

IV. A M O R C

THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER

By

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Introduction

1. The name of the Group is: The Ancient, Mystical Order Rosae Crucis, generally called "Amorc" and sometimes "The Rosicrucian Order". Its members consider it "A non-sectarian fraternity devoted to the investigation and study of the higher principles of life as found expressed in man and nature".¹

2. Membership is open to any and all who show signs of being "seekers". It is not restricted to any sex, age, religious, nationality, social or business group. It is possible to live apart from the city even where there are no groups, and yet to continue the course of study in a satisfactory manner. Such individuals participate by observing "Lodge Night" at home. The lessons begin with elementary natural principles and work gradually in the direction of a complete understanding of the world and life, and thus no special training or formal education is necessary; this is provided as one progresses.² One of the Order's own statements of policy is:

The organization opens widely its doors to the seeker for that knowledge which will enable him to unfold before his view the pos-

¹Stationery caption.

²The Secret Heritage, pp. 21-25.

sibilities that follow in the path of his mental, psychic, and metaphysical development. It cordially invites, and wholeheartedly welcomes, the inquiring soul and the sincere petitioner for that illumination and that brotherly help which is not afforded by any other organization.³

3. The headquarters of Amorc may be found in San Jose, California.

There is located a Museum, Printing plant, Auditorium, one of the six largest Planetariums in the world, a research library for questions in occult religion, a scientific laboratory and an administration building.

I. History of the Rosicrucian Order

1. The general history of the group is traceable, according to their own alleged records, to Amenhotep IV (1375-1358 B.C.). He is called the "First Grand Master" of the Order. There are said to be valuable pieces obtained in excavations in Egypt which indicate the fact of his membership; these may be found in the Museum at San Jose.⁴

2. Another statement of history says:

The organization is not new in any sense, since it traces its actual historical existence back through the centuries to the mystery schools established by the philosophers and savants in the first century of the Christian era. Its traditional history, filled with romance and alluring stories of achievements in the illumination of civilization can be traced through the pre-Christian eras to the temples of sacred teachings in Egypt, Persia, India, and Chaldea.⁵

3. The members of the local group are likewise insistent on the ancient origins of the group. The proofs of these beginnings are said to be available in the records of the group itself; however, these records are in San Jose, and I do not know whether or not they would be available to persons who were not members.⁶

³The Rosicrucian Path to Power, p. 4.

⁴Conversation with Mrs. Wood. ⁵The Rosicrucian Path to Power, p.3.

⁶Conversation with Mrs. Wood.

II. History in America

1. An article in the Rosicrucian Digest of November, 1938⁷ says that the beginning of the Order in America was with a small group of mystics who settled in a hamlet near what is now Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The date of their coming was April, 1694.

2. Among their works were such accomplishments as: the first free, public, non-sectarian Sunday School that America or Europe ever had; the establishing of the "first botanical gardens for scientific research, the first astronomical observatory, the first paper mills, built the first great organ, and issued some of the first printed pamphlets issued in America, etc."⁸

III. History in Denver

1. A group of Rosicrucians met in the Denver Theatre Building in 1927. They remained active, meeting in various places such as the YMCA, YWCA, Theatres, and in private homes and offices. However, after nine years the group became inactive. This inactivity lasted for two years after which they re-organized and are now meeting regularly. There are said to be 125 members in Denver, of which forty or fifty may be expected to be present at any one meeting. The meeting which I attended was somewhat under this count, there being but twenty people there.

2. Each local chapter such as the Denver group works without any apparent financial output or intake. Each member sends two dollars a month to San Jose for dues. This amount covers the magazine and weekly lesson sheet. This, and a five dollar entrance fee are all the required expenses.

⁷The Emperor, "The First Rosicrucians in America". ⁸Ibid.

⁹The Secret Heritage, p. 15.

3. The local meetings are held on Friday evening. This consists of a study group to discuss the lesson of the week, and a service following which is not open to the public. The meetings are really supposed to be secret and I was able to learn nothing about them save two points: 1. Experiments called "scientific" took part of the secret meeting (though there was no apparatus in the room when the meeting started), and 2. They are similar to the Masonic Lodge (but this also being secret, there was no way for me to check the similarities).

In addition to these meetings there are several parties at different seasons. The largest celebration and evidently a time of special mystical significance to the Rosicrucians is the Rosicrucian New Year. The date is that of the Spring Solstice, usually about March 31.

