is tolerable and what is intolerable. You agree, don't you, that if I paint a black table on a white ground, that is quite tolerable. If I paint a blue table — just imagine a room full of furniture painted blue — if you have any artistic feeling, you would find it intolerable. Equally impossible is a room with yellow or red furniture, that is a *painted* room. You can, as I've said, paint a black table on a white ground, it is purely a drawing, but you can do it; in fact, one can put directly upon paper or canvas only something whereby the inorganic, the inanimate is to result, which at first has image-character in its colour. So we have to ask generally: What do the colours black, white, green and peach allow to inanimate objects? You must get from the colour what can be painted. And then it always results that when you paint according to the colour, that is the colour which is also an image, you still have not got the inanimate object. You would have only the image — the colour is already that. You would not evoke the representation of the chair, you would have the image of it, if you had to paint it purely from a colour which is image.

So what must you do? You must try to give the image when you are painting still-life, the character of the luster. That is the point. You have to give the colours that have image-character, black, white, green and peach-colour, inner illumination, that is, luster-character. And then you can combine what you have thus vivified with the other lusters, with blue and yellow and red. So you must strip those colours of the image-character they have, and give them luster-character; which means that the painter, if he paints still-life, must really always bear in mind that a certain source of light, a dull source of light lies in the things themselves. He must so to speak think of his canvas or his paper as in a certain sense luminant. Here he requires on his surface the glow of the light which he has to paint on it. If he paints inanimate objects, he must bear in mind, he must contain in his mental make-up the idea, that a kind of illumination underlies inanimate objects, that in a way his surface is transparent and emits lights from within.

Now you see we arrive at the point in painting where in applying the colour, in conjuring the colour on to the surface, we must give the colour the character of reflecting light; otherwise we are not painters. If we always strive more and more to produce a painting out of the colour itself, as after all later human development demands, we shall have to pursue this attempt further and further; namely to get to the root of the essential nature of colour, so as to compel a colour, if it is an image colour, to return and take on again its luster-character, to make it inwardly luminous. If we paint it otherwise, we get no enduring painting of inanimate nature. A wall which is not covered with paint so as to have this inward light is, as a painting, no wall, but only the image of one. We must bring the colours to glow inwardly, and thereby in a certain sense, they become mineralized.

Therefore we shall have more and more to find a way of not painting from the palette, smearing the material colour on to the surface, for then we shall never be able to evoke the inner light in the right way, but of painting from the pot (*tiegel*); we shall have to paint only with *that* colour which has got the green of liquid because it is watery, (i.e. with liquid colours, Ed.) And generally speaking an inartistic element has been introduced into painting with the palette. Painting from the palette is materialistic, a failure to understand the inner nature of colour which, as such, is really never absorbed by the material body, but lives in it, and must proceed from it. Therefore, when I put it on the surface, I must make it shine.

You are aware that in our building we have tried to bring out this light by using vegetable colours which can most easily be made to develop this inner glow. Any one who has feeling for these things will see how coloured minerals, in different degrees, it is true, show this inner light which we attempt to conjure up when we want to paint a mineral. When we want to paint a mineral according to its colour, we learn to look at it not as a model, naturalistically, but, as is necessary, as in the act of giving light from inside. Now, how does a mineral proceed to give light inwardly? If we have the coloured mineral, its colour appears to us because it is in sunlight. Sunlight in this case does much less than in the case of plants. In plants sunlight conjures up all the colours which occur besides green. In a coloured mineral, or any inanimate coloured object the effect of sunlight is that in the dark, when all cats are grey or black, we do not see the colours; it simply makes the colours visible. But the reason for the colour is, after all, inside. Why? How does it get there? Here we arrive again at the problem from which we started today.

Now, to lead you to the green of plants, I have had to point out to you the breaking away of the moon, as you find it described in my *Occult Science*. Now I must point out to you the other similar events, which have taken place in the course of the earth's evolution.

If you follow what I have explained in my *Occult Science* concerning the earth's development, you will find that those universal bodies which surround the earth and belong to its planetary system, were, as you know, in connection with the whole terrestrial planet; they were torn away just as the moon was. Of course that in itself is connected with the sun. But, generally speaking, if we look simply at the earth, we can regard this as an exodus. Observe that the internal colouring of inanimate objects is connected with this departure of the other planets. Solids become coloured, because the earth is freed from those forces which she had while the planets were tied to her, and they effect her from out of the Cosmos, and thereby evoke the inner force of the Cosmos in the coloured mineral bodies. This is, in fact, exactly what the minerals get from the forces which are no more there, but now shed their influence from out of the Cosmos. We see it is a much more hidden occult matter than with the plants' green. But here we have something which just because it is hidden, goes much deeper into its nature and therefore includes not only living vegetation but also the lifeless mineral. And so we are brought — I am only mentioning it here — if we are to consider the colouring of solids, to something of which modern Physics takes no account. We are brought to the workings of the Cosmos. We cannot explain the colouration of inanimate things in any way if we do not know that this is connected with what the terrestrial bodies have retained as inner forces since the other planets have been removed from the earth.

For instance, we explain the reddish colour in some mineral or other by means of the earth's connection with some planet, for example, with Mars or Mercury; a mineral yellow, by means of the earth's connection with Jupiter or Venus, and so on. For this reason the colouration of mineral swill always remain a riddle until we come to think of the earth in conjunction with the extra-terrestrial bodies in the Cosmos.

If we turn to living things, we must turn to sun and moonlight, and thus come to the one green surface colour, and to the surface colours which later become luster and luminosity emitted by the plant. But if we wish to understand that particular light that confronts us from the inside of substances, that element of the otherwise fluctuating spectrum which is constant inside solid bodies, we must remember that at one time what is now cosmic was in the interior of the earth and is thus the origin of those heavy elements in the earth's composition which are more or less liquid. We have to look outside the earth for the origin of what lies hidden under the surface of minerals. That is the essential thing. The surface of the earth admits of an easier terrestrial explanation than what lies under it, which requires an extra-terrestrial explanation. And thus the mineral component parts of our earth flash out at us in those colours which they have retained from the elements which have left the earth for the planets. And these colours remain under the influence of the corresponding planets of the cosmic environment.

This is the reason why, when we apply the lifeless paint to a surface we must, as it were, get the light *behind* the surface, we must spiritualize the surface and create a secret inner radiance. I mean, we must try to get the downward-streaming planetary influence *behind* the surface on which we paint the picture, so that the painting gives us organically the impression of the essential, not merely of the pictorial, and so it will depend on imparting the spiritual to the colours, in order to paint inanimate nature. But how to do it?

Recall the scheme which I have given you, in which I said: black is the image of the lifeless in the spiritual. We create the spiritual according to the luster and paint in it the lifeless. And in so far as we colour it, and convert it completely to a luster, we wake its essence. This is in fact the process which must be adopted for the painting of inanimate things.

And now you will find that we can ascend again to the Animal Kingdom. If you want to paint a landscape in which the Animal Kingdom is especially conspicuous, you have something which works as follows — it can be grasped only with your feeling. If you want to introduce animals into your landscape, you must paint their colour rather lighter than reality, and you must spread over it a soft bluish light. Suppose you were painting red animals — rather a rare occurrence — you would have to have a soft bluish sheen over them, and everywhere where you had the animal and the vegetation together, you would have to blend the yellowish sheen into the bluish one.

You would have to base this blending on the points of conjunction and then you get the possibility of painting the animal nature, otherwise it will always give the impression of inanimate representation. So that we may say that when we paint inanimate nature, it must be all luster, it must gleam from inside. When we paint the living plant-life, it must appear as luster-image. We first paint the image, and in fact paint so dark that we deviate from the natural colour. We present the image-character, in fact, by painting rather darker, and then overspreading it with luster, luster-image.

