

WALDORF AND DIVERSITY

A PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE

AN INSUFFICIENT INTRODUCTION

SVEN SAAR

NOVEMBER 2022

INTERNATIONAL
CAMPUS
WALDORF

WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Have you been disadvantaged, discriminated against, violated, patronised?

What follows may be painful to encounter...for a variety of reasons.



In order to reassure myself that I think, feel and act in a way that minimises the danger of causing hurt and offence, I need to examine:

1. My personal perspective, and how it informs my practice and my conduct
2. The curriculum and statutory aspects
3. Anthroposophy and related resource material
4. My personal perspective again



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“An anthroposophist is a human being who struggles with cognitive development issues for decades - out of choice!”





Individuality and Genus – a conversation with myself

I. To what extent are my thoughts, feelings and actions determined by

- a) My ethnicity / nationality?
- b) My gender?
- c) My parents' values?
- d) My parents' wealth and education?
- e) My culture and upbringing?

A lot	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all







Easy Skin Care Tips
goodhousekeeping.com



How to Get Glowing Skin - Expert Tips ...
goodhousekeeping.com



The beauty of the face - CosBeauty
cosbeauty.com.au



Glowing Skin - e.l.f. Glow Beautifully...
pinterest.co.uk



Non-Surgical Beauty Beauty Proce...
elle.com



Beautiful Woman Face. Beauty Portrait ...
athenaclinics.co.uk



15 Summer Makeup Tips - Best Makeup for ...
goodhousekeeping.com



Face and Beauty Treatments at Tea...
teamcaidental.co.uk



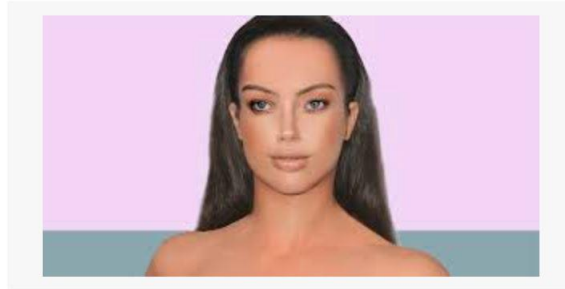
Beauty Face Images, Stock Photos ...
shutterstock.com



10 Ways To Enhance Your Natural Beauty ...
skincaretopnews.com



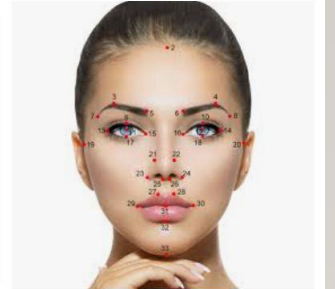
Face Eyebrow Hair Skin Cheek, PNG ...
favpng.com



This is the most beautiful face in the ...
metro.co.uk



Face Beauty Treatments Fleet Hampshire
face2facebeauty.co.uk



Golden Ratio Facial Analysis
goldennumber.net



“What colour should I use for the face?”

“Use skin colour!”



THE CRAYON PROJECT





Skin

colourS!

“White Privilege?”

Twelve Questions.



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11. If my leadership is unsuccessful, I can be sure it is not because of my skin colour.



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12. When I talk with my mouth full people do not assume it is because of “my culture”.





IS **SEXISM** LESS HARMFUL THAN **RACISM**?

STANDING UP AGAINST DISCRIMINATION!

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0005f71>

**“PRIVILEGE IS WHEN
YOU THINK SOMETHING
IS NOT A PROBLEM
BECAUSE IT’S NOT A
PROBLEM TO YOU
PERSONALLY.”**

Intention must be secondary to effect.

...but also:

“The idea that being offended is a valid critique has gained a lot of traction.”

Salman Rushdie May 2021



There is no aspect of anthroposophy that our school faculty embraces dogmatically. Rather we continually test it to see what is true in these times and in this particular place and what is healthy for our students.

We do this while recognizing the history and ongoing impact of racism and the formative influence of the patriarchal, Eurocentric system on our culture and on educational practice in general.

It is our goal to recognize these forces and **awaken our awareness of unconscious biases around race, socio-economic status, sex and gender identity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, age, physical ability, religion, nationality, and any other characteristic that might blind us to the dignity inherent in every individual.**

San Francisco Waldorf School diversity statement





What opportunities are offered here for
socialization,
qualification,
individuation ?

cf. Rawson, "De-colonizing your curriculum", 2020

Freie Hochschule Stuttgart

Developing a Waldorf
Curriculum in Asia

Written Scientific Master's Thesis

for obtaining the academic degree

Master of Arts

Class- and Subject Teacher for Waldorf Schools

Submitted by:

Serene Fong

Breathing new life into old wisdom



A great deal of research was needed in order to bring a specifically Thai version of Waldorf Education into being. Studies were made of Buddhism as the country's main religion and of traditional attitudes and cultures. The two main festivals - Songkran: the New Year Festival and Loy Kratong: the Festival of Floating Lanterns – have been integrated in the school backed by new understanding. Buddhist and Chinese festivals, the two main cultural influences to put their stamp on the country, are celebrated in the kindergarten throughout the year.

