

Titel: MEDITATION AND ANTHROPOSOLOGY - WHAT IS THE CONNECTION?
Part 3: The Abyss of What is Unconscious and Its Possible Overcoming

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Meditation and Anthroposophy – What is the Connection?

Part 3: The Abyss of What is Unconscious and Its Possible Overcoming¹

The actual nature of the movement that calls itself "Anthroposophical Meditation" is already apparent in its name. That is, if one were to speak of an "Anthroposophical" meditation, one would like to distinguish it from other forms of meditation. The main interest is meant to be meditation, the doing of "meditation" ("meditative practice"). This "doing" comes to the fore as if central, while the spiritual direction established by Rudolf Steiner is only belatedly connected with it. Yet is this even possible? Does not such an approach imply that through the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner not something fundamentally new has come into the world, rather something well-known that fits easily into what already exists? That Anthroposophy does not require a fundamental re-thinking, yes even a turning upside down of the whole human being, rather only a connecting onto and a carrying on of the old well-known?

Yet are people at all aware of this approach and the consequences of it?

In the present third essay on this subject,¹ which is to conclude my investigation, I would like to lead the reader, by means of a further deepened understanding of the movement calling itself "Anthroposophical Meditation", into what I myself understand as a meditation that can correctly orientate itself in its connection with the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner.

What is Anthroposophy?

"Anthroposophical Meditation" emerged as a kind of counter-reaction to how Anthroposophy was predominantly practiced in the 20th century. People no longer wanted to read and absorb content, no longer was "the-doctor-said" to be decisive, rather what a person believed to have recognized and researched (while meditating).

Instead of contenting themselves with reading the texts of Rudolf Steiner, people wanted to experience something spiritual – also apart from the texts; instead of reporting on the contents they had picked out of these texts, it was necessary to meditate; instead of being exposed to a gigantic, unsurveyable complete works (the Rudolf Steiner Complete Edition),² what was practically achievable emerged as the main point; instead of reproducing what was read (passive), people went over to wanting to actively research (active).

One of its representatives recalls:

"Finally, together we could develop 'true' Anthroposophy instead of all that 'Reading Anthroposophy'."³

The Anthroposophy often intellectually lived (out) in the 20th century,⁴ led to an estrangement from life that called for a fundamental renewal of its views. "Anthroposophical Meditation" was born out of the urge for this renewal, so the legitimacy of this impulse cannot be denied. Yet it came into the world with a birth defect: that of something unconscious. Those who bore it were not clear precisely about this birth situation. They acted (better: they meditated) without having previously accounted for why they were seeking for a new form for their work.

In the stream of what remained unconscious ruled the urge to overcome the forms in which Anthroposophy had principally lived since the death of Rudolf Steiner. Within this urge, however, lived the questions:

**How can the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner come to that livingness that belongs to it?
What is the form of working that in its actual being corresponds to this?**

¹ This essay and the two previous essays in German and English can be found here: <https://ignisverlag.com/artikel/>

² For this see: Diet, Irene, Ist die Rudolf Steiner Gesamtausgabe das Werk Rudolf Steiners? [Is the Rudolf Steiner Complete Edition the Work of Rudolf Steiner?] IGNIS Verlag [publishing house] 2013. <https://ignisverlag.com/buecher/>

³ Oldenburg, Angelika, Meditation als Kerngeschäft. Zur Tagung 'Meditation als Erkenntnisweg – die Vielfalt anthroposophischer Ansätze' [Meditation as the Main Business. For the Conference, 'Meditation as a Path of Knowledge – the Diversity of Anthroposophical Approaches'] from February 23 to 25, 2018, in Stuttgart, in: Die Drei, 5/2018, p. 73.

⁴ With this, Anthroposophy is meant as it is in its core element, i.e. outside its various fields of application, such as that of Waldorf schools, agriculture, medicine, eurythmy, etc.

If those people had become aware of these questions, a completely different process could have begun than the one we have to look back on today, for then it would have become clear that there is a very specific question that stands at the origin of all the other questions, and it would have become clear that this – not then asked – question has to be asked if one wants to continue working on the history of the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner and not on a short chapter on certain attempts at meditation at the beginning of the 21st century. This question is also the only one capable of penetrating to the actual being of a truly Anthroposophical meditation; all attempts to find its special nature without starting from this question can only lead to insubstantial explanations.⁵

The forms in which Anthroposophy has lived since the death of Rudolf Steiner urge us to become aware of this most central of all questions:

What is the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner?

The Destiny of What is Unconscious

Within the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation", two groups can be discerned who seem to differ in their relationship to the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner. The first group, which initially set the tone, openly acknowledges that the decisive experiences in meditation are first apparent when a person begins working with Buddhistic or Hinduistic forms of meditation or else with Andrew Cohen, Ken Wilber, Psychoanalysis, catatonic imagery, with certain feedback techniques and much more besides.

*"(...), 'I did not learn to meditate with Steiner', so one hears again and again from long-time Anthroposophists. Anthroposophical meditations are complicated and complex, and the underlying experience of absoluteness is often only discovered in them if a person has already met it elsewhere."*⁶

this one can read in the newsletter of April 1, 2012, published by the "Institute for Anthroposophical Meditation". Often the expected successes did not appear until after experiences were made with specific forms of meditation that one had come to learn about on the meditation market, as Anna-Katharina Dehmelt states:

*"The better I get to know the Eastern methods of meditation, the more it seems to me that they are a good prerequisite for the Anthroposophical meditator and, indeed, are perhaps even a condition for successful meditation."*⁷

Even if the prevailing inclination is not always made into a theme, from the way in which one works can be read the preferred direction at the time. Or, as one of their representatives once put it: *"Everyone has their own gate."*⁸ By which of course was not meant the individual approach to Anthroposophy, rather the differences that resulted from the *"closeness to certain 'spiritual streams'."*⁹

The second group, unlike the first, seems to have developed its meditation practice without this external reference; its work seems to be directly based on the work of Rudolf Steiner. Recently, development has moved in the direction dominated by this group; former representatives of the first group are clearly moving towards this. Yet even their approach does not arise from a struggle for the actual nature of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy, rather it arises from the view, which has remained unconscious, that such a struggle is not at all necessary.

⁵ *"In common with most other types of meditation, "Anthroposophical Meditation" has the common goal of overcoming the separation of the human being experiencing itself as subject from a world experienced as object. But in contrast to most types of meditation with a Buddhist or Hindu background, Steiner was [...] concerned [...] with seeking out this foundation of existence quite concretely in the appearances and qualities of the world. The goal of this approach is to enable people to have a spiritual relationship to the world and to themselves."* This definition of an Anthroposophical meditation written by Anna-Katharina Dehmelt has even found its way into Wikipedia but does not capture the essence of Anthroposophical meditation in its difference to the other forms of meditation.

⁶ <https://www.infameditation.de/2012/04/newsletter-april/>

⁷ Dehmelt, Anna-Katharina, Anthroposophische Meditation — Die denkende Individualität als Ausgangspunkt [Anthroposophical Meditation – The Thinking Individuality as Starting Point], in: Anthroposophy, Michaeli 2015, p. 204. (Emphasis mine – I.D.) See also inter alia: Dehmelt, Anna-Katharina, Vom lebendigen und vom leeren Bewusstsein [About the Living and about the Empty Consciousness], in: Die Drei 7-8/2012. Also the remarks by Georg Kühlewind on the subject. See: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Kühlewind

⁸ Stockmar, Stephan, Vorstellung und Imagination [Idea and Imagination], in: Die Drei 17/2015, p. 62.