If we paint creatures with souls and even animals, we must paint the image-luster. We must not go straight to the complete picture. This we achieve by painting lighter, that is, by leading the image over to the luster, and adding on top that which in a certain sense dulls the pure transparency. Thus we get the image-luster.

And if we go to a step up to human beings, we must aspire to paint the pure image.  
Inanimate:

Luster  
Vegetable:

Luster-image  
Soul-animal:

Image-luster  
Spiritual, man:

Image

This is what those painters have done who have not yet painted external Nature, they have merely created the pure image. And thus we come to the complete image; that is, we must now include those colours which we have met in pictures as lusters. That happens because we deprive them in a sense of their luster-character when we get to human beings; we treat them as images. This means we paint the surface anyhow and try somehow to find a reason for it. The yellow surface insists on being, as it were, washed out at the edge. In no other way is it permissible to have the yellow, it must be washed out at the edge. In a painting of human beings, one can remove its real colour-nature and convert it into an image. In this way one transforms the luster-colour into colour and thereby reaches the

human; when one paints a human being one need worry about nothing except the pure transparency of the medium.

It is true one must develop most particularly the feeling for what colour becomes after its transition into image-character. You see, one penetrates in fact the whole nature of colour — also in so far as this nature is expressed in painting — if one cultivates a sensibility to the difference between the pictorial and that which is to be found in luster. The pictorial really more nearly approaches the quality of thought, and the more so, the further we proceed in the pictorial. When we paint a man, we can really paint only our thoughts of him. But this thought of him must be made evident. It must be expressed in the colour. And one lives in the colour when one is, for example, in a position to introduce somewhere a yellow surface and to say to oneself: this ought really to be shaded off; I transform it into image, and I must therefore modify it where it touches neighboring colours. I must apologize, as it were, in my picture that I do not yield to the will of the yellow.

Thus you see how in fact it is possible to paint from the colour itself; how it is possible to regard the world of colour as such as something which so develops in the procession of our earth's evolution that colour first irradiates the earth as light from the Cosmo; and then, since something in the earth departs from it and returns again as radiation, colour becomes incorporated in the object. And we follow this experience in colour — this cosmic experience, and attain thereby the possibility of ourselves living in the colour. It is living in the colour, when I have it dissolved in the pot, and by dipping the brush in it an applying it to the surface, transform it into something fixed and firm; whereas it is not living in the colour if I stand there with a palette and mix colours together, if, having the colours already solid and material on the palette, I then daub them on the surface. That is not living in the colour, but outside it. I live in the colour only when I must translate it from a fluid to a solid condition. Then I experience in a sense the same that the colour itself has experienced, in developing from the former lunar condition to the terrestrial condition and there becoming solid; for a solid can arise only with the earth. And then again there is this in my relation with colour. My soul must live with colour. I must rejoice with yellow, feel the dignity or seriousness of red; I must share with blue its soft, I might almost say, its tearful mood, I must be able to spiritualize colour, if I want to bring it to inner capabilities. I may not paint without this spiritual understanding for colour, especially not inorganic or lifeless objects This does not mean that one is to paint symbolically, that one must unfold the quite inartistic; this colour means one thing and that means another. The point is not that colours signify something other than themselves; but that one will be able to live with the colour.

Living with the colour ceased when one left the pot colour for the palette colour and because of this change we have all the tailors' dummies which are painted by the portrait-painters from time to time on their respective canvases. They are dolls, dummies and so forth; there is nothing real, nothing with an inner impulse of life, which can be painted only if one understands what living with the colour is.

Such are the few remarks I wanted to make to you in these three addresses. Naturally they could be enlarged endlessly, and this can be done at another opportunity in the future. For the present I wanted only to make these few remarks, and to provide a transition to such studies.

One hears very often, after all, that artists have a proper fear of everything scientific, that they refuse to let knowledge or science interfere in their Art. Goethe already — although he could not get to the inner causes of colouration, still produced the elements of it — rightly said on the subject of this fear in painters: Up till now one has found in painters a fear and a decided antipathy towards all theoretic studies on colour and what belongs to it, with which one cannot reproach them, for till now the so-called theories were groundless, vacillating and tending to empiricism. We should like our efforts to do something to calm this fear and help to stimulate artists to put to practical proof the laws as laid down.

If one proceeds in the right way consciously, one's knowledge becomes raised from the abstract to the concrete in Art, and this is particularly the case with such a fluctuating element as in the world of colour. And it is only the fault of the decadence of our Science that artists rightly have such a fear of theory. This theory is material-intellectual, especially this theory that we come across in modern physical Optics. The element of colour is fluctuating, and the most one can wish is that the painter should not solidify his colour as he does on the palette, but should leave it in a fluid state in the pot. But if the physicist comes along then and draws his lines on the board and says that from his strokes and lines run out here the yellow, there blue — this attitude is enough to drive one mad. That has nothing to do with Physics. Physics must be content with the light that is in the room. You cannot undertake the consideration of colour at all without first lifting it into the region of the soul. For it is sheer nonsense to say: Colour is something subjective which produces an effect on us. And if one goes further and says, — and in doing so one conceives an inexact picture of the Ego — that there is some external objective inclination which affects us, our Ego, it is rubbish; the Ego itself is in the colour. The Ego and the human astral body are not to be differentiated from colour, they live in it and are outside the physical human body in proportion as they are bound up with colour out there; they only reproduce the colours in the physical and etheric body. That is the point. So that the whole question of the effect of an objective on a subjective colour is nonsense; for the Ego, the astral body, already exist in the colour, and they enter with it. Colour is the conveyer of the Ego and the astral body into the physical and into the etheric body. So that the whole method of study must come out.

Thus everything which has crept into Physics, and which Physics includes in its diagrammatic lines, must come out. There should first of all be a period in which one abstains altogether from drawing, when one speaks of colour in a discussion on Physics; but one should try to understand colour in its fluctuation, in its life.

That is the important thing. Then you pass of your own accord from the theoretical to the artistic. Then you produce a method of studying colour which the painter can understand; because, if he identifies himself with such a method, and lives wholly in it, it is then no theoretical process of thought, but an element in colour itself. And, since he lives in the colour, he receives from it each time the answer to the question: How am I going to apply it?

Hence the possibility of conducting a dialogue with colours, for they tell you themselves how they want to be applied on the surface. It is this which makes a line of approach aspiring to attain reality enter the sphere of Art. Our Physics had ruined it for us; and therefore it must be emphasized today with all distinctness that such things which above all verge on Psychology and Aesthetics must not be allowed to be further corrupted by the



physical view, but that it must be understood that quite another way and method must be employed. We see the spiritual and psychic elements in Goetheanism, which must be carried further. It has not yet, for instance, shown the differentiation of colours into images and lusters. We have to live Goetheanism thoughtfully, in order to proceed further and further. And this we can do only through Spiritual Science.

## **Colour**

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Section Begins

Lecture I

### **Thought and Will as Light and Darkness**

It is a one-sided view of the world to consider it, like Hegel, as permeated by what one might call cosmic thought. It is equally one-sided to consider, like Schopenhauer, that Nature has a basis of free-will. These two particular tendencies apply to western human nature, which leans more towards the side of thought. Hegel's philosophy has another form in the eastern view of the universe. In Schopenhauer's there is a tendency which really suits the oriental, and is shown by the fact that Schopenhauer has a particular preference for Buddhism, and the oriental view in general.

