

SOME QUESTIONS

What if there was a way of thinking that was dynamic, living, and vital and through this new thinking we necessarily changed our inner world and the outer world of experience? What if this thinking was available not through near-death experiences or mystical revelation but through a methodology by which we could slowly develop this thinking as a new capacity? And if this new thinking was free of gurus, avatars or any devotional apparatus but as open and available to everyone as thinking itself? What if its applications were as manifold as logical thinking's uses: in business system's analysis, in scientific and philosophic description and method, in artistic forums, in life-planning and moral decision-making?

And what if books were written by means of this heart-thinking that one could study and slowly learn as one learns a new language or a musical instrument? And finally what if this thinking was a path that led to the highest spiritual cognition, called at different times supersensible or visionary cognition, a life-path of deepening spiritual experience?

What follows will be an attempt to show that all these *what-ifs* are available to us in realistic terms. Mankind can think in waves. When realized, this thinking unfolds itself from quality to quality in a natural and instantaneous organism form. This much is clearly reported from heart thinkers who have seen higher experience from near-death experiences or from spiritual living. From a logical point of view, the linear plane that is a printed page, and our perspective here, we can only approach it with schema that represent and mirror its qualities. We chart its verbal aspects—its symmetry and rhythm, its membering (*gliederung*), its polarity, its turning point—and thereby reach to the ineffable thinking itself. It must be understood that all our efforts are pointed towards what lies behind the forms and techniques: to the soul experience itself.

WHAT ORGANIC THINKING OFFERS

Meaning in today's world is usually found in the extremes of realism (translated as usefulness, practicality, efficiency, and self help) or the other pole of inner searching, mysticism and art. The obvious missing ingredient is thinking, and logical thinking is insufficient to mediate the two stances. But if thinking is raised, a higher mediation is achievable following the lead of a higher thinking; a resurrected thinking that connects our inner life and our working life.

This higher thinking is a thinking that partakes as well as describes a living organism. This thinking is usefully called "living" because it moves, changes, has symmetries at the level of the whole, takes on qualities and life of organic life. The thinking is based on comparative qualities which reveal whole aspects of life that are otherwise ignored.

Just these qualities make the "living" thinking able to reflect organic activity whose nature is not a specific result under outer conditions (as in inorganic nature) but rather a development of forms or growth from a higher idea or type. In practical terms, the thinking can express a dimension of wholeness and being which is unrecognized by quantitative analysis and logical thinking. Steiner referred to the term "enetelechy" that Goethe used, as a power that, out of itself, calls itself into existence.

Yet the present book puts off any detailed consideration of the larger questions of philosophical meaningfulness (apart from a short final section that touches upon some of

these themes) and describes this new thinking as a technique with everyday practical value. I suggest that the exercises contained in the book offer people who are willing to work through them a tool of immense power to give their life meaning and value.

Admittedly, this does not slightly resemble most contemporary spiritual paths because it is utterly devoid of any spiritual trappings. We are not accustomed to considering thinking as a spiritual path. The separation of science, art and religion-- reflect in the distance between some of their images: cold-blooded scientist committed from feeling-drunk artist from inward-seeking monk-- is so complete that any effort at their synthesis seemed quixotic if not hopelessly naive.

Even more unorthodox is the necessary method of presentation. This technique is mastered primarily by imitation. And what is imitated, for the most part, is the writing of Rudolf Steiner. For the method of Steiner's writing and thinking seems universally to display and embody these living qualities, a fact referred to by the author himself but utterly misunderstood by his students. In fact, it wasn't until 1962 that a quiet teacher and student of Steiner's works, Geroge O'Neil, revealed the nature of the thought style in detail contained in Steiner's PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM. O'Neil and his gifted student Florin Lowndes have detailed this achievement to an audience primarily of Steiner students, but it hasn't been acknowledged even in this small world.

This text suggests that texts from Steiner's PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM are perfect vehicles to develop the thinking. Steiner explained ad nauseam that this book was not primarily a book of philosophy but an actual instrument to change the thinking of its serious reader.