PART II: THEOLOGY

I. Is AMORC a religion?

A. Presumably those most qualified to say whether this is or is not a religious organization are the Rosicrucians themselves, and they are very careful to say definitely and frequently: "This is not a religion".

B. In the Secret Heritage one may find this statement:

The organization is strictly NOT a RELIGIOUS organization, though it has within its ranks those who are active officers not only in the Rosicrucian movement but in the leading religious movements of the world, as well as those devout followers of every religious sect.⁹

C. They prefer to consider the movement:

"....One of the largest philosophical-scientific movements in the world devoted to individual, personal unfoldment and evolution of a practical and tangible nature, free from any

⁹The Secret Heritage, p. 15.

superstitions or any indulgences in the so-called black arts or theoretical practices such as fortune telling, necromancy, spiritualism, and similar subjects".¹⁰

D. In terms of the analysis which I am making, and in spite of repeated warnings throughout Rosicrucian literature that it is not a religion, I wish to treat it as though it were. The basis for this presumption is that:

1. AMORC serves a religious function in that it aids people in their adjustment to the uncontrollable and undesirable aspects of human experience and helps the individual to feel at home in his Existential Medium.

2. AMORC embodies a reinterpretation of the Existential Medium and the relation of man thereto in terms of his religious needs.

3. AMORC employs various techniques by which the reinterpretation is made meaningful and the religious function is carried on.

II. The Function of religion in AMORC.

A. The primary function of religion, if such it can be called, is to enable individuals to be the masters of their lives. Everyone has problems, difficulties, feelings of inferiority, a sense of ignorance, periods of despondency, fear and hopelessness. AMORC will eradicate all such problems. It will give one a sense of success, of mastery, of the ability not only to help oneself, but to influence others as well.

1. The individual personality is glorified in that it is called to one's attention with all of its potentialities magnified.

¹⁰ The Secret Heritage, p. 15.

2. The possibility of knowing more about the self is indicated as a reason for joining the group.

3. "We find the few who have discovered their real places in life, who are busy at their real missions, and who, as real masters of their careers, are controlling their destinies, creating their fate, and mastering their lives in every sense".¹¹

B. A secondary function, a necessary part of the first, is to provide through instruction, the principles of life by which the mastery of life can be found.

The organization actually performs its beliefs through its many welfare and service departments. It considers its principal duty to so instruct its members that they may individually master and perform each and every one of the principles taught, so that they may demonstrate the efficiency of the system to themselves.¹²

III. The reinterpretation of the Existential Medium and the relation of man thereto.

A. The chief activity seems to be that of discovering natural laws and working through them to human experience. That is to say, a cosmic law is considered in its scientific aspects, and it is then applied to human experience. Thus every law that is found in nature has its being in every human being. If nature contains magnetism, then people are magnetic. If magnets are polarized, then human beings are polarized and are subject to the same laws of polarity which determine the magnetic field of magnets. It should be noticed that this is not a process of analogy which shows likeness between nature and man; it is the actual process of making cosmic law human and individual, and of extending human experience until it has cosmic significance.

1. The lesson which I was able to attend consisted of a

¹¹The Secret Heritage, p. 17. ¹²The Rosicrucian Path to Power, p.1.

two individuals have proved that each of these beings within the one body has its respective powers, abilities, advantages, and possibilities.

long discussion of the behavior of static electricity and magnetic fields. The discussion was similar to that which I recall from a high school physics class on the same subject. Certain experiments were suggested in the lesson, but since none had brought their magnets along they were described but not performed. (Evidently most of them had performed the experiment at home).

2. Following and during the discussion there were suggestions accepted by all that as a magnet has a positive charge and a negative charge, so does every living cell. Some people are charged positively and others negatively. When one does not like another person, it is because they are charged in the same manner, and like repels like. Thus complex human responses may be reduced to a simple formula found in the elementary laws of magnetic attraction and repulsion.

3. It was explained to me that this was a beginner's lesson. Their reason for studying it was that they wanted to review old teachings. (One must progress very slowly in reaching the rank of the high mystics. There is always the lure of the secret soon to be disclosed, even the lesson ended, serial fashion, at an exciting place.)

4. Thus in a sense, their entire effort is in a reinterpretation of the Existential Medium and the relation of man to it.

B. The doctrine of man needs some further explanation. Though the cosmos is evidently one in nature and activity, man is dual.

The Rosicrucians have proved through the years of their past existence that the duality of man makes possible the unfoldment of two individuals in one - the inner man, and the outer man. The Rosicrucians have proved that each of these beings within the one body has its respective powers, abilities, advantages, and possibilities.

