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Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

Teachers and pupils in our schools celebrate Michaelmas in many different ways. It is a very special time of the year and we can really sense this, especially in our communities. Michaelic forces challenge us, and the fight with the dragon becomes tangible. In the last 500 years of the earth's development, human beings have become increasingly alienated from divine spiritual beings. Michael, as one of these beings, has from the very beginning directed his gaze at humanity. It is his aim to keep a connection between the divine spiritual forces and mankind's developing intelligence. He wants to keep this intelligence which is developing within mankind in close connection with divine spiritual forces. This is not easy. There is resistance as mankind uses its intelligence increasingly selfishly and is therefore increasingly faced with Ahrimanic beings and their temptations. This is where the battle with the dragon starts. Are we able to meet the other out of who we are? Do we meet the other appropriately? Do we really communicate about what we do, our tasks, our perceptions? Do we help each other to the extent this help is needed? Are we conscious of the effects of our work in the community? These are all questions with which we struggle, particularly at this time, and it can be a help to work together with others on questions of humanity.

Rudolf Steiner expresses this in the Truth-wrought-words as follows:

*We men of present time
Need to give ear to the Spirit's morning call –
The call of Michael.
Spiritual Knowledge seeks
To open in the soul of man
True bearing of this morning call²*

In this edition, you will find several impulses for working together in the community in this way.

There is also a report from the Asian Waldorf Teacher Conference which takes place every other year for one week in that region of the world. Nana Goebel has provided a report from this year's 5th Asian Waldorf Teacher Conference in Bundang/Korea. We are very pleased to be able to present it to you here.

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- 1 Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts, (in German GA 26), 5th Michael Letter 'The Experience of Michael in the Course of his Cosmic Mission'
 - 2 Rudolf Steiner, Truth-wrought-words, (in German GA 40)

We are also once again including items on foreign languages. English versions of the contributions by Claus-Peter Röh, Nicolai Petersen and Gilberte Dietzel from the first World Language Teachers' Conference in Dornach in April are included in this edition, and Peter Lutzker's contribution is included in its German version. The extensive contributions by Nicolai Petersen and Gilberte Dietzel deal with the relationship of human beings to languages as well as the situation of the Upper School pupil based on Rudolf Steiner's knowledge of the human being. Dorothee von Winterfeldt speaks about the verse Rudolf Steiner gave to teachers of Greek and Latin. Her article gives much food for thought. We also received an article by Ted Warren on the subject of grammar based on the *Allgemeine Menschenkunde*, which is related to Claus-Peter Röh's contribution.

To conclude the edition, there are two contributions on the theme, the class teacher. The contribution by Tomáš Zdražil works with statements by Rudolf Steiner which he made on this topic in a variety of contexts. Christof Wiechert's text develops thoughts based on that article leading to a new picture of the teacher. These articles will also provide the basis for further work on these themes. The International Forum (formerly the Hague Circle) will be working with these in future gatherings. A survey has recently gone out to schools worldwide asking several questions about the structure and length of the class teacher years and related issues. We are now receiving initial feedback and are very excited to find out what the situation is worldwide. We will keep you posted. The English translation will to be read in the next edition of the Journal.

Added is a short contribution about Speech in the German language.

In the meantime we have received many orders for the book, "Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education". We are very pleased about the fact that there is such great demand for this book. We are working on a new edition which will contain additional contributions on meditative work, the training path, and how to access and work with the teacher meditations. We hope that the new edition will be a help and support for colleagues working in this area. Our pupils deserve it.

We wish all our colleagues a fruitful Michaelmas time and focused work with pupils, parents and colleagues.

With the very best wishes from the Pedagogical Section,

Dorothee Prange

In-Depth Study of Anthroposophy in Asia – with Peach Blossom and Childhood Magic

The 5th Asian Waldorf Teachers' Conference in Bundang / Korea

The Asian Waldorf Teachers' Conference took place from 28th April to 4th May, for seven full days, from eight-thirty in the morning until nine o'clock at night. About 400 practicing Waldorf teachers from all over Asia gathered to deepen their understanding of Waldorf education and to strengthen their cooperation.

Outside, the first signs of spring started to show; flowering fruit trees and azaleas displayed hues of pink and dark-reddish purple. The teachers gathered in a large national education centre in Bundang; in its park we were able to admire the above mentioned blaze of colour while every so often, the rain brought back the cold. After the morning verse and common singing, Christof Wiechert gave seven lectures which encouraged a deeper understanding of anthropological psychology but also provided very practical teaching ideas. His imagery and humoristic sprinklings were rediscovered, to everyone's great amusement, in the lecturers' sketch at the end of the conference. It has been for the 5th time now that Christof Wiechert, emeritus head of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, has contributed to the success of the Asian conference with a seven-day cycle of lectures. With every new round, the basis of methodology is presented in a more concentrated way; this means that those elements which have become a tradition for no real reason are eliminated and the anthroposophical evidence is presented in simpler words and with more spiritual density. So, Christof Wiechert has become a highly appreciated teacher of the Asian Waldorf movement. Further, there were workshops in preparation of the new academic year, artistic groups in the afternoons, Bothmer gymnastics, crafts for kindergarten and school and so forth. The lecturers had arrived from India, Thailand and Korea as well as Germany, New Zealand and Israel. When, at the last evening, the results of the work groups were presented, the significance and efficiency of such a gathering became visible. The sound Eurythmy of Rieko Hata was presented with precise lightness and beautiful grace. A group of men had undertaken to compare the histories of several Asian countries. (The events of WW II have not yet been publicly reflected in this part of the world and the wounds are still deep.) The singing of these upper school teachers left us with a little smile and it became clear that their talents probably lie elsewhere.

For the first time in the course of these conferences, there were student performances about cultural-historical or geographical topics or just examples from the classroom. It was mostly Grade Five pupils from Cheonggye Waldorf School, Purunsup Waldorf School, Seoul Waldorf School, the School for Special Needs Children in Yangpyoeng, Dorngrim Waldorf School and Gurumsan

Waldorf School who gave contributions; all these are schools in the vicinity of Seoul. At the beginning of the conference we were welcomed by Grade Seven pupils dressed in yellow outfits and hats, playing the drums and the flutes; the children played traditional rhythms, marched in neat rows and led us to the conference hall. The students' evening performances were highlights, too. Grade 12 students from Cheonggye Waldorf School showed us examples of their work in Eurythmy; the upper school orchestra of the same school played itself into the listeners' hearts with Viennese and Czech music. The performances of the four Asian eurythmists, showing examples of Western and Asian composers, were watched and applauded with the same, if not more, enthusiasm.

During breaks and after the evening performances, groups of teachers sat together discussing lectures and workshops and helping each other to understand the contents which they had missed due to poor translation or for other reasons. Right from the start there was an incredibly busy, energetic and joyful atmosphere which intensified as the week progressed. More and more, teachers spoke, sang and practiced across language barriers and interacted with people from other schools. In the afternoon of the last day we gathered to remember Dr. Christian Kröner, one of the lecturers, who had suddenly and completely unexpectedly passed away in the morning. We held the memorial service together with all his new Asian friends from whom he had so suddenly been taken, and a density which can only come about in silence, was felt.

These conferences (Taiwan 2005, Bangkok 2007, Manila 2009 and Hyderabad 2011), as well as previous conferences, have been organised since 1996 by the countries' representatives in cooperation with "Friends of Waldorf Education". They have become one of the most important means of further education across Asia and contribute directly to the cooperation between kindergartens and schools in the respective countries, but also to the development of an Asian Waldorf School Movement. They are therefore irreplaceable. This is also why it is very helpful that Claus-Peter Röh, head of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, as well as representatives of IASWECE have been part of the conference. We hope that this cooperation will be continued. We are looking forward to the next conference in Japan in 2015.

Nana Goebel
translated by Karin Smith

Turning Points: From Play to Work – From Experience to Memory

The bridges between study and lectures on the one hand, and artistic activities on the other side, run like a trajectory through this conference. Again and again, reflection and study find their echo in artistic activities – and vice versa: there are intensive, stimulating encounters; listening; perceiving, and then there is emphasizing, concluding, taking action; all of these are alternating between earnest concentration and softening humour.

Looking at a 1997 issue of the magazine “Erziehungskunst”, we have to ask if anything has changed in foreign language teaching. We can clearly answer this question in the affirmative. This conference has enabled us anew to develop a distinct picture in our souls of the true character of foreign language teaching in Waldorf schools. The picture is still incomplete, but the inner goal towards which our energy and vision are striving, was invigorated and able to grow.

The challenge of finding the archetype for the future in the present has been described by Otto C. Scharmer in his book “Theory U”: *“Something is in motion; perhaps we can call it the signature of our times. The challenges we are faced with today force us to change our viewpoint, to increase and deepen our awareness. A threshold has to be crossed before anything new can come about ...”*

The wisdom in language

The reason for the title of today’s lecture can be found in two very serious incidents in the lives of a Grade one and a Grade six class. A school was urgently looking for a foreign language teacher for a first grade. A wonderful person was employed; he had been given an introduction to foreign language teaching at Waldorf schools, but his actions and habits were still deeply rooted in traditional methods. This new colleague started immediately by giving the children vocabulary lists to learn. It was easy to see how this mainly intellectual kind of learning bypassed the children’s nature, and how the method did not harmonize at all with the children’s development.

In Grade six, we experienced something completely different: The teacher sang so many songs and spoke so many verses with the class that the sounds and melodies became predominant, but the children’s inner will was not activated, the conscious grasping of new language did not happen. The pupils participated in the lesson but stayed, subconsciously as it were, below the surface of learning. Out of these two incidents:

- *the intellectual approach bypassing the children’s nature*
- *remaining under the surface of conscious understanding*

arose the question of turning points in teaching from an anthroposophical viewpoint. Of particular importance for all age groups is a force which appeared again and again in contributions, working groups and conversations: Reverence

and love for the wisdom which is at work in language. Rudolf Steiner, “*I have shown you in these lectures that there lives a certain genius in language. The genius of language is truly gifted; it is cleverer than we are. We can learn a great deal from the articulation of language and the way its spirit dwells within it.*”¹

We can really fall in love with the spirit of language. If you teach in first grade, you realize that the children also have this ability; you realize that they can come alive in this love. After the physical birth, the Self and the astral body draw near the physical-ether body which then, step by step, is inhabited and taken hold of. During this process, the child is a being of the will, through and through. This will power ripples through the child in the early years and the Self flows through the whole being, all the way into sense perception, and makes it its own. That is why small children learn their mother tongue ingeniously; they live out there in the senses, they are at the same place where language is. They are deeply connected with the spirit of language, right down to the physical aspects of the senses.

Memory, Imagination and the Art of Perceiving Foreign Words

Some of this type of energy remains even after the start of school; ether forces are freed during the change of teeth and turn into energy for learning. At the start of school, this can take two different directions. On the one hand, it can be used for thinking and memory: we can now ask the children what happened yesterday or the day before yesterday. On the other hand, these forces can turn towards soulful imagination. In Lecture eleven of “The Foundations of Human Experience”, Rudolf Steiner speaks about children who are the imagination type, who metamorphose everything, and children who are the memory type, who can remember everything. Therefore, in Grade one, two children could recount a fairy-tale in two very different ways. One child might embellish the fairy-tale with so much imaginative detail that it can hardly be recognized. Another child is so much tied to memory and thinking that the main order of events appears in a few clear words: “*Yes, the prince set off on his horse, defeated the dragon in the mountains, returned to the castle and became the new king.*” Everything is correct; the imagination, the ether forces, have been transformed into a type of conscious, mirror-like thinking.

Our task in first grade, therefore, is to enliven the wealth of language as much as possible. Children in first grade still have the ability to live entirely in the spirit, to be so devoted that they can really live deeply in the language. We can expand on this linguistically, so that the joy becomes visible on the children’s faces. However, it can happen nowadays that children are used to discuss everything intellectually at home with their parents or older siblings; these children seem to “know” what everything is about and they are puzzled by the will’s deep plunge

1 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Anthroposophic Press, 1996

into the foreign language. If this child then tells her parents that she “doesn’t understand anything”, the parents in turn become insecure, they call the teacher and ask for a different method of teaching foreign languages However, the teacher might be able to create an atmosphere of trust around Grade one and two by explaining the perspective of the method: from the assimilation of language with a sense of wonder in the early years towards the aims of future years. It is deeply touching if such a pupil reminds the teacher at the beginning of the lesson that he had promised she would “understand something” today; however, after the lesson the pupil walks out of the room, happily humming one of the English melodies... The head asks intellectually, but the feeling and the willing aspect, the active human being, absorb everything and carry it subconsciously forward. Furthermore, the pleasure of anticipation lives also in this power of joyful feeling and active willing. We reduce these forces of awe, of affinity and deep feeling by doing scholarly translations too early. In this connection, Rudolf Steiner says, *“We must not drive these feelings out of the child. He should learn to develop the sound from the external objects and from the way in which his own feelings are related to them. Everything should be derived from the feeling for language. In the word “roll” the child should really feel: r, o, l, l. It is the same thing for every word. This has been completely lost for modern civilised man.”*²

The artistic aspects of methodology are the teacher’s bridge to this deep assimilation of language: The children are inspired to speak, sing and act beautifully if the sound and melody of the language are given enough room in the lesson. The wealth, the spirit of the foreign language, should be experienced and absorbed by the children, before, in later years, logical translations and connections will be encouraged and asked for.

How do we achieve this in first grade? Let’s take the song *“here we go round the mulberry bush ...”* Countless verses can be acted out in between the sung choruses, *“... this is the way we comb our hair, We sweep the floor, We lock the door, ... early in the morning.”* Repeated verses keep their freshness through the direct artistic aspect; new verses inspire the children’s joy of discovery. Language has the ability to integrate, to connect; this aspect can come into effect if a class of Grade one, two, three or four takes up a song or scene with determination. The various aspects of language can then harmoniously play together as one:

- language sound and melody
- movement, individual activity and creative will
- the relevance of the individual fragment in the whole context
- building bridges with peers through mutual social activity

2 Rudolf Steiner, Kingdom of Childhood, Lecture 6, 18th August 1924, www.rsarchive.org [2nd September 2013]

Re-discovering the Meaning of Lexical Items

Metaphors are the crucial, the magic element in the artistic work with younger children. On the one hand, we can discover how deeply the character of language expresses itself in images. On the other hand, it is possible for children in the lower school, by the power of their acting Selves, to connect so deeply to the images that they find a direct, immediate understanding of the foreign language. In the midst of active pictorial experience, the children don't look at things *from the outside* anymore, but they themselves *become* princesses, kings or craftsmen. The power of the children's pictorial experience can amaze us again and again: A first grade class teacher, who taught English in his own class for a year, decided to turn up in a completely different outfit to the English lesson. With an English hat, jacket, umbrella and magnifying glass, he turned into a kind of "Sherlock Holmes" and spoke, as "Mr Simpson", only English. To his great surprise, as soon as he wore his English outfit, he was taken completely seriously as "Mr Simpson", even by the brightest children.

