

Is Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy Of Life Humanist?

Rudolf Steiner wrote the original *Die Philosophie der Freiheit (The Philosophy Of Freedom)* in 1894 with the subtitle “*A Modern Philosophy Of Life Developed By Scientific Methods*”. It presented a philosophy of life that recognizes the “*human individual as the source of all morality and the center of all life*”. He considered it his most important work and the foundation of all his later work. When asked which of his books he would most want to see rescued if catastrophe should come upon the world, Steiner replied without hesitation: “*The Philosophy of Freedom*” Near the end of his life, he suggested that *The Philosophy of Freedom* would outlive all his other works.

Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of life sounds like Humanism, but is it? Let's compare his Philosophy Of Freedom with the meaning of Humanism given by The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU). The IHEU, according to their website, “*is the sole global umbrella organisation embracing Humanist, atheist, rationalist, secularist, skeptic, laique, ethical cultural, freethought and similar organisations worldwide.*” First we will look at the answer the IHUE gives to the question: What is Humanism? Then we will compare that answer with the Philosophy Of Freedom followed by over 100 Humanist quotes. In conclusion we will ask whether Steiner's later Spiritualistic writings contradict his earlier Humanistic writings.

What is Humanism?

According to the IHUE, “Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance that affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. Humanism stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethics based on human and other natural values in a spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. Humanism is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality.” The IHUE's minimum statement on Humanism mentions Knowledge, Ethics, Value and Meaning.

Knowledge, ethics, value and meaning

Knowledge

A humanist is someone who recognises that we, human beings, are the most curious and capable curators of knowledge in the known universe. To gain knowledge, we must use our reason and experience to understand the world. And we may create or partake of the great artistic fruits of humankind to enhance our emotional palettes, deepen our empathy and enrich our understanding. But we reject any reliance on blindly received authority, or on dogma, or what others may claim is divine revelation (because we don't believe we get tip-offs about truth from a supreme being beyond time and space. That would be cheating!)

Ethics

A humanist is someone who recognises that we, human beings, are by far the most sophisticated moral actors on the Earth. We can grasp ethics. We are not be the only moral subjects (for example other animals deserve moral consideration, too!) But we have a unique capacity for moral choice: to act in the interests of welfare, advancement and fulfillment, or against it! To act well, we must take responsibility for ourselves and others, not for the sake of preferential treatment in any afterlife (even if

we believed in it, that motivation wouldn't make our actions good!), but because the best we can do is to live this life as brilliantly as we can. That means helping others in community, advancing society, and flourishing at whatever we do best.

Value

And a humanist is someone who finds value in themselves and each other, respecting the personhood and dignity of fellow human beings, not because we are made in the image of something else (we are a product of evolution, not the product of a divine plan), but because of what we are: a sentient, feeling species, with value and dignity inherent in each individual.

Meaning

There is no reason to believe that "meaning" has to come from a supreme being. If you can write a sentence on paper which isn't nonsense, then you can create meaning! There is no divine plan or purpose, the humanist recognises, but we make our own purposes, tell our own stories, set our own goals. This gives life meaning.

Comparing Humanism with The Philosophy Of Freedom

We will now compare the IHEU statement of the meaning of Humanism to Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy Of Freedom (POF) by going through it line by line and placing comparable POF quotes next to each IHEU statement so you can decide for yourself whether Steiner's philosophy of life is humanistic or not.

Knowledge

(IHEU) A humanist is someone who recognises that we, human beings, are the most curious and capable curators of knowledge in the known universe.

Curious For Knowledge

(POF ch. 2) "Nowhere are we satisfied with the facts which nature spreads out before our senses. Everywhere we seek what we call the explanation of these facts."

(IHEU) To gain knowledge, we must use our reason and experience to understand the world.

Observation and Thinking

(POF ch. 3) "Observation and thinking are the two points of departure for all human striving of the mind. Everyday common sense as well as the most complex scientific research rest on these two pillars of our mind."

(POF pref) "Each of us claims the right to start from the facts we know, from our personal experience, and from there advance to knowledge of the whole universe."

(POF ch. 1) "We distinguish between the knower and the doer, and have left out the one who matters the most—the knowing doer; the one who acts out of knowledge."