But really every such method of observation can be judged only if surveyed from the point of view which is given by Spiritual Science. From this point of view such a grouping together of the world under the heading either of thought or will appears to be something abstract, and, as we have often said, the more modern development of man still leans towards such abstractions. Spiritual Science must bring man back again to a concrete view of the world, in agreement with reality. And it is precisely to such a view that the inner reasons for the presence of these one-sided philosophies will appear. What such men as Hegel and Schopenhauer, who are after all great and important intelligences, see, is of course visible in the world; but it must be seen in the right way.

Now let us today, to begin with, understand clearly that we, as human beings, experience thought in ourselves. When a man speaks of his thought-experiences, it means that he has this thought-experience direct. He could naturally not have it unless the world were filled with thought. For how should a man, who perceives the world by his senses, be able to think, as a result of this sensory perception, unless the thought were already in the world? But as we know from other studies, the organization of the human head is constructed in such a way as to be specially capable of taking in thought from the world. It is formed indeed from thought. It points at the same time to our previous existence on earth. We know that the head is really the result, the metamorphosed result of the previous life, while the organization of the human limbs points to a future life on earth. Roughly speaking, we have our head because our limbs have been metamorphosed from the previous life into the head. The limbs we now have, with everything belonging to them, will be metamorphosed into the head we shall carry in our next earth-life. At present, in our life between birth and death, thoughts function in our head. These thoughts, as we have also seen, are the reshaping of what functioned as will in our limbs in our previous existence. And again, what functions as will in our present limbs will be reshaped and changed into thoughts in our next life on earth.

The will thus appears as the seed, as it were, of thought. What is at first will becomes thought later on. If we look at ourselves as human beings with heads, we must look back to our past, for in this past we had the character of will. If we look into the future, we must take into account the character of will in our present limbs and must say: This is what in future will become our head: thinking man. But we continually carry both these in us. We are created out of the universe because thought from a previous age is organized in us in conjunction with will, which leads over into the future.

Now that which thus arranges the composition of man in this way becomes particularly observable if considered from the point of view of spiritual-scientific research.

The man who can develop himself so far as to have knowledge of Imagination, of Inspiration and of Intuition sees not merely the head of a human being, but he sees objectively the thinking man which his head makes him. He looks, as it were, in the direction of the thoughts. So that we may say with those abilities which man normally requires between birth and death, the head appears in the shape and form in which we see it. Through developed knowledge of Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition the strength of thought, which is after all the basis of the head's organization, that which comes down from earlier incarnations, becomes visible — if we use the term metaphorically. How does it become visible? In such a way, dear friends, that we can only use the expression: it becomes as if it gave forth light.

Certainly, when people, who want to keep to the materialistic point of view, criticize these things, one sees at once how little the present generation is capable of understanding at all what they mean. I have in my Theosophy and in other writings, points out sufficiently clearly that it is not a question of thinking in terms of a new physical world, a new edition of it, as it were, if we contemplate thinking man in Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition; on the contrary, this experience is exactly the same as one has in regard to light in the physical external world. Put accurately it is like this: Man has a certain experience in connection with external light. He has the same experience, in imagination, in connection with the thought-element of the head. Thus the thought-element (See Diagram 1) viewed objectively, is seen as light, or better, experienced as light. Being thinking men, we live in light. We see the external light with physical senses; the light which becomes thought we do not see, because we live in it, because as thinking men, it is ourselves. You cannot see that which you yourselves are. If you emerge from this thought and enter upon Imagination and Inspiration, you put yourself opposite to it and can see the thought-element as light. So that in speaking of the whole world, we may say: We have the light in us; only it does not appear to us as light because we live within it, and because while we use the light, while we have it, it becomes thought within us. You control the light, as it were, you take up the light in yourself which otherwise appears outside you. You differentiate it in yourself. You work in it. This is precisely your thinking, it is a working in light. You are a light-being. You do not know it, because you live within the light. But your thinking which you unfold, is living in the light. And I you look at thought from the outside, you see, altogether, light.

Diagram 1  
Click image for large view

Think now of the Universe (Circle.) You see it radiated with light — by day of course; but in reality you are looking at this Universe from the outside ... we now do the opposite. First we had the human head (Thought in the diagram), which contains thought in its development. Seen from outside, it has light. In the Universe we have light which is seen by the senses. If we come out of the Universe, and regard it from outside, what does it look like then? Like a web of thoughts. The Universe from within — light; from outside — thought. The head from within — thought, from outside — light.

This is a way of viewing the cosmos which can be extremely useful and suggestive to you, if you wish to make use of it, if you really penetrate into such things. Your thought and whole soul-life will become much more active than it otherwise is, if you learn to put this thought before you: if I were to come out of myself — as indeed a person who goes to sleep I continually do, and look back at my head, at myself therefore as a thinking man, I should see myself radiating forth light. If I were to leave the light-flooded world, and look at it from outside, I should see it as a picture of thought, as a thought-being. You observe, light and thought go together; they are identical, but seen from different sides.

Now the thought that is in us is really a survival from earlier times, the most mature thing in us, the result of former lives on earth; what formerly was will has become thought, and thought appears as light. As a consequence you will find: where light is, there is thought — but how? In thought or put differently, in light, a previous world continually dies.

That is one of the world-secrets. We look out into the Universe. It is full of light, in which thought lives. But in this thought-filled light there is a dying world. The world is continually dying in light.

When someone like Hegel regards the world, he really looks at the perpetually dying part of it. Those who have this particular tendency, become, for the most part, men of thought. And in dying the world becomes beautiful. The Greeks, who were really people of innate human nature, had their external pleasure when beauty shone in the dying world. For the world's beauty shines in the light in which it dies. The world does not become beautiful if it cannot die, for in dying the world becomes luminous. So that it is really beauty which is created from the radiance of the continuously dying world. Thus we regard the world quantitatively. The modern world began with Galileo and others to consider the world quantitatively, and our Scientists today are particularly proud when they can put natural phenomena into terms of lifeless mathematics. It is true Hegel used more pregnant concepts than the mathematical ones to understand the world; but what attracted him most was maturity and decay. Hegel's attitude to the world was like that of a man in front of a tree laden with blossom. At the moment when the fruit is about to develop, but is not yet there, when the blossom is at its fullest, there works in the tree that power of light, which is light-borne thought. That was Hegel's position. He looked at the blossom at its maximum, at that which becomes most completely concrete.

Schopenhauer was different. In order to test his influence, we must look at the other side of human things, at the beginnings. It is the will-element which we carry in our bodies. And we experience this — I have often pointed out — just as we experience the world in sleep. It is unconscious in us. Can we look at this will-element from outside, as we look at thought? Let us take the will developing in some human limb or other, and let us ask ourselves: if we were to look at this will from the other side, from the standpoint of Imagination, of Inspiration, and of Intuition, what then happens? What is the parallel here to seeing thought as light? What do we regard the will if we look at it with the trained

power of sight, with clairvoyance? Yes: if we do this, we also get something which we can see from outside. If we look at thought with the power of clairvoyance, we perceive light. If we look at will with the power of clairvoyance, it becomes always thicker and thicker till it becomes matter. You have no other option, if you agree with Schopenhauer, but to believe that man is really a being of will. Had Schopenhauer been clairvoyant, this being of will would have confronted him as a matter-machine, for matter is the outer side of will. Within, matter is will, as light is thought. From outside, will is matter, as thought is outwardly light. For this reason I pointed out in former addresses: If man dives down mystically into his will-nature, then those who only toy with Mysticism and really only strive after a sensuous experience of their Ego and of the worst egoism, believe they will find the spirit. But if they went far enough with this introspection, they would discover the true material nature of man's interior. For it is nothing less than a diving down into matter. If you dive down into the will-nature, you will find the true nature of matter. The scientific philosophers of today are only telling fairy-stories when they talk about matter consisting of molecules and atoms. You find the true nature of matter by diving down mystically into yourself. There you find the other side of will, and that is matter. And in this matter, that is in Will, is revealed finally the continually beginning, continually germinating world. You look out onto the world. You are surrounded with light, and the light is the death-bed of a previous world. You tread on hard matter, the strength of the world bears you up. In light shines beauty in the form of thought, and in the gleam of beauty the previous world dies. The world discloses itself in its strength and might and power, but also in its darkness. The world of the future discloses itself in darkness, in the elements of material will. If physicists were for once to talk sense, they would not produce speculations about atoms and molecules, but they would say: The visible world consists of the past, and carries in it not molecules and atoms, but the future. And you would be right in saying of the world that the past appears to us in the present, and the past wraps up everywhere the future, for the present is only the total effect of past and future. The future is what lies in the strength of matter. The past is what shines in the beauty of light, which includes, of course, sound and warmth.

