

TRIUNE

NEWSLETTER FOR SHAPING A NEW FORM OF UNIVERSITY

- ❖ The cultivation of a living, imaginative thinking as the fundamental aim in teaching and research – the inseparability of science and art.
- ❖ Goethean-style phenomenology as orientation in relation to all faculties; awakening the eye of the spirit.
- ❖ The university as the expression and practice of the threefold social life.

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WALLS THAT BREATHE: ABOUT LAZURE PAINTING

An interview with Dr Fiona Campbell

TRIUNE: What is given to a room when watercolour paint is used to colour the walls?

Dr Fiona Campbell: Watercolour paint may seem like a curious choice for interior walls, since modern interior paints are normally made for durability, consistent finish and ease of application, everything watercolour is not. By contrast, water-based paint may show up the imperfections of the wall behind it, it is sensitive

to light and can fade over time if not treated with a glaze or natural matte varnish, and it requires training to bring out its best nature on walls. However, the benefit of watercolour is the soft luminosity and shifting tone that give the appearance of overcoming the hard physicality of the wall.

Its light sensitivity means that you can work with this quality, rather than against it. With watercolour, the white surface behind the colour reflects light back through the transparent layers of paint, so the colour appears to float in the space rather than simply be colouring the wall. This, in turn, overcomes the flat materiality of the wall and we can then experience the room



A lazured hallway in an administration block, leading from a foyer to offices. Soft earth red tones in one corridor lead to a warm green corridor, to enliven the space with a dynamic contrast.

as having a breathing quality that naturally promotes a sense of wellbeing in us.

Of course, the choice of colour also informs this. A room painted with red may feel warm and nurturing but it will not have the breathing qualities of a green or blue room. Understanding colour – its moods, gestures and inherent dynamics – and how they work upon us is also crucial here. And how the watercolour paint is applied is as important as what colour is used.

TRIUNE: What is lazure painting?

Dr Fiona Campbell: The beauty of watercolour on interior wall surfaces is its breathing quality and luminous finish. However, a simple wash

over a white or a slightly tinted wall will not be sufficient to create these effects. It requires a special technique called 'lazure'. The word 'lazure' is derived from the German 'lasur' meaning 'glaze'.

The philosopher and educationalist Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) developed lazure as a new way of creating holistic environments to support the modern human being by immersing interior spaces in pure colour experiences. Calm or dynamic, evoking mood, movement or culminating in a picture, his intention was to provide a way of ensouling a space, so to speak, with living colour. For this reason, the original lazure paints were plant colours and resins, which already carry a quality of life in them. Steiner, a Goethe scholar, developed his approach to pure colour out of Goethe's phenomenological work on the nature, function, and psychology of qualitative colour experience.

Lazure painting uses layer upon layer of semi-transparent colour applied with a large brush with a rhythmical movement. The colours are mixed on the wall, not in the palette. For example, a green wall requires both yellow and blue layers, not necessarily in equal quantities, but judged sensitively as the painter goes, in accordance with the changing light qualities of the specific room and the desired shade. This is a critical point: you must work with the architectural qualities of the space and the changing light in the room. You must take into account what and when artificial lighting will be used, as well as the purpose of the space and its form. Furthermore, the walls need careful preparation before any colour is applied: the surface must be primed properly, the white undercoat must not be gloss, which will repel the watercolour; and it must be applied very evenly so no joins are showing. Textured surfaces are ideal for lazure, but not essential. Sometimes a texture is created by adding sand or other material to the undercoat or simply by

applying the undercoat with a roller with a longer pile.

Colours take on a life of their own when applied with a lazure approach. You learn to express their individual gestures, moods and dynamics to enhance the ambient quality of the space. It is particularly effective in rooms where you want to create a stress-free environment, such as in medical centres, but also in schools and places of worship.

TRIUNE: And how can it be taught at university level?

Dr Fiona Campbell: Lazure is more than a technique. For starters, the painter needs to understand colour, and how to create colours on the wall, not in the palette or bucket. They must know the different emulsions or binders you can use, the type of base required as well as the painting technique itself and the technical side of how to mix water, binder and pigment. These can be taught at vocational training level, but these skills could benefit from being understood in a wider context.

Creating innovative workspaces, therapeutic healthcare environments or reimagining interior environments for residential, commercial, or public spaces requires a broader understanding of the cultural, social, economic, and technological factors involved. Understanding the whole space, the whole building and its environment needs to be addressed at a conceptual level, such as an academic program provides.

Then, of course, there is the business side, project management, communications, etc, but above all, the human element. Learning how to create environments that shape how we interact requires a deep understanding of spatial awareness and how architectural spaces affect our sense of how we 'stand' in the world. And

while this knowledge may seem somewhat unnecessary to learn a wall painting technique, lazure was originally conceived as more than just a special effect for walls. It concerns a phenomenology of colour.

TRIUNE: How can a phenomenology of the forms of nature help to train an interior architect - for example, in learning to read the gestures of colours in a Goethean sense? What is the key to this method of learning at university level (how could it be carried out)?

Dr Fiona Campbell: Phenomenology is essentially a qualitative approach to the scientific and cultural observation of nature. It requires, not just a different epistemological understanding of nature, but an ontological one, as well. It changes the way you relate to the world; it demands a complete shift in one's way of perceiving the world, from seeing the world as static and objective, to experiencing it as becoming. By requiring the observer to step into the world, not stand back from it, it brings them into a living relationship with the environment that goes beyond simply being a subjective relationship. It foregrounds the experience over theory, but still must be approached objectively, not simply as a personalised response or preference.

So to put it simply, a phenomenological study of nature trains both the eye and the mind of the architect to see in this way. Learning to read colour is just one outcome of this training. It also changes the architect's relationship to space, mood and environment. The method for learning would then also need to include practice-based research and possibly a team project, for lazure painting never involves just the painter.

TRIUNE: What about the phenomenology of architectural spaces? How can students learn to "read" the forms and functions of a particular



Lazured blue walls and ceiling with an indigo strip and warm light red door to enliven the otherwise introspective mood in a small bedroom of a teenage boy on the autism spectrum.

room in order to know which colour gestures should be added to the walls?

Dr Fiona Campbell: This question firstly concerns spatial awareness, which in turn concerns our faculty of perception and our ability to perceive and interact with the physical world. Phenomenological practice will heighten this faculty, just as it develops our perception of colour. How a colour works in the space and how to choose it depends on understanding the different qualities of colours e.g. blue is the ultimate spatial colour but how does orange or a warm red affect a space? We can breathe out into blue, but red walls will breathe in, press

upon us (this also depends on the shade and depth of the red, it is not a hard and fast rule).

However, learning to 'read' a room or even a colour phenomenologically cannot be learned overnight. It requires one to develop this finely-honed faculty with continual practice and starts, not in the space or even with painting, but with learning to truly 'see' colour everywhere. So it is not a quick process, but a very rewarding one, one that opens your eyes and leads to a new way of seeing: 'new eyes' for the world around us.

