

Anthroposophy, Waldorf Education and Social Justice: the Question of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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Preface

This set of essays makes the following cases:

1) That the current trends inside Waldorf Education are mistaken in their attempted criticisms of Anthroposophy in an effort to create a “Waldorf Education without Steiner”. I will also propose that such criticisms are largely irrelevant to the creation of a so-called “decolonised” Waldorf curriculum. Rather, that we should dispense with this concept in favour of a “contextualised curriculum”, an idea that was already present within Steiner’s original principles.

2) That in the background of much Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) provision in education is a particular philosophy called Critical Race Theory (CRT). If applied in Waldorf contexts this has a number of problems: it is a view which is in opposition to the primary goals of Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy. Within Waldorf CRT shows itself in two basic ways:

1) In the *mode of reasoning* in the critical analysis of Steiner’s thought by some leading Waldorf advocates;

2) In some proposals for DEI *training* for Waldorf teachers based on CRT; which leads to a third;

3) A re-writing of the Waldorf curriculum based on diversity aspirations, but with a goal of “de-colonising the curriculum”, but which ultimately derives from CRT.

3) However, real positive solutions can be found to many of the problems of the World concerning Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through anthroposophical principles of socio-cultural evolution; that the criticisms of Steiner and Anthroposophy blind-side the Waldorf movement to the value of these solutions.

More specifically, the essays presented here attempt a beginning to the question of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) from an *anthroposophical* perspective. They are based on the conviction that Anthroposophy provides the foundation of a solution to many of the questions

surrounding DEI instead of the current interpretation through critical race theory (CRT). The essays don't profess to be exhaustive, or even complete, leaving much work to be done in this area. They also provide a beginning for those wishing to develop for themselves an approach to DEI training that is based on a more holistic human approach derived from Anthroposophy rather than the reductionist one of CRT.

The essays are fairly independent of each other but there is a degree of logical coherence to them. There is also a small amount of overlap as they were written as different responses to real issues that have arisen within Waldorf Education. The goal is to address a concerning degree to which the goals of Waldorf are diverging from their true intent through the proposed or actual implementation of DEI through critical race theory. This is often to the complete lack of awareness of this source.

To my observation, leading strands of the world-wide Waldorf movement are suffering under a misdiagnosis. There are many within it who, ***with the best intentions***, are striving for what they are calling a “decolonised curriculum”. Currently, this is in its early stages, most of the effort so far seems to consist in making a critical appraisal of Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy in order to provide a compelling reason for the “decolonised curriculum”. This usually consists in pointing out supposed “racist” and “euro-centric” tendencies within Steiner's thought. I have shown elsewhere that this diagnosis is false (Rose 2013 & 2016) and that it ultimately derives from the *external* critics of Steiner and Anthroposophy. Their thought has now become the standard *modus operandi* for many in the Waldorf movement, somewhat like a cultural virus, or “Parasites of the Human Mind” (Saad 2021, p.16). This specific form of critical consciousness is now *within* and threatens to drive a wedge between Waldorf and Anthroposophy.

The odd thing is that this diagnostic is neither necessary nor sufficient. Waldorf could simply make the case that it aims to create a more “Inclusive” and “Global” education and simply get on with it: ***provided, of course, that Waldorf remains true to its educational goals***. The negative criticising of Steiner and Anthroposophy is misguided and irrelevant to the creation of a more contemporary curriculum. Moreover, it is a complete distraction from the real task at hand: to create a healthy Waldorf Education for the future. *In contrast, I will take a positive position and make the case that, through Anthroposophy, Waldorf can provide an education for the foundations for a positive future civilisation for all human beings.*

This collection of essays does not attempt to present specific curricula for a more inclusive curriculum; that belongs to the province of the independent teachers in Waldorf Schools around the World. What is attempted here is to present some *creative principles* through which such curricula could be created by said teachers. One might also call these “generative principles” an expression that is currently doing the rounds (Bransby & Rawson 2021; Rawson 2021). Where I differ from these authors is that I argue that: ***the creative principles for diversity, equity and inclusion can be found in Anthroposophy and that without them there would be no Waldorf Education worthy of the name.***

This position might come as a surprise to some as the current cultural meme going around is that we need a “Waldorf Education without Steiner” or without Anthroposophy (Schieren 2011; Rawson 2023). I think this is a mistaken view on a number of counts. Firstly, it is true that Steiner rejected the notion that Anthroposophy should be taught to children (Steiner 1921/22, p. 122); that secondly:

“If, therefore we are asked what the basis of the new *method* of education should be, our answer is: Anthroposophy must be that basis... above all you must speak and think truthfully. So if anyone asks you how to become a good teacher you must say: Make Anthroposophy your foundation. You must not deny Anthroposophy; for only by this means can you acquire your knowledge of the human being” (Steiner 1924/95, p. 4).

So clearly, at least for Steiner, Anthroposophy is the *method* of Waldorf Education. But this method is different from much of modern *object-based* science as it also includes the *path of personal development* for the teacher as will be discussed later. Most importantly, the specific idea of child development that is active in Waldorf derives from Anthroposophy as clearly indicated in the article “Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy” (Steiner 1909). It is arguable, as can be attested by a content analysis of 20-ish books of Steiner’s education lectures, that child development is the dominant theme in all of them. From the point of view of child development, **Waldorf Education is applied Anthroposophy**, just as engineering is applied physics. On the other hand, it is also true that the detailed elements of Anthroposophy do not find their way much into Waldorf, quite rightly so, but that does not mean that Waldorf can dispense with Anthroposophy as a *whole*. Each individual person or

teacher needs to do their own research on this count. As I have argued elsewhere, the guiding principle is that of “*sufficient convergent knowledge*” (Rose 2024). This is the idea that one should only teach Anthroposophy in Waldorf Schools to the extent that it converges with modern research or that when it is *epistemologically* true to reality (Rose 2024, p. 40). Through this principle, the problem of indoctrination is avoided.

The primary focus of these essays then is to provide a starting point for understanding Anthroposophy as a “*living method*” in Waldorf Education. Rather than disposing with Steiner or Anthroposophy, the approach will be to **actually research** it in light of modern and future needs of human beings in their civilisation. This is the task that faces all teachers, Waldorf or otherwise. The question of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is just one example of this. I argue that:

This set of essays makes the case that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion can be provided for through the *inner cognitive* and *moral* values advocated by Anthroposophy and which can be developed and enacted by every teacher. The curriculum would then be a created product of these creative principles. Without something like this, any DEI orientated curriculum would be a mere imposition on pupil and teacher, an *outer authoritarian* structure without genuine *independent* moral authenticity, and which is empty of conscious human reality.

At the same time, I wish to present the real nature of Rudolf Steiner’s views on socio-cultural evolution and the role that Waldorf may play in this. Rather than the caricature that is currently being promulgated of him holding euro-centric, racist and nationalist ideas, ***I show him to be a true cosmopolitan*** whose values are crucial to any Diversity, Equity and Inclusion curriculum and to global peace.

Part 1 - Diagnosis:

In which we explore if:

- 1) The criticisms of Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy are true or even necessary; and**
- 2) If a fair consideration has been made for potential anthroposophical solutions to contemporary socio-cultural issues concerning Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.**

1) Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: a plea for a fair Steiner consideration

Introduction

Over the last few years there has been an ongoing international discussion about the relationship between Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education. This has become particularly the case regarding what is currently called “Education for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)”. This pertains to questions to do with euro-centricity, race, gender, sexuality and, rarely, class. Waldorf Educators world-wide have taken up the baton of fairness and justice in this regard and want to embed these into the Waldorf curriculum. However, there appears to be an international trend now to coerce Waldorf education in the direction of a particular type of “Wokeness”. This is the idea that we should all be “awake” to injustices between the above groups and remedy them. Naturally, in this discourse some of Steiner’s statements come into critical focus.

Now there is nothing wrong about being “Woke”, so long as all one means by it is being awake to social injustice and being willing to make some steps to remedy it. The question is: how does one interpret it? Like the word “Food”, the word “Woke” can have many meanings depending on the background philosophical framework; as we know we can have junk food as well as healthy food; the former is bad for our health, the latter good.

I have no doubt that many would see social justice as right, as do I, as the vast majority of people do, as Rudolf Steiner did. In a sense though, this is a part of the problem: ***under the cloak of seeming justice there is a great deal disguised which threatens genuine Waldorf Education.*** My major concern is that social justice has been interpreted from the perspective of a particular philosophical paradigm, namely ***critical race theory*** and that the nature of the practical outcomes have already been determined in light of it, an approach that, at least in part, *stands in opposition to some aspects of Anthroposophy*. This theory, from my observation, ultimately derives from a combination of ***Postmodern Philosophy*** and a covert ***Marxism***, views which advocate a ***subjectivism of knowledge*** and the ***primacy of the group*** over that of the ***individual*** (Hicks 2019). Anyone conscious of Steiner’s advocacy of ***objective knowledge*** and ***Ethical Individualism*** will see the problem here (Steiner 1894).

Integrating False assertions and radical Wokism into Waldorf

A particular case in point is the relatively new Waldorf UK body as represented on its website. It asserts many positive aspects of Steiner's ideas about education and their value to our much troubled world and I would like to acknowledge that here. It needs to be said, though, that whilst Waldorf UK recognises the value of some central aspects of Steiner's views on education, it openly rejects his views on human evolution. *My comments below are restricted to this publically open repudiation and this only. What Waldorf UK doesn't recognise are those particular evolutionary ideas of Steiner which could be essential assets to the overcoming of problems connected with racism, nationalism and many other "isms"; this is because it rejects them without real research in favour of a political positioning within the existing populist woke mindset.* The ideas that are repugnant to them, they think, ultimately derive from Steiner's theory of human evolution, which Waldorf UK's website calls "Euro-centric", which the authors believe should be rejected. It does not question the truthfulness of this belief, it merely accepts it. The question is why? One has to wonder about the knowledge base of Waldorf UK as it appears to be completely oblivious to one of the most basic principles of Steiner's views on evolution, namely that humanity is evolving away from just being a member of a group toward being an individual, an ethical individual (Steiner 1894, chapter 9). As we will see below, Waldorf UK seems to be inadvertently advocating, through an *implicit* critical race theory, a reversal of evolution towards an authoritarian group consciousness; either that or it is completely ignorant of the primary goal of Waldorf Education: *to enable the coming into being of free individual human beings*; or even that Steiner's concept of the goal of evolution is that "Love is the outcome of Wisdom re-born in the "I" of humanity" (Steiner, 1909/63, p. 321). That is to say: that the "I", as the free spiritual individuality, of every human being, irrespective of race or nationality, is capable of transforming wisdom, knowledge, into love for all human beings and the World. I have no doubt that Steiner meant this as the transformation of knowledge, through love into practical action.

Anyone cognisant of Steiner's views on the connection between education and evolution might be bewildered by Waldorf UK's stance: "We must understand how important our task is, and we will understand this if we focus on the special goals that will guide us: if we look at the foundation of this school not as everyday but as a celebratory act of cosmic dimensions. In the name of the good spirit that seeks to guide humanity out of desolation and despair to raise human beings to a *higher level of evolution through education*" (Steiner 1919: The First Teachers' Course, Plus Press, p. 20). In other words, *there can be no trivial or artificial*

separation between Steiner's views on evolution and those on education. Of course, the members of the executive of Waldorf UK are entitled to their own opinions, but one needs to ask why such members would want to represent Waldorf Education.

The alleged negatives of Anthroposophy the Waldorf UK website describes should worry all those committed to its fundamental premises and those responsible for them, particularly if such negatives were *actually* true. So we see on the website statements of the ilk:

“Racism concerns: We recognise that Steiner's anthroposophical theories also included some evolutionary doctrines around race and reincarnation which presented white European culture and history as superior. These concepts are wholly rejected by the UK schools' movement today. We cannot change the fact of this aspect of Steiner's work but we can take steps to resolve that history through our actions now. They sit in contrast with the principles of acceptance and inclusivity which underpin the principles of Steiner Waldorf education.

There are historians who have recently identified that after Steiner's death in 1925; some of Steiner's evolutionary theories were adopted by fascist sympathisers who operated within the anthroposophical community in Germany and Italy. This is abhorrent to the UK school movement and such interpretations bear no relation to what we value and aim to create for children experiencing Waldorf education today. We strive to be vigilant to arguments that seek to diminish others different from ourselves. We aim for our children to grow into adulthood as people who will take a stand against prejudice of all kinds and fight for a more equal society.” (Waldorf UK, section on Rudolf Steiner).

Waldorf UK does not question whether or not any of these criticisms are true, it merely believes them, nor does it inquire about their source. The problem with this is that these are false assertions that all root back, eventually, to the self-professed critics of Steiner and Anthroposophy. These are unthinkingly accepted by Waldorf UK without critical evaluation. The historians that the quote refers to are Peter Staudenmaier in the USA, Helmut Zander and Heiner Ullrich in Germany, and others. All of these are well known for their disdain for Steiner and Anthroposophy. It goes without saying that these are hardly reliable sources on this account alone and it would seem unwise to carry out any actions on their assertions, including the promotion of a “decolonised curriculum”. It isn't clear why such people are taken seriously and those researchers of an anthroposophical persuasion are ignored or relegated to the status

of irrelevance. The problem is that Waldorf UK and other individuals merely assume that what the critics claim is true without giving Steiner or other committed anthroposophists a fair hearing.

This is a consequence of a long standing proposal to *turn away from Anthroposophy, and Rudolf Steiner*, towards a “Waldorf without Rudolf Steiner” (Schieren 2011) or a “Post-Steiner Waldorf Education” (Rawson 2023). In the case of Waldorf UK, this eventually leads to advocating the training of Waldorf teachers and teacher educators, not through Anthroposophy, but by Equaliteach (a non-Waldorf body that uses critical race theory in the teaching of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, see Waldorf UK website). Critical race theory is a *materialistic* interpretation of diversity based on skin colour; a particular type of “wokism”; a view that is rapidly becoming seen by some of its opponents as a new kind of racism, an anti-white racism (McWhorter 2022; Murray 2022; Sowell 2023). One has to wonder why an anthroposophical approach to DEI has not been attempted by Waldorf UK and others. On account of this and other things, it would be fair to say that in the last few years we have seen the rise of “Waldorf Wokism”.

This phenomenon is not unique to the UK, it is in a more advanced state in the USA, where, for instance, we find on the Association of Waldorf Schools North America (AWSNA) website (the equivalent of Waldorf UK) the following 100 year objective to:

“Reconcile the narrative of Rudolf Steiner's writings in relation to race and ethnicity in order to redress any dehumanizing or disparaging aspects of our history and foundation that are in conflict with our values and social mission” (p. 8) and to “Reimagine Waldorf pedagogy by hosting monthly webinars that examine both Rudolf Steiner's indications and educational ideas that have manifested as white-centric pedagogy, with the goal of supporting pedagogical innovation for racial justice” (p. 10).

Of course, for those well acquainted with Anthroposophy, this is all question begging: “what dehumanising or disparaging aspects; what white-centric pedagogy”? To my knowledge, all of this is a rather tortured interpretation of Steiner through the lens of critical race theory. A few voices have stood against this, two of which are the renowned American Waldorf teachers, Eugene Schwartz and Dr Douglas Gabriel. The former making a prediction of the outcomes of this form of DEI:

“Although the denunciation furore has diminished over these four years, it continues to simmer. The destructive forces unleashed, and spiritual shadows cast by AWSNA's inane and short-sighted efforts to appear relevant and woke, will have their own karmic consequences for years to come. We will very likely need triage, not just training, to heal the wounds” (Schwartz 2024, p. 10).

Gabriel made the case that AWSNA's position is “racist, sexist, anti-Steiner, discriminatory and is virtue signalling the “woke” (cultural Marxism) agenda” (Gabriel 2023). He argued that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion has already been accounted for through Anthroposophy and Steiner's educational principles on the basis of free individuality rather than woke group membership concept. Those who are truly knowledgeable about Anthroposophy must surely agree with him, only those incognisant of it would doubt this.

The German Waldorf movement has also not escaped the rise of popularist Waldorf Wokism. The presence of the *modus operandi* of critical race theory, in its peculiar type of rationality, can be frequently seen in the Autumn online seminars on the *International Campus Waldorf*, hosted by Alanus University, Germany. Presentations by Sven Sarr (2022) and Kenya Strong (2023) come into focus here. Also, in January 2023, an article appeared online in *Erziehungskunst (The Art of Education)* called “Building blocks for a diverse, anti-racist Waldorf education” by Martyn Rawson and Albert Schmelzer. The article drew on an interview in the magazine “Die Zeit” with American Waldorf teacher Monique Brinson who claimed that in Germany “The Waldorf movement is white, wealthy and weird”. The Rawson and Schmelzer article analysed the immigration data for Germany and asked if the Waldorf Schools were ethnically representative in light of that. Like typical wokists, they found exactly what they were looking for, they re-interpreted the data in light of woke theory, so their answer was no, so their conclusion was that, in relation German Waldorf schools, it is “quite justified to speak of institutional discrimination of people with a migration background in the context of structural racism”. The argument is so twisted and convoluted that it exemplifies a common trait of popular woke rationality: *that the concept of race is the only metric and cause through which to understand things*. The first difficulty with this is that, as all statisticians will tell you, statistics do not reveal *causation* by themselves, only, at best, *correlations* which may, or may not, lead to causal explanations. This means that no “institutional discrimination” or “structural racism” can be ascribed as a cause through statistics alone. At best one can show a correlation.

The first problem is that this kind of wokism always assumes that racism is the only cause of social injustice: “racism is normal and... in *every* human interaction” (Delgado & Stephanic 2017, p. 3) (my emphasis). It is an example of the assumption of the *single variable of race and racism* as the only mode of explanation. Moreover, in this context one should be considering a *multi-variable* analysis not a *single variable* one. In other words, on this ground you cannot prove that structural racism is the reason for the imbalance in the data. The authors “seem” to be completely unaware of the fact that a phenomenon can have multiple causes, or correlations, and that the existence of the former cannot imply a single reality of the latter. This is well known in research methodology, and leads to the *fallacy of confirming the antecedent*. So one may ask the question: has this possibility has been filtered out due to authors’ adoption of critical race theory, intentionally or unintentionally. It certainly looks that way, at least in effect.

Another problem is that racial statistics cannot be trivially deduced from immigration data. This is because the latter includes a multiplicity of ethnic groups some of which are ethnically identical to those descended from the ancient Germanic people, such as British Anglo-Saxons. So rather than 30%, as the authors claim, of the population of Germany being from ethnic minorities, according to official German immigration statistics 88% of the migration figures are classified as “European”, “non-European” migrants constitute 12% of the total German population. This further differentiates into: Middle Eastern 5.2%, Turkish 4%, Asian 2%, Afro-German or Black African 1%, Mixed or unspecified background 2%. So, in a Waldorf school of say 100 children, if it was ethnically representative of the *country as a whole*, one might expect to see 12 from the migrant group as a totality; 5 would be Middle Eastern, 4 Turkish, 2 Asian, 1 Black and 2 unspecified. In addition, national statistics may not represent particular locations; one cannot ignore local demographics; or history; or how the education has been presented to the public; or appeal, or other kinds of potential causation, even if the statistics do appear unrepresentative. *It is this assumption that race is the sole explanation that is typical of Wokism*; all other modes of explanation are excluded; this is the *modus operandi* of critical race theory (Delgado & Stephanic 2017). The consequence of this is the proposal to re-write the Waldorf curriculum to address the claimed imbalance and to be of broader appeal to ethnic minorities, to be “representative”. This is Waldorf Wokism on steroids, instead of trying to appeal to those *individuals* who experience a *moral and spiritual affinity* for Waldorf Education; the implied goal is to attract *groups* irrespective of that. The problem is, ethnic groups are implied in the former, but free individuals are excluded by the latter. For those

acquainted with critical race theory, it is known that it cannot abide free individuals; it only recognises instances of group membership.