And thus man can understand himself only if he takes himself as a seed of futurity, enclosed in the past, in the light-aura of thought. We might say that looked at spiritually man is the past in so far as he shines in his beauty-aura, but in this past-aura is incorporated a darkness mingling with the light, which rays forth out of the past, a darkness which carries over into the future. Light shines out of the past; darkness leads into the future. *Light is nature in terms of thought, darkness is nature in terms of will.* Hegel leaned toward the light that develops in the processes of growth and in the ripest blooms. Schopenhauer, as philosopher, is like a man standing in front of a tree, who has really no joy in the magnificence of its flower, but has an inner urge to wait till the seeds of the fruit bursts forth. That pleases him, that the power of growth is there, it stimulates him and makes his mouth water to think peaches are going to grow out of the peach-blossom. He turns from light-nature to light. What stirs him, viz., what develops from the light-nature of the bloom as the stuff that he can roll round with his tongue, or the future fruit, is as a matter of fact the double nature of the world. To see the world properly you must see it in its double nature, for only then do you realize the concreteness of the world, whereas otherwise you see only its abstractness. When you go out and look at the trees in blossom, you are really living on the past. You look at nature in spring and you can say: What the

gods have done to the world in past ages is revealed in the beauty of spring blossom. You look at the fruitful autumn world and say: There begins a new act of the gods, there falls something which however has the power of further development, of development into the future.

Thus it is a question not merely of making for oneself a picture of the world through speculation, but of taking in the world with the whole man. One can in actual fact comprehend the past in plum blossom, and feel the future in the plum. The taste of it on the tongue is closely connected with that out of which one rises again, like the Phoenix from his ashes — into the future. There you comprehend the world in feeling, and it was in this way that Goethe really pondered on everything he wanted to see and feel in the world. For instance he considered the green plant-world. He had not, of course, the advantages of modern Spiritual Science, but in considering the greenness of the plant-world, which had not quite reached the stage of bloom, he had after all the element that has come down from the past into the present; for in the plant the past appears already in the bloom; but what is not quite so much of the past is the leaf's greenness.

#### Diagram 2

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The greenness of Nature is that which, as it were, has not yet decayed, which is not so much in the grip of the past. It is this which unfolds itself as green. (See Diagram 2) But that which points to the future is what emerges from the darkness. There where the green is graded off to the bluish tone, there is that which proves itself to be of the future (blue.) On the other hand, there where we are directed to the past, where the ripening force is, which brings things to flower, there is warmth (red,) where light not only shines forth, but inwardly fills itself with force, where it becomes warmth. Now one ought really to draw the whole thing so that one says: You have the green, the plant-world (thus would Goethe feel, even if he has not transformed it into Spiritual or Occult Science;) bordering on it you have the darkness, where the green is darkened into blue. The part that increases its light and becomes filled with warmth, would close again towards the top. But you yourself — as man — are there, there you have within you what you have externally in the green plant-world; there you are, as human etheric body, and I have often said, peach-coloured. And that is the colour which appears here when the blue crosses over to the red. That is our own colour. So that, looking out on the coloured world, one can say: There one is oneself in the peach-colour, and has the green opposite; one has on the one hand the bluish, the dark, on the other side the light colour, the reddish-yellow. But because one is inside the peach-colour, because one lives in it, one can in ordinary life perceive it as little as one perceives thought as light. One does not perceive or observe one's own experience, and therefore one overlooks the peach-colour and sees only the red which one enlarges on the one side, and the blue which one enlarges towards the other side; and thus we see such a rainbow-spectrum. But this is only a deception. You would get the real spectrum if you bent this colour-strip into a circle. In actual fact one does bend it just because as human being one stands within the peach-colour, and so sees the coloured world only from blue to red and from red to blue through green. Were you to have this

aspect, precisely then every rainbow would appear as a self-contained circle, as a circular section of a cylinder.

I mention this last only to call your attention to the fact that a philosophy of Nature such as Goethe's is at the same time a spiritual philosophy. In approaching Goethe, the researcher of Nature, we may say that he has as yet no Spiritual Science, but his view of Natural Science was such that it was quite on the lines of Spiritual Science. The essential thing for us today is that the world, including man, is an inter-penetration of thought-light, light-thought with will-matter, matter-will; and the concrete element in it is built up in the most various ways, or permeated with the content of thought-light, light-thought, matter-will and will-matter.

You must look at the Cosmos qualitatively in this way, not merely quantitatively, to get the truth of it. Then also there creeps into this Cosmos a continuous dying away, a dying of the past in light, and a opening up of the future in the darkness. The old Persians, when they felt the past decaying in light, with their instinctive clairvoyance, they called it Ahura Mazdao, and when they felt the future in the darkening will, they called it Ahriman.

And now you have these two world-entities, light and darkness — the living thought, the decaying past, in light, and the growing will, the coming future, in darkness. If we get so far that we regard thought no longer merely in its abstractness, but as light, that we regard the will no longer merely in its abstractness, but as darkness, in its material nature; if we get so far as to be able to regard the warmth-content, for example, of the light-spectrum, as being connected with the past, and the material side, the chemical side of the spectrum as being connected with the future, we pass over from the purely abstract to the concrete.

We are no longer such dried-up, pedantic thinkers, merely working with the head; we know that what does work in our heads is really the light that surrounds us. And we are no longer such prejudiced people as to have only pleasure in light: we know also that in the light is death, a dying world. We can sense the world-tragedy in the light. We can also get from the abstract thought to the rhythm of the world. And in darkness we see the seeds of the future. We find indeed therein the impetus for such passionate natures as Schopenhauer. In short, we penetrate from the abstract into the concrete. World-pictures rise before us instead of mere thoughts or abstract will-impulses.

In the next lecture we shall seek — in what has developed concretely for us so remarkably, — thought into light and will into darkness — we shall seek the origin of good and evil. We shall penetrate from the world within into the Cosmos and there seek not only in an abstract or religious-abstract world the causes of good and evil, but we shall see how we break through to a knowledge of good and evil, after having made a beginning by realizing thought in its light, and having felt will in its darkness.

- See more at: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA291/English/RSPC1935/19201205p01.html#sthash.JbMcXAAi.dpuf>

**Colour**

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Section Begins

Lecture II

**Artistic and Moral Experience**

The understanding of the spiritual-scientific view of life not merely with the mind but with the heart has as a result a corresponding revolution in artistic creation and enjoyment. The forces which we derive from this world-outlook can also flow into the understanding of the world from the point of view of Art. We have recently tried to indicate with our building (the Goetheanum at Dornach) at least a small part of the spiritual-scientific impulses which can flow into artistic forms. We would see a time, before us, if we examine closely the experiences and feelings to be derived from spiritual science, when the path to Art would be in many respects different from what it has been in the past, when the means of artistic creation will be experienced in the human soul much more intensively than before, when colours and sounds will be much more intimately felt in the soul, when, as it were, colours and sounds can be felt morally and spiritually in the soul, and when in the creations of the artists we shall meet the traces of their souls' experiences in the Cosmos.

