

Harvard's Program for the Evolution of Spirituality

100 Years Rudolf Steiner Conference

***New Perspectives on the Founder
of Anthroposophy, in the
Centennial Year of His Death***

December 15–16, 2025

in Cambridge, MA

Swartz Hall – Harvard Divinity School

Contents

About this Conference	00
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Sunday, December 14

11:00am—~14:30 Events at the Christian Community Church	00
17:00—21:00 Events at the Sheraton Hotel, including Welcome, Keynote by <i>Aaron French & Henry Holland</i>, and Eurythmy Performance	00

Monday, December 15

Presentations 9:00—11:00am	00
11:00—11:15am Break	
Presentations 11:15—13:00	00
13:00—14:00 Lunch	
Presentations 14:00—16:00	00
16:00—16:15 Break	
Presentations 16:15—18:15	00
18:15—19:30 Supper	
19:30—20:45 Keynote at Cader Room: <i>Martina Maria Sam</i>	00

Tuesday, December 16

9:00—10:00am Keynote at Cader Room: <i>Boaz Huss</i>	00
10:00—10:15am Break	
Presentations 10:15am—12:15pm	00
12:15—13:00 Lunch	
Presentations 13:00—15:00	00
15:00—15:15 Break	
Presentations 15:15—16:55	00
16:55—17:10 Break	
Presentations 17:00—18:50	00

Wednesday, December 17

9:30am—~13:30 Events at Divinity Chapel / Divinity Hall	00
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Keynote Speaker Biographies	00
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Presenter Abstracts and Biographies	00
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Basic Information:

The conference will run all day and into the early evening on Monday, December 15 and Tuesday, December 16. Local and national anthroposophical organizations will host additional events nearby throughout the day on Sunday, December 14 and in the morning of Wednesday, December 17. One of the conference keynotes may take place in the evening of the 14th.

The conference is open to all, with no registration fees. It will be a hybrid format, with both in-person and virtual audiences. Questions about the conference can be directed to: pes@hds.harvard.edu.

For more information, Frequently Asked Questions, campus maps, directions, and transportation information, see the conference website:

<https://pes.hds.harvard.edu/steinerconference>.

Address of Conference Venue:

Swartz Hall
45 Francis Ave
Cambridge, MA 02138

About the Conference Organizers:

Aaron French teaches in the international religious studies masters program at the University of Erfurt in Germany. **Henry Holland** is a writer and translator living and working in Hamburg, Germany. **Dan McKanan** serves as the Ralph Waldo Emerson Unitarian Universalist Senior Lecturer at Harvard Divinity School, where he has taught since 2008.

About this Conference

Harvard's Program for the Evolution of Spirituality is delighted to host this special conference marking the centennial of the death of spiritual teacher Rudolf Steiner. The conference will be held at Harvard Divinity School on December 15 and 16, with local and national anthroposophical organizations hosting related events nearby on December 14 and the morning of December 17. Register for the 100 Years Rudolf Steiner Conference below.

This conference marks the centenary anniversary of Rudolf Steiner's death. The driving force behind the esoteric and social reform movement of anthroposophy, Steiner left behind a complicated and transregional legacy. Considering the small number of participants in the movement's first decades, there are few spiritual currents of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that have attracted as much public attention as anthroposophy—and few spiritual leaders who have been subject to as much scrutiny, both critical and sympathetic, especially in the German-language context.

Following a twenty-year period that has seen a huge increase in the quality and the quantity of the scholarship on Steiner and anthroposophy, the centennial of Steiner's death in 1925 offers a perfect opportunity for scholars, practitioners in areas of "applied anthroposophy," such as Steiner education and biodynamic agriculture, and interested members of the public to come together to debate major issues. Our conference goal is to offer new perspectives on Steiner and critical approaches to his legacy, which has been extremely fruitful in multiple fields, from education and organic farming to modern art and architecture. By bringing together a diverse range of scholars and researchers, we hope to shed new light on this legacy and provide a forum to explore complex issues. The conference will feature three keynote addresses and a diverse mix of individual papers.

Below you will find the full conference schedule from December 14-December 16, 2025. Under each day, you will find a drop-down menu organized by time, room, and panel. Find the schedule for Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday below.

Sunday, December 14

At the Christian Community Church of Boston

**366 Washington Street,
Brookline, MA 02445***

The Christian Community is pleased to offer the following activities before the *100 Years Rudolf Steiner Conference*:

11:00am: *The Consecration of The Human Being*

This is our communion service; all who wish to partake in communion are freely invited to do so.

~12:00pm: *Simple Potluck Lunch with Congregation*

1:00pm: Talk by Rev. Jonah Evans:

Rudolf Steiner and The Christian Community: The Purpose and Meaning of the Movement for Religious Renewal

This hour-long talk will be preceded by a short Lyre piece and followed by a 30-minute Lyre concert

Rev. Johan Evans is the Lenker (coordinator) for North America, a Seminary Director, and a priest in the Toronto Congregation.

***Note:** The Brookline Church is conveniently accessible by public transportation. Further, street parking on Sundays in Brookline is free and generally available near the church. Please be aware that a 100+ year-old bank was remodeled into our church; and unfortunately, currently, it is not universally accessible for those with certain physical limitations (i.e., the capacity to manage stairs is necessary). Space is limited to 70 people in our chapel; please email rbower@thechristiancommunity.com with questions.

5:00–9:30pm: *Welcome, Opening Address, Eurythmy*

***Location: The Sheraton Commander Hotel,
16 Garden St, Cambridge, MA***

The Anthroposophical Society in America is pleased to host an Opening Reception for the Harvard Divinity School's *100 Years Rudolf Steiner Conference* on Sunday, December 14, 2025 from 5 to 9:30 pm at the Sheraton Commander Hotel, in close proximity to Harvard Divinity School.

Our gathering will provide opportunity to meet conference presenters, colleagues, and friends, and will include a welcome from *Dan McKanan* (HDS) and *Mary Stewart Adams* (ASA), as well as an interactive opening address with conference organizers *Henry Holland* and *Aaron French* on "Biography in the Mirrors of the Biographers, or Writing the Life of Rudolf Steiner – Empirical Facts, Polemical Insinuations, and Imaginative Insights."

Our evening together will include strolling hors d'oeuvres, a performance by Sea-Anna Vasilas with Eurythmy Spring Valley, and Music in the Light of Anthroposophy with saxophonist Michael Hernandez.

See detailed schedule below

Schedule: Sunday Evening Events at Sheraton Commander Hotel

5pm: Strolling hors d'oeuvres begin

5:15—5:45pm: Welcome with Dan McKanan and Mary Stewart Adams and the Boston Branch of the Anthroposophical Society in America

5:45—6:45pm: Opening Address with Henry Holland and Aaron French (*see next page for description*)

6:45—7:00pm: Q & A for both

7—7:15pm: Transitioning from social space to performance space

7:15—8pm: Eurythmy, directed by Sea-Anna Vasilas with pianist Grigory Smirnov

8—8:15pm: Performance pause

8:15—8:45pm: Music in the Light of Anthroposophy with saxophonist Michael Hernandez

8:45—9/9:30pm: Unstructured togetherness

Aaron French & Henry Holland

5:45—7pm

Biography in the Mirrors of the Biographers, or Writing the Life of Rudolf Steiner – Empirical Facts, Polemical Insinuations, and Imaginative Insights

In this lecture we narrate how Steiner's two major autobiographical texts – *My Life's Course*, serialized in the pages of the *Goetheanum* from December 1923, and the lecture given in February 1913 to the newly-founded Anthroposophical Society – were responses to malicious public polemics. We further explore how both writings color his reception until today, among readers and scholars of all hues. Seeing Steiner and his community as co-shapers of historical processes, rather than as mere victims – their opponents' commitment to violence notwithstanding – we then zoom out to show how third-party descriptions of Steiner's person and companions, from the 1890s and steadily through until after Steiner's death, stamped him as an arriviste, whose popular challenge to dominant knowledge systems was well worth opposing. Aware that knowledge about anthroposophy and Steiner is created out of the societal positions of adherents, opponents, and researchers – and mindful that all research positions consist of privilege and oppression in unequal measures – we conclude by returning to our opening question: How are understandings of Steiner and his work formed in the mirror of biographical imaginations?

Monday, December 15

9:00—11:00am

Note: For all presentation periods, there will be two panels happening simultaneously: in *Cader Room* and *James Room East*. Presenter abstracts and biographies are listed at the end of the booklet.

Cader Room

Panel 1A: Practices of Spiritual Formation (5 papers)

Illuminations on Rudolf Steiner as a Spiritual Teacher. Unpublished Materials from the Rudolf Steiner Archive

Angelika Schmitt

Inclusive Living Thinking: Spiritual Formation and Camphill Communities

Elizabeth Sanders

Religious Education in Rudolf Steiner's Educational Thinking

Carlo Willmann

Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy as a Secularized Religiosity

Zohar Maor

Epistemology as Meditation

Marcelo da Veiga

James Room East

Panel 1B: Steiner's Aesthetics, Modern Art, and Organic Architecture (5 papers)

The Architecture of Living Water: Rudolf Steiner's Aesthetic Cosmology and Spiritual Ecology of Design Practice

Maria Prieto

How Rudolf Steiner's Personal Practice of the Arts and Skilled Craftsmanship Inspired the Creativity of His Students

Reinhold Fäth

The Dawn of Imaginative Knowledge in the Birth of Abstract Art: The Influence of Rudolf Steiner on Artistic Modernism

Arnau Ricart

Visionary Dialogues: Hilma af Klint, Rudolf Steiner, and the Spiritual Aesthetics of the Third Realm

Alexis Braun

Art as Spiritual Pedagogy: The Aesthetic Rigor of Rudolf Steiner

Victoria Reyes

11:00—11:15am Break

Time for a walk, stretching, or enjoying some refreshments

Monday, December 15

11:15—13:00

Cader Room

Panel 2A: Steiner and Christianity (4 papers)

*“Christianity as Mystical Fact” within the Theosophical Context:
Steiner’s Innovative Approach to Esoteric Christian History*

Camden Roy

*Intersection of Esotericism and Human Transformation in Rudolf
Steiner’s Christology*

Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu

How is Steiner’s Mystery of Golgotha Rosicrucian?

Mary Graham

In the Circle of Twelve: Rudolf Steiner as Bodhisattva

Kevin Dann

James Room East

Panel 2B: Steiner’s Goethean Vision of Participatory Research (4 papers)

Rudolf Steiner’s Philosophy of Art

Luke Fischer

Goethe, Steiner, and the Evolution of Science

Craig Holdrege

*Beyond Survival: Kenotic Love, Honeybee Wisdom, and the Spiritual
Science of Evolution*

Terra Malmstrom

*Spiritualizing Science, Scientizing Spirit: Boundary Work among
Anthroposophists in Post-Truth Europe*

Armanç Yildiz

13:00—14:00 Lunch

Time for a walk, stretching, or enjoying some refreshments

Monday, December 15

14:00—16:00

Cader Room

Panel 3A: Social Threefolding, Politics, Economy, and Community I (5 papers)

Belonging in Camphill: Spiritualized Disability and Staggered Knowledge Systems as an Anti-Statist Communal Alternative

Katie Horan

Anthroposophical Anarchism and the Decentralization of the Spirituality

Oliver Ray

Rudolf Steiner and Democracy — Understanding His Relationship to the Democratic Impulse Through the Organizations He Helped Design

Seth Jordan

Rudolf Steiner's Bodily Co-operation as Value Co-creation in Economics Fraternity

Karim Ullah

From Conflict to Connection, Social Healing Through Waldorf-Inspired Practices

Eyal Bloch, and Thom Schaefer

James Room East

Panel 3B: Goetheanism in Practice (5 papers)

Integrating Anthroposophical Principles into Climate-Smart Agriculture: Lessons from Steiner's Goethean Vision

Binta Moustapha

The Further Development of Natural Science through Rudolf Steiner's Reception of Goethe

Matthias Rang

Organic Inquiry, Spiritual Science, and New Possibilities for Research Methodologies

Alison Davis

Organic Geometry

Russell Arnold

Rudolf Steiner's Participatory Insights into the World of Microbes in Nature and Humans as an Outcome of His Goethean Research Approach

Meinhard Simon

16:00—16:15 Break

Time for a walk, stretching, or enjoying some refreshments

Monday, December 15

16:15—18:00

Cader Room

Panel 4A: Social Threefolding, Politics, Economy, and Community II (5 papers)

Social Injustice: LEF vs DEI

Daniel Joseph Polikoff

Rudolf Steiner's Aesthetic Culture, Ecology and Economics

Nathaniel Williams

Anthroposophy's Contributions to Sustainable Development

Johannes Kronenberg

The Dialogue of Social Creation: Rudolf Steiner and the Beloved Community

Christopher Schaefer

Bernard Lievegoed and Gudrun Burkhard as Second-Generation Interpreters of Rudolf Steiner

Angela Assis

James Room East

Panel 4B: Anthroposophical Biographies (5 papers)

Marie Steiner-von Sivers, "Novalis," and the Founding of the first Anthroposophical Society; Köln, Germany, December 1912

Bruce Donehower

Historicizing Karl König: Biography and the Spiritual Legacy of Camphill

Katherine Sorrels

The Self Can Become Spirit: Andrei Bely on Rudolf Steiner's Teaching on the Consciousness Soul

Henrieke Stahl

Michael Chekhov's Biography as an Artistic Expression of Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science

Ismar Smith Rachmann

Pioneering Aspects of Marie Steiner-von Sivers' Work and Anthroposophy's Contribution to Theatre

Gaia Termopoli

18:15—19:30 Supper

Time for a walk, stretching, or enjoying some refreshments

Monday, December 15

7:30–8:45pm (19:30–20:45)

Keynote

Becoming a Spiritual Teacher — Rudolf Steiner's Early Years

Martina Maria Sam

Location: Cader Room

Rudolf Steiner, who was previously known as a Goethe editor and author of philosophical and literary works, surprised his contemporaries when, from the age of 40, he appeared as a spiritual teacher seeking to build on Western spiritual traditions, German Idealism in particular. What makes someone a spiritual teacher? What inner impulses moved him from an early age? What challenges – trials, life crises, experiences of failure – did he encounter on his path? Based on the comprehensive study of original sources and of Rudolf Steiner's own words, this talk will provide an outline of the first forty years of his life.

Tuesday, December 16

9:00–10:00am Keynote

Steiner's Impulse in the Holy Land: The Jewish-Israeli Reception of Anthroposophy

Boaz Huss

Location: Cader Room

Anthroposophy has become a significant presence in contemporary Israeli society. Two branches of the Anthroposophical Society operate in Israel, along with an Anthroposophical kibbutz in the Upper Galilee. Waldorf education, based on Steiner's pedagogical principles, is highly popular, with hundreds of Waldorf kindergartens, schools, and training centers across the country. In addition, several Anthroposophical remedial homes and villages support people with special needs. The widespread success of Anthroposophy in Israel raises intriguing questions. How did the spiritual teachings of Rudolf Steiner, rooted in Western esoteric traditions and incorporating numerous Christological themes, resonate within Israeli Jewish society? How do Israeli Anthroposophists engage with Steiner's negative views on Judaism and Zionism?

This lecture will explore the reception history of Anthroposophy in Israel, from its beginnings in Mandate Palestine to the present, focusing on the efforts of Israeli Anthroposophists to reconcile their Jewish and Israeli identities with their Anthroposophical commitments.

Tuesday, December 16

10:15am—12:15pm

Cader Room

Panel 5A: Historical Roots of Anthroposophical Medicine, Education, and Social Therapy (5 papers)

Educating Children with Complex Destinies: Locating Steiner's Paradigm and the Lauenstein Prototype in the Contested Space Between Humanistic Social Pedagogy and Eugenic Child Psychiatry in 1920s Europe

Jan Goeschel

Unique Features of Steiner's Last Book and the Value of the Anthroposophic View of the Human Being

Michaela Glöckler

The Faculties of the Mind in Waldorf Education: the Epistemological Foundations of the Theory for the Enlightenment of the Practice

Natalia Golovanova

The Sacred and Profane (Intercultural) Roots of Waldorf Education

Matthias Fechner

Translating Anthroposophical Curative Education to Israel: Challenges and Adaptations

Ron Eilon

James Room East

Panel 5B: Waldorf Education in Global and Decolonial Contexts (5 papers)

The Pedagogical Impulse of Rudolf Steiner as a Contribution to the Perspectives Demanded by the Educational Challenges Posed by the Epistemologies of the South

Constanza Kaliks Guendelman

Whose Archetypes? Reexamining Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Child in the Context of Race, Translation, and Storytelling Pedagogies

Peng Liu-Nelson

Discussing the Spiritual and Holistic Perspectives of Waldorf Education from the Viewpoints of Anthroposophy and Mahayana Buddhism

Chih Hung Wang

Root and Renewal: Biodynamics, Cultural Legacy, and the Future of Waldorf Communities

Claudia Nagy

Weaving Spirit and Practice: Reclaiming the Radical Nature of Waldorf Education

Liz Beaven

12:15—13:00 Lunch

Time for a walk, stretching, or enjoying some refreshments

Tuesday, December 16

13:00—15:00

Cader Room

Panel 6A: Historical, Textual, and Empirical Reflections on Anthroposophy, “Race,” and Racism (5 papers)

The Conduct of Anthroposophical Doctors, Pharmacists, and Educators during the Nazi Era (1933–1945)

Peter Selg

Organic Thinking as a Prerequisite for Discussions on Race with a Special Emphasis on India-Britain

Gopi Krishna

Decoupling Racial Stereotypes from the Body of Knowledge Utilized in a Network of Organizations Managed by Meditation Practitioners in Brazil

Rogério Calia

Facing Contradictions: Navigating Race and Diversity in Rudolf Steiner’s Spiritual Science

Cory Eichman

Completing the Circle: Rethinking Cultural Evolution Beyond Eurocentrism

Chiaki Uchiyama Ed.D.

James Room East

Panel 6B: Steiner in Dialogue (5 papers)

Reading Steiner and Whitehead

Ryan Boynton

Rudolf Steiner’s Elemental Phenomenology: From Goethe’s Participatory Method to the Metamorphosis of Consciousness

Matthew David Segall

Spirituality and the Reconstruction of Scientific Epistemology: Goethe, Steiner, and Spiritism Beyond Newtonian Reductionism

Sara Siqueira, Amanda Siqueira, Samuel Andriotte, Gabriel Pádua, Fernando Costa

Social Threefolding and Democracy: Reassessing Rudolf Steiner’s ideas through Hannah Arendt’s Lens

Armin J. Steuernagel, Philip Kovce

Steiner and Sri Aurobindo on Spiritual Evolution and Philosophy

Dr. Ashmita Khasnabish

15:00—15:15 Break

Time for a walk, stretching, or enjoying some refreshments

Tuesday, December 16

15:15—16:55

Cader Room

Panel 7A: Steiner's Philosophical Outlook I (4 papers)

Rudolf Steiner Discovers History: Transitions between Philosophy and Theosophy

Dr. Ansgar Martins

Philosophical Implications of Steiner's Waldorf Pedagogy. A Critique of Ideological Criticism

Jost Schieren

From Nature to Spirit: Rudolf Steiner's Impulse for a New Understanding of Goethe

Iris Hennigfeld

Rudolf Steiner's Nietzschean Phenomenology: Philosophy as the Art of Thinking

Jeffrey Hipolito

James Room East

Panel 7B: Practice of Waldorf Education (4 papers)

Studying the Art of Teaching: Waldorf Teacher Education as a Transformative Process

Peter Lutzker

Using Anthroposophy as a Heuristic Basis for Waldorf Education: A Response to Accusations of the Unscientific Nature of the Theory Behind the Education

Martyn Rawson

Extending Steiner's Soul Tri-Membering into Higher Education: Psychometric Diagnosis and Entrepreneurial Talent Formation in Adults

Mary Angela Nardelli, Tania Stoltz

The Process of Parents' Self-Knowledge Experienced During the Induction of Infants

Felicia Siemsen, Tania Stoltz

16:55—17:10 Break

Time for a walk, stretching, or enjoying some refreshments

Tuesday, December 16

17:10—18:50

Cader Room

Panel 8A: Steiner's Philosophical Outlook II (4 papers)

*Steiner's Trinitarian View and the Philosophy of Mind. A Critique of
Robert Lawrence Kuhn's Landscape of Consciousness Taxonomy*

Terje Sparby

*Beyond Aulasaukaulala - The Philosophical Approach to
Anthroposophy in the Critical Edition (SKA)*

Christian Clement

*The Philosophy of Freedom as an Inner Schooling Path: Results from a
Worldwide Annual Training Program*

Andreas Schmitt, David Martin

*Emotion, Epistemology & the Unclassified Residuum: Steiner's
Challenge to James*

Christopher Germann

James Room East

Panel 8B: Constructive Anthroposophical Responses to Racism (4 papers)

From Rudolf Steiner to Anthroposophy: Spiritual Science Comes of Age
Lucas Dreier

*Understanding Racism through Rudolf Steiner's Psychosophy of the
Seven Life Processes & Fallen-Life Processes*

Billy J. Choi-Gekas

*Reverent Impiety: Reading Steiner's Christian Cosmology Against His
Racialism*

Ashton K. Arnoldy

*Embodying Love: Rudolf Steiner's Phenomenology of Race and its
Relevance for Our Time*

Robert (Karp) Karbelnikoff

Wednesday, December 17

*Location: The Divinity Chapel in Divinity Hall, at
The Harvard Divinity School, 14 Divinity Avenue,
Cambridge, MA 02138*

The Christian Community is pleased to offer the following activities after the 100 Years Rudolf Steiner Conference:

9:30am

The Consecration of The Human Being

Celebrated by **Rev. Oliver Steinrueck**, an Oberlenker and the priest in the New York City Congregation. This is our communion service. **Rev. Jonah Evans** will give a short overview of our service beforehand; all who wish to partake in communion are freely invited to do so.

~10:45am

The Christian Community will host coffee and simple breakfast foods and snacks in The Divinity Chapel, also known as The Emerson Chapel, followed by *an open discussion* about The Christian Community and its sacraments, and *a talk* by the Christian Community priest **Rev. Daniel Kalinov, PhD, M.I.T.**, entitled *Rudolf Steiner as Liturgist: How Did the Eucharistic Service of The Christian Community Develop out of the Tridentine Mass?*

Keynote Speaker

Biographies

Henry Holland and Aaron French

Biography in the Mirrors of the Biographers, or Writing the Life of Rudolf Steiner – Empirical Facts, Polemical Insinuations, and Imaginative Insights



Henry Holland



Aaron French

Henry Holland and Aaron French

Aaron French and Henry Holland have been researching and writing for three years on a new biography, under contract with State University of New York Press: *Modernity's Provocateur: The Young Rudolf Steiner and the Rebirth of Outsider Philosophy* (scheduled for publication 2027). This follows Aaron's published monograph *Max Weber, Rudolf Steiner, and Modern Western Esotericism: A Transcultural Approach* (Routledge, 2025). Henry, an accomplished scholarly translator and editor, who has also been a Translation Fellow at Yale University's Fortunoff Archive of Holocaust Testimonies, first published in this field in 2023, in *German Studies Review*, on "Overlapping Epistemologies in the Thought and Lives of Ernst Bloch and Rudolf Steiner." This will be followed by an extended chapter on "Anti-Racist and Racist Agency in the Work and Thought of Rudolf Steiner and the Anthroposophical Movement," for the *Bloomsbury Handbook of Steiner-Waldorf Education* (postprint, scheduled 2026), ed. Jo Fraser-Pearce, to which Aaron is also contributing an important chapter on "Max Weber and Rudolf Steiner: Sociological Contemporaries."

Parallel to the numerous peer-reviewed articles Aaron has published on the history and present of anthroposophy and western esotericism, and his regular YouTube outreach work on the same subjects, Henry writes regularly for perhaps the only essayistic and edited magazine on Nietzsche today, *NietzschePOP*arts. With Aaron's position in the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen, and Henry based in Hamburg in northern Germany, the two don't have far to travel to embark on further field trips. These journey through still unmapped territory regarding the perennially intriguing and contested subject of their biography.



Dr. Martina Maria Sam

Becoming a Spiritual Teacher — Rudolf Steiner's Early Years

Dr. Martina Maria Sam studied sociology and political science at Heidelberg University, eurythmy and Waldorf education at Witten, and German language and literature and art history at Basel University. She worked for four years as an eurythmist on the Goetheanum stage and has been involved since 1989 in the publication of Rudolf Steiner's Complete Works. From 1997 to 2012, she was head of the Humanities Section at the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum. In 2010, she received her doctorate from the University of Zurich with a thesis on Rudolf Steiner's reception of Goethe's Faust. Since 2011 her research has focused on the early biography of Rudolf Steiner, and she has published her research in two books and numerous articles. Since 2018, she has contributed as a commentator to the edition of Rudolf Steiner's letters. In 2019, she published a catalogue of Rudolf Steiner's Library.



Boaz Huss

Steiner's Impulse in the Holy Land: The Jewish-Israeli Reception of Anthroposophy

Boaz Huss is the Aron Bernstein Chair in Jewish History in the Department of Jewish Thought and serves as the chair of the Goldstein-Goren International Center for Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University. His research focuses on the history of Kabbalah, Western esotericism, New Age culture, and new religious movements in Israel. Huss's recent publications include *Mystifying Kabbalah: Academic Scholarship, National Theology, and New Age Spirituality* (Oxford University Press, 2020), *The Cosmic Movement: Sources, Contexts, Impact* (Bialik Press, 2021, co-authored with Julie Chajes) and *The Secret Doctrine of the Jew: Jewish Theosophists and the Kabbalah* (SUNY Press, 2025).