⁹ *"Yet, a summary in terms of results is made more difficult by the fact that the methodological posing of questions, the need for differentiation according to the individual constitution, and the proximity to certain 'spiritual streams' are very different."* See *ibid.*

Without becoming fully aware of it, they behave as if its actual nature had already been grasped long ago, which is why their own actions must *a priori* be essentially Anthroposophical ones. This approach leads to the development of forms of meditation that correspond to one's own possibilities and insights and that, in hindsight, they then try to bring into connection with specific statements of Rudolf Steiner.

This peculiarity of this second group leads to the fact that elements of traditional "Reading Anthroposophy" are taken up again, which makes it even more difficult to make sense of the process. The fact that with this, however, this group also stands outside of Anthroposophy, I will point to more exactly below.

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The way in which the texts of Rudolf Steiner are mostly read has led to the view that something living cannot arise through reading. When doing this, "experiencing" or even "living things through" are rarely done; often only a deadening intellectual knowledge arises. "Anthroposophical Meditation" is born of the – very legitimate – insight that there cannot be an Anthroposophy which is not experienced and which does not lead to one's own profound experiences. Such an Anthroposophy is an absurdity, a glaring contradiction in itself.

The way one tries to meditate makes this conviction clear.

"Why meditate Anthroposophically? For the reason that we can only speak authentically about spiritual questions based on our own experiences"¹⁰ –

thus does the thoroughly legitimate self-understanding of the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" characterize itself, whereby meditative experiences, as will be shown further on, are equated above all with perceptions and sense experiences. The ideas of "theory" and "practice" underlying such an approach, however, correspond to that of our everyday consciousness. For Anthroposophy, on the other hand, the self-strengthening and self-supporting pure thinking developed through the texts of Rudolf Steiner is the center and the beginning of every "practical" activity that seeks a relationship to the supersensible-spiritual. It is therefore also this thinking that constitutes the actual being of a meditation that wants to place itself in a real connection to the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner.

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"Anthroposophical Meditation" has as its central characteristic, that of placing itself more or less openly outside of Anthroposophy, and yet believes itself to be "Anthroposophically" working with another stream that sees itself as modern: namely with the stream of thought and study that designates itself as "critical" within Anthroposophy.¹¹

Both streams of spirituality, "Anthroposophical Meditation" as well as the so-called "Critical Anthroposophy", are similar in how they encounter Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy. So-called "Critical Anthroposophy", which unlike "Anthroposophical Meditation" is less about a "practical" (i.e. meditative) transformation but as opposed to that reveals its spiritual foundations more strongly, makes what is common to both clear. What is common consists of the idea that an "objective" relationship to the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner can only be found when one meets it, as it were, coming "from the outside", whereas a merely "inner-Anthroposophical" viewpoint is from the outset treated as prejudiced and therefore felt to be non-objective and untrue. "Critical Anthroposophy" purposefully seeks the foundation of its thinking outside of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy; "Anthroposophical meditation", however, apparently wants to prove that a relationship to an "Anthroposophical" meditation can only result from meditation practice – no matter of what kind.

Through the view openly held by "Critical Anthroposophy", objectivity and thus a more direct relation to the truth of one's own position is given *a priori*, so that the path of Anthroposophy only emerges when an external point of view outside of Anthroposophy is taken. With this they are unaware that even the approach called "critical" is

¹⁰ Oldenburg, Angelika, "Wir machen hier gar nichts Besonderes..." ["We are not doing anything special here ..."] A journey through various exercise groups for Anthroposophical Meditation in: Die Drei 7-8 /2012. See loc. cit., p.152

¹¹ Christoph Lindenberg, who can be taken as the founder of this spiritual stream, and who with his book published in 1995 Individualismus und offenbare Religion. Rudolf Steiners Zugang zum Christentum [Individualism and Revealed Religion. Rudolf Steiner's Approach to Christianity] prepared the ground for its further development. Today, Christian Clement, the publisher of the SKA (Steiner Critical Edition), is one of the leading representatives of this spiritual stream.

based on specific ideas and premises. Even if one does not want to start from Anthroposophy so that one can be "objective" towards it, one works on the basis of specific thought-forms and ideas. These are definitely regarded as "objective", but for the reason that they have remained unconscious. These are the forms of thinking that are characteristic for present-day people and that build on what is unconscious in relation to soul-spiritual activity.

The meditations practiced by the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" lead to quick and convincing successes that lead away from the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, which is perceived as too difficult, by creating satisfaction at the exact point where the real path was abandoned.¹² And even then, when the meditator is not aware of their external reference because they think they can do without it, they will take the same path as those who have knowingly engaged in other forms of meditation as long as they are not clear about the fact that one of Anthroposophy's own meditations can never result from the work on the meditation as such, rather only in the course of a searching struggle for the actual being of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy.

Why this is so, will be indicated on the following pages.

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The Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner begins at the point where a person tries to emerge from what is unconscious within them in that they strive to become aware of their own thinking activity. Such a point of view is naturally not given to a person, or in the words of Rudolf Steiner:

"This is the peculiar nature of thinking, that the thinker forgets the thinking while they are practicing it. Not the thinking keeps them preoccupied, rather the object of the thinking that they are observing."¹³

But with this, the thinker forgets above all – their self, the thinker. Such an approach, according to Rudolf Steiner, corresponds to the "naive" view of the world. As opposed to that, Rudolf Steiner goes on, it is necessary to develop an attitude "that takes hold of the laws of one's own actions": the "critical" worldview.¹⁴

Anthroposophy's own view of the world is therefore entirely due to the fact that the thinker, as opposed to the naive view of the world, tries to adopt a new and indeed an "external" point of view. Yet what is "external" in this point of view refers to one's own thinking activity of the soul; this has to be kept in sight. Thus a completely new concept of "objectivity" is realized that stands over against the traditional understanding as it is exemplified by so-called "Critical Anthroposophy". "Objective" (and "critical") no longer means searching for an external viewpoint standing over against Anthroposophy, rather what is external of the viewpoint sought is related to one's own soul-spiritual activity. It is therefore a matter of achieving an external viewpoint over against one's own soul-spiritual activity.

To see this within a struggling activity and to be consciously present in it, is of course not given to present-day people. The possibility of this first arose with Rudolf Steiner: It is his actual being contained in his works that can enable people struggling for knowledge to take a soul-spiritual point of view that – based on the special ways of thinking and speaking of Rudolf Steiner that Rudolf Steiner designates as a "higher consciousness" – is capable of placing themselves outside of their own activity. Since the works of Rudolf Steiner were understood by these people in such a way that they make it possible for these reading thinkers to draw themselves out of their soul-spiritual being, these people can experience themselves as people developing on the basis of the works of Rudolf Steiner.

Such a stepping out of oneself, which requires a great inner activity and is experienced as a painful tearing away from oneself, is, however, nothing other than – the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner.

Facets of What is Unconscious

It is one of the characteristics of "Anthroposophical Meditation" that experiences arising during meditation are backed up by certain concepts coined by Rudolf Steiner. From the very beginning, people assumed that as soon

¹² See the two essays "Meditation and Anthroposophy – What is the Connection?" that preceded this one: <https://ignisverlag.com/artikel/>

¹³ Rudolf Steiner, The Philosophy of Freedom/The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity/Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path, CW 4, p. 42.