The Rosicrucians show, even in their early and primary forms of instruction, that all of the other systems of schools and academic instruction are centered upon the development and unfoldment of the mental and physical possibilities of the outer self, while the greatest powers and latent faculties of the inner self remain dormant, undeveloped, unused, and even unsuspected by the average human being.¹³

C. If there seems to be an inconsistency in the idea of man's likeness to the cosmic order, and his dual nature, it must be regarded as an inconsistency apparent to the beginner, the novice, even to the new member, but which will be taken care of as one advances in study.

IV. The techniques involved.

A. The first technique is to re-establish and teach the wisdom of the ancients. Rosicrucian leaders throughout the ages have kept the wisdom that was handed down to them, have added their bit and passed it on. This wisdom is the "Secret Heritage". It may be found in the archives of the Rosicrucians, but is fortunately in the hands of wise men who will not give it where people are not ready to receive it. In order to get the secrets one must pass through the stages of study and show evidence of progress, by which is meant, belief in the teachings.

1. The Rosicrucians - an august fraternity whose doctrines, hinted by the earliest philosophers, are still a mystery to the unworthy. I do not blame them for their discretion.¹⁴

2. Man is evidently living in a state of lost wisdom and humanity is largely unaware that such knowledge can be found that will enable them to control the very forces of nature. Only Rosicrucianism can point the way to the sincere seeker.

¹³The Secret Heritage, p.16.

¹⁴Lord Edward Bulwer Lytton (A Rosicrucian), ibid., p. 3.

B. The portrayal of a glorious past is one of the first techniques to arouse interest. "All of the ancient records and legends" indicate that there was a time when man was mighty in knowledge. "When men and women had attained the highest degree of mental, physical, and spiritual unfoldment, and possessed all of the wealth of happiness, material blessings, and mystical powers ever dreamed of in the hearts of human beings".¹⁵

1. Man has lost this wisdom through the centuries, but there are a few who know the secret truths. They are the Rosicrucians.

2. The lost continents of Atlantis and Lemuria, now beneath the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, were peopled by wise men and women who had such knowledge.

a. This great knowledge has been given to only a few special leaders in each century, and they have passed it on to a few chosen followers.

b. "In our sanctuary all the hidden Mysteries are preserved intact, they have never been profaned....Our science is the inheritance promised to the Elect."¹⁶

C. The application of psychological principles is used to stimulate experiences which might well be compared in function and nature to the experience of worship or devotion in religion.

1. The Rosicrucian Digest for February, 1939¹⁷ contains an article on the psychological effect of color schemes and their value to occult religion.

¹⁵ The Secret Heritage, p. 3.

¹⁶ Councillor Von Eckhartshausen (A Rosicrucian), ibid., p. 5.

¹⁷ The Rosicrucian Digest, (February, 1939), p. 15.

2. There is something of the New Thought idea contained in such teachings as:

a. As for consciousness, every human has it, but most of them dissipate it in self-pity, false appraisal of their importance, and idle wishes that a fortunate combination of circumstances will suddenly bring them ease, freedom from strife, and the power of wisdom they envy in others. Also, all humanity has the equal right to direct the forces and hidden powers of nature, but most of it lacks the patience and initiative to take time from the fleeting pleasures of the day to seek in these mysteries the lasting contentment and abundance which they conceal.¹⁸

b. The working fire is Action strong and true,
And helps ourselves and friends;
And Speculation is the chimney-flue
Whereby the smoke ascends;
Be busy in trading, receiving, and giving,
For life is too good to be wasted in living.¹⁹

3. Mysticism is of course one of the chief techniques.

It is even considered normal that knowledge gained in occult manner is superior to scientific knowledge. It was said in the lesson I heard that this lesson followed the accepted scientific laws of electricity and magnetism "with but slight modification".

a. "The Cathedral of the Soul" is a Cosmic meeting place for all kinds of the most highly developed and spiritually advanced members and workers of the Rosicrucian Fraternity.²⁰

b. Where can I find such information as I need? Verily, in quiet thought, in a dream, in a book casually passed to you, from somewhere, in some way, the answer will come. If your mind and heart have that rare quality of constancy, you will recognize the answer when it comes.²¹

c. A special psychic contact will be made between the

¹⁸ Pamphlet, Between the Lines, p. 1.

¹⁹ O. J. Rankin, Rosicrucian Digest, (February, 1939), p. 32.

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For information, see any issue of Rosicrucian Digest on subject "Cathedral Contacts".

