

Volume 37, No.3
JUNE 2004
price £3.00

RUDOLF STEINER LIBRARY



VVDZ030225

The Development of Imagination
in the Educator

Teaching Reading and Writing in
Class Two

Water is Life

TV or not TV

Steiner Education

Contents

Features

The development of imagination in the educator during the class teacher period *Beverley Sharrod-Jones*

This article is based on notes revised by the author of her lecture at the World Teachers' Conference in Dornach at Easter. She provides not only a wonderful description of the imaginative processes but shares real insight into the role of the teacher.

Teaching Reading and Writing in Class Two *Adrian Condrea*

In this article a class teacher shows how to engage the interest and imagination of the children within the task of teaching reading and writing. The illustrations are by the children of the class. Although the example comes from Romania, it illustrates a universality of approach.

Water is Life *Lawrence Harrowell*

This article is not about Waldorf education in any direct sense. It gives us a glimpse of what some of our students get up to. Lawrence began an independent project whilst still at school and has continued it after leaving school. In this article he reports on the endeavours of Campesinos in Columbia to improve their lives – a project in which Lawrence has been actively involved.

TV or not TV *Beatrice Greenfield*

A teacher reflects on the challenge of cultivating the art of conversation in the age of mass TV consumption.

Curriculum Research

In this number we feature several aspects of curriculum research:

- International Curriculum Research Group: two new booklets about research
- Report of a working group on sex education in the Waldorf Curriculum by Dr Nicola Fels and Dr. Bart Maris
- A report on Progress Files by Jane Morris Brown at Michael Hall School

Regular Sections

SE Editorial: *A world conference for teachers*

SE Interview with David Newbatt

Parzival – *A new illustrated edition by David Newbatt, introduced by Andrew Wolpert*

From a school doctor...

Dr Bettina Lohn on understanding sexuality

News from the Schools movement

Waldorf education in Singapore

Some thoughts on public funding for Steiner education

Book Reviews

Pene Johnstone reviews *Bullies at School* by Theresa Breslin

Linda Churnside reviews *Working it Out* by Steve Briault

Martyn Rawson reviews *Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy*

by Andrew Welburn

Ann Swain reviews *Neuro-psychological treatment of Dyslexia*

by Dirk J. Bakker

Editorial - A world conference for teachers



At Easter over a thousand Waldorf teachers gathered at the Goetheanum in Dornach in Switzerland for a six-day conference on the theme of "The Power of Imagination in Teaching". This was the seventh in a series of conferences taking place every four years. For the majority of participants coming to the Goetheanum for the first time it was very special experience; for those of us who have participated before, this conference had a new quality.

When teachers from over 50 nations come together, including over 40 colleagues from Arab speaking countries and at least one from the People's Republic of China, there is a lot to discuss in the breaks. As Dr. Heinz Zimmermann put it, it was necessary for the healthy rhythm of the conference to frame the long intervals and lunch breaks with lectures and artistic presentations. Apart from the presentations and workshops, there were dozens of well attended initiative groups on all kinds of topics from Arab-Israeli meetings to discuss co-operation; a meeting of French-speaking schools; Waldorf Basic School (a project to develop integrated small schools for Kindergarten to Class Four in the developing world countries – a concept that may even have a significance in countries like the UK); the Pacific-Asian Waldorf schools; exams; links to Higher Education and so on.

There were 55 teachers from Hungary (who hired a bus and travelled together) and about 20 from the UK, including 10 Emerson students, but not counting the handful of group leaders whose contributions were all very well received. The average age was significantly lower than at previous conferences. Perhaps there is a connection between this and the respective turnout from Hungary or the Ukraine (27) and the UK. At any rate a youthful exuberance was noticeable, not least in the late-night café scene.

The overriding impression one has is of Waldorf education on the move, in dialogue, exploring new forms, meeting new challenges and integrating ever more with mainstream education. In many places Waldorf is a major contributor not only to education but also to cultural vitality. Elsewhere it represents seeds for hope and change. One

thing Waldorf cannot afford to be is introspective or backward looking to ideals that belong to past cultural contexts. Waldorf education is finding new connections to its roots, to the sources it grew from. In some cases this means breaking with the past. This is never easy, especially if the past possessed the virtues of depth, dedication and fidelity to the source. However, it is often necessary because the children, and the society they have to help shape, demand development on our part as educators. If that also means new faces, then we had plenty of them at the World Teachers Conference. What the old guard may feel is the worrying emergence of Waldorf Light (weight), others experience as living anthroposophy.

It is true that the main lectures differed from the style and tenor of previous conferences. This was the deliberate intention of the conference organisers who wanted the talks to exemplify rather than explain, to be practice-based rather than theoretical and above all to give examples of imagination at work. By reducing the time to about 40 minutes, there was anyway little scope for rhetorical flourishes or long philosophical excursions. The substance the participants gained was of a different quality – in my view one that reflected the needs of the times.

In the past people thought of Dornach as Head quarters of the anthroposophical movement – some still do. Some even see it as Heart quarters. Whilst it is the HQ of the Anthroposophical Society, it certainly does not have any such function as regards Waldorf education. It couldn't even if it wanted to. Christof Wiechert as Leader of the Pedagogical Section has two co-workers, Dorothee Prange and Rita Marbach (who between them managed a huge international conference with great success) to run an office that is linked to Waldorf schools and kindergartens in over 50 countries. As a man who gets about and wins friends locally, Christof Wiechert is a model of leadership *without an HQ* and it is this quality more than anything that made the conference a success. Waldorf education is a decentralised local phenomenon with a universal consciousness. This kind of universality is the true spirit of globalisation. We are universal wherever we reach the hearts of the children. It also helps sometimes to get out a bit and see what our colleagues are up to.

Martyn Rawson

RUDOLF STEINER LIBRARY
65 FERN HILL RD
GHENT NY 12075

Steiner Education...
is a magazine for parents, teachers and others interested in Steiner Waldorf education. Though based in the UK, it has an international perspective. The magazine is dependent on people sending in material and the editorial group welcomes contributions (sent as hard copy and – if possible – electronically as a word file)

Telephone: 01342 825005
Email: info@steinerschoolbooks.com

Steiner Education...
is owned by the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and is published by SSF Publications. It has a print run of 5,000 and now appears 3 times a year, in October, March and June

Individual price £3 + p&p 75p
subscription 3 copies per year £10
p&p U.K. £2.75
Europe £3.50
r.o.w. £5.50
Trade and orders over 10, 35% discount
SWSF members' price £1 (plus postage)

Editorial group
Ian Botting (art direction and layout)
Mary-Anne Lumley (assistant editor)
Anne McNicol (proof reading and layout)
Martyn Rawson (editor)
Richard Zienko (proof reading)

Advertising
Jan Swann tel & fax 0117 9633418
Email: jan.swann@care4free.net

Distribution, sales and subscriptions
Gerda Uelfer-Woods
Tel. 01342 825005

Printing
DAP (Sussex) Ltd.



The views expressed in this magazine are those of the individual authors

©Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship
Reg. Charity number 295104
Company number 519230

YALPALL AEMITE TACUNA
OF LIME 1997 20
2005 YALPALL



The picture above, on the cover and on pages 25-29 are from the illustrated edition of *Parzival* by David Newbatt, who is interviewed on page 26.

The Development of Imagination in the Educator during the Class Teacher Period

Beverley Sharrad Jones

*The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of
danger and risk,
Of eternal beginning and eternal becoming,
Of open spirit and deep realisation.
It is the Kingdom of Holy insecurity.*

Martin Buber



When I accepted the opportunity to speak on the topic of "Imagination" and specifically "The Development of Imagination in the Teacher of the Primary Grades", I needed an imagination myself – a

picture that could help transport me from the Mt. Barker Waldorf School in South Australia to the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland; a picture that could move me into my task and into the future, and I found that picture in a character in the *Ramayana* – *Hanuman the Monkey* – *Son of the Wind*.

Hanuman was travelling with a large contingent of monkeys, bears and some humans in search of Queen Sita, wife of King Rama. She had been abducted by Ravana, the rather charismatic but terrible ten-headed demon King, and taken to his marvellous walled city fortress on the island of Lanka, off the southern tip of India. Someone had to get across to the island and find where she was being held and the best way to bring about her recapture. One of the company said to Hanuman, "You are the Son of the Wind and known for your ability to make great leaps – could you not leap across the water?" Hanuman accepted this task.

He walked from the beach, through the dunes to a high place and as he walked he gathered all his

concentration and strength for the task. He became so weighty that the snakes and Naga spirits that live under the ground were squeezed out of their holes and came writhing and wriggling to the surface. He turned and looked at the island city across the sparkling surface of the water. He laid his ears flat back against his head, frisked his long tail, drew himself in and then leapt, flying into the air over the waves. A winged mountain rose to meet him, heaving itself from under the water to offer him rest as payment for a favour done for him many years before by Hanuman's father. But, not wanting to lose momentum, he thanked the venerable mountain, touched the peak with only the tip of his finger and sped on. An old Rakshashi demon beneath the water saw his shadow speeding across the surface and grabbed it from below. Feeling himself being dragged down, he looked down to see what was happening and saw her hideous face break through the waves, her mouth gaping wide to swallow him. He shrank himself to the size of his thumb and dived deep into her, grabbed her heart and squeezed it till it burst, and then flew out and onward to Lanka where he landed and began his search for the Queen.

In lecture two of *The Study of Man* or *The Foundations of Human Experience* Rudolf Steiner very carefully builds up a picture of the polar forces which are in constant interplay within us, forming us and our relationship to the world. These forces arise from the Nerve-Sense organization, which gives us the possibility to know the world through thinking and the senses. It gives us the ability to have memory and to form a conceptual framework in which we operate and which we change according to new information. It gives us the ability to objectify the world and therefore be in relationship to it. But in a particular sense what we see in the

world of given objects is already of the past and in this sense it is corpse-like.

On the other hand we have the Metabolic-Limb system with its constant activity in producing the blood. From here we get the possibility to be active in the world, to be active through the power of our will. Taking the given world as our starting point we are constantly moving ourselves into the future through our deeds and creating the future also by our ability to create our own picture forms or imaginations, independent of the world of objects, particularly in regard to space and time. We can live into these imaginations and so project ourselves into the future. In this sense our imagination gives us the ability to resurrect the corpse, to take our observations of the given world and imbue them with new life; just as the seed looks as though it were lifeless, it is in fact full of sleeping potential.

Each day as we walk into our classrooms, we enter the dynamic of these polarities. It is truly the Kingdom of Holy Insecurity. There are all the elements which are given; what we bring in terms of our personalities and preparation and the physical learning space; what the children bring in terms of their prior experience, their physical constitutions and temperaments. My current class, a very lively Class One, seem all eyes and head in comparison to my previous class, now in Class Nine, who are all limbs. We can already tell a lot about how our students are as we observe the way they arrive at school and how they greet us when we take their hands in the morning. Some teachers will be working with children whose background has been so traumatic that their world has been 'unmade'; they do not have language for what they have experienced and it will take mighty forces of imagination to rebuild their world. For all that we are given we are asked to develop reverence as the attitude that will serve our educational aims, just as Hanuman pays his respects to the mountain which represents the past, its traditions and connections.

On the other hand we are asked to come with enthusiasm for our work and everything that we are going to bring to the children in terms of

activities and content, and enthusiasm also for what is coming out of the future to meet us – all the things we cannot predict. This is sometimes a little more difficult especially if you have a fidgety or raucous element in the class, or children whose enthusiasm is hard to rouse. Both ends of the spectrum require that we use our imagination to draw them into the activity. There is a prayer by Dag Hammarskjöld from Sweden, who was for some years Secretary to the United Nations, which relates to this soul mood. I find myself saying it in the mornings as I tread the path down to my classroom:

For everything that has been – Thanks.

For everything that will be – Yes.

There are many occasions where Rudolf Steiner is exhorting us to "Imbue ourselves with the power of imagination", and he is not simply talking about the capacity to be able to build new picture forms but new ideas and responses to situations; he uses the German word *Fantasie*, which has the connotation of inventiveness, spontaneity and ingenuity. In building this capacity, he points to various active meditations and one of these is observing the interplay of these polarities in the children and taking them into active meditation. Specific reference to this is made in lecture three of "Balance in Teaching" where he refers to the polarities as the sculptural forces working down out of the

Nerve-Sense organisation and the musical forces fountaining up from the Metabolic-Limb system.

We can now take the story of "Hanuman's Leap" and look at it as an imaginative picture of how the power of imagination can build a bridge between the past and the future and between these two polarities. At the point in the story where the leap takes place, the whole drama has come to a standstill. Some new impetus is needed if the situation is to be redeemed. We can find ourselves in this situation in our work or relationships at times, looking for the key to unlock the situation. Hanuman begins by saying 'Yes' to the task. He understands its importance and his love for Rama and Sita creates the desire to see them reunited. He begins the phase of



preparation, concentration and observation. This is both an inner and outer process, examining both the elements given in the landscape and his internal orientation to it; he makes himself humble and centred. The picture of the snakes being driven from the earth by the weightiness of his concentration has its counterpart in Alchemy where the first stage of development practised requires the concentration of substances and the mind. In Alchemy this is represented as a skull with a snake slithering through the hollow eyes; it is each person's personal Golgotha and the price we pay for our ability to cognize in the world of objects.

Hanuman now launches himself into the task of resurrecting this stalemate. Like a seed, flying without resistance he sails through the air. In Class Three, when I'm giving the story of Noah's Ark, I love to carry this picture of the Ark as a seed into which Noah has put all the soul forces in the forms of the animals. This is the seed for the New World but first it must be protected; it needs time to gestate in the waters before it can be set down in a fertile place to germinate. In the years between the change of teeth and puberty the children's feeling life is going through a period of gestation and it is our task to protect and nourish this soul life by giving them images and experiences which keep this embryonic soul life mobile and rich with possibilities; they need to feel that all things are possible. Right into Class Three, if we are telling a story in which the loaf is crying out to be taken from the oven so that it doesn't burn, we have to be able to creep inside the oven and create the relationship between the loaf and the children so that they really want the traveller to stop and give help. This mood is transformed through all the grades so that in Class Six, in Electrostatics, when we do the simple experiment in which we create a close bond between a sheet of plastic film and a laminated surface, we call into the room imaginations of other close bonds; a young child and its mother; Romeo and Juliet, for whom parting is such sweet sorrow, or the dramatic girls in the class whose farewells at the end of each day look as though they are about to endure years of separation, so that when we finally lift the plastic film, the crackling sound of the tearing of countless tiny bonds of attraction is excruciating! We have created a relationship between the children and this everyday phenomenon; we have imbued it with new life. Through imagination and our ability to characterise the objective world in such a way, it

is related to our humanity rather than alienated from it, and we prevent the world from becoming corpse-like for the children. We become like the dove bringing back the olive branch to give hope and the promise of a New World. We become like Hanuman bringing new information and a way forward to those who are waiting for release.