In essentials the attitude of artistic creation and artistic appreciation in the past epoch was a kind of external observation, an appeal to something that affects the artist from outside. The need to refer to Nature and to the model for outward observation has become greater and greater. Not that in the Art of the future there is to be any one-sided rejection of Nature and outward reality. Far from it, but there will be a much more intimate union with the external world; so strong a union with it, that it covers not merely the external impression of colours and sound and form, but that which one can experience *behind* the sound and colour and form, in what is revealed by them.

In this respect mankind will make important discoveries in the future; it will unite its moral-spiritual nature with the results of sense-perception. An endless deepening of the human soul can be foreseen in this domain. Let us take first of all a single point. We will take the case when we direct our gaze to a surface evenly covered with vermilion. Let us assume we succeed in forgetting everything else round us and concentrating entirely on experiencing this colour, so that we have the colour in front of us not merely as something that works upon us, but as something wherein we ourselves are, with which we ourselves are one. We shall then be able to have the experience: you are now in the world, you yourself have become colour in this world, your innermost soul has become colour. Wherever you go in the world, your soul will be filled with red, everywhere you live in red and with red and out of red. But we will not be able to experience this in intensive soul-life, unless the feeling is transformed into the corresponding moral experience, into real moral experience. If we float through the world as red, and have become identical with red, we shall not be able to help feeling that this red world in which one is oneself red is pierced with the substance of divine wrath, which pours upon us from every direction on account of all the possibilities of evil and sin in us. We shall be able to feel we are in the illimitable red spaces as in a judgment court of God, and our moral feelings will be like what a moral experience of our soul would become in all-embracing "illimitable" space. Then when the reaction comes, when something rises in our soul one can only describe it by saying that one learns to pray.

If one can experience in the colour red the radiation and fusion of the divine wrath with all that can lie in the soul as the possibility of evil, and if one can experience in red how one learns to pray, then the experience of the colour red is enormously deepened. Then we can also experience how red can express itself plastically in space.

We can then understand how we can experience a Being who radiates goodness, who is filled with divine goodness and mercy, a Being such as we long to experience in space. Then we shall feel the need of expressing this divine mercy and goodness in a form which arises out of the colour itself. We shall feel the need of allowing space to recede, so that the goodness and mercy may shine forth. As clouds are driven asunder so space is rent by goodness and mercy and we shall get the feeling: you must make that a red which is fleeing.

Here we shall have to indicate faintly a kind of rose-violet streaming into the fleeing red. We shall then be taking part with our whole soul in a self-forming of colour, and with our whole soul shall feel an echo of what those beings have felt who specially belong to our earth, and who, when they had ascended to the Elohim-existence, learnt to fashion the world of forms out of colours. We shall learn to experience something of the Spirits of Form, who as spirits are the Elohim. And we shall then understand how the forms of the colours can be realities as is indicated in my first and second Mystery Plays, and we shall understand a little of how the colour-surface becomes something we have overcome, because we go out with colour into the Universe. If this is accompanied by strong desire, a feeling can arise like that in Strader when, looking at the picture of Capesius, he says: "I fain would pierce this canvas through and through ..."

If you consider this you will see that an attempt has been made in these Mystery Plays to present something of this sort really artistically, how something appears before our soul when it attempts to expand in the cosmic forces, when it feels one with the cosmic spirits. That was in fact the beginning of all art. Then the materialistic time had to come, and this old art, with its inner divine subtlety, had to be changed into the secondary "After-Art, Post-Art" which is essentially the art of the materialistic age, the art which cannot create, but only imitate. It is the sign of all secondary art, all derivative art that it can only imitate, and that it does not create form directly out of the material itself.

Let us assume something else, that we do what we did with the red surface, only with a more orange colour. We shall have quite different experiences with it. If we sink ourselves in the orange surface and become one with it, we shall not have the feeling of the divine wrath bearing down upon us; we shall rather have the feeling that what meets us here, though having something of the seriousness of wrath in a modified form, is yet desirous of imparting something to us, instead of merely punishing us, is desirous of arming us with inner power. If we go out into the Universe and become one with the orange colour we move in such a way that with every step we take we feel that this experience, this living in the orange forces, gives us the impression of becoming stronger and stronger, not merely that the judgment-seat is shattering us. So that orange gives us something strengthening, and does not bring only punishment with it. Thus we experience orange in the Universe.

We feel then the longing to understand the inner side of things and to unite it with ourselves. By living the red we learn to pray, and by living in the orange we experience the desire for knowledge of the inner nature of things. And if it is a yellow surface, and we do the same thing, we feel ourselves transferred to the beginning of our time-cycle. We feel: now you are living with the forces out of which you have been created, when you entered upon your first earth-incarnation. One feels an affinity between what one was during the whole of the earth's existence, and what comes towards one from the world into which one carries the yellow oneself.



And if one identifies oneself with green, and goes with it through the Universe, which can quiet easily be done by gazing at a green field, and by shutting out all else and concentrating entirely upon it, and by then trying to dive down into it — as if green were the surface of a coloured sea — one experiences an inner increase of strength in what one happens to be in that one incarnation. One experiences a feeling of inner health, but at the same time of inner selfishness — a stimulus of the inner egoistic forces.

And if one did the same with a blue surface, one would go through the world with the desire, as one proceeded, to overcome the egoism, to become macro-cosmic. One would feel the desire to develop self-surrender, and one would feel happy to remain in this condition to meet the divine mercy. Thus one would go through the world feeling as if blessed with the divine mercy.

So one learns to know the inner nature of colour, and as I said, we can get an idea of a time when the preparation through which the painter as artists will go, will mean a moral experience in colour of this kind; when the experience preparatory to artistic creation will be much more inward, much more intimate than it has ever been.

These are, after all, only a few indications I am giving you, which will be developed much further in the future, and will take hold of the souls of men and instigate them to artistic production. The adaptation of the material culture of old to modern times has dried up the soul and made it passive. Souls must be taken hold of and stimulated again by the inner forces of things.

- See more at: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA291/English/RSPC1935/19150101a01.html#sthash.V3xatwua.dpuf>

## **Colour**

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Section Begins

Lecture III

### **Colours as Revelations of the Psychic in the World**

If one regards the psychic in all movements and life, the varied and manifold world of colour becomes one whole world. One gradually takes one's place in what I should like to call an astral apprehension of the world. Then all visible colour becomes a revelation of the psychic in the world.

Let us look at the green of the plant. When a plant puts on its green we cannot regard the green colour as something subjective and see vibrations in the plant as the physicists do. After all, we no longer have the plant if we think only of the vibrations in the trees which are supposed to cause the colour. These are merely abstractions. In reality we cannot imagine the plant without its green, if we use our living imagination. The plant creates its green out of itself. But how?

Now, lifeless substances are incorporated in the plant, but these lifeless substances are made to live. In the plant are iron, carbon and some silicic acid. There are all kinds of substances which are found also in the Mineral Kingdom: and in seeing how life penetrates through the lifeless, and makes for itself an image by means of the lifeless, i.e. the image of the plant, we get the feeling of green as the lifeless image of life.

Everywhere we look out upon our green surroundings. We know that the lifeless substances of the earth live plants. Life itself we do not perceive. We perceive plants because they contain the lifeless substances. And because of this they are green. The green is the lifeless image of the life that exists on earth.