Presenter Abstracts and Biographies

Monday, December 15

9:00—11:00am

Cader Room – Panel 1A:

Practices of Spiritual Formation
(5 papers)

Angelika Schmitt

Illuminations on Rudolf Steiner as a Spiritual Teacher.
Unpublished Materials from the Rudolf Steiner Archive

Abstract

In his comprehensive study on the history of anthroposophy in Germany, Helmut Zander (2008, I: 716) points out that the history of Steiner's impact as a spiritual teacher is largely unwritten. This talk aims to make a modest contribution to this huge topic from both the early theosophic and the early anthroposophical periods of Steiner's esoteric teaching. For this purpose, some unpublished, in part only recently discovered, materials from the Rudolf Steiner Archive (RSA) will be examined, including: hectographed diagrams in Steiner's handwriting, and meditative drawings by the Russian

symbolist writer Andrei Bely (1880-1934) and the Russian graphic artist Asya Turgeneva (1890-1966).

From Steiner's early theosophical teaching practice, there exist small colored cards with pentagrams and hexagrams and hectographed diagrams, which probably served as meditation templates, handed out to the members of the ES. These materials illustrate how Steiner, as a spiritual teacher of the Theosophical movement, amalgamated various elements of different Eastern and Western occult traditions, and how he strived to relate the different traditions to each other.

Furthermore, the RSA's collection contains 124 meditative drawings by Andrei Bely and four meditation albums by Asya Turgeneva. Many of them bear the date of creation and a commentary, made by Steiner, who, from the summer of 1912 until 1914, closely mentored the meditation progress of the couple. These meditative drawings by Bely and Turgeneva from the last three years of Steiner's activities as spiritual teacher within the ES show no connections to Eastern occult traditions, but on the contrary demonstrate the inclusion of Christian mystic tradition elements.

Through Andrei Bely, Steiner's esoteric teaching practice had a huge impact on Russian literature, as Bely integrated his spiritual experience into his writing practice and developed a new style, called "ornamental prose," which significantly influenced Russian literature throughout the 20th century.

Biography

After having been trained as circus artist at Moscow States School for Circus Art, Angelika Schmitt graduated in Slavic Studies, Philosophy and Business Administration at the universities of Heidelberg and Mannheim and in Waldorf Education at the Institute for Waldorf Education (Alanus University, site Mannheim). Here, from 2010-2017, she was research assistant in the project "Perspectives and concepts of interreligious dialogue and learning. Contributions from Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education". In 2018, she finished her PhD on the hermetic symbolism in Andrei Bely's "History of the Becoming of the Self-Consciousness Soul." Angelika Schmitt worked as teacher at the Intercultural Waldorf school in Mannheim and at the Widar school in Bochum. From 2018-2022, she was Postdoc at the University of

Trier in the DFG Research Group “Russian Language Poetry in Transition”. Since August 2024, she is working as director’s assistant and since April 2025 as co-director of the Rudolf Steiner Archive in Dornach, Switzerland.

Elizabeth Sanders

Inclusive Living Thinking: Spiritual Formation and Camphill Communities

Abstract

This paper explores how the intersection of practical theology and anthroposophical spiritual science can reframe inclusive community as a process of shared spiritual formation. While much of disability theology emphasizes “metaphorical reversal”—subverting dominant norms through the symbolic revaluation of disability—this paper argues that such reversals must be matched by practical methodologies of transformation. Drawing from Camphill communities and Rudolf Steiner’s methodological writings, I propose a framework in which inclusive communities (potentially) function as sites of embodied and transformative pneumatology rather than as institutions of care provision and individual development. In short, I propose that inclusive community living is itself an incarnated or embodied practice of the “living thinking” that Steiner develops throughout his Goethean and later anthroposophic methodological works.

Biography

Elizabeth Sanders studied religion at the University of Texas in Austin before joining the Camphill movement as a volunteer in 2011. Since that time, she has lived and worked in Camphill communities, and currently serves as the Executive Director of the Camphill Academy, the higher education and professional training community of the Camphill movement in North America. She is currently completing her dissertation in Practical Theology at the University of Aberdeen and lives outside of The Camphill School in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Carlo Willmann

Religious Education in Rudolf Steiner’s Educational Thinking

Abstract

Religion certainly plays a significant role in Rudolf Steiner’s educational thinking. This is because Steiner considers religiousness to be a constitutive potential of the human being, which must be fostered in education in accordance with the psychological developmental stages of the child and adolescent. The task is therefore to gradually enable adolescents to determine their religious existence freely and consciously.

Under the aspect of a holistic education, religious elements therefore find their place in the Waldorf school curriculum. Steiner is primarily concerned with an education of feelings and will, which can serve as a foundation for all religions. As a general religious education, it honors all religions and seeks to promote their common spiritual values under the banner of freedom of thought, tolerance, and mutual recognition.

Such concepts can also be found to some extent in reform-oriented religious education in Steiner’s contemporary German-speaking environment, for example in the Munich Method, which represented a catechetical upheaval. Like Steiner, it also sought to harmonize religious education with the development of the child and to give it a theological foundation by referring to the image of God. While the former operates in the field of ecclesiastical-Christian understanding, Steiner focuses on aspects of training as he had previously described them in his theosophy, later supplemented by his anthroposophical understanding of Christ and the Trinity.

This contribution aims to provide a critical insight into the rationale and didactics of religious education at Waldorf schools and its strengths and weaknesses. Can a religious education really be replaced by an education of feelings and will? Can it contribute in a global multi-religious context - even outside the original Christian roots - to a modern and dialogical religious education so that religions will not be in competition with each other, but

rather in cooperation to give humanity lasting spiritual dignity? A few examples may shed some light.

Biography

Carlo Willmann, Prof. em. Dr., born 1956; Studied Catholic theology in Freiburg i.Br., Frankfurt (Germany), and Vienna (Austria), art history in Vienna. Studied Waldorf pedagogy in Mannheim. Religion, history, and art history teacher at Waldorf Schools in Germany and Austria. Lecturer at the Zentrum für Kultur und Pädagogik in Vienna as of 2001. Professor of Religious Education and Ethics at the Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences in Alfter near Bonn (Germany) 2009-2024. Director of the Masters program in Waldorf pedagogy at the Donau-Universität Krems (Austria) since 2009. 2010-2024 Co-Founder and chair of the International Network for Academic Steiner Teacher Education (INASTE) based in Vienna (Austria). Since 2017 Collaboration in the International Teacher Education Project at the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, Dornach (Switzerland). Research and teaching focus on theological anthropology, religious and ethical education, Waldorf education, Christian art. He lives and works in Vienna (Austria).

Zohar Maor

Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy as a Secularized Religiosity

Abstract

In this paper I wish to examine Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy as a secularized religiosity. By this term I refer to de-traditionalized substitutes of religions, catering for the needs of modern Europeans who renounced religions but still yearned for a source of meaning, identity and a non-scientific worldview.

Steiner ventured to balance religious sources of inspiration and secular challenges and demands. This paper aims to explore Steiner's ambivalent attitude to religion and his modern uses of religious traditions. Through the

case of Anthroposophy, I argue, some basic features of secularized religions could be elucidated, namely a declared syncretism; the dichotomous separation between the "inner" and "outer" layers of religion; the turn to worldliness and the recurring preoccupation with questions of identity.

Biography

Dr. Zohar Maor is a senior lecturer at the department of history, Bar-Ilan University (Ramat Gan, Israel). His main fields of interest are Central European intellectual history, German-Jewish intellectuals, secularization and interreligious study. His latest publication is "A Dialogic Theology of Migration: Martin Buber and Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy", Religions15:1 (2024). His book on the theological concept of secularization in interwar Germany, which is the theoretical basis of this proposed paper, is currently under review.

Marcelo da Veiga

Epistemology as Meditation

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between philosophy and meditation, focusing on their historical development and practical dimensions. Philosophy is understood here as the love of wisdom—a pursuit that seeks not only critical distance but also closeness and insight into the essence of reality.

In European history, philosophy emerged as a response to, and eventual replacement for, mythical consciousness. It developed into a rational, dialectical method aimed at understanding nature, human behavior, and social structures. In contrast, the older wisdom traditions of India and China emphasize contemplation and meditation as essential paths to realizing deeper understanding of reality and higher states of consciousness. A culminating concept in these traditions is Brahmadvidya—a form of knowledge (vidya) that seeks to embrace (Brahma) the highest manifestation of reality.

These traditions became known in the West only in the context of British colonialism, and even then, they were often misunderstood or marginalized. Rooted in a pre-European conception of science, they were largely neglected by the Eurocentric framework that came to dominate Western understandings of knowledge. To this day, Western academia tends to ignore or dismiss the idea Brahmayidya and related forms of spiritual science as inferior, despite the existence of European mysticism and the reemergence of ancient wisdom during the 19th century, notably through the Theosophical movement.

In the 20th century, Rudolf Steiner—initially connected to the Theosophical movement—offered a detailed account of meditative practice grounded in epistemological reflection. His approach involves a specific form of observation that engages the spiritual dimension within subject-object consciousness. This pioneering work laid the foundation for a renewed integration of philosophy and meditation into a holistic practice that addresses both the rational and spiritual aspects of human experience. Steiner's approach to meditation, however, goes beyond the popular contemporary practices aimed at stress reduction (MBSR), and remains challenging for many, due to the complexity and abundance of his detailed descriptions of spiritual phenomena.

Biography

Marcelo da Veiga studied Philosophy, Education, German Studies, and Comparative Religious Sciences in Germany and was first appointed to a professorship at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) in Florianópolis, Brazil, in 1993. In the following years, he began consulting private schools and universities on organizational and economic matters and worked for the Software AG Foundation.

In 2002, he became a professor and the founding president of Alanus University, leading and developing the institution for 16 years. Over time, he gained recognition as an expert in private education, serving as a board member of the Association of Private Universities in Germany and as a Consulting Member of the German Accreditation Council (Akkreditierungsrat). He is also the academic coordinator for program

accreditation at FOM and AKAD University and a member of the Board of Trustees at Heliopolis University in Cairo.

His academic expertise lies in the philosophy of education and social transformation, with a particular emphasis on Steiner Studies and Anthroposophy in academic contexts and holistic education in general. He is actively engaged in Waldorf teacher training programs and supervises Ph.D. research in this field.

Monday, December 15

9:00—11:00am

James Room East – Panel 1B:

Steiner's Aesthetics, Modern Art, and Organic Architecture (5 papers)

Maria Prieto

The Architecture of Living Water: Rudolf Steiner's Aesthetic Cosmology and Spiritual Ecology of Design Practice

Abstract

This paper reexamines Rudolf Steiner's architectural thinking as a vital expression of anthroposophy's spiritual and ecological imagination. Focusing on the interplay between aesthetics, water, and the transformative potential of form, the study situates Steiner's built projects—especially the first and second Goetheanum—within broader currents of spiritual modernism, ecological design, and Western esotericism. It argues that Steiner's architecture functioned not merely as symbolic

cosmology but as a material practice for cultivating perception, ethical awareness, and ecological attunement. By drawing on methods from architectural history, environmental humanities, and esotericism studies, the paper positions Steiner as an experimental designer whose work anticipated contemporary discussions on the affective and moral dimensions of space. Special attention is given to Steiner's treatment of water as both substance and symbol—a mediator of etheric life, rhythm, and spiritual becoming. This element becomes a lens for interpreting the fluid morphologies of his architectural forms and their embodied, perceptual effects. The paper also traces Steiner's influence on post-anthroposophical ecological design, particularly the work of John Wilkes and the Institute of Flowform, whose water-sculpting technologies draw directly from Goethean science and Steiner's aesthetics. These installations exemplify a form of "living technology" that bridges science, art, and moral perception. Finally, the paper puts Steiner in conversation with contemporaneous figures such as Bruno Taut and the Bauhaus, exploring shared commitments to spiritualizing form while highlighting divergent ontologies of material and modernity. In doing so, the paper contributes to a growing reappraisal of Steiner as an architect of spiritual ecology—offering an underrecognized legacy of design as a cosmopolitical and ethical practice, deeply resonant with current ecological and esoteric discourse.

Biography

Maria Prieto is a curator, an architect, an artist, a scholar, a dancer and a somatic educator. With doctoral backgrounds from The University of Manchester (anthropology of architecture, ANT and STS) and California Institute of Integral Studies (somatic psychology), her work centers on reassembling the aesthetic, ethical, and political dimensions of human and more-than-human modes of co-existence and resistance amid extractive forces during a time of polycrisis. Her recent research centers on water-informed architectural practices, with recent presentations including "Numinous bodies of water: Learning from planetary water activism," presented at Numinous Earth: Ecopsychology at the edge (California Institute of Integral Studies), "Altered waters: The psychic watery flows of planetary resistance," presented at Sensory histories of water (Museu

Marítim de Barcelona), and "Towards water assemblies: The watery co-agency in Mar Menor amid polycrisis," forthcoming in *Projections 18: Planning for Polycrisis* (The MIT Press).

Reinhold Fäth

How Rudolf Steiner's Personal Practice of the Arts and Skilled Craftsmanship Inspired the Creativity of His Students

Abstract

How Rudolf Steiner's personal practice of the arts and skilled craftsmanship inspired the creativity of his students.

The paper's title indicates an answer to the panel's question on Steiner's Aesthetics, Modern Art, and Organic Architecture: How did Steiner's personal practice of the arts and skilled craftsmanship inspire or constrain the creativity of his students?

Anyone who studies the art history of the anthroposophical movement, which has been around for over a hundred years, can understand the justification for the polarized question, because one can perceive phenomena in both directions: "inspired" and seemingly "constrained" creativity of Steiner's followers in the areas mentioned. My paper focuses on the pole of inspired students in the fields of painting, sculpture and Studio Furniture (as an integral part of organic architecture) who did not learn about Steiner's artistic impulses through later anthroposophical art schools. The paper will show numerous early examples from both areas – exemplary works of art, many of which have not yet been published – to provide ample evidence of inspired creativity.

The theme of the panel includes the question of Steiner's aesthetics, which provides a framework for any anthroposophically inspired art production, whether judged as inspired or limited. Each judgment should reflect its own aesthetic presuppositions and be adapted to the particular aesthetic goals an artist wishes to pursue. Steiner's aesthetics deals with the apparent paradox of unrestricted artistic freedom and the simultaneous

creation of a New Style that spiritually encompasses all the arts. A brief reflection on Steiner's aesthetics will therefore be integrated into the lecture.

Biography

Prof. Dr. Reinhold J. Fäth After training as an artist (painting) and art therapist, he worked in a drug rehabilitation clinic and at a Camphill school for children with special needs on Lake Constance in Germany. He later earned a German master craftsman's certificate in cabinetmaking and a PhD in art history from the University of Konstanz. He taught art therapy and art (painting, drawing, composition) at the HKS Ottersberg and FH Kunst Arnstadt universities of applied sciences in Germany. His current research focuses on the effects of visual arts and interior design on the human psyche from a spiritual perspective. He has published books on the spiritual functionalism of Rudolf Steiner's design and on anthroposophical art history.

Arnau Ricart

The Dawn of Imaginative Knowledge in the Birth of Abstract Art: The Influence of Rudolf Steiner on Artistic Modernism

Abstract

The present research aims to determine and document the influence exerted by the thought of Doctor Rudolf Steiner on the theory and practice of the main artists of the early 20th century, more specifically those who gave Western art a new direction by eliminating the representational content of the works and embracing a purely abstract language. Among these pioneering artists is undoubtedly the Russian Wassily Kandinsky, considered one of the first to explore the possibilities of this new abstract language. Kandinsky not only attended some of the conferences and lessons given by Dr. Steiner in the city of Munich, but there is evidence that he read

some of the works of the aforementioned Dr. Steiner, as is evident from the presence of these works in the painter's personal library.

The investigation proposes a reading of the modern art movement, not only from its visual and formal dimension, but also through a holistic approach that integrates philosophical and spiritual thought. The figure of Rudolf Steiner, is a hitherto little-recognized influence in the history of modern art, bringing us closer to a new interpretation of avant-garde movements and the development of abstract art.

By revisiting Rudolf Steiner's influence on artists such as Wassily Kandinsky it is offered a unique perspective on how art can be a means for exploration and connection to deeper dimensions of reality. This understanding can help to recover a vision of art as a vehicle for transformation and knowledge.

Biography

Arnau Ricart Sanmartin is a doctoral researcher at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, Spain. His current PhD project (expected 2026) explores the emergence of imaginative knowledge in early abstract art, focusing on Rudolf Steiner's influence on modern artistic movements. In 2025, he is also completing a specialization course in cultural data analysis titled Cultural Art Data; A Creative Approach at the University of Glasgow.

He studied Anthroposophy at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland (2022–23), and trained as a Waldorf teacher at Rudolf Steiner School in Kings Langley, UK (2015–16). He holds a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Barcelona, the Polytechnic University of Valencia, and Palacký University in the Czech Republic (2007–11). His professional experience includes teaching art and drawing at public high schools in Barcelona and working as an educational coordinator at a center for people with special needs in Calldetenes, Catalonia (2011–13).

Alexis Braun

Visionary Dialogues: Hilma af Klint, Rudolf Steiner, and the Spiritual Aesthetics of the Third Realm

Abstract

In the early twentieth century, Rudolf Steiner articulated a vision of art as a transformative spiritual practice—capable of restoring a diminished capacity for spiritual activity in a culture increasingly shaped by materialist tendencies. He viewed art as a vehicle for cultivating imagination, inspiration, and intuition—essential stages of spiritual knowing—and sought to bridge sensory perception and spiritual insight through what he termed a “third realm” between the material and the conceptual.

This paper explores how Steiner’s personal practice of the arts—and his evolving Goethean aesthetic philosophy—inspired, shaped, and at times subtly constrained the artistic evolution of the visionary Swedish artist Hilma af Klint. Af Klint’s creative engagement with Steiner’s teachings provided both a vital source of inspiration and a complex philosophical framework that she navigated with both receptivity and critical discernment. Her evolving practice demonstrates how this lineage could both catalyze new creative directions and invite transformative divergence. In my broader research, I present af Klint as an integral artist and visionary epistemologist—an artist whose work constitutes both a visual language and a profound mode of spiritual knowing. Her engagement with Steiner’s teachings and Goethean methods deepened her capacity to create art as a revelatory and epistemic practice. Yet she extended and transformed these teachings: through collaborative process, mediumistic reception, and architectural vision, she forged a relational and spiritual aesthetic uniquely her own, developed in conversation with, yet moving beyond, the esoteric, philosophical, and cultural contexts of her time.

Af Klint’s oeuvre invites a postcolonial emic revaluation attuned to metaphysical realism and ecological consciousness—revealing the potential of this lineage, shaped through her visionary engagement with Steiner’s aesthetic philosophy, to unfold beyond its original formulations. In doing so,

af Klint’s practice both enriches and extends Steiner’s vision of art as a third realm—demonstrating how spiritual aesthetics might evolve in response to the relational and ecological challenges of our time.

Biography

Alexis Braun is a visual artist, scholar, and doctoral student in the Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness program at the California Institute of Integral Studies. Her research centers on the role of art as a mode of spiritual and epistemic inquiry, with particular attention to female artists whose visionary practices challenge dominant formalist frameworks. Braun’s work positions Hilma af Klint as an integral artist and visionary epistemologist—whose oeuvre invites postcolonial, metaphysical, ecopoetic, and relational approaches to aesthetics and knowledge production. More broadly, she is interested in how artistic processes function as interventions within cultural, ecological, and epistemic paradigms. Braun draws on feminist and postcolonial theory, metaphysical realism, esoteric lineages, and ecopoetic perspectives to explore the transformative capacities of art and imagination. She has presented at Harvard Divinity School’s Spirituality and the Arts conference and is a practicing visual artist and former textile designer with a background in printmaking.

Victoria Reyes

Art as Spiritual Pedagogy: The Aesthetic Rigor of Rudolf Steiner

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy and Waldorf education, considered art to be a vital conduit between the physical and spiritual realms. Steiner himself practiced art in various mediums—painting, sculpture, architecture, and movement, and it deeply informed his pedagogical approach. He believed that specific colors, shapes, and forms possess inherent spiritual qualities and that these are aligned with the

developmental stages of the human being. This is at the core of Waldorf pedagogy.

Steiner's artistic style and beliefs about form and color have inspired numerous artists of his time and beyond. Edith Maryon collaborated with Steiner on the monumental sculpture *The Representative of Humanity*, embodying his spiritual ideals in visual form. Liane Collot d'Herbois developed a therapeutic painting approach based on Steiner's philosophies, layering colors to evoke healing experiences. Beyond Europe, artists like Akira Kasai and Amanda Sage were inspired by Steiner's ideas and reflected the global impact on spiritual art.

However, it can be argued that Steiner's specific artistic directives have sometimes been applied with rigidity or exclusivity among some of his followers, potentially constraining individual creativity. This can happen, for example, when teachers apply art's therapeutic indications but, in doing so, inadvertently disregard the cultural context of the students in front of them and thereby create a constraint. Steiner perceived art as a dynamic expression of the human experience, deeply intertwined with the spiritual and cultural currents of its time. He believed that art should not remain static but evolve in response to the changing consciousness and needs of humanity.

This work will explore the complex nature of Steiner's artistic legacy—how the integration of art and spirituality inspired profound creativity in one way while concomitantly constraining artistic autonomy. I posit that if we stand back far enough, we might see that the perceived paradox of being both inspiring and constraining can be reconciled through the lens of contextual complexity. Structured indications and agile, contextually informed approaches can coexist, fostering art that resonates with both timeless spiritual principles and contemporary human experiences.

Biography

Victoria Reyes has been in Waldorf education for over 20 years and serves on the Pedagogical Section Council of North America and the board of Trustees for the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Victoria was employed at the Austin Waldorf School for 19 years, and in 2024, she moved to New York City, where she is currently the Learning Support

Coordinator at the Rudolf Steiner School in Manhattan. Victoria also works as a consultant to Waldorf schools and is passionate about helping Waldorf school communities pause for reflection with intention and awareness as they grow into the future. Victoria values the profound wisdom found in Waldorf education, as well as her background in anthropology and systems thinking. She believes that human society today is tasked with bringing inquiry to spaces where we have been on autopilot, behaving based on the dominant narrative of mostly dualistic structures that limit our ability to perceive the more complete, diverse, multi-faceted, and complex world reality. Victoria believes in generating practices that can evolve in every direction toward healthy connections and relationships between ourselves and society.

Monday, December 15

11:15—13:00

Cader Room – Panel 2A:

Steiner and Christianity (4 papers)

Camden Roy

*“Christianity as Mystical Fact” within the Theosophical
Context: Steiner’s Innovative Approach to Esoteric
Christian History*

Abstract

This paper examines Rudolf Steiner's early work, *Christianity as Mystical Fact* (1902) within the context of Theosophical interpretations of early Christian history. Contemporary Theosophists such as Annie Besant and G. R. S. Mead constructed narratives of Christian history which emphasized the

decline from an original mystery tradition, either through the rise of an exclusivist Catholic Church or the decline of suitable initiates. Steiner, by contrast, presents early Christian history as one not of decline, but of evolutionary development. Drawing on similar sources as Besant and Mead, Steiner develops a dual-trajectory model of Christian initiation that embraces both esoteric and gnostic currents which continue from the pre-Christian Mysteries and a uniquely Christian universalizing faith-based path inaugurated by Christ.

Steiner's dual-trajectory model of the Christian Mysteries is an innovative intervention within the Theosophical discourse surrounding early Christianity at the turn of the century. In the esoteric current of his model, he embraces the diversity of early Christian belief identified by Mead in *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (1900) and allows for its continued development by the Christian mystics whom Besant had identified in *Esoteric Christianity* (1901). Steiner's attention toward the universalizing aspects of early Christian history moves beyond Theosophical approaches, allowing him to embrace controversial figures such as St. Augustine within his lineage.

This study builds upon Helmut Zander's work on Rudolf Steiner's Christology to offer new perspective on Steiner's relationship to Theosophy as it pertains to discourse surrounding Christianity. Through a comparative study of Mead, Besant, and Steiner's constructions of early Christian history, Steiner's continuities with and radical departures from the Theosophical Society's views are highlighted. Even at this early date, Steiner had already innovated upon the existing Theosophical models and provided the basis for his later, more extensive, Anthroposophical perspectives on Christianity.

Biography

Camden Roy is a PhD Student in the Department of Religion at Rice University specializing in Early Christianity and the History of Religions. His dissertation is titled "Theosophical Constructions of Early Esoteric Christian History (1870–1930)" and focuses on the reception of early Christian history (especially Gnosticism and other esoteric currents) and contemporary scholarship on Christianity by Anna Kingsford, H.P. Blavatsky, G.R.S. Mead, and others.

Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu

Intersection of Esotericism and Human Transformation in Rudolf Steiner's Christology

Abstract

This study explores the transformative potential of Rudolf Steiner's esoteric Christology, where Christ is revealed as a cosmic reality that intersects with human evolution and spiritual growth. Steiner's spiritual science offers a profound understanding of Christ's role in shaping human consciousness, facilitating inner transformation, and awakening higher states of awareness. Through an in-depth analysis of Steiner's works, this research examines the esoteric dimensions of Christ, including the Christ impulse, the Mystery of Golgotha, and the Resurrection. It highlights the significance of Christ as a catalyst for human transformation, enabling individuals to transcend limitations and realize their spiritual potential. The intersection of esotericism and human transformation is explored through the lens of Steiner's Christology, revealing the potential for individuals to experience spiritual rebirth, inner awakening, and a deeper understanding of their place within the cosmic order. This study demonstrates how Steiner's esoteric Christology offers a powerful framework for personal transformation, spiritual growth, and self-realization. By examining the cosmic dimensions of Christ in Steiner's work, this research provides new insights into the transformative power of the Christ impulse and its relevance to contemporary spiritual seekers. It offers a rich foundation for those seeking to explore the mysteries of the human condition, the nature of consciousness, and the potential for spiritual evolution. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of Steiner's spiritual science and its applications for personal transformation, spiritual growth, and esoteric knowledge.

Biography

Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, PhD, is a Professor of African Philosophy and Religious Traditions and Director of Research and Publications at Veritas University, Abuja. He is also a Tenured Professor of African Theology with the University of America, Temecula, USA, and an adjunct to Tansian University, Umunya, Saint Augustine's Major Seminary, Jos, Augustinian Institute, Makurdi, and the Institute for Consecrated Life in Africa, Abuja. Kanu is the founder of the Association for the Promotion of African Studies and a proponent of Igwebuiké Philosophy, which he has applied as an underlying principle to his research in African Christology, religion, and culture. Some of his works include: *Towards an Igbo-African Christology: A Cultural Christological Construct in Post-Missionary Africa*, London; *African Eco-Theology: Meaning, Forms and Expressions*, London; *African Ecological Spirituality: Perspectives in Anthroposophy and Environmentalism*, London.

Mary Graham

How is Steiner's Mystery of Golgotha Rosicrucian?

Abstract

Christ's incarnation and subsequent death on earth, which Steiner refers to most often as the Mystery of Golgotha, was central to Steiner's worldview. Why was this event of paramount importance for Steiner? How is it Rosicrucian in its nature?

Steiner understood the historical event as the archetype of a transcendent reality that can – and ideally should – take place within us. Steiner saw the Mystery of Golgotha as the archetype for the spiritualization of matter. As he saw it, materialistic thinking has 'killed' our capacity to feel religious, making it crucial, in his view, that we infuse our conceptual thinking with feeling. Steiner himself pointed out that this process is essentially Rosicrucian in character, and saw the entirety of his work as in line with the Rosicrucian impulse to unite knowledge with love.

Steiner's own powerful spiritual experience of the Mystery of Golgotha at the turn of the century led him to look at esoteric Christian sources in a new

way, and I will argue that the Rosicrucian understanding of the Trinity echoed his own experience of the Mystery of Golgotha as an archetype, but also a dynamic, living reality. I will elaborate on the Rosicrucian element that Steiner quoted most, arguing that Steiner found profound meaning in the way it expressed the Trinity as activities. We see this echoed in the way he formulated the Trinity in his liturgy for the Christian Community movement for religious renewal: each person of the Trinity is connected with a particular inner activity.

In conclusion I will tie these Trinitarian activities in to the image of the Mystery of Golgotha: Steiner believed that we can come to experience this union of knowledge and love, which is essentially a communion with God, in our thinking. In that way, our thinking can become a sacrament that has its archetype in the Mystery of Golgotha.

Biography

Mary Graham is an American living in Europe. She has been working 10+ years as an academic editor for various universities worldwide, and as a translator for German texts associated with anthroposophy. She holds a BA magna cum laude from Middlebury College, Vermont, and a MA magna cum laude from University of Amsterdam, both in cultural anthropology. She has also engaged in several anthroposophical trainings: eurythmy, biodynamic gardening, Goethean studies, and priest seminary. She is now working on a PhD at the religious studies department of Groningen University in the Netherlands. The dissertation is a phenomenological ethnography of the eucharist service of the Christian Community (Christengemeinschaft), for which she has been studying Steiner's Christology.

Kevin Dann

In the Circle of Twelve: Rudolf Steiner as Bodhisattva

Abstract

From 1904 until 1924, in dozens of lectures and books, Rudolf Steiner repeatedly described the Principle of the Twelve as a central aspect of nearly all the ancient Mystery streams – both East and West – and made

stunning new revelations about this principle within the context of Christian–Rosicrucian mystery teachings. He also actively integrated this principle in his development of new impulses for pedagogy, natural science, and the arts.

Though he gave over 100 lectures (most between 1909 and 1912) that touched on the nature and role of the Bodhisattvas, Rudolf Steiner never spoke of his own position within Earth’s most significant Circle of Twelve – the Twelve Bodhisattvas around the Logos, who, incarnating century–after–century, perform deeds of service to Christ in order to advance the divine plan of world evolution.

This paper will discuss Rudolf Steiner’s role as the Aries Bodhisattva – the Bodhisattva of thinking who bears the Sun Archangel Michael – through his previous incarnations and also within the context of the other members of the Circle of Twelve Bodhisattvas who incarnated in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Biography

A historian of American natural history and ecology, I have taught Native American History at Rutgers University; Environmental History at University of Vermont; the History of Science at Arizona State University, University of Minnesota and the University of Oklahoma, and Modern Global History at SUNY Plattsburgh. My books include: *Bright Colors Falsely Seen: Synaesthesia and the Search for Transcendental Knowledge* (Yale UP: 1998) *Across the Great Border Fault: The Naturalist Myth in America* (Rutgers UP: 2000); *Expect Great Things: The Life and Search of Henry David Thoreau* (2017) and *The Road to Walden* (Penguin: 2018); *Enchanted New York: A Journey Along Broadway Through Manhattan’s Magical Past* (NYU Press: 2020). I am co–author with Robert Powell of two books based upon the scientific work of Rudolf Steiner: *Christ & the Mayan Calendar* (Lindisfarne: 2009) and *The Astrological Revolution* (Steiner Books: 2010). I am currently a Contributing Editor at Public Domain Review.

Monday, December 15

11:15—13:00

James Room East – Panel 2B:

Steiner’s Goethean Vision of Participatory Research (4 papers)

Luke Fischer

Rudolf Steiner’s Philosophy of Art

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner is often seen by those who lack a genuine familiarity with his work as a cultural anomaly or as an outsider to the mainstream European tradition. However, as Owen Barfield (the foremost British exponent of anthroposophy) and Steiner himself sought to illustrate in various lectures and books (including *The Riddles of Philosophy* and *The Riddle of Man*), he is in fact a successor of German idealism and romanticism. It is, moreover, only by situating Steiner’s thought in connection to these broader traditions that his originality and relevance can be justly appraised. Beginning with a consideration of Steiner’s early lecture “Goethe as Father of a New Aesthetics” (1888), this paper will specifically show how Steiner developed his philosophy of art, which is a key to much of his thinking, through drawing on the aesthetics of both Schiller and Goethe, and distinguishing his own position from that of Schelling and Hegel.

“Goethe as Father of a New Aesthetics” contains the seed of Steiner’s later ideas about art and his practice as an artist in various disciplines (including architecture, drama and eurythmy). Moreover, the ideas in this early lecture played a vital role in the development of Steiner’s theory of knowledge and ethics in his most important philosophical work, *The*

Philosophy of Freedom (1893). As Steiner writes in his autobiography, at the time of his contemplation of a Goethean aesthetics: “true knowledge, the manifestation of the spiritual in art, and the moral will in man became in my thought the members which unite to form a single whole.” This paper will elucidate how Steiner’s philosophy of art responds to German idealism, provides the stepping stone to his Philosophy of Freedom, and plants the seed for his theory and practice as an artist in his theosophical and anthroposophical periods.

Biography

Luke Fischer (PhD, University of Sydney) is a philosopher, poet, and author of six books, including the monographs *Philosophical Fragments as the Poetry of Thinking: Romanticism and the Living Present* (Bloomsbury, 2024) and *The Poet as Phenomenologist: Rilke and the “New Poems”* (Bloomsbury, 2015), and his third collection of poetry *A Gamble for my Daughter* (Vagabond Press, 2022). His co-edited volumes include *The Seasons: Philosophical, Literary and Environmental Perspectives* (SUNY Press, 2015), Rilke’s “Sonnets to Orpheus”: *Philosophical and Critical Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, 2019) and a special section of the *Goethe Yearbook 22* (2015) on “Goethe and Environmentalism.” Fischer is an Honorary Associate in Philosophy at the University of Sydney. For more information, visit: www.lukefischer.net

Craig Holdrege

Goethe, Steiner, and the Evolution of Science

Abstract

From the perspective of my work as a practitioner in education and research in the life sciences, I discuss key features of a Goethe-Steinerian approach to scientific inquiry. I focus on essential elements of this participatory way of knowing that finds expression in Goethe’s own practice of science and that Steiner elucidates and develops further in his own work. As a phenomenological practice, the intent is to let phenomena illuminate phenomena to reveal their connections. This only becomes possible when a

careful study of phenomena is wedded with a heightened awareness of thinking and with its ongoing transformation. Instead of imposing conceptual frameworks, thinking can become ever more flexible by participating in the diverse phenomena of a field of study, giving keen attention to what this interaction reveals. Ultimately, thinking can develop into a spiritual organ to perceive the relations that give phenomena their meaning. The practice is based on an expanded understanding of experience that encompasses phenomena given to the senses and to the mind, and it entails a radical commitment to experience in all inquiry. From this perspective, the shortcomings of purported theoretical and mechanistic “explanations” in science become clear and can be articulated. At the same time, the expanded view of phenomena and experience, which is mainly implicit in Goethe and made explicit by Steiner, opens up an understanding of the relation of Goethe’s natural science to what Steiner developed as spiritual science. Steiner went beyond Goethe’s natural science in developing his spiritual science, while recognizing the deep concordance between their approaches and the importance of Goethean natural science into the future.

Biography

Craig Holdrege, Ph.D., is co-founder and director of The Nature Institute in Ghent, NY, an organization dedicated to developing Goethean phenomenology and a participatory understanding of the natural world (www.natureinstitute.org). He is deeply interested in the interconnected nature of things and how we can transform our thinking and perception to understand life in truly living ways as a basis for responsible human action. He carries out whole-organism studies of plants and animals, and also provides commentaries on scientific thinking and new developments in the biological sciences. Craig is the author of many articles, monographs, and books, including “Thinking Like a Plant: A Living Science for Life” and “Seeing the Animal Whole – And Why It Matters.” He gives talks, workshops, and courses nationally and internationally.

Terra Malmstrom

Beyond Survival: Kenotic Love, Honeybee Wisdom, and the Spiritual Science of Evolution

Abstract

This presentation explores kenotic love—self-emptying love—as a transformative tenet within human and ecological evolution through Steiner’s anthroposophy (spiritual science) and the symbolic wisdom of the honeybee. In Steiner’s Bees lectures, Steiner portrays the hive not merely as a biological marvel but as a moral organism: a living embodiment of cooperative service, devotion, and altruistic community.

Building on Goethean science’s call for immersive, participatory observation, this research treats the honeybee not as an object of detached study but as a living moral presence—revealing evolution as an unfolding of spiritual principles rather than mechanistic survival. This presentation positions the hive as an archetype for developing human consciousness beyond egoic individualism and mechanistic Darwinian frameworks. It critiques the Darwinian extension of Newtonian thinking, which omits purpose, interiority, and moral meaning from evolutionary narratives.

This topic is located in Panel Three, which discusses Steiner’s Goethean approach and the growth of participatory spiritual science. The piece extends the criticism of Newtonian thinking from Steiner and Goethe by considering Darwinian evolution as its biological successor, a framework that, like Newton’s, excludes purpose, interiority, and moral meaning from nature and, more specifically, evolution. This research uses the honeybee as more than metaphor; the honeybee itself becomes a living expression of evolution guided by spiritual principles.

The research combines contemplative inquiry with neuroscience, anthroposophical cosmology, and Waldorf pedagogy to study kenotic love in natural and human systems. The inquiry establishes that love functions as the leading transformative force defining our upcoming era. Instead of survival, there is thrival of the altruistic. This study advocates for a renewed connection with nature because its wisdom has transitioned from being

concealed to being disregarded. It invites readers and practitioners to embrace an evolutionary shift that moves beyond competition toward communal relationships.

Biography

Terra Malmstrom is a Waldorf educator, neuroscientist, and spiritual researcher whose work explores the convergence of science, ecology, and contemplative inquiry. She holds a Ph.D. in Transformative Studies from the California Institute of Integral Studies, where her dissertation examined—kenotic love—as an evolutionary principle through the lens of anthroposophy and honeybee sociality. She also holds master’s degrees in neuroscience and Waldorf education and brings over four decades of experience as a research scientist and educator.

Terra has taught in Waldorf high schools across the U.S., served as a department chair, Kolisko conference presenter, and currently works as a science teacher and guidance counselor in Ridgway, Colorado. She is also a Waldorf Practical Arts Training (WPAT) lecturer. A certified Master Beekeeper and Advanced Master Gardener, she brings a biodynamic and Goethean sensibility to her work. Her research integrates participatory methods to bridge inner development with ecological and cultural renewal.

Armanc Yildiz

Spiritualizing Science, Scientizing Spirit: Boundary Work among Anthroposophists in Post-Truth Europe

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner famously called Anthroposophy “spiritual science.” In founding the Anthroposophical Society, Steiner aimed at bringing together occult knowledge, natural science, and Christianity. Despite their official discourse, which does not deny natural science but sees it as “one layer of reality,” their followers did constitute one of the two largest groups in demonstrations against Covid-19 measures in Germany, the other group being the Neo-Nazis. This paper examines how Steiner’s concepts about

science are mobilized within contemporary anthroposophical circles and beyond, particularly focusing on their official training programs conducted at their global headquarters in Dornach, Switzerland.

Employing Thomas Gieryn's concept of "boundary work," I look at how they try to strike a balance between spiritual knowledge that originates from the writings of Steiner and their subjective experience, and scientific knowledge of the body. In these trainings, they engage in a double movement: On the one hand, they employ a scientific language to talk about spiritual phenomena, thus authorizing their spiritual knowledge. On the other hand, they spiritualize science by claiming the centrality of subjective experience for an understanding of reality, that is at once physical and spiritual. By focusing on a variety of exercises offered to develop the spiritual organs of the "new human," I ethnographically engage with Anthroposophy as an object of study that connects science and spirituality in a post-truth and post-pandemic Europe.

Biography

Arman Yildiz is a postdoctoral researcher at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He received his doctoral degree from the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University, with a secondary degree in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. His work stands at the intersections of the anthropology of the body, race, sexuality, spirituality, and science.

Monday, December 15

14:00—16:00

Cader Room – Panel 3A:

Social Threefolding, Politics, Economy, and Community I (5 papers)

Katie Horan

Belonging in Camphill: Spiritualized Disability and Staggered Knowledge Systems as an Anti-Statist Communal Alternative

Abstract

In this chapter, I consider how people with different relationships to disability, practicality, science, spirituality, religion, and philosophy cultivate belonging within a Biodynamic garden. I argue that Camphill communities cultivate a twofold sense of belonging, primarily by employing Biodynamic Agriculture's staggered knowledge system such that people with conflicting relationships to Spiritual Science can coexist amicably. The possibility of a spiritual reality, whether taken seriously or viewed with incredulity, is grounded in practical behaviors that unifies residents. Thus, belonging itself is rooted in shared behaviors that are postured towards spiritual reality. Since the setup of knowledge builds upward from practical insight, everyone who is a participating member of the community has satisfied the knowledge requirement to belong. A secondary argument I make is about disabled belonging. The concept of spiritual reality provides a lens for positively interpreting the behavior of residents with disabilities when they do not complete material tasks or satisfy standards by presuming they have

strong spiritual capabilities. Since nondisabled Coworkers are predisposed towards taking spiritual reality seriously in the garden, so too they are prepared to affirm the spiritual capacity of their disabled neighbors. This fosters belonging by extending the criteria through which someone can be “competent,” creating a strong precedent to dignify Villagers. I will consider how the practice of Biodynamic Agriculture connects with people of different identities and relationships to the technique. By outlining four profiles of my research participants, I will demonstrate how belonging is cultivated across dis/ability distinctions and different resonances with the Biodynamic approach to knowledge. Each profile closely follows the experience and opinions of a resident of Camphill and their interview responses.

Biography

Katie Horan is a recent graduate of Princeton University’s Department of Religion, where she earned her B.A. with research focused on the intersection of religion and disability in the 21st century. Through ethnographic work with communities that center people with intellectual, cognitive, and developmental disabilities, she explores how disabled individuals navigate religious spaces, build community, and conceptualize divinity. Katie is passionate about making scholarship more accessible through inclusive, innovative methodologies. She is also the founder of All Bodies, All Brides, a not-for-profit initiative advocating for greater accessibility in the bridal industry.

Oliver Ray

Anthroposophical Anarchism and the Decentralization of the Spirituality

Abstract

This paper argues that Rudolf Steiner’s political and philosophical trajectory, particularly through The Philosophy of Freedom and the praxis of Social Threefolding, represents a spiritually grounded, anti-statist form of

democracy rooted in ethical individualism and anarchist thought. Contrary to interpretations that view Steiner as retreating into esotericism or turning away from democratic engagement, I contend that his work constitutes a radical rethinking of both democracy and statehood from a non-materialist, anti-authoritarian standpoint.

Drawing on overlooked biographical and theoretical intersections—such as Steiner’s friendship with individualist anarchists like Benjamin Tucker and John Henry Mackay, and his declared alignment with Stirnerian egoism—this paper introduces the term anarcho-anthroposophy to situate Steiner within a wider spectrum of anarchist traditions. This reframing challenges prevailing assumptions that anarchism must be materialist or atheist, and asserts that Steiner’s insistence on monism, spiritual freedom, and non-coercive social evolution positions him within a lineage of anarchist thinkers who oppose both state authority and metaphysical absolutism.

The paper also addresses Steiner’s nuanced critique of Marxism—not as a dismissal of proletarian struggle, but as a rejection of economic determinism and the Party as authoritarian structure. His work with working-class education in Berlin, his rejection of party dogma, and his critique of social democracy as a new form of power all support this interpretation. Rather than offering a blueprint for a utopian state, Steiner’s concept of Threefolding—which separates cultural-spiritual life, legal-political life, and economic life—can be read as an effort to dismantle the monolithic state and foster decentralized, freely associated communities.

Finally, this paper addresses the core paradox often raised by both critics and adherents: How can Steiner’s supersensible insights be compatible with anarchist principles that reject authority? By examining Steiner’s distinction between a guide and an authority, and his repeated insistence that no spiritual teaching be accepted on faith or coercion, I suggest that Steiner’s esotericism is, at its core, a form of radical epistemological liberty.

Through this analysis, the paper positions Anthroposophy not as a bourgeois spiritual retreat but as a latent revolutionary philosophy—one that envisions the self-aware, morally imaginative individual as the foundation for a post-statist, community-based society.

Biography

Oliver Ray has been involved in culture since he was a young man. Inspired early on by the works of the French Symbolist poets and Rock and Roll, he was led to the work of the Beats. By the time he was 18 he had befriended and was mentored by Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso; he worked at the influential small publishing house HANUMAN BOOKS, assisted painters such as Francesco Clemente and Philip Taaffe, and even modeled for Calvin Klein. By 1995 he became the primary collaborator of Patti Smith who had just come out of a 16 year retirement. For the next 10 years, he worked alongside Smith, playing in her band and touring the world; at the same time, Smith and Ray performed together in museums and churches, often designing shows around artists like William Blake, Herman Hesse, or Jackson Pollock. Throughout this time Mr. Ray was a student of Anthroposophy. Mr. Ray was introduced to the work of Rudolf Steiner when he was 15. Though he never joined the Anthroposophical Society, he has studied Steiner's work for the last 35 years. In that time, he has explored how to imbue his creative work with the principles of Anthroposophy while avoiding the soapbox. This is Mr. Ray's first attempt to dialogue with the broader Anthroposophical community. Mr Ray believes he will be an important and valuable voice in the 100 years of Steiner Conference, representing the many silent students of Steiner who work outside the world of academics and the orthodoxies of Dornach and the Goetheanum.

Seth Jordan

Rudolf Steiner and Democracy — Understanding His Relationship to the Democratic Impulse Through the Organizations He Helped Design

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner's relationship to democracy can be easily confusing. At times he seems to articulate a political vision akin to direct democracy ("the truly political element... must allow the judgment and feelings of every single responsible adult to come to expression"), while at other times he ridicules

the modern faith in parliaments and rejects the basic tenets of Western-style democracy ("[Central European political development] should not be the imitation of Western European so-called democracy"). This research explores this confusion and how it can be resolved through a deeper analysis of his threefold sociology.

Fundamental to this analysis is an understanding of the basic social laws he articulated, especially his "fundamental sociological law" (or "law of individualism") and his "fundamental social law" (or "law of socialism"). These two laws demonstrate the inevitable tension between the individual and the collective, a balancing act that Steiner resolves by showing how individual freedom is the guiding star of cultural life, and how collective solidarity (meeting everyone's needs) is the guiding star of economic life. When it then comes to political life, we find the collectivist (democratic) element has its rightful place in making laws concerning that which every adult citizen is equally fit to judge, and the individual element has its rightful place in refraining from making laws wherever individual expertise is required.

The research then turns to the organizations that Steiner consulted. We see how every institution, because of its circumstances and purpose, balances these competing interests differently. In the "college of teachers" at the first Waldorf school, for instance, some decisions were made democratically while others were made according to mandates given to individuals. This was understood to be a balance between democracy and aristocracy — what Steiner referred to as a "republic."

Biography

Seth Jordan is a writer and teacher. After graduating Cum Laude from Connecticut College with a degree in philosophy, Seth studied theology at the Christian Community Seminary in Chicago and later co-founded a peer-led educational program in Rudolf Steiner's social ideas for young adults. For many years he taught in Europe, Asia, and the US, before settling down to work with the Nature Institute in Ghent, NY, in order to deepen his understanding of Goethean science. In 2020, EduCareDo, an international research and learning center, published a distance-learning course that Seth wrote on Steiner's social ideas, called "Transforming Society." In 2021, Seth

began writing regularly at the The Whole Social, a Substack he founded. He lives with his wife in Soquel, California, and teaches at the Camphill Academy.

Karim Ullah

Rudolf Steiner's Bodily Co-operation as Value Co-creation in Economics Fraternity

Abstract

In this commentary, I interpret how the Steiner's co-operation binds social ecosystem to co-create value at multiple bodily encounters of individuals. Value is a perceived collective benefit of and for the agents in an economic ecosystems and it is determined by the beneficiaries as collective expression. Steiner's co-operation promotes mutuality, and it invites the economic agents to co-create value through bodily interactions, rather than producing and then selling such value to others for profit. Such value is both co-created and co-consumes by the individuals in an ecosystem with zero waste of the ecosystem as a whole and for the sustainability thrive. The motive of value for profit create excess use of resources and their flow and is found to be a common pre-text of most of the financial crises that this World has faced.

Steiner's stance of awareness of each other needs in co-operation is central to self-sustainability in the ecosystem. Such awareness triggers the co-operator's mind to cognize temporal and spatial needs and consequent adaptation in corresponding behaviours to make these fit well with the set of behaviours emerging during encounters. The Steiner's idea of need awareness is also embryonic to the realization of value in these encounters as and when experienced, unlike the Adam Smith's economics of production and then exchange of value. The ecosystemic view of value co-operation as expression of individuals may appears humanistic if taken bodily (physical, etheric, astral, and self) and spiritual if taken as lightened up through a deepened niche of knowing in individuals.

Biography

Karim Ullah is a Professor Religion and Financial Services and he founded the Centre for Excellence in Islamic Finance (CEIF IMSciences), which is a joint project of the Central Bank of Pakistan, the UK's Department for International Development, and IMSciences. Moreover, he has 15 years of experience in developing faith centric financial services, which spans across Pakistan, Malaysia, Turkey, the United States, and the United Kingdom. His work relates to the creation, evaluation, and implementation of diverse financial innovations with corporations, financial institutions, and regulatory bodies. These innovations encompass his active roles in developing Trauma Funds, Precious Metals-Based Financial Products, Service Sukuks, and in-depth analyses of Digital Assets and Forex for entities situated in the Wall Street. He has a PhD from Brunel University London UK on developing Islamic financial services and a post-doctorate experience on gold banking products at Sakarya University, Turkiye. He also has extensive learning on case methods and content development at Harvard Business School, MA, USA and IFC World Bank. He trained financiers and academics in Pakistan, UK, Malaysia, UK, and Turkiye. He also won and implemented multiple international grants and Government of Pakistan, Higher Education Commission has awarded him twice for two of his books been declared as the country as the best management books of the years 2015 and 2017, respectively. Karim is on various committees standard setting bodies, governments, and editorial boards of reputed journals. Recently his research on Islamic Finance is presented and appeared at the proceedings of Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University. He also published more than 40 papers and case studies in Islamic and participatory banking, and he regularly present his work in countries that include US, UK, Turkiye, Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and UAE. Karim.Ullah@imsciences.edu.pk

Eyal Bloch and Thom Schaefer

From Conflict to Connection, Social Healing Through Waldorf-Inspired Practices

Abstract

Three decades of field work in conflict zones have revealed the transformative potential of social healing initiatives rooted in Waldorf education principles. This paper presents “A Walk as a Social Healing Impulse,” drawing on experiences from diverse conflict environments and inspired by Rudolf Steiner’s holistic educational philosophy—focusing on imagination, creativity, and community building—to foster resilience, empathy, and democratic engagement among children and communities living amidst strife.

