

Therapeutic Art

by *Katherine Rudolph*

Following is the beginning of the lecture I gave at the conference, 'Art in Therapy' is the title.¹



***A Celebration of Life between Death and Rebirth* by Katherine Rudolph**

Colour wisdom can be consciously learned and applied for therapeutic purposes. Many people who have created the foundations for colour therapy have now crossed the threshold. The teachings of J.W. Goethe, Rudolf Steiner, Gerard Wagner, Elisabeth Wagner, and Erwin Thomalla comprised my initial training; Gerard Wagner was able to give us deeply penetrating colour indications for individual therapy and pedagogy in answer to the questions that came to him. Indeed, the colour itself is the basis of healing, notwithstanding all the techniques of painting or psychology that one may learn.

Henni Geck, Hilda Boos-Hamburger, Dr. Margaretha Hauschka, Lianne Collot-d'Herbois; in Sydney and Melbourne, Anna Kundert, Margaret Piper, and many others, have helped to prepare and carry the grounds for colour therapy. All of these people are now across the threshold. Those who have passed over are united now in the spiritual world. Any errors, misjudgement or misunderstandings that have occurred between them are in the past; the spiritual world creates the remedies in the course of reincarnations to come....

I was initially amazed in 1999, when Gerard Wagner died and I saw that two members of the Anthroposophical Society were in the three-day process of death at the same time. Collot d'Herbois and Gerard Wagner were together in a sense, to go on in their journeys to the life-between-death-and-rebirth. What is the meaning of such an event? How can it help us unite in the battle for the good, in which therapy plays such an important part?

INTRODUCTION

There are many points of view now in universities today, relating to Art Therapy. As Anthroposophists, we can gather the fruits and plant new seeds of understanding as we carry our experience into the world at large.

Art Therapy is used in the treatment of mutism, autism, hyperactivity, social and family therapy, schizophrenia, anorexia/bulimia, neurasthenia/hysteria, nearsightedness / farsightedness, neurosis, cancer, biographical therapy, temperamental one-sidedness, and other illnesses.

In Greek times, healing and religion were inseparable; in modern times healing and science have become inseparable. In the foreseeable future, healing in art, science and religion may become a

¹ A part of which appears in the Section of my website called *The Therapeutic Process*. See www.exploringtheword.com.au for more information.

shared interactive process.

We human beings presently need to earn our daily bread, even in the healing professions. When one considers that the essence of human thought is a faculty that no one can own, our methods of healing can indeed be considered to be the fruits of grace and striving. Competition in this profession sometimes 'goes against the grain' even though all of us have the ideal of healing in common. Understanding the universal principles working and weaving in the colour world may eventually help us to improve our moral judgement.

The universal principles, as we know are connected to the planetary worlds, and live in tone, sound, and form as well as in colour. So, as George Macdonald once said, 'The arts are brothers and sisters'. Being true to myself, I must add that Anthroposophical Speech Formation & Dramatic Art, in which I also earned artistic-pedagogical and therapeutic diplomas, form a part of my particular destined path. Research is the responsibility for therapists in this Age.

It is of interest to me that both Gerard Wagner, himself, and Erwin Thomalla, a painting teacher, originally from Poland, had enthusiasm for the study of Speech Formation and Drama in the early part of their work. Elisabeth Wagner, who was the leading teacher in the Goetheanum Painting School for many years, studied Sculpture, and later, Eurythmy; she was the first student to study with Gerard Wagner. Her perseverance and dedication, as well as her mastery in painting, and understanding of pedagogy, have carried the school in every sense.

Since 2004, my work has existed as an individual initiative called Exploring the Word in Colour and Speech. Speech and movement in a 'Story in Motion' combine with colour painting, and coloured clay, as well as work with the Platonic Solids to comprise an individual approach to therapy.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE EYE

Let us look at some essential spiritual scientific understandings to intuitively grasp certain relationships between the arts, as applied to therapy:

The EAR and the LARYNX have metamorphosed into the eye in the development of the human being. The EAR has been metamorphosed into the INNER- EYE. The LARYNX has been metamorphosed into the OUTER EYE. This is an indication given by Rudolf Steiner in the Natural Science Papers. As such, it has been the guiding line of my therapeutic path since the early 1980's. I first came upon this indication in a book by Albert Steffen, called *The Artist and the Fulfilment of the Mysteries*. Metamorphosis is not finished in the human being.

In the course of human art one can observe an alternation between the inner and the outer manifestations. There has been a continuous balancing of outer and inner, sense world and soul world, impression and expression throughout the epochs of art. It can be seen as a therapeutic balancing of human vision.

The sense world was first observed and painted on cave walls by the Aboriginal Initiates. Earlier, the etheric world was directly experienced by human being. In anthroposophical art, we strive to paint and understand that etheric world and it's forming forces. We have now become over-materialised, so to speak. Through the balancing of extremes, mankind will finally come to conscious clairvoyant vision, an evolved state of being, at which time there will be further metamorphosis. It is altogether a healthy progression, although relatively slow to work.

Rudolf Steiner gives the indication that colour is the soul of man and of the whole cosmos. In communion with colour, we partake of this essential truth.

In the Art of Colour, Theodor Willman's essay on 'The Architecture of the First Goetheanum' includes indications from Steiner's Psychosophy and Pneumatosophy: Our soul is so akin to colour that when the substance of our sentient-soul streams out of our two eyes into matter, colour becomes visible to us. In order to become conscious of this, we must retrace our path back from the sentient-soul, through the knowledge gained in the intellectual-soul, to the consciousness-soul, where the kernel of the Ego opens the portal to Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition. How different this is from the viewpoint of modern day science.