¹⁴ Rudolf Steiner, Truth and Science, CW 3, p. 48. (Emphasis added – I.D.)

as one began to meditate the phenomena designated by Rudolf Steiner as "stages of higher knowledge", those of "imagination", "inspiration" and "intuition",¹⁵ would be reached. The "research" they claim for themselves has been (and continues to be) to work out the differences between these individual stages of supposedly higher knowledge. Many of the meetings and colloquiums organized by "Anthroposophical Meditation" addressed questions that had arisen in connection with all this.¹⁶ To this day, in the numerous seminars offered by representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation", they are working on making these three stages in their differentiation experienceable.

What is essential for our investigation, is that they speak about the three stages of higher knowledge worked out by Rudolf Steiner without first making the fundamental difference between ordinary and higher consciousness a subject of discussion. No single conference known to me has been concerned with this question.¹⁷ The destiny of what is unconscious thus finds its consistent continuation. They are unaware that they are combining their own work with specific concepts of Rudolf Steiner without having taken a look at the sphere in which these terms alone make sense. They are unaware that the question which should be the prerequisite for such a procedure has not yet been asked. It is the question:

What is the principal difference between ordinary consciousness and that which Rudolf Steiner calls a "higher" one?

The consequences of the resulting sleeping through of this all-important question are devastating. Even a superficial view of the event makes this clear. Thus, about the above-mentioned congress on "Anthroposophical Meditation and Academic Research into Meditation" from 2012, we can read the following:

"In the meantime, very refined techniques of self-observation have been developed in which, when the methodology is revealed, quite individual experiences of imaginative, inspirative and intuitive states of consciousness were able to be described. This could be accompanied by measurements of parallel brain activity on the one hand, and on the other by a description of content-related experiences in those states of consciousness to which may belong threshold experiences and fainting or demonic experiences."¹⁸

Had they made it clear to themselves that, before a "higher knowledge" in the sense of Rudolf Steiner can be spoken of, the actual nature of ordinary knowledge has to be examined in order to be able to direct ones view to the difference between this knowledge and one that is no-longer normal, which means supersensible, then they would not have been able to make such a statement. Then they would have known that any brain current measurement that indicates differences between alleged "imaginative", "inspirative" or "intuitive" states can only be proof that they are still completely in the field of ordinary consciousness. A higher consciousness in the sense of Rudolf Steiner is characterized by the fact that as first thing, thinking frees itself from its bodily foundation. Only when the thinker unfolds such an inner power that they are capable of separating their thinking schooled on the texts of Rudolf Steiner from the physical-sensible brain, can this process begin. Different brain currents due to alleged "imaginings", "inspirations" and "intuitions" could then certainly no longer be measured.

Not the fundamental assumptions on which Rudolf Steiner built up his work stand at the center of the work of the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation", rather specific phenomena that arise with "meditative doing" and that are only subsequently brought together with the most appropriate statements of Rudolf Stei-

¹⁵ For this see inter alia Rudolf Steiner, The Stages of Higher Knowledge, CW 12.

¹⁶ Thus inter alia: May 1-2, 2013: Meeting of the Colloquium "Psychic Perception" in Berlin; December 12, 2014: "Meditation Research Colloquium" in Stuttgart, invited by Chr. Hueck, to "Idea and Imagination"; May 1, 2015: "Meditation Science Research Colloquium" in Stuttgart, on "Imagination and Inspiration – Differences and Transitions"; December 4, 2015: "Research Colloquium on the Meditation Science of the AKANTHOS Academy", organized in conjunction with the Anthroposophical Society in Stuttgart, on "Inspiration – a feeling beholding beyond the threshold"; April 9, 2016: "Research Colloquium on the Meditation Science of the AKANTHOS Academy", organized in connection with the Anthroposophical Society in Stuttgart on "Intuition".

¹⁷ In the best case, the so-called "object consciousness" is mentioned as preceding the three higher stages of knowledge, see, inter alia, Dehmelt, Anna-Katharina, Meditation and Research, Part II: Research, in: Die Drei, 4/2009, p. 48. But with this the fundamental difference in essence between ordinary and higher knowledge is not inquired into and even less understood.

¹⁸ <https://www.infameditation.de/institut/forschung/meditationsforschung/> (Emphasis mine – I.D.)

ner.¹⁹ For although the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" are primarily concerned with the *"ability of Anthroposophical-meditative consciousness research to connect to the general discourse of the present,"*²⁰ they increasingly want to have their work understood as an immediate continuation of the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner.

This tendency, as already mentioned, is increasingly observable in recent years, and it stands in a certain contradiction with the beginning of the development of "Anthroposophical Meditation." At that time, they made it more clearly apparent that they wanted to distance themselves from an effectively one-sided turning towards Rudolf Steiner's work. The phenomena that had arisen in connection with the academic research into meditation, with which especially during the first years they had taken part in²¹ (such as measuring the brain current during meditation), therefore remained completely unquestioned. Today though, they want to draw closer to Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy, and this is why more emphasis is being placed on topics that seem to spring directly from it.

**"Anthroposophical Meditation" meets traditional "Reading Anthroposophy" or
How does one Achieve Knowledge of the Higher Worlds?**

Numerous representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" assume that a supersensible perception can arise directly from the contemplation of specific objects or living beings. Starting out from this, they believe they are able to lead directly into what they describe as the three stages of "higher knowledge". Corinna Gleide, for example, tells of *"inner perceptions"* that arise in the observation of certain plants, stones or landscapes and that should be sense experienced. These *"speaking"* sense experiences, however, are for her the path that are to lead from *"the sense perception to soul-spiritual perception"*.²² She describes her procedure as follows:

"When I now do a plant or stone meditation, for example, or in the landscape meditation, then I always start out from the observation of the senses. It is a question at first of the precise observation and description of what one sees. (...) In the instructions, I ask the participants to now go along with the sense perception just as in inner processes. Through this they enter into the gesture language of the plant for example, also of a landscape or of a tree. Inner colors may also arise. An experience comes about where they feel connected to the things. (...)

*With plant meditations – but for example also in the landscape meditation – there are then two more stages of practice. First, we condense the inner perceptions into a sense experience. A snowdrop has in itself, for example, a completely different sense experience at its foundation than a peony. This is what we are trying to describe. The snowdrop, for example, has to do with the gesture and sense experience of modesty and simplicity. The peony is completely different. (...)"*²³

In her article "The Sense Experience Begins to Speak. From Sense Perception to Soul-Spiritual Perception", Corinna Gleide describes her method of working in more detail and shows how she belatedly, that is following after the meditation experiences she has made, tries to bring them into a connection with the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner.

To begin with, she makes three pages (pp. 43-45) from the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – How is it Achieved?* (also *How to Know Higher Worlds* [1994 – pp. 39-41]), which belong to the section "Preparation" (this is the first section of the chapter "The Stages of Initiation"), as the basis for her statements.²⁴ These pages are again and again used by many representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation", who just like Corinna Gleide start out from sense perception. That in this case, however, it is a matter of something Rudolf Steiner – not

¹⁹ In particular Rudolf Steiner's oral work, which for the most part he did not want published at all, offers "quotes" as it were "in every direction". If one searches in it as in a quarry, one will also find the apparently suitable "stone", but this "stone" will have to be read quite differently once one has recognized the foundation on which the work was erected.

²⁰ Dehmelt, A.-K., "Everything in the world is conscious", loc. cit., p. 7.

²¹ See: „Anthroposophische Meditation und akademische Meditationsforschung" ["Anthroposophical Meditation and Academic Meditation Research"] at: <http://www.infameditation.de/institut/forschung/meditationsforschung/>

²² See Gleide, Corinna, *Die Empfindung beginnt zu sprechen. Von der Sinneswahrnehmung zur seelisch-geistigen Wahrnehmung* [The Sensation Begins to Speak. From sensory perception to soul-spiritual perception], in: *Die Drei* 4/2016, p. 21ff.