TRIUNE: Could a phenomenology of water contribute to the experiencing of the internal space of a building as a whole (all the internal spaces) and then help to show how these spaces should be coloured?

Dr Fiona Campbell: I am not sure if this could be taught. Although my own work is very influenced by the work of the water scientist Theodor Schwenk and his phenomenology of water, and it would inform how I might work with a space in relation to the whole environment, I think this would operate more at a conceptual level and of course, be context-specific. But understanding water is certainly critical to watercolour painting of any sort, since water is the bearer of colour, of life.≈

Fiona Campbell PhD, researcher, lecturer, visual artist, and arts educator. She has three research degrees in Communications: PhD on a phenomenological study of thinking, MA in Information Science and BA (Hons) in English and Linguistics, and trained as a visual artist and art therapist at Tobias School of Art, England. She teaches research, consciousness studies, communications and visual arts, particularly painting. As Painted Space Studio, she painted over 660 sq.m of lazure murals in Belgium, Australia and New Zealand and currently runs masterclasses in painting and a 2-year schooling course on art as a spiritual practice. <https://painted-space.com/>

STUDYING ARCHITECTURE AT ALANUS UNIVERSITY FOR THE ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Willem-Jan Beeren

THE PERCEPTION OF ARCHITECTURE

What is architecture? This question concerns us from the beginning of our architecture studies at Alanus University of the Arts and Social Sciences in Alfter. In the introductory module “Man, Architecture, Society” and especially in the courses in the “Architecture and Art” modules, we devote ourselves to this question by practising, experiencing and thinking. This creates a pendulum swing between production and reception, expression and impression, a basic movement that underlies all design.

Steen Eiler Rasmussen, in his book *Experiencing Architecture*, says: “Art shouldn't be explained at all, it should be perceived - you should experience it in order to understand it.”¹ These words contain a method that we apply to the study of architecture: experience to understand. The preferred means of stimulating experience is one's own artistic and creative activity: in experiencing one's own creative activity, what has been produced is understood, in other words: in practicing designing architecture, architecture is experienced and understood.

For this reason the first year of study at Alanus is largely devoted to the experimental and exploratory examination of the perception of architecture. The

simultaneity and overlapping of different sensory impressions turns an architectural experience into a synesthetic and immersive experience that includes the viewer.

In order to understand this complexity, at least initially, we examine individual sensory areas in designated courses over the course of our architecture studies and combine them with selected artistic methods. Rudolf Steiner's theory of the twelve senses and the works deriving from it – by Herbert Hensel, Hans Jürgen Scheurle among others – serve as a guideline for us, as does current discourse.

PERCEPTION TRAINING

We draw from the very beginning of our architecture studies at Alanus and also cultivate this on trips and excursions. Especially in the age of digital design tools, hand drawing remains relevant, not only as a representational tool, but above all as a fundamental aid to perception due to its educational properties.



Freehand drawing 2012. Photo ©Willem-Jan Beeren.

¹ Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *Architektur Erlebnis*, Stuttgart 1980, p.9.

Drawing draws my attention into the world I see and at the same time into the drawing hand. If I manage to detach myself from the idea of obtaining the most realistic depiction of what I see, a direct connection is created between what I see and the person drawing it.

In the first semesters of architecture study at Alanus there are courses on representational drawing: geometric bodies, nature studies and the human form. Also, abstract drawing using line, hatching, contour, shading.

By perceiving we make contact with the world. In every sensory perception there is a contact, an encounter between the self and the other. This happens most obviously when touching, where self-experience and world experience are directly connected. In doing so, we become aware of basic surface qualities such as smoothness, roughness or solidity and thus assure ourselves of an existence outside of us as well as our own. When we sculpt with clay, we directly experience this “other” at the interfaces of our skin. What we perceive resists, a play of forces of impression and expression, softness

and hardness begins. Form emerges almost casually as a real image of this exposure and “interposition”. The aim while sculpting is also to develop the perception and experience of spatial-plastic qualities: surface, edge, relief, convex-concave form and thus the connection of plastic space and architectural space.

Numerous other artform contribute to the development of perception in this architecture study. There are opportunities to explore colour and its effect in space, sound and its effect in space. There are elective courses in the areas of colour theory, sound art, photography and installation – also, acting, choreography and speaking skills.

PERCEIVING WITH THE BODY

The experience of architecture goes far beyond the purely visual activity of experiencing shapes and forms. This is because architecture is not primarily form, but space. We do not understand space as an empty container, but rather, as a “dynamic constellation”. Visual perception often gets in the way of experiencing architecture. We

confuse space with form and miss what is actually architectural in perception: “The most effective thing is not the form, but its inversion, the space, the emptiness that spreads rhythmically between the walls, is limited by them, but whose liveliness is more important than the walls”.²

The perception of space is an interplay of various sensory impressions that result in particular from the self-perception of one's own



Theory of form, 2021. Photo ©Willem-Jan Beeren.

² August Endell, *Die Schönheit der großen Stadt*, Norderstedt 1995, p.74.



Space in motion, 2014. Photo ©Willem-Jan Beeren.

physical activities. We distinguish between body (Körper) and body (Leib): the body (Körper) is the object that can be perceived, measured and weighed externally, the body (Leib) is the subject that experiences, perceives and moves internally.

If you want to capture a building in its entirety, it is usually too big to grasp at a glance and from one perspective. You have to move around the building, walk through it from different sides and build up a living image by linking individual experiences. You are constantly physically stimulated and asked to physically imitate. The gestures and choreographies of space and spatial sequences, stimulate movements in us through which we internally participate in what is going on externally.

In the second semester of studying architecture, we pay particular attention to sensitising and activating this body perception. We teach Feldenkrais, Bothmer gymnastics and Spatial Dynamics as developed by Jaimen McMillan, which, created using different methods and from different backgrounds, offer exercises for body and spatial perception. These exercises are based on individual people and their individual

relationship to space. There are also elective courses in the field of eurythmy.

BUILDING WHOLE

At Alanus University we say, with Steen Eiler Rasmussen, that you should experience architecture in order to understand it, as with any work of art. This is because a work of architecture is something indivisible. How can one study something that is essentially indivisible? When studying, it is

essential to approach the whole thing in steps and partial aspects if you ultimately want to achieve any kind of mastery. Goethe already had Mephistopheles say the famous words in the first part of *Faust*: "Who wants to recognize and describe something alive / First tries to drive out the spirit / Then he has the parts in his hand / Missing, unfortunately! Only the spiritual bond."

The biggest challenge in studying architecture, therefore, is to have real and not just simulated spatial design experiences. As designing architects, we are constantly simulating before building the real architecture. In the forms of representation we choose (floor plans, sections, site plans, models, computer simulations, etc.), we imagine for ourselves and others a built future that is not yet real. We try to anticipate the essential features of the whole that will later be realised and can only make use of inadequate resources.