Rudolf Steiner points out another characteristic of metaphorical representation: The child experiences the strongest pictorial forces through incarnation into the physical body. What we do to our human body, right into the experience of the sense of touch, stands as an archetype for development. The moving human being who experiences its own body, carries within itself the deepest image of mankind. And so it becomes clear why and how, in foreign language teaching, the many nursery rhymes, finger games, poems and drama scenes, in connection with beautifully executed gestures and movements, have such a deep effect. We may take advantage of this force also in an individual pedagogical way. I once said to a restless child, *"If I make this gesture in the lesson ... then it is only for you. This is a secret between us. When you see it, just do it for yourself, too."* The boy took it up and it did actually help him to calm himself. However, other pupils saw it too and imitated it semi-consciously – it is indeed amazing what a small gesture can do.

Let us now look at one last aspect of this particular age, the age of the birth of the ether body: It is a great joy to see Grade one children abroad hear a new word in a foreign language for the first time and to realize that they experience the word immediately with the accompanying sense perception of the corresponding object. They seem to grasp the energy of the word as they repeat it, a word which they have never before experienced or spoken. In Chengdu, a teacher brought a basket full of small objects to class. After the rhythmical beginning, at the turning point of the lesson, she took the objects out of the basket, "This is a pencil sharpener. Here is an eraser." The class was so astonished that they managed to imitate the exact pitch and sound of the word by repeating after the teacher. The children were invigorated by the sounds and by words such as "ruler". The foreign language was present, not as a quick intellectual translation but as a

sounding, animated being. In such instances of serious astonishment, the lightness of humour can easily arise too, “With this ruler we can measure. We can measure the table ... And we can measure our guest’s nose ...!”

In summing up what has been said so far, we arrive at the following methodological aims for the first period of foreign language learning:

- To experience, speak and move the language’s character holistically from the start of Grade one up to the age of nine or ten.
- To facilitate turning points from will-induced group activities to perception with a sense of wonder. The sounds, their qualities and rhythms, should be felt as deeply as possible.
- To discover and comprehend the meaning of lexical items out of speech, experience and action rather than an outward comparing and intellectual translation.

Self and Language at the Turning Point of Nine or Ten

At the age of about nine or ten, the child changes dramatically. The Self initiates an impact, an Ahriman impact, which results in a deeper connection with the physical body, a deeper incarnation. On the one hand, this leads to the child being more alert and curious. Parallel to the incarnation process, the child can now grasp the grammatical and formal aspects of the foreign language and, at the beginning of Grade four, she can start to learn to write it. On the other hand, the particular qualities of early childhood are gradually lost. Just as the golden background of Florentine painting was lost when the powers of consciousness arose at the onset of modernity, so the children seem lonelier and more isolated despite the joy of more earthly discoveries. Deep questions about life are born out of this tension. A child might now ask her parents earnestly, “Are you really my parents? What happens if you die in an accident tomorrow?”

Questions of life and death now stand before the young person’s soul. This is a chance for us as teachers to get to know this age group better because now is the time for encouraging words, for small individual comments. It can happen that a girl slips a letter into the teacher’s hand and asks him to read it at home. To his surprise, the teacher finds in this letter of a nine year old Goethe’s complete “Erlkönig”. “Who’s riding so late through night, so wild? ...” The child’s mother later told the teacher that the girl had taken a large poetry volume, had decidedly chosen this dramatic work and copied it all out in neat handwriting. A silent question remained: “Why had she chosen this particular poem?” Soon after this obvious question mark, the teacher noticed the girl’s joy at beautifully expressed language. Later, in a Grade four essay about the Viking city of Haithabu, she wrote, “*Ebsen was not able to hold himself back any longer and walked straight up to the slave. When the slave saw Ebsen he had such a shock that he couldn’t help it but scream. Everyone was now looking at Ebsen and the slave, and Ebsen wished the ground would open up and swallow him ...*”

The girl had steadily developed this quality of language all throughout the middle school. In looking back, I got the impression that in the language of the “Erlkönig” something tender, a glimpse of the girl’s future, had become visible for an instant. It is obvious that language acquisition, choice of vocabulary and the ability to express oneself are closely connected with the emerging individuality. Rudolf Steiner describes this in the following words:

*“There is untold wisdom in words All human characteristics are expressed in the way various cultures form their words ... If you understand language in this inward way, then you will see how the I-organization works.”*³

With this background, we can start in Grade three to give the children opportunities to experience and recognize grammatical laws. In the children, there is now a more subtle awareness for the parts of speech and for syntax and there is also an emerging joy in understanding language coherence. What is correct? What is wrong? The question connected to grammar is: How can it shine in daily life so that it becomes clear that grammar is inherent in the spoken language? Therefore, we do not want to “teach” grammar; it is already alive in the language. Perhaps this is slightly more nuanced for foreign languages as opposed to the native tongue. In the native tongue we already have the grammar within us, but in the foreign language we have to first make an effort to absorb it and make it our own. Next, we can think about the building blocks of the language and start to understand its laws:

*“... the entire grammar is contained within the human organism. Then we will begin to realize that by calling forth, at the right time and in a living manner, a conscious appreciation of grammar out of instinctive speech, we are supporting the child’s evolving ego-consciousness. Then, in the ninth year, the child will reach this critical moment of his development, this crossing of the River Rubicon, under normal and favourable conditions, for we are working in harmony with the forces which want to unfold instead of forcing alien substance into his system ... the class teachers mutually support and complement the art and music lessons given by their colleagues.”*⁴

We can sum up the following parameters for methodology at the turning point of age nine or ten:

- to respond to the change in the child’s self-consciousness with awareness and new teaching methods
- to develop now, step by step, the conscious thinking about grammar out of the earlier emotional and pictorial approach
- to take the well known verses as a starting point to develop the first writing tasks

3 Rudolf Steiner, *The Roots of Education*, GA 309, 15. April 1924

4 Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of Education*, GA 301, 28th April 1920

The Mystery of the Methodological Countermovement

A kind of *gesamtkunstwerk* can be found in language and we can resort to a variety of methods in the course of the lesson, as it were: On the one hand, we may dive deeply into the language stream through energetic speaking and acting. This, on the other hand, leads to a need to look at the result from a more intellectual, contemplating viewpoint. Artistic activity results in a loosening of the connection between the Self and physical body while academic thinking has the tendency to consolidate that connection. As teachers we need to master the art of inner anticipation: If we experience for example, how a class rehearses a scene with growing, intensifying enthusiasm for acting, movement and singing, we become aware of the need for a countermovement. Just as a lift pulls a heavy counterweight when it raises quickly, so do the increasing dynamics of a class call for the reverse of these dynamics. If we realize this early enough, we can focus the lesson away from the energetic activity back to more listening, contemplating and thinking aspects.

Rudolf Steiner sees the reason for this mysterious countermovement within the child's being:

*"... whereas artistic activity makes him inwardly rich, so rich in fact that this richness must somehow be modified. The pictorial and artistic tends of itself to pass into the more attenuated form of concepts and ideas, and must in a measure be impoverished in this process of transference. But if, after having stimulated the child artistically, we then allow the intellectuality to develop from the artistic feeling, it will have the right intensity. The intellect too will lay hold of the body in such a way as to bring about a rightly balanced and not an excessive hardening process."*⁵

The still sub-conscious forces of the child's Self meet the teacher's more conscious Self at this turning point. The teacher can learn to recognize the child's need for healthy countermovements and to anticipate the next step.

Let's now look at the child's development from birth to the middle school. In the first seven years we can see on the spiritual side the pair Self/astral body and the pair physical body/ether body in the small child's growing process. However, these two couples are only loosely connected. A large part of the ether growing forces turns into soul learning forces around the beginning of Grade one, (see above: Memory and Imagination) these are the forces we need for learning at school. It is of paramount importance, from an anthroposophical perspective, to wake up the Self and the astral body from "below" as it were. Waldorf education is an education of "waking up". It anticipates the child's individuality; it has the highest respect for the dignity of the child's development out of its innermost being.

5 Rudolf Steiner, Education Lecture 7: The Rhythmic System, Sleeping and Walking, GA 307, 11th August 1923, www.rsarchive.org [2nd September 2013]

*Make it, therefore, your ideal [...] not to “explain,” or to act through concepts, but to let the whole being be stimulated, so that only afterwards when the child has gone away from you, understanding dawns on him. Try, then, to educate the ego and the astral body from below upwards...*⁶

This is the reason why methodological stages always start with sense perception and the active will of the lower being which is especially animated by artistic activity. If the young person then connects inwardly, if he absorbs the experiences and makes them his own through feelings, questions and thoughts, then those experiences carry the mark of individuality.

The pairs of aspects of the human body have moved quite closely to each other, from above and from below, by the time the child enters the middle school. The astral body breaks free from this constellation as the child approaches puberty. The astral body is now free for individual development. This is why we can now speak more directly to the child's emerging thinking about cause and effect. On the other hand, with gradual independence of the astral body, deeply felt questions about life and ideals also emerge. This is the time of a growing inner tension between thinking and feeling; between the physical and the spiritual. Foreign language teaching has a particular task to fulfil now.

A boy who came to our school in Grade six may serve as an example to illustrate how deeply the opulence of a foreign language can influence a young person. First of all he admired everything new: the pictures, the songs, the social community, and he frequently commented these with a typical adolescent “wow!” Then, the class play “Robin Hood” approached, and this boy was given the task to make an important announcement as a herald in English. First, he refused and said, “I cannot speak any words which I don't understand!” His peers, who already liked him, told him to say the words beautifully three times a day from now on for the next few weeks. They said, “You will see, you will understand them!” He did it and there was a real breakthrough during the performance. Bravely, he stood on stage and began, “Townfolk and citizens of Lockley!

I hereby make known, that Robin Hood and his outlaws – by the end of the third day after this announcement – are pardoned and must be considered free citizens of England.

Robert of Locksley shall be raised to the peerage and is entitled to run the castles of Lockley and Malaset. – In the name of the King of England – Richard Lionheart”

The boy surprised himself with his own performance and his astral body audibly announced “Wow! I understood everything!” As teachers we have

6 Rudolf Steiner, Practical Course/Teachers: Lecture 1: Introduction, GA 294, 21st August 1919, www.rsarchive.org [2nd September 2013]

learned a lot from this boy's learning: Even though his head fought against the foreign language, he achieved a much deeper connection with it through the will's energy, through repeated activity, which even resulted in unexpected understanding. If we look at the important steps of development which this boy was able to make, thanks to drama and foreign language acquisition, we see the deep connection between the human Self and the spirit of a language.

“There is more to language than language,
the complete human being is found in language
with body, soul and spirit,
language is only a symptom
for the complete human being.”⁷

Language as a Bridge between Self and World

To conclude, let's now look at the upper school. Native tongue and foreign language reveal themselves on a new level as bridges between the physical world and inner spiritual development. On the one hand, the 17 year old students keep up to date with current affairs, they think about world events, they are alert and apply critical thinking. On the other hand, they ask deep questions about human life with the same critical awareness. Language bridges the gap between those two sides. Young people are interested in how language shows itself in the tension between society's humanistic ideals and deliberate commercial abuse of language in the advertising industry. A large advert with a picture of redundant workers and the words “Let me be your human resource!” can spark a fascinating discussion about Zeitgeist and the misuse of language.

At the last autumn conference in Stuttgart, we were fortunate to observe in a group of Grade eleven pupils how the degree of inner sharpness in analytical thinking next to the lyrical-pictorial descriptions of humankind can be expressed. In the words of Paul Klee, *“I cannot be grasped in the here and now. For I reside just as much with the dead as with the unborn. Somewhat closer to the heart of creation than usual. But not nearly close enough.”*

Three days ago, Andrew Wolpert brought up the question of the home of language. We can look at this question from two sides: On the one hand, grade eleven students have made their home in the language – gradually feeling more and more at home in the language. But at the same time the language's rich spirit has found a home in those young people. I would like to conclude, in the sense of the mutual homes between Self, language and world, with Rudolf Steiner's verse for language lessons:

7 Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophische Menschenkunde und Pädagogik, GA 304a, 26th March 1923

*To the one who understands the meaning of language,
The world reveals itself in pictures.*

*To the one who can hear the soul of language,
The world unlocks itself as a being.*

*To the one who experiences the spirit of language,
The world bestows its strength of wisdom.*

*To the one who can love language,
Language will grant its own power.*

*So would I turn my heart and mind
To the spirit and soul of the word.*

*And in my love for the word
Fully experience my Self.*

*Introductory verse for classical language lessons in Waldorf Steiner Schools,
November 1922. ('Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education', Pedagogical
Section, Dornach)*

*Claus-Peter Röh
translated by Karin Smith*

Mother Tongue, Foreign Language, World Language: Our Relationship to Language in an Evolving World

Dear Colleagues and Friends!

The theme of my lecture arises from the following thought: Except for English speaking countries, Steiner Schools in most countries offer two foreign languages: the first is always English, the second some other foreign language. There is obviously a different weight on these languages: English is a must, while the second language is optional. In Germany, French and Russian compete for this second place, sometimes also Spanish. In other countries it might be German or Italian, or any language that is meaningful in a particular region.

The two languages taught are therefore not on the same level. The one must be taught, the other can be taught. This means that a justification is required for the second foreign language. Why French? What speaks for it? If someone doesn't like it, he can ask for Spanish! Or vice versa! The "second" language is replaceable, while English is not.

Terminologically, we can describe this distinction between English and all other languages as follows: we don't actually teach two foreign languages. We teach only one. English is [in non-English speaking countries] no longer a real "foreign language" because it has become a global language. It is no longer foreign to children today because they meet it wherever they go, also outside of school: in the many Anglicisms that are entering all languages in the world, on the internet and in the media, in sports, games and entertainment. Our everyday life is widely permeated by English.

This means that in Waldorf schools three kinds of languages are taught from Class one: the language of the country in question, the world language and a foreign language. The first two are compulsory while there is an element of choice with the "foreign language". In English-speaking countries the local language and the global language are the same and both foreign languages can be freely chosen.

