
Theoretical Research on Waldorf/Steiner Education – a Review

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Introduction

There have been several reviews on empirical research on Waldorf/Steiner (henceforth Waldorf) education (Böhle & Peters 2010, 2011; Gidley 2010; Peters 2020). But, thus far, there seems to be no comparative review of theoretical research. Given the massive growth in research on Waldorf education over the past two decades it seems timely to attempt a first look at this literature.

The aim of this review is mainly to provide an initial survey of the larger field of research. The hope is to assist future researchers in gaining a quick understanding of the various works relevant to their research. As such I have cast a comparatively wide net and preferred to err on the side of including publications that on second glance prove not to be sufficiently academic. If this review is to be taken as a thorough look at the state of theoretical research on Waldorf education this needs to be borne in mind and my guess is that a more restrictive look at what to include would reduce the number of publications somewhat. Some books would be deemed not academic enough. A journal like *Humanising language teaching* might be deemed not stringent enough given that it is not strictly speaking peer-reviewed. I have included these because the field covered is still limited enough that anyone doing research in for example Waldorf foreign language teaching cannot afford to simply ignore *Humanising language teaching*. The articles there might be judged lacking upon closer review but this is something I must leave to those knowledgeable in the language teaching didactics.

The distinction made here between empirical and theoretical research is not a simple one given that for example comparative literature studies could be considered part of either. An example of this is the study by Jelinek and Sun (2003) where a comparative evaluation of texts used as a basis for teaching natural science in Waldorf schools was made. One reason to make the distinction at all is the existence of earlier reviews claiming to be focused on empirical research (Böhle & Peters 2010, 2011; Peters 2020). I have, roughly speaking, considered those scholarly works that have a philosophical, theoretical or critical-comparative approach to be relevant for this review. Philosophical literature considers the conceptual foundations of Waldorf education. Theoretical literature can be concerned with various principles and models regarding pedagogy, didactics and the frameworks as well as structures that schools are part of. Critical-comparative studies are concerned with comparing and contextualizing Waldorf education in relation to other educational traditions or with a more critical and evaluative perspective on its conceptual foundations.

What counts as research?

This review is based on a comparatively conventional understanding of the concept “research” where it is taken to mean work done at accredited universities or colleges on a doctoral level or beyond (and excluding, for practical purposes papers presented at conferences). Basically, this means that most relevant texts are either doctoral dissertations or peer reviewed articles.

What counts as a scientific publisher is also a bit complicated. A narrow definition would be such book publications that have passed through a peer-review process by other scholars at the publisher (something that is done at eg. Springer but not with everything published as a scholarly work). A more inclusive definition defines scientific literature as that literature which is commonly used in academic courses.

This delineation is of course somewhat arbitrary and there are some exceptions (see further below). The present review is located somewhere in the middle between the narrow and inclusive views.

It also doesn't mean that other publications such as the extensive catalogue from Verlag Freies Geistesleben lacks academic standards, on the contrary, there are theoretical works published here that more or less measure up to these (eg. Fucke 1996) but to do any kind of systematic survey would require going through these book by book. Other titles are solid but without any critical-academic perspectives, for example Martin's (1999 English) standard publication on the craft-curriculum in Waldorf education. Much can only be considered dated and/or incorrect.

The exception that I have made concerns some of the more recent Waldorf educational literature, especially in the field of didactics, where I have included titles without systematically having been able to check the degree to which they are contextualized in a broader field of research. These publications are all from the Pädagogische Forschungsstelle in Kassel and the Pädagogische Forschungsstelle in Stuttgart. The titles that I have looked closer at have, for the most part, been relevant and I have excluded those that were clearly not.

Method

I have limited this review to works published after 1990 (a list of earlier publications can be found at: <https://waldorfanswers.org/Studies.htm>). The systematic search for theoretical research was begun by doing a complete review of the published volumes of the online journal *Research on Steiner Education* (RoSE). This began with the most recent and then worked backwards through previous issues. Relevant articles were selected and included in the review and their reference-lists were also reviewed in order to find further publications.