In the process of his leap he recognises but respectfully resists the comfort offered from tradition and the past and family connections in the form of the mountain. He deals resolutely with the forces rising up out of his own shadow which would sabotage his effort; having set out to overcome the stagnating death forces, he is nevertheless able to use the same forces of discrimination to deal death to that which would unlawfully undermine his task and kill the seed of the future. There is no sentimentality here. Rudolf Steiner is at pains to remind us that Anthroposophy has nothing to do with either sentimentality or fanaticism. Both these extremes are examples of judgment that has become weak or fixed. Hanuman, on the other hand, demonstrates an agility and spontaneity in his responses which is able to meet whatever comes toward him with no loss of energy to the system. I've recognised, in my own teaching, that my energy at the end of the day is not dependent on how complex or difficult the day has been but on how I feel about my responses to what the day has brought; there is a tremendous exhilaration in finding the response which works; we enjoy ourselves, our children and the whole teaching-learning environment. It is this experience of a vital learning environment that makes us want to teach in the first place but we have to work for it on a moment by moment basis. It is the practice of eternal beginning and eternal becoming which is the character of the will and of active imagination.

We recognise the importance of imaginative/artistic teaching in this middle period of childhood between the change of teeth and puberty, both for its ability to bring the children into their will without tiring them, and to nurture the embryonic soul forces. Our preparation, our own soul life and the rhythms we create, form the environment, the womb in which this soul life is nurtured.

Time and time again in reference to this requirement we are reminded that our Study of the Human Being is the basis for arriving at imaginations which will have value for our teaching. Here I mean imaginations which help

us to move purposefully into the future, to form the bridge between ourselves and our students, our students and the activity, the activity and the lesson content.

True imaginative pictures always connect and orient us more securely into the reality of the world as opposed to fantastic ideas whose purpose is to entertain and provide an escape from reality. This is especially important to remember in the early grades when we speak of elemental beings. It is important that we carry a picture of these beings as processes at work in nature and ourselves as human beings in nature. If we can re-enter this world, which disappeared like a stream going underground when we lost the clairvoyance of childhood, but which lives in our organs as unconscious wisdom, then several blessings are bestowed on the children. Our telling of the folktales, in which this wisdom is embedded, and our ability to create stories will be imbued with greater authenticity and potency as healing stories for the various temperaments. Also, when we are moving into the sciences in the upper grades the activity of the elements and their lawfulness re-emerges in the experiments we do and in the processes at work in the human body.

Here again we are drawn back to the centrality of the human being in the whole approach to Waldorf Education. It is certainly very rewarding to do our own private study and relate it to the students in our class. The nightly review of the class, when we form a picture of each of the children and take this into our sleep, is one of the fundamental practices in uniting with them on a more imaginative and intuitive level and opening ourselves to inspirations about what approach is right in each moment.

The process of the Child Study, well formed and carried with the requisite qualities of reverence and enthusiasm, contains the whole practice required for the development of imagination of the entire teaching group and therefore makes it a particularly effective and economical way to develop the capacities of the group. This process has in it the seed-like quality of the will in terms of the possibilities which arise when a group of people come prepared and in a spirit of warmth and interest in each other's work. It develops the social fabric of the collegial group and the skills developed in observing one child sharpen our general observational skills. The general conversation about children tends to go to a new level as people share impressions and it can be

easier to respond rather than to react to behaviours which cause difficulties in the class as powers of empathy are developed. It is an excellent example of the "soul economy" we need to work on as individuals in our lesson preparation, so we can bring the content imaginatively and economically, synthesising various subject areas, and respond to our students' needs creatively and with spontaneity.

In the first phase of preparation we practise observation and the soul quality of witnessing. There is a strong tendency in Western society to move to judgment very quickly and this habit of soul can end up creating a really debilitating effect in classrooms and meetings. It is often very convenient for us to form an opinion about a situation or a person because then we use this to justify rigid habits in our own thinking or to fall back on traditional methods which may not fit the current situation at all. Having fixed our opinion, effectively turning the person into a corpse, we comfort ourselves with the belief that we don't have to do any development ourselves. The quality of witnessing however requires restraint; just as the eye receives the light, we create a vessel in which impressions of the child are collected from the teachers who form the most accurate and comprehensive picture of the physical appearance, habit life, soul life and presence in the world.

This observation phase in which all teachers participate is carried over to the next week. During the intervening week the teachers take these observations into active meditation where the task is simply to form the most accurate picture of the child from the description given and to pay attention to anything by way of image, idea, intuition, or any relevant connections that come out of the sleep life. We also pay attention to our continuing observations of the child and comments which come up in conversations which shed light on the situation. The same kind of restraint is required here in simply noting and paying attention, rather than forming judgments/opinions. I have a boy in my class whose behaviour and physical constitution suggest that he is locked into the Nerve-Sense pole. He blurted out one day that his brains were being squeezed out of his head. My first response was to regard this as a very peculiar thing to say but on further reflection I realised that he was actually pronouncing his own diagnosis! By rhythmic meditation over successive nights these impressions may become distilled into something more defined which relates to what the child is

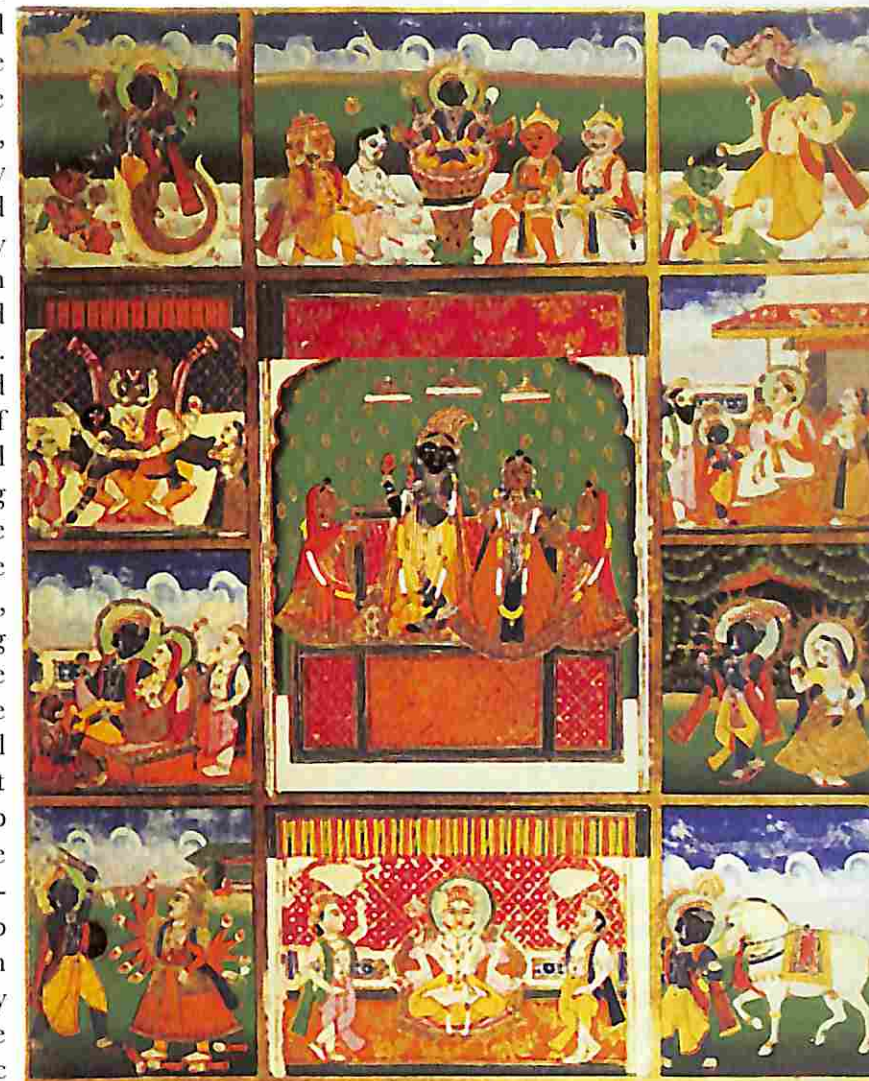
trying to call forth from us as teachers and parents.

The phase of observation, description and picture building, is brought to the second meeting where the teachers share impressions which have formed in the first phase. Meditation brings the observations into relationship, into mobility, and this second, judgment phase is characterised by mobility and bringing the impressions of each one into relationship to build a picture of the working together of the different bodies. In child study, the body becomes a revelation of the life forces and

soul/spiritual forces – where they are dammed up, where they dominate and where they haven't taken hold sufficiently. We try to build a picture of the sculptural forces working through the Nerve-Sense organisation, streaming down from the head and the musical element fountaining up from the Metabolic-Limb organisation and how they meet in the rhythmic organisation of the Heart-Lung system.

In the experience of our child studies, it is often in this middle realm, in the rhythmic system, in the child's breathing and feeling life where they struggle to negotiate the battle being waged between the polar forces working within us. We recognise how the arts play an essential, redemptive role for the children and teachers. All of the arts play their part in helping us to integrate the physical, soul and spiritual aspects of our being. In solving the problems and

resistances we meet in the arts, we solve our own riddles and this takes courage. But we also enter into a creative relationship with colour or the word or with music which works back on us; it creates a new level of dialogue with the objective world where we are co-creators, reflecting back an aspect of reality that otherwise would remain hidden. You don't have to be clairvoyant to experience the change in mood and breathing in the room when the class is really working artistically; all the frictions dissipate, all the elemental activity is soothed.



In the final stage, which once again ideally allows a full week for reflection and meditation, we bring the results of this work to the group in the form of suggestions and ideas born of the imaginative process of meditation and of actions that can be taken to bring balance and healing to the child's situation. These ideas, when arrived at through the group process, often have the quality of an intuitive leap

which synthesises many disparate aspects of the picture that has been built up to the point where you experience being in a totally different position in relation to the 'problem' as you first saw it – there is freshness, a way forward, new possibilities. Where we began looking at the child from the outside we have managed to creep inside their experience. It is like an inversion of how the situation stood at the beginning of the process. Through this new understanding we can enter a new phase of our relationship with them and help to bring them into a healthier

relationship with their environment in the broadest sense.

This process is valid for many other tasks we have as teachers. It is a form of Goethean Conversation which can be generalised from child study to plant study, animal study, geology, in fact all Main Lesson preparation and problem solving. But what is the key here? From one point of view we are looking at the process of general cognition as described in chapter two of *The Foundations of Human Experience*, where we proceed from conclusions or observations given from the perceptual world, to judgments, to a new conceptual framework. The differences are that here the process is undertaken very consciously and actively; the stages of picture-forming activity are mediated by active meditation as well as being taken into the sleep life. The soul mood here is one of active surrender firstly to the

subject of our meditation in actively building the image and then surrendering the image into our sleep life. We allow the subject of our meditation to make its impression on us in a way analogous to how the objects of



perception make an impression on our retina, but whereas in sight we are unaware of that image and focused on what we see in the external world – our eye being empty, an organ of surrender – in meditation we take the image right into our interior organisation and build it up and let it go rhythmically. In our silence and emptiness the image speaks to us, if we are attentive, and these moments are like the intuitive flash of comprehension that we get when disparate aspects of the perceptual environment come together and we understand what it is we are seeing, hearing, tasting, touching. In the case of a child study it is another ego that we are trying to understand.

We have many expressions in English which pertain to this moment when the activity shifts from a head-centred thinking to a heart-centred

knowing; things ‘fall’ into place; we have taken the matter to heart or arrived at the heart of the matter; we know it by heart. When we have reached this new perspective we spontaneously respond to situations, whether it is a child’s behaviour, a moment in a story, an approach to the Main Lesson, a picture to bring to the children to make the bridge needed to bring the content out of the head or in from the limbs into the rhythmic-heart system, the place where the external experience in which we are swimming is comprehended. In this moment we take the leap. Like Hanuman we live with a yes for the task and for the future – we act, reflect and work with the consequences.

In summarising all that has been said, what must be taken into account and what is most difficult to explain is the permeation of the process by what Rudolf Steiner refers to as

imponderables – qualities which cannot be quantified but are nevertheless experienced, and their presence helps us to a certainty that we are on the right track – that we are developing a capacity for our work; an ability to

receive what we need, and a sense of inner calm, that makes it possible to step out into the unknown or make the leap as when a jazz musician leaves the chart and begins an improvisation, because we can create it moment by moment. We are walking beside the Gods as co-creators and taking evolution forward. We hear the rushing in our ears.

It is at this point that we find children of 14 years with the wind rushing in their ears. They are making leaps of various kinds toward a destiny which they intuit inwardly, and if we have done our work well they will have a rich storehouse of imaginations and possibilities to take them into the future. Their wings may be a bit wobbly but they can create an imagination of where they are jumping to and endure the holy insecurity of becoming free.



Teaching Reading and Writing in Class Two

Adrian Condrea

All pedagogical research has shown that the element of surprise is especially important in attracting and keeping children’s interest at school.

It is well-known that school must or should be a place where something new and challenging happens all the time, for each and every child. A child who comes back from school and cannot enthusiastically answer his parents’ question “What did you learn at school today?” is already a bored child. When I used to work in the traditional education system I noticed how harmful textbooks could be. The students were eager to browse through them during the first days of school but gradually their interest disappeared. The next step to be taken was opening the textbook to the next page in order to know what you were going to study. This took place for a whole school year! With very young learners the element of surprise is even more necessary if we consider that their need for

motivation from outside is greater than that of older children.

Nevertheless, even a Waldorf teacher may find it difficult to bring surprise elements to each and every class. One of the greatest difficulties has its source in the aims and objectives we follow in the school year. Accordingly, there are greater or less possibilities to be creative, to bring the surprise element to the teaching. If, for example, the main objective for a whole school year is reinforcing the knowledge taught in the previous school year and turning it into skills and abilities, then it becomes difficult to surprise your students.

Class Two has always been a challenge. From both a pedagogical and anthroposophical point of view nothing significant seems to happen as compared to the first, third and fourth classes and this year can be very boring for children.

In Class One – the first contact with school – given the novelty of the situation and its rules, let alone the stories of letters and numbers, school becomes a very interesting place for children and offers the teacher many possibilities to surprise them.

Unlike Class One, in Class Two the child is already acquainted with school, already used to respecting a set of rules and, what is more, returns to school with great expectations:

If the first class was so interesting, so full of stories and adventures for discovering each and every letter, in Class Two will it be even more interesting? Can we as teachers deal with such expectations?

Let us examine what we can offer the child with respect to aims and objectives in Class Two:

- Learning handwriting and the ability to read handwriting and capitals
- Practising handwriting and the ability to read handwriting
- Practising counting and calculating
- Using fables in the narrative part of the lesson

Besides handwriting and the ability to read handwriting, which brings an element of novelty but is no longer taught as a story (as with capitals), the emphasis is on practice and reinforcement. Those stories with princes,

fairies, and dragons in the narrative part of the lesson leave room for some beautiful fables which, unfortunately, are shorter than fairy-tales and not as charming.

