



THE WEARER OF SHAPES

Goethe's Study of Clouds and Weather

We may picture Goethe in 1825 before his window, old but erect, his "Jupiter-like eyes," as Schopenhauer had called them, intent upon the sky. As often in the past, he pondered the shapes and colors of the atmosphere, followed the ever-changing forms of cloud, and the hues and shadows of landscape and sky. As a young man he had ridden across the countryside with sketch pad or paints to experience and re-experience the landscape. His many drawings and studies had helped sharpen his sight so that his powers of observation were legendary. He had by now become the Weimar weather-prophet. The many visitors who streamed through his chamber, however, came to see him not as naturalist but as author and poet. Goethe's poetry, novels, and remarkable play *Faust* had brought him world acclaim. As a young man of twenty-five he had captured the mood of his era in his romantic novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. But Goethe as he stood now before his window, a man of seventy-six years, had changed greatly since those days of "storm and stress." To his secretary Eckermann he often said,

by Arthur G. Zajonc

As for what I have done as a poet I take no pride whatever. Excellent poets have lived at the same time as myself; poets more excellent have lived before me, and others will come after me. But that in my century I am the only person who knows the truth in the difficult science of colors—of that, I say, I am not a little proud, and here I am conscious of a superiority to many.

His *Farbenlehre*, a theory or doctrine of color, had been a labor of many years and stood in Goethe's mind at or near the top of his many achievements. Yet this work, together with his many writings in botany, biology, geology, and meteorology, has been ignored, considered by most a curious blind alley in the history of science. We, by contrast, will investigate those efforts, in an attempt to begin to unearth the extraordinary riches that lie within his scientific work and, most especially, his methodology.

If we wish to explore and discover the character and method of Goethe's scientific studies we may fruitfully focus on a single field of his endeavors. In this article I have chosen meteorology, in part because his work in this area is less well known than his color or botanical studies, but also because it is a work of the mature Goethe, undertaken only after his scientific views had fully developed. Although Goethe did not see his meteorological investigations as complete, they offer us a wonderful panorama of his manner of research and thinking. By studying them we may come to know Goethe better as both poet and naturalist.

The very beginnings of Goethe's interest in atmospheric phenomena date back to at least his Italian journey of 1786, but it was not until 1815 that he began their serious study. What invigorated his otherwise sporadic concern was the marvelously lucid essay by Luke Howard (1772-1864) "On the Modifications of Clouds," which first appeared in German at that time. Howard, a chemist by profession, had often turned to the sky as an attentive observer. In his essay he presented a description of the structure of clouds and "their manner of aggregation." The general causes of atmospheric phenomena may be hidden, he wrote, but the form and movements of clouds "are commonly as good visible indications of the operation of these causes as is the countenance of the state of a person's mind or body." By his own frequent observation of the heavens he sought to combine the sky-watching experience of mariner or husbandman with the methods of natural philosophy. He hoped to explicate what remained for the weather-wise peasant an incommunicable skill. In order to do so he distinguished the basic cloud formations and gave them the names we use to this day: cirrus, cumulus, stratus, etc. For these distinctions Goethe was enormously grateful. "I seized Howard's terminology with joy," he wrote, "because it provided me with a thread I had till then been missing." For the next two years he applied and tested Howard's classification against his own observations, which he recorded in his "weather diaries." Goethe felt that he had found in Howard a kindred spirit. Here was a man intent upon nature herself, a man whose gaze could move through the heavens resting upon

Engraving from On the Modifications of Clouds by Luke Howard, 1894





each formation gently and discerningly. Goethe had expressed the ideal of such observation years earlier in connection with his studies in botany: "...and like the sun that calls forth and illuminates each and every plant, the botanist too must observe and survey them all with the same calm glance, deriving his standard for recognising and judging them not from within himself but from the area of the things themselves."

