

Anthroposophy as a mode of consciousness

Jost Schieren

Department of Educational Science / Alanus-Hochschule

It is a tall order to give an adequate *and* brief statement of what anthroposophy is.¹ On the few occasions when Rudolf Steiner addressed this point directly², his formulations have sounded more like philosophical riddles than immediately comprehensible definitions. It is probably true to say that Rudolf Steiner's whole life's work consists in his having researched and given form to anthroposophy from a wide range of perspectives – philosophical, theosophical, esoteric, artistic and practical. The virtually insurmountable difficulty of demonstrating or explaining anthroposophy arises from the fact that it lies out of the reach of the normal processes of every-day consciousness. Forming an idea of anthroposophy in this sense will always miss the mark. Both critics and apologists who approach anthroposophy in terms of this kind of consciousness – be they ever so scholarly and analytical, or motivated by reverence and intensity of feeling – will merely create a distorted picture. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...* is not a moral injunction, but a methodological necessity if anthroposophy is to be apprehended in any true sense at all.

In his early philosophical works Steiner casts a critical eye on the limitations of representational consciousness. He proceeds by inquiring into the capacities of thinking. Following on from his researches on Goethe he makes the case that ordinary thinking (representation) only mirrors the phenomena of the world, but is not capable of apprehending their ontological content. He portrays the process of representation as the appearing in consciousness of an end product, which knows nothing of its own origins nor of the subtler spiritual qualities of the world of appearances. In his later lectures on “The Foundations of Human Experience” (held in 1919 at the founding of Waldorf education) he says that dead thinking (by which is meant this same process of apprehending finished representations) only yields an (empty) *image* of the world, but does not apprehend its *being*, and left to its own devices only registers the dead aspects of things.³ Steiner is not alone in this opinion. Jean-Paul Sartre sees things in a similar vein. His formulation is almost identical to Rudolf Steiner's: “In keeping with this we can say that the representation harbours a certain nothingness. [...] However vivid, impressive or strong it might be, it bestows on the object a quality of non-being.”⁴ Sartre also broaches the possibility of a different consciousness that is directly related to being: “If it were possible to envisage a kind of consciousness that does not operate by representation, then it would need to be conceived as embroiled in *being* with insoluble bonds and without any possibility of apprehending anything other than active being.”⁵ Sartre describes this form of consciousness as one that is compulsive and

1. First published in the journal “Anthroposophie”, Christmas 2022. Very few emendation have been made. Translation by Norman Skillen (NS).

2. “Anthroposophy is a path of knowledge which seeks to lead the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.” In Rudolf Steiner: Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts (GA 26), Dornach 2013, p.14, para. 1.

3. Cf. Rudolf Steiner: The Foundations of Human Experience (GA 293), Lecture 3: “When we consider nature with the thinking, representational aspect or our mind, then we can really only apprehend in nature that which is perpetually dying” (Translation by NS, p. 56 german edition). And: “Man confronts nature with his intellectual faculties and through their means he grasps all that is dead in Nature, and in this way derives laws concerning what is dead.” (Translation by NS p. 58 german edition)

4. Jean-Paul Sartre: The Imaginary. Phenomenological Psychology of Imagination. Translation by NS. German edition: Das Imaginäre. Phänomenologische Psychologie der Einbildungskraft. Hamburg 1980. P. 57

5. Ibid. p. 291

restricts freedom. This is how Steiner sees it too. For him the ontologically emancipated representational mentality of the modern human being forms the basis for the development of self-conscious freedom, albeit at the price of the loss of world, being and spirituality. Steiner does not advocate that we should renege on this attainment of freedom. This, however, is exactly what is assumed by critics of anthroposophy and Waldorf education when – like Heiner Ullrich – they claim that they represent a pre-modern worldview and a regression to myth and mysticism.⁶ That is not what Steiner is about. Consequently he repeatedly stressed the (methodological) value of natural science as the appropriate mental attitude for the present time, while seeking to establish anthroposophy as a monistic experience of being and a modern path of spirituality.