I have not included articles on philosophy where no direct discussions about Waldorf education are included such as for example Hennigfelds (2018) article on phenomenology. Other article themes that lack an explicit connection to Waldorf education have also been excluded such as Soetebeer's (2016) on Goethe's understanding of the concept of “Self-Bildung” (German: Selbstbildung) or Ziegler's (2016) on evolution. This doesn't mean that they lack any relevance for Waldorf education only that they do not, in themselves, constitute research in the field. RoSE also has a section called “Forum” where some relevant texts have been published but since these haven't passed through a peer-review process they are not part of this review even though they are often of high academic quality.

Known books were also included at an early stage and systematic searches were conducted in some online book-sellers such as amazon. It is important to note that some books consisting of chapters written by different authors contain chapters that were previously articles, for example Kiersch in Demisch et al. (2014) which is based on, or identical to, Kiersch (2010b).

After the systematic review of RoSE, a systematic database search using the terms Steiner and Waldorf was made (in Eric and Google scholar). This proved to be less efficient than hoped and several publications turned up later in the process through more random searches.

Since the number of references is large, I have separated them into three groups. 1. studies in Swedish and Norwegian, 2. studies in English and 3. studies in German. hopefully this simplifies orientation somewhat although I am aware that for authors who have published in both English and German it is not immediately transparent which reference list to consult.

Categorizing the research

Sorting the various publications into meaningful categories was part of the process and crystallized comparatively early in the following (which is also the order in which they are presented):

- Introductions to Waldorf education
- Broad presentations of Waldorf educational theory
- Educational philosophy
- Pedagogical anthropology and developmental psychology
- General didactics
- Subject didactics
- Evaluating and critical studies
- Preschool or early childhood education studies
- Other/odd studies

Of course, the sorting was far from simple and self-evident, especially given that I have not looked closely at every single publication. There are bound to be mistakes in the following or at least categorizations that appear to some readers as arbitrary. Future versions of this review or reviews by others will hopefully remedy this.

Introductions to Waldorf education

Today there are several books introducing Waldorf education and published with established publishers. They are Dahlin (2018), Hansen-Schaberg & Schonig (2006), Rawson (2021), Ullrich (2015), Frielingsdorf (2012a), Lippert 2001, Prange (2000, first edition 1985) and Leber (1992). These are authored by both “insiders” and “outsiders” without this overlapping in any strong way with them being apologetic or critical. However, it is clear that the subject is not easy to discuss in a neutral fashion and judgments tend to proceed from the author’s valuation of anthroposophy. A review of different standpoints taken throughout the years is given in a collection edited by Frielingsdorf (2012b).

Waldorf education is also discussed briefly, as a chapter among others, in several books that provide overviews or surveys from various pedagogical perspectives. Rawson (2022a), Nielsen (2001) and Marshak (1997) write about Waldorf education as part of holistic education. Brouillette (2023) gives an introduction in a handbook on educational thinkers. Stehlik (2008a) writes about Waldorf education in an overview of pedagogies of imagination (also in article form, Stehlik 2006). Ashley (2009) gives an introduction in a book about alternative pedagogies for the 21st century and Mills & McCluskey (2018) also have a chapter in their book on alternative education.

Barz (2018) and Böhm (2012) have written overviews on reform pedagogy with chapters on Waldorf education and on Waldorf education in comparison to Montessori education. Skiera (2010) and Müller (1999) also consider Waldorf education in the context of reform pedagogy but from a more critical angle.

Hellmich & Teigeler (2007) have written an introduction to Montessori-, Freinet-, and Waldorf education and Aljabreen (2020) has compared Montessori-, Waldorf-, and Reggio Emilia's views on early childhood education. Bauer & Schieren (2015) have edited a volume on the views of the human being in various pedagogies and pedagogical thinkers and Ensign (1996) has compared Steiner and Dewey. Other introductions with chapters on Waldorf education are Gabriel (2014), Gabriel & Schneider (1996) and Kiersch (2011).