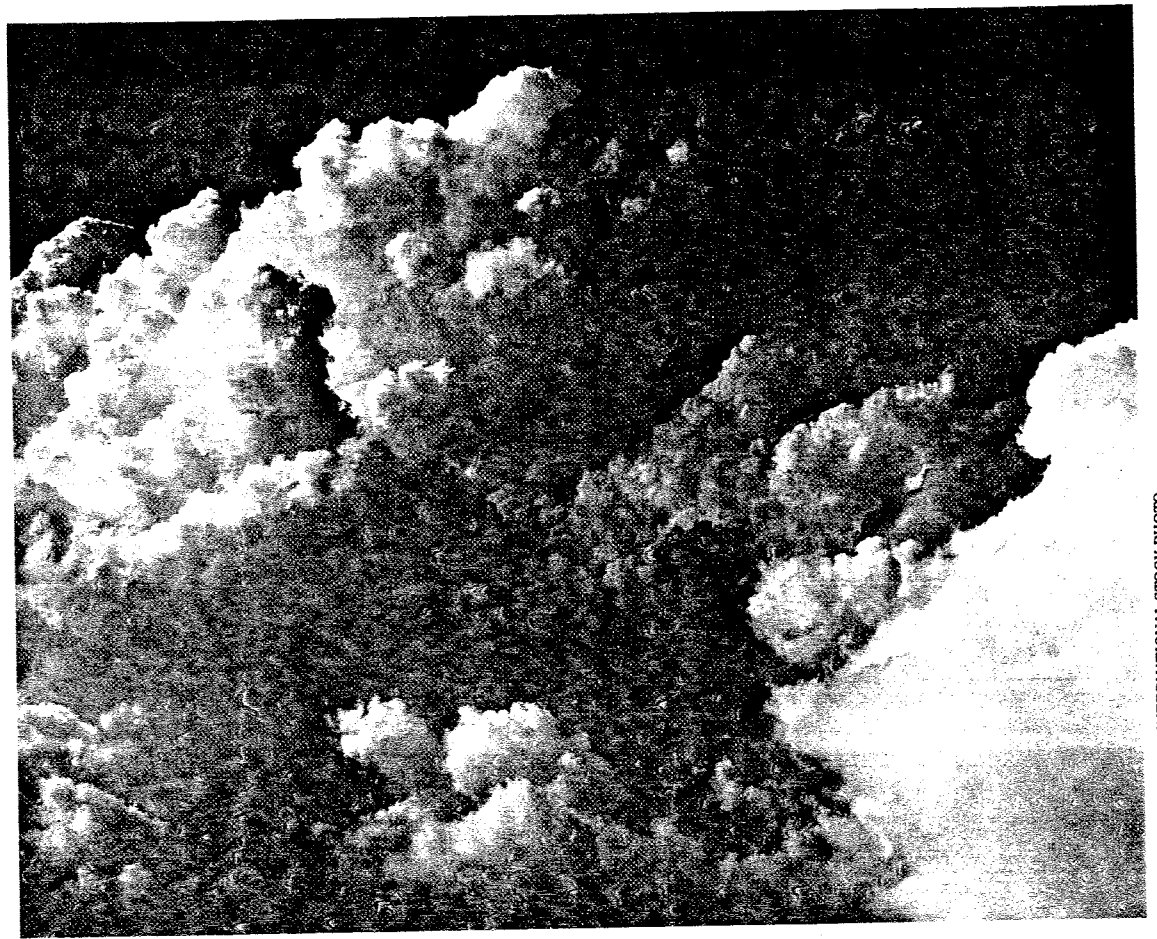
The "calm glance" that surveys all with equanimity takes in a wealth of initially disordered data, which are for the scientist the basis for future investigation. From these data the investigator must form through systematic experimentation and observation "experiences of a higher type," which in turn act as the means for discerning the "open secrets" of nature—her archetypal phenomena. We encounter here a central thesis of Goethe's science. The investigator is not to judge or theorize from out of himself and interpret phenomena in terms of theories he fancies—atomic, mechanistic, or organic. The "area of the things themselves" must act as tutor and guide. As one rises from initial observations to "theory," one should remain

constantly within the phenomena. Goethe expresses this view again and again throughout his scientific corpus. In a well-known aphorism he says it forcefully.

The highest thing would be to comprehend that everything factual is already theory. The blue of the heavens reveals to us the fundamental law of chromatics. One should only not seek anything behind the phenomena: they themselves are the theory.

The phenomena themselves are the theory! How can we understand Goethe's injunction? This article is written in large part to answer that question. To penetrate Goethe's scientific methodology and appreciate his accomplishments we must unravel this maxim, feel its contrast with much that passes as scientific explanation, and attempt to practice his science ourselves. Let us make this attempt in meteorology, venturing also into his botanical and color studies where these illumine the former.

Turning our gaze heavenward we may see against the blue sky billowing clouds drifting si-



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lently and slowly overhead. The shapes they display call to mind myriad forms, be they castle, elephant, bird, or dragon. For child and bard, clouds are often the birthplace of fantasy.

*Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish;
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendent rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon't, that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air. Thou hast seen these
signs?
They are black vesper's pageants.
(Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*)*

Goethe too loved these shapes and begins his poem "In Honor of Howard" with just this imagery. The cloud-divinity Camarupa transforms herself from figure to figure so that we stand in awe before her. Thus wonder, the wellspring of knowledge, opens the poem that celebrates Howard's clear vision. In the second strophe the power of fantasy to form the masses into "camel-necks and vapory dragons" is wonderfully unfolded. These desires of fancy, however, contrast with Howard's "clearer mind," which has grasped where "no hand can reach." As with the botanist, so with the meteorologist, whose "calm glance" must not order and form nature's work by fiat, but rather discern her

laws and patterns through what Goethe called a "gentle empiricism." Howard descried not elephants but a true typology of clouds. His classification allowed the phenomena to rise in the mind of the observer from a level of nondiscrimination to a higher one in which the ordered movements of the atmosphere might manifest themselves. It allowed Goethe for the first time to study the morphology of clouds.

Few realize that Goethe coined the word morphology—the study of organic form—in letters written to his close friend Schiller, and that he advocated the study of plant morphology already at the end of the eighteenth century. As the father of morphology he immediately appreciated the potential of Howard's classification. In his introduction to Howard's autobiographical sketch he wrote: "From all my strivings in science and art it must be clear how precious to me is this process, bestowing form on the formless and a system of ordered change on a boundless world." It must be emphasized that Goethe did not see Howard's classification as a static projection of what is inherently a dynamic process. Rather, each term reflected a momentary transition point in a great cycle of nature. In one line of Goethe's poem—"As clouds ascend, are folded, scattered, fall"—the eternal cycle of evaporation and condensation is indicated. In the stanzas that follow we may trace that evolution in greater detail (see page 44).

Implicit in the poem are two principles that Goethe perceived as animating all of nature: polarity and *Steigerung*. Wherever he turned, nature presented herself in polarities whose opposition brought concord. But along with the rhythmic movements born of polarity he discerned a direction, given through what he termed *Steigerung*—heightening, enhancement, or intensification. These two principles, polarity and heightening, were “the two great activating forces in all of nature.” Let us consider them in turn.

Polarities—light and dark, expansion and contraction, outbreathing and inbreathing, diastole and systole—commanded a central position in Goethe’s science and philosophy. The great Goethe scholar Karl Vietor declared that should we have to choose a single principle out of all those that Goethe used to make the occurrences of life intelligible, we could only choose polarity. Polarity was for Goethe “the eternal formula of life.” We find it in his color theory, his botanical writings, and his poetry.

Consider for a moment the growth of a plant as Goethe describes it in his essay *The Metamorphosis of Plants*. In the development of the plant from seed to fruit one sees the rhythm of expansion and contraction as one passes from node to node. From the tiny seed, the cotyledons unfold and develop into the first leaves of the stem. More leaves are added, becoming larger and more differentiated as the plant grows. They reach their greatest expansion in the fully developed stem leaves. Then, with the approach of the flower, a contraction begins. The stalk assumes a more delicate form, the leaves “draw inward from the periphery.” The calyx then

forms, as Goethe demonstrates, from the leaves themselves. “Here the stem leaves gradually contract, change, and creep, so to speak, into the calyx.” From the single organ of the leaf nature fashions new forms concentrating in one node what would otherwise be produced successively. “Thus, in the calyx, Nature forms no new organ but merely combines and modifies organs already known to us, in this way advancing one step nearer

The cloud becomes the leaf of the sky. It is the single organ that moves through all shapes.

her goal.” Following the contraction to the calyx, the expansive development of corolla and inflorescence appears. The flower petals, likewise, Goethe shows to be metamorphosed leaves, the leaf becoming a “Proteus” able to assume many guises and shapes. Another contraction follows in the forming of staminal organs, and a final expansion and contraction in fruit and seed, respectively.

From seed to fullest development of stem leaves we noted first an expansion. Thereupon we saw the calyx developing through contraction, the petals through expansion, and the sexual organs again through contraction; and soon we shall become aware of the maximum expansion in the fruit and the maximum concentration in the seed. In these six steps Nature ceaselessly carries on her eternal work....





Diastole/systole, expansion/contraction, is an ever recurring pulsation in which the living world participates. It is not a static balance between centrifugal and centripetal forces, but a process in which first one and then the other pole gains the upper hand.

Still these rhythmic changes would yield only a monotony of forms if a second principle were not present. Goethe speaks above of a "goal" in the plant's unfolding, and thereby implies a direction that lifts the plant's growth from simple repetition to a rising, cyclical development. He adds to polarity the principle of *Steigerung*—heightening, progression, or enhancement. The metamorphosis of the single organ, the leaf, is subject to the polar processes of expansion and contraction. But it is also transformed, "heightened" or raised from stem leaf through calyx to corolla, flowering and forming staminal organs, fruit and seed. It is a full metamorphic cycle from seed to seed, one whose movement is articulated and formed by polarity and *Steigerung*.

