

The new spatial concept – part I. Further reflections on the

Goetheanum site

(translated in January 2025; images can be found in the original article)

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The Goetheanum serves as a balancing act between Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces, a topic that warrants deeper exploration than it has received thus far. In figure 1, an attempt has been made to visualize the four spheres of influence of these forces across the site, depicted as left and right, front and back.

In my lecture "*Der Raumgedanke*," I have connected the interplay of spatial directions and their Lucifer-Ahriman polarity to thinking, wanting > will, and feeling)¹. Using Walter Holtzapfel's therapeutic-pedagogical research, one can relate these three aspects of the human soul to these spatial directions)².

For the direction of will, only minimal explanation is necessary. We experience the will as humans every day, very clearly, from back to front. Even when we are not consciously aware that Lucifer lures us from the front while Ahriman stands behind us.

Goethe articulated the concept of feeling in a way that is universally recognized: "*Ecstatic to the heavens, sorrowful unto death*". Thus, we can connect feeling with the polarity of above-below. In this polarity, both Luciferic and Ahrimanic influences are directly addressed.

We can also think of the polarity between lightness and heaviness, which is felt more psychologically in our emotional state and more physically in the weight of things we wish to move.

There are various approaches to thinking. Holtzapfel provides a good direction. When we think and perceive, we seek positions along a line between right and left, where we must constantly strive for the center. Right and left are terms especially familiar in political discourse. Right-wing thinking refers to a dominant interest in developing power and control, managing situations, and the resulting conservatism. On the other hand, left-wing thinking can be associated with ideals, experimentation, and envisioning new possibilities for the future.

It is no wonder that right-wing thinking more easily leads to consensus, while left-wing individuals often face inevitable inherent diverging tendencies. One becomes embroiled in disagreements.

Even regarding our specific location in the world, we must use our eyes to assess our place in every situation, connecting our perceptions to our thoughts.

With our hands - left and right - we can then undertake targeted and fruitful actions supported by our perceptions and thoughts. The violinist and sculptor beautifully demonstrate how the left and right hands operate characteristically in accordance with the intended polarity.

A new site plan

The further exploration undertaken regarding the new spatial concept prompted the creation of a new site plan for the Goetheanum site (fig. 1). On the left, the Luciferic thinking forces operate, and on the right, the Ahrimanic thinking forces. In the front-back polarity, the following applies to the action of the will: Lucifer operates from the west, Ahriman from the east.

We can hardly delve into the concept of feeling here. Although there is a relationship between going up and down of the terrain, this is not accounted for in this site plan. The first plan on which the initial Goetheanum was conceived shows how a grid was laid over this site, beginning from the center of this architectural design (fig. 2). At the same time, it confirms what is to be done here.

The structure of this reflection

Our reflection - through which we aim to apply a new spatial concept to this site - begins this time from the outermost periphery. We start by including the sun as an initiator of the landscape's visibility on this earth, especially through its large arc movement through day and night and its relationships with the specific location of the Goetheanum.

Rudolf Steiner clearly positioned the building in relation to the cardinal directions on the Dornach hill. The axis of the building runs east to west, from sunrise to sunset.

We then wish to briefly explore the larger and smaller geographical environments to discover the mentioned characteristics.

Our focus is subsequently on the location of the Goetheanum itself, the routes of the paths in the area (in part 1), and the placement of the ancillary buildings in the area (in part 2).

This is followed (in part 3) by a closer look at the exterior of the second Goetheanum, including the first Goetheanum, culminating at the lectern,

the focal point of the site plan in image 2. At this lectern, we arrive precisely at the juncture where the grid on this initial site plan has its essential center (fig. 3).

A consistent journey from the outer edge of the sun's path to the location of the large lectern is the path laid out here.

The four quadrants

The quadrants arise when we start from the two boundary planes in the center of the two Goetheanum buildings and become aware of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces that operate on the left and right - connected to thinking - and in front and behind, connected to the will. The quadrant (Latin for "the fourth part") is the quarter plane that lies between two axes in the flat coordinate system.

We will now number these quadrants. The double Luciferic quadrant at the front left of the Goetheanum site is number 1. One is also the number of Lucifer. The double Ahrimanic quadrant at the back right of the building is number 4.

The mixed quadrants are then numbered such that this numbering also takes into account the Ahrimanic and Luciferic influences. Therefore, the quadrant at the front right is number 2, and the quadrant at the back left is number 3. Two is the number of Ahriman. Thus, in the fourth quadrant, we have four times two (fig. 4).

Light and darkness

From a distance, the sun acts as the "great organizer" of every landscape. The sun creates specific light conditions at each location during its respective periods.

