

By employing the method of introspection (self-observation) - in the way it was intended by Rudolf Steiner (see GA 21, About the Riddles of the Human Soul) - we want to investigate thinking processes in a psychological laboratory. Concretely, this means that we will investigate the different properties of thinking processes with the help of test subjects.

The investigation of human, intuitive thinking by means of the method of self-observation is a centerpiece of Steiner's anthroposophy. On the one hand, Steiner elaborated his philosophy of freedom and theory of knowledge on the basis of precisely this kind of research. On the other hand, he saw the proper scientific, introspective research of thinking as the very basis on which he attempted to substantiate the results of his anthroposophy.

Steiner wasn't the only one who investigated human thinking by means of this methodology. We will also make the link with many other philosophers and psychologists who did a similar kind of research in Steiner's time, such as Franz Brentano, Johannes Volkelt, Carl Stumpf, Wilhelm Dilthey, Oswald Külpe, Karl Bühler, Narziss Ach and many others.

In order to properly understand Steiner's work, we must situate it in the broader scientific research context of his time, bearing in mind other philosophers and psychologists. This has been demonstrated by Michael Muschalle in his research papers. Taking this insight as our starting point, we want to concentrate on a project proposed by Steiner: taking anthroposophical psychology further, developing it into "a philosophy of the human being." By proceeding in this manner, it is demonstrated that our everyday, human consciousness is able to develop into a consciousness which can behold spiritual phenomena. Because we take the 'normal', everyday human consciousness as our starting point - which is accessible to everyone -, and search within its boundaries for an untapped ability to behold spiritual phenomena (and not for the actual beholding of such spiritual phenomena), the contents of our research will be accessible for those who are interested purely in psychology, but not so much in anthroposophy.

In concrete terms, we will use the method which was developed by the psychologists and philosophers of the "Würzburger Schule", a research institute founded by Oswald Külpe in the beginning of the 20th century. At this institute, thinking processes were studied by using the introspective method.

The researchers of the "Würzburger Schule" did not only investigate their own thinking processes, they also analyzed the inner experiences of test subjects. These test subjects were given questions (thinking assignments), which stimulated them to develop thinking processes. Then, they were asked to describe these thinking processes by means of introspection (self-observation). Following this method, it is possible to trigger different kinds of thinking processes on behalf of test subjects by asking different kinds of questions. Proceeding in this manner, the range of possible questions (thinking assignments) provides the researcher with an instrument to focus narrowly on single properties of thinking, making very detailed investigations possible.

The anthroposophical path of spiritual schooling - as outlined by Steiner - will be involved in the design and the realization of the research. The particular exercises and meditations which are addressed here, will be one topic of our research project. In this way, we want to study how these exercises are linked to the untapped ability to behold spiritual phenomena - if this ability is, indeed, discovered. The path of spiritual schooling provides a method by which inner processes can be strengthened and refined. Such processes of self-development can be introspectively observed, in order to become more aware and familiar with them. We will also try to chart changes in the human psyche, which may occur as a result of the exercises and meditations belonging to the path of spiritual schooling.

The performance of the project will take approximately one year. This is our minimum goal. When additional financial means are made available to us, we will naturally extend the project.

The use of financial means will be communicated in a transparent manner. We will do this by regularly publishing a statement of revenue and expenditure on our website. We will also communicate these records by means of our newsletter.

The results of our research, together with all the information that was collected - taking the privacy of the test subjects in consideration - will be published and will be made available on the internet free of charge, for all those interested.

## Crowdfunding

Qualitative research - in our case, the scientific investigation of thinking - is very time-consuming and therefore costly. By means of crowdfunding, however, much can be achieved by small, but many financial gifts. We want to start a campaign in order to finance a research project which would take minimally one year.

Different kinds of crowdfunding make independent entrepreneurial, social, cultural, philanthropic and scientific projects possible. In our case, the project is scientific. These projects are supported by people who are interested in a subject or a topic which they find worthwhile. An essential part of working with crowdfunding, is the feedback and the involvement of a group of people who support the project. In this way, all those involved can make adjustments while the project is ongoing, and point out areas of improvement which the initiators hadn't considered yet.

In our case, the proceeds from crowdfunding will be used to release Merijn Fagard from the need to provide an income for the period of one year, so he can dedicate himself to developing different questions about thinking and, practically, can set up a range of psychological experiments with test subjects in order to provide answers. These questions are in line with how contemporary psychology and anthroposophy are positioned in terms of research nowadays, and sample questions can be found on our website.

Another part of the proceeds - by far the smaller amount - will be used to create the reward-packages for the supporters, including shipping costs. Every supporter will receive a reward package.

The crowdfunding campaign involves two basic steps. It will take place by means of a crowdfunding platform specifically designed for supporting scientific projects.

1. During the first phase, more than 100 fans must be found. When this goal is reached, the actual crowdfunding phase can begin. This initial phase starts on 19 September 2016.

2. In the second phase, the actual phase of the crowdfunding, we want to collect 15.000 Euro over a period of 2 months. Only when this amount has been collected, the money will be disbursed to the researchers and the project will be able to start.

The platform for crowdfunding, on which scientific projects are presented to the public, can be found at [www.startnext.com/en/denkbeobachtung](http://www.startnext.com/en/denkbeobachtung). There you can also sign up to become a fan of our project.

---

**Why are we setting up a crowdfunding-campaign? Why aren't doing research at a university, or with the support of an anthroposophical organization?**

We would very much like to do research in this manner, but unfortunately no such opportunities have arisen yet - notwithstanding several efforts on our behalf to secure this kind of funding. On the other hand, gathering funds by means of crowdfunding enables us to remain independent.



Merijn Fagard studied philosophy and wrote a Master's thesis entitled "From the Good Will to the Free Will. The Connection between Knowing and Freedom in the Philosophy of Rudolf Steiner." Additional research on the topic of thinking and the observation of thinking followed. He lives in Leuven, Belgium.



Wilhelm Humérez completed his education as a remedial therapist, and works in an institution for adults with a mental limitation. In addition, he has been participating for many years in a research group about Hegel's "Science and Logic", and has been busy with the dialogical development of concepts which is necessary for that purpose. He lives in Stuttgart, Germany.

### Contact

[m.fagard@denkbeobachtung.eu](mailto:m.fagard@denkbeobachtung.eu)  
[w.humerez@denkbeobachtung.eu](mailto:w.humerez@denkbeobachtung.eu)

facebook: Denkbeobachtung

### Support Us

[www.startnext.com/en/denkbeobachtung](http://www.startnext.com/en/denkbeobachtung)

IBAN: DE38 4306 0967 4011 0191 01  
BIC: GENODEM1GLS  
Account Holder: Wilhelm Humérez  
Message: Observation of Thinking + your e-mail address or phone number

## A research project about the observation of thinking

Research

---

Crowdfunding

---

Collaboration