



# ***Social Justice in the Light of Anthroposophy***

**An Awakening Call**

**Parts I and II**

Robert Karbelnikoff

*Cover Art*

*St. John the Baptist and Thy Crown*

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*by Lucien Dante Lazar*

# Social Justice in the Light of Anthroposophy

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*Dear reader, please note the following:*

- 1. This essay assumes a good deal of familiarity with the worldview, terminology and social movements deriving from the life and work of Rudolf Steiner, also known as anthroposophy or spiritual science. While I hope to write in the future on similar topics for a larger audience, this essay makes no such attempt. Readers who choose to wade into this essay without this background should be aware of the potential for misunderstanding.*
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## **The Hammer Song**

If I had a hammer  
I'd hammer in the morning  
I'd hammer in the evening  
All over this land  
I'd hammer out danger  
I'd hammer out a warning  
I'd hammer out love between  
My brothers and my sisters  
All over this land

If I had a bell  
I'd ring it in the morning  
I'd ring it in the evening  
All over this land  
I'd ring out danger  
I'd ring out a warning  
I'd ring out love between  
My brothers and my sisters  
All over this land

If I had a song  
I'd sing it in the morning  
I'd sing it in the evening  
All over this world  
I'd sing out danger  
I'd sing out a warning  
I'd sing out love between  
My brothers and my sisters  
All over this land

I got a hammer  
And I've got a bell  
And I've got a song to sing  
All over this land  
It's the hammer of justice  
It's the bell of freedom  
It's the song about love between  
My brothers and my sisters  
All over this land

--Pete Seeger and Lee Hays



# Social Justice in the Light of Anthroposophy

## Part I

### **the archetypal social awakening**

To explore the question of social justice in the context of the biodynamic and wider anthroposophical movement, we need to begin with the recognition that biodynamic agriculture is itself an expression of a “social impulse” within humanity, meaning, in the first place, a longing to awaken from a narrow, limiting experience of oneself, of others, and of the world.

When we look to the people who worked with Rudolf Steiner at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on his different activities and initiatives, we find that they all shared, before ever encountering his work, this longing for something new: a new way of being, a new way of seeing, a new form of community and consciousness able to transcend divisions of race, nationality, and class. This longing is what I mean by *social impulse*.

For the people living at that time, this was not an abstract aspiration or vague hope but a deep existential need, especially coming out of the mindless bloodshed of World War I. We could also call it an awakening of *social conscience*. Thousands of people came to the feeling that western civilization had reached a dead end: it had imploded in on itself and a radical new beginning was needed if the civilized world was not to be thrown into endless further cycles of nationalism, ethnic hatred, war, and social chaos.

Many of the individuals who were present at the *Agriculture Course*<sup>1</sup> had also been some of the first witnesses of the destructive impact of the new industrial agricultural methods. They were deeply disturbed by what they experienced—depleted soils, declining harvests, sick animals, loss of rural

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<sup>1</sup> The lectures and events which served as the founding of the biodynamic movement in 1924.

culture—and knew that something different was needed. You could say they had an awakening of *ecological social conscience* and came to feel there had to be another way to work with nature and with the whole realm of agriculture. This, in turn, led them to reach out to Rudolf Steiner.

We do not understand biodynamic agriculture, as well as Waldorf education, anthroposophical medicine and all the other diverse offshoots of anthroposophy, correctly if we think of them simply as “applications” of spiritual science to different vocations. This is an abstraction. In reality, these movements are the result of powerful forces of social conscience living in different individuals and groups of people in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, *which then received from Rudolf Steiner and spiritual science a certain direction, a certain form through which their social impulses were channeled and further cultivated.*

Rudolf Steiner made it abundantly clear that the social impulses come into being first, and only later unite themselves with the inner substance of spiritual science. For example, in his lectures published under the title *Awakening to Community*, he describes “three acts in the soul drama” of an anthroposophist, i.e. of a modern human being striving to work in the world out of the impulses of spiritual science.<sup>2</sup> These “acts” will be a key theme in this essay as I believe they can provide a pathway through the labyrinth of challenges we face in social life today, whether or not we are students of anthroposophy.

The first act of this drama Rudolf Steiner describes as the emergence in our biography of a kind of inner refusal to participate in the destructiveness and superficiality of modern civilization. He calls this a *withdrawal or turning inward of the will* away from conventionality—conventional thought forms, social forms, and ways of being—in search of something deeper.

This turning inward of the will is the very ground of the social conscience, wherever it emerges. The tragic conditions of the modern world touch us in some way: through war, poverty, ecological destruction, racial discrimination, childhood abuse, illness, and so on. Whatever these events or trends are, and however they have impacted us, we can find ourselves disgusted, wounded, angered, depressed, sick, offended. Our will is hindered in its natural outward embrace of the world and we go inward in search for something new and different—we are thrust onto a quest for meaning and healing, both personal and collective. For millions of people in our time, this is the beginning of their hero’s journey of liberation from the oppression, violence, and emptiness of modern life.

On this basis, we can begin to understand the archetypal social awakening as it lives in humanity, as well as the diversity of movements that arise when these social impulses are then channeled into different forms through being wed to the insights of influential thought leaders and the movements to which they gave birth.

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<sup>2</sup> See lecture 4, *Awakening to Community*, The Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, New York 1974.

If we take some of the modern expressions of the eco-agricultural conscience, for example, as one small branch of this general social impulse, we find the most varied movements: from biodynamics to organics to permaculture to the local food and urban agriculture movements, to name a few. Beneath the surface of these movements, we find networks of people with very similar values and social impulses. Above ground, however, we find movements that have remarkably distinct perspectives, priorities and practices informed by the very different worldviews, historical individuals and circumstances that brought them into being.

### **growing a healthy biodynamic movement**

What I hope to have made clear so far is that biodynamics is not an agricultural impulse derived from the teachings of spiritual science; it is rather, a powerful social impulse working in the domain of agriculture that has united itself with the spiritual substance of anthroposophy. *Biodynamics is thus not something that needs to be wedded to, or have grafted onto it, any type of social impulse, movement, or worldview from outside—it is a social impulse in and of itself—with an inexhaustible wellspring of inspiration for social deeds.* The same can be said of all the different so-called “daughter movements” of anthroposophy. This uniting of our social impulses with the insights of spiritual science is what Rudolf Steiner refers to as the second act in the soul drama of an anthroposophist.<sup>3</sup>

At the individual level, it is a fact, however, that the social impulses that fuel movements at their founding are not identical to the social impulses that continue to fuel them over time. This is because the social awakenings of each generation, as well as those of people based in different regions and cultures from the founders, are informed by different karmic, social and historical circumstances and thus have a unique character. It is one thing, for example, to wake up to ethnic violence or ecological devastation as a Central European in the 1920s and another to wake up to these same realities as an African American in the 1990s. This means that biodynamics and all social movements are and must be in a continual evolution. A movement is thus not a static thing but an ever growing and changing reality.

To grow the biodynamic movement in a healthy way, it is therefore necessary for two different things to take place: first, that it is refreshed, again and again, by new people flowing into it with their unique social impulses and perspectives; and second, that these social impulses are continually wedded to and illuminated by the social and spiritual substance of anthroposophy; just as took place for the founders of the movement.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that these “insights of spiritual science” I refer to above are not purely mental in nature, they contain within them also inherent social impulses, which is why in this essay I often refer to the “substance” of anthroposophy, rather than simply to the “insights of spiritual science.” A key question we will therefore need to address later in this essay is, what exactly are these inherent social impulses that derive from anthroposophy and how do they live in the biodynamic movement as well as the other daughter movements?

<sup>4</sup> I am not proposing here that everyone who comes into the biodynamic movement needs to become an anthroposophist. What is essential is that the social impulses living in those who are active in the movement find illumination and guidance from the wellspring of anthroposophy.

The biodynamic movement can thus be distorted in two different ways:

- a. It can close itself off to the fresh social impulses of succeeding generations or from people in very different regions and cultures, and thereby become less and less relevant to the present time, enclosing itself, as it were, in a kind of sectarian skin formed by devotion to the experiences of the founders and to an ever-smaller circle of people in the present. We could call this the *sectarian* tendency.

or

- a. It can welcome new people and fresh social impulses but neglect the process of uniting these social impulses with, and illuminating them through, the substance of anthroposophy; instead adopting and grafting onto itself all kinds of perspectives, narratives, and agenda from movements outside itself. We could call this the *grafting* tendency.

It is important to recognize that each of these tendencies has its light as well as its shadow side. In the case of the sectarian tendency, for example, there lives a deep devotion and commitment to anthroposophy and this is important to recognize and honor because this is an essential quality for the health of our movement. The problem arises when this very devotion leads to an inability to welcome in new people and perspectives and/or bring the vital inner substance of anthroposophy fully to bear on the needs and questions of the present time.

Likewise, in the grafting tendency we find a courageous will to engage with the people, needs and questions of the present time, and we need to recognize and honor the importance of this gesture for the health of our movement. The problem arises when these needs and questions lead to an impatient grabbing hold of thought forms and strategies from all manner of outside movements, whether or not these movements are actually aligned with the inner substance of anthroposophy.

The tragedy of the former is that certain existential questions of the time simply don't get asked or answered, or the people who could ask and answer these questions are not invited to the table. The tragedy of the latter tendency is that the right questions are asked, but they are not brought into relationship with the being of anthroposophia for illumination and guidance.

What has been missing, I would suggest, in the biodynamic movement, through the working of these two tendencies, *is an individualized approach or response to the questions of social justice drawn from the profound social and spiritual heart of biodynamics and anthroposophy*. I am writing this essay to contribute to precisely such an effort.

### **the renewal of the anthroposophical movement**

If we look honestly at the anthroposophical movement and its diverse offshoots (biodynamics, Waldorf, etc.) we must admit that, though a more or less tenuous middle ground continues to hold sway, both these tendencies are living ever more strongly. Many of the groups and organizations in these movements tend to swing from one extreme to the other and often we find different "camps" in

the same movement or organization, each expressing some aspect of the light and the shadow side of these two tendencies. We can also experience how these two tendencies play off one another and create a kind of vicious cycle, because in a subtle but real way they tend to reinforce one another.

This challenging landscape in the anthroposophical movement is a symptom, I would suggest, of the fact that we are approaching (and in some cases have passed) the 100-year anniversaries of the founding deeds of anthroposophy and her offshoot movements. They are a result of the fact that after 100 years, the spiritual forces and social forms that proceeded from the founders begin to decline and can no longer engender the kind of balance between these two tendencies that a movement needs to grow and develop in a healthy way.<sup>5</sup> The power of the founding impulse is thus waning and the only solution is for a profound renewal to take place; *a renewal that taps vertically into the very source and substance of the inspiration for these movements as it lives in the spiritual world in the present, bestowing on us the power to fully meet the challenges of our time.*

Though both of these tendencies or gestures have their place—the gesture of devotion to the work of the founders and the gesture of openness to the world and the work of other movements—they must be brought into a dynamic relationship of harmony through a higher source of inspiration. Rudolf Steiner was fully aware of this reality and thus spoke on several occasions of the need for a great renewal of the anthroposophical movement at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.<sup>6</sup> He also planted a powerful seed for this renewal through the supersensible *foundation stone* of the new Goetheanum that was placed into the heart of the community at the Christmas Conference of 1923/24.<sup>7</sup> It is remarkable to note that at this world-historic event, Rudolf Steiner spoke again and again of how this foundation stone can help us, as a community and as individuals, find the power to harmonize what he called “true and genuine esotericism” with “the greatest conceivable openness”—precisely the two qualities that are needed to bring healing and balance to the two tendencies I am pointing to here.<sup>8</sup>

When we understand this deeper background, we can begin to see that the tendencies referred to above are not only playing off one another in a negative manner, they are also setting the stage—or you could say, creating the longing, the needed tension—for a higher resolution, not only for the movement as a whole, but in each of us. For if we are honest, we have to admit that we each have played our part in this challenging dynamic, we each have our tendencies toward one or both extremes, and thus the needed transformation must begin within each of us.

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<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed exploration of the challenges associated with this 100-year cycle see Jessiah Ben-Aharon “The Global Situation at the End of the Century: The Emergence of a Threefold Global Society and the Future Tasks of the Michael Movement” in [The Future is Now: Anthroposophy at the New Millennium](#). Temple Lodge, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Rudolf Steiner’s lecture of August 27, 1924 in [Karmic Relationships volume VIII](#). Steiner Press, 1975.

<sup>7</sup> The Goetheanum is the name of the building in Switzerland designed by Rudolf Steiner which serves as the worldwide home of the anthroposophical movement.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Rudolf Steiner’s words on page 99 of [The Christmas Conference: for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society 1923/1924](#). Anthroposophic Press, 1990.

Rudolf Steiner spoke of the individual dimension of this challenge in his characterization of Act III of the soul drama of the anthroposophist. Essentially, he suggests we reach a crisis point in our biography as we seek to embody the universal impulses of anthroposophy within the unique circumstances of our destiny—a process that requires us to confront, ever more deeply, the limitations, wounds and weaknesses of our personality, which includes, of course, the limitations of our familial and cultural heritage. This is a drama marked by great inner struggle with our lower selves: our illusions, our biases, our fears. Yet through this process of self-confrontation and self-emptying, new capacities arise, new born powers of soul that ultimately can allow us to unite our personal destiny with the destiny of the time and place in which we live. We could say of this act of the drama: *anthroposophy herself dies in us and is reborn*—she dies in us as an abstract teaching, as a personal spiritual path, as a historical movement to which we are tirelessly devoted—and she reappears as a living spiritual being who guides us to our work and to our colleagues, wherever they may be—and gives us the power to incarnate our highest aspirations in the present historical context. We are reborn, you could say, as world citizens from the confines of our intimate anthroposophical (and biodynamic, Waldorf, etc.) communities. Rudolf Steiner calls this the awakening of a *Sophia* power in our souls, thus connecting this initiation, in a certain way, with the mysteries of the divine feminine in our time.<sup>9</sup>

I am bringing these big picture perspectives at the start of this essay because I feel they can engender the mood of compassion, honesty and patience that is necessary to meet these challenges in the right spirit. To make progress as a biodynamic movement, we need to be willing to see clearly our present state and to name clearly what we see, both the sectarian tendencies and the grafting tendencies, not in a spirit of judgement, antagonism and condemnation, but in a spirit of shared inquiry, shared responsibility and shared love for one another and for the work itself. And to do this work well, we need to recognize that the entire anthroposophic movement, together with its many offshoots and daughter movements, is presently passing through a collective initiation process, a collective turning inside out, an Act III crisis if you will, which is the ultimate source of the challenges and polarizations that we find in our movement.

Finally, I want to emphasize that by suggesting we do not need to “wed biodynamics to any outside movement, or graft any outside movement on to it,” I do not mean we cannot learn deeply from other movements or collaborate with them and their leaders. As pointed out above, many of today’s social movements share a common social awakening or conscience at their root and have, therefore, much to gain from cross-fertilization with one another. Indeed, from my perspective, learning and collaboration between *michaelic movements* and their leaders is of the greatest importance at this

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<sup>9</sup> Please note that these three acts of the soul drama of the anthroposophist are not something that are accomplished once and for all at different times in one’s biography, but are rather an organism of ongoing spiritual practice. For a deeper exploration of the three acts and how they relate to the renewal of the Anthroposophical Society, see my essay “Embodying Anthroposophia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” available at <http://robertkarp.net/writings/>

time.<sup>10</sup> For these relationships between movements to be healthy, however—just as in our personal human relationships—each movement needs to be deeply grounded in their own unique identity, purpose and trajectory, as well as in a growing understanding of the other. True collaboration, in other words, has nothing to do with grafting or merging with one another.

