

PAINTING

Colour Circles

(*The work of Julius Hebing*)

The development of Goethe's Theory of Colour through Rudolf Steiner's conception of the nature of colour is the main theme of an important book by Julius Hebing. *Welt, Farbe und Mensch* (The World, Colour and Man)¹, as yet untranslated, treats of the study and practice of the theory of colour and is an introduction to painting.

Walther Roggenkamp writes of it:²

In colour-circles, a small yet richly-wrought realm inside a widespread world of colour can be experienced, coming to life through the human hand as pictures. Yet strict law prevails even in fleeting phenomena and can be revealed to anyone who, with his senses awake, follows the active movements within each colour.

In Goethe's writings on the theory of colour there is a six-part circle which, through the way it is arranged, makes the colour-values perceptible in relation to one another. We quickly recognize the complementary colour and those which lie opposite one another, and find the 'characteristic' and the 'characterless' ones in those which are closely related. (Plate 96).

The colour and printing industries have in their method and practice introduced other systematic arrangements with different colour-divisions and scales, so as almost to compel what is colourful into measured quality. Developments in physics and chemistry have led to the production of new charts, new colour-tones and often colours are forced to adopt dazzling luminous qualities and characteristics not compatible with the true being of colour. Hence the totality and harmony of a world of colour comes to be ignored, wherein quiet chords of colour that encompass universal laws make it possible to experience a supersensible world within the sense-world.

In his investigations the painter Julius Hebing (1891-1973) has left us a large and comprehensive material for observation regarding the origin of colour and colour-phenomena, and especially colour-circles; these can supplement and help forward the studies originated by Goethe which lead to the boundaries where free, formative colour is active. The many-sided colour-exercises illustrated in his circles can in a wide sense encourage and advance education.

Besides the series on areas of colour, colour-circles geometrically based also come to life. The circles best-known up to now move in a field of tension between black and white, light and dark, inside and outside. They are usually divided into twelve sectors and the colours, painted in a free way, spread over the basic construction. Through the diverse relationships to light and darkness eccentric variations may occur and pass through seven tone-values between black and white; yellow,

the lightest and purest colour, lies nearest the light (i.e. to the white background) and violet appears with the dark shades as neighbour to black, the darkness. Between these extremes the way leads over the warm and cool sides of the circular colour-picture. Inversions are also shown: darkness inside, light outside; light inside, darkness outside. Reflections, intermediate stages in all realms of the colours, light and dark, complementary effects which are in every chart, attract the eye. Many such things are contained in Julius Hebing's extensive legacy. (Plates 96-98).

¹ *Welt, Farbe und Mensch*. Julius Hebing. Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1983.

² *Farbkreisdynamik einer Grundfarbe*. (Dynamics of Colour-circles on Ground-colour.) "Stil". Goetheanistisches Bilden und Bauen. Johanni, 1983, IV, Heft 2. Extract translated by Valerie Jacobs who has been a pupil of Julius Hebing. Walther Roggenkamp also studied with him and in the years 1946-7 helped him in his work as regards black-board materials for his lectures and courses on colour and later for variations of these study-themes. In this article he illustrated examples of colour circles that he had developed further from Julius Hebing's colour circles.

The Image and Lustre Colours

Julius Hebing was not able to complete the research work published between 1950 and 1956. He intended to introduce material that included that on the nature of colour as image and lustre as a focal point of Rudolf Steiner's Theory of Colour.

Fritz Weitmann made it his work to continue where Julius Hebing left off. This was completed and printed in the last section of *Welt, Farbe und Mensch* (The World, Colour and Man) under the title "The Image and Lustre Colours. A perspective" which represents a much needed and important addition. Excerpts are from "Stil".¹

"It is more than sixty years," Fritz Weitmann points out, "since Rudolf Steiner gave his talks on the image and lustre colours. Since then, many a painter has taken a practical approach to this question. Whoever attempts this, however, is confronted time and again by problems difficult to resolve. This explains why this section of the theory of colour has as yet been so little dealt with and translated into actual painting, although more general interest in it is emerging. The subject of the image and lustre quality of colours has entered the work of regular painting congresses for Waldorf school teachers since 1970."