This is the situation that led to my topic. Before entering into it more deeply, I invite you to accompany me on a brief journey into the history of languages.

Saying and Speaking

All the languages I know distinguish between saying and speaking. Here is a small selection of European languages:

German	<i>sagen</i>	<i>sprechen</i>
English	<i>say</i>	<i>speak</i>
French	<i>dire</i>	<i>parler</i>
Italian	<i>dire</i>	<i>parlare</i>
Spanish	<i>decir</i>	<i>hablar</i>
Russian	<i>skazatj</i>	<i>goworitj</i>
Polish	<i>powiedzieć</i>	<i>mówić</i>

They are obviously two different activities. But it is not easy to see the difference because the two verbs are often used synonymously. When I speak I tend to say something and when I say something I usually do this by speaking. This is true in most cases, but not in all.

We come closer to perceiving the difference if we consider that we can say many things without words, by using gestures, body language, facial expressions, gazes etc. (We can shrug, for instance, or nod, shake our head, etc.)

If we follow this train of thought we realize that we can say a lot, not only by using these classic (often international) gestures but also, and often unconsciously, with our body language or actions of various kinds. Someone who greets me in a friendly way or shakes my hand brings something to expression with these actions, whatever words he or she may use. If they look the other way and pass without greeting, they also tell me something. The lack of action can be equally telling. If I ask a pupil to get up and come to the front and he remains seated, his behaviour says something.

If we go deeper into this matter we find that the meaning of “saying” becomes ever wider and more mysterious. Does not everything that happens between people “say” something: our posture, our appearance, our car, our house, our lifestyle – everything that can be observed from the outside or every aspect of us that we *show* to the world?

Surprisingly, “showing” and “seeing” are etymologically included in the words mentioned above, as can be seen from the various word stems of the Germanic, Romance and Slavic languages referred to:

German *sagen*, related to Engl. *say*, from *sehen* (Engl. *see*), original meaning ‘letting see, show’, then ‘erzählen’ (tell); French/Ital. *dire* and Span. *decir* from Latin *dicere*, related to German *zeigen* and Greek *deik-*, e.g. in *deiktisch* ‘deictic’; Russian *skazatj*, with prefix *s-* from *kazatj* ‘show’, as in *po-kazatj* ‘show’, reflexive *kazatjsja* ‘show oneself, appear’; Polish *powiedzieć*, related to Latin *videre* ‘see’; and *idea* (from Greek) and the German *wissen*, both originally in the sense of ‘seeing’.

This means that we find, in all three big European language families, words for saying that derive from “seeing”! Saying therefore means something like: making visible, bringing to light, making conscious.

How is it with *speaking*?

Here the situation is quite different. Every language features a wealth of words that designate some form of speaking. One could choose any number. The words mentioned above are just the ones most commonly used today. These words have, moreover, no roots that go far back into the past. They tend to be quite young words. Why is that?

Many words that designate an act of *speech* are descriptive, even onomatopoeic. Others develop in an almost coincidental way:

German *sprechen*, related to Engl. *speak*, probably derived from a sound, i.e. onomatopoeic, a relatively recent word formation; Russian *говорит* probably meaning ‘rustling’, polyphonic noise, equally Polish *mówić*; French *parler* (Ital. *parlare*) from Vulgar Latin *paraulare* to Latin *parabole* ‘parable’, also *parole* (*parola*) ‘word’; Span. *hablar* from Latin *fabulari* ‘chat, making up stories’, cf. German *fabulieren*.

These few examples give us a sense of how people used to experience speech. It is the sensory phenomenon of people making sounds or noises or uttering words. The qualities of these utterances were described: were they loud or soft, fast or slow, meaningful or meaningless, comprehensible or incomprehensible?

Just as we can *say* something without *speaking*, we can also *speak* without *saying* anything especially if we speak something that we have not composed ourselves and that we speak for its own sake, as when we recite a poem or when an actor practises a monologue, when the children in a Waldorf school recite in chorus. We just imitate texts. One could say: they are all special cases. But – are they really? Is not much of what we say citing after others?

In his book “How to be an Alien” George Mikes makes fun of the British habit of talking at great length about the weather. He gives an example to show foreigners what such a conversation about the weather could be like:

- Nasty day, isn’t it?
- Isn’t it dreadful?
- The rain ... I hate rain ...
- I don’t like it at all. Do you?
- Fancy such a day in July. Rain in the morning, then a bit of sunshine, and then rain, rain, rain, all day long.

- Lovely day, isn't it?
- Isn't it beautiful?
- Wonderful, isn't it?
- It's so nice and hot.
- Personally I think it's so nice when it's hot – isn't it?

Aside from the humorous aspect: do we not follow such – prefabricated – patterns in much of what we utter day in day out? And do our words not often have a different meaning from what their content expresses? The above conversation about the weather says fairly little about the weather as such! It says more about us and the person we are conversing with or our relationship. Much is “said” by the way we speak, our tone of voice, how much detail we include, etc. The words in themselves are a recital of known sentence patterns or sentence sequences. Millions of other people use the same words every day.

Why do I speak about “saying” and “speaking” in so much detail? Because we find it difficult to form a clear concept of such things, especially as language teachers. The two activities overlap in a diffuse way. What, if anything, do parents criticise in Classes 5 or 6? “The children have learned English for five, six years and they're still not able to say anything in English.” Mark you: they are unable to “say” anything! Well, what have we been teaching them all this time? Do we know? Can we respond? Our children have learned to *speak* so much English?!

We can describe the difference in the following way: with “saying” or “showing” it does not matter how we do it, verbally or non-verbally. When we “speak”, the most important thing is how we do it: the language we use, the words, the voice, the volume and – above all – how much! An important aspect of speech is, after all, that it is highly redundant. We do not only speak to convey information: two people who speak about the weather both know very well what the weather is like.

Looking back to earlier times we can assume that speech was even more redundant then: ritual texts, salutatory ceremonies, the reciting and singing of traditional texts, long-winded repetition etc. Redundant means excessive, overflowing: it derives from the Latin word *unda* meaning “wave”. The words, syllables, verses ride on waves of “overflowing” sounds and rhythms (in the olden days they were often rhythmic, ceremonial sounds, rhythmic “waves of speech”). Germans still speak metaphorically of the flow of speech (*Sprachfluss*). Of course, the flow of speech can *also* carry meaning, but only to a limited extent; sometimes very vaguely and sometimes none at all.

The Mother Tongue

Let me summarize what I have said so far: the way we speak varies. Children experience this much more strongly than adults. No person speaks like another, one reason being that we each have a different voice. We recognize others by their voice as reliably as by their outer appearance. It is, however, not only the voice, it is also how fast they speak, their intonation, their choice of words, the length of their utterances – and many other aspects that make speech so very individual.

In addition to that, we have our own language. In many languages, including English, this is referred to as “tongue” (lingua, lengua, jazyk etc.). The tongue was seen as the organ responsible for the way we speak. A concept of “language” as we have it today, in the sense of a system (langue), did not exist when there was no written language and all language transmission was oral. It would have been impossible: there was an infinite diversity of “tongues” in every part of the world, every region, settlement or community, each having its own idiosyncrasies, but there was no discernible language structure.

There was, however, something else beyond this diversity. We know no language or idiom that did not evolve over time. A multitude of factors are working on the living spoken language, renewing it and keeping it in constant flux. The way people speak, their tongue or idiom, has had two qualities in the history of humanity:

temporal: it changes constantly.

spatial: it appears in infinite variations.

In this, language resembles the plant world, the etheric world. There is no status quo in the plant world. Plants change constantly. No two blossoms are the same. There are similarities, parallels, but not sameness. And depending on the place and other conditions plants produce different species.

Language was therefore alive once in the truest sense of the word. Human beings were born into the language context of a particular place, social milieu and time. And the language surrounding them there became their “mother tongue”. The expression is so appropriate because the mother tongue is as important for a child as the mother’s milk. The living polyphonic speech that constantly surrounds children forms a maternal, nurturing aura that helps the child’s still dormant spirit to wake up and learn how to speak and think. Steiner spoke about this in Lecture 11 of *The Foundations of Human Experience*:

“In a certain sense, we take up the work of the genius of nature when we further develop and educate the child. Through our language and deeds, which the child

imitates and which affect the child through the will, we continue that activity we have seen the genius of nature effecting through milk, only we use humans as a means of providing this nutrition.” (GA 293, 2 September 1919, tr. R. Lathe, N. Whittaker)

Foreign Languages

This intimate relationship between language and human beings only came to an end when language was first written down. Writing makes language visible by making it spatial. The eye is now actively involved and the dimension of “seeing” – and of “saying” and “showing”, as described earlier – is added. Language is being shown, as it were.

In order to be written down language had to lose its two basic qualities: the quality of continuous metamorphosis and that of multiplicity of appearance. Language had to give up what made it alive, because we cannot write one way today and another way tomorrow. Written language can’t differ from town to town, or from village to village. It needs uniformity. What is alive has to become rigid: a process of dying.

Many of today’s European languages were first written down in the Middle Ages. The process of systematic standardization did, however, not start until the 15th century, with the beginning of the early modern period. Four factors facilitated this development:

1. One of the driving forces was the emergence of national states (kingdoms such as France or England). The written language was to be made available to all people in a nation as a means of communication: for this to happen, language needed to be standardized.
2. In the standardization and regulation of national languages, the “dead” languages Greek and, in particular, Latin were used as models. It was precisely because Latin had not changed in a long time that it was suited so well as *lingua franca* throughout the Middle Ages! The Latin grammar demonstrated how a language can be turned into a written language, how it can be standardized, compiled in dictionaries, how spelling and grammar rules can be established etc. Our grammar is entirely based on Latin categories and expressions: tempus, predicate, adverb, pluperfect etc.
3. The entire process would, however, not have been possible without the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, because this technical novelty made it possible to multiply and disseminate the “new” written languages. It needed this technology so that the new language forms, such as Modern High German or Modern English, could reach the people.
4. But even the ever growing number of books and printed works that were disseminated from 1500 onwards only reached educated people and scholars, i.e. a

very small proportion of the population. The majority of people were illiterate. This only changed when school attendance became compulsory (in Germany from around 1800, in other countries somewhat earlier or later). It was only then that almost all people learned to read and write, had printed readers and became members of the new national language communities.

The written language, or “book language” as it is also called in some countries, is alienated from the laws of human speech. Compared to the mother tongue it is indeed a foreign language. It is no longer part of the human being and does therefore not vary from person to person or from region to region. On the contrary: people have to go to school so that they learn the written language of their country properly; a process that takes years. There are areas where the written language is totally different from the mother tongue.

This status – that the language has become “alien” to the individual – is normal today. The problem is that we are not really aware of this. Europeans have become used to standardized national languages for generations.

Rudolf Steiner elaborated on this problem in many contexts, particularly in the lectures on education he gave in Basel in the spring of 1920¹, a few months after the foundation of the Waldorf School. Referring to the original spoken language as “dialect” and the written language as “educated speech” he described their relationship as follows:

“A dialect, every dialect, has a certain characteristic. It arises out of what I would call an inner feeling of the human being just in the same way as the inner organic feeling arises, something that is much less important in today’s intellectualism. Dialect is an inner experience that pushes the entire human being into speech. In modern conversational speech, the so-called educated speech, which has become abstract, there is no longer a proper connection between inner experience and what is expressed in a sound or series of sounds.” (GA 301, 28 April 1920)

The written language is less suited as a “mother tongue” than dialect is. We see obvious signs of this today in the increase of speech development disorders in children (affecting an estimated 20-25 per cent of children in Germany). We can assume with a degree of certainty that these disorders did not exist in earlier times. Steiner said to this:

“If we have a child who before the age of seven has already learned a more educated informal language, the so-called standard language, it will be extremely difficult to reach the aspect of the child’s unconscious that has a natural relationship to the logical formation of language, since that has already withered.” (GA 301, 4 May 1920)

1 Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of Education*, GA 301, Great Barrington 2001, tr. R. Lathe, N. Whittaker

Steiner therefore suggested that children who did not have

“the fortune to speak dialect ... should even learn from dialect.” (GA 301, 4 May 1920)

This “withering” of language occurs when people begin, for whatever reason, to differentiate between “right” and “wrong” ways of speaking (as happens permanently in written language):

“We move further and further away from what is alive in language if we say [...] that one or another turn of phrase is incorrect and that only one particular way of saying things is allowed.” (GA 301, 5 May 1920)

For the German and, maybe, other written languages it is therefore true that: “The German educated standard language has become somewhat one-sided. And it is now in danger of becoming a dead language in European life, as Latin used to be.” (GA 301, answer to a question after the lecture of 4 May 1920)

Steiner used the term “foreign” with regard to language in another context, too:

“If we go back to the beginnings of language, people used to be more immediately connected with language. We still find today in rural areas that people live more deeply in their language; they are more intimately connected with it. When speaking a word, they still feel that they imitate what they perceive around them. Words become increasingly abstract the further humanity evolves. They will in the end be mere symbols of what they are meant to express. Language will be less and less organic and become more decorative. It becomes increasingly alienated from human beings.” (GA 150, *Die Welt des Geistes und ihr Hereinragen in das physische Dasein*, 10 June 1913)

But this development has a meaningful role to play in evolution:

“This alienation of language from the inner meaning of words sets free forces that were used to develop language. This process has to do with the fact that it will soon be possible to spiritually perceive the Christ being. [...] To the same degree that language becomes ever more abstract and the power of speech is emancipated from the human organism, human beings prepare for the true perception of the spiritual Christ.” (Ibid.)

There is another aspect to this development. The original diversity of languages or tongues (“dialects”) is based on a Luciferic principle, while the trend towards standardization is Ahrimanic. Steiner once said:

“It is better to speak of ‘luciferic spirits’ and of ‘Ahriman’ for even though there are hosts of Ahrimanic beings, Ahriman presents himself as a unity because unity is

what he strives for. The luciferic element, on the other hand, appears as plurality, because that is what it aspires to ..." (GA 184, *Die Polarität von Dauer und Entwicklung im Menschenleben*, 21 September 1918)

We can say that the origin of language is connected with the luciferic impulse and this is apparent in the plurality or diversity of tongues mentioned earlier: always new, always different, and intimately bound to the individual. Rudolf Steiner mentioned in various places that the luciferic spirits have a close connection with the spiritual aspect of language.

The way language develops, on the other hand, is ahrimanic: its standardization and systematization. They lead away from the individual speaker, away from life. But this death process is at the same time a process of gaining awareness. I will return to this later.

