

Reassessing the relationship of Waldorf education to anthroposophy Part 2

Martyn Rawson

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| <i>Reassessing the relationship of Waldorf education to anthroposophy</i> | 1 |
| Critical and postcolonial perspectives in Waldorf and the need for new epistemologies | 1 |
| Applied anthroposophical research | 5 |
| Conclusion: a globalectic perspective | 10 |
| References | 12 |

In part 1 of the article you can find:

| | |
|---|----------|
| <u>Introduction</u> | 1 |
| <u>What forms does anthroposophy take?</u> | 4 |
| <u>Anthroposophy as metanarrative</u> | 5 |
| <u>Anthroposophy as foundational myth</u> | 12 |
| <u>Anthroposophy as an esoteric path and a means to capacity building</u> | 19 |
| <u>Anthroposophy as a basis for Waldorf education</u> | 20 |

Part 2:

Critical and postcolonial perspectives in Waldorf and the need for new epistemologies

Critical pedagogy (Kincheloe, 2008) has a long history of questioning epistemological and ontological assumptions. It is committed to social justice, equality and diversity, which Waldorf education also aspires to (as evidenced in the mission statements of individual Waldorf schools and national and transnational associations of school). Critical pedagogy and Waldorf education share some core values. Both recognize the importance of the agency of persons (Waldorf speaks of autonomy and anthroposophy of ethical individualism), the importance of the school community, teachers as researchers, the importance of seeing, listening to and accepting each student as an individual and that pedagogy puts the developing child and young person at the focus of their attention, and both reject positivist epistemologies. However, there are ambivalences and differences. One area we can see as problematic is that critical pedagogy “places great emphasis on the notion of context and the act of contextualization in every aspect of their work” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 35). In principle Waldorf does too but struggles to get beyond the notion of a general pedagogical anthropology, a curriculum that is to a large extent ‘arboreal’ and focused on an original curriculum, and many practices that are replicated all over the world (one can always recognize that one is in Waldorf lowers school class from the water colour paintings).

Critical pedagogy is also strongly committed to challenging and resisting the dominant power, which Waldorf is too, theoretically. In practice Waldorf tends to adapt and accommodate (see Oberman, 2008), for example, in accepting the restrictions that go with public exam systems.

Each language and each cultural context has its own perspective, and postmodernism has shown us that certain forms of knowing and certain voices have been and still are marginalized, whilst other are privileged. There are schools of thought that say unhistorical and un-examined assumptions about anthropology, the nature of the human being, such as we find in Steiner's 'general' pedagogical anthropology are no longer acceptable from post- and decolonial perspectives, which after all are amongst the fastest growing debates in the humanities and social sciences (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018). Instead of universal and global notions of development and phases and stages, postcolonial perspectives look to pluriversal and interspersal modes of understanding human development and subjectivities. With this in mind, it is important that even Steiner's foundational pedagogical anthropology be interrogated and not simply be taken for granted, as given. This is not to reject Steiner since his vision is also part of the pluriversal. Mignolo and Walsh are not proposing opposition or resistance to Western thinking but rather a "re-existence understood as 'the redefining and re-signifying of life in conditions of dignity' ¹(Ibid, p.3).

Traditional Western thinking on child development has a heavy historical burden.

Comparison between child, prehistoric 'man' (sic) and 'savage' presupposed a conception of development, of individual and of evolutionary progress, as unilinear, directed steps up an ordered hierarchy. This confirmed the intellectual superiority of the Western male, while non-Western (male or female) could be figured as less important than his or her evolutionary predecessor. (Burman, 2016, p.?)

Postcolonial critics of developmentalism, such as Lesko (1996) see the construction of the phases of childhood and adolescence as part of the colonist project, by overlaying notions of development with recapitulation theory; primitive-as-child and child-as-primitive. In Lesko's terms, "concepts like development, acculturation, modernization, and urbanization carry the evolutionary imagery and social relations of lower species and higher species" (Ibid. p 459).

We find this same idea in Steiner's *Education of the Child* in which he uses the analogy, look at an uneducated savage next to a typical European, or again compare the latter with a person of high ideals. All of them have the faculty to say 'I' to themselves; the body of the I is present in all. But uneducated savages, with their I, follow more the passions, impulses and cravings. More highly developed persons say to themselves...(etc)" (Steiner, 1996, p.10).

Lesko, and many other authors in youth studies, identify adolescence as a social construction, tied up with the preoccupations of specific societies and particular historical times. Again, the point is that it is important to interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions about childhood or any other aspect of the anthroposophical image of *the* developing human being, which is an essentializing use of the definite article. Children develop and may follow similar trajectories

¹ Adolo Albán Achinte, "Interculturalidad sin decolonialidad? Colonialidades circulantes y prácticas de re-existencia," in *Diversidad, interculturalidad y construcción de ciudad*, ed. Wilmer Villa and Arturo Gueso (Bogotá: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional/Alcaldía Mayor, 2008), 85–86.

but, as Largo (2019) emphasizes, they do so in highly individual ways- variation is the norm. The kind of knowledge we draw on, and the kind of knowledge we generate is bound up with who we are, with biographical, cultural and historical dimensions of being. For this reason, I have redefined a layered model of curriculum (Rawson, 2021), which does not assume given developmental stages, but ‘imposes’ a flexible framework of ideal-typical developmental themes for each school year, that may be beneficial to heterogenous learning groups as communities of learning. This stands in marked contrast to traditional presentations of development in Waldorf literature (e.g. Lievegoed, 2005, Glöckler, 2021), which offer a fine-grained normative developmental pattern in annual steps, along the lines of, ‘the class 5 child is....’. This is an area of Waldorf education that needs critical review.