We will be referring to only a few sections of the book in detail while outlining the organic structuring of the book's arrangement. Steiner created thought organism on every level including book sections, chapters, paragraphs, sentences. The book stands to organic thinking as the Well Tempered Clavier or Beethoven sonatas stand to piano literature, with the distinction that Steiner stands as the only writer who is consistently organic, as opposed to examples that exhibit these principles in short stretches.

By studying a few passages in detail, we offer shorthand for the larger project of studying the entire text. The reader masters content first. If we cannot grasp Steiner's content, we would not be able to approach the living form of his work. The experience of thought forms is what transforms the thinking reader. As indicated by the author, the book's primary intent was in working out the means of expression which in its very form could bring about the concentration of the reader's inner forces for a new kind of thinking on his part. The book acts as an awakener to the conscious reader. The life of Steiner's ideas lays the seeds for the reader's own intuitions.

Ordinary knowledge is gained by the introduction of thoughts into the reader's mind; higher knowledge is released when these thought forms are organically introduced into a reader's consciousness. The will becomes united with thinking. Inner forces normally unfocused in daily life are concentrated and transformed. Thinking becomes a seeing thinking.

Steiner was clear about the practical intention of his book. "My book was not written with the purpose most books serve, namely, to acquaint the reader with the subject matter they contain. My PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM was intended to involve the reader, page by page, in the actual activity of thinking, to serve merely as a score read with

inner thought activity as the reader advances on his own from thought to thought." And on another occasion: "

If that book and its thinking is mastered, which this book merely intends to assist, inner changes can occur in the reader. Mastery of the book leads to a purification or "catharsis" of the emotional and feeling life. As the thinking forces are energized, the experience of ideas in renewed, vital form leads to an increased sense of control of the inner life.

Life forces are invigorated. Accordingly, the heart thinker experiences what I have experienced as a kind of psychic self-defense that shields an individual from some of the negativity from the ceaseless bombardment of ideas in advertising, media and entertainment. It seems hard to deny that our inner world is as polluted and threatened as the more recognizable threats to the physical world. Organic thinking can be experienced as protection from those often unconscious influences.

Work with the more measurable, physical effects of the thinking is just getting started in Germany under the direction of Florin Lowndes. What is clear from the pioneering research of the HeartMath researchers is that systematic attention to the heart can measurably reduce stress and assist individuals facing heart disease. The HeartMath techniques shift attention from the head (logical thinking) to more intuitive, balanced, heart-based attention. Thus while they are distinct from the tradition of organic heart thinking coming out of Rudolf Steiner's work, there is much in common between both efforts.

A FIRST EXAMPLE

A comparison of two short paragraphs in typical logical method and contrasting organic method will be presented for clarification.

A four sentence paragraph from the preface to Mortimer Adler's ARISTOTLE FOR EVERYBODY:

When the idea for this book first occurred to me, I thought of entitling it THE CHILDREN'S ARISTOTLE or ARISTOTLE FOR CHILDREN. But those titles would not have accurately conveyed the audience for whom this simple, easy-to-read exposition of Aristotle's common-sense philosophy is intended. The audience, I felt, was everybody-- of an age, from twelve or fourteen years old upward. Hence the title chosen, and the subtitle "Difficult Though Made Easy," together with the statement that this book is an introduction to common sense.

The four lines proceed in this fashion:

Assertion: possible titles

*Correction of title: why those titles are wrong:
misidentify audience*

Correction of audience: broader, inclusive leading

to:

[Assertion #2= Conclusion] Actual Title.

Or expressed differently: a hypothesis, correction of part of the hypothesis, clarification of correction and a new hypothesis.

Adler's clarity makes his method straightforward. He arranges his sentences to indicate the thinking that went into the title.

Next we look at a comparably length paragraph from the preface of THE PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM by Rudolf Steiner.