He has found that “The theory of image and lustre colours is not only the outline of a new theory of colour, but is also the basis for a new school of painting. It is certainly still a world of the future — yet is already of the present. Rudolf Steiner saw in his conception of the future of colour as we have attempted to sketch it here a continuation of the spirit of Goethe. In that spirit we see the intellectual elements and these must be carried further. For example, the distinction of colours as images and lustres is not yet recognized. We must actively think in the spirit of Goethe in order to make constant progress. We can only do this through taking the human being into account.”²

A few specific quotations will show this new approach to the image and lustre colours. In various lectures Rudolf Steiner speaks of the nature of the animal world.³

The psychic element in the animal is bound up with the psychic aspect of the colour of its immediate environment which it absorbs, thereby colouring its own being.⁴

Owing to this characteristic relationship with both the astral body and the group soul, the animal is flooded with receptivity to the living creative aspect of colour. And just as we contemplate an object which excites desire in us and then grasp it with a movement of the hand, so with the animal; its entire organism is such that the directly creative element in the colour makes an impression and flows into the feathers or wool and that gives the animal its colour ...⁵

Right down to the colouring of birds’ feathers, we shall find that these colourings of animals are the deep-seated outcome of that consciousness which arises between the astral body and the environment. That is, the animal lives and moves in the flood of colour ... All animals live as under the surface of a sea of light and colour and they therefore adapt their outer colouring to this fundamental sea of light and colour. Man with his awareness in the perception of colour rises out of the sea of light and colour and that gives him his self-awareness ...⁶

Weitmänn himself then writes: ¹

Many animal pictures by Franz Marc give artistic expression to this one-ness of animal life with its environment. The colours of animals are as many and varied as those in the rest of nature; there is no one colour which attaches to animal life as green does to plants. Only against this background can we understand the urgings of Rudolf Steiner with regard to the painting of animals: ‘If you wish to introduce animal beings into the landscape, you must paint the colours, which the animals would otherwise have, somewhat lighter than they really are and over this you must spread a

soft blue-ish light. You must therefore, .. if you want to paint red animals, let us say, have a faint blue-ish glimmer over this.’ The quality of colour produced in this way is now termed ‘image-lustre’.

... It should be made clear on the other hand that just painting the water-colour lighter on a white background will not produce the lustre effect. The resulting colour with a whitish effect would rather reinforce the image character, for white is an image colour. We must therefore cover the paper with yellow; when dry, veil the animal colour (red) over this so that it shines through from inside — it then appears lighter, then veil the blue over the animal colour, this finally evokes the impression of animation: blue, image of the soul. Over, for example, the red animal colour, however, the blue loses its lustre character and acts as a shadowy dimming. This really makes the expression “image lustre” understandable for the first time ...

Let us assume that we wished to paint a black animal — let us disregard the surroundings. The brightening of the black colour into a lustre will produce a brown shining outwards. A bluish transparent wash will shift the warm colour back towards the cool again, dims it somewhat thereby allowing the animal colour to seem physically animated.

As an interesting comparison, we will go back to the mineral section of Fritz Weitmänn:

... Precious stones or minerals in general can only be reproduced in painting using lustre colours. If you are dealing with an image colour, let us say black, however, it must be transformed into a lustre colour. How is this possible? By giving the black or the green an inner lustre character thereby brightening it. ‘The painter must ... if he is painting something inorganic, be aware that a certain lustre source lies within the objects themselves. In a certain sense he must think of his canvas or his paper as something luminous. Here on the flat surface he needs the radiance of light which he has to paint on it...’

¹ *Das Bild- und Glanzwesen der Farben. Ein Ausblick.* (Image and Lustre Colours. A Perspective.) Easter. 1983/4. V. Heft 1.

² Ibid.

³ Lecture by Rudolf Steiner, 8.5.1921.

⁴ Lectures by Rudolf Steiner, 5.7.1914 and 26.7.1914, Dornach. Second lecture: ‘Das Wesen der Farben’, Bibl. NR 291.

⁵ Lecture by Rudolf Steiner, 26.7.1914.

⁶ Lecture by Rudolf Steiner, 5.7.1914.

Further reading: *Colour* by Rudolf Steiner. Tr. John Salter. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1970.
Goethe’s Theory of Colour Applied. Maria Schindler. New Knowledge Books, 1979.