This activity is particularly palpable at the second Goetheanum itself in the play of light and shadow in the upper southwestern corner of the building. It reflects the conditions in the broader world at this site.

It is the enormous basic polarity of light and darkness in all its extremities and its respective manifestations that are nuanced by the seasons and weather.

Day and night

When the Goetheanum - both the first and second - is oriented with these quadrants in the primary cardinal directions, the sunlight rises in the east in the third quadrant. The light moves through the third quadrant into the first quadrant. The Luciferic thought forces prevail in these two quadrants.

In the third quadrant, the refreshing coolness of the night lingers momentarily, but as the sun enters the first quadrant, a period characterized by both light and warmth begins throughout the day. At this point, the sun dominates the first quadrant: Lucifer reigns. Then, transitioning to the second quadrant, the sun sets in the west. The western facade of the Goetheanum glows in warm yellow and red hues.

Afterward, the sun sinks into the second quadrant, and darkness spreads across the area, but warmth still lingers slightly, especially on summer evenings.

Finally, when the sun enters the fourth quadrant at midnight, the night is characterized by darkness and cold: Ahriman reigns.

Through the path of the sun and its passage around the Goetheanum, certain qualities of Luciferic forces of thought, Luciferic forces of will, and their Ahrimanic counterparts become clear, summarized as follows:

Quadrants 1 and 2: Luciferic forces of will as warmth.

Quadrants 4 and 3: Ahrimanic forces of will as cold.

Quadrants 3 and 1: Luciferic forces of thought as light.

Quadrants 2 and 4: Ahrimanic forces of thought as darkness.

The most surprising aspect is as follows: when you stand and then follow this daily movement of the sun around the Goetheanum with your arms, you suddenly realize how the sun itself performs a circular movement around the gesture that the representative of humanity displays from left-front-above to right-back-below.

You discover how the sun moves to the left, then upwards, and then forwards during the day, and at night moves to the right, downwards, and then backward.

An intense experience can be had as we visualize the paths of the sun around us as they appear between standard time and daylight savings time at the same location.

When you follow this with the movement possibilities of your body, you will notice a continuous upward movement from Christmas to St. John's, with the midpoint around Easter. There is also a downward movement from daylight savings time to standard time, with the festival of Michael in the middle.

The Goetheanum in the larger geographic context

In the geography of the Birs River valley - a valley extending south of Basel - we find the Goetheanum site on a protrusion of the eastern mountain ridge of this valley (fig. 5).

The western façade of the Goetheanum faces the wide valley. This creates a situation that aligns with this spatial concept, even in a large geographic area.

From the Goetheanum site, this is noticeable in the expansive view over the Birs Valley to the west and the more limited view to the east. Here, an aspect of the Lucifer - Ahriman - polarity is also expressed in the bounded landscape to the east and the boundless expanse to the west (fig. 6).

As we approach the immediate surroundings of the Goetheanum, the left-right polarity becomes evident (figs. 7 and 8). Visually, we see a slightly descending landscape on the right side of the Goetheanum, on the north side, while on the left side of the building, the land gently rises toward the south.

Additionally, from the perspective of more formal boundaries, the area to the right behind the Goetheanum is smaller than that to the south and west.

Interestingly, the area on the right side is defined by a straight line of the municipal boundary, cut off in a fairly straight line, while on the left side, one hardly notices any sense of boundary (fig 9).

Upward trend, downward trend, more area versus less, and unrestricted versus limited are the aspects that explicitly confirm the spatial concept here as well.

The three roads

In general, very little attention has been paid to the specifics of the roads on the Goetheanum site. When we compare the original map of the Dornacher Bluthügel with that of the anthroposophical colony in Dornach, you can see in the latter plan three new paths drawn, all leading to the Goetheanum (figs. 10 and 11).

These paths are: in the first quadrant the transformed Herzentelstrasse; in the second and fourth quadrants the transformed Bluthügelweg and a completely newly designed path known as the Philosopher's path, a footpath.

Upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that the Herzentelstrasse, which runs straight up from the restaurant towards the Goetheanum, then slightly veers to the right but immediately afterward takes a sharp turn to the left and is kept precisely within the first quadrant, enclosed there. This is the quadrant where Lucifer reigns over the site. One is the fundamental number of Lucifer.

The Bluthügelweg, on the other hand, which runs alongside the glass house and the boiler house, is located in quadrants 2 and 4. Two is the fundamental number of Ahriman.

Rudolf Steiner deliberately made these changes. He simply repositioned the two access roads that were already present in the area so that - down to the finest details - consideration was given to the pursuit of balance as a modern task of humanity.

