**“Look into the Depths within Yourself and Find the Outside World”[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**The Contribution of Rudolf Steiner’s Monistic Philosophy to Psychoanalytic Conceptualization**

This paper presents a conceptual dialogue between Rudolf Steiner’s philosophy and psychoanalytical thinking. Steiner (1861-1925) is mainly known as the founder of Anthroposophy and the educational system based upon it, but the scope of his conceptual paradigm is much wider: The monism of his philosophical framework offers an alternative to the fissure – implied by Cartesian and Kantian dualism – between the human subject and the world.

The paper argues that the dialogue between Steiner’s philosophy and psychoanalysis enriches both disciplines: it establishes a philosophical substrate, lacking in psychoanalysis, for conceptualizing interpersonal processes, and provides a substrate for therapeutic practice which Steiner’s monistic framework lacks.

In creating and examining this interdisciplinary dialogue the paper uses methodological concepts that relate to the dialogical nature of interpretation and understanding: Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons”; Wittgenstein’s “language-games”; and the concept of “worldview” (“Weltanschauung”) – as it is construed, differentially, by Wittgenstein and Steiner.

Utilizing three concepts that represent different psychoanalytical schools – “projective identification”, “transitional space” and “self-object”/“selfobject” – the paper examines the shared language that may emerge through the dialogue between Klein’s, Winnicott’s, Kohut’s, and Ogden’s psychoanalytic theorizations and Steiner’s philosophy.

This paper creates a dialogue between three psychoanalytical concepts and Rudolf Steiner’s “monism of thought.” To create and examine this interdisciplinary dialogue, it methodologically utilizes tools and concepts drawn from a number of fields: methodological instruments proposed in Wittgenstein’s later thinking for the field of the philosophy of language; interpretative-hermeneutic tools based on Gadamer’s work; and the term “worldview” (*Weltanschauung*) as defined in Steiner’s thinking.

This paper proposes the unified worldview established in Steiner’s philosophy as a theoretical foundation for the examined psychoanalytical conceptualization. Subsequently, it also addresses the different functions of the term “worldview”: in Steiner’s doctrine, this term is defined as a perception at the basis of a certain ideological system pertaining to the relationship between a human being and a world, and is used to examine the changes this perception undergoes;[[2]](#footnote-2) for Freud, it is an “intellectual construction which solves all the problems of our existence uniformly on the basis of one overriding hypothesis, which [...] leaves no question unanswered and in which everything [...] finds its fixed place,” which is the reversal of the scientific method in which he strives to anchor psychoanalysis;[[3]](#footnote-3) whereas Wittgenstein notes the possibility for “surveyable representation – understanding which consists in ‘seeing connections.’”[[4]](#footnote-4)

In Wittgensteinian terms, the paper relates to the language games in the framework of which the examined psychoanalytical terms function, and positions them as “objects of comparison” with the language game instituted in Steiner’s unifying-monistic philosophy.[[5]](#footnote-5) This leads to the “aspect’s lighting-up,” i.e. the ability to see aspects that had not been seen beforehand,[[6]](#footnote-6) which enables the comparison and dialogue between the language games.

In terms of the Gadamerian method, the paper creates a “fusion of horizons” between Steiner’s philosophy and psychoanalytical concepts. This method defines the term “horizon” as a “range of vision [...] everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point,”[[7]](#footnote-7) and argues that understanding is always contingent on a dialogic process and the merging of horizons.[[8]](#footnote-8) The dialogue between different fields enables, according to Gadamer, the creation of a common language between them and understanding based on transformation into a communion in which neither side remains as it was.[[9]](#footnote-9) In this paper, the horizon of Steiner’s theory – what can be seen from the vantage point of his theory – is cast upon three psychoanalytical terms through the examination of the common language created in the dialogue between them.

1. **Rudolf Steiner’s philosophy of unity**

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian philosopher and thinker, is known mainly as the father of the Anthroposophical philosophy, which is identified, first and foremost, with the educational approach based upon it.[[10]](#footnote-10) Nonetheless, the entirety of Steiner’s thinking is significantly broader and includes, beside the Anthroposophical doctrine, extensive philosophical thinking. This philosophical framework formulates a monistic ontology based upon an alternative epistemology to that constituted in Kantian thinking. Following are descriptions of the main contours of this philosophical method.

