

Rudolf Steiner's Idea of Freedom: As Seen in the Panorama of Hegel's Dialectic

TERJE SPARBY

Rudolf Steiner University College

ABSTRACT: Rudolf Steiner's work contains many different claims about human freedom spread out in over three hundred books. A basic challenge for the research on Steiner is to create an overview of his idea of freedom, but also to consider potential conflicting claims. One of the main tensions in Steiner's work is the one between his early philosophical and later anthroposophical accounts of freedom. The former focuses on individual freedom while the latter puts the emphasis on the greater whole in which the human being exists. Hegel's idea of freedom can be used to create a comprehensive and coherent understanding of Steiner's different perspectives on freedom. In particular, using Hegel's notion of *being-with-oneself in otherness*, the freedom that the individual can experience within the whole can be seen as an immanent development of the individual itself.

There are many ways to approach Steiner's idea of freedom,¹ but there is one in particular that interests me here. It is related to the distinction between the philosophical and anthroposophical period of Steiner's work, and consists, specifically, of developing a comprehensive account of his idea of freedom.² Steiner himself did not give such an account, and, as we will see, his idea of freedom contains many different aspects, some of which harbour potential conflicts. In my view, one of the most interesting tensions in Steiner's work is the one between his focus on the individual human personality in his philosophical work, and the notion of the de-emphasis of personality in favour of supra-individual evolution introduced in Steiner's later esoteric phase. This tension—recently identified by Christian Clement as an *aporia*³—is, I think, characteristic of the whole of Steiner's work. Indeed, anthroposophy may be seen as arising in the middle of the tension

between individualism, where freedom is a matter of radical self-determination, and esotericism, where the aim is to become liberated from the confines of the ego. Understood in this way, anthroposophy can be said to represent a unique idea of freedom. But this idea needs to be clarified, something I will attempt to do here. In the process of clarification I will also offer a possible solution to the aporia of Steiner's idea of freedom.

Steiner's interweaving of German idealism, Nietzschean individualism, and western esotericism represents, in and of itself, something unique in the history of philosophy. And while Steiner generally has remained a curiosity on the outskirts of European culture, his work is now starting to attract research interest.⁴ Considering the centrality of the idea of freedom in Steiner's work, the future tasks of the research on Steiner will include investigating the historical context of this idea, investigating the way it relates to the other aspects of Steiner's philosophy and anthroposophy, and considering it in the light of contemporary debates. What I present here is a small step towards a realization of this, and I wish to highlight the importance of considering the whole of Steiner's work, which includes both philosophy and anthroposophy.

In order to create a comprehensive account of Steiner's idea of freedom, I will make use of the understanding of freedom expounded in Hegel's philosophy.⁵ Steiner's idea of freedom is spread out in over three hundred books, and as I've already pointed out, when Steiner's work is viewed as a whole, there is a certain tension at its core. Introducing Hegel will enable us to not only single out the main aspects of freedom in Steiner's work, but also connect them in a way that can resolve the tension.⁶

Steiner would hardly have objected to such an approach—as he said himself: “Ich glaube mich von Hegel in gar nichts zu unterscheiden, sondern nur einzelne Konsequenzen seiner Lehre zu ziehen.”⁷ And indeed I think that Hegel and Steiner's idea of freedom not only fit well together, they are also mutually enlightening. As indicated, Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* focuses on the individual process of rational action, while his anthroposophy brings in topics such as the origin of freedom in the genesis of the human being, and the idea of re-connecting to the whole from which the human being has separated. In a sense, then, we have three main aspects of freedom in Steiner's work: The past (the origin of freedom), enacting freedom in the present, and the future of freedom (re-connecting to the origin). These aspects, I suggest, can be seen to correspond to the three main moments in Hegel's concept of freedom: The universal, the particular and the individual moment. Furthermore, I think it worthwhile to investigate the potential inherent in the individual moment of freedom when interpreting what I above call the specifically anthroposophical idea of freedom, which stands between a strengthening encapsulation and dissolution of the ego. The individual moment in Hegel's idea of freedom is a unity of the universal and particular moment, and

is often characterized as *Bei-sich-selbst-Sein im Anderen* or *being-with-oneself in otherness*.⁸ This conception, I believe, may hold the key to understanding Steiner's idea of freedom. What I present here is a prolonged argument for this thesis.

Consequently, what I aim to do here is to give an account of the whole of Steiner's idea of freedom through considering it in the light of Hegel's dialectic. The main claim is that in developing his idea of freedom, Steiner formulates his own form of Hegel's *being-with-oneself in otherness*, in which the human personality is connected to a greater whole, and with which Steiner in effect unites philosophy with esotericism. This unity is what Steiner also calls "anthroposophy." In section I below I will give an outline of Hegel and Steiner's idea of freedom, while in section II I will go into a more detailed development of Steiner's idea by considering the process of separation from the all-unity (II.I) that leads to the development of the free human personality (II.II), and its potential to return to the all-unity while still preserving the achievements of human freedom (II.III). In section III I offer a conclusion consisting of a unification of the different aspects Steiner's idea of freedom, and also introduce some contemporary perspectives that point to limits of Steiner's conception.

I. OUTLINE OF HEGEL AND STEINER'S IDEA OF FREEDOM

The notion of *being-with-oneself in otherness* is specific to Hegel's philosophy. However, as I will argue here, it also gives us the key to understanding Steiner's idea of freedom. In Hegel, the notion of *being-with-oneself in otherness* is inextricably embedded within a network of other ideas. Therefore, this network cannot really be separated from the notion itself, and so it is necessary to give a short overview of it in its entirety before I indicate the way in which both (the notion and the network) relate to Steiner's idea of freedom.

I.I. The Moments of Hegel's Idea of Freedom: Universal, Particular, and Singular

Hegel's idea of freedom is developed on two levels.⁹ The first is mainly conceptual, or abstract, whereas the second concerns the realization of freedom in history, society, individual action, and philosophy. As mentioned in the introduction, the idea of freedom in Hegel has three parts or moments—the universal, the particular, and the individual—both on the abstract and concrete level. Hegel's distinction between the particular and individual moment is hard to grasp, and will hopefully get clearer as I proceed. It can be helpful to understand *particular* as a *species* or *kind* (like a rose is a kind of flower), while thinking of *individual* as something *unique* (in a way that *contains* universality and particularity in it rather than being opposed to it; like there is only one whole (individual) reality

existing and remaining the same (universal) through different (particular) moments in time).

On the purely conceptual level, the universal moment of freedom concerns the absolute freedom of the I. The I, the subject of freedom, continues to be what it is independent of whatever it exists *as*. A human being can take on a host of different identities, it can be embodied as a specific gender, it can have long or short hair, it can have this or that profession, and so on. Some or these identities are a matter of choice, others are not, but that is inconsequential here. The point is that in itself the I remains independent (and in this way free) of any such identification; it never loses itself completely in any form or way of existing. As Hegel states, the will is inherently free, and this fundamental freedom consists precisely in the ability to remove oneself (in thought) from any specific existence without ceasing to be.¹⁰

Freedom becomes *particular* when the will identifies with something specific. Universal freedom is in fact limited insofar as it has to remove itself from concrete existence. When the will identifies with something specific, it removes itself from itself, or, more exactly, removes itself from its universal nature, though thereby it also realizes itself by giving itself concrete existence.

