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THE THEORY OF FREEDOM

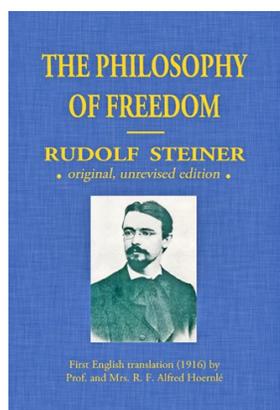
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NOTES

The Act Of Knowing Sense Perceptions And Spiritual Perceptions

The act of knowing described in the *Philosophy Of Freedom* reveals the true reality of sense perceptions when thinking adds the corresponding thought. The same applies to spiritual perceptions, making the *Philosophy Of Freedom* an essential foundation for the spiritualist seeking spiritual perception. Steiner explains in the Theory of Knowledge Notes to the New Edition, 1924:

“This first activity of ours . . . can be called pure experience” It is evident from the whole bearing of this epistemology that the point of its deliberations is to gain an answer to the question, What is knowledge? In order to attain this goal we looked, to begin with, at the world of sense perception on the one hand, and at penetration of it with thought, on the other. And it is shown that in the interpenetration of both, the true reality of sense existence reveals itself. With this the question, What is the activity of knowing? is answered in principle.

This answer becomes no different when the question is extended to the contemplation of the spiritual. Therefore, what is said in this book about the nature of knowledge is valid also for the activity of knowing the spiritual worlds, to which my later books refer.

The sense world, in its manifestation to human contemplation, is not reality. It attains its reality when connected with what reveals itself about the sense world in man when he thinks. Thoughts belong to the reality of what the senses behold; but the thought-element within sense existence does not bring itself to manifestation outside in sense existence but rather inside of man. Yet thought and sense perception are one existence. Inasmuch as the human being enters the world and views it with his senses, he excludes thought from reality; but thought then just appears in another place: inside the soul. The separation of perception and thought is of absolutely no significance for the objective world; this separation occurs only because man places himself into the midst of existence. Through this there arises for him the illusion that thought and sense perception are a duality.

*It is no different for spiritual contemplation. When this arises—through soul processes that I have described in my later book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment* — it again constitutes only one side of spiritual existence; the corresponding thoughts of the spirit constitute the other side.*

A difference arises only insofar as sense perception completes itself, attains reality, through thoughts upward, in a certain way, to where the spiritual begins, whereas spiritual contemplation is experienced in its true being from this beginning point downward. The fact that the experience of sense perception occurs through the senses that nature has formed, whereas the experience of spiritual contemplation

occurs through spiritual organs of perception that are first developed in a soul way, does not make a principle difference.

It is true to say that in none of my later books have I diverged from the idea of knowing activity that I developed in this one; rather I have only applied this idea to spiritual experience.



Two Editions: Original And Revised

The text used in the Philosophy Of Freedom Study Course “Textbook” is from the original, unrevised 1894 publication of Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy Of Freedom*, not the commonly used 1918 revised edition. The original version of *The Philosophy Of Freedom* translated by R. F. Alfred Hoernlé was chosen because it seems to more fully express Rudolf Steiner's initial free spirited impulse and mood at the time he wrote the book, more so than the revised version written 25 years later motivated also by other reasons. (see ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM)

The original begins with Chapter 1 “The Goal Of Knowledge”. This chapter was removed as part of the 1918 revisions. By including it now means that “Conscious Human Action” is again chapter 2 rather than chapter 1 as in the revised edition. See the Contents Table above for the original chapter numbering.

Be aware that both chapter numbering orders are used in the study course. Videos and cartoons use the revised edition chapter numbering, while the topic index, textbook, observation exercises, quizzes and scroll bar chapter markers use the original chapter numbering.

*Some minor English term revisions have been made to the HOERNLÉ translation used in the study course Textbook to introduce two terms, “mental picture” and “cognition”. The term “mental picture” replaces “idea” many times beginning in chapter 5. “Cognition” replaces “knowledge” in some cases beginning in chapter 8.