### **the essential questions**

To explore further the question of biodynamics and social justice we therefore need to ask a whole host of questions, for example:

*What is the unique character of the inherent social impulse as it lives in biodynamics and the wider anthroposophical movement?*

*How do we more consciously cultivate and nourish this inherent social impulse so that it becomes ever stronger in our movement?*

*What is the unique identity, worldview and trajectory of the social justice movement in America and how or where does it converge with or diverge from that of the biodynamic and the wider anthroposophic movement?*

*Does biodynamics have something to offer the unique questions and challenges facing the social justice movement and does the social justice movement have something to offer the unique challenges and questions facing the biodynamic movement?*

*Is there a basis for collaboration between these two movements and if so, when and how might this collaboration take place most fruitfully?*

*What might the being of anthroposophia herself have to say at the present moment to the questions, suffering and challenges that have brought the social justice movement into being? What do these world historical events and existential questions call forth in her, what wisdom can she shed on them and what enthusiasm for deeds might she wish to awaken in us? What, in other words, would a social justice movement look like that was deeply informed by anthroposophic insights?*

*Finally, to navigate this whole landscape of inquiry, I will also need to address to some degree, the perennial question: is there some kind of inherent racial bias or ethnocentrism in the worldview of anthroposophy or was such bias or ethnocentrism present, at least, in the soul of Rudolf Steiner?*

In the further installments of this essay, I will attempt to shed light on these far-reaching questions that are so necessary, as I see it, for the growth and development of a healthy biodynamic and wider anthroposophical movement in the Americas.

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<sup>10</sup> By “michaelic movements” I am referring to movements that consciously or unconsciously are working from the inspiration of the rightful “spirit of the times,” which is understood in anthroposophy to be the Archangel Michael.



# Social Justice in the Light of Anthroposophy

## Part II

### introduction

In Part I of this essay, I suggested that the biodynamic movement, and indeed the whole anthroposophical movement, needs to come to terms with the social injustices and the racial and cultural wounds that live on the North American continent, past and present. To avoid this challenge would be to succumb to what I called in Part I of this essay, the *sectarian tendency*—that is, the tendency to close ourselves off from the world and from the needs and perspectives of human beings in the present time.

I also suggested that our efforts toward social change and transformation should be profoundly informed by the being of anthroposophia herself, who still has so much to offer toward the healing and transformation of our world. I also suggested that we should be extremely wary of “grafting” onto biodynamics and any other movement flowing out of anthroposophy, the worldview, narratives or agendas currently prevailing in the social justice movement. As I said in part I:

What has been missing...in the biodynamic movement, through the working of these two tendencies (sectarianism and grafting), *is an individualized approach or response to the questions of social justice drawn from the profound social and spiritual heart of biodynamics and anthroposophy.*<sup>1</sup>

As you can see, I am seeking to strike a very delicate balance in this essay. On the one hand, I am affirming the need for profound social transformation of American and Western societies. On the

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1 Karp, Robert. Social Justice in the Light of Anthroposophy Part I, 4

other hand, I am suggesting that the narrative and strategies currently holding sway in the social justice movement are incapable of bringing about the needed transformation. This installment, then, has two fundamental goals:

- a) to begin to lay the ground for a new narrative, a new understanding of and approach to social justice that is drawn from the deep wellsprings of anthroposophical spiritual science, and
- b) to explain why the highly influential narratives and strategies currently permeating the social justice movement are not only inadequate to the task, but are actually making the problems they are seeking to change worse.

These two tasks are intimately connected, in my mind, because to birth a new narrative and approach to social justice, I believe we need to understand, at a deep level, why the current narrative, and many of the strategies born of this narrative, simply will not bring about the changes in social life that each of us longs for so deeply. While this installment thus involves a rather strong critique of the social justice movement, I ask the reader to remember that this is all in service to the larger, positive task of contributing to the birth of a new kind of movement for social justice, racial reconciliation, and social renewal on this continent.

I also ask the reader to remember the important distinction I made in Part I of this essay between the positive, semi-conscious social impulses that are rising up in humanity at this time, and the conscious worldviews or theories with which people have united themselves in an effort to bring their social impulses to manifestation. Clearly distinguishing the underlying social impulses from the conscious worldviews of the social justice movement will play a key role in the analysis below and is essential, in my opinion, to come to a balanced perspective on the social justice movement.

Finally, I ask my readers to keep in mind that what I am sharing here is research that is in process and evolving. This is merely a snapshot of my quest for truth in this realm at a certain moment in time. I am not interested in convincing anyone of anything but of adding a particular flame to a community fire. My hope is simply that you will strive to receive this offering into yourself with a certain equanimity, in order to see if and how it resonates with, or contributes to, your own quest for truth. In this way, perhaps, we can open passageways to the collective intelligence that only a community of people can engender through an honest, tolerant, shared quest for the truth. Contributing to this kind of good-willed, communal truth seeking is my ultimate goal and is the foundation, I would suggest, of all genuine social healing and social change.

### **clarifications and nuances**

At the outset of this exploration, I feel the need to clarify a number of things to address some critiques that have already come toward me since the publication of Part I of this essay, as well as to address some anticipated sources of misunderstanding. I apologize for this lengthy set of clarifications but I ask the reader to keep in mind just how fraught this topic is in our society at this time and how bold, and perhaps one could even say risky or presumptuous it is for me, as a white, middle class, able-bodied man, to bring forward a strong critique of the social justice movement.

First, I need to clarify that what I am going to be evaluating in this installment are not the diverse philosophical influences on the social justice movement, but rather one particular strand of influence which is so pervasive that I refer to it in this essay as the *dominant narrative or theory* of the social justice movement, at least at this moment in time.<sup>2</sup> This narrative has its source in a host of new academic disciplines, which in turn have been born of a complex web of social analysis and philosophical discourse that has come to be known as *post-modernism*. These new academic disciplines include, for example, Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality and Post-Colonial Theory. Often, I will refer to these simply as *critical social justice theory*, a term commonly used by many of these writers and activists.

I fully recognize that in its lived reality, the social justice movement is an incredibly diverse ecosystem, with a wide range of influences, perspectives and approaches held by different individuals, organizations and subgroups. I also recognize that it is not a centralized movement of any kind. In spite of this fact, I believe one can readily discern the influence of a specific worldview that profoundly shapes the day-to-day work of the social justice movement, *even if this worldview is not uniformly shared by the people who identify with the movement*. Clearly, for example, there are many people who associate themselves and their work with the term “social justice” who have no particular knowledge of, or connection to, this dominant narrative whatsoever, or who completely or partially disagree with it. I will not, therefore, be evaluating the many different kinds of work being done *in the name of social justice*, much of which can only be applauded. Rather, I will be evaluating certain underlying assumptions, thought forms, and strategies that carry great influence in the movement, and which are often, in my opinion, not critically examined.

I also want to emphasize at the outset that I am not proposing, through my critique, that there is nothing valuable or true about the social justice movement or its dominant narrative. Quite the contrary, I believe the underlying semi-conscious social forces fueling this movement, which I will articulate more fully below, are of vital and extraordinary significance at this moment of history. Furthermore, I believe the facts brought into sharp focus by social justice activists simply cannot be argued away or ignored. A great deal of suffering, anger and even rage is associated with these facts that must be acknowledged and taken seriously by anyone who is concerned with creating a humane future for the world. There are also profound truths articulated by this dominant narrative on which I will elaborate below. If this were not the case, this narrative would never have been able to galvanize the social impulses of so many people.

The great challenge presented by the dominant narrative of the social justice movement, rather, is the tragic mixture of truth and falsehood that it contains and the particular way the two are mixed together. The result is a philosophy that is able to see very clearly certain kinds of evil working in the world but that is not able to bring healing or transformation to the evil that it illuminates. Imagine a fairy tale in which a character is preparing to walk through a dark and dangerous forest at night when a mysterious figure appears and offers a magical lamp to help guide them. The only

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<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, there are some important counter-vailing trends emerging, namely, people and organizations working for social justice out of a very different worldview, that I will describe toward the end of this installment.

problem with this lamp is that at the same time that it illumines certain of the evil beings lurking in the woods, it also makes those beings stronger and more difficult to dispel or transform. This is the challenge we face with this dominant narrative: namely that it perceives essential and important aspects of reality, but in a way that makes those realities more difficult to transform, and thus roots them ever more deeply into the psycho-social landscape of our time. Discerning and affirming what is true in this narrative, and transforming what is false, is therefore key to the forging of a truly effective movement for social justice and social renewal.

I am well aware that some people, perhaps many people, who feel aligned with the social justice movement and are students of anthroposophy, or active in anthroposophically inspired organizations, may be tempted to think that the value of the healthy, underlying social impulses fueling the social justice movement greatly outweigh the value and significance of the worldviews or theories of the social justice movement. These individuals may thus find my critique to be an expression of nothing more than a kind of anthroposophical puritanism. After all, they may say, the social justice movement is about real history, real people, power and policies; it is a movement of morality rather than a movement of ideas, theory, or politics. For example, someone may acknowledge a limitation to the dominant narrative that I point out, but argue that it is of no great significance in the overall scheme of things. What is important, they might say, is that America is coming to terms with its racial history, that people are standing up against blatant forms of evil, and that wills and consciences are being *awoken* and galvanized to change the fundamental racist structures of society and so on.

What this view overlooks is that ideas themselves have an extraordinary and inherent moral power in social life and in the souls of human beings. They shape our thinking and feeling and acting, and in turn the world, in profound ways. To suggest the social justice movement can bring about genuine social change, even in the short term, regardless of the profound limitations of its dominant theory, would be like saying that you can build an airplane even with faulty engineering concepts, just because you have a vision of that airplane and a passionate desire for its realization. This, however, is a dangerous illusion. Building an airplane requires a combination of vision, desire and the appropriate science or theory in the hands of people with the necessary skills. If any one of these is lacking, the project will fail. It is no different with projects or movements for social change. The worldview or theory guiding a movement, at least in broad brush strokes, needs to be in alignment with the laws and realities of human nature and human social life. If theory and reality are not sufficiently aligned, the very opposite of what is intended may come about—an airplane may not only fail to fly; it may fly temporarily and then crash due to inherent flaws in its design and in so doing kill many people. Rudolf Steiner made a similar point using the analogy of building a tunnel:

The building of a tunnel is something eminently practical. Someone might well say: building a tunnel is simple; one has only to start digging into a hill from one side and to excavate away until one emerges at the other side. Everyone can see that it would be foolish to think in this way. . . The real problem of our day consists in the fact that there are great laws for the building of the state and of the social organism, just as there are for building a

tunnel, and one must know these laws . . . just as in building a tunnel one must understand the interaction of all the forces of nature.<sup>3</sup>

I am not suggesting that the ideas must be perfect for action to be taken. Taking the airplane analogy further, we can see that the science of aviation has steadily improved. People did not wait to build airplanes until they had a perfect science, but rather used the building of airplanes to perfect the science itself. I fully embrace this basic principle of life which some academics call *action research*. The problem is that in social life it is much more difficult to discern one's errors and learn from them than it is in the realm of physical engineering. Mistakes in social thinking and theory are not so easy to detect, particularly in a world pervaded by the cognitive habits of materialism, which are by and large unable to penetrate to the true nature of social life. One of the most tragic elements of the dominant narrative of the social justice movement, which I will describe more fully below, is the fact that it actively discourages the kind of self-reflection, questioning and mobile thinking that would be necessary to discern and transform the flaws in its worldview and strategies.

Hence, to those who would say, "the striving is right, and even if the ideas are flawed or one-sided, they will gradually improve; therefore, this critique is unnecessary," I can only point out that you cannot transform or evolve flawed or limited ideas by ignoring them or not talking about them or defending them in the name of showing solidarity with oppressed peoples, or with their justified anger or with their underlying social impulses. Rather, the flaws and limitations must be looked squarely in the eye with courage and humility—which, by the way, can be done even while holding a position of solidarity with those whose ideas one is challenging. This is precisely what I am attempting in this essay. I welcome my own ideas being critiqued, but the suggestion that this essay is somehow unjustified or unnecessary because the ideas will *naturally evolve* is simply illusory—ideas do not naturally evolve without active human participation in that process.

I also need to address those who may believe that a critique of this kind would only be justified coming from a person belonging to an oppressed group of some kind or perhaps someone perceived as working in the grassroots of the social justice movement. For the moment, I think it is sufficient to say that in so far as the social justice movement holds out a vision of change for every aspect and every institution of society, as it clearly does, which in turn means that all people, regardless of gender, race, culture, vocation or economic status will be, or could be, impacted by its worldview and agendas, then as far as I'm concerned, all people have a right, indeed a responsibility, to analyze, critique, question and, if they so choose, actively work to transform these ideas, agendas and strategies. If the social justice movement were only working to bring reform to communities of people of color, on the other hand, then I would agree that it is not my place to critique what is being attempted. But since the movement is clearly seeking to bring about far-reaching changes to social life as a whole, that will impact all people, it should expect and even welcome energetic engagement with its ideas from a wide range of people. This is

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3 Steiner, Rudolf The Temple Legend, (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1985) 132-133

especially the case, since, as I see it, consensus building among stakeholders is an essential feature of all genuine forms of non-violent social change. <sup>4</sup>

### **white fragility**

Finally, I need to address a question that could be posed like this: “But why are you choosing to critique the social justice movement at all rather than the forces arrayed against the social justice movement? Does this choice not belie a bias of some kind on your part, a political agenda, or even perhaps some underlying racial prejudice?” In other words, if we accept the perspective of the dominant narrative of the social justice movement that the history of white civilization is first and foremost a history of racism and oppression, then is it not my responsibility to work first on this legacy within myself and perhaps seek to help other white people do the same, rather than call into question the worldview of a movement that is trying to address the suffering of people of color? Am I perhaps acting out of some form of *white fragility*, which the Oxford Dictionary, drawing on the bestselling book by Robin DiAngelo,<sup>5</sup> has now defined as “discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice”?<sup>6</sup>

Well, the truth is that I *will* be writing, in the course of this essay, about the diverse forces and movements arrayed against true social justice from across the political spectrum. However, sad to say, some (by no means all) of these forces are to be found, from my perspective, in the social justice movement itself. It would be dishonest of me to pretend I think otherwise. While this installment of the essay is focused on the dominant narrative of the social justice movement, in the next installment I will look at several other movements of thought and intention that are also working strongly against the realization of a just and healthy social order. The question as to whether I am motivated by a political agenda is a valid question which I will also address in the next installment of this essay, when I bring forward the ideas of social threefolding.

With regard to white fragility, however, I must confess that the dominant narrative of the social justice movement does call forth some anger in me. This essay has, in one sense, been born out of my effort to discern to what degree this anger has its source in the kind of white fragility that Robin DiAngelo articulates in her book and the degree to which it is a justified response to the errors and distortions of this dominant narrative. As you will see from my analysis below, answering this question has led me into far more complex terrain than I could ever have imagined. For with the topic of white fragility, we really get to the heart of the tangled web of truth and error that lives in the social justice movement and thus it provides an ideal focus for this exploration. To embark upon this journey, and to be able to navigate this difficult terrain, I believe it will be first helpful to revisit the richly layered worldview that lies at the foundation of biodynamic agriculture, as it is from this rich soil that I believe a new narrative of social justice can be born.

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<sup>4</sup> The idea that my race or gender entirely prevents me from having valid insights or perspectives on these issues will be addressed later in this essay.

<sup>5</sup> DiAngelo, Robin *White Fragility* (Boston, Beacon Press, 2018)

<sup>6</sup> [www.lexico.com/en/definition/white\\_fragility](http://www.lexico.com/en/definition/white_fragility)

## revisiting the worldview of biodynamics

Biodynamic agriculture is based upon a recognition of the earth as a living being that breathes, changes and evolves in the course of the day, in the course of the seasons and in the course of larger cycles of time. This being of the earth, we could call her Gaia, is multidimensional, meaning, she has layered expressions of body, soul and spirit in a continual state of evolution. For example, in the varied forms, tones, colors and tastes of earth perceptible to our physical senses, we can feel her pure creative life forces, her nourishing power, her renewing fragrance and beauty. The soul level of the earth comes to expression in the power of interconnectedness that unites and radiates out from all the manifold creatures and aspects of the earth, weaving all her beings into one great web of life, uniting the furthest star with the lowliest stone. When this web of life is aggressively torn into by human beings, many of us can feel her suffering as our own. At every level of her being, the earth also bears the signature of a profound intelligence: a light-filled, lawful, all-pervading wisdom that is the ultimate source of our ability to know the earth, to see into her diverse qualities and to work creatively and dynamically within the folds of her being.

