

Rudolf Steiner and the Spirit of Art:
Romanticism, Modernism, and the Foundations of Eurythmy

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Title

The Experience of Art in Waldorf Schools: An Exploration into the Spiritual Philosophy of Eurythmy

Abstract

Waldorf education was founded by Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of anthroposophy in the early 20th century. Through emphasis on the interconnectedness of Spirit and its relationship to man as explored by thinkers of German Romanticism, Anthroposophy encourages us to find universal enlightenment through spiritual interaction with the arts. The unifying power of art through its mediums is addressed by Steiner and contemporaries such as W. Kandinsky, A. Schoenberg, and P. Mondrian.

The development of the philosophy of Anthroposophy, and sub-sequentially Waldorf education, argues for the interaction between art forms that culminates in a universally expressed embodied spirit. Concepts like 'the music in art' and the 'voice of color' specifically influence Waldorf arts education theory, particularly in the Waldorf specific 'dance art' form of Eurythmy. This capstone seeks to highlight the philosophical framework behind Eurythmy, and trace the arc of influences that Steiner embodied while crafting his theory of this art form.

Keywords

Waldorf education, Anthroposophy, philosophy of Eurythmy

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Introduction and Methodology

In 1919, philosophic mystic Rudolf Steiner developed the Waldorf educational system, a holistic approach to learning that encourages the natural development of the mind and spirit of the individual. Looking historically at the works of Steiner's influential predecessors and contemporaries, I focus my exploratory capstone research on the spiritual and philosophical roots that contributed to Steiner's philosophy of Anthroposophy and Waldorf ideology, more specifically the dance art form of Eurythmy. In the field of arts education, Waldorf school serves as a pinnacle of arts integrated learning styles in approaching not only arts curriculum, but in all subjects as well (Barnes, 2011).

Waldorf education was first established in Germany by Steiner for children of cigarette factory workers. At its conception, the stipulations for Waldorf style education were simple; the teachers strive to approach education as an art that educates the whole child, including the physical and spiritual development and wellbeing. Today there are over 160 schools in the United States and 900 across the globe (Association of Waldorf Schools Across America, 2011).

Steiner's formation of Anthroposophy and Waldorf education are inspired by the ideas of German Romanticism and other spiritual movements of the early 20th century, as well as reflected in the work of his contemporaries. With my background in the arts and German studies, I believe that my expertise will lend itself to tracing these connections. There is no concrete study that outlines the overlying arch of these principals in relation to Anthroposophy and arts within Waldorf schools and the inspiration they provided in Steiner's own philosophy. This paper serves as an exploration into how esoteric spirituality and principals of literature and philosophy are expressed in Eurythmy.

Through an examination of original works in German and a corpus of primary research that is informing my study, I will approach this study with a review of primary literature from key figures of the 19th century that influenced Steiner, as well as early 20th century reflections of thought as viewed by his contemporaries.

My research will explore the spiritual interconnectedness of the periods of earlier German Romanticism to the beginnings of Modernism from Steiner's standpoint and how they manifest themselves in Eurythmy. In conducting my review of literature, I discovered that while much has been written in regards to the many branches of Steiner and Waldorf education, there is no comprehensive collection of thought that truly traced the historical arch of the development behind Anthroposophy with a focus on its spiritual and artistic cultivation in the arts (Maher, 1995).

This analysis focuses on the relationship between philosophies and thought of esoteric spirituality of the early 20th century, particularly on the experience of art in Eurythmy in Waldorf education. The concept of Anthroposophy and Waldorf education have many interpretations of understanding in the modern context. Overall, the major focus of the study will be seeking proof of the spirit in art reflected in the principals of Eurythmy. I argue that Steiner created Anthroposophy and Waldorf education on his own with the context of his philosophical predecessors and modern contemporaries. My goal to provide a comprehensive yet focused guide to this historical arch.

The Waldorf education curriculum, while focused on an arts based learning model, has certain aspects that make Waldorf schools unique. The natural evolution of the child is the focus, rather than educational doctrines being forced upon the student. Handcrafts and the relationship to nature mirrored in class curriculum play a large role in all grade levels

(Carlgren, 2005). There is a standard infused element of Christian spirituality that underlies many Waldorf principals, in addition to spiritual ties in other religions. Children are encouraged to develop at their own pace, forming an intrinsic bond between the physical and spiritual health of the child (Books, 1991).

The intention of this research does not at all focus on the modern reception of these topics, but rather offers a historical glimpse of the foundations behind Steiner's formation of aspects of Anthroposophy and more specifically his creation of the art form of Eurythmy, both of which informed the development of education philosophy that is present in today's Waldorf practices. I approach this research from a historical prospective by uncovering the underlying principals and ideas that laid the foundation for the development of Eurythmy in Waldorf arts education (O'Leary, 2010). I did not attend Waldorf schools, and although I am interested in the study of Anthroposophy, my interest in this topic stems from a love of the arts and an attraction to German humanities.

To complete this research, I was informed by two additional capstone courses in my graduate school curriculum. The advanced literature course I enrolled in was entitled *Musical Absolute* and class served as an overview of German Romanticism with a focus on the nature of the spirit. The class was instructed by Kenneth Calhoon, PhD in the German language, exploring elements of spirituality in art and literature during the Romantic period. In addition, in the winter of 2011 I completed reading credits with Dr. Calhoon, deeper exploring the nature of the previous class with focus on Steiner's role in the contributing movements. Each classed helped to guide my capstone research by providing the opportunity to study the foundational texts for my analysis.

Research Focus: Eurythmy as Dialogue of the Spirit

Rudolf Steiner was part of a generation that represents the transition from German Romanticism to early Modernity, of which this transition is mirrored in the creation of his own doctrines. The Romantic themes of longing, contrast with light and dark mirroring the soul, and an emphasis on the role of nature reflected in man all were being challenged by the confronting issues of modernity and the turn of the 20th century (Calhoon, 2011).

In Anthroposophical circles, Steiner is heralded as the genius of a new generation, but Steiner was at the core a literary man, philosopher, and esoteric spiritualist (Association of Waldorf Schools Across America, 2011). Not only was he influenced by the thinkers of the German Romantics, Steiner served as a contemporary spiritual philosopher, with inspiration from the various esoteric movements of his time. Prolific artists like Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Schoenberg were all influenced by Steiner, illustrating the reciprocal relationship between his endeavors of the time and his contemporaries who were also seeking to find spiritual enlightenment through the unity of the soul (Kandinsky, 1977).