The view which is under discussion here in reference to these two questions presents itself as one that, once attained, can be integrated as a member of the truly living soul life. There will be no theoretical answer given that, once acquired, can be carried about as a conviction merely preserved in the memory. This kind of answer would be only an apparent one for the style of thinking which is the foundation of this book. Not such a finished, fixed answer will be given, rather a definite region of soul-experience will be referred to, in which man may, through the inner activity of the soul itself, answer these questions livingly anew at any moment he requires. The true view of this region will give the one who eventually finds the soul-sphere where these questions unfold that which he needs for these two riddles of life, so that he may, so empowered, enter further into the widths and depths of this enigmatic human life, into which need and destiny impel him to wander.—

The arrangement of material here follows a different organizing approach. The statements have an arrangement beyond the direct procession of logical consideration. The five sentences are arranged by qualities, and once the content has been understood the reader looks at the manner or method, the *how* Steiner has used in arranging his paragraph. The paragraph itself has a quality by virtue of its position in the six paragraphs of the preface. We will find the arrangement of qualities follows a living lawfulness that gives it a special quality. What is key is arousing our reading to understand the nature of this quality. The sentences breathe, they ascend and descend around a central sentence. They have a special and unique effect on the reader.

To summarize this approach we could describe it this way:

Integration: *assertion of result (inner perspective)*

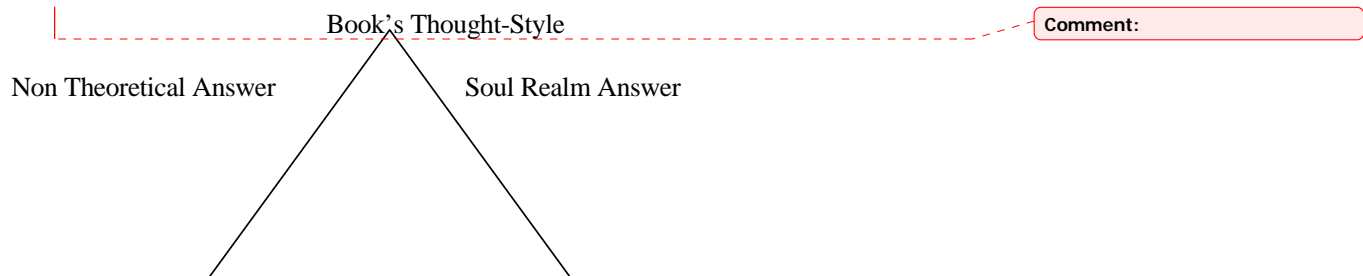
Not theoretical: *assertion of method (inner)*

Thought Style: *observation with inward quality*

Unfixed, Soul Realm: *assertion of method (outer)*

Destiny enabling: *assertion of result (outer perspective)*

Another diagram makes it even clearer:



Soul-Integrated View

Destiny-Unfolding View

The different dynamic of Steiner's thought method can begin to make itself clear. We always find Steiner's style is rhythmic, symmetrical with awareness of symmetry and turning point. In fact, Steiner's style is always a characterizing style, pointing to a quality of thinking that life's behind the words, what cannot be expressed by language. But before we examine that style and its transformative possibilities in detail, we will look at some simple thought exercises that will lead us into it.

Starting With Thinking.

We are unaccustomed to consciously controlling our thoughts. Certainly the performing of countless daily tasks requires specific concentration, yet while performing those tasks we are routinely unaware of the thinking activity itself. This exercise aims at pulling in all our forces and focusing them on a simple object.

We start with a simple manmade object such as a pin or pencil or spoon. We choose such an object because we don't have to supply any concepts that challenge our comprehension. We understand the aspects of a human product in ways that are not nearly as immediate or easy with a natural organism like a flower.

We focus on this object in a setting where we will not be interrupted. We consider in a rhythmic way a series of viewpoints about the object. We arrange the flow of our thoughts and experience in a sequence, starting with the first four considerations listed below and a little later extending those four viewpoints into a fuller seven pointed.

The thinker works with the sequence until it becomes familiar, and then later on boring. Thinking must be completely mastered. When the thinker is so familiar with the content that he is able to perform the exercise automatically while following the sequence out of his own impulse, with his own energy, he or she begins to feel the actual flow of thoughts. One is able to turn away from the content of the thought to the ascent and descent of the thought's form.

The Four-Leveled Thinking Exercise

Four levels in thinking have been used for centuries. The four levels of medieval criticism point directly to the four categories of our thought sequence. Under the names literal meaning, ethical meaning, allegorical meaning and anagogical meaning, they appear in Dante's criticism.