We notice in another context also that language is drifting into a new sphere. Where language is regulated by philologists and scholars working in conjunction with politicians and lawyers, where dictionaries and grammar books become codes of law for the speech community, language moves from the *spiritual* to the *legal sphere*. There, the prevailing principle is that of *equality* not *freedom*. It is no longer the most important aspect of language that it is creatively formed and transformed, but that it is the same for all.

World Language

How is it with the third stage of this development: the world language? At first glance, today's world language, English, is just a foreign language (for those who are not English native speakers). What distinguishes it from other foreign languages is the fact that it facilitates not national but global communication. The development of recent decades is new in that there is really only one world language and that is English. Communication, written or oral, occurs increasingly in English, anywhere in the world. The principle of *standardization* has been raised to a higher level.

Another new development is that *economic* interests have taken the place of political state interests. The cooperation or conflicts of nations increasingly concern economic interests. As a result the world language English is no longer regulated at a national level. It regulates itself in the free interplay of forces across the world. English is spoken mostly by non-native speakers and the guiding principle is utility (as is typical of the economic life) rather than norms or standards. What facilitates communication is good, what doesn't is surplus to requirement.

There is also a change in technology. The printed books that were so important for the emergence of national languages are increasingly replaced by screens.

Electronic-digital communication is in the process of superseding communication on paper.

And what takes the place of compulsory school attendance? In recent years one could have the impression that the world language is no longer taught in schools but through the distribution of the electronic-digital tools that allow people, children included, to participate in global communication wherever they are, via images, films, games, text or symbols.

This brings us to another observation: in speaking of “world language” we refer not so much to English or language as such but more to a new manner of communication. English is competing with an entirely different kind of language that is spreading rapidly: communication through images, signs and symbols. As has been pointed out, much can be *said* through visual signs of all kinds! That these signs are independent of speech is their great advantage! We don’t need speech to say something and we don’t need English. We can show what we want to express and make it visible, as the etymology of the words in question implies.

This kind of visual and non-verbal communication is on the increase. The following randomly chosen examples demonstrate this point:

Images in the form of symbols, pictograms (traffic signs, signposts, pointers)... smileys, keystroke combinations, abbreviations used in chatting and emailing ... picture stories, cartoons ... user directions without words (drawings, videos) ... the whole wide area of body language that we are increasingly made aware of today (effect of face expressions, gestures, attitudes in public life) ... finger signs that have particular meaning or receive greater meaning ... the wide area of clothes and accessories that are used as “statements” (particular brands, of eminent importance for adolescents) ... hairstyles, tattoos, piercing ... in football face painting and dressing entirely in the colours of a particular team ... certain regulated behaviours, group behaviours, new rituals (in stadiums for instance), demonstrations, protests, graffiti on houses, buildings, bridges, flash mobs, where something can be “seen”, where something is being said ... the extreme graphic styling of logos and slogans in any kind of advertising or self-promotion, in combination with clever illustrative elements (simple black and white no longer sells today) ... and many other things one can use to say something without having to (or being able to) speak.

The fact that some kinds of texts (CVs, letters of application) exist as templates also fits this picture. We no longer need to compose our own texts because they are available to download at the push of a button. Many kinds of texts are also getting increasingly shorter: the average length of media articles has been reduced considerably in recent decades. In a recent press release it was announced that a young man has created a “summary app”:

“News that are too long; too much material to prepare for a history test. 17-year old Nick d’Aloisio has created an app that boils down texts to the bare minimum. The internet corporation Yahoo liked the programme so much they paid 20 million Euros for it.”

Language development definitely moves away from the word. Interestingly this process runs parallel with the emergence of English as the world language. Language, any language, is disappearing in a development that corresponds to the development from speaking to saying. What needs to be said to the whole world, to everybody, can be communicated by a number of means.

Rudolf Steiner addressed exactly this development from speech to silence, or from the spiritual life through the legal life to the economic life in various places:

“The spiritual inner element of language is present in the spiritual life; in the legal life this inner element is already externalized, and the connection of language to the human being is lost altogether in the economic life.” (GA 190, 29 March 1919)

In the spiritual life language is still active as a “creative genius”, in the legal life it only serves communication and in the economic life it has become “alien” to us:

“Language has also a purely communicative aspect. It is all people think of today when they use a dictionary. This aspect belongs to the legal sphere. And because one language uses this word and another uses that word it is all about outer understanding” (Ibid.)

“We could all be deaf and mute and still carry on with the economic life. [...] We use language in the economic life only because we happen to speak. Abroad we can function well in the economic sphere even if we don’t speak the language of the country. We can buy everything and do all sorts of things. It is true – we do not need speech for the economic life: speech is a stranger there.” (Ibid.)

Steiner said about the spiritual background of this development:

“For precisely this reason the economic life provides the basis for us to prepare ourselves for life after death. The way we behave in the economic sphere, the feelings we develop there, whether we behave in a brotherly way in that sphere towards others or whether we are driven by greed and want to have everything to ourselves: all that has to do with the basic make-up of our soul and it is essentially a subtle preparation for many impulses that will have to develop in life after death.” (Ibid.)

Pedagogical Conclusions

The last quote points to the destiny aspect in what has been presented. Steiner expressed it even more clearly in the next paragraph:

“We bring with us a legacy from life before birth and this legacy comes to expression in what children carry into everything they learn from their nurse or mother. After death we carry a silent element with us which grows in particular from the kind of brotherhood that unfolds in the economic life and develops important impulses in life after death.” (Ibid.)

Biographically we also see a development that goes from speech to falling silent. We know this as parents and educators.

In the third year children learn to speak. It is a “luciferic influence” that brings us language: *the power of speech*.

Around the age of ten children learn to distance themselves from language and to understand its laws. This is an “ahrimanic influence” that brings *speech awareness*. We introduce grammar teaching at this age and start with reading and writing in the foreign languages. (For more details on these influences cf. GA 150, 14 March 1913.)

In adolescence, culminating around the 16th or 17th year, a mysterious “influence” becomes noticeable, a falling silent that is followed by the newly emerging capacity to use speech autonomously and critically to say things (or to not use it, that is, to remain silent). We could call this third step *speech maturity*.

We enter life with speech. When we leave it speech leaves us. Children have to grow up with speech; they need it for their development: living speech, the mother tongue that awakens the spirit, just like the mother’s milk. The process of falling silent, on the other hand, is one that unfolds in the course of our earthly biography that we actively help to shape. Children must not fall silent.

Christoph Wiechert said in his opening lecture that, as Waldorf teachers, we should convey foreign languages “as we convey the mother tongue”. If we take this seriously it means that our foreign language teaching in the first, purely oral, teaching years promotes the child’s *speaking*. This is true for any language, also – and especially – for the “second foreign language” for which we always need to find a justification. We need to practise speaking particularly in the first years of school, as with the mother tongue, by giving space for the sounds and creating a language aura that envelops the children (passive speaking, the teacher speaking), if possible in one language only, without intellectual explanations, without translating. Comprehension ought to arise out of the *speaking*, not out of the intellect; out of the whole linguistic “redundance”. How often do children hear a word in their mother tongue before they speak this word for the first time or before they use it adequately? Countless times.

The foreign language must be given as much space as possible in our lessons in the first 3 – 4 years. The opposite trend of neglecting the foreign language in the first grades is not helpful. Christof Wiechert already said it: people do not really take the lessons seriously in the first years because they think that proper learning only starts in the middle school, when grammar is introduced. But grammar teaching can only be successful in the Waldorf school when children have learned as much speech as possible which can then be analysed and “penetrated”. The joy in speaking can, by that time, no longer be awakened.

We all know, but tend to forget, that this joy is a necessary precondition for speaking. If pupils don’t enjoy speaking all our efforts will be in vain. This brings us back to the luciferic element that we can and ought to make use of in language teaching in all the creative, artistic, playful, theatrical activities we do with children, using everything we have at our disposal, including our voice, movements, our ideas and idiosyncrasies. What happens in the classroom is very personal. It is “bound” to us, never the same, always different. It is mother tongue. The other stages are for later.

Nicolai Petersen
translated from German by Margot M. Saar

How do we reach the students? Rudolf Steiner's insights into the human being as a guide through the upper school

In last year's Christmas issue of the Pedagogical Section Journal Christof Wiechert wrote: "There is secondary reading on foreign language teaching that does not address these questions [whether Steiner's propositions for foreign language teaching alone constituted the art of education, to the exclusion of all other approaches]. This literature offers suggestions which are not based on Steiner's indications. The question is whether foreign language teaching leading up to the upper school – that is, in the lower and middle school – meets the criteria set by Steiner." The following thoughts arose as a result of this question.

I asked myself if and how the study and implementation of Steiner's insights into the human being can enhance and enrich French teaching in the upper school. My focus will be the development of judgement in young people since the power of judgement is crucial if adolescents are to grow into responsible, independently thinking adults.

"As the third element [...] in education we need to wake up the students. Everything that goes beyond puberty needs to affect the young man or girl in such a way that they learn to form their own judgement in what must appear as a continual waking up process. [...] And if as teachers and educators we fully embrace this awakening impulse we will know how to behave, teach and present contents so that the students begin to form judgement out of themselves and, in a certain dramatic augmentation, become inwardly active, especially in the astral body."¹

The decisive experience for youngsters is the forming of their own individual judgement. This begins when they consciously delineate themselves from the judgements of adults and develop their own taste in all areas of life, such as clothes, music, friends etc.

It is only from puberty that young people begin to form judgements independently. Up until that point they tend to take on and follow the judgements of the people around them. This they do with as much vigour as those people do because the power of the individuality that is at work in every judgement is conveyed to the children. It can happen that under-10 year olds verbally delineate themselves from adults; but this tends to be due to a lack of interest rather than a sign of independent judgement.

Youngsters in Classes 9 and 10 tend to form very idealistic judgements, but

1 Rudolf Steiner, *Anthroposophische Menschenkunde und Pädagogik, Über Erziehungsfragen* 30th August 1924, GA 304a, p. 178ff (The lecture is available in English in: Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy Vol. 2. Hudson, N.Y., 1996)

they relate them more to others than to themselves. They expect and demand of their teachers and other people absolute honesty, reliability and fairness. These are the values that for them reflect the integrity of the adult person.

Judgements that are not accepted on the basis of authority arise from experience and insight. The experience that a particular behaviour has a particular effect will either confirm this behaviour or result in it being changed. In addition there are insights that are formed through thinking and that can be used to reliably weigh up and justify the validity of judgements. These insights rest on the trust in one's own thinking that is conveyed in the lessons.

Judgements are more than intellectual evaluations of situations: they form the personal basis of one's existence. It is therefore essential that children and youngsters experience, through the example and authority of adults, how valid and reliable judgements can be formed. This process can become a source of strength in the formation of the young person's personality.

Power of judgement means "the ability to consciously distinguish from among the plethora of sense perceptions and to interrelate them in adequate ways", that is to say the cognitive capacity to perceive the reality and develop judgements and will impulses as well as the ability to act on them.

The inner urge to develop one's own views based on judgement and to detach oneself from the authority of adults arises between the 12th and 14th year; because the forming of judgements relies on the physical as well as the astral body. Since the astral body, as bearer of the sentient life, is only fully set free with puberty, it is only then that young people are able to establish an independent relationship with their surroundings and form their own judgements.

The change of the limbs between the 12th and 14th year forms the foundation for the emerging power of judgement. Forming judgements involves the activity of the human middle that includes arms and hands and the rhythmic organs (heart and lungs), while drawing conclusions corresponds to the coaction of both legs.

This is a time of profound change for young people. The physical body changes first. The forces of gravity that are at work need to be overcome by the I. They are forces that first affect the limbs, that is, the organs used in conquering space. These organs that execute the activity of the will grow now, while the muscular system will be consolidated later. We see this growth mostly in hands and feet, then arms and legs (first in the lower then upper legs).

The young people look lanky at this age; up until then their movements were gracious, harmonious and in harmony with their rhythmic organization (heart beat and feeling). Through the growth process the limbs become detached from this organization. This independence means that the will activity is no longer directly stimulated by feelings but develops out of the experience of gravity. Young people can now unfold their will independently of any emotional stirrings.

Compared with the mental life – thinking for instance – the will is a seed for the future because in the will we are seed-like, emerging. The will points to the future; it drives us on; it is the cause of our outer as well as inner actions. As a time organism we always act in the moment. Our actions have to do with us; they make us what we are.

Thinking and doing determine our behaviour in various ways. In our thinking we can ponder, gauge, imagine, rule out, observe ourselves In our doing we cannot undo anything or reverse what has been done. Thinking is therefore closer to appearance, while actions can be allocated to being. Only in our actions do we realize ourselves. In the moment of action we wish for the deed, which means that the will is linked to sympathy.

We execute our will with the help of our limbs. The quality of our will activity differs, however, depending on whether we use arms and hands or feet and legs. There is an essential difference between our upper (arms, hands) and lower (legs, feet) limbs and this has an effect on the quality of judgements. The forming of judgement is connected with arms and hands, the drawing of conclusions with legs and feet.²

Arms and hands are also closely related to our rhythmic system, the physical carrier of our feeling life. We express feelings through arm and hand gestures. Because of their connection with the our middle, rhythmic part arms and hands are only to an extent subject to gravity and we are not as fully unconscious of them as we are of our metabolism-limb system. In arms and hands we engage the will sentiently: carefully touching on a matter that retains its own character.

The inner judging process corresponds to the more subtle will organization of arms and hands: percepts and concepts are carefully attuned, as if palpated by an inner hand. A judgement is only arrived at when the active will sensitively examines in thinking observation whether the concept covers the essence of the percept.

The other kind of judging is connected with the activity of the lower limbs since hypothetical, or causal, judgements correspond to the movement of feet and legs. Just as right and left leg work together according to particular laws when we stand or walk, one fact follows another by necessity: if..., then..., because... . Each activity is necessitated by the previous one; strictest causality prevails. If we want to understand a causal relationship we must know how the effect arises from the cause out of an inner necessity. Hypothetical judgements express causality in a particular way. In order to be able to hold the balance when we walk, our will and our I need to be active. A hypothetical or causal judgement requires more intense will application.

Puberty changes the adolescent's relationship with the outside world. Because the body is experienced more strongly young people meet the outside

2 Rudolf Steiner, *Menschenkenntnis und Unterrichtsgestaltung*, GA 302, p. 49f (Available in English as *Waldorf Education for Adolescence*, Stourbridge 1993)

world more directly. The body is subjected to mechanical and gravitational forces and arrives in the sphere of causality. A strong need for causal comprehension arises: a need to cognitively permeate facts and understand how they evolve necessarily from their antecedents.