(IHEU) And we may create or partake of the great artistic fruits of humankind to enhance our emotional palettes, deepen our empathy and enrich our understanding.

Creative Expression

(POF pref) "Never have artists been less concerned about rules and norms in art than today. Each of them asserts their right to express, in the creations of their art, what is unique in them."

(POF ch. 13) "The person without imagination creates no ethical ideas."

(POF pref) "All genuine philosophers have been artists in concepts. Human ideas have been the medium of their art, and scientific method their artistic technique. "

(IHEU) But we reject any reliance on blindly received authority, or on dogma, or what others may

claim is divine revelation (because we don't believe we get tip-offs about truth from a supreme being beyond time and space. That would be cheating!)

Authority

(POF ch. 10) “The most narrow-minded trust in the authority of a single person. Someone a little more advanced allows his conduct to be dictated by a majority (state, society). When, at last, it dawns on him that the authorities are just as weak as himself, the naive seek refuge in a Divine Being.”

Dogma

(POF pref) “We do not want the kind of knowledge that has been formulated in rigid academic rules, and stored away as valid for all time. We strive for certainty in knowledge, but each in his or her own way.”

Divine Revelation

(POF ch. 12) “Monism [The worldview of the Philosophy Of Freedom] cannot admit any continuous supernatural influence upon moral life (divine government of the world from the outside), nor an influence through a particular act of revelation at a particular moment in history (giving of the ten commandments), or through God's appearance on the earth (divinity of Christ). Moral processes are, for Monism, natural products like everything else that exists, and their causes must be looked for in nature, —that is to say, in human beings, because humans are the bearers of morality.”

Ethics

(IHEU) A humanist is someone who recognises that we, human beings, are by far the most sophisticated moral actors on the Earth. We can grasp ethics.

Ethical Individualism

(POF ch. 9) “To let our moral content express itself in life is the moral principle of the human being who regards all other moral principles as subordinate. We may call this point of view Ethical Individualism.”

(IHEU) We are not be the only moral subjects (for example other animals deserve moral consideration, too!) But we have a unique capacity for moral choice: to act in the interests of welfare, advancement and fulfillment, or against it!

Ethical Choice

(POF ch. 9) “There is a higher conduct that sees a value in all ethical principles and in each particular situation asks whether one or the other ethical principle is more important.”

(IHEU) To act well, we must take responsibility for ourselves and others, not for the sake of preferential treatment in any afterlife (even if we believed in it, that motivation wouldn't make our actions good!), but because the best we can do is to live this life as brilliantly as we can.

Live life brilliantly

(POF ch. 13) “Ethical ideals are human intuitions, they are the driving forces that our own spirit harnesses; we want them, because their realization is our highest pleasure.”

(IHEU) That means helping others in community, advancing society, and flourishing at whatever we do best.

Community building

(POF ch. 9) “If we all really draw from the world of ideas, and do not follow external physical or spiritual impulses, then we cannot but meet in the same striving and intentions. An ethical misunderstanding, a clash of aims, is impossible among ethically free human beings.”

Advancing society

(POF ch. 14) “That part of our conduct that springs from our intuitions has ethical value. This is our

contribution to humanities already existing total of moral ideas.”

Flourishing at whatever we do best

(POF pref) “Our contribution to the development of the world, however trifling, must be something which, by reason of the uniqueness of our nature, we alone can offer.”

Value

(IHEU) *And a humanist is someone who finds value in themselves and each other, respecting the personhood and dignity of fellow human beings,...*

Human dignity

(POF ch. 9) “We expect to find agreement with others, not because of some external arrangement, but in the attitude, the inner disposition of a human being experiencing itself amidst other valued fellow human beings, that best does justice to human worth and dignity.”

(IHEU) *...not because we are made in the image of something else (we are a product of evolution, not the product of a divine plan),..*

Darwin's theory of evolution

(POF ch. 12) “Ethical Individualism, far from being in opposition to the theory of evolution, is a direct consequence of it.”

(POF ch. 12) “Ethical Individualism is the crown of the edifice that Darwin and Haeckel have erected for Natural Science. It is the theory of evolution applied to the moral life.”