Can we discern these elements in the atmospheric cycle of cloud formation and rain as well? Wherein lies the principle of polarity, of expansion and contraction, so central to plant morphology? In a conversation of 1827 with his secretary Eckermann, Goethe presents his views.

I compare the earth and her atmosphere to a great living being perpetually inhaling and exhaling. If she inhale, she draws the atmosphere to her, so that, coming near her surface, it is condensed to clouds and rain. This state I call water-affirmation (Wasser-Bejahung). Should it continue, the earth would be drowned. This the earth does not allow, but exhales again, and sends the watery vapors upwards; whereupon they are dissipated through the whole space of the higher atmosphere.... This state of the atmosphere I call water-negation (Wasser-Verneinung). If this should continue extraordinarily, the earth... would be in danger of drying up.

In abnormal plant formations, such as the "perfoliate rose" illustrated above, Goethe saw with special clarity the archetypal principle that stem-leaf, sepal, petal, stamen, etc. are all particular manifestations of that "Proteus able to assume many guises and shapes"—the leaf. Notice that the ovary and five normal sepals are missing at the base of the flower and are replaced by five fully developed compound leaves of the kind that rose branches usually produce at their nodes. The upper portion of the flower has produced an aberrant formation in which several petallike structures (dark red in color) branch off the leafy stem emerging from the center of the rose. As Goethe described it in his Metamorphosis of Plants, "The stalk keeps on growing; thorns even appear on it again; the individual colored petals that follow become smaller, and finally are transformed before our eyes into half-red, half-green stem leaves; a succession of regular nodes is formed, from the buds of which there again emerge little rosebuds—albeit imperfect ones."

Thus once again the rhythm of contraction and expansion, this time in the form of inhalation and exhalation, finds its reflection in the phenomena of rain, mist, and cloud. Goethe saw these phenomena as purely telluric in origin—contrary to common belief, unaffected by moon or stars. The earth, not unlike an animate creature, draws the atmosphere closer to her, and then sends it out again. This picture was corroborated for Goethe through data reported by Daniell in 1823, showing that "barometers, situated at great distances from each other, often rise and fall together with great regularity." The planet as "living earthly body possesses two fundamental movements," wrote Goethe, the daily rotation of the earth about its axis and a periodic change in the earth's force of attraction. Both reflect themselves outwardly in the

readings of the barometer.

The daily variations of barometric pressure due to the earth's rotation had been known since the seventeenth century and today are usually ascribed to temperature changes and the associated volume expansion and contraction of air. Large-scale barometric fluctuations can be caused by storms, but vast "pressure surges," which may extend over both a cyclone and anticyclone, remain very difficult to explain. Certainly, however, contemporary meteorology would never advance Goethe's hypothesis of a changing gravitational attraction. Although it would explain the phenomenon, it is not supported by observations in other fields of science. Be that as it may, atmospheric pressure became the centerpiece of Goethe's meteorology.

There are many phenomena associated with weather conditions, but to isolate the essential in any scientific field was Goethe's constant endeavor. The archetypal phenomenon stood for him as the crown of any natural investigation, beyond which one should not go. "Between phenomena there is a great difference: the archetypal phenomenon, the purest, never contradicts itself in its eternal simplicity..." For Goethe the inbreathing and outbreathing of the earth became that eternally simple phenomenon. While it is a phenomenon, the archetype is not directly manifest. Conditions are never perfect for its appearance uncomplicated by extraneous factors. But it can reveal itself to the mind's eye. While local disturbances might spoil its purity, Goethe held to it as archetype. To Eckermann again he said, "The thing is very simple, and I abide by what is simple and comprehensive, without being disturbed by occasional deviations."

In his "Attempt at a Doctrine of Weather" (1825) Goethe compared this polarity to that of light and darkness in his color theory. Light and darkness stand over against one another as poles eternally separate. It is only when they meet in a turbid or cloudy medium that colors spring into view. Consider the brilliant sunset. What essential conditions must be met for the yellows, oranges, and finally reds of a sunset to appear? There are sunsets upon the moon, but they remain monochrome, black and white. On the earth, the atmosphere plays the role of turbid medium, mingling the light of the sun with the dark materiality of air to give the warm colors of the evening sky. By contrast, the dark vault of the heavens arises when we look through the light-filled atmosphere into the dark depths of space. The atmosphere becomes wonderfully versatile in this view, acting in one instance as an obscuring agent, darkening the light to red and yellow, and in the next instance lightening, lifting the black sky into the cool blues above us. Herein lie the "laws of chromatics," the archetypal phenomena of the color world through which other color phenomena are understood.