In this connection he takes his lead from Goethe. In the course of his *Italian Journey* Goethe was intensely preoccupied with the question of the archetypal plant. His concern was with overcoming the limits of our normal cognitive capacities, which are incapable of penetrating into the plant world's sphere of life. His approach to knowledge was directed largely towards an intensification of our powers of observation and perception in relation to the sensory world of phenomena. On this he said: "...that through perceptual attention to the ongoing creativity of nature we should render ourselves worthy of mental participation in her productions."⁷ By means of such attentive perception Goethe sought to enter into a monistic, participatory, process-oriented relationship to the concrete being of the living world.

Steiner follows on from here, but by turning his gaze inwards. His concern is to call forth awareness of thinking as an active process. In terms of Rudolf Steiner's introspective approach, Goethe's *perceptual judgement* becomes *inner observation*. Whereas Goethe's phenomenological method addresses the world of phenomena, Steiner develops – especially in "The Philosophy of Freedom" – a phenomenology of mind. The position he thus sets forth is that normal thinking is aware only of its content, but not of the genesis of the same; in other words, it is not aware of the activity within thinking which generates its content.⁸ If we could succeed in observing this activity *in actu*, this would be the *most important* observational act we could perform as human beings. This would mean consciously performing an act which is entirely self-motivated and self-generated. It would also mean gaining experience of an independent sphere of mind, of dynamic concepts and ideas with which the act of thinking enters into relationships both of exchange and of union. While Goethe's *perceptual judgement* leads to an inner world within the outer world, Steiner's *inner observation* opens up the (spiritual) outer world of the inner world (of mind). Rudolf Steiner designated this as "intuition": "Intuition is the conscious experience – in pure spirit – of a purely spiritual content."⁹ It is an inner activity, the generative performance of an active subject, which is at the same time an experience of encounter with an objective spiritual reality.¹⁰ On this basis we can say: An earlier (pre-Enlightenment) form of spirituality receives spiritual experiences as revelations without any component of active thinking on the part of the subject. Many accounts of spiritual training as conducted in past times testify that it was a matter of extinguishing the rational voice of the subject. By contrast, a modern form of spirituality, such as that Rudolf Steiner was seeking to establish as anthroposophy, assumes the involvement of self-activated thinking. This criterion of modern spirituality – that thinking take the form of a self-activated event – can lead to such spiritual experience being interpreted as mere auto-suggestion. For thinking not to take this form, however, would mean a regression into a premodern mentality, predisposed only to receive, but not produce its contents.¹¹

6. Cf Heiner Ullrich: Rudolf Steiner. Leben und Lehre. München 2011: "Here the pre-modern dogmatic-metaphysical speculation of neo-Platonism merges with the conscious myth-making of the theosophical world-conception." (p. 109f). And, in similar vein: Heiner Ullrich: Waldorfpädagogik. Eine kritische Einführung. Basel 2015, p. 143f.

7. Johan Wolfgang von Goethe: Goethes Werke, Hamburg edition. Ed. Erich Trunz. Anschauende Urteilskraft. Vol. 13, p. 30f.

8. Cf. Rudolf Steiner: The Philosophy of Freedom. Ch. 3

9. Ibid. Ch. 9

10. A constructivist position in modern philosophy would be to regard thinking as a purely subjective event which can have no claim on objectivity. An exception here is the position of Markus Gabriel and other advocates of so-called "new realism". Cf. Markus Gabriel (ed.): Neuer Realismus. Berlin 2014.

11. This kind of misunderstanding is found in Frank Linde's essay on Christian Clements: "Imagination und Halluzination. Christian Clements Bild der Geistesforschung Rudolf Steiners" in "Die Drei", 11, 2015. Linde argues there that Clement has a purely subjective concept of spirituality. Christoph Hueck, in his essay: "Die geistige Welt als 'Projektion'? Ein Beitrag zur Diskussion um die SKA" in "Anthroposophie" (278, Christmas 2016, p. 361) has corrected this view. He writes: "Rather Clement has characterised the epistemological and, at the same time, mystical core of anthroposophy in a concentrated ... form: the human mind becoming aware of the spiritual foundations of its being in the act of thinking."

