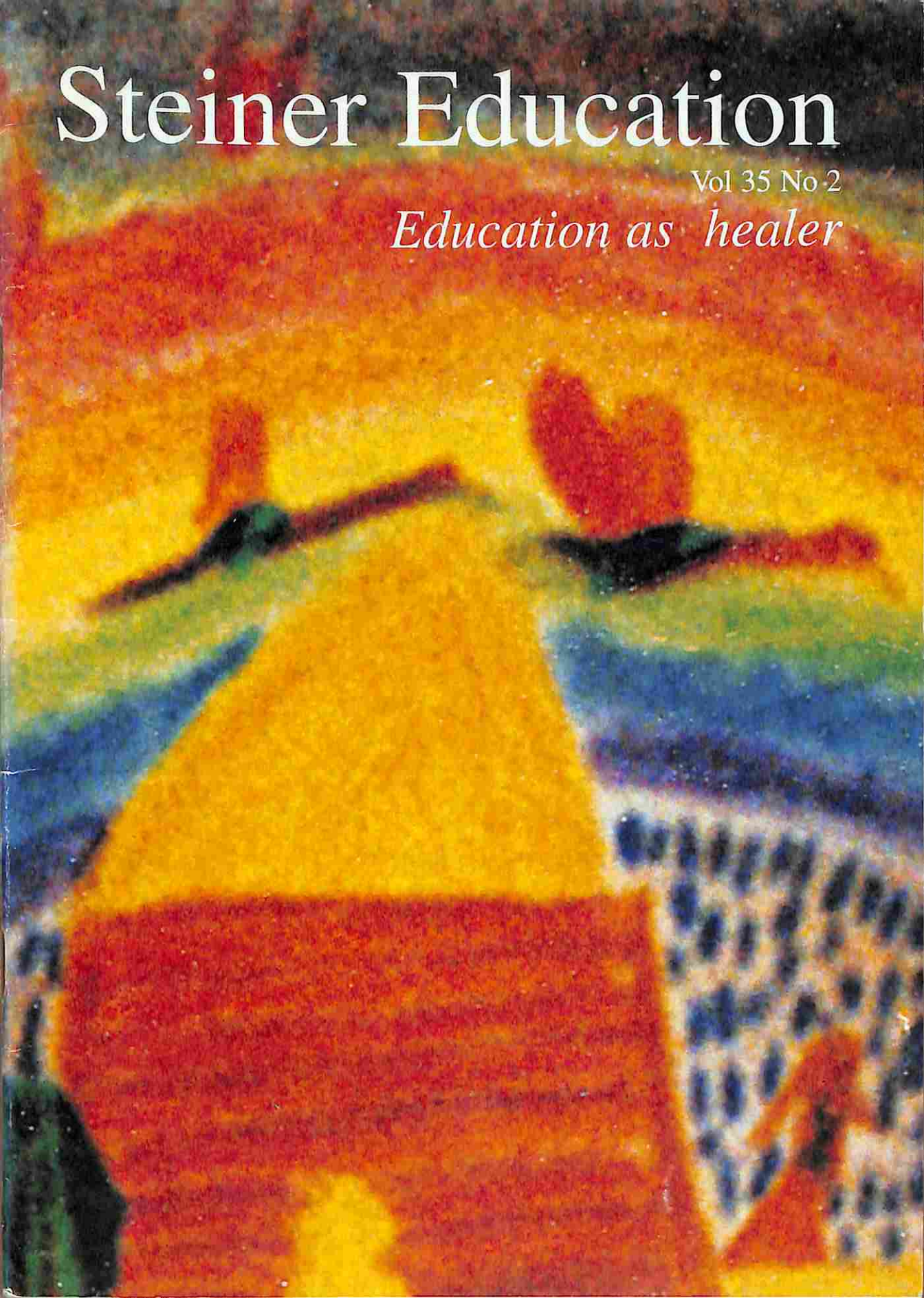


Steiner Education

Vol 35 No 2

Education as healer



Steiner Education

ISSUE THEME:
Education as healer

Our whole Waldorf School pedagogy has a Therapeutic character.

Rudolf Steiner, 6 February 1923.

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Front Cover: *Enriching the emotional life—a 7/8-year-old's drawing following a story told by the class teacher (see article on p.27).*

Inside Front Cover: *Portrait of Beethoven by a 17-year-old from a music main-lesson book (see article by a former pupil on p.24).*

Journal for Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Education (formerly 1930–1995 *Child and Man*)

July 2001 Vol. 35 No. 2

Steiner Education is a focus for ideas, insights and achievements in Waldorf, Steiner and all truly human education throughout the world.

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Opinions expressed in this journal attach to the respective authors and are not necessarily those of the Editor.

Editorial

Psychosomatic! It would be reasonably fair to say the word has never really cottoned on. Never quite stepped confidently with both feet onto the ground of everyday usage. It can't simply be its Greek origin that is off-putting. We'll all resort to *elephantine* if we are in a somewhat indulgent, chortling kind of mood. Or, given a bout of *diarrhoea*, we'll all go happily running to the dictionary if we need to spell it. And we'll glibly scatter-cushion words like *phone*, *tele*, *autograph*, *economy* and *astronomical* across our ever more snappily typed e-mails. We might even take a bite at *anthroposophy* if the spirit moves us. But psychosomatic! It's simply not your regular Olympic winner's cup of tea. *Pentathlon*-inspired, he may well be tempted to meddle medal-mindedly with nandrolone, or dabble in forbidden diuretics if there's a weight problem. But however psychosomatic his dope-taking action might negatively be seen to be, the word itself would surely never cross his athletic mind.

So much for Greek etymology.

Coming closer to home, if we're doing in-depth educational research, the precept is bound to crop up sooner or later. Notwithstanding, if it's not directly our line of research, how will we view it? More of a *clownish* decoy, probably, than something to be taken serious note of. Or if we're skimming through the literature, perhaps with a new school prospectus in mind, and on the scout for those Waldorf maxims we want to give particular prominence to, the word might seem a bit of a *vulture* that looms and refuses to fly far away, however much we shoo it off and however unattractive we feel it to be. Occasionally, however, there are also those times when, severely faced with a child's behavioural problem, the adult might take down the term from her shelf of dust-gathering *conceptual pill-bottles*, swallow a salt-spoonful or two of the crunchy compound and afterwards feel a little better able to cope.

Coming still closer to home, I am not aware of the word being part of Steiner's voluminous vocabulary in the first place. QED? Well, yes, partly. But the concept of 'body and soul in harmony'—or not: and we'll touch on that later—is as common to his fundamental educational ideas as ponds are common to water lilies. Indeed, without wishing to put the reader off, one could go a step further and extend the notion from twofold (psychosomatic) to threefold: *spirito-psychosomatic*.

Whether we look at Steinerian theory—his educational ideas before they were put by others into practice—or at Waldorf praxis, we find that body and soul are precepts that go hand in glove. —Or it could just as well be 'soul and body', *psyche* coming first in the Greek. Two world outlooks probably meet here, on opposite sides of an evolutionary watershed. But let us simply reach out to the hand-in-glove, everyday obviousness of the phrase as support for Steiner's perceiving the two members of the human constitution as equally important partners in the trinity of body, soul and spirit, especially when it comes to education where bodily health and psychological wholeness are inseparable.

Frequently we meet Steiner putting forward those developmental stages that are seated in the *physical* body as prompting some topic in the curriculum. The respiratory/circulatory development (maturation, one might even say) in the child between 7 and 14 years is perhaps the most obvious and most well known. But there are equally fascinating other examples, such as the development of the muscles and limbs from which derives his recommending the study of mechanics in Class 7. Following this line of Steiner's thought, others, in researching the curriculum, have pointed out the vital importance of the myelination process in the brain being supported by the narrating of various mythologies in Classes 3–6, backed up by movement and the arts, of course, and by imaginative ways of teaching more academically pedestrian subjects, all of which protect the right hemisphere of the brain at the onset of puberty (see the article by Paul King, 'Movement and Development', page 10).

Similarly, the so-called Waldorf curriculum abounds in topics that have their prime educational source in *psychological* stages of development: fables in Class 2, round and canon singing in Class 4, world geography in Classes 7 and 8, ancient history in Class 10... the list, plus explanations, would easily fill a couple of sizeable tomes.

But though examples of curriculum topics having psychosomatic implications are plentiful, in arguing the present case the Waldorf educator would probably be best advised to turn to the classroom rather than to anything that smacks of a printed 'syllabus'—the *way* (rather than the *what*) to teach.

Looking at the *Konferenzen*, the meetings at which Steiner together with the first Waldorf teachers discussed school matters of all kinds, one finds a host of references to pedagogy. The meetings were not weekly—Stuttgart was some distance from Steiner's home town, and weekly meetings there would have been overly time-consuming for a busy man, even by today's commuting standards. Despite this, they averaged one per month. Thus they present us with by far the most significant written record of how the 'theory' worked out in practice.

Three of the aspects of pedagogy that can be discerned in the *Konferenzen* are as follows.

Firstly, there is the *universal* value of teaching a subject in a particular way. Such a principle will always hold good, at least as long as Waldorf lasts. For example, at age c.6–8 the experience of water colour ('painting' in the curriculum) is best gained, Steiner encouraged, via a colour story. This has been beautifully demonstrated recently in the article 'Colour Stories' by Veronica Rees in *Steiner Education* vol. 33 no. 2, in which she recounted stories she told in Classes 1 and 2. A wealth of children's paintings resulting from her stories were reproduced there in colour.

Secondly, there is the way to teach a subject to a *particular* class. For example, building in Class 3 is one of the most treasured main-lessons in the curriculum; yet it can be taught in a variety of ways, each with its own valid rationale, and each with a different starting point and entailing different practical experiences, depending on the nature of the class and the circumstances in which the school is situated. This was well illustrated in the article 'Building a Tipi' by David Tasker in the last issue of *Steiner Education* vol. 35 no. 1.

The third aspect of pedagogy has to do with *individual children*. We can surely all remember those moments in our school career when a teacher noticed a blank or quizzical look that crossed our face, causing him or her to pause and trawl over the point in question again, approaching it this time from an angle which was more accommodating to our particular psychology. Such pedagogy is part of the bread and butter of every good teacher's practice. Failure to master this dimension to teaching could well be one of the underlying causes of stress that the profession is prone to. (For recently conducted research on 'Stress and the Waldorf teacher: towards pre-emption through understanding' by Richard House, see page 36.) Other approaches that Steiner explicitly or implicitly valued—falling under the broad

heading of adapting one's teaching to the autonomous needs of individual children—also discussed in the present *Steiner Education* are:

- (1) addressing *groups* of the class quite specifically during the course of each lesson, while having the four temperaments in mind (see page 15, 'And How Goliath Stamped: fashioning the temperament through story telling so that it becomes a useful tool', by Anne Tandree);
- (2) arranging learning support for children in one sphere or another, where possible within the school provision (see page 4, 'Did We Mean Them to Become the Jesters?' by Ann Swain).

It might seem a blatant contradiction whenever Waldorf on the one hand puts so much emphasis on the archetypal stages of child development and attributes so much of its practice and its success to the seriousness with which it takes this aspect of education into account; while, on the other hand, it stresses its overriding aim of supporting each child in realising the full potential of his or her own individuality. Normally it's true: "You can't have your cake and eat it." But if we interpret the adage so that the cake is seen as the *what* of the curriculum, and eating it designates *how* the cake is cooked, served and then washed down with sparkling meal-time conversation, it might explain how to succeed in both respects.

Steiner sometimes referred to this whole educational process as administering 'stones' or 'bread'—a concept that may already have been familiar to him in his student days (see the article by David Wood 'Commemorating the Centenary of Karl Julius Schröer—Educationist and Teacher of Rudolf Steiner', page 31). Clearly he was thinking principally not of the curriculum (i.e. whether the cook had dished up wheat or granite, rye or gypsum, oats or malachite...) but of the *how*. However, given that the outcome is *psychologically* beneficial, one can also rest assured that one is at the same time making a positive contribution to the health (the *somatic* development) of each child. We can therefore see in this a psychosomatic approach to education, which presents itself neither as some caricature, clowning behind our backs while we endeavour to keep a stern chalk face face, nor as a vulture staring bleary eyed at us from its perch on the gaunt, lifeless branches of league-table driven assessment. The approach is something that needs to lie at the heart of any education that seeks to engender health and healing, and thus bring life-long vigour to the adult-to-be.

B.M.

Did We Mean Them to Become the Jesters?

by ANN SWAIN

"Is there more dyslexia nowadays, or are we just more aware of it than we used to be?"

This is one of the most commonly asked questions I receive as a Learning Support teacher and one whose answer seems to change as my understanding of dyslexia changes.

If one is defining dyslexia as a pathology, a learning disability, where those who are affected master skills of symbolic language, (writing, reading, speaking) only to a poor standard and with tremendous difficulty, then there is a greater prevalence of this condition in today's classrooms than generations ago. But when we define it thus, must we not take a great portion of responsibility for its increase?

In the last hundred and fifty years, and in predominately industrialised societies, educational expectations have changed. We now expect all schoolchildren to attain proficiency in particular and valued, albeit highly specialised, subjects. These requirements are placed on every child regardless of their gender, individual inclinations, gifts or weaknesses. Whether their destiny calls them to be farmers, social workers, jewellers, research scientists or story tellers, we educate them all by the same means, expecting the same degree of competence in the same fields.

While this value of equality has made education available to many who may not have had the privilege in the past, it has also had a deleterious effect on those children who may require other skills for their lives, or who may perceive the world in a fuller, 3-D wholeness than the predominantly linear and language-based methods employed in classrooms. The fact that we expect all our school leavers to be fluent in reading, writing and computer technology, compounded by the fact that we measure this proficiency by such narrow means, leaves little room for the genius of the dyslexic child to be experienced as anything other than a humiliating handicap.

Many adult dyslexics report having spent their time in formal education in a constant state of shame. Without knowing why they weren't achieving, they began to hone the skills of

avoidance—evading being exposed by teachers or peers, exposure that was certain to bring nothing but humiliation. One dyslexic offers teachers insight by sharing his experiences of school.

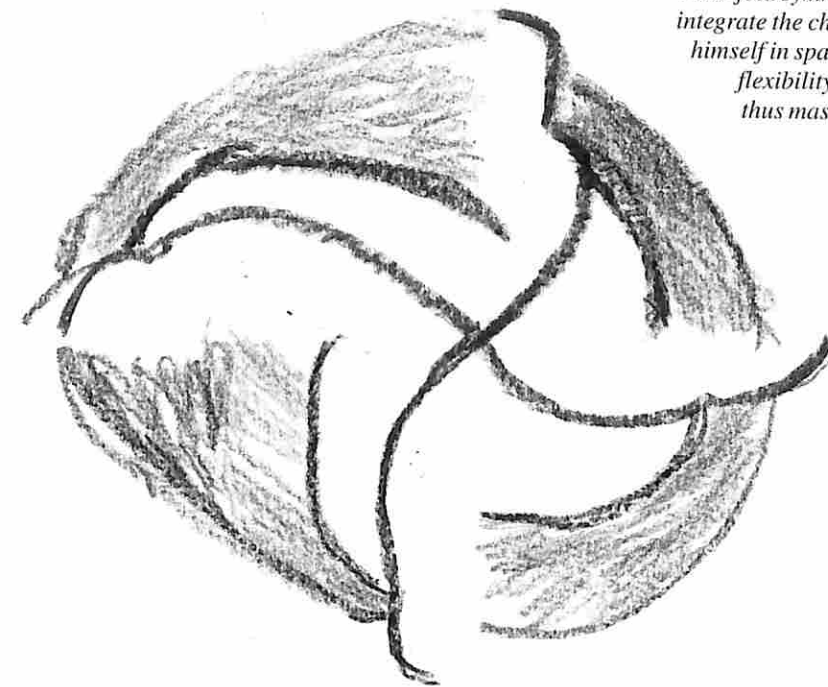
I would try to compensate where possible by absorbing information in other forms, but mostly, as the pressure began to build, I had to fall back on evasion, cheating and deceit.

Another child who had difficulty learning the material presented by her teacher nevertheless learnt a great deal in school which would stand her in good stead in later life. She learnt to cover up her struggles and her misunderstandings in a way familiar to all teachers, although few are able to read it in its truth. She learnt to overreact and play the role of the class clown.

The same boys and girls, who the previous year had laughed at the freak, were now laughing with the jester.

If we re-evaluate our definition of dyslexia to encompass a wider, less pathology-based bias, then perhaps the opening question, as to whether there is more dyslexia today, would be answered differently. Perhaps the answer to that question is ruefully, "There aren't enough dyslexics and we are greatly responsible."

Neuroanatomic research has presented remarkable findings regarding the brains of dyslexics. Where most skulls house two asymmetrical hemispheres (the left lobe being usually considerably larger than the right), the dyslexic subjects' brains presented two hemispheres that were approximately equal in size. Albert Galaburda and associates at Harvard Medical School found the symmetrical brains of his dyslexic subjects failed to lose as many neurons and "failed to prune down the number of connections between neurons and between hemispheres". This difference predisposes one to less specialised and perhaps less reliable means of carrying out tasks, but allows heightened creativity, more mobility in performing cognitive tasks, ability to perceive



Four-fold symmetry: form drawing helps to integrate the child's relation to space and to himself in space. A rotating form will train flexibility within space. The pupil will thus master the correct orientation of letters in space.

feeling 'thick' and continually shamed in school. Being intelligent, resourceful, but tragically unguided, they found challenges and respect were to be found outside the law.

By identifying children with specialised needs, our intent, as Steiner Waldorf learning support teachers, is to meet them, their genius and difficulty, before they erroneously assess themselves as stupid or unable. One fourteen-year-old arrived

holistically as well as greater innovativeness and vibrant, imaginative capabilities. The known great dyslexic personalities, such as Einstein, Faraday, Tesla, Rodin, Picasso and Twain, may actually have been great because of their dyslexia, rather than in spite of it! "We are thus brought to the apparently paradoxical notions that the very same anomalies...that have led to the disability of dyslexia in certain literate societies, also determine superiority in some brains. We can, thus, speak of a 'pathology of superiority' without fear of being contradictory!"

What then is a Steiner Waldorf special needs teacher and how does our work manifest within the context of the mainstream school? An essential first step lies in correctly assessing any children who may not be thriving within the group context. By failing to recognise learning differences, teachers run the risk of continually leading certain children towards failure every moment of the school day. Their frustration with their own powerlessness to grasp what their peers seem to understand easily can build and become a hugely destructive force.