*Let no one underestimate this, **if, and it is an if**, critical race theory, and this CRT form of Wokism were to be widely embedded in Waldorf Education, the proposed changes to the education would not be mere boundary effects that can be changed without very significant consequences: sooner or later they threaten to re-write it as a totality and completely negate the essential spiritual inspiration that came from Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy. This means that Waldorf Education would have failed its evolutionary purpose: **to enable the coming into being of Ethical Individuals**. Rather than an education based on the developing child as a spiritual individual, it will be one based on group determinism along racial, gender and class lines with polarities of the oppressed and oppressor created within each category. These conflicting polarities are typical of critical race theory and Marxist thought, originally in describing the relationship between the working class and the upper class; but now, through critical race theory, between races, peoples, sexes and gender, etc (Hicks 2019).*

Of course, it is natural for some to think that if Rudolf Steiner is a source of at least some racism why would one turn to him for solution? *It is here that I have my main question.* I made the case, over ten years ago now; that a beginning of a solution to many forms of racism and nationalism, etc, actually lie in Steiner's works (Rose 2013 & 2016). I also argued that the assertions that Steiner had any racist convictions were actually wrong. But worse, these allegations were engineered fantasies of the opponents of Steiner and Anthroposophy, particularly Staudenmaier in the USA. These fantasies have been taken up by prominent strands of the Waldorf movement worldwide in their desire to create a world-wide "decolonised curriculum". All of this is based on the assumption that Steiner, or more generally Anthroposophy, held racist and Eurocentric convictions. This assumption is then used as leverage to sideline Steiner and Anthroposophy from the discussion about DEI and turn to the wrong kind of woke based on critical race theory.

I have had similar discussions about the racism assertions before with others in the Waldorf movement. They came to dead end, completely irreconcilably, with some being adamant that Steiner actually did make some racist and Eurocentric statements. I argued that he didn't, not

by any *scientific* definition of the term. So some years later, the Waldorf UK new website still makes these assertions, ultimately derived from the opponents of Steiner and Anthroposophy.

I have wondered over the last few years as to why this has happened. I got a clue from Martyn Rawson's talk in the *International Campus Waldorf* on Youtube 2023; when he said to an global assembly of Waldorf teachers and teacher trainers, to paraphrase: "I only research Anthroposophy in so far as it enters Waldorf Literature". Now Rawson works in Germany, at a number of Waldorf teacher courses, *inter alia*, and is a one of the main advisors to Waldorf UK. So his influence on this institution should not be underestimated. Rawson is at least a partial advocate of "Waldorf Education without Steiner" as can be attested by his recent article (Rawson 2023). He also, wrote, with Kath Bransby, a Waldorf UK executive, the hoped for future trend setting article "Waldorf Education for the Future (2021)"; in which the word "Anthroposophy" appears only twice, once as a footnote (p.3) and once as a throw away sentence at the end of a paragraph (p. 24). So in this "Waldorf Education for the Future (2021)", Anthroposophy is demoted to a status of near irrelevance for the future of Waldorf. But here is the problem: if you are *unwilling* to research fundamental Anthroposophical literature, i.e. in Steiner's writings, is it really possible to address the question of these supposed racist and Eurocentric statements? From my observation of the Waldorf movement, this approach is not uncommon. However, if one does this is it really possible to form a valid judgement generally or more specifically the question of racism or Eurocentrism? I think not. After all, if you don't see it as your task as a Waldorf teacher to research Anthroposophy generally, under the conditions of scientific and ethical justification, through "*sufficient convergent knowledge*", then you are in no position to know anything about it: you simply cannot have a valid judgement. If on the other hand you have researched Anthroposophy, but are now telling other teachers not to, then you are putting yourself in a position of authority: the problem is that this is the very accusation being levelled at Steiner by such internal critics.

Now, it is clear from the official Waldorf websites and other sources that my Waldorf colleagues are not claiming that Steiner was *fundamentally* a racist, but, inconsistently, that he did, according to them, make some racist statements and that his views on evolution are racist and Eurocentric. This makes little sense, even if Steiner made some statements they believe to be racist, but that these are not a fundamental part of his theory of evolution and history, then there is no reason to reject his fundament theory, only the very few (16 in total) statements. *Moreover, these are claims that I also contest, not **just** because I think they are wrong, but*

mostly because they obscure those of Steiner's evolutionary ideas that can be helpful to a future diverse, equitable, inclusive global society.

Now, it has to be noted that the Waldorf Wokists make a rather bland and blunt distinction here between Steiner's work on Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy. The inference behind this is that Waldorf Education is not racist, but aspects of Anthroposophy are. Textual evidence is rarely given concerning the "statements and concepts that characterise race and other group identities in ways that are offensive, racist and wrong" (Waldorf UK website). In my conversation with some Waldorf colleagues they frequently were not willing to provide evidence for Steiner's supposed racist statements, also even when they knew of a statement they were not willing to research its context. Nor were they willing to give fair consideration to the research done by others for the last 20 years which argue the contrary. In particular, Sune Nordwall in Sweden, Daniel Hindes in the USA, Hans-Jürgen Bader and Lorenzo Ravagli in Germany, Angus Jenkinson, Richard House and myself in Britain. More recently the Goetheanum leadership have written a paper rejecting the racist allegation (Peter Selg, Constanza Kaliks, Justus Wittich, Gerald Häfner (2021), Anthroposophy and Racism). Even Karen Priestman (2009): *Illusion of Coexistence: The Waldorf Schools in the Third Reich, 1933-1941*", has been ignored, a researcher doing her PhD. ***It is almost as if dissenting voices have been excluded from the discussion in the attempt to create and normalise a narrative derived from popular Wokism.*** A central person in the Waldorf UK movement claimed that all previous anthroposophical research "served to make the movement appear to be an apologist for racism" (Fran Russell, CEO Waldorf UK, *pers comm* 2021)! This is a form typical of postmodern critical race theory: spurious generic assertions are made that have nothing to do with real research; they are a mere distraction to avoid real debate. But this still leaves the question: are such claims true or are we now just assuming critical race theory is correct even without proof; or is this mere virtue signalling (House 2022)?

*I would just like to be clear, the notion that Steiner made some racist statements is not my main issue at this point (although I disagree with such claims as I argued in my Rose 2013 & 2016, I can work with the differences of view). In research procedures convergence of approach is still possible if the **central thesis** is agreed upon. The disagreements about the **boundary concepts** are part of the process. The main difficulty lies in the **ignoring** of the **central principles** because of the boundary concepts. In the case of Steiner, the **central theses** of his views on **evolution** are crucial to the overcoming of racism, nationalism, sexism and many other things:*

“It is the striving of a true cosmopolitanism which, by assimilating all that can be acquired from a love extended to other races, ennobles and uplifts the individual people; knowledge of one’s own race is sought by assimilating all that is idealistic, great and beautiful in other peoples of the Earth... Human love alone has power to heal the wounds of hatred. They will take this knowledge into their feeling — love for humanity will be born. They will take this knowledge into their will -- deeds for humanity will be accomplished... The evolution of the age, with all the terrible paralysis that is appearing at the present time, places a solemn duty before the soul: to gather together all that can unite humankind in love and array it in opposition to the destructive elements that have made their appearance in recent times... To those who understand the conditions of life today, it is the very highest duty of humanity.” Steiner, R (1920): *The Peoples of the Earth in the Light of Anthroposophy*, paragraphs 29 – 35, www.rsarchive.org.

Much of this is reflected in his well known education course “Soul Economy”:

“But the anthroposophic view of the world engenders a strong desire to build bridges across all divisions into nationalities, races, and so on. In its inmost being Anthroposophy feels compelled to speak with a voice that is supranational, or international... The anthroposophic worldview itself is intended to help people, wherever they live on earth, toward knowledge that is beyond all limits of race or national language. Consequently, spiritual science tries to speak a supranational language (not in any physical sense, of course), a language that can be understood throughout modern civilization.” Steiner, R (1921/2, pp 270-2): *Soul Economy*, Anthroposophic Press, pp. 270-2

For me, there is no Eurocentrism or racism here, but a genuine cosmopolitanism that should be a part of any kind of education, let alone just Waldorf. So my question to some of my Waldorf colleagues is: why ignore Steiner? Why not give him a fair consideration rather than choosing postmodernist Marxism in critical race theory? Why not use Steiner’s concept of cosmopolitanism or his Ethical Individualism? As the black American academic Walter Myers III said:

“Whereas the hope that one day we would judge one another by the content of individual character, and not the color of our skin, CRT defines people by categories of race, placing people in either “oppressor” or “oppressed” power

groups. In response to this, Dr. Wyatt asks, how can two people ever bind together in friendship if they are members of inherently opposed power groups? Why should an individual strive to succeed by merit if group dynamics make this impossible? How will we ever find peace among the races if can't look at each other as individuals, person to person, based on actual facts and intentions? We simply cannot reconcile as a people if we allow ourselves to be judged by the ethnic, race, and gender essentialism of Marxist-style power groups, and thus we should reject CRT" (Myers 2021).

From my observation Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education also see the human being from the perspective of individual character and not merely group membership. Consequently, I would claim that most Waldorf Teachers have tried their best to meet the needs of the *individual* children that are in their care, this includes the care and respect needed for whatever ethnic group or gender they belong to. Waldorf Education, through its anthroposophical understanding of human nature, has and will continue to respect diversity, equity and inclusion, but seen through the lens of child development and evolution towards ethical individualism.

Evolving the Curriculum as a Necessity

Unless I am misunderstood at this point, I am convinced that all education provision should evolve, including Waldorf. There is always the necessity to develop and adapt a curriculum to a particular context, global or local; no generation should avoid that. In fact, it is a part of the definition Steiner gave to the education, but this does not require the exaggerated term "decolonisation" and all the negative connotations that go with it. After all, Waldorf Education hardly compares to the colonising activities of the European nations of the 15th to the mid 20th centuries. Nor does it require the claim that Steiner's ideas were "Eurocentric". Even a brief consideration, say, of his suggestions for a history curriculum, shows this assertion to be demonstrably false; three fifths of it is non-European and he predicts that European history will be succeeded by a more advanced one derived from "the east".

More importantly, the accusation of "Eurocentric" is particularly problematic. Some ideas are universally valid even though they arose in particular places. For example, Leibniz's calculus is not only relevant for Germany; Newton's laws of motion are not only valid in England; and Pythagoras's theorem is not only applicable in ancient Greece. The main point of Steiner's

concept of education is that it needs to be based on the *universal* scientific *principles* of child development. He claims that these principles are valid around the World, just as other scientific principles are (Steiner 1924/96, p. 132). This would be true also for those aspects of Anthroposophy which can be scientifically verified and are ethically justifiable, such as I will introduce below (Steiner 1919-21, p. 495). Of course, that isn't to say some things aren't culture specific, Steiner made that case too (Steiner 1923, p. 188/9); but this needs in-depth research not the *assumption* that Steiner's views are Eurocentric.

2) Racism: is the Waldorf Movement in conflict with itself? - An argument for Truth, Courage, Reconciliation and Responsibility

“Imbue yourself with the power of imagination,

Have courage for the truth,

Sharpen your feeling for responsibility of soul.”

Steiner, R (1919): Foundations of Human Experience,
Anthroposophic Press, p. 22.

The following is an attempt to reconcile the apparently opposite positions of the Goetheanum Leadership and the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, UK (now Waldorf UK) and that Courage for the Truth is the most important element in this process.

Preamble: having courage for the truth is difficult. It requires facing things of which we are afraid. But by being courageous, we can meet the future with strength and confidence. The assertion of racism within the movements both Anthroposophical and Waldorf may make many people afraid for it eats at the core of what one thinks both movements are. Not only that, but some may feel personally addressed by the question: am I a racist and is the school system I love racist? Some may naively rush to the feelings of shame and guilt as a means to make amends – thus sacrificing the real search for the truth and the courage needed to attain it. The power of imagination plays a role here; but it also has a dark side: sometimes we can imagine that something is there, but it is not; sometimes we can imagine that something is not there, but it is. Truth becomes the guideline here and courage the power to attain it. The casual imagination that the truth is not important is the enemy of “responsibility of soul”; only imagination guided by courage and truth can ground “responsibility of soul” in reality.

Introduction

We seem to live in an age when racism is still a powerful force in the World, so the following discussion needs to be seen in light of that and the fact that Waldorf Education is a global and racially diverse movement. So it needs to be stated up front:

The fundamental principles of Waldorf Education as presented by Rudolf Steiner are against any kind of racism and need to be seen so.

As perverse as it is, there are some who depict it as having a racist core; or in a more moderate form as having some racist elements. There are different schools of thought on the matter. The critics of Waldorf are often ex-parents who were originally sympathetic to the education, but then for one reason or another turn against it. They then “Google” for problems with the education and find articles and websites dedicated to critiquing Waldorf, one component of which is the racist allegation. They may even find such allegations on Waldorf websites, some of which are representative of the movement. Parents may then begin to have doubts and suspicions as to what they have gotten into, despite the presence of disclaimers on such websites.

One response from within the Waldorf movement is to research the supposed racist statements, from which there is also a bifurcation of views. The first makes the case that there is no racism in Steiner’s core philosophy or in any peripheral statements. The second acknowledges the first of these but recognises that Steiner made some statements that are racist.

Recently, there have been two publications about the racism allegation; one from the leadership of the international Anthroposophical Society at the Goetheanum (Selg, P *et al* (2021): Anthroposophy and Racism) and the other from the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF) in the UK (Waldorf UK website). They represent quite opposite viewpoints concerning the allegation of racism levelled against Rudolf Steiner and thereafter Waldorf Education. The Goetheanum Leadership rejects the view that Steiner held any kind of racist view or even made any racist statements as such.

The SWSF on the other hand, whilst denying that there is any racism in the central ethos of Steiner Waldorf Education, agrees that there are racist statements made by Steiner and they should be publically rejected. Consequent upon this are some suggested practical measures such as acknowledgement, apologetics and rectification through Diversity Training. The SWSF also asserts that views like the one held by the Goetheanum Leadership are “not what matters” and that they may lead the movement to be perceived as being an “apologist for racism”. This is a very strong claim indeed. As it stands, such a difference in views threatens to drive a wedge between Waldorf Education and the Anthroposophical Movement.

Both views have their downsides. For the Goetheanum Leadership position, *if, and only if*, there is some degree of racism in Steiner settings it is theoretically possible that no action would be taken. This could be potentially damning for the Waldorf movement. Of course, this all depends on if there really is racism in the schools. One would need real research and statistically significant evidence to show this together with the appropriate theoretical underpinnings. By statistically significant evidence, I mean that there is scientifically collected evidence with justifiable theory that needs to show that the statistical level is sufficient to demonstrate racism. Anecdotal reports are not sufficient to demonstrate this as they may well be isolated instances and based on personal prejudice. One piece of research by the European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education (ECSWE, see references) suggests that racism amongst Waldorf pupils is actually less than that of mainstream.

On the other hand, the potential presence of racism in any place of work cannot be seen as irrelevant, even in isolated instances: certain legally binding as well as ethical / social processes need to be in place to prevent this occurring. The SWSF approach aims at this whilst the Goetheanum Leadership approach may not (although it has to be said that they haven't discussed this as yet, at least not in any detail).

One of the problems is, however, that the supposed presence of racism in Steiner schools is often attributed to Steiner himself. I will make the assertion that this belief has never been justified and that a contextual analysis of Steiner's works shows that there is no racism in Steiner's central philosophy. The downside of the SWSF position is that, in my view, it is rooted in a philosophical "Untruth". More precisely, it accepts something to be true without knowing it to be so or having researched it (to be discussed later). The problem is that those who have researched the question make the cogent case that there is no genuine racism in Steiner's thought; neither in the central philosophy nor in any isolated statements, once the various contexts have been understood. Additionally, a critic of Anthroposophy and Waldorf education would probably interpret the "corrective measures" suggested by the SWSF as mere political expedience, a somewhat cynical attempt to cover up or ignore the systematic racism in Steiner's essential thought or to curry political and social favour with the goal of increasing student numbers for financially struggling schools. This is why thorough research into the supposed "racist" statements is perceived by many of us to be necessary. The outcome of this research after 20 years is that there is neither racism nor any racist statements in Steiner's thought.

The Dutch Commission into Racism in Waldorf Schools – what did it really say?

There is another component to this and it lies in the way that the “Dutch Commission” into possible racism in Waldorf schools has been understood by critics and supporters of Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education alike. The following quote is from an English translation of the summary of the report:

“the debate about the question whether Anthroposophy embodies racism and racial discrimination has been conducted on the basis of grossly incomplete information. This incompleteness has led to a distorted picture – in the negative sense – of both Steiner’s ideas and the reputation of the anthroposophical movement in Holland today. The conclusion of the Commission is that sixteen statements, if they were in public by a person on his or her own authority, could be a violation of the prohibition of racial discrimination under the Criminal Code of the Netherlands.” (Gerard Kerkvliet, April 1, 2000).

Concerning the second part of this quote, there has been an almost complete failure by critics and supporters alike to recognise the nature of this statement: it is an imaginary scenario with legal conditionality clauses. Many have taken this to imply that Steiner made some racist statements and it is these that have become the points of issue for the critics and supporters. But the statement says nothing of the kind. As the law cannot be applied, strictly speaking, to a deceased person, the commission had to imagine a scenario in which a hypothetical person said these things today (i.e. in the year 2000); and in the Netherlands; under its laws. So we have at least three levels of conditionality here; it is not a proposed factual statement. In other words, there is no proof here that Steiner made any racist statements only that an imaginary person who made similar statements may be guilty of racial discrimination in the year 2000 Netherlands.

But it also needs to be noted what that meant at the time. In the year 2000 Netherlands the relevant laws were framed in such a way that a statement was considered to be racist if it was felt to be so by someone on the receiving end of it: they were subjective laws. But by around 2003/4, the laws changed to objective definitions in which proof had to be given to demonstrate racism. In other words, there was a shift, under the umbrella of EU legislation, from a subjective definition to an objective one. This was attempted though the Racial

Equality Directive (2000/43/EC)”; this should have been transposed into national law by 2003 (Chopin & Germaine-Sahl 2013, p. 3-5). That is three years after the Dutch Commission. With this there has been a shift towards objective criteria and away from subjective ones. The harmonisation process sees the “burden of proof” of racism to be based on facts and on the “principle of equal treatment” rather than on feelings of insult (Chopin & Germaine-Sahl 2013, p. 99). This means that, were the same investigation into Steiner done now, and if an **objective definition** was being used, the persons asserting racism would have to give objective evidence that it was so and not just how they felt. Yet, the myth continues that the Dutch Commission claimed that Steiner made some racist statements *as a matter of fact rather than hypothetically*. These were not facts, but hypothetical scenarios under an out of date legislation and for another country operating under different laws.

Beyond the Dutch Commission

Of course, this does not obviate the fact that some may consider some of Steiner’s statements as racist irrespective of the Commission’s judgement. In many respects, this is the root of the difference between the SWSF and the Goetheanum Leadership. The SWSF “believes” at least some of the statements of Steiner are racist, either directly or indirectly through others; whilst the Goetheanum Leadership does not. The closest it comes to recognising racism in Steiner’s thought is when their article said:

“As de-contextualized statements, the sentences classified as problematic by the Dutch Commission – as well as some other isolated partial statements – are of course to be rejected; in this form they correspond neither to our view, nor to Rudolf Steiner’s basic attitude and the foundations of his anthropological and ethical concepts”. (Waldorf UK website)

Clearly though, this is not an acknowledgment of racism as such, but that as “de-contextualized statements” they would appear to be so. The counter side to this is that the alleged statements in the **context** of the more complete literature may not appear racist. It has to be added that the statements of Steiner are often not seen from the context of *his* making in an absolute sense: they are read from the context of the consciousness of the reader, they are interpreted from the perspective of the theories held by the reader. This a good example of the **theory-ladenness of observation** (Kuhn 1970).

I would like to suggest that the diversity statement described by Antoinette Reynolds on behalf of the Council of the Anthroposophical Society in GB (Newsletter, Winter 2020, p.6) represents a more just viewpoint than the one of the SWSF:

“In the early 20th century Rudolf Steiner addressed questions of individuality, race, ethics and religions in his many lectures and writings. A small number of statements he made do appear racist if quoted out of context, even though Rudolf Steiner’s entire life’s work was devoted to the whole of humanity’s evolutionary development in complete equality, while recognising diversity.”

It has to be said that the Goetheanum Leadership and the AS in GB have kept up to date with 20 years research by anthroposophists; to my observation the current SWSF leadership has ignored such research and deemed it “not really the issue” and an “apologist for racism” (See below). On the other hand, as stated above, the potential existence of racism in Waldorf is worthy of addressing, but I will argue: that even if this turns out to be existent, this is not due to Rudolf Steiner or Anthroposophy, it is the responsibility of Waldorf Schools and Waldorf teachers.