Now let us look at the green, since in a way we have in it a kind of world-word which tells us how life in the plant weaves and flows.

Then let us look at men. If we examine nature we find the colour that most resembles the healthy human complexion to be the fresh peach-blossom in spring. No other colour in nature is like it. But we feel that the inner health of man is expressed also in this peach-coloured time. We learn from the flesh-colour to know the living health of man which is really endowed by the soul. And we feel that when the colour of the skin becomes green, the man is ill and soul cannot find the right way into the physical body. On the other hand if the soul occupies the physical body too markedly in an egoistical way, as e.g. with avarice, the man becomes pale; as also is the case in fear.

Between paleness and greenness lies the healthy human colour with the suggestion of peach. And as we feel in the plant's green the lifeless image of life, we feel in the characteristic flesh-colour of a sound person the living image of the soul.

You see the world is beginning now to come alive in colours. The living forms itself through the lifeless into the image of green. The psychic forms the human skin into the image of peach or flesh-colour.

Let us look further. The sun appears to us whitish, which we feel to be closely related to light. If we awake at night in darkness we feel that it is not our real human environment in which we can fully feel our ego. For this we need light between us and other objects. We need light between ourselves and the wall so that the wall can have its effect on us from the distance. Our ego-feeling lights up in us if we wake up in light. In the darkness we feel ourselves strange in the world.

I say, light: but I could also take other sense-perceptions. And you will notice an apparent contradiction, because a person born blind never sees light. But it is not a question of seeing light directly, but of how one is organized. Man, even if born blind, is organized for light. And the limitation of ego-energy which is present in the blind, is there because of the absence of light.

Whiteness is related to light. If we feel whiteness in this way, as we feel the ego stimulated in a room by whiteness to its inner strength, we can say, making the thought living and not abstract: Whiteness is the psychic appearance of the spirit. For this reason we always feel, when we see white in pictures, yes, that is meant to be the spirit.

Take, on the other hand, black. When you see black, when we use black somewhere, it can most easily be used to represent the spiritual image of the lifeless, just as we feel ourselves killed, lamed, when our spirit has to find its place on awakening in black darkness. So one can feel black as the spiritual image of the lifeless.

And think now how one can live in colours! We experience the world as colour and light, when we experience green as the lifeless image of life, peach and flesh-colour as the living image of the soul, white as the psychic image of the spirit and black as the spiritual image of the lifeless.

I have really completed a circle by saying this, for observe how I had to describe green as the lifeless image of life; I stopped at life. Peach and flesh-colour = living image of the soul. I stopped at the soul. White = the psychic image of the spirit. I stopped at the soul

and go up to the spirit. Black = the spiritual image of the lifeless. I stopped at the spiritual, proceeded to the lifeless, but came back again, since the green was the lifeless image of life. I have completed the circle. Thereby this living participation in colour becomes a real, artistic experience of the astral element in the world.

And if one has this artistic experience, death, life, soul and spirit present themselves as in a wheel of life, for from death one returns to death through the life of the psychic and spiritual; if they present themselves also through light and colour, as I have just described them, one knows one must go outside space, one cannot remain in space, the riddle of space must be solved on a surface.

And one loses the idea of space; as a sculptor has lost the habit of thinking with the head, so we lose now the idea of space. Everything presses on one as light and colour; one becomes a painter. The source of painting is opened of its own accord by means of such a view. And one gets the great inward pleasure of putting on this or that colour and setting the other colour next to it. For then colours become a living revelation of the living, of the lifeless, of the spiritual and of the psychic.

Thus, having passed beyond dead thought, one really arrives at the point of feeling oneself driven no longer to speak in words, no longer to think in ideas, and no longer even to create forms, but to reproduce in colour and light, the reflections of life and death, spirit and soul as they appear in the world.

Of course in treating of things artistic, I must refer not to the abstract understanding, but to artistic feeling. What is artistic must be understood artistically. Therefore I cannot here point out to you by means of some concept-illustration, how green, peach-colour, white and black give one the desire to have an enclosed image. One wants to have a contour and the circumscribed picture inside it. Then these four colours always contain something of shadow. White is the lightest shadow, for it is shadowed light. Black is the darkest.

Green and peach-colour are images, that is, self-contained surfaces, which give to the surface something of a shadowy nature.

Thus in these four colours we have image-colours or shadow-colours, and we want to feel them as such.

The case is quite different when we go on to other colours. These other colours are, if I take three nuances of them, red, yellow and blue. With these we have not the desire, if we rely on our purely artistic sensibility, to have them in a circumscribed contour, but we feel the need for the surface to shine in these colours, so that the radiation of the red comes forth from the surface to meet us, or that the mattness of the blue has a calming effect on us, or that the gleam of the yellow shines out from the surface towards us.

And so one can call the four colours, flesh-colour, and green, black and white, the image or shadow-colours; and on the other hand blue, yellow, and red the luster-colours which shine forth from the image of the shadowy.

And when we follow with our sensibility how the world becomes luminous with the three colours, red, yellow and blue, we say again to ourselves, that in the lustrousness of red we want preferably to see the living; the living wants to reveal itself to us in active red; so that we may call red the luster of the living.

If the spirit wants to reveal itself to us not merely in its abstract equality as white, but to speak to us inwardly and intensively — that is to our soul — it will shine yellow. Yellow is the luster of the spirit.

If the soul desires to remain truly inward and this state is to be expressed artistically in colour, then the soul will withdraw itself from outer phenomena and remain, as it were, sealed. This give the soft luminosity of blue, which is thus the luster of the soul.

In this way we live in colour; we understand it with our sensibility and our feeling if we realize everywhere how a world forms itself out of the four image-colours and the three luster-colours. And if one in this manner lives in the luster and the image-character of the world of colour, one becomes a painter, who paints with his inner soul, for one learns to live *in* the colour.

One learns, for example, what each colour wishes to say to us. Blue is the luster of the psychic. When we paint a surface blue, we are satisfied only if we paint it strong at the edged and weaker in the center.

On the other hand, if we want yellow's message we make it thicker in the middle and lighter towards the edge. The colour itself demands it, and thus what lives in the colour reveals itself gradually. We come to produce the form out of the colour, that is, to paint out of the world of colour itself, through our feeling.

If we experience the world as colour in this way, it will not occur to us if we want, for instance, to represent a figure in a picture as a gleaming white figure, a figure that lives in the spirit, to reveal it in any other colour, but in a yellow, lighter at the edges. It will not occur to use to paint the soul element in a picture otherwise than by using blue shaded off inwards to a softer blue even if it is only in the garment.

If you appreciate from this standpoint the painters of the Renaissance, Raphael, Michelangelo, and even Leonardo, you will find in all of them that at the time they really lived in this way in colour.

And, above all, there was present something else. In the painting which has practically died out in our time, but was still to be found echoed in the Renaissance painting, there was that inner perspective of the picture which lives in the colour. A man who feels the luster of red properly will always feel how the red comes forward out of the picture, how it brings the object it represents near to us; while blue takes the object it represents into the distance. We paint colour-perspective as inner perspective. It is the perspective which still lived in the psychic-spiritual.

It was in the materialistic age — a fact often over-looked — that space-perspective first appeared, the perspective that deals with spatial measurement, so that distance did not become blue, but smaller, the foreground not red, but larger. This perspective is a side-product of the materialistic age which, living in the material element in space, wanted to paint in it also.

We are today again at a time when we must find our way back again to the natural element in painting. For the surface belongs also to the materials of a painter, for he works upon it. But an artist must before all things have a feeling for his material. For instance, if he wants to carve a plastic figure out of wood, he must carve, for example, the man's eyes out of the wood. Whatever is concave he must see with his artist's eye and hollow out. The wood-sculptor hollows out the wood.