A sobering research project conducted in a young men's detention centre in Scotland, found that, in contrast to the usual 10-15% incidence of dyslexia within the 'normal' population, there was a 53% rate within the very specific population of young male offenders. These men described their frustration of

for his lesson with me after being assessed by an educational psychologist the week before. In his characteristically exuberant way he entered the room and declared, "She says I'm dyslexic, I always thought I was thick!" What a relief that label was for him. He could begin to appreciate that he could learn.

At Michael Hall children are regularly screened for possible learning differences.

Towards the end of Class 2 all the children make a journey through their classroom, over mountains, across rivers, through various trials and triumphs. At this time we can assess the degree to which they have co-ordinated their movement, the strength of their balance, laterality, memory for sequences and forms, sound discrimination and any compensatory strategies which may already be in place. We recognise that the foundations of literacy are in fact the ABCs, but we translate that into, Attention, Balance, Co-ordination. Without a sounds basis in these, we ask the children to do almost the impossible if we expect them to sit still, attend to seemingly abstract and meaningless sounds and symbols, and be able to remember them tomorrow.

Class 4 is presented with another form of class-wide assessment. Here, by looking at the child's performance in purely literacy tasks, we can see where those with learning differences continue to struggle and where they present as being in need of

individual lessons. There are times when perhaps the need for a trip to the optometrist is indicated; or we are fortunate to have the Tomatis Centre nearby in Lewes, where we can refer children for a full listening assessment. A simple solution is sometimes easy to bring about, but without the full class screenings a child could be struggling alone.

Further class screenings are more for the sake of assessing progress than determining which children have special needs, until the pupils prepare for their GCSEs and through an assessment they may be granted special exam provisions.

Once a child has been assessed it is often seen that one to one learning support lessons are recommended. Steiner Waldorf learning support is not about coaching in literacy and numeracy. Were it that we would most likely be compounding the frustration these children experience. It is to do with finding out how these children perceive their world and tailoring the lessons to their particular language of learning. Anthroposophy describes how the child spends roughly its first 6-7 years building up and permeating its physical body. By the time the child enters Class 1 she has entered fully into her body, moved into every nook and cranny, grown acquainted and adept with movement in the physical world. If this progression, which moves from head to toe, has been complete, all that went into building capacities of movement is no longer needed for that purpose. Those forces are now liberated to be used to develop cognitive faculties of imagination, logical thinking and memory. In some cases of dyslexia, children present as not being at home in their bodies. Traits of infancy linger on and interfere with the child's ability to focus on the more cognitive tasks that are demanded of them in school. The first four senses, namely touch (tactile), movement (proprioception/kinaesthetic sense), balance (vestibular), and life (visceral) remain poorly developed and must be tuned and integrated before we can expect these children to master the tools of symbolic language and numeracy. All educators know the importance of multi-sensory teaching. For children with specific learning differences it is even more essential. Tools we have, such as form drawing and movement exercises, help the child find her place in space, between right and left, behind and before, above and below. A lesson that focuses on feeding the child's senses of movement, touch, seeing, hearing, and even taste, while tuning her balance will make the task of acquiring all the many skills of literacy (speech, sequential expression, articulation, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, reading etc.) something the

child can have confidence in. The particular relationship that arises between the special needs teacher and the child is an exceptional one, and one in which the child's sense of self worth and sense of belonging to this, sometimes extremely, confusing world can grow strong and can, in turn, open new ways of beholding for the child. She can learn how she learns, and eventually take hold of capacities herself. She can learn how to anticipate those moments of confusion; she can learn to keep her balance. She can begin to perceive the gifts she possesses as strengths and learn to rely on her powers of creative thinking without any longer having, as her only voice, the voice of the jester.

Ann Swain is a Learning Support Teacher at Michael Hall and a co-founder of the Steiner Waldorf Dyslexia Association (SWDA).

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*I like to write on worm happily because
I do a lot better when I am not pushed.*

Samples of writing: (above—age 11.2) What this pupil wrote and what he read back—'I'm a lot more clever when I'm happy and can come up with good ideas.' He nevertheless expresses some insight-filled gems of self knowledge.

(below—age 14.0) A familiar statement from many dyslexics. Note the interchanging of 'word' and 'work', and the frustration of taking a long time to sort something out while the whole class is moving on.

*I find writing is especially annoying
when... you are in a dictation
and you really don't know how
to spell a word so you stay on
a word when at last figure how to spell
but work is finished and we move on.*

The Waldorf College Project

Experiential education for ages 16 to 19

by AMANDA LABRON

The Waldorf College Project started with a small group of twelve students in September 2000 in Stroud, Gloucestershire. Prior to this, however, much groundwork had been done by the Parent Steering Group and the dedicated group of young people who showed enthusiasm and determination to become pioneers in a new form of education. Members of the steering group which formed share a common background as teachers within the Waldorf school movement both here and abroad. They also share a common desire to look at new ways of working with the Waldorf curriculum outside the Waldorf school.

There is a significant group of Waldorf students from age 16 onwards who no longer feel comfortable within the Upper School setting. This is a world wide phenomenon which raises a question worth asking. Is it linked to the compromises which need to be made to the Waldorf curriculum in order to meet the external examinations for university entrance? The young people ask that we recognise their changing needs in a changing world. They also ask for a new relationship to their tutors, one which goes further in recognising

A modelling session at the Waldorf College Project, Stroud, Gloucestershire.



their emerging potential for self determination.

The Waldorf College Project formed as a research project which has the freedom of being outside an established school structure. It hopes to research the question of the educational needs of young people between the ages of 16 and 19 in a way which can be shared and thus further the development of Waldorf education into the 21st century. It was felt that a 'college' style of education would best suit this project. The site available was ideal in a beautiful and prominent building, The Centre for Science and Art, which was already housing a number of initiatives for adult education.

Prior to the commencement of the College the group engaged a local facilitator to lead them in a series of Search Conference workshops in which adults and students worked creatively together developing the college idea. The process engaged them in the creation of two imaginative pictures.

1/ Our desired future—how would we like to see the world in 7 years?

2/ The probable future—what we're likely to see in 7 years.

From the desired future picture the group was then able to work backwards. The question was asked: What capacities and skills would one need in order to create such a future? From there it was possible for the steering group and the student group to work together, creating an educational facility to develop the capacities and skills the young people had *themselves* decided they needed.

As an adult involved in this process I felt continually impressed by the insight and wisdom which shone through the young people. It confirmed for me that we had the potential for a successful and significant research into new ways of engaging young people in their own education. *This is the key. Students need to 'own' their educational process.* They expressed this as having the freedom to take up responsibility. They also realised that they needed courage to go forward into creating an education which doesn't yet exist.

The truth is that in this step there is much which is *already* deeply educational. Their will has been fired.

They already had a conviction they are capable of making a difference, they can take their part in creating the future. In fact some of the identified capacities and skills were already emerging. The students have been documenting this experience of the creation of the college, as an ongoing project. This will no doubt be invaluable research material for other educational initiatives whilst also becoming a part of the student profile, a record of the work done at College.

The students work on thematic projects which take up the subject to be explored experientially and practically. The thought processes are engaged during the daily reflection and the written documentation which accompanies the project work. The college is working together with the Open College Network (OCN) developing criteria to accompany each project which will provide an important accreditation route to higher education in the future. This gives the college the advantage of accrediting its own curriculum without sacrificing time to an examination system.

Ongoing literacy and numeracy skills lessons also take place along with a craft programme which continues as a backbone within the structure of the changing thematic projects. There is a weekly review session which provides the necessary forum for communication between tutors and students. Students also conduct their own meetings to address social, domestic and management issues.

Learning life skills through participatory management

Another of the fundamental concepts within the college is that of a participatory management structure where students learn through first-hand experience how to problem solve, chair a meeting, handle finances, accounting and budgeting, plan study courses and be mindful of cleaning and maintaining the space. Apart from the obvious skills gained in these activities it contributes to the sense of empowerment and ownership of learning. As co-creators of their college it immediately shifts the responsibility into a shared one. The students soon realised this places greater demands and challenges to their maturity and a level needed to be found which didn't overestimate their abilities. Skills in communication and human relations are highlighted. However their self esteem is strong as they work in an environment where their views are listened to and incorporated into the college.

The Waldorf College Project has made a positive start. As in any new venture it is necessary to constantly review and adjust according to the experience of what works. The student group in this

first year have all previously been Waldorf school students. Naturally this means there is a good foundation in developing a course which requires a high level of self determination and a creative will to work.

How does the college work with the Waldorf curriculum, one might ask? Whilst it is true that the relationship to the existing Waldorf curriculum is a freely interpreted one, it does exist. Whereas not every subject will be covered which one encounters in a school, particular themes can be identified as fundamental to this age (years 11 and 12). Take the *Parsifal* theme, where it is quite possible to work this story experientially—say through story telling. It also can be found to be underlying the year. The students are encouraged to identify and develop their learning quest and take up an individual project which involves learning to research. The freedom to choose the topic they wish to follow gives the opportunity for them to *deeply engage their will* in a subject they love.

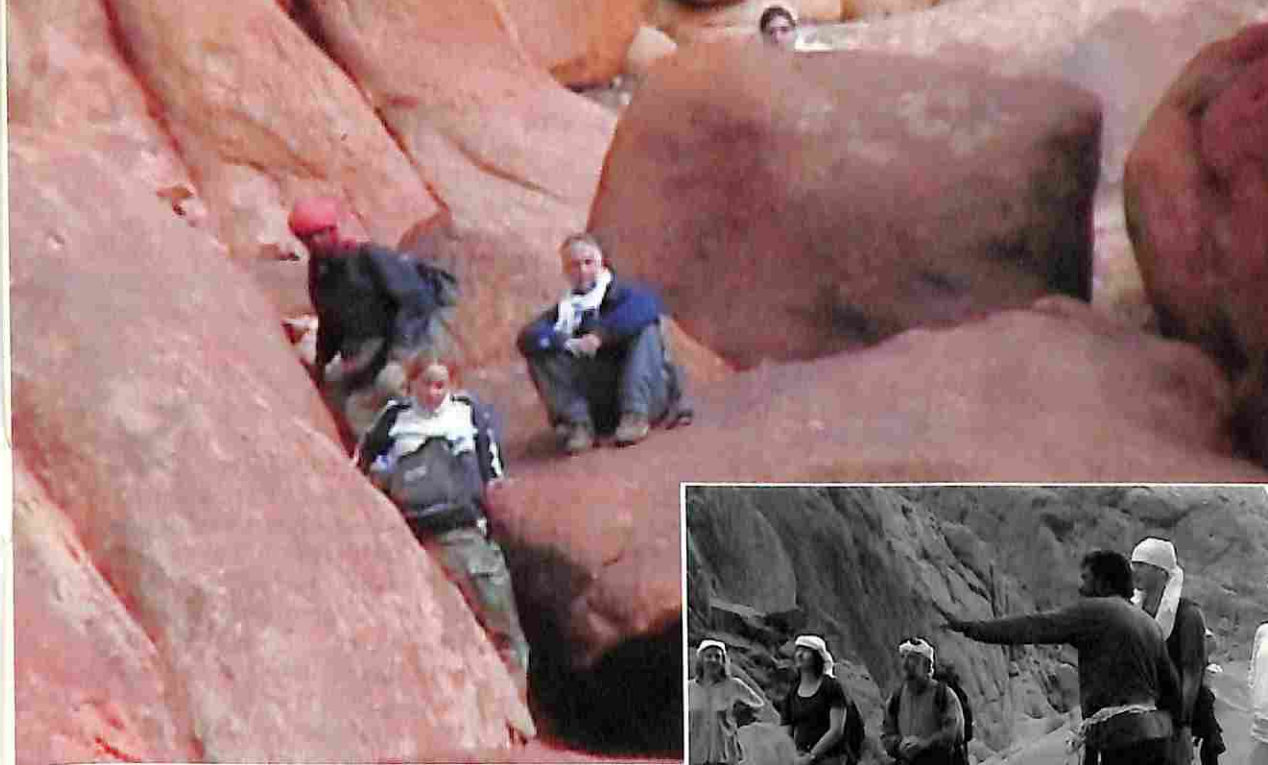
The college is fortunate to have a co-ordinating tutor with a strong background in teaching in the Upper School and a deep commitment to the experiential approach to education. As the only full-time staff member his role is to co-ordinate the part-time tutors and incoming project leaders, ensuring there is integration across the multi-disciplinary contributions to a project.

Thematic projects

The multi-disciplinary approach is taken in all thematic projects. For example, a project based on chemistry works with the connections between chemistry and music through the number relationship between atomic weights and the musical intervals. By working the scientific and the artistic together, the project topic is enlivened and the living connections between all things become apparent. Another project combined the appreciation and writing of poetry with the making of dramatic masks. The mask-making opened the way to a theme of personal identity. Our experience has shown the students are engaged with a healthy enthusiasm when the craft work, art, drama or music are integrated in a related way to thematic projects. Another important principle is developing sustainable culture which is one of the tenets in the college curriculum.

Journeying

In the Spring term the students will take a journey into the Sinai Desert. This is a landscape of astonishing colour and dramatic form in which remarkable stories have taken place. It is the land of the Burning Bush, The Exodus and The Tablets of Stone.



This journey provides an opportunity to study three world religions. Mohammed, Moses and Christ lived and journeyed in the wilderness in this part of the world. Prior to the actual journey, a study of comparative religion will combine with artistic work in the crafts of stained glass and mosaic. Further studies will include history of the Middle East and survival skills. Here again we can link to the underlying theme of the grail which involves both outer and inner journeying. We won't need to 'teach' this link: it will arise as a natural outcome of the experiences of the journey. It will probably be more important to give space to allow their own questioning to reverberate as they travel with the traditionally nomadic Bedouin people, sleep on Mt. Sinai and arise before sunrise to climb down the mountain to attend a service in St Catherine's Monastery in the desert. The students have undertaken to find paid work to raise the funds for this trip.

Networking the local and the global

The project tutors will often be professionals who are active in their field. Their teaching comes directly from a contemporary and practical application of a subject. The students benefit from working with someone whose source of inspiration comes from years of working in a particular field. It enables the college to network the talent in the local community. A school is comparatively more self-contained within its community.

The college also invites visiting overseas lecturers



Students amongst the awe-inspiring landscape of the Sinai

and professionals in to conduct workshops when the opportunity arises. A visiting leading French scientist, for example, shared the story of his research into the 'memory of water'. This process involved the homeopathic imprinting of conventional drugs and showed results which were highly controversial revelations to the scientific community and the drug companies. He spoke as an ethical scientist who stood firm against ostracization by those who didn't want these results known.

Networking the local and the global is one of the keys which brings a dynamic, contemporary element into the work of the college. The structure of the college includes this flow in and out between the centre (student) and the periphery (community). The education is not in isolation from the world but has an ongoing lively flow built through the field of work.

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Movement and Development

by PAUL KING

The chances are high that you drive a car. If so, can you remember what you were thinking about the last time you got in and drove off? —what you needed from the supermarket, the finishing touches to your lesson plan, some family matter? What you were not thinking about, I'd wager, was the actual mechanics of what you were doing—co-ordinating hand and foot to change gear, synchronising the feet to come to a stop, the degree of turn needed to negotiate the bend, all the minutiae of getting from A to B in a car.

Now think back to your first driving lesson. Do you recall what was uppermost in your mind? *Not* the bank manager, or who would win the 4 o'clock, or whether you'd remembered to pay the milkman. Your mind was one hundred percent focused on hands and feet and the new procedures of driving. On movement.

Between that first lesson and now there is a vast difference in the ratio of movement to awareness while you drive. By now you have attained a high degree of automaticity; you can drive without thinking about it. This is mastery of movement for a particular task. Put as a formula, we could say: mastery of movement = skill.

This allusion to learning to drive is an example in miniature of the process involved in the mastery of all movement, or all skill. On the greater scale of full human development, movement is the basis of almost all other development. Steiner names the three great achievements of early childhood as walking, speaking and thinking. I take 'walking' here to be a kind of abbreviated term for a breathtaking array of more foundational and primary movement developments that must be mastered before walking is possible. These developments move from head to foot. At first the infant is a sea of instinctive unskilled movement—the tight-fisted little arms flailing haphazardly, the weightless legs kicking and prodding the air, facial muscles moving through a random repertoire of expressions. Gradually, this changes. The child gains control of eye muscles and directs its gaze, the neck muscles are mastered and the child can turn and then lifts its head, gradually the arms can reach out and the hands grasp things. The child sits, crawls, stands, balances, and finally walks. This process has gone in two directions: from head to foot, and from the centre to the finger- and toe-tips (the so-called *cephalo-caudal* and *proximo-distal*

principles), and walking is the end achievement. We could say that 'walking' denotes a certain degree of maturation of the gross motor (or large-limb) development.

This initial body of gross motor skills is further elaborated and refined. The finer movements of fingers and toes (the 'tips') are worked on. Nuances of feeling now flit expressively across the facial muscles, and the delicate and subtle movements of speech from larynx to lip are mastered. Steiner's term 'speaking' is again a kind of shorthand for this wider development of the fine lacework of movement, the so-called fine-motor control, which culminates in speech.

Walking and speaking are the developmental basis for thinking. 'Thinking' here, from a pedagogical point of view, can be said to be learning at school. The class-one child is only ready for thinking if its 'walking' and 'speaking' phases have been fully and soundly traversed.

Closely interwoven with this motor development is a sensory development. In the very young child this also follows a foundational progression. As one researcher puts it: "...the motor system has developed a certain body of information before the perceptual system begins its course of development. The motor system is not complete in its development, but an initial body of information has begun to be built up." As the child incarnates and takes hold of its body, it is not surprising that the first senses to come into play here are the 'bodily' senses, the senses of touch, movement (or kinaesthetic sense) and of the well-being or otherwise of the body's physiological life processes. Later the sense of sight and sound are integrated. "Perceptual learnings thus come to depend upon prior motor learnings as a foundation."