(IHEU) *...but because of what we are: a sentient, feeling species, with value and dignity inherent in each individual.*

Inherent human worth

(POF pref) “We are convinced that in each of us, if only we probe deep enough into the very heart of our being, there dwells something noble, something worthy of development.”

Meaning

(IHEU) *There is no reason to believe that “meaning” has to come from a supreme being. If you can write a sentence on paper which isn't nonsense, then you can create meaning!*

Self-definition

(POF ch. 5) “Self-perception must be distinguished from self-definition through thinking. Self-perception confines me within certain limits; but my thinking is not concerned with these limits.”

(IHEU) *There is no divine plan or purpose, the humanist recognises, but we make our own purposes, tell our own stories, set our own goals.*

World purpose

(POF ch. 11) “With the rejection of an Absolute Cosmic Being, any reason for assuming the existence of a purpose in the World or Nature falls away.”

(POF ch. 11) “We look for laws of Nature, but not for purposes of Nature.”

Human purpose

(POF ch. 11) “Human life has only the purpose and destiny that a human being gives it.”

(POF ch. 11) “I have no predestined mission; my mission, at any one moment, is the one I choose for myself.”

HUMANISM QUOTES FROM RUDOLF STEINER'S 1894 PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM

Preface The Goal Of Knowledge

1. "Nothing is accepted as valid, unless it springs from the roots of individuality."
2. "Everything which hinders the individual in the full development of his powers is thrust aside."
3. "The saying 'Each one of us must choose his hero in whose footsteps he toils up to Olympus' no longer holds for us."
4. "We allow no ideals to be forced upon us."
5. "We are convinced that in each of us, if only we probe deep enough into the very heart of our being, there dwells something noble, something worthy of development."
6. "We no longer believe that there is a norm of human life to which we must all strive to conform."
7. "We regard the perfection of the whole as depending on the unique perfection of each single individual."
8. "Our contribution to the development of the world, however trifling, must be something that, by reason of the uniqueness of our nature, we alone can offer."
9. "Never have artists been less concerned about rules and norms in art than today. Each of them asserts their right to express, in the creations of their art, what is unique in them."
10. "We do not want to be dependent in any respect, and where dependence must be, we tolerate it only on condition that it coincides with a vital interest of our individuality."
11. "Truth will be sought in our age only in the depths of human nature."
12. "Truth that comes to us from outside always bears the stamp of uncertainty. Only truth that appears within ourselves will convince us."
13. "We no longer want to believe; we want to know. Belief demands the acceptance of truths without having the insight to fully understand."
14. "The only knowing that satisfies us is the kind that submits to no external standard, but springs from a person's own inner life."
15. "Each of us claims the right to start from the facts we know, from our personal experience, and from there advance to knowledge of the whole universe."
16. "We strive for certainty in knowledge, but each in his or her own way."
17. "Today, no one should be compelled to understand. We demand neither acceptance nor agreement from those who are not moved to a certain view by their own particular, individual needs."
18. "We do not want to cram facts of knowledge into even an immature human being, a child. We try rather to develop the child's capacities in such a way that the child no longer needs to be compelled to understand, but wants to understand."

19. "All science would be nothing but the satisfaction of idle curiosity, if it did not strive to elevate the value of existence for the human personality."
20. "The true value of the sciences is seen only when we have shown the importance of their results for humanity."
21. "Knowledge has value only in so far as it contributes to the all-around development of the whole of human nature."
22. "We should take possession of the world of ideas to use them for our human goals, which go beyond those of mere science."
23. "One must be able to confront an idea as master; otherwise one will fall into its bondage."

Chapter 1 Conscious Human Action

24. "We distinguish between the knower and the doer, and have left out the one who matters the most—the knowing doer; the one who acts out of knowledge."

Chapter 2 The Desire For Knowledge

25. "The Dualist regards the human mind to be a spiritual being entirely foreign to Nature and then tries to hitch this being on to Nature. No wonder it cannot find the connecting link. We can find Nature outside us only if we first know her within us. What corresponds to Nature within us will be our guide."

