

ABSTRACT

This dissertation deals with the philosophical and anthroposophical foundations of Waldorf pedagogy. It presents and analyses the philosophical work of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). Particular emphasis is placed on epistemology, because with it Steiner tries to justify not only sensory-empirical cognition (science), but also the possibility of so-called spiritual cognition or spiritual science. The prerequisite of spiritual science (anthroposophy) is the transformation of thinking into so-called living thinking, which Steiner believes was pioneered by Johann W. von Goethe (1749-1832). Not abstract pedagogical principles, but such enlivened thinking is also supposed to be the cornerstone of good practice in Waldorf pedagogy. Anthroposophy is to be an aid to the revitalization of thinking. The relation of anthroposophy to philosophy and science is dealt with in the final part of the thesis. In it will be also outlined the context of Steiner's theory of knowledge and anthroposophy and their place in the history of philosophical thought. It will be shown that Steiner offers an expanded conception of science than the conventional one, which makes the scientific foundation of Steiner's pedagogy questionable. The recognition of the scientific character of anthroposophy rests partly on the recognition of the possibility of a so-called spiritual science, while such recognition by the scientific community also has internal obstacles in the misapprehension of anthroposophy, whether in the anthroposophical movement or in the environment of Waldorf schools. It will turn out that Steiner intended anthroposophy not as a closed worldview, but as an open system (or even organism) capable of self-reflection, whose role in Waldorf pedagogy is primarily for application: to stimulate a fruitful pedagogical practice through a meditative grasp of anthroposophical ideas.

KEYWORDS

Rudolf Steiner, theory of knowledge (epistemology), science, philosophy, anthroposophy, spiritual science, Waldorf pedagogy, thinking, abstractions, living thought, Goethe