

## Interview with Thomas Meyer about his work & his views on Anthroposophy today

This is a e-mail interview. The questions were asked by Bruce Donehower, Sacramento in December 2001.

**Question 1:** What experiences led you to work on the biographies of D. N. Dunlop and Count Polzer-Hoditz?

**Answer 1:** Originally it was my interest in the work and the personality of W.J. Stein. When visiting his daughter in Ireland (1979) I found in his literary estate typescripts, letters, manuscripts on and by D.N. Dunlop, Polzer-Hoditz and many others of his friends, also the typescript of the doctoral thesis by Stein, with numerous handwritten corrections by R. Steiner.

In her book, *Ein Lebensbild*, Lili Kolisko speaks of an inner opposition to Rudolf Steiner. For example, on page 460 she says: “Dr. Steiner hatte oft darüber geklagt, dass man gegen ihn eine innere Opposition treibe. Man findet das in den Sitzungen des 30er Kreises; man findet es in zahlreichen Vorträgen erwähnt—es wurde dies öfters in diesem Buch dargestellt—von der Weihnachtstagung und nach der Weihnachtstagung.”

**Question 2:** Can we speak of an inner opposition today? If so, in what sense do you see this working and how can it be met?

**Answer 2:** I think there is indeed an – often unconscious – opposition against R. Steiner within the AS since Steiner's death. A symptomatic, rel. recent example: Look at the foreword by R. Lissau of the *Zeitgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* Vol. II. It gives a portrait of RS as sometimes being swayed by emotions of chauvinism etc. It was reproduced in the members sheet March 15<sup>th</sup> 1992. No one in the Vorstand or the membership cared about this attack upon the capacity of RS to stay objective when speaking about the West, the English speaking people or so called Western lodges: You can still get it in the bookshop. This sort of indifference vis a vis an officially published statement about RS can be considered as a sort of opposition against his being and mission. If people talk of the «incarnation of the being anthroposophy within the AS» while ignoring such facts at the same time, this can be felt as spiritually untrue.

This opposition can only be overcome by those who burn to understand anthroposophy as a modern spiritual science & who want to remain faithful to it, making no compromises on the spiritual level, while keeping up tolerance towards any sort of human beings. To combine these two is not easy, but necessary.

On page 65 of your novel you make the statement: “Für Freeman gab es kaum ein besseres Mittel zur Erneuerung der zerfallenden Kultur der Gegenwart als die Tatsache der Reinkarnation, die auch die Schicksalsfrage in ein neues Licht rückt. Nur mü\_te diese Tatsache, um ihre Heilwirkung zu offenbaren, auch noch im Buwu\_tsein aufgenommen werden.” In the popular culture of the United States today, especially in California, there are many signs that this concept of reincarnation is being taken up. One could cite a list of movies, beginning with *Little Buddha*, as well as television shows. One could also point to the popularity of the Dalai Lama, whose picture appears regularly in popular American media and in movies such as *Kundun*, which celebrate his life. Not long ago, the mainstream New York magazine *Vanity Fair* published a long article on the karmic

relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, a relationship that stretches back through several incarnations.

**Question 3:** How do you view these signs of the times? Is this an example of the “fact of reincarnation” being taken up by the Zeitgeist? Has the work of Anthroposophy and Anthroposophists, either in the physical world or from beyond the threshold, helped to prepare this shift in consciousness, in your opinion?

**Answer 3:** Yes and no. Anthroposophy and anthroposophists may indeed have contributed towards a more open atmosphere for the consideration of such facts as reincarnation. On the other hand reincarnation is often discussed in a perfectly superficial way among people who get their insights through channelling or other mediums, regression therapy etc. with often questionable if not dangerous results. Look at the website of Walter Semkiw <http://www.plutoproject.com/pl.html>. WS draws far reaching conclusions from the mere comparison of paintings or photographs. Some of the cases may be even true – at least the relation between Anne Frank and B. Karlén can be understood in terms of reincarnation in my own eyes –, but the proofs are purely «physical» in nature. This is spiritual materialism in a high degree. Here anthroposophists could step in (I do not mean necessarily literally) and help to raise the level of the discussion & spread the insight that the spiritual (the invisible reincarnating Ego e.g.) can only be grasped by spiritual means (e.g. through real scientific intuition).