²³ See: <https://www.anthroposophische-meditation.org/corinna-gleide/>

²⁴ See Gleide, Corinna, *The Sensation*, loc. cit., p. 22ff.

without reason – intended for "preparation", is not talked about. Like so much else, this circumstance seems to have remained completely unconscious.

Because Corinna Gleide is concerned with experiences that result from sense perceptions, she can no longer rely on this same work by Rudolf Steiner for her further explanations. About "*inner perceptions*", which are supposed to evoke certain sense experiences in the physical body (such as, for example, the "*inner gesture*" of Amaryllis, which she describes as "*occupying a place, drawing in and spreading out space – while at the same time remaining within-itself*"²⁵), one can read nothing in 'Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – How is it Achieved?' This is why she draws on the theory of the senses established by Rudolf Steiner.²⁶ Starting out from this, she believes she is able to bring the "*inner perceptions*" she has made into connection with certain concepts of Rudolf Steiner: namely with those by him designated as the "*lower senses*".²⁷

To give definitive proof that her work corresponds to the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, Corinna Gleide does something extraordinarily surprising at the end of her article: She draws on the epilogue of 'Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – How is it Achieved?', which Rudolf Steiner added to the work in the year 1918. This epilogue is so composed, however, that it may be taken as conclusive proof against Corinna Gleide's approach, for Rudolf Steiner places precisely the type of errors committed by her right at the centre.

The afterword begins with the following words:

*"The path to supersensible knowledge characterized in this text leads to a soul experience in the face of which it is of particular importance that whoever seeks it does not succumb to deceptions and misunderstandings about it; and it is easy for a person to deceive themselves about what is being considered here."*²⁸

In the following pages of the epilogue, Rudolf Steiner shows, so clearly that it cannot be overlooked, what is the only thing that can protect "*human beings*" from giving in to such deceptions: It is the development of an ability that he calls "*pure thinking*":

*"One can separate something out of the sphere of the life of the soul that consists only of **pure** thoughts, of thoughts that consist of themselves, from which everything is excluded that perception or the inner life of the body give. **Such** thoughts reveal themselves through themselves, through that which they are as a spiritual being, as an individual supersensible being; and the soul that unites itself with such thoughts by excluding all perception, all memory, and all other inner life during this union, knows itself with its own thinking in a supersensible region and experiences itself outside of the body."*²⁹

And a few pages further:

*"For the supersensible soul activity intended here, it is exceptionally important to grasp the experience of pure thinking in full clarity, for fundamentally this experience itself is already a supersensible soul activity, yet one through which one does not yet see anything supersensible. One lives with pure thinking within the supersensible, but one experiences solely **this** in a supersensible way; one does not yet experience anything else supersensible, and so the supersensible experience must be a continuation of the soul experience that can already be achieved in the experience of pure thinking."*³⁰

Solely on the basis of these few fundamental statements of Rudolf Steiner, it is clear that the prerequisite for a meditative work consists precisely in completely eliminating what constitutes Corinna Gleide's work: "*all perception, all remembering, and all other inner life*". The experience of "pure thinking", however, has to be made such that every "*supersensible experience*" that goes beyond that of pure thinking appears as the immediate continuation of "*the soul experience that can already be achieved in the experience of pure thinking*".

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²⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

²⁶ See inter alia: Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophy. A fragment, CW 45

²⁷ See Gleide, Corinna, The Sensation, loc. cit., p. 27.

²⁸ Rudolf Steiner, Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – How is it Achieved? / How to know Higher Worlds[p.207] CW 10, p. 216. (Emphasis added – I.D.)

²⁹ Ibid., p. 217f.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 220.

It is this epilogue that Corinna Gleide draws on as the definitive proof that her meditations correspond to the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner. How is this possible?

The approach Corinna Gleide takes makes clear the decisive step that led to the confusion characterizing so-called "Anthroposophical Meditation" in general. Since the same phenomenon seems to occur again and again – only clothed differently – it will have to be looked at more closely here:

Corinna Gleide speaks for the first time at the end of her article³¹ of "pure thinking" without developing a concept of it. This "pure thinking", she says, following a quotation from Rudolf Steiner's epilogue, should "transform" the "lower senses" central to her work. – Not only has she misread Rudolf Steiner's sentence – she "translates" the verb "*to permeate, to penetrate {durchdringen}*" with "*to transform {verwandeln}*".³² Above all else, however, she treats "pure thinking" as if it underlies her meditative work. She presupposes it, so to say, without ever having carried it out. Always, whenever she describes her thought activity during her meditations, she describes one that develops exclusively on the basis of what was sensibly perceived, on what was sensed, and on "*any other inner life*".³³ The whole text of Corinna Gleide is a description of the activities which, if one wants to develop a "pure thinking", have to be eliminated.

Solely through the fact that Corinne Gleide talks about the "pure thinking" of which she has read in Rudolf Steiner's epilogue, she believes she is doing it. This seems to me, however, on the basis of many years of observation and experience, to be a most questionable result of traditional "Reading Anthroposophy": The reading of certain statements of Rudolf Steiner was and is treated by this "Reading Anthroposophy" as if a reader, who reads exactly as they always do,³⁴ already took possession of the relevant experience directly through the reading. A great deal of the so-called "secondary literature" bears witness to this. People treat the most difficult questions of Anthroposophy as if they had a right to do so. They speak about the Angelic hierarchies, about world development and other connections presented by Rudolf Steiner as if these people had experienced the things themselves. That this is not the case at all, rather that perhaps what is learned from reading might be nothing other than something false or misunderstood, has been washed down into the deepest subconscious by the tradition of "Reading Anthroposophy".

"Anthroposophical Meditation" has emerged on the basis of this approach that remains completely unconscious of its own actions. What is unconscious in this way leads to an excessive self-overestimation, since the great distance that separates one's own abilities from what makes up the work of Rudolf Steiner, is consistently slept through.

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³¹ See Gleide, Corinna, *The Sensation*, loc. cit., from p. 28, the penultimate page.

³² Under the subheading "*The Meaning of Thinking for the Lower Senses*", Corinna Gleide explains: "*Pure thinking is to begin with the only human activity through which body-freeness is attainable. If a person cultivates pure thinking, then this fact gradually transforms the way in which feeling and willing, but also the lower senses, can be made suitable for soul-spiritual perception.*" (Ibid., p. 28, emphasis mine – I.D.) With this she refers to the following sentence of Rudolf Steiner: "*Yet whoever has experienced such a thing, for them the experience has become that everywhere, where thinking rules in soul life, to the extent that this thinking pervades other soul activities, the human being is engaged in an activity in whose formation their body is uninvolved.*" (Rudolf Steiner, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – How is it Achieved?* [p.208] CW 10, p. 217, (bold emphasis by Rudolf Steiner; expanded emphasis mine – I.D.) It is not only that Corinna Gleide has read the process of "penetrating" other soul activities described by Rudolf Steiner as if it were a matter of a "transformation"; it also follows from the reading of the next following paragraph that Rudolf Steiner is saying exactly the opposite of what Corinna Gleide claims.

³³ Thus inter alia with this sentence: "*Characteristic of this way of practicing is that through the exact and at the same time devotionally directed, not by preconceived concepts, sense perception in the feelings of one's own soul, sensations and thoughts arise that are connected with the nature of what is observed.*" Gleide, Corinna, *The Sensation*, loc. cit., p. 23.