Naïve metaphysical realism

In his early philosophical works Steiner argued against *naïve realism*, which purports that there is an objective reality existing independently of any cognizing subject. This applies in equal measure to the spiritual reality revealed by anthroposophy. Naïve *metaphysical* realism in the form of a pseudo-religious, pious belief in angels, in Christ and in elementary beings is not compatible with the modern, post-Enlightenment form of spirituality represented by anthroposophy.¹² In a modern sense spiritual experience is always the act of an individual. This is the only way the freedom and autonomy accruing from the Enlightenment can be upheld, and the only way the spiritual world can be experienced by a modern mind. Thinking as an act initiated and performed by a subject and, at the same time, as an interaction with objective, self-justifying correlatives (concepts and ideas), is the hallmark of the modern individual's experience of freedom.

The question arises as to what this self-activating aspect of thinking consists in when its contents are of a spiritual nature. Essentially it is an experience of powerful presence, which is existentially transformative. Cézanne, in making his painting of the "Montagne St. Victoire", had such an experience, and called it "réalisation".¹³ It is the (mystical and at the same time post-Enlightenment-tinged) experience of the object brought forth by the subject simultaneously bringing forth the subject in a new form. Thus in the super-sensible realm the consummated act of thinking initiated by the "I" is more closely related to the form and presence than to the content side of things.

Rudolf Steiner's "The Riddles of the Soul"

The ideal of the self-actualisation of thinking as an intentional act is something that already preoccupied the philosophers of *German idealism*, especially Fichte and Schelling. To refer to it they used the concept of *contemplative intellect*. In the wake of his study of Fichte, Novalis also viewed the experience of thinking as a form of self-actualisation. He called it *magical idealism*, whereby *magic* means that the subject, over and above the idealistically conceived activity of thinking, experiences the spiritual-magical presence of the objectively ideal. Novalis writes: "Inwards travels the mysterious path. Eternity with its worlds, the past and future, is within us or nowhere. The outer world is the world of shadows, it casts its shadows into the realm of light. Admittedly now we seem to be in inner darkness, desolate, formless, but how utterly different we will feel, when this body of shadows has been rolled away and the gloom is gone. Our joys will be greater than ever before, for our spirit will have been released."¹⁴ Novalis thus sees the world as experienced by normal consciousness as the world of shadows.

In his book "The Riddles of the Soul" (1917) Rudolf Steiner describes it in similar terms. It is noteworthy that in this book, more than twenty years after the first publication of "The Philosophy of Freedom" (1894), he gives renewed expression to the impulse of an epistemologically founded spirituality, then going on to reinforce the position in the new enlarged edition of "The Philosophy of Freedom" (1918). In "The Riddles of the Soul" he once more turns his attention especially to the theme of representations, their formation and limitations.¹⁵ He explains that representations of the world of things, which form the substance of every-day waking consciousness, are merely *benumbed by-products* of a living, conceptual activity which, in contrast to conscious representations, must be regarded as pre-conscious. He writes: "Representations strictly as such – considered as what they themselves originally are – do indeed form part of the life of the soul; but they cannot become conscious there as long as the soul does not consciously use its spiritual organs. So long as they retain their original vitality they remain unconscious. The soul lives by means of them, but it can know nothing of them. They have to suppress (herabdämpfen) their own life in order to become conscious experiences of normal consciousness. This suppression is effected by every sense perception.

12. Let it be noted that this criticism does not apply to any form of genuine religiosity.

13. Cf. Michael Doran (ed.): Gespräche mit Cézanne. Zürich 1982

14. Novalis: Blütenstaub. In: Novalis: Die Christenheit oder Europa und andere philosophische Schriften. Köln 1996, p. 103

15. Johannes Kiersch has performed the much appreciated task of repeatedly pointing out the importance of Rudolf Steiner's book "Von Seelenrätseln" ("The Riddles of the Soul"), especially in "Vom Land aufs Meer. Steiners Esoterik in verändertem Umfeld", Stuttgart 2008.