Through this particularization, however, a tension arises between what the free will is in itself and what it exists *as*. The will becomes simultaneously both more and less free. When the will finds a way of realizing its universal nature in a particular existence it will enter into the individual moment of freedom, the moment of *being-with-oneself in otherness*. The typical example of this is the relationship of love, where giving up one's own will for the sake of another's is a way of realizing a deeper bond between the two, a bond in which one does not lose oneself at all, in which self-loss is actually the path to finding one's true self.¹¹

Hegel's philosophy of history is an exposition of the development of freedom (Steiner seems to both reject and accept this idea, as I will go into later). Furthermore, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* traces the realization, or concretization, of abstract freedom in his treatment of *abstract right*, *morality*, and *Sittlichkeit* (society or ethical life). Abstract right concerns the universal aspects of freedom in the sense of the inalienable (universal) rights, while morality is about the particular aspects of free action, such as the moral subject's happiness or conscience. *Sittlichkeit* deals with freedom within *the family*, *civil society*, and *the state*. These three make out an individual moment of freedom, which is further divided into a universal (family), a particular (civil society) and an individual (the state) moment of concrete freedom. The family makes out a "universal substance" where all of its members are immediately related to each other (a father is a father because of the son; the son is a son because of the father). Though family-relationships are not optional, a particular will can only be realized as a subject separates itself from the family and decides to take on a specific identity, such as a profession, within

society. The state, for Hegel, represents the highest moment of the realization of concrete freedom within finite, human existence. The state is a superordinate individual that establishes and secures a sphere within which its citizens can lead lives that accord with their deeper nature as human beings. However, as the state exists within finitude (states rise and decline, for instance, through wars) it is not the absolute pinnacle of freedom. There is indeed a further form of freedom for Hegel. We could call this a spiritual freedom, which is realized in religion, art, and philosophy (as the contemplation of the basic forms of thought and their relationship to manifest existence).¹² Hence, in the end, freedom for Hegel is realized in a stoic retreat into the inwardness of human thinking.

This framework for understanding freedom can provide a framework for systematizing Steiner's idea of freedom. This will, however, require a few changes to Hegel's conception. The abstract account of freedom in Hegel will remain intact as a guideline, but his account of freedom in relation to history and society will have to be modified extensively. In fact, Steiner can be seen as implicitly providing a deeper realization of Hegel's own project of coming to know and enact freedom in self-knowledge. Again, this is, I think, a way to understand what is specific to Steiner's anthroposophy.

I.II. Steiner's Philosophical-Anthroposophical Idea of Freedom: All-Unity, Separation, Return

Steiner's idea of freedom is harder to outline than Hegel's.¹³ In part this is because Steiner's complete works is more extensive, but also because Steiner didn't present a single comprehensive account of his idea of freedom that included both his philosophical and esoteric ideas. This is what the following sections are devoted to. What can be given here is only an anticipatory outline. In one instance, Steiner seems to be giving such an outline himself; he describes the development of the human being in a way that also lies close to Hegel: "Des Menschen Entwicklung ist ein Niederwärtssteigen aus der All-Einheit zur Sonderheit und ein stufenweises Aufsteigen in bewusster Freiheit zur Erkenntnis seines Zusammenhanges mit dem All und Rückkehr ins Allgemeine."¹⁴ Here we see the pattern of particularization (Niederwärtssteigen/Sonderheit) from a universal (All-Einheit/Allgemeine), a turning point where the process reverses and becomes a matter of returning to the origin (Rückkehr ins Allgemeine). I believe that Steiner's *philosophy* is mainly concerned with the particularized state (Sonderheit) and the turning point while his *anthroposophy* widens the perspective to include both a detailed account of the movement downwards and as well as the return.¹⁵ Steiner's anthroposophy thereby also deepens the understanding of what takes place at the turning point (which, it can be noted, includes what we usually consider to be part of recorded human history).

However, Steiner's philosophical perspective seems at times to be at odds with his later anthroposophical perspective. Steiner understands the task of philosophy as the development of the human personality, while the later influence of esotericism on his work relativizes the centrality of the person. As an example (which we will explore more deeply later), the philosopher Steiner rejects the idea that history is the development of freedom, and that there is any will beyond the will found in human beings (such as God's will) that can be the source of freedom. The anthroposophist Steiner, however, considers the influence of the spiritual world on human freedom, and claims that freedom is about acting according to world-historical necessity. In other words, as a philosopher Steiner is concerned primarily with freedom in the sense of realizing moral intuitions, where the human being is seen as bringing something new into the world through practical reason, while as an anthroposophist he is concerned with a perspective from which the single human will seems to be of negligible significance. Or, to use the Hegelian terminology, whereas Steiner's philosophy is focused on the particular moment of human development and freedom, anthroposophy includes the universal and individual. Whether there is a real contradiction between these two perspectives, or whether it is rather an *aporia* that can be resolved, will be addressed below.

II. THE THREE MOMENTS IN STEINER'S IDEA OF FREEDOM

As we have seen, three main moments of Steiner's account of freedom can be identified: The process of separation, the free existence of the human personality, and the return. As we will now see, these correspond to the universal, particular and individual moment of Hegel's idea of freedom.¹⁶ In light of this, the deeper relationship between the different aspects of Steiner's idea of freedom will become clearer, rendering a resolution of the tension between Steiner's anthroposophical and philosophical views possible.

II.1. The Process of Separation

One of the most important aspects of Steiner's idea of freedom is that freedom is not static, but rather in a process of becoming. Hence, the question as to whether the human being is absolutely free or not cannot be posed in an abstract way. Rather, we should ask: How does the human being become free? How does it enact and increase its freedom? As Steiner claims:

Der Mensch ist ein immer mehr sich befreiendes Wesen. Und umso mehr Freiheit erringt er sich, je mehr sich ihm entfaltet, was als ein ewiger Wesenskern in ihm lebt. Frei sind wir, weil wir unsterblich sind; frei sind wir mit demjenigen Teil unseres Wesens, mit dem wir unsterblich sind.¹⁷

Here we can find parallels to all the moments in Hegel's concept of freedom. The immortal part of the human being is the universal moment, the part that has to

realize freedom is the particular moment, and realized freedom corresponds to the individual moment, in which the universal and particular are united. We will now focus on the transition from the universal to the particular moment: In Steiner's cosmology, human evolution is ruled in part by what the Christian tradition has called "heavenly intelligences." Steiner often refers to these intelligences by the names given to them by Pseudo-Dionysus: Cherubim, Seraphim, Throne, etc.¹⁸ Sometimes, however, when he is in a more pagan mood, Steiner speaks of them simply as "the gods":

Um zur Freiheit zu kommen, musste der Mensch aus seiner eigenen Kraft ein Wissen, eine Erkenntnis, ein Denken, ein Fühlen, ein Wollen, entwickeln. Er wurde gewißermaßen von den Göttern verlassen, aber er wurde—wenn ich mich so ausdrücken darf—zu seinem eigenen Heil von den Göttern verlassen.¹⁹

Certain conditions have to be in place in order to create a free being, and the gods take part in this process to a certain extent. However, such a process is more about separation and less about creating something determinately new. One could say that it is a process of opening up a new space of possibility. The reason for the reservation expressed by Steiner with the appendage "wenn ich mich so ausdrücken darf" is something to which we will return. Presumably it has to do with wanting to avoid an overly teleological conception of evolution, something Steiner, particularly in his philosophical phase, emphatically rejects.

The process of separation from the divine that enables freedom for the human being is a big topic in Steiner's work, and we can only touch on some essentials here. In Steiner's view, the human being of former times used to stand in a much closer relationship to its environment. The division between the inner and outer world was not as sharp as we experience it to be now. Today we can propose a *theory* of panpsychism; earlier, *experience itself*, according to Steiner, was of a panpsychist kind—everything was ensouled. Steiner believes, furthermore, that theoretical activity, the capacity for abstract thinking, is closely connected with becoming free.²⁰ When the surroundings no longer reveal their own nature, we have to become active ourselves and create ideas about the goings-on of the world: "In demselben Maße, in dem das Geistig-Seelisch-Lebendige im Menschendenken zurücktritt, lebt des Menschen Eigenwille auf; die Freiheit wird möglich."²¹ If true ideas would present themselves immediately to us, we would at most lead a mechanical existence as knowers, simply reflecting whatever the world is projecting in each moment.