Nourishing beauty, all-encompassing interconnectedness, and intelligent, light-filled essence: these are the primal powers of earth. The earth is thus a being of body, soul and spirit and each of her aspects and creatures are likewise beings of body, soul and spirit. A word that can perhaps help us understand the relationships among the many beings of the earth is the term “holon” which points to the nesting together of living beings in which each layer or part of reality is also a whole organism unto itself.<sup>7</sup> Think of how the organs of the human body are both “parts” of the human body but also whole worlds unto themselves, with highly unique functions and personalities. Thus, within the living being of earth, there are also the holons of the different continents, regions and climates. These are both parts of the earth as well as individual beings with distinct qualities of body, soul and spirit. And within these are innumerable other holons. These include the holons of the different species of plants and animals and the different minerals and metals, as well as the elemental powers of earth, air, fire, and water. We can also speak of the holons of the different seasons and of individual lakes and rivers, mountain ranges, forests, deserts and valleys.

Nested within this dynamic, living community of holons is the human being. The human is also a being of body, soul and spirit, who also, both at the individual level and at the species level, is involved in a path of continual growth, change and evolution. From the biodynamic perspective, the human being is unique among the other holons of the earth because the human has been gifted, over the course of millions of years, with a special kind of individual self-consciousness and through this fact has a number of unique attributes not possessed by other holons. These include the power to harm, abuse and exploit the integrity of other holons. The human, in other words, has been partially hatched out of, or you could even say, emancipated from, the primal divine unity in which the rest of the ecological holons are still embedded. The feeling of being separate

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<sup>7</sup> This term was first used by Arthur Koestler in his 1967 book [The Ghost in the Machine](#). According to Wikipedia “it is a combination of the Greek holos (ὅλος) meaning 'whole', with the suffix -on which denotes a particle or part (as in proton and neutron).”

from nature, even while still being embedded in nature, is one result of this fact; it is one of the existential experiences unique to the human being. And yet, if this existential challenge can be met with the help of spiritual development and ecological conscience, humans also possess an awe-inspiring power for the good. By learning to understand and work in cooperation with other holons we are able to bring new and powerful forces of healing and renewal into the life of earth: forces that can even help other beings evolve to higher levels of expression.

This reality is perhaps nowhere better expressed than in the creation of a true biodynamic farm. Consider how a true biodynamic farm functions as a living, breathing holon of body, soul and spirit within the living being of the earth—a holon that radiates out to the wider landscape and to the surrounding community its healing, nourishing powers of creation, interconnectedness and wisdom. Here we have a picture of how the human, when working in concert with the intelligences of nature, can not only *not do harm*, but can actually *bring forth the good*, i.e., can bring into being holons that bestow healing on nature and that actually raise up nature to a higher level of expression.

Let us be clear that this understanding of the unique role of the human being within the organism of the earth that we find in biodynamics is wholly different from the earlier forms of anthropocentrism which were all based on a dualistic view of the world in which nature and human were fundamentally at odds, fundamentally separate. In anthroposophy, however, nature and humans are understood as parts of a higher unity of beings and forces. The earth has been birthed out of this higher reality and the earth in turn has given birth to the human in our current form so that we can become the earth's conscious, creative partner in evolution: a role that will require many lifetimes and ages still to come for us to bring to full realization. Clearly, a powerful spiritual calling of the human to begin to embody this true relationship to the earth is taking place in our time.

The receiving of individual self-consciousness, and with it the capacity for profound evil and error as well as higher forms of good, is a path that other holons will also take over time, indeed some of the higher animals are clearly moving in that direction. Furthermore, there are other holons, completely invisible to the senses, who long ago passed through a phase of individual self-consciousness; in anthroposophy these are sometimes called *angelic beings*. So, you see, we are dealing in biodynamics and in anthroposophy with a very new and sophisticated form of anthropocentrism: one that does not raise the human up in pride and arrogance over the rest of creation, but rather one that can fill us with awe in the face for our cosmic responsibilities, and sometimes also profound shame in the face of our failures to manifest this high ideal of the human being.<sup>8</sup>

### **social life in the light of anthroposophy**

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<sup>8</sup> For readers who would like to explore further the unique form of the anthropocentrism living in the biodynamic movement, I would warmly recommend Dan McKanan's 2018 book [Eco-alchemy: Anthroposophy and the History and Future of Environmentalism](#), from the University of California Press.

While this understanding of the natural world, and the human being's relation to the natural world, which is the foundation of biodynamics, is perhaps familiar to many of my readers, I suspect some of my readers may not be aware that anthroposophy also conceives of social and historical realities in this same way. Human society is thus also a holon within the greater holon of the earth, a living being of body, soul and spirit. The economic, political and cultural spheres of which it is comprised are also dynamic, evolving beings or organs. This knowledge is the basis for Rudolf Steiner's approach to social change called social threefolding, which I will speak of in more depth in future installments of this essay. History and particular historical time-periods are also holons, as are the realities of race, culture, language, nation, family and gender in which the human being is imbedded. Like the earth as a whole, like the different species, so are races, nations, cultures, languages, families and genders real beings of body, soul and spirit in a process of growth, change and evolution.

There are some subtle but important differences, however, between the ecological and the social holons. One of these differences is that the social and historical holons are subject to error and evil in a different way than the ecological holons. Essentially, wherever the human has fully penetrated the reality of another being, good and evil forces begin to work in a different way than they do when the human influence is working upon a being more outwardly. While we cannot really speak of a good and evil spirit of a fern or of a woodpecker, for example, we can speak of a good and evil, or true and false, or healthy or unhealthy spirit of a nation or a race or gender, or time period (or a family, religion, language, organization, movement and so on). The ecological crisis, in this sense, is the result of the influence of the human being beginning to penetrate ever more deeply into the holons of nature, which in turn is causing more and more chaos to arise even among holons normally anchored deeply and unconsciously within their cosmic archetypes. In the weather and climate, for example, but also certain landscapes, one begins to sense the working of beneficent and malevolent forces of a different order than has historically been the case. All this is the result of the greater and greater penetration of the earth by human consciousness, human social forms and human technologies.

From this perspective, for example, there is both a divine archetype or truth to the masculine and feminine dimensions of the universe as well as certain imbalances, distortions and shadow aspects which have come into being in the course of history. All people have to grapple with these twin legacies working in the domain of gender. It is important, however, not to conflate the divine archetypes of the genders, which are mighty, objective, evolving and creative powers of the universe, with the particular expression of gender in any particular culture or time period. The truth is that each culture brings to expression some aspects of these divine archetypes as well as some aspects of their distortion and one-sidedness. Furthermore, from the perspective of spiritual science, all human beings have within them the forces of the divine masculine and the divine feminine, regardless of the sexual expression of their physical body.

Though I am only touching on this topic, perhaps we can already begin to see how looking at something like gender through a threefold lens of body, soul (or culture) and spirit (or divine archetype), can begin to untangle certain one-sided viewpoints currently living in our society. We

begin to see, for example, that gender is neither a fixed physical reality informed by a divine archetype or essence—a viewpoint, sometimes called *essentialism*, which tends to conflate particular cultural expressions with their divine archetypes—nor is gender purely a cultural construct as the post-modernists and critical gender theorists like to think—a view which tries to bring fluidity into the realm of gender by denying divine archetypes or essential influences altogether. The truth of gender, however, encompasses aspects of both these viewpoints and goes far beyond them.

It is important to note that the understanding of evil expressed here is also distinct from other historical and traditional understandings. From the perspective of spiritual science, the entanglement of the human being (and the social and historical holons) with forces that bring about error and distortion was facilitated and allowed by our spiritual creator beings because only in this way could humans meet the necessary resistances to eventually mature, over many lifetimes, in many different races and cultures, into ethical individuals capable of free and conscious cooperation with the holons of the earth and of the cosmos. They knew this entanglement would not only lead to grave tragedies and injustices on the earth, but also to free deeds of healing and transformation on the part of human beings that would otherwise not have been possible. We see this divine plan reflected in the archetypal phases of human development wherein a child, who is initially nested and anchored in the loving group consciousness of their family, gradually hatches out of this unified consciousness into a more or less dualistic, individualized consciousness, as part of their journey to full maturity as a self-directing human being able to unite with, and serve, in a free and loving way, other holons.

Yet another difference between the ecological and the social holons is the fact that, generally speaking, the social and historical holons undergo more rapid changes in their development than the ecological holons. The holons of the current races, national cultures and ethnicities, for example, over the next several thousand years, will fade away almost entirely. All efforts toward genuine social change need to reckon with this reality and with the fact that this transition is taking place at a different pace in different regions and in different cultures. Likewise, major changes are presently taking place within the holons of the genders. These changes are all part of a larger evolutionary process designed to support human beings in gradually waking up to their spiritual individuality or higher self, that is, to the part of themselves that transcends race, nation, culture, ethnicity and gender. Only in this way can humans learn how to weave the gifts of the existing races and cultures into a higher unity, and thus forge a cosmopolitan world culture based on universal human values.<sup>9</sup>

This whole way of seeing the world, both ecological and social realities, could be called

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<sup>9</sup> It is also important to note, that from the perspective of spiritual science, the holons of the races are all of equal dignity; they are all archangelic, planetary spirits of the same rank, even though they are each involved in a unique path of evolution upon the earth. The same principle applies to the human self or individuality—we are all of equal dignity and inherent worth, even though we are each forging a unique path of evolution upon the earth. I will elaborate upon this picture in future installments.

- **cosmic-ontological** because it recognizes that all things—stones, ferns, cows, races, cultures, individuals—are real beings with an inherent dignity—spiritual and physical—which change and evolve over time. It could also be called
- **eco-ethical** because it embodies a profound understanding of the interweaving and inter-dependent ecology of all beings and therefore calls forth a heightened awareness of the ethical implications of our actions. It could also be called
- **existential-sacramental** because it recognizes the unique and challenging role humans hold within the cosmic ecology of life in that our thoughts, feelings and actions have the power to either degrade the lives of other holons or raise them up to a new and higher life. For example, when I as an individual carry out a deed of love or selfless service for another being, my action not only furthers the evolution of that being, it also furthers my own evolution, including the holons in which I am embedded, i.e., the holons of my family, society, culture, gender, nation, race and so on. When I act selfishly, on the other hand, I bring a degrading influence into myself and into these other holons. This view could also be called
- **western-shamanic** because it recognizes a trajectory to the universe and certain archetypal patterns of meaning that are embedded within it, which the human being is able to know, to communicate with and to commune with in freedom, through higher, thought-filled forms of consciousness.<sup>10</sup> We could also describe this way of seeing the world as
- **healing-trinitarian** because it opens the door, through an understanding of the body, soul and spirit dimensions of reality, to those spiritual beings, insights and qualities which are able to harmonize the great polarities currently living in our culture, and thereby bring genuine healing and transformation into the world.

This spiritual-scientific worldview is vitally important in our time because it offers us a way of working toward social and ecological change based on real insight into the evolutionary trajectory of human beings, human societies, cultures, races and genders, etc. as well as landscapes, soils, plants and animals. Rather than seek to change the world around us based on abstract ideals or political or technological agendas of power and control, it shows us a way of entering into the living ecology of reality and drawing forth completely new possibilities of healing and transformation.

Think, for example, of how Trauger Groh, and the other biodynamic farmers and activists who were steeped in this worldview, drew forth the concept of *community supported agriculture* out of a living contemplation of society and of the challenges faced by small farmers.<sup>11</sup> All social and

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<sup>10</sup> In anthroposophy, these are called *Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition*.

<sup>11</sup> Trauger Groh (1932-2016) was a biodynamic farmer, a co-founder of Temple Wilton Farm in New Hampshire and one of the pioneers of Community Supported Agriculture or CSA. Together with Steven McFadden, Trauger wrote Farms of Tomorrow, which played a significant role in the spreading the CSA concept in North America and around the world.

ecological healing and transformation, from this perspective, asks us to give birth to something new out of the given realities we experience around us. Whether we give birth to holons of healing or holons of destruction, or something in between, has everything to do, I would suggest, with the worldview and with the quality of consciousness, of attention and intention, that informs our creative process. From this perspective, we could perhaps also describe these social and ecological insights deriving from the work of Rudolf Steiner as the basis for a new kind of embodied **subtle activism**—a term that is being increasingly used to describe the integration of spiritual insight and practice with efforts toward social change.

Whether or not you feel yourself somehow aligned with, or working out of, this worldview, and whether or not you resonate with or approve of my attempt to summarize it, I suspect we can agree on a few things. Firstly, we can perhaps agree on the fact that literally everything positive that has come into the world through the lifework of Rudolf Steiner, whether in biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophical medicine, Waldorf education, the Camphill movement, etc. etc. has its source in this worldview, and is literally inconceivable without this new way of seeing and understanding the world. And secondly, we can perhaps agree that one of the prerequisites for the further development of anthroposophy and her practical expressions lies in the deepening and creative elaboration of this worldview by at least some group of people on the planet. For anthroposophy, and her practical expressions, did not come into the world whole cloth, complete and finished and simply ready to be applied. Rather, they are something incredibly new and delicate in human evolution that must be reborn, rewon, and made fresh again and again through the creative process of each person, each community, each culture and each successive generation.

### **the dominant narrative of the social justice movement**

To begin to understand the dominant narrative of the social justice movement, we need to be aware of the degree to which it is rooted in a worldview that has rejected anything remotely resembling a cosmic-ontological, eco-ethical, existential-sacramental, western-shamanic or healing-trinitarian view of life of the kind upon which biodynamics and Waldorf education are based. Nor can it remotely be described as a form of subtle activism. The philosophic underpinnings of this dominant narrative are based rather on a profound mistrust of the ontological notion of beingness altogether, as well as the principle of multi-dimensionality, i.e., the idea that that the world has been shaped by more than material forces. It is also based on a profound skepticism toward human thought and the idea that a human being, through thought, could ever rise above their cultural conditioning in such a way as to perform free actions or commune with universal truths or meanings indwelling the universe.<sup>12</sup>

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12 I recognize of course, that there are many other leading thinkers and activists in the social justice movement who have grafted a more spiritual way of looking at the world onto the materialistic substrate of critical social justice theory, or who have grafted critical social justice theory onto a traditional spiritual tradition such as Buddhism, Judaism, Islam or Christianity, or some of both. See for example, the work of bell hooks, Ruth King or Shelly Tochluk. My focus in this installment is not on these thinkers, however, as I do not consider them to be representative of the dominant narrative of the social justice movement.

What critical social justice theory, drawing heavily from post-modernism, asserts instead, is that all of human knowledge and culture is shaped by dynamics of power working in the material world, which are constructed and upheld through the use of language. From this perspective, the concepts of individuality, race, gender, objectivity, truth and universality, for example, have been socially constructed, through the use of language, to create hierarchies in society that will enhance and maintain the economic, political and cultural power or dominance of white people. Like Marxism, which reduces all of human history and culture to the working of material, economic forces, critical social justice theory reduces all of human history and culture to the working of the material forces of power and race, which are created through subjective mental constructs and held in place through the medium of language. Sadly, anything associated with the spirit, or the reality of pure thought or beingness, is viewed by critical social justice theory as a misguided form of essentialism, to which I referred earlier. In other words, it is an attempt to use ideas and categories of thought to fix in place or uphold certain power dynamics in society. Thus, strictly speaking, from the standpoint of critical social justice theory, the whole of anthroposophy, including her practical expressions in the world, are nothing more than a sophisticated, pseudo-spiritual, pseudo-scientific attempt to further the dominion of the white race.

