

Love, Freedom and the Evolution of the Races

By Dr Robert Rose

This article is the second in a series of seven on the theme of Rudolf Steiner's views on the human races. The aim is to present some evidence which shows Steiner's stance against racism and his hope for a peaceful and moral future for the whole diversity of humanity. It is my wish thereby to provide members of the Waldorf Movement and the Anthroposophical Society with documented **evidence** for situations whenever they meet views which assert that Steiner had any racist views or made any racist statements. Why? Unfortunately, it has been my recent experience that there are some both within and outside the anthroposophical movement who hold that he had some racist views or made some racist statements. These positions are held without a shred of evidence or even decent reasons. This makes evidence and good reasons the crucial starting question.

In the previous article, I introduced Steiner's ideas concerning the future of the human races as an evolution towards the assimilation of ideals. Here I would like to present an idea of Steiner's where he describes one of the main reasons for the existence of a multiplicity of human races, namely love based on freedom. There are other views though, as strange as it may seem, which would like to deny the existence of races on moral grounds. For example, there is a tenet that can be found within some interpretations of Critical Race Theory (CRT), namely "that there are no biological races" (Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic (2017): Critical Race Theory, New York University Press). The view represented there, is that the concept of race is a *sociological* construct and, as such, can be changed. In this way, the fundamental premise of racism, that races **exist**, is repudiated and therefore has no scientific validity. It is hoped thereby to eventually eradicate racism. As admirable as this goal is, it is, however, to be argued below, that it is more consistent with Steiner's thought that racism will be better overcome through the recognition of the existence of races, and universal humanity, which give the existential ground for love between them based in genuine freedom.

The starting point here is the view represented in some versions of Critical Race Theory that confuses two basic categories of research, namely the existential (ontological) and the moral (ethical). Implicit in this interpretation of CRT is that denying the existence of races gives the moral ground for equal and fair treatment. Despite the fact that this is a high moral goal, it is rooted in a fallacy, a well known one in fact called the “is – ought fallacy”. First thought up by the British philosopher David Hume, this is the argument that one cannot derive an “ought” from an “is”. Put in more general terms, it simply is not necessary to deny the existence of something about a being, in order to be moral towards that being. What this means in this context is that recognising the diversity of the races does not imply differential moral treatment.

The other problem here is that the denial of the existence of races is not scientifically grounded. What can often be found in CRT literature is the idea that science rejects the existence of races due to the almost complete genetic identity of all the peoples of the World. Unfortunately, the notion that near genetic identities means that there are no races is scientifically spurious. This tenet of CRT assumes that small genetic differences between certain groups of people mean that there are no significant phenotypical differences that determine races (i.e. observable characteristics on the whole body level). This is clearly false. By comparison, men and women have almost identical genetics, but there are significant biological differences on the phenotype level. In fact some of these differences make procreation possible, obviously. In terms of humans, were there no reproductive differences on a whole body level between female and male, then there would clearly be no offspring. Moreover, in terms of races, the observable characteristics are heritable; if this premise of CRT were true, then race-specific inheritance would not happen, but factually speaking it does.

In addition, from the perspective of modern evolutionary theory this tenet cannot work either. In evolutionary theory there are three basic principles necessary for the theory to work: *genetic mutation*, *inheritance* and *adaptation*. In combination, according to modern biology, these lead to the evolution of species, also called speciation. Now if genetic variation were insignificant on the whole body level, then no mutation would matter, there would be complete identity down the line of reproduction and inheritance. Were there to be a change in the environment such a species would not be adapted to it, it would simply die out. There would be consequently no speciation. The very concept of evolution requires that genetic mutation leads to significant differences on the whole body (phenotypical) level; these can be inherited and when there is

environmental change some organisms may be adapted to it; eventually, over evolutionary time, this leads to reproductive isolation and speciation. This is why Darwin's finch studies from the Galapagos Islands are often given as a good example of mutation, inheritance and adaptation: it is the fine mutations on both the genetic and phenotype level that gives rise to the evolution of varieties and species over time. The varieties are capable of interbreeding whilst the species are not (although there are some boundary cases). The latter of these is called speciation.

Clearly though, human races are not species because they are not reproductively isolated from each other, any female person from one race can have offspring with a male from another. Human races are more like varieties of one species; ***the human races are varieties of the one humanity:***

If there is a moral to this story it is that humanity is a unified species with diverse varieties. This species unity gives sufficient ontological ground for moral attitudes and behaviour without the need to deny the obvious existence of human racial diversity.

But there is a further question: is there a role for the existence of a variety of races in evolution? In a lecture series called "The Universal Human", which describes the emergence of the different races on the Earth, Steiner effectively argues, in the cited text below, that **racial diversity** is crucial to the **evolution of love between the races as it is a form of love grounded in freedom:**

"However, this development was not supposed to come from the outside because then it would have made us into beings who love automatically — that is, we would have loved others because they are our own kind, but without knowing the force that urges us to this love. Thus, what would otherwise have come to us in unfreedom was prepared for freedom through Lucifer¹ and Ahriman's opposition. This sanction of the opposition is therefore inherent in the original plan of divine wisdom. Indeed, we may say that in still earlier periods of earthly evolution, the opposition against the harmonious progressive divine-spiritual powers was created precisely

so that it could later bring about freedom... For freedom to enter in so that human beings did not develop an unfree love through their outer shape or form, the luciferic and ahrimanic elements had to be part of our evolution. Only in this way can we arrive from within ourselves at the unity indicated by the term "humanity". Steiner (1916), The Universal Human, ch 4, rsarchive.org

So in other words, in addition to the acquisition of freedom, Steiner was of the view that racial diversity enabled the possibility of **love through freedom between the races to arise**. This is not the kind of notion one would expect of any racist theory or even be an element of racism. Steiner saw the emergence of the human races as a significant step in the evolution of human love. But for Steiner, it was important for evolution that the development of love should be based on freedom rather than compulsion.

Critical Race Theory, from this perspective, is attempting to deny this type of love between the races; after all, there cannot be love of this type if there are no races. Perhaps this is why it has another of its tenets: *interest convergence* (Derrick Bell). This is the notion that "white people" will only help "black people", or other ethnic groups, if there is a convergence of interest. That is there has to be something of self-interest for "white people". Interest convergence cannot conceive of true altruistic deeds, only those of self-interest.

But as the above quote indicates, anthroposophy promotes the possibility of true altruism. One form of this is love between the races. But this kind of love, at least to this degree, based on freedom can only exist if races do. As Steiner argues, the existence of races came about in order for this possibility to arise. Without it the only type of love would be of your own kind and this would be a kind of compulsion. But for Steiner, love based on freedom can arise **between** the races.

From a mainstream biology perspective one would need a different approach. As can be seen above, Steiner's view is distinctly teleological: evolution moves towards a purpose. Modern biology on the other hand does not hold this view. What one could say, however, is that the existence of a variety of races of the human species gives an **opportunity** for love based on freedom to arise. For modern biology, rather than racial diversity being a purpose it would be a **potentially for autonomous love between the races in evolution**.

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1. Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces are Steiner's way of describing certain types of psychological processes in the human being. The former of these leads to flights of fantasy and sometimes illusions and delusions. The Ahrimanic psychological processes lead to reducing the human being into less than which they truly are, such as seeing them as being mere functions in the economic system or as mere physical entities. They are also conceived by Steiner as spiritual beings which produce an oppositional force so that humans can develop freedom.