With spatially, temporally and thematically limited interventions and art installations, at Alanus we approach space on a real scale of 1:1. We design by directly shaping space and are directly inspired by the immediate result to adapt the design. The architectural medium "space" is the closest we come to the pendulum swing described at the beginning between production and reception, design and perception. We do not use an intermediate

representation technique that is merely a reference to the spatial construct to be realised later, but rather work *in medias res*. At the same time, we experience the complexity of the spatial and architectural experience in our own actions. Like in a mobile, the components of spatial design are balanced and condensed into a harmonious overall composition. In this way, we try to explore the indivisibility of architecture through design and experience.≈

Willem-Jan Beeren was, from 2003 to 2012, a project architect and research assistant. In 2012 he was appointed professor of architecture and art at the Alanus University and until 2019 was vice dean of the architecture department. He is the Chair of Architecture and Art in Dialogue and works at the intersection of art and architecture.
<https://www.alanus.edu/en/home>



THE FIRST LEARNING STEP IN ADULT EDUCATION: STRENGTHENING THE USE OF THE TWELVE SENSES

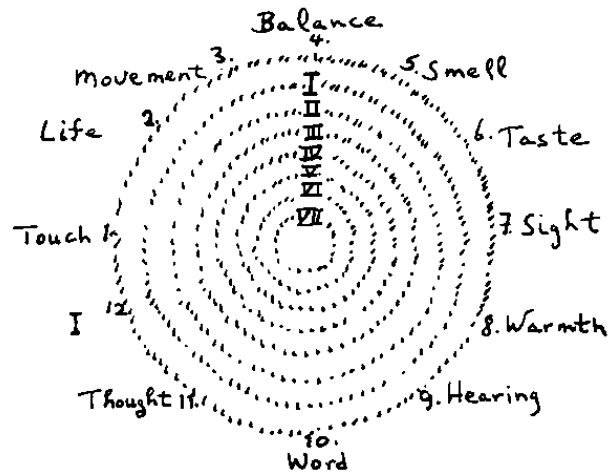
Coenraad van Houten

BREATHING – PERCEIVING

Any learning begins with observing the world. Through the twelve senses the outside world streams into us.³ Only a part of it, however, which becomes the basis of the learning process, is turned into conscious

³ Following Steiner's indications: 1) the sense of touch 2) the sense of life 3) the sense of movement 4) the sense of balance 5) the sense of smell 6) the sense of taste 7) the sense of sight 8) the sense of warmth 9) the sense of hearing 10) the sense of the word 11) the sense of thought 12) the sense of ego.

observations by the ego. Something enters us from outside. As an *organic* process it is a rhythmic breathing in and out. As a *learning* process, *attention*, at least must be added, if anything is to be retained for the learning process itself. Only then do we *hear* a speaker,



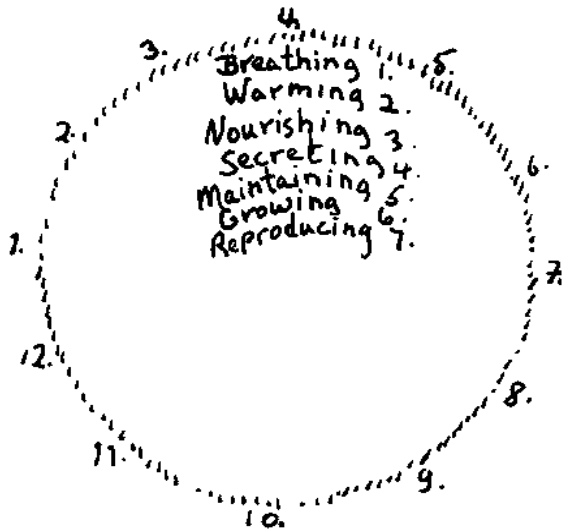
read a book, perceive sound, colour, movement, etc. Enlivening the sense activity is the prerequisite for the learning process to take place.

Here, we have to pay attention to the fact that perceiving is a rhythmical process. We can take in consciously only to a limited extent; there has to be a space for “breathing out” as well. The proper “breathing” of the learning elements is a fundamental necessity for Adult Learning.

Here, too, it is important to regard this “learning breathing” as something permeating all Seven Steps.⁴ Something is breathed in, internalised, and then breathed out again in a new form. “Breathing”, therefore, become a prototype for all learning – just as the rhythm of day and night

⁴ The Seven Steps of the adult learning process follow from Rudolf Steiner's indications: 1) Breathing-Perceiving, 2) Warming-Relating, 3) Nourishing-Assimilating/Digesting, 4) Secreting-Individualising, 5) Maintaining-Practising, 6) Growing-Growing Faculties, 7) Reproducing-Creating Something New. See the discussion in C. van Houten, *Awakening the Will*.

carries our life through a daily breathing in of the senses and a nightly breathing out. Our whole biography, too, could be imagined as a learning process of breathing in and out.



TAKING IN - OBSERVING

Anything that strengthens the active use of our twelve senses will further this first learning step. There are already educational courses that include half an hour of observation exercises every day, which has increased the learning ability of the participants considerably. Including the senses in a proper and objective way is, however, only a first step. A second step would be to enliven the senses by way of certain artistic exercises; that is to say, increasingly to incorporate the life processes into the activities of the senses. A third step will then be looking through the senses, to become aware of the spiritual realities lying behind them. This is a truly Goethean way, which however, should now become a didactic learning method, a true Schooling Path.

This will often accompany an embarrassing discovery that gives us a little more self-knowledge. For, although our senses are selfless, the way we use them is often coloured by

innumerable psychological factors and there is very little, if any, *pure* observation. Who is truly able to listen to a lecturer in an open and selfless way, or look at an art object in such a way that it may clearly express itself to us, or really to see the picture nature of another human being? Here, the fundamental attitude to be practised continually is openness, wonder, even reverence for the sense phenomena – just as the unspoiled child is still able to.

The adult educators are then confronted with the pressing question of whether they are furthering or disturbing this attitude by the way they act. They may discover a great deal by observing their breathing pattern while teaching; and even more when asking the participants how their breathing rhythm responds to theirs while listening to the presentations. Due to the influences we are exposed to in our environment today, such as radio, television, film, noise, our senses have been considerably dulled. Therefore, an adult education that re-enlivens the senses is already carrying out cultural therapy.~

Excerpted from Coenraad van Houten, *Awakening the Will: Principles and Processes in Adult Learning*, Adult Learning Network, Forest Row, 1995, pp.37-41.



THE LANGUAGE OF A MORAL ARCHITECTURE

Rudolf Steiner

It is probable that our building will not be able fully to attain its goal – indeed we are only aiming at a primitive beginning.⁵ Yet if human

⁵ The first Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland.

culture is able to take what is expressed in our building ... and develop it; if the ideas underlying such works of art find followers — then people who allow themselves to be impressed by these works of art and who have learnt to understand their language, will never do wrong to their fellow men either in heart or intellect, because the forms of art will teach them how to love; they will learn to live in harmony and peace with their fellow beings. Peace and harmony will pour into all hearts through these forms; such buildings will be “Lawgivers” and their forms will be able to achieve what external institutions can never achieve.