³⁴ Reading the texts of Rudolf Steiner is definitely the decisive foundation for a path that leads into the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner. Of course this has to be completely traversed; what is unconscious of the reader in the face of their own activity has to be overcome first of all. See for this: Blankertz, Rudiger, *Vom Lesen im anthroposophischen Buch. Rudolf Steiner über die Aktivierung des Denkens und das rechte Verhältnis zum Buch* [From Reading in Anthroposophical Books. Rudolf Steiner on the activation of thinking and the right relationship to the book, in: *Anthroposophy, IV / 2010*; Full text see: <http://menschenkunde.com/neu.html>]

The article by Corinna Gleide shows with startling clarity the unbridgeable distance between the path of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy and the manner of working within "Anthroposophical Meditation". Both phenomena stand almost without connection next to one another, and even with a belated effort the latter can no longer approach the former, for how should a meditation, which begins with sense perception, lead to a supersensory perception? Even a simple consideration makes it clear that the sense perception and the supersensory perception initially have such a relationship to one another that the former (the sense perception) makes the second (the supersensible perception) completely impossible. Indeed, the fundamental presupposition for supersensible perception consists in the fact that "the senses become silent": every sense perception must be consistently excluded.

Such an exclusion of sense activity cannot take place, however, as long as the person is perceiving or feeling; it only becomes possible when they think; and even then, the body will continue to be involved as long as thoughts are being formed that are in a normal, meaningful connection, limited to the thought content, with what is being thought about. Such thoughts presuppose the brain as the basis of thought. Pure thinking first carries out those preconditions that open the path to a consciousness that is no longer the usual one.

The Question of Body-Freeness

Within the effort to combine "Anthroposophical Meditation" with Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy, questions arise that have not yet been addressed. Christoph Hueck, the person responsible for the "Research Colloquium on Meditation Science" held in Stuttgart since 2014, took up some of these questions in a recently appearing article on "Body-Free Consciousness in Meditation":³⁵

"Does what is practiced in various Anthroposophical seminars as meditation exercises lead to supersensible knowledge of a body-free consciousness, or is this merely about refined sense experiences? Are, for example, the inner impressions of movement and the experiences one can get from the observation of sprouting and wilting plants supersensible, or are these lifted up into consciousness and aesthetically refined impressions of the "lower" senses, the senses of touch, life, movement, and the sense of balance?"³⁶

The questions asked by Hueck aim to place experiences, which were made during such meditations described above, in a relationship with the ideas he himself has developed from a supersensible knowledge. Elements of "experience" are picked out in order to connect them with a characteristic appearance that is assigned to supersensible knowledge – the so-called "body-free consciousness". Subsequent to this, Hueck brings together various statements from the work of Rudolf Steiner that are intended to characterize a "body-free consciousness".

It has become a kind of fashion today to speak of a "body-free consciousness" to be achieved in meditation, without noticing that Rudolf Steiner, when he talked about the path that should come about through a meditation, always described thinking as becoming body-free. Not the consciousness as such, under which also a feeling, a perception, etc., can be understood, becomes body-free first, rather the body-freeness to be experienced in meditation arises, according to Rudolf Steiner, always in connection with the thinking that is developing itself.³⁷ And, if one reads the texts more precisely that are in question, one will even notice that to begin with Rudolf Steiner is not concerned with body-freeness at all, rather with the experience of the bodily-boundness of ordinary thinking.

Why is this so?

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The first experience a person struggling for a supersensible consciousness will have, is that a quite specific question becomes an experience for them: How can I step outside of the person with whom I myself am

³⁵ Hueck, Christoph, Das leibfreie Bewusstsein in der Meditation. Das Wesen des leibfreien Bewusstseins und einige Kriterien zu seiner Erkenntnis [Body-Free Consciousness in Meditation. The essence of body-free consciousness and some criteria for its realization], in: Die Drei, 10/2018, p. 39ff.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 39.

³⁷ See inter alia: Rudolf Steiner, Philosophy and Anthroposophy, in: CW 35, p. 66ff; also, The Task of Spiritual Science and Its Building in Dornach, in: ibid., p. 173ff.; also, Human Life from the Viewpoint of Spiritual Science (Anthroposophy), in: ibid., pp. 225ff; also, Knowledge of the State Between Death and a New Birth, in: ibid., p. 269. Rudolf Steiner speaks of a "body-free consciousness" only when he describes it in connection with such a (fully performed) initiation that is similar to the process at death. See Rudolf Steiner, The Riddles of Philosophy, CW 18, in the section: A Sketched View of an Anthroposophy.

actually identical? This question becomes the experience of one's own being, which always comes about when ordinary consciousness comes to its own boundary. This "boundary" is painful since it deprives the thinker of the habitual contents of thinking, and so they have to experience themselves as "blind". Along with the contents of thinking, the ordinary ground of their self-consciousness disappears. The person struggling now has to maintain themselves in a soul sphere that is bottomless and consists only of their own initially blind experience of thinking activity (better: of thinking-will).

This boundary, which can also be experienced as a soul wall up against which the thinker "bumps", Rudolf Steiner calls the "threshold to the spiritual world". At this threshold, further questions become an experience: How is it possible for consciousness to leap over itself? And just as much the answer becomes an experience: This becomes possible only when ordinary consciousness is confronted with something which is of such a kind that ordinary consciousness can experience itself on this because it begins to see itself. This higher consciousness on which ordinary consciousness is capable of experiencing itself in its actual being, is, however, the one of Rudolf Steiner.

This is why the experiential proof of having left ordinary consciousness will always consist of the fact that the person struggling for knowledge begins to behold that ordinary consciousness. As long as they have not beheld and recognized it in their being, they will take all the varieties of it for appearances of a supersensible consciousness, as is impressively demonstrated by "Anthroposophical Meditation". For the person struggling, their ordinary consciousness always only appears before the soul in its reality of being when the soul frees itself from it. The first (experiential) knowledge that leads out of normal consciousness thus refers to the actual being of ordinary consciousness.

Rudolf Steiner repeatedly described this process that always has to begin with an intensification and condensing of thinking. Work of such a kind on thinking is unusual; it is extremely strenuous and not very attractive. Interesting and newsworthy perceptions, as they arise on the path of so-called "Anthroposophical Meditation" where they are considered as "research results", are not made on this path. Quite the contrary: To begin with, the thinker is moving along a path on which even that becomes lost which until then was the only interesting aspect of what they were doing: i.e. the usual content of thinking. They have to develop a thinking that can maintain itself within itself and get along without reference to a content of thinking that springs directly from the object of the thinking. Then the person struggling experiences the pain of a self-created emptiness; this pain is to be endured, for only when one can "*hold on to this experience long enough in stillness of soul*" will the person struggling be able to receive this "*inner revelation*":³⁸ The thinker getting to know a whole new way of thinking; a thinking that is no longer just an image of the "reality" presented, rather reality itself that reveals itself in its spirit character.

Such a thinking is, of course, initially largely unknown. The path that "Anthroposophical Meditation" took was only possible because this thinking was not experienced, rather "thinking" remained for the meditator that which consists only in its image-character. Anyone who is on the path of a real experience that makes thinking possible, will therefore be able to grasp the superfluousness and insubstantiality [lacking being] of what has been visible up till now through "Anthroposophical Meditation".

In his essay "Knowledge of the State between Death and a New Birth", Rudolf Steiner described very precisely the process underlying this experience of reality. Since it is an essay that he also addresses to a non-Anthroposophical audience, he begins with the experience of a struggler for knowledge who experiences the boundaries of knowledge and does not avoid this boundary experience rather finds in it their further pathway.