The Physical development is the foundation for the need for facts and explanations. Adolescents want to find out what things are and why they are what they are. They perceive the world more consciously, want to be given facts rather than images and want to understand them intellectually. The thoughts are, like the bones, subject to gravity and become ever denser and increasingly concrete. The ability to inwardly survey coherent events, grasp their causality and see abstract concepts as causes of effects enables young people to establish a connection between ideas and the things and to think hypothetical-causal relationships.

We only understand causal connections because we find them as subjective experiences within ourselves. This subjective interpretation of reality reveals the objective spirituality that is at work in the world. For this I need to experience inwardly that the things relate in the same way as I inwardly experience the actions arising from my will: I must experience them as closely connected with me.

Judgement always involves feeling because as soon as one discerns lawfulness one feels a warm stream of inner acceptance. When a judgement is made³ this feeling of acceptance emerges and the experience of truth unites the soul with the judgement. It is a feeling similar to gratitude since with gratitude one focuses less on oneself: accepting a truth is a selfless feeling that gives rise to inner conviction.

What do young people need? They need convictions and sobriety in judgement. They only find inner strength and orientation if they gain strong convictions.

Independent judgement is, however, only possible when adolescents first observe the phenomena and facts as pure percepts, free from the interpretation of other people. That will allow them to form in their thinking concepts that reflect the “essence” of these phenomena. They practise unprejudiced observation and examine in self-reflection whether their judgement has adequately interpreted the situation. Judgements serve to demystify reality.

Young people therefore need to observe the phenomena, then enter into the process and grasp the inner coherence and recognize the underlying causality.

Making judgements touches on the parts in us where feelings, passions and emotions prevail. Caution is called for, however, because it can happen that not the things express themselves but unreflected and momentary emotions and opinions.

3 Rudolf Steiner, *Menschenkenntnis und Unterrichtsgestaltung*, GA 302, 13 June 1921, p. 29 (see footnote 2 for English title)

When power of judgement develops in the lessons, i.e. when the soul connects with the world, a profound educational process unfolds. The evolving capacity for judgement educates the soul. Impatience is transformed into serenity, carelessness into circumspection, rigidity into flexibility, complacency into selfless devotion to the truth.

However, lessons are often used to convey to students statements, theories or models that teachers consider to be valid. This approach is tantamount to handing them ready-made products and does not meet their real needs. What they need is the journey, the process of arriving at a judgement, where the observation of the phenomena is separate in time from the making of judgements since the tendency to put opinions in the place of observation will undermine the power of judgement.

But the concepts and definitions of scientific thinking are powerful and any teacher who is enthusiastic about his subject and has internalized the knowledge related to it will eventually fall prey to them. The question is why teachers find it so difficult to resist this power and the arrogance of the concept or definition.

In what follows I refer to the book *Objectivity* by Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison. The answer lies in the fact that scientific thinking, the generator of concepts, claims to be examinable, generalizable, and independent of persons and interests and that the results produced by the natural sciences are therefore absolutely objective.

The reason why scientists claim validity for their results has to do with how the sciences have developed. Like the arts, they have evolved from environments where they did not previously exist. The difference between the arts and the sciences lies in the discourse: the sciences formulate person-independent recipes that allow for the desired properties to be reproduced, and put them into practice. The claim to general validity is therefore confirmed.⁴

In the age of Enlightenment natural truths were only recognized when all sentiments had been actively filtered, sorted and synthesized by the nature researcher. The truly wise were geniuses of observation who were able to filter the truth out of myriads of diverse impressions. Objectivity as the benchmark of truth emerged in the 19th century when the subject began to negate subjectivity. The change came with Kant and the break with the perception-oriented philosophy of the Enlightenment. The subjective self of the scientist was denied; self-discipline, self-control, self-denial and self-restriction became the hallmarks of truth. The path of knowledge could only be walked if the will fought against the self and from that a moral claim was derived. Subjectivity became synonymous with fallibility; “objective” denoted the reality as such, independent of cognition. The new paradigm dictated that only what was measurable, countable and weighable could become the object of scientific inquiry.

⁴ Lorraine Daston, Peter Galison, *Objectivity*, Brooklyn, 2007

This is why scientific definitions and concepts became so significant and they still determine our thinking today. Because they are, intellectually, seen as truths and, morally, as guidelines. Concepts no longer have the mobility that appertains to processes of discovery; they become rigid statements. Rudolf Steiner warned against this when he said: “Imagine you form concepts, and these concepts are dead. Then you inoculate children with conceptual corpses. If you inoculate children with dead concepts, you inject the corpses of concepts right into their physical bodies.”⁵

This is why he called for “living concepts”, concepts that remain flexible and that will later awaken the memory of what one felt when they were first formed. Otherwise the soul would wilt away, as he said. These previous feelings enable us to have living memories and to raise concepts into consciousness.

“What does a concept need to be like when we teach it to children? It must be living if children are to live with it. [...] You must teach children concepts that can evolve throughout their lives. [...] When do you inoculate them with dead concepts? When you continually give them definitions [...] and have them memorize this, then you inoculate children with dead concepts. [...] This means that continual defining is the death of living instruction. [...] In teaching we should not define, we should attempt to characterize. We characterize when we look at things from as many points of view as possible.”⁶

Teachers who wish to heed this warning must keep their imagination alive however well they know their subject. Without the power of imagination the concepts wilt away and become empty thinking patterns that will stifle all interest young people have in the world. Without the power of imagination judgements will relate only to the outside of things or processes and will not inspire actions. It depends on our power of imagination whether we can change the world, whether we can break away from what is there already and embark on new journeys: “the power of imagination is the natural power of growth metamorphosed into soul forces.”⁷

Our perceptions inform us about the sensory world around us. Our thinking informs us, through concepts and ideas, about the forces that shape the sensory world. The concept that arises in our mind is different from the active principle in the world in that it cannot generate the reality of the world: concepts become weak mirror images of actively generative forces. But they need to be newly thought, their genesis be made comprehensible, for every adolescent.

Young people can only arrive at prudent judgements if they are not served premeditated opinions and conclusions but if they are given the chance to practise precise perception and characterization on the basis of phenomena and

5 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience*, GA 293, 30 August 1919, Hudson, 1996, p. 153. Tr. R. Lathe, N. Whittaker

6 Ibid.

7 Rudolf Steiner, *Das Künstlerische in seiner Weltmission*, GA 276, 20 May 1923, p. 142

facts that cannot be called into question. Upper school pupils need, on the other hand, to be able to deal competently with abstract definitions and concepts while not falsely assuming that these concepts do full justice to the reality of the world. A deep interest in the facts, clear concepts and precise imagination are prerequisites for developing the capacity to make judgements.

Foreign language teachers, who aim at putting this ideal into practice, need to find an imaginative, multi-perspective and phenomenological approach and introduce a variety of consciously planned methods to their upper school lessons. I will describe two possible ways that have been developed in French lessons:

The first fundamental gesture in upper school teaching is, in my view, the metaphor since it brings life to the concepts which disambiguate and narrow down facts and circumstances. By using metaphors we approach the phenomena of the language through the soul life by visualizing them.

Metaphors express similarity, but they go further than similes. With similes the two aspects that are compared remain independent. Similes demonstrate or evaluate processes, objects, persons and/or their actions by drawing on other aspects. Two facts can only be compared if they are not identical but have at least one characteristic in common. Similes therefore remain at the level of identifiable facts.

Examples:

A child, boisterous as a whirlwind

A child like a whirlwind

Metaphors, on the other hand, lead the aspects compared into a new semantic unity. Their constituents melt into one and mutually affect each other in their new meaning. Metaphor means “transfer”. Metaphors are ambiguous; they don’t specify their meaning. They always bring to mind the opposite of what they express. This is why images are seen as “untruthful”, a view that implies that there is such a thing as a true, definite expression.

The metaphor’s lack of definition prompts a cognitive process since the common denominator needs to be recognized and identified. Compared to the language of abstract, conceptual cognition, images are the mode of expression of poetry, myth, fiction but not of tangible reality.

Metaphors distract listeners and readers from the purely physical observation of phenomena by pointing to what lies “behind” them. They transfer attentive listeners or readers to a state of hovering that they might experience as either unpleasant or liberating. Images are closer to feelings than concepts because their vividness evokes emotions. They lead listeners or readers away from particular phenomena by relating them to others. It is the ambiguity of the metaphor that causes this state of hovering. Because they inspire emotions we experience our consciousness as dreamlike.

Metaphors therefore widen the field of vision by introducing images. Images dissolve the comparison that we established intellectually, thus creating ambiguity. They require greater inner activity on the part of the reader or listener.

Metaphors leave traces of meaning between the lines that want to be discovered and pursued. If we explore metaphors we have to change our standpoint. If we discuss phenomena in purely conceptual terms we eliminate variety up to the point where human life becomes standardized by those for whom concepts are the only valid parameter.

Metaphors are tools that enable us to go beyond the meaning, while concepts limit us to the outlines of outer appearance. The path from concept to metaphor runs from clear definition to context-dependent ambiguity. Life is diversity; standardization through definition and concept generates uniformity.

I will now look at how this can be put into practice in upper school French teaching:

Class 9 students express their sympathy and antipathy without reflection. Because their thinking is so impulsive there is no time for analysis and they are not yet able to distance themselves from the phenomena they observe. The aim is to develop, in the will, the resoluteness that appertains to the power of judgement, in the feeling a love for taking action, and in thinking the quality of practical judgement. It is the task of teachers to offer them strategies so they can learn to direct their will through actions. All facts must be related to the present time if they are to become knowledge. The phenomena must be unequivocal and have nothing hypothetical about them. The contents presented must be looked at from many sides so that the underlying ideas can be discovered in the diversity. This brings movement into what has become rigid. It is for this reason that Rudolf Steiner suggested we approach grammar teaching with a sense of humour. The forming of judgements is practised on the basis of facts; precision is needed when outer phenomena are described. When the students are active they experience how they see through occurrences: strengthening on the outside, trust inside.

Class 9 pupils work with similes so they learn how to formulate exact descriptions. Similes help to better understand particular properties or aspects. A full simile also reveals itself wholly: it consists of the theme, a comparative element, the comparative tool and the point of the comparison. The correctness and accuracy of similes can be examined against the phenomena described and this makes the quality of the phenomenon more easily accessible for the pupils: “Peter runs as fast as lightning.” If the simile is not ironical its truth can be verified in the world of facts.

We can practise this in French lessons when we work on vocabulary: the pupils give exact descriptions of illustrations (photos, realistic pictures). After that the various elements of the pictures are described even more clearly by using similes that come as close as possible. Pupils can be asked to use similes to describe the behaviour and looks of the characters in a reader such as *Un si terrible secret*⁸ by E. Brisou-Pellen: “*elle est blanche comme la neige*”, “*elle*

8 Évelyne Brisou-Pellen, *Un si terrible secret*, Easy Readers Französisch, Klett 2011

pleure comme une madeleine”... Or they are encouraged to express sadness or anger in words, starting by exactly observing a grieving or angry person. As a result detailed descriptions emerge (with the help of dictionaries) of how people behave when they are sad or angry.

Cause and effect are rooted in us. In Class 9 we first look at their outer, visible effect. If this is done well in Class 9, the students will have no problems with analysing texts once they get to Class 12. Pupils who are unable to analyse texts in Class 12 did not practise exact observation and characterization in Class 9.

Class 10 pupils can enter more deeply into things if they manage to penetrate to the active principles inherent in them. Class 10 is about reconnecting with the earth. Experiencing the polarities within the phenomena and ways of reuniting them are now the central theme. Lessons ought to lead pupils to make this connection out of themselves. The world is no longer outside; the young person is the centre of the world. Class 10 pupils are in constant inner monologue. The lessons have to bring similar issues to them from the outside to distract them from their own problems.

The main theme of Class 10 is working on metre in poetry. The main aspect in grammar is the search for the spirit in the language, the search for what is particularly French. The students should understand the working of the soul and how it comes to expression in the forms and processes. In poetry we cannot, as in the visual arts, observe the work of art at rest, as it were. It is still evolving and the task is to discover the principles that are active in it.

In Class 10 we focus on the metaphor as a formative element of poetic language. We could ask the pupils to describe the painting of a landscape in as much detail as possible. As a next step we ask them to replace every verb they used in describing an object by one they would use for a person. “*Il y a une maison*” becomes “*une maison dort*” or “*une maison repose*” or “*une maison s’assoupit*”. We have arrived in the realm of the metaphor. Again we use the dictionaries to help us. Now it is not about the verifiability of reality but about the feelings associated with the picture. Through the compilation of images, the simple prosaic description of a landscape is transformed into a poetic prose text, an ensouled landscape.

The work on word images is further enhanced when the students compose poems based on their own metaphors. Through the activity they gradually familiarize themselves with the laws of French poetry. As a result they will, in Class 12, be able to analyse poems out of their own inner experience without having to fall back on concepts and definitions that were imposed on them.

The second path I pursue in teaching is based on the three steps of conclusion, judgement and concept as described by Rudolf Steiner in *The Foundations of Human Experience*.⁹ Steiner refers to the Aristotelian teaching of logic that is based on conclusion, judgement and concept, but uses the terms in different ways.

9 Rudolf Steiner: *The Foundations of Human Experience*. GA 293 (see footnote 5), p. 149

With Steiner the conclusion comes first when we meet the world. Conclusion means the active comprehension of the contents of a perception and the connecting of that new experience with one's own understanding. This – usually unconscious – process is a creative cognitive act. Steiner pointed out that we should, in lessons, not work with ready-made conclusions but that we must allow for independent experience, interpretation and categorization of phenomena since we otherwise diminish the pupils' motivation to gain an understanding of reality.

Making judgements, which is the next step, means for Rudolf Steiner that we gauge, validate and assign qualities to situations on the basis of our life experience and insights.

Concepts, which are usually considered to be first, only come last in this view. For Steiner forming a concept means grasping hold of a situation through thinking. It does not denote the mental image that we form of things but the lawfulness that is at work in the things and that we can cognitively take hold of.

I will explain how these three steps evolve in the French lessons. One could gain the impression that Waldorf teachers ought to avoid fixed concepts. This is certainly not the case since knowledge contents need to be conveyed in a clear, comprehensible and structured way and knowledge must be consolidated. This is an essential goal of teaching. The method we use is therefore that we confront the pupils first with phenomena and allow them to experience them. Definitions are not derived at the end of the lesson but, if possible, only on the next day.