It is important to note that this perceptual and kinaesthetic development needs to come to a certain maturity before formal learning can take place healthily. Another researcher states what has always been known in Steiner education: "Sensory-motor interaction provides the groundwork for later cognitive functions. It may look as though the child at play is not learning anything, but actually he is learning something very basic, he is learning how to learn." It is therefore very important that this 'sensory-motor' phase be allowed to complete itself without interference—interference being any kind

of formal teaching. Motor development closely allied to sensory development forms and configures the brain and prepares it for 'thinking'. "Asking the kindergarten child to learn reading before his brain is ready for this task will not only be unproductive, but also take the child away from sensory-motor activities that his brain needs now in order to learn reading at a later age." (!) The child requires at least six years to complete the sensory-motor phase, the outward sign of which is the change of teeth. At birth the child has a new body full of inherited tendencies which must be overcome to a certain extent in order to make the bodily vehicle as good an expression of the child's individuality and intentions as possible. The muscles must be mastered and the organs subtly sculpted to the individual blueprint. This is an enormous task requiring a huge input of albeit unconscious vital energy. Subjecting the child to formal teaching in this phase siphons that vital energy away from all-important 'body-work' to mental work, leaving the sensory-motor system and the internal organs incompletely developed and weakly founded. Surely this is child abuse of the first order!

Problems in motor development can also lead to learning difficulties of various kinds. When one looks into a situation of a child with specific learning difficulties of a dyslexic or arithmetic type, one almost invariably finds a movement problem. Parents are often surprised about this: "But he is such a wizard on the sports field." The child can indeed be very able at sports, but that is not the type of movement in question. Ask that child, for example, to hop along a hopscotch track, or in a sequence of right foot, right foot, left foot, right, right, left etc. and they will get confused. Ask them to step and clap in a certain sequence (e.g. 1 clap, 6 steps, 2 claps, 5 steps, 3 claps, 4 steps etc.) and they can lose the sequence almost immediately. A good deal of this has to do with sequencing, but all sequence is movement in time and/or space. This serves to underline the importance of a solid kinaesthetic base for healthy learning.

Traditionally children built up their movement skills by playing games of running, climbing, balancing, hopping, skipping, aiming, throwing, and catching—ranging from the large movement level of hopping and ball games, to fine motor skills such as marbles and cat's cradle. Also, physical work at home, indoors and out, contributed to these skills. In our civilisation where we travel on an unprecedented scale, we paradoxically move much less. Locked into computer games, slumped in front of the TV, taken everywhere by car, much of their

manual work done by machines, appliances and gadgets of all kinds requiring no more dexterity than the pushing of a button, children too move a great deal less. The consequences of this are encountered in the classroom.

An experienced teacher once told me that in his first class he had twenty healthy children and four with learning difficulties. In his second class he had four healthy children and twenty with learning difficulties. There are obviously any number of factors that play into this, and movement, or more precisely the healthy and complete development of the motor-sensory phase, is a major one. This is particularly emphasised by Steiner in connection with difficulties in arithmetic: "The basis of arithmetic is one's own will-filled movement, the sense of movement."

It is probably accurate, and certainly would do no harm to assume that children who come to Waldorf schools in Class 1 nowadays do not have a fully completed sensory-motor phase. All true education needs to be therapeutic, and movement can be a particularly efficacious remedy in the classroom. Movement exercise can be used to improve the child's body image, handwriting, ability at arithmetic, even to conceptualise. All the children would benefit.

So what can one do?

The following are some movement exercises I have found to be effective and workable in a classroom situation with classes ranging from Class 1 to Class 4. They cover a range of motor skills, and include body image and spatial development. They are just a few suggestions; the possibilities are endless.

For gross motor

Stepping and clapping in a variety of sequences. In Class 1 this could be used in learning the tables e.g. to step while counting up to 30. Step on every number but also clap the multiples of 3. Variation 1: only say the multiples of 3 aloud. Inwardly the children count every number, but outwardly you hear: step, step 'three!', step, step 'six!', step, step 'nine!' etc. Variation 2: say all the numbers *except* the multiples of three. Other variations: *stand* on the clapping numbers i.e. come to a stop for that one number (this has a strong awakening effect); take a step backwards on the multiples of 3. In Class 2 you can step to, say, the count of 4 and clap on the 1, then on the 2, then on the 3, then on the 4, then the 1 again and so on but so that the underlined numbers are clapped: 1 2 3 4; 1 2 3 4; 1 2 3 4; 1 2 3 4 etc. This can be increased to a sequence of seven numbers in



Movement in morning ring time in the Kindergarten, Riga (left).

During 'creative play' exercising balance, one of the so-called bodily senses (centre).

Photos: Ligita Gaile.

them do it, and stop them again, ask them for the next sequence, and so on. This stopping has an awakening effect, but it is only preparatory, the goal is that they should eventually do it without stopping.

Walking a triangle

Starting with one child at each corner of the triangle, the children walk the form to the count of three, taking two steps on 1 and 2 and then a jump on 3 to the end-point and turn ready for the next side. This can then be done to the 3-times table, mum on the first two steps and calling out the multiple of 3 on the jump. Depending on space, two or three triangles can be done at once, thus involving six or nine

children at a time. The same can be done on a square, four children at a time, with three steps and a jump, using the 4-times table. An older class could also walk a pentagram.

Chinese skipping

An old playground game, jumping over two parallel lengths of knicker elastic fixed around the ankles of

two friends—or chair legs. Children jump from side to side, land with both feet inside, both feet outside, turn about, and both feet on the elastic. We used a rhyme that starts *Ingle angle silver hangle...* With enough elastic and some children acting as elastic anchors, the whole class is engaged. After a successful completion of the sequence the elastic is raised a little higher.

Beanbags

These are wonderful for learning all sorts of sequences such as days of the week, months, tables. The bag can be passed round one's own waist, over the head, under a leg, to a partner, in front of one or a neighbour at the side. Children can stand in two concentric circles, the inner circle facing out, outer circle facing in and everyone thus facing a partner. A sequence is done, then everyone takes a step to the right to a new partner, and the sequence is repeated. Two favourite exercises went as follows:

1) Children in two concentric circles as described above, each facing a partner. The person opposite is the partner, the person on one's right is the neighbour. This involves giving and receiving, and the partners change after each sequence.

<u>Rhyme</u>	<u>Movements/Actions</u>
Partner	—With right hand pass beanbag into partner's left hand, holding your own hand out to receive.
good morning;	—Pass beanbag from your LH to your RH.
Neighbour	—With RH pass beanbag into right neighbour's LH, holding out your LH to receive.
good day.	—Pass beanbag from your LH to your RH.
Partner	—With RH pass beanbag into partner's LH.
good morning;	—Pass beanbag from your LH to your RH.
We'll up	—With RH pass over your head and give to LH, at the same time stepping with right foot to the right.
and away.	—Lower LH and pass beanbag from your LH to your RH, bringing left foot together with right foot—at which point you should be facing a new partner.

2) The same positions as for the above exercise:

I see the sun,) For every 'I' and 'me' the

beanbag goes round the waist; the sun sees me.) For each 'sun', 'moon' and 'star' the beanbag goes over the head.

I see the moon,) For both times that 'you' is said, the beanbag is passed to partner.

the moon sees me.)

I see my star,)

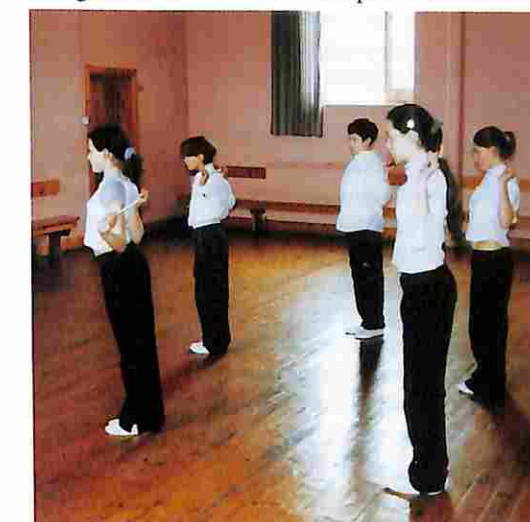
my star sees me.)

I see you,)

and you see me.)

Drawing with the feet

Simple forms such as semicircles, circles and triangles. This can be done with a pencil between the



Rod exercises: before and after letting go and catching the rod in 'the waterfall'—see article on p. 19.

Class 3 and similar variations introduced. Even more complicated is a sequence that transforms 7 steps into 7 claps (on the spot i.e. not stepping) and back again (non-underlined numbers are steps, underlined numbers are claps): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7; 1 2 3 4 5 6 7; 1 2 3 4 5 6 7; and so on until you get to seven claps (1 2 3 4 5 6 7); now back again with six claps and one step 1 2 3 4 5 6 7; and so on until you are back at seven steps again. Such exercises are very effective for concentration! As a variation, instead of or as well as clapping, the children step backwards on the 'clap' places. Holding rods or beanbags, move the rod in front of the body for forward steps and behind the body for backward steps. As the teacher, tap out the beat with two sticks, on a tambourine or whatever. For children who find this very difficult it is good to break the exercise into bite-size portions. Stop them at the end of each seven-sequence and ask them to tell you what comes next. When they are clear let

toes on paper taped to a board, or with a stick in a smoothed sandpit. Steiner recommends this especially for poor handwriting: "It would be enough if one got the children who have bad handwriting to draw very simple forms with their feet. This works back powerfully on the head."⁶

Folk dancing

This can be done very simply, the desks having been pushed back or stacked, just with singing and a tambourine, or with a recorder. By Class 3, the children can learn new dances just from hearing them called i.e. 'right-hand star', 'promenade your partner', 'do-si-do' your partner etc.

For fine motor

Finger games and exercises of all descriptions. Let the children tap the thumb with each finger three times each, then twice, then once. Do left, and right hand, both hands, with eyes shut, with hand behind the back. Let them slide their thumbs around each finger a few times as though unwinding an imaginary thread around the finger. This is best done rhythmically, at different tempi, also with eyes shut. Use traditional rhymes or, best of all, find appropriate images and make up a rhyme for it. A sequence of cat's cradle done to something like *incy wincy spider, climbing up the spout* could do the trick! Finger puppet sequences and dances done to music or rhyme.

Body image

For children who are weak conceptually, Steiner gave body image exercises: "...basic exercise so that they must think by means of their own body. With your right middle finger touch your left shoulder. They must think these things through by means of their own body." This can be done quite simply with Class 1. "With your right hand touch your left ankle," and become more complicated e.g. "With the knuckle of your right index finger touch your right earlobe." This exercise can finish with a game of Simon Says.

Spatial orientation

This can be done on a large scale in a cleared space, or just behind the desks. Say: "Turn to the left and take one step backwards," or "Take one step to the right and turn left twice." One can increase the number of instructions so that it also becomes a memory exercise. For the young children it is often not clear that once they have turned left they now have a new left. When you're facing the board, 'left' is the wall side, but when you've turned to the wall,

'left' is now the window side. They have to grasp 'left' from their own body orientation. The 'floor circles' described in Dafydd Griffiths' article in *Steiner Education* vol. 34 no. 1 would also work excellently in this area.⁷

Such exercises are inordinately difficult to describe and even harder to visualise from the written word. But three principles can be helpful to follow. Firstly, begin gross and get finer. Secondly, accompany the movement as much as possible with rhythm i.e. use short rhymes and poems or the times-tables, which the children recite while moving, or tap a tambourine or two sticks together. (Getting the children to speak the rhymes helps to get the movement more into the unconscious and 'skilled' level. Almost invariably it is the children with difficulties who tend to stop speaking.) And thirdly, a good eurythmy therapy principle: get fast slowly, then slow down quickly. Finish on a slow, peaceful note. Such exercises harmonise the children and prepare them for the lesson. They can also help to counteract the forces of inertia that are so palpable in our technified, mechanised, digitalised society. These forces are harmful but necessary. Indeed, in many ways we can be grateful for them. But they are most harmful in the young child whose development is subtly lamed by them if they are not counteracted. The strongest means at our disposal for this counteraction is art in all its forms, and in the younger primary (Lower School) child, so alive in its limbs, artistic movement (be it as movement games, rhythmic movement, dancing or, most powerfully, eurythmy) is a vital component in a modern art of education.

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"And How Goliath Stamped..."

Fashioning the temperament through story telling so that it becomes a useful tool

by ANNE TANDREE

Economy in teaching

Balancing my attention between the individual children and the whole class was one of the first challenges that I met in my first teaching experience.

I found myself sucked into situations with one child and then another, and I would spend endless time in preparation at night thinking of these particular children. The more I tried to concentrate on the individuals and tried to 'solve' problems, the more little individuals reared their heads and demanded my undivided attention. I was losing the class. I needed to find a way to address the class as a whole while giving each individual child the sense that they were being recognised. A colleague suggested that I look at the children's temperaments and that I consciously address each temperament group in some individual way every day, even better every lesson.

Why the temperaments?

As some of the readers may already know, Rudolf Steiner gave many indications, to teachers especially, about the four temperaments which can be observed in children. In the 2nd Chapter of his *Discussions with Teachers*, Steiner responds to a question about a drawing lesson, with the following: "Here our work of individualising begins. We have said that we can divide the children according to temperament. In the larger groups the children can all take part in the general drawing lesson, but by dividing them up into smaller groups we can individualise to some extent... You will be able to differentiate by your choice of forms, by taking forms with straight lines."

A knowledge of the children's temperaments will enable the teacher to learn how to teach the individual child.

Another quote from the same publication (p.12) will remind us what these differences in the temperaments are based on:

In Spiritual Science we consider the human being from various points of view [particularly] the ego, astral body, etheric body and physical body. Now in an ideal man the harmony pre-

destined by the cosmic plan could quite naturally hold sway between these four principles of the human being. But in reality this is not the case with any one person. From this it can be seen that the human being, when he is given over to the physical plane, is not really complete, but that education and teaching would serve to make a complete man of him. One of the four elements preponderates in each child, and education and teaching must bring about the harmonising of these four principles.

If the ego preponderates... [in the child], we have the melancholic temperament. If the astral body preponderates, we have the choleric temperament. If the etheric preponderates, we have the sanguine temperament. If the physical body preponderates, we have the phlegmatic temperament.

Frequently there is more than one temperament within one person. Most people share a bit of all four. And it is important to keep this in mind when we focus on each temperament at a time for the sake of clarity. It is still helpful to observe whether a child has a dominant temperament, for this will show his or her particular tendency to one-sidedness.

Having taught for some years and having had many interesting talks with colleagues I think it is important to say at this point, that in the 21st century this working with temperaments and identifying of children's temperaments is much more difficult than when I started teaching. The influences on the children which affect their behaviour and even their physical body—such as bad diet, overdose of media, lack of rhythm in their daily lives, even maybe different beginnings of life—cloud the picture we try to make. Nevertheless, although coming to simple conclusions may be more arduous nowadays, careful observation will eventually highlight one particular aspect of a child which can be helped through his/her temperament being addressed.

There are many publications, some by Steiner and others by teachers who have worked with the temperaments in their own particular field. Not wishing to repeat all that has been said and can be

found in these excellent books (see Bibliography). I will endeavour to try and give a useful foundation on which any beginner can start to build.

The most important aspect to remember is that this knowledge of the temperament must be a developing wisdom and become an 'instinctive' tool in the activity of teaching. Applying it as dogma will end with the child not responding to a constricting label; in fact children often rebel under the yoke of dogmatic teaching.

Working with the temperaments in story-telling

Children from different temperaments can help each other to complete a picture. The teacher's role is to give the children the possibility to reflect back to the others their experience of a story. But before this the children need to feel that the teacher has prepared the lesson with them in mind. The children wait expectantly maybe in complete silence, but their inner being is reaching out for the beam which is just for them, the colour that speaks to their soul, it envelops them in a feeling of warmth of recognition and is the beginning of their process of transformation of the content given by the teacher. This process is one of individualising and transforming the content into new skills.

Steiner also recommends that we allow children of the same temperament to influence each other in order to tone down their temperament e.g. by sitting them together in the classroom.

In *Discussions with Teachers* Steiner's work with the teachers on the art of story telling is described and there he pays particular attention to the different ways language can be used to involve children from all four temperaments.



Contrasting temperaments coming to expression in Class 3 weaving.

In a summary we could say that the following areas can be varied according to the temperament you are addressing:

- The content of the story
- The pitch of the voice
- The rhythm of the speech
- The speed of the telling
- The gestures accompanying the telling

The content of the story

The choice of a particular story may be made with one particular temperament in mind.

In Class 3 you are telling the story of David and Goliath and many choleric sit up expectantly at the thought of this battle. They admire David's fearlessness. They show little compassion for the defeated. They sympathise with that particular way of solving problems. They wish that teachers and parents would allow them to fight to solve their problems. Most children of this age love this story, and there is plenty of scope for retelling and acting this out the next day.

The sanguines in the front of the class will be quite restless in their excitement and the teacher can address them at the beginning by describing the activities in both camps: the details and the hustle and bustle, especially if you tell it from the point of view of a child being sent everywhere to run errands for David or for Goliath. The colours and the smells will capture the sanguines' attention and will give others the chance to dream into the story as they will take longer to become interested.

For the phlegmatics it is always suggested that food should be mentioned; and without sliding into negative clichés about a temperament, it is my experience that talking about food need not appeal simply to the greedy aspect of a child, but can be used to bring out the importance of feeling well in one's physical body, and especially how it may, in this case, influence the outcome of a battle. In the story it may also be possible to describe how well the parents of the tribe were looking after the young ones who were scared of the noise and the preparation for

the great duel. Phlegmatic children are often the ones who help the class teacher make sure that every child is feeling cared for.

This particular story may not appeal at all to the melancholics, they might dislike the confusion and the heroism involving violence. The Old Testament doesn't readily inspire compassion. They will need you to provide an entrance for them, through their ability to empathise with suffering, especially the suffering of the down-trodden. A little introduction about David's childhood, leading up to the battle and imagining how David felt the night before will help these children identify with him by recognising the fear or the loneliness and the sense of responsibility. This is also particularly pertinent for children in their ninth or tenth year: they often start to experience fear and loneliness and particularly melancholic children tend to take responsibility for the problems that they see around them.

The pitch of the voice

As you can imagine a class of young children is very sensitive to the human voice; it makes a deep impression on them and teachers must be aware of this as it is their basic teaching tool, especially in Steiner schools where there is little use of electronic equipment and information technology. A teacher with a constantly high-pitched voice will tend to make children nervous and restless; the opposite may be quite restful but may be soporific. By doing speech exercises, by growing aware of one's voice, it is possible to use it as a pedagogical tool.