Finally, there are a group of studies that provide introductions in the shape of articles in journals: Easton (1997), Koca (2022), Rahmani (2022), Lange de Souza (2012), Stehlik (2006), and Ullrich (1994) uses a significant amount of space in an introduction to Rudolf Steiner for a discussion of Waldorf education.

Broad presentations of Waldorf educational theory

Schieren (2016) has edited what must be considered the standard book on Waldorf education at the present. It is a handbook that covers everything from epistemological issues, developmental psychology and didactics to the status of Waldorf education within reform pedagogy. An English translation has recently (2023) been published and contains most but not all the chapters from the German original. A similar but briefer overview is from Paschen (2010). In this context one might also include publications that have introduced a discussion between Waldorf education and academic research. Scheuerl (1993) provides an introduction to the issue as it emerged 30 years ago. Another early publication was Bohnsack & Kranich (1990).

Schieren (English 2012a, German 2012b) has discussed the concept of learning in Waldorf education and (2008) edited a volume about quality in teaching and how it is understood (in part a theoretical work and part an empirical one). Hutter (2012) and Buchka (2011) have theorized Waldorf education as an art and Götte et al. (2019) have edited a book on the artistic in Waldorf education. Krautz & Schieren (2013) have edited a volume about the importance of relationships and personality for pedagogy. Wiehl (2019, 2020) and Wiehl & Steinwachs (2022) have edited a series about, respectively, Waldorf education generally, early childhood pedagogy (pre-school and the first school years) and adolescent education (secondary and upper secondary school). Siegler, Sommer & Zech (2018) have edited a handbook on Waldorf education in secondary and upper secondary school.

Stoltz & Wiehl (2020) are editors of a book, that partly in English and partly in German discusses themes of spirituality, creativity, and development in Waldorf pedagogy (some of the chapters are possibly empirical studies and the book is listed in the English section of the references). In particular, the section on development is somewhat sprawling with several chapters on sexual education next to, for example, one about inclusion in early childhood pedagogy. A similar "sprawlingness" is exhibited in Greubel & Schieren (2019) who have edited a volume about children's development with chapters ranging from early childhood to adolescence.

Demisch et al. (2014) have edited a book about reading Steiner's lectures on Waldorf education today and finally Uhrmacher (2004) has written a chapter on Steiner's ideas concerning the educational environment.

Pedagogical philosophy

Dahlin (2013a, 2009) has discussed Steiner from an educational point of view in relation to Heidegger and Bergson & Deleuze respectively and also (English 2013b, German 2013c) in relation to Romantic philosophies of childhood. Lawton (2022) has compared some of Freire's and Steiner's pedagogical and philosophical foundational concepts and Lambert (2015) has discussed Steiner's ideas and their relevance to Freire's pedagogy. Holm (2021) has discussed the contribution of art in differentiating our experience of reality based in Wittgenstein. Øystein Nome (2021) has considered the critical potential of Waldorf education in the light of Hanna Arendt's philosophy. Mansikka (2007) has done a study on the history of ideas in which Waldorf education is embedded.

Weiss (2015) has discussed the pedagogical theory of recognition (German: Anerkennungstheorie) as it has been developed from the philosophies of Fichte and Hegel in relation to Waldorf education and

(2014) about trust as a core educational concept. Wagemann (English 2015a, German 2015b) has discussed shared intentionality from a consciousness-phenomenological perspective and its implications for Waldorf education. von Wright (2014) has written about subjectivity and intersubjectivity in teaching and Lutzker (2014) about attunement as an educational concept. Schieren (2008b) is editor of a volume on rationality and intuition from philosophical and pedagogical perspectives. Kiersch (2014) has opened a discussion on potential intersections between Rudolf Steiner, Ernst Cassirer and Jean Piaget. Oberski (2011) has written about Steiner's *Philosophy of freedom* as a foundation for a spiritual pedagogy and Goldshmidt (2017b) has written a dissertation on the value of reintroducing the soul as a concept in curriculum research.

