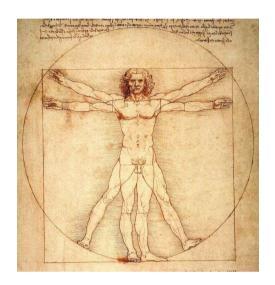
A newsletter

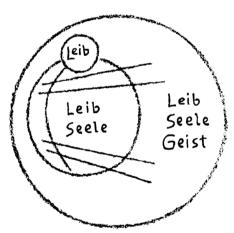
News for friends of anthroposophy*

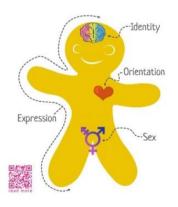
This newsletter has been translated digitally from the German

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Editor: Roland Tüscher (*acc. to §4/Statutes AAG). The responsibility for the contributions lies with the authors © All rights reserved.







¹ The brochure "The Art of Relationships" from the Association of Waldorf Schools can be found on the Internet:

Who falls into the gender trap?

On the endangered future of Waldorf education

On the publication of a brochure by the Association of Waldorf Schools on the subject of "Relationship Art" ¹

Christian Breme

The confidence that the tasks facing education today can be understood and helpfully tackled with the help of Rudolf Steiner's anthropology has diminished in Waldorf schools. It is more convenient to resort to more "modern" views. The new brochure from the Association of Waldorf Schools "The Art of Relationships - Humanity, Identity and Sexual Education in Waldorf Schools" is a telling and at the same time frightening example.

"The art of relationships celebrates diversity", proclaims the initiator of the publication, Sven Saar, in the foreword. The sixty-page brochure is intended for teachers and parents. It ultimately leads to the concept of a "school open to diversity". If you enter the term "school open to diversity" into Google, you will be directed to numerous projects by local and national LGBT groups who are looking for other associated schools under the keyword "school of diversity".

https://www.waldorfschule.de/fileadmin/downloads/Blickpunkte Reader/beziehungskunst Web 2024 web.pdf

There are always references to LGBT teaching materials. Books, videos and stories with gender-appropriate images and gender-appropriate language for all class levels. Writing such stories yourself or rewriting existing fairy tales and stories in a gender-appropriate way is the aim of the brochure.

But do we as a Waldorf school want to be involved in this

schools of diversity" that are completely alien to school culture? Does the Association of Waldorf Schools really want to point parents and teachers in this direction? Is the Association aware that in doing so it is abandoning vital sources of its own pedagogy? The justification for this urgent question will be made clear below:

The following glossary is a brief introduction to gender philosophy for parents and teachers by the authors of the brochure of the Association of Independent Waldorf Schools

Geschlechtsidentität

CIS, TRANS, NONBINÄR

Die Geschlechtsidentität (engl. "Gender") bezeichnet die innere Gewissheit über die eigene geschlechtliche Zugehörigkeit. Die Selbstwahrnehmung, ob wir Frau, Mann oder weder noch (nonbinär) sind, kann sich dabei vom biologischen Geschlecht unterscheiden. Nach der Geburt findet eine Zuordnung statt, die sich auf körperliche Geschlechtsmerkmale bezieht und noch nicht im Zusammenhang mit der Identität stehen kann. Im Laufe des Lebens zeigt sich dann, ob diese Zuordnung stimmt (cis) oder nicht stimmt (z.B. trans, non binär).

Sexuelle und Romantische Orientierung

HETEROSEXUELL, HOMOSEXUELLE, BISEXUELL, PAN/OMINISEXUELL, ASEXUELL...

Die sexuelle oder romantische Orientierung bezieht sich darauf, von wem wir uns sexuell angezogen fühlen oder in wen wir uns verlieben. Oft wird vom biologischen Geschlecht auf das zu begehrende Geschlecht geschlossen, dabei wird die heterosexuelle Anziehung als Norm betrachtet. Jedoch sind die Formen der Orientierung unabhängig vom eigenen biologischen Geschlecht und so vielfältig wie die Menschen selbst. Menschen, die ihre Orientierung als pan- oder omnisexuell bezeichnen, machen deutlich, dass sie Menschen unabhängig von ihrem Geschlecht lieben und/oder sexuell begehren. Auch gibt es Menschen, deren Liebesfähigkeit sich selten oder gar nicht in sexueller Begierde ausdrückt (asexuell).