Likewise with regard to weather, the atmo-

sphere acts as that medium into whose "fine air-materiality" two polar forces work, giving rise to meteorological phenomena. These two are the forces of attraction, which manifest in the appearance of weight, and its opposite, the power of warmth, whose expression is expansion. The inbreathing and outbreathing of the atmosphere, to which Goethe refers, is the manifestation of these polar forces as they work into the air about us. Although the effects are many and varied, they are at the same time lawful, and the rising and falling of the barometer reflect that lawfulness. As in the plant so in the atmosphere, polarity constantly shows itself as a principle active in natural phenomena.

Associated with the rise and fall of atmospheric pressure are a series of differentiated cloud formations. Goethe, in fact, prided himself on his ability to know the reading of barometer and thermometer from visual atmospheric conditions alone.

Phenomena, like light, fashion organs suited to themselves. "Each new object, well-contemplated, opens up a new organ within us."

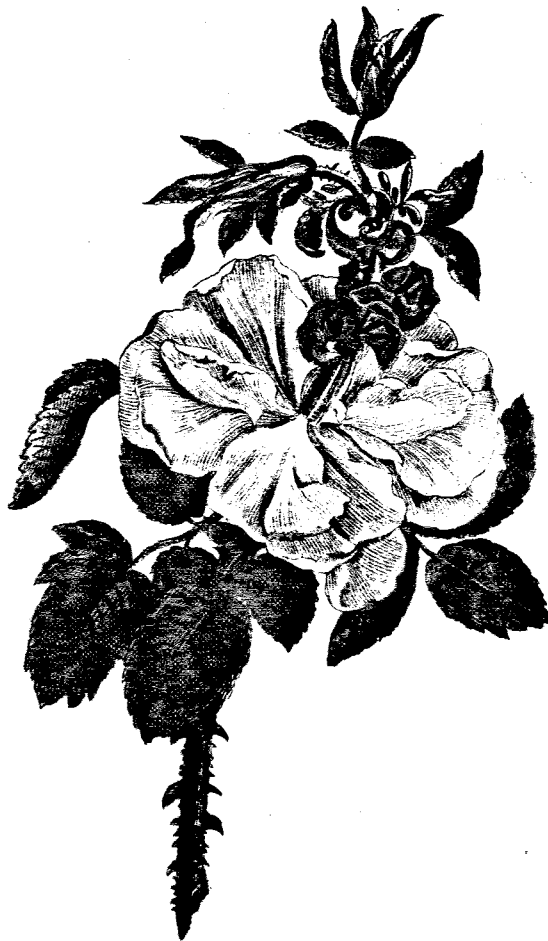


PHOTO BY ALLEN ROKACH/NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN LIBRARY

Barometric pressure as measured by the height of the mercury column might be a phenomenon of central importance, but in Goethe's words, to reduce "the entire complex of meteorology to tables of number and symbols was for my nature impossible." As we may observe the plant grow from seed to seed through the miraculous metamorphosis of leaf, so also in the rise of mist from the valley, in the formation of low billowing clouds, in the high wisps of horsetails and the dark clouds that yield up rain we may learn to see a similar metamorphic cycle. In his poem "In Honor of Howard" we follow just this movement from "the cold mist" stretched like a canopy over vale or sea and rising up the mountain's side, through higher intermediate stages to the "Father's breast," and thence to thunderclouds "downward driven by the earth's attraction." From low misty stratus, through majestic cumulus, to high silvery-robed cirrus, we follow the metamorphosis of clouds caught between the force of earth and the expansive powers of warmth. The cloud becomes the leaf of the sky. It is the single organ that moves through all shapes. While Goethe called the leaf Proteus for its metamorphic powers, he begins his cloud poem by naming the cloud divine Camarupa, meaning "one who may wear all shapes at will."

Polarity is active in cloud formation as well as in large-scale changes of pressure. Between the misty veils that hover over valley floor and the high wispy cirri, between these poles, the phenomena of weather unfold. But that intermediate realm also seems to reveal a polarity within itself. For we find there, on one occasion, the beautifully sculpted forms of cumuli, and on another a formless, gray-white cloud-mass that spreads from horizon to horizon. Howard's terminology continues to be used today for this latter polarity: cumulus for "heap" clouds and stratus for "layer" clouds. Thus added to the vertical scale from fog to cirrus, is another axis that describes the forms of clouds from stratus to cumulus. Grasses, green and golden, may spread over hundreds and thousands of acres. So also may layer clouds (stratus) extend over vast areas. Cumuli, however, like single flowering plants, grow and unfold their billowing shapes in our sky. We can follow the life cycle of cumulus clouds from their beginnings on a calm, clear summer morning, and discover their plantlike cycle of development. In early morning looking out over hills or the dark earth of a farmer's fresh-plowed field, we see small cumuli nearly motionless in a blue sky. First slowly but then more and more rapidly these clouds begin to expand, building towers and turrets, which by midday may rise miles into the air. As they reach their greatest height the peaked upper sections glaciare, forming tiny ice crystals, and expand to become threatening, anvil-headed cumulonimbus. Rain showers may develop, but as the anvil head spreads, the shade it provides cools and gradually