One of the central, unresolved issues about Steiner’s pedagogical anthropology is what extent it is generally, even universally valid. Bearing in mind that we must at least be aware that all claims to universality are contestable, my suggestion, which I have elaborated elsewhere (Rawson, 2020, 2021), is to treat Steiner’s descriptions as heuristics. In the process of working with them the teacher develops dispositions or habits of mind and seeing that direct her attention to certain aspects of the pedagogical situation, what is referred to as pedagogical tact, or knowing-in-practice. The relationship between the specific phenomenon, the child in front of us, and Steiner’s general pedagogical anthropology, is not one in which we see the child as an example for or illustration of a general principle or rule (nor indeed of accumulating specific examples as proof of the rule!). Rather there is an iterative process in which the heuristic idea draws our attention to aspects of the phenomenon and that repetition of similar experiences makes us more experiences and thus builds our capacity for pedagogical tact.

The commitment of Waldorf education to a fine-grained link between curriculum content class for class, developmental stage and the way schools are organized (with key transitions from kindergarten to grade school, and from the class teacher period to the high school) is a mutually reinforcing system. Regardless of the pedagogical justifications that are given, the system would become unstable, if any of these elements were critically questioned. Asked to explain the use of particular curriculum content, the developmental argument is used. The same applies for the transitions from kindergarten to class 1 and from middle to high school (traditionally from class 8, age 14, to class 9). We are told that Old Testament stories relate to the so-called Rubicon, a developmental construct relating to the so-called ninth year crisis, in which children seek new forms of identity in relation to aduly and their peers (e.g. in Röh & Thomas, 2019). The psychological situation of the child is understood as analogous to Adam and Eve being cast out of paradise, the conflict of Cain and Abel, and the quest of the Hebrew people for social structures based on divine law. The assumptions behind this account (here reduced to its most simplistic form, but supported by more detailed accounts in Glöckler, 2020, Lievegoed, 2005, Howard & Reubke, 2019) would provide a rich field for deconstructing (the Rubicon construct, Old Testament morality and the role of women in the figure of Eve, the essentializing of the age etc.).

Studies by Berman (2016) have shown that historical constructions of infancy, childhood and puberty have gone hand in hand with industrialization and capitalism, and with colonialism, as well as the need to discipline the uncivilized working-class children through compulsory state education. We know from youth studies (e.g. Furlong, Woodman & Wyn, 2011) how

adolescence has been constructed and reconstructed in postmodern times, and Hurrelmann and Quenzel (2018) have theorized the new developmental tasks facing youth under the combined influence of consumerization, globalization, digitalization. Largo (2019) has shown empirically that individual developmental variation is the norm among children and youth. Taken together there would be good reasons to critically interrogate Waldorf assumptions about development and the link to curriculum and school structures. The one-size-fits-all approach can lead to a heavy reliance on teacher authority, selection, not meeting individual learner's needs, conformity and the proliferation of homework and extra school tuition (for those who can afford it).

The arguments for the Waldorf approach, some of which I myself have provided (Rawson & Masters, 1997, Rawson & Richter, 2000, Rawson & Rose, 2003), emphasize the learning community of the heterogenous Waldorf class, the role of the class teacher in providing a shared learning experience and long-term pedagogical relationships, may ameliorate the problems but have not been critically tested through focused research. More recent arguments that emphasize the orientation towards and around intrinsic and extrinsic developmental tasks and the 'reading' of biographical intentions of the students, the notion of an ideal-typical developmental framework that is non-essentialist (Rawson, 2021) have also not been critically examined, and have yet to have any real impact on practice. It is understandable that busy Waldorf teachers are not able to restructure their schools to allow for any other way of doing things, and those who could bring about change (if indeed change is needed- in the absence of research, we don't know) in teacher education have invested much in the 'old' narrative.

One of the issues that highlights the need for a practical epistemology is the question of adapting curriculum over time and cultural and geographical space (see Boland, 2015, 2017, 2022, see Rawson 2021, pp. 147-151 for an overview of the problems connected with curriculum). This is a problem that has not yet been adequately solved because of the question of equivalence. Waldorf schools have existed outside the German-speaking world since 1923 (London), which means that the curriculum used in the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart (published by 1925 (1966) by Caroline von Heydebrand) has had to be translated both in terms of language and cultural content. However, the reception and transmission of Waldorf education has on the whole been arboreal rather than rhizomic (see Bransby & Rawson, 2022), that is to say, the original model has been closely followed and reproduced. This means either using themes and literature from the German (or English, since Rawson & Richter, 2000, has been the most widely used curriculum, internationally), or finding equivalents in the local culture. Finding equivalents to the Old Testament stories or Norse mythology in China or South Africa is not only difficult but probably meaningless. The problem is one of translation in the widest sense.

One solution to this problem has been suggested by Rawson (2021) and Bransby & Rawson (2023) by using the model of the layered curriculum, which assumes at the macro-level a common and constructed developmental framework as a set of ideal-typical themes (i.e. acknowledging that there are no universal developmental stages and phases, but that this construct can provide a useful heuristic tool for orientation). At the meso level, schools adapt the curriculum in terms of content, methods and intended outcomes in response to local need, and at the micro level, individual teachers adapt their lessons to take account of the meso and

macro levels but in the context of the actual learning group. My point here, is that developing curriculum requires the ability to critically evaluate existing knowledge and generate new knowledge and of course generating new practices. To date, there is little evidence that Waldorf teachers or academics are using an anthroposophical epistemology in their research, or at least no one is owning up to it in any published writing. What would anthroposophical research look like?

Applied anthroposophical research

Jost Schieren's contribution to the question of the relationship of Waldorf education to anthroposophy has firstly been to show how anthroposophy can be considered scientific (2011), then to show how an anthroposophical understanding can provide a theory of learning (2012a), followed by papers on the nature of spirituality in Waldorf education (2012b). Then he has engaged with the academic critiques of Waldorf education (2015), showing how new accounts of Steiner's theory of knowledge open up possible access to non-positivist science, and by showing that the study of the esoteric makes it more possible to address Steiner academically. He also suggests that by treating Waldorf education phenomenologically, anthroposophy can be bracketed out or suspended (the technical term is *epoché*). Waldorf education would therefore have to prove the validity of its anthroposophical foundations through the effectiveness of its application. Schieren argues that anthroposophy manifests as practice, as situated awareness (consciousness) and as a means to capacity building in teachers (2019).