The potential solution to this apparent dilemma may be along the following lines:

- 1) **If** there is no racism at all in Steiner’s thought; and:
- 2) **If and only if** there is genuine racism in Steiner Waldorf schools then:
- 3) The Steiner / Waldorf movement has to acknowledge this and take responsibility for it. This requires that Steiner and Anthroposophy are no longer blamed for the existence of any racism in the schools, past or present.
- 4) As an outcome of this, the Waldorf movement is rooted in the truth and at the same time can provide processes to provide better equality, diversity and inclusion. It seems to me that this would be a better position to take than the current one. It requires the Waldorf movement to take responsibility for any potential or actual racism within its boundaries and to stop using Rudolf Steiner as a scapegoat.

All of these are contingent issues upon real research (and not “moods” as the SWSF Diversity conference report states) in light of which the following may be read.

Why the Truth Matters not so much Moods and Assertions

The first step here following concerns a report of an online conference, attended by 600 virtual participants, published on the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship website on the theme of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion. The report can be found under this heading. It was written by the current CEO of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, Fran Russell. I have chosen this report as a focus, but it represents a discussion that has been repeated many times and many contexts and meetings in the UK as well as on Steiner school websites and the Anthroposophical newsletter in Britain.

I think there is much that I can agree with in Fran Russell’s report on the SWSF website, especially concerning positive steps in the movement about the issue of racism, particularly in regard to the last paragraph of the report. The process of listening to the “voice of others” and respecting how they perceive and experience aspects of Waldorf Education is inherent in the fundamental principles of Steiner’s philosophy, especially in the six and eight virtues which form the foundations of his ideas on cognitive and moral development. The other side to this though is that the “voice of others” should not be deemed infallible, nor can they be interpreted as “one voice” as they do not all agree with each other. They are simply reports of valuable experience worthy of consideration.

Where I disagree with the report concerns the conviction expressed, explicit or implicit, that:

“a number of statements made by Rudolf Steiner in lectures which clearly read as espousing racist concepts. Although these statements are at odds with the fundamental ethos of Rudolf Steiner’s vision for the world... we have to acknowledge their existence and reject them”.

We also find the following statement:

“Previously, the response to assertions that these statements were racist has largely been to seek to explain or contextualise the underlying meaning as being different from how they appear. Sadly, this has served to make the movement appear to be

an apologist for racism”, Russell, F: “Equality, Diversity, Inclusion – Reflections”, July 8, 2021

Now, it isn't clear from her text exactly who is doing the reading here. Is it her reading or is it meant to represent the collective opinion of the conference participants? If it is the latter, there is an epistemological problem as to how one would know that all or most or some of the conference participants are reading the statements in this way, especially bearing in mind that this was an online conference. To me this looks largely untestable apart from a small sample. Moreover, as the title of this section of the article is “Acknowledging Racism” this means that either Fran Russell or a few participants at the “Diversity Conference” really do think that Steiner made some racist statements. The question is: where is the proof? Where is the statistically valid evidence? Is it true?

An Evaluation of the “Man on the Clapham Omnibus” Principle: Why Dickens’s Mr Bumble is right: “the law is an ass”.

The only notion that in any way resembles a “proof” offered by Russell is the following. In discussions of the assertion of some of Steiner’s statements being supposedly racist, she has made reference to a British legal principle called the “Man on the Clapham Omnibus”. It has been claimed that according to this principle these statements of Steiner **are** racist, not just that they appear to be so when taken out of context. I will make the case that there are a number of problems with this principle such that this claim cannot be made with any certainty. In fact it makes any real judgement impossible due to its epistemic ambivalence.

The essence of the concept of the “Man on the Clapham Omnibus” can be encapsulated in the following quotes:

“The man on the Clapham omnibus is a **hypothetical** ordinary and **reasonable person**, used by the courts in **English law** where it is necessary to decide whether a party has acted as a reasonable person would – for example, in a civil action for negligence. The character is a reasonably educated, intelligent but nondescript person, against whom the defendant's conduct can be measured.” (Wikipedia)

“Even if the party offered to prove that his witnesses were reasonable men, the evidence would be beside the point. The behaviour of the reasonable man is not

established by the evidence of witnesses, but by the application of a legal standard by the court. The court may require to be informed by evidence of circumstances which bear on its application of the standard of the reasonable man in any particular case; but it is then for the court to determine the outcome, in those circumstances, of applying that impersonal standard.” (Wikipedia)

Of course one could question the validity of this source, but for now we will consider it as a starting point. The problems are this:

- 1) This “person” is purely hypothetical. As such they can have no opinion as they do not exist. It amounts to no more than this **imaginary** person thinks what some **real** person imagines them to think. That is, it is a substitute and camouflage for what another real person (or persons) thinks. But there is no way of cognising this as the imaginary person does not exist.
- 2) Even if one accepted the validity of this imaginary person, they would be reasonable. A reasonable person would want to see the full evidence and not just that of the prosecutor, which leads to point 3 below. Also, what one reasonable person might think may be different from another one, which makes it un-decidable and arbitrary.
- 3) The principle by itself is not sufficient for a case: it requires evidence at some point of the procedure. In the first instance where judgements are made by “application of a legal standard by the court” and not by the evidence of witnesses, some information has to be fed into the standard. By itself, the legal standard is a mere mechanism which requires further information for the judgement to be made. It is somewhat like a mathematical equation: it cannot be solved without the information from the special conditions that apply in a given circumstance. In the case of the racist allegation against Rudolf Steiner this means that the precise nature of the information fed into the “legal standard” is critical. If it is only the partial information from the critics, or from anyone else, that is fed in, there will be one outcome; if the information from a greater context is given then there would be the opposite outcome. Whether one calls this evidence or information is beside the point.

In the second instance, the **court** would decide if the evidence of the witnesses can be applied to inform the application of the standard. Again, the nature of this evidence is crucial to the judgement of the court and the same argument follows as in the above. Moreover, this means that as it is a court decision it cannot be made by an outsider. So a single person cannot make

this claim as they are not the court. This means that Russell is not in the legal position of deciding if the statements are racist.

What this means is that the nature of the evidence is crucial as is who is making the judgement. Were restricted evidence used one judgement would be reached, were more full evidence given the judgement could very well be different. In other words, ***context of the meaning is central to the judgement anyway***. In essence, it is the evidence that is the crucial turning point in the decision, not the procedure of the “Man on the Clapham Omnibus” by itself.

There is a well known expression in English: “The Law is an Ass”. Of course, not all laws can be called this, but it certainly seems relevant here, but please keep in mind that this is meant in the old English sense of the term, i.e. a donkey (reputed to be dull, thick-witted and inflexible) and not in the current American sense of the term (although?). The expression was made famous by Charles Dickens in his “Oliver Twist”: when Mr. Bumble, the unhappy husband of a domineering spouse, is told in court that “...the law supposes that your wife acts under your direction”, replies: “If the law supposes that,” said Mr. Bumble, squeezing his hat emphatically in both hands, “the law is an ass - an idiot”. If the way to make a judgement on Steiner’s statements is through the “Man on the Clapham Omnibus”, then on this point the law really is an ass (in both meanings of the term).

Truth is better than Assertions, Interpretations are better than Impacts: Taking Responsibility

The SWSF has moved away from a “perception” of what the “mood” of the conference was and has published an “Anti-Racist Statement” on their website. Here it is clearly and assertively stated that:

“However there are some statements in Steiner’s work which we acknowledge are racist and we wholeheartedly repudiate them. They sit in contrast with the bulk of Steiner’s work which puts at its heart the equal value, dignity and potential of each human being and do not reflect the values of this organisation or the wider Steiner Waldorf Education movement in the UK”.

What strikes me about this is the naiveté of the approach. The critics of Waldorf are frequently watching and they would deny the difference between the central philosophy and these singular and supposed “racist” statements. They have said this before and will no doubt say it again. This is one of the reasons why it is important to research these statements and not placidly accept them as racist. Above all, the movement needs to overcome the naïve realism that something is true because it “seems to be so”. On this issue, one education section member emailed me and said “I just take these [statements] for what they seem to be” (i.e. racist). As we know though, Anthroposophy makes the case that “Seeming and Being” are not the same. Additionally, if the movement is now thinking like the critics then we have not moved beyond them, some of us have become them, at least to some degree.

It is to the potential truthfulness or falsehood of the racism allegation that a few of us have been addressing over the last 20 years. In particular, Sune Nordwall in Sweden, Daniel Hindes in the USA, Hans-Jürgen Bader and Lorenzo Ravagli in Germany, Angus Jenkinson and myself in Britain and more recently Peter Selg, Constanza Kaliks, Justus Wittich, Gerald Häfner from the Goetheanum leadership. In the SWSF diversity conference report, and in an email to me, there is an assertion by Russell that the approach represented by these authors “served to make the movement appear to be an apologist for racism” and that this approach “had not worked”. What can strike one about this statement is its casual attitude and dismissive nature. More importantly, it is simply untrue. One cannot simply reject two decades of research on the grounds that:

“To my mind what Rudolf Steiner meant by what he said in those few sentences is not really the issue, nor that they may have been taken out of context, what matters is their **impact** which is discriminatory and more so because they sit in a world and society that is steeped in prejudice” (My bold).

Russell, on behalf of the SWSF, provides no evidence or reasons for this viewpoint, it is simply stated. In contrast, those of us who have thoroughly researched the racism assertion, complete with proper evidence and reasoning, there is proof that no racism exists in Steiner’s thought. For those of us who have researched this issue properly, the truth matters and I am sorry, but this really is the issue. I will explain my point of view.

Interpretations and Impacts: Why human consciousness matters

Russell writes about the “impact” these statements of Steiner are supposed to have had and that it is these that are most important, not the interpretation, meaning or the context. In saying this, a division is made between a human phenomenon and the contextual interpretation and historical reasons for that phenomenon. I disagree with the very notion of discarnate “impacts” and the separation of interpretations and the impact on human phenomena. In terms of the human psyche, there are no such things as “impacts”. Russell is writing about people as if they were objects of physics, somewhat like being subject to hypothetical “Newton’s Laws” applicable to the human social realm: there are no impacts here in this sense of the term. Human beings are *participants* in the social life not just the passive receptors of forces: they are interpreters of other interpretations presented to them in given contexts. As a lawyer, I am sure Russell would understand that evidence is conditioned by this: a person is convicted not because of an “impact”, but because of reasonable evidence of guilt, a **consciousness** that someone is responsible. A lorry driver who killed someone whilst driving is not convicted just because of the event, the impact, but because of evidential reasons that proves their guilt. After all, they may have had a heart attack at the wheel, or the company they worked for may not have had the steering serviced, or the driver may have been drunk, etc. The driver’s guilt or innocence depends on the evidence. I know that Russell is not explicitly saying, in the conference report, that Steiner is guilty of fundamentally racist philosophy. However, in the Diversity statement she does make the claim that Steiner made racist statement: I don’t think the movement will be able to move on until it addresses the **truthfulness** of these claims.

So, there are at least two aspects to my argument:

1) Imagine a person reading these statements by Steiner. Where have they read them? These 16 supposedly “discriminatory Statements”, first identified by the Dutch commission in 2000, are from very obscure texts, very few British people will have read them in the language of the report (Dutch) or the original German. *From my observation, most people I have communicated with have read them in the writings of the critics. In this context, the words of Steiner are enfolded by the words of the critics; they try to leave the reader with no doubt that these are “racist” statements*. The critics have tried their best to make it look that way by re-describing and determining the meaning context. When you thoroughly research the original texts, you find that the racist allegations are contrivances of the critics and that the real

meaning of them is totally different. I made this case around ten years ago now (Rose 2013 & 2016).

I would argue that the “impact” Russell writes of is an outcome of understanding the meaning of the statements in the context of the critics, not in the context of Steiner’s thought or in the context of the time. People are not just “impacted”; the way they feel is dependent on their *understanding*, which is conditioned by the context presented by the critics. This is well known in historical and philosophical studies as “Theory ladenness” (Kuhn 1970). This can influence teachers, parents and those who support the education generally. I have met many of these who are fairly convinced by the allegation of racism. When I first started my research into this, I also thought the same. But if the interpretation of Steiner’s thought is perverted by the critics and if one just accepts these statements as they “appear to be”, then you have allowed yourself to become a plaything of the opponents. A good degree of the problem concerning the racism allegation is explicable in terms of naively accepting the views of the critics in their reconstruction of Steiner’s thought in a context of the critics’ own making. For supporters of Waldorf Education, this is a call to do the research thoroughly or abstain from a viewpoint until they have done so.

2) I also disagree with the report’s statement that: “the Steiner Waldorf movement has been undermined by assertions that it is based on a racist dogma because of a number of statements made by Rudolf Steiner in lectures which clearly read as espousing racist concepts” Russell, F (July 8 2021): Equality, Diversity, Inclusion – Reflections, SWSF website. There are two difficulties with this: 1) there is no statistical evidence to support the “*because of*” element and 2) the statements of Steiner are interpreted by the reader and these are definitely not racist concepts, provided the research is done thoroughly in their original contexts.

On the other hand, it is not unthinkable that some Steiner / Waldorf educators have interpreted Steiner’s thought as espousing racism, although I am sure that most would not see it that way. If they do, the “impact” is really the interpretation of some Waldorf teachers, and yes I have come across this in real life, though not frequently. Deeds can follow thoughts and emotions and what some may have experienced as racism in our schools may very well be an outcome of this misinterpretation; or perhaps these particular teachers may simply be covert racists (although I doubt that) and have read Steiner in accordance with their own inclinations.

In both of these cases, truth and contextual meaning are central; “impact” is derived from them and cannot be separated and put in a world of its own, it is the truth that matters. “Impacts” in the human social realm are determined by contextual meaning and what is considered to be true: “impacts” have no existence of their own.

I also question Russell’s view that “our” approach “had not worked”, i.e. the approach of the above mentioned anthroposophical authors. I have had a number of correspondences regarding my own book with people from ethnic minorities and they have been very positive about it. Their observation was that now they recognise that the problems of racism in Steiner schools are not to do with Steiner or any statements he may, or may not, have made, but with individual people in schools. This needs to be taken on board, at least as a possibility, and an appropriate process set in place as in some of the “Action” statements suggested; this is the bit where I agree with Russell.

Oddly, it is in Waldorf circles that this issue still has a life (I do not refer here to the alleged existence of some “racism” in Steiner schools). Perhaps the critics may think now their work is complete and it is up to the Waldorf movement to carry their perverse views of Steiner and Anthroposophy forward. It is after all their hope that Steiner schools cease to exist, and the starting point for this is to create irrational doubt in Steiner’s whole system of thought leading to its ultimate rejection over a period of undetermined time (By the way, I do not consider Steiner as infallible, this allegation is also a “neat trick” of the critics in a vain attempt to undermine contesting arguments). After all, if you read Staudenmaier’s (2014) work, you will see that his claim is that this “racism” is central to Anthroposophy and that the few supposedly racist statements are representative of the whole corpus. Were that the case, then it would mean that Waldorf Education is, in its essence, systematically racist. If we passively and naively submit to this untruth, we become complicit in the potential demise of the Waldorf movement (although unlikely).

There is another aspect to this, namely that of the *evidential base*. These supposedly “racist statements” are largely not from the written works of Steiner but from lecture notes (in German) taken down by a stenographer. These notes were unrevised by Steiner. From the perspective of research and proof it makes the allegations very insecure. How would you know if Steiner said these things, or in this way? How do you know that the comments don’t represent the conceptual framework of the person who wrote the lectures down? How do you know if the reports are accurate if they have been translated into English or if they represent

the interpretation of the translator? How could you be certain that these are Steiner's views when he didn't edit them? How do you know that current readers are reading them according to their own intent or projecting *their* own world views onto them? Consequently, on this point: it is the Anthroposophical and Waldorf movements themselves that are responsible, not Rudolf Steiner or Anthroposophy.

I have also been involved in conversations and discussions about supposed racism in Steiner Waldorf curriculum. Whilst in theory this may be a potential reality, every example I have been presented with is not based in reality but is speculative and theory-laden, *inter alia*. Some words might be needed here to explain the latter of these and its relevance to the question at hand. Theory-laden is a concept derived from historical studies and the philosophy of science. It is a position which argues that "Theory-laden" is when an observation is over-written by a theory. In other words, what is observed is interpreted in light of the theory rather than theory independent evidence. The problem with this is that if judged in an absolute sense, there then could be no test of the truthfulness of the theory, the observation would always confirm it and the theory would blind one to the objective nature of the observation. It would then become unscientific, or pseudo-science. In the example here, it was a case of "reading into" something that simply was not there. In a recent article in the Anthroposophical Newsletter (Summer 21), the story of Mother Holle was presented as if it was potentially racist. I am sorry, but this is wrong. I re-read the original story after reading this article, and the contrasts that were presented in the Newsletter between black and white skin simply did not exist, not in my copy at any rate. Whatever the case, the real thrust of the story concerns what philosophers call "moral consequentialism", if you are good you will be covered in "gold", if you are bad, you get covered in "pitch" (tar). By the way, people who behaved badly at the time of this story in middle Europe may have been "tar and feathered" it was common practice (first recorded during the rule of Richard I (1157-1199) when on crusade in the holy lands). So, the story had nothing to do with racism but historical reality. The way it was presented in the Newsletter was in terms of a hypothetical scenario of what children in the kindergarten might have interpreted the story as. The trouble is that children in kindergartens are not capable of interpretation in the way that we adults are. The children of this age would have had an instinctual intuition of the real moral meaning. Besides, if you read the story there are so few adjectives (unlike some others) such that were it to be told anywhere in the world the child could image any scenario derived from its own experience and ethnic background.

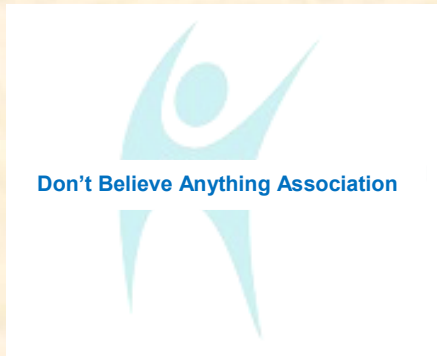
Moreover, the language of this article is derived from a radicalised version of Critical Race Theory. Whilst this is a view perfectly valid for the analysis of legal and educational systems, it is not so easily done when applied to individuals or stories. Radicalised CRT has become very contentious in the USA and has in fact been made illegal in the UK if it is taught as fact. This is a theory that assumes “white privilege”: that a white person has privileges simply on the grounds that they are white. The SWSF has announced on its website that it uses EqualiTeach as the source for the coming “Diversity Trainings” in the schools. According to the EqualiTeach website, they use CRT. Is the SWSF aware that it is grounded in materialistic Marxism and that it is illegal to teach radicalised CRT as a fact in British schools? Moreover, it assumes that racism is endemic in every interaction between people of different races. It doesn’t need much imagination as to the implications of this for a movement such as Waldorf when it is both nationally and internationally diverse (See later section on the differences between Anthroposophy and Critical Race Theory).

The Principle of the “Small Window by the Back Door”

There are some, no doubt, who would consider this all a question of minor points and for which the Waldorf Movement has little time or inclination. Let me tell a story, a real story, as to why small things can have big consequences:

When I was a young man Sheffield, England, I worked as an electrician. On one particular day, we arrived at a house only to find the lady owner in a rather distressed state: she had just been burgled. She explained that she liked to have fresh air flowing through her house, so she was in the habit of leaving two very small windows open: one upstairs and one on the top part of a window by the back door. These windows were so small that only a child or a very small adult could have climbed in. She reckoned, no one could have gotten in. She was wrong; by one means or another, the burglar had used the small back window to open the larger window below it, either that they may have been very small, or had a very small accomplice. Once inside, they were able to open the back door and steal many valued belongings.

The motto of this story is that small things can sometimes have big effects. If you would like to consider what this might mean for the issue of racism here, read the short fictional but possible story here:



A surprising but likely story: Breaking News: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship acknowledges Racism.