Chapter 3 Thinking In The Service Of Understanding The World

26. "There is only one thing of which I am absolutely certain, for I myself bring it to its certain existence: my thinking. Perhaps it has another ultimate origin, whether it come from God or somewhere else; of one thing I am certain, that it exists in the sense that I myself produce it."

Chapter 5 Knowing The World

27. "In so far as we think, we are the All-One Being that pervades everything."

28. "It is futile to seek for any common element in the separate things of the world, other than the conceptual content presented by thinking. Not a human personal god, nor matter, nor blind will can be valid for us as the world's unitary element."

29. "Let us call the form in which thought first appears in consciousness—'Intuition'. Intuition is to thoughts what observation is to perceptions. Intuition and observation are the sources of our knowledge."

Chapter 6 Human Individuality

30. "For the universe as a whole, my feeling life can attain value only if the feeling connects with a concept and in this indirect way integrates itself into the cosmos."

31. "A true individuality is the one who reaches up to the farthest possible extent with his feelings into the region of the ideal."

Chapter 7 Are There Any Limits To Knowledge

32. "The naive consciousness demands that God must appear in bodily form in a way accessible to sense perception, and confirm his Divinity by changing water into wine."

33. "The Divine Being, as conceived by the naive person, is thought of as acting in a way corresponding completely to how man himself acts—the Deity is conceived anthropomorphically."

Chapter 8 The Factors Of Life

34. "The naive person must feel the connection of things before he believes he has grasped it; he seeks insight through feeling rather than through knowledge."

35. "The error in Mysticism based on feeling is that it wants an immediate experience of what should be attained through knowledge; it wants to develop individual feeling into something universal."

Chapter 9 The Idea Of Freedom

36. "The highest level of individual life is conceptual thinking [universal thinking]... It is customary in philosophy to call pure thinking 'reason', we call the moral driving force of this level practical reason."
37. "There is a higher conduct that sees a value in all ethical principles and in each particular situation asks whether one or the other ethical principle is more important."
38. "My standard cannot be how everybody else would act, but what is right for me to do in each particular situation."
39. "I do not consult any person or moral code of rules with the question, 'Should I perform this action?' On the contrary, I carry it out as soon as I have grasped the idea of it. That alone makes it my action."
40. "To let our moral content express itself in life is the moral principle of the human being who regards all other moral principles as subordinate. We may call this point of view Ethical Individualism."
41. "For everyone who accepts ethical norms, their actions will be the outcome of the principles that compose that ethical code. They merely carry out orders. They are a higher kind of robot."
42. "To bring about action that is Christian or unselfish—the outcome of an accepted code of morality—just inject some stimulus to action into their mind, and at once the cogwheels of their moral principles are set into motion to produce an action considered Christian."
43. "I acknowledge no lord over me, no external authority, and no so-called inner voice. I acknowledge no external principle for my action, because I have found in myself the ground for my action—my love of the action."
44. "When I review my action later, I can discover the ethical principle that influenced me, but while I am acting the ethical principle moves me in my love for the goal that I wish to bring about through my action."
45. (In regards to moral freedom) "I am not talking of children or those who follow their animal or social instincts. I am talking of human beings capable of raising themselves to the level of the ideal content of the world."
46. "An action is free when its reason stems from the ideals part of my individual nature. Every other act compelled by natural instincts or obligation to moral standards is not free."
47. "We are free to the extent that we are able at every moment of our lives be our own guide."
48. "The concept of duty excludes freedom, because duty does not acknowledge the right of individuality, but demands the subjection of individuality to a general norm."
49. "Freedom of action is conceivable only from the standpoint of Ethical Individualism."
50. "The Moralist believes that a social community is possible only if we are all united by a common moral order. The Moralist does not understand the unity of the world of ideas. The world of ideas that inspires me is the one that inspires my neighbor."
51. "I differ from my neighbors, not because we live in two entirely different mental worlds, but because from the common world of ideals we receive different intuitions. My neighbors want to live out their intuitions, I mine."
52. "If we all really draw from the world of ideas, and do not follow external physical or spiritual impulses, then we cannot but meet in the same striving and intentions. An ethical misunderstanding, a clash of aims, is impossible among ethically free human beings."
53. "The free human being expects to find agreement with others, not because of some external arrangement, but in the attitude, the inner disposition of a human being experiencing oneself amidst other valued fellow human beings, that best does justice to human worth and dignity."
54. "Only the ethically unfree who blindly follow their natural instincts or the commands of duty, turn their backs on their neighbors if they do not follow the same instincts and obligations as themselves."
55. "Live and let live is the fundamental principle of the free human being."