His *Erziehungskunst* article in 2022 caused controversy within parts of the German Waldorf movement, who accused him, in effect, though not in print, of wanting to cut Waldorf education off from its anthroposophical roots. His response was epistemological and ontological (2023). He argued philosophically that anthroposophy is not a body of knowledge, or a set of representations, which would be a form of naïve realism but a state of consciousness and he criticizes the widespread practice of the secondary literature reproducing and providing representations of Steiner's ideas. Schieren is without doubt the main voice redefining the relationship of Waldorf education to anthroposophy (and someone who goes out of his way to make his article available to English-speaking readers) with a view to making Waldorf education more accessible to educational science in Germany, and internationally. My sense is that this important attempt will only succeed if the Waldorf discourse becomes genuinely pluralistic and if arguments are taken from beyond Steiner and anthroposophy. At the moment, both Schieren and the voices from within the German academic Waldorf community are all trying to argue primarily with reference to Steiner (and Goethe).

The English philosopher (and anthroposophist, through his international fame is as a philosopher and linguist) Owen Barfield has applied anthroposophical perspectives to the question of epistemology and the nature of language. Like Kiersch and Schieren, though a generation before, Barfield draws on Steiner's key epistemological book *Riddles of the Soul* (2010) in which Steiner addresses the nature of representations contrasting them with what we would call today processual thinking. Barfield (1988) refers to this mode of knowing as participatory, distinguishing between original participation as the experience of human beings who are embedded in as part of the world without dualities, and final participation being gained through consciously developed thinking that reunites the meaning with the appearance

of the world (hence the title of his book, *Saving Appearances*). In his linguistic works (1944, 1953, 2011) he showed how language has its origin in a participatory consciousness (“nature speaking through man (sic)”) and that language reveals the stages in the evolution of consciousness from original participation, in which “the human psyche (somewhat like a child, at first in the womb then afterwards at the breast) gradually *drew forth its own meaning* from the meaning of its environment; that man was, so to say, spoken into being before he himself began to speak” (1978) before to our recent loss of meaning with the advent of the processes Steiner referred to as the consciousness soul and its potential for a future conscious participation.

The idea of a new participatory consciousness is important to the question of the nature of anthroposophy and what it could be. Dahlin notes that other philosophers have also taken a non-representational perspective on knowledge, including Bergson and Deleuze. He also cites Osberg, Biesta & Cilliers (2008), in which they promote an emergent perspective on knowing. Dahlin makes the link to Steiner, commenting that this is the kind of epistemology that enables participation in the first place. Osberg and Biesta have contributed to, the idea that knowledge is “neither a representation of something more ‘real’ than itself, nor an object which can be transferred from one place to the next” (Osberg & Biesta, 2008, 313). Knowledge is rather something that ‘emerges’ out of our participation in the world and its social activities. On the other hand, we must recognize that knowledge is also that which *enables* this participation...(Dahlin, 2013, p.68).

Ingold also formulates this, when he says, “we do not have to think the world in order to live in it, but we do have to live in the world to think it” (1996, p118). Skill is always knowledgeable and therefore the knowledge that Waldorf teachers need is skilled and practical. Biesta (2020) argues that teachers’ need practical knowing in practice similar to Aristotle’s notion of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, as the knowledge required in *praxis*, rather than knowledge that has the character of general laws or principles. This skilled knowing is acquired through doing. Ingold describes how a novice learns this skill, highlighting the role of imagination. The novice,

though one step removed from the uninterrupted engagement of the skilled practitioner, nevertheless, carries on his (sic) deliberations against a background of involved activity...He continues to dwell in a world that provides, above all in the presence of other persons, a generous source of support for his deliberations. The same is true for the scientist, who confronts nature in rather the same questioning way that the novice player confronts his instrument, as a domain of occurrent phenomena whose workings one is out to understand. Here, then, we have the final, essential difference between intelligence and imagination. The former is the capacity of a being whose existence is wrapped up within a world of puzzles, the latter is the activity of a being whose puzzle-solving is carried on within the context of involvement in a real world of persons, objects and relations (Ingold, 2000, 418-9).

The implication of this approach to anthroposophy for teacher education are, I think, significant. The nature of knowledge we can generate through active and contemplative engagement with the world leads not to propositional knowledge or universal truths, but

rather cultivates practical wisdom, knowing-in-practice. This proceeds by using heuristic ideas and ideal types as lenses to look at the particular phenomenon in order to understand them in context. This does not lead to generalizable outcomes but builds capacity, makes us more experienced (in German *gebildet*). The capacity directs our gaze to what is salient and relevant in the given situation. One might add that this process needs a corrective through critical reflection and above all collegial peer-review. Working together in a learning community builds the capacity of the community and thus affords growth among the individual members.

Much thinking about research in Waldorf teacher education is still linked to empirical, positivist paradigms that still dominate university level humanist and neopositivist educational research in many parts of the academy (St. Pierre, 2014, Biesta, 2020) and particularly in Germany. This sees research as collecting data through formal surveys (frequently questionnaires), deriving themes from data and quantifying these, on the assumption that what people say is the truth and that by lumping many statements together one arrives at generally valid statements of truth. As Elizabeth St Pierre (2014) points out, even qualitative research is being instrumentalized through standardized procedures and using a centred perspective of the subject (i.e. assuming that subjects can speak for themselves without taking their context into account), that ignores theory and interrogating experiences through theory; “For example, the researcher uses positivism to claim there is a brute reality out there to be found and interpretivism to claim that reality is socially constructed.”(Ibid., p. 9). Text is never just text, it is always context. From an anthroposophical perspective the Self as spiritual core of being is simultaneously embodied and distributed in the spiritual environment.