Consequently, when the mind receives a sense impression, there is a benumbing (*Herablähmung*) of the life of the representation, and it is this benumbed representation which the psyche experiences as the medium of a cognition of outer reality. All the representations and ideas that are related by the mind to an outer sense reality are inner spiritual experiences, whose life has been suppressed.¹⁶ This is what Rudolf Steiner means when he writes that thinking only apprehends dead content.¹⁷ The (initially unconscious) thought activity kindled by sense experience calls up living concepts and ideas in the mind, the living, spiritual reality of which is *suppressed* and *benumbed* the moment they come in contact with sensory experience, and only then do they become conscious representations of the phenomenal world. Steiner then points out that this mirroring function of the representation, which provides the normal content of consciousness, is only a part of the latter's overall nature. "The representations and ideas acquired through sensory experience can be retained in the mind with the effect that what is experienced in them is a reproduction of sensory reality. And they can also be experienced in another way: the energy they evince in the psyche by virtue of what they are, quite apart from the fact that they reproduce phenomena, can be allowed to act itself out."¹⁸ Here, as in chapter 3 of "The Philosophy of Freedom", Steiner addresses the otherwise un- or pre-consciously active and energetic side of thinking (representation). Inner observation in this sense leads to apprehension of the coming into being of representations. Thinking here becomes aware of its own spiritually real origin. In this Steiner identifies the full actuality of the representation: "The corresponding further development proper to a representation is to function as a force in the development of the psyche."¹⁹ Steiner here employs the comparison of a seed, which, on the one hand, can be used as food and, on the other, as a source for the development of a new plant: "In fact, just as its application as nutriment is something quite external to the seed itself, so is cognitive reproduction irrelevant for representation. The truth is that what the psyche does lay hold of in its representations is its own developing existence. Only through its own activity does it come about that the representations turn into media for the cognition of some reality."²⁰ This latter activity usually remains unconscious and can only be raised into consciousness through strenuous inner training. Indeed, becoming conscious of the process whereby the objective representation is formed by a preconscious activity of thinking which is its spiritual origin, is the main trajectory of the anthroposophical path of inner training. Only when representations *come alive* in this way (here Steiner speaks also of living concepts) can the spiritual basis of the world of appearances begin to shine forth. – Just as intuition for Rudolf Steiner is cognitive union with a spiritually dynamic thought content, so with living concepts and representations experience arises of the mind's participation in the world of sensory phenomena, which Goethe was already familiar with. As a meditation formula, this has been expressed as follows: "I feel myself to be one in thought with the stream of cosmic events."²¹

The problem of nominalist esotericism

Initially Rudolf Steiner did not want his lectures to be recorded and distributed. They were given for the purposes of spiritual training and not intended to be received simply for the sake of their content alone. He had no way of regulating or controlling this, however, so he entrusted their stenographic recording to persons authorised by him, in order to avoid the occurrence of serious mistakes. These lectures were then printed, mostly without having been checked by him. He insisted that all lectures be preceded by a "caveat". Thus it says in the founding statutes of the General Anthroposophical Society that the lecture cycles are "manuscripts printed for the members of the School of Spiritual Science, Goetheanum, class ..."²² "No one is considered capable of making a competent judgement of these contents, who has not attained an

16. Rudolf Steiner: *Von Seelenrätseln*. (GA 21), Dornach 1983, p. 26. Translated as "The Case for Anthroposophy" by Owen Barfield.