Our central case study is the “Peace Olympics”—festivals organized by the AllinPeace movement founded by Eyal Bloch—which brought together over 250 children from eight conflict-affected regions, including Kosovo, Belgrade, Israel-Palestine, Cyprus, Turkey, China, Greece, and France. These events created neutral spaces for children of diverse backgrounds to encounter one another beyond conflict boundaries, planting seeds of possible futures. The profound wisdom emerging from these encounters is captured in participants’ poetry: “We are different but the same/In our hearts a common flame/Through our games and art we see/The world as it could truly be.” Such authentic expressions reveal children’s capacity to transcend deeply entrenched societal divisions when given the appropriate environment.

Our work is grounded in the conviction that social healing begins with transforming memories of past traumas into impulses for a better future. The Peace Olympic festivals integrate Waldorf-inspired practices like Spacial Dynamics, experiential learning, and social artistry, enabling participants to encounter the “other” and develop empathy. As one 11-year-old Palestinian participant wrote: “Yesterday enemies, today friends/Where hatred ends, healing begins.” Longitudinal research, including Schaefer’s Master’s thesis,

documents significant reductions in negative stereotyping (83%) and increases in self-esteem and tolerance among participants.

The initiative’s impact extends beyond children to institutions, exemplified by partnerships with military organizations like the Greek Air Force repurposed as vehicles for peace. Additionally, the festivals’ celebration of marginalized leaders—such as Blind Zulu who ran from Olympia to Delphi—has spawned the extrAbility movement, redefining heroism and leadership. In the words of a young Greek participant with disabilities: “Not by sight but by heart I ran/Showing others what truly can/Be achieved when we dare to dream/Beyond limits, beyond what seems.”

We present this “From Conflict to Connection, Social Healing Through Waldorf-Inspired Practices” as a proven, adaptable model for conflict transformation and democratic education, offering practical insights for policymakers, educators, and civil society actors seeking to address community conflict and strengthen democracy in the 21st century.

Biographies

Thom Schaefer is a veteran Waldorf educator, peacebuilder, and educational innovator whose work has spanned both the United States and international conflict zones. Schaefer began his Waldorf teaching career in California and New York, guiding classes from first through eighth grade and later serving as a Waldorf consultant. He played a central role at Shining Mountain Waldorf School in Boulder, Colorado serving as Pedagogical Dean of Faculty. He also co-founded Credo High School, a distinguished Waldorf public charter with over 450 students. Schaefer co-developed the “Hands in Peace” (PACT) model with Jaimen McMillan (Spacial Dynamics), a non-competitive pentathlon and arts festival for children, adopted in Waldorf and public schools worldwide. His action research on the Peace Olympic Festival demonstrates how movement, art, and games can overcome prejudice among youth in conflict. Schaefer continues to train teachers, lead peace initiatives, and inspire holistic education for social renewal.

Eyal Bloch is a pioneering Waldorf educator, social innovator, and educational entrepreneur in Israel and internationally. As one of the founders and the first headmaster of Adam Waldorf School in Jerusalem, he

played a central role in establishing Waldorf education in Israel and co-founded the Israel National Waldorf Forum, guiding its growth and vision. Bloch is a senior lecturer at David Yellin Academic College and co-founded the ESD Institute, where he developed holistic teacher training programs inspired by Rudolf Steiner. He is the founder of the AllinPeace movement, which organizes Peace Olympics for children from conflict zones, and co-creator of the extrAbility initiative for empowering marginalized and disabled leaders. Internationally, Bloch co-founded TOP (Technology of Peace), a platform launched in Kenya that supports marginalized groups—such as women and small-scale farmers—in shifting from aid dependency to self-reliance through sustainable, Waldorf-inspired education and community innovation. His impact bridges Israeli schools, African villages, and global networks for social change.

Monday, December 15

14:00—16:00

James Room East – Panel 3B:

Goetheanism in Practice (5 papers)

Binta Moustapha

Integrating Anthroposophical Principles into Climate-Smart Agriculture: Lessons from Steiner's Goethean Vision

Abstract

Soybean production is crucial for Nigeria's food security and economic stability, with women contributing significantly to agricultural practices. Climate change affects 70% of Nigerian farmers, compromising crop yields and food security (FAO, 2020). This research investigates Rudolf Steiner's biodynamic agricultural principles, grounded in anthroposophy—a

philosophy emphasising interconnectedness—and Goethean science, in climate-smart soybean production by women farmers in Nigeria's Gwagwalada Area Council.

How does Steiner's Goethean vision inform biodynamic agriculture's ecological and social sustainability in soybean production? What insights can enhance climate-smart soybean production practices among women farmers?

Biography

Binta Moustapha is a dedicated social entrepreneur and environmental advocate passionate about researching innovations through university innovation hubs and ecospirituality. She works with several non-profits to enhance digital skills training for young people in Nigeria and Niger. With over 15 years of experience advocating for women and girls in technology and STEM education, Binta now supports young individuals aged 18-35 who are not in education, employment, or training (NEETs).

- Academic Background: Master's degree from GASDI, Osun State University, and pursuing a PhD in Sustainable Development Practice.

- Professional Experience: Head of Operations and Partnerships at Centre for Climate Smart Agriculture, Cosmopolitan University, Abuja, Nigeria; 2014 Waste to Wealth US State Department TechWomen Programme Fellow; and Founder of 100 Women in Tech Nigeria.

- Climate Advocacy: Participated in COP28 and served as a consultant with the UNFCCC Global Climate Innovation Hub during COP29.

Binta promotes sustainable development, climate-smart agriculture projects, and entrepreneurial opportunities, empowering young people to build sustainable climate ventures. She is affiliated with the Climate Technology Centre & Network, Global Thinkers Forum and the TechWomen Programme.

Matthias Rang

The Further Development of Natural Science Through Rudolf Steiner's Reception of Goethe

Abstract

As a monist, Rudolf Steiner was convinced that spiritual and scientific knowledge do not contradict but complement each other. Thus, on the one hand, he tried to base his spiritual science on the methods of natural science; on the other hand, he was convinced that spiritual knowledge could fertilize natural science. From his student days until his death, he defended Goethe's theory of color as a contribution to the development of natural science out of spiritual conviction, even though it was considered disproved and Goethe's polemics against Newton were regarded as misguided. Like no other, he succeeded in inspiring researchers for experimental development in this field.

In this contribution we look at the research results that have been achieved in the field of color theory over the last one hundred years, inspired by Rudolf Steiner. In particular, we look at new experiments that have originated from these approaches and ask what they contribute to natural science.

Not all hopes have been fulfilled, but the work that has been done allows a reassessment of Goethe's theory of color from a scientific perspective. In particular, the newly developed experiments show that, following Newton, optics was built on a subclass of experiments. This subclass allows the formulation of a complete optical theory. However, it was only after the development of the new experiments that symmetries and conservation laws were formulated, which until then had been the implicit, but unspoken, basis of optics. Finally, the new experiments suggested the abandonment of ontological concepts, as had already been done in other areas of physics.

Biography

Matthias Rang (PhD, University of Wuppertal) studied physics in Freiburg and Berlin before becoming a visiting researcher in the field of nano-optics at the University of Washington, Seattle. At the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, where Rang co-leads the Natural Science Section, he carries out research on optical complementarity and Goethe's theory of color in relation to physical optics. Some of his research is shown in a color exhibition, which he developed together with Nora Löbe and that has taken place in Stourbridge (United Kingdom), Basel and Dornach (Switzerland), Ytterjarna (Sweden), Berlin (Germany) and Mountain View (CA).

Alison Davis

Organic Inquiry, Spiritual Science, and New Possibilities for Research Methodologies

Abstract

Although Rudolf Steiner characterized spiritual science as a participatory "path of knowledge," he did not present it as a research methodology, nor do any of the foundational texts of anthroposophy elaborate processes that researchers can follow to formulate research questions or methodically gather, interpret, and communicate data. This fact alone makes it difficult for spiritual scientists to conduct research within institutions, especially universities.

This paper proposes that organic inquiry, a research methodology founded in the late 1990s by a team of transpersonal psychologists who wanted to integrate the sacred into their work (Clements, Ettling, Jenett, and Shields, 1999,) is a suitable methodology for spiritual scientists. Organic Inquiry is a participatory, qualitative research methodology closely related transformational theory (Mezirow, 2000), wholeness science (Braud and Anderson, 1998), and other holistic paradigms that intentionally works with spiritual influences, emphasizes the interwovenness of researcher, participants, and reader, and values transformation over information.

This paper will provide an overview with visual aids that compares the key features, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and guiding questions of spiritual-compatible research methodologies, with an emphasis on organic inquiry and spiritual science. Then it will compare axiomatic overviews of those research methodologies with those of the positivist paradigm.

Having established these overviews, this paper will then explore one of the most challenging aspects of conducting qualitative research in the dominant positivist paradigm, especially for organic inquiry researchers and spiritual scientists: the question of validity. This paper aims to make three main contributions in this realm. First, it will lay out how organic inquiry and other wholeness science paradigms establish validity. Second, it will take a novel evolutionary perspective on qualitative research methodologies and how assumptions about validity have changed over time. Finally, it will offer suggestions for expanded axioms in research.

Biography

Alison Davis is an award-winning educator, researcher, author, and artist based in Northern California. Alison holds degrees from the University of Kansas, the University of Notre Dame, Rudolf Steiner College, Stanford University, and Antioch University. Alison's work has been widely featured in literary and scholarly publications, including the New York Times, Rattle, The Sun, Research Bulletin, School Renewal, and in two books of poetry, *A Rare But Possible Condition* (Saddle Road Press, 2025) and *italics* (Wildhouse Publishing, forthcoming). IG: poems_and_pebbles.

Russell Arnold

Organic Geometry

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner mentioned synthetic projective geometry several times in his lectures, particularly in connection with the development of imaginative cognition and the forces of life, inspiring a large body of anthroposophical mathematics over the last century. One of the core themes in these developments is the possibility of viewing the fundamental constituents of

space as things other than points, yielding novel relationship between whole and part. For instance, if lines are taken as fundamental constituents, a point can be viewed as being composed of all the lines converging on it. Other possible choices of fundamental constituents include spheres and planes. Relationships between these entities can be contemplated directly without recourse to points. Such relationships form organic structures and configurations. Studying the metamorphosis of such organic structures, with conic sections as fundamental constituents in a goethean mode of thinking led the Norwegian Waldorf teacher Morten Eide to the independent discovery in the 1980s of a powerful theorem which unifies many well known theorems of projective geometry such as Desargues, Pascal, Monge and Poncelet to name just a few (this theorem, the Penrose 8-Conic Theorem, was first discovered by mathematical physicist Roger Penrose as a student in 1950s, but was left unpublished until a recent joint work with Morten and the presenter of the present paper).

Biography

Russell Arnold is a projective geometry researcher at the Goetheanum in Dornach. He comes from Chicago and did his doctorate in applied mathematics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Meinhard Simon

Rudolf Steiner's Participatory Insights into the World of Microbes in Nature and Humans as an Outcome of His Goethean Research Approach

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner's approach to study nature in a participatory way based on Goethe's pioneering research has been adopted and applied in quite a few research fields, like botany, zoology, landscape ecology, and pharmacy. One field, almost unknown with its greater implications in ecology and medicine 100 years ago, has been little studied with this approach: Microorganisms, today well known as the microbiome. One reason why this field has been

largely neglected in Goethean-based participatory research may be the fact that microorganisms can hardly be approached by phenomenology-based studies and are not physically observable, like plants and animals. It is surprising, though, that Rudolf Steiner, more than 100 years ago, conceptualized microorganisms, their role and significance in nature and man, compatible with their state-of-the-art view today and far ahead of the accepted concept of microorganisms at his time. This is obvious from lectures in medicine and agriculture and indicates how Rudolf Steiner grasped the concept of microorganisms with the Goethean approach.

I will present three examples highlighting Steiner's participatory and modern view in understanding microorganisms in the context of their occurrence. I) He strongly criticized the concept of pathogenic bacteria as the prime cause of a disease and emphasized that these bacteria rather reflect that the human body was susceptible to this disease. II) He emphasized the importance of the digestive system and the intestinal flora for the development of the brain and developing thoughts. Today, the gut-brain axis is a hot research topic in life sciences but 100 years ago nobody was even thinking of this relationship. III) The horn manure preparation is a distinct means in biodynamic farming. He emphasized that it enriches distinct microorganisms and life and formative forces which are transmitted to the soil and crop plants. This enrichment of such microorganisms has recently been proven.

Biography

Professor emeritus. Meinhard Simon studied biology at the Universities of Konstanz and Freiburg, Germany, and received his PhD in 1985. From 1997 to 2023 he headed the working group Biology of Geological Processes/Aquatic Microbial Ecology at the Institute for Chemistry and Biology of the Marine Environment at the University of Oldenburg, Germany. He served as dean of the school of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (2013-2015) and as vice president for research and transfer (2018-2019) at the University of Oldenburg. He published more than 190 papers in peer-reviewed journals (Google Scholar <https://scholar.google.de/citations?user=82-CkLYAAAAJ&hl=de>). He has been working for more than 40 years in the field of microbial ecology with

an emphasis on marine microorganisms. He has been always interested in a deeper and participatory understanding of microorganisms. He has been serving for more than 30 years in the advisory board (Sektionskollegium) of the Natural Science Section at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland.

Monday, December 15

16:15—18:15

Cader Room – Panel 4A:

Social Threefolding, Politics, Economy, and Community II (5 papers)

Daniel Joseph Polikoff

Social Injustice: LEF vs DEI

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner worked with a heightened sense of spiritual as well social emergency in the wake of the turmoil bred by WWI. In 1917, in answer to a request by a German diplomat, Steiner sketched the first draft of his own “social justice” theory—the Threefold Social Organism. When the window for its practical implementation closed, Steiner—always responding to initiatives from others—turned his attention to other endeavors. Yet Waldorf education, the formation of a Youth Branch, and the founding of the Christian Community all can be understood as movements answering to the urgent call for social renewal. In related yet distinct ways, each reveals Steiner's firm belief that a vital and cohesive social life depends upon a reawakening of the spiritual capacities of the human being.

Over the last decade or so, modern “critical social justice theory”—a movement originating outside anthroposophical circles—has exerted a

profound influence on Waldorf education. The adding of an eighth foundational principle to the AWSNA “charter” of Waldorf education exhibits the ideological as well as practical force of the movement carried forward under the aegis of the concepts of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Yet while we hear a great deal about DEI, Steiner’s own social theory, one premised upon a different triad of founding principles, has been largely neglected. The two triadic sets of terms, while superficially analagous, are profoundly different in kind. Whereas the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, as elaborated in the context of Social Threefolding, represent a social theory firmly grounded in Anthroposophy generally and Steiner’s Philosophy of Freedom in particular, the concepts of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—as conceived and applied today—represent an anti-anthroposophical counterforce that effectively undercuts the spiritual ground of Waldorf education. The cause of social justice calls for critical review of contemporary trends and renewed attention to Steiner’s own social theory.

Biography

I received my Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Cornell University in 1996, and my Diploma in Waldorf Education (high school specialization) from Rudolf Steiner College in 2000. I have taught at Waldorf high schools and Teacher Training programs as well as at Sonoma State University. I currently teach literature and psychology at the Pacifica Graduate Institute near Santa Barbara. My anthroposophical connections include almost twenty years parenting two Waldorf students, and partnering my eurythmy-teacher wife (an ongoing concern).

As an author, I have published eight books of poetry, translation, criticism, and creative non-fiction. I am best known as a Rilke scholar, but am currently at work on a multivolume opus *Reset or Renaissance: Life, Liberty and the Quest for Enlightenment in a Post-Covid World*. Steinerbooks published the first volume in 2024; the second is due out in September, 2025.

Anthroposophically speaking, I am currently involved with both the Literary Arts and Humanities section of North America and the Social Justice Project. Over the last year, I’ve given talks on “Covid, the Constitution and

Consciousness Soul,” “Emerson and Anthroposophy,” and “Anthroposophy Today . . . And Tomorrow?,” the last at the San Francisco Waldorf School on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Steiner’s death.

Nathaniel Williams

Rudolf Steiner’s Aesthetic Culture, Ecology and Economics

Abstract

This paper is a contribution to a better understanding of a narrow facet of Rudolf Steiner’s work, namely the significance of his understanding of aesthetic culture and its connection with ecological sensibilities and economics. While aesthetics has largely been narrowed in conventional usage to refer to beauty and art, it was introduced by Alexander Baumgarten in the 18th century as a term that could denote knowledge gained through perception. While Steiner did not explicitly draw on Baumgarten’s philosophy he did embrace the role of aesthetic judgement as it was developed in Goethe’s natural scientific method of delicate empiricism as intuitive understanding, and by Schiller in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind*. Steiner explicitly situates his associative economics, first articulated at the end of his life, within this legacy of aesthetic judgement. Steiner presents the concept of economic association, a transformation of Goethe’s notion of intuitive understanding, within a cooperative framing, as capable of facilitating valid economics judgements, or true price. Steiner’s notion of aesthetic culture can be seen as encompassing not only the arts and humanities, but also the natural sciences and economics. The paper is a contribution toward a deeper understanding of the argument put forward by Dan McKanan in *Eco-Alchemy: Anthroposophy and the History and Future of Environmentalism*, which frames the influence of anthroposophy as central to the emergence of the modern environmental movement and social-cooperative economics. The paper develops an interpretation that can help explain important ways that Steiner’s comprehensive notion of aesthetics facilitated this influence. The portrayals of Rudolf Steiner’s economic theory and orientation, as they have appeared in the works of Peter Staudenmaier, are also reviewed in this

light revealing the limits of an excessively critical approach to understanding.

Biography

Nathaniel Williams is originally from the USA. After completing a studio art degree in Switzerland he worked in the USA as an artist and teacher and went on to complete a PhD at the University at Albany in New York in the fields of political theory and public law. His primary research focused on the connection between natural science, aesthetic education and capacities of ecological sensibilities and judgement. Working closely together with colleagues at the Nature Institute and Free Columbia in upstate New York he went on to pioneer a one year, college level program as an experiment in creating aesthetic learning opportunities that involved not only art but also the natural and social sciences. In 2023 he moved to Switzerland with his family and joined the faculty at the Goetheanum, the School for Spiritual Science, as the director of the department dedicated to youth work.

Johannes Kronenberg

Anthroposophy's Contributions to Sustainable Development

Abstract

This contribution explores anthroposophy's historical and contemporary contributions to sustainable development. For over a century, anthroposophically inspired initiatives—such as biodynamic agriculture, Waldorf education, complementary medicine, inclusive social development, the arts, and more—have offered practical responses to ecological and social challenges across cultures and continents. Steiner's concept of anthroposophy as a “path of knowledge” connecting the spiritual in the human being with the spiritual in the universe laid the foundation for a spiritual science rooted in both sensory and supersensory understanding.

In light of current socio-ecological crises, the search for culturally and spiritually grounded responses to sustainability challenges is gaining

interest. Technocratic approaches often dominate sustainable development discourses, leaving deeper cultural-spiritual dimensions aside. Meanwhile, recent scholarship challenges the dominant historical narrative of the crisis' origins, tracing global-scale injustice and ecological breakdown not merely to industrialisation but to colonial expansion since 1492. In this trend of widening and deepening the understanding of sustainable development as a meta-discipline, Steiner offered an integral worldview which extends the current definition of sustainable development.

This presentation builds on the publication *On the Earth We Want to Live – Anthroposophy's Contributions to Sustainable Development* (Kronenberg & Lammerst van Bueren, 2025), comprising over 75 authors. Some 28 contributions come from anthroposophically inspired enterprises and 16 papers explore worldview and transdisciplinary foundations. The contribution seeks to engage professional and academic communities in an inclusive dialogue, highlighting anthroposophy's integral approaches to sustainable development and inviting critical reflection. Can Rudolf Steiner be recognised as a pioneer of sustainable development who bridged conceptual insight with practical application? What unfulfilled potential does anthroposophy hold for the future of sustainable development? These guiding questions inform the session and point towards possible educational and research pathways. The paper is presented by the Section for Agriculture at the Goetheanum, representing its ongoing work at the intersection of anthroposophy and sustainable development.

Biography

Johannes Kronenberg is a Research Associate at the Section for Agriculture at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. His current work focuses on the intersection of sustainable development and the contributions of Anthroposophy to this field. Additionally, he is actively involved in several initiatives, including the Iona Stichting in Amsterdam, which supports societal and ecological transformation through project funding and capacity building for grassroots initiatives. At the Goetheanum, the center of the General Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science, he is also involved in organisational and global development, supporting a

membership body of 41,000 members across 78 countries and all continents.

Born in 1991 in the Netherlands, he obtained a BA in Fine Arts from ArtEZ University of the Arts in Arnhem. He later earned a Master of Science in Sustainable Development from the Blekinge Institute of Technology in Sweden and pursued further Advanced Studies in Sustainable Development at the University of Bern, Switzerland.

Christopher Schaefer

The Dialogue of Social Creation: Rudolf Steiner and the Beloved Community

Abstract

Steiner described a conversation, a human encounter, as the archetypal social phenomenon. If one ponders this statement and combines it with inner experiences of being in dialogue with another then the following insights can emerge:

1) The natural world is a divine creation but we, human beings, are the creators of the social world. Families, shops, schools, companies, towns and nations are our creation, reflecting our nature, consciousness and values.

2) The archetypal social phenomenon through which the social world is created is the meeting and dialogue between two or more people.

3) What is revealed through dialogue is the mutuality of our karma; we find ourselves through our meeting with others.

4) Not only do we awaken to our destiny through others, it is in dialogue that we experience the spirit directly, through our mutual presence as ego beings and through the reality of spiritual inspiration in conversation.

5) Dialogue and encounter is one of the best methods of transforming evil in our times for we must overcome anti-social forces in ourselves to truly listen to another, to develop interest, empathy and to practice love, which Steiner defined as acts to serve the needs of the other, the group or the community.

6) In conversation we also have three soul-spirit experiences which form the basis of a healing social life in ourselves and in society. In western societies we desire freedom in our thought life, to express our opinions without interruption or judgement; a sense for equality of participation in our feeling life, and an opportunity to contribute to the result of the conversation or project with our deeds. Having a sense for freedom in our thoughts, experiencing our equality with others in the realm of rights, and being able to contribute to the wellbeing of others and the community is essential to the experience of our humanity. It is also the basis of a healing society which Steiner described as The Threefold Social Order.

These statements paraphrase many of Steiner's social insights and reveal how our relationships with others can be seen as a modern mystery school in everyday life. They also describe central elements of the Beloved Community, an imagination for our time first described by Josiah Royce in the early 20th century, then made the basis of the civil-rights movement and non-violence by Martin Luther King Jr., and finally applied to all life forms, to the world of inter-being, by King's friend and the proponent of engaged Buddhism, Thich Nhat Hanh.

Biography

Christopher Schaefer B.A. Yale University and Ph.D ,Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, was an Assistant Professor in the Political Science Department at M.I.T before getting intensively involved with Rudolf Steiner's work as an adult educator and organization development consultant. He cofounded the Centre for Social Development at Emerson College in England as well as an international organization and community development consultancy group called Social Ecology Associates. He was a member of the International Collegium of the Social Science Section in Dornach before initiating Section work in the United States in 1986. Since that time he has taught at Sunbridge College in Spring Valley, N.Y. and has been a consultant to Waldorf schools and other Anthroposophically inspired organizations internationally. He is the co-author of *Vision in Action: Working with- Soul and Spirit in Small Organizations* (1986), and the author of *Partnerships of Hope: Building Waldorf School Communities*,(2013), *Re-Imaging America: Finding Hope in Difficult Times* (2019) and is presently

editing a book called *Spiritual Science and Social Reform: Lives of Social Engagement*. He has written extensively on Steiner's social thought. Relevant for this conference is Rudolf Steiner as a Social Thinker in *Revision: A Journal of Consciousness and Transformation*, Fall 1992. He is now retired and living in the Berkshires.

Angela Assis

Bernard Lievegoed and Gudrun Burkhard as Second-Generation Interpreters of Rudolf Steiner

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner bequeathed a developmental sketch—septennials, fourfold anthropology, cosmic rhythms—whose practical application he left largely uncharted. This paper probes how two pivotal second-generation figures, Dutch psychiatrist Bernard Lievegoed (1905–1992) and Brazilian physician Gudrun Burkhard (1929–2022), transformed that open framework into influential therapies and leadership tools, thereby igniting debates over doctrinal fidelity and institutional authority within anthroposophy.

Drawing on newly consulted NPI archives (Driebergen), Artemisia records (São Paulo), and 2024 oral-history interviews, the study combines intellectual history with organisational-studies analysis. Close readings of Steiner's GA 183, 293, 298, Lievegoed's *Phases* (1968/1979), and Burkhard's *Biographical Work* (2002) are triangulated against correspondence, and training manuals.