Counter and Complementary Colours

During the painting of the small cupola Rudolf Steiner gave instructions, passed on by word of mouth, that the themes of the south side should be painted on the north side in "counter colours" (*Gegenfarben*). He began the task himself by painting, in orange, the angel that was blue on the south side. The Dutch painter, J.M. Bruinier, recounted her memory of that time to Daniel van Bemmelen.¹

The term "counter" produced difficulty among the artists. As she did not understand it, Miss Bruinier asked if Dr. Steiner meant complementary colours, instancing red and green. He replied, no, that green only occurred in the large cupola where the colours had come from the day spectrum (the "rainbow" scale). "Here", he said, "peach-blossom stands in the middle and round it are grouped the counter colours, red-yellow on one side and blue-violet on the other. You can see how I have made a beginning by painting the red angel on Christ's right side which is the counter colour of the blue angel on His left." He was referring in fact to the orange angel; his use of the word "red" varied, for like Goethe he regarded the warm active colours as reds and the passive colours opposite as blues. "You can also study the different attitude I have given the red angel. This was simply demanded by the red. So I want you to adapt the attitude of the figures you paint ... in counter colours, to the character of these colours." Miss Bruinier and the other artists said that was too difficult, so Rudolf Steiner agreed rather sadly that they should simply copy the colours of the south side on the north side.

There were different interpretations of the instruction. Assia Turgenieff took it to mean complementary colours, thus including green. According to Daniel van Bemmelen however, it is a question of painting out of the basic hue of "peach-blossom" (in its deeper tone, magenta), the fulcrum of colour in the night scale. It was in the cupolas that he himself first appreciated the difference in the two scales. In the large cupola the seven colours of the day spectrum had been painted like the metamorphosis of a rainbow. In the small cupola where Rudolf Steiner had painted the south side, "one immediately became aware that it was not green that appeared between blue and yellow, but that scarlet or peach-blossom dominated." Daniel van Bemmelen believes that there is still today too little comprehension of the distinction between the day and the night spectra.¹

When Goethe had found that the prismatic colours appeared only at a border between light and darkness, he recognized that our experience of colours, emerging in a polarity of yellow and blue, accords with their proportions of light and darkness. He then looked for conditions in nature that corresponded with his primal phenomenon and he found them in the blue of the sky and the yellow tones of sunlight; a lightening of an outer

darkness and a darkening of the sun's light, in the partial opacity of air.

The prismatic effects come about through a shifting of the coloured edges. When a veil of darkness, increasing in density, creeps over a white ground, orange and red reinforce the yellow edge; when light increasingly illumines the darkness, the cool blue turns to deep blue and violet. Goethe saw the deepening hues as 'heightened' colours, enhancements of the original blue and yellow. When, however, two dark edges enclosing a white strip are brought together and the yellow and blue poles interact, the white is transformed into a quite new colour, green, of which Maria Schindler writes "The green's radiant purity has wrested its existence from the battle between the elements of light and darkness."² In a similar way the green of the plant world must arise between the sunlight and the density of earth.

Green thus has a unique position between the opposing forces. With his characteristic need to integrate what is partial into its ideal totality, Goethe knew there must be a counter-spectrum to this rainbow scale, with a different balance. He arranged his prismatic experiments so that this time two light areas enclosed a strip of darkness. The polar colours passed from blue through a narrow line of deep blue to violet, and from light yellow through a narrow orange to red. When the deep veils of red and violet met, again a new colour appeared which Goethe called "pure red" or "peach-blossom". Maria Schindler describes it as "ruby-magenta". This time the balance arises from colours in their heightened form transforming the dark strip; and again what we perceive outwardly as colour accords with our feeling. In the colour-circle thus completed, nature's quiet green faces this glowing hue that was reserved in older times for the highest human dignity and ceremonial. If one has observed the enhancement of the opposites, Goethe wrote, and has seen how they incline to each other and are united in a third, we shall discern a spiritual meaning behind these opposite entities and shall acknowledge that "when we see them bringing forth, here below, the green, and there above, the red, we are beholding on the one side the earthly, on the other the heavenly creations of the Elohim."³ Daniel van Bemmelen imagines a pair of scales with magenta in equilibrium, and yellow and blue as the polar forces that swing the pans up and down.