56. "In the midst of such enforced order, there arise free spirits who lift themselves above the welter of customs, legal coercion, and religious practice to find themselves by being true to themselves."
57. "Our life is made up of free and unfree actions. The free spirit is the purest expression of human nature. Indeed, we are only truly human to the extent that we are free."
58. "Nature makes human beings merely natural creatures; society makes them obedient to the law; but only each person can make themselves into a free being."
59. "The standpoint of free morality sees the freedom of spirit as the final stage of human evolution."
60. "The conventional laws of morality were at one time established by men, and the laws of the state are always born in the heads of a state official. These minds have set up laws over other people. They make no one unfree unless we forget their origin and make them divine commandments or an authoritative inner voice."
61. "Free human beings act morally because they have moral ideas, they do not act in order to bring about morality."
62. "The human individual is the source of all morality and the center of all life."

Chapter 10 The Philosophy Of Freedom And Monism

63. "The most narrow-minded trust in the authority of a single person. Someone a little more advanced allows his conduct to be dictated by a majority (state, society). When, at last, it dawns on him that the authorities are just as weak as himself, the naive seek refuge in a Divine Being."
64. "The naive person conceives a Divine Being that dictates to him the ideal content of his moral life by way of his senses—be it as the God that appeared in the burning bush, or who walked in human form among the people and audibly declares for their ears what they should and should not do."
65. "To the Spiritual Dualist, moral laws appear to be dictated by the Absolute. Human beings through their intelligence need only discover and carry out the decisions of this Absolute Being."
66. "Just as the Materialistic Dualist makes human beings into automatons whose actions are the result of purely mechanical laws, a Spiritual Dualist makes human beings into slaves to the will of the Absolute. Freedom has no place either in Materialism or Spiritualism."
67. "Anyone incapable of producing moral ideas through intuition must receive them from others. To the extent that humans receive their ethical principles from without, they are in fact not free."
68. "In regards to genuinely ethical conduct, Monism is the true philosophy of freedom. Monism denies any validity to Metaphysics. The actions of human beings are not free if they obey external compulsion; they act freely only when they obey themselves."
69. "A truly moral world view is liberated from both the fetters of naive ethical maxims within the world, and the imposed ethical maxims of speculative Metaphysicians outside the world."
70. "The ethical laws which the Metaphysician regards as issuing from a higher power are human thoughts; the ethical world order is the free creation of human beings."
71. "It is not the human being's business to realize God's will in the world, but his own. He carries out his own decisions and intentions, not those of another being."
72. "The world of ideas is not expressed in a human community, but only in human individuals. What appears as the common goal of a human collective is in reality the result of the will impulse of a few select individuals, whom the rest obey as their leaders."
73. "Each one of us has it in them to be a free spirit, just as every rosebud is potentially a rose."
74. "Morality is a specifically human quality, and freedom is the human way of being moral."

Chapter 11 World Purpose And Life Purpose

75. "Human life has only the purpose and destiny that a human being gives it."
76. "I have no predestined mission; my mission, at any one moment, is the one I choose for myself."

77. "With the rejection of an Absolute Cosmic Being, any reason for assuming the existence of a purpose in the World or Nature falls away."

Chapter 12 Moral Imagination

78. "Before making a decision, an un-free spirit recalls what some one else has done, or recommended, or what God has commanded to be done in such a case and acts accordingly. A free spirit makes a completely original decision."

79. "Authority works best through examples, giving specific actions to un-free spirits. The Christian acts less according to the teachings than to the example of the Redeemer."

80. "Some people have tried to maintain moral laws as a standard or norm. This error is due to the fact that moral laws are not at every moment new creations, but are handed down by tradition."

81. "It is true that an individual's moral ideas evolve from their ancestors, but it is equally true that individuals are morally barren unless he or she has moral ideas of their own."