1. Objective idealism

The roots of Steiner’s theory of knowledge are found already in his early writing, which deals with Goethe’s scientific writings and with the formulation of the epistemology upon which these writings can be based.[[11]](#footnote-11) This epistemology views the laws of nature discovered in human awareness as the objective laws of nature itself, and not as subjective laws of the human spirit, as Kant maintained.[[12]](#footnote-12) In his book *Truth and Knowledge*, Steiner establishes objective idealism as his epistemological method.[[13]](#footnote-13) This method contends that “everything necessary to explain and account for the world is within the reach of our thinking.”[[14]](#footnote-14) The role of thinking is the convergence of the foundations of the impression and the concept, which man receives, from outside and inside, respectively, and which both belong to the object which becomes known: “It is not due to the objects that they appear to us at first without corresponding concepts, but to our mental organization [...] from every real thing the relevant elements come to us from two sources, from perceiving and thinking.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

b. Monism of thought

Steiner’s response to the question of perception is the basis for the formulation of the unified ontological view, which Steiner’s method constructs as “monism of thought.” According to this view, perception of the distinctive existence of different elements in the world is illusional – “The tree which I perceive, taken in isolation by itself, has no existence; it exists only as a member in the immense mechanism of nature, and it is possible only in real connection with nature”[[16]](#footnote-16) – and such is the case for the perception of man’s separate existence: “A particular human individual is not actually cut off from the universe. He is a part of a universe, and his connection with the cosmic whole is broken, not in reality, but only for our perception.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

Thinking is perceived in this method as a spiritual force, which exists both in man and the world. It is the common foundation for all entities and objects in the world – and therefore constitutes the unity of the world, on the one hand, and is responsible for the human capacity to know the world, on the other. Unlike Kant, who defines concepts such as “functions of unity in judgements,”[[18]](#footnote-18) for Steiner, concepts point to the ideal content into which the unifying reality is interjected. This content connects between different objects subject to the impression of the perceiving subject, as well as between them and this subject: thought is the connecting apparatus through which all of the impressions appearing separately in time and space are interjected. Beyond the impressions perceived through the senses, there is nothing other than the ideal connections between them, that is, beyond what we are able to discover by way of our thought.[[19]](#footnote-19)

The attempt to establish universal unity upon a foundation other than the ideal content revealed through the act of thinking, is, according to Steiner, destined to fail.[[20]](#footnote-20) As opposed to Schopenhauer, who contends that man is connected to the universe through his body and “whose affections [...] are the starting point for the understanding as it intuits the world,”[[21]](#footnote-21) Steiner claims that our bodies’ activities reach our consciousness solely through impressions of our selfness, and as such, their status is no different than that of any other impression.[[22]](#footnote-22) What man knows directly, not by way of impression, is, according to Steiner, thinking.[[23]](#footnote-23) By observing thinking, man observes something he himself creates, and finds solid ground in the figure of the object for which the meaning of its existence he can draw from within himself: “Such an object I am myself in so far as I think, for I qualify my existence by the determinate and self-contained content of the thinking activity.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

In a similar way, Steiner establishes a distinction between man’s consciousness of his self and his “I.” Like consciousness of any other thing, consciousness of the self, according to Steiner, is based upon man’s impressions of himself. In contrast, the “I” is located within thinking,[[25]](#footnote-25) which is not connected to the defined boundaries of the impression.[[26]](#footnote-26) Thus, the “I” does not overlap with the sphere that man perceives as the domain of his personality: man bears within himself the “activity which, from a higher sphere, determines [his] finite existence.”[[27]](#footnote-27)

c. The “I” in Steiner’s unifying method

The “I” to which Steiner’s theory relates is anchored in thinking as a faculty into which the entire world is infused. The content that the “I” discovers through thinking is derived from the world he is subject to,[[28]](#footnote-28) and not as Kant’s pure *a priori* consciousness – “independent of all experience and even of all impressions of the senses.”[[29]](#footnote-29) Unlike Fichte’s “I,”[[30]](#footnote-30) the “I” described in Steiner’s paradigm is not an absolute entity whose existence is based on the assumption of its existence and which creates the world from within itself: the “I” is a creating activity, which establishes a worldview from the unification of the given and the concept.[[31]](#footnote-31) Through human thinking, the the thought-infused essence of the world is mediated to the “I.” Thus, the distinction between the “I” and the external world is valid – like any other distinction – only within the framework of the given world as impression and without the activity of thinking.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Steiner’s philosophical method institutes monism, which asserts the identification of the “ideal” dimension with the “real,” and describes world and man as injected within thought: “there is nothing unknown *behind* the sensory world, but that *within* the sensory world is the spiritual world [...] the realm of human ideas exists within the spiritual world.”[[33]](#footnote-33) The creative power of thinking is manifested, according to Steiner, differently in the various kingdoms of nature and in man: in the plant kingdom, creative thinking appears in the form of the plant’s living body – which carries the power to create its form from within itself and transmit it to members of its species; in the animal kingdom, it is expressed as sensations and impulses; whereas in man, thinking appears in its own form. Only in man does the spirit know itself as spirit, and only in man is there the possibility for development stemming from its conscious activity: in man, the spirit becomes his inner being.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The spirit of man, his “I”, according to Steiner, constitutes part of the overall spirit in which the world is instilled.[[35]](#footnote-35) At the same time, the “I” is also the human dimension that defines man’s uniqueness, and through which every man is a species in his own right: “What a human being signifies begins, not where he is merely a member of a species, but only where he is an individual being. I have not in the least understood the nature of Mr. Smith of Podunk, if I have described his son or his father.”[[36]](#footnote-36) This is the fundamental contention of Steiner’s method – and herein lies its uniqueness in relation to other monistic methods – a perception of the unity of man and the world concurrent with a perception regarding the essential distinctiveness of every human being.