Unlike that of Newton, Goethe's theory includes an activity of the human soul and spirit, the inner light. And so we come to the so-called "physiological" or counter colours: after-images, created in the eye in response to perception and of great importance both to Goethe and Rudolf Steiner. One need only look through a bright window for a time, then at a shadowed wall, to perceive a light window-frame and dark spaces as

an after-image. There is a similar contrasting relation between any colour and its after-image; and while it is true to say that red and green, orange and blue, yellow and violet correspond as complementaries, it is a simplification. For according to each tone of yellow or blue or of their heightened neighbours, the after-image will vary in its hue, its degree of light or darkness and other qualities. It will also be affected by the light and by the field on which it appears. (Plate 96).

Complementary colours are a threefold totality. "Every time we place one colour before the eye, it is like a question" is how Maria Schindler describes it.² "The complementary colour is the answer. This answer makes the One into Three, i.e. yellow is complemented (completed) by red plus blue, which is violet; red by yellow and blue, which is green; blue by red and yellow, which is orange. Or, if the question consists of two colours, then the answer will be One — in order that there are Three again."

In painting it is necessary, according to Rudolf Steiner, to enter into the "force relationships" of colour, for instance into the polar activity of blue and yellow. He tells how, feeling the radiating spirit of yellow, the artist could not apply it with sharp outlines. Yellow, red and blue have the character of lustre. "What is it? Yellow ... lives on in me inwardly. If you take yellow in its archetypal quality, it becomes more and more diffuse as it rays outward ... if it lights up in you as spirit you will have to say; yellow is the lustre of the spirit. Blue is an inner concentration, a damming up, a maintaining. It is the lustre of the soul. Red is space evenly occupied. It is the lustre of the living."⁴

Maria Schindler notes the need of a harmonious distribution of these three hues: "Subconsciously everyone has a persistent longing for them all and seeks an equalized development of this triad. So real is the struggle in achieving it and so powerful the regulating force of the Ego, that it is expressed even through the activity of the eye in creating the physiological counterpart"² — the counter colour.

We should, however, distinguish between what we see and what we *know*. We have learned that certain colours are "complementary", but must "see" that with our mind! With our eye and other organs, we sense not complementaries but *colours*, contrasting in their qualities, for instance orange and blue, light and dark, warm and cool. And the making of the after-image of a hue does not lead to the opposite hue of an equalized complementary circle and back again, but to a near neighbour. Daniel van Bemmelen quotes Rudolf Steiner's description of the process of perception and explains how careful examination will show that the after-image becomes enhanced or reduced.¹ Colour lives in tension, and the subtleties of perception and feeling require exact observation.

When we see colour, yet another process is going on. We owe our seeing while awake to the fact that we meet the light-borne pictures of the outer world with a dreaming of their after-images. It is the same process that brings the visual images of dreams from the inward side; and what we see is not outwardly existing colours, we feel the effect of activity in the eye. Rudolf Steiner was concerned with this when he spoke of the counter colours. He said that when the active colours of the light side of the spectrum are seen (from red to yellow) blood in the eye is slightly destroyed and with it the nerve. The organism responds by supplying more oxygen to the eye so that the blood is again restored. This enlivens not only the eye; our whole blood-circulation is stimulated, it flows more rapidly and the red blood corpuscles circulate more quickly. "The man develops a healthy complexion." With blue and violet (the dark and passive colours) the blood in the eye will not be destroyed and nerve activity proceeds unhindered. Man feels well inwardly. This feeling of well-being is due to the fact that oxygen is transformed to carbonic acid in the normal way and calm respiration takes place. When the human being thinks, he uses carbonic acid from the blood. If he develops too much of it he becomes pale. "This is the difference between the blue and the red colours. As yellow is a modification of red and green a modification of blue, you can say: according to whether nerve or blood is active in man, he will sense more red or he will sense more blue."⁵

It is not usually observed that the eye produces the contrasting colour even while perceiving an outer colour — thus all colours are tinged by the light of the colour produced by the eye.⁶ The organic reaction does not itself become a matter of consciousness; it is the astral, the inner light, that creates the after-images and with attentiveness they become conscious as visual experience.