The inner and outer eye, actually seem to be working together in everyday life. However, painting can be a meditative activity, alternating between inner and outer qualities, which become perceived and, to a degree distinguished. Balance is sought, as in all healing processes

The concept of the eye as a metamorphosis of the ear and the larynx can help to understand this

balancing process in painting therapy. The ear has metamorphosed into the inner eye that contemplates colour and retains the echo of complementary colours. It is a passive experience in which one awakens to what has just been painted, quietly taking in the whole of the painting at once. This contemplation of colour is always a kind of hearing process. Both the ear and the inner eye are receptive. A person who may be too active in the limbs, maybe too warm, needs this moment of contemplation. Rushing into the next stroke, one may miss the beauty and quality of perception that will allow the following brushstroke to create balance.

The earthy Melancholic, the watery Phlegmatic, the airy Sanguine and the flame of the Choleric: all the human temperaments can be seen as coming out of the forming forces or the etheric being, which gives life to our physical substance. This comes from the same realm as the ocean of colour being. Each temperament needs to find balance. Discovering colour, we learn to know ourselves and understand others. However we begin where we are, in our own temperaments in therapy; and from thence, may go on to explore other temperaments by means of the Colour-Word in a social-therapeutic sense.

Certain persons have a constitution that is one-sided in nature. They are drawn down into the metabolic, blood circulation pole. They need to be more in control of their movements. The metabolism may tend to dominate their consciousness. An extreme example of this state is called Hysteria. Every case is always to be handled individually. (In Speech, epic recitation as well as drama can be helpful.)

Painting on a dry surface is a help to these persons if they have the patience to let it dry again before continuing. A veiling technique can be helpful. One veil over a part of the painting has been demonstrated in 'The Mystery of Golgotha' painting by Rudolf Steiner. One might also apply the principle 'Fire fights fire'. A fire or a blossoming plant, where mixed or impure colour become consumed by the pure red to create a balance, can be therapeutic when applied at the right time. The process of eventually cooling down will come into play with the blues. One must not be afraid of creating shades of browns, and grey in this process. Learning to work with such colours actively and objectively is therapeutic, again, when applied at the right time. Mixed-colour can certainly be brought into balance with other rainbow colours besides red. When colour dissonances are brought into balance they create drama in painting.

A treatment, which uses the red of the 'consuming-flame' against cancer in the metabolic system, was initiated by Erwin Thomalla in the 1980's.

Deaf persons can 'hear' the colours in a way. They can usually feel and see more deeply in compensation for their loss of hearing. Painting is very helpful for them. The spoken vibrations of intoned vowel sounds that are related to the colours can also be experienced while deaf persons are contemplating colour. The retina always hears, in a sense.

Persons with severe rheumatic conditions who are allowed to contemplate clear coloured glass, and rest directly afterwards, can see the complementary colours there involved; sometimes they actually fall asleep afterwards. When they awaken, they are often much restored and less depressed. This therapy initiated by Marianne Altmaier in Germany, also uses the inner eye quality as healing. Cancer patients also benefit from similar treatment with colour light. The strength of the life forces can be augmented, also using the inner eye experience.

STANDING BACK FROM A PAINTING AND ALLOWING THE COLOUR TO REFLECT BACK AND HEAL SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED. THIS RELATES TO THE INNER EYE.

Now in the outer eye, is metamorphosed from the larynx. The cilia muscles that move the lens are the same as those that move the larynx. The outer eye sees and follows the movement of the brushstroke. The movement of the larynx is a part of the process of speaking. It is an active process in both cases whereby one is focussing and refocusing - forming and re-forming in colour or in sound. Intimations of further metamorphosis are to be intuitively grasped.

For someone who is 'too much in the head,' one-sided toward the upper pole or the nerve-sense system, tending towards coldness, seeing-rather than hearing, the process of movement has to be encouraged. (This kind of person could eventually be brought to Lyrical or declamatory speech). The tendency may be to gaze at a painting for along time before making one brushstroke. It might be hard to change what is already there. First hand knowledge about the truths of the colour world, through painting, helps them to dispel doubt. The extreme condition of this sort is known as Neurasthenia.

Many persons who are intrinsically attracted to painting may tend towards such a condition. They may have to be encouraged to paint on a damp paper, if needed, or to use more water.

Shortly we will understand how, in painting the relatively cold nerve-sense process is warmed by the higher individuality, by the Ego's blood forces flowing behind the optic nerve.² In the case of a sclerotic condition, the person may not even have enough strength to move the brush without having a wet surface to paint on. Painting red is especially warming to people with an acquired head- injury. They need to have more circulation in the head.

Painting is communicating. One can speak with the paintbrush, and indeed in the case of mute- autistic persons, this can be a saving grace, which may lead to verbal response.

ACTIVELY PAINTING, MOVING THE PAINTBRUSH, SEEKING BALANCE IN COLOUR QUALITY AND MOVEMENT IS A HEALING SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY, ESPECIALLY CONNECTED TO THE OUTER EYE.

So in the activity of painting, there is a two-foldness; one part of us knows the outer view of order and direction (the right sequence, the right technique, for example), while another part of us feels the sentient quality, the inner mood, and the right colour gesture. Our consciousness-soul, working through the grace of the Creative Logos, holds the key to understanding these processes and applying them therapeutically.

Katherine Rudolph

² See *Kunst und Kunst-Erkenntnis* by Rudolf Steiner.