1. **A Dialogue between psychoanalytical thinking and Steiner’s theory**
2. On the history of the relationship between psychoanalysis and spiritual philosophies and doctrines.

In creating a dialogue between Steiner’s monistic method and psychoanalytical thinking, this paper joins the plethora of writing dealing with the convergence of psychoanalysis and philosophical thinking, on the one hand, and with spiritual doctrines, on the other.

Psychoanalysis’s initial attitude towards both of these domains is shaped by Freud’s attempts to anchor psychoanalysis in science and distinguish it from the “philosophies.” Unlike them, psychoanalysis, according to Freud, is not a system starting out from a few sharply defined basic concepts, seeking to grasp the whole universes with the help of these: [psychoanalysis] keeps close to the facts in its field of study, [...] gropes its way forward by the help of experience, is always incomplete and always ready to correct or modify its theories.[[37]](#footnote-37)

In his paper “The Question of a ‘Weltanschauung’” (1933), Freud sets psychoanalysis, which “has a special right to speak for the scientific Weltanschauung,” against the world-views of philosophy and religion, which are based, in his view, on the demand generated by the life of the soul for a sense of security.[[38]](#footnote-38) Philosophy behaves, according to Freud, as a science, but is different from it in terms of its adherence to the illusion that it is capable of creating a complete and coherent worldview. In terms of the method, philosophy is misguided by exaggerating its evaluation of the role of acts of logic in knowing our world, and in its acknowledgement of other sources of knowledge, such as intuition.[[39]](#footnote-39) For Freud, religion is already a literal adversary: the attempt it represents – to rule the world of the senses by way of the world of wishes man develops as a result of his biological and psychological needs – is “a counterpart to the neurosis which individual civilized men have to go through in their passage from childhood to maturity.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

In his essay “Civilization and its Discontents” (1903) – following Romain Rolland’s response to his paper “The Future of an Illusion”[[41]](#footnote-41) – Freud addresses man’s experience of his unity with the world as the source of the religious sentiment and as the objective of spiritual practice.[[42]](#footnote-42) The origin of this experience, which Rolland refers to as “‘Oceanic’ feeling,” is linked, according to Freud, to the preservation of the early developmental state of the infant who “does not yet distinguish his ego from the external world as the source of the sensations flowing in upon him.”[[43]](#footnote-43) Religious needs are derived, in his view, “from the infant’s helplessness and the longing for the father aroused by it [...] The origin of the religious attitude can be traced back in clear outlines as far as the feeling of infantile helplessness.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

Psychoanalysis’s relationships with philosophy have changed significantly since Freud. Many writers deal with the establishment of a dialogue between psychoanalytical thinking and different philosophical methods, and with the creation of a relationship – different from that instituted by Freud – between them. Tauber argues that in the express rejection of formal philosophy, Freud “eschewed significant self-reflection on his own intellectual commitments.”[[45]](#footnote-45) Thus, he opines that scrutiny of the Freudian project by way of philosophical apparatuses leads to important insights regarding psychoanalysis, and proposes its placement within its broadest intellectual and cultural contexts;[[46]](#footnote-46) Mills argues that “psychology is the child of philosophy; although psychology has grown up and has flown from the nest, philosophy will always remain its Gracious Mother (“alma mater”)”;[[47]](#footnote-47) whereas Orange contends that “psychoanalysts [...] are practicing philosophers. Doing philosophy every day, [...] [the]dialogue with great philosophers can help us to keep thinking and questioning.”[[48]](#footnote-48)

The attitude of psychoanalysis towards religious, spiritual, and mystical doctrines is also undergoing significant change. In his study “Psychoanalytical Approaches to Faith,” Gideon Lev describes the opening up of psychoanalytical thinking to engagement and dialogue with a wide range of spiritual, religious, and mystical doctrines: Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and Kabbala, are just a few examples of such doctrines and practices with which this type of dialogue has been maintained over the last decades.[[49]](#footnote-49) After nearly one hundred years, during which the psychoanalytical establishment took a critical and reductive stance towards – or completely ignored – religion, spirituality, and faith, from the end of the twentieth century, psychoanalysis has been going through a process that renders it, in Lev’s view, “spiritually-sensitive.”[[50]](#footnote-50)

1. The uniqueness of the meeting between psychoanalytical thought and Steiner’s theory.

Steiner’s philosophy is absent from both the conventional repertoire of philosophical theories and the spiritual theories with which psychoanalytical thought maintains a dialogue. This is the case despite the common chronological, geographical, and cultural contexts in which these two theoretical fields grew; although Freud and Steiner frequented the same close circles in Vienna of the late nineteenth century, and shared a similar cultural environment, as well as special veneration for the philosopher Franz Brentano, with whom both studied,[[51]](#footnote-51) and a connection to a renowned acquaintance, Joseph Breuer,[[52]](#footnote-52) the only encounter between their doctrines appears in Steiner’s sharp criticism of the conceptual and practical aspects of psychoanalysis, which he expressed in several of his lectures.[[53]](#footnote-53)

