Water as a Mediator for Life

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Summary

We are embedded within, surrounded by and dependent upon rhythms of all kinds and yet they remain a mystery. Life and rhythm are indeed one. Water is the most sensitive carrier and mediator of rhythm. George Adams during the mid years of the 20th century was concerned with the influences particular mathematical surfaces might have upon water. These so-called path-curve surfaces are intimately involved with generative forms such as buds, cones and eggs that occur in a natural healthy context. Due to extensive morphological studies the question which attracted my attention in 1970 could be expressed as follows. «Would it be possible to create for streaming water a vessel or indeed an ‹organ› which would enable it to manifest its potential to order and metamorphosis?»As a result of experimentation it became gradually clear to me that rhythms are the result of resistance rather than some kind of mechanical process. The resulting Flowform Method which demonstrates a rhythmical lemniscatory process, made evident the close relationship between surface, proportion and rhythm. It immediately became possible to show that the influence of path-curves, combined with rhythms could be investigated regarding their influence upon the quality of water when correct relationships were made available. The redeeming of life-supporting energy in water will remain predominantly the subject of our investigations in the Institute.

Zusammenfassung

Wir sind in Rhythmen eingebettet, von ihnen umgeben und abhängig, und doch bleiben sie ein Geheimnis. Leben und Rhythmus bilden eine Einheit. Wasser ist der empfindlichste Träger und Vermittler von Rhythmen. In den Fünfzigerjahren des 20. Jahrhunderts hat sich George Adams mit den Einflüssen beschäftigt, die bestimmte mathematische Oberflächen auf Wasser haben können. Die so genannten Weg-Kurven-Oberflächen sind eng verbunden mit generativen Formen, die in gesunden Naturzusammenhängen vorkommen und z.B. an Knospen, Zapfen und Eiern beobachtet werden können. Nach intensiven morphologischen Studien konnte die folgende Frage formuliert werden, die mich seit den Siebzigerjahren beschäftigt: «Ist es möglich, ein Gefäß oder gar ein ‹Organ› zu bauen, in dem fließendes Wasser sein Potential für Ordnung und Verwandlung zum Ausdruck bringen kann?»

Experimente zeigten allmählich, dass Rhythmen eher als Ergebnis von Widerstand als von irgend welchen mechanischen Vorgängen betrachtet werden müssen. Die *Flowform-Methode*, mit der rhythmische, lemniskatförmige Fließbewegungen erzeugt werden können, machte eine enge Beziehung zwischen Oberfläche, Proportionen und Rhythmus sichtbar. Darüber hinaus konnte gezeigt werden, dass der Einfluss von Wegkurven in Kombination mit Rhythmen untersucht und in ihrer Wirkung auf die Wasserqualität bestimmt werden kann, wenn sie in einer richtigen Relation zueinander stehen. Der Erhalt der lebensunterstützenden Energie im Wasser wird weiterhin ein zentrales Forschungsthema unseres Institutes sein.

We are embedded within, surrounded by and dependent upon rhythms of all kinds and yet they remain a mystery. Rhythms can never be pinned down, they are always on the move, always changing, never repeating. There are short lived rhythms and infinitely long-standing rhythms. Rhythms have quite evidently to do with our whole existence on earth and stand behind the riddle of what we call life, which itself can only be maintained in the context of rhythm. Life and rhythm are indeed, one. This is the view we will take in this article.

Fluids or at least fluid-like conditions are the carriers of rhythm. The solid, material, physical world can only be rhythm carrier in the long term, due to its changing state, inevitably accompanied by fluidic processes. Water however by virtue of its anomalous character is perhaps the most sensitive carrier and mediator of rhythms.

Our blue Planet supports abundant life through the fact that it has a water cycle fed by its oceans extending over most of the surface and brought into movement by the Sun. The conditions seem to be unique in the known Universe but the search is on for evidence of any other such bodies. Water dissolves and transports substances and influences, coarse and subtle. It is an element that sacrifices itself entirely to its surroundings. It comes under the influence of gravity and levity and due to these polar opposite agencies, it moves. Life moves within it and it moves within living creatures and these movements tend to be rhythmical. Life forms always have to do with surfaces or skins which convolute in space to create shapes and bodies of all kinds. It is such surfaces which exist within the volume of water whenever it moves and which act as organs of mediation for all the formative processes relevant to the sustaining of life.

It is becoming increasingly evident that water and its functions will have to be much better understood before we treat it more widely with the respect it deserves.

To create aesthetic and phenomenological experiences that will engender in us wonder for the miracle of water, to encourage an attitude of respect and understanding for water as a precious commodity by revealing its subtle capacities and functions, to strengthen our consciousness and conscience with regard to its use.

This is a task we can set ourselves.

In this article we will aim at describing a path which increasingly demands the fulfilment of initiatives inaugurated during the middle period of the last century. At Emerson College we urgently seek the means to continue and intensify our activities relating to Flow Design Research by creating an Institute workshop and seminar centre. The following is a description of the evolving initiative.

Beginnings

It was early in the 50's that I met George Adams. A scientist and mathematician who spent a great deal of his life with Projective Geometrical research. An early publication from 1933 is called «Strahlende Welt-Gestaltung» (*Adams* 1933), a description of the historic development of this Geometry. In London he regularly gave lectures and one day I came to him with questions about a thesis that had to be written for my finals at the Royal College of Art. During this conversation we touched on the questi-