17. Cf. footnote 2

18. Rudolf Steiner; *op. cit.* p. 23

19. *Ibid.* p. 24

20. *Ibid.* p. 25

21. Rudolf Steiner: *Die Schwelle der geistigen Welt*. (GA 17), Dornach 2009, p. 12

22. Rudolf Steiner: *Die Weihnachtstagung zur Begründung der Allgemeinen Anthroposophischen Gesellschaft*. (GA 260, Dornach 1994, p. 52.

appropriate level of pre-knowledge approved by the School.”²³ Accordingly, the lectures serve as material for the meditative training of the members of the School. The main thing is not the content, which is likely to have been expressed in normal representational terms, but the injunction implicit in it to transcend normal representational consciousness. In what is known as the Bologna Lecture, given on 8th April, 1911, as part of the 4th International Philosophical Congress, Steiner describes a possible approach to the use of content generated by spiritual research: “The spiritual researcher, in the sense here intended, seeks for mental contents which are similar to the concepts and ideas of ordinary life or of scientific research; but he does not consider their cognitional value in relation to an objective entity, but lets them exist in his mind as operative forces. He plants them as spiritual seed, so to speak, in the soil of the mind’s life, and awaits in complete serenity of spirit their effect upon this life of the mind.”²⁴ Here also he is speaking of the *energetic* side of the process of representation, which does not figure in the course of normal apprehension. Conversely the fact remains that the purely representational reception of the content of spiritual research may well lead to misunderstandings. He comments (also in the Bologna Lecture): “Here, however, the reason is also to be found why the presentations of the spiritual researcher may so easily be misunderstood. That is, the manner in which he speaks is more important than what he says. In the *how* is reflected his super-sensible experience.”²⁵

The kind of misunderstanding formulated here is very serious. If the self-actualising activity of conscious thinking at work in the training of inner observation is left out of account in the apprehension of anthroposophical content, then anthroposophy will be misunderstood. This kind of misunderstanding, however, is currently widespread among both critics of anthroposophy and its defenders. Due to the ready availability of the complete works of Rudolf Steiner matters of a profoundly esoteric nature are being bandied about in purely nominalistic fashion. On this basis, according to which group you belong to, either pejorative or affirmative judgements are being made. Entrenched partiality, behind both critics and apologists, goes hand in hand with such misunderstanding. In this way the spirituality of anthroposophy is stifled. The apprehension of anthroposophy requires a form of consciousness adequate to the task. It’s like playing the violin. It can only be played if the requisite skill is present. It is then also possible for those who are only listening to apprehend – by adopting the right inner attitude – the musical quality of the playing, and thus to experience a certain musical refinement. This is largely what makes the communicating of anthroposophical contents worthwhile. But normal representational consciousness behaves like a listener who reacts to the virtuosity of the violin music by merely taking delight in the violinist’s facial expressions, or turning away. The mere representation does not meet the spirituality of anthroposophy, no matter how nominally accurate the quotations.

In such discourse it is in principle less dangerous for normal representational consciousness to rely upon sensory experience than to concern itself with passages from spiritual-scientific texts. At least sensory phenomena have been taken from personal experience. If normal consciousness looks to spiritual sources for its material, however, then it vacates the realm of personal experience and ends up embracing a given body of teaching, the public face of which looks like dogmatic doctrine. It’s a kind of anthroposophical Tik-Tok. This internet platform gives people the chance to imitate pop-musicians by showing themselves mouthing the words and doing their own dance moves. In a similar fashion, much secondary anthroposophical literature imitates the modes of expression of Rudolf Steiner – without the corresponding inner activity – and puts forth conclusions and judgements from them in a spirit of partiality. What is esoteric about anthroposophy cannot be had from printed texts. It is not compatible with the ordinary representation. The esoteric is a result of individual meditative effort and can only be experienced as thinking in its activational form. It is always in process and is not an instance of knowledge which has been finally arrived at. It is thus essentially ineffable. It cannot simply be used for the purposes of argument, conclusion, judgement or as an article of knowledge. That would be an error in the mode of naïve realism. The esoteric is the living spiritual form of anthroposophy, which can only be experienced in a meditatively activated mind. So-called esoteric utterances cannot and therefore should not be taken simply as textual material (and distributed as such).

23. Ibid.

24. Rudolf Steiner: Philosophie und Anthroposophie (GA 35), Dornach, p. 115. Translation used here by Olin D. Wannamaker.