This paper argues that a dialogue between psychoanalytical thinking and Steiner’s comprehensive theory bears potential for the fertilization of both disciplines.[[54]](#footnote-54) It proposes the monism of Steiner’s thinking as a unique solution to the psychoanalytical quest for a philosophical foundation that does not define a contradiction or fissure between the subject and the world.[[55]](#footnote-55) This paradigm’s uniqueness is related, on the one hand, to the alternative it proposes to the dualism that defines separation and fissure between “I” and “world,” “spirit” and “matter,” “subject” and “object”[[56]](#footnote-56) and its juxtaposition of the “ideal” dimension and that of the “real”;[[57]](#footnote-57) and on the other hand, to the fact that it offers an alternative to theories of unification – like Buddhism, with which psychoanalytical thinking has been engaged in a developing dialogue over the past decades[[58]](#footnote-58) – which negate the uniqueness of the “I” as an illusional opposite of unity.

The Steinerian doctrine can also benefit from a dialogue with psychoanalytical thinking: as exemplified in his criticism of psychoanalysis, Steiner’s doctrine underscores the importance of referring to the spiritual dimensions of man, but ignores the importance of being familiar with different dimensions of the emotional experience and dynamic. This paper argues that Steiner’s framework lacks both attention to emotional processes and the creation of a basis for understanding and working with them. A dialogue with psychoanalytical thinking is essential, therefore, for filling this gap, and for creating a practice of psychological therapy based on this framework.

In what follows, the dialogue between psychoanalytical thinking and Steiner’s “monism of thought” is accomplished by way of examining the implications of the latter philosophical method for three psychoanalytical concepts – “projective identification,” “transitional space,” and “self-object”/”selfobject.” These concepts formulate in different ways the connection between the psyche and selfhood of an individual and that of another individual or external object. In Steiner’s terms, they constitute a distinctive, even if not a precise, expression of a philosophical view regarding the relationship between “man” and “world.” In practical terms, each of these concepts subverts conceptions describing this relationship in terms of separation and difference. Steiner’s unique view of unification is proposed hereinafter as a philosophical foundation in which it is possible to anchor the different dimensions of these concepts.

1. Steiner’s monism of thought as a foundation for psychoanalytical conceptualization

c.1. Monism of thought and projective identification

In his essay “On Projective Identification,” Ogden holds psychoanalytical thinking responsible for the fact that a concept as important as projective identification suffers from a vague and unstable definition, and remains, to a large extent, misunderstood.[[59]](#footnote-59) The current study argues that basing the concept of projective identification on Steiner’s philosophy may enable a clearer definition of it, as well as a better understanding of the processes and mechanisms it points to.

As a mechanism with a communicative function and which has a significant impact on the consciousness of the other –[[60]](#footnote-60) as it is described by Klein’s successors,[[61]](#footnote-61) as well as in her own “On Identification” (1955)[[62]](#footnote-62) – projective identification requires a philosophical foundation, which allows for attention to the influences of one individual’s processes of consciousness on the other. The unified worldview constituted in Steiner’s philosophy is proposed as such a framework.

Steiner’s philosophy describes “thinking” not only as the spiritual dimension at the basis of the existence of man and world, but also as that which constitutes their unification and serves as a basis for man’s faculty of consciousness. As “monism of thinking,” this viewpoint describes the indistinctiveness between human beings and creates a framework for understanding the real connection between the different contents of their consciousnesses.

Basing the term projective identification on Steiner’s philosophy establishes the link created in Bion’s writing between it and thinking and its development.[[63]](#footnote-63) The anchoring of the possibility for the transition of parts of consciousness between human beings in the unity of the conscious world, creates a basis for understanding the process where thoughts which are intolerable for the infant are transferred to the mother. This possibility facilitates, in Bion’s terms, the infant’s capacity for thinking, that is, for use as Alpha-components in the same sensory-impressions that were converted by the mother’s Alpha-function.[[64]](#footnote-64) In combining Bion’s and Steiner’s approaches, one can say that the mother’s ability to think thoughts that cannot be thought by her child – and which are transferred to her by way of the unification of thinking – enables the development of the child’s capacity for thinking.

c.2. Monism of thought and the transitional space

Winnicott’s well-known terms, “transitional object,” and “transitional phenomena” – which point to an intermediate area, “to which inner reality and external life both contribute” [[65]](#footnote-65)– were received, as Winnicott himself testifies, with great generosity in the psychoanalytical community;[[66]](#footnote-66) however, according to Kolka, their conceptual background and widespread implications were barely absorbed in the psychoanalytical consciousness.[[67]](#footnote-67) Erel claims that the broad use of the idea regarding the existence of “transitional space” – of which these terms are particular cases – cannot testify to its clarity: “it can even be said that in this case the opposite is true [...] the potential space is one of the more puzzling and complex ideas in Winnicott’s theory.”[[68]](#footnote-68)

