

Germany:

A Debate on Questions of Our Time

Becoming Free Through the Other

On October 5th, a colloquium at Rudolf Steiner-House in Frankfurt (DE) debated questions of our time around the conditions and perspectives for an 'Understanding of the Other'.

Whilst at the moment the press is leading an intensive discussion on how much Islam should be allowed in a country like Germany and how far immigrants are willing or unwilling to conform, the colloquium on questions of our time addressed the enigmatic encounter, when one I meets with another. As an introduction, Thomas Kracht (Hardenberg-Institute, Heidelberg) presented two findings which had encouraged him to prepare this meeting. As well as in the autobiography of Barack Obama 'Dreams from My Father' as in the book about the free intercultural Waldorf School Mannheim, comments can be found, says Kracht, about the development of an irreducible humanity; whilst this mainly relates to cultures, however, the individual human being is not confined within it. In fact, understanding a human being is not achieved by only looking at his past and his environment. But how is an understanding beyond this possible?

Conditions of the Process of Understanding

A contribution by the Philosopher Stefan Brotbecks got straight to the point of this question. Brotbeck explained the alternating conditions of the process of understanding, where not only «Understanding» matters but also «giving to understand», not only «participation» but also «communication». Three questions were given by the lecturer for self-examination: «Do we really participate or do we only react? Do we really communicate or do we only manipulate? Which abilities enhance our participation and inspire communication?» In relation to the last question, Brotbeck looked at Plato's dialogues where truth, benevolence and forthrightness are described as conditions for the unfolding of the Logos in dialogue.

How an understanding is «an act of deliverance of the one through the other», was addressed by Stephan Stockmar (Chief Editor of the publication 'Die Drei'). The fact that one might be exposed in the other can lead actually lead to a renewed self-examination, says Stockmar. However, there is the risk to use the other purely as a tool for one's own self-knowledge without really meeting him.

Understanding Based on Sense Organs

In the afternoon we focused on concepts of understanding in Rudolf Steiner's 'Philosophy of Freedom', including this sentence in chapter 14: «if we are to understand a free individuality we must take over into our own spirit those concepts by which he determines himself, in their pure form (without mixing our own conceptual content with them)». Rudy Vandercruysse (Hardenberg-Institute) linked this sentence with the characteristics of morale fantasy from the same book. The fact that different sense organs cause different modes of understanding and that every understanding at the same time presupposes a pre-understanding, so that only the ability to understand leads to opportunities of understanding, were some of the comments concluding Kracht's final address. | Philip Kovce, Witten (DE)

Switzerland: Rudolf-Steiner-Research Days

The Sound Depends on Me

On 8 and 9 October young researchers and students discussed the relationship between Anthroposophy and Science and between Science and Life at the Rudolf-Steiner-Archive in Dornach (CH). They focussed on working with sound and processes in society.

What actually is a sound in its beingness? This is the question the pianist and author Steffen Hartmann of the Institute Man Music in Hamburg, has been working on. It is based on the realisation that so far sounds are only understood, more or less, from their quantitative qualities, although music history shows undoubtedly an «emancipation of individual sounds» (Hartmann). But what defines an individual sound if it is not defined by key, position, length, volume or an interval? An-

swers to this question were explored with Hartmann and the participants, by using works by Johann Sebastian Bach, Franz Schubert, Hugo Wolf, Arnold Schönberg and Morton Feldman for a deepened listening experience. It was now possible to achieve listening phases from 'calmness before' to 'calmness after', and also to recognise that from a specific moment onwards it is completely up to me whether and how a tone sounds. The way it manifests depends on its interaction with my organisation. Steiner's comments relating to the change in musical experience which he explains in 'The Inner Nature of Music and the Experience of Tone' (GA 283), as well as his own experiences, inspired Hartmann's research.

Awareness for Social Processes

Bijan Kafi, consultant on civil processes, spoke on the subject 'from philistine to free individual-anthroposophical perspectives of civic engagement between the economy and the state'. Kafi showed that in Steiner the term civic engagements does not have the same meaning as today, possibly because Steiner already describes the «free individual» as «socially active person» who contributes to the social organism. In addition, Kafi looked critically at civic engagement by using the ADAC, the Bertelsmann-Trust and the Eliant-Initiative, to show what problems can arise when particular interests without social sensibilities become pseudo public interests. Anthroposophy could develop a more sensitive awareness of social processes, says Kafi.