Educational research in Waldorf education can use the palette of quantitative and qualitative methods available to social research, though researchers should inform themselves about post-inquiry methods, epistemologies and ontologies. For teachers researching their practice, the methods of action research (Altrichter and Posch, 2018), illuminative case studies (Elliott & Lukas, 2008) interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2008), lesson study (Mewald & Rauscher, 2019) among other methods, offer many opportunities. It is also possible use methods based on an anthroposophical epistemology, which are particularly suitable for teachers researching their practice These include the following:

- Contemplative methods
- Using boundary ideas as heuristic tools

Contemplative methods include using Steiner’s various meditations to sensitize the teacher/researcher to spiritual dimensions of pedagogy, including developing capacity in observation. Rawson (2018a and b) has built on the work of Zajonc (2008) and Scharmer’s work on presencing and becoming sensitive to the emergent future (2016), to suggest ways in which practitioners can enhance their methods of practitioner research case studies and lesson studies.

Kiersch (1979) drew attention to Steiner’s thoughts on the use of anthroposophical ideas as ‘boundary ideas’ enabling the inquirer to incrementally expand the boundaries of her knowing-in-practice. As Schieren (2023) notes, Steiner had earlier referred to the use of ideas based on spiritual scientific insight as ‘operative forces’ (in the famous Bologna lecture of

8.4.2011). In *Riddles of the Soul* Steiner explains that using anthroposophical boundary ideas to approach social phenomena, in my words, to make sense of these experiences the researcher can go the beyond the current boundaries of her perception, without that person being clairvoyant. There are two aspects to this. The first is that by using an anthroposophical boundary concept to draw the researcher's attention to certain aspects of the phenomenon, the researcher will be able to 'see more'. Secondly, normal ideas are pale representations of the phenomena they refer to, akin to a photographic negative compared with Steiner speaks of the representation of a spiritual insight as a seed-force in the development of the unconscious part of the psyche. This is referred to latter in the book as a disposition of soul (in the Barfield translation, 2010, p. 57). Thus, boundary ideas, which are imaginal, can become "points of departure for spiritual perception" (Ibid. p34). 'Imaginal' is the process of imagining that is activated in the imagination rather than the image produced. Rawson (2018, 2021, pp. 29-32) has applied this notion, together with contemplative approaches to teacher capacity building and illuminated case study work, but this only a tentative beginning. It would require far more work to bring this to a method that could be taught to teacher students. Thus far, most teacher educators have shied away from such practical engagement with this anthroposophical epistemology.

St Pierre (2013) has explained how many research methods that set out counter positivist humanistic methods actually fall into the trap of transporting humanist assumptions about authentic voice, lived experience and the continued assumption that there are two kinds of writing, academic/scientific and literary ("there is no longer any such things as fiction and nonfiction, there is only narrative" cited in Richardson) , that art and science are clearly demarcated and this view is reinforced by handbooks, journal criteria, guidelines for writing Master theses. As yet, so little research is carried out with the Waldorf movement that subtleties of St Pierre's concern may not yet be relevant, which only shows how much need there is for the further development of the culture of research within Waldorf education. The doctoral school at the Alanus University is a seed bed for the cultivation of an academic research community. A Waldorf research culture can be thought of in the following graphic:

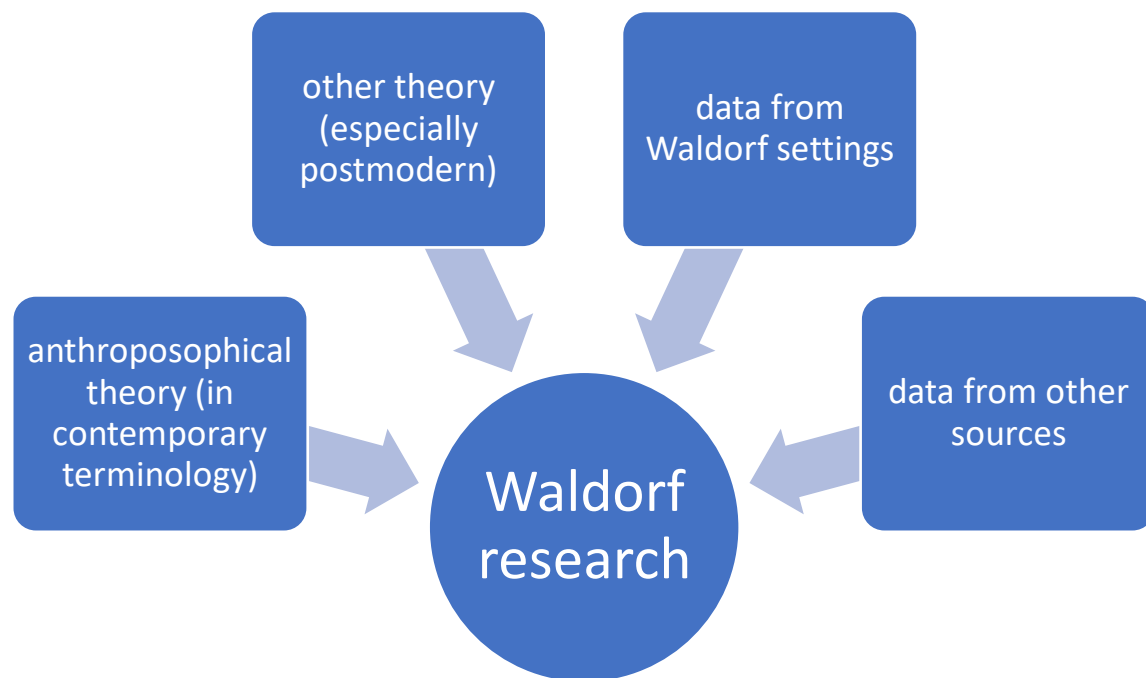


Figure three. The elements that could comprise Waldorf research

Waldorf education would need to move on from affirmative research that sets out to show how Steiner was right, if it wants to make a significant difference to current practice. This does not diminish Steiner's achievement, on the contrary, it would show the fruitfulness of many of his key ideas. Other researchers have also made important contributions from which Waldorf education can learn. Perhaps even more importantly, Steiner's ideas on the nature of the human being and his epistemology are too important to be inaccessible to the rest of the human sciences. It will only be able to make a contribution in modern form.