In Class Three there are Main Lessons on agriculture, building houses, measurement, plans, and getting to know the environment, as well as a Main Lesson on *Genesis*; the school subjects grow in number and diversity and also in challenge.

In Class Four, besides mother tongue and Mathematics, interesting topics are included in History, Geography and Zoology, along with relevant field trips.

All in all, the second grade is apparently disadvantaged from the point of view of diversity of Main Lesson themes, mother tongue, Mathematics and a little Form-drawing. It is even boring for the teacher!

The child has to practise reading, but what is he or she supposed to read?

In the traditional system of teaching there are textbooks containing excerpts from literary texts, some of them following the succession of the seasons, but most of them have no relation to one another. They are read and discussed. In Waldorf schools textbooks are not used; children

write their own textbooks, the Main Lesson books. I have always wondered what a child should write in the second grade. The idea of using unrelated texts, or texts on the general topic of the seasonal succession has not appealed to me, as it does not seem challenging enough. I noticed that some of my colleagues used a main character called *The Little Wandering River* that crossed the whole school year before flowing into the sea. I liked the idea of a main character, unique for the whole school year, but not the idea of a little river as the character. Later on I came across a short story about a dwarf who was called Radacinel (meaning “Little Root”). I considered him more appropriate for children aged seven to eight and chose him to join my students during the school year.

Once I had chosen the character, I also had lots of ideas to write stories about him but I had to make the stories not only interesting, but also to divide them into short fragments written in letters which were big enough to be seen and be easily read by the children, I also wanted the surprise element so that my children would look forward to the next episode. Bearing these factors in mind I used a computer, printer and copier to fulfil my goal. During the mother tongue Main Lessons each child got an A4 page which contained a new story fragment. At the beginning this happened every two or three days, and later on a daily basis. The dividing up of the

story was to motivate the children to always wish to find out the continuation of the story. I always left them to decipher the new part of the story and only then did we read it together with me explaining some unknown words.

The result was that even those who had had problems with reading learnt to read correctly and very quickly; this motivated them to be eager to come to school. It happened often that during the mathematics Main Lessons or even during holidays I could hear the children asking me about Radacinel and telling me they missed him.

Radacinel is a very curious dwarf, hardworking and eager to make new friends. He has a great responsibility in the woods: the plants. He brings the Spring in the woods, the seeds, thus helping the rebirth of nature. I described the various adventures of the dwarf as we went through the mother tongue lessons and in this way I could relate the weather changes and the events of that specific season with what is going on in the story. This year, for example, we had a hard winter followed by a long-awaited spring, then we had a drought and Radacinel succeeded in helping the woods and his friends. Sometimes he risked his life for them.

I was very impressed with the reaction of Mihai, a new pupil from a different educational





background. Initially he made fun of the story but he finally got to be more interested in the evolution of Radacinel than in Harry Potter whom he had as an idol.

To help the children make the transition from writing in capitals to cursive writing, I asked them to transform capitals into handwriting followed by drawing, and thus they made their Main Lesson books.

I also used the dwarf story to develop pupils' creativity. I often asked them to continue the story themselves although they eagerly waited for the 'real' version that I subsequently gave to them.

I took care that some of the characters or incidents that appeared in one part of the story should be found in another episode, to preserve the integrity of the story.

Furthermore, through seasonal elements and religious holidays and through the deeds and words of the dwarf and his friends, I tried to instil in my pupils moral values such as sincerity, friendship, honesty and purity of soul.

At the end of the school year when the students had to part from Radacinel – I had sent him on a journey around the world – both the pupils and I felt that we were separating from a dear friend

and some children even cried. The question "Are you really leaving?", which was present in the story, was also asked by the children.

This is how Class Two became an interesting year and how the practice of reading and writing metamorphosed into a pleasurable activity for the children and stimulated their appetite for further self-selected reading. Furthermore each child now has, at home, an impressive folder comprising 80 pages of the story of Radacinel. I am convinced that, of their own initiative, they will read this over the summer holidays.

Adrian Condrea has been teaching at the Waldorf School in Iasi in Romania since 1993. He is a Member of the Managing Council of the Waldorf Federation of Romania and was one of the contributors to the Romanian Waldorf Curriculum.



Water is Life

Project to provide water for 110 families – Department of Huila, South Colombia

Lawrence Hallowell

Lawrence writes: *I went to Michael Hall, a Steiner School in England, from the age of 9 to 16, which I found a refreshing and nourishing experience after having been in state schools before that.*

When I was 14 I took a 3-month break from school and went to the remote Amazon jungles of Colombia to stay with a community of indigenous and mixed blood Campesinos (farmers), who have formed a community called the Shamanic and Ecological Association of Colombia. This experience positively shocked my perception of our world, and inspired me greatly. When I returned to England to continue studying I knew I would be back with the Indians as soon as I was able.

During my time in England the community was displaced from their land in the jungle by the violence resulting from Colombia's civil war. They re-located in the Andes mountain range, near the town of San Agustin.

Almost two years later I had sat my last GCSE exam and after earning the appropriate money went to Colombia with a 12-month ticket. During the year I learned many things about how over 70% of the world live, and in many ways it was an incredibly testing time, coming from a background of a materially-developed country. But the work in nature and the help and support I received from all the members of the community helped me to turn what could have been a nightmare into a lesson on many levels.

One of the most precious resources that the people are lacking in the area where the community is based is water, and for this reason I am part of a handful of people in England working to raise funds for this project to secure a safe and constant supply of water to over 100 families, as well as servicing future population growth.

Introduction

This project is being presented with the aim of collecting funds to help alleviate the difficulties faced by a large number of families in collecting the water necessary for daily life.

The project is situated in a rural area in the foothills of the Andes, midway between the towns of Pitalito and San Agustin in the department of Huila, South Colombia. The local people have designed the project with the help of engineers from the Society of Aqueducts and Drains of Huila. They have completed detailed plans, and survey work has been carried out to calculate the specific technical needs.

The project involves collecting and re-directing water from a mountain stream in a forest above the populated area in question. The stream will provide water for 110 families for now and has sufficient flow for future growth of the local population.

The small streams that presently provide much of the water are steadily getting drier whilst the need for water is increasing as families grow and new houses are built. Many



of these streams dry up completely in the hot summer months; climate changes have affected the area, lengthening the dry season. Deforestation has also contributed to the decline of the water supply.

Many people have to collect rainwater from the aluminium roofs of their houses, which has adverse health-effects due to contamination from the aluminium. Others have to collect water from stagnant pools, which are breeding grounds for Dengue fever and other diseases. In the dry season the search for water is ever more time consuming, as many people have to walk a distance to collect water.

Project proposal

The Shamanic and Ecological Association of Colombia is a non-profit-making organisation with its own farm in this community which is carrying out reforestation and other ecological projects. Our objectives include the creation and assistance of projects of a social, economic or ecological type that benefit the marginalised community. We are also working to conserve and protect the natural environment and its resources.

We have witnessed at first hand the genuine need for improved water supply in the area and have been given official authorisation by the local Communal Action Committee, which was set up to oversee the project, to work on their behalf to collect funds.

The Municipality of Pitalito has contributed 30 million pesos (about £6,650) but another 430 million pesos is needed to complete the project (£96,000). Unfortunately local government resources in Colombia are very limited and the people themselves have to look for other sources of funds.

The success of the project will also ensure that the 140-hectare area of forest, where the stream to be used is located, will be formally designated as a nature reserve, protecting the flora and fauna and ensuring the conservation of the stream.

Using this project as a platform we aim to initiate the planting of native tree species around all the streams in the area in order to provide shade. As well as preserving the water source, the project will also provide local



education to explain the importance of not deforesting areas where streams run.

Local problems

The campesinos (peasant farmers) of the area face many problems that make their lives difficult, centred primarily around a lack of basic necessities that are taken for granted in the developed world.

Only half the population have a minimum electricity supply; the prices of their crops are low and they barely get by on an income that often has to support large families.

Most of the campesinos are completely dependent on coffee for their survival. Without being washed within a day of its harvesting, the coffee bean ferments in its own juices, becoming useless, and cannot be sold on to the buyers. This adds demand to their water supply.

There are few telephones and communication is restricted; the roads are in bad repair and getting crops to market is difficult due to lack of frequent public transport.

In the area of the project (which is extensive) there are only two small health centres. The nearest hospitals are in the towns of Pitalito and San Agustin and the scarcity of public transport makes getting to them difficult and time-consuming.

Campesino children often have to travel large distances to the towns for education. This puts it out of the economic reach of most families.

These factors mean that people do not have the resources or time to improve their own living conditions; these are taken up in securing the means of basic survival. This constant struggle and lack of education mean that the use and care of natural resources such as timber and water are not regulated or organised in a form that is beneficial for present or future populations. This project, however, represents a new initiative on the part of the local community to both organise and conserve the most basic of resources, WATER.

A clean and constant water supply is a basic human right. In the area of the project there is a serious threat of an epidemic of Dengue fever, and amoebic dysentery is common due to contaminated water. With regular, clean water, many diseases can be avoided.

Technical considerations

With the help of local engineers the Communal Action Committee that has been working to devise the project has drawn up detailed plans, which we will briefly describe:

- The stream from which the water will be taken has been calculated as providing 4 litres per second of fresh mountain water (in the dry season).
- Number of farms benefiting: 110 with an average of 7 people per house = 770 people.
- Average consumption: 200 litres per person daily.
- Total average consumption: 154,000 litres per day.
- Capacity of stream: 345,600 litres per day. (Allowing for future increases of consumption due to population growth).

The work will involve the construction of a 50,000 litre holding tank from which the water will be piped directly to each house. The majority of the work will be in installing the system of pipes leading to each house. The area is extensive and the houses furthest from the holding tank are approximately 5 km away. The project is located in a mountainous region and engineers have made a complete topographical survey in order to find the optimum position of the holding tank and the best routes for the piping to maintain a



constant pressure so that the water can go uphill where required.

The project will benefit 16 homes in the locality of Libano, 80 homes in the locality of Albania and 14 in upper Criollos.

Conclusion

- Rural life in Colombia is tough; the people work hard to provide the basic necessities, farming what crops they can.
- The lack of clean water is a serious health problem posing a genuine threat to the lives of the 100 or so families in the area.
- Current water supply streams are providing less water while family numbers are growing.
- Water collection requires more and more time away from work, for families already on the subsistence borderline.
- Local Government has contributed funds, but

outside contributions are needed to complete the project (£96,000).

- Further ecological and social development can continue after the provision of the basic need for clean water.

Appeal

We, the Shamanic and Ecological Association, are launching an appeal on behalf of the people of this rural district of South Colombia. We would be grateful for your donation whether large or small, or, we ask you, the reader of this message, to initiate an activity to collect money so that these people can have water, be it a sponsored walk, a jumble sale, a non-uniform day or whatever idea you have. Alternatively, you could help us with ideas or know-how on raising funds for charitable projects. If you would like to find out more, please get in contact with us.

Contact number: 01825 724432.

Email: huilawater@yahoo.co.uk

Address:

1 Broomlye Cottages, Sharpsbridge Lane,
Newick, East Sussex BN8 4SA.



TV or not TV:

that is the question

Beatrice Greenfield

The package to improve speaking and listening in schools in the primary age range has been developed by QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority). It was reported in the *Guardian* on November 13th, 2003, and quoted the unions as saying that they have welcomed the programme, stating that it “will reinforce good practice and most schools will find it tremendously helpful”.

Obviously, help given to teachers to improve the ability of all children to communicate effectively must be welcome, but the issue begs the question why there should be a need to get children to talk in the first place? Is it so long ago when the question was asked: “Why is it, after spending so long teaching children to walk and talk, that we are constantly telling them to sit down and shut up?” Could we ask rather: Why, after spending so many hours watching others communicating on the television, do children themselves not know how to communicate. Could this be seen as the root of the problem?

Sitting in front of the TV is a passive occupation. Children need the company of others, talking and practising the skills that the QCA wishes to develop. After all, conversation on TV will never go the same in real life and children need to work through this. They need to know the difference between the world portrayed on the box and in real life.

It is not just with their peers that children need to talk, but with all age groups. Many programmes on TV portray adults as selfish, stupid and uncaring about their children. The parents and grandparents are there only to stop children from doing what they want to do. They are the enemy. They must be argued with, and ways worked out to circumvent their authority. After all, no adult understands what life is all about, do they? Life for a family consists of jumping from argument to crisis on a continual basis. The programme writers seem to give us the idea that what is seen on the screen is a reflection of reality. But is it reality, or are we given the impression that our lives are so boring that we must act and create situations like those on the TV, or else we are not

real and not living real lives? In one street are there really so many murders, rapes, thefts, lies, arguments and broken relationships? Martin Large’s book *Set Free Childhood* states:

Another consideration is the high levels of aggressive and violent behaviour shown by the electronic media. There are various estimates that children can see, on average, up to 3,000 murders by the end of primary school, and over 16,000 by the age of 18, together with an outstanding 200,000 violent acts. With access to the Internet and video, moreover, some children may be exposed to far more violence.

Furthermore, by seeing so much violence on TV, our children grow up being more aggressive and desensitised to the horrors portrayed. By encouraging children to watch TV, we are not giving them the conversational skills needed for life. In households, especially those with teenagers, we hear the complaint that “Now they are getting older they don’t want to talk to us any more”, that any conversation is to be comprised of a series of grunts and moans. When children come home from school what is it that they want to do first: go out to play? Read a book? Go to their rooms and play a game? Or watch TV? Let us look at a household where the child is sent to the front room to watch TV while the adult is making tea. This would make life so much easier for both adult and child but there are missed opportunities for learning essential life skills. This time could be spent discussing the child’s day at school and the adult talking about their day at work or at home. (The other part of the package to be introduced gave the impression that not only do children not know how to talk to each other, but that they cannot listen either). During this ‘quality time’ together problems that have arisen during the day could be discussed, with ideas of how to deal with them. Maybe during this time spent in the kitchen making tea, further skills in cooking can be taught as well as the ability to work together as a team.

If we get rid of the plug-in drug – and in this I would also include computers and computer games – what would it be like for the family? The morning spent having breakfast and watching

TV would be spent working out what the new day held in store and children at their desks would be ready and receptive to learn, rather than already having been bombarded with millions of pixels which affects their ability to learn and respond. Instead of copying how cartoon characters run in a jerky stop/start way, a fluidity of movement would become natural and the ability of wanting to play make-believe games would start to come through. There is much research to show that, far from the TV stimulating the imagination, it actually deadens it. Again, from Martin Large's book:

Reading programmes, quite apart from their use of an electronic medium rather than a book and real human contact to teach reading, have received poor reviews. For example, a reading programme called 'Reader Rabbit', used in over 100,000 US schools, resulted in a 59% decline in measures of children's creativity. And when pre-schoolers used the programme for 7 months, they were then unable to answer simple questions, and showed poor skills in creative brainstorming.

When children come home from school bursting to tell about their day, time must be spent in talking through what is important to them; what they did, how they did it and how it affected them. This is teaching conversation through playing games, baking, painting, gardening, reading books and even learning a musical instrument. After tea, the family could work together cleaning the house, listening to a story and having a quiet time before going to bed. Children are then happy and secure that they are loved and wanted.