You can see, especially in these two routes, how consistently he dedicated himself to this issue and how he efficiently seized every opportunity that arose to achieve his goal (fig. 12).)³

The Bluthügelweg is quite straight. It comes up the hill from the west and then - and this is Rudolf Steiner's intervention - in the fourth quadrant curves to the right towards the Goetheanum.

The Herzentalsstrasse climbs quite straight up the hill, makes a short turn to the right, and then - and this is also Rudolf Steiner's intervention - a large turn to the left, with the path ending approximately to the left of the western entrance of the Goetheanum.

This is still the path most used by the many guests of the Goetheanum and, therefore, also offers the most engagement on-site. Nowadays, it is mostly traveled on foot.

In contrast, the Bluthügelweg is more used for operational traffic of the Goetheanum, as access for staff, the postal van, etc. You almost always drive there by car.

You can see how these two paths, especially in their concrete functioning and in their respective embedding in the map, fit entirely within Rudolf Steiner's spatial ideas.

Experiential aspects

This is further emphasized when we look at the different experiences that using the two paths bring to the user. Motorists rush quickly through the long, straight stretch of the Bluthügelweg; they barely see the building on the right, only in a brief, quick glance (!). Then the right curve occurs, and you find yourself at the back of the Goetheanum, feeling completely unimpressed (!) there (figs. 13 and 14).

Pedestrians walk slowly along the path from the intersection at the restaurant as the path rises quite steeply. If you have time, you will notice that this route is the most attractive way to approach the Goetheanum.

The closer you get, the more you become captivated by the play of light and shadow on the left front side of the Goetheanum building.

There is a strong sense of beauty here, also in the way the grounds powerfully support this view of the building.

When you arrive at the Goetheanum, you can delight in the incredibly dynamic forms of the roof edge up close. Especially when the senses are fully directed upwards, the posture of the human body also indicates that at such moments, there is an activity dominated by Lucifer (figs. 15, 16, and 17).

The "Philosopher's path"

A third path is the so-called Philosopher's path. This path runs through two quadrants. It was designed by Rudolf Steiner as a completely new element in the landscape.

The name "Philosopher's path" is not a coincidence, considering that this path lies entirely in the sphere of Lucifer's will, but that the workings of the thinking forces are exposed to both Luciferian and Ahrimanic influences. An enthusiastic back-and-forth movement in the streams of perception and thinking can easily be linked to walking this path (fig. 18).

When you walk up from the intersection near the restaurant, the first thing you see is the Goetheanum building (fig. 19). A direct turn to the left gives you a wide view of the light-filled Birs valley to the left front (fig. 20).

Along the route under the Felsli and beneath the garden of the House Duldeck, consciousness focuses on this open valley (fig. 21).

When you reach the Dragon's Tail, the focus changes radically. There is a noticeable turning point in the perceptual situation here. Suddenly, you see the west façade of the Goetheanum on your right as you continue walking, unexpectedly entering the second quadrant (fig. 22).

The relationship with the Goetheanum is like a lightning strike and develops as we follow this path further, allowing us to approach the Goetheanum from the right front (fig. 23).

We now have a very different experience than when we climbed the Herzentalsstrasse, where the building sparkled fully in the sun. From here, we approach the building with a view of the north side, which creates a large shadow spot in full sun, although this is best experienced in the morning hours.

At this moment, you will experience light and shadow very differently, contrasting the experience at Herzentalsstrasse. You are more confronted with the "two sides of that one, great whole." If you allow the large, cool

shadow to enter within you, you can experience a particular dramatic aspect.

Back down

The Philosopher's path heading towards the valley also provides remarkable "philosophical" experiences. Now, you constantly feel exposed to an increasing gravity along the path as it goes all the way down the hill. Particularly on the right side, you have a sloping section all the way to the Speisehaus at the intersection (fig. 24).

As you walk down, you become more aware that you are walking alongside a sloped surface. From a darker boundedness with a certain darkness, you suddenly step into an atmosphere of light as you pass the Dragon's Tail.

In the brief, powerful farewell perception of the Goetheanum on the left, you see it as bathed in light. As you descend further, you look less into the distance and tend to gaze down at the houses along the road at the bottom of the slope. The view of the landscape is much more limited than when you are climbing this path (fig. 25).

Notes:

)¹ Piet Sieperda - *Der Raumgedanke*.in: STIL, Ostern 1994/95, XVI - I, p. 2 and fig. 4

)² Walter Holzapfel - *Seelenpflegebedürftige Kinder, Band I - 12: "Die menschliche Organisation in den Raumesrichtungen"*, Dornach 1967

)³ Rex Raab cites in *"The Development of the Goetheanum Site,"* Philosophical-Anthroposophical Publishing House, 1984, p. 21: "Oswald Dubach told me that Rudolf Steiner personally developed the route – using models."