With freedom, this relationship is reversed. As the human being starts to think abstractly, it creates representations that mirror what it finds in nature. According to Steiner, this has a special significance in relation to freedom:

In dieser Tatsache, dass der Mensch in seinem augenblicklichen *Vorstellen* nicht im Sein, sondern nur in einer Spiegelung des Seins, in einem Bild-Sein lebt, liegt die Möglichkeit der Entfaltung der Freiheit. Alles Sein im Bewusstsein ist ein zwingendes. Allein das *Bild* kann nicht zwingen.²²

In other words, as the human being starts to think, to represent, it sets up a world of its own, which is only indirectly related to the external world. Thereby it is separated from its environment and becomes freer. The high point of this development is pure thinking, which is also a pure image.²³

For Steiner, two of the main cultural expressions of freedom in the sense of a process of separation that results in a self-activation of the human being are *natural science* and *philosophy*.²⁴ Natural science arises because the natural world is no longer experienced as having an inside.²⁵ By not delivering absolute truths, natural science creates a space where the human being can become active.²⁶ Similarly, the real significance of philosophy is not to uncover truth, but to create a space in which the free *personality* can unfold.

This perspective is the foundation of Steiner's extensive study on the history of philosophy in *Die Rätsel der Philosophie*. Steiner is more interested in what a specific philosophy has to say about the human being than the truth-value of its content. In particular, he is interested in how the possibility of error is related to self-consciousness; making mistakes, doubts and "unknowing" makes the thinking human, the philosopher more self-aware through the seemingly unsurpassable dichotomy of mind and world. For example, Steiner claims that the typical philosophical view at the end of the nineteenth century, namely that the sensory world is an illusion, stems from an experience of being isolated within one's own inner life.²⁷

In accordance with this, one could say that Steiner has an expressivist understanding of philosophy. Through developing a philosophical view of life, the human being gives expression to its own deeper nature, an expression that is both constitutive of what this deeper nature is and reveals something about it at the same time. As philosophers give expression to the experience of isolation, this both strengthens the experience and makes possible an objective stance towards it. In other words, one becomes more conscious of the isolation, and since the isolation is *one's own* isolation, this intensification of consciousness is identical to an intensification of self-consciousness. So, for Steiner, the answer to the question about why there is not more progress in philosophy²⁸ is simple: Philosophy is not a kind of process that can converge on the truth. Its significance is developing human self-consciousness—and in this regard I think we can say that it has been successful. Hence, the task of philosophy is still understood by Steiner in the same way as in Plato's *Charmides*; its task is self-knowledge.²⁹ However, self-knowledge consists in calling forth knowledge of something that the human being is in itself—an absolute, immortal, universally free being—and

part of the process of bringing this deeper nature to awareness, really *knowing* it, consists in establishing a sense of separation and isolation. The sense of isolation puts the human being in touch with the part of it that is beyond finite existence; its immortal core. From this vantage point it can start to self-actualize. All of this happens through a long development, the whole of which is *self-knowing* (one could also say *self-experiencing* as long as one keeps in mind that experiencing is also a form of knowing).

As the human being starts realizing its inner nature, it enters into opposition with the outer world. Its sense of self arises, and through this a kind of tension begins to arise, a tension between, on the one hand, the universal process that brings about self-awareness, and, on the other, the self-awareness that is actually conditioned on being separate from this process. In a sense, then, we could speak of the self-separation of the universal, similar to how, in Hegel, the universal self-particularizes; the universal *opposes* the particular and thereby becomes particular itself.

II.II. The Freedom of Human Personality

To repeat, Steiner understands the significance of philosophy to be the development of the human personality.³⁰ This is also how Steiner himself understands his *Philosophie der Freiheit*:³¹ "Ich lehre nicht, ich erzähle, was ich innerlich durchlebt habe. Ich erzähle es so, wie ich es gelebt habe. Es ist alles in meinem Buche *persönlich* [emphasis added] gemeint."³² In other words, the content of the book, Steiner's philosophy, is not separate from his personality.³³

The development of human personality is conditioned on the human being separating from its origin. The origin calls forth the human being and starts the process of separation; it is deeply connected to the creation of a free being. This is reflected in the ontogenesis of the human being, who is first taken care of and brought up by other human beings, taught the ethical codes of society, and then, in the end, to a greater or lesser extent, is expected to set its own goal and take care of itself. As Steiner states: "durch das sozial-sittliche Leben, durch das staatliche Leben, durch das ethische Leben wird der freie Mensch herausgeholt."³⁴

However, a free human being cannot act arbitrarily. Or, more precisely, it can, metaphysically speaking, act arbitrarily, but such acts do not, for Steiner (and most philosophers for that matter), represent the full unfolding of freedom.³⁵ It is a condition of this unfolding that a person has the ability to retreat or abstract from given drives and any presumed "natural course" of events. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance for Steiner that one comes to a *clear understanding* of the causes [Beweggründe] of one's actions.³⁶ Having such knowledge is essential to becoming free.³⁷ However, as Steiner also indicates, acting freely does not imply that my actions have to be "causeless," that I reject all external and internal influences; rather, I can *let a cause affect me* [auf mich wirken lassen] *after I have come*

to know it and still be free.³⁸ In other words, a free human being for Steiner has the capacity (which Hegel describes as the universal freedom of the I) to abstract from any given circumstance. This capacity is the foundation of freedom. Coming to know the causes of my actions can be seen as a part of the exercise of this capacity, since it requires one to view oneself from the outside and consider what is half-consciously (or even unconsciously) going on within oneself.

The process of free action, which Steiner describes in *Philosophie der Freiheit*, also includes the liberation both from given (unreflected) natural drives and the commands of reason. Being free is about finding a balance between natural drives and reason:

Zwei Triebe sind in der Menschennatur vorhanden, die diese von der idealischen Vollkommenheit zurückhalten, wenn sie in *einseitiger* Art zur Entwicklung kommen: der *sinnliche* und der *vernünftige* Trieb. Hat der sinnliche Trieb die Oberhand, so unterliegt der Mensch seinen Instinkten und Leidenschaften. In die Betätigung, die von seinem Bewusstsein durchhell ist, mischt sich eine dieses Bewusstsein trübende Kraft. Sein Tun wird das Ergebnis einer inneren Nötigung. Überwiegt der vernünftige Trieb, so ist der Mensch bestrebt, Instinkte und Leidenschaften zu unterdrücken und einer abstrakten, von innerer Wärme nicht getragenen Notwendigkeit sich zu übergeben. In beiden Fällen ist der Mensch einem Zwange unterworfen.³⁹

Following natural drives results in an unfree action, because in so doing one is not following oneself but rather that which belongs to the natural species one is part of.⁴⁰ Following duties or principles set by reason also results in an unfree action, insofar as these are adopted “from the outside,” from authority, dogma, or external principles of reason.⁴¹ When acting freely, the human being acts out of itself; it determines itself, as Steiner repeatedly states.⁴² But what does “acting from out of oneself” mean if it is neither acting according to one’s biology, nor the rules of society, nor the commands of reason? For Steiner, it is closely connected to acting out of moral intuition. Such acts are, to use one of Kant’s terms, acts of *practical reason*. As Steiner describes it, in practical reason the drive and motive of an action are one, whereas for other human actions, the drive is given from the outside, and the motive represents a concrete way to satisfy the drive.⁴³

Furthermore, the content of a moral intuition is of an ideal nature; it does not involve an empirical representation. It could be tempting, then, to charge Steiner with being a moral rationalist after all (seeing the source of free action in reason alone), but Steiner understands moral intuition as an *impulse* that has its source in the deeper (non-animalistic) layers of the subject.⁴⁴ If this is moral rationalism, then Steiner can be counted as an advocate. He can also be called a moral rationalist insofar as this entails claiming that acting morally stems from an insight into what is good.⁴⁵ This is the classical Platonist view, and is opposed to the Christian lament: “For the good that I want, I do not do, and the evil that I do not want, that I

do.”⁴⁶ However, as the insight is accompanied by an inner (spiritual) impulse, it is not a manner of acting for the sake of duty alone; indeed, for Steiner, pure moral action can accompany an impulse. This is where he differs from Kant.