It is said that when colours appear in the prism the effect is "subjective", for they are thrown on to the retina of the eye and are there only for the observer. The sunlight must pass through the prism for the effect to become "objective". To reproduce outwardly what is happening in the arising of after-images Rudolf Steiner made artistic use in the Goetheanum windows of the principle of coloured shadow, in which colours of opposite hues arise and exist side by side. If a rod is placed before a white screen with one clear and one coloured light thrown upon it, the shadow from the clear light will remain dark, while the other shadow will assume the complementary of the coloured light. "If I darken the light to green," wrote Goethe, "the shadow will turn red. If I darken it to blue it will be yellowish ..."¹ Daniel van Bemmelen quotes a beautiful description by Heinz Müller of the overwhelming impression he received in passing from the light of the red window (where in single

light the shadows remained colourless) to the auditorium, and coming into a complex play of green, blue, lilac and rose from the passive hues of the windows there, with the warm complementary shadows that appeared on the inside of the pillars, on the seats, on the shaded side of his hand. "These shadow colours were to make clear to the visitor what he is creating inwardly as counter colours when he takes the rainbow colours into his eye from outside."⁷ The red window reproduced what happens in the eye when a red attacks it and the blood restores the system. Only as one moved away from the windows did the after-images become conscious by means of the coloured shadows.

"What difference does it make," asks Rudolf Steiner, "whether the necessary apparatus is out there or in your frontal cavity? We are not outside the things when projecting the phenomena into space ... We with our being are *in* the things"⁸ and van Bemmelen adds "In the daylight the rainbow is brought forth magically by the sunlight. In the night world of the inner eye, this spectrum is called forth by an inner Sun."¹

The use of after-images to modify a child's temperament is familiar practice in Rudolf Steiner schools. Teachers know that excitable children can be calmed by surrounding or clothing them with reds and that lethargic children can be aroused by green or blue tones. What occurs in blood and nerve is not restricted to the eye. A red, for instance, will influence the nervous system *as a whole* and the blood system reacts as a whole with a metabolic activity corresponding to the colour green. The child is still more asleep in the nervous system than is the adult, more awake than the adult in the blood system. So while he enjoys colour, he lives strongly in the calming or vitalising effect. The adult is conditioned by modern culture to the nerve, the death process; he brings his perceptions to consciousness in the astral body and is not aware of the life therein.⁶

The organic process is also important in the sphere of healing as was shown in the section on "Colour in the Herdecke Community Hospital". It is at the basis of what has been told of the Congress Hall in Munich, with its red walls and red and blue pillars; the model building at Malsch, with red walls and indigo blue ceiling. The esoteric side is treated in the lectures reproduced: colour effects in "Occult Features of the Stuttgart House" and the organic process in "Occult Seals and Columns". Compare the colours in the Temple scene of *The Guardian of the Threshold*; and the fourth apocalyptic seal, painted by Clara Rettich, on which the "blue" pillar was enhanced to violet.

For the Goetheanum painters, however, perhaps the real core of their problem was that simple statement by Rudolf Steiner: "I want you

to adapt the attitude of the figures you paint in counter colours to the character of these colours."¹ For Hilde Raske "The question remains as to what influence the problem of arranging a given motif in complementary or counter colours might have had on the development of forms. Practically speaking, in experiencing the colours according to their character there could never be a coercion of colour by the outline of a form; the quality of the colour must determine the outer form." She tells that Rudolf Steiner has spoken of how hidden qualities of the human being are experienced when a complementary green is sought for individual flesh-tones. "So the question arises whether there exist, for the forms that were painted in the cupola, hidden qualities that could not be expressed in a single picture, hidden qualities of the gods, different aspects as in mythology; for example with Apollo? Could a higher unity be apprehended through combining the colours of north and south sides? This entails a 'listening-in' to the motifs. Where is the pure complementary effect to be expressed: where is polarity justified, and where does colour stand unchanged?"⁹

Small wonder that Assia Turgenieff had called the task an overwhelming one. Painters, however, have not ceased to grapple with the problems. E. Oling-Jellinek devoted many years to an attempt to paint the "north side" on twelve large boards. She used green in addition to the other colours and reproductions were made. But on looking carefully at one of these, it could be seen that she had used a *blue-green* as complementary to one of the reds on the south side. This would not have conflicted with what Rudolf Steiner had said concerning the night scale, since blue-greens and yellow-greens have not the passivity of green, but are still living modifications of blue and yellow.

Hilde Raske has made suggestions, "with caution", for imagining the colours of the north side, in which she does find that through opposite colours, other revelations of a being are called forth; a new side of the original motif. She gives examples.