The paper identifies four axes of contestation:

1. Hermeneutic authority—textual fidelity versus experiential innovation;
2. Institutional autonomy—NPI and Artemisia operating beyond Goetheanum governance;
3. Expansion of the septennial model—from corporate lifecycles to elderhood beyond age 63;
4. Geographical translation—Dutch pragmatism and Brazilian spiritual egalitarianism shaping reception.

By testing Sergei O. Prokofieff's charge that “psychologising” drains Steiner's supersensible core, the analysis shows instead how Lievegoed and Burkhard preserved esoteric intent while extending its social reach. Their contested biographies reveal anthroposophy's capacity for plural, transregional reinvention—an insight that complements recent critical editions and Anglophone scholarship highlighted by this centenary conference.

In situating therapeutic and organisational practice within a century-long struggle over Steiner's legacy, the paper invites fresh dialogue on who may speak for anthroposophy in the twenty-first century and how its ideas migrate across cultures, professions, and generations.

Biography

With over 30 years of experience in Consulting, Organization and Leadership Development, Angela Assis has held roles at PwC and IBM, including as Executive Leadership Development Strategist at IBM. Additionally, she contributed to cutting-edge leadership research at IBV-IBM, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods, along with data analytics, to produce actionable insights for C-suite leadership.

In 2021, Angela Assis retired from IBM and now works as an independent social practitioner and organizational consultant, specializing in biography work for leadership development. She facilitates biography workshops and offers individual counseling, guiding clients toward self-discovery, career alignment, and purpose-driven leadership. Angela Assis holds an MBA in Human Resources from the Universidade de São Paulo and a degree in Linguistics and Pedagogy, and has been studying Anthroposophy since 1998.

Monday, December 15

16:15—18:15

James Room East – Panel 4B:

Anthroposophical Biographies ***(5 papers)***

Bruce Donehower

***Marie Steiner-von Sivers, “Novalis,” and the Founding of
the first Anthroposophical Society; Köln, Germany,
December 1912***

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner placed enormous emphasis on the German early romantic poet Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772-1801). This aspect of Rudolf Steiner’s anthroposophy is often underestimated, even by dedicated anthroposophists. Whereas Goethe and Goethe’s scientific writings and Goethe’s theories of aesthetics represent the well-known exoteric side of anthroposophy, Novalis is the often-unperceived esoteric side of anthroposophy. Rudolf Steiner’s Christology becomes incompressible without an understanding of Rudolf Steiner’s unique reading of Novalis, whom he identified as the herald of anthroposophy. This reading of Novalis evolved during the very dynamic, formative theosophical years of the anthroposophical movement, 1902 – 1914. During these years, Rudolf Steiner’s intimate collaborator, the theosophist Marie von Sivers, played a decisive role. She and Rudolf Steiner collaboratively presented Novalis and Novalis’s poetry at theosophical events. These events occurred in the context of the impending split of the German Section of the Theosophical

Society (under the leadership of Rudolf Steiner) from the worldwide Anglo-American Theosophical Society. These are also the years of conflict over the context and importance of Buddhism, the so-called Boddhisattva conflict, and the lectures concerning the reappearance of the etheric Christ. Rudolf Steiner’s unique reading of Novalis, which he arrived at in collaboration with Marie von Sivers (not yet his wife at that time), provided the justification for his split from the Theosophical Society—it provided the justification for the anthroposophical movement (in contradistinction to theosophy), and it eventually provided the justification for the founding of the first anthroposophical society in Köln, December 1912. Indeed, this unique reading of Novalis is foundational to an understanding of Rudolf Steiner’s Christology, without which his anthroposophy makes no sense. From a literary perspective, if anthroposophy were a novel written by Rudolf Steiner, Novalis would be the all-important protagonist, without whom the plot would fall apart.

Biography

Bruce Donehower, PhD (UC Davis) is the North American representative to the Goetheanum School for Spiritual Science for the North American Section for the Literary Arts and Humanities (die Sektion für schöne Wissenschaften). He has facilitated meetings and conferences of the North American Section since 2010 and has been continuously active on the Section leadership team since 2001. Since his retirement from university teaching, he has been a frequent contributor to the Section magazine *Stil*, published by the Section at the Goetheanum. He works closely with the Goetheanum Section leader, Christiane Haid. Bruce Donehower is a scholar of early romanticism with a special interest in the poet Novalis. He is the author of “The Birth of Novalis: Friedrich von Hardenberg’s Journal of 1797, with Selected Letters and Documents” (SUNY Press). For more information, visit the website for the North American Section at www.TheLiteraryArts.com.

Katherine Sorrels

Historicizing Karl König: Biography and the Spiritual Legacy of Camphill

Abstract

This paper examines the carefully curated biography of Karl König (1902–1966), founder of the Camphill movement, in relation to questions of Jewishness, memory, and the spiritual authority conferred by anthroposophical leadership. Drawing on archival materials, König's own writings, and recent historiographical critiques, I argue that König crafted a narrative of his life that both downplayed and excused his Jewish ancestry. While König's anthroposophical commitments offered a framework for personal transformation, they also enabled him to distance himself from his Jewish identity in ways that subtly aligned with prevailing antisemitic norms within mid-twentieth-century esoteric and spiritual movements.

As the founding spiritual figure of Camphill, König's self-fashioning has had lasting consequences. Contemporary Camphill communities, deeply invested in his memory, maintain a reverential, often hagiographic version of his biography. This guarded narrative resists critical scrutiny, not merely to preserve König's reputation, but because his spiritual authority remains central to the movement's sense of purpose and legitimacy. I argue that this dynamic inhibits Camphill members from reckoning with the latent antisemitism in König's life and work. It also forecloses opportunities for a more honest, historically grounded engagement with the movement's origins.

I propose that we view König's conflicted relationship with Judaism as a historically situated aspect of his leadership and legacy—one that reflects broader tensions within anthroposophy about race, identity, and spiritual hierarchy. Historicizing König does not require rejecting Camphill's achievements, but it does require relinquishing the mythic biography that allows him to have personality quirks, but never deeper moral or intellectual complexity. In doing so, Camphill communities might recover a more

truthful relationship to their past—and a healthier foundation for spiritual life in the present.

Biography

Kate Sorrels is a professor of History at the University of Cincinnati. Her main research interests at the moment are in modern European and North American history of medicine and horticulture. She enjoys collaborating with other academics and community members and has worked on projects in public health, disability studies, and Holocaust commemoration. She recently wrapped up a research project on the Camphill movement and is now working on an initiative to restore the two-acre historic landscape around Cincinnati's Harriet Beecher Stowe House as a vibrant, educational greenspace for the community.

Henrieke Stahl

The Self Can Become Spirit: Andrei Bely on Rudolf Steiner's Teaching on the Consciousness Soul

Abstract

The Russian symbolist writer and cultural philosopher Andrei Bely (1880–1934), a personal student of Rudolf Steiner, was one of the most important figures who promoted the development of anthroposophy in Russia. After anthroposophy was banned by the Soviets in 1924, Bely continued his anthroposophical work underground. His extensive writings on Steiner's philosophical and anthroposophical work shaped the further development of anthroposophy in Russian underground culture until its comeback in the Russian Federation.

Bely's greatest work on anthroposophy is a literary-cultural study in two huge volumes, written in 1926–31 in the Soviet underground. The work deals with Steiner's teachings on the soul and cultural epochs, applying them to European cultural history since ancient times. The focus is on the concept of the "consciousness soul," which gives the work its title. Bely's translation of the anthroposophical term reflects his specific understanding

of this concept: “The History of the Becoming of the Self-Conscious Soul.” In 2020, I published the manuscript together with Russian colleagues in a text-critical, annotated edition in the archive series of the Russian Academy of Sciences “Literaturnoe nasledstvo.”

Bely explains the concept with the help of an analysis that combines Steiner’s philosophical writings with his anthropology and Christology, and compares it with the theory of knowledge and science, especially that of (neo-)Kantianism. Bely sees the originality of Steiner’s term in the fact that, on an epistemological basis, it describes a form of knowledge as self-creation that can transform the human ego into a spiritual substance for eternity.

The paper will highlight the innovative content of this concept in Bely’s interpretation and critically evaluate it against the background of its historical and philosophical contexts.

Biography

Since 1st November 2003: Senior Professor for Slavic Literature, School of Humanities, University of Trier. I was director of the following research projects: 1) DFG- funded Research Group “Russian-Language Poetry in Transition: Poetic Forms – Addressing Boundaries of Genre, Language, and Culture Across Europe, Asia, and the Americas” (2017-2023); 2) 2015-18 DFG-Project “Typology of the Subject in Contemporary Russian-language Poetry 1990-2010”; 3) 2006-2012 DFG-Project “A Critical Annotated Edition of Andrej Belyj’s ‘Istorija stanovlenija samosoznajuscej duši’”.

Selected works: 1) Ph.D. Doctoral Thesis on ‘Renaissance des Rosenkreuzertums. Initiation in Andrej Belyjs Romanen “Serebrjanyj golub” und “Peterburg”’. Frankfurt/M. et al., 2002. 2) Sophia im Denken Vladimir Solov’evs - eine ästhetische Rekonstruktion. Münster, 2019 (Russian Translation in 2024). 3) (together with Mikhail Odessky, Monika Spivak: edition with introduction, commentary, and indexes) Andrei Bely: Istorija stanovlenija samosoznajuščej duši. Literaturnoe nasledstvo, vol. 112 (Part. 1: 630 pp., part 2: 618 pp.). Moscow, 2020.

Ismar Smith Rachmann

Michael Chekhov’s Biography as an Artistic Expression of Rudolf Steiner’s Spiritual Science

Abstract

This presentation offers an anthroposophical reading of the biography of Michael Chekhov (1891–1955), highlighting his theatrical pedagogy as an artistic expression of Rudolf Steiner’s (1861–1925) spiritual science. Addressed to the anthroposophical community and all those interested in the developments of Anthroposophy in the field of the arts, this text seeks to contribute to the recognition and deepening of the spiritual legacy present in Chekhov’s work.

A nephew of the playwright Anton Chekhov (1860–1904), Michael Chekhov began his training at the First Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre under the direct guidance of Konstantin Stanislavski (1863–1938), who regarded him as one of his most brilliant and instinctive students. However, Chekhov soon began to seek paths beyond those proposed by his mentor, particularly due to a series of psychic crises that would play a decisive role in transforming his artistic and existential vision.

He first encountered Steiner’s work through reading the book Knowledge of the Higher Worlds (CHEKHOV, 2005), and shortly afterward through a transformative encounter with the symbolist writer Andrei Bely, an anthroposophist who influenced him deeply regarding the Spiritual Science (KNEBEL, 2017).

The relevance of presenting this biography at an anthroposophical congress lies in the fact that Chekhov represents one of the most powerful artistic translations of Anthroposophy in the 20th century. His actor training methodology incorporates principles derived from Eurythmy, conceptions of the human threefold nature (thinking, feeling, willing), the etheric body, and Imagination, while also introducing the vision of the actor as an instrument of the spirit.

The aim is to emphasize Chekhov’s importance for today’s anthroposophical context, as a living bridge between art, inner

development, and spiritual service. In times of fragmentation and mechanization, his work emerges as a call to conscious gesture and moral imagination.

Biography

Ismar Smith Rachmann is a Brazilian director, theatre pedagogue, and actor. He is married to a teacher of anthroposophical arts and is the stepfather of two Waldorf students. He is the co-founder and director of Estelar de Teatro, a Brazilian theatre company with 19 years of experience, with which he has toured nationally and internationally presenting artistic-pedagogical work. He holds a degree in Social Communication from PUC-SP and is currently a PhD candidate and holds a Master's degree in Performing Arts from the University of São Paulo. His current research focuses on anthroposophical influences in the work of Mikhail Chekhov. He is enrolled in the Intensive Training Programme at the Michael Chekhov International Academy (Berlin) and studied Eurythmy in Brazil for one year. He completed the two-year Master Programme for Theatre Teachers (UNAM), created by Russian pedagogue Jurij Alschitz, from whom he received a letter of pedagogical trust.

Gaia Termopoli

Pioneering Aspects of Marie Steiner-von Sivers' Work and Anthroposophy's Contribution to Theatre

Abstract

The 100th anniversary of Rudolf Steiner's death marks a turning point in the anthroposophical discourse. It invites a renewed examination of anthroposophy's contributions to various academic disciplines, viewed in the light of developments over the past century. This calls for a new perspective for the coming 100 years—one that engages in a living dialogue with the spirit of our time in order to clarify what contributions anthroposophy can make today and in the future.

The paper, as part of the PhD at the Institute of Theatre Studies, University of Bern, with a dissertation project titled Marie Steiner-von Sivers as a Pioneer of Directing, aims to examine the contributions of anthroposophy to theatre studies and the pioneering work of Marie Steiner-von Sivers (1867–1948) in the fields of theatre directing. The work takes as paradigmatic example the preparatory and training course in speech formation and dramatic art, which emerged from her collaboration with her husband, Rudolf Steiner, and took place in September 1924 in Dornach, Switzerland.

But what role does Marie Steiner-von Sivers play in the development of Rudolf Steiner's theatrical conception? The thesis of the present work is that the development of Rudolf Steiner's theatrical conception cannot be separated either from the work of Marie Steiner-von Sivers and from the development of Anthroposophy understood as a theory of knowledge.

The research project focuses on the pioneering elements in the work of Marie Steiner-von Sivers and her contribution to the theatre out of anthroposophical knowledge. A methodological approach is employed that combines feminist, theatre-historiographical, staging analysis and archival research methods.

Biography

Gaia Termopoli (1984) is conducting a PhD at the Institute of Theatre Studies, University of Bern, with her dissertation project titled Marie Steiner-von Sivers as a Pioneer of Directing. She is trained as theatre actress at the National Academy Silvio d'Amico in Rome (Italy). After an international theatre production (France and Switzerland), she returned to Italy and dedicated herself to the independent theatre scene. She founded a women's collective focused on "new languages for theatre" and children's theatre as a high-quality artistic form for all audiences (winner Premio Scenario Infanzia 2010). She received a Master's degree in Educational Science at the University of Urbino, where she graduated magna cum laude with a thesis entitled "Creativity and Artistic Processes as Tools for Vocational Training." She has focused on speech formation, puppetry and since 2024 is working with Mystery Theatre.

Tuesday, December 16

10:15—12:15

Cader Room – Panel 5A:

Historical Roots of Anthroposophical Medicine, Education, and Social Therapy (5 papers)

Jan Goeschel

Educating Children with Complex Destinies: Locating Steiner's Paradigm and the Lauenstein Prototype in the Contested Space Between Humanistic Social Pedagogy and Eugenic Child Psychiatry in 1920s Europe

Abstract

In 1924, Rudolf Steiner gave his course on supportive (curative) education to a group of young people engaged in the anthroposophical youth movement, who established an educational home for children with developmental disabilities in Jena (Germany). Based on a hermeneutic review of primary sources and secondary literature, this presentation examines how Steiners paradigmatic orientation towards the established profession of “Heilpädagogik” and the practice prototype established at the Lauenstein Institute are located in the contested space between an existing humanistic and progressive social-pedagogic conception of the field, as exemplified by Heinrich Marianus Deinhardt (1821-1880) and Johannes Trüper (1855-1921), and the eugenic medical-psychiatric attempts to appropriate the “Heilpädagogik” term gaining ascendancy at the time. The findings are also

discussed in terms of their relevance for anthroposophically oriented supportive and inclusive education practices today.

Biography

Jan Goeschel is Head of the Section for Inclusive Social Development at the Goetheanum – School of Spiritual Science (Dornach, Switzerland). He is also the founding President of the Camphill Academy, the professional education and research organization of the Camphill movement in North America. Jan holds an MA (Hons) in Psychology from the University of Edinburgh, an MA in Educational Leadership with instructional certification in special education from Immaculata University and a PhD in Supportive Education and Rehabilitation Sciences from the University of Cologne. He is also certified in Waldorf education, anthroposophically oriented approaches to supportive education and Spacial Dynamics (a somatic movement modality). His professional experience includes classroom teaching, school leadership, inclusive community building, organizational development and professional education and training internationally.

Michaela Glöckler

Unique Features of Steiner's Last Book and the Value of the Anthroposophic View of the Human Being

Abstract

Anthroposophic medicine (AM) exists on all continents; as medical practices and therapy centers offering various treatment-modalities and in Central Europe even in the form of some recognized regional hospitals. Besides conventional methods this medical approach includes specific anthroposophic medicinal products, nursing techniques and external applications, artistic therapies, healthy lifestyle and nutrition counselling, body work, therapeutic eurythmy, and meditative practices. The basis for this therapeutic direction is Steiner's final book, which he was able to complete shortly before his death in collaboration with the Dutch physician Dr. Ita Wegman (1876–1943) entitled: Fundamentals of Therapy, an

Extension of the Art of Healing through Spiritual Knowledge (FoT). The worldwide presence of AM confirms its integrative medical approach that goes well beyond “tolerant cooperation” of different complementary modalities. AM, as presented in Steiner/Wegman’s book, is based on a rigorous anthropological-philosophical method of understanding that encompasses active principles of any spiritual, psychosomatic and natural science-based healing method. Because all ancient and modern medical systems are either partly or entirely based on five principles: the materially tangible processes and facts, the laws of life, which manifest through rhythmic processes, the dynamics of soul and mind, personality formation and finally the fifth essential principle in the being of man, named by Aristotle *pempte ousia*, the fifth essential. Steiner explained and redefined all the five, making them imaginable and thus observable and practicable for daily use. This not only gave rise to the anthroposophic understanding of man. It provides the opportunity for mutual understanding of the different medical systems. But it also accounts for the fact that, unlike animals which are controlled and driven in their development by instincts, humans must compensate for their instinctive insecurity and “physiological imperfection” through learning processes - through self-consciously controlled thinking, feeling, and willing. According to Steiner/Wegmann, this particular physical-mental constitution predisposes humans to illness.

Biography

Dr. med. Dr. h.c. Michaela Glöckler, pediatrician, is emeritus head of the Medical Section at the Goetheanum/Dornach. From 1988-2016 she supported the anthroposophic medical movement worldwide in its development and is founder of the International Postgraduate Medical Training/IPMT. Before she worked as a pediatrician and medical consultant at the Rudolf Steiner School in Witten, she graduated in history and German literature at the University of Heidelberg for the teaching profession, in medicine at the University of Marburg and qualified as a pediatrician at the anthroposophic Community Hospital Herdecke and the University Hospital Bochum. Her publications on pediatric topics, child development, Anthroposophy and adult education are aimed at professionals and laypeople and have been translated into many languages. In English for

example: Education for the Future, A Guide to Child Health. She is Co-founder of the Alliance for Childhood and the European Alliance for Initiatives of Applied Anthroposophy/ELIANT.

Natalia Golovanova

The Faculties of the Mind in Waldorf Education: the Epistemological Foundations of the Theory for the Enlightenment of the Practice

Abstract

Waldorf Education’s spiritual view of the human being, and of the child in particular, clearly distinguishes it from other progressive educational movements. This distinction necessarily comes to the fore in teacher training. One of the pillars of the education based on Steiner’s philosophy is the threefold nature of the human being: the founder of the pedagogy believed that there are three active faculties in every student — thinking, feeling, and willing — which develop gradually and progressively, passing through a seven-year stage until they are fully activated at the age of 21. The sources of this theory are obviously esoteric and spiritual, although it is possible to draw parallels between this doctrine and other theories of the child’s development that also involve several stages until the full development of all faculties.

At the same time, the roots of this conception can be found in Steiner’s philosophical period. I would thus like to return to the origins of these ideas in the writings of the young Steiner and to their roots in the philosophical tradition, as well as to address the question of the shift in epistemology that occurred in Steiner’s work between the 1890s and the 1920s, particularly with regard to the theory of faculties. This work is based on my doctoral dissertation defended in 2025 at the University of Upper Alsace (Mulhouse, France), which seeks to articulate the philosophy of education on which Waldorf education is based. I will offer for discussion some findings regarding the role of the other faculties in the pedagogy, as well as the changes in the concept of thinking in Steiner’s later work. This will provide a

better understanding of the meaning of the intellect and intellectual education in the pedagogy based on Rudolf Steiner's conception of the human being.

Biography

Young researcher, I have just obtained a doctoral degree at the University of Upper Alsace, in France. The main topic of my dissertation is the philosophy of education of Waldorf education. Before that, I completed several master's degrees in philosophy, first in Russia and then in France. I have worked in particular on German idealism and phenomenology as a philosophical movement of the 20th century. In my work, I have been particularly interested in questions related to reflection, cognitive faculties and the means of activating them, thus bringing to the fore an educational dimension to the historical analysis of philosophical doctrines (in this vein, my theses have focused on Kant and Hegel, Husserl and Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, among others). In my dissertation, I am exploring the concept of thinking and its connection to other faculties of the human mind in Waldorf education, combining a historical-philosophical analysis with an examination of pedagogical methods. The fundamental question of this work is: How does the connection to other faculties contribute to the development of thinking according to Waldorf education?

Matthias Fechner

The Sacred and Profane (Intercultural) Roots of Waldorf Education

Abstract

In my contribution I would try to explain that Steiner did not create the idea of 'Waldorfschule' in 1919 as an hermetic, inalterable entity, but rather as an ongoing and dynamic project to which some of his more experienced teachers, namely Robert Killian, were able to contribute substantially.

Killian, who joined 'Waldorfschule' Uhlandshöhe in 1920, had previously taught at state schools in Alsace and at 'Landerziehungsheim' Haubinda,

founded by Hermann Lietz. Hence, many pedagogical concepts, which from the 1890s onwards were initially put into practice at German 'Landerziehungsheime,' could later be found at Uhlandshöhe and other schools, transferred by dedicated teachers like Killian.

Moreover, I try to argue that these concepts were not merely transplanted by individual teachers, but rather adapted to the specific needs of a school, drawing on the strong current of reform education and contemporary educational trends. E.g., 'Epochenunterricht' was, arguably, introduced first at Berthold Otto's 'Hauslehrerschule' before it caught on at Haubinda mainly for organizational reasons, until it was geared to students' needs at Odenwaldschule and, at long last, experienced a spiritual transformation within the Waldorf movement.

This transfer of knowledge worked, in fact, both ways. During the Third Reich, after most Steiner schools had been closed, Waldorf teachers like Robert Killian, Karl Ege, or even René Maikowski found a means to survive working at 'Landerziehungsheime' bringing valuable spiritual insights to otherwise fairly profane institutions. In the case of Odenwaldschule personal ties even strengthened the transfer of knowledge. Robert Killian would strongly support headmaster Heinrich Sachs, not only during the Second World War, but also in 1945/6 following the latter's controversial removal by the US military administration. And after Sachs' untimely death in 1946, his wife Elisabeth would meet Karl Ege again, while founding a Camphill community in Hillsdale, NY.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the fact that educators, and especially Waldorf teachers, have – hopefully – never acted as uncreative automata, but rather as agents of change. Thus, it certainly seems instructive to henceforth take a closer look at their biographies (and their estates), in order to gain more valuable insights into the dynamic processes within many educational institutions and concepts.

Biography

Matthias Fechner (Trier University): under- and postgraduate studies (M.A., Ph.D.) at the Universities of Stuttgart, Manchester and Sheffield. Waldorf teacher training at Freie Hochschule Stuttgart. Founding teacher for the upper school at Boeblingen/Sindelfingen Waldorf School (1999-2006),

member of the school management team and upper school teacher at Heidelberg Waldorf School (2005-11); guest lecturer at Freie Hochschule Mannheim, deputizing for the chair of history didactics. Head of department (PPE), house master and archivist at Odenwaldschule (2010-15). Establishment of Cusanus University College in Bernkastel-Kues (2016-17). Research Fellow and Junior Research Group Leader in a DFG Research College at Trier University (2018-22); member of Rhineland-Palatinate Research Initiative (2020-2022). Development and coordination of a new Bachelor's degree program (Intercultural Communication and Management) at Trier University (since 2023). Research areas: History of pedagogy, critical theory of science, contemporary literature (especially poetry), intercultural communication, history of sport.

Exemplary publications related to the conference theme:

- „Es handelt sich darum, das Gute überall zu finden.“ Ein gemeinsames Kapitel von Waldorfschule und Reformpädagogik, in Info 3: Sonderheft Waldorfpädagogik, Juni 2016. 10-15.

- Der Mensch als Ziffer? Pädagogik vor der Digitalisierung, in Coincidentia. Band 11/1 (2020). 243-282.

- Success and Failure. Four phases of education reform in long-term historical contexts in Central Europe (and a short detour to contemporary China), in Chieh Cien, Matthias Fechner and Vassilis Vagios (eds.), Cultural Contact, Innovation and Tradition. Interface 20, March 2023. 7-35.

- Die maskierte Wissenschaft, in Matthias Fechner, Klaus Buchenau (eds.), Die verlorene Wissenschaft (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2024). 23-50.

Ron Eilon

Translating Anthroposophical Curative Education to Israel: Challenges and Adaptations

Abstract

This paper tracks anthroposophical social initiatives in Israel in the mid-20th century. It follows the migration and transfer of anthroposophical ideas, people, and texts and the transnational translation of social work knowledge and practice from European culture to Israel in its first decades.