To sum up this section we can hold on to the following ideas, In my view:

- Waldorf teachers should treat the grand narrative of anthroposophy with criticality, rather than accepting it as truth.
- Anthroposophical content should not be taught in schools (unless it can be supported by other evidence and if Steiner's description is not supported by established scientific facts, we should hold back until we know more).
- Anthroposophy is a state consciousness, a way of looking at the world and generating knowledge about this in an iterative way, moving from one horizon to another. This is not speculative or theoretical activity. It only makes sense to apply this method to practical situations we are involved in.
- This is an epistemology that leads to dispositions that enable situated knowing that manifests in knowledgeable and meaningful action.
- Anthroposophical ideas can function as heuristic boundary ideas to help us understand the social and pedagogical world we work in. This is particularly the case in everything relating to the development of the human being.
- Anthroposophical ideas can function as heuristics to interrogate and give meaning to information and ideas from other sources, for example, if we use Steiner's distinction

between soul/psyche and spirit (as the agent and spiritual core of the person) to understand what neurology reveals to about the senses, cognition and consciousness.

- At the same teachers can take heuristic ideas from other fields of theory to interrogate anthroposophical ideas, for example using the discoveries of the biological sciences to understand Steiner's idea of an evolutionary trend to emancipation of the organism from its external environment. Another example is using community of practice theory (e.g. Lave and Wenger, 1991, Rogoff, 2010) to understand the function of a Waldorf class over 12 years, or phenomenological anthropology to understand the importance of crafts.
- Applied anthroposophy has developed since Steiner's death in 1925. It builds on, extends and modifies what anthroposophy stands for and what ideas it expresses. For example, a post-Steiner anthroposophy would take a considered stance on gender and transgender issues, on the challenges of living in societies with legal and illegal immigration, on global warming and renewable energy and on decolonizing. This means *not* trying to illuminate every question primarily through references to Steiner, but by using anthroposophical methods together with other compatible ideas to understand current realities.

In all these points there is something of a catch, namely the question: is it possible to imagine a pluralistic anthroposophy independent of Steiner, or at least not identical to his version of it, and can we imagine a pluralistic, inclusive Waldorf education?

Conclusion: a globalectic perspective

Anthroposophy has an implicit and occasionally explicit assumption of being universally valid and relevant. The message of postmodernism (e.g. as elaborated by Lyotard, 1979/1984) is that universal grand narratives tend to filter out diverse voices, especially those from the Global South. The postcolonial discourse has much to teach Waldorf education about how to rid itself of its Eurocentric baggage (not to say, its ambivalence to Steiner's theory of race and cultural evolution). An anthroposophy that is relevant today has to not only distance itself from this heritage but critically interrogate its narrative. Waldorf education as an application of anthroposophy must do the same and develop itself into an education for the present and future and that inevitably means taking up new positions on identity and diversity, gender and culture in pluricultural contexts. To do this it needs a practical epistemology and new understandings. It also needs to retain its global appeal and relevance, but in a rhizomic rather an arboreal way. There is a model for this. It is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's notion of globalectics, which itself was inspired by Goethe's notion of a world literature.

Goethe's intentions behind his West-East Divan, however much this was tainted by cultural appropriation and orientalism (Myers, 2006), were not to borrow or recreate another cultural experience (in Goethe's case, of the Divan of the Persian Sufi poet Hafiz in the 14th Century), but to be inspired by this otherness to give expression to something living in the present. Goethe explains this in his theory of translation (Goethe, 2010), which he elaborates in his notes to the Divan, and it also comes to expression in his notion of world literature (Soetebeer, 2023, see also Huang 2014). Walter Benjamin (1996) took up Goethe's ideas of translation in his essay *The Task of the Translator*, in which he suggests that a translation that goes back to the pre-linguistic sources of the original and from there creates a new text in the

other language, can be considered of equal literary value as the original. Benjamin also takes this thought further by arguing that all translation is interpretation, and that translation lies behind all genuine forms of understanding. Gadamer (2013) makes a similar case that in engaging with texts (and by extension any artefacts) the reader can find a new horizon in the fusion of horizons that occurs, thus becoming more experienced and having a new perspective on the world. The act of translating, if done in this way, changes us.

The Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o takes up Goethe's notion of a World Literature, writing that at "present, the postcolonial is the closest to that Goethean and Marxist conception of world literature because it is a product of different streams and influences from different points of the globe, a diversity of sources, which it reflects in turn" (2012,p 49). This thought leads him to formulate his theory of globalectics, which posits a theoretical position in which there is no hierarchy of language, no colonial language taking precedence over local, indigenous languages. A globalectic approach,
is to read a text through the eyes of the world; it is to see the world through the eyes of the text. Such a reading should bring the local and the global, the here and the there, the national and the world into mutual impact and understanding (ibid. p.60).

We can apply this analogy to knowledge. A globalectic epistemology would be one that does not impose a particular reality but sets up, what Ngũgĩ calls a multi-logue, a multi-voice conversation about our experiences and how we understand them and the knowledge we construct, in such a way that we strive to attain mutual understanding. Each language (and speaker) perceives the world from a particular perspective and represents this. By engaging with the other, through translation, we can approach common concepts, or at least an approximation of these. A globalectic approach to anthroposophy would be look at it from different perspectives and translating between them. It would mean interpreting texts and other phenomena from through an anthroposophical lens and looking at anthroposophy through other theoretical lenses. It would also mean, generating knowledge using anthroposophical methods (see below) and translating the outcomes into different languages both literally and figuratively.

Globalectics becomes a way of reading the world in its multiple languages and cultures,

breaking open the prison house of imagination built by theories and outlooks that would seem to signify the content within is classified, open only to a few. This involves declassifying theory in the sense of making it accessible – a tool for clarifying interactive connections and interconnections of social phenomena and their mutual impact in the local and global space, a means of illuminating the internal and the external, the local and global dynamics of social being. (ibid, 61).