The most interesting discovery I have found through this research is that the relationship between Steiner's philosophy of Anthroposophy, and how it is expressed through the arts, is like the very nature of the philosophy itself; interconnected and deeply intertwined. This research began with a focus on the philosophical development of Anthroposophy in relation to the arts and education, but what I discovered is that trying to dissect these doctrines without regard to the reciprocal nature of the philosophy, I was blindly attempting to categorize these broad ideas.

Inspired by philosophers and writers of German Romanticism such as Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Novalis, who sought to understand the world of the spirit and soul in relation to man and his surroundings, Steiner's development of Waldorf education is interconnected in all elements. Of particular importance is the integration of the arts for all ages of development, both in terms of the physical body and the soul body. The universal idea of interconnectedness of spirit as explored by German romantics influenced Steiner to such a strong degree that all aspect of the arts in Waldorf education are fluid with one another (Calhoon, 2010).

The perfect unity of the concepts mentioned above is best illustrated with Steiner's founding of Eurythmy. Eurythmy is the physical manifestation of the dialogue of spirit, just as vivid as color applied to art resonates a kind of soul of its own. The interconnectedness of spirit is best personified through this dance form, because it utilizes concepts of universal spiritual enlightenment through art. According to Steiner, Eurythmy is, while appearing to be dance-like in form, actually the incarnation of the dialogue of the soul (Steiner, 1984). Just as Steiner applied the spirit in color, as did his contemporaries, the spirit in dance is expressed specifically though movement in Eurhythmy.

Eurythmy is the concrete expression of the idea that enlightenment of the soul may be achieved through connecting the spirit with movement. The development of Eurythmy is organically cultivated not only in Steiner's time, but that the roots lie deeper in the thinkers of the German Romantic movement. Eurythmy serves as the perfect example of a human art form that blends Steiner's desires to unite the greater universe with the soul of man.

The Foundations of Spirit in Art: Steiner's Precursors

Goethe

In the German Romantic movement, thinkers strove to understand the world through embodiment of the soul and a close relationship with nature. The influence of Wolfgang von Goethe plays a major role in Steiner's philosophy of Anthroposophy and education. Originally published in 1888, Steiner lectures about Goethe as the "father of a new esthetic" (Steiner 1987, p. 7). This lecture brings together Steiner's interpretation of Goethe's nature aesthetic in relation to beauty and the soul, highlighting that "beauty is truer than nature," and that "the soul is alive" (p. 32).

Goethe serves as the pinnacle thinker in early Romanticism, synthesizing the external world through observation and natural reflection in his studies of philosophy, literature, and art theory. He remains one of the most influential German thinkers and was certainly regarded as much during the late 19th century and early 20th century (Calhoon 2010). Steiner derives much of his own philosophy from Goethe, writes personally about him in a number of lectures, and made his work as part of the foundation of Anthroposophical thought. The building and performances held in the Goethaenum are tribute to Goethe, with his *Faust* text being one of the heavily integrated pieces of literature into the Waldorf arts system through theater, storytelling, and Eurythmy.

Goethe's writings on color theory, originally published in 1810, is one of the underlying foundations that informed Steiner's work. In his book *Color Theory*, Goethe explores the notion that certain colors possess unique emotional and spiritual vibrations that can be not only felt by man, but utilized in such a way to achieve a kind of

enlightenment through art (Goethe, 1971). The philosophical and spiritual aspects of this color theory work is explored by Steiner is reflected in his doctrines, and is consequentially reflected in his artistic contemporaries Kandinsky and Mondrian. The spirit of color is a major theme that unifies these thinkers together because they are all trying to access universal truth through the spiritual expression of color in art (Calhoon, 2011).

The influence of Goethe's work is best summarized by Steiner (1984), who states, "To state it most simply, Goethe saw every leaf, every colored petal as an entire plant. He saw inwardly the process of a single leaf unfolding by metamorphosis into the entire plant; then also by corollary, that the entire plant is only a more complicated leaf" (p. 2). Steiner approached Anthroposophy, the foundation of Waldorf Education, and the creation of Eurythmy all through an approach inspired by Goethe, with special attention to this leaf and plant metaphor (Steiner, 1987). The goal of Eurythmy is to expand this metaphor of the plant and leaf to human movement.

Steiner's philosophy of art in reference to Anthroposophy underlies the basis for Waldorf arts education. In his lecture series about the arts (Steiner, 1964) originally published in 1923, Steiner emphasizes that, "one result of Anthroposophical spiritual science – once it has been absorbed into civilization – will be a fructification of the arts" (p.15). He makes claim to the positivity of Goethe's understanding of art and the spiritual life and how he believes in the revival of these themes. He continues by saying, "I wished to call attention to the fact that Anthroposophical contemplation leads to a particular manner of beholding the world, which must lead, in turn, to an inner vitalization of the arts, present and future" (p.43). The series concludes with his interpretation of color theory, as

illustrated earlier as ideas originally explored by Goethe, in relation to the living image of the soul and the soul image of the spirit.

Steiner writes extensively on Goethe and developed a whole theory of theater and performance around Goethe's *Faust*. In lecture series given originally in 1915, Steiner traces Goethe's Faust from a humanitarian standpoint to the mystical knowledge and the revelation of the soul through nature (Steiner, 1931). Goethe's *Faust*, originally published in 1808 is one of the most influential pieces of German literature that bridges late enlightenment and early German Romanticism. Essentially a story about redemption, the play follows the plight of Faust as he makes a deal with Mephistopheles to give him enlightenment in return for his soul (Sivers, 2004). Steiner draws parallels between the Faust character as a symbol for the duality of man and the challenge of unfulfilled relationships with God and nature, especially by saying, "That is that, what lives in the earth as the spirit of the earth, like it lives in our soul. But Goethe knowingly portrays Faust as not yet ready for his soul to unfold [self translation]" (p.17).

Embedding Goethe's Faust in the arts curriculum in Waldorf plays a consistent role at various levels throughout the different grades (Carlgren, 2005). This influence of Faust explores the ideas presented in the play about duality, the soul, and redemption (Calhoon 2011), and how these themes can be embodied physically and spiritually by the students in Eurythmy.