Geschlechtsausdruck

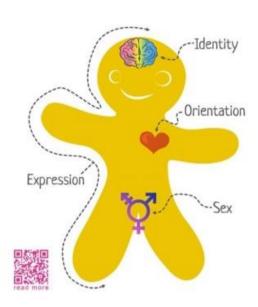
FEMININ, MASKULIN, AUTHENTISCH, INDIVIDUELL ...

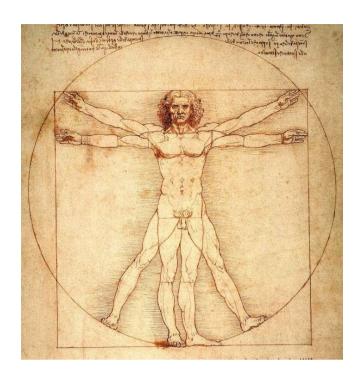
Der Geschlechtsausdruck ist die sicht- und hörbare Komponente von Geschlecht. Damit ist gemeint, wie ein Mensch sich z.B. kleidet oder spricht und so Geschlecht zum Ausdruck bringt. Häufig passiert es, dass vom Ausdruck einer Person auf deren Identität geschlossen wird. Zum Beispiel gelten Rock und Lippenstift als Zeichen dafür, dass sich jemand als Frau fühlt. Damit kann man sich jedoch leicht irren: Kleidung, Haarschnitte oder Verhaltensweise (z.B. übereinander geschlagenen Beine) bedeuten nicht für alle das Gleiche.

Biologisches Geschlecht

WEIBLICH, MÄNNLICH, INTER

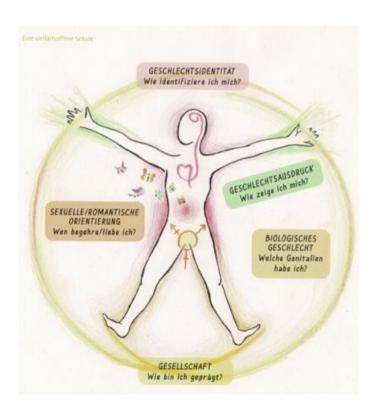
Das biologische Geschlecht (engl. "Sex") wird durch körperliche Eigenschaften vorgegeben: Penis, Hoden und XY-Chromosom für männlich oder Vulva, Eierstöcke und XX-Chromosom für weiblich. Allerdings ist das binäre Modell eine recht grobe Vereinfachung: Die aktuelle Forschung geht von nachweisbaren Zwischenstufen aus. Die betroffenen Menschen – je nach Studie zwischen 7 und 17 von 1000 – werden als intergeschlechtlich bezeichnet. Die Richtwerte, ab wann etwas männlich oder weiblich ist, sind subjektiv. Manche Körper werden, um Klarheit zu erreichen, aufwändig und ethisch fragwürdig operativ angeglichen.



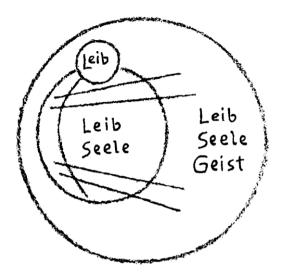


Through this image, printed millions of times - it is called 'Genderbread Person' or 'Gingerbread Man' - the *gender movement* wants to convey a new image of man, an image of man that explains the diversity of all gender constitutions in a simple and catchy (yet tasty) way. But no one recognizes that it obscures the view of spiritual individuality.

Sophia Klipstein, co-author of the brochure "The Art of Relationships", has adapted this picture for Waldorf schools in the usual colored pencil aesthetic. The result is a hybrid of the gingerbread man and Leonardo da Vinci's famous proportional drawing. Nothing has remained of the spiritual being and his integration into the cosmos:



How does Rudolf Steiner talk about the development of the human body and the emergence of sexuality?