In the above story it would be appropriate to vary the pitch used very slightly without making a caricature of any of the characters. It is certain that Goliath will have a tremendous roaring voice and the teacher's chest capacity must grow just for this, but when David speaks he will be clear but quite soft; if one could imagine speaking more from the forehead for David and more from the stomach for Goliath the right result might be achieved.

Varying pitch should be used with subtlety. It will, however, be wonderful the next day when you ask the children to come up in front to act parts of the story to see a child puff up his chest and give a goliathan mighty roar. Another child of a less choleric nature may enjoy acting out the gesture of precision of David's catapult—in total silence!

The rhythm of speech

I have already mentioned how to focus the sanguine children at the beginning of the story through the description. It will be appropriate to speak in short words and quite briskly to describe the child (in the

story) as he rushes around watching all the preparations.

When the fight is about to begin, a mood of ceremony can be created by talking slower and emphasising the consonants. The choleric will enjoy the strength of the sounds. These act as a forming force on them.

How can some of the ordinary aspects of life be portrayed for the phlegmatics to enjoy? A fluidity in the speech will resonate well with them and they will strain slightly forward if you speak softer and allow the vowels to sound out. There is no need to rush this part of the story. Let the choleric grow slightly impatient; it will not harm them, and allow the phlegmatics to enjoy your sounds and descriptions. The melancholics would really enjoy hearing one of the beautiful minor Hebrew songs in the middle of the story, they are often the ones whose feelings overflow at the beautiful sounds.

The speed of the telling

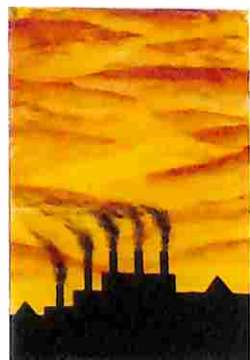
The speed of the telling goes hand in hand with the rhythm described above. It is important to remember, however, to vary the speed. We so often settle in a certain mode that lasts the whole story long. This will not help your images to be alive and colourful. A few pauses in a story will bring back the phlegmatics who may have dreamed off.

The gestures of the story teller

In most stories a minimum of gesture is necessary. It can easily take the children's attention away from the sound of the words. For that reason a few well chosen moments where your gestures accompany an action in the story can complement your particular temperament slant. A slight stamp with the foot at the approach of Goliath will remind the choleric of his weight and therefore of the extraordinary feat performed by David. You can outfox the sanguines by looking quickly from one side to the other during your description; this may be needed to allow them a bit of movement too before you focus on a more quiet and serious part. This is a good time to release tension and make them laugh. It will be so much better if they laugh in the right place rather than upset the melancholics and choleric by bubbling over with mirth at the tragic moment.

How you stand and where you put your hands when you are describing the world of feelings will make a deep impression on the melancholics, you will see it the next day in the recall or later in the year when they act out a play.

So far we have looked at how the teacher can address the temperaments in the class by varying aspects of the story-telling. The next step consists in



The four temperaments in Class 8—by which time they are normally well in hand—expressed through paintings of imaginary industrial revolution scenes.

enabling the children to give each other a different aspect of the complete experience in the next days.

The story recall and the individual work in writing and drawing

The day after the story has been told, you can expect the choleric children to come through the door begging to be allowed to retell the story or better still to act it out. Ideally a small group of children should be chosen, representing the different temperaments, and asked to go out in the corridor to prepare a little scene. While they are outside you can do another activity, which may appeal more to the melancholics:

The children close their eyes and imagine the camp the night before the great duel. The teacher can help by asking children to respond to questions e.g.: are there any noises? Can anything be seen? What light is there? What is the sky like? etc. Asking just for describing words (adjectives), children are called to the blackboard to write them down. These will come in useful both for the children's drawings and their writing of the story the next day. Melancholics who often enjoy remembering things of the past will benefit from this exercise as it gives a certain objectivity, a wider context to their one-sided picture. Phlegmatics need a bit of pushing when it comes to articulating their inner life; they will be helped by the other children because once the activity is started, they actually enjoy falling into the pattern of making lists of words. They dislike having

to be the first to do anything that involves work. In these recall exercises sanguines often stare at you blankly as they have forgotten the whole story, or so they think. But they will take up the impulse of the choleric in the acting out or will soon join in the 'game' of finding adjectives. A lot of these will probably have nothing to do with the story in question but sometimes the fact that sanguines are participating and not chatting to their neighbour is enough to satisfy one.

This description is only a taster of what can start to happen in a class when you know the children well. As you get used to working in this way you find that the lessons are enriched by this multiplicity and variety of hues and textures. It penetrates into all the parts of the lesson; it is particularly helpful in the realm of language teaching if you are teaching younger children only through the spoken word.

A codetta on language teaching

It has been my experience when starting to teach 6/7-year-olds French that some of them experience a feeling of insecurity at the first hearing of those different words. A good way of bringing them into the group without singling them out is to make sure that there is an activity in each lesson which meets their particular needs.

The strong rhythmic poem for the choleric, a dancing ring game for the sanguines, a picture dictation for the phlegmatics, and a memory game for the melancholics, for example.

In a balanced language lesson all the above would happen anyway but to prepare them with the children's faces in your mind creates this gesture of community building: acknowledging the wealth of differences living in the children and using these differences for the fulfilment of the whole group, that is the potential gift of working with the temperaments.

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Curriculum Research: Eurythmy rod exercises

by MARTYN RAWSON

If, for some reason, one had to reduce the Waldorf curriculum to its absolute minimum, what would remain? How much can you take away and still call it Waldorf education? This may seem an entirely hypothetical and therefore un-serious question but it is not quite as theoretical as it may seem. There are essentially two reasons why we might have to consider such a drastic question. Firstly if some totalitarian educational regime said you can have *some* elements of Waldorf education but not all, which ones do you insist upon? Secondly if some key aspect of the Waldorf approach were no longer possible because there weren't enough competent people to teach it, then it might drop off the curriculum and thus undermine the whole Waldorf ethos. Well, both of these circumstances are no longer unthinkable.

Certainly one of the core subjects in the Waldorf curriculum, perhaps *the* core subject, is eurythmy. It is one of the few things taught in Waldorf schools that is not taught in any other branch of education. It is also one of the subjects that can claim the most direct connection to anthroposophy, the philosophy underlying and informing the Waldorf approach. No eurythmy, no Waldorf education. I *think* one could also make a case for the corollary, namely, no Waldorf education, no eurythmy, or at least its scope in the world would be drastically reduced if it were no longer being taught in Waldorf schools.

But is there a risk that eurythmy might in some way disappear from Waldorf education? The answer has to be *possibly*—the risk being greater in some countries than others. The reality is that for many reasons the number of eurythmists teaching in Waldorf schools is declining. More and more schools are not in a position to offer the subject. This is not unconnected to the fact that the educational quality of the eurythmy taught is not everywhere as high as it needs to be. With many noble exceptions, eurythmists are finding it increasingly difficult to teach eurythmy as it should be taught. The reasons for that, are again complex.

The Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum has been concerned with this problem and has conducted research to establish the facts of the situation. Broadly

speaking, the reasons are thought to be as follows (obviously in an article of this length one cannot go into detail, so the reader is asked to accept the following summary without detailed supporting arguments).

- The amount of provision for the training of educational eurythmy is often inadequate. All eurythmists have a 4- or 5-year basic training in eurythmy. They can then do a post-graduate training in therapeutic or educational eurythmy. Despite the agreement on behalf of the Waldorf schools' movement not to take on eurythmists without a pedagogical training, this still happens.
- The basic eurythmy training does not necessarily equip eurythmists to become teachers of children with the professional requirements that entails.
- Other teachers have an inadequate understanding of eurythmy or its place in the curriculum. Consequently eurythmy is not supported by teachers and parents with conviction based on insight. It is widely believed to do good but that belief is not always enough.
- Eurythmy is a difficult subject for many pupils to accept at school unless it is taught extremely well, perhaps more so than any other subject. The fact that it is scarcely known outside of the Steiner or Waldorf community does not help.
- The art of eurythmy has been inadequately explored in relation to how it works on the human being. Certainly non-eurythmists have very little understanding of its effectiveness, and many eurythmists are not experienced at translating this into terms that can be generally understood in the context of education. To put it bluntly, too few people either understand eurythmy or are able to articulate its benefits for the developing human being.

I realise that these bare statements may shock and offend some readers but I would not make them if I were not convinced they were broadly true. The fact is, Rudolf Steiner created eurythmy out of the deepest insights into human nature and its needs in our times. Just as Waldorf education itself was conceived as an antidote to the social and spiritual devastation that

Steiner predicted for the coming centuries, so eurythmy has a special place in that task.

Put very simply, the primary task of education today is to help developing individuals harmonise the spiritual and soul side of their beings with the bodily-rhythmical side of their nature. The increasing materialism of our age is leading not only to a drying up of spiritual sources of renewal but an increasing scleroticism of the whole human constitution.

Steiner offered humanity two central paths to spiritual integration: the path of knowledge which leads from the cultivation of living thinking to penetrate down into the will (the path from knowledge to the enlightened will), and the path that leads through the cultivation of the will to the ennobling of the soul and for the enlightenment of the mind. The latter path is that of eurythmy. Self-knowledge begins with self-education and this leads to the various spiritual paths an individual can follow as an adult. It all begins with education and for this reason eurythmy is central to Waldorf education. Its contribution to the healing of humanity is vital. Thus far the best we can say is that it has *started* to fulfil this task.

So what can be done? Well many things are being done at an international level. The basic eurythmy training is undergoing a major revision in some countries. In Holland and Germany, where most eurythmy students train (Moscow is the second largest eurythmy school after Den Haag, followed by Stuttgart) the educational eurythmy training has been integrated into the main teacher training institutions (Emerson College in England is following suit). In the case of Holland the basic eurythmy training has gone down this path as well, having gained state recognition as a primary training. These steps to integrate eurythmy into the wider community of anthroposophical adult education are important.

Furthermore an international conference has been organised for parents, teachers, students and eurythmists to reinvigorate the movement by showing the educational art at its best (16-21 April 2001). One of the most important steps that is being taken in many places is new research into the fundamentals of eurythmy. A real study of eurythmy from anthropological, physiological, educational and therapeutic perspectives has begun, involving workers from several different fields. It is hoped that the international conference will be a focus for this research work.

The remainder of this article summarises one such modest attempt to explore an aspect of educational eurythmy. It involved myself as teacher and curriculum researcher,¹ Thea Kaesbach a school



(Above and on facing page) the 3rd and 4th movements in the 7-fold exercise.

eurythmist, and Hajo Dekker, a co-leader of the Dekker-Schmandt Eurythmy School in Forest Row. Our task was to explore the pedagogical significance of the rod exercises.

Exercises using copper rods are an important feature of the eurythmy curriculum. They also have other therapeutic uses, which in this case was not the focus of our study. We explored the four basic exercises, recognising that each exercise can be used with many variations.

Our research method was quite simple and consisted of a series of steps.

1. We began by doing the exercises together and discussing how we experienced them.
2. We discussed the origin of the exercises.
3. We experimented with different sizes and weights of rods to get a feeling for their effectiveness in supporting different aspects of the exercises.
4. We reviewed the curriculum use of the various exercises and why they are used in the various classes.
5. Finally we attempted to describe how each exercise might affect the individual and therefore what its pedagogical value actually is.

The detailed outcomes of this research, which is by no means complete, will be published in due course in a research journal. However, a few preliminary observations can be made.

The rod exercises were introduced by Steiner specifically as preparatory exercises designed to assist the individual tune their bodily organism so that it can become a skilful medium capable of expressing the *essence of human movement itself*.² The aim of the rod exercises is to gradually free the bodily organism of any hindrances that might prevent it from being an organ of the soul permeable to spiritual impulses.

This somewhat concentrated definition needs a



little unpacking. Firstly the assumption is that spirit can come to expression through movement, or put the other way round, movement is a non-physical but nevertheless real being in its own right. Spiritual content—and this could for example be thoughts, aesthetic ideas or individual intentions—can come to expression through the spiritual medium of movement made tangible and sense-perceptible through the human body. Mediating this is the human soul. To simplify the matter even further we can say: an idea is experienced and made conscious in the soul, and this comes to expression through gesture and the movement of the individual. In this sense thought becomes visible, just as thought can also become audible in spoken speech.

We are familiar with this process in its unconscious form, namely in body language. The gestures, movements and posture an individual adopts can be 'read' as an expression of thoughts and feelings. In eurythmy this process is intensified. In eurythmy as an art something of the essence of a piece of music or poetry can be made visible. The intrinsic and fundamental elements of music and language, from the primary sounds of the vowels and consonants, and the individual musical tones, to the most complex elements of composition, can be expressed through eurythmical gesture. In other words their spiritual form can be experienced and translated into movement. The process is not simply that of an impulse resounding in an instrument (like air being blown through a hollow reed, or the percussive force on a taught skin). The impulse is first individualised through the human soul.

In artistic eurythmy there is always a layer of conscious intention beyond the content of the material itself. There is choreography, selection of text and artistic interpretation. In therapeutic eurythmy it is more the case that an archetypal process is 'enacted'. This might be a process of contraction or expansion, or it might be immersion in

the qualities that belong to a particular consonant, sequence of consonants, or to a particular rhythm. Through the 'enacting' of the consonantal form, for example, the soul draws a spiritual process into itself though the actual movement.

Educational eurythmy stands somewhere between the artistic and therapeutic processes. The teacher's understanding of the developmental needs of the child enables him or her to combine both of these elements. What then is the educational value of eurythmy and what do the rod exercises contribute to this process?

As stated at the beginning of this article, education has the task of helping children harmonise their development. Development means, at least in Steiner's use of the term, an inner determining principle (the individuality of the child) striving to come to ever more complete expression through the biological organism within a given social and cultural context. Children have to make themselves at home in the body whose form they have inherited through the familiar genetic channels. This body has to become an instrument of their intentions. (*I want to reach that apple on the table; I want to formulate the following ideas and communicate them to my Mum.*) Furthermore, individuals have to structure and order the experiences they have in the world in such a way that they can remember them, form concepts, link ideas, comprehend feelings and relate to the world—in other words all the things that belong to the soul life of an individual. All this happens within a given social setting, culture and language. Throughout the course of his or her biography the individual strives continuously to individualise this whole process, which really means to give the individuality an ever clearer voice. This individuality is the spiritual core, the 'I' of the person.

This brief description, I think, makes abundantly clear why eurythmy has a key role in education. It is an activity that enables the spiritual impulses at work within an individual to find expression first in the soul and then through the body. This should not necessarily be seen as a process tied to this strict sequence. The child might imitate a eurythmical movement made by the teacher, experience it, and only later awaken in consciousness to what the movement contains as spiritual impulse. A professional eurythmist as artist may first work with a piece of music, explore its intrinsic qualities, interpret it and then derive an appropriate form for it, before, as it were, it becomes eurythmy. The child imitating the teacher bypasses the preparation and simply does the movement. Even here, however, there are at least two fundamental preconditions.

Firstly the child's feeling life must be engaged or the movement may be mechanical. Therefore the experience requires a picture. The activity is introduced through a description, an image which stimulates the children to re-create pictures in their own mind's eye. When the movement is shown, the children join in and participate, thus linking the movement and gestures with an image they already have within them. This image is naturally an individually coloured version of the archetypal reality behind the eurythmy gestures themselves and the content of the poem or music. Therefore the picture has to be well-chosen and designed to appeal to the child at various ages.

The second precondition is that the child's movement organisation and body are sufficiently in harmony for the movement content of the eurythmy to be experienced at all. If the child is so uncomfortable in her own body or if she is so detached from her own experience there will be too much resistance and hindrance for the spirit as it were to resonate. The child will not experience much, other than physical discomfort, often in the form of tiredness, clumsiness or heaviness in the arms. In other words, the child is experiencing the physicality of gravity rather than levity, of rhythm and pure movement.

To this end the rod exercises are designed to loosen the child's burden. The different exercises do so in different ways. The rod itself plays an important role. It gives the child something in the hand that makes the movements more visible. More importantly, the child experiences movement in the weight, texture and temperature of the rod. The length of the rod relates to the length of the arm. The thickness provides sufficient tactile contact without being unwieldy. The weight is sufficient to be conscious of the arms but not too heavy as to tire them out too quickly. Interestingly, some therapeutic exercises require particularly heavy rods made of solid copper, precisely because this weight is important as extra resistance. In most exercises the rod is held balanced in the middle, which therefore draws the warmth down into the child's hands and fingers.

In moving the rod, the individual experiences his or her own movements extended into the immediate surrounding space. This has the effect of drawing the field of proprioceptive perception (that is the body's monitoring of its own boundaries and the totality of its movements in space) outwards. The extension of this field of perception into the immediate surrounding space has a loosening effect. The



(Above and on facing page) the front and back positions of the 12-fold exercise.

movement of the rod supports the perception of the individual's own movement by amplifying it.

This leads to the question as to when this experience is appropriate. There is a feeling that until children have acquired the ability to distance themselves from their environment, and experience themselves as separate from it, the rod exercises will not have the desired effect. That means in practice after the ninth year, often known as the 'Rubicon' of self-awareness. Nor should the rod exercises be learned primarily through imitation because they are most effective when the child establishes the form and movement out of themselves. They need, as it were, to impose the structure on themselves as a conscious act, much as balancing a spinning plate on a stick requires active inner participation. This aspect of rod exercises certainly also suggests that age 9 is a watershed in this respect.

One interesting aspect of the exercises which became apparent was that they appear to need relatively little picture support. In contrast to a poem or piece of music these exercises need to stand on their own, with minimal imaging. Rather they require accurate instructions, concerning the positions of the arms, the sequence of movements and so on. This element emphasises their exercise character. The precision that some of the exercises require, calls for clarity of 'mental picture' as to what is being asked for. Instructing the child that the rod should, for example, be held in a vertical position directly in front of the left shoulder, with the lower hand directly below the upper hand etc.—requires little imaginative picturing. The precision that is attained is the result of the child's ability to structure his or her awareness of movement and bodily position from



within. In order to do so they have to have an accurate inner picture of what is required. To quote Martin Baker, leader of the spatial dynamics training at Michael Hall, Sussex: "If you can picture it, you can do it."