In an astonishing public admission of guilt, Fran Russell, chief executive officer for the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF) has recognised there is racism in Steiner's thought. This is the latest of news to appear on the SWSF website. Although she attempts to allay people's fears by saying that this part of Steiner's Anthroposophy plays no part in the education and is to be rejected. She also adds that the real trajectory of the education is ethical. However, we at the "Do not Believe in Anything Association" (DBAA) are not convinced by this and know what this means – ethics from the point of view of Anthroposophy.

For those not knowledgeable of Anthroposophy, its central core is that of the evolution through the races. As the emeritus professor Dr Peter Staudenmaier has shown, this means that human beings evolve through the races, from black to yellow to white; the latter being the culmination point of evolution. The task of Waldorf education is to educate people of all colours so that in their next, or some later, incarnation they will all be white. Yes, that's right, Waldorf teachers believe in reincarnation whose task is to fulfil Steiner's belief that "the white race is the race of the future". No doubt Waldorf teachers think they are doing a good thing in preparing "young souls" for their next life, but it is a perverse view of what it means to be ethical. This is what Russell means when she says that: "It is an education philosophy that puts at its heart respect for the unique nature of each human being" and "Although these statements are at odds with the fundamental ethos of Rudolf Steiner's vision for the world which was to create an inclusive, kinder and whole community where each person is recognised as a unique human being". But Waldorf Education aims at creating a society for white supremacy, i.e. by being "good to people of colour", but with the long term hope that they cease to exist. It is of course a lot of pseudoscientific nonsense complete with "mystic barmptottery", but it is what the Waldorf movement believes.

Parents need to be aware of this and chose something different for their precious children. Join our campaign against “education” of this type, we were successful in our Kings Langely report to the government, join us and we will be successful again.

April F Day, Chief Chair of the Anti-Faith Schools for the “Do not Believe in Anything Association”.

If you don’t believe this could happen, visit the website of the British Humanists Association.

The Importance of a Definition of Racism

One of the outcomes of showing the one-sidedness that “it is impacts that matter”, is that the need for a definition of racism becomes important again. The problem is that most of the allegations of racism against Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy are done without a working definition of racism. This is a serious problem of proof and discussion. Until the Waldorf movement comes to an agreement on what it is that defines racism there will be little way forward and it will be continuously talking from incommensurable frameworks. This means that no decisions or judgement could be made in principle concerning the status of any statement made by Steiner, or anyone else for that matter.

In my earlier publication (Rose 2013), I made the following proposal for a definition of racism:

Proposition 1:

- a) The supposed inequality of the human races with hierarchical classification and superiority.
- b) The inequality of associated cultures and civilisations.

Conjoined with:

Proposition 2:

- c) A **Principle of Harm** such as an implied or explicitly stated proposal of physical harms, harms to rights, cultures and social forms. Other examples of this are: domination of other races, prejudicial judgements, preferential treatment, slavery and genocide.

The problem of many discourses is that proposition 1 contains the concepts of **stereotypes** and **hierarchy**. These are frequently taken as the sole criterion for racism. The irony of this is that many social justice advocates, inside and outside the Waldorf movements, use stereotypes of both black and white people in order to make a case for social justice. If stereotyping is a sufficient criterion for racism, then that would mean that many social justice advocates would be racist. It would be then that such advocates inside the Waldorf movement would be racists in their goal of being ant-racist. Of course, this is nonsense, so this means that we need proposition 2 as well to show racism.

The moral of this story is that:

1) A principle of stereotyping combined with

2) A principle of benevolence

Is not racist

Steiner's theories contain both of these, therefore are not racist.

Of course this does not stop stereotyping being distasteful, wrong and untruthful. I suspect no one likes being stereotyped. In an age when I would estimate most people would wish to be judged for their individuality, stereotyping is socially inappropriate, no matter what your skin colour. There is also a scientific aspect to this in that it is impossible to deduce the characteristics of the totality of a group from a number of finite instances. This was the case argued by the famous philosopher Sir Karl Popper in his "Logic of Scientific Discovery". At best, one can show a statistical correlation of a group, but then there are always those who are not a part of the group average, they are individuals, like everyone in reality. Moreover, any claim of a group average is subject to falsification, such claims may be false, but they are not racist, they are *scientific* assertions that may be true or false, statistically accurate or inaccurate.

Teachers are Autonomous

There is a final element to this discussion, Steiner made the case that teachers are autonomous individuals and are in a position to exercise their creative imagination based on

true human knowledge (Steiner, R (1924): The Kingdom of Childhood, Anthroposophic Press, p. 29). This has a number of implications for the question addressed here.

In connection with diversity based curriculum, if a teacher sees the need to change the curriculum, or the method, to be more representative and encouraging of diversity, equality and inclusion, there is no reason why they couldn't do so, ***provided that essential principles of the education are also promoted***. To my knowledge, it is inherent in Steiner's views on education to be multicultural / multiethnic; in cases where this has not happened; it is the responsibility of the individual teacher and Waldorf movement. Having said that, from my observation, a great many Waldorf teachers around the World have made efforts to place the education in the context in which they work. As many will know, Steiner advocated creative autonomy of teachers and this applies to the context they find themselves in. This context can be multi-ethnic and I suspect is the real reason for the international growth of the Waldorf movement and this has nothing all to do with "colonisation" as some would call it (it is current in the UK to refer to the "de-colonisation of the curriculum, another misappropriated concept in my view). What this can mean in terms of literature, is that it is not that difficult to create or find stories, biographies and ideas / practices from people from ethnic minorities, and the countries concerned, that are of ideal value – so why not just do it and stop the untruthful assertions of Steiner's so-called "racist statements" and stop making absurd statements about "de-colonising the curriculum" – another derivative expression absorbed naively by Waldorf supporters from the critics.

Conclusions

So my question is this:

If and only if, there genuinely is racism in Steiner / Waldorf schools, could not the Waldorf movement take responsibility for it and stop blaming Steiner or Anthroposophy? Could they have "courage for the truth"?

Unless something like this happens, no "Truth and Reconciliation" process could possibly occur as there would be no truth; merely a veil to cover our inability to take responsibility for the Waldorf movement, we would be lacking "courage for the truth". It seems to me that the solution of the problem is somewhere here: that the Waldorf and Anthroposophical movements need to accept responsibility for any genuine racism present, (should it even be

present; and there needs to be real and not imagined evidence for this), because there is none in Rudolf Steiner's thought or Anthroposophy. In this way, the opposite positions between the Anthroposophical and Waldorf movements can be begun to be reconciled.

3) Diversity in Waldorf: Structural Racism or Institutional Inertia?

In an article, published in *Erziehungskunst*, January 2023, Martyn Rawson and Albert Schmelzer made a case for a diverse anti-racist Waldorf Education. I would be surprised if anyone would disagree with them on that, but I wonder if they have analysed the problem sufficiently. Rather than see the claimed lack of diversity in Waldorf Schools being due to structural or institutional racism, there may well be another explanation: *institutional inertia concerning teacher research*. This is an idea also highlighted in Monique Brinson's interview which they refer to and it deserves more attention.

Moreover, the argument the authors make is based on the supposed validity of the statistics they refer to, particularly in determining institutional racism. As is well known amongst statisticians and scientists: *it is not possible to derive causal relationships from statistics; only correlations*. So I assert the contrary, that institutional racism is defined in terms of fundamental principles not supposed statistics and that the opposite of these are present in the founding principles of Waldorf Education. Consequently, there is no need to ask the question "How can anti-racism be anchored in the curriculum of Waldorf education" *because it already has been in its founding principles*. Rather we should ask "how can the institutions of Waldorf Education encourage more teachers to be researchers for the specific context in which they find themselves"? Increasing inclusion and diversity would be a natural outcome of this as teachers are faced with increased diversity in the classroom: the environmental diversity becomes the initiating point for teachers' creative research for a diverse curriculum. This would be devoid of the wish to self-flagellate on a misplaced feeling of "white guilt" or of using the racism card as a kind of whip to drive teachers towards a sanitised curriculum. It would simultaneously avoid the "hollowing out" of Waldorf that relies on a set of strictures of does and don'ts derived from critical race theory and replace this with the inner creativity of the teacher.

Demography and Context Matter

The authors opening presentation contrasts the diversity of the Oakland (USA) Waldorf school with the claimed lack thereof in German Waldorf Schools. As wonderful as the Oakland school may be in terms of what it does, the wide diversity, however, is not surprising and cannot simplistically be attributed to the implied anti-racism of the Waldorf School.

Figures from the United States Census Bureau 2022 show the diversity ratios in the demographic of Oakland to be approximately 33.4% white, 27.2% latino, 22% black and 15.7% asian, plus some other small percentages. Also, the Waldorf school is a public school, which means it is a non-fee paying. These two factors alone can help explain the diversity within the school, so it may not have anything to do with the specific nature of that Waldorf School, as wonderful as I am sure it is, it may just be representative of the area. It seems too simplistic to make this contrast of diversity in the German Waldorf schools.

From Statistics to Right Understanding: from Seeming to Being

The authors use statistics that make the case for “structural or institutional racism” in Waldorf:

“Rather, it is the non-intended forms of exclusion or discrimination of groups “on the basis of actual or ascribed biological or cultural characteristics” that are socially more effective... How can the Waldorf movement be classified against this theoretical background? It cannot be denied that, with regard to the composition of the pupil body, selection exists here which, although not intended, nevertheless exists in fact and it is *therefore quite justified to speak of institutional discrimination of people with a migration background in the context of structural racism.*” (My emphasis)

The case I am making is that the authors are confusing Seeming for Being. To begin with one may ask what it is that they might be referring to regarding “non-intended forms of exclusion or discrimination of groups”. With Waldorf circles, conversations have taken place concerning the supposed discriminatory nature of the kind of stories that are used in the early years of schooling, but also in the history and geography curriculum. Some have seen aspects of these as “Eurocentric” and they make a case for a “de-colonising” of the Waldorf curriculum. Examples I have come across range from the story of “Mother Holle” to the “History of Civilisations”. One question that may be asked is that, even if this were true, how could, in principle, a “non-intended form” even be used to exclude or discriminate? This may be just inaccurate language on their part, but I claim that discrimination can only be intended – who after all in the Waldorf movement makes a *conscious* decision to discriminate? If children from ethnic minorities are not coming in larger numbers to Waldorf schools, then perhaps

this is not because any person or institute is discriminating against them, maybe it is some other cause that is at work. On the other hand, if there is something “non-intended” about the Waldorf curriculum that ethnic minorities find off-putting, this is not discrimination against them by the Waldorf movement. Being non-intended is not associated with conscious discrimination. I would argue that what the Waldorf movement *consciously* intends is one of its defining features.

They reference the “lack of diversity” in Waldorf Schools and even though they acknowledge that the “data is limited” they deduce that this implies a form of structural or institutional racism. Unfortunately, if the data is limited, then this is not conclusive, it is a mere hypothesis that is still to be thoroughly tested through the accumulation of significant evidence. Also, when the authors refer to “pupils with a migration background from economically weak social classes”, what precisely does that mean and can institutional racism be inferred from that *in principle*?

They refer to “one third” of the German population as being from “migration background from economically weak social classes... and/or are Germans of colour” is related to the evidence from the “Federal Statistical Office of Germany”. But one needs to show some caution with this. Clearly, from the statement itself, the statistics are of mixed categories not a single one, namely “migrant background” and “economically weak social classes” and “Germans of colour”. Just on this basis alone institutional *racism* cannot be deduced as we are dealing with three categories not the single one of race. Also, being of “migration background” does not *necessarily* imply race. A person can be of any racial background and be a migrant. For example, a British person of Anglo-Saxon decent living in Germany is a migrant, but not a different race from the majority of ethnically (biologically speaking) German people. So the gross figure of “one third” of Germany’s population cannot be taken at face value. This affects how representative Waldorf Schools seem to be.

Also, the population of “*migration background*” that the authors refer needs to be differentiated. The way statistics are gathered depends on how the different categories are defined. So, in the official German population figures, 88% of the migration figures are classified as “European”, which means the “non-European” migrants constitute 12% of the total German population. This further differentiates into: Middle Eastern 5.2%, Turkish 4%, Asian 2%, Afro-German or Black African 1%, Mixed or unspecified background 2%, Other groups (primarily the Americas) 1.8%. Also, the categories “Turkish” and “Other groups (primarily the

Americas)” are not so straightforward because “European” biological phenotypes can also be found within them. As can be seen, a “migration background” does not necessarily imply a single race but a multiplicity of races. Even so, if one were to infer “Eurocentrism” in Waldorf Schools, then one would have to show that an average 12% of “non-Europeans” are not found in the schools. One would also have to show that this is statistically significant and even relevant. So rather than 30% of German citizens being of non-European origin, it would be more like 12%. Were the Waldorf schools to be representative in this respect then one may expect to observe 12% of students being of a non-European origin. Even then some considerable caution is needed. One aspect of this is demographics again. In the region where I live in England, Devon, only 2% are from an ethnic minority. Were the Waldorf school here to be representative in this respect, one would expect to observe 4 students of ethnic minorities in a school of around 200 students. As a matter of fact, there are more. The question for the German Waldorf schools needs consideration in terms of their regional demographics.

Also, the reference to “*linguistic background*” in the work of Randoll and Peters as evidence for institutional racism is not necessarily connected with race. It wouldn’t be surprising if a third generation family of any racial background may only be German speaking, this has actually happened in Britain in respect of English, many Asian British now only speak English in their family as do families of African and Caribbean descent. By itself linguistic background is a statistically irrelevant category for inferences to racism.

Moreover, the idea of “discrimination” or “selection” the authors describe does not correspond to the global reality of Waldorf. As can be evidenced from the publication “Waldorf World List”, there are Waldorf Schools in a wide range of countries all around the World. This is inclusive of a great diversity of ethnic groups from those countries. Seen globally, the Waldorf movement is not “white, wealthy and weird”, it is very diverse and its teachers are certainly not wealthy, but perhaps it is a little weird. More importantly, the fact of this global diversity suggests that it is the parents that are *consciously* selecting *for* Waldorf Education. This does not deny the fact that elements of Waldorf have a European signature, but that this is not seen by parents as “colonialisation” or that it discriminates *against* non-European ethnic groups. There is no doubt a good deal of work to be done to improve the *contextualisation* of Waldorf, but this has nothing to do with it having a discriminatory curriculum. I would assert that identifying structural racism depends on *principles* not statistics, so racism cannot be

inferred from such statistics. Moreover, even if the statistics were correct, this would show a mere correlation and not causation. To show that latter one would need to do something else.

Diversity as the new Ethic?

There is a new growing trend within both the wider World and Waldorf: diversity is the new ethic. To be clear, when diversity is spoken of it is usually the racial kind that is meant. A bit more accurately, it is the biological phenotypes that are being referred to. But of course, there is also a cultural element associated with this so some caution needs to be taken.

One of the dangers of diversity as a new ethic is that, for example, a piece of literature, such as a story, may be exchanged for another simply on the grounds of increasing diversity. But the question is: *is the deep ethical structure maintained just by a diversity choice?* Following Chomsky, not only does language have a surface and deep structure, so do stories, geography and history. One needs to be wary of “shopping consciousness” whereby one needs to merely replace one’s clothes in order to be seen to be “keeping up with the Joneses”.

How would the Curriculum be affected?

In Steiner’s original indications for Waldorf education, there were two fundamental components:

1) Teacher **creative autonomy in relationship to knowledge** (Steiner, R (1924):

The Kingdom of Childhood, Anthroposophic Press, p. 29); and

2) **Adaptation**

(Steiner, R (1923): The Child’s Changing Consciousness”, Anthroposophic Press, P. 188/9.).

The latter is a point perhaps overlooked in the Waldorf movement that the principles of the education need adaptation to specific circumstances. In a World of globalised Waldorf, it is something to take note of. Problems may have arisen through the transportation of the curriculum to other parts of the World if there was no creative adaptation to locality. On the other hand, care needs to be taken concerning the potentiality of human universals which

may be valid everywhere in terms of their deep structure, such as Steiner's theory of child development or some of the deep moral messages of certain stories. In any case, this need not be interpreted as "colonisation" with the need for "decolonisation", rather it may be a lack of research regarding the process of adaptation to global and changing national contexts.

Part 2 - Prognosis:

In which we begin to consider those aspects of Anthroposophy which may enable a more humane solution to the questions of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

4) Anthroposophy and the Basic Tenets of Critical Race Theory – Leading Thoughts on Contrasting and Contrary Principles

So a question that could arise at this point is: what is wrong with critical race theory and its use in diversity, equity and inclusion education? This part then provides a preliminary analysis of the differences between Anthroposophy and Critical Race Theory (CRT) – it identifies certain essential areas where they are not in agreement, something that Waldorf needs to be aware of. As such, this essay should be seen as “leading thoughts” on the topic. It has to be noted that it is well worth investigating CRT further, especially in view of the potential, and in some cases real, implementation of CRT in Steiner / Waldorf Schools. I shall make the case, based on the *fundamental tenets* of CRT, that it is not compatible with the fundamental principles of Waldorf Education or indeed Anthroposophy. As such CRT should not be used in Diversity trainings for Waldorf teachers or in the education of children or in the reforming of Waldorf Education in the misguided belief in “de-colonising” the curriculum.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) had its origin in Critical Legal Studies research in the USA of the 1960s and 1970s. It is sometimes seen as the successor of the Civil Rights movement. It was thought to have been initiated due to the latter movement being interpreted as being “stalled”. Whether this claim is true or not is open to question. The aims of CRT were to identify and change the existing legal and social systems of the time which it considered to be racist, such as the “Jim Crow” laws (1877-1954) in the USA. Such laws established “white privilege” at the time as they were to the benefit of white people. As such one can see the research base of CRT as being perfectly justified at that time. Even now it cannot be ruled out *a priori* as a valid research framework. As a theory relevant today though, in order to be properly recognised as a social **science** theory, it will need to positively identify racially biased laws and seek to change them, it should not be assumed that such laws and systems exist; it needs to give evidence that they do to this day. It will also need to be open to the possibility that, on occasion, its hypotheses may be wrong, that is if it wants to be recognised as a scientifically testable theory and not a pseudoscience (Popper, K R (1963)).

To begin with one needs to note that CRT is predominantly concerned with *systematic* racism and not *individual* racism. The former of these concerns itself with how racism may be embedded in systems, such as the law, education, etc. Within the context of this theory, individuals only come into consideration here in so far as they are members of systems and may be subject to and manifest those systems. Individual racism, in contrast, is considered a

personal affair and not a manifestation of a system. It has to be noted that this bifurcation of these two racisms has created a confusing situation. Those who believe in the existence of systematic racism sometimes see individuals as “unwitting” racists due to the existence of an all embracing systematic racism. Often, this means, for this view, that white persons are considered universally racist due to the existence of an all encompassing systematic racism. In its extreme interpretation, systematic racism does not recognise individuals as being capable of overcoming racism out of themselves, only if the system is changed, or if there is a systematic program for change.

Individual racism is different in that this is not due to systems but the nature of the person or persons (groups), or sometimes individual *character*. In this case, the racism is dependent on a personal ideology or a group ideology that may, or may not, be at odds with the prevailing systems of a society.

The following discussion is based primarily on a book by two of the founders of Critical Race Theory, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. The quotes are from: Critical Race Theory: An Introduction, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, Online paper, see also publication by New York University Press, 2017.

Quotes are from the above reference, the comments are by myself. They outline the six major tenets, the most fundamental principles, of Critical Race Theory.

Admirable Aims and Dubious Methods

The aims of CRT, I would imagine, most rational and fair people would agree with. That is, if its aims are to create a more inclusive, equal, fair, compassionate society in which all the peoples and races of the world can flourish. The question then becomes whether or not its **methods** can achieve these aims. It then becomes possible that one may agree with its aims but not its methods. As we will see in the following, critical race theory may have admirable aims, but its methods cannot achieve them and in many respects has the potential to create more social discord than overcome it.

1) Racism is ordinary, “Normal”.

For this particular tenet, Racism is everywhere, all the time, in every instance, for CRT racism is everywhere in every interaction:

“First, that racism is ordinary, not aberrational - "normal science," the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country. Second, most would agree that our system of white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes, both psychic and material. The first feature, ordinariness, means that racism is difficult to cure or address. Color-blind, or "formal," conceptions of equality, expressed in rules that insist only on treatment that is the same across the board, can thus remedy only the most blatant forms of discrimination, such as mortgage redlining or the refusal to hire a black Ph.D. rather than a white high school dropout, that do stand out and attract our attention” (p.3).