halts the rise of moist warm air that feeds the growing cumuli. With the cessation of this source the cumuli dissolve, leaving high cirruslike remnants drifting overhead. The sun again shining full on the earth may generate once more small cumuli over hilltops and fields. And so we may watch clouds grow like so many plants, from small beginnings drawn upward by the sun to majestic proportions. Then as the narrow top turrets glaciare, they "bloom" to become an anvil-headed storm cloud which, like so many seeds, sends its raindrops earthward. Between the earth and heavens, between the formed and unformed, the eternal cycle of cloud formation unfolds. The generation of clouds finds its direction once again through *Steigerung*, rising from vaporous plains of earth to the highest reaches of the sky.

The principle of *Steigerung*, or of heightening and enhancement, which Goethe puts forth, is important for an understanding of his methodology. How is it that the naturalist should proceed in scientific investigations; through what means is one able to win a glimpse into nature's veiled sanctum? Francis Bacon wrote of a method that could be used by all, an empiricism that demanded only the registration of characteristics in Tables of Presence, Absence, and Degrees, from which laws could be induced. It demanded no Aristotle nor Newton but merely a being with five senses and a modicum of education. Goethe, by contrast, presents a method which, while empirically based, demands the constant development of new faculties and sensibilities. Such transformations can take place through outer forces or circumstances, the strokes of destiny and fortune, but also through self-education and self-development. We have the means to shape and cultivate ourselves so that phenomena that might otherwise remain mute speak to us of their forms and laws. The unfolding of new organs is a subject Goethe elaborated on in comments regarding animal evolution.

The eye owes its existence to the light. Out of indifferent animal organs the light produces an organ to correspond to itself; and so the eye is formed by the light for the light so that the inner light may meet the outer.

Out of unformed organs the exalted organ of sight was called forth by the power of light. What was true for sight is true likewise for those faculties of mind which we must develop if we hope to see and name nature truly. Our tutors in this task are the objects themselves. Phenomena, like light, fashion organs suited to themselves. "Each new object, well-contemplated, opens up a new organ within us." For as Novalis wrote, "Association with the forces of nature, with animals, plants, rocks, stones, and waves must of necessity mold man to a resemblance of these objects." Science is not

From a deep interest in organic form and the "inner economy" of plant structure, Goethe attempted to reduce the spiral arrangement of a pine cone's leaf like scales to a series of simple mathematical laws.

purely egalitarian in its conduct. Rather, those who by nature and through self-transformation possess eyes to see will see. For Goethe the *Aperçu* is everything. To behold is to know. "In science, however, is the treatment empty, and all efficacy lies in the *Aperçu*."