Finally, a conversation around the relationship between science and life. Although there might be a conscious division between these fields, factually, however, they both are one. That doesn't lead me so much to the question whether but more how science makes sense, especially if it is not applied as an end in itself but for the «advancement of human individuality» ('Philosophy of Freedom'). | Philip Kovce, Witten (DE)

Next Rudolf-Steiner-Research Days:
May 2011, Vienna
www.steinerforschungstage.net

Schweiz: Rudolf-Steiner-Forschungstage

An mir liegt, ob es klingt

Am 8. und 9. Oktober besprachen junge Forscher und Studierende im Rudolf-Steiner-Archiv in Dornach (CH) das Verhältnis von Anthroposophie und Wissenschaft sowie von Wissenschaft und Leben. Thematische Schwerpunkt waren darüber hinaus der Umgang mit dem musikalischen Ton und der Blick auf zivilgesellschaftliche Prozesse.

Was ist eigentlich ein Ton seinem Wesen nach? Mit dieser Frage hat sich der Pianist und Autor Steffen Hartmann vom Institut «MenschMusik Hamburg» auseinandergesetzt. Ausgangspunkt war die Einsicht, dass bis heute Töne nur über mehr oder weniger quantitative Eigenschaften erfasst werden, obwohl in der Musikgeschichte eindeutig eine «Emanzipation des einzelnen Tons» (Hartmann) erkennbar sei. Was macht nun aber den einzelnen Ton aus, wenn er nicht durch Tonart, Lage, Dauer, Lautstärke oder ein Intervall charakterisiert wird?

Antworten auf diese Fragen entwickelte Hartmann gemeinsam mit den Teilnehmern, indem er anhand von Kompositionen Johann Sebastian Bachs, Franz Schuberts, Hugo Wolfs, Arnold Schönbergs und Morton Feldmans zu einem vertieften Hörerleben anregte. Eine differenzierte Gliederung der Hörphasen von einer «Stille davor» bis zu einer «Stille danach» wurde nun ebenso möglich wie die Erkenntnis, dass es ab einem gewissen Moment unmittelbar an mir liegt, ob und wie ein Ton erklingt: Seine Erscheinungsform bildet sich nur noch im Zusammenspiel mit meiner Organisation. Fragen Steiners zum «Umschwung in dem ganzen musikalischen Erleben», die dieser in «Das Wesen des Musikalischen und das Tonerlebnis im Menschen» (GA 283) schildert, dienten Hartmann, neben eigenen Erfahrungen, als Anregung für die Untersuchung.

Sensibilisieren für soziale Prozesse

Bijan Kafi, Berater zivilgesellschaftlicher Prozesse, sprach über das Thema «Vom Philister zum freien Individuum: Anthroposophische Perspektiven für bürgerschaftliches Engagement zwischen Wirtschaft und Staat». Dabei zeigte Kafi, dass bei Steiner der Begriff des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements keine der heutigen Bedeutung entsprechende Rolle spielt – wohl deshalb, weil Steiner das «freie Individuum» bereits als «sozial handelnden Menschen» beschreibt, der am sozialen Organismus partizipiert. Außerdem setzte sich Kafi kritisch mit zivilgesellschaftlichem Engagement auseinander, indem er anhand des ADAC, der Bertelsmann-Stiftung und der Eliant-

Initiative darstellte, welche Probleme entstehen können, wenn Partikularinteressen ohne soziale Sensibilität zu pseudoöffentlichen Interessen erklärt werden. Für das Wahrnehmen sozialer Prozesse könne die Anthroposophie jedoch sensibilisieren, so die Einschätzung Kafis.

Im gemeinsamen Gespräch ging es schließlich um das Verhältnis von Wissenschaft und Leben. Zwar mag es eine Trennung dieser Bereiche bewusstseinsmäßig geben, faktisch fallen beide jedoch immer in eins. Das führt nicht so sehr zur Frage ob, sondern vielmehr wie Wissenschaft sinnvoll ist – gerade wenn sie nicht als Selbstzweck, sondern zur «Erhöhung des Daseinswertes der menschlichen Persönlichkeit» (‹Philosophie der Freiheit›) betrieben werden soll. | *Philip Kovce, Witten (DE)*

Hinweis: Die nächsten Rudolf-Steiner-Forschungstage finden im Mai 2011 in Wien statt. Informationen und weitere Berichte: www.steinerforschungstage.net.

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