We point to four qualities of the four-leveled thought under a variety of terminology that refers to the sequence in different but related ways. Some of these include the following four levels:

Point of View	Physical	Vital (life)	Sentient (soul)	I (spirit)
<i>Questions</i>	What?	How?	Why?	Who?
<i>Kingdoms</i>	Mineral	Plant	Animal	Human

<i>States</i>	Solid	Fluid	Gaseous	Plamic
“	Static	Dynamic	Qualitative	Intentional
<i>Cognition</i>	Sense Perception	Mental Re-Presentation	Concept	Idea
<i>Grammar</i>	Adverb	Verb	Adjective	Noun
<i>Stages</i>	Form/space	Life/time	Consciousness	Being/entity

What hopefully is clear is that the relationship between these four levels is tremendously flexible as all the examples indicate a sequence of increasing complexity in the categories even as they are clearly distinct from each other. One can consider an object from four viewpoints in ascending or descending order starting either from its physical level or being level. For the moment we focus on just these four possibilities, but later on, we'll be open to much richer vocabulary of associations.

So we start with a pencil from four viewpoints. We focus on each of the four levels in a rhythmical fashion. We look at the physical aspects of a pencil that might be sitting on a table before us. This includes all material aspects, its paint, smell and so on.

Next we place our attention on the method that the object before us was created. This answers our question how. Included in this might be various aspects of its manufacture and sales.

The third quality we consider is the design that was created for the pencil. We can visualize the plans as they would appear on a or a The object,, in the second step considered as an industrial method, now is analyzed as an idea or conception that leads to the physical product before us.

Our final step is the inventor himself, the individual who created the modern pencil. Research will show us that Nicholas Conte would be such an individual.

A clear consideration of each of these four steps is important, but an awareness of the flow of the four ideas is just as important. Once we are comfortable with the four steps, we can reverse the order, starting with the inventor, his idea, his method of manufacture and the end product. Again, it is the flow of ideas that is important, and when practiced forwards and backwards, the movement becomes more completely experienced.

To summarize in visual form:

Ego Level	Inventor	Who?
Astral Level	design	Why?
Etheric Level	composition/manufacture	How?
Physical Level	physical pencil	What?

The Four-Leveled Exercise Over Seven Steps. After getting acquainted with this four-levelled progression, we are ready to extend the exercise to seven steps. These basic rhythms, fourfold and sevenfold, are rich with meaning. Just as we pointed out that fourfold structures have been used in critical, philosophical and theological argument for years, there is a long tradition of seeing man and the universe through the form of this number. In Rudolf Steiner's analysis of the human, we find the inner constitution to have

seven parts which manifest along four levels. Using his terminology, we can express them:

Ego Level	I organization	
Astral Level	astral body	spirit self
Etheric Level	etheric body	life spirit
Physical Level	physical body	spirit man

Our next step will be to look at the same pencil concentration that we performed in four steps and extend to seven steps following the lead of the sevenfold organization we've just been examining. Put in familiar form it would look like this:

Ego Level	Inventor	
Astral Level	design, feeling	need, utility
Etheric Level	composition/manufacture	history
Physical Level	physical pencil	types of pencil

We have extended the steps so that we have reconsidered the four points of views or four levels of our questions. We have returned to our starting point and yet it is a higher physical level, at a more complicated stage.

Let's look at the seven steps themselves in detail.

We suggest that the reader try these steps repeatedly, and as before, backwards and forwards. When the reader is familiar enough with the meditation, the focus shifts to the sequence of thoughts, to the movement. This is the beginning of organic thinking, which is a thinking in movement or motion.

For the point of the exercise is not mastering the seven steps or any aspect of the content of the exercise. Instead, we are seeking the inner experience that comes from the exercise. In his masterful presentation of this meditation (within the context of Steiner's Six Accompanying Exercises) Florin Lowndes makes this clear: "Up to this point, the exercise can be carried out by logical thinking. The *real* exercise only begins when one has repeated it so many times and developed such good command of it that it becomes thoroughly *boring*. Not until the exercise can proceed almost by itself and automatically, until it has grown to be habit and therefore a capacity of soul, will it become possible for us to direct our whole concentration and awareness away from the object itself to the wavelike vibration and motions of the thinking etheric body, thus concentrating upon the pure activity of thought itself. That is the real point of the exercise: experiencing the *inner* life-force."