The 7-fold exercise³ requires the greatest amount of precision. The spatial relationships are more important than the paths from one position to the next. Certainly from the perspective of the layperson, this is surprising. We are used to try to move from one position to another with fluidity. It is not that this is not required. It is more that the position the arms and the rod come into are more important, consciously filling the passage of space between them. This gives the exercise a strongly formal, frontal and centred feel to it. The physical experience of space in its co-ordinates up-down and right-left, and particularly the correct angles, are paramount. These directions are experienced as objective external qualities. In its basic form the exercise is done in standing but it can also be carried out whilst walking a simple forwards, sideways and backwards form.

The 12-fold exercise has a much stronger element of rhythm to it. There is a flow and breathing quality to the movements, with an in-breath as the rod is raised at the front and behind the body, and an out-breath as the rod is moved down again. This is enhanced by the spiral sequence of the whole exercise. There is also a strong element of tension and relaxation, bending and stretching. The movements are kept close to the body as the rod moves from front to back and up and down. This gives a strong sense of being in the centre of a flowing movement. This exercise has several variations.

The next sequence of exercises—in which finger dexterity and a fluid mobility of the arms and in particular the wrists all feature—clearly engages not

only fine motor skills but also a fine balance between lightness of touch, control and rhythm, which provide a basis for what can only be described as gracefulness of movement.

The fourth exercise, that known as the *waterfall*, involves the strongest feeling yet for the quality of space around one. Following a distinct and rhythmical sequence of movement, the rod is raised over the head and placed behind the neck just above the shoulders and then dropped behind the body. The hands then have to move rapidly to catch the rod as it falls. This exercise not only includes a strong element of front and back but also requires a confidence in letting go behind one's back. This awakens a consciousness for the space behind, which, given our frontal posture and way of facing the world, has a liberating effect of opening up a space usually hidden, not only from view but from consciousness (illustrated on p.13).

I hope from these brief descriptions it begins to become clearer what the pedagogical value of these exercises might be and that they work in a realm barely touched by other educational activities, with the exception of gymnastics. What distinguishes them from gymnastics, however, is the fact that although as exercises they are formal and have a strongly physical basis, they are nevertheless essentially musical in their composition, not only because they are often accompanied by piano music or the beating of a tambourine. Their structure is akin to tuning exercises or scales in music, in which arpeggios or chords are practised. It is not that melodies are played but rather musical elements are highlighted and exercised. The engagement of the soul is modest but essential, so that the spiritual quality of the space can be experienced.

Martyn Rawson was co-founder of the York Steiner School. After taking a class through eight years there, he has taught in several places, including Michael Hall, England and the 'original' Waldorf school, Stuttgart. His specialities include a wide range of Upper School subjects and the teaching of Modern Languages.

1. The author recently edited the *Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*, published in 2000 jointly by the Pedagogical Section in Dornach and the Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications.

2. This is a paraphrase of how Steiner described Eurythmy in the book *Eurythmy as Visible Speech*.

3. Detailed descriptions of the exercises can be found in Annemarie Dubach-Donath's book *The Basic Principles of Eurythmy*, Rudolf Steiner Press, Chapter 1.

You Only Die Twice

by ALEXANDER ZUNDEL

I recently stood pondering the possible value of purchasing the book perched in front of me on the shelf in London's largest bookstore, Foyles. The title of the book was at once intriguing and repellent: *Love Lives of the Great Composers* by Basil Howitt.

"I want something that will catch the imagination," I thought—"something that will move earth and heaven, but speaks out of a real person, an authentic character." I opened the book and began to read about Beethoven walking, or should I say striding, up and down the 'fashionable promenade' from ten in the morning till six at night with his coat hanging on a stick over his shoulders, making the Emperor, the Empress and the Court stand aside for him, and how he would stride furiously around Vienna, red face blazing, hat on the back of his head, coat tails flying and sagging with the weight of books crammed into his pockets, singing—roaring—at the top of his voice. This was just what I was looking for, perfect to catch the imagination of the young 18/21-year-olds I would soon be teaching music—youngsters with disabilities. "There will be other things in this book leaning towards the politically incorrect or extreme, far 'worse' than this hearty image of an artist," I thought. Just enough for breakfast!?

Love and passion in all its forms is something which plays a large and immediate part in the lives of all idealistic adolescents and teenagers, not to mention 'big kids' or just ordinary adults.

Why is it that youngsters crave this exhibitionistic self-expression, this Dionysian flamboyance—the qualities which somebody like Beethoven lived out in virtually everything he did. He poured jugs of water over his head when he overheated whilst composing, he lost his temper, he lost his chamber music under his dirty washing, and finally he lost his hearing and the company of many fellow human beings. Still he found depths of feeling and human emotion which lifted music into new heights of grandeur, heights of the greatest humanity.

We may answer briefly this 'why' with the words *inner experience*. Youngsters want to experience the extreme—their unconscious driving motive being... freedom.

Rudolf Steiner spoke about the liberating forces of music in various lectures, how in music (that is, in rhythm and tone) cosmic entities pour through our souls, 'setting them free'. Through engaging in

musical activity of a genuine kind we actually achieve something for the future of ourselves and for humanity—our astral organisation (soul) is becoming liberated, goes through transformation. Not only is it purified, not only does it experience beauty, but it actually *becomes* beauty. In the activity of being musical we develop ourselves away from the prison of necessity into the blissful existence of beauty.

There is no better word to describe the driving force, the hidden longing of every intense and idealistic young person than the word *becoming*. They are nonconformists extraordinaire—of course they are—because they don't want to stay put, but become. But it is not just anything that they want to become; in fact, as an anthroposophist one may recognise in each and every one of them the becoming of three virtues: truth, beauty and goodness.

But the youngsters of today are disillusioned, they are the Samurai of the East in the metropolis of the West. They demand the absolute to the point of death in the face of all adversity. They believe but cannot always find. Society is laced with toxins and cruel concoctions specially for the 'inner need'. In education we must administer a different medicine, indeed a preventive and healing one, a nourishing and life-preserving one.

Society has changed rapidly and violently in the last five years. Globalisation's draconian demands have eroded cultural life, spiritual values, the fabric of human-spiritual relationships. Why is this so? Because we are on the whole living in a mono-culture of a bi-polar world. *Bi-polar*, because of a firmly established yet entirely unhealthy economic-political axis which pushes the soul-spiritual further and further into the background; and *mono-culture*, because the economic forces of capitalism, based on a neo-Darwinistic world view, drag us all in the same direction, like helpless creatures caught in a gigantic trawling net.

Even if as adults we do not want to see this reality, our children and our teenagers see it and sense it, or, one should say, experience it all too clearly—mono-culture where peer-pressure holds sway and bi-polarised ideas, where there is no room to be Beethoven for very long.

The human being is a tri-polar being, a being of

body, soul and spirit, not merely of body and soul. This is what the younger generation is asking us to realise; this is our task as educated adults. Especially in the realm of Steiner education, one endeavours to establish this threefold reality—one tries to work with it, strengthen it.

But what about the bi-polar world, one may ask, shouldn't we fix that first? The short answer to this question is 'no'. *Threefolding always comes from inside outwards*. That is, human beings are threefold and this, if strengthened, will bring threefolding forces into the world.

The task of the Waldorf teacher is first and foremost to educate in a threefold way: not only body, soul and spirit, but also the trinity of soul forces: thinking, feeling and willing.

Rudolf Steiner speaks about the three soul forces on many occasions, thinking as a torch of truth, feeling as the grail of beauty and willing as the way to goodness, and this is what they might become—three powerful tools in the hands of the human spirit.

The teenager's head-over-heels craving for boundless experience needs to find a harness in the birth of the ego or spiritual centre within the threefold soul forces at age 21. The soul seeks liberation. One of the means to such liberation of the astral organisation is music. Other arts also bring such a freeing from the 'prison', but though this liberation of the astral may be the taming of the lion, it is not yet the taming of the lion-tamer! Young people of today want to find the golden island, the secret place, the king's throne. They seek to find the way to self-mastery, this is their second craving. The commercial world of movies with its larger-than-life characters is food for this craving, but this merging of circumstances needs to be found in the complete inversion of the James Bond idiom 'You only die twice'. To experience the profound mystery of the decadent death-like forces of modern culture, as a call to re-awaken to a *second life in spirit* is what is staring us in the face, and this, through nothing more urgent and compelling than the cry of our children in the wilderness of a strangled society.

In summary, young people need to *feel* free in their soul-life in their astral organisation, but they also need to take the reins of the soul and lead it by the way of self-mastery, as a task beyond the age of 21, to new pastures, to new arenas of culture where spiritual content can abide, where soul and spirit can both find each other in freedom.

As educators or responsible adults we can nourish and guide young people in this direction. To educate the three soul forces of thinking, feeling and willing, instead of feeding information to the intellect in a

disharmonious way, leads to self-empowerment, to creativity of individuals. Beethoven was great because he broke the 'classical dogma' through the originality of his own passionate soul. Garibaldi was great because out of inner conviction born of self-mastery he inspired men to free their nation.

Young people of today wish to follow these ideals, but we must show them which key opens the door into the creative mind, teach them the language of the heart. It is *awe of themselves* which we must teach them. Great individuals like Beethoven and Garibaldi changed history; through their lives we can inspire a sense of the strength of the individual spirit as opposed to merely fictional heroes on a 'mission impossible'.

The striving for meaning in life is fundamental, whether it be as truth, beauty or goodness—in the 'mummy and daddy' world of the toddler, the heart-string-straining exclamations and questionings of the 'lover sighing like furnace', or the teenager's extravagant and exotic rumblings through virtual reality and the 'gardens of the forbidden fruit'.

In the epic poem of Parzival by Wolfram von Eschenbach, which forms part of the Class 11 curriculum in Waldorf schools, Parzival represents the search for this meaning, but the character Gawain represents 'the way of the heart'. This way, the way of Gawain, is the way which many youngsters seek to be *and are going*.

Gawain is a dauntless knight of the sword. He is invincible amongst Arthurian knights, but gets himself into trouble because of his natural candour where the ladies are concerned and his overt compassion. This naive directness and spontaneity of emotion are too much for the dampened and languid natures he meets (adults!) upon his adventures. Impetuousness and passion all too readily get the better of him and so, in search of catharsis and self-mastery, he turns, like Parzival, to the Grail quest. But it is the very qualities of compassion and warmth of heart which save the day. Parzival falls into a trance from which he cannot awake, but Gawain has pity on him and wakes him up.

Many other knights pass Parzival by without so much as a thought for his predicament. He is trapped, caught up in agony of mind which, though illumined by the idealistic imaginative vision of undefiled growth, cannot find its place in the world. Parzival is destined to find the Holy Grail, yet he is helpless. Gawain chanced upon him and lends him the forces of the heart which set him free.

After this meeting between idealised vision which has become paralysed, and compassionate *deed*,

Gawain embarks on further adventures. We hear how a powerful king lays siege, on unjust grounds to a city called Beaurisch. Gawain joins the defenders of the city, in the name of justice, but one of the assailants is the fearsome Red Knight himself—Parzival! Why is Parzival fighting on the wrong side? The one who will achieve the Grail is fighting on the side of evil.

The assailant king is captured, the Red Knight departs invincible and Gawain also comes away victorious and unscathed.

Gawain travels on until he approaches a sumptuous natural paradise of fruit trees, murmuring brooks, scented valleys and distant strains of tantalising music which seemed to be floating towards him from a nearby city. This is the City of Logrois, and half wrapped in ecstasy, he beholds the beauty of beauties. There, sitting beside a spring was the Duchess of Logrois. A paragon, sublime and earthly all in one! Gawain asked her politely if he could be her knight—she dismissed him with icy scorn. She told him that he must bring her horse to her—on exchange of this she called him a goose! Whatever Gawain did, was met with mockery. Gawain eventually becomes angry, losing his temper, which the duchess dresses with words: “I love to see you furious.” The insults continue but Gawain undergoes a self-initiation. After some time he says to the dark, lascivious beauty the following words: “The more you mock me the more you will want to make it up to me later.” Passion has been tempered by forbearance. Indeed here a secret of the character is revealed. It is all an allegory of the soul. The Duchess of Logrois is Gawain’s unredeemed heart forces, which he must now begin to come to terms with. But this is not the only symbolic character. The poet had already said, after the battle of Beaurisch: “Two hearts that are not one have shown their strength in fierce enmity,” pointing to the fact that Parzival and Gawain are in fact the same person! And now it seems that Gawain meets characters which are, again, nothing but aspects of his own soul.

But what of the battle of Beaurisch—why was Parzival on the wrong side? Gawain is a knight of the sword, but Parzival is a knight of the ‘word’—a knight of the thinking spirit. They are different; Gawain must oppose evil, he must fight on the side of the good. But how can injustice be overcome in the world; how can the bi-polar world become a tri-polar world which balances out the perpetual conflict of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, equality and inequality, aggression and pacifism, tyranny and anarchy, truth and falsity?

Parzival symbolises the light growing in the

darkness. Parzival is on the side of evil, because he can transform the evil from the *inside*, from his own inner nature. He does not fight outwardly against injustice, but enters the dragon and irradiates his blackness.

Gawain has not learnt to do this yet and so takes the path of ‘outer’ conflict. But how can one oppose evil outwardly without being drawn into evil oneself? This is Gawain’s dilemma—the dilemma of many a well-meaning ‘freedom fighter’. Parzival is powerless without Gawain, because Gawain is love. Gawain is meaningless without Parzival because Parzival is purity.

Gawain’s soul becomes free when he passes through the experience of the castle of wonders, where all the powers of seduction and allurements must be met and conquered. The Duchess of Logrois, Orgeluse, as she is called, at once falls to her knees transformed into the kindest and gentlest creature, bestowing upon Gawain only the tenderest feelings.

Parzival, being one and the same with Gawain has found a place for his idealistic vision, in the compassion and social forces of the heart. Gawain ‘tames’ the lion in the castle of wonders and Parzival tames the lion-tamer and finds the Grail.

So it is with Steiner education. Its task is to embrace the whole human being as a three-fold soul-spiritual being on the path to a greater humanity. Humanity is what is being demanded by the younger generation, but this means the ‘freeing’ of the astral forces and the steering of the ship.

But what about the great men and women of the past—it seems that they don’t make them like that any more these days? Young people are looking for something more than ideas. It is their *will forces* which they seek to put to service. Rudolf Steiner himself was a unique thinker in the respect that he went beyond ideas. Goethe, his predecessor in the realm of ‘free thought’, was satisfied with ideas and their power of inspiration, but Steiner harnessed ideas and used them to penetrate to the reality of *being*.

This is where we stand now as educationists. What is the being of the child? What is the being of the adolescent, the teenager, the human? What is the being of education itself, of society? It is a threefold being and this being must come to life once more.

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Fat-, Big-, Seven-, Soft-, Large- and Small-Headed are Not All Undesirables

Cracking one of the tougher nuts in Steiner's view of education

by BRIEN MASTERS

When the successful, if rare and unplanned, mating of a sheep with a goat occurred last year, the breeder being interviewed (BBC 4 News, 6 June 2000) was quick to come up with what her expert’s eye saw. “*It’s all lamb. You can tell by looking at it.*” Initially she was emphatic. But something of a summery mood prevailed and the amicable conversation meandered on, longer and more leisurely perhaps than if it had had to compete with newsworthiness such as the outcrop of BSE among French and German cattle, that assailed Europe in the later autumn, bringing unprecedented chagrin to both the farming and political worlds. Try as he might, the interviewer couldn’t persuade his expert to budge on the new-born being anything other than ‘all lamb’. He did, however, manage to get her light-heartedly to admit, in her closing words: “It’s the *liveliest* little lamb I’ve ever seen!” How he resisted quipping: “Perhaps the creature’s just kidding,” is hard to imagine. Be that as it may, it goes to show that just as ‘mutton dressed as lamb’ is sheer human vanity designed to deceive the sharp-sighted sharks perpetually swimming around our cocktail- and appearance-besotted society, so also ‘goat dressed as lamb’ can just as well escape the ‘partially’ sighted, to whom only externalities are visible as a direct result of their habitual mode of positivist thinking.

Steiner’s views were in marked contrast to positivism. He insisted that anthroposophy was extremely practical—more practical, he claimed, than that vein of materialism that lacked awareness of the *spiritual* dimension of the *matter* that was the ‘the matter hand’. A striking case in point was his warning that the ox:-

“possesses forces... that can [transform]... plant into meat... What would happen if the ox were to eat meat directly instead of plants? It would lead all the forces that can produce flesh unused... the unused energy in the ox’s body cannot simply be lost, so the ox is finally filled with it, and this pent-up force does something in him other than

produce flesh from plant substances. It produces waste products. Instead of flesh, harmful substances [would be] produced. Therefore, if an ox were suddenly to turn into a meat eater, it would fill itself with all kinds of harmful substances such as uric acid and urates. Now... the specific effects of urates are expressed in a particular affinity for the nervous system and the brain. The result is that if an ox were to consume meat directly, large amounts of urates would be secreted; they would enter the brain, and the ox would go crazy” (13 January 1923).

With hindsight, one sometimes wonders what it must have been like for someone with the inner perceptions that Steiner had developed. Without being a prophet of doom, there must have been moments when it seemed as though, despite enlarging on his perspectives with the utmost clarity, no-one seemed inclined to make ethical use of the vantage point he had gained. One can talk till the cows come home, but to what purpose, if nothing but deaf ears are turned? Sadly, when this particular ‘cow’ did come home, the evidence bore out all too tragically what he had predicted.¹

But even if Waldorf were confined to Kindergarten provision (as is mostly the case with Montessori), the



*Subtle but clear contrasts in character projected onto a page of form drawing.
Photo: Alik Sapountzi.*

-garten component would hardly justify all this lambing and kidding and BSE-ing. My strategy here is to draw heavily on the example in the hope that I can refer in this article, in an acceptable way, to empirical research alongside indications of Steiner's that focuses on the *physical* characteristics in human beings.