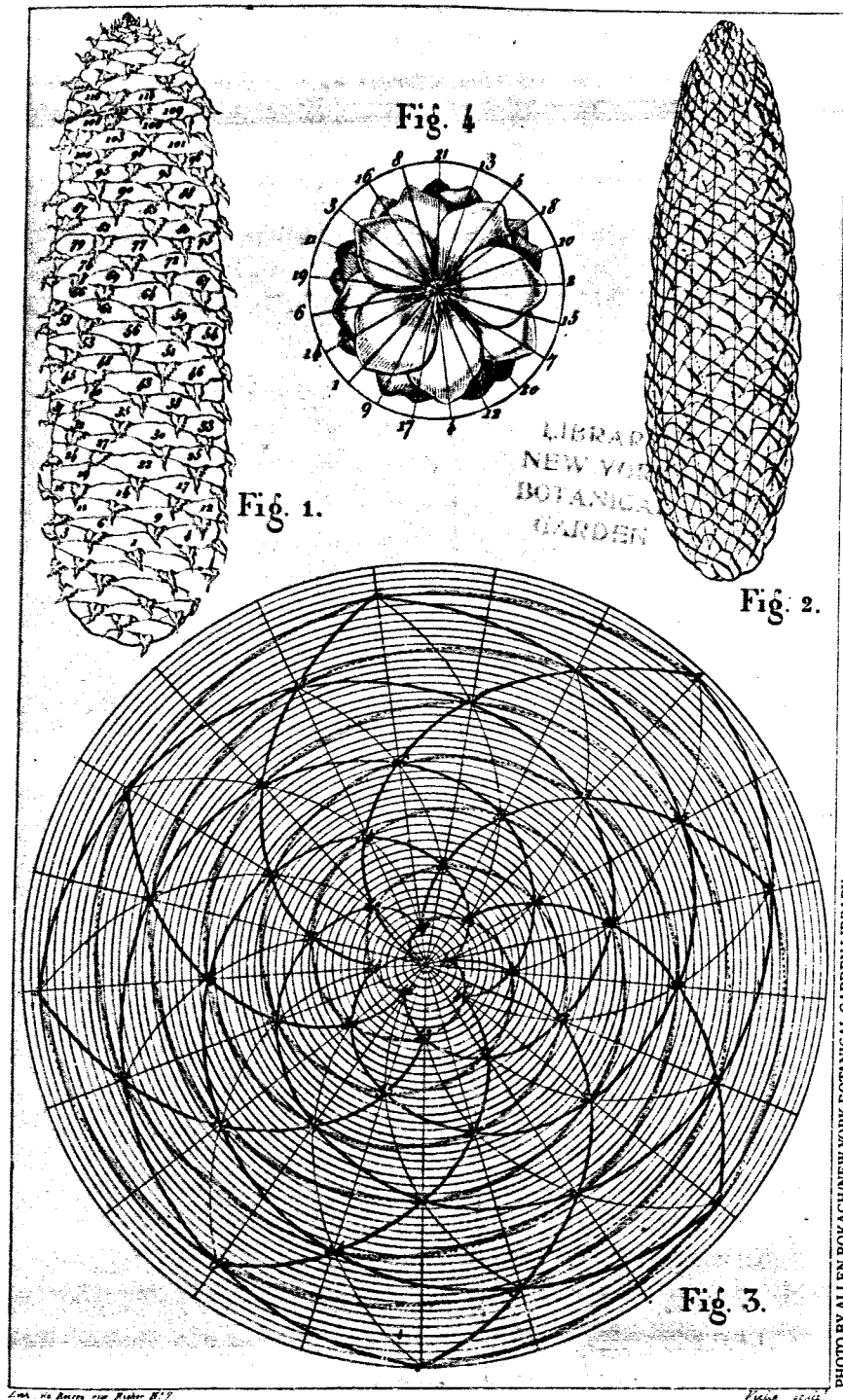
We may understand now why Goethe sought constantly to remain in the phenomenal realm. He worked to behold the archetype through phenomena rather than engage in the rationalism of his period, where hypotheses and models replaced the objects of sense. The phenomena, fully perceived, can rise to the ideal. It is again a process governed by *Steigerung* but now the enhancement is reciprocal. For as nature unfolds organs within man, these in turn lead to new levels of insight, to new higher phenomena, and the circle is complete. Cognition itself becomes a kind of inbreathing of sense impressions and an outbreathing of insight.

The metamorphosis of clouds demanded an attentive and sensitive soul to see and classify their forms. Goethe saw Howard as an individual like himself who, by upbringing and destiny, possessed senses suited for these inquiries. Thus his request to Howard for biographical material whereby he hoped to learn the circumstances of his youth, "the history of his destiny and formation."

Although Goethe's meteorological efforts ranged widely, he never considered them definitive or complete. "The subjects of meteorology are, indeed, something living which we daily see working and producing; they presuppose a synthesis...to which man is not equal." Still, though the character of our knowledge may be partial and fragmentary, its quest remains our noblest endeavor. Our every effort may be met with frustration yet we cannot but persevere. Vision of the true, of the divine demands effort and self-transformation. If the grace of *Aperçu* is to be granted, we must struggle as Faust among the phenomena of nature.

The True, which is identical with the divine, does not allow itself to be recognized by us directly. Rather we discern it only in reflection, in instance, symbol, in particular and kindred appearances. We become aware of it as incomprehensible life and yet cannot renounce the wish to comprehend it.

Arthur Zajonc is assistant professor of physics at Amherst College, where he teaches physics and history of science. His research interests include laser spectroscopy and atomic physics.



Suggested reading:

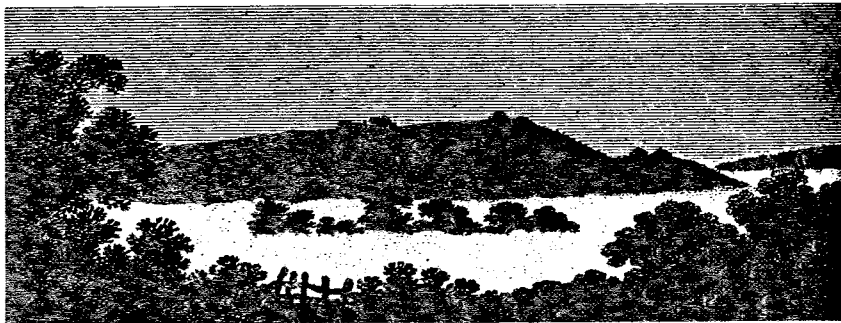
Goethe's Botanical Writings, translated by Bertha Mueller, University of Hawaii Press, 1952. This book also includes an excellent selection of short essays by Goethe on science generally.