I have stated this rather strongly because I believe we need to recognize just how divergent critical social justice theory is from anthroposophy and the movements born of anthroposophy, especially in light of the degree to which these ideas and concepts have begun to be embraced by some biodynamic and Waldorf communities. Having said this, it is important to acknowledge that reductionist theoretical frameworks are not necessarily false just because they lack a holistic understanding of the nature of reality. We need only think of all the genuine insights that have come into the world through the profound reductionism of modern science. By reducing ones focus to one thing, we can sometimes see that one thing more clearly. And yet great ‘side-effects’ can also arise from narrowness of vision. We know, for example, that the tendency of modern science to mechanistically pull reality apart into discrete parts, functions or minute particles, often leads to technologies that are highly destructive of the delicate web of forces that we call the natural world. Think, for example, of the impact that nuclear energy, resulting from the discovery of the atom, has had on humanity and on the natural world. Thus, I want to honor that there are certain truths revealed by critical social justice theory in spite of its profound reductionism. What are these truths? And what are the realities that it is ignoring to its great peril and to the great harm of the delicate web of forces we call the social life of humanity?

### **entering more deeply into white fragility**

To explore these questions, I wish to enter more deeply into Robin DiAngelo’s book [White Fragility](#), which I consider to be a key, representative work of the dominant narrative of the social justice movement—one that summarizes in a particularly clear and straightforward way, the

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Furthermore, I believe these “grafts,” which are also becoming common in the anthroposophical movement, are highly flawed to the degree that they have adopted uncritically the underlying materialistic assumptions of the dominant narrative, the critical examination of which is my purpose in this installment of this essay.

perspectives of dozens if not hundreds of other writers and activists. Here, for example, speaking out of the worldview of critical social justice theory, the author informs us, repeatedly, that our experience of ourselves as unique individuals is the result of a kind of cultural myth, an ideology, a social construct that white people use to avoid looking at the role of race and racism in their lives.

*We make sense of perceptions and experiences through our particular cultural lens. This lens is neither universal or objective, and without it, a person could not function in any human society. But exploring these cultural frameworks can be particularly challenging in western culture precisely because of two key Western ideologies: Individualism and objectivity. Briefly, individualism holds that we are each unique and stand apart from others, even those within our social groups. Objectivity tells us that it is possible to be free of all bias. These ideologies make it very difficult for white people to explore the collective aspects of the white experience.*<sup>13</sup>

Now, at first glance, these may not appear to be terribly controversial statements, because there is clearly some element of truth to them. Who can argue, for example, with the idea that we each have a particular cultural lens that impacts how we assimilate our life experiences? Or that our experience of ourselves as individuals can sometimes make it difficult to see and understand our collective identities and their impacts upon others?

As we read along in White Fragility, however, a fundamental logical dissonance begins to emerge that should give us pause: namely, that on the one hand, Robin DiAngelo speaks to her readers as though they are distinct individuals with an inner life whose moral choices, that is, whose thoughts, feelings and actions, are somehow relevant and important for the world. On the other hand, she consistently informs those same readers that their experience of themselves as unique individuals facing discrete and complex moral choices in their lives is purely a kind of illusion. It is, she posits, an addiction to a cultural ideology, a cultural construct, which, like the concept of race itself, was created to advance and maintain the superiority of white people. So, what is going on here we might ask? Are we real people whose inner lives and outer choices have ethical import or are we living in an illusion of individuality fueled by the racial and power structures of society? Can both be true?

If we put aside for the moment a long, academic exploration of the historical and philosophical foundations of post-modernism and its off-shoot social theories, and simply try to take up these questions while entering sympathetically into the work of Robin DiAngelo and others like her, we discover something quite remarkable and ultimately quite shattering: namely, that these thinkers and activists are aware of certain very important occult realities, that is, certain invisible aspects of human nature and society that are also known in anthroposophy. Understanding this fact is absolutely key to making sense of the narrative that is presently wielding so much influence in the world through the social justice movement. Please allow me to elaborate.

### **the mysteries of the human double**

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13 DiAngelo, Robin White Fragility (Boston, Beacon Press, 2018), 9

As mentioned above, the human being has become entangled in forces of evil in a different way than all other holons, meaning that evil tendencies not only work upon us from outside, but have found a home, like a parasite, within the body, soul and spirit of human beings.<sup>14</sup> Thus, tendencies toward separation, error, selfishness, manipulation, etc. are present in each and every human being. The part of the human being that has become infected with these distorting influences is called in anthroposophy “the double” and two parts or aspects of this double can also be distinguished, namely the *Luciferic* and *Ahrimanic* “doubles” of the human being.<sup>15</sup>

The Luciferic double—we could also simply call it the *false self* or *false persona* of the human being—is that part of us that wants to live in the surface realities of life and that thus fosters in us all manner of vanities, illusions, deceits, passions, self-interests, denials and grandiosities. You could say that it shields us or blocks us from the knowledge of the deeper spiritual realities living in the world and in the human soul—forces of both good and evil. It is the aspect of our earthly personality that is highly self-involved and that is concerned with how we are seen and how we fit into society, again in a superficial sense. This aspect of human nature encourages us to enjoy unthinkingly the pleasures and privileges of our lives and to suffer unthinkingly our hardships and handicaps, and in doing so avoid consideration of the deeper meaning of our lives and the deeper impacts of our choices. You could also say that the Luciferic double is the part of us that wants to deflect responsibility for our lives away from the self and onto others. This is the one occult reality.

In the shadow of the Luciferic double, the human being is also host to an Ahrimanic double—we could simply call it the *lower self* or *lower nature* of the human being. Whereas the Luciferic double resists the limiting influences of the outer and inner world and seeks to live in a world of our own imagination, so to speak, the Ahrimanic double would bind us to the physical world and to a materialistic way of understanding the physical world. In so doing, it would also bind us to the familial, cultural and racial conditioning through which we are incarnated into the physical world. The Ahrimanic double thus harbors all manner of twisted, distorted and frozen thoughts, inclinations and habits which we bear within us as a legacy from our race, language, society, culture, time period and family, as well as from our own past lives.<sup>16</sup> All that we have not transformed of the shadow side of these influences, you could say, lives in the Ahrimanic double. Here we find the forces that call forth active greed, hatred and fear in the human being; whereas in the Luciferic double, we find primarily ignorance, arrogance, pride and often a superficial veneer of idealism or spirituality.

Of course, in our day to day lives, these two realities are not so neatly separated and the way they show up at the individual level is also utterly unique. Nonetheless, both of these realities, in some

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14 Please keep in mind here the perspective on evil derived from spiritual science shared on pages 18-19.

15 For the reader newer to spiritual science, the terms Luciferic and Ahrimanic are references to two spiritual beings (Lucifer and Ahriman) who are the source of specific kinds of distorting influences in the evolution of humanity and in the human soul.

16 It is important to note that the Ahrimanic double is also intimately connected to the economic, mechanical and electrical influences that flow into us from the wider society, from the earth and from the machines and technologies created by human beings.

form, can be found in each and every human being. In addition, these holons, for they truly are beings of body, soul and spirit themselves, even though of a parasitic nature, also permeate all social and historical realities. Thus, we can also speak of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic double of a race or culture or gender or time period. This is what I was pointing to earlier when I referred to the shadow side of the masculine and feminine powers of the universe that have come into being in the course of history.

Now, what authors like Robin DiAngelo are aware of, at least on some level, is that it is the Luciferic double, the false persona, which prevents human beings, particularly white human beings, from confronting the deeper, historical forces of racism which live in their Ahrimanic double, and in the Ahrimanic double of society as a whole, and which they do not want to confront because doing so might force them to question their day-to-day life choices and perhaps shock them out of the comfortable superficiality of their various privileges. Robin D'Angelo captures this perspective with a wonderfully vivid image in Chapter Five of White Fragility:

Imagine a pier stretching out over the water. Viewed from above, the pier simply appears to float there. The top of the pier—the part that we can see—signifies the surface aspect of these claims.<sup>17</sup> Yet while the pier appears to float effortlessly, it is, of course, not floating at all; it is propped up by a structure submerged under the water. The pier rests on pillars embedded in the ocean floor. In the same way that a pier sits on submerged pillars that are not immediately visible; the beliefs supporting our racial claims are hidden from our view.<sup>18</sup>

And you see, this is actually true, at least to a degree. Anyone in our time who undertakes a spiritual path of a certain depth is bound to confront these realities. It is a fact, for example, that the privileges that we enjoy in our lives, that all of us enjoy regardless of race, are paid for through an extraordinary degree of exploitation, largely unseen, of both nature and of other humans, both in the past and in the present. It is also true that the white race, by bringing materialism into the world, has played a most significant role in bringing about these conditions of civilization. I will elaborate on this in future installments of this essay. Thus, when a person begins to peel away the layers of their Luciferic double (the pier) and of their Ahrimanic double (the pillars supporting the pier), they will naturally, if they are so prepared, begin to bear witness to these realities. And this is, indeed, extremely important work, for the only way the human being can unite with ever-higher forces of the good is by confronting and transforming, ever more deeply, their unconscious entanglement in the forces of evil. This is a fundamental principle, I would suggest, of all true forms of spiritual development.

It is important to note here that the longing for such a path of spiritual development, a path that leads to a purification and transformation of both the Luciferic and Ahrimanic doubles, is one of the great, semi-conscious social impulses of our times, rising up from the deep strata of the human being. We could call it *the semi-conscious longing to transform ourselves into worthy vessels of our true humanity; to become a human being capable of living ethically, empathetically and*

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17 She means here various claims by white people that they are not racist.

18 DiAngelo, Robin White Fragility (Boston, Beacon Press, 2018) 78-79

*harmoniously in community with our fellow human beings and with the beings of the natural world.* This is one of the key semi-conscious social impulses that is being tapped into by the social justice movement, though there are many other such social impulses as well to which I will refer to later in this essay.

What we know from spiritual science, however, is that for this process of spiritual development to take place in a healthy way, there are at least three necessary prerequisites.<sup>19</sup>

1. Firstly, the individual human being must undertake such a path in complete freedom, that is, no one has the right to compel or demand that another human being undertake this process, as it concerns the most intimate aspects of a human being's soul life and karma. To demand such a thing is to violate the holy of holies of a human being.
2. Secondly, such a path can only be undertaken successfully if a human being is also put in touch, in some fashion, with the reality of their higher self or divine nature and is given the means to strengthen the relationship of their earthly self to their higher self. Only in this way can a human being learn to face calmly and see objectively the profound distortions that live in their Luciferic and Ahrimanic doubles.
3. And lastly, the human being needs to develop the capacity to allow higher beings, forces and qualities to flow into and through them, so they can not only discern the forces of evil and distortion working in them, but also begin to transform those realities. For the forces necessary for the transformation of evil, distortion and trauma do not lie in the earthly self of the human being, but only in the higher worlds, to which our higher self is the doorway.

With this as a background, we can begin to grasp some of the tragic flaws in critical social justice theory. The first thing that becomes clear, for example, is that what Robin DiAngelo, and thinkers like her, mean by the *myth of individualism*, is really the myth of the false persona. Sadly, however, they have mistaken the shadow of the human self, that is, the false persona, or Luciferic double, for the genuine earthly self of human beings, and have thus rejected individuality itself, personhood itself.

Let me be as clear as possible: critical social justice theory does not completely deny the reality of individuality. This is why Robin DiAngelo has no problem referring to her readers as though they are individual human beings. What I am suggesting, rather, is that critical social justice theory has *defined individuality* as nothing more than an imprint of cultural constructs and ideologies upon the human being. In other words, from the perspective of this dominant narrative, there is nothing contained in our individuality that is capable of transcending and transforming the hereditary, environmental and cultural influences we have received into us through our birth into a particular

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<sup>19</sup> Of course the way these pre-conditions are fulfilled in an age in which the whole of humanity is crossing the threshold to the spiritual world is not always so straightforward, but the basic principles have not changed.

race, gender, nation, culture and language, etc. The result is that our genuine individuality is confused with, or replaced by, the false persona.

Anthroposophy, it is important to recognize, does not deny the great power of environmental, historical, hereditary and cultural influences on the human being. Rudolf Steiner did not teach, for example, that human beings are somehow magically free of these influences. He taught, rather, that human beings, by activating the power of their individuality through conscientious effort, can learn to see into, transform and transcend their received hereditary, racial and cultural imprints, thus forming a free, or freer, relationship to these influences. The human individuality, in other words, is not the same as the false persona, nor it is irrevocably bound to the patterns of the false persona.

In a similar fashion, critical social justice theory has identified the “soul” of the human being, in particular of white human beings, with the lower self or what in anthroposophy is called the Ahrimanic double. In addition, it tends to conflate the individual Ahrimanic double of white people with the Ahrimanic double of American society or Western civilization as a whole, and assumes that the ties that bind these two realities (the personal Ahrimanic double and the Ahrimanic double of society) are forged by the realities of race, when in fact race, in our time, is only a small part of the picture. Likewise, critical social justice theory confuses the double of American society and of Western civilization with the essential nature of these highly nuanced and complex social realities.

To help clarify this complex terrain, in Table 1 below I have elucidated in more detail some of the inner dimensions of the human being through the lens of anthroposophy, together with a summary of how the dominant narrative of the social justice movement, implicitly or explicitly, views these same aspects of human nature.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 1: Inner Dimensions of the Human Being**

<b>Inner Dimension # 1: The Higher Self or Divine Nature</b>	
<b>Anthroposophical Perspective</b>	<b>Critical Social Justice Perspective</b>
This aspect of the human being dwells in the spiritual world and holds the blueprint, the higher intention and archetype of our present incarnation as well the memory of our past lives. It is the source of our ability to become something greater than we are now and of the	The dominant narrative of the social justice movement does not recognize this reality working in the human being and is profoundly skeptical that such a reality exists as anything other than a character within a “grand narrative” used to foster white supremacy. A grand or meta-

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<sup>20</sup> I hope it is abundantly clear that the point of this Table is not in any way to idealize anthroposophy and its advocates or demonize critical social justice theory and its advocates. We are all human beings struggling with our false personas and lower selves to become truly human and to realize a healthy social order. The point of this Table is simply to make clear certain limitations in critical social justice theory that are preventing it from realizing its goals, and, as I said earlier, to lay the ground for a new kind of narrative and approach to social justice.

<p>opportunities for growth that flow into destiny from the future, as it were. The higher self is also the doorway through which we may receive wisdom and guidance from higher beings as well as the power to heal from, and transform the effects of evil and trauma living in our soul and in the world around us. This aspect of ourselves transcends all divisions of gender, race and culture and is the source of our higher unity with all other human beings and all other holons on the planet.</p>	<p>narrative is a term coined by the post-modernist Jean-François Lyotard, who saw in all worldviews, religions, philosophical systems and political movements little more than a story created by human beings to limit the expression of other human beings' life energies. These stories, or grand or meta- narratives, are often called "ideologies" by contemporary scholars like Robin DiAngelo. At most, critical social justice theorists might see in the concept of the "higher self" a kind of Freudian "super ego" imposing culturally derived moral standards onto the "ego" and the "id" of the human being.</p>
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**Inner Dimension # 2: The Earthly Self or Individuality<sup>21</sup>**

<b>Anthroposophical Perspective</b>	<b>Critical Social Justice Perspective</b>
<p>This is the self-consciousness that we draw on each day to experience our continuity of being while in waking consciousness. In religious traditions, this part of the human is sometimes called the "voice of conscience" or "the pearl of great price" because it contains the seed force implanted into the human being through the Christ Impulse<sup>22</sup> whereby, through conscientious effort, we can see, transform and rise above our social conditioning, that is, the influences of our Luciferic and Ahrimanic doubles, and make free choices and conceive fresh approaches to the problems facing us. By activating this seed force within our earthly personality, we are able to forge a connection with our higher selves and to universal ideals such as the good, the true and the beautiful. Through this seed force we can also connect with the forces of genuine empathy and compassion and with the other social impulses we brought with us from our pre-earthly sojourn in the spiritual world which live sub- or semi-</p>	<p>The dominant narrative of the social justice movement believes this aspect of the human being is largely an illusion that has resulted from our acculturation to an ideology that fosters white supremacy by inculcating us with the ideals of individualism. In other words, it has confused it with the next level of the human being which is the Luciferic double. When Robin DiAngelo says, for example, that, "Individualism is a story line that creates, communicates, reproduces and reinforces the concept that each of us is a unique individual and that our group memberships, such as race, class or gender are irrelevant to our opportunities,"<sup>23</sup> she is speaking in reference to the Luciferic double and from this perspective, she is right, she is saying something true. In other words, it is true that our Luciferic double tends to hide from us the degree to which our sense of self is informed by and supported by our place in the culture and by our group identities. Unfortunately, she is also saying that our belief</p>

21 I am well aware that one could make more subtle distinctions, for example, between the earthly self, individuality, personhood and personality, but time and space do not permit this level of detail.