The importance of the Goethe's influence is personified in the actual performance space in Dornach, Switzerland where Steiner's Goetheanum performance hall is located. The Goetheanum is "a building based on an architectural concept in which each element, form and color bears an inner relation to the whole and the whole flows organically into its

single elements in a process of metamorphosis (Allgemeine Anthroposophische Gesellschaft, 2011). Greiner (1988) explores the performance theory of the Goetheanum that serves as a real world personification of Steiner's ties to Goethe, performance, and the soul. As Greiner emphasizes (p.13),

The instrument of the actors and the stage artists is in themselves. The artistic work that he wants to accomplish is what he must bring out of his own body as instrument. The human performer must have the patience to bring, through the artistic faculty of anthropology – the 'material' is therefore of no use – that human nature that allows the possibility to build a bridge to the spirit [self translation].

The same rationale applies to the spirit of speech and tone. Steiner (2006) expresses this as reaffirming that the tones of speech are represented as possessing both spirit and color. He states that, "The beauty – the shining of the vowel and the character of the consonant – is lost in speech. The vowel loses its should and the consonant becomes void of spirit" (p. 14). Eurythmy is a way to speak through movement, and thus preserves the inherent spirit of the individual that is attempting to communicate with a higher universal truth.

German Romantics, Art, and Steiner

This search for the inherent truth as pure spirit is a major theme in the works of 19th century German Romantic thinkers. By illustrating the spiritual nature of these writings, I may elucidate the underlying philosophy of Steiner's Anthroposophy that focuses on the relationship of the art and the soul. The notion that stillness as a way to connect to the divine is a fundamental part of this aesthetic (Calhoon, 2010), which is later reflected in dance manifestations of stillness in Eurythmy.

Published originally in 1797, Tieck and Wackenroder illustrate through their literary figures how the experience of sound can effect the human spirit and how the

whole body has the potential to be completely engrossed in a kind of stillness that resonates with the embodiment of God (Wackenroder, W.H, & Tieck, Ludwig, 2005). These ideas of stillness and the union of body and soul are manifest in Steiner's development of the purpose and application in Eurythmy.

Novalis, writing originally in 1800, continues to explore the relation of soul between man and nature in his writings, which attends to the fact that everything embodies a spirit including the rivers, trees, flowers, and animals. Themes of fantasy, ether, God, duality of light with dark, and nature all play important roles in Novalis' work (Novalis, 1984). The notion that everything embodies a spirit is further explored by Steiner and developed in the foundations of Anthroposophy as carried through Theosophy.

Ideas explored by Schopenhauer in 1818, such as the universal spirit of the world represented by all creatures of the earth, and the importance of transcendental art seep into Steiner's belief system. This spiritual outlook strove to connect the patterns of spirit in art with physical manifestations expressed through tone, color, and form. The personification of these ideas is then transformed into notions of how tone and movement embody color as readily as this reflection of the soul is capable of being unified in art (Schopenhauer, 2008).

Steiner (1983) believed that, "according to Schopenhauer, a blind, unconscious will rules the entire world. It forms the stones, then brings forth plants, the stones, and so on, because it is always discontent. A yearning for the higher thus dwells in everything" (p. 2). He further comments that while all other art forms are made from a reflection of man's image or perception, music alone stands apart as the only art form that truly transcends that reflection, resulting in the purest form of spirit that can be communicated by man. Steiner states (1983) that, "the other arts must pass through the mental image, and the therefore

render up pictures of the will. Tone, however, is a direct expression of the will itself, without interpolation of the mental image” (p. 2).

Steiner incorporated music as the foundation of Eurythmy; he believed that the human body itself would be freed from such earthly constraints, resulting in the purest form of the soul expressed through movement and music fused together. Channeling though a creative person, Eurythmy allows for the true nature and color of the sentient soul to appear, because these individuals are sensitive to the subtle sounds of the musical spirit. Steiner also argues that when we sleep, the music of the universe is filtered into our beings, therefore upon waking, we have a longing to connect with this spiritual imprint through sound. Steiner states (1983)

The archetype of music is in the spiritual, whereas the archetypes for the other arts lie in the physical world itself. When the human being hears music, he has a sense of well-being, because these tones harmonize with what he has experienced in the world of his spiritual home (9).

Steiner reemphasizes Schopenhauer again in stating that, “Music is the expression of the will of nature, while all the other arts are expressions of the idea of nature” (p.13). In reflecting on why music so well embodies all qualities of the spiritual science of Anthroposophy, Steiner urges the manifestation of this clarity through the three states of bodily consciousness that are available in perceiving this unity of the spirit and the physical self. Grounded in German Romanticism and revealed in Eurythmy, elements of peace and stillness are present in these conscious and physical movement embodied in this dance form. It is here that color and tone merge together as the true manifestation of the soul, giving way to the personification of color in tone; concepts of which were reflected in select Modernist artists and philosophers of the early 20th century in regard to art and spirituality.

Steiner & Theosophy

In addition to the influences of German Romantics, Steiner was part of the esoteric movement of Theosophy, the school of thought that he derived his own ideas of Anthroposophy. Forced to confront issues of growing materialism, the beginning of a new century, and the effects of the First World War, his theory of esoteric enlightenment strove to find meaning in an otherwise meaningless world. It is within this historical context that the spiritual philosophies of Theosophy and Steiner's Anthroposophy began to take shape (Calhoon, 2011).

Important to the understanding of Anthroposophy is clarifying the definition and purpose of Theosophy. Steiner's fascination with the occult was also connected to Theosophy¹, another spiritual movement of the early 20th century, that began as the basis for his self made "spirit science" of Anthroposophy (Steiner, 1971). The connections between Theosophy and Steiner contemporaries. Originally published in 1934, Faivre makes a compelling argument when relating themes of esotericism and theosophy and explains the historical roots of Anthroposophy. Faivre (2000) maintains that there are six characteristics related to the esoteric: "the idea of correspondence, living nature,

¹ "In accordance with the Theosophical spirit, most Theosophists regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They hold that belief should be the result of individual understanding and intuition rather than mere acceptance of traditional ideas, and that it should rest on knowledge and experience, not on assertion. Truth should therefore be sought by study, reflection, meditation, service, purity of life, and devotion to high ideals.

At the same time, Theosophists respect the different beliefs. They see each religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom, adapted to the needs of a particular time and place. They prefer the study of various religions to their condemnation, their practice to proselytism. Thus, earnest Theosophists extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform. They seek to remove ignorance, not punish it; peace is their watchword, and Truth their aim" (Theosophical Society in America, 2011).

imagination and meditations, the experience of transmutation, the practice of concordance, and transmission” (pp. xxi-xxv).