²¹ Rosicrucian Digest, (November 1938), p. 380.

Imperator and all of the higher degree members on the evening of Friday, November 25, beginning at six o'clock, Pacific time. This day is the birthday of the Imperator, and this is to be in the form of a psychic birthday party.²²

PART III. EVALUATION

I. Any evaluation must be made with definite reservations.

A. The secret practices, which are the real Rosicrucianism, are not known and cannot be included in any evaluation.

B. Since it takes seven years for a member to complete his period of Probation, it is impossible to grasp the real nature of the group in such limited contacts as I have had.

II. First, I should like to commend the sincerity of the people whom I have met who are representative of the group in Denver. Though sincerity is not a test of the truth of conclusions, in such a group as this it is a basic necessity, and these people are deeply sincere.

III. The people, as I was able to sense their nature, were of average intelligence of the high school graduate, some of them possibly having a little bit of further study in business college, chiropractice, or some other business. They were all attracted by the thought of getting scientific knowledge (or better) but had not developed their critical faculties enough to recognize the inadequacy of what they were getting.

IV. The group itself seems to be meeting a need in that it fulfills its function rather well for those who come. Exactly how far it has influenced the individual lives would require much more study, but there is a possible answer in the intense and happy spirit of the meetings which would indicate that it is successful.

V. As for the techniques, I doubt that the scientific experiments

are truly scientific in the technical sense of the word. I question the existence of a past Eden from which certain secret wisdom has been preserved. I think there is certainly some value in the use of psychological principles in the promulgation of any doctrine. And as for mysticism, everyone has his own opinion one way or another, and mime would be insignificant.

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Introduction

This is the third article to be written on the subject of Spiritualism. The first article was written by Joe E. Burns entitled "An Investigation of Spiritualism". This is a very interesting and enlightening article and well worth one's time and trouble to read. The second article was written by Wilbur P. Wood and is entitled "The Trend of Spiritualism". Both of these papers are very thorough and may be found with other articles in bound form, edited by W. H. Bernhardt and entitled Denver Quills. The word "trend" has again been used. If this paper is to be of interest it must show any changes, advances or retreats in the field of spiritualism since the writing of the first two papers. Burns wrote his paper in 1932 and Wood wrote in 1934; now what is the situation in 1939? More will be said concerning these two former papers in a little while.

There are several questions that will be raised in this paper, some of which have only been lightly touched in the previous papers. The question will be raised as to the trend of spiritualism toward conventionality. It is the contention of C. E. Clark in his book entitled Small Sects that most sects or cults tend toward conventionality during the second generation. Is this true of spiritualism? Again the question will be raised as to the class of folks attracted. Are these people

2. Shakers and Unitarianism

1. Books Used in Preparation:

Authorized Rules of a Shaker Community, Mount Lebanon, N. Y., 1894.

Avery, Giles. B. A M O R C: The Rosicrucian Order Albany: Weed-Parsons, 1884.

Darrow, Meacham, Youngs. I. Sources: Christ's First and Second Appearing, Exemplified by the Principles and Practice of the True Church of Christ (Elsewhere credited to Youngs).
Rosicrucian Digest, November, 1938 and February, 1939.

Dixon, Wm. H. The Secret Heritage. Philadelphia: Livingstone Co., 1884, pp. 301-302.

Ferguson, Chas. Conversation with Dr. Wood, one of the local leaders. New York: Shakerday Doran, 1929, pp. 321-325.

Pamphlets:

A Holy, Sacred, and Divine Roll and Book from the Lord God of Heaven to the Inhabitants of the United Society at New Lebanon, New York.
The Evolution of You.
The Rosicrucian Path to Power.
You and the Universe.

Howells, Wm. D., Shakerism: Osgood and Co., 1884, pp. 69-113.

2. Reference:

Lewis, H. Spencer, Rosicrucian Questions and Answers with Complete History of the Order, (This is said to be the only official history; it may be found in any city library in the United States). New York, 1893.

Evans, P. W., Autobiography of a Shaker

Cellibacy from the Shaker Standpoint, New York: 1866.

Compendium of the Origin, History, Principles... of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearance, New York, 1853.

Second Appearance of Christ, Boston: 1853.

Shaker Communism, London: 1871.

Tests of Divine Inspiration, New York: 1873.

Hinds, H. A., American Communities, pp. 32-68.

Robinson, C. B., Complete History of... Shakers, East Canterbury, N.H., 1877.

White, Anna, and Taylor, Lella, Shakerism, Its Meaning and Message, Orem, 1904.