Pedagogical anthropology and developmental psychology

Since major elements of Waldorf education rest on views regarding the human being in relation to pedagogical anthropology and developmental psychology there are studies that deal explicitly with this although many can also be found in the previously listed overviews.

Lutzker & Zdrzil (2019) are editors of a book on Rudolf Steiner's lectures *Allgemeine Menschenkunde* where these are discussed from a scientific, artistic and practical perspective.

Wagemann (2017) has written about the pedagogical anthropology of Waldorf education from a consciousness-phenomenological perspective and (2013) through a sketch of a social-anthropological structural model for pedagogical knowledge and action. Sommer (2021, English 2010a, b, German 2010c, d) has written about the embodied self, its "resonance-figures" and about the cognitive development in secondary and upper secondary school. Nome (2019) has discussed the role of embodiment in the pedagogical ideas of Rudolf Steiner. Mathisen (2015a, b) has discussed the pedagogical role of rhythm in two articles.

Barkved (2022) has written about the developmental theory of Waldorf education focusing on the 7-year rhythms. Föller-Mancini & Berger (2018) discuss the so-called 9-year crisis or rubicon in an article in English in RoSE which is a translation of a chapter from Schieren (2016). The same text is reprinted in the English version of Schieren (2023). van Alphen (2011) has a comparative discussion regarding Kieran Egan's and Rudolf Steiner's views on the role of imagination in primary school education.

Sobo (2015) has discussed Waldorf education as a salutogenetic pedagogical impulse. Patzlaff (2015) has considered the risks of having an educational policy that strives to accelerate the speed with which children are introduced to and led through formal schooling using the example of moving from preschool to school. O'Connor and Angus (2014) have written an article about when children in Ireland should go from preschool to school from the perspective of Waldorf education.

General didactics

Wiehl (2015a, b) has written a dissertation on Waldorf educational teaching methods (2015b is an article based on the dissertation) and Rawson (2018) has worked out a complementary Waldorf educational learning theory. Masters (1997a) has written a dissertation comparing Waldorf educational theory and practice.

Stehlik (2008a) and Nielsen (2004) discuss how Waldorf education supports the development of imagination. Schieren (English 2010a, German 2010b) has discussed conclusion, judgment and concept as well as intuition (2010c) as foundational concepts for Waldorf education. Steinnes (2019) has written about "living concepts" and what this means in Waldorf education. Hoffman (1998) has written a dissertation on Goethean phenomenology and its pedagogical relevance. Weiss & Willmann (2021) are editors of a book on the concept of development in Waldorf education. Sommer (2014 English, 2013 German) compares Waldorf didactics and Klafki's Bildung-theoretical perspective and Cockerill (2016) has compared Steiner's educational thought with the soviet educational thinker Sukhomlinsky.

Goodson (2020) carries out a critical discussion about the practice of the class teacher staying with the same class for a long time (mostly eight years from grade 1-8). Auer & Wiehl (2021) are editors of a volume

regarding the dynamic classroom (German: bewegliche Klassenzimmer) in theory and practice and Hüttig (2019) is editor of a series of chapters discussing the different school subjects in secondary/upper secondary school as they relate to current research. de Vries (2012) has discussed the developmental needs of secondary/upper secondary Waldorf didactics.

Randoll (2015) has, based on an extensive empirical study, written a briefer reflective text about self-directed learning processes in Waldorf schools and Vogt (2015a) has written about how self-directed learning can be supported through portfolio-documentation.

There are a few publications regarding the integration of vocational education and Waldorf education. Tyson (2019) gives an overview and Schneider & Enderle (2012) are editors of a book on the Waldorf-Berufskolleg, an vocationally oriented upper secondary track in Germany. Fintelmann (1990) has written specifically about the Hibernia school.