Faivre traces Theosophy from the 16th century to its foundations in the 1880’s through Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Russian mystic and founder of Theosophy. The link between Theosophy and Anthroposophy are reinforced by Faivre’s arguments concerning Steiner. Faivre in 1934 makes reference to Steiner and his Anthroposophical movement in saying (p. 47), “Such a kinship makes us wonder whether Rudolf Steiner would not have called his movement “Theosophical Society” had this name been still available. He adds (p. 210), “that not only Madame Blavatsky, who ‘added and opposed to the material evolution of Charles Darwin a breathtaking vision of the spiritual evolution of the universe,’ but also Rudolf Steiner, ‘who throws into relief the center of gravitation of cosmic spiritual evolution’” (p. 210).

Steiner writes about Theosophy in his text originally published in 1922, which traces the ideas of the essential nature of man, the re-embodiment of the spirit and destiny, the three worlds of the soul, and the path of knowledge (Steiner, 1971). His focus on the soul world reinforces the ideas of German Romanticism, a movement that directly explored the links of the soul with the divine. Steiner then leaves Theosophy behind and begins to create his own interpretation of esoteric artistic spiritual philosophy, which culminates in Anthroposophy.

A major reason Steiner broke from the school of Theosophy was that it was not accommodating to artists. He believed that Theosophists were concerned with the “reality of spiritual life” (p. 14), but did not give attention to the sensory world where artists exist

(Steiner, 2006). As the arts were further cultivated in Anthroposophy, spiritual knowledge continued to be fused with participating in artistic endeavors, especially in Eurythmy.

Steiner states that Anthroposophy, “aims to understand the spiritual world and to receive it into our ideas and thoughts, into our feelings, perceptions and will” (Steiner 2008, p.16). There is attention given to the reciprocal nature of life and death, personified by this spiritual science, themes certainly reminiscent of Romanticism, specifically in Schopenhauer’s work *World as Will and Representation*. A main task of this spiritual science is to cultivate a harmony from within (Steiner, 2008), and to move beyond the abstraction in the physical world to delve deeper in between the realms of birth and death, light and dark.

With understanding of certain underlying principals of Theosophy, it is easier to transition to talking about concepts of music as physical art and sound as color. The universal truth found in the spirit of these art forms is exemplified through the life force or life body of their mutual interaction. Steiner, when speaking about Anthroposophy in relation to the artistic movements of the age states, that “the task of art is to take hold of the shine, the radiance, the manifestation of that which as spirit weaves and lives throughout the world. All genuine art seeks the spirit” (Steiner, 2008, p.151).

Acknowledgement of Steiner’s Modernist contemporaries that Theosophy had influenced their work is in connecting the abstract art of Mondrian and Kandinsky to principals of color theory and Anthroposophy. Golding (2000) states, “One of Mondrian’s greatest debts to Theosophy was his subsequent and abiding belief that all life is directed towards evolution, and that the goal of art is to give expression to this principle” (p. 15).

It is directly presented in Golding's work that Theosophy had a direct effect on Mondrian, and further reading into this relationship is necessary in understanding this connection.

Steiner and his Artistic Spiritual Contemporaries

Steiner urges the interconnectedness of the spirit as expressed through art in order to achieve a kind of enlightenment. During the turn of the 20th century, there was a distinct push for artistic endeavors that would explain and personify the importance of spirituality in art (Calhoon, 2011). It wasn't only Steiner who was concerned about the spiritual shift in consciousness during this time in relation to the artistic forms being produced. The interest in the development of man, in particular the development of the soul, were major concerns for those artists influenced by new emerging ideas of esoteric spirituality such as Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Schoenberg. There is a longing expressed by these individuals to return, in a way, back to the primitive and natural universal spirit that unites man with his cosmos. Steiner contemporary Wassily Kandinsky (1977) states in 1911,

And so at different points along the road are the different arts, saying what they are best able to say, and in the language which is peculiarly their own. Despite, or perhaps thanks to, the differences between them, there has never been a time when the arts approached each other more nearly than they do today, in this later phase of spiritual development (19).

This understanding of the universality shared by the manifestations of various art forms is explored by artists of this time period through the relationship of art to spirit, both in the observer and the artist.

Kandinsky & Schoenberg

The esoteric spiritual movements of Theosophy and Anthroposophy during the epoch of early modernity emphasized a universal truth that united the soul with the spirit

through art. The spiritual work of Rudolf Steiner contributed to the inner framework of art from contemporaries Wassily Kandinsky, Arnold Schoenberg and Arthur Schopenhauer. The influence of Theosophy and spirituality maintained a reflexive relationship with Steiner and these contemporaries. I will trace how the concept of spiritual universality is expressed in Kandinsky's work through idea of music as art and sound as color, illustrating the importance of spirit in art and Steiner's philosophies.

Theosophy can be defined as a combination of, "old Egyptian wisdom, Laoism, every aspect of Indian Philosophy, the teachings of the Buddha, Plato and the Neoplatonics, early Christianity, Jakob Böhme, Goethe's *Faust* und Wagner's *Parsifal* [self translation]" (Föllmi, 1999, p. 56). A spiritual blend in its own right, Theosophy inspired individuals of the age to seek inner fulfillment through interaction with the various 'soul bodies' of man. This led to the belief that the spirit expressed in art is in a way very much alive, with an aura and soul of its own. This soul of the spirit is explored by Steiner, as transcendental spirituality, as well as by Kandinsky. Under the influence of Theosophy, which strives to find hidden wisdom in the universe, Kandinsky sought to find an interpretation of spirit in art in his abstract drawings.

Specific manifestations of spirit in art are presented by Kandinsky in his work, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* originally published in 1911. In his chapters *Spiritual Revolution* as well as *The Language of Form and Color*, spiritual concepts are discussed and are relatable to the work of Steiner. Kandinsky explains plainly the perspective that what is occurring during his lifetime is a universal calling for spiritual abstraction and enlightenment through art.

In Kandinsky's discussion of an abstracted triangle, the connection with Steiner is clear. Kandinsky states (1977), "In every segment of the triangle are artists. Each one of them who can see beyond the limits of his segment is a prophet to those about him, and helps the advance of the obstinate whole." (p. 7). This reemphasizes the notion that Steiner was known as being a new spiritual prophet, forging new pathways of a comprehensive *spiritual science*, understood as the "study of the spiritual processes in human life and in the cosmos" (Steiner, 1977, p. xxii).