25. Ibid. p. 128

They exist, rather, for the purposes of inner training. Their content has the ability to bring about a widening of perspective and vision, which reaches beyond the confines of normal representational consciousness. They can, as *organs of contemplation*²⁶ in Goethe's sense, sensitise observation and in so doing gradually open up deeper levels of experience. They can also, for instance in bio-dynamic agriculture, attain practical significance as a spiritually sensitive relationship to nature, albeit here also mental attitude is decisive. A more profound value of Rudolf Steiner's brand of esotericism lies in the way it acts upon the minds of those willing to open themselves up to it. Through its delicate influence they experience a gradual and fundamental transformation of their thinking, feeling and will.

The concept of *nominalist esotericism* as employed here is actually an *oxymoron*, as in the phrases "silent cry", "cold heat" or "bright darkness". The esoteric is the expression of a fulfilled, authentic spirituality that integrates both form and content. It evaporates in the nominalism of representational consciousness, and becomes mere presumption.

Postscript

The approach to anthroposophy presented here has been deeply influenced by early encounters with Herbert Wizenmann, both through his works and in person. There is scarcely anyone from among the students of Rudolf Steiner who embodied and managed to formulate an epistemology of spiritual dimensions, or rather an epistemologically based spirituality, quite as he did. I am firmly convinced that the approach to anthroposophy that he and certain other like-minded individuals developed, namely that of deriving it entirely through epistemological method, has been crucial to its continuing existence and vitality, as well as its overall influence upon society at large. In my opinion anthroposophy has been a source of impulses towards human betterment, which are both necessary and worthwhile; among them are:

- respect for the indwelling spiritual individuality of every human being,
- associated with this, a view of the human being that guarantees and preserves the freedom of everyone as a creative being,
- the promotion of a form of community development that is non-hierarchical and not based purely on self-interest or personal inclination,
- ecological awareness – a caring concern for the natural environment
- the opening up of a perspective that gives meaning to life in a way that is both universal and spiritual

It is important that impulses like these, which assuredly exist – with varying emphasis – within the context of other strains of humanism, and which within anthroposophy receive a comprehensive foundational background, become as widespread as possible. Besides the enthusiasm and practical engagement that is essential if anthroposophy is to play an effective part in the cause of civil society, I feel that a scientific approach and research-based mode of presentation is what will fit the bill and carry most weight.

In my capacity as professor of education with special emphasis on Waldorf education at the Alanus University in Alfter, I have attempted in a wide range of publications to characterise and bring into balance the relationship between anthroposophy and Waldorf education in the sense presented here.²⁷ In methodological terms in this connection I have spoken of "doing without anthroposophy" and of "Waldorf education

26. Cf. Goethe: "An idea about the objects of experience is, as it were, an organ I make use of to apprehend them, to make them my own." Letter to Sömmering, 28. August 1796. In: Goethe Briefe und Briefe an Goethe. Ausgabe in 6 Bänden (Edition in 6 Volumes). Ed. Karl Robert von Mandelkow. Vol 2. München 1988, p. 237

27. Vgl. Jost Schieren: Anthroposophie und Waldorfpädagogik – ein Spannungsfeld. In: Jost Schieren (Hg.): Handbuch Waldorfpädagogik und Erziehungswissenschaft. Standortbestimmung und Entwicklungsperspektiven. Weinheim Basel 2016; ders.: Der Weltanschauungsvorwurf. Vom Einfluss der Anthroposophie auf die Waldorfpädagogik – Eine Frage der Form und des Maßes. Rezension zu: Heiner Ullrich: Waldorfpädagogik. Eine kritische Einführung. In: www.rosejournal.com, Vol 6, No 1 (2015); <https://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/view/257/256>, abgerufen am 1.11.2022; ders.: Die Wissenschaftlichkeit der Anthroposophie. In: www.rosejournal.com, Vol 2, No 2 (2011); <https://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/view/78/105>, abgerufen am 1.11.2022; ders.: Anthroposophie in der Kritik. In „Anthroposophie“ 299, Ostern 2022, S. 1.

without esotericism". In the ensuing critical reactions, these formulations were not taken methodologically as necessary, epistemologically cautionary steps, roughly corresponding to Husserl's concept of "epoché" (in other words a refraining from being judgmental or, as in this case, of following a particular worldview), but as a betrayal of anthroposophy and a pandering to the scientific mainstream.²⁸ That is not what was intended. From the reactions, however, it is clear to me that I need to explain myself better.