Little known but carefully studied Thai fairy tales are told in Class 1. They are imbued by the same qualities as fairy tales in the West. The tales of Arahats, a Buddhist monk who received illumination, are told in Class 2. The sufferings of Kuan Yin, the Chinese Goddess of Mercy provide exciting stories for eight-year-olds. And the story of the Eight Immortals or that of the Chinese Monkey God can make a strong impression on children if well told. In Class 3 the children build a bamboo hut in the house-building main lesson and plant and harvest rice. Thai folk-tales and legends are treated in Class 4's local history and geography lessons. Class 5 pupils are inspired by the great Indian epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and also stories about great Chinese thinkers such as Confucius. Whereas in Europe children in Class 6 hear about the Romans, in Thailand they are told the history of the great ruler of the Chin Dynasty who united the gigantic Chinese realm under his sway. Although Thai children pass through the same phases as children all over the world as their consciousness develops there are one or two slight differences. For this reason the flute is not introduced until Class 3 or 4. Western instruments are added in Class 5. In handwork lessons weaving is done with bamboo leaves, and in modelling with clay or working with wood or leather the decorations hark back to ancient Thai craft traditions. English and Chinese are taught from Class 1 as they nicely balance the very refined Thai language.

Although there are many obstacles in the laws and regulations still to be overcome, Waldorf Education in Thailand can look to a bright future. The only question is whether it will be able to keep its promise to bring in the highest quality.

PORN PANOSOT

St Michael and the
Devil,

Catholic Church,
Ghana

2018



The Order of St Michael and St George:

A reward for “service in a foreign country, or in relation to foreign and Commonwealth affairs”.

2022



AUSPICIUM MELIORIS AEVI: Pledge for a better age.

It is impossible to understand a person entirely, if one bases one's judgment upon a generic concept. One persists the most in judging according to the genus where it is a matter of gender: A man sees in a woman, a woman in a man, almost always too much of the general characteristics of the opposite sex and too little of what is individual. [...]

Rudolf Steiner,
“Philosophy of Freedom”

Anyone who judges human beings according to their generic character stops short at the very point beyond which they begin to be individuals whose activity rests on free self-determination.

Philosophy of Freedom, chapter 14



A differentiated approach to encountering racism in Rudolf Steiner's work.



Instances of racism in Steiner's work?



21 August 1922. Lecture 5 Oxford Course:

Wenn man aus dem Leben heraus Grundsätze aufstellt, weiß man, wie das Leben mannigfaltig ist, wie sich das eine in der allerverschiedensten Weise verwirklicht.

Denn selbst die Neger müssen wir als Menschen ansehen, und in ihnen ist ja die menschliche Gestalt in einer ganz anderen Weise verwirklicht als in uns, zum Beispiel. Und so handelt es sich darum, daß jede Art von Pedanterie, aber auch jede Art von Schematismus ferngehalten werden muß, wenn Erziehungskunst als etwas Lebendiges aufgefaßt wird,

When we have to deal with life, isn't life is in all of you— natural life? You are all human beings, but you all look different. No one's hair is like that of another. Life displays variety in manifold forms. Each person has a different face. If you lay down abstract principles, you expect to find the same activities in every classroom. If your principles are taken from life, you know that life is varied and that the same thing can be done in very different ways. You can see, for example, that negroes are also regarded as human beings, yet in them the human form appears quite differently. In the same way, when the art of education is held as a living art, all slavish attention to rules and every sort of formalism must be avoided.



Steiner and the „Mulattoes“ quote

The passage IS in lecture 2, GA 348, 30/12/1922, but was (wisely or disingenuously?) left out of the recent English edition of the “**Workers Lectures**”.

You see, if I asked a pregnant woman today what she would like to read – well, there isn’t anything! There’s nothing worth recommending! The other day I went into a Basel bookshop and saw a list of the latest publications: a negro novel – showing how currently the negroes are gradually entering European civilisation. You can see Negro dances performed everywhere, people hopping about .

And now we’ve even got this negro novel – it’s dead boring, appallingly boring, but people can’t get enough of it. For my part I am convinced that if we get a few more of these negro novels, and we give them to pregnant women to read, we won’t even have to arrange for negroes to come into Europe in order for there to be Mulattoes: through the very reading of negro novels a whole crowd of children will be born in Europe that are all grey, with Mulatto hair and looking just like Mulattoes!