Anthroposophy could be globalectic if it only got rid of its baggage of grand narrative. Hoping that one day it will be shown that Steiner was right all along, is not a viable position in the contemporary world (though it does no harm to the world and may provide some people with comfort). There is nothing stopping anyone extending her powers of perception through spiritual practices of whatever cultural origin (the old saying that the most important

meditation is the one that you do, is almost certainly true here) and discovering a bit more of the truth. For me however, Waldorf education is too important to be marginalized because some devotees insist that it is all true.

In this globalectic metaphor, there are equidistant, rhizomic centres of anthroposophy being performed. The great globe itself - to borrow Shakespeare's image - is the spiritual dimension of all relationships and movements. At each cultural point, people make sense of this dimension in their own language and using their own set of symbols and anthroposophy is the process of translating this into communicable ideas and actions.

We are living in the age of the Consciousness Soul, not of the Intellectual Soul, and there is a world of difference between the two. You would be mistaken if you supposed I am fancying philosophers, scientists, doctors, sociologists and others poring over the extracts from one or more of Steiner's writings, dissecting the sentences word by word, disputing the correct interpretation of them, and even perhaps ostracizing or persecuting anyone who was minded to depart from them altogether. What I do see, if things are not to go very badly indeed with us, is a rapidly increasing habit of *using* his revelations. And that of course was what he himself wanted. He had no desire for them to be believed or swallowed whole. As Robert McDermott summarizes in one of the introductions in his valuable book *The Essential Steiner*:

Steiner's indications for spiritual truth are intended as disclosures which await verification by future observers. Steiner in effect says: let future spiritual scientists observe the validity of my spiritual perception, and let the scientist limited to empirical observation note the extent to which observable phenomena not only correspond to, but are illuminated by, the insights of Spiritual Science. (McDermott cited in Barfield, 1987)

As we have seen, this aspiration remains largely unfulfilled. But this doesn't mean that we can't start reading Steiner hermeneutically.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2006). *Queer phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke University Press.
- Altrichter, H., Posch, P., & Spann, H. (2018). *Lehrerinnen und Lehrer erforschen ihren Unterricht (Teachers research their teaching)* (5th. edition ed.). Klinkhardt.
- Baggini, J. (2018). *How the World Thinks. A global history of philosophy*. Granta Books.
- Barfield, O. (1944). Speech, Reason and Imagination. In O. Barfield (Ed.), *Romanticism Comes of Age. Essays on creative imagination* (pp. 52-67). Anthroposophical Publishing Company.
- Barfield, O. (1953/2007). *History in English Words*. Floris Books.
- Barfield, O. (1978). Owen Barfield and the Origins of Language. *Owen Barfield* Retrieved 5.7.2023, from <https://www.owenbarfield.org/read-online/essays/owen-barfield-and-the-origin-of-language/>
- Barfield, O. (1987). Anthroposophy and the Future. *Owen Barfield* <https://www.owenbarfield.org/read-online/articles/anthroposophy-and-the-future/>
- Barfield, O. (1988). *Saving the Appearances. A study in Idolatry*. Wesleyan University Press.
- Barfield, O. (2011). *Speaker's Meaning*. Barfield Press.

- Benhabib, S. (2007). Another Universalism: On the unity and diversity of human rights. *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Society* 81(2), 7-32. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27653991> .
- Benjamin, W. (1992). Über die Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen. In *Walter Benjamin Sprache und Geschichte. Philosophische Essays* (pp. 3049). Reclam.
- Benjamin, W. (1996). *The task of the translator* (Vol. 1). Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Biesta , G. J. J. (2020). *Educational Research. An unorthodox Introduction*. Bloomsbury.
- Boland , N. (2015). The globalisation of Steiner education: Some considerations. *Research in Steiner Education*, 6(Special issue December 2015), 192-202. www.rosejournal.com
- Boland, N. (2017). Waldorf: An education of its time. *Pacific Journal*, 51(1), 26-30.
- Boland , N., & Rohde, D. (2022). The development of Steiner/Waldorf education: Looking through the lens of time. *Research on Steiner Education* 13(1), 24-31. <https://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/view/665/607>
- Bransby, K., & Rawson, M. (2022). Rethinking Waldorf Curricula: An ongoing process. *Research Bulletin for Waldorf Education*, XXVII(1).
- Bristow, W. (2017). Enlightenment. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. SAGE.
- Dahlin, B. (2013). Gloves of Ice or Free Hands? A nomadic reading of Rudolf Steiner and Bergson and Deleuze and others on knowledge as nonrepresentational and the importance of Aethesis. *Other Education*, 2(2), 67-89.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari , F. (1976). *Rhizom*. Merve Verlag.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari , F. (2004). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Continuum.
- Elliott, J., & D., L. (2008). Epistemology as ethics in research and policy: the use of case studies. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 42(1), 87-119.
- Fanon, F. (1952/2019). *Black Skin, White Masks (Peau noire masques blancs)*. Penquin Modern Classics.
- Foucault, M. (1980/2000). Interview with Michel Foucault (Interviewer D. Trombadori). In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power* (pp. pp.239-297). New Press.
- Furlong , A., Woodman , D., & Wyn , J. (2011). Changing times, changing perspectives: reconciling 'transition' and 'cultural' perspectives on youth and young adulthood. *Journal of Sociology*, 47(4), 355-370.
- Glöckler, M. (2021). *Education for the future: How to nurture health and human potential. Experiences and perspectives from the global Waldorf School Movement for education in the 21st. century*. InterAction. Wynstones Press.
- Göschel, J. C. (2012). *Der biographische Mythos als pädagogisches Leitbild: Transdisziplinäre Förderplanung auf Grundlage der Kinderkonferenz in der anthroposophischen Heilpädagogik (Biographical myth as pedagogical leading thought: Transdisciplinary learning support on the basis of the child study process in anthroposophical curative education)*. Verlag am Goetheanum Athena.
- Goethe, J. W. v. (2010). *West-East Divan, Poems, with 'Notes and Essays': Goethe's intercultural dialogues* (M. Bidney & v. Armin, P.A., Trans.). State University of New York Press.
- Howard, S., & Reubke, P. (Eds.). (2019). *Transitions in Childhood from Birth to 14 Years: Significance, challenges and consequences- The tasks for educators and teachers*. Pedagogical Section and IASWECE.
- Huang, S.-Y. (2014). Translation and World Literature in Goethe's West-east Divan. *Tamkang Review*, 45(1), 105-128. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.6184/TKR201416-6>
- Hughes, G. R. (2012). Rudolf Steiner's epistemology and its relation to feminist thought in America. In R. McDermott (Ed.), *American Philosophy and Rudolf Steiner: Emerson, Thoreau, Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey, Whitehead, Feminism* (pp. 227-250). Lindisfarne Books.
- Hurrelmann , K., & Quenzel , G. (2018). *Developmental Tasks in Adolescence*. Routledge.
- Kaiser, U. (2020). *Der Erzähler Rudolf Steiner. Studien zur Hermeneutik der Anthroposophie*. Info 3 Verlag.
- Kiersch, J. (2010). "Painted from a palette entirely different". A new hermeneutic approach to Steiner's esoteric courses for teachers. *Research on Steiner Education*, 1(2), 64-72.