As already pointed out, in forming a judgment in respect of anthroposophy, or, in other words, of approaching it in a way that reduces the representation to its source²⁹, the important thing is to be clear in one's mind about the finished representational form in which anthroposophical contents are normally received and distributed and to free oneself from this, so that doctrine and dogma do not take centre stage. To see in this a cosying up to scientific reductionism or a merely selective understanding of anthroposophy³⁰ and thus to feel one must do something to combat it is actually a misunderstanding of phenomenological method. It is like setting up a scarecrow only to scare and warn oneself about it.

On one occasion Rudolf Steiner said the following: "Phenomenology – that is the ideal of the scientific endeavour anthroposophy represents."³¹ It is central to phenomenological method to become aware of one's own cognitive predilections, so that the object under consideration is not perceived in a subjectively distorted manner. Insofar as we are dealing only with cognitive objects and questions, the consequences might be thought to be comparatively harmless, i.e. *only* misconceptions. But these can also be serious. When anthroposophy becomes involved in real-life situations (as, for instance, in Waldorf education), a careful manner of proceeding, involving awareness of one's habits of thought and the ability to form sound judgments, or even withhold them, is of paramount importance. Every critical look, every utterance of a dogmatic judgment and every forming of an opinion within an educational context has direct inter-personal consequences, which may on occasion cause serious biographical damage. For this reason I have only the highest respect for the fact that Rudolf Steiner, in laying the foundations of Waldorf education, reined in – in a truly wonderful way – the anthroposophical and esoteric aspects of what he had to say. The learners were the central focus. For teachers the main purpose of anthroposophy is to enable them to deliver education of a high standard. It should not act as a worldview that sets the tone of the educational process. Where this happens it can cause damage to the children in its care; and anthroposophy itself incurs damage in this way, for it is being used in a way counter to its own spirit. In this connection I have repeatedly been accused of not distancing myself sufficiently from anthroposophy's critics and opponents. With opponents who refuse to recognise the right of anthroposophy and anthroposophical initiatives to exist and who try to hinder its development and undermine the foundations of its existence there is no point in entering into discussion. With critics the situation is different. Even though I do not share all of their criticisms and argue the issues they raise, I do value a number of critics, because they put their finger upon justified sore points. Their main complaint is about anthroposophy as a mythico-religious, pre-scientific worldview. Although in my opinion this in no way applies to Rudolf Steiner, it is an evaluation that does hit the mark with some anthroposophical publications, journals and organisations. I appreciate critics pointing these things out, thus drawing them to my attention. This then inspires me to work even harder towards arriving at a scientifically valid form of anthroposophy.

28. Vgl. die Zuschriften von Christian Giersch, Friedrich Schmidt-Hieber, Arnim Husemann in „Anthroposophie“ 300, Johanni 2022, S. 182, und die weitere Zuschrift von Klaus Müller in „Anthroposophie“ 301, Michaeli 2022, S. 283.

29. Husserl speaks of "eidetic reduction".

30. Vgl. Mathias Maurer: Steiner selektiv. In: Anthroposophie weltweit, 31.5. 2022: <https://anthroposophie.org/de/nachrichten/rudolf-steiner-selektiv>, abgerufen am 1.11.2022.

31. Rudolf Steiner: Fachwissenschaften und Anthroposophie. (GA73a), Dornach 2005, S. 318. Further on come the words: "What spiritual science is trying to do, therefore, is nothing other than phenomenology." (Ibid., S. 418.).