I have met several “serious” Anthroposophists who rarely read novels, or if they do read novels, they read only classics by authors who are long dead.

**Question 4:** As a novelist, what do you find unique about the novel from a spiritual scientific perspective?

**Answer 4:** You can show tendencies as if they would fully realize themselves. This gives you a freedom you do not have as a historian. As historian you have to show what actually was; as a novelist you can show **what could become**. Of course, the seed of the tendencies of such a becoming should be taken out from the real, they have to be discovered within the real. Otherwise you get fiction without reality instead of fiction as a higher form of what is real. In my own case, the historical acquaintance with such personalities as Dunlop, Stein & others inspired my soul more and more with the yearning to reach beyond the «What they have been» to a «What may become of them?»

On page 119 or the translated edition of your book, *The Bodhisattava Question*, you write: “According to an eyewitness account, on the morning of that day [day of the General Assembly, 1935] Elizabeth Vreede called on the spiritual world with wringing hands and beseeching gesture to help her in her need, not for her own personal destiny but because for her it went without saying that if the exclusion of the members were carried out, then, as inevitably as the planets and the Sun move in their heavenly courses, far-reaching negative consequences would affect the whole destiny of the age.” Such exclusions did, of course, occur. To my knowledge, they remain in effect.

**Question 5:** In light of the Society events of 1930s, particularly the exclusions of 1935, to what extent do you think that the Vorstand of the Goetheanum can claim legitimacy as an esoteric Vorstand in the spirit that Steiner meant for it during the Christmas Foundation Event?

**Answer 5:** I think no one spiritually serious can attribute an «esoteric» quality to a group of people in a Vorstand after 1935 – I mean per definitionem, just because they are «the Vorstand». «Whoever holds the position of being pope, is enlightened by the holy spirit»: Such a dogmatic welding together of position and spiritual insight is characteristic for the Roman Catholic Church. It should never have entered the sphere of the AS where it has done infinite damage.

In your article of April 2001 entitled “Okkulte Gefangenschaft,” you cite a letter from D.N. Dunlop to W.J. Stein dated June 16, 1932 in which Dunlop raises the idea that perhaps the time is right to found an International Association for the Advancement of Spiritual Science. Steiner appears to have rejected this idea of an “international association” as a solution to the problems facing the membership in 1923. However, your own life path appears to take you in this direction—for example, you mention that you resigned from membership in the AAG on May 30, 2001.

**Question 6:** Why did you take this step, and in what way do you see yourself linking to Dunlop and his idea for an International Association? Is the time right for such an international association? Why? Would this not become an alternative Anthroposophical Society, with all the attendant problems?

**Answer 6:** What Steiner rejected has hardly anything to do with Dunlop's idea – which was only born in 1932. DND considered it to be necessary to compliment the work within the AS, *while he was still its British Gen. Secretary*. I believe this need has not become less, as the AS does by no means attract all individuals interested in spiritual science, partly because it has been invaded by certain «esoteric myths». My own resignation from the AS does not mean that I intend to deny the justification of its existence – many of my friends are members –, I just wanted to give my work for RS and anthroposophy a basis independent from the present AS. I am still going on (if asked) to give talks within the AS, e.g. in the Weimar-branch this autumn or in the Paracelsus-branch next spring. I am not going to found anything, I only want to create more awareness for those individuals being linked to Spiritual Science and RS without being members of the AS. Anthroposophy. This is my main concern, not the society in which many people seem to be too much concerned with the «esoteric» importance of the Society itself.

**Question 8:** If the Anthroposophical Society and First Class is not a “vessel” for the incarnation of the Being Anthroposophia, then what is its esoteric function?

**Answer 8:** It is illusionary in my eyes to try to maintain any «esoteric function» of the School of Sp. Science. The real esoteric deed – in the sense of a thoroughly true deed –, at the turn of the century would have been to drop all such presumptions and humbly confine oneself to sober, serious work for spreading anthroposophy in the world. To do so, no one needs big words which may only flatter our ego.