However much study may be given to the elimination of crime and wrong-doing from the world, true redemption, the turning of evil into good, will in future depend upon whether true art is able to pour a spiritual fluid into the hearts and souls of men. When men’s hearts and souls are surrounded by the achievements of true architecture, sculpture and the like, they will cease to lie if it happens they are untruthfully inclined; they will cease to disturb the peace of their fellow men if this is their tendency. Edifices and buildings will begin to speak, and in a language of which people of today have no sort of inkling.~

From: Rudolf Steiner, *Ways to a New Style of Architecture*, GA 286.



A UNIVERSITY TRAINING IN TRANSFORMATIVE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Johannes Schuster

TRANSFORMATIVE ARCHITECTURE AND THE BIOSCULPTURAL METHOD

Every student who passes through a training in architecture, will be motivated by the idea that their designs are going to make a positive impact on the world. The question is how we can inspire and equip tertiary students with a living knowledge of how architectural form can become *morally transformative*, that is to say: uplift the soul of those who move within and around them? And how can a such transformative architecture be taught?

This is a completely different question from trying to create a built-up environment that is merely well-designed, functional, green, healthy or energy efficient etc. As important all such considerations are, they are in the end utilitarian in nature. Whilst utilitarianism can be efficient, practical, profitable, healthy, even attractive, it can never become truly beautiful nor uplifting. Why not? Because in the final analysis there are always functional and/or commercial motives attached to anything of a purely utilitarian nature.

True beauty on the other hand, can only arise when it is freed from utilitarian motives; that is when it is given as a free gift and not as the result of a commercial transaction. This doesn’t mean that Michelangelo couldn’t have been paid for his work, but it means that the money wasn’t what motivated him. This also doesn’t mean that functional and utilitarian requirements need to be ignored, but it means they are initially set aside for a later stage in the process. This allows

for a creative “open space” to arise within which an inspiration is able to metamorphose a formless spiritual essence into a generative gesture and seed.

We can admire the beauty of a rose, a spectacular sunset, the gait of a brumby, the smile of a baby or even the humour of a wizened old face. Some manifestations of beauty are universal and not subject to the eye of the beholder, nor are they limited to the phenomena of nature alone. We may also come across them in man-made works of art. When listening to such works as Mozart’s *Ave Verum*, Bach’s *Magnificat* or Beethoven’s *Pastorale* for example, we are transported to another realm, which is highly moral in nature and which, momentarily, transforms us into better human beings than we were before. The architectural equivalent of such moments is to stand in awe inside a great cathedral, look up at a Greek temple or walk up the steps of a great modern building such as the Sydney Opera House. These are all experiences of *universal beauty*.

WHAT IS THE AIM?

There are many architects and architectural movements today whose entire focus is about functionality, sustainability, energy efficiency, health/ ecology/environmental awareness etc. *Transformative Art and Architecture* is not primarily focused on any of these. Neither does TAA wish to replace or modify any of such worthwhile principles and ideals, which are already recognized as integral to best architectural practice. Rather than replacing such approaches, TAA adds another perspective which does not replace, but is complementary to existing architectural best practice.

TAA arises from a *monistic, spiritual perspective*, which elevates architectural design from the utilitarian, functional and conventionally aesthetic or fashionable level to a spiritually

objective ‘*transformational*’ level. It does this by aiming for an experience of *Universal Beauty* i.e. not “subjective beauty” that lies in the eye of the beholder.

For the purposes of TAA, beauty becomes universal when it bears within itself an element of “Goodness and Truth”. TAA therefore seeks to create morally transformative architecture through the incorporation of “*Goodness, Truth and Beauty*.”

HOW CAN THIS BE ACHIEVED?

TAA and its Biosculptural method have identified a number of concrete, practical steps and design criteria to help bring this about. While the theory of TAA is based on the universal principles of spiritual science, which are not likely to change with the passage of time, the practical methodologies of how this theory is applied may vary and change over time. Both TAA and the Biosculptural methodology complement each other and form part of the same TAA course.

In its present form, TAA addresses three perspectives of form creation, all of which are essential to create a meaningful and spiritually uplifting environment. They are:

1. The spiritual nature of the creative process
2. The four Ethers as nature’s etheric language of Form
3. Consciousness of form in the Consciousness Soul age

CREATIVE PROCESS – SPIRIT ESSENCE

Understanding and working with the spiritual nature of the creative process is necessary to help incorporate spiritual essence into architectural form. We can approach the archetypal nature of the creative process by

studying the creative steps of cosmic evolution, which reveal themselves to be the steps of WARMTH – LIGHT – MOVEMENT – FORM. We can also trace the same steps in the archetypal plant gestures over a twelve month period. More about the creative process shortly.

LANGUAGE OF FORM – LIVING FORM

“Spirit cannot act in the world without form”. All forms of nature ultimately have a spiritual origin and are therefore filled with purpose, meaning and beauty. The form itself arises within physical substance through the creative tension that exists between the polarity of life forces and physical forces. Understanding and appreciating the dynamic tension that exists between these polar opposites is the first step towards a universal and living architectural language of form. This is why we can begin to learn how to create new and meaningful forms by studying the form language of the four Ethers and the twelve formative forces connected with the zodiac. More about language of form below.

CONSCIOUSNESS OF FORM – HUMAN BEING

Every form has consciousness. There are four archetypal categories of form connected with the typical forms of the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom and the human kingdom. The spiritual counterparts of the lower kingdoms are not physically incarnated within their material bodies. Only the human form can incorporate a spiritual centre or Ego. Since the forms we wish to create are to serve, above all, the human kingdom, and since the human being was created in the image of God, it behoves us to study the *“lawfulness of the human body”* as Steiner puts it. This in turn will help us to find the new architectural principles and forms capable of serving humanity in the age of the consciousness soul.

TWELVE FORM CRITERIA

TAA has identified four archetypal form criteria connected with each of the current three TAA perspectives: ***Content, Language and Consciousness***. This adds up to a total of twelve fundamental criteria acting as a foundational guide during the design process, as well as an orientation map in the evaluation of the transformative potential of architectural form.

THE SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

Although TAA’s spiritual perspective adds only one extra layer to the design process, it is however a layer that is very likely to have a significant effect on the chosen geometric forms, final appearance and the overall feel and atmosphere emanating from any given project.

The name *Biosculptural Architecture* implies a deliberate association with the name *Biodynamic Agriculture*. Both are practical endeavours that arise out of anthroposophical principles and both seek to establish concrete links between cosmic/spiritual and earthly/physical realities. Just like biodynamic agriculture seeks to bring plants into a dynamic relationship with the cosmos, in order to draw increased life force into fruit and vegetable, so does Biosculptural architecture seek to embody soul/spiritual qualities within the “sculptural” and “living” forms of a building.