The Russian Man. The orange angel, like the blue in the south, was painted by Rudolf Steiner. The result of an attempt to carry the motif further, in conformity, may be that the soft violet ground gives an immediate mood of inwardness, of devotion. The Centaur, rising up in violet and blue-green, affirms more strongly than the orange does, the relationship with the constellation of the Archer. If this is taken over into the pictorial world of the northern sagas, does it not suggest the eight-limbed winged horse, the swift steed of Wotan, rushing through the air? The cross has become a shining golden orange. The stars, in the light green of a tourmaline, do not so much lose their radiance in the inward violet as arrange themselves in a circle of tranquil power. In a dull

green garment, the illumined Double beside him, the man carries the cross and stars into the future.

The Persian-Germanic Initiate. Lucifer appears here in a harsh violet and blue-green, proud and haughty; Ahriman in blue-black and whitish grey, "the cold cosmic light". The child is in soft violet and peach-blossom, the Initiate in a serious, dignified indigo.

The Egyptian Initiate. Up above, the violet ground-colour gives way to greenish-blue. The green-blue is hovering — is it Horus, the divine child? Isis appears in a light yellow that becomes greenish, the colour of moonlight, and inspires the Initiate with a radiant gesture of blessing. The Initiate, in inwardly illumined blue tones, is surrounded by warm colours, from orange and vermilion to deep red. It is astonishing that these are the colours so often found applied in Egyptian art.

Athene-Apollo, the Greek motif. The radiant yellow of the sun-god in the south is contrasted with a solemn magenta (*purpur*) in the north, the brown of the throne with a dull indigo. The peach-blossom (*purpur*) of the inspiring beings in the heights shimmers with greenish-yellow through greyed violet tones. The form and gesture of Apollo's wintry revelation are serious and admonitory. It can immediately be felt with Apollo that to him there can only correspond a form which is differentiated, but which inwardly completes him; the summer god in the south (god of the Muses and Lord of the Castalian spring) with the northern god (the winter god of the north Hyperborean mysteries).

The Faust motif. Faust, victoriously pressing through to knowledge, appears erect in yellow-orange, similar to Rudolf Steiner's eurythmy figure for knowledge. Its colours are white, yellow and orange. The child hovers towards him in soft blue.¹⁰

Daniel van Bemmelen painted his own representation of the whole area of the small cupola and he describes and illustrates his experience in the book which forms the background of this chapter.¹ His third plate reproduces a painting¹¹ of the north side as he thought Rudolf Steiner had intended it. "This attempt," he makes reservation, "cannot be regarded as absolute or as the only correct solution, but as the artistic conception of the painter."

One may hope that other artists will recognize the importance of continuing such projects. There is still much to be fathomed of the powers, natural and spiritual, that permeate and surround us.

¹Rudolf Steiner's *New Approach to Colour on the Ceiling of the First Goetheanum* by Daniel van Bemmelen. St. George Publications, U.S.A. 1980. Portfolio with colour-plates. Tr. by A.W. Mann. List of Plates: 1 East-West section through the Goetheanum. 2 The paintings in the small cupola. 3 The view into the area of the small cupola. 4 Colour foundation of the large and small cupolas. 5 Schematic representation of Rudolf Steiner's colour theory. 6 Ground-plan of the first Goetheanum in colour. 7 Photographic reproduction of colour-shadows in a small model of the first Goetheanum.

²Goethe's *Theory of Colour. Applied* by Maria Schindler. New Knowledge Books, 1979. (Describes the night scale and the physiological colours.)

³From Goethe. "Elements of a Theory of Colour": English extracts in *Pure Colour* by M. Schindler and E.C. Merry. London, 1946. (*Farbenlehre*, Para. 919.)

⁴Lecture, 7.5.1921, Dornach. See *Colour*. Tr. J. Salter. London, 1971.

⁵Quoted from Rudolf Steiner: *Zehn Vorträge gehalten vor der Arbeitern am Goetheanum*. Dornach, 1961.

⁶In describing the organic reaction to colour, D. van Bemmelen quotes freely from E. Lehrs, *Man or Matter*, London, 1958.

⁷Heinz Müller, quoted. From *Spüren auf dem Weg*. Stuttgart, 1970. (See "The Golden Blade", 1970.)