If we cannot communicate with our children at the age of 5, how are we as adults going to be able to cope with them when they are 15? If they have been taught from babies that all they must do is to sit in front of a TV screen, then are our adolescents going to do the same? In creating a home environment where all members of the family are encouraged to talk and listen, the budding adult would be more likely to stay at home in the evenings rather than hang around the streets. By stimulating the imagination and encouraging children to try new skills, our new

adults would be more willing to try new sports with a group, join bands, try voluntary work, rather than sitting in front of the box with nothing to do. There are so many more facilities out there for young people but the cry comes out loud and clear from the organisers that they are underused. The voluntary sector is constantly understaffed and the few that do undertake such work are exhausted.

Should we be asking ourselves whether children under 8 can discriminate between programmes and advertisements; or do they believe in them implicitly? There is growing concern from many adults who object to the Christmas pester when their children have seen the latest 'must have' on the box. Could this also manifest itself throughout the year in putting pressure on parents to have special lunchboxes with only the right type of food inside? This 'foodstuff' can often be low in nutritional value and high in chemicals. Could this be seen as part of the growing obesity problem, which has affected our children? Are children turning into sugar junkies? Are adverts aimed at the young, appropriate?

Governments are now discussing ways of reducing or stopping advertisers targeting youngsters, in line with other European countries. Coca Cola won approval for backing this scheme and refusing to focus adverts at children, yet gave \$1 million for the promotion of the pop charts so it will have permanent mention as a sponsor during a weekly show aimed at the young market.

With so much controversy around is it any wonder that parents are confused, teachers frustrated and children are left gazing like zombies at the screen. We, as adults, need to be clear and strong in our conviction and gather information to make informed choices before we let our children near the box.

References

- Martin Large, *Set Free Childhood*. Hawthorn Press, 2003.
Rebecca Smithers, *The Guardian*. November 13th, 2003.

Curriculum Research

The International Curriculum Research Group of the Pedagogical Section

Curriculum Development

The ICRG, which hasn't met as a group for about a year and a half, due to funding problems, facilitated two initiatives at the World Teachers Conference at Easter. In the first initiative we presented a small booklet *Guidelines for Curriculum Research and Development*, which attempts to outline a series of guiding principles underlying the Waldorf Curriculum. It is aimed at those working with Waldorf education in contexts that require that the traditional Waldorf curriculum be adapted to local cultural and geographical factors. From a certain perspective this description includes any school in any country since, even in the heartlands of Germany, all manner of pressures and cultural changes call for curriculum research and innovation. The aim of the booklet was to characterize some basic principles and then pose a series of questions, the idea being to stimulate research and reflection at the local level.

The ICRG is willing to use means such as email networks and websites and the various Waldorf publication organs to collate and circulate information, examples of curriculum research and generally facilitate exchange of ideas. Where opportunity arises, we will also organise research meetings at an international level.

At present, the booklet exists in English and can be ordered from the address below. It is also possible to get the text electronically (eventually we wish to make it available on a website). There are already translations being prepared in Danish, Swedish, Russian and Finnish. Pedagogical Section groups or national Waldorf Associations are welcome to translate the text if they wish. Above all we wish to hear from individuals and groups engaged in curriculum research and development.

School Readiness

Another initiative at the World Teachers Conference related to the question of school readiness and the problems being faced in some countries with the lowering of the school entry age. There are two main issues to deal with:

- To present the basic concept of the significance of the transition from the first to the second seven-year phase of development, particularly from a salutogenetic point of view – that is to say, from the point of view of establishing the basis for life-long healthy development. We have to translate this fundamental principle of Waldorf education into a language that parents and the public, as well as education authorities, can understand.
- To meet the real changes in child development, mostly brought about by modern lifestyles, by revisiting our existing forms and exploring how we can better accompany the process of transition from Kindergarten to school. This requires a new approach especially in the age groups five to nine years old.

The ICRG has produced a booklet outlining the basic principles of school readiness from the perspective of Waldorf education and addresses the issues described above. It also contains a checklist for identifying school readiness.

These booklets are now available in English and German from the address below.

Martyn Rawson
Pädagogische Forschungsstelle
Wagenburgstr 6
70184 Stuttgart Germany

Email: rawson@waldorfschule.de

Martyn Rawson

Sex Education in Waldorf Schools

Dr. Nicola Fels (Paediatrician, School Doctor) Dr.med. Bartholomeus Maris (Gynaecologist) for the Curriculum Research Group on Sex Education

At the last international Kolisko conference (in August 2002 in Finland) a research group met to discuss sex education in the curriculum. Since then a working group has continued researching the situation. Here two of the leaders of the group – Nicola Fels, paediatrician and school doctor, and Dr. Med. Bartholomeus Maris, gynaecologist – report on the research so far. The following paper includes a draft curriculum for further research and discussion. The research group would welcome feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

(Editor)

Sexuality can become problematic when it becomes detached, isolated and one-sided. This can occur at an increasingly younger age, not least through the massive presence of pornography freely accessible on the Internet. Children and young people are increasingly exposed to the dangers and risks of this type of encounter with sexuality. Teachers report the following typical phenomena in their classes:

- The frequent use of sexual and feral language throughout the younger classes
- Girls in Class Four (rarely) and Class Five (more commonly) have their first periods
- From Class Six onwards a subculture of sexual activity (mostly limited to talking about it and looking at pictures). By this age most children consider themselves “fully informed”. This includes much misinformation, prejudice and partial information
- In Classes Seven and Eight serious cigarette smoking and consumption of alcohol begins.



At this age many girls consider abortion as a normal form of contraception

- There is generally an acceleration of sexual development and activity
- There is considerable research to support teachers' views that boys have particular difficulties at school. The preponderance of female teachers and single (usually mother) parent families mean that many boys lack suitable sexual role models
- In Classes Eight and Nine marijuana smoking begins
- From Class Nine onwards most girls start taking the pill as an almost automatic decision.

Anthroposophical aspects of the problem

The topic has had a low priority in Waldorf education until recently. Perhaps this is connected to what Rudolf Steiner said (in a lecture on 21st June 1922) to teachers in the first Waldorf School:

If children have been educated in the right way then it ought not to be necessary to address young people between the age of 14 and 20 on the subject of sex or misuse of power and aggression at all. ... If we have to address it at all, it would be a sign that something was unhealthy.

In this lecture he describes what the main educational objectives in this age are:

At this age the power of judgment must blossom and be directed to towards all aspects of the wider world. The world must be so interesting for these young people that they cannot become obsessed with themselves.

The issues of sex and power arise in his view for the following reasons:

Riddles about the world and its phenomena must arise in the souls of the young people. If these riddles don't arise then the forces within the newly born soul-body that should decipher them, transform themselves and become free. If these forces are not applied to understanding the world they transform back into forces of instinct, sexual instincts and power instincts.

Towards the end of the lecture he says further:

If we then see the emergence of unhealthy sexuality, then we can be sure that the teachers are to blame because they have bored the children and generated no genuine interest for the world. And when the children have no interest in the world, what should they interest themselves in then? Nothing other than what goes on their bodily organs, if they have been so bored by mathematics or history. We can prevent this by directing their interest away from their bodily selves through generating interest for the world. When too much interest for eroticism awakens in the children then school is generally to blame.

Thus the pedagogical challenge is clear. Is interesting the children enough for the real issues in the world?

From implicit to explicit teaching and learning

Themes that have to do with male female relationships, partnership, sexuality and reproduction are all present in the Waldorf curriculum in a form corresponding to the children's age (fairy tales, sagas, history, Parzival, Faust, biology, anthropology, etc.). Nevertheless, many teachers, parents and also older pupils are of the opinion that these subjects should be much more explicitly discussed. Naturally, sex education and its related topics belong primarily in the home, but this does not release the schools from the obligation of making their own contribution. And anyway, most children do not receive their sex education either at home or in the school, but from friends, on the street or via the media.

The Curriculum

If we look at the biology curriculum then there appears to be a paradox. On the one hand we should study nutrition and health in Class Seven and in Class Eight the physical human being using the examples of the eye and the skeleton. In Class Nine we should study “real anthropology” (as Steiner put it), the organs of movement and uprightness. In Class Ten we should examine the inner organs, although Steiner himself said, “this is the worst possible age to be concerned with oneself”.¹

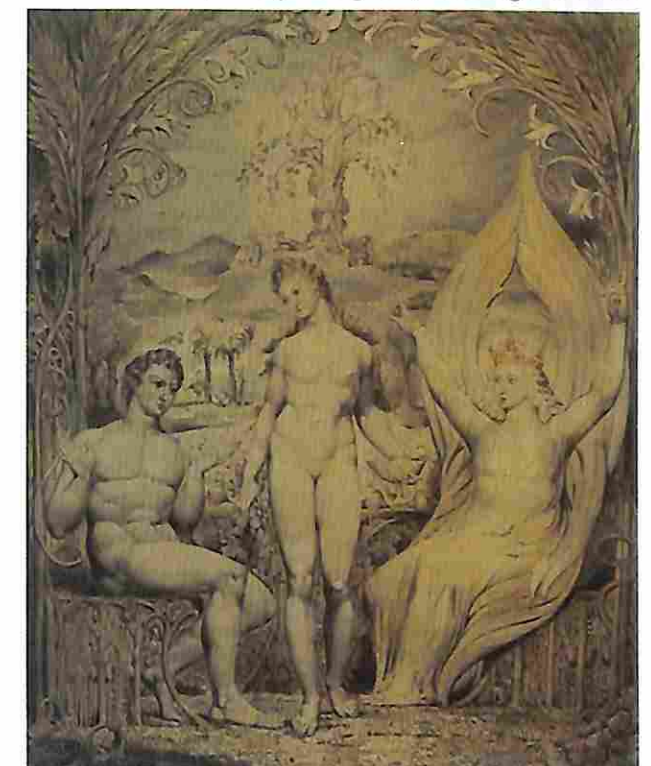
Clearly this should be done in such a way that the young people should not become too self-orientated, which is obviously difficult with such

a topic. Usually in the curriculum the heart and the circulation are studied.

The educational and preventative tasks of the school

While there may have been good pedagogical reasons in the past not to deal with sexuality directly in the curriculum, the fact is these days it is absolutely necessary from the preventative point of view. As times have changed enormously (100 years ago there were no contraceptives, hardly any pornography and virtually no instant media) and the need is now so great, many find it appropriate that topics relating to sexuality and reproduction should now be dealt with explicitly within the curriculum. This has to be done in such a way that conforms with our overall pedagogical approach in the various age groups. Furthermore sex education belongs to the whole group of those under the heading of personal, social and life skills and should be taught in an integrated way. The following curriculum suggestions have been developed as an orientation.

During the first seven years at home and in Kindergarten, the children have (we hope) learned many good behavioural habits. In the Lower School we have to reinforce these habits by putting them into a more conscious context. In the Lower School there is a need to intensify the education of the lower senses (touch, movement, balance, life) and especially the sense of warmth (including cultivating a sense for appropriate clothing). From Class Three personal hygiene should be explicitly taught (washing, care of



the teeth, care of the hair and skin) with age-appropriate explanations that help children to become more aware of themselves and the need to be independent in such matters (and not have to wait to be told to do such things). Bread baking, food preparation and plant cultivation should be practised regularly. Learning about animal breeding and birth can begin in connection with direct experience of farming and animal husbandry. In Class Three children can already be taught about human sexual relations (where do children come from?) in relation to the spiritual origins of the human being. This should be done in a context of learning about family life and parental responsibilities, taking flexible modern family structures into account in a positive way. Caring for animals should be a theme throughout Class Four as well.

In Class Five the regular care of plants (both in the classroom and outdoors) should be practiced and children should be introduced to the care of their working environment (cleaning techniques, washing clothes, repairing household artefacts). This should be continued into Class Six with personal hygiene, lifestyle, time management and personal organization, sleep habits, the need for rest and activity. From Class Six the aspect of the awakening power of judgment should be applied to this theme.

In Class Seven the specific topic of studying the form and development of the sexual organs,

ovulation, conception and the development of the embryo can be undertaken from the perspective of the life processes. Sexuality and nutrition can be taught as related topics and practical aspects of nourishment, cooking, food production and preparation should be introduced. Anorexia and eating disorders can also be discussed. It may be helpful to take the boys and the girls separately for some aspects of these lessons, though being together as a whole class group is also important. Certainly when it comes to discussing periods, methods of contraception and simply allowing girls to ask whatever questions they like, it is necessary to have the girls alone.

Whether the class teacher, another teacher, or non-teacher does this teaching should be carefully considered within each school. It depends on the existing relationships and the trust of the children. Certainly children at this age should have the opportunity to express their opinions about whom they wish to discuss these things with.

In Class Eight there should be frank discussion of the methods of contraception and self-restraint. Biographies of individuals who maintained their love for partners despite being separated, of fidelity, and of adult human relationships, may be helpful if these can be found. It may also be a good idea to offer a babysitting course with 'certificate' for those pupils who wish to participate.



In Class Nine, sexuality can be integrated in specific life-skills lessons dealing with topics such as gender issues, conflict resolution, AIDS, the law and youth, drugs and substance abuse, addictive behaviour and relationships. Role play is recommended in this age. Life skills should also include practical tasks in relation to the environment, such as recycling, water filtering and quality studies (including visits to water works and refuse and recycling centres).

In Class Ten the whole cycle of reproduction and the sexual organs should be studied as well as the emotional and psychological aspects of sexuality and emotions. In this connection one can address social and pedagogical issues such as pornography, abortion and population control. The care and development of the senses is also an important topic.

In Class Eleven, in connection with molecular biology, human genetics and related topics such as cloning should be discussed. Embryology, birth and the early years of childhood should be studied. It can be very helpful to invite a midwife to discuss practical aspects of birthing. Courses can be offered in basic parenting (with certificate). Care of the young child, elderly people and the handicapped should be discussed in relation to social practicals in the caring professions. Young people should also be offered a course in basic healthcare, dealing with fevers, infections, safety aspects of work and caring for young children.

In Class Twelve, human relationships, including homosexuality, family conflict, single parenthood, sexual abuse, prostitution and sexual deviancy should be discussed in relation to ethics, morality, biography, freedom and karma. An overview of education including an introduction to Waldorf education can be offered.

In all these curriculum suggestions, it is important to see where these topics are already integrated into the curriculum, where they could be strengthened as elements of the curriculum and where they need to be introduced as topics in their own right, with the corresponding adjustment of the curriculum (i.e. in other words, decisions are made about what these topics would replace in the curriculum, since new content usually means something has to give way.) In this sense we are called upon to exercise what Steiner called "soul economy" in teaching. That means our task is to:

arrange the teaching in such a way that within the shortest time the maximum amount of content can be given to the pupils with the simplest means possible. ... the whole topic can be brought in a living, organic context...to avoid inflicting harm on the pupils.¹

This last remark is important. This topic should be especially carefully and pedagogically presented.