To sum up, *Transformative Art & Architecture* is a newly formulated theory of how spirit relates to artistic and architectural form. As a theory it is fully grounded in Rudolf Steiner’s research of the spiritual universe and our place within it. As a *Biosculptural methodology*, it has developed a series of practical steps and criteria, which can be applied in architectural practice.

EXAMPLES OF A TERTIARY CURRICULUM IN BIOSCULPTURAL ARCHITECTURE

The Creative Process

Through Anthroposophy we can come to understand how the creation and evolution of the world itself is a creative process on the part of many spiritual hierarchies. This process unfolded in four archetypal steps that could be summarised by the principles of: WARMTH – LIGHT – MOVEMENT – FORM

The Hermetic principle of “as above - so below” implies that such fundamental principles apply on all levels of creation, from the largest all the way down to the lowest scale.

Therefore, every truly creative process must allow these four steps to take their course. There must be personal commitment, enthusiasm and engagement (WARMTH). There must be appropriate skills, information and an element of artistic/spiritual inspiration (LIGHT). There must be a sufficient amount of time and space to allow the design to evolve, so the solutions have time to “cook” and mature (MOVEMENT) before the process is finally able to yield a concrete, comprehensive and beautiful result (FORM).

If any of the four steps or principles is missing in the design process, the results are being compromised. So, for example:

Lack of WARMTH	means the results are likely to be	tight, cheap, generic
Lack of LIGHT		boring, uninformed, uninspiring,
Lack of MOVEMENT		impractical, rigid, inflexible
Lack of FORM		chaotic, fragmented, arbitrary

These four archetypal steps inspire the four stages of the creative process. Within the

architectural design process the four steps mean:

1. Clarify Intent and resourcing (WARMTH)
2. Seek Inspiration (LIGHT)
3. Create the Life & Soul Gestures and the Seed Model that resonates with the inspiration (MOVEMENT)⁶
4. Grow the seed model into a purposeful, living whole (FORM)

Etheric Language of Form

The transition from a ‘seed model’ to the final form is comparable to the growth of a plant from seed to flower. This is where the form language of the four Ethers provides a useful template in design development. It is only through a living, etheric form-language that the soul/spiritual qualities of the original inspiration are able to condense into outer form. Therefore, the study of the form language of the four Ethers, plus, at a more advanced stage, the study of the formative forces connected with the zodiac, become a necessary part of any TAA based university curriculum.

Based on Steiner’s indications, we can begin to relate to and understand the formative forces via the eurythmy gestures, which give expression to the form impulses behind the vowels and consonants. This is complemented by observing and studying the many plant forms of nature in the context of their particular gestures, medicinal properties and relationships to the planets and the zodiac. All of this of course opens up a huge field of research for

⁶ The Life Gesture, Soul Gesture and Seed Model represent three specific stages of a twelve step design process. All twelve stages reflect the archetypal plant’s twelve growth gestures over a twelve month rhythm. The ‘seed model’, for example, represents the germinating spring seed,

which bears within itself the formative blueprint of the mature plant form. The study of these relationships forms part of the first teaching module of the TAA course.

generations of interested students and practitioners at the tertiary educational level.

A university training in Biosculptural architecture would involve an experience of eurythmy, speech formation and the observation of natural forms in a way which reveals their gestural language.

The B – Gesture

To take one example – the consonant B. The experience of this sound reveals the gesture of B as a formative force, as are all consonants (as opposed to vowels which have a feeling gesture). The specific gesture of B is a space creating force that contains something, and at the same time protects what it contains. In eurythmy the arms come together in the form of an embracing gesture.

See:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toWYtr6Fgpl&ab_channel=LogosEurythmie

Therefore, we could say, the knowledge and experience of the B gesture is fundamental to the creation of all building spaces – spaces which hold and protect – but it is expressed most archetypally in a building for young children. The possibility of inwardness is created by the sheath or skin which surrounds all living creatures. The kindergarten years could be compared to a seed which harbours a strong inward activity that bursts into stem and flower during the subsequent school years and finally bears fruit in the young adult. The quality and form of a seed is a great image for the archetypal gesture of a kindergarten building. The walls want to be strong and protective and embrace the internal space in a gesture reminiscent of the eurythmy gesture for the letter “B”. The same gesture also reminds us of the gesture of the human embryo, or the curled up gesture of the foetal position, all of which are expressions of inwardness and inner movement. Once the perimeter of the roof

line and verandas are taken into account, we get an egg-like form, which is also reminiscent of the shape of a seed or bud. The circular space where the children gather for the story would be roughly in the same location where the head is situated in the embryo.

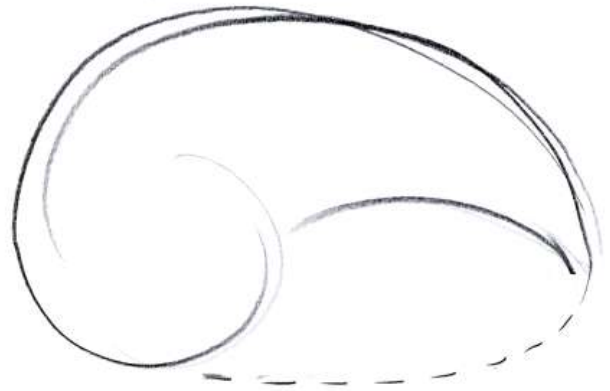


Figure 1: An archetypal kindergarten floor plan is reminiscent of a “seed, or bud like, embryonic shape” or of the eurythmy gesture for the letter “B”.

DEVELOPING A LANGUAGE OF FORM

The formative shapes created in speech through the consonants and vowels are able to create an infinite variety of meaningful words, language and poetry. Once we learn to understand ever more deeply the formative signatures of the formative forces emanating from the universe, we will be able to start using them consciously to create meaningful forms. The individual form impulses then become like the letters of an architectural alphabet or language of form and in future times we will be able to write consciously in this language of form. In this case it is possible to sense the future potential and reality behind Steiner’s seminal statement about the moral effects of architecture quoted at the start of this article.

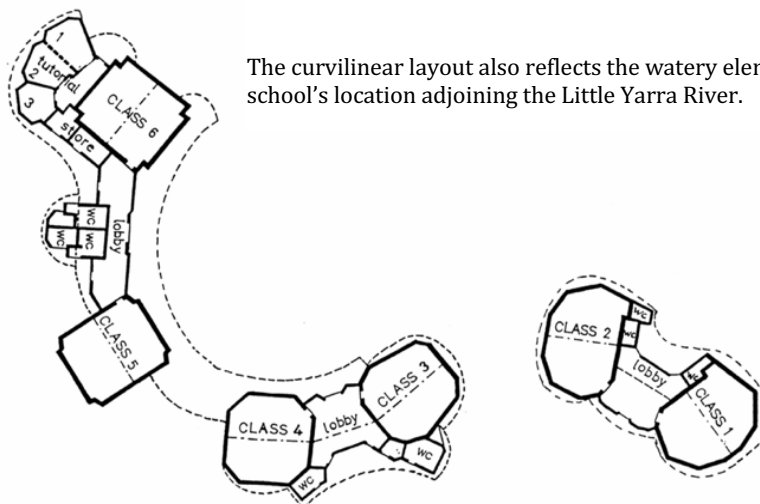
SOME EXAMPLES FROM THE LITTLE YARRA STEINER SCHOOL

I applied the principles of Biosculptural architecture to the design of all the initial Little Yarra buildings over the first twenty years of the school's establishment phase.