Tyson (2021) discusses the existence of several different “Waldorf curricula” and problematizes Waldorf education as a monolithic educational practice. Tyson (2018) introduces a conceptual framework for exploring Waldorf education as a practice. Tjärnstig & Mansikka (2021) discuss Bildung, inclusion and equality in relation to the didactics of Waldorf education.

Wiehl (2016) writes about the theory involved in Waldorf education's use of images in contrast with older forms of “Anschauungsunterricht”, and Gran (2018) delves into the topic of using the black board from a performativity and materiality perspective. Stene (2019) writes about the monthly assemblies and Waldorf educational perspectives on music and Stabel & Stabel Jørgensen (2019) write more generally about the monthly assemblies and yearly festivals and their meaning in Waldorf pedagogy. Masters (1997b) has written generally about the meaning of movement in Waldorf education. Schmalenbach (2014) has written about closeness and distance as well as different forms of knowledge. Jeske (2004) has written a dissertation where she develops a feminist, holistic pedagogy that partially rests on Waldorf educational philosophy and didactics.

Subject didactics

Language and literature

Steinwachs (2020, the article is available in both English and German) discusses how the student's “latent” or unconscious questions as an anthropological paradigm for teaching literature in secondary/upper secondary school. Burnett (2007) has discussed the potential of Waldorf education to contribute to the debate about teaching languages in primary school. Steinwachs (2022) has written an article about postcolonial perspectives on language and literature teaching in Waldorf schools. Goldshmidt (2022) has discussed the role of stories in Waldorf education. Lutzker (2022a) has written a book on foreign language teaching and also an article (2016) discussing Steiner's hypothesis of a language-sense and its role in teaching foreign languages. Okumoto (2019) has written about speech-formation and its relevance in Waldorf education. Montenegro (2022) has written an article about what enables Waldorf-learners to maintain engagement in reading over time.

Steinwachs (2022b, 2022c, 2021, 2018) and Zech (2018) discuss the role of the Parzival epos and more broadly speaking medieval literature in upper secondary literature-studies. Schumacher (2020) has written generally about how the understanding of literature is foundational to teaching literature in Waldorf schools. Bartoniczek & Fiechter (2017) have written a book on Schiller and Kafka and Fiechter & Schumacher (2014) one on poetics.

Peter Lutzker, Martyn Rawson and Theresa Hermanns (2023) have been guest editors for a volume of the journal *Humanising language teaching* which has a long record of publishing articles in language didactics. It is not formally a peer-review journal but many of the articles are on par with those from such journals. The issue is concerned with a variety of perspectives on Waldorf didactics in the context of language teaching. The articles are: Lutzker (2023a, b), Spencer (2023), Skillen (2023), Pavlov-West (2023), Bryden (2023),

McNeer (2023), Goddard & Boland (2023), Sievers (2023), Jaffke (2023), Desai (2023), Radisic (2023), Rawson (2023).

Peter Lutzker has also been guest editor on a similar theme in the peer-review journal *Scenario: Journal for Performative Teaching, Learning, Research*. In it there are articles by: Rawson (2022b, c), Jaffke (2022), Lutzker (2022b, c) and Maley (2022) as well as some further articles that are more practice-oriented (so-called Windows of creative and reflective practice).

Art-, Technology-, Gardening-, Physical education and Crafts didactics

Goldshmidt (2017) has discussed the unique place of arts in Waldorf education. Eftestøl (2018) has written about a phenomenon-based approach to the teaching of music-history and Vogt (1995) has written a book about the foundations for Steiner's music pedagogy. There are, thus far, no academic publications about the craft curriculum in Waldorf education. What exists is mainly concerned with textile crafts: knitting and crocheting (Ohlendorf et al. 2019), the sewing of animals (Ohlendorf 2021), cross-stitching and other crossing textile craft techniques (Sigler et al. 2021) and these appear to be more practice oriented than focused on an academic contextualizing and comparative discussion. This deficit is all the more surprising given the central role that crafts play in Waldorf education.