Archival material was collected from official, institutional, and private archives in Israel, Switzerland, Britain, and Germany, and some data was obtained through oral history interviews. Transnational correspondence between anthroposophists in Palestine, later Israel, and those in Europe and Britain up to the late 1960s reveals efforts to tackle the newly founded state's most burning struggles in order to adjust, realize, and embed an anthroposophical practice of care. The paper proposes that transnational translation of anthroposophical curative education played a significant role in the reception of anthroposophy in Israel, through a process in which European cultural aspects of anthroposophy were adjusted, and its universal human aspects were prioritized.

Biography

Ron Eilon is a clinical social worker and Ph.D. candidate at the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He holds a master's degree in clinical social work, with a focus on trauma therapy, and has worked in psychotherapy and psychiatric rehabilitation for young adults. His research interests include anthroposophy, social work history, disability studies, and the adaptation of social work practices across cultures. His doctoral research looks at the development of anthroposophical social care institutions in Israel, exploring their clinical approaches and their unique understanding of disability.

Tuesday, December 16

10:15—12:15

James Room East – Panel 5B:

Waldorf Education in Global and Decolonial Contexts (5 papers)

Constanza Kaliks Guendelman

The Pedagogical Impulse of Rudolf Steiner as a Contribution to the Perspectives Demanded by the Educational Challenges Posed by the Epistemologies of the South

Abstract

This study explores the convergence between aspects of the “epistemologies of the South,” as articulated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and the pedagogical approach developed by Rudolf Steiner. Santos identifies two essential components of southern epistemologies: respect for the knowledge and lived experiences of the other, and the practice of participatory action research. Although originating in Central Europe over a century ago, Steiner’s educational philosophy embodies these principles and remains relevant to contemporary contexts marked by cultural diversity and social vulnerability.

At the heart of Steiner’s pedagogy is a view of the human being as a being in constant becoming. His educational impulse aligns with the four pillars of learning outlined by Jacques Delors in the 1996 UNESCO report: learning to know, to do, to live together, and to be. Steiner emphasizes the values and

priorities that correspond closely to Santos’s concepts of knowledge ecologies, intercultural translation and practice-based learning.

Interdependence and solidarity, seen as essential human characteristics, form the ethical and pedagogical basis of Steiner’s approach. His emphasis on reciprocity resonates with 20th-century humanist educational thought, particularly that of Paulo Freire. The research underpinning this analysis draws on literature from Global South scholars, Steiner’s own writings and lectures, and empirical data gathered from South American schools serving diverse and socially vulnerable populations.

A central characteristic of Steiner-inspired schools is collaborative teacher development through shared inquiry, dialogue, and ongoing reflection—practices that constitute the “heart of the school” and embody the principles of participatory action research. The analysis thus suggests that Steiner’s educational model, while historically and geographically distinct, is relevant to contemporary educational demands and provides a framework that contributes to diverse socio-cultural realities.

Biography

Dr. Constanza Kaliks was born in Chile in 1967. She holds a Postdoctoral degree in Education from the University of Coimbra (2022) and a PhD (2014) and MEd (2009) in Education from the University of São Paulo (USP). She earned a Specialization in Waldorf Pedagogy (1991) from Dornach’s Waldorf Teacher Training Centre and a BSc in Mathematics (1990) at USP’s Institute of Mathematics and Statistics. From 1992 to 2011, she taught Mathematics at EWRS Secondary School in São Paulo and lectured in Waldorf Teacher Training (1996–2011). She also coordinated EWRS’s Mathematics Department (2006–2011). In 2012 she came to the Goetheanum in Switzerland, directing its Youth Department until 2022. In 2015 she joined the Executive Board of the Anthroposophical Society. Since 2021, she is in the leadership of the Department for General Anthroposophy, and in 2022 she assumed the co-direction of the Department of Education.

Peng Liu-Nelson

Whose Archetypes? Reexamining Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Child in the Context of Race, Translation, and Storytelling Pedagogies

Abstract

This paper critically engages Rudolf Steiner's concept of the "spiritual child" by tracing how his civilizational model—organized through post-Atlantean cultural epochs—informs the racialized construction of universality in Waldorf Early Childhood Education (WECE). While Steiner's pedagogy emphasizes reverence for children's inner development and has inspired transformative practices across class and ability lines, it also embeds a Eurocentric spiritual hierarchy that privileges Indo-European stories and aesthetics as archetypal. This vision, filtered through linguistic and cultural translations, continues to shape WECE storytelling curricula in the U.S., where non-European cosmologies are often marginalized or tokenized.

Building on Knight's (2023) application of Wynter's Man 1 and Man 2 framework to Waldorf kindergartens, I extend the critique to Steiner's own spiritual anthropology, examining how the spiritual child ideal risks universalizing whiteness. In response, I turn to Jo-ann Archibald's (2008) Indigenous Storywork to propose a relational, place-based pedagogy of storytelling grounded in respect, reciprocity, and plural cosmologies. Storywork reorients storytelling from fixed archetypes to living practices, foregrounding protocols, memory, and land-based knowledge.

Through this juxtaposition, I argue that WECE must be critically re-engaged not as a neutral spiritual method but as a historically situated tradition requiring conscious transformation. To honor Steiner's legacy today is not only to preserve his insights, but to translate and critically revise them in dialogue with decolonial educational frameworks and Indigenous story practices.

Biography

Peng Liu-Nelson is a doctoral candidate in the Culture and Teaching program at the University of Minnesota. Their research explores the intersections of spiritual pedagogy, race, and storytelling in early childhood education, with a particular focus on Chinese and Indigenous epistemologies on turtle island. Before beginning doctoral work, Peng spent over a decade teaching in Waldorf and bilingual early childhood programs across China, Thailand, and the United States. As both an educator and community-based researcher, they draws on their experiences with Waldorf pedagogy, Indigenous Storywork, and decolonial frameworks to examine how children's stories reflect and reproduce broader social and cosmological assumptions. Check out their work on website: www.wanderlearner.com.

Wang Chih Hung

Discussing the Spiritual and Holistic Perspectives of Waldorf Education from the Viewpoints of Anthroposophy and Mahayana Buddhism

Abstract

In his work "Outline of Esoteric Science," Rudolf Steiner introduces the evolutionary history of the Earth, demonstrating that Anthroposophy adopts a distinct evolutionary perspective, albeit from the scale of the Earth and humanity as a whole. Although these views, which are difficult to empirically verify or distant from everyday reality, may not easily resonate or have practical application, Anthroposophy maintains the same evolutionary perspective in the aspects of social development (threefold social order) and human growth (pedagogy) within the realm of everyday life. The anti-authoritarian characteristic of Waldorf education is rooted in the fundamental belief in a spiritual view of life. In other words, the spiritual self should be its own authority, evolving through repeated reincarnations while contributing to the overall civilization of humanity.

This paper will discuss how the progressive and anti-authoritarian stance of Waldorf pedagogy, based on the spiritual perspective of Theosophy

(Anthroposophy), is implemented in the curriculum at various stages, leading to the establishment of an ideal social image and the cultivation of new-generation citizens. From this perspective, the discussion of Waldorf pedagogy reveals subtle dualistic concepts embedded in its “holistic view of the curriculum,” such as individuality and collectivity, material life and the spiritual world, and so on.

Additionally, considering the spiritual aspects of its philosophical foundation, the paper will also discuss the liberation path, the Bodhisattva path, and the concept of reincarnation in Mahayana Buddhism, the harmonious integration of principle and phenomena in the Huayan Sutra, and the development of Waldorf education in the East.

Biography

Wang Chih Hung has previously served at Taiwan’s first established Cixin Waldorf School, where he worked as a class teacher for 15 years and held administrative and principal positions for 4 years. His expertise and interests include educational philosophy, Waldorf pedagogy, adolescent development, and outdoor education. His doctoral dissertation topic was “The Contemporary Significance of Spiritual Waldorf Education,” discussing the connections between Anthroposophy, the new paradigm of future physics, and Buddhist teachings. Since 2022, he has been an assistant professor at the Teacher Education Center of National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan, concurrently serving as the deputy director of the Waldorf Education Center and a board member of the Taiwan Waldorf Education Movement Federation.

Claudia Nagy

Root and Renewal: Biodynamics, Cultural Legacy, and the Future of Waldorf Communities

Abstract

This paper explores the spiritual foundations of biodynamics as both a legacy of Rudolf Steiner and a universal agricultural wisdom shared across cultures. As a first-generation Hungarian-Chinese woman with ancestral ties to Steiner’s homeland, I reflect on the ways biodynamics—as practiced today—must evolve to honor its multicultural echoes if it is to survive and thrive for the next hundred years. Drawing on the curative intentions behind Waldorf pedagogy and agriculture, I propose that genuine inclusivity is not only a moral imperative but also an esoteric necessity.

I examine parallels between biodynamic practices and Indigenous agricultural systems across the globe—highlighting how the same spiritual principles manifest universally, even when unrecognized by dominant anthroposophical frameworks. Waldorf education and biodynamic farming, at their best, are anti-authoritarian, curative, and spiritually awake. Yet they risk stagnation when insulated from critical reflection and broader cultural dialogue.

This paper is both a critique and a devotion—an offering to the Waldorf movement that asks: how can we truly live into the spiritual intentions of Steiner’s work in a world that is no longer Eurocentric, but interconnected and diverse? By anchoring my inquiry in biography, land, and ancestral voice, I seek to renew a pedagogical impulse that heals—by remembering its shared roots in humanity.

Biography

Claudia Nagy is a first-generation Hungarian-Chinese American scholar, environmental educator, artist, and organizer based in New York. She holds a BA and MPA from Columbia University, where she studied environmental science and policy, and is the founder and Director of Earth Arts Center, a

nonprofit dedicated to healing people and planet through environmental education.

Claudia began her training in biodynamic agriculture at the Pfeiffer Center at Threefold Community Farm—an historic site where Steiner’s student Ehrenfried Pfeiffer once lived and practiced. After completing a yearlong training, she went on to work with organic, regenerative, and biodynamic farms throughout the tri-state area. Today, she works at the Mountain Top Arboretum in New York and continues to deepen her commitment to accessible, decolonial approaches to spiritual agriculture, informed by Steiner’s legacy. With ancestral ties to Rudolf Steiner’s birthplace, she brings personal insight to her research on anthroposophy, esotericism, and ecological renewal through the lens of race, ancestry, and cultural regeneration.

Liz Beaven

Weaving Spirit and Practice: Reclaiming the Radical Nature of Waldorf Education

Abstract

Waldorf education is possibly the best-known example of the practical application of Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual-scientific work. Beginning with a single school in Stuttgart, it has grown steadily into a worldwide movement. At its heart lies Steiner’s profound image of the human being as a spiritual being in development, a spiritual reality that can be researched, and a pedagogy that demands imagination, freedom, and continual renewal. Drawing deeply from both theosophical spirituality and progressive educational ideals, Steiner offered a holistic, anti-authoritarian vision of schooling. Education, he insisted, was to be not a fixed system but a responsive “living art,” with the teacher as artist.

The history of Waldorf education displays a persistent paradox, in which a movement founded on creative freedom has often turned toward codification. Although Steiner repeatedly urged that education is an artistic process and should evolve responsively to individual and cultural needs,

Waldorf education has frequently sought to define and standardize its methods, forms and traditions. What began as spiritual insight risks being limited by dogma; what was intended to inspire and be initiative-filled risks becoming prescriptive.

This central tension between Steiner’s vision of an education rooted in dynamic spiritual and pedagogical freedom and the emergence of a movement limited by system and form is the basis of my inquiry. Steiner’s educational ideas are situated within the broader context of progressive education and theosophical concepts; within this, he asks for teachers to engage as spiritual researchers, observing each child, the times, and their own path of inner development.

Steiner’s dynamic, radical indications have been fixed in place. Waldorf education is challenged to return to its founding impulse, a weaving of spiritual inspiration and practical, responsive application, to meet the needs of today. By doing so, this “new art of education” will provide a truly transformative, spiritually grounded approach.

Biography

I have been involved in Waldorf education for 40 years as a class teacher, school administrator, Board and College of Teachers member, lecturer, consultant, speaker, parent, and grandparent. My extensive practical experience is supported by research, writing, and a wide range of adult education. I have bridged traditional independent Waldorf education and expansion into public education for 30 years, including my current position as the Executive Director of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education and membership of the Pedagogical Section Council.

I have also explored and supported Waldorf education in higher education with roles including President of Rudolf Steiner College (Fair Oaks, CA), and Associate Professor then Provost at California Institute for Integral Studies (San Francisco). My work, research, and writing has been and is motivated by a commitment to interrogating, expanding, and deepening our understanding of Rudolf Steiner’s transformative intentions and indications and their application in evolving, diverse settings.

Tuesday, December 16

13:00—15:00

Cader Room – Panel 6A:

Historical, Textual, and Empirical Reflections on Anthroposophy, “Race,” and Racism (5 papers)

Peter Selg

***The Conduct of Anthroposophical Doctors, Pharmacists,
and Educators during the Nazi Era (1933–1945)***

Abstract

A comprehensive study conducted between 2016 and 2025 examined the behavior of anthroposophical doctors, pharmacists, and curative educators during the Nazi era. The study explored how these professionals operated within a biopolitical dictatorship that, on one hand, sought to exterminate those deemed “unworthy of life” based on racial ideology and, on the other, aimed to optimize the “desirable” life. Critics of anthroposophy have argued that its proponents benefited from the Nazi regime’s support of “natural medicine” and alleged ideological similarities. However, this was not substantiated by the historical analysis.

Instead, the research revealed that anthroposophical doctors, pharmaceutical producers, and curative education institutions demonstrated significant resistance to Nazi policies. The study highlighted that, while individual behaviors ranged from resistance to conformity, the broader picture showed the inherent incompatibility between National Socialism and anthroposophy. This was particularly evident in the

contradictions between the racial ideology of the Nazis and the humanistic, individualized approach of anthroposophic medicine.

Anthroposophic medicine as such, grounded in Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual science, was never accepted within the Nazi system. Despite some high-ranking Nazi officials privately using anthroposophic remedies or consulting anthroposophic doctors, the regime considered anthroposophy a threat. In 1941, a report from the Reich Security Main Office stated: “If one accepts the totality of ideological thinking and its effect on the overall opinion and attitude of human beings, there can be no doubt that followers of anthroposophy must inevitably become opponents of National Socialism, or at least remain alien to it.”*

*Note: Quoted in Uwe Werner, *Anthroposophen in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Piper, 1999), 383.

Biography

Peter Selg, Prof. Dr. med., born in 1963, studied medicine at the University of Witten/Herdecke, in Berlin and Zurich, and obtained his doctorate with a thesis on „The historical development of an anthroposophical human physiology in the work of Rudolf Steiner”. Specialised training in child and adolescent psychiatry and psychotherapy, senior physician at the Herdecke Community Hospital and the Ita Wegman Clinic in Arlesheim. Worked at the Institute for Applied Epistemology and Medical Methodology in Freiburg. Current: Director of the Ita Wegman Institute for Anthroposophical Basic Research (Arlesheim), Professor of Medical Anthropology and Ethics at the Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences in Alfter near Bonn, member of the Faculty of Health at the University of Witten/Herdecke. Co-director of the General Anthroposophical Section at the Goetheanum. Since 2008, regular seminars on medical ethics with students from the Witten/Herdecke faculty at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial (Poland). Publication of over 200 book monographs on the life and work of Rudolf Steiner and on issues of medical anthropology and ethics.

Gopi Krishna Vijaya

Organic Thinking as a Prerequisite for Discussions on Race with a Special Emphasis on India-Britain

Abstract

Racism is emotionally charged, due to its being present at the nexus of power, prejudice and morality. While this emotion is certainly grounded in a desire to value the core of humanity, the reasoning process that accompanies emotion does not always have a clear grounding. In this presentation, I will be examining the differentiations in the reasoning process, including the processes of defining, stereotyping and categorizing strengths and weaknesses, thinking about moral actions of individuals and groups, as well as moral judgment. With the help of examples drawn from both mathematics and botany, I will show the critical importance of a systematic development of organic thinking which forms a prerequisite especially for deciding on the crucial question of whether Steiner's work is a 'spiritualization of prejudices'. Drawing on the history of relations between the races in the Indian subcontinent (beginning with the British conquest of India up to the relation between Annie Besant and Krishnamurthi), both successes and failures in the reasoning process will be highlighted through the study of specific events, such that the need for organic thinking will be shown to be a critical part of a genuine evaluation of this relationship. The continued repercussions of the failures in the reasoning process echoing into the 21st century will be described, showing how the historic experience can shed light on the approach to race relations today.

Biography

Dr. Gopi Krishna Vijaya is from Bangalore, India. He has completed his undergraduate physics training from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (India), and his PhD in Physics (Solar Energy) from the University of Houston in 2014. He is currently the Science Director of the Foundation for Cultural Renewal, and also engaged in the Postdoctoral Research of the Reciprocal System of Physics – a way to inculcate Goethean thought into

modern physics – in Salt Lake City. In physics, he has been the author of journal publications in semiconductor physics, presented his work in multiple international conferences (IEEEPVSC, SPIE etc.), served as a research mentor for students and collaborated with MIT, Cal Tech, Imperial College London, UNSW and the University of Tokyo on Solar Energy. Apart from physics, his work spans geometry, chemistry, social threefolding, pedagogy, philosophy, as well as the relationship of digital technology to society, which are available at www.gopivijaya.com.

Rogério Calia

Decoupling Racial Stereotypes from the Body of Knowledge Utilized in a Network of Organizations Managed by Meditation Practitioners in Brazil

Abstract

In a network of organizations managed by meditation practitioners in Brazil, how to decouple racial stereotypes from its body of knowledge? How to more effectively respect the rights of black individuals interacting with anthroposophical organizations without racially discriminatory stereotypes being reinforced in Brazil? Are there alternatives to Dan McKanan's (2017) field observations of "hermeneutics of veneration" causing study groups to uncritically accept stereotypical sentences in books authored by Rudolf Steiner? An organizational science action-research methodology was performed following the approach of Otto Scharmer's "Theory U", in order to find some steps towards answering these questions. Dialogue interviews with black individuals in the context of anthroposophical organizations and a contemplative inquiry meditation for mental receptivity to insights were instrumental to create simple potential solutions to be tested in focused social experiments ("prototypes"). In the first prototype, a group of decision makers in Brazil accepted the recommendation to decouple racial stereotypes from two books. A second prototype proposed a change management communication plan to be tested, which was based on Robert Livingston's approach for racial equality in organizations and based on the

implementation of Steiner's "ethical individualism" concept applied as practical criteria for the change management process. In this communication plan, a change management coordinating team is recommended to ask key questions individually to meditation practitioners representing anthroposophical humanism in Brazil, in order to invite them to support the decision above to decouple racial stereotypes from the two books. Evaluation of resulting answers and reactions to those key questions will provide additional data for checking to what extent the ideas of "ethical individualism" can be applied as practical criteria to a new evidence based change management process, in order to decouple racial stereotypes from the body of knowledge of a network of organizations managed by meditation practitioners in Brazil.

Biography

Rogério Calia is professor at a business school of the Universidade de Sao Paulo (USP) in Ribeirao Preto city, Brazil. Research supervisor in the master professional programme for management of health organizations of the Medical School of USP Ribeirao Preto. Former Waldorf student. Studied anthroposophical meditation in Europe in the early 1990s. Anthroposophical meditation practitioner since 1994. Since 2017, is part of a team of anthroposophical meditations facilitators for the School of Spiritual Science in Brazil. Studied business administration (USP), has a PhD in Production Engineering (USP) and another PhD in Business Administration (FGV-EAESP). Worked for 8 years in the Brazilian subsidiary of 3M company in operational excellence projects and was part of the team implementing a Sustainability department. Professor since 2009 (statistics, organizational science, sustainability, mindfulness and Theory U). Writer of a book about intuitive thinking in action and in dialogue - an introduction to Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy of Freedom.

Cory Eichman

Facing Contradictions: Navigating Race and Diversity in Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science

Abstract

Distinguishing between a Seer's spiritual vision and the cultural context from which it arose can be a tangled, divisive thread. Rudolf Steiner's work is no exception. Although he strove to develop a 'universal' spiritual science, he was looking at the spirit world through the lens of a European male of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Socially progressive for his day, and in some respects ours as well, Steiner was still part of a world outlook embedded within the globalization rooted in European colonialism. Nowhere is this perspective more evident than in his descriptions of race and peoples. His frequent emphasis on the individuality, regardless of gender, race, nationality, or religion, lead many to insist he had no racist views. However, there are enough references in his work to the 'white' race being the most progressive that they cannot be ignored.

Steiner's views changed through the course of his public life. He eventually broke away from Theosophy's declaration that Aryans are the leaders of modern humanity. His spiritual research revealed a breaking apart of humanity well before the end of the Ice Age, with one group emerging as central. In the Age of Social Darwinism, it seems he assumed this division was the conventionally identified races with the central position held by Indo-Europeans. I believe his vision instead pointed to the multiple Hominid species living simultaneously, the evidence of which didn't emerge until after Steiner's death. All Homo sapiens, that is all peoples, carry human evolution forward. Reinterpreting his spiritual research potentially opens up a decentralized, multi-cultural perspective on spiritual science, the seeds of which can be found in what Steiner was striving for. The issues of race and diversity highlight how our times are defined by the ongoing challenges around 'de-personalizing' truth.

Biography

Cory Eichman has been farming Biodynamically for over 30 years. He has managed the Saugeen River CSA farm in Durham, Ontario Canada since 1997. He has taught many workshops and courses for the Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto and the Biodynamic Association. He has led courses on Anthroposophy and race for the Council of Anthroposophical Associations (for two years), the Camphill Academy, and the Anthroposophical Society in America. He currently teaches through the Saugeen River School for Sacred Agriculture.

Chiaki Uchiyama

Completing the Circle: Rethinking Cultural Evolution Beyond Eurocentrism

Abstract

This proposal explores Rudolf Steiner's evolutionary framework of human consciousness through the lens of cultural epochs and reconsiders its implications for contemporary understandings of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Drawing from Steiner's lectures—particularly *At the Gate of Spiritual Science* and *Egyptian Myths and Mysteries*—the Western European epoch is situated not as the culmination of human development but as a midpoint in a larger arc of evolution. While this stage represents the rise of intellectual materialism, individuality, and freedom, it is intended to be followed by a re-spiritualization of consciousness that integrates these qualities with cosmic and universal wisdom.

Contrasting with Hegel's view of Western consciousness as the apex of human freedom, the anthroposophical model foregrounds a more balanced and cyclical view of evolution. Without this broader understanding, Steiner's insights risk being misinterpreted as Eurocentric or hierarchically biased. The paper argues that such misreadings overlook the inclusive and forward-looking nature of Steiner's vision, which recognizes the essential contributions of all cultural streams.

Importantly, when considering the latter half of evolution, Africa emerges not as a lesser point of origin but as a future bearer of deep spiritual potential, symbolizing both the beginning and the end of the evolutionary circle. This perspective reframes human history as a dynamic interplay of spiritual and material qualities across all peoples. It challenges the notion of cultural superiority and instead presents each race and epoch as holding a unique evolutionary task.

Ultimately, the evolution of consciousness points toward a future where individuality and spiritual unity coexist. Recognizing the spiritual contributions of all cultures allows for a more holistic and inclusive vision of human development—one that transcends hierarchy and affirms the sacred diversity of the human journey.

Biography

Chiaki Uchiyama was born and raised in Yokohama, Japan. In 1997, Chiaki moved to the United States and began teaching Japanese at a Waldorf School, where she served for 21 years before becoming Pedagogical Director in 2018. In 2022, she joined the Portland Waldorf School as Pedagogical Director and is now in her third year serving as School Director. Since 2010, Chiaki has led annual Waldorf language teacher conferences for Japanese educators and has facilitated a wide range of pedagogical workshops. Her presentations include contributions to AWSNA, WECAN, the Center for Anthroposophy, the NAIS People of Color Conference, and the NAIS Continental Conference. Chiaki holds an Ed.D. in Waldorf Education from Antioch University. Her doctoral research explored diversity, equity, and inclusion through the lens of anthroposophy. Her dissertation, titled *Heart-Thinking Leadership*, examines a consciousness orientation that transcends binary thinking and fosters unity as an organic whole.

Tuesday, December 16

13:00—15:00

James Room East – Panel 6B:

Steiner in Dialogue (5 papers)

Ryan Boynton

Reading Steiner and Whitehead

Abstract

Any academic effort to explain, understand, or otherwise account for Steiner's work needs to address and engage the relation between one's own approach to the pursuit of knowledge and the approach that Steiner implied or advocated—including his explicit critiques of conceptions of knowledge and knowing typical of the academy of his day, especially as these continue to inform present academic practice. I will suggest that a fruitful path into Steiner's work—in a manner that helps us to engage these questions in ways that can genuinely disturb us—is provided by his age-mate Alfred North Whitehead. There is a compelling similarity in the world-pictures arrived at by Steiner and Whitehead, made all the more intriguing because they arrive from opposite directions: Steiner starts from the problem of how to articulate his own uncommon experience of spiritual realities in a form that could facilitate the cultivation of that experience by others; Whitehead from how to frame a speculative system of general ideas in terms of which all aspects of experience can be interpreted. I am persuaded that by reading Steiner and Whitehead in and through and off of one another, each can be seen to offer constructive criticism of how the other met the task before him. And this engagement offers us as present readers significant aid in overcoming the obstacles of our own assumptions—about the character of reality, the activity of knowing, the process of communicating (and the role

of language in that process)—that are implicitly or explicitly challenged by Steiner's work. Steiner brings far wider experience to Whitehead's project; Whitehead brings a more direct, clear, and (in terms of meeting the contemporary reader) ultimately more effective critique of the obstacles that stand before a serious entertaining of the possibilities toward which all the forms of Steiner's efforts gesture.