The incarnation process of an individuality was described in detail again and again by Rudolf Steiner and became the basis of the General Study of Man. The origin of the body lies spread out in the cosmic environment. The limbs appear like radiations. The integration of the limbs into the still half-open chest-torso area gives rise to the organs of speech and sexual organs (10th lecture). In the 14th lecture of this course Rudolf Steiner deals with important core points of sexual knowledge and at the same time points out the conditions for educational work. You can read about it here. ²

The diagram he drew back then is a key to understanding the spiritual, mental and physical human being from its cosmic origin.

Is this profound approach to knowledge in Waldorf schools really to be replaced by the LGBT gingerbread man, whose image of man is stripped of all spiritual and cosmic qualities? Who wants this and why?

A dangerous project

The Art of Relationships brochure repeatedly talks about the individuality of people, which should be treated with sensitivity and care. However, if we look for concrete indications of how this individuality manifests itself, where it may be vulnerable, we are always referred to sexuality, to the scope for personal gender expression and free gender orientation. According to the brochure's message, modern identity formation takes place in the personally desired mixture of gender factors. Biological sex, gender orientation and gender expression are considered to be freely selectable. Medical research and technology have made it possible to postulate this "new concept of freedom" as a human right.

The primacy of self-design appears to emphasize intellectual individuality, but constantly draws attention to gender. On *facebook*, *for* example, there are 36 options on the gender scale for describing one's own identity.

This required change in consciousness is embedded in a mood of glossed-over arbitrariness, which Sven Saar repeatedly describes with a quote:

"In a world where you can be everything, be kind."

How could it happen that in Waldorf circles Rudolf Steiner's view of the human being is sacrificed to such a shallow, pedagogically and philosophically untenable "perspective"?

The directionality of the soul as a prenatal inheritance

In his book "Die Geschlechtlichkeit des Menschen" ("The Sexuality of Man"), Stephan Leber³ has extracted the foundations for a deeper understanding of human sexuality from Rudolf Steiner's extensive work.

und Erziehung (39), Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart 1981, 140 pp. paperback, ISBN: 3772502393.

² Rudolf Steiner: General Study of Man. GA 293.

³ Stefan Leber, Geschlechtlichkeit und Erziehungsauftrag: Ziele u. Grenzen d. Geschlechtserziehung. Menschenkunde



Directing forces of development, by Christian Breme (ikaros-verlag.ch)⁴

In this context, the "directionality of the soul" appears to be one of Rudolf Steiner's most important concepts. In it lies a force originating from the pre-natal, which gives direction to development in childhood and adolescence, indeed in the entire biography. This relates to the shaping of relationships between people and the world (world interest) and from person to person (shaping relationships).

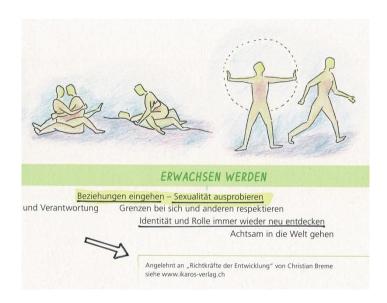
For 15 years, there has been a presentation of child development that describes this incarnation process from birth to the end of school years in pictures and rich text. It reckons with these guiding forces of development.

PUBERTAT

Erste Menstruation, Ejakulation und Masturbation
Suche nach der eigenen Identität und sexuellen Orientierung
Orientierung an Gleichaltrigen, Auflehnung gegen Autoritäten

It is inconceivable to the author of this widespread developmental image that the authors of the brochure "Beziehungskunst" ("The Art of Relationship") take up this depiction without being asked (!)⁵, and use it as a backdrop for a deeply shameful presentation of their idea of a healthy development of relationship skills: It shows menstruating, masturbating teenagers and those who "try out" sexual positions together!

This depiction (brochure p. 30/31) is not the only blow to the forces of the ideal, which always underlie healthy relationship development.