The Hoernle English translation of the original *Philosophy Of Freedom* can be purchased at Amazon books.



Barrier To Study

A barrier to the study of *The Philosophy of Freedom* is bringing in terms and ideas Steiner later used in Anthroposophy, such as the terms “imagination” and “intuition”. Steiner gave these terms a different meaning in Anthroposophy, while their meaning is closer to normal usage in the *Philosophy of Freedom*. Michael Wilson explains in his *Notes on the translation*:

IMAGINATION

In later writings Steiner describes how this ordinary faculty of imagining, or making mental pictures, can be developed to the point where it becomes the faculty of actually perceiving the creative ideas behind the phenomena of nature. In these later writings “Imagination” becomes a special term to indicate this level of perception, but in this book the meaning remains near to the ordinary usage.

INTUITION

Intuition is again the same as the German word, and means the faculty and process of grasping concepts, in particular the immediate apprehension of a thought without reasoning. This is the normal English usage, though Steiner uses the term in an exact way, as follows (see Chapter 6, Knowing The World):

In contrast to the content of the percept which is given to us from without, the content of thinking appears inwardly. The form in which this first makes its appearance we will call intuition. Intuition is for thinking what observation is for the percept.

In later writings, Steiner describes a stage of perception still higher than that called “Imagination”, the stage of “Intuition” in which one immediately apprehends the reality of other spiritual beings. Although this book deals only with the spiritual content of pure thinking, intuition at this level is also a step towards a higher level of perceiving reality.



The Observation Of Thinking

Jürgen Strube's book *The Observation Of Thinking — Rudolf Steiner's “Philosophy of Freedom” As a Path to the Knowledge of Formative-forces* whose exercises are included in this study course tries to impose Steiner's later meaning of imagination and intuition into the *Philosophy of freedom* as a way to connect Steiner's later work with the earlier. A difference does exist between his earlier and later writings just as a difference does exist between the later and earlier meaning of the terms imagination and intuition, but the difference can be acknowledged without making it any more difficult to present a series of exercises beginning in the *Philosophy of Freedom* and then continuing on with exercises and terms from his later writings. An attempt was made to edit Strube's observation exercises that appear in the study course to remove terms and beliefs that went beyond the *Philosophy of Freedom*.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM

ORIGINAL UNEDITED EDITION*

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www.philosophyoffreedom.com

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM

A MODERN PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE
DEVELOPED BY SCIENTIFIC
METHODS

BY
RUDOLF STEINER
Ph.D. (Vienna)

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION BY
Mrs. & Mrs. R. F. ALFRED HOERNLÉ

EDITED BY
H. COLLISON

1916

EDITOR'S NOTE

THE following pages are a translation of Dr. Steiner's *Philosophie der Freiheit*, which was published in Germany some twenty years ago. The edition was soon exhausted, and has never been reprinted; copies are much sought after but very difficult to obtain.

The popularity of Dr. Steiner's later works upon ethics, mysticism and kindred subjects has caused people to forget his earlier work upon philosophy in spite of the fact that he makes frequent references to this book, and it contains the germs of which many of his present views are the logical outcome. For the above reasons, and with the author's sanction, I have decided to publish a translation.

I have had the good fortune to have been able to secure as joint translators Mrs. Hoernlé, who, after graduating in the University of the Cape of Good Hope, continued her studies in the Universities of Cambridge, Leipzig, Paris, and Bonn, and her husband, Mr. R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, M.A., B.Sc. (Oxon), Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University, U.S.A., formerly Jenkyns Exhibitioner, Balliol College, Oxford, their thorough knowledge of philosophy and their complete command of the German and English languages enabling them to overcome the difficulty of finding adequate English equivalents for the terms of German Philosophy.

I am glad to seize this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to these two, without whom this publication could not have been undertaken.

March, 1916

HARRY COLLISON