In Steiner's view, drive and reason are united in the following way: There are *higher* levels of human existence in which the sensory and intelligible are one, and a moral intuition is an example of that. Hence, in a moral intuition, the separation of the outer and inner world is overcome, even if only to an ever so slight degree. When someone is acting according to moral intuition, neither the drive to action, nor the dictates of reason come from outside. Since they are one, the intuition is at once personal and impersonal. Drawing on Schiller, Steiner sometimes calls such moral action *play* (*Spiel*)—moral action becomes play when natural drives become virtues, and virtues the only drives.⁴⁷

An example of a moral intuition would be the so-called golden rule, “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Such a pure moral intuition does not have any empirical content; it does not state who the others are, where they are in time and space, what background they have, etc., but rather appears in an ideal, universal form, as a law, or norm. Furthermore, for Steiner, most of what is already embodied in our normative practices comes from moral intuitions: “die Staatsgesetze sind sämtlich aus Intuitionen freier Geister entsprungen, ebenso wie alle anderen objektiven Sittlichkeitsgesetzen.”⁴⁸ It can be noted, however, that moral intuitions do not by themselves state how they should be applied. The ideal form in which they occur does not specify concretely how they are to be realized. Consequently, Steiner introduces *moral imagination* and *moral technique*. Through moral imagination the moral intuition becomes individualized; one creates a representation, a motive, out of the intuition that can then be realized in the empirical world.⁴⁹ The moral technique concerns everything necessary to bring the motive created through moral imagination to realization; it is a form of practical wisdom or knowing how to act in the world in order to bring a specific representation to fruition. An alien coming to visit earth might very well have formed intentions out of moral intuition and imagination, but could still be ineffective with regards to putting them into practice, because of the lack of practical knowledge of how, let's say, human politics work.

The process of ethical deliberation and action that Steiner presents in *Philosophie der Freiheit* can be brought together in a Hegelian framework: The human being arises out of a *universal* stream of life. We can think of a situation where a human being who exists within this stream would be led to action x. Only when the automatism of the stream is disrupted can a free process begin. This happens by first reflecting on the drives and ethical codes involved, and then considering an alternative course of action, namely y. This would be a *particular* moment in the process of freedom. At this stage, the representation (intention) y could have its original cause in a moral intuition, or in some other natural instinct or social habit.⁵⁰ Further reflection may

lead to a situation where drive and motive are unified but remain ideal (i.e., not specified as a representation). One would then have entered into the sphere of pure moral intuition. Going into this sphere is the *individual* moment of the process. The subject transcends empirical reality as it enters a normative beyond. In doing so it gives up its interests as a specific, natural being. But by giving itself up in this manner, the subject also finds a truer version of itself coming towards it as moral intuition; the moral intuition is a *being-with-oneself in otherness*.

However, as already indicated, the content of the moral intuition is abstract or universal. So the individual moment becomes *universal* again. As moral imagination becomes activated, the universal normative content of the intuition is given a *particular* form again as a specific representation, giving rise to action z. Then, as the representation is realized, i.e., brought into the empirical world through moral technique and empirical action, another *individual* moment is encountered: What the ethically reflecting subject has found within itself is now found within its surroundings, and hence it finds itself (the moral intuition made concrete through imagination and technique) in otherness (the empirical world); a new, more concrete form of *being-with-oneself in otherness*.

Notice then that there are three possibilities of ethical action. The representation x could indeed be acted upon after a process of ethical reflection has “approved” it. This is also true in the case of y. Pure ethical action (case z) is, however, one in which the origin of the representation is found within a moral imagination that starts from moral intuition alone (i.e., when either no motive is presented naturally or such motives are rejected or bracketed).

II.III. Returning to the All-Unity

Individual freedom, on the Hegelian account, is the freedom of the whole in which universality is not separate from particularity; it is the freedom of someone who unites with what is universal without dissolving into it. As I will argue now, this is the proper conception of the final realization of freedom according to Steiner. It is clear, however, that Steiner seems to take a different stance at times. In one of his earliest philosophical works, *Grundlinien einer Erkenntnistheorie der Goetheschen Weltanschauung*, Steiner claims that:

Der Weltengrund hat sich in die Welt vollständig ausgegossen; er hat sich nicht von der Welt zurückgezogen, um sie von außen zu lenken, er treibt sie von innen; er hat sich ihr nicht vorenthalten. Die höchste Form, in der er innerhalb der Wirklichkeit des gewöhnlichen Lebens auftritt, ist das Denken und mit demselben die menschliche Persönlichkeit. Hat somit der Weltengrund Ziele, so sind sie identisch mit den Zielen, die sich der Mensch setzt, indem er sich darlebt. Nicht indem der Mensch irgendwelchen Geboten des Weltenlenkers nachforscht, handelt er nach dessen Absichten, sondern indem er nach seinen eigenen Einsichten handelt. Denn in ihnen lebt sich jener Weltenlenker dar. Er

lebt nicht als Wille irgendwo außerhalb des Menschen; er hat sich jedes Eigenwillens begeben, um alles von des Menschen Willen abhängig zu machen. Auf dass der Mensch sein eigener Gesetzgeber sein könne, müssen alle Gedanken auf außermenschliche Weltbestimmungen u. dgl. aufgegeben werden.⁵¹

On such a conception there is no need to try to act according to the will of a god outside of the human being, since the human being cannot fail to act according to such a will; the will of any creator, *der Weltengrund*, would always be identical to the human will.

This standpoint is radicalized in Steiner's essay *Individualismus in der Philosophie* (originally titled: *Egoismus in der Philosophie*), where he goes so far as to claim that all ideas of gods, of the divine, ethical norms, and so on, are just projections of the human I.⁵² All claims to the effect that the human being has to make its will accord with some objective standard outside of itself is a way of trying to escape the god-like freedom of the I, which does not need to acknowledge any external standards. The authority of the external standard ultimately comes from the I itself, and the stronger the support for external standard is claimed to be, the stronger the self-deception really is. The only real power such standards can have will come from the I itself (here we see Steiner anticipates existentialist notions such as that of "bad faith," and in a certain way repeats Hegel's analysis of the unhappy consciousness in *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*).

Furthermore, in *Die Philosophie der Freiheit* we see a similar view at work. Steiner takes a strong stance against all teleological conceptions of history. In doing this, he could be seen to be rejecting Hegel: "Alle solche Wendungen wie: "die Geschichte ist die Entwicklung der Menschen zur Freiheit" . . . sind . . . unhaltbar."⁵³ Later, however, Steiner indicates that his philosophical conception of freedom is indeed compatible with a Hegelian view:

Der idealerfüllte Mensch wird derjenige sein, der befreit ist von all diesen Formen der Unterdrückung, der gelöst von der Erdschwere seinen Blick aufwärts richten kann. Dann wird das Wort *Hegels* zur vollen Wahrheit werden: Die Geschichte ist der Fortschritt der Menschheit zum Bewusstsein der Freiheit.⁵⁴

In another instance he goes even further: "Die größte Freiheit liegt dann vor, wenn man das welthistorisch Notwendige macht!"⁵⁵ As I stated at the beginning, Steiner's anthroposophy includes references to "heavenly intelligences" that are at work in history. Even moral intuitions have their source in divine inspiration, which the human being under normal conditions of consciousness is unaware of.⁵⁶ Therefore it is unclear whether the work and inspiration of the intelligences come "from the outside," and hence are in conflict with the idea of freedom Steiner developed in *Philosophie der Freiheit*. However, *prima facie* Steiner seems to imply that it is not always the case that the human being is projecting when it says there exists an objective necessity of world history. This would be a self-contradiction.