The attentive reader of Rudolf Steiner's texts will be able to find out that such experiences always occur when they begin to read these texts very carefully:

"Take the following case. A person deliberates over one of those questions that considers a certain world-view as going beyond the boundaries of the human being's ability to know. In such a case, one can argue with oneself in a thinking manner and believe that one is compelled by this argumentation to say that up to this point a person can go with their knowing; a further penetration into reality is not possible. It is also possible, however, to push on experimentally, so to say, with one's thinking to the hard experience of what the soul ex-

³⁸ Rudolf Steiner, Knowledge of the State between Death and a New Birth in CW 35, p.289.

*periences when it thus places itself at this boundary. In doing so, one has to muster in inner stillness the strength to bring the soul activity to a standstill in the grasping of this experience. One will then experience why it is that one cannot go further with thinking, and this experience reveals to the thinker it is conferred on that it is not a matter of the thinking when one finds oneself placed at a boundary, rather of the fact that thinking is performed by the bodily instruments. The dependence of ordinary thinking on the bodily instruments now becomes an immediate soul experience. Spiritual science would be less attacked by the prevailing scientific view of the world if the latter could, with the necessary impartiality, penetrate to the insight that the first experience of the spiritual researcher is a full affirmation of what science itself asserts: that an ordinary idea is as bound to the relevant bodily instrument as is gravity to matter. Only, for the spiritual researcher this insight is not the result of theoretical considerations, rather a deep-reaching soul experience that one has when one places oneself in full consciousness at the boundary of ordinary knowledge. A person might now discover that the standing still at this boundary, if they have come to its recognition through theoretical considerations, is as if founded in the nature of knowing; but they cannot do this without deceiving themselves if they find themselves inwardly living with consciousness at this boundary. For in this experience, it depends only on whether a person can maintain it long enough in soul stillness to receive the inner revelation that thinking now frees from its attachment to the bodily instruments and that now becomes a living reality within itself, in the face of which everything that is bound to the bodily instrument only behaves as a spectator. Then thinking takes on a life of its own that makes it into a reality which one cannot observe in ordinary life and in recognized science. Then one experiences the difference between ordinary thinking and the thinking living within itself. Ordinary thinking gives images of real beings; but in itself it is as little a reality as a reflection is over against the mirrored object. Living thinking is a reality within itself."*³⁹

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The questions asked by Christoph Hueck are intellectual constructs that do not come from the soul region they are aimed at. A question that does not arise from the arbitrariness of the intellect, will always be recognized by the fact that it comes from the same soul sphere where the answer can also be found. The questions asked by Hueck, however, do not bear the answers within themselves; they correspond to a type of idea that, coming "from outside", knocks up against certain statements made by Rudolf Steiner in his work and then does not know how specific phenomena are to be brought together with those statements. This is why it is not surprising when in his article Hueck brings together certain statements of Rudolf Steiner about supersensible (not body-free!) consciousness in such a way that this compilation does not go beyond the tradition of "the-Doctor-said".

Such an approach will always have to lead to the fact that questions such as those posed by him at the outset cannot be answered. Hueck does not even once return to these questions in his article.⁴⁰

The not overcome Theosophy

If one reads certain remarks by Rudolf Steiner that he made especially from 1916 or 1918 about the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – How is it achieved?* or about the chapter "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds" from his work *Occult Science – An Outline*, one can become aware of the tragedy with which we are still dealing today: that of the need at the beginning of the 20th century to link onto the special soul situation of the members of the Theosophical Society.

³⁹ Quoted from: CW 35, p. 288f [tr. - or 269ff]. Emphasis mine – I.D. [tr. – The first half of this article, ending just before this quote by I.D., is available in English from the Rudolf Steiner Archive at: https://wn.rsarchive.org/GA/GA0035/DeaBir_index.html]

⁴⁰ In a subsequent article, however, Huck goes back again to his earlier remarks and explains: "A person moves with such experiences (such as the experience of the living, shaping forces in sprouting or wilting plants – I.D.) on the boundary between the ordinary and the no longer sense-based consciousness, which, according to Rudolf Steiner, can be increased to a completely body-free consciousness." Hueck, Christoph, "Strahlender als die Sonne" *Die Grenze zum leibfreien Bewusstsein in der Meditation* ["More radiant than the sun". *The Limit to Body-Free Consciousness in Meditation*], in: *Die Drei*, 3/2019, p. 19. What is shocking is how, in this article, the boundary between the ordinary and the no longer sensible, body-free consciousness is understood, which represents the threshold to the spiritual world.

It is well known that many of his contemporaries were shocked by Rudolf Steiner's apparent turning towards Theosophy, about which he had previously so expressly warned.⁴¹ Yet there were personalities among the members of that Society who "had great interest for the spirit world"⁴² and who in Rudolf Steiner recognized – at least feeling-wise – the person he had become. This became the reason why he took on the chairmanship of the German Section of the Theosophical Society in the year 1902.

Of course the souls of those people were not of such a nature that Rudolf Steiner could have immediately built on the spirit path depicted in his early works.⁴³ He had to pay attention to their special, theosophically formed and also pre-formed state of soul and seek to arouse an interest in an inner soul activity, to begin with with quite specific exercises and mantras. To these exercises belong the "perception" exercises so strongly pushed into the centre by the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation", which, as already mentioned, were expressly thought of as only for preparation. It was not until 1916 or 1918 that Rudolf Steiner was able to begin to link directly onto his pre-turn-of-the-century works. Yet interestingly enough, this happened, apart from the writings and essays written at that time,⁴⁴ primarily not in the lectures he held before the members of the Anthroposophical Society rather in public lectures.

How greatly Rudolf Steiner struggled to point out the misunderstandings that prevailed about his work and his aspirations, is evident in many of his remarks of those years. These misunderstandings were so numerous because instead of the 'world-historically new' of his path, again and again only the 'already known' was seen, which people interpreted according to their own inclination and then disseminated abroad. It is evident that Rudolf Steiner's comments about these misunderstandings were put in such a way as if they were also an answer to the present-day situation. Especially the many references in his lectures to his book "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – How is it Achieved?", as well as the epilogue of 1918, appear as if he had even anticipated the present development. That situation is not surprising but is the tendency to see in what is completely new of Anthroposophy nothing but what was known of old, today disseminated abroad at least as much as then.

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Still completely caught up in the Theosophical tradition of the early 20th century, the VIII Research Colloquium on "The Boundaries of Ordinary Consciousness and Body-Free Consciousness in Meditation", organized by Christoph Hueck and the Akanthos Academy, took place in June, 2018. Andreas Neider described the foundational contribution by Markus Buchmann, who took as his main point certain experiences of Eric Emanuel Schmitt who as a young man on an expedition to the Sahara had experienced a physical boundary situation.⁴⁵ Buchmann reported to the participants of the colloquium about,

"how he (Eric Emanuel Schmitt – I.D.) buried himself in the hot desert sand in order not to freeze, how he suddenly felt outside his body, felt himself hovering above himself, and how because of that he could directly have the experience of a person existing independently of the body, which made out of him, the materialistic-minded young man, a spiritually seeking person.

Markus Buchmann told the attending 60 participants of the Meditation Colloquium organized by the Akanthos Academy about this out-of-body experience in order to explain the various stages of body-free experience. In the case of imaginative experience, at first only thinking is detached from the body, in this case from the head. Only in inspirative experience does feeling also become detached from the body, although in the lower human being we remain connected to the body through our will. Apart from this, the body-free experience swings back and forth within what is imaginative between body-boundness and body-freeness. With this, however, it is always a matter of lifting what is experienced in the state of body-freeness, including what is only a dreamlike conscious, into clear consciousness."⁴⁶

⁴¹ So especially Rosa Mayreder, who had been important for Rudolf Steiner at the time of writing his *The Philosophy of Freedom*. See Mayreder, R., *Mein Pantheon, Lebenserinnerungen* [My Pantheon, Life Reminiscences], Rudolf Geering Verlag, o.l., pp. 180f.