It is here that the concept of “white privilege” can be found and that “systematic racism” is relatively permanent feature of society. There are three essential problems with this:

1) Epistemological Generalisation: All acts of knowledge concern themselves with questions of truth or “truth-likeness” (Popper 1963). In his “Philosophy of Freedom (Spiritual Activity)” chapter 5, Steiner outlines the basic conditions for knowing the truth: it is the justified union of ideas with observation. Concepts are what are called universals in that they contain the totality of the kind of things under consideration; percepts or observations on the other hand are singular and are momentary realities. The problem that CRT gets into is the well known issue in epistemology known as the “problem of induction”. In the case under consideration here, the question here is: *how is it possible to **know** that a **finite** number of instances of racism means that **all** human situations are inherently racist?* Such a proposition fails the “Popper test”, namely that it is logically impossible to derive an infinite universal from a finite number of instances. The best that CRT could claim is that racism happens in many instances. But even here there needs to be observationally grounded proof. As we can no longer assume that racism is present in all interactions, it also means there has to be a way to prove that it is present in

this instance. Otherwise, there is no way of knowing if it is present at all. Due to this false assumption it becomes difficult to deal with real racism as it runs the risk of creating problems where none previously existed. Instead of some instances of differential colour relations being genuinely racist, this tenet assumes that all are racist. Clearly it is much more difficult to deal with human social relations if one assumes they are all racist rather than just some. Put in different terms, this has to be proved in specific instances not assumed. To do this, the correspondence of the definition of racism has to be demonstrated in connection with a potential observable instance of it. CRT, in so far as it fails to do this, is a pseudo-science and open to the objection of indoctrination.

The outcome of this is that Critical Race Theory lacks an epistemology through which the truth can be known.

2) Stereotyping (problem of the “oppressor – oppressed” polarity): if it is claimed that racism is present in every social interaction, it is necessary that a basic two categories of persons are identified: the ones carrying out the racism and the others receiving it. That is, there are two categories of people who are identified as necessarily the **oppressors** and those whose are the **oppressed** (victims). The former of these are normally regarded to be the white people, the latter black (but it can also be other ethnic minorities). The other side to this is the implicit assumption that a white person is a racist **because** they are white and a black person is a victim **because** they are black. By doing this, the identity of a person is derived from their physical skin colour rather than their psychology or character. In other words, there is no choice in the matter; there is no freedom, only a physical - biological stereotype that determines an attribute of oppressor or victim. If this were true, a white person could not be other than a racist no matter how hard they tried not to be.

This proposition makes the same mistake as classical racism in that it classifies people in terms of predetermined biological stereotypes. This also puts it at odds with one of the fundamental principles of Waldorf Education: all human beings are essentially or potentially free individuals (see more discussion on this below):

- CRT then lacks the recognition of individuality;
- CRT lacks the recognition of individual freedom in the self-determination of ideas, ideology and practice.
- CRT is inherently conflict - creating as it interprets the relationship between ethnic groups as *necessarily* based on the binary concepts “oppressor-victim”.
In that sense, a future civilisation or society based on CRT is one of conflict.

3) Problematic Instances: This proposition runs into a series of practical problems which have the potential to become socially very divisive. If every interaction were racist, then every black – white relationship would be permeated with it. A friendship between people of different races would have a racist core; every white mother – coloured son; white man – black woman marriage would follow suit. Were this believed, it would lead to a breakdown of social trust in these relationships.

This first tenet outlines a recurring issue in CRT especially in its contrast with Anthroposophy. Steiner was of the conviction that the central element of the human being is their “I”, their spiritual / soul *individuality*. Of course, he also recognised that human beings were also members of groups, such as nation, race, gender, religion, etc. But for him, the human “I” is able to transcend any group influences that play into the individual’s life and set their own destiny independent of them. For Steiner, the individual is sovereign not the group(s). This is quite the opposite of CRT which puts, at best, the emphasis on group influences, stereotypes. This point alone is where Anthroposophy and CRT will always be at odds. As we will see, this has a number of different perspectives.

- For Anthroposophy, the individual “I” is sovereign and is able to transcend group membership and specifically the physical – psychological condition; CRT cannot and does not do this.

2) Interest Convergence.

The tenet of “Interest Convergence” makes the case that “white people” will only help black people if it is in their own interest to do so:

“The second feature, sometimes called “interest convergence” or material determinism, adds a further dimension. Because racism advances the interests of both white elites (materially) and working-class people (psychically), large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it. Consider, for example, Derrick Bell’s shocking proposal (discussed in a later chapter) that *Brown v. Board of Education*—considered a great triumph of civil rights litigation—may have resulted more from the self-interest of elite whites than a desire to help blacks” (p.3).

This tenet is at some point going to conflict with Steiner’s concept of ethical individualism (Steiner 1894, chapter 9). If it is directed not just at white elites, it implies that people cannot be altruistic across racial boundaries. It basically assumes that white people can only be self-interested, or in terms of moral philosophy “egotistical”. From this perspective, the best that could be hoped for from CRT is what scientists and philosophers call “reciprocal altruism” (Dawkins 1992), which is to say not altruism at all but mutually beneficial egoism. Steiner however, makes the case for the possibility of pure altruism as a possible moral position or scenario. This is very clear from his fundamental work in his “Philosophy of Freedom (Spiritual Activity)” where he argues for the existence of pure ethical individualism where the ethical motives and drives for action are not bound by membership of groups but by pure individuality:

- The ethical concept of pure altruism is not possible for CRT, but it is for Anthroposophy.

3) Race is a Social Construct not Biology.

One technique used by CRT in an attempt to repudiate racism is to deny the existence of races:

“A third theme of critical race theory, the “social construction” thesis, holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient. People with common origins share certain physical traits, of course, such as skin color, physique, and hair texture. But these constitute only an extremely small portion of

their genetic endowment, are dwarfed by that which we have in common, and have little or nothing to do with distinctly human, higher-order traits, such as personality, intelligence, and moral behavior. That society frequently chooses to ignore these scientific facts, creates races, and endows them with pseudo-permanent characteristics is of great interest to critical race theory” (Delgado, p. 3).

The premise here is that as a social construct, racism is not an objective concept rather; it is a product of subjective character. As such it can be readily changed to prevent racism, such as through education.

The problem here is that this is not scientifically grounded. The notion that near genetic identities means that there are no races is scientifically spurious. This tenet assumes that small genetic differences mean that there are no significant phenotypical differences (i.e. 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. In terms of humans, were there no reproductive differences then there would be no offspring. Moreover, in terms of races, the characteristics are heritable, if this premise of CRT were true, then this would not be possible.

In addition, from the perspective of evolutionary theory this tenet cannot work either. In evolutionary theory there are three basic principles necessary for it to work: genetic mutation, inheritance and adaptation. In combination, these lead to the evolution of species. 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 which eventually over evolutionary time leads to reproductive isolation and speciation. This is why Darwin’s finch studies 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.

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

- Anthroposophy acknowledges the universal human as well as the rich diversity of races and individuals to give existential foundations for good moral behaviour towards all.

4) Racialisation

In many respects, racialisation can be seen as another perspective on the “race as a social construct” hypothesis. It concerns the social process through which races are deemed to be produced by society and how this is used in the establishment of “white superiority”. It involves the creation of racial stereotypes and their assimilation into society:

“Another, somewhat more recent, development concerns differential racialization and its many consequences. Critical writers in law, as well as social science, have drawn attention to the ways the dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labor market. At one period, for example, society may have had little use for blacks, but much need for Mexican or Japanese agricultural workers. At another time, the Japanese, including citizens of long standing, may have been in intense disfavor and removed to war relocation camps, while society cultivated other groups of color for jobs in war industry or as cannon fodder on the front. Popular images and stereotypes of various minority groups shift over time, as well. In one era, a group of color may be depicted as happy-go-lucky, simpleminded, and content to serve white folks. A little later, when conditions change, that very same group may appear in cartoons, movies, and other cultural scripts as menacing, brutish, and out of control, requiring close monitoring and repression” (p.3).

Whilst this may have been true in 50s and 60s USA, is it true now? No doubt stereotyping still occurs, but the question really is whether or not social systems allow for such things in the 21st century. This can only be established empirically and not through philosophical speculation. The challenge for CRT here is to show that current social systems provide opportunities for racialisation to occur, i.e. to positively identify, demonstrate that such things still exist:

- CRT has not tested its hypothesis sufficiently in the current context

5) Intersectionality

Intersectionality concerns the overlap between group identities, such as between race and gender, or race and sexuality, etc.

“Closely related to differential racialization—the idea that each race has its own origins and ever evolving history—is the notion of intersectionality and anti-essentialism. No person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity. A white feminist may be Jewish, or working-class, or a single mother. An African American activist may be gay or lesbian. A Latino may be a Democrat, a Republican, or even a black— perhaps because that person’s family hails from the Caribbean. An Asian may be a recently arrived Hmong of rural background and unfamiliar with mercantile life, or a fourth-generation Chinese with a father who is a university professor and a mother who operates a business. Everyone has potentially conflicting, overlapping identities, loyalties, and allegiances” (p.4)

The human being is interpreted in this way as being a set of general categories which may overlap in a number of ways. Together with this, the notion of there being a unique human individualised spirit is implicitly rejected. This means at least two things: that there is nothing in a person that is universally human, nor is there an individualised essence. This follows from the fact that CRT only recognises the potential overlapping of group categories, this is not individuality as there would be many, possibly millions, of people whose “identity” is defined in terms of their intersection. Even in terms of evolutionary biology, CRT ignores the individual lifeline of each and every human being which constitutes their individualised space – time development (Rose 1997).

From an anthroposophical perspective this is also clearly problematic. Steiner made the case that human beings have both a universal and an individual essence. It may be additionally argued that CRT, by construing humans as not having essences, it creates itself a problem. Namely, the ethical ground for overcoming the above mentioned group categories. This is probably why the concept of interest convergence is crucial to CRT. But doing so, the so-called moral ground for ethical behaviour is grounded in the cynical concept of self-interest:

- As shown before, CRT does not recognise the individualised human essence and its self-determined agency to overcome group identities and associated characteristics.

6) Unique Voice of Colour

As a quasi – epistemological element, this tenet places persons of colour in a position not available to a “white person”. It is intended as giving a unique perspective for the yielding of knowledge in questions of racism:

“A final element concerns the notion of a unique voice of color. Coexisting in somewhat uneasy tension with anti-essentialism, the voice-of-color thesis holds that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, black, Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters that the whites are unlikely to know. Minority status, in other words, brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism. The "legal storytelling" movement urges black and brown writers to recount their experiences with racism and the legal system and to apply their own unique perspectives to assess law's master narratives” (p.4).

It is of course very important that the experiences of people of colour are listened to. In 1960s USA this was crucial to understand their lives in the context of a racially divided society as well as the oppression they experienced. This may well have been the case in the UK and other countries at the time. In today's society it is also important but perhaps in a different way from 60 years ago.

It also has to be noted though that the “unique voice” should not be deemed to imply infallibility nor convergence of opinion between people of colour. This is testified by the fact of black American or British dissenters of the narrative of critical race theory, such as Thomas

Sowell (2023), Coleman Hughes (2024) and John McWhorter (2021). No human being is infallible nor do they necessarily agree with each other on the basis of race:

- CRT does not recognise the universally human characteristic of fallibility and as such comes into conflict with modern science practices, it is a pseudo-science.
- There is no one “unique voice” of colour, all human beings are worth listening to, but all are fallible. We should all embrace the notion of listening to and understanding each other as ***individuals grounded in empathy***.

5) Epistemology, the Epoché and Critical Race Theory: Inner Freedom from Research Prejudice

In recent discussions about the allegations of moderate racism in some of Steiner's literature, I have come across a particular standpoint which needs addressing in the Waldorf movement. There are some who are ready and willing to admit and apologise for a limited form of racism in Steiner. They also want to take steps to eradicate any potential influence this may have had in the schools. After an extended conversation with the CEO of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship in the UK, Fran Russell, which included asking for evidence and good reason, it became clear to me that the acceptance of limited racism is based purely on assumptions derived from the theories propagated by the opponents of Anthroposophy. These myths now seem to have been absorbed by the movement including a pathological mode of reasoning derived from a radical version of CRT. A particular example of this is Martyn Rawson's recent article (August 2023). Whilst it is recognised here that certain things need to be "seen to be done" for political and social reasons, I am not of the conviction that this should be carried out on the basis of Untruths and the absence of knowledge. This is also the case for proposed solutions to the mythical allegations against Steiner. If anything, the Anthroposophical society and the Waldorf movement should be striving towards being "movements of knowledge" not "movements of assumption and mythical untruths".

As an antidote to this, I want to look at a particular aspect on Steiner's view of knowledge. I want then also to consider how this might be applied to one of the supposed solutions to racism. Rudolf Steiner proposed that epistemology is the foundation of all knowledge. It is that human activity through which the contents of knowledge are acquired. In his later writings he referred to this as the "path of knowledge". In connection with the question of racism this raises a specific question: how is our knowledge of racism acquired?

As described above, a particular approach to the solution of racism is proposed by a view called "Critical Race Theory". One of its founders, Richard Delgado, describes some of its fundamental tenets: 1) racism is everywhere, in every human interaction; 2) interest convergence: white people only help people of colour when it is in their interest to do so; 3) Race is a Social Construct not Biology; 4) all situations are racialised; 5) intersectionality: that race identity overlaps with other identities, such as gender; 6) Unique Voice of Colour: that people of colour have a unique story to tell. There are many aspects to each of these, but one is very prominent: by what process are these tenets known? That is, how are they known to be

the true or are they just assumptions or limited in time and space? When asked about the process of knowledge, a respected colleague from within the Waldorf movement replied:

“I think people who focus on criticising CRT are missing the point: we are some decades from the time when this will become an intellectual argument. If you hold on to the one-sidedness of critical race theory in order to relativise your "guilt" you are "overthinking and underfeeling" the issue: it's a classic example of white privilege. You are compartmentalising the discussion in academic terms because you can afford to do so: you have never suffered the direct consequences of the cards being stacked against you. You can argue in favour of a balanced, rational approach because you have no reason to be angry.” (Saar, 2021)

This answer is completely in the style of Critical Race Theory, its unique *modus operandi*. It was an unexpected answer as the question I put to my colleague was concerned with approaching CRT from what Steiner called a “presuppositionless” approach to research. This is not a unique position of Steiner; Husserl (1970) employed the same notion calling it the Epoché: ***the temporary suspension of conviction for research purposes***. It is also implicit in the history of scientific change such as in the rise of Copernican theory, Darwinism, quantum theory and relativity; each of which required a “suspension of conviction” from the already existent and conflicting conceptual paradigms for them to arise. Clearly, Sarr’s answer is full of the presuppositions of CRT and need the application of the Epoché. Whatever one thinks of the above statement, it does not answer the question of an assumption-free epistemic approach, either to racism generally or CRT specifically. The difficulty is this:

In the acquisition of knowledge, the process, the epistemology, of that knowledge should not assume the truth of that which is to be discovered, or determined. The epistemic process itself should not include the concept outcomes in its premises and activity.

What we see in the above quote is the exact opposite of this: it assumes the truth of the very thing that is as yet to be determined. As such, the import of Sarr’s assertion is to block the knowledge process and avoid the question being asked. Whether there is such a thing as universal “white privilege” or universal “white guilt” may be an outcome of an epistemic process, but it cannot be assumed at the beginning of process itself.

In my view, we need a presuppositionless approach not one laden with assumptions. This is encapsulated by Steiner in his "Truth and Knowledge". There he made the following points which I think are relevant to the discussion about Critical Race Theory:

"Epistemology is the scientific study of what all other sciences presuppose without examining it: cognition itself. It is thus a philosophical science, fundamental to all other sciences. Only through epistemology can we learn the value and significance of all insight gained through the other sciences. Thus it provides the foundation for all scientific effort. It is obvious that it can fulfil its proper function only by making no presuppositions itself, as far as this is possible, about man's faculty of knowledge." (Steiner, R, Truth and Knowledge, Preliminary Remarks, paragraph 1).

The discussion which follows aims so to formulate the problem of cognition that in this very formulation it will do full justice to the essential feature of epistemology, namely, the fact that it is a science which must contain no presuppositions."

Steiner, R, Truth and Knowledge, Preliminary Remarks, paragraph 2, (my bold).

Steiner goes on to make the case that the knowledge activity is best served when the knower practices self-knowledge, through self-observation and critical evaluation of what and how one knows. He sets this position in contrast to naive consciousness:

"In all our activities, two things must be taken into account: the activity itself, and our knowledge of its laws. We may be completely absorbed in the activity without worrying about its laws. The artist is in this position when he does not reflect about the laws according to which he creates, but applies them, using feeling and sensitivity. We may call him "naive." It is possible, however, to observe oneself, and enquire into the laws inherent in one's own activity, thus abandoning the naive consciousness just described through knowing exactly the scope of and justification for what one does. This I shall call critical. I believe this definition comes nearest to the meaning of this concept as it has been used in philosophy, with greater or lesser clarity, ever since Kant. Critical reflection then is the opposite of the naive approach. A critical attitude is one that comes to grips with the laws of its own activity in order to discover their reliability and limits. Epistemology can only be a critical science. For its object is an essentially subjective activity of man: cognition, and it wishes to demonstrate the laws

inherent in cognition. Thus everything “naive” must be excluded from this science. Its strength must lie in doing precisely what many thinkers, inclined more toward the practical doing of things, pride themselves that they have never done, namely, “think about thinking.”” Steiner, R (1892): Truth and Knowledge, Rudolf Steiner Publications, Chapter 3, last two paragraphs.

For me this means, in terms of the research process, all should be evaluated about CRT, no assumptions about its truth or falsehood, either as a whole or in its parts, no declarations of convictions, but a presuppositionless search. This requires a critical stance in which all thoughts, feelings and actions are evaluated and freed from conceptual assumptions, emotional inertia and unconscious will.

6) The “I”, Racism and the Question of Intentionality

This leads us on to a closely related problem concerning the “I” in knowledge and action. There is a popular view in which one can find the statement “we are all racists”. It is a curious kind of expression because it is often said by those who are actively against racism but also want to apologise for any remnant of racism which they may possess. It is a common statement made during Anti-Racist seminars. It is a statement I have read and heard a number of times and I want to address this here. The question is associated with another one in which it is asserted that it is possible to be an unintentional racist. Proponents of this view think that it is mistaken to link the identification of racism with intention and that we are all racists unintentionally. Linked to this is a concept represented in Critical Race Theory, of the popularist kind, which makes the case that all white people are racists *because* they are white.

In all of this, the fundamental question cannot be ignored; what is the human being, how do we self-identify, as “I”? The famous German dramatist and scientist W. J Goethe (1749-1832) once made the following statement in his drama “Faust”: “Two souls alas dwell within my breast...”. Goethe was referring to the ongoing struggle of humanity between the higher and lower Self. Does the human being identify with their lower self or higher self? Take the question considered here: can a person who is trying to overcome racism be a racist? Suppose for the sake of argument a person regards themselves as having racist impulses or tendencies but they are trying to overcome them, i.e. trying to be anti-racist, can they really be called a racist? Is their self-identity in their lower tendencies or in their higher striving? How does the human being relate to this seeming duality of soul?

From the point of view of Anthroposophy, we know the human being to consist of three basic levels of reality: body, soul and spirit. According to Steiner, in his lecture series “Foundations of Human Experience”, chapter 4, (also to be found in “The First Teachers Course (Anthropological Foundations section)), within the will dimension of the soul region we know that we have instincts, impulses and desires; but we also have wishes, motives, intentions and resolutions as we move closer to the spirit, the I / Spirit Self. Of course, the “I” can identify with the lower self and indeed become lost in it. But the “I” can also consciously identify, or self-locate, with the higher self as for instance in our wishes, motives intentions and resolutions.