Figure 2: LYSS primary School Class room footprints 1 to 6 and classes 3 – 6 in the landscape view.

The Primary School



The curvilinear layout also reflects the watery element connected with the school's location adjoining the Little Yarra River.

Classes 1 & 2

Although the kindergarten had not yet been built during the time of my involvement with the school, one can see a further development of the same B gesture illustrated in Fig.1 in the footprint and roof lines of the Classes 1 & 2 buildings, which represent a metamorphosis from the archetypal kindergarten seed gesture. Unlike the upper classrooms from Class 4 up, all of which have some form of clerestory windows looking out into the world with interest, the

roofs of the lower class rooms are more like protective shells, nurturing inward activity.

In this way most classrooms, with the exception of Classes 11 & 12, which also had not yet been built during my time at the school, represent a metamorphosis of the archetypal, holding-protecting movement of the B gesture. The actual metamorphosis corresponds to the development of consciousness from the young child to the young adult as illustrated in Fig.8.

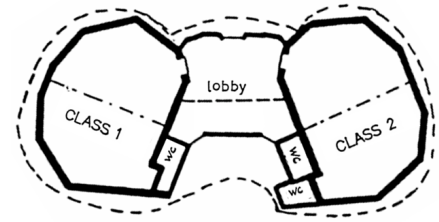


Figure 3: LYSS Classes 1 and 2

Classes 5 & 6

The consciousness of the child from kindergarten to the upper school undergoes enormous changes. It represents a progression from inward focus to outward interest, from dreaming to wakefulness, from picture thinking to abstract thinking. This evolutionary sequence is expressed architecturally in the change from rounded informality to more linear, geometric formality, which begins with Class 5.

The Class 5 floor plan, for example, encompasses a rectangle in the proportion of the “golden section” which is also the proportion of the windows and a number of other relationships in the room. The corners have not yet crystallised into right angles, but geometrically arise out of two overlapping pentagons. Overall the room has much less of the organic flow evident in the earlier rooms, in favour of greater formality and weight. The greater degree of formality is connected with the intrinsic nature of conceptual thought, which brings structure,

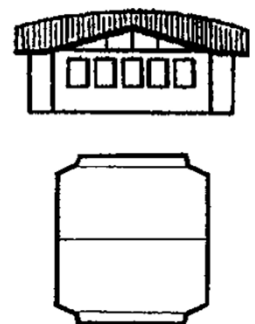


Figure 4: Interior of the Class 5 building: the greater degree of formality is connected with the intrinsic nature of conceptual thought, which begins to awaken in the Class 5 child.

form and understanding as against movement and flow which arise from the heart. In the Class 4 and early Class 5 child there is still a perfect balance between movement and form, but this balance is about to tilt in the following years.

Class 6

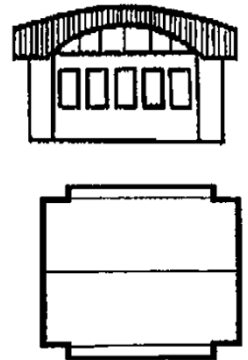


Figure 5: Class 6 building – In class 6 the students learn about ancient Rome and the curriculum branches out into science, geology etc. The greater focus on the physicality of the earth is reflected the rectilinear floor plan, balanced with curvilinear rooflines reminiscent of “Romanesque arches”.

Upper School



Figure 6: Upper school science laboratories and junior high school class rooms - a balance and play between forms combining roundedness and rhythm with angularity, unpredictability and interest.



Figure 7: In its upright 'mentoring' gesture, the upper school teacher and conference room overlooks the high school precinct below.

make informed and astute judgments.

Architecturally, this comes to expression not only in the footprints, but also in the upright ego gestures of the roof structures and in the balance of movement between roundedness, rhythm and liveliness for the lower age groups and the geometric angularity, dynamic balance and unpredictability in the forms of the upper school buildings.

The Overall LYSS Seed Idea

In geometrical terms, the architectural journey from the Kindergarten to Class 12 reflects the gradual descent of consciousness from the cosmic circle in the pre-school to the earthly square of Class 6.

This is followed and mirrored by the subsequent ascending process from Class 6 to Class 12, as shown in Figure 8 below. By time the students have grown into young adults, the circle and the square have inter-penetrated each other. This of course is not to be taken literally, but is a symbolic way of saying that the Ego or spirit centre of the child has fully incarnated into physical form. Or in less abstract terms, the warmth, life and spiritual connection of the little child, which expresses itself architecturally in round and rhythmic gestures, reappears again in the young adult, but now on a more conscious level, supporting a lively interest in the world and a creative capacity that is able to

Here the architectural forms are more related to the angular eurythmy soul gesture for knowledge/thinking and insight. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rax4rsqGN7k&ab_channel=LogosEurythmie