That the exclamation above is not simply a rare rhetorical exaggeration can be justified by looking at other places where Steiner is speaking out against the centrality of the human personality. Here is an example:

. . . die wirklichen geheimwissenschaftlichen Wahrheiten [machen] den Menschen nach und nach selbstlos. Und warum? Weil sie in vielem das Interesse abziehen von dem kleinen Punkte, den man das Ich nennt. Die . . . geheimwissenschaftlichen Wahrheiten sind so groß, so mächtig und bedeutsam, nehmen uns so stark in Anspruch, dass wir uns nach und nach als Einzelpersonlichkeit höchst uninteressant vorkommen. Man lernt erst, wie uninteressant die Einzelpersonlichkeit ist. Dieses Lernen, wie uninteressant die einzelne menschliche Persönlichkeit ist, . . . das führt den Menschen erst zur Befreiung vom Egoismus.⁵⁷

Here the liberation from egotism is equated with liberation from the personality. Clearly then, when speaking as a representative of the perspective of a higher form of knowledge, Steiner is creating a tension with the views of his philosophical phase.

There are two related tensions therefore that need to be investigated: (i) The tension between *rejecting* any outside influence on the free human being and *accepting* such influence. (ii) The tension between *the ego/personality-centred perspective* and *the perspective of dissolving the self*. Both tensions can be resolved, I think, by taking a Hegelian approach.

In his autobiography, Steiner notes that he at one point moved from an idealistic to an individualist standpoint, which, more concretely, was a shift from German idealism to the individualism of his contemporaries such as Nietzsche and Max Stirner (known for the anarchist classic *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*).⁵⁸ This move, I believe, can be understood as a change from the view that there is a objective “Weltengrund” that has become one with the human being, to the view that all such conceptions are only projections of the I. These views are not, however, ultimately opposed. The rejection of an external, original “Weltengrund” that is characteristic of Steiner’s individualism can be viewed as the pinnacle of the “Weltengrund” becoming one with the development of the human being within the world. It is the pinnacle of self-separation since, as the human being sets itself up as the only true source of objectivity, it also affirms its divinity. However, this is in a sense only a further intensification of the tension. Within its life-world, the human hardly experiences itself in its divinity: It is thrown into a particular existence, it is not responsible for the beating of its own heart, and it is dependent on interacting with its surroundings, for instance, through its metabolism, in order to continue to live. Hence the human being is not at all self-sufficient; it does not bring about its own existence like a god would. So the individualist view tends toward hyperbole and hubris; the individualist speaks as if everything depends on the human I, but this I is actually fully dependent on a reality that lies beyond it.

This, I think, is where a void opens up in Steiner's work: There needs to be a form of knowledge, a form of experience, in which the divine nature of the I is revealed. Here, Steiner turns to esotericism: Through higher knowledge, through a meditative development of consciousness and spiritual vision, the immortal essence of the human being can be revealed to itself. But, again, such knowledge arises when the ego/personality dissolves. However—and this issue is key—the anthroposophist Steiner thinks that it is possible to retain the personality even when encountering and returning to the “all-unity”:

Man soll nicht verwechseln dieses Einswerden der Persönlichkeit mit dem umfassenden Geistesleben mit einem die Persönlichkeit vernichtenden Aufgehen derselben in dem “Allgeist.” Ein solches “Verschwinden” findet bei wahrer Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit nicht statt. Diese bleibt in dem Verhältnis, das sie mit der Geistwelt eingeht, als Persönlichkeit gewahrt. Nicht Überwindung, sondern höhere Ausgestaltung der Persönlichkeit findet statt.⁵⁹

So not only can the personality be retained when entering into the spiritual world, it can also be further development through this connection. If we look to the man who became the Buddha, Siddharta Gautama, who must be considered to be someone who realized the dissolution of the ego to a high, if not even the highest, degree, this should be quite evident. The Buddha is one of the most distinct personalities within world history, and continues to influence the lives of countless individuals. Gautama's selflessness led to a unique form of spirituality, he became a “higher individual,” the Buddha, who has its very own nature and role within the family of religions.

The two tensions mentioned above are in fact aspects of one overarching tension, namely the one between the universal and the particular moment of freedom. Accepting something external to the personality as a determining ground of action can be seen as a form of ego-dissolution. When acting according to a moral intuition, the agent becomes integrated in a more universal web of relations—this is a way of setting aside its particular being for something universal—but the agent does so on the basis of an insight into its own ideal, normative nature. Hence it is rather a form of being at home in otherness, a *Bei-sich-selbst-Sein im Anderen* in which the universal and particular can indeed unite. In Hegel, this is exemplified by “the cunning of reason,” which is the idea that the world spirit does not control the flow of events from the outside, but rather its will is done through particular human beings acting exactly as they themselves see fit.⁶⁰ In other words, there is no real and lasting separation between the will of the individual subject and the will of the whole. This is a case of what Hegel sometimes refers to as internal teleology, which is instantiated when parts and whole are organized in such a way that they are incomprehensible when not seen in the light of the other.

I believe the tension between the divine and human will in Steiner can be understood in a similar way. When the human being sets its own goals, this is at once

a realization of the human and divine will. Ultimately, these cannot be thought of as separate. In one sense, the divine retreats in order to make room for the human will, but this is also an unfolding of the divine.⁶¹ However, for Steiner, taking a philosophical view on this will not be sufficient. Higher perception and knowledge reveal further aspects of the interrelation between humanity and divinity, between freedom and history.⁶² This is the perspective of initiation that Steiner, in his mature phase, has on freedom. Initiation is intimately connected to a revelation of the essence of the human being, but also to death. At one point Steiner even claims: “Die Freiheit bewegt sich in einer aufsteigenden Kurve und hat ihre Kulmination im Tode.”⁶³ Death, for Steiner, belongs to the realm of physical existence, and is exemplified through forces of separation and solidification. Human freedom in the sense of separation from the all-unity is therefore a form of death process; the physical body becomes ever more rigid as death approaches. Through initiatory practices, through dying consciously before one dies, self-consciousness is retained after physical death.⁶⁴ Through such practices, which Steiner thinks today are to be founded on meditation—what he also calls “the only really completely free act within this human existence”⁶⁵—one can experience the afterlife while retaining self-consciousness. This is then the next big step in human evolution, which up until now has culminated in the development of the human personality.

III. CONCLUSION

We can identify four phases in the development of Steiner’s idea of freedom. The first one is the idealist, in which the acting subject is not yet fully separated from its source,⁶⁶ the second one is the individualist, where this separation is brought into an extreme, the third one is the reversal of the individualist phase, where the esoteric perspective of dissolving the ego takes centre-stage, and the fourth is the anthroposophical, where personality is seen as retained within a greater whole. The first two are philosophical, while the third and fourth are esoteric.

What is often lacking in Steiner is a comprehensive connection between the perspectives of the different phases. Turning to the idealistic conceptions can help here, as I have tried to show. Indeed, one of the most central ideas of German idealism is that the process of separation between the all-unity and the human being is something that ultimately is not separate from the all-unity (an idea that is also found in the Mahayana view that Nirvana and Samsara are one⁶⁷). When the human being rejects divinity, divinity is, in a sense, rejecting itself, but this rejection is at once divinity’s affirmation, an affirmation of a free being. Implicitly this means that anything that is separate from the human being, from divinity, cannot ultimately be opposed to it. And this is realized in the various ways in which the human being relates to its environment. Separation and connection is already taking place through the most basic organic processes, through

procreation, history and culture; time and space is already transcended as the singular human being comes into existence, but this transcendence—or rather, being-with-oneself in otherness—is re-enacted and deepened through human practices ranging from individual ethical acts to initiation.