22 The Christ Impulse, in spiritual science, refers to certain objective realities which entirely transcend the perspectives or creeds of any particular race, religion or culture, which flowed into humanity and into the earth through the life of Christ, and which continue to grow, evolve and radiate their influence.

23 DiAngelo, Robin White Fragility (Boston, Beacon Press, 2018) 10

consciously within our soul nature. Our shared perception, as human beings, of the objective external world also derives from this seed force of individuality within the earthly self.	in, or sense of having, a self, an identity, that is independent of race, class or gender is an illusion, it is a story we tell ourselves to deny or ignore our participation in white supremacist civilization.
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**Inner Dimension # 3: Luciferic Double**

<b>Anthroposophical Perspective</b>	<b>Critical Social Justice Perspective</b>
As described above, this is the part of the human being that wants to live in the surface dimensions of life and that tends toward all manner of self-delusions, passions, ambitions, denials and vanities. Many of these delusions and passions, of course, derive from racial and cultural influences working in the human soul. In addition, the “self-involvement” of the Luciferic double often blinds (or in some cases protects) human beings from uncomfortable realities living in their soul or in their Ahrimanic double or in the larger social fabric of society of which they are a part. The Luciferic double also tends to deflect responsibility for our own actions onto other people and other things and also tends to pass judgements on others using standards to which we ourselves have not lived up to. Herein, then, is the actual source of the problematic aspects of individualism described by DiAngelo.	The dominant narrative of the social justice movement is very focused on this part of the human being, especially the way it expresses itself in white people and in white civilization. This is the part of the human being Robin DiAngelo compares to the pier over the ocean in her analogy quoted above. However, as I have pointed out, critical social justice theory has confused this aspect of the human being with the genuine personhood of the earthly self or individuality.

**Inner Dimension # 4: The Soul or Astral Body**

<b>Anthroposophical Perspective</b>	<b>Critical Social Justice Perspective</b>
This is the realm of the human where our capacities for thinking, feeling and willing have their home. It is also the realm where both positive and negative influences work into us from the holons of family, gender, culture, language, society, race, etc. in which we are embedded. In other words, it is in the soul that we wrestle with the positive and negative legacies working within us from the holons of gender, culture, race, etc., and through this wrestling transform and individualize them to varying degrees. The soul is thus both where our	Here we enter a complex realm. Critical social justice theory, clearly, has no place for a concept or term such as “the soul,” however it does place great emphasis on the sub-identities that live in the human soul, through our race, gender, culture, sexual orientation, etc. As pointed out by Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay “The individual, in applied post-modernism, is something like the sum total of the identity groups to which a person simultaneously belongs.” <sup>24</sup> The soul identities of marginalized groups, in particular, are considered to have

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24 Pluckrose, Helen and Lindsay, James. Cynical Theories (Durham, NC, Pitchstone Publishing, 2020)

<p>sub-identities have their home, i.e., our identities based on race, gender, sexual preference, culture and so on, and also what we have made of these identities through our inner effort, that is, through reshaping them out of the power of our individuality and higher self. The soul is also home to those profound social impulses that we have brought to earth from our pre-earthly sojourn in the spiritual world.</p>	<p>objective reality and value and thus a play an immense role in the social justice movement and in what is called identity politics.<sup>25</sup> No such positive, objective “soul reality” has been granted, however, to white people or to the identity of whiteness, which has been entirely confused with its Ahrimanic double. As Robin DiAngelo says: “white identity is inherently racist; white people do not exist outside the system of white supremacy.”<sup>26</sup></p>
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**Inner Dimension # 5: The Ahrimanic Double**

<b>Anthroposophical Perspective</b>	<b>Critical Social Justice Perspective</b>
<p>This is the source of the most distorted and difficult to transform cultural conditioning arising from our family, gender, culture, society and race, as well as from past lives. The forces emanating from the Ahrimanic double would like to keep us bound to the physical world, to a materialistic way of understanding the physical world, and to rigid identities and ways of being arising from family, gender, race and society, etc. that separate human beings from one another. It is important to note, however, that the Ahrimanic double of each human being is shaped by our personal karma and is thus utterly unique. Furthermore, from an anthroposophical perspective, the ties that bind a person to the Ahrimanic double of society, are only in small part racial at this time in history; they have primarily to do with how we choose to participate in the dominant cultural, political, economic and technological forces of society. Everyone, for example, who treats labor as a commodity (their own or others’), or who is</p>	<p>The dominant narrative of the social justice movement is ultimately concerned with somehow uprooting this aspect of the human being, particularly of white human beings. This is the realm of the “pillars holding up the pier” in Robin DiAngelo’s analogy quoted above. It is important to note, however, that critical social justice theory conflates the soul of white people with the Ahrimanic double (what DiAngelo calls the “inherently racist” nature of white people in the quote above.) It also conflates the bodies of white people with the Ahrimanic double of Western civilization, with what the author calls “institutionalized white supremacy.” In other words, it assumes that race is the key factor binding white people to the larger Ahrimanic double of society. This conflation of white people with the Ahrimanic double of society, <i>through race</i>, shows up again and again in <u>White Fragility</u> and in critical social justice theory. For example: “Being perceived as white carries more than a mere racial classification; it is a social and</p>

25 Only in this way, that is, by assuming that some identities have objective value, was critical social justice theory able to turn post-modernism into a practical, activist philosophy. In other words, strictly speaking, post-modernism views all identities as being pure cultural constructs and thus as having no inherent, objective reality or lasting value. Such a worldview, however, created no basis for activism and thus several leading social justice theorists came up with the idea that the identities of groups that have been marginalized by the dominant system do in fact have some objective value that is worth fighting for politically. You can find a good description of this history in the 2020 book Cynical Theories by Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay cited above.

26 DiAngelo, Robin White Fragility (Boston, Beacon Press, 2018) 149

addicted to their electronic devices, is binding themselves to some degree to the Ahrimanic double of society, regardless of their race.	institutional status and identity imbued with legal, political, economic, and social rights and privileges that are denied to others.” <sup>27</sup>
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To summarize the above in the simplest possible terms, we could say that critical social justice theory views white human beings as follows:

**Spirit** = Luciferic Double

**Soul** = Ahrimanic Double

**Body** = Double of American society and Western civilization

People of color (and to some degree other marginalized groups), on the other hand, also lack a higher self, that is, a source of universal, common humanity, but they have several redeeming characteristics by virtue of the fact that:

1. Their spirits are not in denial of their inherent racist nature or their complicity in white supremacist power structures
2. Their souls are not subject to the inherent racism of white identity
3. Their bodies are not irrevocably embedded in white supremacist power structures

In addition to its overall reductionist view of the nature of reality and the nature of the human being, critical social justice theory thus holds two different images of the human being, one image of white people and one of non-white people.

**the results of the reductionist worldview of the social justice movement**

The results of this limited and reductionist worldview are far-reaching; I will name just a few.

In the first place, it results in this philosophy lacking insight into anything other than the false persona and lower selves of human beings, in particular of white people, but also of American society and of Western civilization as a whole. While many of these insights, as I mentioned earlier, have a genuine reality at the level of the double, a singular focus on them creates a kind of caricature of both white human beings and western societies. We need only think of how, when we are angry with someone, or have had a falling out with someone, we tend to be singularly focused on that person’s flaws and lower-self characteristics. The result, you could say, is that we unconsciously “other” that person; that is, we blind ourselves to their higher selves and to our shared humanity with them. Much of the polarization in our culture at the moment results from this kind of *othering* of human beings of different cultures, perspectives and political orientations.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 24

There is a growing tendency to see only the shadow side of people who are different from us, or with whom we disagree. Tragically, the reductionism baked into critical social justice theory fosters and even strengthens these caricatures, this process of *othering*.

Of course, someone may well argue that it is natural and justified for people of color, given all they have suffered, to be angry at white people and white civilization, and that it is important for them to *other* white people in order to “un-enmesh” themselves from white culture as a part of their healing process. And is it not high time, some would say, that white people were forced to look at their shadow sides? I recognize a degree of truth to these sentiments. The problem to which I am pointing, however, is that critical social justice theory, lacking insight into *anything other than* the double of white human beings and western civilization, cannot lead people of color through their anger toward constructive social change. Nor can it inspire white people to transform the shadow nature of themselves or of white culture, which would require awakening in them, and in society, something that transcends, and is capable of transforming, these shadow forces. This is why I said earlier, that this philosophy can see, but not transform, evil.

And since, from a certain perspective, the double is that part of our individual and collective life that would bind us to old habits, attitudes, and ways of being, this emphasis on the forces of the human shadow keeps the social justice movement very focused on the past, and on the habits, attitudes, behaviors, art, literature, language, (dare I say monuments) of past phases of American history and of Western civilization as a whole. While this orientation has resulted in the unearthing of many ugly specters and traumas of the past, which certainly are in need of illumination and healing, it has also undermined the ability of the social justice movement to tap into the forces of healing flowing toward humanity from the future. Only through these forces, however, can we gain perspective on our past and resolve and heal historical wounds. Of course, these past realities need to be seen and honored, but what happens, we might ask, when members of a society are asked to focus intently and repeatedly on the historical wounds of the past, if very few constructive, healing impulses or perspectives, are also articulated?<sup>28</sup>

These tendencies are exacerbated by the fact that critical social justice theorists are unable or unwilling to recognize that, regardless of the great influence of white people in shaping the modern world, there are positive and negative, or healthy and unhealthy, forces working through every race, culture, society, gender and person. Instead, they have adopted a form of analysis that sees some races, cultures, genders, societies and persons purely as oppressors and other races, cultures, societies, genders and people purely as oppressed, as victims. As pointed out above, the logical extension of this whole philosophy is that oppressed or marginalized people have a soul (i.e., meaningful identities), but white people do not; they are “inherently racist”<sup>29</sup> as DiAngelo says. This perspective has played an important role in fostering what Greg Lukianoff and Jonathon

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28 This orientation to the past has also resulted in a very one-sided notion of “cultural appropriation,” which I will discuss in one of the next installments of this essay.

29 DiAngelo, Robin White Fragility (Boston, Beacon Press, 2018) 149

Haidt call in their best-selling book “common enemy identity politics” as opposed to “common humanity identity politics;” insights I would strongly encourage my readers to explore.<sup>30</sup>

In anthroposophical terms, one could simply say that, lacking a true understanding of individuality, critical social justice theory has a) turned to the sub-identities that live in the human soul for a source of meaning and b) have highly politicized these identities through a simplistic, Marxist type of analysis. This, in turn, has led to a heightened awareness of some of the most retarded and distorted aspects of the double of white people and western societies. You could say that, lacking a more nuanced understanding of the social and historical holons, critical social justice theory has come to have one diagnosis for the ills of society—racism and white supremacy—and one cure: to call out racism and white supremacy. And yet, if one steps back and looks calmly and objectively at what is taking place in society, one can see that by continually “calling out” these shadow forces—whether they are truly there or not in a given instance is another question—the social justice movement is actually “calling forth” and even strengthening the lower selves of human beings, and the lower self of society as a whole. I will elaborate on this point below.

By not making a distinction between the earthly self and the false persona, social justice theory also lacks an understanding of, and appreciation for, the significance of human freedom and individuality. Yet it is only through the seed force, or what I called above the “pearl of great price” living in the earthly self, that we are able to discern the working of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces in our souls, and in society, and chart a pathway that *transcends and transforms* these influences. This blind spot drives the social justice movement toward a strategy of moral compulsion and theoretical indoctrination at the individual level, and revolutionary tactics at the societal level. This is expressed very clearly in the sentence that comes at the end of Robin DiAngelo’s pier analogy quoted earlier. For the sake of clarity, I will include here the whole passage:

Imagine a pier stretching out over the water. Viewed from above the pier simply appears to float there. The top of the pier—the part that we can see—signifies the surface aspect of these claims. Yet while the pier appears to float effortlessly, it is, of course, not floating at all; it is propped up by a structure submerged under the water. The pier rests on pillars embedded in the ocean floor. In the same way that a pier sits on submerged pillars that are not immediately visible; the beliefs supporting our racial claims are hidden from our view. *To topple the pier, we need to access and uproot the pillars (my italics).*<sup>31</sup>

This *toppling of the pier* through the *uprooting of the pillars* is a concise image, I would suggest, of the approach to self and social transformation living in the dominant narrative of the social justice movement. You could call it the social justice movement’s *theory of change*. It is not an image of the free-willed transformation of the self and of society that is both possible and needed in our time, however. Rather it is an image of the aggressive toppling of individuality and of the social

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30 The Coddling of the American Mind (New York City, Penguin Books, 2018) 60-67

31 DiAngelo, Robin White Fragility (Boston, Beacon Press, 2018) pages 78-79

order that fosters individuality, by calling forth the subconscious racial forces in the human double and in the double of society.

This can be seen with particular clarity in critical social justice theory's focus on *disruptive* strategies for social change. Since in their view evil cannot be transformed though action inspired by the forces of individual and collective conscience, our only hope is to try to *hack* into the power dynamics of white civilization in order to disrupt its core operating system. And since critical social justice theory believes power dynamics are created and held in place by language, this often takes the form of linguistic interventions. This has led Robin DiAngelo and other leading scholars and activists, for example, to seek to redefine the traditional meanings of the words *racism* and *white supremacy*, which in turn fosters the conflation of white human beings with the double of American society and Western civilization as a whole, that I referred to earlier.

For example, instead of simply distinguishing between individual racist attitudes or actions and collective or institutionalized forms of racism, these theorists advocate for the conflation of these into one term—racism. Racism thus becomes a) a reality fixed into place by social institutions and b) something that only lives in white people because only white people have behind them the power of these social institutions. A person of color, therefore, can be biased but not racist.

When I say that only whites can be racist, I mean that in the United States, only whites have the collective social and institutional power and privilege over people of color. People of color do not have this power and privilege over white people.<sup>32</sup>

Likewise, whereas traditionally the term white supremacy refers to a conscious belief in the superiority of the white race on the part of an individual or group of people, this term has now been conflated with white people in general and with the whole of Western civilization. White civilization therefore does not contain some individuals and some currents of thought that are white supremacist, but rather white supremacy is the essential, unchanging nature of Western civilization, which must be uprooted by some means.

Just imagine what would happen, however, if all people, families, genders, races and cultures were conflated with, and named, according to their worst attributes or historical actions? Imagine, for example, an isolated region with a particularly bad history of child abuse. Certainly, an enlightened perspective would suggest that everyone in the region has some responsibility for this reality, and that perhaps certain cultural, political and economic structures in the region are contributing to this trend. But will a greater sense of individual and collective responsibility for these trends, and a greater will to transform these patterns and structures in the region, come about, by referring to everyone in the region as a *child abuser*? Are these genuine strategies for social change, we might ask, or rather a perpetuation of certain classical forms of racism in which individuals and/or groups of people are associated deterministically with their worst attributes?

Unfortunately, to call out racism or white supremacy, whether individually or collectively, or both together, does not necessarily awaken the desire or the capacity for change, for transformation

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 22

among white people—more often it simply awakens fear and defensiveness; in other words, it calls forth precisely what Robin DiAngelo is so concerned about: *white fragility*. The problem here, again, is that the awakening of the forces of conscience, humanity and empathy, living in the individual and in groups of individuals, is not part of the toolbox of critical social justice theory. What has thus been resorted to instead, when all the academic tinsel is removed, is little more than a linguistic strategy of shame and blame.