82. "A moral act is never explained by tracing it back to some continuous supernatural influence (a divine government), or to historical revelation (the giving of the ten commandments) or to the appearance of God (Christ) on earth. Moral causes must be looked for in the human being, who is the bearer of morality."

83. "Freedom is impossible if anything other than I myself (physical processes or God) determines my moral ideas. I am free only when I myself produce these ideas, not when all I do is carry out the ideas another has implanted in me."

84. "A free being is one who can will what he regards as right. True freedom is to determine for oneself the reasons for one's willing."

85. "Only when they enslave my mind, drive my motives out of my head, and replace them with their own— only then do they really intend to make me un-free. This is why the church attacks not only actions, but also motives, the so called 'impure thoughts'."

86. "A church or another community does not produce genuine slaves until her priests or teachers become advisers of conscience, and the faithful depend upon the church (upon the confessional) for the motives of their actions."

Chapter 13 The Value Of Life

87. "According to Pessimists, we must recognize that the pursuit of individual satisfaction (Egoism) is foolish, we ought to devote ourselves in selfless service to the world for God's redemption. An education based on Pessimism is supposed to eradicate Egoism by convincing us of the hopelessness of achieving happiness."

88. "Moral ideals, in the opinion of the Pessimists, are not strong enough to overcome Egoism. Instead, Pessimists say moral ideals establish their dominion by first recognizing the hopelessness of Egoism."

89. "The Pessimists say that moral ideals are not strong enough to dominate the will until the human being has learned that the selfish striving after pleasure cannot lead to any satisfaction."

90. "Ethical ideals are human intuitions, they are the driving forces that our own spirit harnesses; we *want* them, because their realization is our highest pleasure."

91. "We do not need ethics to forbid us to strive for pleasure and then tell us what we should strive for. We will strive for ethical ideals if our moral imagination is active enough to provide us with intuitions that give our will the strength to overcome all obstacles."

92. "Whoever strives for sublimely great ideals does so because they are the content of his nature, and realizing them will bring him a joy that makes other common pleasures seem trivial."

93. "Idealists revel in translating their ideals into reality."

94. "What is called 'Good', is not what a person ought to do, but what he wants to do when the fullness

of his nature unfolds.”

95. “A person who lacks imagination does not create ethical ideas. They must be given to him.”

96. “Every ethical system that demands that we should suppress our own will in order to fulfill tasks that we do not want, fails to regard the whole human being and instead considers the human being devoid of spiritual desires.”

97. “In a harmoniously developed human being, the so-called ideas of the 'Good' lie not outside, but within his own being.”

98. “Ethical conduct does not depend upon the extermination of a personal will, but in the full development of human nature.”

99. “Those who hold that ethical ideals are attainable only if the human being destroys his own personal will, do not know that these ideals are rooted in human will just as are other instincts.”

100. “Mature human beings assign themselves their own value. They do not strive for a pleasure handed to them as a gift of grace by the Creator, nor do they live for the sake of duty after renouncing the striving for pleasure.”

101. “Mature human beings act as they want—that is, according to the standard of their ethical intuitions—and they find in the achievement of what they want the true enjoyment of life.”

102. “Mature human beings determine the value of life by measuring achievements against aims.”

103. “The view that I have developed in *The Philosophy Of Freedom* refers us back to ourselves. It recognizes as the true value of life only what each individual regards as such, according to the measure of what each one desires.”

104. “*The Philosophy Of Freedom* looks upon the individual from all sides, and sees the essential individuality in each of us as his own master and the assessor of his own value.”

Chapter 14 Individuality And Type

105. “Human beings free themselves from generic characteristics. As individuals, we develop qualities and activities of our own, whose source can only be sought within ourselves.”

106. “What is generic about us serves only as a medium through which we can express our own distinct individuality.”

107. “If a human being has achieved emancipation from all that is generic, and we still want to explain everything about that person in generic terms, then we have no sense for what is individual.”

108. “A man sees in a woman, a woman in a man, almost always too much of the general characteristics of the other sex and too little of what is individual.”

109. (written in 1894) “As long as men continue to debate whether a woman is suited to this or that profession 'according to her natural disposition', the woman's question cannot advance.”