Biography

Ryan Boynton first read Steiner in a freshman seminar at Harvard, and later spent six months at the Goetheanum working as a stagehand during a year off after his sophomore year. After completing a B.A. in cultural anthropology, he traveled through Europe and Asia, spending two years in China studying Chinese language, history, and philosophy. After receiving an M.A. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Chicago, he pursued a Ph.D. in the Philosophy of Religions at the Divinity School (ABD), under the direction of David Tracy, Franklin Gamwell, Arnold Davidson, and Robert Richards. During this time he began working on Whitehead, and resumed his study of Steiner. As an independent scholar, his focus remains in the philosophy of science and experiential approaches to science education. He has taught occasionally at the UofC, and participates regularly in the Committee on the Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science.

Matthew David Segall

Rudolf Steiner's Elemental Phenomenology: From Goethe's Participatory Method to the Metamorphosis of Consciousness

Abstract

Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science is an application of the Goethean method of observation beyond the world of the physical senses. While it includes the study of so-called "etheric" processes of metamorphosis in nature, Spiritual Science is also recursive, involving the observation of observation itself—that is, observation of the metamorphosis of the researcher.

Steiner's description of the process of cosmic evolution—which includes the deeds of various angelic and demonic beings—may at first seem incredible, to put it mildly, to today's more materialistic common sense. My paper explores the historical precursors and onto-epistemic presuppositions of what I call Steiner's Elemental Phenomenology in the hopes that its philosophical justifications can be clarified. Such clarity is unlikely to convince skeptics, but it may at least allow for honest critical assessment to replace incredulous scorn. The key desideratum, for Steiner, is to overcome the modern bifurcation between moral and physical dimensions of the universe. For example, in Steiner's earliest cosmic phase—Old Saturn—the only discernable quality is a spiritual warmth arising from the sacrificial self-immolation of the Thrones offered to the Cherubim. Steiner insists our experience of heat is not merely a consequence of molecular kinetic energy but an expression of this primordial sacrifice.

Most secular intellectuals have come to accept that a materialistic version of evolutionary theory provides a satisfying—empirically adequate and rationally consistent—account of how human beings came to be. But glaring philosophical gaps remain unaddressed. The onto-epistemic status of consciousness in an evolving cosmos is perhaps the central question underlying not only our spiritual aspirations, but also the basis of scientific knowledge itself. Why is the universe intelligible, and how are we to account for our own existence as intelligent agents capable of scientific inquiry? My paper will flesh out how Steiner's Elemental Phenomenology attempts to answer these questions by first directing our attention back upon itself.

Biography

Matthew David Segall, PhD, is a transdisciplinary researcher, writer, teacher, and philosopher applying process-relational thought across the natural and social sciences, as well as to the study of consciousness. He is Associate Professor in the Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness Department at California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, and the Chair of the Science Advisory Committee for the Cobb Institute. His most recent book is titled *Crossing the Threshold: Etheric Imagination in the Post-Kantian*

Process Philosophy of Schelling and Whitehead (Integral Imprint, 2023). He blogs regularly at www.footnotes2plato.com.

Sara Siqueira, Amanda Siqueira, Samuel Andriotte, Gabriel Pádua, and Fernando Costa

Spirituality and the Reconstruction of Scientific Epistemology: Goethe, Steiner, and Spiritism Beyond Newtonian Reductionism

Abstract

In response to the epistemological constraints of Newtonian science, Goethe proposed a vision of knowledge grounded in the active participation of the observer, a dynamic relation in which the knower is internally transformed through disciplined engagement with the living processes of nature. Rudolf Steiner adopted and radicalized this participatory epistemology, advancing a spiritual science where cognition itself becomes an instrument of perception, capable, through ethical and inner development, of accessing lawful dimensions that remain inaccessible to reductive, mechanistic approaches.

In parallel, Spiritism articulated a convergent epistemological project. Rooted in the intelligibility of spiritual laws and the continuity of consciousness beyond bodily existence, Spiritist philosophy likewise positioned consciousness not as a byproduct of matter, but as a primary ontological foundation underlying reality. Both Steiner's and Spiritism's models reject limiting science to the measurable and material, advancing instead an expanded epistemology that incorporates inner experience, ethical responsibility, moral development, and non-physical realities as essential domains of scientific investigation.

This framework opens pathways for addressing empirical domains that strain classical models: non-local consciousness, verified survival phenomena, and transpersonal cognition. Examples include veridical near-

death perceptions, telepathy studies, reincarnation cases, evidential mediumship, instrumental transcommunication, altered states of consciousness, and direct spiritual perception, all of which lie beyond the reach of Newtonian paradigms. Far from abandoning scientific rigor, Steiner's Goethean science and Spiritism expand its methodological boundaries, offering a coherent, ethically grounded approach to investigating the full spectrum of consciousness and existence.

By bringing Steiner's participatory spiritual science into dialogue with Spiritism, this study advances not merely a historical parallel but contributes to the reconstruction of spiritual science as an epistemological alternative to materialism. It challenges the foundations of modern science by exposing the limitations of any scientific model that excludes consciousness, interiority, and meaning as intrinsic to the very structure of existence.

Biographies

Sara and Amanda Siqueira are Brazilian twin cardiologists, researchers, and postdoctoral research fellows at Harvard Medical School. They have extensive expertise in spiritual science, Spiritism, and consciousness studies, focusing on the intersections of science, spirituality, and non-material dimensions of reality. Their research includes near-death experiences, after-death communication, paradoxical lucidity, instrumental transcommunication, and related perceptual phenomena. At the Percentual Studies and Scientific Spiritism group, they integrate science, spirituality, and healthcare through holistic and innovative approaches fostering a transformative vision of care.

Samuel Andriotte is a Brazilian researcher in neuroscience and physics of consciousness, with extensive expertise in spiritual science, Spiritism, consciousness and electronic voice phenomena. His work combines technical knowledge in electronics and energy systems with empirical investigation of anomalous phenomena. He develops and applies innovative approaches for real-time empirical studies in Instrumental Transcommunication, conducting laboratory-based research on after-death communication phenomena and the potential integration of non-material dimensions into scientific inquiry.

Gabriel Pádua, a Brazilian physician and researcher, has been fascinated by laboratories and spiritual phenomena since childhood. With extensive expertise in spiritual science, Spiritism, and consciousness, and a passion for Instrumental Transcommunication, he dedicates his work to exploring the mysteries of the spiritual realm and promoting collective responsibility for personal growth and the well-being of the planet.

Fernando Costa, a Brazilian cardiologist, professor, researcher, and principal investigator of international clinical trials, has extensive expertise in both cardiovascular medicine and the interdisciplinary study of spiritual science, Spiritism, consciousness, and the relationship between science and spirituality. As a Fellow of the ACC and ESC, and former director at SBC and SOCES P, he explores the connections between health and spirituality, promoting holistic care and personal well-being.

Armin J. Steuernagel and Philip Kovce

Social Threefolding and Democracy: Reassessing Rudolf Steiner's ideas through Hannah Arendt's Lens

Abstract

This paper examines Rudolf Steiner's Kernpunkte der Sozialen Frage (The Core Issues of the Social Question) through the lens of Hannah Arendt's democratic theory. Written in the aftermath of World War I, Steiner's proposals for a threefold structure of society—freedom in cultural life, equality in political life, and solidarity in economic life—have recently been criticized as undemocratic (Zander). Drawing on Arendt's reflections on the political realm, truth, and totalitarianism, I argue that Steiner's ideas, far from undermining democracy, anticipate key strategies for its preservation. Both thinkers advocate for the autonomy of cultural institutions and for the separation of economic imperatives from political deliberation, warning against the dangers of politicizing truth and cultural life, and of bureaucratizing the political sphere by burdening it with the management of the sphere of necessity (economic life). By aligning Steiner's threefold model with Arendt's vision of a free and pluralistic public sphere, this paper

seeks to shed new light on the relationship between democracy and Steiner's threefolding, while at the same time highlighting the potential of Steiner's proposals to address contemporary democratic challenges, such as rising bureaucracy and political encroachments into cultural life.

Biographies

Armin Steuernagel is co-founder of the Purpose Group (www.purpose.ag), president of the Purpose Foundation, and executive board member of the Foundation for Steward-Ownership. He is also a research fellow under Prof. Birger Priddat at the University of Witten/Herdecke. Armin holds a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics from the University of Witten/Herdecke and an M.A. in Political Science from Columbia University, New York. As an entrepreneur and researcher, he draws inspiration from Rudolf Steiner's ideas on the theory of the firm and researches in this field. He founded his first company at 16 and his second, Mogli, at 22—now active in around 50 countries. In 2020, he was named one of Forbes' "30 under 30" and Capital Magazine's "Top 40 under 40." Armin is an alumnus of the Club of Rome's young think tank (TT30) and serves on the Board of Trustees of the University of Witten/Herdecke Foundation.

Philip Kovce, M.A., conducts research at the Freiburg Institute for Basic Income Studies at the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg and at the Philosophicum Basel and is co-director of the Rudolf Steiner Archive. He studied Economics and Philosophy at Witten/Herdecke University and at the Humboldt University of Berlin, conducted research at the Chair of Economics and Philosophy at Witten/Herdecke University and at the Götz Werner Chair of Economic Policy and Constitutional Economic Theory at the University of Freiburg. He also taught in the Studium fundamentale at Witten/Herdecke University and in the Studium generale at the Berlin University of the Arts. Kovce is an alumnus of the German Academic Scholarship Foundation and the Club of Rome's young leaders think tank (TT30). He moderates the UM Politics Talks series at Switzerland's largest coffee house in Basel and was awarded the one-time Rudolf Steiner Prize for his study on ethics of speaking (2011).

Ashmita Khasnabish

Steiner and Sri Aurobindo on Spiritual Evolution and Philosophy

Abstract

The paper will propose a comparative analysis between the philosophy of the Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo, and Rudolf Steiner based on the interstice of their philosophical ideas between transcendence versus immanence or dualism versus non-dualistic philosophy.

According to Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of Supra-mental consciousness, the bliss or what Steiner calls intuition or spiritual freedom could be attained through ego-transcendence. Sri Aurobindo describes it almost like a psychoanalytical process in Life Divine: the mind has to go up through higher mind, illumined mind, intuition and over mind to the super mind level of consciousness to reach super mind through ego-transcendence. Once that is achieved which is called ascent, one has to bring it down to the body and this is called descent. Once the ascent and the descent occur concurrently, the goal of the supramental consciousness is achieved.

As the process of ascent and descent is non-dualistic and cannot be achieved through dualism, likewise, Steiner's philosophy valorizes non-dualism. In his book *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*, he deconstructs this eternal battle between matter and spirit and dualism. Both Steiner and Sri Aurobindo strive to achieve this harmony between the inner and the outer self and believe that it could be achieved through the evolution of the spiritual consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo talks about ego-transcendence but Steiner explains in the following way: "What dualism seeks only beyond the observed world, monism finds in this world itself" (131). It resonates with the concept of Brahman or the concept of the absolute in Hindu philosophy that the whole world is manifestation of Brahman and therefore there is no distinction between myself and my fellow human being. Finally, it will discuss how Steiner's anthroposophical views on spiritual bodies and the cultural epochs

resonate with the philosophy and show the path for the modern spiritual world.

Biography

Dr. Ashmita Khasnabish, lecturer, Lasell University is a Co-Investigator in Regent's Park College, Oxford University in Love in Religion and Culture Project working on her book *Global Bengali Identity*. She published *Jouissance as Ananda: Indian Philosophy, Feminist Theory and Literature* (2003, 2006) *Humanitarian Identity and the Political Sublime: Intervention of a Postcolonial Feminist* (2009), *Negotiating Capability and Diaspora: a Philosophical Politics* (2013, 2016) and the edited volume *Postcoloniality, Globalization and Diaspora: What's Next?* (2019, 2020) through Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group. Her most recent monograph is *Virtual Diaspora, Postcolonial Literature and Feminism* published in 2022 and 2024 through Routledge, written while an Associate of Harvard University's Comparative Literature Program. She held teaching positions at Boston University, Emerson College and held various research positions at Brown University, MIT, Brandeis University, Oxford University and Harvard University. She lectured at Oxford University, Trinity College, Dublin, University of Geneva, in North America and in India.

Tuesday, December 16

15:15—16:55

Cader Room – Panel 7A:

Steiner's Philosophical Outlook I (4 papers)

Ansgar Martins

***Rudolf Steiner Discovers History: Transitions between
Philosophy and Theosophy***

Abstract

This paper examines Rudolf Steiner's intellectual transition from philosophy to theosophy between 1899 and 1904, drawing on lectures and texts recently published in new volumes of his Gesamtausgabe. It identifies three central transformations: the emergence of a historical consciousness, Steiner's engagement with ancient philosophy and mystery traditions, and the influence of Jewish philosophy on his evolving conception of the "post-Atlantean cultural epochs." First, Steiner's late 1890s writings, notably *Welt- und Lebensanschauungen*, mark a shift from epistemology to intellectual biography, signaling a growing historical awareness. This development continues in *Mysticism at the Dawn of the Modern Age* and *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, where Steiner's interest in ancient spiritual cultures becomes increasingly pronounced. Second, the paper highlights Steiner's openness around 1900, a period characterized by exploratory engagements with historiography and philosophy. Rather than offering fixed systems, Steiner's work at the turn of the century reflects a search for a worldview capable of integrating scientific knowledge and spiritual life. This dynamic is particularly evident in his portrayal of Philo of Alexandria as a foundational

figure for Christianity, underscoring the critical role of Jewish mysticism. Third, the paper traces how Steiner's understanding of Jewish traditions evolved, illuminating the complexity behind his development of the "post-Atlantean cultural epochs." Initially emphasizing a distinct "Jewish cultural epoch," Steiner later reconfigured this phase within a broader "Chaldean-Egyptian cultural epoch," demonstrating a gradual shift in his cultural-historical models. Rather than framing this period as either rupture or continuity, the paper analyzes Steiner's transitional phase as a creative and experimental response to the philosophical challenges of his time.

Biography

Dr. Ansgar Martins studied philosophy of religion, sociology, and history at Goethe University Frankfurt, where he completed his Ph.D. at the Martin Buber Chair for Jewish Religious Philosophy. His master's thesis, translated into English, explored Theodor W. Adorno's reception of Jewish mysticism. His dissertation examined Siegfried Kracauer's concept of religion between Judaism, esotericism, and Marxism. He was a fellow and research associate at the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is currently a research associate in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Bern, Switzerland. He has published extensively on anthroposophy, including a book on Rudolf Steiner's racial teachings and another on the history of anthroposophy under National Socialism. He is currently preparing the introduction to volume 11 of the critical edition of Steiner's writings on the concept of history.

Jost Schieren

Philosophical Implications of Steiner's Waldorf Pedagogy. A Critique of Ideological Criticism

Abstract

Waldorf education is one of the world's most successful models of alternative education. With 1,283 schools and 1,922 kindergartens, the

education founded by Rudolf Steiner with the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart in 1919 is now represented on all continents and in over 71 countries (cf. Waldorf World List 2024.) However, the practical success of Waldorf schools is counteracted by a widespread critical attitude towards the theories based on Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy. These are considered to be ideologically charged, in that they are not scientifically justified on the one hand and are not considered to be scientifically justifiable on the other. Despite the fact that since around 2000 there has been an increased (educational) scientific debate about Waldorf education the ideological criticism of Waldorf education remains unbroken. The current media (in Germany) unanimously attest to Waldorf education as an esoteric, obscure, unscientific ideology. A rather reflexive apologetic response to the existing accusations of ideology, as is sometimes the case on the Waldorf side, is not helpful, as it rejects the offer of critical self-reflection, which in itself is fruitful. After all, not all accusations of ideology are unfounded; against the background of a revelation-like reception and representation of anthroposophy and a rather 'fossilized' (versteinert in German) Waldorf culture that has been adopted as a recipe, they are quite justified. Therefore, this contribution does not pursue a strategy of defending Waldorf education, but rather takes a self-critical look at Waldorf education as well as the ideological criticism that is leveled against it. The central question pursued is aimed at examining and questioning the ideological content of Waldorf education against the background of current ideological (unspoken consensual) assumptions. This ideological content is currently being sharply criticized as an ideological doctrine of faith. In the eyes of its critics, Waldorf education thus undermines the standard of a scientifically based pedagogy and is denied participation in an academic debate on an equal footing.

Biography

Prof. Dr. Jost Schieren

Dean, Department of Education

Professor of School Pedagogy (focus on Waldorf Pedagogy)

at Alanus University, Alfter since 2008

<https://www.alanus.edu/de/hochschule/menschen/detail/jost-schieren>

Born 1963 in Duisburg (Germany)

Degrees:

1997: PhD in Philosophy, University of Essen, Germany

1990: M.A. in Philosophy (major), Art History (minor) and German Language and Literature (minor)

Selected Academic Activities:

2011: Member of board of Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE) (USA)

2010: Co-founder and co-editor of online-journal “RoSE” – Research on Steiner Education (www.rosejourn.com)

2010: Co-founder and member of “INASTE” – International Network of Academic Steiner Teacher Education (www.inaste.net)

2008: Member of DGFE (GERA) – German Educational Research Association, Section School Pedagogy

Selected Publications:

- *Handbook for Research on Waldorf Education*. Routledge: New York 2023
- “The Enigma of the Human I – A Challenge for Teachers and in Teacher Training.” In: *Journal of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum*. Special Edition – World Teachers Conference 2012. Dornach (Switzerland), 2012.
- “The Concept of Learning in Waldorf Education.” In: “RoSE” *Research on Steiner Education*, Vol. 3, Number 1, 2012 (online).
- “The Scientific Credibility of Anthroposophy.” In: “RoSE” *Research on Steiner Education*, Vol. 2, Number 2, 2011 (online).

Iris Hennigfeld

From Nature to Spirit: Rudolf Steiner’s Impulse for a New Understanding of Goethe

Abstract

This paper explores how Goethe’s approach to nature reaches a threshold where consciousness turns from the external object toward itself — a movement made explicit only through Rudolf Steiner’s work. As Steiner himself puts it in his foreword to the 1918 new edition of “Goethe’s Theory

of Knowledge: An Outline of the Epistemology of His Worldview” (1886), Goethe’s epistemology — which is not explicitly articulated in Goethe’s own texts — “speaks of a nature of knowing that paves the way from the sensory world into a spiritual one.” This insight epistemologically underpins the transition from the science of nature to the science of spirit. Steiner revealed the implicit spiritual dimension in Goethe’s natural philosophy and laid the foundation for a science of the spirit, addressing non-sensory phenomena.

Goethe’s method seeks the inner core of reality accessible only to the spirit, relying on what Steiner refers to as the productivity of consciousness. Central to Goethe and Steiner’s epistemology is the idea that consciousness must not only focus on its contents but also detach from them and, as Steiner states in “The Philosophy of Freedom” (1894), observe itself in its own activity. Steiner highlights this self-observation as essential for genuine spiritual knowledge. This process, described as a methodically guided inner training, cultivates new cognitive or spiritual faculties — “fully conscious imagination” (bewusste Imagination) — which Steiner identified as a crucial future task for humanity.

Adopting an immanent-critical approach grounded in phenomenology and its call “back to the things themselves,” this paper seeks to understand Goethe and Steiner on their own terms, resisting reductive interpretations that impose external philosophical categories. Ultimately, Steiner’s development of Goethe’s sensorial imagination into conscious imagination offers not only a new epistemological method but also a path toward cultural renewal. Contrary to narratives of cultural decline, this approach envisions perception and knowledge as active, formative forces constituting reality — pointing toward a Goethe who is truly “yet to come.”

Biography

Iris Hennigfeld is a philosopher currently completing her dissertation on Goethe’s philosophy of nature in light of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology at Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena. Her research interests include Goetheanism with a focus on consciousness studies, as well as Husserlian phenomenology. Iris holds a degree in philosophy from the University of Freiburg and was awarded a two-year Goethe Fellowship at McGill

University in Montreal, Canada. She also completed a one-year research stay at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She is a member of the editorial board of the Goethe Lexicon of Philosophical Concepts (University of Pittsburgh) and has published on anthroposophical and philosophical topics in both academic and public contexts. Iris has held a teaching position at Leuphana University Lüneburg and is also a painter, integrating her artistic practice with her philosophical research. Committed to exploring the intersection of classical philosophy and spiritual science, she aims to deepen the understanding of Goethe's and Steiner's legacy for contemporary philosophical inquiry.

Jeffrey Hipolito

Rudolf Steiner's Nietzschean Phenomenology: Philosophy as the Art of Thinking

Abstract

This paper contends that Rudolf Steiner's philosophical writings offer, in response to the Marburg Neo-Kantian school then ascendant, a highly original synthesis of other nascent philosophical currents: a Nietzschean emphasis on philosophy as an art of self-overcoming, a development of Franz Brentano's approach to phenomenology, and his own invention of a Goethean philosophy as a means to provide them an epistemological ground. I take a brief look at each branch in turn. The work of Nietzsche resonates most obviously in Philosophy of Freedom, in which Steiner defines the philosopher as an "artist in the realm of concepts." I show how this view is central to his book, and how it had already been anticipated in Steiner's book about Nietzsche, *Fighting for Freedom*. The second part of this paper shows how the Nietzschean emphasis on freedom as an artistic activity harmonizes with Steiner's development of the phenomenology of Franz Brentano, some of whose lectures Steiner attended: though philosophy is an art form, it is a precise one. This section of the paper establishes that the primary significance of Brentano for Steiner is the former's attempt to establish a rigorously scientific phenomenology of

thinking itself, thereby paving the way to Steiner's own concept of "spiritual science" as a phenomenology of spiritual experience. Much of anthroposophy is an expansion of the method established and practiced with too much self-limitation by Brentano. The paper's final section takes up Steiner's early book, *A Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's Worldview*. If Nietzsche showed that the philosopher is an artist of concepts and Brentano showed that that art is also a precise science, Goetheanism establishes what concepts are while navigating the pitfalls post-Kantian idealism. The book's final section, on aesthetics, returns us to our beginning: the art of philosophy.

Biography

Dr. Jeffrey Hipolito is the current chairperson of the Owen Barfield Society and the author of *Owen Barfield's Poetic Philosophy: Meaning and Imagination* (Bloomsbury 2024) and *Owen Barfield's Poetry, Drama, and Fiction: Rider on Pegasus* (Routledge 2024). He is co-organizer of the annual Owen Barfield conference, now in its third year, hosted in its first two years by the Divinity School at Cambridge University and in its third year by Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. He has published numerous articles, and presented numerous papers, about Owen Barfield, anthroposophy, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. His current research focuses on different modernist responses to the rise of the secular age.

Tuesday, December 16

15:15—16:55

James Room East – Panel 7B:

Practice of Waldorf Education ***(4 papers)***

Peter Lutzker

Studying the Art of Teaching: Waldorf Teacher Education as a Transformative Process

Abstract

In this contribution the fundamental relation in Waldorf education between the self-development of a teacher and the learning of her pupils will be examined. The self-development of the teacher will first be discussed in the context of Rudolf Steiner's understanding of teaching as an art. From this perspective, the importance of the arts as a cornerstone of Waldorf teacher education programs and the connections between artistic practice and attaining artistry in teaching will be elucidated. The nature of practice as a transformative process will be discussed, along with the potentials of experiencing transcendence through art.

Another perspective on attaining artistry in teaching will be considered in the context of the studies of pedagogical anthropology based on Steiner's threefold view of the human being viewed from physical, soul and spiritual dimensions. The potential consequences of these studies for understanding and attending to child and adolescent development will be examined. As a way of deepening these studies, the potentials of contemplative and meditative practices will be discussed. The publications and work of Arthur Zajonc regarding the integration of contemplative studies in different

university programs will be viewed as paradigmatic for Waldorf teacher education. Although Zajonc's own spiritual path was rooted in anthroposophy, his work and writings have drawn from a broad range of meditative practices from different religions and cultures. As Waldorf schools now exist in more than 70 countries, his approach points to the possibilities for Waldorf educators throughout the world to connect to their own spiritual traditions.

Finally, at a point at which education is undergoing profound changes due to the 'answers' which generative artificial intelligence programs can instantaneously provide, the potential significance of artistic practice and meditation as long-term embodied processes that can contribute to both self-development and artistry in teaching will be explored.

Biography

Prof. Dr. Peter Lutzker was born in New York City and studied music, literature and linguistics in the United States and in Germany. After working as a French hornist in German orchestras, he received a diploma in Steiner/Waldorf education and taught English and music at Waldorf Schools in Frankfurt and Duesseldorf. During this time, he also regularly taught courses in teacher education programs in Germany, England, Hungary and Russia. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Eichstaett, Germany. In 2010 he became a full professor at the Freie Hochschule Stuttgart (Free University Stuttgart – Waldorf Teachers College). He was also appointed honorary professor at the National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan in 2019 and has continued to teach there regularly. He has published extensively in the fields of sensory and arts education, foreign language teaching and teacher education and been a keynote speaker at conferences in Europe and Asia.