This paper argues that Steiner’s monism of thought constitutes a philosophical foundation for the concept “transitional space.” The existence of a common and “unified world of ideas,” which Steiner’s philosophical method asserts, creates a basis for understanding the Winnicottian term: “world” is, according to Steiner, the origin – or in paraphrasing Winnicott, “the place”[[69]](#footnote-69) – of all ideas, concepts, notions, and thoughts.[[70]](#footnote-70) This space is also the origin from which stems the uniqueness of every individual – defined, according to Steiner, by way of the different intuitions that the individual receives from this unified spiritual world.[[71]](#footnote-71)

The anchoring of the concept “transitional space” in Steiner’s “unified world of ideas” serves as a basis for the potential and necessary existence of a “space” that is both common and private; a space that is the basis for creating both a connection with the world[[72]](#footnote-72) and for the experience of the “self.”[[73]](#footnote-73) This type of anchoring establishes this space as the origin and place of play, art, philosophy, science, religion, and culture;[[74]](#footnote-74) the placement of the transitional space as an intermediate area between the external reality and the inner world;[[75]](#footnote-75) the universality of the phenomena related to it;[[76]](#footnote-76) and the description of the developmental process of the experience of selfhood and the ability for objective consciousness from within the unified experience and existence.[[77]](#footnote-77)

From the dialogue with Steiner’s philosophy, one can relate to the developmental process described by Winnicott as a transition between a state of being in the unification of thinking and a state in which thinking functions also in human consciousness: at the beginning of, as well as later in life, the individual is part of the all-encompassing unification of thought. At the stage where a thinking consciousness does not yet exist in them, the infant is in an experience of unity with its mother and with the world, and therefore, in Winnicottian terms, is incapable of object-relations and the use-of-an-object;[[78]](#footnote-78) these become possible when during the child’s development there appears “the thinking activity of the soul,” only which through it is possible to “understand what is meant by knowledge of something.”[[79]](#footnote-79)

The convergence of the terms “transitional space” and Steiner’s monism of thinking allows for inspection of these two thinkers’ attitudes towards the dimensions of subjectivity and objectivity. Winnicott’s theory produces identity between the experience of unification that characterizes early life, and subjectivity, and assigns objectivity to the stage at which the infant’s fusion with the object ends.[[80]](#footnote-80) Steiner’s philosophy, in contrast, describes the connection between them differently: on the one hand, and in a manner that strengthens Winnicott’s logic, the knowledge of and objective attitude towards things are described in terms of the activity of thinking in man’s consciousness – that it, as a situation in which they are aware of the separateness between them and the world. On the other hand, this separateness is a subjective state. In Steiner’s words, “The subject does not think because it is a subject, rather it conceives itself to be a subject because it can think,”[[81]](#footnote-81) whereas objective knowledge is possible through the unifying activity of thinking – by way of which man “embraces himself and the rest of the world.”[[82]](#footnote-82)

The primary state is described by Winnicott as subjective, and is related to conceptualization: objectivity, which in his view is connected to perception,[[83]](#footnote-83) develops from within this state,[[84]](#footnote-84) when the infant progresses to the stage of “separating out the mother from the self.”[[85]](#footnote-85) In contrast, Steiner asserts subjectivity of perception and objectivity of conceptualization: while for Winnicott, the infant separates the object from itself, for Steiner, the infant separates itself from the object. Subjectivity, according to Steiner, is related to the experience of separateness produced by thinking, and objective consciousness is linked to the development of thinking towards an essential knowledge of its unique unity of selfhood with the world.

The dialogue with Steiner’s “monism of thinking” enables the grounding of the Winnicottian term in an ontology that establishes the existence of the “transitional space” as a reality which is the identical origin of the world, and of every human being’s unique selfhood, and their activity of consciousness. The external and internal realities are anchored in this real space in a manner that transforms the objective and subjective experiences into the different aspects of its realness.

c.3. Between monism of thought and “self-object” and “selfobject”

The terms “self-object” and “selfobject” are at the foundation of and express the Kohutian theory regarding the relationship between the “self” as a subject and another individual, who is perceived as an object into which narcissistic energy is invested.[[86]](#footnote-86) The dialogue with Steiner’s monism of thinking embeds these concepts in a philosophical framework that describes the experiential and ontological dimensions of the relationship between the “self” and the “object” and the connection between them. In addition, this philosophical paradigm provides justification for the transition from the concept “self-object” – which refers to the relationship between both its parts in terms of the experience of the “object” as part of the “self”[[87]](#footnote-87) – to the concept “selfobject,” which describes the relationship between them as necessary for the formation of the “self.”[[88]](#footnote-88)

The relationship between the “self,” the “subject,” and the “object” is derived, according to Steiner’s theory of thinking, from the reciprocal acts of thinking and observation in human consciousness. As the impressed subject, man experiences the objects of his impression as given and as separate from him. When he turns to contemplate his impression, he defines these perceptions as objects; as a thinker, he experiences himself as active. When he focuses his thinking on this activity, he defines himself as subject; the conception of the “self” comes into being as consciousness of the self when man turns his thinking to his being a thinking-subject. Thinking is located, according to this theory, beyond the subject and object: it is that which creates these two concepts.[[89]](#footnote-89)