- Kiersch, J. (2011). Der springende Punkt. Heiner Ullrichs Argument gegen die Wissenschaftlichkeit der Anthroposophie (The decisive point. Heiner Ullrich's argument against the scientific nature of anthroposophy). *Erziehungskunst*, 2011(1).
- Kiersch, J. (2018). In "okkultur Gefangenschaft"? Von der gewordenen zur werdenden Anthroposophie. Info 3 Verlag.
- Kiersch, J. (2021). On Steiner's Conception of Consciousness Soul. *Steiner Studies*, 3(2), 41-81.
- Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). *Critical Pedagogy* (2nd. ed.). Peter Lang.
- Koren, I. (2022). Between Racism and Universalism: Rudolf Steiner's doctrine of racial development and decline. *Aries. Journal for Studies of Western Esotericism*, 1-32. <https://doi.org/0.1163/15700593-tat00002>
- Lambert, G. (2006). *Who's Afraid of Deleuze and Guattari?* Continuum.
- Largo, R. (2019). *The Right Life. Human individuality and its role in development, health and happiness*. Allen Lane.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning. Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lievegoed, B. C. J. (2005). *Phases of Childhood: Growing in Body, Soul and Spirit* (T. L. a. P. Peters, Trans.; revised edition ed.). Floris Books.
- Lonnemann, A. (2023). Ist das noch Waldorf oder kann das weg? *Erziehungskunst, February 2023*. <https://www.erziehungskunst.de/nachrichten/inland/ist-das-noch-waldorf-oder-kann-das-weg/>
- Lutzker, P., & Zdrzil, T. (2019). Einleitung. In P. Lutzker & T. Zdrzil (Eds.), *Zugänge zur Allgemeinen Menschenkunde Rudolf Steiners*. Pädagogische Forschungsstelle beim Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge*. Manchester University Press/ Minnesota University Press.
- Martins, A. (2012). *Rassismus und Geschichtsmetaphysic. Esoterischer Darwinismus und Freiheitsphilosophie bei Rudolf Steiner* (Vol. Vol. 3). Info 3.
- Massumi, B. (2002). *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Duke University Press.
- McMillan, M. (1904). *Education Through the Imagination*. Swann Sonnenschein & Co.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception* (C. Smith, Trans.). Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Mewald, C., & Rauscher, E. (2019). *Lesson Study. Das Handbuch für kollaborative Unterrichtsentwicklung und Lernforschung*. Studien Verlag.
- Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On Decolonity. Concepts. Analysis. Praxis*. Duke University Press.
- Myers, P. (2006). Colonial consciousness: Rudolf Steiners Orientalism and German cultural identity. *Journal of European Studies*, 36(4), 389-417. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/0047244106071070>
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. (2012). *Globalectics . Theory and the politics of knowing*. Columbia University Press.
- Oberman, I. (1997a, March 24 1997). *Waldorf History: A case study of institutional memory* American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting Chicago
- Oberman, I. (1997b). *The Mystery of Waldorf: A turn-of-the-century German experiment on Today's American soil* Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, Chicago March 24-28. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED409988>
- Oberman, I. (2008). *The Waldorf Movement from European Cradle to American Crucible 1919-2008*. The Edwin Mello Press.
- Osberg, D., & Biesta, G. J. J. (2010). The end/s of education: complexity and the conundrum of the inclusive educational curriculum. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14(6). <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1080/13603110802530684>
- Osberg, D., Biesta, G. J. J., & Cilliers, P. (2008). From representation to emergence: Complexity's challenging to the epistemology of schooling. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 40(1), 213-227. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/j.1469-5812.2007.00407.x>
- Paull, J. (2011). Rudolf Steiner and the Oxford Conference: The birth of Waldorf education in Britain. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 3(1), 53-66.
- Rawson, M. (2013). *Bewusstseinswandel des Menschen von der Altsteinzeit zur Jungsteinzeit: Die Suche nach Identität- ein aktuelles Thema für die 10. Klasse (Changes of consciousness in human beings during*