⁴ Directional forces of development, a development picture with a brief description of key development steps. Translations in English, French, Italian, Russian; print run 26,000, order: christian.breme@ikaros.ch

⁵ And explicitly linked to his name! (Editor's note)

It is an abuse of those children and young people who are far from entering into relationships (plural!) at their stage of life in order to try out sexuality in them (!), and whose concern is not "that there should be more talk about how to deal with each other when making love", as is put into the mouths of schoolchildren at the end of the brochure.

How and where can Waldorf education survive?

The publication "The Art of Relationships", published by the Association of Waldorf Schools, shows how uncertain and endangered the future of Waldorf schools is. The study of human nature remains a prerequisite for their flourishing. Research questions relating to transgender children, with which we are increasingly confronted, must be approached from the spirit of anthropology. They were formulated in an exemplary way in a recently published article by the Belgian physician and long-time school doctor, Dr. Luc Vandecasteele, in the field of medicine (Merkurstab 4/2023, Journal of Anthroposophic Medicine):

"From my point of view, there are important questions for a humanities-based medicine:

How are the variations in sexual orientation and gender identity to be understood in the light of the different members of the being with their contrasting gender imprint?

How do these variants relate to the degree to which one is incarnated with astral body and ego in the physical or etheric body?

What role do today's lifestyle and media culture play in this incarnation process?

What other reasons might there be?

What support can be provided without causing harm? ..."

With great concern, I would like to ask: How can we find people who *still* understand these and similar research questions from the depths of human studies - or who want to understand them as young colleagues? And where is it still possible to maintain pedagogical

work that has been deepened through study and research, especially in times of challenging resistance? These are questions of survival for Waldorf education.

Appendix

Note on the author's biography and the nature of this article

Christian Breme has been continuously active in the Waldorf school movement from his studies at the Stuttgart Waldorf Teachers' Seminar with Ernst Michael Kranich and Stefan Leber (1976 - 77) to the present day. He was a class teacher in Bonn for 12 years, then a specialist teacher for art and science at the Rudolf Steiner School in Basel for 25 years. For many years he has been active in teacher training at the seminaries in Dornach, Lausanne, Freiburg and Stuttgart. Today he is also involved in the French school movement.

In his extensive consultancy work, primarily in Swiss schools, he devoted himself to the development of a relationship education based on Rudolf Steiner's study of man,⁶ which also includes the tasks of sexual education. His books were translated into English and French. The concept of relationship education was adopted by many schools in German-speaking countries.

Christian Breme drew attention to the appearance of transgender children and young people at a time when this was not yet known in the German school movement. He was aware of the phenomenon through his stays in America. This was followed by a series of lectures and working groups on the topic: "The dress of gender, and when it doesn't fit." Articles appeared in educational journals: "Are we prepared? On the task of supporting transgender children and young people."

His essays on the dignity of shame and on accompanying transgender children were included in the book "Beziehungskunst" by the Association of Waldorf Schools. (published in 2022) With this article, Christian Breme wishes to distance himself decisively from

seminars throughout the German-speaking world. The reinterpretation as "art of relating" turned it into its opposite.

⁶ Dr. Anne-Sophie Evison first coined the term "relationship science" in 2008 when she was a school doctor at the Rudolf Steiner School in Basel. The term was disseminated by Christian Breme through lectures, publications and

the objectives of the publisher and editor, as well as from the subsequent publications, which are characterized as research projects, and at the same time call for serious anthroposophical research and in-depth anthroposophical work in the area addressed.

In 2022, the book "Beziehungskunst⁷ - Menschlichkeit, Identität und Sexualpädagogik in der Waldorfschule" was published by the Association of Waldorf Schools. At the beginning of

2024, a 60-page brochure was published with the same title and the note: An overview for parents and teachers. It is more than just an excerpt from the contents of the book; the authors Laura Frey (Basel) and Sophia Klippstein (Hamburg) continued their research, according to the foreword by the brochure's initiator, Sven Saar. They condense their findings into a school concept in the final chapter.