As I stated in the introduction, Steiner's views are quite far removed from the contemporary discussions of freedom. Steiner is willing to accept that freedom is in a certain way already a fact, something we can immediately know through simple self-observation,⁶⁸ and he seeks to understand how this experience relates to other areas of human knowledge (ranging from natural science to cosmology).

Where Steiner could be seen to be either lacking or encountering problems is, however, in his explanation of how the inner world connects to the outer.⁶⁹ This is a problem that persists in contemporary theories of agency as well, but I think Steiner would be on side of the Aristotelian, incompatibilist or nondeterministic approaches that are gaining some traction.⁷⁰ Indeed, Steiner expresses a general appreciation Aristotelian metaphysics.⁷¹ He would, however, probably also involve the whole of his anthroposophical framework in order to provide an explanation.⁷² Furthermore, it would seem that Steiner's view would fit very well with a dispositionalist account of causation and natural law.⁷³ For instance, he refers to an example of not being able to move one's hand because someone who is stronger than us is holding it back.⁷⁴ Sometimes the forces of nature are stronger than us, sometimes drives and conventions exert a strong influence, but that does not mean that we are in principle unfree. We can develop ourselves in ways that enable us to take control over such external influences, and to do this we have to become conscious of our own freedom.

In fact, for Steiner, in the depths of consciousness we are one with nature and natural laws, and so increasing our self-understanding in a deep way includes realizing that there is no ultimate distinction between freedom and natural law.⁷⁵ Still, it remains a problem for Steiner's whole idea of freedom that this issue was not been addressed in depth. An inner experience of freedom does not do much good if we cannot relate this experience to an understanding of the natural world where there is room for it. As Steiner says, nature and its laws will only contradict human freedom insofar as we keep looking at its parts; with the whole in view we will come to realize that the contradiction is resolved.⁷⁶ However, such a realization ultimately comes through developing higher knowledge,⁷⁷ and essentially, therefore, means that Steiner's philosophical perspective on freedom is incomplete, and that the full understanding of freedom is hardly available to ordinary human cognition. The development of higher cognition is, however, fully interwoven with the development of freedom; it is the completed self-particularization of the universal life-stream, the fulfilled self-knowledge of philosophy, the return "in bewusster Freiheit" to the all-unity that retains the fruits of human intellectuality.⁷⁸

NOTES

Abbreviations:

- GA Steiner, Rudolf. 1955–. *Gesamtausgabe*. Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag. Format: Vol., Page.
- TWA Hegel, G. W. F. 1970. *Theorie—Werksausgabe*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. Format: Vol., Page.

1. See the preface by Eckart Förster, and the introduction by Christian Clement, to Steiner, Rudolf: *Schriften—Kritische Ausgabe, Bd. 2, Philosophische Schriften*, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog 2016.
2. A recent attempt at systematizing Steiner's concept of freedom can be found in Jaap G. Sijmons, "Rudolf Steiners Philosophie und die Frage nach der Freiheit," in *Rudolf Steiner. Seine Bedeutung für Wissenschaft und Leben heute*, ed. Peter Heusser and Johannes Weinzirl (Stuttgart: Schattauer, 2014), 76–99. Sijmons uses Steiner's own twelve-wordviews model (p. 88). Besides being a short sketch, Sijmons's systematization has certain weaknesses: It does not address the conflicts related to what Steiner says about freedom, its references are almost exclusively to Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom*, and it fails to account for the processuality of Steiner's idea of freedom. The approach I present here does not suffer from most of these weaknesses, though it is admittedly also in a sense a sketch, only slightly longer than Sijmons's—I would agree with Sijmons that, having Steiner in view, one could without doubt write twelve books on freedom (p. 98). It can be noted that by giving a comprehensive account I mean giving one that covers the whole in a general way rather than by including all relevant details.
3. Christian Clement, "Einleitung," in Rudolf Steiner, *Schriften—Kritische Ausgabe, Bd. 2, Philosophische Schriften* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2016), xxviii.
4. The main indication of this is the release of the critical edition of Steiner's works: *Schriften. Kritische Ausgabe (SKA)*, ed. Christian Clement (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2013–). Other examples of recent works include Hartmut Traub, *Philosophie und Anthroposophie. Die philosophische Weltanschauung Rudolf Steiners. Grundlegung und Kritik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011); Jaap Sijmons, *Phänomenologie und Idealismus: Struktur und Methode der Philosophie Rudolf Steiners* (Basel: Schwabe, 2008); and Jonael Schickler, *Metaphysics as Christology: An Odyssey of the Self from Kant and Hegel to Steiner* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005). When it comes to the historical investigation of Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy, Helmut Zander's *Anthroposophie in Deutschland. Theosophische Weltanschauung und gesellschaftliche Praxis 1884–1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), has been influential. See also the review articles by Peter Staudenmaier, "The Higher Worlds Meet the Lower Criticism: New Scholarship in Rudolf Steiner," pp. 93–110; and David W. Wood, "Exoteric & Esoteric: Methodological Reflections on Vol. 7 of the Rudolf Steiner Critical Edition," pp. 111–27, both in *Correspondences* 3 (2015).
5. For a treatment of other aspects of the relationship between Steiner and Hegel, see Terje Sparby, *Rudolf Steiner som filosof* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2013).

6. See Hartmut Traub, *Philosophie und Anthroposophie. Die philosophische Weltanschauung Rudolf Steiners. Grundlegung und Kritik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011), for an investigation of Steiner's idea of freedom in relation to Kant and Fichte.
7. This quotation is from a letter to Eduard von Hartmann of November 1, 1894 (GA 39, 227). Steiner continued to be interested in Hegel, as evidenced by his lecture on Hegel held in Hamburg May 26. 1910, published in *Beiträge zur Rudolf Steiner Gesamtausgabe*, 10, 1970, 3–13.
8. One of the first occurrences of the term can be found in Michael Theunissen, *Sein und Schein. Die kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), 49. Theunissen understands “Im-Anderen-bei-sich-selbst-Sein” as freedom and “Bei-sich-selbst-Sein im Anderen” as love (i.e., clearly as aspects of the same idea), but “Bei-sich-selbst-Sein im Anderen” is also often primarily connected with freedom. See, e.g., Friedrich Fulda, *Hegel* (München: Beck, 2003), 48; Robert Pippin, *Interanimations: Receiving Modern German Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 127; Jonas Jakobsen and Odin Lysaker, *Recognition and Freedom: Axel Honneth's Political Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 215. Compare TWA 7, 56, “Freiheit ist, ein Bestimmtes zu wollen, aber in dieser Bestimmtheit bei sich zu sein und wieder in das Allgemeine zurückzukehren,” and TWA 8, 83: “So ist der Geist rein bei sich selbst und hiermit frei, denn die Freiheit ist eben dies, in seinem Anderen bei sich selbst zu sein, von sich abzuhängen, das Bestimmende seiner selbst zu sein.”
9. For an in-depth treatment of Hegel's idea of freedom, see Paul Franco, *Hegel's Philosophy of Freedom* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), and Alan Patten, *Hegel's Idea of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
10. TWA 7, 46.
11. TWA 14, 154: “Das wahrhafte Wesen der Liebe besteht darin, das Bewußtsein seiner selbst aufzugeben, sich in einem anderen Selbst zu vergessen, doch in diesem Vergehen und Vergessen sich erst selbst zu haben und zu besitzen.”
12. It can be discussed how radical this retreat should be understood. On the one hand it can be said that Hegel was only concerned with organizing already existing empirical knowledge and forms of philosophical thought, but, on the other hand, his dialectical understanding in a way presents a guideline for the choice of theory, and he did indeed make contributions to the empirical sciences of his time (TWA 9, 240). See the discussion of this problematic in Terje Sparby, “The Problem of Higher Knowledge in Hegel's Philosophy,” *Hegel Bulletin* 35(1): 33–55.
13. The selection of quotations in the following is in part based on Philip Kovce, *Stichwort Freiheit* (Basel: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 2014).
14. GA 88, 172.
15. While I think that Steiner's philosophy is *mainly* concerned with the state of “Sonderheit” I'm not claiming that there are no connections to the movement downwards and the return. For instance, in the last pages of *The Philosophy of Freedom*, Steiner sees the life in thought as a life in God (GA 4, 250). Though Steiner in his later anthroposophical phase notes that there is a connection between “intuitively experienced thinking” and spiritual perception Steiner, he still distinguishes between the content of *The Philosophy of Freedom* and what he presents in his later works (see GA 4, 256–7).