Kandinsky touches on the split between Theosophy and Anthroposophy as he speaks about Blavatsky. Kandinsky states that Theosophy, "consists of groups who seek to approach the problem of the spirit by way of the *inner* knowledge" but that the students "receives definite answers to his questions from the theosophical point of view, ...synonymous with *eternal truth*" (p. 13). This concept deviates from Steiner. He believes that definite answers are available to those who seek them without the use of an intermediary. This split, however, is only important to point out the evolution of this spiritual mentality, not to discredit the relevancy that Theosophical concepts play in the overall development of seeking universal and eternal truth through artistic representation. I suggest that Steiner is aware of the works of spiritually influenced modernists, and in a way, is arguing that the spiritual truth they are exploring is pure and genuine. His argument for a spirit-soul manifestation in all beings is a concept that is reinforced by the reflections of Kandinsky.

Color as reflection of the soul is one of the major themes explored by Kandinsky, inspired by Steiner's belief that color served as an appropriate indicator of spiritual expression. Emphasis is put on the life of the spirit, the voice of color, and an artist's

ability to live in the color. Steiner (2003) argues for understanding “the experience of colour in painting [...] to show that colour is not merely something which covers the surface of things and beings but radiates out from them, revealing their inner nature” (p.188). Rooted in Goethe’s color theory, Steiner expands the life force definition of color further to encompass a universal truth also found in art.

There is much attention to the dynamic and animate role of color in Kandinsky’s own work. Color is expressed as having its own spirit, its own *Stimmung*, or spirit-voice. The impression color has on the soul is a very real manifestation of the spirit in art. Color has not only a psychic effect, but also can be perceived by other sensory preceptors, such as the ear and the nose. Insight into the spiritual values of color and form guides his work, especially in his painting completed in 1911 entitled *Little Pleasures*², as this was a painting dedicated to his interpretation of Theosophy.

Kandinsky applies soul-inspired explanations to color and music, as willingly as Steiner applies meaning to the color of spirit aura. There is a direct relationship between Kandinsky’s (1977) belief that “blue is the heavenly color” and Steiner’s understanding that “shades of blue appear in soul-moods full of devotion” (Steiner, 1977, p. 145).

Although many of the other colors do not share the same association, the fact that both individuals, including Steiner, painted in accordance to their own spiritual understanding of color speaks to the importance of the inherent soul message of color as presented through the Theosophical and Anthropological movements.

² see appendix A: Little Pleasures

Kandinsky and Schoenberg

Another follower of Theosophy was Kandinsky's friend and artist Arnold Schoenberg, who had shown interest in this spiritual approach since childhood and had attended lectures by Steiner (Föllmi, 1999). It is clear through analyzing Schoenberg and Kandinsky's work together that the role of Theosophy played a large role in inspiring the meaning behind their endeavors. Kandinsky complements Schoenberg and his ability to realize, "that the greatest freedom of all, the freedom of an unfettered art, can never be absolute" (Kandinsky, 1984, p. 17). This relates to Steiner stating,

By grasping the truth, the soul connects itself with something that carries its value in itself. This value does not vanish with the feeling any more than it arose with it. What is really truth neither arises nor passes away. It has a significance that cannot be destroyed (*Theosophy*, 23).

Truth's inability to be destroyed is indeed a great freedom, but it is an intangible relationship, only perhaps to be found hidden in the soul of art.

In a correspondence with Schoenberg in 1912, Kandinsky said that, "the painter (and precisely so that he will be able to express *himself*) should learn his whole material so well and develop his sensitivity to the point where he recognizes and vibrates spiritually..." (Kandinsky, 1984, p. 25). Spiritual vibration is linked to the idea that color in art possesses the power to communicate through 'spiritual' sound. What Kandinsky could be suggesting in this particular letter is that the different forms that lines can possess have a spirit, or aura, of their own. He maintained that an artist should be able to tell the difference between the spirit of two parallel lines in contrast to two perpendicular lines.

Schoenberg was also forging new ground in the realm of music³, and in his *Study of Harmony* published in 1911, provides a thorough explanation of ideas of counterpoint, modulation, and harmony. Because this was written around the time that he was interested in Theosophy, it is possible to read between the lines to understand the underlying spiritual current. Exemplifying music as art he states, “Once again: the tone is the material of music. It must therefore be regarded, with all its properties and effects, as suitable for art” (*Study of Harmony*, 1978, p. 20). The properties and effects that he refers to push for the tangible qualities of the spirit, as tone personified as a ‘material’.

In regards to music, it seems unanimously understood that it is this form of art that represents best the totality of not only the spirit and soul, but the universe itself.

Schoenberg agreed with Kandinsky in the belief that one may compare color to musical timbre. Kandinsky also comments on the ability to paint in counterpoint. This is a reference to Schoenberg’s work in reflection to his own attempts to capture the color of music.

Kandinsky used the joined universal spirit understanding of art and music when he explains to Schoenberg that an exhibit he visited was “*ff*” or double forte. This statement makes the intangible meaning of music a real personification of an emotion in relation to an event, in essence, capturing for a moment the soul reflection of the occasion. Emphasis is put on music as being the ideal form of art, as it is not “the reproduction of natural phenomena, but rather to the expression of the artist’s soul, in musical sound” (p. 19).

Varying interpretations of the spirit of tone are present not only with Schoenberg and Kandinsky, but are found earlier in the works of Schopenhauer as well.

³ Schoenberg’s development of “*neue Musik*” or “*new Music*”, laid the foundations for the era modern classical music. He serves as the creator of this movement (Calhoon 2010).

In Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation* originally printed in 1844, he stresses the importance of the universality of the spirit in art as expressed through the natural world. His thought excellently lays the foundation to the ideas of universal spirit in music. As Theosophy has roots in Eastern mysticism, it could be interpreted that Schopenhauer was drawn much earlier to these principals, possibly influenced by his interest in Buddhism. Schopenhauer (2008) states, "The music is in no way similar to the other arts as merely a representation of an idea; but instead is the representation of the will itself [self translation]." (p. 359).

The inherent truth that music represents a copy of the will itself is directly connected to Steiner's belief that art should not be a representation of the soul, but rather essential personification of the soul-spirit. I believe that it is this tension in understanding how music is represented in the spirit world that also connects with Theosophical concepts of inner hidden knowledge. Emphasis is then placed on music's ability to remain still, like the soul, in order to find universal truth. If one art form can be understood as 'purer to the soul reflection', then by means of this rationale, it is acknowledged that music is the best example.