Eidner (2022) has written a book on making of soap and its pedagogical and didactical potential in teaching. Keller (2015) and Rieth (2011) have written about the period in class 3 where focus is on the origins of vocations in farming and crafts. Giessler (1999) has authored a comparative study of the didactics of physical education in Waldorf schools and regular German schools.

Didactics of history, geography, social studies and religion

An important subject field is history teaching where today there are both extensive studies in didactics (Zech 2020, 2015a, b, 2014, 2012) and a series of smaller publications about various epochs (Hesse et al. 2011; Osterrieder & Boss 2009; Osterrieder & Guttenhöfer 2010; Rawson & Schumacher 2013; Schad, et al. 2009). The latter works are important because much of the traditional history taught at the primary level in Waldorf schools has proceeded from a cultural epoch theory and datings of developments that the present stand in research has shown to be either in need of revision or to be incorrect. This work is mainly driven by researchers at the Pädagogische Forschungsstelle in Kassel. Apart from this Barkved (2020, 2018) has also contributed with a pair of discussions into the philosophical foundations of the history subject in Waldorf schools as well as some of its Eurocentric issues.

Keller (2014, 2009) has written about the subject of geography in relation to globalization and culture and Keller & Schmutz (2023, 2022, 2021a, b) have written a series about the subject of geography in the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades (for some reason these are split into parts 1, 2, 4 and 5 where part 3 seems to be missing). Wright has discussed and compared the didactics of geography in Waldorf- and state schools (2013a, b, c, 2011a, b, 2009, the last being a dissertation and the others articles, all in English except 2013c which is a translation into German of 2013b). Lütje (2005) has written about China and Tibet as part of geography in 8th grade and (2011) about motifs from East Asia as part of geography in 12th grade. Brenner et al. (2000) have discussed interdisciplinary teaching in 11th grade where geography, economics and technology are combined into a theme about contemporary social life. Ungefug (2017) discusses the standing of social studies as a subject in Waldorf pedagogy and Ketels & Zech (2010) have written about the theme of globalization using the example of cotton for social studies in 11th grade. Lütje (2015) has written about modern Egypt and Fucke (2016) has discussed neoliberalism as ideology.

Willmann (2001) has authored an extensive publication on the subject of religion and Tellkamp (2013) has written about the subject of philosophy. Saar (2022) is editor of a book about sexuality education in Waldorf schools.

Science didactics

Dahlin (2001) is a phenomenological critique of the theoretical grounds of natural science teaching. Hörner (1995) has written a dissertation about Steiner's understanding of Goethe and how this has influenced the teaching of natural science in Waldorf education. Buck & Kranich (1995) have written about overlooked dimensions in nature and their implication for teaching. Buck & Mackensen (2006) have written about understanding natural phenomena based on the didactics of Wagenschein and Waldorf education and Arndt (2022) has written about how the two didactical traditions can be brought closer to each other. Lindholm (2018) has written about how to develop curiosity in science education. Mackensen & Bos (2022) have written a book about botany for 5th grade and Rohde (2022) one about teaching biology.

Sommer (2022, 2020a, both available in German as well as English) has written about physics in 9th and 10th grades respectively as well as (2020b) more generally about phenomenologically oriented physics teaching.

Schad & Scheffler (2004) have written a general overview of teaching chemistry in Waldorf schools. Wunderlin (2014) and Mackensen (2022) have written about phenomenologically oriented chemistry teaching for grades 7-9. Mackensen (1991) has written about experimentation in chemistry and (2019) about practical projects in chemistry for 7th grade.

Schmutz et al. (2004) have discussed the didactics of teaching geology in 12th grade.

Mathematics didactics

Sigler (2020a) has written about mathematics teaching in Waldorf schools. Neumann (2018, 2017a, b, c), Sigler (2022, 2020b, 2015, 2014/2021 English and German respectively, 2010), Baum (2022), Hünig (2022) and Fuhrer (2020, 2014) have written about mathematics didactics in various grades as well as some specific themes.