This account of the relationship between impressions and concepts presents a possibility to explore man’s perception of himself as “self” and as “subject” – as well as his perception of the other individual as “object” – through a perspective that aims for identification of the reality of these impressions. Steiner’s monism of thinking suggests that while the impression of the “self” delineates man within defined boundaries,[[90]](#footnote-90) the realization of this impression belongs to the entirety of the “universal world process.”[[91]](#footnote-91) The reality of the rest of the impressions – which man defines by way of his thinking of them as “objects” – belongs to the entirety of the same event, so that “self” and “object,” or “self” and “other,” constitute actual unity.

Steiner’s philosophy differentiates between the actual unification of the “subject” and “object” and their definition as separate concepts: this definition is created through the capacity for thinking, on the basis of the separation inherent in the impression. This distinction enables reference to the transition in the Kohutian conceptualization from “self-object” to “selfobject” – as a transition from a concept that marks the experiential dimensions of the relationship between the “self” and the other, to a concept that marks the unified dimensions of the ontological connection between them.

The initial definition of the concept “self-object” refers to the experiential dimension of the relationship to the object into which narcissistic libido is invested. Such an object is experienced as part of the “self,” the implication being that in reality it is indeed separate from the “self,” and therefore “object,” but is not experienced as such. This definition – coined by Kohut in his monograph *The Analysis of the Self* (1971) – is related to the view that relates to “self-objects” as archaic objects, positions their formation and function in early childhood, and defines healthy development in terms of their internalization and assimilation into the mature personality.[[92]](#footnote-92) In Kohut’s next book – *The Restoration of the Self* (1977) – a footnote notes a change in this perception: “The psychologically healthy adult continues to need the mirroring of the self by self-objects [...] No implication of immaturity or psychopathology must, therefore, be derived from the fact that another person is used as a self-object.”[[93]](#footnote-93)

The implications of the perception according to which man continues to need the self-object throughout his entire life leads to the conceptual shift from “self-object” by omitting the hyphen connecting and separating the “self” from the object. This shift – which appears in Kohut’s “...” (1978) – establishes the term “selfobject” to mark the need for the permanent existence of “a matrix of emphatic selfobjects that is held to be as much a prerequisite of psychological existence as oxygen for biological life.”[[94]](#footnote-94)

In its first incarnation, the Kohutian framework maintains the separation between the “self” and the “object” or “other.” From a dialogue with Steiner’s philosophical method, it can be anchored in a viewpoint according to which conceptualization of separateness is based upon the level of the experience and impression and the restrictedness structured within it. The later concept, in contrast, can be anchored in the ontological dimension of Steiner’s method and in the description of the tangible unification of human beings with each other and with the world.

By relinquishing the hyphen between “self” and “object,” the Kohutian paradigm performs a transition from a concept relating to the unification of the “self” and the “object” within the experiential dimension only, to a concept that marks their actual unity. This process is philosophically justified in Steiner’s monism of thinking, which establishes the distinction between the dimensions of the experience and the dimensions of reality as a reversal of the distinction upon which Kohut bases the first concept, in which the hyphen separates the “self” from the object: while Kohut begins with the assumption that in the tangible dimension, the “self” and the object are separate from one another, and that their unification occurs in the experiential dimension, Steiner’s method enables the argument that their unification – which is manifested in the hyphen-less concept – is the real one, and that their separateness exists on the experiential level only.

**Summary**

This paper compared language games in the framework of which the concepts “projective identification,” “transitional space,” and “self-object”/“selfobject” function with language games constituted in Steiner’s philosophical method. The worldview at the basis of this method describes the unification of man and world, and anchors this unification in the same dimension that discerns every human as “I” – the thought or the spirit. This worldview was proposed as a philosophical foundation for three psychoanalytical concepts which cannot lean on a conception of absolute distinction between one human being and another.

The dialogue between the psychoanalytical terms and this viewpoint enables an ontological approach to the occurrence that each one points to: the application of “projective identification” to the concept of unity of consciousness illuminated the possibility of the influence of one individual’s consciousness on that of another; the placement of the “unified world of ideas” described in Steiner’s ontology at the basis of the Winnicottian concept “transitional space” enabled to relate to it as a unified space that connects between human beings, and as such, constitutes the origin of their uniqueness; the Kohutian concepts, which link between the “self” and the object, were superimposed on the dialectic between the actual unity of human beings with one another and the experience of separateness and consciousness of the self.

In terms of Gadamer’s hermeneutics, the dialogue between Steiner’s unifying framework and psychoanalytical thinking enables a fusion of horizons between them, and the creation of a language based on the encounter between them; the uniqueness of this language is related, in my opinion, to the possibility it sets up for relating to the actual dimensions of events and interpersonal processes and to the relationship between the actuality of these processes and the ways in which they are experienced. This language allows for the description of interpersonal inner-psychic processes in terms of the “thinking” that creates the actual spiritual unification of human beings with one another and the uniqueness of every human as an “I,” the experience of the individual’s separateness and consciousness of self, and their potential for essential knowledge of their self and of the world.