The 17-year old students of Class 11 know the multiplicity of the world: in Class 9 they learned much by looking out into the world. They know the laws that have shaped the world into what they now experience, after their interest had clearly focused inward in Class 10.

The students now long for insight. They want to know the laws that determine their own existence and that move the world. They ask how the tension between "I and you" can be dissolved, how the equilibrium between people can be maintained from the inside as well as from the outside. They know now that their words can hurt. Self-directed thinking arises from the effort they make to use language in a way that allows the injuries they inflicted to heal. It is no longer about emotional opinions but about inner attitude. Their relationship with the world is deepened. The young people experience what goes on in others. They understand now that life shapes our inner being and shapes our life from the inside. They need more strength to explore the areas where this happens in nature and in us.

The idea of human development – that we take in from the outside what comes towards us as our destiny in the course of our biography – can be experienced in Class 11 with Antoine de Saint Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*. The pupils' judgement and understanding of the experiences of the author and the little prince evokes the ideals and goals that live – as yet unrealized – within them.

In Class 12 the students want to understand so they can act responsibly and become active in the world. They feel that, together with others, they can shape the future. They must experience how the living creative spirit takes hold of the inside of the world and how passiveness in spirit ties us to the surface of the phenomena.

If pupils find nothing to ignite their interest and to open up the inner meaning of the things for them, life becomes meaningless for them. Our teaching must develop the capacity for judgement in the young adults. Only then can they find the centre of their will and of their actions within themselves.

In Class 12 the students learn to analyse statements and texts, interpret the unspoken and discover intended effects, without being taught traditional concepts. Text studies require exact imagination because imagination makes us independent of what is given; it is projective rather than reproductive. It adds possibilities to the reality. It needs imagination to characterize persons and to recognize their qualities and this is not different from interpreting their character and being on the basis of a few attributes given in a text. It certainly does not involve passing judgement on the characters. It is a matter of observing them astutely so that the aspects perceived are condensed into characteristic properties and the characters come to life. This way of working follows the three steps of conclusion, judgement and concept. Because the power of judgement is called for we need to cast light on the fictitious characters from various sides.

We must enable the students to experience the historical and cultural context that underlies the texts without imposing ready-made thinking patterns on them. It is our task to facilitate the personal connection that young people are always looking for and that is only possible through inner experience. History has contributed in shaping today's picture of the country and the mentality of its people. Understanding how things hang together means taking hold of them and, in taking hold of them, the students connect their thinking with their own will: their own activity melts with the facts. It needs the personal relationship in order to unite the objectivity of the historical facts with the students' subjectivity. An image can then arise of how individuals are shaped in the stream of history. What happened in the past contributes to how we see our own existence. History has played a part in shaping the environment that we are subjected to and that co-determines our life.

In practice, the teacher first briefly presents the historical facts and then describes the personalities of that time in more detail. Once the situation has been clearly outlined we go on a hypothetical journey: if ... then

The following keywords were central to the history of France:

Bismarck → Napoleon III → Algeria

Human zoos → the self-image of the French → the image of the stranger → the marginalization in the *banlieus*.

Taking the example of Napoléon III and Bismarck one could proceed along the following lines:

Had Bismarck not published an edited version of the Ems Dispatch, France would not have declared war on Prussia in 1870. Napoléon III would probably not have resigned and could have realized his vision of an Arab kingdom in Algeria and that would have decisively changed the course of France's colonial history in Algeria. The Prussian soldiers would not have laid siege to Paris and hunger would not have forced people to butcher the animals in the zoos and eat them. After the war one would not have brought new animals from the colonies, there would have been no human zoos, the self-image of the French and of Europeans in general would have developed in different ways, the world would have formed a different image of the French ... to the point that there would be no problems now in the French suburbs.

This activity allows the students to explore the effect of causal thinking first in a fictitious way. After that the actual consequences are developed together. The approach allows young people to think themselves into and connect with the world that has historically evolved, to learn to understand it as an immense network of influences, causes, consequences and effects that also affect their world and their lives.

The approach prevents prefabricated judgements or superficial and momentary conclusions, for young people are not yet able to value the world as they find it as much as they value their own wishes and actions and to include this world in their own objectives and ideas for the future.

Teachers must be able to give reasons for why and how things have come about. If youngsters are confronted with a world of unjustified contents, they will see it as unreasonable and pointless and might lose their inner footing in the world. We need to emphasize the imagination, the vivacity and the immediate connection with real life to prevent the presentation from becoming too fantastic. Such issues open up deep insights into ethical questions of our time.

“Criticizing what has happened constitutes a kind of dilettantism that spiritual science must not be part of. The matter must be understood on its own terms if we are to develop the right will impulses in relation to it.”¹⁰

Students who have upper school French lessons like the ones described will experience the difference between dead, pre-meditated, impoverished concepts and living ideas, and they will hopefully turn a deaf ear to xenophobic polemics.

From Class 9 to 12 students must be able to discover in the phenomena the deeper processes and laws of the world.

The emphasis on pure learning is replaced by an education that includes the personality in a wider sense. Foreign language teaching must be primarily

10 Rudolf Steiner, *Geschichtliche Notwendigkeit und Freiheit. Schicksalseinwirkungen aus der Welt der Toten*. GA 179, p. 152ff. (An English translation of this book is available under the title: *The Influence of the Dead on Destiny*. Great Barrington MA, 2007, tr. P. Wehrle

formed by the educational needs of children and adolescents: if we help young people to find themselves and to unfold their individual abilities, if we help them to develop imagination and the will to become active, they will find their own way in society.

I hope that my contribution has illustrated how French teaching can bring contents to young people in a vibrant and unprejudiced way and how it can contribute to developing healthy judgement.

For it is not our task to pass on convictions to the younger generation. It is our task to encourage them to use their own power of judgement and their own intelligence. They must learn to look at the world with open eyes.

Whether or not we have doubts about the truth of what we teach to young people is not the point. Our convictions apply to ourselves only. We teach them to young people as a way of saying: this is how we see the world. Look how it presents itself to you. It is our task to awaken abilities not to pass on convictions.

Young people must not believe in our "truths" but in our personality. They should realize that we are seekers. And we must show them how they can become seekers too.¹¹

Gilberte Dietzel
translated from German by Margot M. Saar

Further reading:

Willi Aeppli, Wesen und Ausbildung der Urteilskraft, Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart 1963, p. 11

Ernst-Michael Kranich, Anthropologische Grundlagen der Waldorfpädagogik, Verlag Freies Geistesleben, Stuttgart 1999

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Peter Selg, Vom Logos menschlicher Physis, Die Entfaltung einer anthroposophischen Humanphysiologie im Werk Rudolf Steiners, Verlag am Goetheanum, 2000

11 Rudolf Steiner, *Unzeitgemäßes zur Gymnasialreform*, first published in: *Magazin für Literatur*, Vol. 67, No 9, 5 March 1898 (GA 31, p. 233-234)

The One who Understands the Meaning of Language

The verse which was spoken every morning in various languages during the World Language Teachers' Conference has sparked the need for discussion in many people and I would like to contribute to this discussion.

There have been a variety of questions. There were people who obviously did not know the verse at all and wished for some clarification. Others found it inappropriate, even old-fashioned, and they would like to see another one in its place. Generally, the question arises, "What is the meaning of such, and other, traditions?"

*To the one who understands the meaning of language,
The world reveals itself in pictures.*

*To the one who can hear the soul of language,
The world unlocks itself as a being.*

*To the one who experiences the spirit of language,
The world bestows its strength of wisdom.*

*To the one who can love language,
Language will grant its own power.*

*So would I turn my heart and mind
To the spirit and soul of the word.*

*And in my love for the word
Fully experience my Self.*

Introductory verse for classical language lessons in Waldorf Steiner Schools, November 1922

("Towards the Deepening of Waldorf Education", Pedagogical Section Dornach)

Rudolf Steiner gave those words to Dr. Maria Röschl, on her request, as an introductory verse to be spoken at the beginning of classical language lessons. The verse was meant to be spoken in chorus by the class and the teacher, and by no means was it meant as an esoteric mantra for practicing teachers. However, the fact that it has been used as such by later generations of teachers, seems to prove that the verse is somewhat universally applicable.

I have been able to connect with the verse by working with Heinz Zimmermann and have used it as a foundation in many courses and seminars. However, just as all mantras, (i.e. the Calendar of the Soul or the morning verses

for the main lesson) it is in need of renewal through our conscious effort. Only if we fail to do so, is it in danger of becoming old-fashioned.

Heinz Zimmermann describes in his book “Meditation” (published in cooperation with Robin Schmidt) a meditative approach to mantras. You may get inspired by the chapter “Meditation with Mantras” where you find suggestions for the work with spoken mantras.

Here are some ideas as to how you might be able to make the verse come alive for yourself.

The mantra is very clearly structured. It is enlightening to work with it in the following way: Concern yourself with just one stanza a day and watch the progress, the metamorphosis of words and images. Soon, it will become clear that a threefold structure is hidden within it – *meaning of language, soul of language, spirit of language* – ending in a summary in which the language becomes a unity. Furthermore, the verb sequence displays a meaningful threefold transformation: *to understand, to hear, to experience*, respectively, *to reveal, to unlock, to bestow*. It is also interesting to note the changes in the grammatical forms (reflexive, intransitive, transitive) – and the German particularity of pre-determination by a pre-fixed genitive (an additional challenge for the translator).

In the first three stanzas we find “triangles” of human being, world and language – in the fourth stanza, the world as mediator steps back; human being and language are now facing each other directly.

If you have come this far, you might ask, are these four verses not enough of a basis for my own work with language? Do I not receive enough impulses from this fourfold in order to dive deeply into the languages’ phenomena? Isn’t there some kind of summary and even completion in the line “*the one who can love language*”?

If we look closely, we discover that the peculiar expression “the one who” – four times at the beginning of a stanza – maintains such a universal meaning that I don’t necessarily find myself in it.

In the fifth and sixth stanza, Rudolf Steiner leads us into the last part which represents a kind of personal commitment, just as in the school’s morning verses. (The words of the morning verses: “From Thee stream light and strength – To Thee *rise* love and thanks. – Spirit of God to thee *I turn myself* in seeking”)

In the verse for classical language lessons, this part is introduced with the expression “So would I ...” now the language undergoes its last transformation and becomes the “word”. Despite the many years of contemplating this present by Rudolf Steiner, I hesitate every time I am about to write “*and in my love for the word*” because I am inclined to write “word” with a capital letter.

In a workshop for class teachers on the topic of “rhythm and metaphor”, we worked with this verse for four weeks and came to the conclusion that one could

also lay it down eurythmically as a five-pointed star: Five stanzas on one path each – starting from the head – and the sixth stanza as a circle around the star. Years ago, a Grade Eleven class showed this form on stage in Helsinki after their Eurythmy teacher and myself had worked on it during a conference in Järna.

When I heard some of my colleagues' reservations about the verse being "old-fashioned", I felt quite old myself and worried that I may have become a traditionalist who clings to unexamined customs.

After many hours of contemplating this question at our Easter conference, I concluded that this cannot be the issue. Mantras cannot become old, as long as their content helps us to see the spiritual dimensions of our work. However, this can only happen if we keep the words alive!

It has been suggested to change to a more modern verse as an esoteric mantra for foreign language teachers such as the verse "in gegenwärtiger Erdenzeit ...". This suggestion can only be understood if one is aware of the kind of modern challenge it entails. However, the verse has a completely different background and is more suitable for intellectual contemplation than to be used as a mantra. This may be explained by the fact that Rudolf Steiner wrote those words as a summary of the first lecture of the series "The Driving Force of Spiritual Powers in World History" – Dornach, 11th March 1923 – GA 222, and sent them to Marie Steiner on March 15th (It can therefore be considered a late birthday present to her.)

In the above mentioned lecture, Rudolf Steiner describes people's connection to the archangels, the guardians of language. This is a connection which begins to form in puberty and happens while we are sleeping. Furthermore, he speaks about modern people's relationship to language. As language teachers we are daily concerned with language; the lecture encourages us to "give wings" to language, especially in the upper classes- just as Rudolf Steiner proposes it in the lecture, citing Schiller. It matters – also in foreign language lessons – what kind of language we offer the students. The more it is void of spirit, the more materialistic it is, the less our students will be able to connect to the archangels in sleep. Those thoughts by Rudolf Steiner may remind us to choose challenging literature and poetry for our pupils from grade seven onwards.

In present earthly Time

Man needs renewed spiritual content

in the words he speaks.

For of the spoken word Man's soul and spirit
during the time outside the body while he sleeps

retain whatever is of spiritual value.

For sleeping Man needs to reach out

into the realm of the Archangeloi

for conversation with them;

*and they can only receive the spiritual content –
never the material content of the words.
Failing such conversation,
Man suffers harm in his entire being.*

From the book in the German language: GA 262, Rudolf Steiner und Marie Steiner-von Sievers: Briefwechsel und Dokumente, 15. März 1923

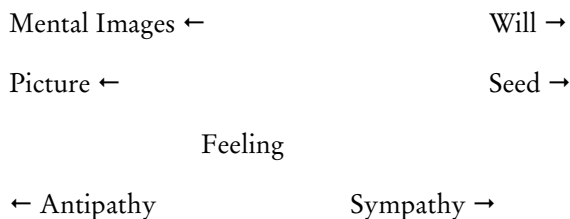
*Dorothee von Winterfeldt
translated by Karin Smith*

Teaching Grammar Based On Knowledge Of The Human Being

The main goal of teaching is to guide our children into healthy relationships with their thinking and willing between the years of seven and fourteen. At Waldorf Schools we base these efforts on the cultivation of the children's feelings. This is the art of education and it is good to remember that we can fail in this. When children continue to suffer from feelings that tear them apart, their education is failing them. If we notice that children have become sceptics in their feelings and will, their education is not working. They will think one way and act another. This essay provides insight on how to use grammar lessons to help children create a true relationship between their thinking and willing before adolescence.

For his first Waldorf teachers, Rudolf Steiner introduced a very clear picture of child development. We find a starting-point in his second lecture of "The Foundations of Human Experience." He begins with the child's ability to create mental images. This ability appears in the child's soul from her life before birth. The mental images meet the forces of antipathy and sympathy in her life of feelings and are reflected back towards the past. With these mental images the child creates pictures and eventually concepts.

The opposite takes place with mental images that a child creates in her will by observing the world. These images become seeds for the future and are powered by the sympathy in the child, which is often inspired by the teacher's sympathy for the child. The diagram below is merely a snapshot of the movements in the child's soul. In real life the forces mix continually.