The founder of anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), dealt with questions of individuality, diversity, and race in his talks and writings in the early 20th century. We acknowledge that some passages characterize race and other group identities in a way that we recognize as incorrect and offensive.

Throughout his life, Steiner spoke about the growing social and spiritual importance of diversity in communities of the future, principles of common humanity that we affirm. **We explicitly reject any theory or statement in Rudolf Steiner's work that characterizes or judges individual human beings as superior or inferior based on racial, gender, ethnic, or other group identity.**

San Francisco Waldorf School diversity statement



The Dutch Commission (2000):

Zeist/Driebergen, Netherlands, April 1, 2000: On Saturday, April 1, 2000, the Commission on "Anthroposophy and the Question of Race" made its final report to the Council of the Anthroposophical Society in The Netherlands

In total the Commission examined and evaluated 245 quotations from the 89,000 page collected works of Rudolf Steiner

The conclusion of the Commission is that sixteen statements, if they were in public by a person on his or her own authority, could be a violation of the prohibition of racial discrimination under the Criminal Code of the Netherlands.

The Frankfurt Memorandum (2008):

Frankfurt Memorandum: Rudolf Steiner and the subject of racism¹

By Ramon Brüll and Dr. Jens Heisterkamp

Overview:

- I. Introduction
- II. Critical examination of Steiner's remarks
 - 1. Apparently racist theosophical terminology
 - 2. Anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism
 - 3. Discrimination through attribution of decadence
 - 4. Discrimination through unclear formulation and creation of stereotypes
 - 5. Racist remarks
- III. Steiner against the background of historical-critical research
- IV. Developmental thinking between the ideal and an hierarchical approach
- V. Summary and conclusions

Annex 1: Background to this memorandum

Annex 2: Documentation: official statements on the subject from the anthroposophical movement

Example from 1904:

The greatest part of the Atlantean population declined, and from a small portion are descended the so-called Aryans who comprise present-day civilized humanity. According to the nomenclature of the science of the spirit, the Lemurians, Atlanteans and Aryans are root races of mankind. If one imagines that two such root races preceded the Lemurians and that two will succeed the Aryans in the future, one obtains a total of seven. One always arises from another in the manner just indicated with respect to the Lemurians, Atlanteans, and Aryans. Each root race has physical and mental characteristics which are quite different from those of the preceding one. While, for example, the Atlanteans especially developed memory and everything connected with it, at the present time it is the task of the Aryans to develop the faculty of thought and all that belongs to it.

From *Cosmic Memory*, CW 11, chapter 3



The idea of **race** is only really applicable to old Atlantis. Since we deal with the real evolution of mankind, we have never employed the idea of race in the most eminent sense for the post-Atlantean age. **We do not speak of an Indian race, a Persian race etc, because that is no longer correct.**

We speak of an old Indian period of civilisation, of an old Persian period of civilisation, etc. And it would be utterly devoid of sense if we would speak of our time preparing a sixth race. If relics of the old Atlantean distinctions, of their group soulness, are still existing in our time, so that one can still say that racial division continues to work on -- that which is preparing to the six period of time consists just in the character of race being stripped off. That is the essential.

from "Individuality and the Group Soul", Munich, 4th December, 1909



Therefore it is necessary that the movement which is called **the anthroposophical movement**, which should prepare the sixth period of time, adopts in its basic character this stripping off of the character of race – that especially it **seeks to unite people out of all “races” out of all nations, and in this way bridges over these differences, these distinctions, these gaps, which are existing between various groups of human beings.**

For the old racial standpoint had in a certain connection a physical character, whereas what will fulfil itself in the future will have a much more spiritual character. Therefore it is so urgently necessary to understand that our anthroposophical movement is a spiritual one, which looks to the spirit, and overcomes just that which arises from physical distinctions, through the force of a spiritual movement.

It is, of course, thoroughly comprehensible that **any movement has, as it were, its childish illnesses**, and that in the beginning of the theosophical movement, matters were so represented as if the earth fell into seven periods of time - they were called Root races - and each of these Root races into seven sub-races, and that would always repeat itself, so that one could always speak of seven races, and seven sub-races, etc.

But one must get beyond the illnesses of childhood, and be clear that the idea of race ceases to have any meaning, especially in our age.

from “Individuality and the Group Soul”, Munich, 4th December, 1909

Broadly speaking, Steiner quotes that may be characterised as racist fall into four categories:

1. Expressions in need of contextualising because they appear racist to the superficial view.
2. Expressions for which there can be no excuse: they were as ill-judged and offensive last century as they are now.
3. Expressions from which Steiner later distanced himself because he recognised them as misjudged. Are they closer to 1. or 2.?
4. Passages we have not yet examined:

This 'Body of the Ego' is the vehicle of the higher soul of man. Through it man is the crown of all earthly creation. Now in the human being of the present day the Ego is by no means simple in character. We may recognize its nature if we compare human beings at different stages of development.