I am acutely aware that the matter is fragile. We are witnesses of a growing climate wherein we slate one another at the slightest provocation—both on political platforms and through the media. Elsewhere too. At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, we are wary of making remarks that trespass on one another's *bodily* 'space'. Litigation is making hay out of this. Expressions like big-headed, lily-livered, a face that would turn the milk sour—and one could readily come up with a dozen others, some of which sink into obscenities—may all be very well among the fishmongers of Nova Scotia, or in the opening scenes of Shaw's *Pygmalion*, but not any more in 'polite society'. A recent radio review of Bernard Shaw's writings as a music critic—*delectably entertaining, it has to be said*—having unashamedly made as much broadcasting mileage out of the ubiquitously slanderous 'purple passages', ended with a rather hollow sounding whimper: "He wouldn't get away with it now." Such is our supposedly caring society which in looser moments wouldn't jib at fable-like connotations such as: cunning old fox, a bit of a bitch, eagle-eyed, made a pig of myself, feathering his own nest... We find such expressions in all languages and, as may be seen from the above Anglo-Saxon examples, they belong linguistically not to the varnish, paint and stucco of foreign invaders daubed onto the façade of our vocabulary, but to the original timbered framework of the language.

The horrifying crimes of the last century that were perpetuated against people because of their physical background (heredity, family etc.) made pointed reference to such matters essentially taboo for decades. And the flood waters of 'ethnic cleansing'—alas that such diametric opposites as *cleansing* and *clean* should have the same linguistic root!—show precious little signs of abating. One might equally wonder what progress we are making to overcome residual attitudes from the days when 'racism' was rife. When its ugly head subsides in one place, it rears up in another. True, we keep making efforts to repair the catch on the lid of the offensive Jack-in-the-box, but we never seem to realise that it's its *spring* that needs removing, and that unless we can do that, no catch will ever be strong enough to hold permanently.

But fragile does not mean untouchable. It *does* mean delicate handling; and there are some helpful precedents. Therefore, on the assumption that attitudes

towards *physiological* differences are progressing sympathetically, I shall proceed to cite some of the empirical research that is symptomatic of that progress, only too aware that my gleanings in this sphere are random and minimal. Three examples should suffice, the third thrown in to demonstrate that we can even enjoy a certain amount of flippancy over such matters without it being condemned as bad taste—a sure sign, I would say, that attitudes are veering towards the tolerant and that past wounds are healing. One has only to think of the recent research that has been carried out into the different thinking habits of east and west, or the lengths to which we are going to understand special needs such as autism or dyslexia, or the educational revolution now taking place in places such as South Africa where the worthily acclaimed Mandela era fanfared the collapse of a racist Berlin wall that celebrated the closing years of a century smeared with social indignity. Taken as a whole, it certainly suggests that discerning researchers *are* beginning to read 'spirit' between the empirical lines—that the lively goatness of the little lamb is no longer escaping notice, but clearly leaping out from the quantifiably plain, four-legged facts.

In the child's best interests

The trail which Steiner blazed in this respect—smoke-screened though it became last century by the tragic events of the holocaust and the like—leads to vitally important aspects of child study. Letting the pioneer Waldorf teachers down gently, he introduced them already before the opening of school to physiological features that would indicate the nature of the child's *temperament*.² For Steiner, the metaphysical aspect of the four temperaments was something that needed carrying over into modern thinking from the knowledge that derived from Greek and Medieval tradition, making it one of the several indispensable pedagogical tools of the teacher. He linked its educational relevance to the manner in which each temperament *showed interest* in and *maintained interest* in a particular topic. This is an absorbing and valuable study in itself which ideally needs to be launched already during teacher training and continually overhauled in teacher education.

But leaving this distinctive feature of Waldorf pedagogy at a mere mention, the aspect of child study I intend to turn to here is that of large- and small-headedness (a) because it is potentially more controversial and therefore needs to be embarked upon with the kind of delicacy that has been referred to; (b) because it is a theme which Steiner related to the deeper aspects of the child's nature—the child's nature arguably being the corner-stone of Waldorf; and (c)

because it comes poignantly into the same category of current research as mentioned above.

Large and small is a polarity that is more obvious at first sight than the polarities which Steiner indicated in the four temperaments. In empirical research recently published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences* (and reported last year in *The Independent* 26 September 2000), the size of head was connected, not surprisingly, with IQ. The psychologists carrying out the research were connected with the University of Western Ontario. Their findings were based on the measurements of width, height and length of the upper head, measurements which were then correlated with the results of intelligence tests that the respondents were asked to undertake. In a nutshell, the consistencies revealed by the figures were: *large heads, more intelligent; small heads, less intelligent*. However, true to scientific discipline, the researchers also reported on what seems to be an inconsistency, namely that head *height* was "negatively correlated with IQ". This already tempts one to join the suspicious camp whose argument is perhaps best summarised as: the cars inside large garages are not necessarily always large. What gives cause for further surprise, and seems to have escaped other commentators, is that only IQ tests were applied. What about *Emotional Quota*? Has Daniel Goleman's work made so little impression? Perhaps a clue may be found in a comment in the last paragraph of the article in which the research was reported: "One consolation for small-headed men is that, although size can matter, not all 16cm men are necessarily geniuses. Indeed *some may well be fat-heads* in the more traditional sense of the word" (my emphasis). Leaving aside that to ignore EQ in such an exercise may be a small-headed thing to do—perhaps the researchers would care to make the data of their 'top storeys' available?—let us turn at this point towards the trail that Steiner blazed.

In doing so it will be instructive to consider next a point Steiner made in lectures he gave to the original Waldorf teachers in June 1921. The school had been running for some two years, during which regular teachers' meetings, child studies, visits by Steiner to classes, and educational lectures had taken place. As part of such 'best practice', the end of the school year was a natural time to take stock. Assessment in sober style. This was the setting in which Steiner came to speak of two 'types' of children that showed polar opposite tendencies, each type requiring differing pedagogical treatment. He termed these polar types 'cosmic' and 'earthly'. The cosmic child could be recognised physiologically by a "plastic forming of the head"; the earthly child had "a plastic moulding of the rest of the organism, notably the limbs".

The pedagogical treatment was as follows. For the cosmic child: give particular encouragement to "the subjects more connected with thought... history, geography, literature etc." In doing this, Steiner urged the teachers "not to *stay* in the realm of thoughts and contemplation". This meant that, for instance, when "teaching history, you will need to... imbue the lessons with strong personal interest... Geology becomes quite fascinating when the teacher has a deep and sympathetic understanding for the various rocks and stones that s/he describes". Steiner acknowledged that this would be difficult in many cases—he was talking to highly educated people in an age when academia was certainly not leading down this track. But, he insisted, "it is actually the case that what we impart with feeling, fosters the growth of the child's own inner life." Teaching which remained in the realm of ideas was comparatively dead, leaving 'reflected pictures' which called on the child to work only with the head; whereas material treated in the way that Steiner was recommending would "reach what is found in the blood"—thus having great significance for the "here and now". It was in such ways, not only in the more obvious subjects of arts and crafts, that Steiner sought to imbue the education with qualities that would result in the pupils making relationships to the practical life.

The treatment for the 'earthly' type led toward the arts—for example, painting, music and eurythmy. "Try to help [such children] appreciate music that passes over... from the melancholic minor into major." And foreseeing the problem here: "Even where a child shows very little talent for these, we should take the greatest pains to call forth the little he has."

How different is this approach from one where we stream children according to those subjects they are best at. Presumably, that kind of streaming tends to force the two types to extremes: the cosmic type to be too withheld, too up in the air (unpractical? unworkable? airy fairy? otherworldly? removed?); the earthly type to be in danger of becoming too entrapped in matter, too down to earth (dully pragmatic? uninspiring? sparkless? bureaucratically red-taped?). We may also take it, from Steiner's indication, that he had no fears that the two types would lose their natural bent, no fears of identity changes from one extreme to the other, that 'the second state of that man would be worse than the first'. Nor is he veering towards the vapid concept of 'balancing out'. It is more a question of *supplementing* than balancing out. But however one reflects on the indications, the teachers' task increases, both in substance and in responsibility.

Objective observation

It is becoming more and more widely known that

Steiner's spiritual-scientific inner discipline meant that it could be decades before he gave out the 'tried and tested' fruits of his research. It doesn't take much arithmetic to realise that the initial spadework of all his research must have taken place in the last quarter of the 19th century. Furthermore, if there is *one* key-stone to his whole corpus, it is surely his concept of the threefold nature of the human being, something to which he himself returned time and again, always in new guises—as in, for instance, "By far the most important thing to aim for in our whole cultivation of school health is that the teacher absorbs right into his very flesh and blood a feeling for the threefold nature of the human organism."

Steiner was speaking at a teachers' meeting at the Waldorf School at which the school doctor, Dr Kolisko, was also present. It was the occasion on which Steiner pointed out that all children belong either to the type in which the nerve-sense organism is not in order, or the opposite: the metabolic-limbs organisation. He goes on to exhort the teachers "to develop a potential for noticing how the children express themselves so that this reveals to you what you have to do with the child to bring its health into complete balance." Steiner gave what amounted to a lecturette, indicating the *medical* treatment for these predominances where they become too extreme, at the same time making it clear that it was not just the concern of the school doctor: "...every teacher should develop an eye for these things."

For the teacher, there were *symptoms* that one or the other polarity was not in order. The large-headed child could be too red-faced and lack the ability to discriminate mentally; while the small-headed child was often pale-faced and weak in imagination and synthetic thought. Again, the teacher's opportunity was to support both types in overcoming their weakness. In observing their symptoms, adjusting their pedagogy accordingly and providing suitable activities for the two types, the teacher would be working "prophylactically".

Unless one bears in mind that Steiner is always talking about *whole-class teaching*, one might be inclined to argue that there is an incipient danger in this approach, namely: in fostering the weaker sides of the child's nature, the teacher is ipso facto neglecting the child's strengths with the consequence that *neglect* might lead to *atrophy*.

Three considerations will help to allay this fear. The first is relatively obvious to anyone familiar with the classroom: in practice, the teacher just *won't* neglect a pupil's strengths. The promising painter's paintings are going to get plenty of teacher-praise and admiration from the rest of the class. While similarly, the talented draughtsman, or the very skilled embroiderer, or the

quick-to-grasp grammarian will constantly be having their fairshare of spotlight. At the same time, school life will not be a somewhat boring sinecure for the specially gifted, after which they can't wait to get home to their lavish programmes of entertainment. Yes, they will hoe and tend the crops in the well cultivated fields, but equally, yes, they will deep plough the fallow field as part of the way towards a better future.

Secondly, one should not lose sight of the fact that in whole-class teaching, each pupil is tuned in the whole time. While the teacher is making efforts to 'reach' the small-headed type—and has them particularly in mind—the large-headed type, through the process of individuation, are soaking up her pedagogical approach *because it is their 'natural' element*. And vice versa.

Thirdly, there is the perspective of neuropsychology. The by now orthodox thinking about the brain will detect that in Steiner's small- and large-headed types are qualities related to the right and left hemispheres. Right-hemisphered thinking bears a resemblance to large-headed; left-hemisphered thinking bears a resemblance to small-headed. If one of these hemispheres is by nature stronger, supporting the other hemisphere does not only have significance in itself: it gives added support across to the other side of the brain.

It is somewhat puzzling that, in an age where various aspects of the *physical* body loom so large in life, we should be squeamish about too much reference to the physical nature of child development. Perhaps, encouraged by the endless care that Steiner took over such matters, we who are at the chalk face can strengthen our work by making detailed observations and taking direct action as a result.

Brien Masters has been involved in education at all levels of the Steiner sector for over forty years. His main publications comprise resource material for classroom use—readers, poetry, songs. Dr Masters' world-wide lecturing and workshops focus principally on educational themes, music and the development of human consciousness as seen in the light of anthroposophy.

1 Even after identifying cattle feed containing animal protein as the cause of BSE, the problem continued, as the feed was 'dumped' on—and, of course, cheaply bought by—German farmers, thus spreading the disease to hitherto unaffected areas. (see Independent 25 Nov 2000).

2 Many other features, too, as an inspection of the lectures quickly reveals. I have chosen the temperaments here, since the topic can give rise to more subjective reactions than others, and therefore fits well into the category of 'fragility' needing tactful handling.

Commemorating the Centenary of Karl Julius Schröer— Educationist and teacher of Rudolf Steiner

by DAVID WOOD

The 16th December 2000 marked the 100th anniversary of the death of Karl Julius Schröer (1825-1900)—Rudolf Steiner's great teacher. Schröer has become particularly well-known in our time due to his efforts in collecting and publishing the Oberufer Christmas Plays. In addition, his remarkable and prolific Goethe studies may also be counted among his most enduring literary legacies. —These studies include detailed introductions and commentaries on *Faust* and the other Goethean dramas, as well as the sublime little book, *Goethe and Love* (now available in English translation, Mercury Press, New York, 2000).

However, one aspect of Schröer's work that has received surprisingly little attention are his writings on education. In the 1870s, as a result of many years of teaching activity at schools and colleges in Pressburg (Bratislava), Budapest and Vienna, Schröer published a collection of 28 essays entitled *Questions of Education* (*Unterrichtsfragen* Sallmayer und Comp., Vienna 1873; 2nd ed, 1876). This little volume covered a vast array of educational issues, and was later called by Steiner "one of the pearls of pedagogical literature". Yet the book is still virtually entirely unknown despite, for example, Rudolf Steiner further praising it in his autobiography—where he relates how the book and his numerous discussions with Schröer were a decisive influence on the development of his own educational views. Because K. J. Schröer's ideas were directly forged out of his extensive and practical experiences, Rudolf Steiner believed they could be successfully applied far beyond the Austria of that time. Thus 40 years after *Questions of Education* was published Steiner could still write: "What one may nowadays term obsolete in this work from 1876 does not really come into consideration in regard to such a lively art of thinking. This art of thinking which has its basis in a rich life experience continues to remain fruitful,

even when later generations have to apply it to entirely new conditions." (*The Riddle of Man*, Chapter 6.)

The following piece by K. J. Schröer is from the first edition of *Questions of Education* (pp.94-110); it is a write-up of a lecture entitled *Some thoughts on the imagination and the teaching of the German language*, originally delivered in Vienna on the 8th July 1870, to the XIX General Conference of German Teachers. We now present it in English, with additional sub-headings, as a small commemoration of the centenary anniversary mentioned above. And thus 100 years after Karl Julius Schröer's death, may his educational ideas and ideals continue to bear fruit!

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Schröer's Essay—translated by David Wood

Imagination—the fount of education

Georg Gervinus has said of Goethe: "What is so remarkable about him, and works in an altogether poetic manner, is that *energetic imagination and youthful spirit* of which there is hardly any trace in our old and withered world, in our latest inherently intellectual generation. —This kind of imagination is only powerfully present in a *select few*, yet manifests itself so strongly in *Goethe*, that according to Schiller's testimony all his cognitive forces were concentrated upon this single goal. In other words, we also recognise here that unique characteristic of naïve poetry, that Schiller

nonsensical manner), we discover rhythmical word-formations. This justifies the teaching of these rhythmical series of words in the classroom, or even their inclusion in children's books of ABC, as Heinrich Deinhardt has done. Later the class will fondly recall these with looks of delight in their eyes. And this is even more the case with songs, ballads and numerous kinds of poems, which are certainly not lacking in our present cultural epoch.

Yet what are we to do when metrics and poetics are formally taught as a subject in the higher classes, often in accordance with a handbook, so that the young become incapable of any true enjoyment of the poet? Or when one also believes the higher classes must be taught the history of literature, a subject naturally dependent on completeness, so that in the end the pupil can't see the forest for the trees! That is, the pupil is taught poetics and the history of literature to facilitate an enjoyment of the poet, yet doesn't view the aesthetic enjoyment in the subject itself, but in the completeness of the numerous facts to be examined! —As long as memorisation is emphasised he will only be left with fixed *opinions* and a crude appreciation of the different poetic styles and writers, yet it is the natural freshness of the subject that should be brought to the fore! —This is the educational predicament we find ourselves in if we are unable to raise ourselves up to those heights, or are incapable of maintaining that open attitude which freely holds the balance between the spirit and the senses.

In reality, this is what culture boldly demands of the teacher. —It asks him to represent an ideal, to be the highest human being, as Schiller does of the poet; it is an ideal embodied in Goethe, with the philosopher merely a caricature in comparison.

Now, once a person recognises an ideal as one fulfilling his aspirations, it can and will never be too lofty for him. We also mustn't forget that the demand to revitalise our conceptions and rekindle our enthusiasm by aspiring to the heights of great men must not be confused with the demand to be their equal.

The teacher must strive for a direct and unprejudiced view of reality, to give assistance in turn to immediate conceptions. What is required is an energetic immersion in the subject with one's entire soul out of a love of truth, not out of self-seeking or external compulsion. Yet compulsion must be applied if one demands a knowledge founded on memorisation alone.

Fichte wonderfully discusses this point in his *Speeches to the German Nation* (2nd speech). He says, "It is a soul-burden and not a soul-activity if

the memory alone is called into action; and thus it is not surprising to behold the pupil's great unwillingness in this regard. The acquaintance with wholly foreign and entirely uninteresting things is then a poor substitute for this burden. We therefore have to allay the pupil's aversion with the promise this knowledge may be of use in the future; or that *success and a livelihood can only be won by means of it*—yet only after overcoming the threat of punishment or recompense. We see that in order to *make an impact upon the pupil here*, knowledge is stressed from the outset as the *servant of our sensible well-being*. Yet *this kind of education* is powerless for the development of a moral life—in fact, it increases and contributes to the pupil's moral ruin, with his interests added to the interests of this ruin." We also arrived at this result in our earlier reflections: "The development of the *spiritual abilities* alone should be at the basis of education, inflaming a desire for pure knowledge as such, while a state of suffering receptivity lames and stifles all knowledge and moral sensibility from the very start." —For "its destructiveness consists in the fact that only the pupil's sensible well-being is promoted, and it does this by stimulating a fear or hope for this same well-being, whether in a present or future existence."

"In the place of that self-love—we must foster and further a different kind of love, one that immediately and willingly proceeds onto the good, absolutely as such and out of its own inner nature."

For what kind of child would be one who only learned so that it wouldn't be punished, or so it got good grades, or to receive future scholarly fame and fortune!? In our old and withered world, in which the generations are already *born* intellectual, wouldn't we have to prefer the *unruly child* to such an all-too-clever child, one who looked beyond these considerations and just followed the strong inclinations of his blood? Thus, how do we engender that unassuming love of the true that is devoid of self-seeking and captivates the senses, yet also energetically stimulates all the soul-forces of our youth? Moreover, how do we acquire that youthful freshness of spirit innate in the ancient Greeks, and which appears to be reborn in *Goethe* himself? Lastly, how do we elevate ourselves to that aesthetic conception, which establishes the happy medium between spirit and nature?