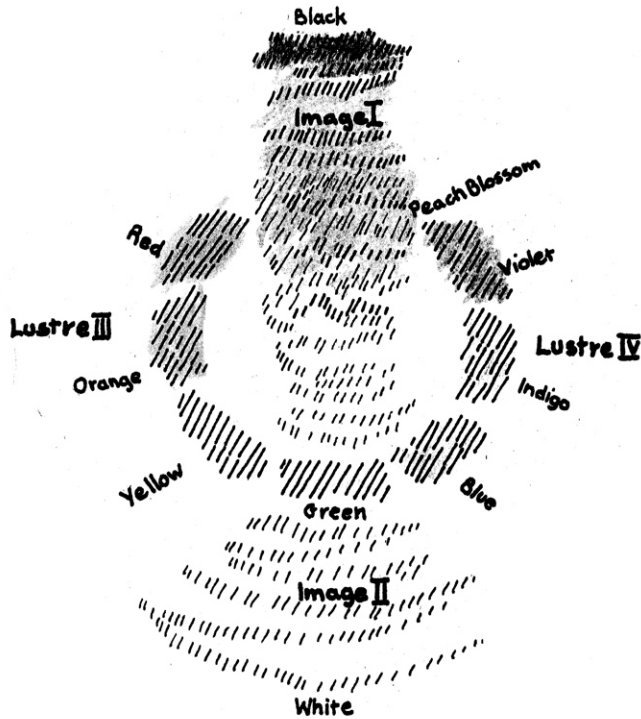
⁸From Rudolf Steiner: *Geisteswissenschaftliche Impulse zur Entwicklung der Physik*. I. Dornach, 1964.

⁹Hilde Raske. *Das Farben Wort*. Rudolf Steiners Malerei und Fensterkunst im ersten Goetheanum. Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1983.

¹⁰*Ibid*

¹¹On canvas, in oil and water-colour. 14¾ x 14¾ feet.

Rudolf Steiner's Colour Circle (Diagram).



This colour circle appears in one of Rudolf Steiner's lectures on colour. "*Colour Experience, Lustre and Image*". The three lectures were given at the request of painters working in the Goetheanum in May 1921.¹