Media pedagogy

Hübner (2022) is editor of a comprehensive volume about media pedagogy from various perspectives as well as (2020) a foundational work on media pedagogy and Feise-Mahnkopp (2015) has written an article on media pedagogy for secondary/upper secondary grades. Graber (2012) has written about Waldorf pedagogy and new media literacy. Turós (2022) has written about Waldorf education and ICT in Hungary.

Evaluative and critical studies

A central critical perspective is concerned with Waldorf education and spirituality/anthroposophy. Several relevant chapters discuss this in the overview books. Kiersch (2015) has written an article about how Rudolf Steiner's pedagogical esotericism or spirituality can become subject of an academic discussion and another (2010a English, 2010b German) about the hermeneutics required to read Steiner's educational lectures. Dahlin (2021) has explored the eco-spiritual potential of Waldorf education and Gidley (2007) has looked at it from the perspective of Ken Wilber's integral spirituality. Rawson (2020) has discussed the spirituality of Waldorf pedagogy from a postmodern Bildung-perspective.

Gidley (2008) has written a chapter where she discusses the possible relevance of alternative educational movements in a globalized world and Uhrmacher (1997) has discussed strategies for how alternative educational practices and theories can be "borrowed" by other pedagogical frameworks. Xu & Spruyt (2022) have mapped alternative education in China. Dahlin (2010) has written about Waldorf education and civil society and Code (2020) about the contribution of Waldorf pedagogy to global citizenship education.

Bauer & Schneider (2006) have edited a book where Waldorf education is discussed from a critical academic perspective and Ullrich (2022) has written an article about the class teacher and the history behind this construct which includes a review of current empirical studies.

Boland & Rohde (2022) have discussed what has ongoing value in Waldorf education and what has needed to be changed over the course of its 100-year long history as well as today.

Nordlund (2013) discusses how Waldorf educational perspectives on art education can enrich conventional art education. Shank (2016) discusses how Waldorf educational perspectives can contribute to transformational teaching in regular schools in Kenya and McDermott (1992) has written about Waldorf education in the USA, its promise and problems.

A recurrent critical theme concerns what might be loosely called postcolonial and intercultural perspectives on Waldorf education. This can also be found in subject didactical literature and here the issue is more on a general level.

Boland & Munoz (2021) discuss contemporary critical theories in relation to Waldorf education. Aceves (2008, 2004) has written two articles about Mesoamerican indigenous pedagogy where Steiner is mentioned. Yoshida (2005) has written a chapter on Japanese schools and Waldorf education and Mayuzumi (2011) has written a critical answer in an article on decolonization. Rawson (2017) has written a semi-formal text with guidelines for developing a global Waldorf-curriculum locally and (2018b) an article about Steiner's epistemology with some postcolonial considerations. Schmelzer (2015) has written about Waldorf education's intercultural potential and Büchele (2014) has authored a dissertation about Waldorf- and intercultural education. Willmann (2015) has written about the potential in Waldorf education to work with intercultural religious education.

The journal *Bildung und Erziehung* has a thematic issue from 2021 about Waldorf education and inclusion where Ulrich; Schmelzer; Bender; Feuser and Barth & Maschke have raised various critical perspectives in their articles. Paschen (2014) has written about inclusion and raised issues of the degree to which the concept of inclusion rests on a dogmatic view of the human being.

Keller (2015) discusses contemporary risk society and the tasks of Waldorf education as well as (2012) the contribution that Goethe's concept of metamorphosis can give to our understanding of a multicultural society.

Preschool or early childhood education studies

Nicol & Taplin (2018), Nicol (2016), Parker-Rees (2011), Saßmannshausen (2008) and Barz (1993) have written introductions to Waldorf early childhood education studies. Nutbrown (2011) has written a book on the central concepts and theories of early childhood education that has a chapter on Waldorf and Follari (2018) has published an overview with a chapter on Waldorf as well. Patzlaff, et al. (2007) and Kardel, et al. (2006) have written about pedagogy for the ages of 3-9 (part 1 and 2 respectively). Patzlaff, et al. (2010) have written about early childhood education in the ages from birth to three.