Lifelong learning

Let us again cast a glance into the domain of education, where we can unfortunately see how it isn't to be done. Only after we have started from the



Karl Julius Schröer (1825-1900)

correct presuppositions, will we perhaps derive those guiding principles enabling us to fulfil the demands outlined here. —I cannot discuss how, within the debates concerning the organisation of our schools, education is frequently considered in an external and superficial manner, as a quantity able to be arbitrarily divided up. According to this view the "correct allocation of the teaching hours" is the main thing! Yet, how we are to skilfully teach all the best and most desirable subjects while making sure the individuality of the pupil—which should be harmoniously developed as a unified whole—is not overwhelmed, oppressed and confused, this is deemed to be of lesser importance!

I also cannot go into the trouble that results when the different educational institutions proceed in this fashion along their own separate paths, and never at any time consider education as a whole. —I will only mention the training of primary school teachers. There we unfortunately behold how the words of the schoolmaster or instruction textbook continue to dominate! "For what is printed in black and white, can safely be taken home." Here we find the quantum of knowledge demanded by the State dispensed in compendia; and once the teacher has imbibed it we say he is finished. On account of completeness these books commonly contain a

great deal more than can be taught; nevertheless, the requirements usually asked in total of the teacher are in reality exceedingly small. Of course, for the examinations the requirements are perhaps infinitely and intolerably large; yet as demands asked of the teacher himself, who should desire to have a life-long and permanent relation to the fount of his knowledge if his teaching is not to become sterile—they are actually futile and worthless. —Or does anyone believe the quantum of knowledge demanded of the teacher is sufficient to last a human life-time? Of course it isn't, and we shouldn't then be surprised when a teacher who believes he possesses "what is needed for the classroom" presumes he is a capable teacher at 18-20 years of age; or when he becomes engrossed in all sorts of private interests and pursuits in the course of life, to discover his teaching is immune to advancement and his knowledge unable to be broadened. Such a teacher is today, just as he is tomorrow, and will be the same in years to come. Why does he need to learn more, especially if he has attended a "good teacher training college"?! —The peasant farmer daily gathers experiences, and will never exhaust the knowledge of his profession; and yet the teacher is supposed to be "finished and complete" at 20 years of age! Every other profession demands a further development of its views and conceptions. Shouldn't this also be true of the teaching profession?

Absolutely. The teacher must never believe his knowledge to be sufficient and closed; closed knowledge is dead knowledge, and as soon as he thinks it suffices, it will harden. All living knowledge generated by a direct and immediate conception is not only capable, but in need of infinite expansion. A continuous and joyous interest in knowledge, as well as the desire to communicate it, uplifts the teacher, granting him the necessary vitality of soul.

Yet so as not to be misunderstood, we have certainly demarcated a boundary here between the knowledge demanded of scholars, and the knowledge required of the teacher. Such a boundary naturally comes into existence as soon as we realise the former knowledge is directed at solving the problems of science—whereas the latter is concerned with the problems of life. Life itself and everyday experience must be the inexhaustible source from which the teacher draws his knowledge. And hence, what is above all necessary for teaching is that the teacher becomes capable of this!

(To be continued)

Stress and the Waldorf Teacher: towards pre-emption through understanding

by RICHARD HOUSE

Introduction

While the question of stress has received a great deal of research attention within education in general, there exists very little of substance in the published Waldorf literature on the stresses that might be specific to the Waldorf teacher's experience. A central feature of this article is its attempt to assess which aspects of the Waldorf teacher's workload are less stressful than that of the mainstream non-Waldorf teacher, and which aspects are distinctively different from those of the non-Waldorf teacher.

The article will hopefully be useful to both existing and prospective Waldorf teachers in highlighting those demands peculiar to Waldorf teaching, some foreknowledge of which will surely help them to pre-empt the more challenging aspects of those stresses. It may also interest disillusioned non-Waldorf teachers, many of whom are widely reported to be quitting their profession, and who might well embrace Waldorf teaching with enthusiasm if it could be demonstrated that, overall, Waldorf teaching offers teachers a significantly less stressful working environment compared with the non-Waldorf sector.

The article draws upon qualitative questionnaire survey data from British Waldorf teachers, with its main focus being on the class teacher—though other types of teacher did also respond to the survey.

Background issues

It is useful to begin with a cautionary note about the very notion of 'stress' itself. A number of both academic and 'popular' commentators have not only displayed a considerable dose of scepticism as to whether 'stress' is a meaningful 'scientific' concept, but have even questioned *its very existence* as a valid concept. One Waldorf class teacher, for example, sent me a recent article from the *Guardian* newspaper (3/1/01, supplement, p.10) entitled 'Stressed?...', which reported the provocative views of "maverick psychologists" that "feeling bad at work is normal"; that "we're turning into a nation of emotional hypochondriacs"; and that "People feel 'stressed' because they believe in the first place that feeling

stressed is a legitimate condition... Without such a belief, the subjective feeling is not possible". I must say at the outset that I am very sympathetic to any approach which dares to challenge take-for-granted, culturally fashionable norms—and there is no doubt that 'stress' has become a very fashionable 'catch-all' term which may, at least in some usages, obscure at least as much as it reveals about challenging human experience. At its worst, uncritical, culturally fashionable clichés can certainly actively *create* subjective experience and constrain it along certain lines such that it can become very difficult *not* to think about our experience in certain culturally determined ways.⁽¹⁾

It is clearly important to be alert to this danger, then, when investigating the phenomenon of 'stress', and not necessarily to accept it uncritically as an unproblematic given of modern human experience. Concomitantly, we should also be open to the way in which 'stress discourse' might 'socially construct' the very ways in which we think about and conceptualise our own subjective experience. But I think it would be equally unhelpful simply to reject the validity of 'stress' as some socially constructed myth of the modern imagination—for *its very cultural existence* and comparatively sudden emergence within modern discourse must surely be an important *reflection of something*. The crucial question, of course, then becomes: a reflection of *what*?

The consideration of stress that is *specific to the teaching profession* is hardly a new phenomenon: for over a quarter of a century there has been voluminous, world-wide empirical research into the question, with results that have consistently found that teaching is indeed a profession peculiarly susceptible to stress—and for a whole range of (complexly interrelated) reasons (see Further Reading section). What does appear to be new, however, is the quite unprecedented degree of stress that teachers within mainstream (state) education have been suffering in recent years—certainly within the UK. The press and broadcast media have reported ever-escalating

numbers of horror stories about the manifold stresses that teachers are under, with particular prominence being given to a seemingly irreversible recruitment crisis, the advent of the school 'four-day week', and a number of highly distressing teacher-suicides which seem to have been directly related to a pernicious 'surveillance culture' which is arguably de-professionalising and 'infantilising' a generation of teachers (principally via the infamous Office for Standards in Education—OFSTED).⁽²⁾

In my own work as an NHS counsellor in general medical practice, I have in recent years worked with a numbers of teachers who have had to retire early on health grounds, sometimes on the verge of emotional breakdown; and it has seemed to me on hearing these distressing stories *that there is something quite fundamentally wrong within the teaching profession, that has been, and continues to be, expediently (or even cynically?) ignored by politicians and policy-makers alike*. Yet it would be naive *necessarily* to assume that, in comparison, the Steiner (Waldorf) sector is relatively immune from teacher stress. Certainly, before researching this article my own anecdotal experience from talking with Waldorf teachers had been that they commonly find their work demanding... but in what precise ways 'demanding' or 'stressful' seems to have received little if any systematic consideration in the Waldorf literature.

The really interesting questions then become, first: to what extent there might be systematic differences between the nature of the demands upon, and stresses experienced by, Waldorf and non-Waldorf teachers; and second, the extent to which stress in teaching is a *universal, cultural* phenomenon which all-pervasively cuts across *all* teaching settings, rather than being predominantly an artefact of the relentless 'modernising utilitarianism' which has swept through the maintained sector in recent years (starting with the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988). It was in part to address these important questions that the research reported below was conducted.

The research survey

In early December 2000 I compiled a 'stress questionnaire', three copies of which I sent to each of the 18 established Waldorf schools in Britain. In the covering letter I wrote that "I am currently conducting some research on the vocational stresses experienced by Waldorf teachers, and to this end I am conducting a questionnaire survey to gather information for an article on 'Stress and the Waldorf teacher'... I would be most grateful if you would draw the questionnaire to the attention of your teachers at

the next College meeting, to see if any would like to complete the questionnaire". Respondents were assured of total confidentiality if they required it: "... Please be assured that the article will be written in such a way that *it will be impossible to identify any individual's responses to the questionnaire*. Do please state if you'd prefer not to be quoted anonymously [in the article]".

It is crucial to emphasise the methodologically limited nature of this survey. The 14 completed questionnaires which I received were clearly not anything approaching a statistically random or representative sample: rather, *the sample is entirely self-selected*, and in this sense it cannot be assumed accurately to represent the generality of Waldorf teachers' views about and experience of stress in their jobs. A far more methodologically sophisticated sampling design would be required to obtain such results. However, what the survey *can* legitimately be used for is to provide impressionistic, suggestive indications of at least some of the concerns of at least some Waldorf teachers—indications which could, for example, then provide guidelines for further research in this area, or provide the basis for discussions within schools about how the demands of the working environment might be more successfully managed.

Summary statistics of respondents

Gender: 8 males, 6 females

Age: 30-39 years: 6
40-49 years: 7
50-59 years: 1

Average age: 43 years

Number of years in all teaching:

0-5 years: 3
6-10 years: 2
Over 10 years: 9

Number of years as a Waldorf teacher:

0-5 years: 6
6-10 years: 3
Over 10 years: 5

Average years in all teaching: 13 years

Average years as a Waldorf teacher: 8 years

Number of sample with non-Waldorf teaching experience: 9

Type of teacher:

Kindergarten: 4
Class Teacher: 9
Upper School: 3
Specialist: 2
Part-time: 2

(Totals sum to more than 14 due to dual/multiple roles of some teachers.)

Results

Question 1: What do you consider to be the most stressful aspects of your work as a Waldorf teacher?

A considerable number of 'stressors' were mentioned. Most frequently raised (with eight mentions) was *parental expectations/criticisms*. There were seven mentions each for *general teaching demands and workload*, and the '*politics*' and *inefficiencies of the collegiate system*. There were five mentions each for *level of pay/salaries* and *paucity of resources/poor working conditions*. Finally, three mentions each were received for *criticisms/conflicts with colleagues* and *covering for absentee colleagues*.

Some interesting comments were:

- Many consider our schools as alternative so they may find conventional authority, respect and discipline hard concepts.
- We sell a 'wonderful' system—might this make parental expectations too unrealistic?
- When starting out one does not have the experience to put parents' unrealistic expectations and excessive worries in perspective.
- Stressor: a lack of a proper framework in which to deal with parental criticism.
- Work with children does not give stress, unlike in the state sector—rather, parents and colleagues are the source of stress!

It is interesting to note that four potential *Waldorf-specific* sources of stress only received one mention each—i.e. holding the mood of the class; difficulties in negotiating needs-based salaries; organising festivals; and carrying children 'in spirit'.

Question 2: What personal 'coping strategies', if any, do you deliberately follow in order to help mitigate the effects of teaching stress?

Respondents listed no less than 25 different coping strategies, just five of which were mentioned three times or more: viz. *meditation* (five mentions); and three mentions each for *varied leisure time interests*;

walking (e.g. recreationally, or to and from school); *sharing with and seeking support from others*; and *swimming*. Clearly, it is important that teachers find their own preferred coping mechanisms, which will reflect their interests, available opportunities and their particular personality/temperament.

Question 3: Are there existing institutional mechanisms within the school which you think help to ameliorate teacher stress? And what additional institutional mechanisms might further help to alleviate stress?

Five respondents answered 'no' to this question. Of those who answered 'yes', two factors received three mentions each—namely, the support provided by the College of Teachers, and mentoring or 'co-colleagueship' practices.

Several respondents suggested potentially helpful innovations they would like to see—namely:

- more creative work to facilitate trust between the teachers and respect for opinions;
- a buffer between the teachers and the responsibility of day-to-day running of the school—allowing them to get on with their teaching;
- someone the parents could turn to as a mediator;
- proper line management structure and proper monitoring of management.

Other interesting statements:

- Collegial support is essential. We have a college retreat once a year and strive to make time for social and artistic time together. This contributes to a supportive environment to work in.
- A mandated system of task management is being developed. Teacher/college meetings can be both supportive and stressful. Doing break duties and cleaning is stressful—people should be employed for this.

Question 4: What character qualities do you consider are helpful for enabling the Waldorf class teacher to deal adequately with the stresses of teaching?

Respondents listed no less than 30 distinct qualities. Those most frequently mentioned were *patience* and a sense of *humour* (five mentions each); *determination/persistence*, *enthusiasm/inspiration* and *calmness/equanimity* (four mentions each); and *adaptability/resourcefulness*, *commitment/dedication* and a *phlegmatic temperament*! (three mentions each).

Question 5: Did your Waldorf Teacher Training

prepare you adequately for the stresses you subsequently encountered as a Waldorf teacher? And if not, what could the course have done to prepare you more adequately in this regard?

It was striking that no less than ten of the fourteen respondents answered 'no' to this question (two with added emphasis!), while just one answered 'yes'. Here are a number of comments made:

- [There is a need to] make students more aware of problems that might arise, [with] a course in coping with people management.
- Journal work with counselling and biography work would provide the necessary foundation of preparation for teaching.
- The ideal of the child and Waldorf teaching, and its perception in reality, are often poles apart... Courses need time to fully explore the gulf between the extremes—which largely involves self-understanding and self-development, so that the necessary life skills can underpin the work of the developing teacher.
- [I would have liked] more indications that working at a deeper (soul-spiritual) level [with children] makes other demands [on one].
- I don't believe any course can adequately prepare one for the multi-faceted demands of being a teacher, but education on self-health and sleep life could be strengthened.

Question 6: What stress-relevant advice/counsel, if any, would you offer to a new Waldorf class teacher who was about to embark upon a first teaching job?

Nearly 30 distinct suggestions were made for the new teacher. It is revealing to categorise these according to whether they were more self- or environment-focused—for just 4 of the 29 suggestions were unambiguously concerned with actively engaging with the environment of teaching (as opposed to being directed at one's own personal attitudes, beliefs, self-care etc.). These four suggestions were:

- saying 'no' to inappropriate 'extras' (two mentions);
- not allowing oneself to be pestered by over-demanding parents (two mentions);
- making firm boundaries for children; and
- addressing problems immediately they arise.

There were just four other suggestions which received more than one mention—i.e.

- don't neglect your home/family life (five mentions);

- prepare well in advance (three mentions);
- avoid perfectionism (two mentions); and
- seek good mentoring/supervision (two mentions).

Question 7: If you've also taught in the non-Waldorf (e.g. state) sector, what differences are there, if any, between the teaching stresses you encountered there and those in the Waldorf sector?

This question elicited some very interesting responses, and overall presented a very mixed, complex picture. On the one hand, there were many aspects of the state system which respondents regarded as substantially more stressful than the Waldorf environment—e.g. "a mechanistic soulless curriculum"; the stress of larger classes (two mentions); having to deal with more "damaged" families; the boredom of teaching disaffected students; exams detracting from the joy of learning; far worse levels of pupil self-discipline; and the lack of a shared, collective vision. On the other hand, one respondent preferred the state system's clearer, more 'objective' framework for teaching; and four respondents mentioned that the state schools' clearer management structure did help to support the teacher.

A number of *Waldorf-specific* stresses were also listed: viz. lack of money and time; more stressful human relations (e.g. with colleagues); longer meetings encroaching on preparation time; higher expectations from parents; more mixed ability and special needs demands; and being much more involved in 'carrying the school'.

Some interesting quotations:

- In state teaching I found it to be more intellectual and one was stressed in a different way. The demands were more on the astral body. In Waldorf the demands in the Lower School are more on the life forces.
- An enormous difference—cavernous. I taught in a comprehensive school in...—synthetic classroom, fixed syllabus and curricula. Stress there was palpable, written across faces—especially teachers. I've also taught [in a variety of other settings]. Waldorf is the least stressful environment I have worked in by far.
- [In state teaching] stress was due to too many abstract concepts being driven home by the teacher—*result*: teacher with fried brains only alive by caffeine injection!!