Both publications reveal a policy on the part of the Association of Waldorf Schools that is deeply worrying for many people and which raises fears for the future of the movement. These are perceptions of an increasing flattening of Waldorf education, a gradual distancing from the sources of its origins, i.e. from Rudolf Steiner's study of the human being, and a pandering to social tendencies that currently determine the mainstream.

The book and brochure have the same motif on the cover: we are looking at around 20 hands open at the top, which together form a surface. A mist in the colors of the rainbow - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet - descends on them.

The brochure is entirely dedicated to "modern" pedagogy in a "changed social situation". The foreword states:

"Freedom and happiness" are "increasingly linked to the issues of self-discovery, equality and humanity" These "must be reflected in schools and education.

Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen

Beziehungskunst

Menschlichkeit, Identität und Sexualpädagogik in der Waldorfschule

Eine Übersicht
Für Eltern und Lehrpersonen

Therefore, this is about many kinds of love, about sex, gender and justice."

And further:

"We are concerned with the careful, life-affirming development of all students, and this includes the ability to deal with oneself and others in a recognizable and loving way: the <u>art</u> of relationships."

Were these abilities to recognize oneself and others and to be able to treat oneself and

others with love not always the goals of education at Waldorf schools? Just think of Rudolf Steiner's thoughts on social and antisocial drives, which gave a new direction to perception and educational action. But here it seems to be about something different, something new, a new quality:

"It's about a **modern** awareness of diversity, an awareness to which this magazine and the book of the same name want to contribute."

We learn why Steiner 100 years ago and the developing Waldorf education could not yet be at the height of this awareness:

"Although Waldorf schools have been characterized by a strong emphasis on human values for over 100 years, certain areas may have been neglected in theory and practice, including sexual education, social justice, **modern** identity formation and political awareness"

Did we not believe that human studies were a source of pedagogical inspiration and practical innovation that was far from exhausted? But that is what it says:

"Rudolf Steiner's writings and lectures also contain ambivalent and contradictory statements to which both progressive and conservative voices can refer. As a result, a **modern** awareness of diversity has found it more difficult to assert itself than necessary."

⁷ The brochure "The Art of Relationships" from the Association of Waldorf Schools can be found online at

https://www.waldorfschule.de/fileadmin/downloads/Blick-punkte_Reader/beziehungskunst_Web_2024_web.pdf

⁸ Emphasis in bold and underlining by the author of the article

The author of this foreword, Sven Saar, is the founder and co-director of **Waldorf Modern**, an English Waldorf institute that runs seminars and online courses and provides teacher training. The **modernization of Waldorf education is** a central concern for him. In the foreword, he formulates his thoughts on overcoming the normative thinking that, in his opinion, still prevails in Waldorf circles. This refers to thinking in terms of the binary categories of man and woman and the devaluation of everything that does not fit into this scheme. He also calls on Waldorf schools to **be more woke**⁹ in future, "i.e. to become awake to the demands of the environment."

The programmatic text culminates in the emphatic statement:

"Relationship art celebrates diversity."

What might that mean, the reader wonders. Who should we celebrate?

If you enter this phrase into Google, you will find countless announcements with the same content:

Berlin celebrates diversity, Munich celebrates diversity, Hamburg, Basel, Zurich celebrate diversity. Save the date: July 27 (Berlin), June 22 (Munich), August 3 (Hamburg), June 29 (Basel). Reserve the day for Christopher Street Day (CSD). Walk, drag brunch, queer talk, party...- an Americanized, English-speaking mixture of political statement against all forms of oppression and modern, exuberant entertainment culture in public spaces.

Waldorf schools should also celebrate diversity in the future...???

In the book "Beziehungskunst", in which this appeal first appeared, you will find that quite a few articles are illustrated with pictures of such love parades on Christopher Street Day. They show children and young people with rainbow-colored hair, with cheeks painted in rainbow colors, with rainbow-colored flowers and capes. The picture credits come from English-speaking countries. Was it during the Love Parade in New York, in Seattle or in London? Are they Waldorf children who can be seen in the pictures? There are doubts. Will it be possible to take such pictures in Berlin on Christopher Street Day, or in Hamburg or Zurich? In any case, it's not everyday school life.