One of the most problematic distortions of critical social justice theory, lies in the assumption that the ties that bind human beings to the distortions of the larger society are primarily racial. While this was true in the past when race was the dominant influence shaping human civilization, it is no longer the case. As I indicated earlier, the influence of the race, ethnicity and national culture are on the wane, and it is the power of individuality that is gradually becoming the primary force shaping civilization in every part of the world. The ties that bind us to the double of society are thus formed primarily (of course, not entirely) by our individual choices, that is, by how we each choose to think, feel and act in the world.<sup>33</sup>

This flaw is the reason the representatives of this dominant narrative bring forward so few ideas for deep, innovative, practical changes in the economic structures of society—for example, in the way currency is issued, in the way land and capital are held, in the structures of Wall Street, in the manner in which labor is bought and sold. Rather than put forward a bold vision for a transformation of modern economic structures that would serve all human beings, regardless of race—a transformation founded on individual freedom and conscience—we find an endless focus on greater race consciousness as the key lever of social change. What will bring change into society, however, is not the fostering of race consciousness, which drags human beings down into the realm of the subconscious and the past. What is needed, rather, are fresh insights and ideas for changes to the structures of society, together with an appeal to our shared humanity and responsibility for the future. This is what will lead human beings and human society upward to the higher self and toward genuine social change.<sup>34</sup>

Just suppose, for example, that over the next decade, through the work of the social justice movement, the vast majority of the staff and board members of the top Fortune 500 corporations become people of color. Will anything about the exploitative nature of these corporations have changed purely through this fact? Of course not. What will bring change is not the race or color of the staff or boards of directors of any business or organization, but rather the qualities of heart and mind living in these individuals, whatever their race or culture. A greater cultural awareness, a greater multicultural sensitivity, by and among individuals, is certainly of the utmost importance in

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33 The growing role of individuality in the world is an inherent trend, or aspect of world evolution, for reasons I explained on page 18. It is not an agenda of white people but a trend to which white people, like all other people, are responding, in their own unique ways. The question we face as a humanity is not whether we can somehow uproot this trend, but whether the higher aspects of individuality can be brought to expression in any given person, culture or context.

34 After all, at the level of race, we are all identified with a particular people or blood line rather than with the whole of humanity. In other words, in so far as we identify, rigidly and singularly, with the racial dimension of our being, we are all inherently racist.

our age. But this sensitivity is something every individual must develop; it is not guaranteed by anyone's particular race or culture, and to believe as such is naïve at best. Certainly, there are positive changes that often can arise simply by creating a more diverse workplace, I do not question this fact. But my point is that this kind of diversity does not necessary address the deeper, underlying economic practices that lead to social injustice in the world. Have the practices of American corporations, for example, been significantly transformed, or become more humane, purely through the greater inclusion of women in the workplace?

I realize that in saying this, it may sound like I am denying the lived experience of many people of color that race plays and has played a huge role in their lives, in the opportunities available to them, in the judgements leveled against them, and in the way they are treated on a day-to-day basis. I do not deny this reality in the least. My point is simply that race is only one factor shaping this reality and shaping social life as a whole. The sources of social injustice in our society are much more complex, and to transform them we need a much a deeper, a much more holistic and complex social analysis and social change strategy. Wrapping all this complexity into racial terms will only fuel the forces that divide human beings, that call forth rage, defensiveness, apathy and despair, because human beings cannot change their race or the race of another person, whereas they can change how they think, feel and behave, and, through constructive dialogue, how others think, feel and behave.

As mentioned earlier, this worldview also tends to foster a particularly virulent form of close-mindedness among its adherents. For if you believe that a human being, especially a white human being, consists only of their cultural conditioning (i.e., only of a Luciferic and Ahrimanic double), then you can easily deflect and reject any and all perspectives that someone, especially a white person, would bring forward that run contrary to your own. If a white person suggests, for example, that perhaps hate can only be transformed through love, this idea would be seen solely as that person's attempt to gloss over the hard realities of race and power. Or if a white person were to suggest that a certain amount of color-blindness in society is a good thing, this would be seen purely as their unconscious desire to perpetuate the dominance of white people.<sup>35</sup> Essentially, a kind of impenetrable dogma has been erected that allows the most devoted adherents of critical social justice theory to deny the possible validity of any perspectives that differ from their own. How is the kind of genuine dialogue and consensus building among stakeholders, that is so necessary for true social change, possible under these conditions?

Finally, as it does not acknowledge the existence of the higher self of the human being, or of a spiritual dimension of the universe, this worldview cannot see and nurture those social impulses that human beings have brought down to earth, through their pre-earthly sojourn in the spiritual world—those impulses which alone can bring social transformation into the world. Nor can it lead them to those higher beings and forces that ultimately unite all peoples, cultures, races and holons. Nor can it awaken the forces of conscience, courage and empathy through which the

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35 In any given instance, of course, these sentiments may be expressions of denial and ignorance or of genuine insight. My point is that for the devoted adherent of critical social justice theory, there is only one way to interpret such statements, namely as denial and ignorance.

Luciferic and Ahrimanic doubles of a person, family, gender, culture, language, nation or civilization can be transformed.

But the reality is, the depths of the shadows living in the souls of white people and in the soul of American society and Western civilization are entirely incapable of transformation and further evolution without recourse to divine powers of a profound nature. I am not in denial about the depths of these shadows. As I pointed out earlier, the white race bears an immense responsibility for the conditions of the modern world. But to invite someone, rather to demand someone, to acknowledge and “own” the very worst parts of their cultural, national and racial heritage, without offering, at the same time, a genuine pathway by which these distorted aspects of self, of history and of society can be healed and transformed—other than to submit to the dogmas and social and political agendas of the one making the accusations—is a profoundly dangerous thing. It is potentially a form of the highest manipulation and from a certain perspective, it could even be described as a misuse of occult knowledge.<sup>36</sup>

Essentially, I would suggest that in the dominant narrative of the social justice movement we have swung from a superficial narrative of the oppressors to a superficial narrative of the oppressed. In other words, we have swung from a narrative which tended to identify white people and Western civilization with the higher self of humanity and which tended to demonize or lack empathy and understanding for the experiences and needs of people of color—to a narrative that identifies white people and Western civilization solely with the very worst elements of human nature and human history. And behold what a powerful downward spiral the adherents of these two narratives have now created in our culture, each drawing out the worst of the other, in a powerful vortex of polarization, hatred and increasingly, violence.

### **seeking a genuine narrative**

But what about a true narrative, a narrative that can help us come to terms with both the light and shadow side of our human nature, of Western civilization and of the role of the white race in bringing about this civilization? Do we really think we can bring about social transformation without such a new narrative? If there is one thing we should know from the best of modern psychology and spirituality, it is that attempting to transform someone or something without being profoundly anchored in one’s own divine nature and without a powerful vision of the good or divine in that thing or being you wish to transform, simply will not work; it is not only impossible, it is damaging and destructive and will ultimately make that thing or person worse.

Yet, as I pointed out earlier, according to Robin DiAngelo and critical social justice theory, there simply is no divine or good or redeemable aspects of the holon of white people and white civilization because “white identity is inherently racist; white people do not exist outside the

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<sup>36</sup> My point here is not to suggest that the scholars and activists behind critical social justice theory are knowingly misusing occult knowledge to manipulate people. My point, rather, is that they have unknowingly tapped into sources of inspiration that wish to derail human evolution and who misuse occult knowledge for this purpose. I will elaborate on this in the closing section of this installment.

system of white supremacy.”<sup>37</sup> Again, I hope you can see the conflation of the true holon of the white race, and the true holons of white individuals, with certain elements of the Ahrimanic double of Western civilization as a whole (i.e. white supremacist civilization)—a conflation which thus leaves no room, no possibility whatsoever, for transformation at the individual or societal level. The most that white people can hope to achieve, according to DiAngelo, is to become “less white...to be less racially oppressive.”<sup>38</sup>

How completely different was the approach taken by Dr. Martin Luther King and the other leaders of the civil rights movement of the 1960’s. Here we encounter a movement that was able to gaze upon both the good and evil of their white brothers and sisters with hearts filled with a most profound, world transforming, courageous love. Why? Because in the first place, they understood the powerful forces of self-transformation necessary to work for true social change.

By opening our lives to God in Christ, we become new creatures. This experience, which Jesus spoke of as the new birth, is essential if we are to be transformed nonconformists . . . Only through an inner spiritual transformation do we gain the strength to fight vigorously the evils of the world in a humble and loving spirit.<sup>39</sup>

The civil rights movement was thus infused with a deeply Christian view of the world, a view which, from an anthroposophical perspective, we could say was in harmony with reality, i.e., with a world in which ontologically real individuals face real moral choices based on the good and evil influences stemming from their race, gender, culture, etc. as well as from their own past karma, their past lives as morally responsible individuals.

This movement was also imbued, I would suggest, with extraordinarily healing forces that live in the holon of African American culture, forces that when properly channeled, have a unique capacity to bring transformation to the soul of America. Because Dr. King and many other civil rights leaders had transformed themselves spiritually, they could channel these beneficent forces of the African American holon and could thus utter words such as the following:

Black supremacy is as dangerous as white supremacy, and God is not interested merely in the freedom of black men and brown men and yellow men. God is interested in the freedom of the whole human race and the creation of a society where all men will live together as brothers, and all men will respect the dignity and the worth of all human personality.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, the image of the higher self of humanity lived in the heart of the civil rights movement, the image of the divine-human, the divine-human that both embraces and transcends all separate

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37 DiAngelo, Robin White Fragility (Boston, Beacon Press, 2018) 149

38 Ibid., 150

39 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (2010, March 26, republication; originally published in 1963 by Harper & Row). Strength to Love. Fortress Press; Gift edition. ISBN-13 : 978-0800697402

40 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1960, September 5, transcript). School of the Prophets annual event hosted by the Indiana Methodist Church. Gobin Memorial Church on the DePauw University campus.

racism and cultures, the divine-human that has the power to face, to gaze upon and transform, through love, through non-violent witnessing, the most deeply entrenched forces of evil.

### **revisiting the phenomenon of white fragility**

Perhaps we are now in a position to ask: Is it possible that in the phenomenon of “white fragility” there is living a lot more than the unwillingness of white people to confront or make changes to the inherent racist elements of themselves and of white culture?

Is it possible, for example, that some white people feel a strong instinct to push back against a profoundly one-sided view of the world and of human nature, not to mention an incredibly narrow, reductionist portrayal of white people and Western civilization?

Is it possible that some white people are also pushing back against having their individuality completely identified with the worst elements of the collective culture in which they are living? Or perhaps they even feel, as least instinctively, stripped of their dignity as a human being by this philosophy?

Is it possible some white people have also experienced in their families, communities or work place the splintering, fragmenting impact of various trainings, programs and policies inspired by this worldview? Or perhaps they sense the incendiary, revolutionary quality that has increasingly begun to permeate the strategies of the social justice movement?

Or perhaps they push back because they are hearing no reference to the higher forces of the human conscience, or the higher unity of all people or the forces of divine love that are ultimately necessary to bring about genuine self-transformation, social healing and social change?

Perhaps, when white people insist to Robin DiAngelo and other such trainers that they are not racist, they are even articulating something partially true that deserves recognition. What if the truth, in other words, is that racism, *traditionally defined*, has actually been steadily declining among the American people, through the work of the civil rights movement of the 1950’s and 60’s; through the growth in global, liberal perspectives on human rights, the environment, and multiculturalism starting in the 1970’s; through various demographic changes in American society, and through what in anthroposophy is called the *evolution of human consciousness*? What if, in fact, a certain purification of the Luciferic double of white people has taken place over the last sixty some years? This idea is given weight by similar trends, for example, the waning of homophobia in the American population, ultimately leading to the passage of the Marriage Equality Act in 2015.<sup>41</sup> Is it really plausible to suggest that homophobia has decreased in American society but racism has substantially increased, as the social justice movement seems to insist? I do not think so.

The real issue, I would suggest, is that this purification of the Luciferic double of white Americans has *not yet* led to profound transformation of our collective political and economic structures. This

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41 While I see problems with the Marriage Equality Act from the standpoint of social threefolding, I honor and applaud the significant cultural milestone that it represents.

is because, as we know from anthroposophy, it is much easier to bring about changes in the thoughts and feelings living in one's astral body, than it is to bring changes into the social and economic habits that live in one's etheric and physical body—where the Ahrimanic double resides—and from there into the social and economic structures of the whole society.

Nonetheless, the stage has been set for mighty changes in cultural, political and economic life in America. The vast majority of Americans, I would suggest, in spite of continuing and increasing political polarizations, are actually uniquely open to the future, to new possibilities, and new social forms. What is needed to realize this opportunity, however, is not a host of disruptive strategies that will foment unending social unrest and racial tension. What is needed, rather, is a spiritual, social and moral convergence upon a compelling vision for the future of America and for a truly just society, a vision that speaks to all people, and that brings *into the will*, in the right way, the profound forces of social and ecological conscience rising up in the feeling life of human souls in our time.

With regard to my own white fragility to which I referred to on page 14, I readily confess to a degree of arrogance, cultural complacency and racial pride living in my Luciferic and Ahrimanic doubles. I am primarily angry, however, and profoundly saddened, because I know the violence and bloodshed that will result—and the immense opportunity for genuine social change that will be lost—if the dominant theory and strategies of the social justice movement continue to flourish unchecked in American society. Essentially, a huge swath of white Americans, indeed the vast majority, who could have been—and still could be—engaged as powerful partners in the true work of social justice, are instead being told, repeatedly and dogmatically, that they are inherently racist and de facto white supremacists. And not because of their thoughts, feelings or actions, but purely and simply because of the color of their skin, because of their membership in a racial group. But, since no one can change their race, the only path to redemption for these guilt-ridden white souls is to submit to the political and social dictates of the social justice movement. In other words, to become, not ever more true, ever more free, ethical and loving human beings, but rather ever more devoted, dogmatic proponents of an abstract ideology of race and power.

But this is not a strategy for creating social justice but rather for creating social disease and social warfare, because the truth is that race is not a cultural construct, but rather a living being, a powerful holon, that lives in the spiritual world and in the depths of the human psyche and physical body. And while the influence of the holons of race, ethnicity and nation, as I mentioned on page 18, are declining and are meant to decline more and more as an objective force in the human being and in human evolution, the proponents of critical social justice theory are unwittingly calling these racial forces back up to the surface of human consciousness.

There are, however, a large number of Americans who are still in need of and are still drawing upon the positive forces of race, ethnicity, gender and national culture, for there are still beneficent forces from these holons working in the semi- and sub-conscious layers of the human

soul.<sup>42</sup> And sadly, many people who would naturally have grown out of certain naïve cultural prejudices associated with these traditional values, are instead becoming more entrenched in their cultural prejudices, precisely because, or at least in part because, of the one-sided worldview and agendas working in the social justice movement. And this in turn is leading, and certainly will lead ever more, if unchecked, to the calling up of those evil influences that are able to possess human beings through the Ahrimanic double of the races.

We saw something very similar happen at the end of World War I when the abstract nation-building ideals of Woodrow Wilson and the western nations were imposed upon central and eastern Europe as well as the Middle East—ideals such as the self-determination of nations, which on the face of it sound just as noble as the ideals of the social justice movement today. Unfortunately, these ideals were also not grounded in the actual reality of human nature nor the actual needs of social life in this moment in history nor in the deeper needs and realities of those regions and countries, and thus these policies had the very opposite effect. The phenomena of Nazism and the endless cycles of ethnic violence that have plagued eastern Europe and the Middle East ever since cannot be understood unless one recognizes how the shadow forces of race, nation and ethnicity were called forth and exacerbated by the attempt to solve racial and cultural problems through the abstract ideas and policies of Woodrow Wilson and the Western Allies and those organizations that supported and continue to support this way of thinking. Tragically, in the dominant narrative of the social justice movement, we find this same spirit of abstract idealism completely divorced from the true realities of human nature, human history and culture.