The child's thinking, feeling and willing work in separate directions. Therefore, the art of education is to give the child healthy experiences in which she connects these forces in her feelings. In each lesson we can appeal to both directions in the child's soul activity. We provide methods for the children to use their antipathy, their ability to take a step back in order to create mental images. Later in the lesson we can use methods that appeal to their sympathy and will, to give nourishment to the other side of their creativity.

Ideal phases in the first nine years of school

In his lectures on education, we find ideal phases in child development that Rudolf Steiner identified and implemented for many years before he started a school. He found four main phases in the first nine years of school: the years before nine, before twelve, before fourteen, and after fourteen. All of his curricula, educational principles, methods, and psychology are based on these phases in child development. Even his exercises for teachers are given within these time frames. Grammar is one of many subjects Steiner develops along these lines.

Grammar before the age of nine

During the first years of school, before the age of nine, we appeal to the power of imitation in our pupils. We have them imitate grammar rather than raising it into their consciousness. By singing songs, reciting poems, playing games, writing words, and hearing stories, they not only learn the structure of the language by imitation, but they also become familiar with the sounds of the language, the way people in their culture speak, as well as how the native speakers relate to each other. The seeds for learning language are set.

Until the age of nine we intentionally delay intellectual stimulus. At this time some of their life forces are freed from their physical body and become available for conceptualization, the ability to picture the world and to find meaningful context. Before this age we do not include grammar or syntax. We simply speak the mother tongue and the foreign languages so the children acquire them just as any other habit.

Grammar before the age of twelve

In the next phase, between the ages of nine and fourteen, we no longer teach grammar out of imitation but out of our authority as adults. This is to support the healthy interpenetration of thinking with the child's will in its life of feelings. One example of how adults fail at this is when moral or intellectual attitudes are forced on children before they can make their own concepts. All forms of prejudice polarize children.

At the age of nine the children experience themselves as separated from the world. Childhood fades into the background and they begin to reflect upon who they are. Teaching grammar is an inspiring way to help children grasp these changes productively.

“Between the ninth and tenth years, children go from the level of awareness to self-awareness; they distinguish themselves from the world. At this age, we can begin (gradually, of course) teaching grammar and syntax rules, because the children are reaching a point where they think not only about the world, but also about themselves. As far as speech is concerned, thinking about oneself means not merely being able to speak instinctively, but also being able to apply rational rules in language. It makes no sense, therefore, to teach language with no grammar at all. By avoiding rules altogether, we cannot give children the necessary inner firmness for life's tasks. It is most important to keep in mind that children do not pass willingly from awareness to self-awareness until nine or ten. To teach grammar before then is absolutely irrational.”¹

One guiding method for introducing grammar in the mother tongue and in foreign languages was given in the ninth chapter of, “Practical Advice To Teachers.” Steiner suggests, using the way children naturally obtain knowledge: begin with conclusions, then move to judgments of those conclusions, and then build concepts. All of his methods before the age of fourteen follow this simple educational principle. This is challenging for every teacher.

He suggests we present activities that create inner enlivenment. The topic may be a meadow in Spring. The teacher states the *conclusions*, “It is greening. It greens.” The *judgment* could be, “The meadow greens.” And then we lead the children into the *concept*: “The green meadow appears in the Spring.”

You can move into further activities: “It is raining. The waterfall is thundering. The boat is sailing.” All of these are conclusions. The next step would be to judge these activities: The rain is warm. The waterfall is making it hard for me to hear. The boat is sailing downwind. We can also judge the activities by comparing them as questions with statements. What is the

1 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture on “Problems of Education,” Lecture six, London, November 19, 1922, page 100

difference between, “Is it raining?” and “It is raining.” Is there a difference between, “Is the waterfall thundering?” or “It is thundering!”

Another method for raising self-awareness through grammar is to analyze simple sentences word for word. Which word comes first? Which word is in the middle of the sentence? Which at the end? How do the words sound? Is anything repeated? Then we may pronounce each syllable of the word, first slowly, then more rapidly. We can ask the children to speak the sentence with intonation so they express feelings in these sentences. The logical structure in the language appears in judgment and is brought slowly into consciousness.

When we introduce grammar and syntax we draw it out of the stories and poems they already know. We use familiar sentence structures to tap their memories. This may be supplemented by presenting a new text and asking them to reproduce the content verbally. When teaching a foreign language, we may give them a topic for conversation and then circulate around the classroom to hear how well they are doing.

I introduce grammar to ten-year-olds by using a verb and a corresponding noun as bases: The farmer farms. The dancer dances. I guide the class into creating their own concept of a noun and a verb. Then I ask the question, “What kind of a farmer farms?” or “What kind of a nurse nurses?” This makes them conscious of a new area in grammar. Once they have discovered how the nouns, verbs, and the adjectives work in a sentence I ask the question, “How does the farmer farm?” This brings them into the power of adverbs. It is less important to know what an adverb is than it is to use adverbs creatively in your writing and your speech. Here the teacher shows them how adverbs enliven their language. You may want to have them practice using adverbs to give people real compliments!

When I introduce prepositions I work with Steiner’s method of moving from conclusion to judgment to concept in the following way: I ask the class for two nouns; for example, the cat and the tree. I write them on the board and ask the class for a verb that may indicate what one of the nouns may be doing. They decide: the cat climbs. Now the challenge is to enter the realm of prepositions by giving them a variety of conclusions they can eventually judge. So I play around with the possibilities. Can I say, “The cat climbs under the tree?” Can I ask, “Does the cat sit through the tree?” Is that good English? May I say, “The cat climbs above the tree?” They answer, “Maybe, or maybe not.”

If we use new nouns: the mouse and the pig, we can find a verb; for example, “to run.” Now a multitude of judgments become entertaining: The cat runs into the pig. The cat runs after the pig.

Once we are saturated with conclusions and judgments there is a real need in the classroom to put all of these experiences in a meaningful context. The teacher becomes a guide again and leads the class into a meaningful concept of a preposition.

Steiner suggests that at the age of twelve they should deal with things that happen in real life: letters and business correspondence and recounting things that have happened to them, rather than free essays. In foreign language teaching you can give them orders they need to carry out. This challenges them to act rather than reflect upon the language. It engages their will.

Grammar before the age of fourteen

At the age of twelve we should be able to introduce a large part of the grammar of the mother tongue and of the foreign language. Whatever is introduced one year should be repeated the following year at a new level, giving all of the children a new chance to gain confidence in their skills. Using a good sense of humor and appealing to the intellect in a new way each year, the goal is to help the teenagers know that they know grammar. This good feeling depends on our authority as teachers, that is displayed in our methods, our principles, our ability to see them as human beings, and our ability to follow their learning processes. This can be done economically, meaning devoid of activities that bear no lifelong fruit. Teens need to learn according to their own capacities.

Free rendering through conversation of a passage they have read is a good method. You ask them to repeat the passage in their own words. Another method is to discuss a subject in the mother tongue that they follow in their feelings and thoughts and let them express it in the foreign language. They learn to think in each language.

Remember that grammar should be developed independently. Steiner suggests, "When you carry on grammar and syntax with the children you will, then, have to make up sentences specifically to illustrate this or that grammatical rule. But you will have to see to it that the children do not write down these sentences illustrating grammatical rules. Instead of being put down in their workbooks they should be worked on; they come into being but they are not preserved. This procedure contributes enormously to the economical use of your lessons, particularly those for foreign languages, for in this way the children absorb the rules in their feelings and after awhile drop the examples. If they are allowed to write down the examples, they absorb the form of the example too strongly, whereas for the teaching of grammar the examples ought to be dispensable; they should not be carefully written down in workbooks, for only the rule should finally remain. So it is good for the living language, actual speaking, to use exercises and reading passages as just described, and on the other hand to let the children formulate their own thoughts in the foreign language, using more the kind of subject that crops up in daily life. For grammar, however, you use sentences that from the start you intend the children to forget and therefore you do not do what is always a help in memorizing: write them down. For all the activity involved in teaching the children grammar and syntax with the help of

sentences takes place in living conclusions; it should not descend into the dreamlike state of habitual actions but continue to play in fully conscious life”²

You can present your own examples to the class one day; the next day you ask them to create their own examples. The examples given in textbooks need not be repeated. As you can see, any teacher of languages needs to relearn the grammar of that language. No matter what level of grammar you have obtained at college, continual learning is needed in order to reach the children in the classroom each day.

When new children enter the class or you take over a new class, find out what they know and what they do not know in grammar. You have to close those gaps. When they reach the point of being able to understand grammar and syntax in one language, they are then able to enliven their knowledge of another language.

Grammar after the age of fourteen

Fourteen-year-olds at a Waldorf School will have learned plenty of grammar. By now they can use grammar to improve their writing style, their reading comprehension, and their ability to speak out of inner freedom. They can now reach for the next level of “knowing that they know” and thereby experience a new sense of confidence.

Our goal has been to use the grammar lessons to allow the teenager to develop self-awareness based on what he already knows in the structure of the language. This self-awareness has been developed in a timeframe and with methods that give the teen the ability to create independent concepts. He has done this in many other subjects at the school. In this way he develops his moral life within his feelings. When he enters puberty, these feelings will help his further develop his intellect and further awaken his moral feelings: all of this according to his own spontaneity. His feelings will flow back into his intellect. There will be healthy integration in his sympathy and antipathy as he discovers how life works in the world at large and in other people. His understanding of grammar helps his learn from more complicated texts about nature, science, economics, politics, and all other subjects that interest his. He is ready to face his next challenges as he finds their place in society.

Ted Warren

2 Rudolf Steiner, “Practical Advice To Teachers” Lecture nine, Stuttgart, August 30, 1919, page 133

Having Class Teachers for Eight Years

Rudolf Steiner's Viewpoints on the Span of the Class Teacher's Work

1. The question of the span of the class teacher's time

The class teacher has a special position in the educational conception of the Waldorf school. In most countries he or she teaches their pupils for eight years as a rule and thus has a central position in their educational biography. However, in Waldorf schools in recent years, especially in the upper classes of the middle school, it is not uncommon to find the situation arising that the class teacher has difficulties managing the class. Equally, the acceptance of the class teacher by the pupils seems not as strong as it was in a number of places.

Against this background several German Waldorf schools have introduced a particular idea of the middle school that shortens the tenure of the class teacher. A lot of Waldorf schools are in the process of considering the question as to how long class teachers should teach their class. There are tributes to this educational arrangement on the part of German educationalists (P. Struck in his talk in the 'Deutschen Hygienemuseum'), but more frequently questioning of it (H. Ullrich 2011, p. 240 onwards). This is why it seems important to investigate the reasons behind Rudolf Steiner himself introducing the class teacher tenure of eight years when he founded the first Waldorf school, just what motives and intentions was he pursuing? Especially of interest to us in the present day is the question as to which (educational-human) qualities, conditions and requirements needed to be present, in his view, for the work of the class teacher.

In this article Rudolf Steiner's educational (and anthroposophical) works will be examined with regard to the length of the class teacher period. It is possible to find direct, explicit statements by Rudolf Steiner which contain an indication in this regard. The context of these statements seems to be almost more important; in other words, Steiner's motives for the eight year period. The article is expressly not concerned with analysing the experience of modern class teachers or with sociological findings about the changing nature of childhood or the needs of adolescents. This study is concerned with forming a picture of the class teacher's vocation and putting it into context, based on Rudolf Steiner's complete educational or anthroposophical works.

2. How the Waldorf School was run under Rudolf Steiner's Leadership

It is possible to glean from the running of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart under the direction of Rudolf Steiner that with the building up of the school the eight year period of class teaching appeared in the second or third school year and was kept the whole time. If we reconstruct the group of teachers from Classes 1 to 8 in the years of founding and building up the school from 1919-1926, what comes out is that the eight years of class teaching was a matter of

course after the first two years – as one can see despite some question marks arising (Sources: Steiner GA 300a-c, Husemann/Tautz 1979, Esterl 2004, p. 72 onwards, Archives of the Uhlandshöhe Free Waldorf School).

Among the class teachers of the early years we find various well-known names, which we would be inclined to link to particular tasks, subjects or levels further up the school. In the first school year Karl Schubert replaced Friedrich Oelschlegel and took his Class 6 onto Class 8 before Rudolf Steiner entrusted him with taking on the auxiliary class for learning support. In the second school year Alexander Strakosch and Herrmann von Baravalle took on Classes 5 and 6 and took them through to Class 8. Both teachers subsequently became highly responsible colleagues in the upper school. In 1921 Herbert Hahn became the class teacher of Class 3 after Leonie von Mirbach and kept it until Class 8.

In the early class teachers' group we find fourteen women and sixteen men. Rudolf Steiner endeavoured strongly to keep the female and male elements in balance as much as possible (*"It would be good – you will excuse me – if we alternate: man, woman; man, woman, as otherwise this school will become too feminine."* Rudolf Steiner, Faculty Meetings 17th June, 1921, GA 300b/36). In the first two years, for various reasons, four class teachers gave up their classes. After this, despite the fact that two form entry was gradually introduced in 1921, which was necessary because of the size of the classes, an amazing degree of stability emerged with the class teachers and their respective classes. The number of classes taught by one class teacher rose in only four years from eight in 1919 to seventeen from 1923 onwards.

The class teacher principle of the free Waldorf school as a unified primary and secondary school in Stuttgart was clearly at odds with the usual teaching structure in Württemberg at the time, which was set up as a four-year elementary or primary school, followed by the three-part German secondary school structure. Even the training of the elementary school teachers and the teachers of the secondary schools took place separately (Langewiesche/Tenorth 1989).

3. Direct explicit Remarks by Steiner on the Length of the Class Teacher Time

Rudolf Steiner's explicit remarks as to the length of the class teacher time have been ordered chronologically and precede the further explanations. The first, rather general remark comes from the first teachers' course: *"The class teacher has the task of working mainly as a teacher of unity (underlined by TZ) ... The teacher of the last class becomes the teacher of the first one again."* (R. Steiner, GA 295/21, 21.8.1919). This remark was made as the school with eight classes was to come about.