There may be some who doubt this line of reasoning. They may, for example, argue that a criminal might make the case that they are not really criminals because that is not what they

intend to be. They might do criminal things but they are striving to get away from this. Consequently, so the thinking might go, it would not be right to call them criminals as their true identity lies in what they aim to be. To argue like this however is to show a confusion of what is meant in this context. At some point of the psychological process of committing a crime, a person makes a decision. Of course this is accompanied by desires, thoughts, etc. But the critical point is the decision. In that moment, the path to the deed is determined. At the moment of action, the person is a criminal. Continuing to make that type of decision makes a person a criminal generally. The inner agency involved in this decision identifies the person with criminality; that is they “become as one” with this. This could be despite the fact that the person has the wish to be otherwise. Contrarily, a person who resolves not to commit criminal deeds is not a criminal. In the inner agency of the resolution to become the “not criminal” lies a person’s true identity, that is in their “I”. By a similar act of reasoning, the person who resolves and identifies with being an “anti-racist” is not a racist, even in the case that they may have some racist tendencies. Even in the case that a person, in some situations, unintentionally carries out instincts, impulses or desires that have racist consequences it does not mean that they are racists as a totality. It is what a person consciously resolves to act upon consistently that really matters, this is their real identity.

What then are we to call ourselves? One of the functions of words is to refer to realities, but in the case of the human being this is complex so there needs to be a primary identifier, that is: the linguistic reference to the essence of our being. In the case of racism, if a person has racist impulses or instincts, but in their conscious intentions and resolutions they are striving to be anti-racists what then is their primary identifier? From the point of view of anthroposophical evolution this would be in the becoming person, what someone is striving to become. For Anthroposophy what a person is, is their higher self. The higher self is present in the “Now” as entelechy, the inner power of “I”; the strength to become: pure inner agency. Through this the Essence of Ideals is internalised in the future, either near or far. This is the primary identifier of the human being as it is that through which evolution is brought about. The opposite would be to lose ourselves in base emotions, such as racism, and be stuck in the evolutionary past. In this sense and in this context, our primary linguistic identifier is as an anti-racist, better: a pro-global ethicist. It makes no sense to call yourself a racist if you are trying to overcome it and striving towards a diverse and rich global ethos.

The other notion of intentionality is based on two things: that there is a system that “white people” are unaware of and which gives them privileges. This is what is meant when “white

privilege” referred to in Critical Race Theory and the unintentional racism that follows from it. The other is subconscious feelings or instincts which give rise to racism or indeed actions that unintentionally have racist consequences.

The first of these needs definite proof. Whilst it is no doubt the case that for a great deal of the 20th century there were laws and systems that made equality and fairness impossible for people of colour, such as the “Jim Crow” laws in the USA, and apartheid in South Africa. Such laws established “white privilege” at the time as they were believed to be of benefit to white people. There is a question, though, as to the presence of such things now, in the present age. It is possible that such laws and systems exist now, but they need identifying and changing now and not assuming. Without such demonstration, the argument from “unintentional racism” has no basis. There have, however, been reports of inequalities within education systems, concerning student outcomes, particularly in the USA and the UK which purportedly give evidence, but one cannot ignore the “weight of history”. Whilst it may be that the laws and systems of a country have become more equal, they were not so in the past. The effects of this past may have some ongoing inertia in the present even though the current systems have changed. There is no doubt there is a need to remedy this historical inertia.

The second of these aspects is that of “subconscious instincts” or unintentional consequences of actions. Of course everyone is capable of having racist instincts and feelings as well as carrying out actions that have racist consequences. This, however, does not make everyone a racist no more than does the fact that every able bodied person can play football mean that they are, or can be called, footballers. This is a question of professional identity just as the attribution of “racist” is a question of ideological identity or indeed ideological identification. But here a similar argument follows: this identification needs to be cognised and not just assumed. In other words, the unconscious has to be made conscious and addressed. But then, as the Ghanaian sociologist Appiah (2002) argues:

“We call such views - racism... indicating that what we have in mind is not simply a theory but an ideology. It would be odd to call someone... a - racist... if that person gave up these beliefs quite easily in the face of appropriate evidence.” (Appiah 2002, p. 392)

In other words, it makes no sense to call someone a racist if they are willing to change their mind when presented with evidence contrary to their beliefs, such as white supremacy. It would only be if they still accepted their racist beliefs once they had become conscious of

them. Put differently, without proof there is no such thing as unintentional racism that is universally true. The only type of racism worthy of the name is an intentional one. A person who does this identifies with their base instincts, this is a true racist; but someone who identifies with their higher wishes, motives, intentions and resolutions can support a genuine anti-racism, a diverse global ethics.

The difference between the view represented here and the radicalised version of Critical Race Theory could not be more stark. Firstly, we need here distinguish this version from the more credible type, i.e., the kind that searches for and tries to remedy the racism embedded in systems. Radical CRT on the other hand sees the existence of racism as due to physical skin colour and assumes “white privilege” on that basis. Strictly speaking if the possession of white skin is the pre-condition for racism and white privilege, then there would really be no means to overcome it except by changing your skin colour. A view from Anthroposophy, on the other hand, sees the overcoming of racism as an inner activity before it is an outer one. Wishes, Motives, Intentions and Resolutions made by the “I” are the *inner* founding of “anti-racism” and “global ethics” before the *outer* one can occur.

7) Rudolf Steiner's Anti-Racism and Pro-Global Ethics

Over the last twenty years or so, there have been a number of allegations made against Steiner concerning some statements he made about race. For some, who draw on the outdated “Dutch Commission” of the year 2000, whilst these statements are not the core of his ethical thought they are thought to be still racist. In addition to this, it has been claimed in a public online document that attempts to research the true meaning about these statements leads to the Waldorf movement being perceived as an “apologist for racism” (Russell 2021). Whilst there is no publically available evidence for this, due to this interpretation, there are those who may wish to look for solutions to the problem of racism from outside the movement rather than look deeper within it. I will propose the opposite view, namely that Anthroposophy has the best solution.

I would like therefore to look at how to begin an approach to the problem of racism from an intrinsic study of a key element of Anthroposophy rather than import ideas from outside, such as Critical Race Theory (CRT), a view that is beginning to be introduced into the anthroposophical movement and the Waldorf schools. Unfortunately, Critical Race Theory has many interpretations some of which are perfectly just, whilst others, as online research can testify, can cause controversy and division, thus defeating its primary goal: to help build a more fair society. Critical Race Theory is also clearly the inspiration behind the Sunbridge Conference reported on in the Summer 2021 newsletter by Antoinette Reynolds. Unfortunately, CRT classifies human beings using categories based on physical appearance rather than moral qualities. There is of course much more to CRT than this, but a discussion of this theory is beyond the scope of this section.

It seems to me what is needed is an *inner* approach to the overcoming of racism. But this should not be seen as merely “anti-racist”, after all that only says what you are against, not what you are for. Steiner proposed what may be called a “global ethics” in that divisions of humankind can be overcome and transcended through inner qualities. In the quote below, Steiner’s goal was to conceptualise the human being in terms of an ideal towards which all races can aspire. His focus though was on inner cognitive and moral qualities rather than outer ones, such as skin colour or form. To do the latter, is to see the human being as just a physical entity. The human Self is not white; or any other physical colour.

From a spiritual and soul point of view, more is needed. For Steiner, racism and nationalism can only be overcome through inner qualities such as love, knowledge, beauty, etc, which, according to him, in his time, each race has in its own unique way. Steiner thought that no one race is superior and that all races can learn from one another and find a way to integrate the ideal of the “Other” into the inner life of the Self. It is through this mutual admiration and assimilation of the Ideal of the Other that, for Steiner, the human species can evolve to a higher level and for that the human races need each other. But this cannot be achieved by external means, such as stereotypes of superiority, guilt, oppression, victimhood and white privilege. These will not help with the challenges that humanity faces, only genuine inner moral qualities based on real knowledge will help us reflect on the past and form the future:

“humanity in its whole nature is not expressed in the members of any one people or race. Full humanity is as yet only an urge within us, but this urge must grow into a love for all humanity, for those qualities we do not ourselves possess by nature but can acquire if we sincerely seek for **knowledge** of the nature of other peoples of the Earth... It is the striving of a true cosmopolitanism which, by **assimilating** all that can be acquired from a **love** extended to other races, ennobles and uplifts the individual people; knowledge of one's own race is sought by **assimilating all that is idealistic, great and beautiful in other peoples of the Earth...** True internationalism... springs from a love which goes out to all peoples and races in order that the light received from them may be kindled in the deeds, concepts and creations of one's own people. Each individual race must so find its place in the great chorus of the peoples on the Earth that it contributes to the full understanding which can alone unite them all in real and mutual knowledge... There must be knowledge of the conditions requisite for uniting the peoples of the Earth, in order that, as a result of this knowledge, each individual people may help to make the waves of love follow those of hatred. Human love alone has power to heal the wounds of hatred. If humanity has no wish for this love, chaos will remain... Humans who realise this will acquire the kind of knowledge that flows from a spiritual conception of the relationships between the peoples. They will take this knowledge into their feeling — love for humanity will be born. They will take this knowledge into their **will** -- deeds for humanity will be accomplished. The evolution of the age, with all the terrible paralysis that is appearing at the present time, places a solemn duty before the soul: to gather

together all that can unite humankind in love and array it in opposition to the destructive elements that have made their appearance in recent times. This quest for loving unification, for unifying love is not merely a vague feeling. To those who understand the conditions of life today, it is the very highest duty of humanity.” Steiner, R (1920): The Peoples of the Earth in the Light of Anthroposophy, paragraphs 29 – 35, www.rsarchive.org. (My emphasis)

It is clear from this quote that Steiner did not see any one race as being superior to another. Each can learn from the other and that humanity needs this learning process in order to attain fulfilment. In other words, socio-cultural evolution, for Steiner, can only be achieved through the internalisation of the ideal aspects of the Other. Knowledge, love and the assimilation of the Ideal leading to action are the key concepts here. ***Instead of the concept of “cultural appropriation”, with all its negative connotations, we have “ideals assimilation” in order to achieve full humanity.***

8) Love, Freedom and the Evolution of the Races

This article is 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 and Waldorf movements 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 a 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" (Delgado & Stefancic 2017). 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 potentiality for autonomous love between the races in evolution.

* * *

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.

9) Overcoming Racism through the Ideals of Love, Freedom and Progress – Steiner's Concept of the Future of Civilisation

As most people will know, Rudolf Steiner had some unusual ideas. This is also the case in his use of the term “race”. Today, many would probably think of race in terms of physical appearance such as skin colour and form, what one might consider the physical biology of race. But for Steiner, the word “race” went beyond biology and he used the term as a means for the classification of things which have nothing to do with biology at all, either in the past, present or future. This is one of the reasons why some accuse Steiner of racism: simply because they lack the living thinking that he applied to the use of words: they are subject to a particular form of the *anachronistic fallacy*: the belief that the meaning of words now is the same as earlier or later times of history. ***As unusual as it may sound, for Steiner, people from all biological or ethnic groups can belong to the same “race” if they are spiritually and morally committed to, amongst other, the ideas of “love, freedom and progress”. The rejection of these principles, as well as others, puts a person into a different “race”, such as those who are personally bound to egoism and selfishness, on individual as well as group levels, and which brings with them consequent conflict.***

A particular case for what the word can mean to Steiner is what may be called the “context of the future”. It is perhaps a little unusual to call a spiritual / moral community a “race”. But those with sufficient cognitive fluidity will perceive what Steiner is trying to do here, namely find a term for a group of people dedicated to an ethical approach to life. Of course, we are free to choose other words, but this is the word he used in one particular place. Obviously, this should not be confused with the biological meaning of the term “race” as defined by contemporary biology and sociology. For Steiner, the meaning of “race” in relation to the future is defined by concepts like individual freedom, universal love and progress; these stand in complete opposition to the biological determinism of racism.

Steiner did, on occasion, also use the word in the way that we do. So why was this important to him? He did, for example, make a positive claim and that an understanding of race was significant for the future:

“It is particularly important because the destiny of mankind in the near future will bring men together in far greater measure than has hitherto been the case in order to fulfil the mission common to all mankind. But members of the individual

peoples will only be able to offer their proper, free and positive contributions if they have, above all, an understanding of their ethnic origin, an understanding of what we might call “the self-knowledge of the folk”... This maxim will have a certain significance for the activity of mankind in the future.”

(Steiner 1910/70, p. 23)

Steiner’s general view is that all “races” have a positive significance for the future of human evolution. There is no negative and no asymmetry in Steiner’s proposition as would be the case for a racist view.

Anthroposophy as a Principle of Peace

Steiner makes the case that relationships between all the people, races and nations of the World should be based on peace. This is founded on his conviction that through Anthroposophy we can understand that our highest being lies in the universally human. This is shown in the following paragraph:

“When we stand on a pure anthroposophical foundation, when we develop the high truths for our souls, which touch humanity’s highest being, then we stand on ground that is beyond all nationality and all racial differences... these same truths are valid for the whole Earth... as soon as these highest truths that concern humanity come into consideration” (Steiner 1914-21, p 33/4) (My bold).

For Steiner, his fundamental idea was to enable global understanding between nations and races. This he considered the “highest” ideal that humanity could strive for and which would make possible realistic solutions to aspirations based on national and racial differences and enable peaceful coexistence.

Through this, Steiner was committed to a peaceful solution to the World’s problems even in opposition to strife and hate and that he was a pacifist in all things and to all people:

“We do not fight, we do something different: we cultivate love, and we know that, with this cultivation of love, strife must disappear. We do not place strife against strife. We place love, in that we carefully nurse it, against strife... We work for the pouring out of love and found a society that is built on love. That is our ideal... It is

not through strife that one overcomes strife, not through hate that one overcomes hate, but that, in truth, strife and hate are overcome only through love” (Steiner 1906, p. 55).

The Peaceful Unification of the Races

Steiner did not say that the white race as present today would continue into the future and that the others would die out. This is a pernicious view propagated by critics of Anthroposophy. As a matter of fact, as the next quote shows, Steiner argued that in the future all races would gradually cease to have significance and will unite under moral principles and form a new kind of moral community: “with the principles of progress, of inner freedom, of brotherly love, a small band from **every** tribe and **every** nation” (Steiner 1908/77, p. 140) (My bold).

Moreover, Steiner was committed to the overcoming of racial divisions in the future:

“Therefore, in its fundamental nature, the anthroposophical movement, which is to prepare the sixth period, must cast aside the division into races. ***It must seek to unite people of all races and nations, and to bridge the divisions and differences between various groups of people.*** The old point of view of race has physical character, but what will prevail in the future will have a more spiritual character.” (Steiner 1909/90, pp. 12-13) (My emphasis)

More importantly, the way he uses the term “race” in relation to the future is about the forming of a community according to spiritual / moral principles not racial biology. As such, Steiner argued that it is up to each individual “I” to make their own choices; the “choice” is not determined by biology. Racism as conceived of today is partly defined by the idea of biological determinism. According to this, whether or not an individual belongs to such a “race” is not a question of choice, thought, feeling or action, but one of biology. In this context, however, Steiner is saying something quite different: firstly, being a member of the future “race” (moral community) is not due to biological causation; rather it is a question of every individual (irrespective of biological race) choosing and living spiritual and ennobling principles. For Steiner, the future “races” are nothing to do with race as we conceive them

today; they are about living according to the good (or evil) principles, not biological determinism. As such, these “spiritual and ennobling principles” of the “good race” (that really is a distributed spiritual / moral community) would allow a unification of the supposedly biological races into a new spiritual and moral community that would enable a positive evolution in the future.

The Resolution of “I”

For Steiner the human individual, this “I”, is of an individual spiritual nature, not of biological race. For him, this individual “I” is the centre of future Earth evolution. Speaking of how wisdom evolves into love he claims:

“This is the secret of all future evolution... Then in the “I” of man, it is turned inward. From Earth evolution onward, the Wisdom of the outer world becomes inner Wisdom – Wisdom in man himself. And when thus resurrected in the inner life, in the “I” of man, it grows into the seed of Love... Love is the outcome of Wisdom re-born in the “I” of man” (Steiner 1909 / 63, p. 312).

As can be seen, no mention of “race” is present in the biological sense of the term, but rather of “man” or “humanity” (in the original German text “*mensch*” means “humanity”). In other words, for Steiner the concern was for the evolution of all human beings irrespective of racial origin. The wisdom and love he speaks of is a potentiality for all of humanity, not for one specific biological group.

The Marriage of Peoples

Steiner’s real views were the exact opposite to racism. Again, in his lectures on the “Apocalypse of St John”, he says speaking of the next cultural epoch to come:

“It will be different for the next epoch which will succeed all these cultures there will not be a colony limited to one place, but from the general body of mankind will everywhere be recruited those who are mature enough to form the good, the beautiful side of the next civilisation... there is the possibility that *from all races of the World* will be recruited those who really understand the call of the Earth

mission, who raise up the living Christ in themselves, who develop the principle of brotherly love over the whole Earth... not in the sense of Christian confessions, but in the sense of true esoteric Christianity.” (Steiner 1908/77, p. 133) (My emphasis)

For Steiner, brotherly love and other moral values were the unifying principles that could unite all the races. To ascribe to him an extreme and destructive form of white supremacism, as some critics do, is a complete falsehood. As has been shown, for him, what was important was that all peoples of the world, through the agency of individuals, could create a positive future. His view of the future was not one of white or European supremacism, but one of the “mighty marriage” of peoples:

“The nations which today are the vehicles of Western culture were chosen to lead the fifth age to its zenith; they were the nations who were to develop the intellect. Hence wherever the Western culture extends we have predominantly the culture of the intellect, which is still not finished. This intelligence will extend further; people will exercise still more of their spiritual forces in order to satisfy their bodily needs; to slay one another they will employ much greater spiritual forces before the great War of All against All... endless amounts of energy will be exercised in order to satisfy the lower impulses. But in the midst of it something is being prepared, with which certain nations of the East, the northern part of the East, are gifted... a spiritual impulse... the opposite pole of intelligence... we shall experience something like a mighty marriage of peoples, a marriage between intelligence and intellect and spirituality.” (Steiner 1908/77, p. 134) (My bold)

Obviously, Steiner did not see Western culture as the most advanced civilisation of all time nor as the end point of social evolution as a “white supremacist” would have to. For Steiner each culture has a “task” and will be succeeded by others. In his view Western culture has its positives and negatives. As he saw it, one of its positives is the ability to use the intellect in the transformation of nature in order to satisfy bodily needs, such as the invention of machines for practical purposes (such as with the industrial revolution). On the negative side it can lead to War, conflict, oppression and destruction when combined with egoism and its extension into nationalism. Contrary to this, the future for Steiner was a “mighty marriage of peoples”, of East and West [and one should add north and south], based on a unification of the intellect with spiritual and moral principles. Of course, much has changed since Steiner’s time and the

western origin of the industrial revolution has long been transcended so some of what he predicted may well have been achieved.

Transcending the War of All against All

Steiner's interpretation of the "Apocalypse of St John" is where he conceptualises the idea of a future "race". This is a lecture series about the possible distant future of humanity; it is not primarily about the past or the present races. Later on in the text Steiner speaks about a far future state of the world where he interprets the Apocalypse of St John as predicting that there will be a "War of All against All":

"After the War of All against All, there will be two streams of mankind: on the one hand the stream of Philadelphia will survive with the principles of progress, of inner freedom, of brotherly love, a small band from every tribe and every nation; and on the other hand the great mass of those who will be lukewarm... the stream of Laodicea" (Steiner 1908/77, p. 140) (My bold).

This is no racist statement, quite the contrary; it is a description of the possible unification of all kinds of races (every tribe and nation) under the principles of progress, freedom and love. In this context, Steiner's main concern was with the future of all humankind through these principles and that it lies within each individual to connect themselves with them. This "theory" is not rigidly bound to a particular biological race, as a racist theory would be, but is about the development of a new type of "race" (moral community) formed by the spiritual principles of progress, freedom and love. For Steiner, no person is causally determined by their racial biology, we become a new kind of "race" (community) by self-identifying ourselves with specific spiritual and moral principles such as "progress, freedom and love". Arguably, for Steiner, those who are indifferent to, or even against, progress, freedom and love may be considered by Steiner to be "Lukewarm". In either case, Steiner would have considered this to be a choice open to every individual to make and not down to the biological determinism of a specific biological race.

Human Futures: Love versus Egoism

Moreover, when speaking of this “War of All against All”, he envisages this not as a conflict between the peoples or races of the World but between those individuals committed to egoism:

“this War must be pictured quite differently from the way we are accustomed to think about wars... Its foundation or cause is the increase of egoism, of self-seeking and selfishness on the part of man” (Steiner 1908/77, p. 136).