Many of these topics can be integrated into existing main lessons but in the Upper School it is clear that new lessons will have to be created either as Main Lessons or as subject lessons. This requires curriculum research and study within the faculty meetings.

There is a risk of course, when interdisciplinary themes run through the curriculum, that one simply does not know what the students have been taught, what they have experienced, or what they actually know. For that reason it may be helpful to develop an internal checklist within the school.

What else can a Waldorf school do?

1. Engage in intensive work with parents, hold parents' meetings on the topic of sex instruction, discuss prevention of abuse, hold parents' meetings for fathers only, etc.
2. Study the various related aspects of sexuality in relation to child development in the teachers' meetings in order to deepen understanding. Practice-based research methods are particularly useful for evaluating the effectiveness of new curriculum programmes.
3. It is important to engage the students in discussions not only about the content but also about the introduction.
4. Pastoral care and advice should be offered confidentially to pupils by appropriately-trained teachers and other co-workers.

Reference

1. Rudolf Steiner in a lecture of 30th December 1921.

Student Progress Files

Jane Morris Brown

Innovation

Some years ago Michael Hall School started issuing a customised Student Planner to all students from Class Eight upwards. As well as a weekly diary and homework planner (including 'things to remember', space for parents' signatures and a record of attendance) the Planner also contains the School Code of Conduct and Dress Code. Last year a Core Skills checklist was introduced so that students could reflect on their own personal development.

Student Progress Files

Students are increasingly asked to incorporate independent learning into the key skills they develop throughout the Upper School. This is particularly evident in terms of the coursework they produce as part of their summative assessment, but perhaps more importantly through their approach and attitude towards work in and outside lessons. Since, in these Upper School years, "the focus now shifts to a more analytical and self-determined approach to learning",¹ it seems appropriate to make these core skills more visible and accessible for students themselves.

With this in mind, the introduction of a 'Progress File' section in our Student Planner at Michael Hall was designed to raise students' awareness of their own progress in competencies that underpin all their studies. The 'core skills' cover areas of: Personal and Learning Skills, Social Skills, Work Related Skills, with subsections covering detailed areas within these broad categories. Students are asked to rank their standing for each within a five-point scale, with the intention that by Class Twelve all students will have reached the highest level of competency in the majority of areas.

Whilst it is very early days, it would seem that those students who have worked with this process have generally found it useful. I have spoken to a number of tutees, who agree that working on their Progress File prompts discussion and thereby brings greater self-awareness regarding

their core learning skills. They often had to work through an understanding of the statements (e.g. 'appropriate' behaviour in lessons) and described struggling with the rankings and where they fitted within them. It seems that students have high expectations of their own performance, and will often undervalue their skills; this offers the tutor an opportunity to negotiate their score, so raising self-esteem and recognising progress made. By making a commitment to regular (generally termly) reviews, tutors and students work together to formulate strategies for improvement, focusing upon manageable and achievable goals.

However, perhaps the greatest advantage of using the Progress File lies within the focus it brings to tutor meetings. For the new tutor it offers a structure that may broaden out into more specific pastoral issues that need attention. The topic areas generate discussion in a 'safe environment' that is not intrusive and may highlight concerns that lie under the surface; a proactive rather than reactive response to students' needs. Importantly, the students are at the centre of this process, setting their own goals and forming an understanding of the ways in which their strengths and weaknesses impact upon their learning in and outside the classroom. This is then linked to their relationships with others in their learning community.

Ideally, the Progress File will enhance student self-awareness and encourage greater independent learning skills. Through encouraging shared responsibility for learning and therefore increased communication between teachers and students it should form part of their preparation for lifelong learning. Only time will tell whether the files will be used consistently and comprehensively by all tutees, but initial responses suggest that it is a positive development.

Reference

1. Rawson, M. and Richter, T., *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*, SSF 2001, p. 19.



SE Interview

with David Newbatt

SE: Can you tell us how the pictures illustrating Parzival came about?

David: The pictures came about because for some time I had a wish to deepen my understanding and experience of the whole process which takes place within the story of Parzival. I had previously told the story on many occasions, and frequently illustrated parts of it, including one series of illustrations with one picture for each adventure, but I was wanting to penetrate the story in more detail, and to delve further into the intricacies of this epic, in an artistic way.

SE: How did you choose which parts of the story to illustrate?

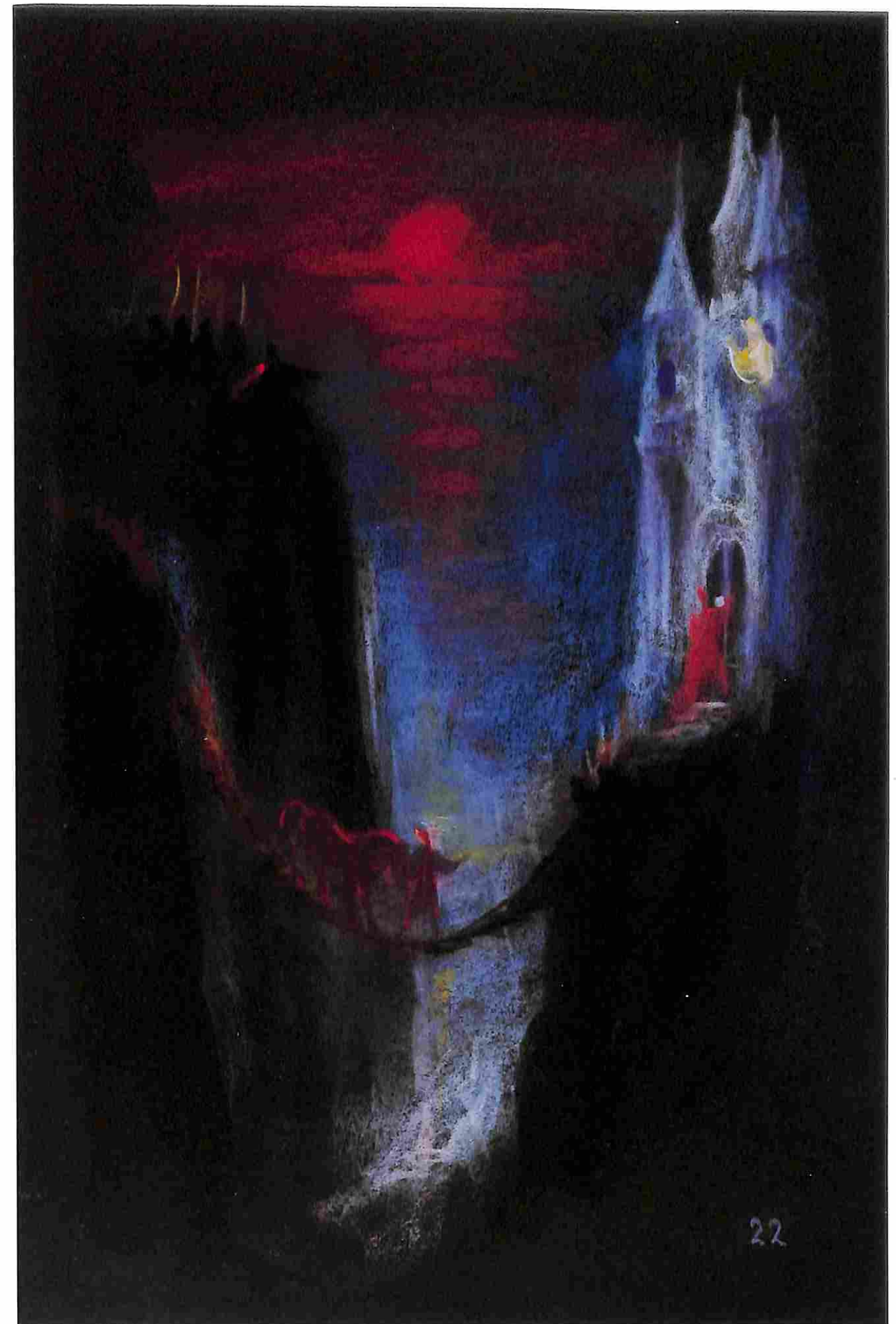
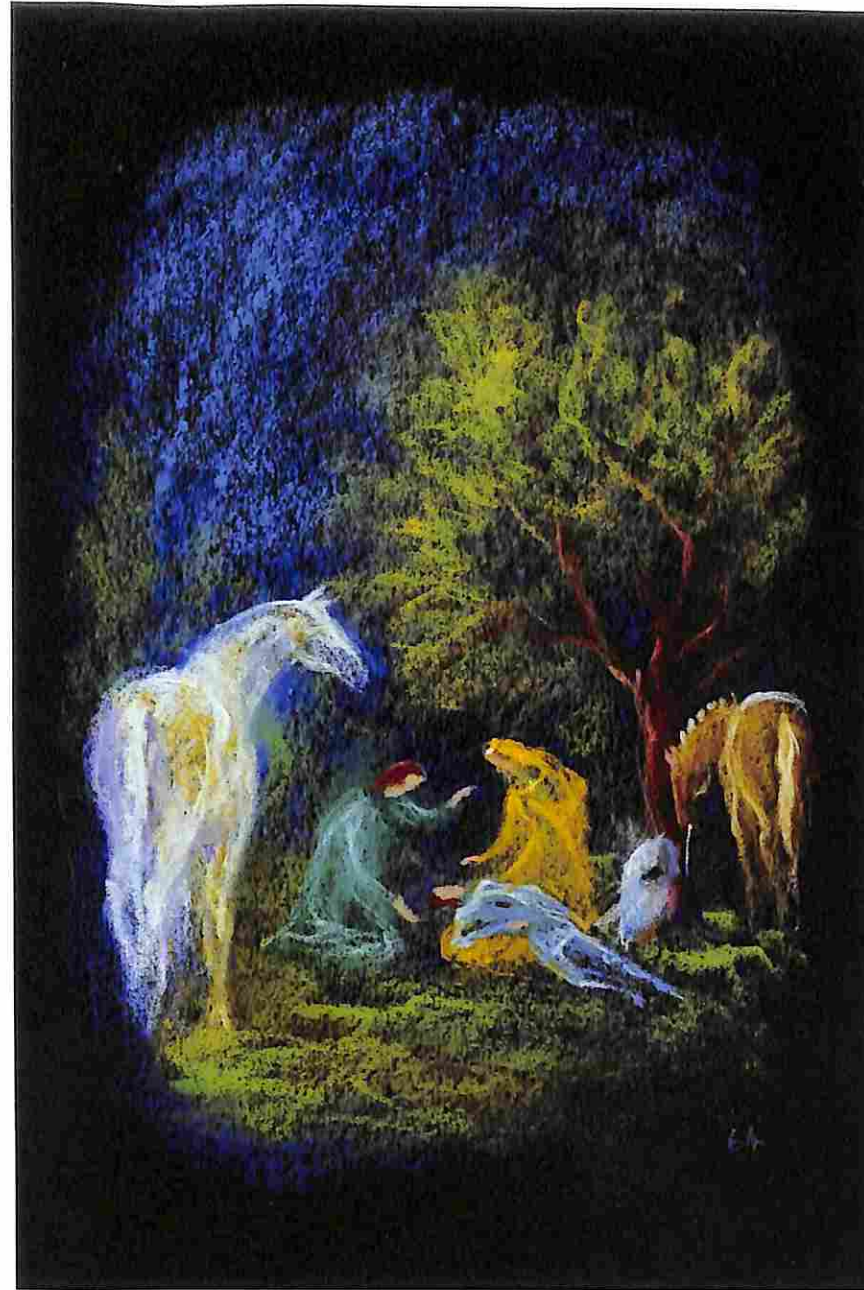
David: Aware that there is quite a mathematical structure to Wolfram von Eschenbach's original poem, I decided to take seven pictures for each adventure.

Trying to find the right balance of images for each adventure, I read and re-read the Mustard and Passage translation, without reference to any of the commentaries and interpretations of the tale in an attempt to meet the story afresh.

SE: Tell us about the choice of the text.

David: After completing the illustrations, writing the accompanying text proved to be a real challenge, because I wanted to make the story understandable to the first-time reader. In doing this, I was immensely helped by our secretary who was very interested in the story, and in being most critical, assisted greatly in forming my text into a concise whole.

The interview was conducted by Stephen Goodall



22

Parzival

**A new illustrated edition by David Newbatt,
introduced by Andrew Wolpert**

Parzival appears at a decisive moment in European history, and Wolfram von Eschenbach's epic is the most consummate portrayal of this figure. This 12th Century poem describes the lineage, birth, childhood and manhood of what is believed to be a 9th Century individuality, and his adventures, his errors and failures, his achievements and success unfold in the rich and lovingly depicted context of the medieval world. There is no aspect of social life, worldly concern, or soul drama, that does not play its part in the story of our hero. The very human comments of the author and the many down-to-earth aspects of the story provide the entertaining and worldly balance to the mighty theme. This truly comprehensive human context ensures that the sublime quest is not removed from the everyday world or sanctimonious, but sacred in its full human integrity.

The immediately contemporary history includes the significant Ecumenical Council of 869 at which the Church fathers declared the human being no longer to consist of Body, Soul and Spirit, but rather to be Body and Soul, the latter with some spiritual attributes. Such an ecclesiastical pronouncement does not, of course, reduce the divinity of humanity, but it expresses an attitude that attempts to control the image we have of ourselves. The spiritual world responds, not on this occasion by impelling a schismatic clerical riposte, but by inspiring a story-teller to celebrate with his subtle, strong and incontrovertible art the truth of the human threefoldness. The three main characters of this epic personify the three aspects of our humanity and the deep resonance of this truth lies at first beyond conscious recognition and the censorious notice of the church. This is but one of the correspondences and symbolic paradigms in Eschenbach's tale that nourish our yearning to have the great archetypes we carry within us affirmed. These truths do not age, and the undiminished appeal of this story attests to its timelessness.