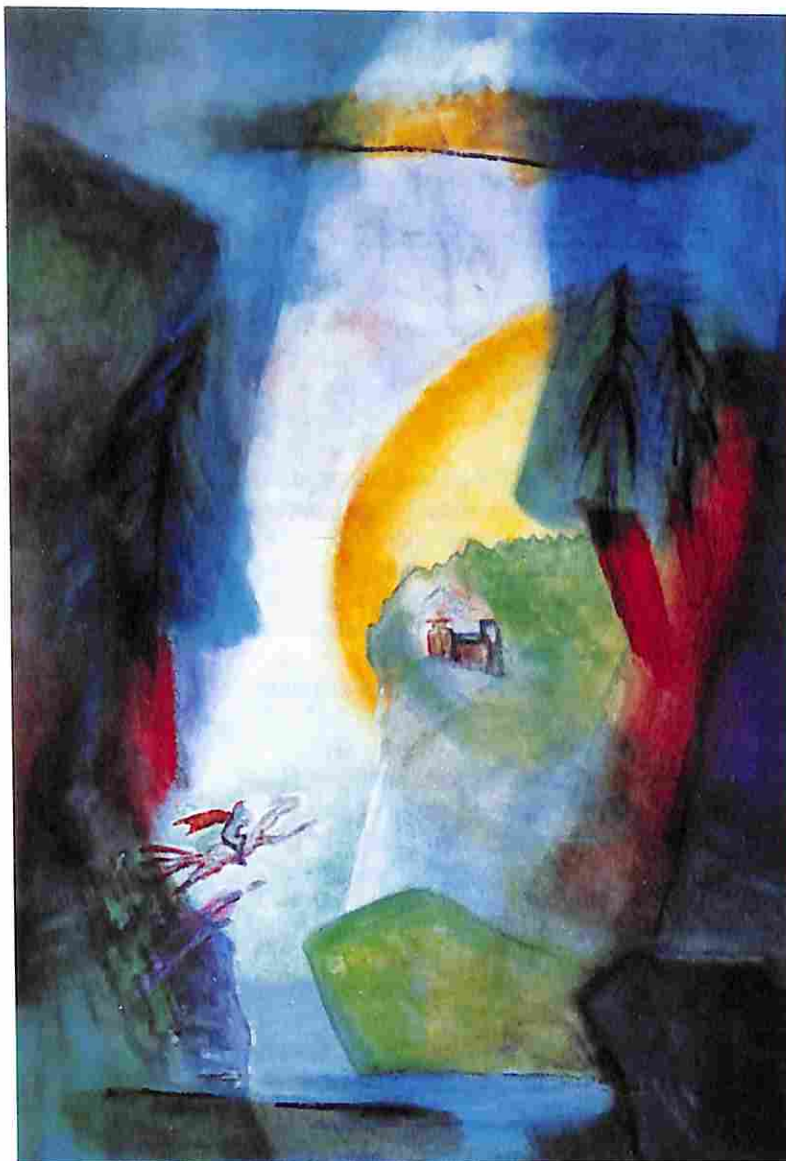
Question 8: Any other comments

Here is a selection of additional comments offered by respondents:

- I did a four-year counselling training... I have very strong feelings from [this] training about how we could improve teacher training for Waldorf.
- The Waldorf teacher can become a martyr for the cause. I do not think this sacrificial gesture is healthy. I believe it is possible to be an unstressed Waldorf teacher.
- I feel that we often load our own stresses on to our teaching work... [Waldorf teaching involves] a real sense of belonging to the place and serving the institution and the community that it contains. The sense of responsibility for the school can lead one to take on extra tasks... [which] can lead to stress over and above the 'normal' amount... There is more to be done than there is time to do adequately. 'Stealing' time from... preparation and meditative work can then lead to increased stress because one feels that one really isn't doing the work properly...
- [There is] too much adherence to the 'old familiar ways'...., too much insularity and lack of contact with the 'outside world' and our teaching colleagues in other branches of education...
- Stress [is] often of our own making. People here have so little appreciation of what life is really like 'OUT THERE' in other schools... We are so lucky here, as are our children: beautiful environments, flexible curricula, smaller teaching groups, no 'boss' mentality, a spiritual focus for our work, longer holidays, supportive parents, and a more healthy rhythm to our work.

Discussion and conclusions

The results reported above largely speak for themselves. The responses to questions 1, 2 and 6 do strongly suggest that teachers possibly feel relatively powerless to effect changes in their 'external'



Parsifal's journey to the Grail castle—painting by a 17 year-old (see article on p.24).

working environment, focusing instead on self-care or self-change responses to the demands of their work. One respondent even described how her work as a Waldorf teacher was "a form of sacrificial service". Certainly, it seems that there are significant levels of stress in Waldorf schools stemming from difficulties with parental expectations, the collegiate type of management structure, in-school human relations and low pay levels (though it is interesting that the latter was mentioned less frequently than might have been expected).

However, these difficulties are arguably more than compensated for by the far greater educational

freedom in Waldorf schools compared with the state sector. Indeed, one class teacher wrote movingly that he felt "blessed to be in my job, not stressed... it is a wonderful job. Maybe things would be easier with more money, more staff and better facilities—but maybe they wouldn't. I have worked in many jobs, as you know—I count my blessings. I do hope you will find some way of expressing the sheer joy to be had in teaching in a Steiner school".

Coda: A need for further research?

If, on reading this article, other Waldorf teachers were interested in completing the 'stress questionnaire', they can write to me at the address below for a copy, or else simply complete the questions as set out above and send the answers to me. Comments on the article's findings would also be most welcome. If I receive sufficient of a response, I am very open to writing an update/follow-up article for *Steiner Education*. It would be particularly interesting to hear from teachers in countries other than the UK, so that international experience can be compared—and, perhaps, international/global trends identified.

This article has been largely empirical and descriptive rather than theoretical or analytical in nature. There are a number of questions about the 'unconscious', emotional, spiritual and cultural forces and pressures involved in teaching, and the peculiarly distinctive stresses to which these give rise, which I would also hope to explore in a future article.

Acknowledgements

I would like sincerely to thank the following people for giving up time in their very busy lives to complete the questionnaire: without their kind assistance, this article could not have been written. Tim Coombs; Vivien Easton; E. Henderson; Antonia McArdle; Chris Malins; William H. Milne; Julian Paine; George Potter; Glenn Rawlinson; Jill Taplin; Tom Towey; Evert Wilbrennick; Graham Woodhouse. Several respondents elected for anonymity.

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Notes

- (1) For a penetrating analysis of the way in which culturally pervasive psychoanalytic notions have influenced human subjectivity, see I. Parker, *Psychoanalytic Culture*, Sage, London, 1997.
- (2) See, for example, B. Jeffrey and P. Woods, 'Feeling deprofessionalised: the social construction of emotions during an OFSTED inspection', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 26(3), 1996, 325-43; and R. House, 'Stress, surveillance and modernity: the modernising assault on our education system' (Feature Supplement), *Education Now*, 30 (Winter), 2000.

Further Reading

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Mathematical Brain by Brian Butterworth, Macmillan 461 pages £20.00.

The Mathematical Brain provides interesting scientific support for some of the principles of Steiner education. The author, neuropsychologist Brian Butterworth, is mainly preoccupied with evidence supporting the hypothesis that we are born with an innately mathematical sense, but he says his research was partly inspired by the question of whether we could "improve how well we understand mathematical ideas if the education system were to base its teaching more firmly on the mathematical toolkit we are born with".

In a fascinating chapter entitled 'Hand, Space and Brain' he looks at research which suggests that what children do with their fingers really matters, since the way number is represented in our brains is related to the neurological representations we form of our fingers.

Butterworth looks at historical evidence from a variety of cultures, and reviews the different ways in which the fingers have been and still are used for counting and learning to count. The finger counting system up to 1,000,000 recorded by Bede in the seventh century, for example (universal throughout Europe at that time), involved movements including bending the fingers at the first joint for the units up to 5, and at the knuckle for units above 5—a degree of *flexus digitorum* that most adults today would find difficult!

The author relates the unusual symptom of *finger agnosia* (a lack of knowledge about the fingers) to the symptom of *acalculia* (an inability to use numbers). His clinical evidence includes the example of the highly developed 'finger knowledge' of a Braille reader, whose reading finger is represented by far more brain-cells than their non-reading fingers. "What you do," he points out, not surprisingly, "shapes the way your body is represented in your brain."

Butterworth's conclusions suggest that finger games, knitting and other handwork, and playing a musical instrument, can—by helping to expand the representation of the fingers in the brain—lead to an improvement of other functions of this part of the brain (be they mathematical or otherwise). Steiner education: "woolly" but wise?

The Mathematical Brain also looks at how individuals acquire expertise, in any given subject area. The author, whose findings touch poignantly on the short life and solitary research of Indian mathematical genius, Ramanujan, finds the most significant factor to be what he calls 'reflective practice'. He repeatedly emphasises the fundamental importance of the *deliberate* and *reflective* nature of the learner's engagement with the subject—there is no emphasis on achieving standardised educational milestones at ever-earlier ages! I was reminded of M. Glöckler and W. Goebel's comment about computer games: "In an atmosphere of sensationalism and excitement, all too often characterised by cynical indifference and cruelty, quick reactions are certainly stimulated, but at the expense of deeper reflection and

true understanding. All young people need for their development moments of stillness, of listening and reflecting on what has been experienced, accompanied by a reverent and serene attitude." (*A Guide to Child Health*, Floris Books, 1990)

Butterworth's findings strongly support a school curriculum model which is not based on a culture of speed but rather involves pupils in a real inner experience of wrestling with new ideas, and new learning.

The Mathematical Brain is another intriguing reminder that Steiner education can be placed under the microscope of modern scientific research in education and come out with flying colours.

Ursula Jenkins

Millennial Child: Transforming Education in the Twenty-first Century by Eugene Schwartz, Anthroposophic Press sb 310pp \$19.95.

The writer of this book is an American. He is unhappy with the condition of American youth. He believes that the nature of the education on offer to the majority of American youngsters, in the country's public schools, serves them ill. In other words, the very mechanism—which should be ensuring the rude health and purposefulness of this and future generations—is faulty. Also, by implication, if the parents (and taxpayers) who fund the schools and the teachers who teach in them are happy with the existing arrangements, they shouldn't be. Schwartz offers them (and his overseas readers) an alternative model of a school—as a challenge to orthodoxy and a practical remedy—the Waldorf school.

The premise of *Millennial Child* is that mainstream American education is based on a narrow, reductionist view of child development. In simple terms, this view sees the child as a miniature adult, incipiently capable of rational thought, justifiably aware of his/her inherent sexual drives, and able to make and act upon independent judgments. Schooling, Schwartz argues, which does not distinguish between childhood and adulthood, which 'wakes up' the child too early through an over-emphasis on rapid cognitive development, has unintended consequences in adolescence: sexual precocity and promiscuity, and patterns of aimlessness with episodes of violence.

It must be admitted that Schwartz does not present any systematic data supporting his contention about the activity (and will-less inactivity) of American youth. The *a priori* assumption is that there is a crisis. It is simply asserted that there is a major social problem with adolescent violence, some extreme instances of which have involved school buildings being destroyed and teachers murdered (the notorious incident at Columbine High School, Littleton, Colorado is flourished as a symbolic trump card). On this peg is hung a general point about inappropriately developed and directed 'will forces' in young people. Other possible causes of, predominantly, male violence, such as confusion and frustration arising from changing gender roles, are not reviewed.

The first part of *Millennial Child* presents a detailed critique of general trends of twentieth century psychology, in an attempt better to understand current thinking and practice. The author is particularly concerned with the lasting effects of some of Freud's thought. In trying to understand the mental distress of middle and upper-middle class female patients, Freud suggested a dualistic model of the human psyche: a conscious part and an unconscious part. He surmised that instinctual sexual feelings (felt by the infant girl towards her father), if not gently 'owned' by her parents, would be repressed and stored in the unconscious. If, in later life, the adult woman is treated by her husband (and bourgeois society) as an asexualised object, then the pattern of repression will be reinforced, the conscious mind will sense its disconnectedness from an important component (i.e. a right sense of *libido*) and depression will ensue. In retrospect, it can be argued that this psychology—whatever its 'truth'—has performed an essential function in liberating women from the restrictions that surrounded them in the nineteenth century. But the legacy of this psychology of 'infantile sexuality' on the twentieth century has been, Schwartz argues, pernicious.

If the pre-puberty child is seen as being imbued with strong, if latent, sexual drives, then the child is not an innocent. S/he partakes of the adult world from the start. The sooner the child can be equipped with tools of reason and judgment to manage him/herself with a quasi-adult sense of responsibility, when s/he becomes physiologically potent at puberty, the better; for the likely consequences of parental (or magisterial) control of the adolescent's feeling life are the repression and neurosis of the analysand. So the early emphasis on literacy, numeracy and cognitive skills in American schools is not so much driven by the manpower requirements of a technological society (as a sociologist might argue) but rather by the need to help the youngsters protect themselves from themselves. And this is the cause of Schwartz's unhappiness—the system he, as an outsider, observes is designed to produce fine young men and women, but it doesn't. Indeed, it can't, because its view of the child is mistaken. Childhood has been lost and must be regained. Or, put another way, the pre-lapsarian kingdom, where wonder, awe and delight reigned, must be reinstated to allow its special atmosphere to suffuse all pedagogical endeavours. There should be no hurry to decode the contents of the Tree of Knowledge.

The second, and shortest, part of *Millennial Child* introduces the anthroposophical view of the human being. In a book for the general reader, unacquainted with Steiner's careful exposition in a treatise such as *Theosophy*, this is a tricky task. The author's approach is as follows. He takes the case of the paediatric condition Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), a significant issue in American society, and looks at four major current psychological schools of thought concerning its causes. These are the biophysical school which sees, in dietary and/or

chemical imbalances, a physical basis to ADHD; the behavioural school which sees, in the absence of appropriate authority, a behavioural basis; the 'intrapsychic' school which sees, in disturbed feelings, an emotional basis; and the phenomenological school which sees, through a multiplicity of causes, an individual (or existential) basis to the condition. Schwartz suggests that these differing approaches can give some notion of the fourfold human being, comprising Physical Body, Etheric Body, Astral Body and Ego. The parallels are subtly drawn and, while some psychologists will inevitably remain bemused, the open-minded reader is given a clear enough picture to consider—with understanding—the new educational paradigm represented by the Waldorf curriculum.

The third and final section of the book gives an overview of life in a Waldorf school, much of which must stem from the author's own experiences as a teacher. It should be of particular interest to parents of Waldorf pupils, around the English-speaking world, in search of a fleshed-out version of the curriculum. The American orientation of several important subject areas, such as in history, is unavoidable but this serves to emphasise the point that the principles which underlie the curriculum have to be brought to life in whichever cultural milieu they are applied. And doubtless the flavour of the curriculum-in-action at a school on the west coast of America—with (say) Chinese-, Korean-, and Vietnamese-American children on the roll—would be distinctly different to that found in an east coast school. A striking feature, arising from Schwartz's presentation, is the emphasis on doing activity rather than thinking activity. Doing—whether building or knitting, acting or playing—involves the heart and cultivates the will of young children. The capability for clear and directed thinking is best developed in the teenage years.

Millennial Child is a stimulating volume. At the least, any American public school teacher wishing to deepen her own thinking about pedagogy could obtain one or more refreshing draughts from this text; if all American parents and citizens managed a chapter or two off the Internet (*pace* the publisher's accountants), so much the better. Transformation and renewal will be signatures of the present century; a writer of penetration and heart, when he labours with his pen, makes a special contribution to this process.

Andrew Lloyd

Autobiography: Chapters in the Course of my Life 1861-1907 by Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press sb 416pp £16.95.

Given the demands on many Waldorf teachers' time, it might be thought a luxury to sink into an armchair with an autobiography of this dimension. It is worth thinking again. Not only for the general reader but also for the educationist, this work, though at times demanding, is enlightening as well as being a good read. Perhaps it is because Steiner was conscious that he lived on more than one level that the incidents in his

life, as well as his reflections on them, appear to have that bit more than the personal significance that is usually associated with autobiography—something in the nature of 'parables of the heart'.

Thus, for the person interested in education in the light of the 'science of the spirit', there are many topics touched on that will set Waldorf bells ringing. Indeed, the whole work is a *campanile*—from the pull-string book through which Steiner spontaneously learnt to read (17), to the teacher of geometry he met at age nine (22), to the idea of the nature story (86), to the educational value of descriptive characterisation as distinct from conceptual 'definition' (92), to the nature of picture thinking and its place in human development (106, 253), to the value of lively reports (234), to the insights into gender questions (96, 129, 357 n243), to the importance of the teacher striving to become a *Weltmensch* (242), to the significance of children's play (75), to the use of colour stories in liberating colour from being shackled to the realistic (180), to the inception of 'main-lesson' books (320 n124), to fairy tales (122), to the creative polarity of Apollonian / Dionysian (172), to, to, to... These references (and they are only a small selection to which I am making little more than a mention)—come across as biographical overtones that later sound forth from the great symphony of Waldorf. But beneath the rich upper partials, there are educational themes that boom constantly throughout the work, like a magnificently voiced tenor bell wrought in some world-famous foundry. First and foremost there is the subject of education itself—its nature, and the fact that it is the means by which (through tutoring) Steiner was able to make ends meet in his student days. There is his constant interest in the latest scientific inventions and literary ideas—something which eventually singled out the Waldorf curriculum from all others. There is Steiner's emerging perception—won through 30 years of persistent inner work—of the threefold nature of the human being and the principle of *metamorphosis* which is intimately bound together with it. And finally—finally in the slender framework of this short review—there are the dozens of references to Goethe and the long journey that destiny offered Steiner as the first significant companion, might one say, to Goethean science, a core curriculum theme that would benefit from still more discussion in Waldorf circles.

Without wishing to be sentimental over synchronicity, one cannot help noticing that this edition, in restoring the original number of chapters in which the work first appeared as a serial (threescore and ten) highlights the fact that it is an autobiography which was broken off by Steiner's untimely death in 1925. (After the last chapter, the words 'to be continued' were omitted.) At the same time it is fortuitous that the narrative takes us to 1907, the year in which his book *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy* was first published.

To conclude with one last echo from the metaphor of the campanile, this unique peal is even further enhanced by over a hundred pages of annotations (a quarter of the publication) written by the editor Paul

Allen. Informative without being obtrusive, they strike exactly the right note.

B.M.

The Challenge of the Will by Margret Meyerkort and Rudi Lissau, Rudolf Steiner College Press sb 93pp £9.95.

The standard idea of a handbook is one that, like a manual, tells the reader in clear terms what to do. Well named, one might think: enable the reader to carry out certain actions that will have guaranteed results. What better way could there be of going about cleaning the carburettor? But in education, subjects such as crafts notwithstanding, an altogether deeper attitude towards the life of will is necessary, an attitude that this book is well qualified to engender. The authors have adopted a compact style that combines sharp decisiveness with open-armed freedom. They offer the finest cherries from the cake of their rich life experience. The result is far from being a handbook: they inspire the 'hand' of the teacher / parent / carer to become a creative faculty. A remarkable achievement.

The work assumes considerable knowledge of anthroposophy. But it repays re-reading as one faces the challenge of the will—both the will that comes towards one from the young child, as well as that most illusive of all our faculties: the will within—that faculty which is destined to become a co-creator.

B.M.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

Having read a recent issue of *Steiner Education* I am amazed at all the wonderful work that is going on around the world. But I am wondering how Waldorf education at the present moment can be promoted in the less privileged areas of the world. In the Cape Flats in the Western Cape there is a lot of gangsterism, drugs and violence. I have played table tennis with young people who live in crime-riddled areas. Some of them show no emotions. They have not been taught sensitivity and respect. I am sure that Waldorf education would help to develop such vital qualities. I know that work is being done; I would like to see new Waldorf schools opening in less privileged areas all over the world. I have just finished matric and can't help but wonder why I as a privileged person was allowed Waldorf education while other disadvantaged people were not.

Yours sincerely,
Christopher McEwan
Cape Town
South Africa

**A list of World Associations of Waldorf Schools
was printed in the last issue
Vol. 35 no. 1 and is being updated.**



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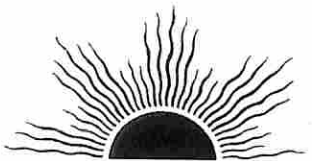
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