He then contrasts this with those who are committed to universal love:

“Thus the ego will be the pledge for the highest goal of man. But at the same time, if it does not discover love, if it hardens within itself, it is the tempter that plunges him into the abyss. Then it becomes what separates men from one another, what brings them to the great War of All against All, not only to the War of nation against nation... but to the War of each single person against every other person in every branch of life; to the war of class against class, of caste against caste, and sex against sex. Thus in every field of life the ego will become the bone of contention; and hence we may say that it can lead to the highest and on the other hand to the lowest” (Steiner 1908/77, p. 137) (my emphasis).

This is how he conceptualises the two “races” the “good” and the “evil”; he identifies them with the particular moral qualities of “brotherly love” and “egoism” respectively, not with biological race. For Steiner, the extreme form of egoism leads to conflict in every area of human existence, whilst love leads to peace. He furthermore does not envisage that the “good race” will destroy the “evil race”, rather that it will help redeem it:

“After the great War of All against All, gradually the evil stream will be lead over to the good by the good race, by the good stream. This will be one of the principle tasks after the great War of All against All; to rescue what can be rescued from those who after the great War will only have the impulse to fight one another and allow the ego to express itself in the most external egoism” (Steiner 1908/77, pp. 140/1).

It is these two qualities of brotherly love and egoism that, for Steiner, identifies the two “races”, not biological inheritance. Put in other words, the community based on brotherly love

will try to help the other community overcome their egoism. For Steiner, egoism leads to conflict whilst brotherly love leads to a peaceful future for all humanity:

“True Anthroposophy can only be put forward as a final goal; the community of free and independent egos, of egos that have become individualised. It is just this that is the mission of the Earth, which is expressed in love.” (Steiner 1908, pp. 137).

One can see in this that Steiner’s view of evolution was one of individuals becoming free and independent egos who are willing to cultivate love between all the peoples of the World. Such a view is the opposite of any kind of racism. The future “good race” has nothing to do with racial biology and is entirely to do with the choice of individuals:

“Love would be impossible for man and freedom would be impossible for man without the possibility of sailing down into the abyss. A man unable of his own free decision, to choose good or evil, would be a being lead on a leading string to a good which must be attained by necessity and who had no power to choose the good of his own free purified will, by the love which springs from freedom.” (Steiner 1908/77, p. 206)(My emphasis)

This freedom is the antithesis of that which is at the foundation of the biological determinism of racism. A racist theory cannot allow for individuality free of biology; for such a view, being a member of a race is not a question of choice, there are no exceptions for individuals for this view and group membership is determined by the biological state and causation. In contrast, the question of belonging to a “moral community” (chapter 3) is down to the freedom of choice, thought, feeling and action of the individual. It is the latter of these that was Steiner’s view.

The Meaning of Spiritual / Moral Community

In terms of the future, Steiner’s use of the term “race” took on a specific meaning according to his theory of evolution. So what is Steiner’s view of the future? Steiner, in his “Apocalypse of St John”, envisaged a new kind of community which he sometimes referred to as a “race”, but is not to be confused with biological race. He described it as being derived from “every tribe and every nation” based on the moral principles of “progress, freedom and love” (Steiner 1908/77,

p. 140). This is a concept of a spiritual / moral community that is inclusive of all races and is formed through the agency of ethical individuals (Steiner 1963, p. 175):

“That is why it is absolutely essential to understand that our anthroposophical movement is a spiritual one. It looks to the spirit and overcomes the effects of physical differences through the force of being a spiritual movement... Humanity is becoming ever more individual, and this has further implications for human individuality. It is important that this individuality develop in the right way... In light of this, we can describe this anthroposophical movement as leading a person to grasp correctly what is called the “I” [the individual spirit], the innermost member of the human being... What is entering humanity through the anthroposophical movement concerns every human being regardless of race or nationality. This movement speaks only to the new humanity, the new human being — not to an abstract concept “human being,” but to every individual... Full understanding between individuals is hardly possible today, except when what is to be communicated comes from the centre of one individual’s being and speaks to, and is understood rightly by, the centre of another.” (Steiner 1909a/1916) (My emphasis).

So, rather than the agency of “race” being central to Steiner, it is the agency of the individual “I”, that is central to human development and to the forming of moral communities through concepts like progress, freedom and love. For Steiner this can only occur through the agency of each individual “I”. For him, nothing in human life is ineluctable or caused by the determining power of race, all humans are free agents capable of forming and determining moral communities; it is not the membership of a biological race which determines our future, but our free individual creativity and choice. He made this clear in his early work “The Philosophy of Freedom (Spiritual Activity)” and it never changed throughout his life. His commitment to ethical individualism in the forming of communities is absolutely central to every part of his thought:

“To live in love of the action and to let live, having understanding of the other person’s will, is the fundamental principle of free human beings... The free man does not demand agreement from his fellow men, but he expects it because it lies in human nature” (Steiner 1963, p. 181).

These are not ideas that can be present in any kind of racist theory, but are derived from a view of the World where individuals matter, not just their membership of a particular race.

Moreover, this “I”, as he showed in his “Mission of the Folk Souls”, was important for Steiner in that he also made distinctions between the progressive evolution of “races” to nations to civilisations and to individuals (Steiner 1910/70, p. 80/1). Steiner only speaks of biological races on a few occasions; they are neither the goal of his evolutionary thought nor to Anthroposophy. Clearly, for Steiner, the human community of the future is meant to be more than just about biology, it is about communities of human beings forming under moral or spiritual principles. For him, in the long term, all the peoples of the Earth could find peaceful unity derived from these moral values and realised by individuals.

Steiner’s hope for the future was to promote tolerance and peaceful cooperation between all the races, peoples and nations of the Earth and he encouraged supporters of Anthroposophy to live their lives accordingly:

“What alone accords with Anthroposophical teaching is that we should unselfishly dedicate the best that is in us, our sympathy and compassion, to the well-being of all mankind... and live, not for ourselves but for all human beings, then that is true anthroposophical tolerance... Spiritual Science, as we shall realise more and more clearly, will bring an end to the divisions of mankind. Therefore now is the right moment to learn to know the Folk Souls, because the province of Spiritual Science is not to promote antagonism between them, but to call upon them to work in harmonious cooperation... The more we practice this, the better anthroposophists we are.” (Steiner 1910/70, p. 185)

This was written at the conclusion of the lecture cycle “The Mission of the Folk Souls”, where critics claim Steiner expressed racist views. As can be seen, nothing could have been further from the truth. The cycle was held four years before the outbreak of the First World War. His ideas of “sympathy and compassion” and “harmonious cooperation” stand in complete opposition to the then emerging conflict of the 1914-18 war between the peoples and nations of the World.

A Three-fold Unification of the Races?

Steiner foresaw a possible unification of the world's different races on three levels in accordance with his threefold understanding of the human being. On the physical level, he argued that miscegenation (racial mixing) is positive for evolution. The following quotes are not just about the past but also the future:

“miscegenation and contact between different peoples have played significant role at certain periods. Now not only the mixture of peoples and their interrelationships which lead to the introduction of foreign blood, but also the psychic and spiritual development of the Folk Spirits have played a decisive part” (Steiner 1910/70, p. 171).

This position was first stated in his “Occult Significance of Blood”:

“Exogamy inoculates man with new blood, and this breaking-down of the tribal principle, this mixing of blood, which sooner or later takes place among all peoples, signifies the birth of the external understanding, the birth of the intellect... But this mingling of blood which comes about through exogamy is also that which at the same time obliterates the clairvoyance of earlier days, in order that humanity may evolve to a higher stage of development” (Steiner 1906b, paragraph 72)(my emphasis).

Now, it has to be strongly noted here that this is a description and a potential prediction: it is not a proposal for what one should do, nor is it a suggestion for what one should not do. Remember, Steiner was committed to the idea of ethical individualism. It merely predicts what he thinks will happen over a very long evolutionary period of time.

So for Steiner, races as we understand them today will likely have ceased to be by the end of the seventh cultural epoch (in about six to seven thousand years time by his way of calculation) through a threefold, but natural, process of unification based on ethical individualism. That is to say that Steiner was making a prediction here of how the future may unfold.

This is how Steiner foresaw the possible and gradual unification of the races over the present and the next two cultural epochs:

As being due to the free spiritual “I”, through miscegenation on the physical/bodily level, and through a bringing together of the spiritual/soul cognitive and moral powers into a higher unity. For him, through this process, a deeper ethical and physical individualisation may potentially evolve and cultivate an ever increasing diversity on all levels through individualisation.

10) An Education for a Future Civilisation

In order to provide a context for the questions concerning Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, I would like to discuss something of the nature and overall goal of Waldorf Education in light of its Anthroposophical Foundations. It is my contention that: *Anthroposophy, and through it the daughter movement Waldorf Education, provides the basis of a new healthy future civilisation for **all** human beings.* It is worth taking a few moments and pondering the meaning of the word **all** here in light of our discussions about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

As a brief background to Steiner's concept of civilisation and the role of Waldorf Education, it is good to recall that in 1924 there were a number of monumental changes in the anthroposophical movement generally that also had educational significance. At the very beginning of 1923, the first Goetheanum had burned down, sending seismic shock waves through the movement which lead to a lecture cycle on "Anthroposophical Community Building" (1923). Later, in the Christmas of that year, Steiner held the Christmas Foundation Meeting which re-established the Anthroposophical Society on a completely new footing. It is here where he presented for the first time the Foundation Stone Meditation, which he called the "most important result of recent years" (The Foundation Stone, p. 12). The meditation describes the place of humanity in the cosmos and the ideal relationships to the higher spiritual realities and the taking of responsibility for the evolution of civilisation on the Earth. Shortly thereafter, in January 1924, Steiner founded the Esoteric School, also known as the School of Spiritual Science or the Michael School; this being the research core of the Anthroposophical Society.

To my mind, there is no doubt that Steiner saw Waldorf Education as a part of taking responsibility for the development of civilisation. The standard education of the time he described as "leading to a loss of mental vigour... paralysis of soul" and a "physical world empty-headed in respect of thoughts and ideas" (The Foundation Stone, p. 48). For Steiner, the success of a healthy education lay in the connection to higher realities. This is evident also in the earlier education cycle of 1919 (The First Teachers' Course). There Steiner presents a meditation which, for teachers, enables a real connection to be made between the teacher and the higher realities which yield future impulses for the education:

"if we look at the foundation of the [Waldorf] school not as everyday but as a celebratory act of cosmic dimensions. In the name of the good spirit that seeks to

lead humanity out of desolation and despair and to raise human beings to a higher level of evolution through education” (Steiner 1919, p. 20).

It has to be born in mind that this came directly after the First World War which lay waste and devastation to much of Europe, which in turn partly arose from a certain kind of mechanised thinking from the preceding century. A century which some scholars referred to as initiating the “Mechanisation of the World Picture” (Dijksterhuis 1961) and epitomised by Charles Dickens in “Hard Times” as represented by the character of Mr Gradgrind:

“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, root out everything else... Thomas Gradgrind, sir, a man of realities. A man of fact and calculations... With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to... Thomas Gradgrind now presented Thomas Gradgrind to the little pitchers (the children) before him, who were to become so full of facts... He seemed a galvanising apparatus, too, charged with a grim mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stormed away.” (Dickens, C (1854/1969): *Hard Times*, Penguin Press, p. 47/48).

Today, one may say that we live in the age of the fulfilment of this notion where much that is human is seen in terms of measure, number and calculation, as represented by Pink Floyd’s song “Brick in the Wall” (1979) with the lines: “we don’t need no education... we don’t need no thought control... no dark sarcasm in the classroom... teacher, leave them kids alone”!

For Steiner, such an education leads to nothing but the death of civilisation through rigidified thinking, feeling and willing; not just about basic subject matters, but also about the relations between nations, peoples, races and sexes. For him, “Gradgrindian” thought ends in conflict between these groups; cognitively, emotionally and practically. Hence, they are a cause of strife, conflict and war. For him, the way out of this is through the education of living thinking, imagination, emotional agility and practical skill. It is to the development of these that Anthroposophy and Waldorf education are devoted.

It is worth keeping this context in mind when trying to form a judgement about the role of the critical race theory approach to DEI. CRT is a fundamentally materialist approach to human beings. It observes people and judges them in terms of their skin colour rather than their

independent inner character. In fact it deduces their character from their physical appearance. In that sense, Anthroposophy tries to transcend the merely physical and appeals to the true inner nature of the person. From this perspective, Anthroposophy has more kinship to the Civil Rights Movement: “I refuse to accept the idea that the ‘isness’ of man’s present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal ‘oughtness’ that forever confronts him.” Martin Luther King jr, Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech (1964).

Two Fundamental Principles

Another event that occurred in 1924 was the presentation of the education lecture series often called the “Torquay” course. This re-presented his educational ideas from previous years. The original title of the course was “The **Art** of Education on the basis of an Understanding of the Human Being”. This is *the* theme for all of Steiner’s lectures on education as it encapsulates the essence of the pedagogy. To begin with, Steiner proposed that the teacher becomes creative in the pedagogical deed, somewhat like a musician or painter is in their productions. At the same time, it also means that the curriculum is partially taught through the various means the arts have to offer. But it also needs to be noted that this was to be no random freedom, for him teaching needs to be done in relationship to the way human beings develop over time. One can find that these two themes are central to all his proposals for education:

- **Teacher Creativity**
- **Child Development**

For him, pedagogy consists in the *process of **adaptation*** between these two polarities. That is **lived knowledge** and **adaptation**, to individuals, nations, races and genders in their specific contexts. This means that, for Steiner, the principles he suggests should not lead to “colonisation”, but be reflective of the local social-culture whilst also maintaining those universals of human development that are relevant. The agent for enabling the coming into being of free individuality in the young person is the teacher. The teacher is intended to be the **principle example** of free individuality which enables that civilisation impulse that includes but transcends “groupism”. The free individuality of the teacher is intended to be the model of the free individuality of the learner.

On the Nature of Waldorf Pedagogy: Universal Child Development at the Centre

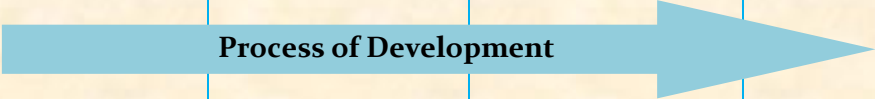
It has to be noted that the central focus of Steiner's ideas on education is that of *universal* child development. It would be no exaggeration to say without this there would be no Waldorf Education. It might be good to focus on this concept for a while otherwise there is a danger that what it means could be lost and with that the civilisation impulse for the future would also be lost. Steiner made the claim that his ideas of education were literally for all human beings:

““But the anthroposophic view of the world engenders a strong desire to build bridges across all divisions into nationalities, races, and so on. In its inmost being Anthroposophy feels compelled to speak with a voice that is supranational, or international... The anthroposophic worldview itself is intended to help people, wherever they live on earth, toward knowledge that is beyond all limits of race or national language.” (Steiner, R (1921/2, pp. 270-2)

In terms of universal child development and general pedagogy, he made no exception for nationalities, races or sex, for him the most central elements of child development were the same for all human beings, but also bearing in mind that we are first and foremost *individuals*. The question of gender is a special case and the issue of race and nationality would have been parts of the adaptation process. In this sense, Anthroposophy in its special manifestation as Waldorf Education is intended to help humanity across the whole globe. With that a future civilisation is meant to arise which cultivates, freedom, equality and solidarity for all. The concept of child development is intended to help with this process.

Whilst Steiner did give indications concerning the *content* of the Waldorf curriculum (The First Teachers' Course" in the First to Third Curriculum lectures, pp. 330-345); it is without doubt that his main focus was *pedagogy* (the art of teaching) and its relationship to child development, or *ontogeny*. The Torquay course reiterates this approach and many of the child development themes from earlier lecture cycles. The most important of these is the idea that education should help the development of *Human Nature*; in his terminology that is of body, soul and spirit. In Waldorf education, the idea of Human Nature is normally associated with wholeness as Steiner often said that education should aim to develop the "Whole Human Person": "Our task is to introduce an education that concerns itself with the whole person - body, soul, and spirit - and these three principles will become known and recognized" (Steiner

(1924/1995, p. 5). Steiner develops this concept from a three-fold understanding of the human being to an educational picture over developmental time:

Human Development Phase	Physical Body 0 – 7 years	Life Body 7 – 14 years	Soul 14 – 21 years	Spirit or “I” 21 +
Pedagogical and Learning Principles	Imitation & Creative Play	Imagination & Memory & Feeling.	Independent Thinking and Psyché	Free thinking and action
				
School period	Kindergarten	Lower School	Upper School	University – Life

Steiner’s idea, in simplistic terms, is that each phase of human development has a unique pedagogical principle and way of learning. The intention was that pedagogy should serve the ontogenetic needs of the children. It also needs to be added that each of the main phases above is further differentiated into three, giving nine subtle sub-phases which in terms of pedagogy leads to a learning metamorphosis and gradual transformation over the developmental time of the three school periods. In the above, we see a gradual metamorphosis in how learning is approached to accompany and aid the natural development of the children. In the kindergarten years imitation and creative play are the key principles of learning. By the second phase, it is imagination, memory and the strengthening of the feeling that is appealed to, but which also evolves towards the next phase of development. In the third period, teaching and learning encourage the development of the independent psyché of the young person. The fourth period lies outside of normal schooling but is dependent on and an enhancement of the third period. ***The ultimate goal is the development of free independent human beings no matter their race, nationality, gender.*** The fundamental goal of Waldorf Education is the freedom of the individual embedded within thinking, feeling, memory, imagination and creative play. This is intended to be the ground of a future civilisation.

The point of this is to integrate the three major human *levels of being* into the learning process with the aim of developing the integrity of the whole person. This in turn is to provide a foundation for the *wholeness* of the individual’s life and their place in society and civilisation.

Without this wholeness there is always the danger of dissonances between thinking, feeling and willing. These dissonances may then become reflected in civilisation.

The Content of the Curriculum

The curriculum in terms of content is truly holistic in broad terms and its aim is to aid the ontogenetic process: the content is chosen to enhance the existing child development. Instead of being presented as a mere collection of parts, Steiner recommended that each topic needs to go through an evolution from the whole to the parts and back again. To aid this process, the content is taught in periods, also known as blocks, of three or four weeks. This enables the healthy creation of a whole topic that is taught.

The evolution of the topics over the years is correlated with the development of the child and how they learn in each stage. Beginning in the early years, there are no specific subjects as such but an encouragement to learn out of the holistic human experience in relationship to real life. This is why the learning environment is shaped as far as possible to resemble a healthy home-like experience. In a sense the environment, inner and outer, *are* the content of the “curriculum”. Though the cultivation of “Being Together” the first foundations of a civilisation impulse can be achieved.

By the second phase, the content of the curriculum is sculptured by the imaginative-memory-feeling approach to learning, but out of the previous wholeness of content there emerges the three primary topics represented above. Thereafter, the topics further diversify, but in the teaching-learning process consciousness is kept on the whole from which the individual topics arise. The subjects below are derived from the “First Teachers’ Course”, First to Third Curriculum lectures, pp. 330-345:

Phase 1 Kindergarten 3-7th year	Phase 2: Classes 1 to 8: All within the context of Imagination: 7-14 years			Phase 3 Upper School 14-21 years
Differentiation and Reintegration: between the wholes and the parts 				
Pedagogical Principle: Imitation & the Good Example	Pedagogical Principle: Imaginative Anthropomorphisms	Pedagogical Principle: Imaginative Facts	Pedagogical Principle: Images of cause and effect	Pedagogical Principle: Independent thinking
Curriculum: Being and Togetherness; The Universal Human Experience	Curriculum: Literacy & Literature Home & Environment Mathematics	Curriculum: Literature/Drama Geography Plant & Animal History Mathematics	Curriculum: Literature/Drama Geography History Mathematics Plant & Animal Physics & Chemistry	Curriculum Literature/Drama Geography History Philosophy Mathematics Plant & Animal Physics & Chemistry

One can observe in this process how the topics gradually differentiate from the wholeness of early childhood consciousness to a more differentiated understanding of young adult awareness and yet retain and find the whole for each of the parts, which manifest as subjects of study. More importantly, it is through an education like this that a sense for the *wholeness of life* may come into being and enables young people to find their way in life as well as create a new wholeness for others in society as well as themselves. *It is a kind of signature for a future civilisation based simultaneously in respect for the whole of society and nature as well as the individual.*

Teacher Development: Self Knowledge as a Principle of Civilisation

For Steiner, the nature of learning is not just concerned with the absorption of learned content but, perhaps more importantly, on the *healthy relationship* between teacher and student. For him, the teacher is in a kind of leadership position such that the teacher needs to *exemplify* the civilisation impulse. We might say: be the change you want to see in the world. The *inner nature* of the teacher's being comes into particular focus here. Consequently, one of the most fundamental principles of Steiner's views on education is the development of the teacher:

"If you make a surly face so that a child gets the impression you are a grumpy person, this harms the child for the rest of its life. This is why it is so important, especially for little children, that as a teacher you should enter very thoroughly into the observation of a human being and human life. What kind of school plan you make is neither here nor there; *what matters is what sort of a person you are*" (Steiner 1924, p.19).