The way Schopenhauer speaks about the symphony representing the universe is in direct affiliation with Steiner's ideas of Theosophy and Kandinsky's own meaning in which he gives musical instruments personality of color. Schopenhauer's personification of instruments, for example the low bass representing the swirling abyss of the cosmos, is attempting to capture the universal spirit of nature through music. The fact that he furthers his analysis with the plant, crystal, and animal world all represented through music is a

wonderful connection to Steiner's theory of interconnectedness of the universal soul-spirit expressed through all beings of the planet.

Blavatsky is quoted as proclaiming that Theosophy was a unification of spirit and the world, "every being, person, animal, plant, and mineral is godly nature [self translation]." (Föllmi, 1999, p. 57). This Theosophical interpretation is clearly linked to Schopenhauer's explanation. Inspired by Goethe's nature-based philosophies, much of Steiner's approach in speaking about uniting the spirit can benefit from Schopenhauer's analysis of the universe as a spiritual symphony. This analysis of the shared consciousness of beings, man included, connects to the influence of esoteric mysticism later explored by Theosophists and their followers.

Whereas Schopenhauer strives to give a symbolical spiritual meaning to the cosmos as a whole through music, Kandinsky makes specific recommendations for which instrument represents which soul color⁴. From this, it is understood that light blue is the flute, dark blue a cello, darker blue the double brass, and the darkest blue being the organ. Also, green is the middle sounds of a violin, vermillion red the trumpet or drum, deep red or blue the sad notes of a cello, light red the singing of the violin, orange as an old violin, and violet the English horn and other wood instruments. At either spectrum, like Steiner's concept of the dual nature of man, is placed the colors white and black, representing the harmony of silence and a deadly silence accordingly. Steiner has a similar interpretation of white and black, with black being the spiritual image of death and white being the soul image of the spirit.

⁴ See appendix B: Color for figure.

Although yellow is mentioned, it is only referred to as ‘shrill’ so I will suggest that because it is grouped in the A antithesis category with the color blue, that perhaps yellow is the piccolo. It is also interesting to note that the color blue has the potential to represent more than one instrument, depending on the depth and vibrancy of the hue. This connects back to the divinity of color as expressed by Steiner and Kandinsky, in that the multiplicity of blue has a complex and deeply spiritual nature.⁵

Walter Benjamin

One of the problems that arises from understanding the work of art as possessing spirit, is the displacement between viewer and object. The distance that divides the artistic relic from the onlooker is discussed in Walter Benjamin’s essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. He discusses the concept of the aura in art, and what the influence of reproduction does to this aura.⁶ Of particular interest is Benjamin’s concept of the surgeon and the magician. Benjamin states (1968),

The surgeon represents the polar opposite of the magician. The magician heals a sick person by the laying on of hands; the surgeon cuts into the patient’s body. The magician maintains the natural distance between the patient and himself; though he reduces it very slightly by the laying on of hands, he greatly increases it by virtue of his authority. The surgeon does exactly the reverse... (233)

This idea of the observer can be combined with Kandinsky’s color-antithesis explanation of a work of art⁷. In the first antithesis, the relationship between warm yellow and cold blue are set against each other. As yellow turns towards the spectator, it is found to be

⁶ In speaking of Benjamin’s concept of the aura and reproduction, I have to briefly comment on the experience of reading Kandinsky’s book *The Spirit in Art*. In the two copies I studied, one is the first edition original from 1911, the other a reprint in English from 1977. I can confidently say that the aura of the original work is somewhat lost in its reproduction.

⁷ See Appendix C: Blue and Yellow

‘bodily’, and this can be understood as how the surgeon treats a work of art. As blue turns away from the spectator, the ‘spiritual’ is perceivable, and this relates to the magician.

Both Benjamin and Kandinsky reflect on ideas of body and spirit and how they relate in works of art and the observer. Seen together, this brings to light the relationship between the aura of a work of art and the aura of the observer.

Steiner’s beliefs are in agreement with Benjamin’s expansion on the spiritual themes concerning the reproduction of the aura of art. Steiner is of the opinion that “to merely imitate, or reproduce, an object of the senses” through copying is an original sin, as well as “the attempt to express, or represent, the supersensible through art” (Steiner 2008, p.195). His concern appears to be the issue of false representation of the spirit in art distracting from the true aura or soul of either the human senses, or the various relationships of art forms that can be perceived by these senses. In Steiner’s Anthroposophy, the concept of natural distance and perception of spirit reinforce the idea of the spiritual aura as magician. However, instead of viewing this separation as always having a maintained distance, it is viewed more as a reflective relationship between the spirit of the art and the gazer, held together by the universal spirit. In this sense Benjamin and Steiner do not perceive distance in the same way.

What I have discovered through this analysis is that these individuals all share the common goal of progressive thought in their particular medium as influenced by spirit or spirituality, perhaps in effort to reach soul fulfilling enlightenment. Their attempts to break boundaries on what was commonly accepted in the spheres of their work is telling of this epoch of universal uncertainty. The very fact of the mutual correspondence and shared interest of their endeavors is in its own way a shared universal spirit. The hidden

connections explored in this analysis are telling of the movement as a whole. And in the attempt to find these hidden meanings, we ourselves become one with this perception and thereby contribute our own aura to the universal spirit of art.

Steiner's Development of Spirit in Eurythmy

Development and Confronting Modernism

The turn of the 20th century marked a prolific time in terms of development of the arts in an attempt to express the nature of the soul in a modern context. There is a push to metaphorically return to an origin— in all senses of the word. This is also present in the German Romantics and Modernists as themes of longing and isolation are synthesized with possible spiritual solutions that merge the universal nature of the soul with the divinity of mankind. This can also be interpreted religiously, as Steiner brought many Christian elements into his theories of Anthroposophy, the idea of Christ's return plays an interpretive role here (Calhoun, 2010). This concept of 'the return' is expressed by Steiner as he states (1984) originally in 1914, "We must return – just as the art of the dance needs in many cases to return to the ritual dance of ancient times – so we must return to an earlier style of recitation" (p. 4).