⁴² LG, p. 279.

⁴³ These include, first and foremost: *A Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World Conception*, CW 2; *Truth and Science/Truth and Knowledge*, CW 3 and *The Philosophy of Freedom*, CW 4.

⁴⁴ The most important of these essays are in CW 35.

⁴⁵ Schmitt, Eric Emanuel, *Night Fire*, Frankfurt a. M. 2017.

⁴⁶ Neider, Andreas, *Die Erfahrung der Leibfreiheit* [The Experience of Body-Freeness]. For the VIII. Research Colloquium on Meditation Science on June 9, 2018 at the Rudolf Steiner House Stuttgart, in: *Die Drei* 9/2018, p. 72.

The remarks of Markus Buchmann were foundational for the Colloquium; as summary may be taken the division of body-freeness into three different stages laid out by him: an "imaginative", an "inspirative" and an "intuitive".⁴⁷ Following the fixed assumption held by the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation", according to which "imagination" is the strengthening of the idea, "inspiration" that of feeling, and "intuition" that of willing, body-freeness was then also "put into stages" and brought into direct connection with the body dependent phenomena that Eric Emanuel Schmitt had to do with.

It is quite hard to understand that this Colloquium was organized by people who did not belong to the Theosophical sphere of discussion of the beginning of the 20th century, rather were born one hundred years later and for the most part have been dealing and working for many years with Rudolf Steiner's work; and even more difficult to understand is that Markus Buchmann's remarks were not met with the strongest opposition among the 60 people present but instead became the basis of the Colloquium. For does the astral travel described by Buchmann (also called "out-of-body experience") not belong to such widespread phenomena⁴⁸ that would have interested the former Theosophists or Spiritualists, about whom, however, anyone who has worked with the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner certainly knows that it has absolutely nothing to do with the body-freeness that is to be achieved in meditation?

Time and again Rudolf Steiner points out that experiences of that kind are further removed from the soul path of Anthroposophy than those of ordinary consciousness. In other words: Every thinking "materialist" stands nearer to Anthroposophy than those who see in these phenomena more than manifestations of certain "*morbid or abnormal body relationships*". In the epilogue of 1918 to *A Way of / A Road to Self-Knowledge [of the Human Being]* Rudolf Steiner describes this connection as follows:

*"It may already be clear from the remarks on the second of these 'meditations' and will be seen from the following with even greater clarity, that the soul path spoken of in this text resolutely declines to deal with all pathological or abnormal relationships of the body based on so-called 'clairvoyance'. All that is visionary and mediumistic arising out of such states remains excluded on this soul path. Such soul contents emerge from a condition of the human being's inner nature as opposed to which sense perception and the thinking based on it represent a higher region. With this perception and this thinking, one lives **more** in the supersensible region, and with it one is more independent of the body than is the case when an irregular bodily organization of the soul conjures up a content that springs from processes which actually ought to serve the body and which, in a pathological manner, stray from their natural task and lead to ideas that are not based on an external perception nor on an independent activity of the will.*

Among the soul activities that are present in ordinary consciousness, it is only thinking that separates itself from perception and can lead to independent activity not determined by abnormal bodily expressions. Not below the soul state, not deeper into the organic activities, goes what is meant here as clairvoyant beholding, rather it goes up into regions that begin with the thinking inwardly illuminated by the soul and governed by one's own will. Out of this self-governed thinking, the soul develops the clairvoyant vision meant here. Thinking is the model for this vision. What is described as such a vision in the 'meditations', differs essentially, of course, from mere thinking, and it leads into supersensible experiences of worlds into which that thinking cannot penetrate. Yet the life the soul unfolds in this vision must be none other than that developed in thinking. With the same consciousness with which the soul lives in a thought, with which it passes from one thought to another, it must live in the visions, in the illuminations."⁴⁹

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The experiences of Eric Emanuel Schmitt are the result of "*pathological or abnormal relationships of the body*", which, according to Rudolf Steiner, lead even deeper into dependence on the body than is the case with ordinary

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 73.

⁴⁸ 15 to 35% of all adults from various countries and cultures around the world say they have had such experiences once before. See also: https://anthrowiki.at/Au%C3%9Ferk%C3%B6rperliche_Erfahrung

⁴⁹ Rudolf Steiner, *A Way/A Road to Self-Knowledge*, CW 16, p. 85f. (The bold emphases are from Rudolf Steiner; the expanded emphasis are mine – I.D.)

thinking and perception. Not a "seeing-one's-own-body-from-outside", which can occur automatically in certain abnormal stress situations, characterizes the higher consciousness according to Rudolf Steiner, rather quite the contrary, it is a question here of tearing oneself away from the ordinary thinking processes, something that can only result from a hard, wide-awake thinking work carried on by a strong will, consciously guided. Not easy and automatic, so to speak "by itself", proceeds the development here, rather it is the result of an again and again renewed wrestling and self-overcoming that has to take place within thinking.

"Pure Thinking" as a Prerequisite?

The efforts within "Anthroposophical Meditation" to place their own meditative activity in a visible connection to the work of Rudolf Steiner have recently increased considerably. This development stands in contradiction to its beginning when for the representatives of "Anthroposophical Meditation" *"the ability to connect (...) to the general discourse of the present day"*⁵⁰ was more important than to the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner. In the further course of this development, what for Rudolf Steiner was the center of every meditative endeavor – thinking – is also being spoken of for the first time. It even appears in the title of one of the major meditation conferences organized by the Akanthos Academy in Stuttgart: "The Soul Breathes within the Light – Meditative Practice between Thinking and Perception," is the name of the conference scheduled for the end of March, 2019. Anyone interested who picks up the conference program, however, will be quickly disappointed: The events offered will, as always, be above all "perception exercises". Not one of the 11 different workshops is dedicated to the training of thinking.⁵¹ This is why it is not surprising when Andreas Neider, who wrote the introduction to this conference, explains:

*"The aim of this conference is to present the significance of sense perception for Anthroposophical meditation and to make the latter so accessible to a broader circle of interested people that a regular meditation practice can arise from it."*⁵²

Once again the popular "sense perception" is placed at the center of an allegedly Anthroposophical meditation practice. Yet where has thinking disappeared to from the conference title? Or otherwise: why does it even appear in the title of the conference?

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At the center of the Stuttgart conference at the end of March, 2019, stands the "Soul Light Process", which was only mentioned once by Rudolf Steiner, and which for some time now has become a sort of "in vogue phrase". In order to handle this extremely difficult concept, which was used by Rudolf Steiner only once in a lecture on November 30, 1919,⁵³ other lectures are drawn on in which thinking and perception appear in their polarity with breathing out and breathing in: These are the lectures Rudolf Steiner gave during the 1st Anthroposophical course of the School for Spiritual Science in September/October, 1920.⁵⁴ At the center of this cycle of eight lectures, which became known under the title "The Boundaries of Natural Science", is a mathematizing, pure thinking, and only at the end of the cycle does Rudolf Steiner come to speak of a perceiving that can only develop in such a soul sphere that begins to be formed in the constant training of pure thinking.