Sadly, like certain strands of the deep ecology movement that suggest nature would be better off without human beings, critical social justice theory betrays a deep loss of faith in humanity and in the eons-long project of the earth herself to endow humans with independent self-consciousness so that we can become cooperators in the sacramental transformation of the universe into a higher order of being. It has thrown out the baby of human evolution with the bathwater of racism and thus a deep nihilism, a deep despair and rage underpins this dominant narrative. It lacks a vision of the true, the beautiful, and the good in the universe and in human nature, which alone can unite human beings and lead them into and beyond the forces of race and ethnicity in the right way, toward a truly cosmopolitan world culture. And lacking this vision, it cannot help but inspire the desire to destroy, to cancel, root and branch, the entire legacy of Western civilization, which, however, is an inseparable part of human civilization, human culture and evolution as a whole.

### **birthing a true movement for social justice and social renewal**

I hope it is clear that in saying this, I am not attempting to deny or ignore the whole history of racism, oppression, abuse and violence suffered by people of color right up to the present time. Nor am I suggesting that profound changes to the cultural, political and economic spheres of American and Western societies are not needed at this time. Nor am I suggesting that there are

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42 I am not referring here to nationalism, but to genuine patriotism and love for the founding ideals and values of the United States, not to mention an appreciation for certain traditional Christian values.

not amazing people in our communities doing incredibly important grassroots work, from community gardening, to low-income housing, to prison reform, who identify heart and soul with this movement, with this term, social justice. No, I am not saying any of these things.

My point is simply that we should not deceive ourselves into thinking that the abstract, reductionist, racialized worldview of critical social justice theory is capable of bringing about anything resembling the lasting, deep, non-violent social change that America is so hungry for. It is, rather, a major contributor to the profound forces of polarization currently tearing our country apart at the seams.

We should also not deceive ourselves into thinking that the genuine social impulses that are rising up in human souls in our time which are fueling the social justice movement will find any kind of fulfillment through their union with these seductive thought forms. These semi-conscious social impulses are rising up from the deep strata of the human soul and include, for example, the instinctive feeling or sense, more or less conscious, depending on the individual:

*that all human beings have an essential self or common humanity that is of equal worth and that both transcends and embraces our various earthly identities.*

*that a great and tragic injustice is committed against the human spirit when a person is seen, judged or treated unfairly based purely on their race, gender, class or other outer forms of expression.*

*that a tragic loss to humanity occurs when even one single person cannot realize their potential and bring their gifts to the whole of humanity because of outer conditions and inner attitudes among their fellow human beings.*

*that we become more human, more ourselves, when we are able to be in empathetic relationship with people of diverse racial, ethnic, economic, spiritual and cultural backgrounds.*

*that the problems facing society can only be solved through relationship and collaboration among different kinds of people, in other words through collective action in which diverse peoples bring their unique gifts and talents and perspectives to bear on the problems facing our world and our local communities.*

*that civilization has reached an inflexion point and is undergoing and in need of undergoing a radical transformation or metamorphosis of some kind, economically, politically and culturally.*

*that the economic life of the modern world, in particular, perpetuates the principle of slavery, i.e., that it depends for its survival on the principle of the ruthless exploitation of human beings and of nature.<sup>43</sup>*

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43 Mind you, there are many other genuine social impulses living in human souls today; here I have simply tried to capture some of those that I believe are living in and fueling the modern social justice movement.

These forces of conscience, these longings for true community, these awakenings to the reality of the spirit, have their origins in human beings' encounter with evil and the destructive forces of materialism in our time, which were described in Part I of this essay,<sup>44</sup> which in turn open human souls to the working of Michael in the subconscious depths of the human being and to the presence of the Christ Impulse working in the spiritual aura of the earth.

We saw this process happening before our very eyes when George Floyd was tragically killed in 2020 by a Minneapolis police officer. On the one hand, we saw how the encounter with the destructive forces emanating from this event became a profound source of social-spiritual awakening for many thousands, if not millions, of people. And yet we also witnessed how certain spiritual beings, certain movements and thoughts forms also rushed in, seeking to capture these genuine social impulses and give them a certain direction. Unfortunately, this is a direction that undermines, rather than uplifts, these genuine social impulses. To give wings to these longings and forces of conscience there must be people, ideas and thought forms working in social life that are grounded in a much deeper, a much more holistic understanding of human nature, human history and human social life—thought forms that can penetrate to the true sources of social injustice and that can awaken insight, courage, love and good willed actions in the souls of human beings and not simply hatred of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic doubles of white people and of Western civilization.

The biodynamic movement, the Waldorf movement, the whole anthroposophical movement could be offering so much toward a true narrative of social justice, toward a true picture of the human being, of human society and of the deeper mysteries of Western civilization and American history, that are so needed at this time. Instead, we are wringing our hands over the idea that anthroposophy or Rudolf Steiner himself might be racist and some of our best and brightest institutions are grafting onto themselves thought forms, strategies and policies inspired by a narrative that is completely antithetical to the worldview and inherent social impulses that are the basis of our movement. The sad truth is that strategies such as training our board, staff and communities in the principles of anti-racism, or working to prevent microaggressions in our schools and conferences, will not bring about the changes for which we are hoping. Tragically, by and large, these strategies will only contribute to those forces that wish to bring endless division and strife into society and into our anthroposophically inspired communities.

But in fact, we have a choice, as individuals, as organizations, as daughter movements and as a whole anthroposophical movement, to walk a different path, to wake up and chart a different course. We can hold at bay, and challenge, when necessary, this dominant narrative. And more importantly we can work to birth those ideas and ideals, thoughts and strategies that are so desperately needed in our time to lead the forces of social and spiritual renewal that are rising up in humanity to genuine fulfillment. We can also make a renewed commitment to embody in our lives and in our communities the deep forces of universal human love, reconciliation, fairness, generosity and hospitality that anthroposophy, that living anthroposophy, is uniquely capable of

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44 [Social Justice in the Light of Anthroposophy](#) Part I, 2

calling forth in us and in our communities. In other words, we can work to bring a new spirit into our work and into the social justice movement itself and in doing so, perhaps help birth a genuine movement for social justice and social renewal on the earth.

As I mentioned in footnote 2 on page 11, a counter-vailing trend is beginning to emerge across America—the courage to take a principled position against critical social justice theory and walk a different path toward social justice is touching thousands of people. This is an awakening that can bring us inspiration and new colleagues. I encourage, my readers, for example, to get to know the work of the *Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism* (FAIR). FAIR was started by a remarkable, multi-racial, non-partisan community of scholars and activists who are promoting a “pro-human” approach to social justice based on the life and work of Martin Luther King rather than on the teachings of critical social justice theory. Their website is filled with extraordinary stories of individuals, schools and other institutions seeking to walk this *pro-human* path to social justice. The common-sense principles they have articulated include:

**Fairness.** “I seek to treat everyone equally without regard to skin color or other immutable characteristics. I believe in applying the same rules to everyone, and reject disparagement of individuals based on the circumstances of their birth.”

**Understanding.** “I am open-minded. I seek to understand opinions or behavior that I do not necessarily agree with. I am tolerant and consider points of view that are in conflict with my prior convictions.”

**Humanity.** “I recognize that every person has a unique identity, that our shared humanity is precious, and that it is up to all of us to defend and protect the civic culture that unites us.”<sup>45</sup>

I am currently in dialogue with a number of individuals in our movement about the idea of creating something like FAIR, or perhaps a national chapter of FAIR, that would serve the needs of Waldorf Schools and other anthroposophically inspired organizations that would like to pioneer a path to diversity, equity and inclusion that is aligned with the work of Martin Luther King and Rudolf Steiner, rather than critical social justice theory. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you are interested in this work.

Another such organization is *Moral Courage College*, founded by the remarkable Islamic activist Irshad Manji, author of the book [Don't Label Me: How to Do Diversity Without Inflaming the Culture Wars](#).<sup>46</sup> The homepage of *Moral Courage College* says

We need remedies for racism. And, to be effective, any remedy has to be enduring. That's why it can't be imposed. Buy-in gets cultivated by giving space to different viewpoints in service of honest conversations. The “white fragility” approach amounts to shaming. But

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45 [www.fairforall.org/about/#pledgeandprinciples](http://www.fairforall.org/about/#pledgeandprinciples)

46 Manji, Irshad [Don't Label Me: How to Do Diversity Without Inflaming the Culture Wars](#) (St. Martin's Griffin, New York, 2020)

shaming people leads to humiliation, and humiliation sows the seeds of blowback. At Moral Courage College, we teach diversity without shaming.<sup>47</sup>

I have created a list of some of these organizations at the end of this document that I encourage my readers to explore.

Our movement also has an immense contribution to make to the effort to pioneer new pathways toward social justice and social renewal. Just imagine, for example, if instead of educating children and adults about microaggressions, and trying to prevent them, which has only had a chilling effect on race relations in our communities and across America, we pioneered an approach to social justice and renewal focused on telling stories of the many historic examples of cross-racial and cross-cultural friendships and cooperation that are such a significant strand in American history. Or imagine if we pioneered new kinds of “safe spaces” in our communities, namely social spaces where people of different races and cultures and viewpoints can practice relaxing with one another, getting to know one another, supporting one another, forging friendships and yes even making mistakes with one another, which is part and parcel of all true friendship.

If we take our start from the genuine social impulses articulated above, and apply to them the wisdom of anthroposophy, that is, the wisdom of our shared humanity, rather than critical social justice theory, there is no end to the creative, healing approaches we could develop that would foster true and genuine social change. All it takes is one person, one Waldorf school, one anthroposophical branch, one Camphill or biodynamic community at a time, finding the courage to decide upon a different path, deciding to create, for example, a true festival of racial, cultural and ecological healing—a festival inspired by and aligned with those spiritual beings that both embrace the beauty of our differences and who would lead all people, all races, cultures, nations, religions, and families toward a higher, cosmopolitan sense of unity and good will. This is the work, I would suggest, that is truly calling to us at this decisive moment in history, the work that is necessary to bring healing to the wounded soul of America and to our own, deeply wounded souls.

In carrying out this kind of work, however, as I mentioned in footnote 12 on page 20, we must be very careful not simply to graft some aspects of anthroposophy (or Waldorf education or biodynamic agriculture, etc.) onto the materialistic substrate of critical social justice theory, or vice versa. There are times when taking a principled stand against something is appropriate, as long as it is balanced with a strong, clear vision of what one is for, rather than against. I believe this is such a time when a principled position *against* critical social justice theory, by our movement and our institutions, may be necessary. Clearly, however, such a position must be combined with an ever clearer and stronger commitment to an alternative pathway to social justice and social renewal on this continent. It is to this forging of a different pathway, a different narrative, a different set of strategies, that I believe our movement has so much to contribute.

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<sup>47</sup> [www.moralcourage.com/learn/](http://www.moralcourage.com/learn/)

The following closing sections are written for long-term students of anthroposophy and active members of the Anthroposophical Society, and the School of Spiritual Science, who wish to reflect more deeply on the question of the moral and spiritual challenge presented to the anthroposophical movement by critical social justice theory.

### **facing our loss**

If we want to understand why the positive work of bringing forward an alternative approach to social justice is not already happening to a much greater extent in our movement—and what it will take to bring about such a change—we must return to an idea presented in Part I of this essay, namely, that after 100 years, a movement such as ours must undergo a deep and fundamental renewal in order to address the decline in the forces emanating from the founders of our movement.<sup>48</sup> To deepen those reflections, I would like to suggest that we need to consider a certain shattering reality that flows from this fact, one I think we have honestly to admit to ourselves, to feel deeply, to the point where the glow of genuine shame pours over us. Namely, that as a movement, as a community, we have to a degree fallen away from Michael, fallen out of connection with the forces of the Archai Michael that serve, that surge through and unite, all of humanity. In the individual and collective facing of this reality, lies one of the fundamental moral steps of development necessary for the renewal of our movement. It could perhaps be thought of as the meeting with our collective guardian of the threshold, or as the first step in the recovery of the anthroposophical movement.

Please do not misunderstand me. I know that our movement is filled with extraordinary Michaelic individuals, activities, initiatives and organizations and I do not underestimate the significance of it. But I am asking you to step back and take a much wider look at the whole super-sensible organism of our movement, not at the human, angelic or archangelic level, but at the archai level of our movement. And I am asking you to consider the possibility that through the tendencies toward sectarianism and grafting that I described in Part I of this essay, as well as through the long history of tragic human conflicts that have beset our work, we have fallen away to a degree from the universal sun-stream and are working instead at the level of planetary existence. And I am asking you to consider the possibility that each of us needs to find a way to face, to feel our individual responsibility for this reality. I am also asking you to consider the possibility that in order to turn this reality around, and bring our work to its culmination in the coming decades, we need to attempt to bring to birth in some way, or at least contribute to the birth of a movement for social justice and social renewal in our local communities, in America, and in the world, that is informed by a true understanding of the human being and human social life.

I hope it is clear that I am speaking here about the need to fashion a movement that goes well beyond the usual ideas and insights of social threefolding as they currently live in our movement and the abstract way they are often conceived. All these ideas and impulses must undergo a

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profound metamorphosis. For example, a genuine social threefolding movement in America must come to terms with the race question, with the karma of the races in America, with the racial wounds and injustices that live in this country. This is by no means simply because of the presence of the social justice movement here, but rather because the supersensible character of this continent has a unique connection to the forces of race and it is thus not surprising in the least that the social justice movement has taken such strong root here.

The irony is that while some people, as I said before, are wringing their hands over the idea that perhaps Rudolf Steiner or anthroposophy are racist, the exact opposite is true. Not only is there nothing whatsoever racist about Rudolf Steiner or anthroposophy, as I will attempt to show in a future installment of this essay, but the spiritual-scientific understanding of race, if truly taken hold of and worked with freshly and dynamically in the present context, offers precisely what is needed to bring healing to the racial wounds in the soul landscape of America, not to mention in other parts of the world. The same could be said of the spiritual scientific perspective on gender and sexuality. We also need to recognize that the healing of these wounds is inseparable from the healing of the earth, the soil, the atmosphere, the lakes and rivers, the forests and the weather. The healing of the social, historical and ecological holons cannot be looked upon as separate; they are part of a single tapestry and must be worked with in this spirit if we wish to forge a truly effective movement for social change.

The deeper challenge is that we as anthroposophists have, by and large, not been willing to put both feet down on this continent, to really become, spiritually, Americans, which means to enter with courage both into the dragon skin of this continent as well as into the higher forces of the land and of the historical evolution of humanity here, both before and after Columbus. As I said earlier, we need a new narrative, a narrative that can inspire genuine social, ecological and spiritual healing on this continent. And we need to awaken a voice, a Pentecostal voice in ourselves and in our movement, that can speak to the burning questions and longings living, consciously and unconsciously, in the souls of human beings today.

Likewise, I would suggest, we need to enter more fully into the current social and political landscape of America, into the unique character of the different political parties and movements, their light and shadow sides and the way they are changing and evolving. The Covid crisis, for example, has brought the most far-reaching changes imaginable to the whole social and political landscape of the world and of America, and we must need wrestle our way to some common, future-bearing perspectives on this new landscape. While it may help us sleep at night (or not!) to tell ourselves that it is all about the incarnation of Ahriman, this is hardly a sufficient social analysis with which to help birth a movement for genuine social change.

We also need wrestle to the ground the whole concept of “social justice” to determine if there is some genuine reality this term is pointing toward and if so, what are the real sources of social injustice, and the real sources of social transformation. Social threefolding, of course, has an immense contribution to make to this effort. Then there are the many other individuals and groups working for social change and transformation and the whole question of how one would

work fruitfully and constructively with these other movements. All this and so much more, so VERY MUCH MORE is needed to lay even the barest foundation for this effort. In the next installments of this essay, I hope to at least scratch the surface of this important work.