Goethe as a Scientist, Rudolf Magnus, translated by Heinz Norden, Henry Schuman, 1949. A general, comprehensive account of his scientific work.

Goethe the Scientist, Rudolf Steiner, translated by Olin D. Wannamaker, Anthroposophic Press, 1950. The commentary to the Kürschner edition of Goethe's natural scientific writings.

Forthcoming: "Facts as Theory: Aspects of Goethe's Philosophy of Science," Arthur G. Zajonc, *Teacher's College Record*, 1983.

In Honor of Howard



*W*hen divine Camarupa, wavering on high,
Lightly and slowly travels o'er the sky,
Now closely draws her veil, now spreads it wide,
And joys to see the changing figures glide,
Now firmly stands, now like a vision flies,
We pause in wonder, and distrust our eyes.

Then boldy stirs imagination's power,
And shapes these formless masses of the hour;
Here lions threat, there elephants will range,
And camel necks to vapory dragons change;
An army moves, but not in victory proud,
Its might is broken on a rock of cloud;
E'en the cloud messenger in air expires,
Ere reach'd the distance fancy yet desires.

But Howard gives us with his clearer mind
The gain of lessons new to all mankind;
That which no hand can reach, no hand can clasp,
He first has gain'd, first held with mental grasp;
Defin'd the doubtful, fix'd its limit-line,
And nam'd it fitly.—Be the honor thine!
As clouds ascend, are folded, scatter, fall,
Let the world think of thee who taught it all.

Stratus

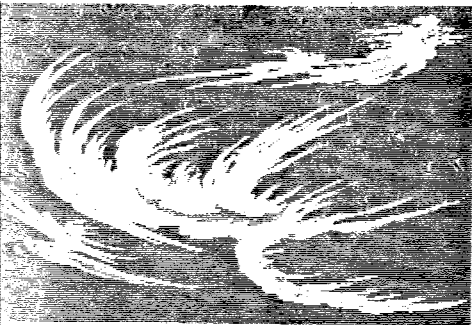
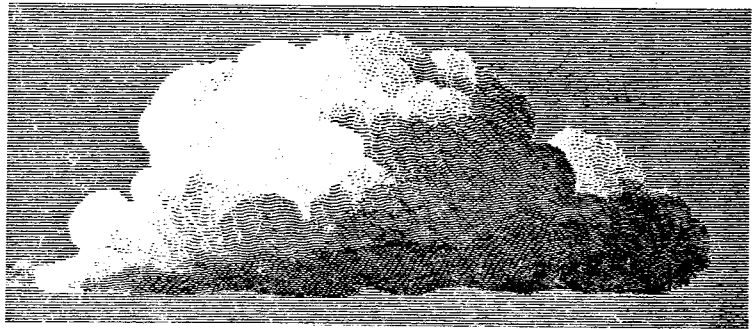
When o'er the silent bosom of the sea
The cold mist hangs like a stretch'd canopy;
And the moon, mingling there her shadowy beams,
A spirit, fashioning other spirits seems;
We feel, in moments pure and bright as this,
The joy of innocence, the thrill of bliss.

Then towering up the darkening mountain's side,
And spreading as it rolls its curtains wide,
It mantles round the mid-way height, and there
It sinks in water-drops, or soars in air.



Cumulus

Still soaring, as if some celestial call
Impell'd it to yon heaven's sublimest hall;
High as the clouds, in pomp and power arrayed,
Enshrined in strength, in majesty displayed;
All the soul's secret thoughts it seems to move,
Beneath it trembles, while it frowns above.



Cirrus

And higher, higher yet the vapors roll:
Redemption is the noblest impulse of the soul!
Then like a lamb whose silvery robes are shed,
The fleecy piles dissolved in dew-drops spread;
Or gently wafted to the realms of rest,
Find a sweet welcome in *The Father's* breast.

Nimbus

Now downwards by the world's attraction driven,
That tends to earth, which to heaven had uprisen
Threat'ning in the mad thunder-cloud, as when
Fierce legions clash, and vanish from the plain;
Sad destiny of the troubled world! but see,
The mist is now dispersing gloriously:
And language fails us in its vain endeavor—
The spirit mounts above, and dwells forever.