Metamorphosis of LYSS Floor Plans

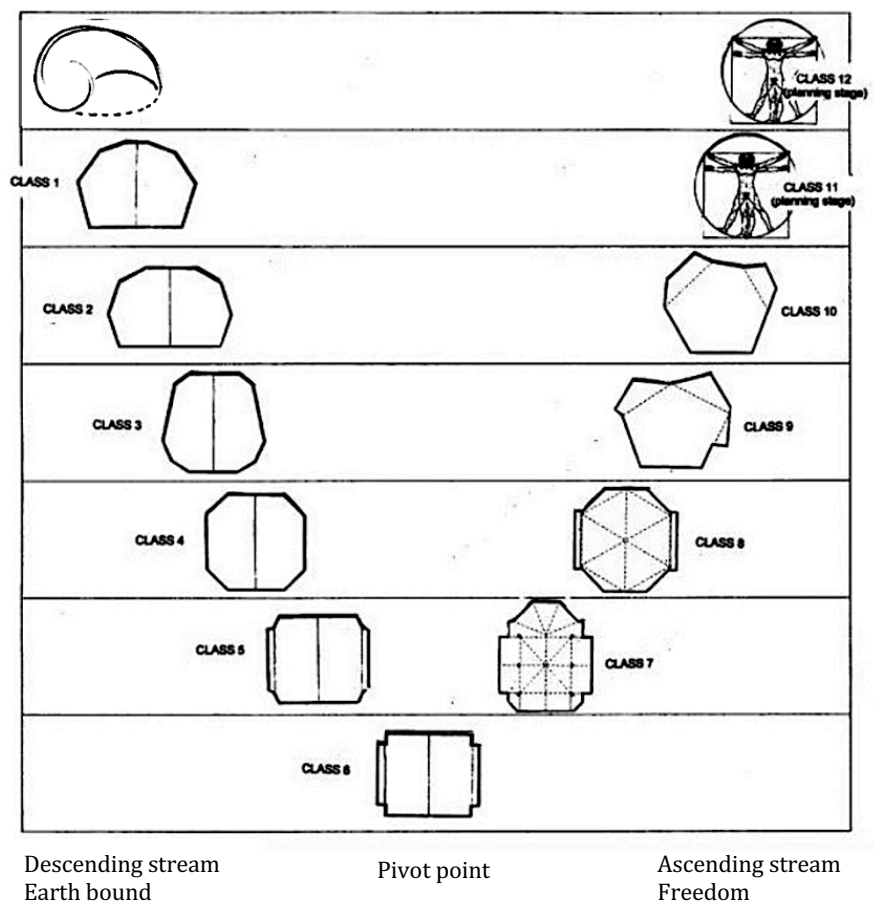


Figure 8: Metamorphosis of floor plans at Little Yarra Steiner School, Class 1 to Class 10. The Archetypal Kindergarten Gesture and the Vitruvian Man icons for Classes 11 & 12 indicate that those buildings had not yet been designed or built during my time at the school.

Johannes Schuster is one of the founders, first-class teacher, long standing administrator and original building designer of the Little Yarra Steiner School, Victoria, Australia. More recently, Johannes founded the Transformative Art and Architecture – International Training Initiative:

<https://biosculpturalarchitecture.com/courses/>

Within this training he has been offering courses in Australia, Europe, South East Asia, China and South America. The full TAA course of currently 8 modules (350 hours) provides the theoretical foundation for qualifying as a Biosculptural Architectural Design Consultant.

<https://biosculpturalarchitecture.com/consulting/>

TAA Event Notice

We are planning to schedule the next online **TAA Module 1 (about the Creative Process) over two weekends in July 2025**. Module themes: "How does the "Formless" become Form? How does Spirit manifest in matter?"

Anyone interested to find out more about it please contact Johannes at:

js@biosculpturalArchitecture.com



THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN A UNIVERSALLY HUMAN EDUCATION

Rudolf Steiner

When we are discussing the tertiary stage of education it must be said that a certain educational groundwork ought to be the same for everyone, whether they are destined to be a doctor, a lawyer or a teacher; that is one aspect of the matter; in addition to this, everyone must receive what contributes to the general culture of man, whether a person is to become a doctor, a machine maker, architect, chemist or engineer; they must be given the opportunity of receiving general culture, whether they are to work with their hands or their head. Today little thought is

given to this, though certainly in some places of higher education many things are better than they were.

When I was at the Vienna University of Technology a professor was giving lectures on general history. Each term he started to give his general history; after three or perhaps five lectures he ceased—there was no longer anyone there. Also, at this university, there was a professor of history of literature. Thus there were the means to receive what was universally human besides specialised subjects. To these lectures on the history of literature, which included exercises in rhetoric and instruction on how to lecture, like those given, for example, by hand—to these lectures I always had to drag someone else, for they were held only if there was an audience of two. They could be kept going, therefore, only by a second being dragged in, and this was someone different practically every time. Except for this, the only attempt to provide students with the information they needed about conditions in life was by lectures on constitutional law or statistics. As I said, these things have improved; what has not improved is the driving force that should exist in our whole social life.

This will improve, however, when there is a possibility for all that constitutes the universally human not to be made intelligible only to those with a definite professional view but intelligible from a universally human aspect. I have often been surprised how distorted my lectures on anthroposophy have been by my audience; for if they had taken them in a positive way they could have said: we won't bother about the anthroposophy in these lectures, but what is said about natural science, which receives great praise when coming from the ordinary natural philosopher—that is enough for us. For as you all know these lectures are always interspersed with general information about nature.

But there are many people who are not interested in taking things from a positive angle, preferring to distort what they have no wish to accept. What they refused to accept, by the very way in which the thoughts were formed, by the whole mode of treatment, as well as the necessary interspersing of natural science, could be taken as contributing to universal human knowledge, which the manual worker could receive just as well as the scholar, and which was also generally intelligible as natural science. Just consider other endeavours towards a world-outlook. Do you imagine that in monistic gatherings, for instance, people can understand anything if they have not a scientific background? No, and if they have not, they merely gossip. What here we pursue as anthroposophy is something that can change all knowledge of nature, and even of history, so that everyone will be able to understand them. Just think how intelligible to everyone what I have shown to be a great leap historically in the middle of the fifteenth century can be. That, I think, is intelligible to everyone. But it is the groundwork without which there can be no understanding at all of the whole social movement in our time. This social movement is not understood because people do not know how mankind has developed since the middle of the fifteenth century. When these things are mentioned people come forward and declare: Nature does not make leaps, so you are wrong to assume there was such a thing in the fifteenth century.

This foolish proposition that nature never makes a leap is always being harped upon. Nature continually makes leaps; it is a leap from the green leaf of a plant to the sepal which has a different form—another leap from sepal to petal. It is so too in the evolution of man's life. Whoever does not teach the history that rests on senseless conventional untruth, but on what has really happened, knows that in the fifteenth century men became different in the finer



The leap from sepal to petal

element of their constitution from what they were before, and that what is brought about today is the development of what they have grasped in the centre of their being.

If there is a desire to understand the present social movement, laws of this kind in historical evolution will have to be recognised. You have only to call to mind the way in which matters here are dealt with and you will say: To understand all this no special knowledge is necessary; there is no need to be a man of culture; everyone can understand it. This indeed will be what is demanded in the future—that no philosophies or world-conceptions should be propagated which can be understood only by reason of a form of education belonging to a certain class. Take up any philosophical work today, for example, by Eucken or Paulsen, or anyone else you want information about, take up one of those dreadful works on psychology by university professors—you will soon drop it again; for those who are not specially trained in the particular subject do not understand the language used. This is something that can be set right only by universal education, when the whole nature of education and instruction will be absolutely changed in the way I have tried to indicate today.