16. For reasons of space, I have left out Steiner's social theory, the so-called *Dreigliederung*. A fully comprehensive account of Steiner's idea of freedom would have to include it. There might also be further connections between Steiner's threefolded account of society and Hegel's threefolded account of the state.
17. GA 67, 355.
18. Steiner's view of the ontological status of such beings can be discussed. However, he tends to describe them in similar terms as he describes the human being, making comparisons, for instance, between the composition of the bodies of the human and the bodies of angels (see for example GA110, 111). It therefore seems clear that Steiner at least does not regard such higher beings as less real than human beings.
19. GA 179, 132.
20. GA 25, 21: "In der modernen geistigen Entwicklung der Menschheit hat sich erst das ausgebildet, was man abstraktes Denken nennen kann. Der Mensch früherer Entwicklungsepochen hatte *dieses* Denken nicht. Es ist aber notwendig zur Entwicklung der menschlichen Freiheit. Denn er löst die Kraft des Denkens von der Bildform los."
21. GA 26, 81. See also GA 207, 170: "Im Denken wird uns durch den Intellektualismus unser Menschenwesen genommen, um uns zur Freiheit gelangen zu lassen. Was wir in Freiheit erleben, das wird uns dann wiederum gegeben als menschliches Wesen. Der Intellektualismus tötet uns, aber er belebt uns auch. Er lässt uns wieder auferstehen mit völlig verwandelter Wesenheit, indem er uns zu freien Menschen macht."
22. GA 26, 216.
23. See GA 76, 43. Pure thinking does not try to picture anything, it is fully separated from the world of perception and contains only the pure form, the pure universality, of an ideal being—the pure concept of a triangle does not represent any specific triangle; neither a sensory triangle, nor a triangle pictured inwardly.
24. GA 18, 602.
25. GA 72, 190: "Der Mensch wäre nie zur völligen Befreiung seines Wesens gekommen, wenn er nicht den Aufstieg getan hätte zum naturwissenschaftlichen Erkennen. Also dadurch, dass sich die Seele völlig loslöst und im Naturbeobachten nur die Natur als solche gelten lässt, indem sich sie sich für die Naturwissenschaft loslöst von allem Seelischen in der Natur, dadurch wird die Seelen gezwungen, umso stärkere, bedeutsame Kräfte aus ihrem eigenen inneren Seelen- und Geistesquell zu holen, um, abgesehen von aller Naturbetrachtung, abgesehen von allem Sinnenleben, in einer neuen Art in die geistige Welt einzutreten."
26. GA 73, 316: "In den letzten Jahrhunderten wurde der Mensch gerade dadurch, dass er zur reinen Naturerscheinung vordrag, aus der Natur herausgestellt. Die Naturerkenntnis bekommt dadurch erst ihre rechte Aufgabe, ihre rechte Mission im Entwicklungsgange der Menschheit, dass sie nicht absolute Erkenntnisse liefert, wie man heute noch abergläubisch meint—naturwissenschaftlich abergläubisch –, sondern dass die Menschen frei macht."
27. GA 18, 594f.: "Die alltägliche sinnliche Welt ist zur "Illusion" geworden, weil das selbstbewußte Ich im Laufe der philosophischen Entwicklung mit seinen Innererlebnissen sich immer mehr in sich selbst isoliert gefunden hat."

28. Cf. David Chalmers, "Why Isn't There More Progress in Philosophy?," *Philosophy* 90(1) (2015): 3–31.
29. Plato: *Charmides*, 164(d), and GA 18, 23f.
30. For a further elaboration of this, see GA 137.
31. For philosophical treatments of various aspects of Steiner's *The Philosophy of Freedom*, see Verlag Freies Geistesleben 1994, Karl Martin Dietz and Thomas Kracht, *Erfahrung des Denkens* (Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1996); Thomas Kracht, *Erkennen und Wirklichkeit. Zum Studium der "Philosophie der Freiheit" Rudolf Steiners*, Bd 2 (Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 2001); Michael Kirn, *Freiheit im Leib? Rudolf Steiner, "Die Philosophie der Freiheit," Kapitel I und II, philosophisch erweitert* (Verlag am Goethanum, 1999); Michael Kirn, *Das grosse Denk-Ereignis: Rudolf Steiner, "Die Philosophie der Freiheit," Kapitel III, philosophisch erweitert* (Dornach: Verlag am Goethanum, 1998); Michael Kirn, *Das Ich in den Strukturen des Daseins: Rudolf Steiner. Die Philosophie der Freiheit, erster Teil systematisch erläutert* (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2015). There are also many works that investigate *The Philosophy of Freedom* in a broader context. Here is a selection: Karl Martin Dietz, *Rudolf Steiners "Philosophie der Freiheit." Eine Menschenkunde des höheren Selbst* (Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1994); Sergej Prokofieff, *Anthroposophie und "Die Philosophie der Freiheit" Anthroposophie und ihre Erkenntnismethode. Die christologische und kosmisch-menschheitliche Dimension der "Philosophie der Freiheit"* (Dornach: Verlag am Goethanum, 2006); Gennadij Bondarev, *Die "Philosophie der Freiheit" von Rudolf Steiner als Grundlage der Logik des anschauenden Denkens. Religion des denkenden Willens, Organon der neuen Kulturepoche* (Basel: Freie Philosophische Assoziation, 2005); Jürgen Strube, *Die Beobachtung des Denkens. Rudolf Steiners "Philosophie der Freiheit" als Weg zur Bildekräfte-Erkenntnis* (Verlag für Anthroposophie, 2010).
32. Letter to Rosa Mayreder, November 4, 1894, GA 39, 232.
33. It can be noted that this is not a psychological stance. It is expressivist; in philosophy, the human being both gives expression to, constitutes, and reveals its deeper nature, which cannot be reduced to either social or natural factors.
34. GA 72, 267.
35. GA 4, 16: "Dass die Freiheit nicht darin bestehen könne, von zwei möglichen Handlungen ganz nach Belieben die eine oder die andere zu wählen, scheint heute jeder zu wissen, der darauf Anspruch macht, den wissenschaftlichen Kinderschien entwachsen zu sein."
36. GA 4, 24, GA 4, 202.
37. GA 079, 128, GA 235, 46f., GA 235, 54.
38. GA 4, 20: "Auf hier bleibt der Unterschied ohne alle Berücksichtigung, der besteht zwischen Beweggründen, die ich erst auf mich wirken lasse, nachdem ich sie mit meinem Bewußtsein durchdrungen habe, und solchen, denen ich folge, ohne daß ich ein klares Wissen von ihnen besitze."
39. GA 22, 65.
40. GA 4, 164.
41. GA 4, 178: "Insoweit der Mensch den Antrieben von dieser Seite folgt, empfindet er sich als frei."