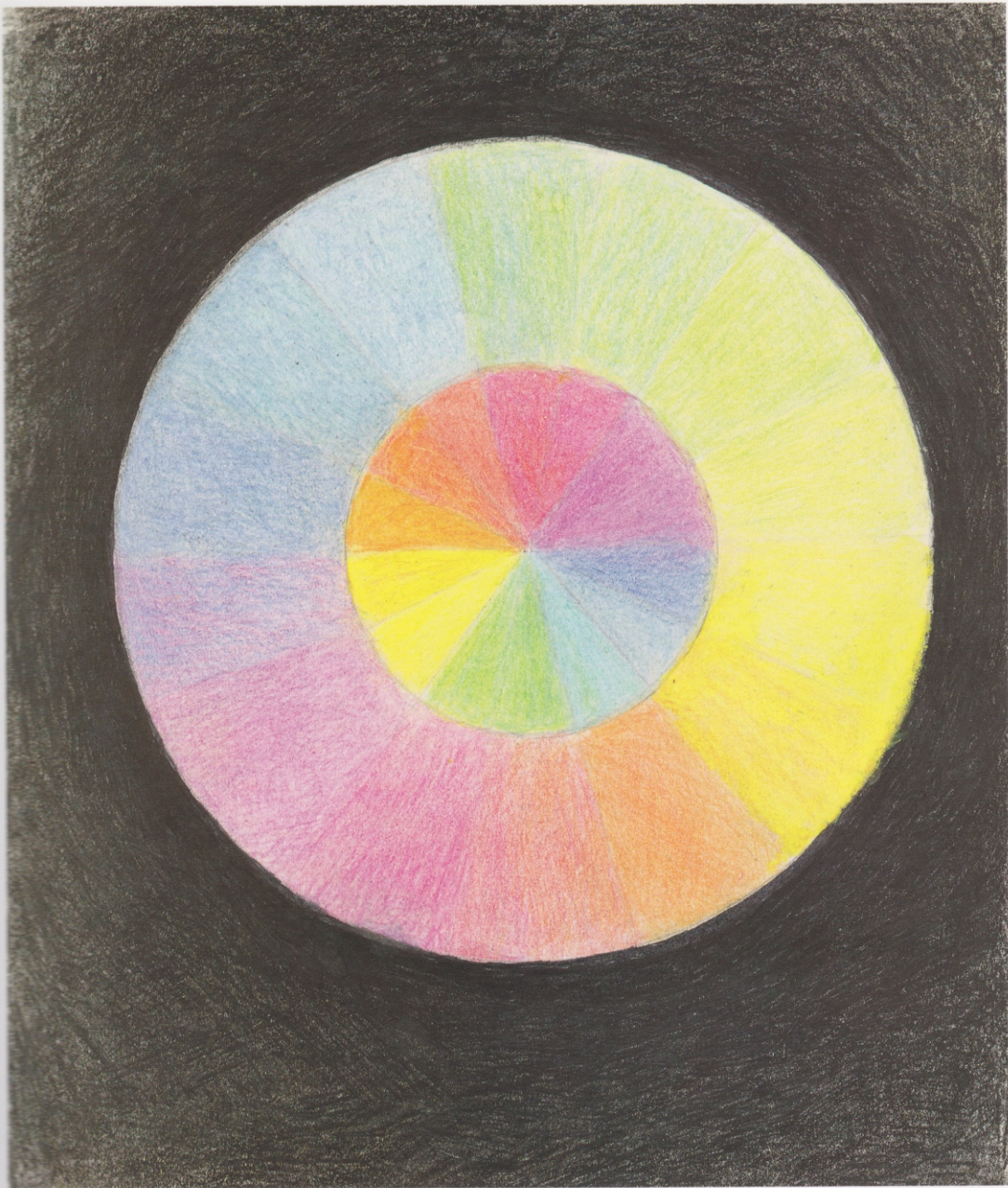
Rudolf Steiner describes this circle: "... If you take the usual diagram found in physics then all you have is ... red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet ... now if I do not show it as it appears on the physical plane but as it is in the next highest world, I would have to bend the warm and cold sides of the spectrum so that it is drawn like this — red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. If I were to bend the band of colour which was stretched out in a line back on itself. I would have my peach-blossom colour up here at the top. I have come back again to an image colour, I, above and II, below: lustre III, left and IV, right. Now only the two other colours, black and white, remain hidden. If I bring the white up here (from below up) it would stay in the green, but then the black comes down to meet it from above and they begin to ripple into each other creating, with the red lustre, peach-blossom. I have to imagine black and white

overlapping and weaving into each other. In this way I obtain a complex arrangement of the colours which, however reveals more of the nature of colour than you will find in physics ..."

"... We can say that, black, white, green and peach-blossom, have a quiescent effect. Even when one colour flows into another in movement, as black and white in peach-blossom, it still remains peaceful. In the three colours of red, yellow and blue there is an inner movement, a planetary quality. Something of the nature of the fixed stars is present in black, white, peach-blossom and green; something of the planets lives in yellow, red and blue. Yellow, red and blue tinge the other colours, white is tinged by yellow and blue to green, white and black are tinged, when red shines into them, to peach-blossom."

¹ "Colour Experience: Image Colours" 6 May 1921. "Lustre and Image" 7 May 1921. "Colour in Matter. Painting out of Colour" 8 May 1921.

This, together with extracts from Rudolf Steiner's Notebooks was published by the Rudolf Steiner Press under general title *Colour*. Rudolf Steiner, 1970. Reprint 1977.



Goethe's Colour Circle with complementaries
by John Fletcher



Plate 97 Two Colour Circles, complementary to each other, inside and outside black.
by John Fletcher

Note.

These two illustrations are examples of work done during a term's painting course at Rudolf Steiner House, London, in which a group studied Julius Hebing's metamorphoses of Goethe's Colour Circle. They were chosen out of twenty-one examples given in his book. They were displayed at first in a half-finished condition and (to avoid copying) were only brought to the present stage when the class had had sufficient preparation. The technique was first to use crayon and later, water-colour.



The black and the white are not just 'background colours': great tension is created between the grounds and the colour clearly affirming Goethe's dictum that colours arise through the deeds and sufferings of light. This can be seen to happen at sunrise and sunset. (It may be of interest to add that the publishers of Julius Hebing's book chose the example shown in plate 98 for its very striking dust cover.)

Two Colour Circles, complementary to each other, inside and outside white. Plate 98