Another aspect of the tale that addresses our own social experience today is the dynamic between

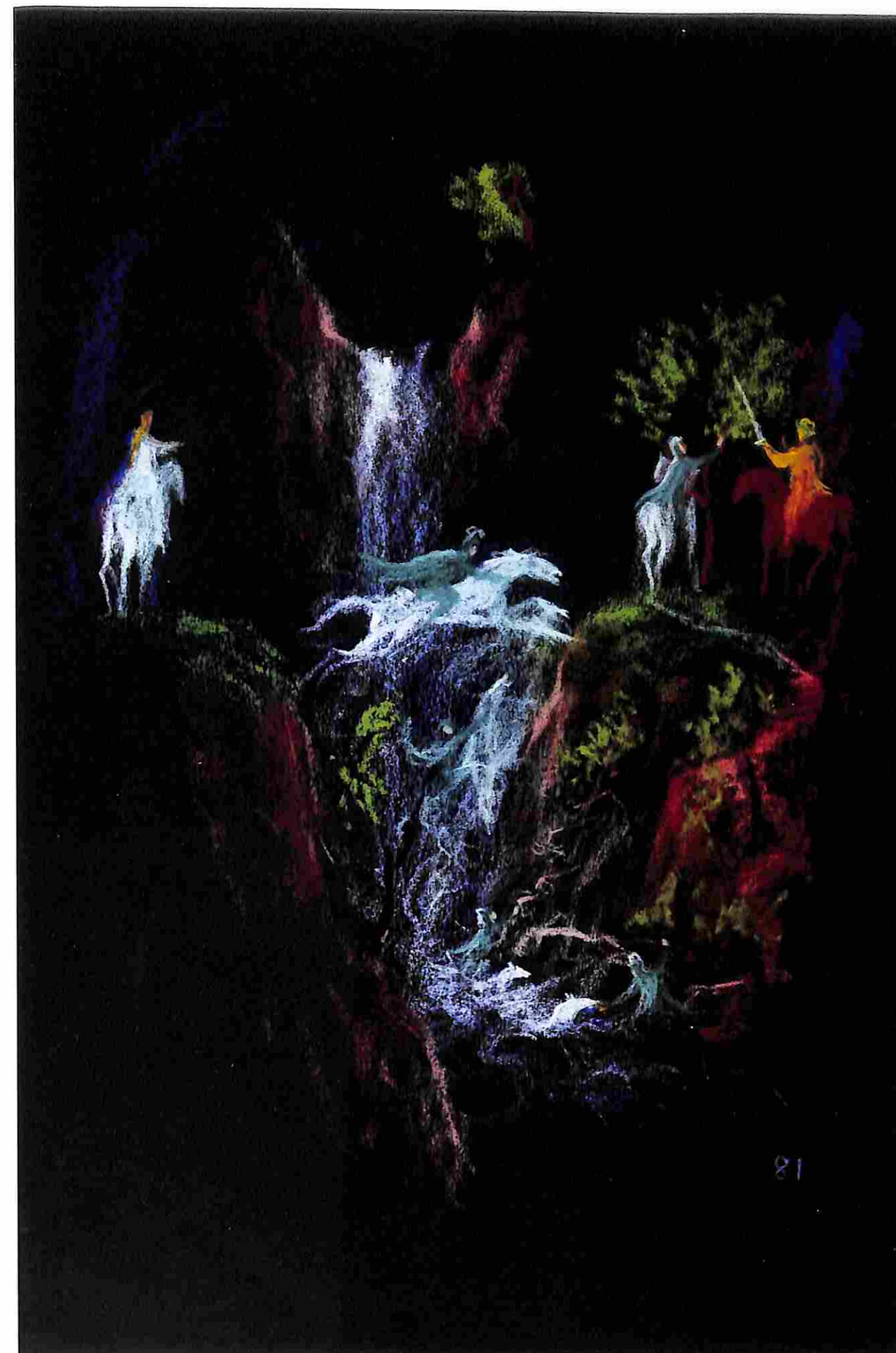
the individual and the group. We see how by then the Arthurian court had long lost its power as a sacred twelvefoldness which conferred on an individual knight a responsibility that the group depended on. The time when it was membership of a group that determined status has clearly passed. This story shows, way ahead of its time, how the group is affected by what the individual brings to it, and that it is the individuals who enable a group to achieve its task. The enabling principle for such a turning point in our individual biographies occurred over two thousand years ago. Nine hundred years ago this story presented that dynamic as a contemporary social reality and its artistic power works as a beacon for what we today still strive to achieve.

Our present interest in biography, gender issues, the value and significance of setbacks and even failures, who are our destiny companions, and the related questions about the meaning of life, are all addressed by the events of this great epic. Not only young adults, who carry these existential theme more or less consciously, but also those facing critical life conditions in painful mid-life consciousness, and the parents, teachers, companions, colleagues and therapists who witness and accompany those thus burdened will find in this story life-affirming images and a healing dynamic.

The distant historical context of this most modern tale paradoxically makes it more accessible and less threatening. The otherworldliness of the images dissolves any conscious resistance to what might be thought didactic, allowing deep soul-resonance without needing to satisfy modern criteria of political correctness or realism, and yet so intriguing and bizarre as to stimulate the most focused questions in the reader who is awake and induce a spellbinding awe in those for whom that too is appropriate.

It is in any case a jolly good story and worth reading for the pure joy of it!

Andrew Wolpert, Emerson College



81

From a School Doctor

Thoughts on Sex Education

Dr. Bettina Lohn

Introduction

Sexuality has found its way into most areas of life, particularly via the media and Internet. Yet the subject of sex education and sexual health is often avoided despite an increasing need for discussion. Although there is apparently an increasing openness about sexual relationships and orientation, contraception and related issues, sexual health is in fact deteriorating, especially in teenagers, among whom there is a high pregnancy rate. Such is just one contradiction in the vast field of sex education, with its many aspects and diverse opinions. This article cannot be exhaustive of course, but hopes to give some guidelines.

Some statistics and facts

Although statistics never do justice to individual situations, they can nevertheless reveal facts and trends.¹ For instance, adolescents are sexually active at an ever-younger age. In the year 2000 more than 25% of 16-19 year old women first had sexual intercourse under the age of 16 years. This might be related to the fact that the UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe: 31 out of 100,000 women aged 15-19 years. As a consequence there is a high termination rate (around 20% of all terminations) in women under 20 years of age; more than 50% of all conceptions in under 16 year old girls result in termination. There are also an increasing number of people, especially adolescents, with sexually transmitted infections (STI). In the 10 years between 1991 and 2001 the number of new STI doubled, with 16-19 year olds mainly affected. STI often lead to long-term fertility and health problems, with consequences for personal, social and family life. Whatever the individual or general stories behind these statistics, they cannot be ignored and ask for serious considerations, pro-active commitment and action.

The nature of sexuality

Despite the wealth of available information about such issues, talking about it still feels uncomfortable for most people. This could well relate to the intimate nature of sexuality itself.

My own thoughts could fill a book, but I would like to mention a few aspects, which might be helpful for parents and teachers.

The two sexes go right back to Adam and Eve and the 'fall from paradise'. The 'fall' is marked by the appearance of shame and seems an archetypal event. Shame is an elemental feeling, often accompanied by bodily changes like blushing. We could regard shame as a guide in a landscape of overwhelming and sometimes conflicting and confusing feelings, rather than an emotion 'to be avoided or overcome'. Sexuality and sexual relationships are private, and involve very direct, intimate physical contact and emotions: they are both body-bound, self-centred *and* related to the other person. Egoism and altruism meet and mix in a powerful way.

Also, sexuality has become increasingly separate from procreation; contraception has contributed to a direct meeting between nature and culture. However, the potential of a pregnancy, i.e. a third person starting to become involved, is always there (at least in heterosexual relationships), as no form of contraception is 100% effective. Pleasure and sincerity are very close allies here.

Home or School?

There is an ongoing debate as to whether sex education is primarily a parental or an educational responsibility. Most people consider that it needs attention in both environments. Whatever one's inclination, adequate awareness and communication between parents and school are essential, but of course this is easier said than done. Sex education raises issues of one's own sexuality, for everybody, teachers and parents alike. And although these might need to be addressed, it is often a question of timing and circumstances.

What is the appropriate age for the child to get to know the "facts of life"? Often, parents wait for their child to ask a question, and although this is generally appropriate, at times one has to encourage the child to ask the questions s/he is desperate to ask. It can be an enormous relief for

the child and help to address misunderstandings and fears.

A further challenge is to find age-appropriate answers when the child does ask and not to be (or at least appear to be) fazed by the question. As in any relationship honesty is paramount. However, honesty is not the same thing as sharing everything and every detail with the child at any age. In addition to the child's age, the imagination, way of thinking and previous experiences (for example the birth of a sibling) all shape the individual child's need for particular information and a way of presenting it. This can range from very general pictures (fairy tales or stories) to very detailed factual descriptions. The parental relationship to spiritual questions will further shape the context.

Many children receive their first knowledge about sex from friends and peers rather than home or school. This gives even more reason to address the issues in order to rectify misunderstandings, answer questions and provide a context in which sexuality and sexual relationships can be placed as part of the great range of possible human interactions, including conventional and same-sex family structures.

Sex Education in the Waldorf Curriculum

Many people will wonder whether sex education features in the Waldorf curriculum other than in Upper School biology. It does, although not always obviously so or as expected; it certainly needs reviewing! The article "Sex Education in Waldorf Schools" in this *SE* edition gives more detailed information and suggests new ideas, but I should like nevertheless to highlight one or two points.

Sex education and related subjects are touched on throughout the school years. Initially it is the awareness of the male and female archetypes in very general terms through fairy tales, stories and the *Old Testament*. The latter describes the 'fall from paradise', very closely linked to sexuality, albeit not in a direct, modern way. Such imagery takes into account the child's pictorial thinking and understanding at the Lower School age.

Around the ninth year, when they experience an increasing inner separation from their parents and familiar surroundings, many children do ask questions about their origin, both in physical and spiritual terms. For most children this is often a good moment to share more specific facts about



sexual maturation and relationships, although many of them will not yet appreciate or need full descriptive details of sexual intercourse. In my view, parental involvement and home rather than school environment are most appropriate at this age. From Class Seven onwards, when most children are well into puberty, the issues are more directly addressed. The article in this *SE* edition gives more details.

Every child is unique, so there are no easy answers or detailed, prescriptive suggestions. However I would encourage everybody to share their concerns, questions and experiences – both the successful and challenging ones. Sex education is a significant subject that needs our mutual commitment and initiative.

Reference

1. The above and further statistics are available from the Office of National Statistics' website: www.statistics.gov.uk

Waldorf initiatives in Singapore

Ours was not the first attempt at setting up a Waldorf kindergarten in Singapore, but to-date it has been the most successful. It began when four parents with children of similar ages met up and discovered they shared an interest in Waldorf education. Our children were between the ages of 18 months and two years old, so we started a weekly playgroup, held at my home. This was September 2001. We invited others to join in; as we met others and they showed an interest. Soon we were a group of about nine children.

In June 2002, Nila Chambers ran a course at Kampung Senang ("Serene Village"), a local charity which also runs a Waldorf-inspired day-care programme, amongst its other charitable enterprises. Nila is an inspirational Waldorf teacher who came to run an introductory course on Waldorf Early Childhood teaching. She gave us so much hope and encouragement that, as our children were now fast approaching Kindergarten age, we began to think about starting up a small initiative of our own. We looked for a suitable house and a teacher. Margarete Lange, a very experienced German Kindergarten teacher who was based here in Singapore, agreed to work for the co-op and helped us to prepare for the first class. We opened our doors in January 2003 with eight children (one left half way through the year as the parents moved to NZ). We registered the "Waldorf Steiner Education Association (Singapore)" to reinforce our commitment to

developing Waldorf in Singapore. The class was a mixture of children from many backgrounds – but this is a reflection of Singaporean society. We have Chinese, Indian, American, European, Japanese. Attending a parents' meeting was a bit like chairing the UN (but not as political!).

We now have 12 children in the programme: two local Singaporeans and the rest a mixture of PR (permanent residents) and expats.

We soon realised that if we were going to make a lasting impact on Singapore we had to start training local teachers. Margarete kindly agreed to help and in February 2004 our first trainee – Ms Poon, Woon Gay – joined us. She is attending the Bangkok Asian Early Childhood Teacher Training being run by the International Waldorf Association.

A small but growing number of local parents are struggling against the cultural tide to try and introduce Waldorf education to Singapore. It is harder for them because the local education system is very academic and all local children must attend the local school system. Children are expected to read and write on joining Class One, and most will have been taught in Kindergarten. It was reported in the *Straits Times* that over 15,000 children here have been classified as dyslexic or suffering from some kind of learning disability – on a island with a population of just over three million that's a very large number. But if they are experiencing difficulty reading on entering Class One, then

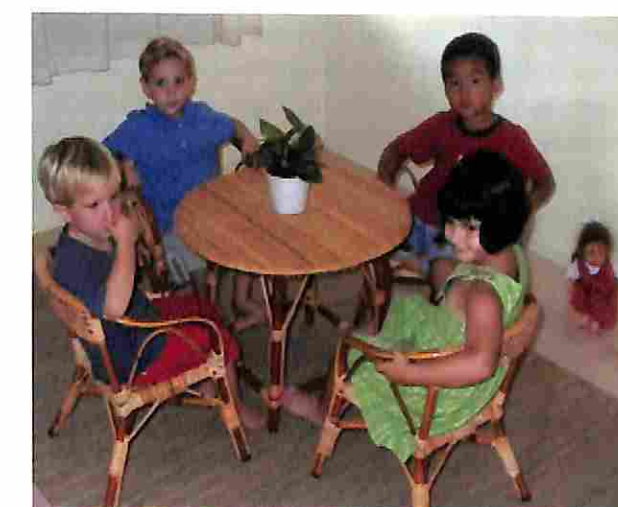
they are tested for learning disorders. My personal feeling is that this is too young to tell and most likely they are just late developers who have been over-burdened at an early age.

We are trying to build bridges to working parents – it is the norm here for both parents to work and children are placed in day care. We still run a weekly playgroup and try to distribute as much information as we can about the dangers of early academics, too much TV and electronic media for children. It is a slow process but very worthwhile and rewarding. Next year we will be starting a second class to fulfil demand and we shall have (so far confirmed) five local children in the programme and a total of 18 children (including the five locals). I know it is small but every child counts!!

The cultural tide is changing in Singapore. The government has stated on more than one occasion that it recognises the need for more creativity and imagination in education. When we have built our parent-run co-op to the point where the majority of parents are local, perhaps we will start thinking about a school. Right now our focus is on consolidating what we have and building a strong foundation for the future. I try not to focus on the outcome of our work. We're doing this for love and it's not important to us when or how the seeds we are sowing start to grow.

Our main challenges, as elsewhere in Asia, are:

1. finding and training quality local teachers. We are searching for two more for next year. The ideas behind Waldorf are so alien to people here: simply because they are so different from the mainstream approach; I feel that we have a lot of affinity with those involved in the Buddhist community here and that we will find a lot of support for this kind of education from that direction.
2. Educating parents so that they understand why childhood should be protected; and
3. Reaching out to the international community to provide support. Visits from overseas teachers (such as Renate Breipohl and Nila Chambers) are a great boost for our community because it enables us give people a chance to learn from experienced Waldorf educators. We find when parents 'do' craft



or artistic work it opens them up a little to consider this form of education for their children – appealing to their hearts and hands rather than their heads! If anyone is passing through Asia on their travels elsewhere, please consider visiting in Singapore!

Paula Huggins



Some thoughts on public funding for Steiner Education

Looking at the 80-year history of Steiner education in this country it is impressive that we have the number of schools and early-years centres that we do. It has taken much courage and sacrifice to exist in the hitherto less-than-conducive environment of the UK education system. However, times change and we now find our educational principles more in accord with what is being said by an increasing number of mainstream educators and innovative circles of politicians, academics and practitioners. Despite varied interpretation, the realisation of "spirituality" as a concept worthy of serious study in the context of education and childhood is a sign of a deeper change and a more questioning attitude to educational traditions inherited from the past. Together with issues concerning multiculturalism, multiple intelligences, creativity, responsibility and tolerance, a forum has now been created in which Waldorf has become a participant that is respected and progressively influential. Now we too have to think of the future.