- the transition from the palaeolithic to neolithic periods: A relevant theme for the 10th grade).*
Pädagogische Forschungsstelle.
- Rawson, M. (2018a). The case for practitioner research using complementary theory in Waldorf pedagogy. *Research on Steiner Education*, 8(2), 15-32.
- Rawson, M. (2018b). The case for illuminative practitioner research in Steiner Education. *Research on Steiner Education*, 8(2), 15-32.
- Rawson, M. (2019). International Waldorf 100 Curriculum Project: Some guidelines for choosing story material. *Pacifica Journal*, 56(2), 10-17.
- Rawson, M. (2020). A Theory of Waldorf Education: Part 2. The role of study and artistic exercises. *Research on Steiner Education*, 11(2), 23-36.
- Rawson, M. (2021). *Steiner Waldorf Pedagogy in Schools . A critical introduction*. Routledge.
- Rawson, M. (2023). Waldorf education: the implications of decolonizing curriculum. *Waldorf Working Papers*(10).
- Rawson, M., & Masters, B. (1997). *Towards Creative Teaching* (J. Collis, Trans.). Waldorf Resource Books.
- Rawson, M., & Richter, T. (2000). *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications
- Rawson, M., & Rose, M. (2003). *Ready to Learn: From birth to school readiness*. Hawthorn Press.
- Rawson, M., & Schmelzer , A. (2023). Building blocks for a diverse, anti-racist Waldorf education. *Erziehungskunst in English, January 2023*.
<https://www.erziehungskunst.de/en/search/?sorting=0&search=Rawson>
- Ricoeur, P. (1991). Life in quest of narrative. In D. Wood (Ed.), *On Paul Ricoeur: narrative and interpretation*. Routledge.
- Rittelmeyer, C. (2023). *Rudolf Steiners Mission und Wirkung. Exkursionen in eine fremde Bildungslandschaft*. Info3 Verlag.
- Röh, C.-P., & Thomas, R. (2019). *Unterricht gestalten- im 1 bis 8. Schuljahr der Waldorf-/Rudolf Steiner-Schulen*. Verlag am Goetheanum.
- Rose , R. (2013). *Transforming criticisms of anthroposophy and Waldorf education- Evolution, race and the quest for a global ethics*. Centre for Philosophy and Anthroposophy, UK.
https://www.anthroweb.info/fileadmin/pdfs/RR_Transforming_Criticisms.pdf
- Sagarin , S. (2007). Playing ‘SteinerSays’: Twenty myths about Waldorf education. *Research Bulletin for Waldorf Education*, 12(2), 37-44.
- Said, E. W. (1979/2003). *Orientalism*. Random House.
- Scharmer, O. (2016). *Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges- The social theory of presencing* (2nd revised edition ed.). Berrett-Koehler.
- Schieren , J. (2011). The scientific credibility of anthroposophy. *Research on Steiner Education*, 2(1), 90-98.
- Schieren, J. (2012). The concept of learning in Waldorf education. *Research on Waldorf Education*, 3(1), 63-74.
- Schieren , J. (2012). The spiritual dimension of Waldorf education. *Research Bulletin for Waldorf Educaion*, 19(1), 19-29.
- Schieren , J. (2015). Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education: a dynamic relationship. *Research in Steiner Education*, 6(2), 139-149.
- Schieren , J. (2019). Waldorf pedagogy and educational science. In C. Willmann & L. Weiss (Eds.), *INASTE. The next generation of Waldorf Teachers* (pp. 8-9). INASTE.
- Schieren , J. (2022). Anthroposophy under fire. *Erziehungskunst in English, May online*
<https://www.erziehungskunst.de/en/article/waldorf-science/anthroposophy-under-fire/>
- Schmelzer , A., & Schmitt, A. (2021). *Die Weltreligionen. Vielfalt und Zusammenklang* (Vol. 7 Volumes). Verlag Freies Geistesleben.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*. SAGE.
- Soetebeer , J. (2023 in press). World Literature- World Culture: Goethe’s modern thinking on cultural history and its relevance today. In H. Hsueh, J. Munoz, M. Rawson, & J. Williams (Eds.), *Postcolonial perspective on Waldorf Education*.

- Steiner, R. (1982). *Balance in Teaching. Meditatively acquired knowledge of man*. Mercury Press.
- Steiner, R. (1996 (1907)). *The Education of the Child*. Anthroposophic Press.
- Steiner, R. (1997). *An Outline of Occult Science* (C. E. Creeger, Trans.). Anthroposophic Press
- Steiner, R. (2020/1919). *The First Teachers' Course. Anthropological Foundations. Methods of Teaching. Practical Discussions* (M. M. Saar, Trans.). Ratayakom. Thailand. A project of the Education Research Group of Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen, Germany and the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum.
- Stockmeyer, E. A. (2015/1965). *Rudolf Steiner's Curriculum for Steiner-Waldorf Schools. An attempt to summarize his indications* (R. Everett, Trans.; 5th edition ed.). Floris Books.
- St. Pierre, E. A. (1997). Circling the text: nomadic writing practices. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3, 403-417.
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2013). The posts continue: becoming. *Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26(6), 646-657. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2013.788754>
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2014). A Brief and Personal History of Post-Qualitative Research. Towards 'post inquiry'. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 30(2), 2-19.
- Ullrich, H. (2008). *Rudolf Steiner*. Bloomsbury.
- Ullrich, H. (2015). *Waldorfpädagogik: Eine kritische Einführung*. Beltz.
- von Heydebrand, C. (1966/1972). *Curriculum of the First Waldorf School* (E. Hutchins, Ed. & Trans.). Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications.
- Weber, M. (1970). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Oxford University Press.
- Woods, G. J., & Woods, P. A. (2008). Democracy and spiritual awareness: interconnections and implications for educational leadership. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 13(2), 101-116.
- Zajonc, A. (2009). *Meditation as contemplative inquiry: When knowing becomes love*. Lindesfarne.
- Zdrazil, T. (2020). *The First Waldorf Teachers. Twelve vignettes of leaders at the original school* (J. Kees-Saltet, Trans.). Waldorf Publications.
- Zdrazil, T. (2019). *Freie Waldorfschule in Stuttgart 1919-1925. Rudolf Steiner-das Kollegium-die Pädagogik*. Verlag Freies Geistesleben.
- Zech, M. M. (2020). *History in Waldorf Schools. Creating an individual consciousness of history*. Pädagogische Forschungsstelle Kassel.