The sculptor in marble or some other hard stone does not bother about how the eye goes in. He does not hollow out, but he notices how the brow emerges from the eye. He applies; he keeps the convex in mind. The marble-worker, even if he has made his model in plasticine or clay, must think in terms of his material. He must live in it, so that it speaks to him.

It must always also be the same with colour; one must reckon with the fact that the painter's material is the surface. And the surface can only be felt in this way if the third dimension of space is ignored. It is ignored when one has what is qualitative one the surface as the expression of the third dimension; when one feels blue as a retiring and red as an advancing colour, when, in short, the third dimension is inherent in the colour. Then one really releases matter, whereas in space-perspective matter is only imitated.

I am, of course, not saying anything against spatial perspective; it was natural and self-evident in the middle of the fifteenth century, and indeed added something powerful to the old aesthetics of painting. But the important thing is that after passing through materialism artistically for a time, as expressed in space-perspective, we can return to a more spiritual interpretation of painting also, so that we come back one more to colour-perspective.

In talking about Art, one cannot theorize; one must remain always in the medium of Art itself and the thing that can be of service to us in talking about Art must be artistic sensibility. One cannot speak about Mathematics or Mechanics or Physics from artistic sensibility, but from reason and understanding, by the light of which one can in no wise consider Art, though this is what was done by the aestheticists of the nineteenth century.

- See more at: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA291/English/RSPC1935/19230518a01.html#sthash.PvUE2IAw.dpuf>

## Colour

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Section Begins

Lecture IV

### **The Hierarchies and the Nature of the Rainbow**

When I wrote my *Occult Science*, I was compelled to bring the evolution of the earth somewhat into line with present-day ideas. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries one could have put it differently. For instance, in a certain chapter of this *Occult Science* the following might then have been found. One would have spoken otherwise of those beings whom one can describe as the beings of the first hierarchy: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones. One would have called the Seraphim those beings who make no differentiation between subject and object, who would not say: there are objects outside myself, but: the world is, and I am the world and the world is I — who know of their own existence only by means of an experience, of which man has a weak idea when some experience carries him away in glowing rapture.

It is in fact sometimes difficult to explain to modern people what a glowing rapture is, for it was even understood better at the beginning of the nineteenth century than it is now. It still happened then that some poem or other, by this or that poet, was read, and the people acted through rapture — forgive my saying so, but it was so — as if they were mad! So much were they moved, so much were they suffused with warmth.

Nowadays people are frozen just when one thinks they should be enraptured. And this rapture of the soul — which was experienced particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, — if raised as a unifying element into the consciousness gives one an idea of the inner life of the Seraphim.

And we have to imagine the consciousness-element of the Cherubim as a completely purified element in the consciousness, full of light, so that thought becomes directly light, and illumines everything; and the element of the Thrones as bearing up the world in grace. One would then have said: the choir of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones act together, in such a way that the thrones constitute a nucleus, and the Cherubim radiate their own luminous nature from it. The Seraphim cover the whole in a mantle of rapture, which streams out into all space.

But these are all beings: in the midst of the Thrones, round them the Cherubim, and in the periphery, the Seraphim. They are beings which mutually interplay and act and think and will and feel. And if a being possessing the necessary susceptibility had traveled through space where the thrones and Cherubim and Seraphim had thus formed a center, he would have felt warmth in different degrees and in different places; now higher, now lower warmth, but yet in a spiritual and psychic way; in such a way, however, that the psychic experience is at the same time a physical experience in our senses. Thus, when the being feels the warmth psychically, there really is present what you feel when you are in a heated room.

Such a union of the beings of the First Hierarchy did exist once upon a time in the universe. And this formed the system and existence of the "Saturnian Age." Warmth is just the expression of these beings. The warmth is nothing in itself, it is only the evidence that these beings exist.

I should like to use a simile here which may perhaps help as an explanation. Suppose you are fond of somebody, you find his presence warms you. Suppose further there comes another man who has no heart at all and says: that person doesn't interest me in the least; I am interested only in the warmth which he spreads around. He does not say he is interested in the warmth the other sheds, but that nothing but the warmth interests him. He is talking nonsense, of course, for when the person who radiates warmth has gone, the warmth has gone also. It is there only when the person is there. In itself it is nothing. The person must be there for the warmth to be there.

Thus Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones must be there; otherwise warmth is not there either. It is merely the revelation of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. Now at the time of which I speak, what I have just described to you did in actual fact exist. When one spoke of the element of warmth one was understood to mean really Cherubim, Seraphim and Thrones. That was the Saturnian Age.

Then one went further and said that only this highest hierarchy, the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, has the might and the power to produce something of this kind in the Cosmos. And only by reason of the fact that this was done at the beginning of a terrestrial creation could evolution proceed. The Sun, as it were, of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones was able to a certain extent to direct the course of it. And this happened in such a way that the Beings produced by the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, the Beings of the Second Hierarchy — the Kyriotetes, Exusiai and Dynamis — now surged into this space created and warmed in this Saturnian life by the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. Thus the younger — of course, the cosmically younger — Beings entered in; and theirs was the next influence. Whereas the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones revealed themselves in the element of warmth, the Beings of the Second Hierarchy were seen in the element of light.

The Saturnian element is dark, but warm, and within the dark and gloomy world of the

Saturnian existence arises light, precisely the thing that can appear through the sons of the Second Hierarchy, through the Exusiai, Dynamis and Kyriotetes.

This is the case because the entry of the Second Hierarchy represents an inward illumination, which is connected with a densification of warmth. Air comes forth from the pure warmth-element, and in the revelation of the light we have the entry of the Second Hierarchy.

But you must get this clear: Actually Beings press in. Light is present for a Being with the necessary powers of perception. Light is what distinguishes the paths of these Beings. Under certain circumstances when light appears somewhere, there also appears shadow, darkness, dark shadow. So shadow also arose through the entry of the Second Hierarchy in the form of light. What was this shadow? The air. And actually till the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was known what the air is. Today one knows only that the air consists of oxygen and nitrogen, etc. which means no more than if one says, for instance, that a watch is made of glass and silver — whereby nothing whatever is said about the watch. Similarly nothing whatever is said about the air as a cosmic phenomenon when you say it consists of oxygen and nitrogen. But a great deal is said if one knows that from the cosmic point of view air is the shadow of the light. So that with the entry of the Second Hierarchy into the Saturnian warmth, one actually has in fact the entry of light, and its shadow, air. And where that happens is Sun. In the thirteenth and twelfth centuries one would really have had to talk in this manner.

The further stages of development are now conducted by the sons of the Third Hierarchy, the Archai, Archangels and Angels. These Beings bring into the luminous element with its shadow of air, introduced by the Second Hierarchy, another element resembling our desire, our urge to acquire something, our longing to have something.

Hence it came about that, let us say, an Archai or Archangel-Being entered and found an element of light, or rather, a place of light. In this place it felt, by reason of its sensitiveness to light, the urge towards and desire for darkness. The Angel-Being carried the light into the darkness, or an Angel-Being carried the darkness into the light. These Beings became the intermediaries, the messengers between light and darkness.

The result was that what formerly shone only in light, trailed behind it, its shadow, the somber, airy darkness, now began to gleam in all colours, that light appeared in darkness, and darkness in light. It was the Third Hierarchy which conjured forth colour from out of light and darkness.