Our schools have survived and served the vast majority of their pupils well. But is the endless struggle to survive in fact compatible with what Waldorf education could venture to become? There is a weariness in some quarters of the movement and we are clearly not attracting enough younger colleagues who can take the impulse forward with integrity, enthusiasm and commitment to Anthroposophy. In these times our responsibility goes beyond the traditional boundaries of our existing institutions. We are becoming more and more conscious of our responsibilities to all children and their educational wellbeing. As a movement that Steiner clearly intended to bring about social change, we need to widen our horizons and, through that interest in the world, find new sources of strength and inspiration.

In our international work we have noted that countries like Norway, and, more recently, New Zealand, Sweden and Finland have managed to integrate well into national educational life. Public funding has allowed the schools there to flourish, thereby allowing Waldorf ideas and methods to percolate into

mainstream practice. Obviously such funding can bring new questions and challenges, as well as risks, but these countries have surmounted them well and not forfeited any sense of being Steiner schools nor the essential principles on which the education is based. Why cannot it also happen here? The set of provisions so far put in place by the DfES and SWSF can give grounds for optimism and are well worth exploring further. If we do not, we could end up regretting this long-sought-for opportunity as a failure of courage and imagination that could result in our work remaining peripheral to education endeavour in general. Norway is a good example of how a maintained Steiner sector has kept its integrity and gone from strength to strength, affecting positively the general educational scene.

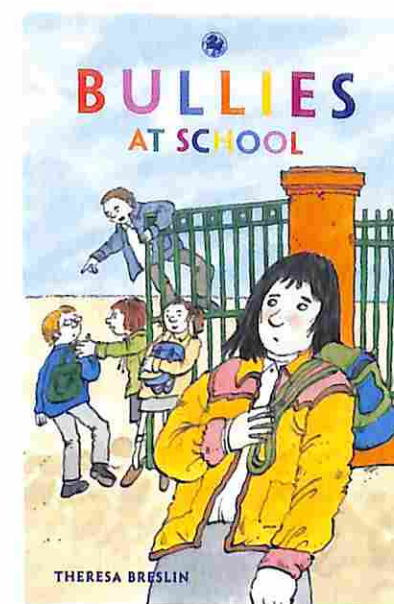
What happens here is of educational interest to much of the world and influences policy beyond our shores. Our colleagues abroad have made this abundantly clear over the years we have worked together in ECSWE and other international groups. What we are currently being offered is, in fact, a very satisfactory opportunity and could, if taken up with foresight, become a help in surmounting some of our own present inadequacies and dilemmas. We must move on with the knowledge that the spiritual world has laid these questions before us at this time and this place, endeavouring to live up to the task of being engaged with like minded people of good will in trying to lift educational practice to a level that all our children deserve.

Christopher Clouder



Book Reviews

Pene Johnstone reviews *Bullies at School* by Theresa Breslin



Theresa Breslin is an acclaimed children's author who has made no attempt, in her title, to disguise the content. As the story unfolds the roles of victim and bully are juxtaposed and even come around to playing their opposites. This is an interesting insight into the true nature of the bully; exploring the idea that bullies are victims in disguise and that victims can employ strategies to turn the bully/victim relationship around.

Siobhan is a caricature of victim. Nothing is going right. Social exclusion, teasing and taunting, being "set up", learning difficulties, only child, solo mother struggling at home The toilets are one resort during playtimes, or the library which offers diversion, occupation and sympathy.

The situation goes from bad to worse when Siobhan strikes back and is caught. Yet it is through her retreat to the library that the possibility for change comes. In a moment of myth and magic help comes to Siobhan, in the form of a snake. This creature from distant Celtic past empowers Siobhan to go on the offensive, as indeed her forebears had done, using the same source of strength.

Now Siobhan is invincible and she watches her tormentors falter and crumble. It is Henry, fellow victim of the past and ally in times of need, who awakens her to the folly of what she is doing. "You're starting to become like them."

In the conclusion of the story Siobhan returns the Plaid Pin (snake) to its storage place – knowing that it has helped her – knowing that it is there.

In this brief story we see typical social dynamics, conflict and resolution, transformation. But do we really? Is the story plausible? Who is it written for?

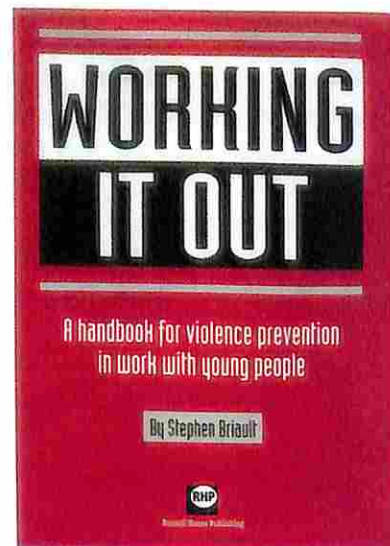
On first reading I felt that it begged credibility and came across as a parody on bullying. Yet from the title one could imagine a dissertation. Does resolution really happen like that? Without going into a lengthy thesis on bullying I can offer the following.

Siobhan, big, clumsy, unattractive (self appraisal), vulnerable, learning difficulties: she fits the bill. Karen – leader of a gang, using "oddballs" for targets – to increase her power. The Plaid Pin – enables Siobhan to untangle knots but becomes a weapon. Where is the snake that will give the victim in our playground the power to withstand?

Can a victim, from that place of low self esteem, fear and desperation, find their own solution? It is in the closing paragraphs, almost missed, that the key question is addressed. Can Siobhan, in future, tell someone what is happening? For me the story is about the failure of the potential support systems, teacher, principal, mother, to "read" the victim's behaviour which is exhibited in such a raw form. The story fails to recognise this vital issue in the case of bully/victim relationships. Breslin's victim is never protected and made safe and trust does not develop. In real-life situations our first task needs to be to protect the victim and validate her pains; make it safe to tell.

The book disappointed me. Can victims transform their behaviour without the help of a Celtic charm? And where are we in our positions of authority, if we cannot create an environment where telling is a safe thing to do? I question whether this story will offer any comfort to victims, or give them strength and courage. I think it will fail to touch them. Nor does it offer guidelines, for adults, on ways to transform patterns of behaviour in the school. Perhaps my criticism is harsh but the book, by its title, suggests help. I have read many novels that describe, analyse and resolve bullying situations with more depth and conviction, but where the pain of the victim is embedded in a broader story.

Linda Churnside reviews *Working it Out – A handbook for violence prevention in work with young people*, by Stephen Briault, published by Russell House Publishing



Violence is never acceptable. This is the underlying basis for a book that takes us through a process of analysing our thoughts and feelings about aggression, the violence in ourselves, the people we work with, and in our environment.

Stephen Briault has carried out extensive research with a number of institutions, both anthroposophically based and not, which cater for teenagers and young adults in a training and working environment. Many of these young people have learning difficulties, are economically or socially disadvantaged or have learned that using violence gets short-term success. Some of them are being detained at Her Majesty's pleasure, others are undertaking training rather than be unemployed. A few are lucky enough to have found a place at Ruskin Mill, where they enjoy the opportunity of discovering and developing discipline through engaging in the processes of technology from ancient to contemporary arts and crafts. So the research deals with young people for whom aggression, either verbal or physical, can be an everyday occurrence but it describes inspiring attempts to work with staff and students to find better ways of dealing with problems.

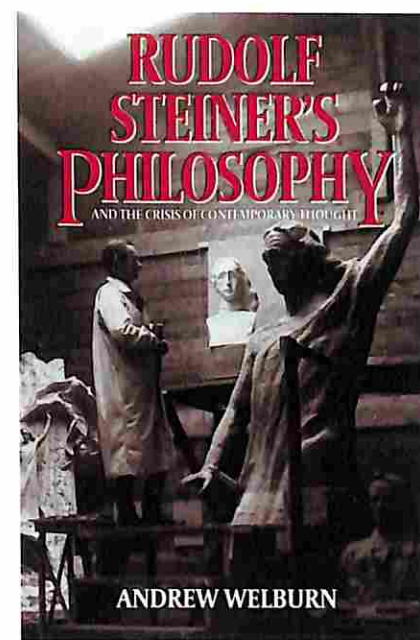
This handbook aims to contribute to work on the prevention of violence by being a source of new ideas and key concepts to better understand youth violence and to enable its readers to stimulate the development of better practice in their own organisations. It provides strategies and exercises to develop a range of successful, practical approaches for use by staff with young people to transform their own attitudes and feelings about aggression, to change their violent behaviour, and reduce causes and triggers for violent behaviour in their institutions.

There are 23 activities in the handbook, ranging from ways to examine why violent outbursts have

occurred to questions to get staff to consider ways that their methods of communication can unconsciously trigger confrontations with young people. All these, along with practical suggestions about improved practice, can be used for staff training in most schools and other institutions where young people are educated or trained.

For teachers and others who work with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, this book will be useful and thought-provoking. For teachers and parents of "ordinary" young people it will give insight into the ways that we can unintentionally make life difficult for ourselves by the things we say and how we say them. A very interesting book...

Martyn Rawson reviews *Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy and the crisis of contemporary thought*, by Andrew Welburn, published by Floris Books



Education. And it has. Philosophy is of course not everyone's cup of tea, though armchair philosophers will enjoy reading this with nothing stronger than a mild herb tea to keep them awake. It reads well and explains just enough to enable us to follow the arguments but neither assumes a deep knowledge of Western philosophy nor delivers the kind of sound-bite synopses that typify philosophy-made-simple books.

What really makes this book relevant and exciting is its subject. Sooner or later anyone who has adopted and lived with the premise that the Steiner approach to education or health, therapy, organic farming, banking, ecology, organisational development, artistic creativity and of course self-

A book with this title, and an Appendix with the title "Kant and the Post-Kantians: Steiner's relationship to German Idealism", has to have something really interesting to say to engage the attention of readers of *Steiner*

development makes sense – has to ask: how does this approach relate to other serious quests to understand the world? Behind every meaningful attempt to structure the life we lead lie ideas, assumptions, theories – in short philosophy. We are used to running alongside the mainstream, offering our complementary holistic approach. But as Andrew Welburn points out;

Steiner is potentially so exciting, then, because he does more than offer a 'complementary' view on the major developments of ideas in our time, pleading for some kind of residual role for spiritual ideas. Rather, he makes us aware of dimensions of meaning in the very ideas which constitute the framework of the modern world, whose consequences we have all too often failed to face up to, at least until the situation becomes too critical to shirk any longer. He shows our culture not as an 'alternative' but a challenging version of itself.

The kind of thinking needed in the world today is being called for all round, whether it is for holistic explanations and correlative thinking in all fields of science; whether it is for an integrated concept of health and human development that includes the whole human being – body, soul and spirit; whether it is for a child-centred education that really addresses the need to enable and empower the individual to develop his or her full potential and is based on human nature rather than abstractions or the policy whims of Ministry officials. The changes we are facing in the world of globalisation, the (re-)emergence of fundamentalism and all the consequences of 9/11 all require individuals who can think for themselves, outside of the box, creatively yet morally responsibly. This was Steiner's challenging contribution, to create a framework for the emergence of higher balance between polarities, through what he called knowledge and freedom – two technical terms Welburn more than adequately clarifies.

Much of this book is about knowledge, what it is, how we achieve it and above all, how knowledge acquires meaning. What Steiner taught, and Welburn makes clear, is that knowledge is not simply the sum or essence of what we perceive in the world but includes the activity of the knower. The chapter in which this is explained is helpfully entitled "Knowledge as Relationship", which sums it up. In perceiving the world we are at the same time thinking it and the quality of this thinking relates to who we are and what we have experienced. The act of seeing is thus creative. Cezanne saw the colour blue as part of the meaning of his paintings. In this view

of knowledge lies Steiner's conviction of the deep affinity, indeed unity, of science, art and religion.

As Welburn puts it, "*Waldorf Education attempts to foster the interplay between art and understanding throughout the curriculum, and its success shows that both can be enriched through deeper awareness of their role. Finding the bridge from knowledge to art may have indeed been the most significant aspect of those ideas for Steiner's subsequent thought.*"

As long as the knower was deemed to be outside the phenomenon, looking on or looking in, as an observer, we could remain detached. And that has been the problem. As long as we can remain detached we can think anything we like, we can act in contradiction to our own principles. How else can we explain all the major disasters caused by human knowledge, the Holocaust, the destruction of the environment, oppression and so on? Steiner argues for a participation in the world through our thinking, feeling and willing. Through deeds as through knowledge we form a relationship to the world that sees us as players rather than as spectators. The stage upon which cosmic events unfold is now, according to Steiner, the human soul itself.

As many fields of contemporary knowledge have identified, we do not simply grow into the world by adapting to it, nor is it all simply inherent within us, requiring only the right nourishment and context. As the language researcher Gordon Wells put it in his ground-breaking book, *The Meaning Makers*, developing human beings create meaning as they grow into the world. Or as Professor Tim Ingold put it, "*We do not have to think the world in order to live in it but we do have to live in the world in order to think it.*" Our modern Western mind often gets in the way. Studying pre-literate peoples Tim Ingold was able to state that for them, "*Far from revealing a world that already exists, as it were out of time, life is a temporal process of its ongoing creation in order to live. Every being must constantly draw on the vitality of others' complex network of reciprocal interdependence, based on give and take.*"

This participatory reciprocal nature of life also applies to the social world. The individual self is not the product of society or education. Yet knowledge arises through the process of the self developing and it does so in a uniquely human context. Individual development always occurs in a social context and it does so through the development of knowledge. In Steiner's concept of society, social forms evolve in tandem with

human consciousness, self and society are two aspects of the same process, *“the individual would become stunted if he led an isolated existence outside human society. Indeed, this is why the social order arises, so that it may in turn react favourably on the individual.”* (Steiner in the *Philosophy of Freedom*).

Here are big ideas that underpin the issues of our times. As Waldorf educators and parents, how we arrive at knowing about the world, and whether we can rely on this, is deeply relevant to our respective life tasks. As Andrew Welburn puts, it, *“Knowledge is our affair. Therefore it is through self-knowledge and through responsibility for our act of achieving the conscious otherness of modern detachment, that we may also look to heal the spiritual wound.”*

This book is an excellent guide to the rediscovery of meaning. I wish I had read it before I wrote a chapter on the subject in my recent book on human evolution.

Ann Swain reviews *Neuro-psychological Treatment of Dyslexia*¹ by Dirk J. Bakker

1. A set of brains and learning to read

We are by now, somewhat familiar with the two hemispheres of the brain, and especially the quality they have of being a cross picture of what the two sides of our bodies are doing.

By taking in something with our Left eye, our Right brain participates and the opposite for the Right eye.