1. R. Steiner in: T. Mellet, “Ecstatic American Cosmogony and the Mystical Anthropic Principle,” *Journal for Anthroposophy*, no. 59 (1994): 5–15. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Rudolf Steiner, *The Riddles of Philosophy* (Great Barrington: SteinerBooks / Anthroposophic Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sigmund Freud, “Lecture XXXV: The Question of a ‘Weltanschauung,’” in *New Introductory Lectures On Psycho-Analysis.* (The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud 22, 1933), 1–182. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. P.M.S. Hacker and J. Schulte, trans. G.E.M Anscombe, 4th revised edition (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), § 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In accordance with Wittgenstein’s argument that language-games “are not preliminary studies for a future regimentation of language (..). Rather, the language-games stand there as *objects of comparison"* (ibid., § 130, italics in the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. L. Wittgenstein, “Philosophy of Psychology - A Fragment,” in *L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations (Rev. 4th Ed.)*, ed. G. Anscombe, P. Hacker, and J.(Trans.) Schulte (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), § 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. L. Wittgenstein, “Philosophy of Psychology - A Fragment,” in *L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations (Rev. 4th Ed.)*, ed. G. Anscombe, P. Hacker, and J.(Trans.) Schulte (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), § 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid. 367-374 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid. 378-37 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Anthroposophical education is an educational school which exists in many countries throughout the world and which is based on the anthroposophical philosophy. In 1919, in response to an invitation by the manager of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany, Steiner founded the first anthroposophical school for the factory workers’ children. The anthropological education is based on the educational and developmental tenets of Steiner’s philosophy, at the center of which is a detailed account of the child as a physical, mental, and spiritual entity. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. R. Steiner, *Goethe’s Theory of Knowledge; An Outline of the Epistemology of His Worldview*, ed. P. Clemm (Trans.) (Great Barrington: SteinerBooks, 2008); R. Steiner, *Goethean Science*, ed. W. (Trans.) Lindeman (New-York: Mercury Press, 1988). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. S. H. Bergman, *Men and Ways; Philosophical Essays (Hebrew)* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1967). 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. R. Steiner, *Goethe’s Theory of Knowledge; An Outline of the Epistemology of His Worldview*, ed. P. Clemm (Trans.) (Great Barrington: SteinerBooks, 2008); R. Steiner, *Goethean Science*, ed. W. (Trans.) Lindeman (New-York: Mercury Press, 1988). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Freedom; The Basis for a Modern World Conception (GA 4)*, trans. Michael Wilson (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1964 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid., 236, [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid., 233-234. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. P Guyer and A. W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity [Freedom]*. 82-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ibid., 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, ed. C. Janaway, J. Norman, and A. Wechman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity [Freedom]*. 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid., 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid, 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Steiner, *Truth and Knowledge; Introduction to “Philosophy of Spiritual Activity”*, p. 66 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. J. G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre), with the First and Second Introductions*, ed. P. Heath and J. Lachs (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1970). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Steiner, *Truth and Knowledge; Introduction to “Philosophy of Spiritual Activity”*. 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid. 87 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. R. Steiner, *Autobiography; Chapters in the Course of My Life 1861-1907*, ed. R. Stebbing (Trans.), P.M. Allen, (Ed.) (Great Barrington: Steiner Books, 2006). 126 (italics in the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. R. Steiner, *Theosophy; An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man*, ed. H. B. Monges (New York& London: Anthroposophic Press; Rudolf Steiner Publishing, 1946). 185-191. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. R. Steiner, *An Outline of Esoteric Science*, ed. C. Creeger (Trans.) (Great Barrington: Anthroposophic Press, 1997). 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. R. Steiner, *Theosophy; An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man.* 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. S. Freud, “Two Encyclopaedia Articles,” (The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Work of Sigmund Freud 18, 1923). 233-60. 233–60. 253-254. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Freud, “Lecture XXXV: The Question of a ‘Weltanschauung.’” 158-159. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid. 160-161. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ibid., 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. S. Freud, The Future of an Illusion” (The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Work of Sigmund Freud 21, 1927), 1–56. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. S. Freud, “Civilization and Its Discontents” (The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Work of Sigmund Freud 21, 1930), 57–146. 64-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Ibid., 66-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid., 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. A. I. Tauber, *Freud, The Reluctant Philosopher* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), xiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid., 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. J. Mills, *The Unconscious Abyss: Hegel’s Anticipation of Psychoanalysis* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. D. Orange, *Thinking for Clinicians; Philosophical Resources for Contemporary Psychanalysis and the Humanist Psychotherapies* (New York & London: Routledge, 2010). 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Gideon Lev, “Denigration, Indifference, Fascination: Psychoanalytic Approaches to Faith” (Hebrew), Ma’arg: *The Israel Annual of Psychoanalysis* 3 (2012): 53-90. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Ibid., 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. P. Herzog, “The Myth of Freud as Anti-Philosopher,” in *Freud - Appraisals and Reappraisals; Contributions to Freud Studies, Vol 2*, ed. P.E. Stepansky (New York & London: Routledge, 1988), 163–90. 