Observe, you have here something as it were historically documented to put before your souls. In the time of Aristotle one still knew — supposing one had pondered within the Mysteries on the origin of colours — that the Beings of the Third Hierarchy had to do with this. Wherefore Aristotle expressed in his Colour-Harmony that colour was a combined effect of Light and Darkness. But this spiritual element was lost — that the First Hierarchy was responsible for warmth, the Second for light and its shadow, the air, and the Third for the shining forth of colour in a world continuity. And there remained nothing but the unfortunate Newtonian theory of Colour, over which the initiated have smiled up to the eighteenth century, and which then became an article of faith with those who were just expert physicists.

In order to speak in the sense of this Newtonian theory, it is really necessary for one to have no knowledge at all of the spiritual world. And if one is still inwardly spurred by the

spiritual world, as was the case with Goethe, one is utterly opposed to it. One states what is correct as Goethe did, then one storms dreadfully. Goethe was never so furious as on the occasion when he castigated Newton; he was simply furious about the wretched nonsense.

We cannot understand such things today, simply because anyone who does not recognize the Newtonian teaching concerning colour is looked upon by the physicists as a fool. But it was not really the case that Goethe stood quite alone in his own time. He alone uttered these things, but even at the end of the eighteenth century the learned knew perfectly well that the origin of colour lay in the spiritual world.

Air is the shadow of light. Just as when light radiates and, under certain circumstances, gives rise to deep shadow, so, if colour is present, and this colour works as a reality in the airy element, not merely as a reflection, not merely as a reflex-colour, but as a Reality; then the fluid, watery element arises from out of the real colour element. As air is the shadow of light, in cosmic thought, so water is the reflection, the creation of the element of colour in the Cosmos.

You will say you don't understand this. But just try to grasp the real meaning of colour. Red — well — do you believe that red in its real nature is only the neutral surface on generally regards it? Surely Red is something which attacks one. I have often discussed it. Red makes one want to run away; it pushes one back. Violet-blue one wants to pursue; it continually evades one, and gets ever darker and darker. Everything lives in colours. They are a world of their own, and the psychic element feels in the colour-world the necessity for movement, if it follows colours with psychic experience.

Today man stares at the rainbow. If one looks at it with the slightest imagination, one sees elemental beings active in it. They are revealed in remarkable phenomena. In the yellow certain of them are seen continually emerging from the rainbow, and moving across to the green. The moment they reach the underneath of the green, they are attracted to and disappear in it, to emerge on the other side. The whole rainbow reveals to an imaginative observer an outpouring and a disappearance of the spiritual. It reveals in fact something like a spiritual waltz. At the same time one notices that as these spiritual beings emerge in red-yellow, they do it with an extraordinary apprehension; and as they enter into the blue-violet, they do it with an unconquerable courage. When you look at the red-yellow, you see streams of fear, and when you look at the blue-violet you have the feeling that there is the seat of all courage and valor.

Now imagine we have the rainbow in section. Then these beings emerge in the red-yellow and disappear in the blue-violet; here apprehension, here courage, which disappears again. There the rainbow becomes dense and you can imagine the watery element arises from it. Spiritual beings exist in this watery element which are really a kind of copy of the beings of the Third Hierarchy.

One can say that in approaching the learned men of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, one must understand such things in this way. You cannot understand Albertus Magnus if you read him with modern knowledge, you must read him with the knowledge that such spiritual things were a reality to him and then only will you understand the meaning of his words and expressions.

In this way therefore air and water appear as a reflection of the Hierarchies. The Second Hierarchy enters in the form of light, the Third in the form of colour. But in order to enable this to be established, the lunar existence is created.



And now comes the Fourth Hierarchy. I am speaking now with the thought of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Now the Fourth Hierarchy. We never speak of it; but in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries one spoke freely of it. What is this Fourth Hierarchy? It is man himself. But formerly one did not understand by it the remarkably odd being with two legs and the tendency to decay that wanders about the world now; for then the human being of the present day appeared to the scholar as an unusual kind of being. They spoke of primeval man before the Fall, who existed in such a form as to have as much power over the earth as Angeloi, Archangeloi and so on, had over the lunar existence; the Second Hierarchy over the solar existence; the First Hierarchy over the Saturnian existence. They spoke of man in his original terrestrial existence, and as the Fourth Hierarchy. And with this Fourth Hierarchy came — as a gift from the higher Hierarchies of something they first possessed, and preserved, and did not themselves require — *Life*. And life came into the colourful world which I have been sketchily describing to you.

You will ask — But didn't things live before this? The answer you can learn from man himself. Your ego and your astral body have not life, but they exist all the same. The spiritual, the soul, does not require life. Life begins only with your etheric body; and this is something in the nature of an outer wrapping. It is thus that life appears only after the lunar existence, with the terrestrial existence, in that stage of evolution which belongs to our earth. The iridescent world became alive. It is not only then that Angeloi, Archangeloi, etc., felt a desire to bring light into darkness and darkness into light and so called forth the play of colours in the planets, but also they desired to experience this play of colour inwardly, and make it inward; to feel weakness and lassitude when darkness inwardly dominates over light, and activity when light dominates over darkness. For what happens when you run? When you run it means that light dominates over the darkness in you; when you sit and are idle, the reverse happens. It is the effect of colour in the soul, the effect of colour iridescence. The iridescence of colour, permeated and shot with life, appeared with the coming of man, the Fourth Hierarchy. And at this moment of cosmic growth the forces which became active in the iridescence of colour began to form outlines. Life, which rounded off, smoothed and shaped the colours, called forth the hard crystal form; and we are in the terrestrial epoch.

Such things as I have now explained to you were really the axioms of those medieval alchemists, occultists, Rosicrucians, etc., who, though scarcely mentioned today in history, flourished from the ninth and tenth up to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and whose stragglers, always regarded as oddities, existed into the eighteenth century and even into the beginning of the nineteenth. Only then were these things entirely covered up. The philosophical attitude to life of the time led to the following phenomenon:

Suppose I have here a human being. I cease to have any interest in him, merely take off his clothes and hang them on a clothes-dummy with a knob at the top like a head, and thereafter take no more interest in the human being. I say to myself further: That is the human being, what does it matter to me that anything can be put into these clothes; the dummy is, as far as I am concerned, the human being. So it was with the elements of Nature. People are no longer interested that behind warmth of fire is the First Hierarchy, behind light and air is the Second, behind the so-called chemical ether, colour-ether, etc. and water is the Third, behind life and the earth is the Fourth, or Man. Out with the clothes-horse and hang the clothes on it! That is the first Act. The second begins then with the school of Kant!~ Here begins Kantianism, here one begins, having the clothes-horse

with the clothes on it, to philosophize concerning what “the thing in itself” of these clothes might be. And the conclusion is that one cannot recognize “the thing in itself” of the clothes. Very perspicacious! Naturally, if you have removed the man first, you can philosophize about the clothes, and this leads to a very pretty speculation: the clothes-horse is there all right, and the clothes hanging on it, so one speculates either in the Kantian fashion — one cannot recognize “the thing in itself” — or in the manner of Helmholtz, saying: these clothes cannot surely have form. There must be crowds of tiny whirling specks of dust, or atoms, in them, which by their movement preserve the clothes in their form.

Yes, this is the turn that later thought has taken. But it is abstract, and shadowy. All the same it is the kind of thought in which we live today; out of it we fashion the whole of our Natural Scientific principles. And when we deny that we think in terms of atoms, we are doing it all the more. For it will be a long time before it is admitted that it is unnecessary to weave a Dance of the Atoms into it, rather than simply to replace man into his clothes. But that is just what the resuscitation of Spiritual Science must attempt.

- See more at: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA291/English/RSPC1935/19240104v01.html#sthash.AuIGTSBg.dpuf>