110. “The tendency to judge according to type is most persistent where differences of gender is involved. We must be allowed to decide for ourselves what is and what is not in accordance with our nature.”

111. “Racial, tribal, national, and gender characteristics are the subject matter of special sciences. Only persons who wish to live solely as examples of a type could possibly fit the general picture derived from academic study.”

112. “Our conceptual content cannot be fixed once and for all, and handed down to humanity. The individual must gain his concepts through his own intuition.”

113. “Anyone who wants to understand an individual must penetrate to the innermost core of their being, and not stop short at the typical characteristics that he shares with others.”

114. “We gain knowledge of an individuality only when he shares with us his way of viewing the world and his intentions and wishes.”

115. “To understand a free individuality we take into our own mind those ideas by which the individual defines himself, in their purity, without mixing in our own conceptual content.”

116. "Those who immediately mix their own ideas into every judgment of others can never understand an individuality."

117. "A person is a free spirit within a human community only to the extent that he has freed himself from all typical traits."

118. "Only that part of our conduct that springs from our intuitions has ethical value. This is our contribution to humanities already existing total of moral ideas."

119. "The ethical life of humanity is the sum total of what free human individuals have created through their moral imagination."

120. "The history of moral life is not the education of the human race by a transcendent God, but as the gradual living out in practice of all ideas that spring from the moral imagination."

"When we speak of the essential being of a thing or of the world altogether, we cannot therefore mean anything else at all than the grasping of reality as thought, as idea. In the idea we recognize that from which we must derive everything else: the principle of things. What philosophers call the absolute, the eternal being, the ground of the world, what the religions call God, this we call: the idea." Rudolf Steiner, Goethean Science IX

Do Rudolf Steiner's later Spiritualistic writings contradict his earlier Humanistic writings?

In 1918, twenty-five years after *The Philosophy Of Freedom* was first published, Steiner published a second edition after revising some passages and rewriting the Preface, but kept the original Preface because,

"the opinion keeps cropping up that I need to suppress some of my earlier writings on account of my later ones on spiritual science." He added "Only people of ill will would take these changes as proof that I have changed my fundamental conviction".

When Steiner's interest moved from science to "spiritual" science in 1900, he attempted to apply his training in mathematics, science, and philosophy to produce rigorous, verifiable presentations of his spiritual experiences. The accusation is still made today that Steiner abandoned his earlier Humanism conviction when he began writing and lecturing on the spiritual themes of Theosophy/Anthroposophy.

Steiner was very clear that no contradiction exists between his earlier and later writings, so what was given in Anthroposophy must be viewed from a humanistic perspective if it is to be properly understood and applied. How is this possible? First it would require understanding Steiner's foundational Humanist philosophy of life and then putting everything he gave later within this context. If this is not done it opens the door for anti-humanist forces such as authority, dogma, and obedience to divine revelation to enter Anthroposophy and its initiatives.

There is a danger in trying to bridge the appearance of a contradiction between the Philosophy Of Freedom and Anthroposophy by inserting the ideas of Theosophy into the philosophy. This will likely lead to reading errors:

"The members read The Philosophy of Freedom, but reading is not the same as understanding. They took what I offered, not as something issuing from my mouth or written in my books, but rather as what this one thought 'mystical,' that one 'theosophical,' another something else again" Rudolf Steiner on His Book The Philosophy of Freedom

In the new rewritten Preface added in 1918 to the revised edition Steiner makes it clear that;

"You will find nothing at all in The Philosophy of Freedom that is derived from clairvoyant communications of spiritual science. It is written for the express purpose of disciplining thinking without any mention of theosophy."

Steiner's Philosophy Of Freedom is possibly more relevant today as it was in 1894, when its subtitle proclaimed it to be a "Modern" Philosophy Of Life. Many today are striving to orient their lives in the direction of Steiner's Humanist philosophy without necessarily having an interest in Spiritual Science. Steiner understood this;

"this book occupies a position completely independent of my writings on actual spiritual scientific matters... What I have said in this book may be acceptable even to some who, for reasons of their own, refuse to have anything to do with the results of my research into the spiritual realm." Rudolf Steiner, "The Philosophy of Freedom", 1918 New Preface to the Revised Edition