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Steiner, *Autobiography; Chapters in the Course of My Life 1861-1907*. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. In various lectures on the subject, Steiner attacks Freud’s view of the sexual impulse as the cause of and explanation for different mental states. The connection Freud makes between hysterical symptoms and unconscious sexual drive is, according to Steiner, rooted in examination and knowledge of the psyche with unsuitable means of consciousness **(not sure this is what is meant here)**. The attempt to explain and know the psyche through unsuitable methods of consciousness is found as well in Adlerian thinking and Jungian depth psychology (R. Steiner, *Freud, Jung & Spiritual Psychology*, ed. (Trans.) R. Laird-Brown, M. Seiler, & S. Smoley (Great Barrington: Anthroposophic Press, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. The current study relates to the contribution of the dialogue between psychoanalytical thinking and Steiner’s philosophical method. A dialogue with other aspects of his anthroposophic method will be explored in other contexts. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Stolorow, Orange, and Atwood, who are identified with this position **(tendency?)**,argue that at the basis of all schools of analytical thought is the doctrine of the Cartesian “isolated mind” (Stolorow et al., 1999, 2001b, 2001a). This doctrine divides the subjective world to spheres “inside” and “outside,” renders this division tangible, and describes the psyche as an objective entity amongst the other objects of the world: as an “important thing,” which has an interiority full of content, the psyche looks from within upon the world outside itself from which it is alienated (Stolorow et al., 2001a, p. 469). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity [Freedom]*. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ibid., 80 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. E. Fromm, “Psychoanalysis and Zen-Buddhism,” in *Zen Buddhism & Psychoanalysis*, ed. D.T. Suzuki, E. Fromm, and R. De Martino (London: Souvenir Press (Educational and Academic), 1974), 77–141; D. T. Suzuki, “Lectures on Zen Buddhism,” in *Zen Buddhism & Psychoanalysis*, ed. E. Fromm, D. T. Suzuki, and R. De Martino (London: Souvenir Press (Educational and Academic), 1974), 1–76; A. (Ed.) Molino, *The Couch and the Tree; Dialogues in Psychoanalysis and Buddhism* (New York: North Point Press, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. T. H. Ogden, “On Projective Identification,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 60 (1979): 357-73, 357. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. In other words, not only as a concept that points to an inner-psychic process related to unconscious fantasy, as first defined by Klein in 1946 (Melanie Klein, “Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 27 (1946): 99-110 **(is this the same journal cited in ft 59? hyphen or not?)**, “but as one that has an actual impact on the mental reactions [...] of the other.” (Durban & Roth in Melanie Klein, *Selected Writings* Vol. 2 [Hebrew], eds. Joshua Durban and Merav Roth, trans, Orah Zilberstein (Tel Aviv: Bookworm, 2013), 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Durban & Roth, 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. In which case she writes: “One part of Fabian literally leaves his self and enters into his victim, an event which in both parties is accompanied by strong physical sensations” (Melanie Klein, “On Identification,” in *The Writings of Melanie Klein, Vol III: Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946-1963* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 141-147. 166 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. “The activity we know as ‘thinking’ was in origin a procedure for unburdening the psyche of accretions of stimuli and the mechanism is that which has been described by Melanie Klein as projective identification” (W. R. Bion, *Learning from Experience* (London & New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 1962. 31.) [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. W. R. Bion, “The Psycho-Analytic Study of Thinking,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 43 (1962): 306-10. 308. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. D. W. Winnicott, “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena—A Study of the First Not-Me Possession,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34 (1953): 89–97. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London and New-York: Routledge, 1999). 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. R. Kulka, “Foreword: Revolutionary Continuity in Psychoanalysis (Hebrew),” in: D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, ed. Ra’anan Kulka (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1995), 9–30. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. O. Erel, “The Secret of His Charm" (Hebrew), in *True Self, False Self*, ed. Emanuel Berman (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers, 2009), 9–21. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Winnicott, *Play. Real.*, 41, 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity [Freedom]*. 148-159. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Ibid., 152 [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Winnicott, *Play. Real.*, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ibid., 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Ibid., 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Ibid., 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid., 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Ibid., 107, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Ibid., 86-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity [Freedom]*. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Winnicott, *Play. Real.*, 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity [Freedom]*. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Ibid., 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Winnicott, *Play. Real.*, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Ibid., 13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ibid., 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. H. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009). 326. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Ibid., xiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. H. Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?*, ed. Arnold Goldberg and Paul Stepansky (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013). 51-52. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity [Freedom]*. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Ibid., 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Ibid., 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. H. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders*. 26-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. H. Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009). 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. H. Kohut, *Self Psychology and the Humanities; Reflections on a New Psychoanalytic Approach*, ed. C. B. Strozier (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985). 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)