Steiner critiques the impressionistic and expressionistic movements of the time, faulting the reliance on the pure representation of art as portrayed in these artistic new directions. As earlier illustrated with the thoughts of Benjamin that would follow Steiner's time, there is then a caution against the representation of art because it has the potential to lose its aura. In the early lectures given by Steiner, there is a clear acknowledgement of this problem in relationship to the new art form of Eurythmy. How Steiner avoids the pitfall of pure representation of the spirit in art is through the inherent qualities of

Eurythmy that embody free formed spiritual understanding through the reciprocal nature of man and his spiritual space around him. Avoiding the representation of the will is echoed from Schopenhauer's work in *World as Will and Representation*, as he urges that man should strive to free himself from this reflection and instead embody the will itself, through the medium of music, or as Steiner sees it, Eurythmy. This concept is summed up by Steiner (1984) as he states:

In Eurythmy we are able, apart from the conventional thought element that must be present in everyday speech, to eliminate thought entirely and to derive movement directly from the whole human being, from the human will. We have, therefore, an immediate experience for which the artistic medium is man himself, and in which the impression is of man himself.

Although dance like in physical form, Eurythmy did not grow out of the modern dance movement, but rather from the spiritually inclined artistic impulses explored by Steiner and the Theosophical and Anthroposophical movements. Still considered to be an art form of the future because of its power to synthesize many artistic mediums together for the benefit of spiritual engagement, Eurythmy has a place the traditional art world that is left for exploration.

It is acknowledged in some of Steiner's lectures that the creation of this art is merely an intention set forth in its beginning stages, but with the hope that the development of Eurythmy would continue to strive for that perfect reflection between man and his spirit (Steiner, 1984). He confesses that this form of art is in its first stages and that it is through the embrace of Goethe's concept that, "when the whole human being is brought to expression, higher natural laws shine through what is being presented to the eternal senses" (Steiner 1984, p. 15).

To better understand how the spiritual in art connects to this dance form, the question of what is Eurythmy must be first addressed. Eurythmy is much more than dance like movements expressed by the body. Steiner states, “Eurythmy shapes and moves the human organism in a way that furnishes direct external proof of our participation in the supersensory world. In having people do Eurythmy, we link them directly to the supersensory world” (Steiner 2006, p.17). Part of this supersensory world, of course, includes the supersensory soul, which is exactly what comes to life through Eurythmy.

I view this statement of having direct correlation to the roots of Steiner’s philosophy being rooted heavily in German Romanticism as it is the perfect synthesis of ideas that came from this epoch. Steiner stresses that the beginning of the 20th century is the dawn of an artistic evolution, one which I believe has continued until now, thus stressing the importance of this philosophy in relation to a contemporary context. Furthering this ideology are artists Kandinsky and Mondrian, who attempt to relate to the external world infused with the spirit in their artistic work. In this sense, the historical arch for the development of Eurythmy is indeed begins with Goethe, transitions through German Romantic thought, and continues to fuse with Steiner contemporaries in early Modernism.

“Eurythmy is the direct image of the relationship human beings have to the cosmos” (Usher, 2006, p. 4). The context of Eurythmy has expanded far beyond its original beginnings, and has developed into the three-fold artistic process that Steiner had originally imagined as uses for this particular art form. This three fold approach again reinforces the Christian aspects of Anthroposophy, of which these aspects strongly illustrate where Steiner deviated from the Eastern esoteric roots of Theosophy.

Today, Eurythmy is practiced as not only a performance art, but has extended into the adult work place, and even into the realm of therapy for those suffering from a variety of ailments in the world of medicine. The growing uses for Eurythmy reemphasize the universal nature of this art form, both in terms of development of the spirit and synthesis of this exploration in the external world (Usher, 2006).

The fact that music is a key fixture in Eurythmy reinforces the idea of universal spirit through music as earlier highlighted by Schopenhauer. In this way, the audience is asked to hear with the eyes as much as to see with the ears. The concept of whole body dance as a means to communicate the spirit of man emphasizes Steiner's notion that, "Eurythmy is a kind of silent speech" (Steiner, 1984, p. 23). This silent speech may be perhaps interpreted again through Goethe's notion of 'supersensible observation,' a process by which individuals may interpret their surroundings unnoticed but are still immensely affected by the motion. The duality and contrast between the senses and the art form that they represent through Eurythmy is seen through Steiner to be the same as the relationship between language and poetry in addition to poetry and movement. In this way, the language that is spoken in Eurythmy is the spiritual poetry of the body.

Eurythmy as Spirit-Body Architecture

In understanding more completely the context into which Eurythmy resonates with the individual in terms of physical space, understanding the issue of architecture from the prospective of Steiner. With this theme, it is also expressed by Mondrian in reciprocal response to Steiner's development. Steiner argues that he himself is unclear at the reasons why architecture as an art form have strayed so far from man's inner artist, and suggests that the increased reliance on utilitarian thought have influenced this relationship in a

negative manner, leading for a detachment between mans spiritual connections with his surroundings (Steiner, 2006).

Steiner continues his analysis on spatial architecture externally in relationship to the physical architecture of the human body. He states (2008), “Through this process, sculpture arises out of the etheric body, just as architecture arises out of the physical body...Just as architecture we push the laws of the physical body into the space outside us...” (p. 26). idea further highlights the importance of the interaction between these two physical spaces as illustrated with Eurythmy.

In order to illustrate the evolution of how our etheric bodies, processed through the physical bodies, are manifested through the outer world of art and understanding, Steiner proposes the following paradigm.

Physical Body	Architecture
Etheric Body	Sculpture
Astral Body	Painting
Ego	Music
Spirit Self	Poetry
Life Spirit	Eurythmy

With this paradigm, it becomes clear that Steiner's attempt to unite man's spirit and soul with and through the external world culminated in the expression of the life spirit, as accomplished through Eurythmy.

Steiner had a focus on Eurythmy especially around the years of 1912-1917. During the infancy of Eurythmy, Steiner presented to many various audiences with the intent to inform and share this new art form. These talks that were presented before performances ranges in the three hundreds, and serve as the primary sources that connect modern audiences with Steiner's original ideas, some six decades later. Beginning with only presenting at Anthroposophical societies, Steiner took the new impulses of art and esoteric thought movement of the time in creating this new art form (Steiner, 2006).

Because of its new artistic nature, these talks also served as an introduction to what audiences were about to see. As time went on and as others joined the Eurythmy movement, including Steiner's wife Marie Steiner, steps were taken to adapt not only the art form itself, but how audiences should receive and interpret what they were experiencing. Steiner acknowledges and embraces the newness and unknowing aspect of these performances, while again shedding light on his own inspirations from early German Romanticism when he states (2006):

We are involved in something quite different, something new. It rests – as everything does, really, that is cultivated here at the Goetheanum – on Goethe's world conception and on his conception of art. This is not because we want to bring Goethe forward again into our time, but because we feel that his ideas can and must be worked out in relation to the feelings, the artistic and spiritual insights of our modern epoch. (1)

If the intent of Eurythmy is to indeed show how speech manifests itself in the physical form, then we may conclude that it is Steiner's strong drive to connect the early ideas of

the spirit in art as shown through German Romanticism with a modern contemporary approach that focuses much on physical manifestation of that spirit.