Look at the uneducated savage beside the average European, or again, compare the latter with a lofty idealist. Each one of them has the faculty of saying ' I ' to himself; the 'Body of the Ego' is present in them all. But the uneducated savage, with his Ego, follows his passions, impulses, and cravings almost like an animal.

The more highly developed man says to himself, 'Such and such impulses and desires you may follow,' while others again he holds in check or suppresses altogether.

The idealist has developed new impulses and new desires in addition to those originally present.

All this has taken place through the Ego working upon the other members of the human being. Indeed, it is this which constitutes the special task of the Ego. Working outward from itself, it has to ennoble and purify the other members of man's nature.

“The education of the child in the light of anthroposophy”, 1907



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Look at a member of a tribal community living in the wilds of nature with the average European, or again, compare the latter with a lofty idealist. Each one of them has the faculty of saying ' I ' to himself; the 'Body of the Ego' is present in them all. But the member of the tribal community, with his Ego, follows his passions, impulses, and cravings almost like an animal.

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“The education of the child in the light of anthroposophy”, 1907

Problem solved?

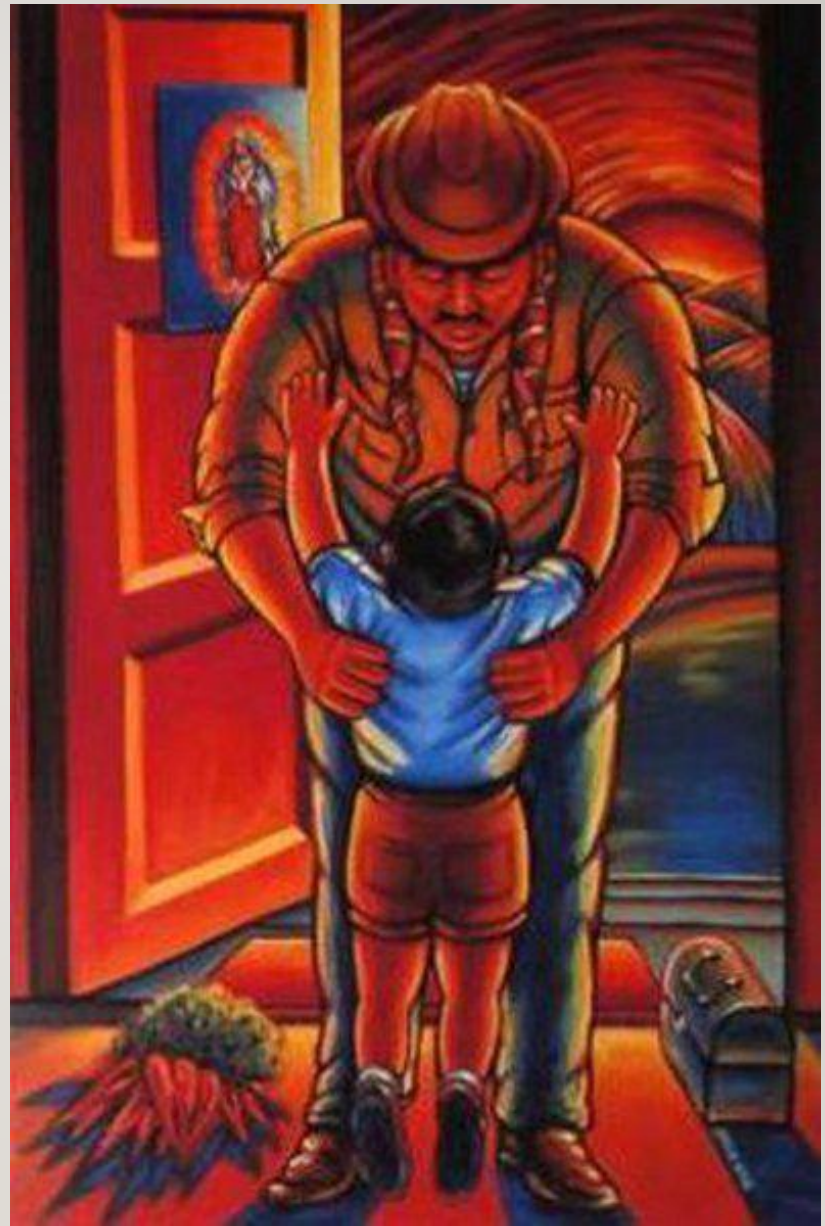


So what needs to change?









who wants

So what ~~X~~ needs ~~X~~ to change?

I do.