Anna-Katharina Dehmelt has taken up these lectures in a recent article with which she intends to lay the foundation for this year's meditation congress. In detail (and for the first time), she goes into – in reference to Rudolf Steiner – the central role of thinking; she repeatedly and emphatically emphasizes that the training of pure thinking must be the unconditional and indispensable condition of any meditative work. She explains:

⁵⁰ Dehmelt, A.-K., "Everything in the World is Conscious", loc. cit., p. 7.

⁵¹ Thus inter alia those of A. Neider and H.-Chr. Zehnter offered "Perception exercises in the twilight and at sunrise"; the "morning meditations" directed by C. Gleide and Steffen Hartmann, in which colors and "inner sounds" are to be experienced; the "perception exercises from the research on formative forces" offered by Markus Buchmann and Dirk Kruse, etc. But even if perception is not so clearly in the center of attention, the training of thinking is never in focus. See: <http://www.anthroposophischemeditation.de/pdf/flyer.pdf>

⁵² Ibid., p. 2.

⁵³ In: Michael's Mission – The Archangel Michael, CW 194.

⁵⁴ The Boundaries of Natural Science, CW 322.

*"First of all, it is assumed that one has intensively studied Steiner's 'Philosophy of Freedom', but not to take note of it, rather to strengthen and purify through it one's own thinking. As a prerequisite for the Soul Light Process, a thinking should already have been practiced that is capable of observing itself, of guiding itself and of holding itself free from reminiscing on the sense world."*⁵⁵

And she concludes:

*"Only on this basis does the path into imagination begin."*⁵⁶

With these few sentences Anna-Katharina Dehmelt expresses something new that puts all her previous work in question; as already indicated, she has never before, to my knowledge, expressed anything in this way about the role of working on thinking, or in lectures, seminars, congresses, and the like, encouraged practicing "pure thinking". In the same way, with these sentences she refutes everything she herself has hitherto expressed about the formation of imaginations; it was always only ideas that had to be worked on,⁵⁷ but not a thinking that is capable *"of observing itself, of guiding itself and of holding itself free from reminiscing on the sense world"*.

Yet that is not all: with these sentences, Anna-Katharina Dehmelt also contradicts the work of all her colleagues; with these she places herself in open contradiction to "Anthroposophical Meditation" in general and to the Stuttgart Congress in particular, which she wants to prepare with her article; for this thinking, as she explains further in connection with the lectures by Rudolf Steiner, has to be so got hold of that it also transforms the manner of perception; this should become completely free of ideas and at the same time be "drawn in". She explains:

*"The preparatory work on the 'Philosophy of Freedom' is particularly indispensable in order to exclude the penetration of perception with ideas. Strengthening thinking leads precisely to holding it back when perceiving (...) normally one should 'draw in' the perceptions 'without working on them with ideas while drawing them in'."*⁵⁸

With these sentences, Anna-Katharina Dehmelt turns all her previous work as well as the greater part of that of her colleagues upside-down. These sentences are a blow to everything that has been held up till now by these people as "perception meditations". Neither a 'pure thinking' was previously practiced for this, nor even less were the ideas arising in meditation held back. On the contrary, they even formed the centerpiece of the work, as can be seen, for example, in the work of Corinna Gleide.

Unfortunately, the reader of her article who had hoped at this point that Anna-Katharina Dehmelt might draw the necessary consequences from this finding, wherewith a fundamental discussion about the relationship between Anthroposophy and meditation could have begun, will be disappointed. The attentive reader will become increasingly surprised in the course of the article, and only gradually will the world of ideas on which the remarks of Anna-Katharina Dehmelt are based become clear. This is due to the fact that Dehmelt does not at all consider a thinking capable *"of observing itself, of guiding itself and of holding itself free from reminiscing on the sense world"* as necessary to be practiced. No, her further remarks make clear: She assumes that this thinking already exists from the outset – and this not only with herself and with her meditation colleagues, rather also with sociologists such as Christian Rittelmeyer and Hartmut Rosa. In fact, according to Dehmelt their work would show,

*"that today, we are more and more in a position to penetrate into the branch of perception of the Soul Light Process – far more than was the case 100 years ago."*⁵⁹

That Anna-Katharina Dehmelt quite obviously assumes that the ability that Rudolf Steiner called "pure thinking" can today be presupposed humanity-wide is also evident a few pages further on in the same issue of "Die Drei": There, Andreas Neider reports on a congress entitled "Meditation and Science" held in Berlin in December, 2018, at which Anna-Katharina Dehmelt introduced, for the 550 attendees who were of course largely non-Anthroposophists, a typical "Anthroposophical" meditation: a "perception meditation" on the basis of a herb

⁵⁵ Dehmelt, Anna-Katharina, Von Lichtseelenprozess. Grundlagen und Übungsansätze [About the Soul Light Process. Principles and exercises], in: Die Drei 3/2019, p. 29. (Emphasis mine – I.D.)

⁵⁶ Ibid. (Emphasis mine – I.D.)

⁵⁷ See inter alia Dehmelt, Anna-Katharina, Meditation and Research. Part II, loc. cit.

⁵⁸ Dehmelt, Anna-Katharina, About the Soul Light Process, op. cit., p. 29. (Emphasis mine – I.D.)

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

handed out to all participants.⁶⁰ Not the question of pure thinking as a prerequisite for any Anthroposophical meditation was mentioned, rather a preparatory exercise presented as characteristic for the path of Anthroposophy, and in fact such a preparatory exercise that Rudolf Steiner had given to a Theosophical reading circle in 1904/5, which he clearly referred to in his epilogue of 1918, because:

*"The path to supersensible knowledge characterized in this text leads to a soul experience concerning which it is of quite particular importance that whoever seeks it does not give themselves over to deceptions and misunderstandings about it; and it is easy for a person to deceive themselves about what is under consideration here."*⁶¹

That the entire epilogue of 1918 is dedicated to pure thinking as the absolutely necessary prerequisite for any Anthroposophical meditation in order to understand and prevent these types of obvious misunderstandings, I have already described.

Anyone who seriously struggles to practice a sense-free, pure thinking must recognize that Anna-Katharina Dehmelt certainly has read of "pure thinking" in Rudolf Steiner, but that – much like Corinna's Gleide – she equates what she read with what she experienced. Because a person who with the aid of Rudolf Steiner's sentences struggles for pure thinking, experiences how far such a thinking is from everyday thinking and therefore cannot be presupposed, they will be forced to recognize that Anna-Katharina Dehmelt can only speak like this about pure thinking, because it has remained unknown to her until now. This which has remained unknown to her, however, remains unconscious for her.

Once more we witness how what is unconscious, when faced with what one is doing, determines and directs this doing. Again it is not noticed how assertions are placed next to and after one another that are completely mutually exclusive, and how an activity is continued on that is in blatant contradiction to the thoughts that have been recognized as essential.

*

We are only a few years from the 100th anniversary of Rudolf Steiner's death. The development of so-called "Anthroposophical Meditation" makes it clear that today a question absolutely needs to be seen and answered: Will that which is unconscious, which has characterized the life form of Anthroposophy since the death of Rudolf Steiner, continue to dominate and so finally rob Anthroposophy of its own being. Or will there be a future for the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, a future that has as a definite and very first prerequisite the becoming conscious in the face of what one is doing?

Irene Diet, March, 2019

⁶⁰ Neider, Andreas, Selbstoptimierung oder Weltbezug [Self-optimization or world reference?] For the Fourth Congress, 'Meditation and Science', in: Die Drei 3/2019, p. 76.

⁶¹ Rudolf Steiner, Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – How is it Achieved?[p.207] CW 10, p. 216.