Concluding Thoughts

What began as a study into the application of the arts in Waldorf culminated in a glimpse into the spiritual foundations of this educational practice. This capstone research explores how arts integration in education is much more than just the practical application of the art form being practiced. Emphasis on the development of the soul through art is a concept explored by Steiner, manifested in Waldorf schools, and has implications for the field of arts education proving that arts should take priority in developing the whole being of the student.

Integrating these concepts into modern practice begins at debunking the myth that Waldorf principals are based solely on esoteric foundations. Although spirituality plays a large role in Anthroposophy and Waldorf education, my research supports the ideas Steiner constructed his theories based off of deep philosophic and highly regarded principals of the 19th century. The purpose and practice of Eurythmy is often misunderstood in the modern context, and I cannot help but wonder if Steiner would consider our era to be the ‘future’ he dreamed of that would understand and embrace his special art form. Eurythmy is flourishing as quickly as the spread of the Waldorf schools that employ this dance form into their curriculum. I believe that the understanding and application of Eurythmy and its use in not only the spiritual realm, but the pedagogical sphere, is still waiting to be discovered. As this research has illustrated, the foundations of Eurythmy, Waldorf, and Anthroposophy developed holistically over centuries, by not just Steiner, but his predecessors and contemporaries. Perhaps this hints at the timeline in

which Eurythmy will make itself known outside of Waldorf circles and emerge into the larger world of fine arts, the place where Steiner always hoped his Eurythmy would eventually gain understanding and appreciation.

As Steiner and his contemporaries sought spiritual meaning in the face of a new century, we ourselves are searching for a ‘new return’ that will give meaning to our new interpretations of a seemingly meaningless world. Art as a way to connect with the soul, color as personified spirit, and movement as a reflection of our inner desires are all ideas explored by Steiner in the early 20th century and I believe that there is still much to be discovered about these concepts. We must reflect on the concluding words of Blavatsky’s book as quoted by Kandinsky (1977), “the earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now” (p.14). As the spirit of our age continues, we will be challenged to see whether these spiritually inclined predecessors were correct.

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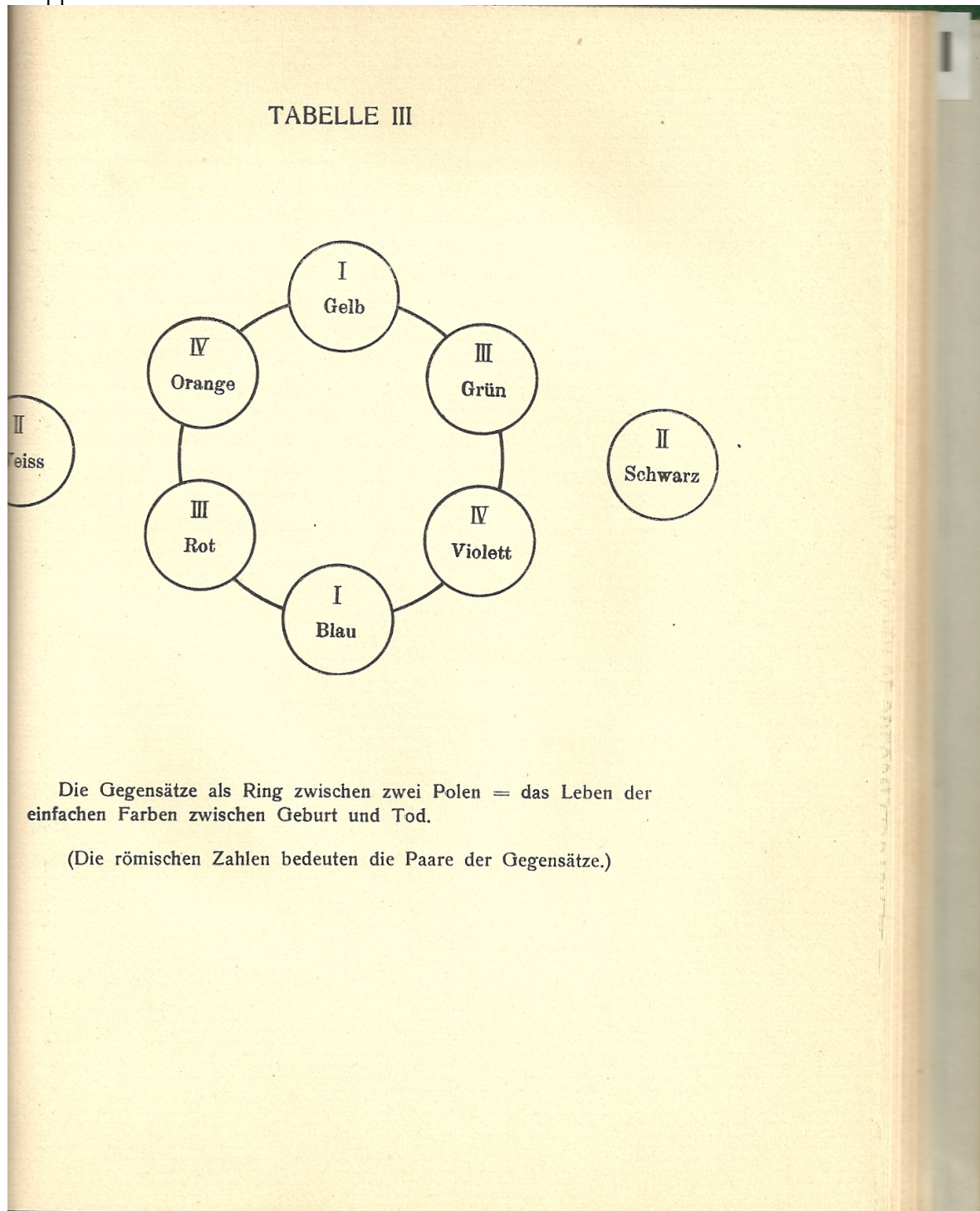
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Appendix A: Small Pleasures



Appendix B: Color



Appendix C: Blue and Yellow