### **reconnecting to Michael**

Nevertheless, consider for a moment how even a somewhat traditionally conceived movement for social threefolding would help overcome our growing distance from Michael. Consider, for example, how such a movement would not concern itself with the proliferation of Waldorf schools, but with the freeing of all schools from undue political and state control, whether they are neighborhood schools, Montessori Schools, Muslim schools or schools teaching critical race theory, for that matter. We would not be working for “our thing” but for “everyone” out of a clear, consistently applied, guiding principle. Consider how such a movement would not concern itself with raising more money for biodynamic agriculture or for Waldorf education, but with working to reform the capital markets in such a way that every individual would benefit from the wealth produced by the whole society and in such a way that the entire cultural sector is lifted up. Perhaps you can see from these two small examples, abstract though they may be, how such a movement would balance the all too natural egotism that arises from always being focused on growing *our* movements, *our* individual organizations, *our* programs and *our* audiences, most of whom are drawn from the privileged classes of society.

*Is it possible we have lost sight of the fact that each biodynamic farm, each Waldorf School, each anthroposophical medical clinic, each Camphill community, each study group and branch etc. is really a kind of cornerstone on the earth for a much larger social movement that is seeking to be born?*

*Is it possible that we have lost touch, through the demands of our institutions and esoteric practices, with many a devastating reality around us, such as the poverty of our inner cities, which is without question a travesty in the eyes of the spiritual world?*

*Is it possible that the incursions of the dominant narrative of social justice into our movement is an opportunity to wake up to our larger social mission; to wake up out of our esoteric and institutional egotisms, our sectarian and grafting tendencies, our personality conflicts?*

*Perhaps, we could even say, it is an opportunity to wake up, in the right way, out of our white privilege, which, even if critical social justice theory has turned it into a kind of caricature, is a genuine reality living in the double of white human beings and of Western civilization that needs to be seen through and transformed.*

From a certain perspective, I would like to suggest, that without something resembling a cohesive, inspired, culturally and regionally rooted movement for social threefolding on the planet, that is working *independently but alongside* the anthroposophic movement, we are like a movement with

a mother but no father.<sup>49</sup> In other words, we are a kind of “*widow’s son*” which, according to Rudolf Steiner, is an ancient designation for a great initiate and connotes, among other things, the fact that such an individual must create the father forces entirely out of their relationship and work with the spiritual world rather than receive them out of the culture itself through an earthly father.

Is this not the spiritual reality we are facing as individuals and as a community devoted to anthroposophy at this time? For we have our esoteric work, our spiritual wisdom, practices and origins, stewarded by the Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science, that we can turn to like a mother for solace, guidance and inspiration. And we have our daughter movements, our initiatives and organizations, farms, clinics, workshops and conferences, where we can to some degree ray out this wisdom as a healing force into the world. But we seem to lack a fatherly force, or forces, that can help us to incarnate fully into the hard realities of our time, into the good spirit of the land and people of America, and into our deeper potential as a community, as a movement at this decisive moment.

Whether or not you experience the forces that are lacking in our movement as feminine or masculine, maternal or paternal in this way, or whether one or another of us feels the bearer of these forces as the power of Uriel, the spirit of Elijah, of Joan of Arc, the Holy Spirit, Michael, Sophia, the Christ Impulse, or the true spirit of the Christmas Conference, is perhaps not the most important thing. I am simply trying to point here to new powers of inspiration, new ways of being, of working together, of showing up in the world, that I believe wish to incarnate into and through our movement in the coming years, and which only can incarnate when enough of us, and when our movement as a whole, has undergone the Act III initiation I described in Part I of this essay.<sup>50</sup> Something must shift within us, and within our collective being, so that we can actually become a beloved community, a true Michael community, on the earth, and so that we can begin to show up outside of our truly beautiful and noble institutions, show up, if you will, in our Michaelic might and armor—together with our many colleagues working outside of the anthroposophical movement—to battle for the truth, for the true image of the human being and of the earth—and work for the good of all of humanity.

In this light, meaning, in the absence of a true Michael movement and community on earth, I think we also need to honor the justified rage living in the social justice movement, and the rightful disillusionment with Western civilization, in response to all that has been withheld from these communities, not only materially but also spiritually. I am reminded of Rudolf Steiner describing his experience reading the autobiography of Henry Ford. He says that he could experience how Henry Ford, at a very deep level of his being, is knocking on the door of anthroposophy, not actually knocking but rather pounding, and in doing so he is turning Rudolf Steiner’s soul black and

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49 I ask the reader to keep in mind that with the use of these traditional terms (mother and father) in this context, I am trying to point to certain occult realities associated with the archetypal forces that stand behind the genders, rather than to their physical expression in our culture at this time.

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blue! And he goes on to express the hope that perhaps now, through the Christmas conference, the Anthroposophical Society will finally be able to open the door from within, to open the door that can allow anthroposophy to stream out into the wider world and into the souls of *all those who are truly seeking it*.<sup>51</sup> In certain respects, can we not also say that the social justice movement is pounding on the door of anthroposophy, demanding that we remember our true social mission, our true social tasks, and threatening to destroy us, root and branch, if we do not pick up the thread of this social mission? And is not a similar demand coming to us, even louder still, from the so-called coronavirus pandemic and the devastating manner in which it is being used to manipulate human beings and human social life? Do we really think our movement will survive these trends, much less gain the ability to bring a transforming influence to bear on them, without undergoing a fundamental change of heart, a metanoia, of some kind?

### **opening the door from within**

I realize, of course, how absurdly ambitious, how utterly unrealistic, foolish, even ludicrous, it must sound to propose birthing, or helping to birth, a popular social movement in America out of the esoteric womb of anthroposophy. Is such a thing even remotely possible? Do the forces of intelligence, courage, creativity and cooperation even lie within us, within our movement? Can the spiritual world even support such an undertaking? Would we not make utter fools of ourselves? Are there not a plethora of groups already doing this work to which we simply need to hitch our wagon? And would not such an effort just bring increasing attacks upon us and make our current work impossible?

And so on.

Whatever your response to these questions and the hundreds of other questions that could be asked, clearly the realities and events of world changing events of 2020 and 2021 are calling for something quite new from us, from our world and from our movement. And is it not also the case, when we look through the incredible darkness that has spread over the earth in the past year, past the immense demonic forces that have stepped into the foreground of human civilization, armed with extraordinary new powers, that we can also discern that in some strange and mysterious way, the souls of human beings, the soul of the earth herself, have become ready to receive, in a new way, a new form, in a new historical moment, the seed of anthroposophy, the seed of a living, practical, earth- and Christ-centered, spirituality of love?

I don't know about you, dear friends, but I am not terribly inspired to be part of a movement that would sacrifice truth for the sake of institutional continuity or fashionable social agendas. Are we not called, rather, to follow the example of Christ who, in the middle of Thursday night in the week of Passover, going against ancient Jewish custom, opened the door of the Cenacle from within and

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<sup>51</sup> Lecture by Rudolf Steiner of January 18, 1924. I will elaborate in future installments of this essay on the great significance of this experience of Rudolf Steiner's for our work in America, and address any concerns anyone may harbor about Henry Ford's shadow sides.

walked out into the darkness with his disciples, exchanging the elevated mood and profound intimacy of the Last Supper for the final, arduous journey to Golgotha?

**may human beings hear it**

To bring to a close this installment, and draw many of these threads together, I would like to invite my readers to consider that it is the earth herself, the long-suffering, blood-stained, sacred landscapes of Gaia, that are calling to us, calling us to work for racial reconciliation, for true social justice and ecological renewal, and that is seeking to inspire in us the new social forms of the future that can make these possible. Building on the work of Orland Bishop,<sup>52</sup> I have come to understand this calling of the earth more deeply, by recognizing that there are sacred shrines, sacred earth temples and earth chakras, across the globe, which are in the process of being opened at this time by the initiates who have guarded them for centuries, opened so their profound gifts of wisdom can stream forth as a healing substance to the whole of humanity. I understand this to be a gradual process that began around the time of the end of Kali Yuga in 1900 AD and that will continue for many years yet to come, a process associated, in some cases, with some aspects of these ancient, sacred or indigenous traditions becoming public and available to a wider audience.

Like the gold, frankincense and myrrh that were once placed at the foot of the Christ child, the sacred earth shrines of Asia, of Africa, of the Middle East, of Eastern, Central and Western Europe, of North, Central and South America, of Australasia, of the entire earth, are gradually being opened and from them sounds a most extraordinary ringing forth of wisdom and of healing forces. When I seek to listen to this ringing in the depths of my heart, I find myself carried to the place where these tones come together, weave themselves into a whole, and ray out in harmony, the harmony of the spiritual legacy of all races, cultures and peoples. It is in and through these universal tones that I experience the calling for the awakening of the true human being in our time, and the calling for the uniting of all human beings in service to the healing and refashioning of the earth out of spiritual wisdom and insight. I believe we can hear these tones ringing through the Foundation Stone meditation given by Rudolf Steiner, and in a special way, perhaps, in the Monday mantra:

Oh Light Divine

Oh Christ Sun

The spirits of the elements hear it

In East, West, North, South

May Human Beings

Hear it!

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<sup>52</sup> Bishop, Orland [The Seventh Shrine: Meditations on the African Spiritual Journey: From the Middle Passage to the Mountaintop](#) (New York, Lindisfarne Books, 2017)

When I feel my way into the place where these tones come together and ray out, I also come to the experience that the cultural initiates, the culture heroes, who are guiding the opening of these sacred temples and earth chakras are working together as a community, and that Rudolf Steiner, and the other great initiates of the West, of true Christianity, have an honored place in this circle, this community of spiritual co-workers. In fact, it is quite clear to me that the initiates and spiritual beings who are there, representing all the races and cultures of the world, past and present, look to anthroposophy, to western spiritual-science, with great hope, for they see in the spiritual substance created by the work of students of spiritual science, forces of great significance for the future of humanity, as well as forces that can help their own mystery streams move into the future.

This is the source, I would suggest, of the remarkable experience that many of us have had in North America, many of us who are both deeply devoted to anthroposophy and who have opened our hearts to the good spirits of this land. Namely, that when our work reaches a certain level of depth and intensity, we can, on special occasions, feel ourselves joined in the spirit by many deep souls of the Native Americans of this land. Yes, many deep and profound souls and spirits of Native American culture come to us, to support our work, but also to receive from this work the forces they need to carry their own communities and spiritual gifts into the future. They come because, I believe, they have been guided by the leaders of their mystery streams who stand in the circle of initiates I have mentioned above, to forge these collaborations, these friendships for the future, if you will. Clearly, many such friendships are also being forged among physically incarnated individuals of these two cultures.

This is also the reason, I believe, that people in other cultures from all over the world have come to embrace Waldorf education. The fact that Waldorf schools can provide a good education for their children is only a very small part of this picture. The overriding reason is that the people who start these schools have come to experience how the riches of their own culture find a home and a new, universal form of expression through Waldorf education. You could say, they experience the Waldorf impulse as a kind of *grail chalice* into which the fruits of their culture can be poured and which undergo a kind of rejuvenation through their union with the Waldorf impulse, which in turn allows these individuals to bring fresh, transformative impulses into their local communities. In this process, I would suggest, they do not feel they are uniting the fruits of their culture with something European per se, but rather with something universal, that helps draw out the best of their own cultural legacy.

Likewise, when we look to the incredible growth of biodynamic agriculture in India, we find that this has not been the result of a bunch of greedy, missionary-minded, white, anthroposophists imposing their ideas, practices and financial schemes onto Indian farmers and Indian culture. This has, indeed, been the way, the methodology, of the western, biotech industry. The growth of biodynamics in India, however, has arisen entirely out of the spirit of genuine love and friendship, initially, between Peter Proctor, a white man, and various Indian farmers, scientists and agriculture professionals—cross-cultural friendships which continue to grow and ramify to this day. And what has arisen through these friendships is not the replication of the biodynamic farming models of

Europe, but rather the rejuvenation, the strengthening and re-enlivening, of traditional Indian agriculture, which, of course, came into being under the guidance of the great initiates of Indian culture in long past ages.

The spirit of anthroposophy, in other words, is one of pure service to other people, cultures, religions, traditions, and movements. Anthroposophy, as a modern mystery stream that has come to terms with the strong, Ahrimanic influences of modern culture, contains a force that has the unique capacity to strengthen and enliven all people and cultures with which it comes into genuine dialogue, genuine friendship. To suggest, as some have begun to do, that anthroposophy, or the Waldorf curriculum, or biodynamic agriculture, or any other of the so-called daughter movements, are somehow tainted by European or American traditions of white supremacy is an error of almost imponderable proportions. The truth is that all races, cultures and civilizations have given birth to fruits of universal significance, fruits that are able to transcend entirely the influence of the double of those cultures. If this were not the case, the earth temples of the different cultures would be found empty at the time of their opening—there would be no healing wisdom able to stream forth from them. Anthroposophy, likewise, though midwived into being by European culture, is universal in significance and scope, and is not tainted in the least by the colonial, missionary, white supremacist traditions of the European or American past. In fact, it carries within itself the power to heal and transform those very tendencies.<sup>53</sup>

Of course, the human beings who are seeking to embody anthroposophical ideas and impulses on the earth bring to expression a vast array of limitations, errors, flaws and weaknesses. Even Rudolf Steiner had certain understandable limitations as a human being incarnated into a particular time and place, which I will describe in an upcoming installment. These challenges within the anthroposophical community must needs be acknowledged and worked through, as I have shown throughout this essay. But all this must be distinguished from the being of anthroposophia herself, who, as I have tried to show, is a universal being of pure service, pure love, pure alchemical, rejuvenating, transformative power.

On the other hand, I find it necessary to point out that if we seek to find the source, in the spiritual world, of the ideas that have formed critical social justice theory, we come upon a host of lesser initiates and other human and spiritual beings, associated with both European and non-European cultures, who have rebelled against the opening of the earth temples of their peoples, who rebel against the uniting and universalizing of the wisdom streams of humanity, who are unable and unwilling to let go of ancient wounds, resentments and egotisms that live in the doubles of their racial and cultural holons or group souls. Sadly, we also find that many of these beings have set themselves in fierce opposition to all that flows from the initiates of the West, of true Christianity. Though the words they have inspired might suggest otherwise, the vision of the holding of hands,

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53 I understand, of course, that the question of how the pure spirit of anthroposophy can best be placed in service of the complex, multi-cultural organism of the United States is not always so straightforward to discern. This is something I will explore in future installments of this essay.

of the filial bonds of friendship and cooperation, between the initiates of the world's cultures in their circle of healing tones, is simply repugnant to them.<sup>54</sup>

But we must remember that these burdened spirits, too, can and shall be redeemed, that in their very opposition they are seeking to be redeemed. If we hold at bay the various teachings they have inspired on the planet, and, as I said above, work to carry out deeds of loving service each day on our farms, in our neighborhoods, communities and schools—deeds inspired by the harmonious ringing out of the tones that emanate from the world's earth temples, tones that in their working together form a part of the Michaelic garment or sheath of the Christ impulse of our age, then these spirits burdened by the past—in whose community our wounded souls too have a place—shall be healed, and shall themselves become, over time, servants, cooperators, friends of the true being, the universal individuality, of the earth.

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54 Their opposition is particularly aroused, in my experience, by the impulses of social threefolding.

## Resources

Some organizations working to advance social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion, from a different worldview

**Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism** [www.fairforall.org](http://www.fairforall.org)

Waldorf parents and teachers may find these two reports and related videos from the “Profiles” section of the FAIR website particularly worthwhile:

<https://www.fairforall.org/profiles-in-courage/dwight-englewood-whistleblower/>

<https://www.fairforall.org/columbus-academy/>

**Moral Courage College** [www.moralcourage.com/learn](http://www.moralcourage.com/learn)

**Counterweight** [www.counterweightsupport.com](http://www.counterweightsupport.com)

Counterweight has some great resources for alternative ways of thinking about and going about diversity trainings in the “CW Toolbox” section of their website

**Heterodox Academy** [www.heterodoxacademy.org](http://www.heterodoxacademy.org)

Heterodox Academy also has a plethora of materials on alternative approaches to diversity, equity and inclusion in the “Resources” Section of their website

**Theory of Enchantment** [www.theoryofenchantment.com](http://www.theoryofenchantment.com)