Is it the task of Waldorf education to *celebrate* diversity?

Is it the task of Waldorf education to *celebrate* diversity?

Does the Association of Waldorf Schools in Germany and its research center want to point all teachers and parents in this direction? Is this conscious and enthusiastic embedding of Waldorf education in the mainstream dominated by the LGBTIQ movement what we owe our pupils?

Anyone who works or has worked in the field knows that many children need help and support. Those with a handicap, those with limited intellectual ability, those who have experienced abuse, those whose environment does not provide sufficient bonding and, increasingly, those who have experienced flight or migration. We have just learned that 80% of young people are affected by severe or moderate loneliness. 10 Among these many differences that require our special attention are also those that affect children and young people who have an orientation other than heterosexual. And those who cannot identify with their biological gender. Both would feel excluded from the image of humanity described in a hundred facets if life situations such as theirs were never given an appreciative mention in the classroom. But is this a good enough reason to celebrate diversity?

In these latter situations, there are pedagogical tasks that we must not overlook. Exclusion, even by the group of children, would affect the social life of the whole class.

The task is not new. We can look back on experience and initiatives:

I know of the always supportive guidance given to pupils who cannot identify with their birth gender in many kindergartens and schools. I remember trusting and open conversations with homosexual pupils. There were teachers who built bridges for every orientation and diversity.

This did not require a new study of human nature. All that was needed was to take the educational mission of Waldorf schools seriously, which means the evening pupil reflection of the teachers, the joint pupil meeting on Thursdays and the hearty daily pupil contact.

⁹ According to the Duden dictionary, *woke* means: highly politically aware and committed against racist, sexist, social discrimination. Sensitivity towards people from

minorities. Wokeness: movement since 2013, originating from American universities

¹⁰ Youth loneliness study, Berlin, November 2023

New tasks require a deeper understanding of the human being, a deepening of the study of mankind

If we want to understand the increase in transidentity and intersexuality, which are rather unusual phenomena in our culture, we need to deepen our knowledge of human nature and look beyond this to other areas that Steiner researched, such as historical symptomatology and the processes of the pre-natal and the almost general loosening of the relationship between body and soul that can be observed today and the increased occurrence of dissonances between the essential members. Incarnation processes must be included in observation and thinking. There is no need for a new or different anthropology. Our capital is the study of man. Methodology, didactics and individual constitutional knowledge are based on it.

We view childhood development as the continuation of prenatal processes. We think of and observe the incarnation process of a human being in a multi-layered body structure. We assume alternating incarnations once in a body that appears male, once in a body that appears female. However, if we look at the inner structure through the outer physical appearance, this body is **always bisexual**. This is the revolutionary aspect of the anthroposophical view of human nature. A male physical body is built up and supported by a female etheric body. A female physical body can know that it is carried by a male etheric body. Both bodies are permeated by an astral body that is always bisexual. And the supra-sexual individuality is to be thought of as the sovereign in and around the human being.

The Waldorf school's study of human nature thus holds a key to understanding the diversity that is evident today.

The program of **modern** Waldorf education - called the <u>art</u> of relationships - has been trying to find its way into schools with a missionary zeal for years. This is causing great concern. When I visit schools, I experience how this new trend determines the climate and creates pressure to conform, which results in censorship and self-censorship in a woke state. Talking about the difference between boys and girls at a certain stage of development requires civil courage.

I would like to exclude the chapter "Artistic-pedagogical approaches" written by Laura Frey from the criticism of the brochure expressed in this essay. These explanations are written on the basis of pedagogical experience and humanistic considerations and dispense with ideological claims.

Christian Breme - Arlesheim, Easter 2024

Urgent request

On behalf of the author and editors, we would like to make a very urgent request for feedback so that a broad picture can emerge of what we expect or do not expect from Waldorf schools and the educators of our children.

You can write to us directly or choose the direct route to the board of the Association of Independent Waldorf Schools (a copy to us would be desirable).

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