Preface

This book is primarily addressed to scholars and researchers of educational science and philosophy, who wish to familiarise themselves with Rudolf Steiner’s educational thought; that is, the underlying basis for Steiner Waldorf education (here, for simplicity’s sake, called only Waldorf education). I have tried to pick out and present those of Steiner’s ideas that may be of interest to a present time academic educational thinker or researcher that knows little or nothing about Waldorf education. My picking and choosing is partly guided by similarities to views and ideas present in contemporary educational thought and practice—even if such similarities are only ‘partial overlappings’, or strictly limited ‘intersections’, since the basic perspective, or paradigm, that informs Steiner’s ideas, is not shared by any of the educational philosophers and researchers referred to.

To give a comprehensive view of Steiner’s educational thought is not easy, considering that Steiner never summed up his ideas on education in a systematic way (hence, the many introductions to Waldorf education that have been written after Steiner’s death). One reason why Steiner did not write such a book is probably lack of time. However, the main reason may have been that, as Steiner himself says, Waldorf education is not intended to be a neat system of educational ideas and principles, but an impulse of awakening. To capture such an impulse and express it anew about a hundred years later requires more than intellectual orderliness. There is a certain conflict here between the norms of academic discourse, and the essence of the subject presented.

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