42. GA 4, 170: "... ein freies Wesen kann er nur *selbst* aus sich machen." GA 4,?: "Er fasst einen schlechthin ersten Entschluss." GA 4, 202: "Frei sein heißt die dem Handeln zugrunde liegenden Vorstellungen (Beweggründe) durch die moralische Phantasie von sich aus bestimmen zu können." GA 1, 199: "Dadurch also unterscheiden sich Prozesse der Natur von Handlungen des Menschen, dass bei jenen das Gesetz als der bedingende Hintergrund des erscheinenden Daseins zu betrachten ist, während bei diesen das Dasein selbst Gesetz ist und von nichts als von sich selbst bedingt erscheint." GA: "Der Mensch lässt sich nicht von einer äußeren Macht Gesetze geben, er ist sein eigener Gesetzgeber." GA 4, 178: "[Der Mensch] kann frei handeln, wenn er nur sich selbst gehorcht." GA 2, 125.
43. GA 4, 158.
44. GA 4, 170, GA 4, 191.
45. Cf. GA 2, 126.
46. Romans 7:19.
47. GA 18,56: "Im Spiel ist der Mensch *frei*; in der Erfüllung der Pflicht und in der Hingabe an die Sinnlichkeit ist er *unfrei*. Will der Mensch nun auch in seinem moralischen Handeln in voller Bedeutung des Wortes Mensch sein, das heißt, will er frei sein, so muss er seinen Tugenden dasselbe Verhältnis haben wie zur Schönheit. Er muss seine Neigungen zu Tugenden veredeln; und er muss sich mit seinen Tugenden so durchdringen, dass er, seiner ganzen Wesenheit nach, gar keinen anderen Trieb hat, als ihnen zu folgen. Ein Mensch, der diesen Einklang zwischen Neigung und Pflicht herstellt hat, kann in jedem Augenblick auf die Güte seiner Handlungen wie auf etwas Selbstverständliches rechnen."
48. GA 4, 171.
49. GA 4, 193.
50. For instance, an automatic aggressive reaction can be replaced, through reflection, by an action that is more in accordance with social norms (originally formed by moral intuitions). However, pure moral acts, which can also be called novel or original moral acts (i.e., case z), will often bear the mark of intelligence and creativity. They will be acts that are personal, but at the same time they are recognizably ethical.
51. GA 2, 125.
52. GA 30, 103.
53. GA 4, 186.
54. GA 51, 105.
55. GA 166, 92.
56. GA 28, 247.
57. GA 56, 148f.
58. GA 28, 328f.
59. GA 9, 193, TWA 12, 49.
60. TWA 8, 365.
61. This view, which could be called that of mystical theology, has found a recent voice in Hans Jonas. Compare Hans Jonas, *Philosophische Untersuchungen und metaphysische Vermutungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag), 193–4: "Im Anfang, aus unerken-

- nbarer Wahl, entschied der göttliche Grund des Seins, sich dem Zufall, dem Wagnis un der endlosen Mannigfaltigkeit des Werdens einzunehmen. Und zwar gänzlich: Da sie einging in das Abenteuer von Raum und Zeit, hielt die Gottheit nichts von sich zurück; kein unergriffener und immuner Teil von ihr blieb, um die umwegige Ausformung ihres Shicksals in der Schöpfung von jenseits her zu lenken, zu berichten und letztlich zu garantieren" with what Steiner says in GA 30, 239: "[Gott] hat sich in voller Selbstentüßerung ganz in die Menschheit ausgegossen. Er hat für sich nichts zu wollen übrigbehalten, denn er wollte ein Geschlecht, das frei über sich waltet. Er ist in die Welt aufgegangen. Der Menschen Wille ist sein Wille, der Menschen Ziele seine Ziele. Indem er den Menschen seine ganze Wesenheit eingepflanzt hat, hat er seine eigene Existenz aufgegeben."
62. GA 20, 167f.: "Freiheit erschiene somit als eine Illusion. Man kommt aus diesem Konflikt nicht heraus, solange man nicht vom Standpunkte des schauenden Bewusstseins in dem gewöhnlichen Bewusstsein nur eine durch die Leibensorganisation bewirkte Spiegelung der wahren Seelenvorgänge erblickt, und in der Seele eine in der Geisteswelt wurzelnde, vom Leibe unabhängige Wesenheit."
 63. GA 187, 45.
 64. GA 57, 420: "Der Mensch ist als ein in seinem Unterbewusstsein lebendiges Wesen aus der geistigen Welt heruntergestiegen, um sich in der sinnlichen Welt sein Selbstbewusstsein Er wird wiederum hinaufsteigen zur übersinnlichen Welt *mit* seinem Selbstbewusstsein. Das alte Hellsehen war nicht *sein* Hellsehen, sondern das, was ihm andere Wesen eingeträufelt haben. Das Hellsehen, das der Mensch sich erwerben wird in der Zukunft, das wird ein selbstbewusstses, ein ichdurchdrungenes Hellsehen sein."
 65. GA 214, 126.
 66. This is based on interpreting what Steiner says about the *Weltengrund* having poured itself out into the world in *Grundlinien einer Erkenntnistheorie der Goetheschen Weltanschauung* (see section II.III) as implying that he means that God is real. This view is rejected in *Individualism in Philosophy*, though God does indeed enter into the picture again as a real being towards the end of *The Philosophy of Freedom*. This means that *The Philosophy of Freedom* can be located right at the edge of the transition from the second to the third phase.
 67. Gajin Nagano, *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 177.
 68. GA 26, 24.
 69. Steiner on many occasions considers how the inner and outer world connect (see, for instance, GA 1, 167). But what is his account of how the human spirit interacts with the body it inhabits so as to make the world accord to its moral intuitions? Steiner's view seems to imply that something like this is possible, and that means that he has an interactionist view. Interactionism, or a views that allow for downward causation, are not widespread, and anyone who takes such a position is usually expected to have an explanation for how interaction between the spirit and the body is possible given that the body is ruled by natural laws. Steiner does indeed address this issue at times (for example: GA 78, 132–52) but again, like his views on freedom, it is in need of a thorough and comprehensive treatment. Much progress can be indeed made in our

understanding Steiner's idea of freedom by sorting out how he conceives of interaction between the spirit, the soul and the body, and how this relates to contemporary natural science. Though interactionism and downward causation is not at the center of current philosophical debate, it does have its proponents. See Nancey Murphy, George F. R. Ellis, and Timothy O'Connor, *Downward Causation and the Neurobiology of Free Will* (Berlin: Springer, 2009).

70. A recent example is Helen Steward, *A Metaphysics for Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
71. See Steiner's essay "Philosophie und Anthroposophie," in GA 35, 66–110.
72. Some steps are taken in GA 202, in particular lectures 10–12.
73. See Stephen Mumford and Rani Lill Anjum, *Getting Causes from Powers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
74. GA 191, 240.
75. GA 6, 84: "Erst wenn der Mensch gewahr wird, dass die Naturkräfte nichts anderes sind als Formen desselben Geistes, der auch in ihm selbst wirkt, geht ihm die Einsicht auf, dass er der Freiheit teilhaftig ist. Die Naturgesetzlichkeit wird nur so lange als Zwang empfunden, solange sie als fremde Gewalt ansieht. Lebte man sich in ihre Wesenheit ein, so empfindet man sie als Kraft, die man auch selbst in seinem inneren betätigt; man empfindet sich als produktiv mitwirkendes Element beim Werden und Wesen der Dinge."
76. GA 191, 240.
77. GA 28, 247.
78. This article was initially presented at the conference "Freedom as the Way to Keep Human Identity" in Rostov-on-Don in 2014. Thanks go out to the participants of the workshop on Steiner's and Hegel's conceptions of freedom, and also to Troy Vine and Aksel Hugo, who provided valuable feedback on the final drafts of this article. Thanks also to an anonymous reviewer who pointed out certain points that were in need of clarification.