Of course, Steiner is not just proclaiming "Thou shalt not make grumpy faces", it is about the totality of the person of the teacher, or parent, is what matters here, in their inner life of thinking, feeling and willing:

"When the inner nature of a person is filled with a living knowledge of what the human being is, this will be expressed in his or her face, and this is what can make a really good teacher" (Steiner 1924, p.22).

It is this striving for knowledge, for the truth which, for Steiner, that needs to be a part of the inner life of the teacher so that they can become good at teaching; it is from out of this inner reality that the children can learn in a healthy way:

"The first essential for a teacher is *self-knowledge*... Teachers must always keep themselves in hand, and above all must never fall into the faults that they are blaming the children for." Steiner, R (1924): Kingdom of Childhood, p. 54.

This idea is confirmed in other places:

"Here you can see how much of what people call the question of education is actually a question about the *qualities of the teacher*." Steiner, R (1924): The Renewal of Education, Anthroposophic Press, p. 125.

Some of these qualities to be acquired are represented by a verse given by Steiner near the end of the First Teachers' Course (p. 310):

Imbue yourself with the power of imagination
Have courage for the truth
Sharpen thy feeling for responsibility of soul

For Steiner, these are the essential teacher qualities that will provide a foundation for a good education. For him, teaching is not an abstract *pedagogy*; it is a way of *Being: the good learning of the pupils follows from the good Being of the teacher*.

Inner Tranquility and Self-Knowledge: Reflecting on Life

The call to practice self-knowledge was presented by Steiner in his early work "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds" (1909/10). There he presents it as "Inner Tranquility":

"Provide for yourself moments of inner tranquillity; and in these moments learn to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential... [the practitioner] must seek the power of confronting themselves, at certain times, as a stranger. He or she must stand before themselves with the inner tranquillity of a judge. When this is attained, our own experiences present themselves in a new light. As long as we are interwoven with them and stand, as it were, within them, we cling to the non-essential just as much as to the essential. If we attain the calm inner survey, the essential is severed from the non-essential." (Steiner 1909/10, chapter 1)

The aim of the exercise is for the practitioner to reflect on their life in terms of their thought, feeling and will within a state of inner calm. Through this the true inner Self, what Steiner calls the "I" evaluates the three activities of their own psyché and comes to resolutions concerning their life. For the teacher, this can include the practice of reflecting, in tranquillity, on their teaching activity with the aim of evaluation and improvement. This is also applicable

to their relationships with the other teachers, parents and pupils. In terms of the latter, due to the leadership principle outlined above, this practice can, over developmental time, become an inner attribute. In that sense: ***Self-Reflection with Inner Tranquility becomes a Principle of Civilisation when extended across the globe. This practice then also is a principle of peace for all nationalities, races, genders, groups and individuals.***

Openmindedness

As a vital part of teacher development is also the acquisition, development and practice of the ethical virtues in education. One of the primary educational virtues is that of **openmindedness**. In the context of his educational philosophy, Steiner formulates this in terms of its significance for teaching:

“This is why a most essential aspect in Waldorf teacher training involves **receptivity** to changes in human nature... A Waldorf teacher must be prepared to face something that will be completely different tomorrow from what it was yesterday... We need **open minds** ready to receive new wisdom each day, and a disposition that can transform accumulated knowledge into a sense of potential that leave the mind clear for the new. This keeps people healthy, fresh and active...

[This] **must be a Waldorf teacher’s basic mood and nature**”. Steiner, R (1922):

The Spiritual Ground of Education, Anthroposophic Press, p. 124/5. [My bold]

Steiner is clearly pointing out that this inner disposition is a kind of **thinking virtue** of openmindedness and its significance for teachers. At the same time though, openmindedness requires a **feeling virtue** of receptivity and **willing virtue** to act in a different way in each situation. In the text, Steiner gives some advice on how to develop this within oneself.

The **place** of openmindedness in Steiner’s suggestions should not be underestimated: If a person does not have this to a sufficient degree already, then the potential teacher development of all other virtues becomes a moot point: if a person is not open to the notion of developing inner virtues in themselves, then they will not attempt to acquire them. For Steiner, the whole of virtue development depends on this, without openmindedness the whole of Self-Development stops. Consequently, as child development and learning depends on teacher virtues, without the cultivation of teacher virtues Steiner / Waldorf Education is not possible and neither is a future civilisation for all.

Four fundamental attributes:

- 1) The teacher must be a person of initiative in everything done, great and small. [**Universal Initiative**]
- 2) The teacher should be one who is interested in the being of the whole world and of humanity. [**Universal Interest**]
- 3) The teacher must be one who never compromises in the heart and mind with what is untrue. [**Universal Truthfulness**]
- 4) The teacher must never get stale or grow sour. [**Universal Enthusiasm**].

Steiner, R (1919): Discussions with Teachers, *Closing Words*, pp. 180-82

Initiative

This lies at the foundation of creative educational activity in Steiner education, amongst other things. As a soul / spirit virtue, it is a kind of **inner will to create**. As has been indicated previously, Steiner Education does not have a fixed curriculum; rather it has a set of pedagogical principles and a few content indications. These enable teachers to create a curriculum for their own particular case. Through initiative, the teacher is able to enter into a subject in a free way and create opportunities for learning for each unique context, class group and child. Developing initiative for the teacher in Steiner settings becomes paramount as without it either the education does not happen or it becomes based on tradition. Were that to happen, then the uniqueness of situation and the children is not recognised. Hence Steiner encouraged initiative in teachers in order to enable the creative source of the education. Consequently, if pupils perceive teachers having, or trying to attain, creative initiative, they will strive for this too and which may lead to a more positive future civilisation.

Interest

To be interested in all things is likewise crucial to the education. Interest is an **emotional – cognitive** process that can positively enhance learning. In one of the original meanings of the term, interest meant something like: “between the essences”. Through the virtue of interest, the teacher is able not only to engage with the essence of the subject they teach, but also

develop a deep understanding of the children, that is in their typological age-phase characteristics, temperament and individuality. Genuine interest bridges the gulf that can exist between teacher and student and helps form educational connections and later to social cohesion.

Truthfulness

This lies at the core of Steiner education in the sense that the teacher strives to establish the truth content of that which they teach as well as of their knowledge of the children. In this sense, **truthfulness incorporates observation and thinking as teacher virtues**. It may be recalled from Steiner's "Philosophy of Freedom" (1894), that "truth" is defined as the rightful union between concept and percept. It is a simple formulation but it is well worth remembering. Many things we regard as true are often merely due to thought processes without accompanying perceptions. Speculations, guesses, hypotheses, rumours, etc, fall into this category. A person we trust or an authority may have told us an idea and we consider this to be true. But without the right set of perceptions they are just thoughts, ideas or concepts and are not therefore necessarily true. Many problems which exist in society are due to a lack of truthfulness and which can lead to a breakdown in social connections, doubt and fear.

Through the virtue of truthfulness a teacher can recognise this and apply the principle of the *epoché*, what Steiner called "presuppositionlessness" (Steiner 1892, Husserl 1970): we hold concepts, hypotheses, etc, in *temporary* suspension until corroborating perceptions can be acquired. Similarly, if something is merely perceived, the virtue of truthfulness enables the teacher to seek for the appropriate concepts that should go along with the perception. The mere linking of a percept with a concept is not necessarily the result of truthfulness – sometimes people associate the wrong concept with the percept. It is only when the right concept has been found that truthfulness can be attributed.

This virtue can sometimes put teachers in difficult position because they may be expected by society to teach something they themselves cannot establish the truth of. This becomes particularly pertinent in the upper school, say in science, when the knowledge content of what is taught is dependent on specialised knowledge and specialised methodology. So the question here would be how to deal with this in the sense for "striving for truth" rather than "having the truth". Obviously, this is dependent on the teacher's virtue of "truthfulness" as a **striving** rather than a **having**.

Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm for teaching what you teach and who you teach also is significant for Steiner Educators. As a soul / spirit virtue, it is this that provides the **emotional** ground for teaching and learning. Steiner was of the conviction that if a teacher could teach with enthusiasm, then this would enable the pupils to feel enthusiastic about the subject being taught and overcome emotional barriers to learning. A teacher who is bored with teaching and with what they teach erects those barriers and obstructs or prevents learning. Enthusiasm for knowing the world can start a process to overcome civil unrest and provide a ground for mutual interest and mutual tolerance.

Three golden rules

Steiner thought that certain rules are necessary for being a teacher, rules which are essentially virtues that all good teachers need to have or need to acquire. These can be intuitively seen as being fundamental for society. These virtues are, unusually, distinctive for the three main phases of child development:

“These must become the **three golden rules** in the art of education: they must imbue the whole **attitude of teachers** and the whole impulse of their work. The golden rules that must be embraced by their **whole being**, not as a theory, are these:

First, **reverent gratitude** toward the World for the child we contemplate every day;

Second, **gratitude** to the universe and **love** for what we have to do with the child; and

Third, **respect for the child's freedom**, which we must not endanger, since it is this freedom that we must direct our teaching efforts, so that the child may one day stand at our side in freedom in the World.” Steiner, R (1922): The Spiritual Ground of Education, Anthroposophic Press, p. 56/7.

Gratitude

This enables the early years educator, as well as the later years teacher, to genuinely accept the children in their care. Without this, there will always be a gulf between the child and the teacher, sometimes with the latter seeing the former as a mere functionary of their work: “I teach children because I have to for my job”. Steiner sees the teacher’s role as an act of care: you teach because you care for children – it is central therefore to be grateful for the actual children that come to you, not just the “ideal” ones you would like to have. Gratitude creates “being to being” relationships and enables the teacher to be a good example: without the feeling of the teacher’s gratitude towards the children, they may not feel recognised and therefore not perceive you as good example.

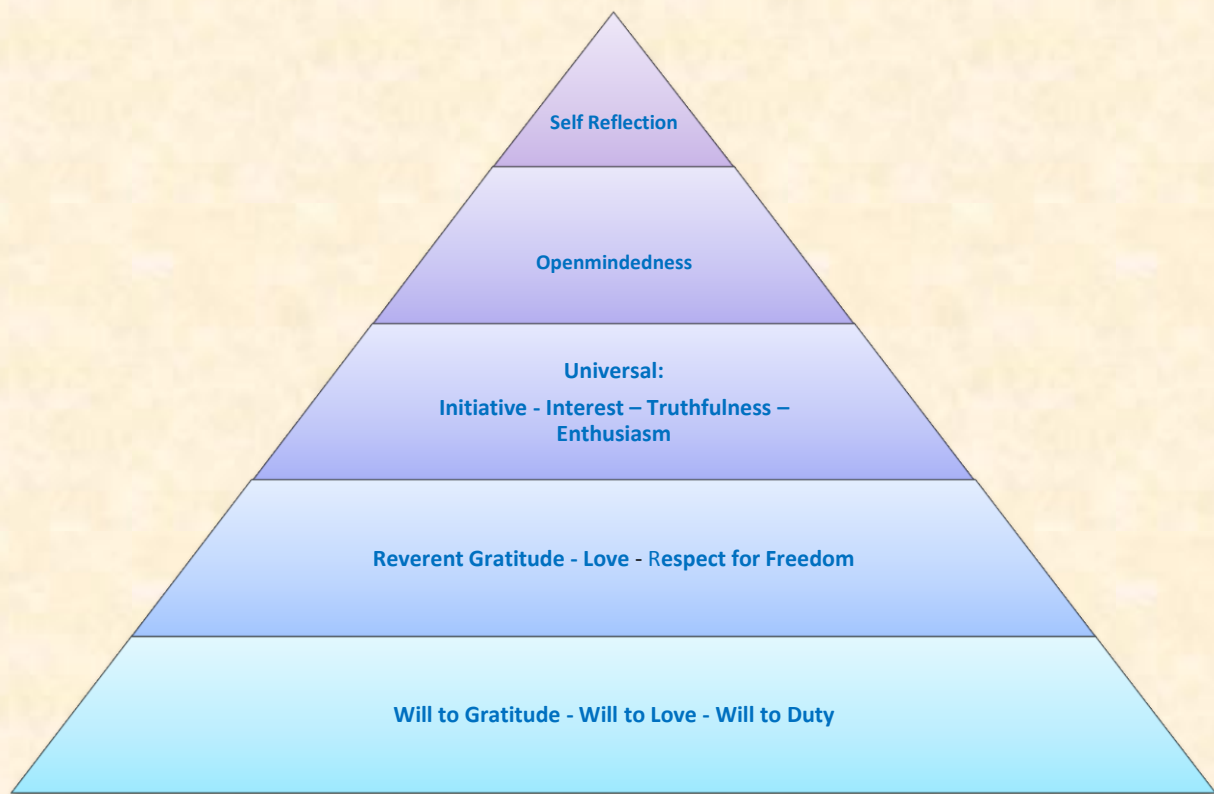
Love,

Moral *educational* love, is, for Steiner, twofold: love of the subject and love of the children. Love is, at least in part, an **emotional** virtue that enables the teacher to really engage with the subject at hand. Whilst Steiner designated this virtue as relevant for the lower school teacher, it is just as valid for the other teacher periods. If a teacher only has an intellectual understanding of their subject there may be an inner feeling barrier to the subject for the teacher and thereby the pupils. If the children have the perception that the teacher does not love or even like what they are teaching, then they will wonder why they should. Similarly, if the teaching does not have moral love for the children, then the latter will feel the gulf between them and have the feeling that this person does not really want to be with them; so the child’s feeling would be: “how could I learn from them?”.

Respect for Freedom

This is especially relevant for the gradually becoming independent adolescent. As all virtues are, respect for freedom is, or can be, an **inner reality** of the teacher; but it is not only a **cognitive** respect but also **emotional**, this can then become expressed as an outer **deed**. In other words, this can manifest in how a teacher teaches: it manifests itself in the creation of learning spaces whereby students can exercise their independent judgement which has a formative influence on the inner life. If a teacher attempts to operate just out of their authority, or the authority of others, this is, at least partially, a denial of the student’s growing independence. “Bad behaviour” may follow as a consequence. When educational **content** is presented as merely based on “authorities”, i.e. even in a more positive sense of the term, such as from the scientific community, it is important to create a framework whereby this content

can be questioned and debated in a free way. In this way, is the teacher's virtue of "respect for freedom" important for the education of the free judgement of the student. Put another way, a Steiner teacher should neither accept nor expect students to merely follow their authority or that of others, it has to be gained. We can represent these teacher values in the following way:



Each of these virtues can become the foundation of a positive civilisation for all human beings no matter their other group memberships.

The Social Significance of the Education – the Future of Civilisation

For Steiner, his proposals are not just about providing a good education for children; they are about the future of all individuals, society and civilisation. It is his view that education is the primary social condition for an evolved civilisation. In the Torquay course he speaks of this:

“It is no fanatical idea of reform that prompts us to speak of a renewal in educational life; we are urged to do so out of our whole feeling and experience of how humankind is *evolving in civilization* and in *cultural* life.”

(Steiner 1924, Kingdom of Childhood, p. 1)(My italics)

Steiner formulated his social ideas in the wake of the catastrophe of the First World War, around the same time as the founding the first Waldorf School. He saw the root of the war and the consequences thereof in the anti-social behaviour of **individuals** as well as the nature of the then contemporary economic **structures**:

“The current anti-social state of affairs is the result of individuals entering society who lack **social sensitivity because of their education**. Socially sensitive individuals can only develop within an educational system which is conducted and administered by other socially sensitive individuals. No progress will be made towards solving the social question if we do not treat the question of education and spirit as an essential part of it. An **anti-social** situation is not merely the result of **economic structures**; it is also caused by the **anti-social behaviour of the individuals who are active in these structures**. It is anti-social to allow youth to be educated by people who themselves have become strangers to reality because the conduct and content of their work has been **dictated to them from without**.”

Steiner, R (1919): *Towards Social Renewal*, Preface 1920, p. 14. (My bold)

The primary origin of this anti-social behaviour he located in the education system of the time. This in turn he considered to have its source in an education dictated to teachers from without. For him, the Waldorf School should provide an impulse in the opposite direction: ***a autonomous teacher who adapts their creativity to the growing child creates a possibility of a free a creative young person.***

For Steiner the “social” consists in three spheres or sectors that interact in distinct ways:

“In the course of the last three to four centuries a social life has been formed: a **state/rights life**, a **spiritual/cultural life**, and an **economic life**. This social life, particularly the education system, “resists”, we might say, the renewal of the social relationships... But what we strive for here is a **transformation** of the present social configuration”. Steiner, R (1919/20): *The Spirit of the Waldorf School*, Anthroposophic Press, p. 9. (My emphasis)

His claim is that society resists change and that education as normally conceived is a part of this resistance. So it was his intent that Waldorf Education should provide a means to bring

about the beginnings of a positive change to the three spheres of society and future civilisation.

One example of this is Steiner's social philosophy. Steiner intended that Waldorf Education should embody social ideals:

“Obviously, the Waldorf School can be successful only if it is completely inspired by the Spirit that aspires towards the **threefold nature of the social organism**”
Steiner, R (1919/20): *The Spirit of the Waldorf School*, Anthroposophic Press (p. 7)
(My emphasis).

This led him to the conviction that the Waldorf School needs to aim towards an education rooted in the three principles of the social, democratic and freedom:

“Adults will have to live in a social organism which, in regard to the economic aspect, will be social; in regard to the government, democratic; and from the spiritual aspect, liberal, free. *The great problem of the future will be that of education.* How will we have to deal with children so that they, as adults, can grow into the *social, democratic, and spiritually* [cultural] free areas of living in the most comprehensive way?” Steiner, R (1919/69): *Education as a Social Problem*, Anthroposophic Press, (p. 12) (My emphasis).

For Steiner though, social education is not just a question of teaching children about social concepts, it is also about the exemplification of the social through the nature of the teachers themselves:

“The second thing that we must develop as we work toward a more **humane form of society is a social attitude of teachers... We must find it so that a new love of humanity may come into the relationship between teacher and pupil**”.
Steiner, R (1919/95): *The Spirit of the Waldorf School*, Anthroposophic Press.

The grounding point for a social attitude is the moral principle of “love of humanity”. For him it is this orientation of the teachers toward the children that would lead ultimately to a social attitude to the World. The social then has its grounds in morality:

“We can bring the social question into proper perspective only through a genuine comprehension of morality” Steiner, R (1922/96): *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy* 2, Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner’s view was the social life consists in at least two different components: an individual’s social abilities, or sensitivities, and social form. These have their source in education, in thinking and learning:

“Therefore it is necessary that we not only reflect upon the transformation of single institutions, but that we really adjust ourselves to a genuine transformation in our **thinking** and **learning**, down to their innermost structure”. Steiner, R (1919): *Education as a Social Problem*, Anthroposophic Press, p. 111 (my emphasis).

The question then is how can one integrate the two components within the three sphere of the social life which he then goes on to describe? The key is to have social values and abilities that coincide with the appropriate social principle of the spheres of the social form: sensitivities or abilities in freedom, equality and “brotherhood” – if these are established as **social sensitivities** then the **social forms** can work; if not the latter will always struggle to succeed if not they may fail outright. For Steiner, it is the task of education to provide the foundation for a social future that is at the same time a civilisation worthy of the name for *all* human beings whatever they are as individuals, social class, race, nationality, ability or gender.

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