

In the real world arises a riddle; it is there as a phenomenon; its solution arises also in reality. [...] Thus knowledge also becomes an event in reality [...]; knowledge in man is his participation in what the beings and events in the spiritual and physical world have to say.

Rudolf Steiner in 'The Story Of My Life'³

At the end of the 1990s, Ron Brady, Stephen Edelglass and Georg Maier agreed to write a book on a fuller and more explicit presentation than previously attempted of the radical implications of a rigorously phenomena-based scientific knowledge for the understanding of the world of the senses. Furthermore, it was to show for the first time in English the path along which the Swiss philosopher Heinrich Barth (1890-1965) invited his readers to 'awareness of existence' (see chapter 'Existenz – vom 'Dass' des Erscheinens'). It is part of this book's history that, after an initial publication in the USA, Georg Maier, the sole surviving author, agreed with the German publisher Logos to the issue of another English edition in the form of a printed book. The book's title is *Being on Earth – Practice in Tending the Appearances*. In order to make parts of the book available to German readers, the editors of *Elemente der Naturwissenschaft* decided to translate and publish four of its chapters authored by Georg Maier. Although, because of references to earlier chapters, it is problematic to publish only part of a book, we have chosen for various reasons 'Habitats – Existence – Company' which are, as in the original, preceded by 'The world inside the human being is the inside of nature' (Die menschliche Innenwelt ist das Innere der Natur) which presents a philosophical orientation of knowledge of the self and of the world with examples of annotated quotations from Rudolf Steiner's *Goethe's World View* (Steiner 1897). The chapter 'Habitats' has already been published in *Elemente* issue No. 98. The other three chapters, translated into German by Barbara Schmocker and Ruth Richter, follow in this issue.

Our reason for choosing these chapters is that they offer a self-contained entry to a path that appears in the subtitle of the book. *Practice in Tending the Appearances* can mean two different kinds of paths of training: the first, paying attention to the phenomena and taking them to heart, and the second ('intending the appearances') *willing* the phenomena in the sense that one takes seriously that they hold something of the future in which we involve ourselves through each decision in the here and now.

3 H. Collinson translation slightly edited, 1928, p. 230.)

Readers who have chosen the anthroposophical path of training will find in the approach characterised in these chapters a wealth of indications that can be summarised in the opening quotation from Rudolf Steiner which expresses appreciation of the phenomena of the world of the senses. Our 'Being on Earth' offers us a unique entry to the world of the spirit. In that we practise immersing ourselves in the connections between the phenomena – in their typical richness of interrelationships – we take part in what they express, namely a continuous communication between beings and processes of the spiritual world. If we turn our attention to the relationship of the phenomena to ourselves, this path offers insights into the meaning of our individual existence – also called karma.

In addition, the 'aesthetic' way of knowledge, characterised in the translated sections, has methodological implications for the way science is practised in the future. What experimenters do does not reveal a reality that exists 'in itself', but instead in experiments phenomena happen in which the observer and the investigated object take part equally and interactively. Certain aspects or properties of both become visible. But with the 'anaesthetic' method largely practised in science today these properties are inserted into a network of explanatory intellectual concepts, at the same time confirming them. In contrast to this, Heinrich Barth said: 'But understanding existence takes place in an existential participation of he who understands existence.' Only a complementary 'aesthetic' approach reveals what the phenomena mean for our reality. Only in a conscious involvement in the contexts from which the phenomena arise – according to Steiner the conversation of the beings in the spiritual and physical world – and into which they act – the future of the earth – will 'knowledge become an event in reality'.

Ruth Richter