Martyn Rawson

Using Anthroposophy as a Heuristic Basis for Waldorf Education: A Response to Accusations of the Unscientific Nature of the Theory Behind the Education

Abstract

Despite a broadly positive critical academic reception of the education there has been increasing, often ideological criticism of its anthroposophical foundations, summed up by Heiner Ullrich's often repeated phrase, "interesting educational practice, unscientific theoretical foundation" (e.g. Ullrich, 2024). The practical success of Waldorf schools is counteracted by a widespread critical attitude towards Steiner's anthroposophy as the theoretical basis for the education.

This lack of scientific status for the theoretical basis of Waldorf education is an Achilles heel for representatives of Waldorf education, who wish it would gain wider recognition and be more accessible to children, whose parents are not supporters of an anthroposophical approach.

Johannes Kiersch made the suggestion that Waldorf education, in contrast to the whole of Anthroposophy, could claim to have an anthroposophical process of generating knowledge and a pedagogy that is sufficiently secured in theory. He added that this would require "a more precise anthropological and educational-theoretical justification" (Kiersch, 1986, p.555).

I build on this stance to argue that in order to do this, it would be necessary to carry out a discourse analysis to establish that what constitutes Anthroposophy and then thus be able to identify parsimoniously which aspects of Anthroposophy are essential foundations for Waldorf education. On this basis Waldorf education would need to establish that its application of anthroposophical ideas was heuristic and capacity building for teachers. There would need to be a new pedagogical anthropology based on Steiner's work but supplemented by other theory and on the basis of this a new learning theory and approach to child and youth development would be developed that met the criteria for a contemporary educational science.

Biography

Dr. Martyn Rawson

Born Glasgow, Scotland 1954

Studied History and English at York University, UK

MA and EdD Plymouth University, UK

Waldorf teacher training Stuttgart

Co-founder York Steiner School, UK 1979

High School teacher at Michael Hall School, Forest Row, Stuttgart Uhlandshöhe, Elmshorn, Germany and currently Christian Morgenstern School Hamburg.

- Editor Rawson, M., & Richter, T. (2000/2014). *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications
- Teacher educator at Emerson College, Greenwich University, Plymouth University, Leiden University,
- Current positions: Freie Hochschule Stuttgart, International Masters Programme, Honorary Professor National Tsinghua University Taiwan, Senior Research Fellow, Alanus University, International Masters.
- Member of European Union Working Group on Schools, Special advisor European Council Steiner Waldorf Education

Academic publications (books)

- Rawson, M. (2021). *Steiner Waldorf Pedagogy in Schools. A critical introduction*. Routledge.
- Rawson, M., & Bransby, K. (2025). *Crafting Coherent Curriculum*. Routledge.
- Rawson, M., & Steinwachs, F. (Eds.). (2024). *Waldorfschule, Globalisierung und Postkolonialismus – Versuch einer Annäherung*. Beltz.
- Over 20 peer-review journal articles

Mary Angela Nardelli and Tania Stoltz

Extending Steiner's Soul Tri-Membering into Higher Education: Psychometric Diagnosis and Entrepreneurial Talent Formation in Adults

Abstract

This paper presents the Entrepreneurial University Diagnosis (Diagnóstico Universitário Empreendedor — DUE), a psychometric tool for identifying entrepreneurial potential in university students and adult learners, integrating scientific assessment with formative development. The DUE is directly inspired by Rudolf Steiner's pedagogical and anthroposophical principles—especially the soul tri-membering of thinking (cognition), feeling (emotion), and willing (action). It offers a contemporary extension of Waldorf pedagogy applied to higher education and vocational formation, guiding adults toward professional paths aligned with their inner capacities.

Built upon this spiritual-scientific framework, the DUE operationalizes self-knowledge and vocational autonomy. It integrates Steiner's vision of the human being with models from modern psychology: Gardner's multiple intelligences, Bandura's self-efficacy, Dweck's mindset, McClelland's achievement motivation, and emotional intelligence. The diagnostic structure encompasses three dimensions—Mindset (thinking), Personality (feeling), and Behavior (willing)—and generates personalized feedback to guide individual development beyond mere classification.

Applied to over 1,700 participants in partnership with Brazilian universities and SEBRAE's innovation programs, the DUE functions as both diagnostic and formative. It reflects Steiner's view that education should not merely transmit knowledge but activate latent potentials for meaningful life purposes.

By extending Steiner's pedagogical framework into adult entrepreneurship education, the DUE demonstrates how anthroposophical insights can inform contemporary personal and vocational development, offering a replicable model of applied spiritual science for higher education and entrepreneurship formation.

Biography

Mary Angela Nardelli is an educator, researcher, and entrepreneur based in Curitiba, Brazil. Founder and CEO of Talento Nato, she developed the Diagnóstico Universitário Empreendedor (DUE) to extend Steiner's pedagogical principles into higher education and vocational formation. After entering higher education at age 44, her academic work integrates psychometrics, applied anthroposophy, and adult developmental psychology to foster vocational autonomy through formative diagnosis. Her company has partnered with Brazilian universities and SEBRAE (Brazil's national entrepreneurship agency), applying the DUE to over 1,700 participants. Nardelli's work demonstrates how anthroposophical pedagogy may inform entrepreneurship education and personal development in adulthood, addressing both higher education and professional transitions.

Tania Stoltz is a full professor at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), Brazil, specializing in Educational Psychology, Giftedness, and Talent Development. She has extensive publications on multiple intelligences, creativity, and entrepreneurship education. Her research explores theoretical and applied approaches to adult learning, talent identification, and the fostering of vocational autonomy. Prof. Stoltz has supervised numerous research projects that intersect educational psychology with self-development models, contributing to the academic foundation of the Entrepreneurial University Diagnosis (DUE) project.

Felicia Siemsen and Tania Stoltz

The Process of Parents' Self-Knowledge Experienced During the Induction of Infants

Abstract

The objective of this study is to understand the process of parents' self-knowledge experienced during induction of infants in a collective daycare and preschool environment. The study is based on Rudolf Steiner's pedagogical perspective for observation of human nature in the physical,

soul, and spiritual realms. Also, investigates a deeper understanding of the parental transformation of feelings of pain and anguish during their child's process of transition to the school environment. The phenomena of consciousness in subjective first-person experience in education contexts is inspired by Goethe's approach. This is a qualitative study using the micro-phenomenological approach based on Claire Petitmengin. The data collection instruments were: microphenomenological interview; field diary entries; mothers' notes on experiences shared with their children. First, the analysis examined the elements portrayed in a diachronic way, respecting the temporal element. The moments of transition from initial phases to the composition of secondary sub-phases were investigated. The mothers' transformation images as corporal, dynamic, visual and auditive characteristics of the phenomenon evoked were found to have deepened in the synchronic structure. The mothers' experiences of self-knowledge results, experienced by each participant in the induction of their children at the childcare center, present a process of development that underwent evolution, challenges, feelings, thoughts. The conclusion reached is that the parental experiences lived in the infant induction process, when shared with teachers, school and their families, favor the mothers' inner journey and their self-knowledge as a creative lived experience.

Keywords: induction; infant; self-knowledge; parents; comprehensive education.

Biography

Felicia Siemsen, Ph.D. student in Education at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), Brazil, in the line of Cognition, Learning and Human Development. Master in Education, UFPR. Graduated in Pedagogy and Art Education. Educator and researcher on the parental processes of self-knowledge and early childhood education. Worked as an early childhood educator at a Waldorf school, coordinator of teachers and lecturer in specialization courses on Rudolf Steiner and Emmi Pikler approaches. Currently works as a pedagogical and parental advisor in schools. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3230-9462>

Tania Stoltz, Prof. Dr., Bachelor of Arts in Pedagogy; Bachelor of Arts in Artistic Education. Master and Doctor of Education (Educational

Psychology). Postdoc from the Jean Piaget Archives, Geneva, Switzerland (2007), from the Alanus University, Germany (2012), and from the Witten-Herdecke University, Germany (2024). Since 2008 Coordinator of the scientific cooperation agreement between Alanus University in Alfter, Bonn (Germany) and the Federal University of Paraná. Member of the Board of Directors at the Jean Piaget Society (2016–2019 and 2024-2027). Full Professor at the Federal University of Paraná, Brazil. CNPq Productivity Research Fellow. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9132-0514>

Tuesday, December 16

17:10—18:50

Cader Room – Panel 8A:

Steiner's Philosophical Outlook II (4 papers)

Terje Sparby

Steiner's Trinitarian View and the Philosophy of Mind: A Critique of Robert Lawrence Kuhn's Landscape of Consciousness Taxonomy

Abstract

In a recent taxonomy of different philosophies of mind, Robert Lawrence Kuhn classified Rudolf Steiner's view as a mind-body dualism. We argue that this classification is incorrect. Rather, Steiner's view is trinitarian and represents a unification of monism and dualism. Hence the trinitarian conception of the human being in Steiner not only challenges Kuhn's taxonomic placement of Steiner's view but indicates a potential

fundamental limitation of the whole taxonomy. Furthermore, since other thinkers (such as Whitehead, de Chardin, and others) may potentially be classified as trinitarian, Kuhn's taxonomy arguably needs revision. In fact, the dualism vs. monism debate mirrors limitations in current ways of thinking. The trinitarian view offers a different approach to "hard problem of consciousness", understanding the differentiation between mind and body, and the philosophic problems that arise from this differentiation, as part of human development.

Biography

Terje Sparby is a philosopher and meditation researcher. His main areas of research are German idealism, Steiner, and first-person methods. He studied philosophy at the University of Oslo and received his PhD in philosophy at Heidelberg University in 2012. The topic was Hegel's conception of the determinate negation. Terje has been a postdoc at the Humboldt University and the Bender Institute of Neuroimaging, and a visiting scholar at the Mind & Life Institute. He did his habilitation at the Witten/Herdecke University, where he worked as an assistant professor. Currently, Terje is a professor (full) of philosophy and research director at the Steiner University College in Oslo. He is a member of the board of Steiner Studies, has contributed to the critical edition of Steiner's works, and co-edits RoSE (Research on Steiner Education). His current research projects focus on advanced meditation, inner work among Waldorf educators, and Steiner's trinitarianism.

Christian Clement

Beyond Aulasaukaulala – The Philosophical Approach to Anthroposophy in the Critical Edition (SKA)

Abstract

Dr. Clement's presentation will provide a summary of the history, reception, and conceptual framework of the Critical Edition of Rudolf Steiner's Writings (SKA), which has been published by frommann-holzboog in Stuttgart since

2013 under his editorship. The focus will be on the question of why, and to what extent, the accompanying introductions and commentaries in this edition place anthroposophy primarily within a philosophical context and seek to understand Steiner's life's work from that particular perspective—despite criticism from the academic community and despite Steiner's own views on the limitations of philosophy.

Biography

The presenter, Dr. Christian Clement, is the editor of the Critical Edition of the Works of Rudolf Steiner (SKA). He works as an Associate Professor at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Andreas Schmitt and David Martin

*The Philosophy of Freedom as an Inner Schooling Path:
Results from a Worldwide Annual Training Program*

Abstract

The Philosophy of Freedom (PoF) stands at the heart of Rudolf Steiner's spiritual-scientific oeuvre. While its philosophical rigor is profound, many modern readers find it difficult to access its spiritual potential. In response, we developed a seven-month global training program based on PoF that supports individuals in cultivating inner freedom through structured, meditative thinking.

Participants engage daily with curated quotations ("thought-cards") from PoF, supported by weekly guidance, monthly peer exchange, and a dedicated app. Since 2020, nearly 2,000 participants from over 35 countries have completed the program.

This contribution presents results from the 5th cycle (2023–2024), including both quantitative and qualitative data. Over 50–80% of participants reported clear improvements in concentration, insight, clarity, intuition, emotional stability, and spiritual well-being. While these findings were not statistically significant—due to the cross-sectional design—we are implementing a full pre-post longitudinal evaluation in the next cycle.

We propose that the PoF—when approached as a living inner practice—can serve as a valid path of contemporary spiritual schooling. At the Conference of December 14-16th 2025 in Harvard we will be able to additionally present the fresh analysis of the 2024-2025 cycle with 748 participants. Our findings suggest new perspectives on how Steiner's epistemology of freedom might be integrated into modern adult education and interdisciplinary research on contemplative development.

Biography

Andreas Schmitt, born 1979 on Stuttgart, Germany. He is a Specialist in Visceral Surgery, Scientist at the University of Tübingen, functional senior physician in the field of Integrative Oncology in the Filderclinic, Filderstadt, and guest scientist at the University of Witten-Herdecke, Germany. He is the founder and director of the Institute for Spiritual Activity, the Non-profit organization Leben im Denken e.V. and the Annual Training Philosophy of Freedom www.Philosophie-der-Freiheit.de. He has given various in person lectures and workshops all around the world. In the field of the Philosophy of Freedom in Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Kanada, USA, Russia, India, Japan, Korea. In the field of integrative oncology in various congresses (DKK Berlin, DEGAM Würzburg, DGHO Basel, ECIM Madrid, Ärztekongress Stuttgart, DGNHK Essen, FORUM Essen) and in Korea.

David Martin, born 1973 in Vermont, USA, grew up in the USA, France and England. He is a pediatrician, pediatric endocrinologist, oncologist, diabetologist and hematologist. After being Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Tübingen, he is now Chair of Medical Theory, Integrative and Anthroposophic Medicine at the University of Witten/Herdecke, Germany. He has received several prizes for his research in the field of growth, skeletal development, diabetology and endocrinology and is Counselling Professor of the German National Academic Foundation. He is the founder and director of www.feverapp.de, www.warmuptofever.org, and the Clinical Foundation Course of the Eugen-Kolisko Academy www.kolisko-academy.org, tutor of www.anthroposophic-drs-training.org, scientific director of <http://icihm.damid.de/en> and is co-founder and co-director of www.lebens-Weise.org, www.mediafasting.org and www.bildschirmfrei-bis-3.de. He has authored over 175 peer-reviewed publications.

Christopher Germann

Emotion, Epistemology & the Unclassified Residuum: Steiner's Challenge to James

Abstract

In his 1893 essay *The Hidden Self*, William James introduces a category of anomalous mental experience—ecstatic trance states, somnambulism, subconscious personalities—which he calls the “unclassified residuum.” These cases, James argues, demand a broadening of psychology's scope and a loosening of its physiological constraints. He proposes that a proper understanding of the self must include these “exceptional mental products,” even though they defy the current limits of empiricism.

Rudolf Steiner's spiritual science picks up precisely where James hesitates. Whereas James classifies these cases, Steiner integrates them. Steiner's view—that the “soul-spiritual” is ontologically primary—allows for a richer metaphysical interpretation of the same phenomena. For Steiner, trance states and altered consciousness are not pathological or peripheral, but signs of a supersensible dimension accessible through disciplined inner development.

This paper argues that James's notion of the “hidden self” gestures toward what Steiner fully articulates: a layered ontology of the human being, including spiritual, soul, and physical dimensions. Where James catalogs the evidence, Steiner interprets it. Both thinkers emphasize inner experience, but Steiner offers a method to move beyond the empiricist limits that James himself acknowledges.

The dialogue between these two thinkers—though separated by discipline and intent—opens critical space in the study of emotion and selfhood. Their shared concern is not just what the self is, but how it can be known—a question that links psychology with epistemology and metaphysics. This paper explores that link, arguing that Steiner's approach provides a necessary philosophical supplement to James's empirical

sensitivity, especially in our contemporary efforts to integrate emotion, cognition, and consciousness studies.

Biography

Dr. Germann is a cognitive psychologist with interdisciplinary training in cognitive science. He acquired his PhD as an EU Marie Curie Fellow at the University of Plymouth (United Kingdom). He is currently affiliated with the University of Witten/Herdecke, where he works as a postdoctoral researcher in integrative medicine at the anthroposophic Gerhard Kienle Chair.

Tuesday, December 16

17:10—18:50

James Room East – Panel 8B:

Constructive Anthroposophical Responses to Racism (4 papers)

Lucas Dreier

***From Rudolf Steiner to Anthroposophy: Spiritual Science
Comes of Age***

Abstract

Among indigenous people like the Kogi of Colombia, traditional wisdom is passed on from generation to generation, but at the same time it is engaged with directly and unpredictably through divinatory practices that allow for communication with the very beings of which the tradition speaks. A parallel might be drawn with gnostic invocations of Sophia, whereby deep engagement with tradition is combined with living access to wisdom. While

Helena Blavatsky framed her research as Theosophy, Rudolf Steiner stands out for his framing of Anthroposophy explicitly as a living, evolving being of wisdom with whom we can directly relate, coupled with a methodological approach that aims to be “scientific.” In assessing Rudolf Steiner’s legacy 100 years after his death, then, the question arises of how to think about the relationship between the legacy of Rudolf Steiner the man and Anthroposophy conceived as a living being. What if, rather than limiting ourselves merely to debates between critics of Steiner and his defenders, we were to think of anthroposophy as a dynamic constellation of ideals that Steiner, however imperfectly, pointed towards in such a way that others could take it up themselves? Could such a characterization of anthroposophy be framed meaningfully, coherently, and rigorously? And could such an approach enable us to wrestle, from within anthroposophy itself, with challenging aspects of Steiner’s legacy? Building on recent scholarship, I will seek to clarify these questions through engaging with Steiner’s own articulation of what characterizes anthroposophy while also considering its conceptual and epistemological scope and its corresponding methodology. In doing so, I will suggest that by clarifying the relationship between Steiner the person and Anthroposophy the being, we can elucidate the movement’s history more clearly and engage with its present and future more productively.

Biography

Originally from Massachusetts, Lucas Dreier has been working for several years with the Kogi people of Colombia, combining ongoing anthropological research on Kogi knowledge practices with participation in efforts to support the Kogi in protecting their traditional homeland. After attending a Waldorf school and studying anthropology at Yale, where he helped launch the Yale Sustainable Food Project, Lucas pursued graduate studies in social anthropology at the University of St Andrews. In both his anthropological and his anthroposophical studies, his abiding interest is in the potential for spirituality to empower ethical action in the face of planetary imbalance. He is a longtime member of the Anthroposophical Society in America.

Billy J. Choi-Gekas

Understanding Racism through Rudolf Steiner's Psychosophy of the Seven Life Processes & Fallen-Life Processes

Abstract

The research for this paper is derived from the work of my capstone for the Association of Anthroposophic Psychology's 3-Year Program. The goal of this work is to begin developing an 'Anti-Racist Anthroposophy' using the framework of the 'Seven Life Processes' and 'Seven Fallen-Life Processes' that Rudolf Steiner provides in his lecture "The Riddle of Humanity (GA 170)." This research is only in a genesis-stage for the study of racism from specifically an anthroposophic psychosophy to develop a decolonial and anti-racist praxis, in hopes that it may continue over time with deeper work and collaboration. For now, I provide a starting place to catalyze both a study in this area, and a praxis for beginning to develop an anti-racist anthroposophy. This discussion on an anthroposophic verstehen of racism through the seven life processes and the seven fallen-life process, hopes to begin leaving you with some accessible praxis to embody an anti-racist anthroposophy. Through understanding the spiritual-science of anthroposophy and intersecting these frameworks of verstehen with the mainstream socio-cultural praxis of anti-racism, critical race theory (CRT), and critical race psychology (PsyCrit), we have a powerful opportunity to facilitate holistic healing that includes what Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy would believe to be spiritual and karmic healing for the present and future individual, community, and world with all its Kin-dom members.

Biography

Billy J. Choi-Gekas (they/them) is a wholistic practitioner, educator, and anti-oppression consultant, working with numerous universities, and social justice, queer, and interreligious organizations across Turtle Island (North America). They are a member of the Anthroposophical Society through the

Goetheanum and is a graduate of both the Association of Anthroposophic Psychology's 3-year Psychology and 2-year Psychotherapy specialized programs. Billy continues their graduate research at the University of Toronto through Trinity College and works through their institution in management and provides training for the university's equity offices. Billy spends the rest of their time with their Anishnaabe-Cree community working with their Elder Audrey Bone to support the protection and ethical use of Indigenous medicines and ceremony. To ground their work, Billy's sadhana (cultivation practice) is from the Anthroposophic, Taoist, and Vedic traditions, and is under a life-long mentorship with their Sifu Dr. Hon, Sat Chuen.

Ashton K. Arnoldy

Reverent Impiety: Reading Steiner's Christian Cosmology Against His Racism

Abstract

This talk affirms Dan McKanan's suggestion that the "hermeneutic of reverence" practiced by good-willed proponents of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy "might require a dose of antiracist critique" if the movement is to persist. Careful study of Steiner's published works and lectures reveals that his evolutionary vision includes racist categories as the temporary outcome of descending further into solidity than providence intended. While Steiner claimed race ceased to be a force during the Atlantean epoch and would disappear in the sixth Post-Atlantean period, his writings contain inconsistencies. At times, he envisions racial unity through mutual participation in the divine Anthropos; at others, he stresses the essential differences among races, associating them with distinct moral and spiritual capacities. The notion that karmic destiny is tied to racial genealogy provides a framework for legitimizing white supremacist paternalism a posteriori.

Rather than wholly dismiss Steiner as a white supremacist, this talk critiques his racial doctrine from within his Christian cosmology, arguing

that the universality of Christ's salvation contradicts racial hierarchies. Steiner's inconsistencies raise broader epistemological questions: how much faith should one place in someone who claimed to report unfiltered spiritual facts when his racist statements suggest otherwise?

But perhaps, as Robert McDermott has suggested, there is an ironic silver lining here: "while these unenlightened statements are truly regrettable, they could have the positive effect of helping some of Steiner's followers free themselves from the fundamentalist assumption that his words should be taken as unquestioned truths instead of, as Steiner intended, progress reports to be continually checked and improved by subsequent exoteric and esoteric researchers." The future of anthroposophy may rest upon whether its practitioners are willing to acknowledge and adequately address the issue of racialism and yet still aspire to bring the fruitful method articulated by Steiner forward by improving upon the progress reports he set forth over 100 years ago.

Biography

Ashton K. Arnoldy is a scholar, multimedia artist and astrologer with a Ph.D. from the Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness program at the California Institute of Integral Studies. His dissertation explores a postcolonial recuperation of metanarrative in the work of Owen Barfield and Rudolf Steiner. He is currently working on a postdoc project at the Goetheanum. He writes and creates digitally @micrOk0sm.

Robert (Karp) Karbelnikoff

Embodying Love: Rudolf Steiner's Phenomenology of Race and its Relevance for Our Time

Abstract

Though Rudolf Steiner's view of race has faced increasing and justified scrutiny, in this paper I suggest that Steiner made important contributions to a truly Christian, healing, and ethical understanding of race and culture

that has particular relevance for our times. This contribution is easy to miss and misconstrue because:

1. Steiner did not set out to explicate a theory of race;
2. His view of race is embedded in an elaborate esoteric worldview filled with idiosyncratic terms and redefinitions of conventional terms;
3. His views of race and culture evolved over the course of his life;
4. He spoke differently about race to different audiences in differing contexts;
5. The prevalence of racist theories in his historical context naturally prompts skepticism toward his ideas and perspectives.

When the inessential, personality- and context-dependent elements in his philosophy are clarified, however, what emerges is a healing, balanced, phenomenological understanding of race that has much to offer present discourse, which tends to polarize around the fault lines of postmodern constructivist, and traditional essentialist, views of race. This paper will elucidate and explain key aspects of Steiner's philosophy in three main categories:

Ethical Individualism: Every human has a unique, divine self that both encompasses and transcends racial, cultural, and other generic influences.
The Evolution of Consciousness: While races and ethnic cultures express essential biological and spiritual characteristics, these influences evolve and are now diminishing, allowing universal human values to come to the fore.
Conscious Social Development: All races and cultures reflect aspects of the universal human. By engaging with people of diverse backgrounds we both enrich our humanity and make it possible to solve the problems of the modern world. I conclude by exploring the practical applications of these views to a host of contemporary race and culture related challenges.

Biography

Robert Karp, M.Ed. is an educator, researcher, writer and long-time leader in the local, organic and biodynamic agriculture movements in the US. Robert's writings include:

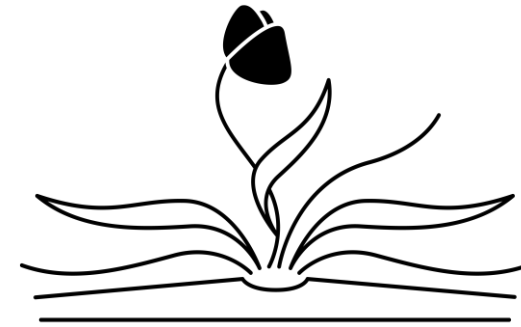
- Toward an Associative Economy in the Sustainable Food and Farming Movement
- Social Justice in the Light of Anthroposophy

- Agriculture and the Sacred, which was published as a chapter in the book Journeys and Awakenings, Wisdom for Spiritual Travelers, published by Sacred Spirit Books

- A New American Revolution: Associative Economics and the Future of the Food Movement published by Hawthorne Press as a chapter in Free, Equal and Mutual-Rebalancing Society for the Common Good

- Community and Agriculture: An Iowa Pilgrimage, published by Free River Press in Eating in Place: Telling the Story of Local Foods.

Robert is increasingly focused on giving talks and teaching workshops on esoteric Christianity, social threefolding, and earth healing. Robert lives in Viroqua, Wisconsin. You can learn more about Robert at www.robertkarp.net



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