Schwartz (2007) has written about the importance of play. Astley & Jackson (2000) have written about the possibilities and conditions for researching spirituality and interpreting rituals in studies of preschools/ kindergartens. Greubel & Jachmann (2021) have written about processes of professionalization in Waldorf preschools. Greubel (2018) discusses how to adequately consider the child's perspective and right to self-determination. Mathisen & Thorjussen (2016) discuss imitation as a pedagogical principle in Waldorf early childhood education and how contemporary dialogical and interactive perspectives could enrich practice. Becker, et al. (2023) and DeLucam, et al. (2019) have considered how Waldorf, Montessori and Reggio Emilia offer alternative assessment methods to conventional ones and Boyd (2018) how Waldorf and Montessori are expressions of sustainable early childhood education. Masters (2000) has discussed how Waldorf perspectives on early childhood can contribute to contemporary debate.

Walsh & Petty (2007) have done a review of ten years of articles in *Early Childhood Education Journal* surveying how the various pedagogical traditions are represented.

Other/Odd studies

Steinnes (2021) has written an article on Steiner's social ideas and how they can be considered relevant to contemporary educational policy discourse using ideas from Simon Critchley, Slavoj Žižek and Bernard Stiegler.

Vogt (2015b) has discussed the concept of competence as it is used in educational research and placed it in relation to Waldorf education.

Weiss & Willmann (2018) are editors of a book on learning-aims and assessment in Waldorf education and Föllner-Mancini (2010) has written about how students are discussed in the teacher's conferences.

Stehlik (2008b) has written a chapter on Waldorf schools as communities of practice and arenas for developing social sustainability. Pätzold (2013a English, 2013b German) has written about the relevance of images and metaphors for school organizations.

Basfeld & Hutter (2012) have published a book on identity formation in pedagogical processes.

Concluding discussion

Just as noted in the empirical review of Peters (2020) the majority of research projects have been done since 2000 and this, to a large degree, overlaps with the accreditation of the Alanus Hochschule as university and the beginning of the master-program at the Rudolf Steiner College in Oslo. This accelerated further with the launch of RoSE as a peer-review journal focused on Waldorf education. One conclusion from this is that the increase in research is not so much connected to an increased interest in the academic world at large but rather stems from the possibility that has opened up for the Waldorf movement to establish its own academic institutions. If and when this changes, remains to be seen.

The review highlights the great variety of topics that have been studied, there is seldom more than one or maybe two studies dealing with the same issue which is an indication of how young this field of research is. Still, compared to other educational alternatives, Waldorf education can be considered one of the most well researched and the recurring references to a lack of academic studies are hardly justified going forward. An important task in the coming years that a review such as this highlights is the need to follow up, deepen and test many of the singular studies that have been made in order to explore if they are replicable or in need of revisions and additions. Several of the thematic areas contain a number of studies that warrant a closer comparative review where all of the relevant articles and books are discussed and contextualized, not least given that so many studies are only available in German and thus not accessible to many in the international audience. There is also remarkably little research into Waldorf early childhood education given the fact that there are fewer schools than there are preschools.

It is worthwhile taking a brief look at the number of studies reviewed here. The number is approximal since several of the articles and some of the books are available in both English and German and some of the chapters in books were previously or later published as articles. Furthermore, some of the books listed were initially dissertations meaning that the number of dissertations here is lower than the actual number. Finally, as has been noted, not all of the articles are peer-reviewed (although most) and it is not easy to draw a clear line regarding what counts as an academic book publication at least for the purpose of this inclusive review.

- Doctoral dissertations ca. 10
- Articles ca. 160
- Books English ca. 20
- Books German ca. 85
- Book chapters ca. 15

To summarize, there are about 290 works of theoretical research about Waldorf education available today and even a more restrictive count would hardly end up with much less than 250.

Reviews regarding research in Spanish, about Waldorf teacher education and about curative education are, to my knowledge still waiting to be done.

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