Reading, as far as it is a language task, activates the Left cerebral hemisphere, but the aspect of reading that calls on the reader to differentiate orientation and form activates the Right cerebral hemisphere. In a situation without complications the various brain regions interact and co-operate and a unified sensory stimulation makes its impression.

An adult reader reading a common text activates the left hemisphere noticeably more than the right. Their eyes can make fewer and larger jumps from one fixation point to next across the page. A beginner reader has a very different reaction. The print is novel, the movement their eyes make is still untrained and the saccades are small and frequent. Such a reader will even fixate between a word and one half of it will be projected to the right hemisphere via the left visual field and the other half to the left hemisphere.

Investigators began to wonder at what point in reading development does the balance of brain activity tip from right to left.

In their research they flashed words into the visual half fields of both adult and juvenile readers. The adults read words presented to their right visual fields (left hemisphere) more accurately, the young children consistently performed better when receiving words via their left visual fields.

Under normal educational circumstances, the tip of activity happened when children were between 7-8 years old...but not in all.

2. Two types of dyslexic readers

Bakker asks his reader to imagine someone deciding to learn to ride a horse. One character will choose the ploddy, old, safe but slow mount. This rider will learn aspects of horsemanship, but will not progress to be able to gallop and jump and race with the wind. This rider will develop “dysjockia of the P-type”.

Another character will immediately saddle and attempt the ride the race-horse. Speed will be assured but the rider will take many falls and never develop the basic skills to ensure he becomes a good and accurate rider. This person will develop “Dysjockia of the L-Type”.

The first is an example of a reader who never makes the shift from Right to Left brain activity during a reading task. The task remains a perception task and the focus of effort is on deciphering shape and orientation of the print. This reader has little or no comprehension of the text, (no language sensing).

This reader will read carefully. Mistakes made will have the character of being “time consuming” ones – false starts, hesitations, fragmenting the word and stammering. They continually are experiencing print as novel.

The L-Type is not so challenged by the novelty of the shapes and symbols. Reading, right from the beginning, was a language experience, not that they are especially linguistically skilled, but more as if they are “linguistically zealous.” They read quickly and inaccurately and are “perceptually negligent.” Their errors were “substantive” in nature e.g. omissions, mutilations and substitutions of words.

An investigation of ear dominance in these two types of dyslexics revealed and significantly high rate of right-ear dominance in the L-Type and the reverse in the P-Type which is comprehensible by piecing together the cross journey auditory input takes from the right ear to left brain of the L-Type reader and the other direction for the P-Type.

3. Neuropsychological Treatment Methods

Hemispheric-Specific Stimulation (HSS)

So we have identified the different types of reading disorder, the slow accurate one who has little or no comprehension (P-Type) and the hasty inaccurate one who understands everything the author intended. Then what...how do we help them put their money on the right horse as it were.

For the quick L-Type reader, the right hemisphere is not joining in sufficiently and the left is too much involved. The right hemisphere requires specific stimulation.

By presenting text to the left visual field the right hemisphere becomes the initial “landing site” for this visual impression. Bakker explains the difficulty in presenting HSS visually because to control fixations is very cumbersome. But visual is not the only way to stimulate. Tactile is also a viable HSS. By having the child read with the fingertips of her left hand the HSS is also occurring. Auditory HSS is also a possibility.

For the P-Type reader the reverse eye, hand and ear will provide equally suitable HSS.

Hemisphere Alluding Stimulation (HAS)

Rather than stimulating a particular hemisphere with complex or costly means, the research sought ways to provide stimulation that would enable reading to improve. Hemispheric Alluding Stimulation was a method that teachers could use to alter texts for the different readers’ needs.

For the hasty L-Type reader they found that providing text that alluded to the right hemisphere the children’s reading accuracy improved, (Their rate decreased, but their comprehension did not suffer).

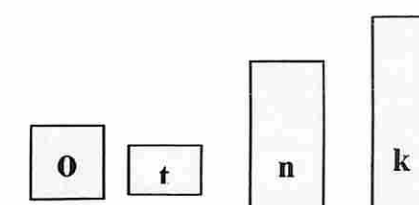
HAS text suitable for L-type dyslexics is text that has been made perceptually complex and should accentuate perceptual aspects.

There are CAPITALS and small letters. Make a word out of the capital letters.
Do the same for the lower case letters.

PcLAYhGiROUIdND

sLEtMOrNAaDEw

Arrange the letters from the biggest box to the smallest and read the word



By calling on the child’s need to analyse form they can exercise their right hemisphere and invite it to take part more fully in the activity of reading. Pages with illustrations and with different fonts styles and sizes and even unconventional use of capitals and lower case will offer HAS to the right hemisphere.

Jennie took everything and went
out into the world. On the corner
she met a small pig wearing
large sandwich boards. He smiled
and pointed to a box attached to the
front board on which was printed.
Free Sandwiches. please take.
Jennie chose a tuna ON RYE and
gobbled it as she read the
advertisement on the board

For the P-Type dyslexic, HAS to the left hemisphere is best when it accentuates the language aspect of reading. By calling on semantic and phonetic abilities these readers gain in fluency and comprehension. The text is presented in the most perceptually simplistic way. No illustrations, and very simple font. Words are left out that the child must supply meaningful possibilities, or rhyming omissions are also supplied by the characteristically slow and faltering reader.

HAS for P-Type dyslexics:

The sun descending in the west,
The evening star doth shine;
The birds are silent in their _____
And I must seek for _____

The moon, like a flower
In Heaven's high _____
With silent delight
Sits and smiles at the _____

The book ends with rather detailed accounts of experiments done with P and L-type readers with various forms of HSS and HAS. The concluding findings were that HSS (especially tactile/haptic) did benefit readers of both P but especially, L-type and the positive affects did last. HAS was most beneficial to P-type readers.

(put these words into an order
that makes sense).

Jack, Jill and on going are holiday.

We by together travelling are
train.

They for have looking days
forward been this to.

Bakker is open about the shortcomings of the research carried out, i.e. possible failure to control certain elements such as motivation and being withdrawn from lessons for opportunity to play.

In the awakened climate in which we as teachers daily see the need to differentiate our teaching for our pupils, Bakker offers some very simple ways to accomplish a great deal. By being able to identify these two types of readers, we can present them with reading material that will strengthen their literacy attainment, as well as nourish and stimulate their cerebral hemispheres!

Dirk Bakker is Professor of Child Neuropsychology at Free University, and Head of the Research Department, Pedagogical Institute, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Footnote

1. Translated from Dutch by Ginny Spyer, Oxford University Press, Inc., 1990.

St Paul's Steiner School



invites applications for the following positions for
September 2004:

Class One Teacher
Senco

Subject Teachers: Music, German, Games and Gardening
Administrator F/T
Administrator P/T
Bursar P/T

Our pioneering school is located in and restoring the beautiful St Paul's Church, Islington (Grade II listed). From September we will have Classes 1-6, two flourishing Kindergartens, a Playgroup and a Sure Start funded drop-in.

Send your CV and covering letter to:

Lisa Warren, St Paul's Steiner School
1 St Paul's Road, London N1 2QH

For further information please call on 020 7226 4454

ANNOUNCING: A FOUNDATION DEGREE IN STEINER WALDORF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

The new programme in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood, with its flexible delivery systems, offers opportunities for Early Years Practitioners, teaching assistants, parents and those wishing to specialise in early childhood to achieve a professional qualification.

This new programme is currently going through the accreditation process of the University of Plymouth, and the intention is to have it up and running by September 2004.

The weekend programme will run in York with short residential courses held at Elmfield School in the West Midlands.

The course will take place over two years, but the modules

can be completed within a five year period should it be difficult to attend all the sessions required.

For potential students who have previous experience of Steiner Early Childhood Education, it would be possible to apply for previous learning and experience to be accredited, where relevant.

Contact the address below for a preliminary application form to register your interest.

Abi McCullough, Faculty of Education, University of Plymouth, Douglas Avenue, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2AT
abi.mccullough@plymouth.ac.uk Tel: 01395 255325

Bristol Steiner School Vacancies for September 2004 Class 1 teacher Class 3 teacher Full/part time music teacher

We are a friendly, forward-looking school situated in a green area of the city.

Bristol is a lively city, culturally rich and diverse, with easy access to beautiful countryside.

For further information, to arrange a visit or for an application form contact the school office on

0117 933 9990
office@steiner.bristol.sch.uk

MYRIAD NATURAL TOYS

Encouraging Meaningful Play

We specialise in beautiful handcrafted wooden toys, organic soft dolls, plant dye based art materials, natural craft materials, books and pentatonic musical instruments - all based on Steiner Waldorf educational principles. High quality - low environmental impact.

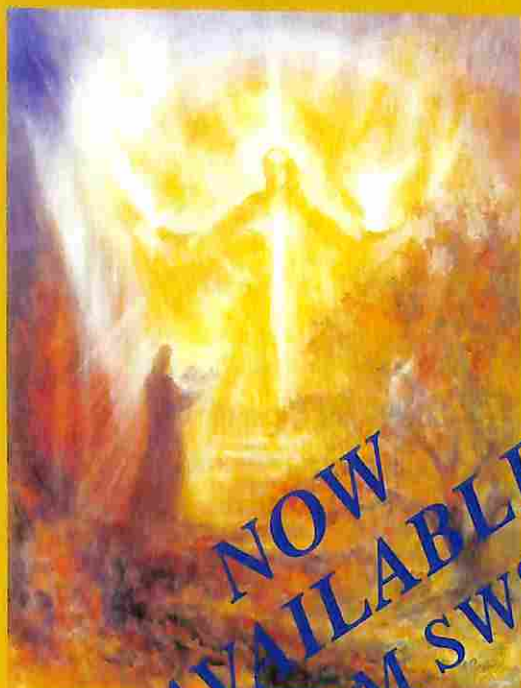


For free mail order catalogue, and a friendly service:

01725 517085 www.myriadonline.co.uk

FIVE PLAYS FOR WALDORF FESTIVALS

by
RICHARD MOORE



Gilly of the Goats, the Churl of the Town, and the Mischievous

NOW AVAILABLE FROM SWSF

Camphill Eurythmy School

Eurythmy Training within Camphill



Applications are now being taken for
September 2004

We offer the opportunity to train in the art of eurythmy within the social-therapeutic setting of Botton Village (Camphill Village Trust).

Enquiries to:
Camphill Eurythmy School,
Botton Village, Danby, Whitby,
YO21 2NJ. U.K.

Tel: +44 (0)1287 661257/318
Fax: +44 (0)1287 661254
E-mail: CamphillEurythmy@aol.com

www.camphilleurythmy.org.uk

Michael House School

VACANCIES

Michael House is a long established school, in a beautiful parkland setting. Our numbers are growing, and plans for further development are underway.

We are currently seeking committed and enthusiastic applicants for the following vacancies:

- Upper School Humanities Teacher
- Class 1 Teacher
- Class 3 Teacher
- Upper/Middle School French Teacher
- Part-time Gym Teacher

An ability to teach auxiliary subjects is always desirable (e.g. gym, handwork)

Informal visits before application are welcomed.

Possibility of rented accommodation in the school grounds. Discounted education for staff children.

Please telephone for more information
(01773 718050)

Or apply in writing with full details of experience and two referees, to:

The College of Teachers, Michael House School
The Field, Shipley, Heanor
Derbyshire DE75 7JH

PHILPOTS MANOR SCHOOL and FURTHER TRAINING CENTRE

West Hoathly, East Grinstead,
West Sussex RH19 4PR
Telephone: 01342 810268 Fax: 01342 811363

Philpots Manor School is an independent Special Steiner School for children with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties.

TEACHING VACANCIES September 2004

We are currently looking for a **Class Teacher** for one of our training course classes of 16 – 18 year olds. We are also looking for a part-time **Eurythmy teacher** for 9 – 19 year olds.

We are hoping to find Waldorf-trained, experienced teachers, ideally with some experience with or knowledge about children with special needs. We can offer fulfilling, exciting and challenging work with children who have had more than their fair share of difficulties and challenges themselves.

Applications or enquiries should be to Linda Churnside at the address above, by phone on 01342 813839 or 07946 506511 or by e-mail to lindachurnside@supanet.com.



BA (Hons) Degree in Steiner Waldorf Education

This course has been developed at the University of Plymouth in partnership with the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. Based at the University's Exmouth campus since 1992, it is integrated within the School of Education. It offers training over three years in Steiner Waldorf teaching combined with Education Studies at degree level.

Students on the course are offered a broad-based introduction to Steiner Waldorf education with emphasis on teaching children in the Class Teacher period (6-14 years). The course is modular and includes units in:

- Introduction to the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum
- Practical Pedagogy: classroom management and classroom skills
- Perspectives on Child Development
- Artistic activities including eurythmy, music, painting, drawing modelling, and speech

- School-based observation and teaching practice
- Evolution of consciousness
- Anthroposophy and Philosophy
- Physiology and medical studies: the image of the human being derived from anthroposophy
- The esoteric basis of Steiner Waldorf education
- Education in the early years
- Science Teaching
- Education through the crafts
- Comparative Studies
- Independent Study Options

In addition, students are able to select alternative modules within the broad programme offered within the Faculty.

For further details, please contact:

Education Faculty, University of Plymouth
Rolle School of Education

Douglas Avenue, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2AT
T: 0044 (0)1395 255475, E: j.burnett@plymouth.ac.uk
www.plymouth.ac.uk/steinerwaldorf

PARZIVAL

The Quest for the Holy Grail
Illustrated by David Newbatt.
The classic tale of Parzival illustrated with 112 colour reproductions of David's work.

With a clear and concise accompanying text, this is a unique artistic introduction to this much studied story.

Recommended for all ages from 15-years-old and up.

240 pages. Hardback. 30 x 22 cms.

Price £35.

ISBN 0-946206-54-6

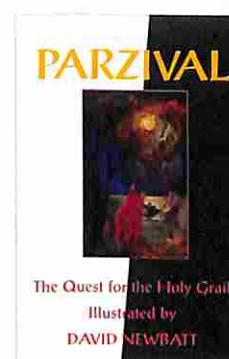
American published books

Wynstones Press distributes a range of titles from Mercury Press and Rudolf Steiner College Press in the USA. These include many educational titles, including books by ROY WILKINSON and AUDREY MCALLEN.

For a complete catalogue please contact:

Wynstones Press

Ruskin Glass Centre, Wollaston Road, Stourbridge,
West Midlands DY8 4HE. England.
Telephone: 01384 399455. Fax: 01384 399463.



Waldorf School Windhoek



Association Not For Gain

In January 2004 our school will start with the Junior Secondary Phase (grades 7 – 10) on a new property on the edge of town. For this we need a Waldorf class teacher for grade 8, with a lot of engagement and pioneer spirit as well as excellent knowledge of the ENGLISH language.

The subject gardening is recommended.
Please send your applications to:

Waldorf School Windhoek

For attention: Mrs Peter

P.O.Box 90326,

Windhoek, NAMIBIA

Tel./Fax. 264-61-242499

Email: waldorf@namibnet.com

Website: <http://www.candor.com/waldorf>