People have never learnt to take lessons from life, because they always learn some particular thing. They think: Ah, I know that, I am a specialist in that sphere; you know something else and are a specialist in some other sphere.— People have become accustomed to this without ever getting beyond what they have absorbed as knowledge at school, considering this as an end in itself, whereas the important thing is *learning to learn*,— Learning to learn, so that, however old one is, one can remain, up to the very year of one's death, a student of life. Today even when people have taken their degree, as a rule they have exhausted their powers of learning by the time they are out of their twenties. They are unable to learn anything more from life; parrotwise they reel off what they have absorbed up to then. At most they have, now and again, an inkling of what is going on. Those who are different are exceptional. It is important that we should discover an educational method where people learn to learn, and go on learning from life their whole life long. There is nothing in life from which we cannot learn. We should have different ground beneath our feet today if people had learnt how to learn. Why nowadays are we socially so helpless? It is because facts are confronting us on a level to which men have not grown. They are unable to learn from these facts because

“The next coming of university, its third incarnation, is not going to come from the managerial regimes directing the current institution in crisis, or from those cadres of compliant academics who have traded down the idea of tenure as a position of intellectual free expression to it becoming job security by another name. Rather, the re-created university will come from ‘outsiders’ and that handful of proactive dissident educators who have not been neutered by time-serving, or by the reduction of university education to the status of technocratic training or just another supermarket commodity to be plucked from the shelf. This extremely small community of re-creation has a future bonded to the identification and engagement with that which is most critical.”

Tony Fry, “Dead Institution Walking: The University, Crisis, Design and Remaking (Hot Debate)”, *Design Philosophy Papers*, 1:5, (2003), 267-282.

they have always to confine themselves to externals. In future there will be no education that bears fruit if people will not trouble to rise to the great points of view in human culture.

Now this has led to all that is found in our common cultivation of the spirit, which no longer bears the stamp of a united culture. It has split us asunder and so far has been unable to master what must be mastered. Anyone having experience in this sphere knows what wide praise has been given to the specialisation of recent times. It has constantly been pointed out how our cultural life has been so much extended that a man can have a thorough and profitable grasp only of special branch of knowledge. Something has been indicated here which, from one aspect, might be called self-evident, but out of inner laziness people have accepted it with alacrity. Men need today just to confine themselves within the limits of some special subject to be hailed as qualified men of culture. Naturally, anyone having culture at heart cannot hope and cannot wish that specialisation should give place to a general dilettantism.

The aim must be for all education, all school-life, to be so organised for the human being that at a lower level of his consciousness it is always

possible for him to connect his specialty by threads of intelligence with the general culture. This can happen in no other way than by giving every university a foundation of the general culture of mankind. The pedants today will here protest and ask what is to become of professional training. We should just prove how economically we can proceed with professional training, when dealing with specialities, if we can work upon human beings with an all-round culture—if we can work upon men who really have something human in them. Through the perverse conditions of our modern culture we have reached the point where a man in his special subject can be a most highly developed being and, at the same time, colossally stupid where the great problems of mankind are concerned, understanding absolutely nothing about them.

We have in our midst nowadays this curious phenomenon—that someone who has only passed through the primary school, and perhaps has not done this very satisfactorily, and has been dragged rather than brought up, has more sensible things to say about general human conditions than the man who has passed through higher education and excels in his own sphere. Today we must fight this phenomenon if we have any idea of sending into the depths

those impulses which alone can bring improvement, impulses which do not lead merely to the superficial measures sought by those unwilling to take the path demanded by reality if anything is to happen. Naturally today we have let the evil go so far that we no longer have the personalities fit to build the foundations for a university of the kind, and are in the terrible situation of possessing no teachers for general human culture. For, my dear friends, it has come to this, that our universities lie half asleep on the outermost fringes of culture.≈

Excerpted from R. Steiner, *Social Basis for Primary and Secondary Education*, Lectures 1 & 3, 1919, GA 192.

LINKS AND INITIATIVES

This space is reserved for news, relevant links and outlines of initiatives. Please send any information to be included here.

AUSTRALIA

INDUS UNIVERSITY PROJECT

The Indus Project is a pioneering tertiary educational initiative feasibility-researched for Western Australia.

Go to:

<https://www.educationforsocialrenewalfoundation.com/>

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE NEWLETTER

To help develop an international community of people together striving to shape a new kind of university. **Please share this newsletter widely.**

To share insights and information which will help to develop the content, methods and organisational principles of this kind of university

BACKGROUND – ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY

The university, since its inception in the medieval people, has become a central organ of the cultural and spiritual life of society. It has been called a “little city”, a melting pot for new ways of thinking and for shaping the world creatively.

All knowledge in the medieval university was unified by faith in a transcendent God. During the time of Renaissance humanism, and later in the early-modern Kantian and Humboldtian universities, the human rational faculty became seen as the unifying power. The university came to be thought of as a centre for universal knowledge. The modern university can better be called a “multi-versity”; faith in God or the rational striving toward the universality of knowledge is not its central concern. It is essentially materialistic in outlook, serving mainly practical ends through its teaching and research.

SHAPING A NEW FORM OF UNIVERSITY

This means stepping toward a future in which the university is completely free of the state – financially, in terms of course content, and in relation to the awarding of degrees. This freedom is the responsibility and duty of this central organ of the cultural-spiritual sphere of the threefold social organism; it is already recognised in academic freedom. Ways this freedom can be further achieved can be discussed and advanced through this newsletter.

Following the indications of Rudolf Steiner, the aim of lower and higher schooling is not to educate but to awaken – to help awaken the modern human being to the spirit, the spirit working in the human being itself. What can be achieved at the tertiary level will fructify the whole field of education into the future.

Thus we can state boldly: the aim of the new university is to help open the “eye of the spirit” to the working of creative spirit in all forms of nature and the human world. In every faculty, in every aspect of teaching and researching, the task will be to advance human life towards an understanding of the world as a manifestation of spirit.

For this reason the orientation of the new university is fundamentally phenomenological. This is the method which is taught, guided and inspired by what others have perceived in this way. Modern individuals need to learn to see for themselves.

Seeing is grounded in physical perception, in what appears to us in the world (phenomenon literally means – “what appears”). But physical appearance hides what is invisible and essential. When teaching and researching focuses one-sidedly on the physical we have everything technical, the approach which considers what is “real” as only observable, empirical phenomena. Academic thinking then becomes highly materialistic and objective. However, when teaching and learning reaches through what appears to us physically, it rises to the artistic through a “knowing of the heart”. In the works of the later Heidegger and the later Merleau-Ponty we have the vision of the invisible within the visible. We find that “more appears than appears to appear”.^{*} The appearance hides the innate idea (*eidos*) which may nevertheless come to presence through the pathway of phenomenology; this innate idea Plato equated with *to ekphanestaton* (“what properly shows itself as the most radiant of all is the beautiful”).

The new university is focused on a highly practical, applied phenomenology, on all the phenomena which come within the scope of the different faculties. Different minerals and soil

forms; plants and animals; the forms and structures of the human body and human consciousness; the different stages in the growth of children, their different soul gestures and temperaments; all the disease and health appearances; social forms and social processes – and so on. For this advanced practical phenomenology, we look mainly to the indications of German philosopher and artist Rudolf Steiner, who in turn drew greatly on the artistic phenomenological natural science of the poet Johann von Goethe.

Editor

* R. Bernasconi, "The Good and the Beautiful" in *Phenomenology in Practice and Theory*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht, 1985, pp.179-184.