**Question 9:** Do you personally think that the students of Rudolf Steiner from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have reincarnated to resume their karmic tasks? If so, what evidence would support this?

**Answer 9:** This is an esoteric matter. Everyone can find them spiritually if he really tries to find a path to their eternal being. All I can say is: they will **first of all** care about how to further Spiritual Science as the great remedy to humanity on different planes, not about the present AS which is too much pervaded by the feeling of an «esoteric» self-importance while at the same time associating itself with obvious opponents of spiritual science.

For example: How many members are aware of the fact, that some most arrogant and ignorant opponents of Spiritual Science & RS were invited to criticize RS in the Grundsteinsaal (named after the Foundation stone!) two years ago, with no one from the Vorstand saying one single word (in fact only one Vorstandsmember was present – and remained silent)? Those from the close circle around RS would seem to need the cooperation of souls awake.

**Question 10:** Why did you make the protagonist of your novel an American?

**Answer 10:** The life paths of pupils of Steiner like Eugen Kolisko and W.J. Stein seemed to be orientated towards a future incarnation in America. Kolisko travelled through the States half a year before he died founding the Sacramento Faust Branch at this occasion. There are remarks by RS that he himself would «come back» around 2002 – in America. The question is: Did he mean being born or getting newly active as a spiritual master? I believe the second. But RS will not present himself as a new Krishnamurti to the AS. He has to be *spiritually* discovered by those faithful to his impulses.

Where Ahriman will unfold his greatest strength (Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, the power struggle behind it, the lies surrounding the events etc. can be seen as an acute prelude to his earthly incarnation work) there those are needed who can recognize his ways & help others to «read the events» in the right way. That is also why Freeman had to be America-born.

**Question 11:** What is the most urgent task facing Anthroposophists today, in your opinion? Please answer from two standpoints: 1) from the standpoint of someone who has met Anthroposophy and the Society for the first time in this lifetime; 2) from the standpoint of someone who met Anthroposophy and the Society in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is confronting it again now.

Answer 11: re 1): to help spreading the fruits of anthroposophy for humanity,  
re 2): to help spreading the fruits of anthroposophy for humanity.

In a sidebar to your article “Die Gesellschaftskonflikte sind in mir erledigt...” you mention that Frau Ina Schuurmann quoted Rudolf Steiner as saying that “Die Weihnachtstagung ist misslungen.”

**Question 12:** If indeed the Christmas Foundation Event has miscarried, as some believe, then from the standpoint of Goethe's ideas concerning metamorphosis, do you have any thoughts on the present or future activity or incarnations of Rudolf Steiner? Is he still karmically joined to the Society?

Answer 12: How can anyone expect that after the expulsion of closest pupils of RS from the AS RS could have remained linked to the AS, as if nothing had happened? He will certainly be able to link to anyone truly striving in his sense. But as the AS has precisely expelled such individuals no one within the AS should possess the illusionary vanity to claim RS as the special «property of the society», regardless of what has happened after his death. Besides, it can only be a deep misunderstanding to believe tha RS has ever given any guarantee of an unconditional presence within the AS, as some believe. No true occultist working on the basis of individual freedom will ever do such a thing. How to get more anthroposophy into the world that is the real question for me, not the rather sectarian concern, whether RS is «infinitely linked» to the AS. If the AS can contribute to this task all the better. But ist members should accept that it is no longer the only instrument for this task & therefore seek cooperation with any individuals seriously working on the basis of anthroposophy. See also above answers.

On page 121 of your interview in *The Future is Now*, you mention “people who want to work with what you might call potentized anthroposophical impulses.”

**Question 13:** What are *potentized anthroposophical impulses*? Who are the people who are working with these impulses?

Answer 13: By potentized anthroposophical impulses I meant impulses from people who have had the chance of a second «anthroposophical incarnation in which that which they have taken into their hearts and spirits in one life can contribute to develop higher individual faculties in their next life.