During this introductory course Rudolf Steiner spoke twice on the principle of the class teacher, *"That is why it is essential in any good school that for as long as possible the teacher should remain with his group of pupils: he takes them on in the first class, continues with them in the following year in the second class, moves*

on again with them to the third class and so on as far as external circumstances will allow. And the teacher who has had the eighth class this year should start again with the first class in the following year.” (Rudolf Steiner: *Practical Advice to Teachers*, GA 294, Lecture of 27th August, 1919). In lecture eleven of the Study of Man there is an important argument. The class teacher period spread out over the whole seven-year period forms the prerequisite for the educational accompaniment of physiological and health processes of development right into the period of the children’s accelerated growth. It touches the core of the practical Study of Man for teachers, instinctively to recognise the fundamental polarity of the three-fold constitution of man (‘child of memory’ and ‘child of imagination’): “This is why it is so important to keep the children right through their school life; why it is such a mad arrangement to pass children on to another teacher every year.” (Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man*, GA 293, lecture 11 of 2nd September 1919, compare also Zdražil 2010).

In the first year of the school Rudolf Steiner reaffirms that the class teacher should stay until ‘the end of elementary school’, i.e. until Class 8. At that time school had, in fact, eight years and there was a class teacher only until Class 6: “I should like to go even further by suggesting that it is desirable for a class teacher to stay with his class throughout the first eight years; you entrust Class one to a teacher and let this teacher move on with his class, as far as humanly possible, best of all, until the end of the eight years ... The relationship of the teacher with his class becomes so deeply founded ...” (Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of Education*, GA 301, Lecture of 26th April, 1920). As in the last two classes two teachers (Treichler, Stockmeyer, the following year, Stein, Stockmeyer) had taught in alternation and there had been changes for the worse in the behaviour of the classes, Steiner spoke of the class ‘being at loose ends’ as a result, continuing, “Being at loose ends is a good term for this feeling. There is no real working together and that is terribly dangerous. That is what I attempted to counteract by having one class teacher for as long as possible. That offers some protection against being at loose ends.” Rudolf Steiner, *Faculty Meetings*, 20th June, 1922, GA 300b.

The two most definite and clear remarks about the length of the class teacher’s tenure derive from the last few years of Rudolf Steiner’s guidance of the Waldorf school: “The eighth grade is really the last year of elementary school. In the following grades, we change teachers.” Rudolf Steiner, *Faculty Meetings*, 3rd March, 1923, GA 300c).

“Nothing is more useful and fruitful in teaching than to give the children something in picture form between the seventh and eighth years, and later, perhaps in the fourteenth and fifteenth years, to come back to it again in some way or other. Just for this reason we try to let the children in the Waldorf school remain as long as possible with one teacher. When they come to school at seven years of age the children are given over to a teacher who then takes his class up the school as far as he can, for it is good that things which at one time were given

to the child in germ can again and again furnish the content of the methods employed in his education." (Rudolf Steiner, *The Kingdom of Childhood*, GA 311, Lecture of 15th August, 1924).

It may, of course, be that this collection is incomplete. This is not a case of numerous remarks by Steiner on this matter; nonetheless, they are, in my view, unmistakably clear and not ambiguous. They do not always contain definite reasons, but some important reasons emerge as clear:

- Deepening the bond between the teacher and the class,
- Balancing out the pupils' constitutional tendencies to one-sidedness,
- Guarding against the class community being at loose ends,
- Transforming the subject matter of teaching according to age.

However, the remarks convey a clear picture of the eight-year class teaching period. All the same, the reasons behind it should be further investigated.

4. Specialisation and Full Humanity

In his last lectures for the college of the first Waldorf school Steiner speaks of the need for a Waldorf school teacher consciousness (R. Steiner GA 302a/123). The first fundamental requirement for the vocation of Waldorf teacher and, in particular, for the class teacher is nothing less than changing one's consciousness. This huge demand to change our consciousness signifies extending our 'normal' (scientific) consciousness, which relies upon the external senses and the intellect.

"Modern science fosters only the understanding of natural phenomena in an intellectual way. This has no power to have any effect on the soul disposition or will of the person. It is therefore unsuitable for developing the social side of life. Anthroposophical spiritual science does not only draw on the intellect as a source of creativity but on all the soul forces of the human being. For this reason it also feeds back again into all these soul forces." (R. Steiner GA 24/190 onwards).

Here Rudolf Steiner speaks of the extending of the 'knowledge of nature' to 'spirit knowledge'; in spirit knowledge 'all the soul forces', i.e. feeling and will too, are activated as powers of gaining knowledge. Thus the human being – putting it briefly – develops from scientist to artist, the teacher from educationalist to educational artist; and their knowledge thus takes on artistic form. *"The main current of future development will lead from science to artistic comprehension, from a deformed human being to the attainment of full humanity; and in this it is the pedagogue's duty to co-operate."* (Rudolf Steiner, *Balance in Teaching*, GA 302a, lecture of 16th September, 1920).

In this remark from the first lecture of "Meditatively acquired Knowledge of Man" the expression 'full human being' appears as a notably characteristic term for the Waldorf teacher, who (besides the expression 'person of culture', R. Steiner, GA 293/15), stands in contrast to the 'specialist', as a term, representing the danger of modern consciousness or soul-spiritual constitution, which is a disaster for the teacher vocation. This becomes obvious from the following

words: *“In the course of time this way of thinking was increasingly faced with something that was acclaimed so much, though also from time to time criticised: specialisation in all areas of life, specialisation which has entered into higher levels of knowledge, from where it has spread its influence, for example, right down into elementary school education. This specialisation has made the individual person into a physicist, a botanist, a lawyer, a professor, a teacher and so on, and yet it has driven the human being out of him. And here we need to ask, does it really enhance knowledge itself, when knowledge in recent times has developed in such a way, leading to a world view but then fragmenting into those small parts? As a result of this fragmentation people have lost their humanity and have been unable to preserve an outlook for the world any more ... Spiritual science is what wants to give back this quality of being fully human to humanity of today ...”* (R. Steiner, GA 335/253-255, on the theme *“The Teacher as a full Human Being”*, see too R. Steiner, GA 307/192).

5. The Humanity of the Teacher

With the question of specialisation Rudolf Steiner takes a strongly critical position, like some educational reformers or even Albert Schweitzer, the position of someone who regards specialisation as a sign of cultural degeneration that is not to be underestimated:

“In all professions, most of all perhaps in science, the spiritual danger of specialisation emerges more and more clearly for the spiritual life of the individual as well as for spiritual life in general ... In administration, in teaching and companies of all kinds the natural room for manoeuvre is being restricted as far as possible through supervision and regulations. How unfree is the elementary school teacher today in some countries ... How lacklustre and impersonal their teaching has become through this restriction!” (Schweitzer 1923, p. 13). However, Steiner does not see the solution in having different contents for people’s consciousness, but rather in consciousness itself, i.e. developing the form of consciousness to a higher level. The effect of the scientific way of thinking, that is, of *“specialisation, which can be completely shed in anthroposophical education”* (Steiner, GA 343/504), consists for one thing in the materialistic, intellectual, scientific knowledge providing for the person no stimulation for emotional soul qualities or for qualities of volition as the central educational faculties. They are chiefly empathy, grasping the psychological traits of the pupils, the ability to anticipate the behaviour of the pupils, their reactions and answers, the pedagogical sense of tact, the pedagogical faculty for observation etc.

The other effect for Rudolf Steiner are ‘concepts that are alien to reality’, which do not enable people to have any practical, intuitive understanding of the human being and will necessarily lead to “greater and greater calamities” in the reality of social interaction (R. Steiner, GA 177/206).

In this sense Waldorf teacher consciousness thus consists of ‘humanity in the fullest sense’ as an enhanced form of humanity (*“... what is most important is the*

humanity of the teacher ...” R. Steiner, *Faculty Meetings, 15th March, 1922 GA 300b/74*, see too R. Steiner, *GA 181/136* and R. Steiner, *GA 53/313*). It presupposes the striving “to reach beyond specialisation to what we attempted to bring about through anthroposophy as it is called here. What we must achieve is that the thread should never be broken to a general view of the human being, to insight into what the human being actually is, ...” *GA 192/123*). The instrument for overcoming specialisation is anthroposophical spiritual knowledge, which connects knowledge of man with knowledge of the world, which “connects the individual human being with the whole universe” (Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man, GA 293, Lecture 2 of 22nd August, 1919*). It should give the teacher the background “to all he undertakes in his schoolwork, he should have a comprehensive view of the laws of the whole universe” (Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man, GA 293, Lecture 3 of 3rd August, 1919*), and have an “idea of the universe and its connections with the child”, which “passes into feeling which hallows all the varied aspects of our educational work. Without such a feeling about man and the universe we shall not learn to teach earnestly and truly.” (Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man, GA 293, Lecture 10, September, 1919*).

We are concerned here with several essential viewpoints, which are valid for all Waldorf teachers, but which are heightened to the highest degree for class teachers there.

6. The Second Seven-Year Period and the Educational Basis of the Generally Human

For the basic characteristics of the second seven-year period and its link with the class teacher what Rudolf Steiner says before the founding of the Waldorf School about a “*through school for everyone*” seems important: “*These laws, which take place in human development between roughly the seventh year and roughly the fourteenth or fifteenth year, these laws are the same for all human beings. And the only thing that ought to come into question is to answer the question through teaching and education in general, how far do I need to take someone as an individual by their fourteenth or fifteenth year?*” (R. Steiner, *GA 192/91*). Treating and fostering a child as a whole human being in the school lessons right through to its fourteenth or fifteenth year and not as a one-sided being (e.g. specialised for an occupation), what does it involve? That is, of course, connected with the question whether the child is taught by ‘one and the same teacher’ all through or by a ‘specialist’. It would be really necessary to consider the second seven-year period from the viewpoint of what is generally human. This hint seems to go rather in the direction of teaching by a class teacher than a specialist.

7. The Need of the Child to “have an Authority beside it”

As everybody knows, ‘authority’ is a central concept in Waldorf education, above all, with regard to the second seven-year period (Steiner had already

mentioned it in 1907 in his book “The education of the Child ...”, R. Steiner, GA 34/329). Steiner calls it the “*inherent longing in the child between the sixth or seventh and fourteenth year for a guiding authority. This has to be understood as a fundamental impulse.*” (Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of Education*, GA 301). Steiner calls it the ‘authoritative principle’, the most essential educating power (R. Steiner, GA 304/105). In this context I do not need to analyse this soul force, though it seems important to me to distinguish it from some other basic, soul-spiritual forces, which work against the above. The longing for a guiding authority is an important one, but only one stream of the inner soul-spiritual development ((a “*need of human nature itself*”, R. Steiner, GA 301), which – as R. Steiner formulates it – is laid down in the human being by “*the progressive divine-spiritual powers*”. On top of this, though, the interventions of the Luciferic and Ahrimanic streams occur, quite individually and irregularly: “*If you consider this development of the human being from seven to fourteen years, then you are principally dealing with the effects of the working of the so-called normal beings of the higher hierarchies on human evolution*”. (R. Steiner, GA 150/13 onwards). However, as will be familiar to many, no human biography proceeds in neat seven-year periods, but rather sometimes things happen early or late, they accelerate or are delayed. They are the result of the interventions of Luciferic and Ahrimanic spirits.

With these two forces pushing and pulling in different directions we get a kind of archetypal polarity as an anthropological constant of child development.

It means, however, that the gearing of children’s education of at this stage towards the prevailing of ‘unquestioned guiding authorities’ in the second seven-year period is far from a mere copying of what evolution has in store, but rather deliberate strengthening and supporting of a (healthy) stream of evolution as opposed to another, which is harmful (R. Steiner, GA 150/20). Thus deciding in favour of a guiding authority (and indirectly also for the class teacher) brings with it the evaluation and assessment of what we want to give priority to from the various soul forces of the child.

8. Transforming the Principle of the Guiding Authority and the Role of the Class Teacher

However, for Rudolf Steiner the second period of seven years does not imply that it proceeds uniformly and he underlines “*that the child develops through the principle of imitation up to the change of teeth and in decreasing fashion, up to the ninth year. Newly emerging feelings for authority, which are at first interwoven with waning powers of imitation, make themselves felt and come into their own from the ninth year onward. Then, round about the twelfth year, again an entirely new faculty begins to develop, namely the child’s ability to form his own judgements.*” (Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of Education*, GA 301, lecture of 29th April, 1920). In this seven-year period we are dealing with a radical transformation of consciousness for the child. That should have

consequences for the educational approach of the class teacher in this second seven-year period, involving the teacher in transforming himself in the sense of self-development in accordance with the needs of his pupils. The teacher's self-development is the most effective driving force for the development (self-development) of the pupil. *"We need to fully understand what it means to stand beside the child in such a way that he or she takes on their own self-development in the best way possible in our proximity."* (R. Steiner, GA 306/134).

9. Transforming the Motif of the Lesson during the Class Teacher Time

Rudolf Steiner attached much importance to allowing a motif from the lesson at one stage of school life to grow in the soul of the child and coming back to it time and again with new viewpoints, feelings and thoughts in the lessons of later years: *"Nothing is more useful and fruitful in teaching than to give the children something in picture form between the seventh and eighth years, and later, perhaps in the fourteenth and fifteenth years, to come back to it again in some way or other."* (Rudolf Steiner, *The Kingdom of Childhood*, GA 311). However, that, of course, only works, if one person teaches the class through the various levels of the school. *"Just for this reason we try to let the children in the Waldorf school remain as long as possible with one teacher. When they come to school at seven years of age the children are given over to a teacher who then takes his class up the school as far as he can, for it is good that things which at one time were given in germ can again and again furnish the content of the methods employed in his education."* (*ibid.*)

10. The End of the Class Teacher Period and the Transformation of the Curriculum after Class Eight

When the first Class nine is started in September 1920 and is discussed in the College Meeting, and in particular the curriculum is discussed, Rudolf Steiner emphasises the principle of 'continuity'. Concretely, though, it means that the subject matter of the lessons of some subjects does not, in fact, change compared with Class eight whereas the approach does indeed change a great deal. Thus, the same theme is taught differently; the subject matter remains, the people involved change. History is given as an example:

"In class eight the teacher needs to continue history right up to the present day, yet really taking full account of cultural history. Most of what makes up the content of conventional history nowadays, he or she should mention only in passing. It is much more important that the child experiences how the steam engine, the mechanical loom and so on have transformed the earth than that it should learn far too early such curiosities as the correcting of the Dispatch of Ems or such like." (R. Steiner, GA 295/163).

And he then says about Class nine: *"I would recommend that for the time you do not go further, but go through it again with a spiritual scientific perspective."*

Follow that with Lecky's 'History of Modern Civilisation'". (Rudolf Steiner Faculty Meetings, 22nd September, 1920, GA 300a).

Here we are dealing with a different situation from the case in which the motifs of the class teaching lessons are transformed. Rudolf Steiner was reckoning that the same theme would be taught by a different teacher, a subject teacher. A transition is consciously made from the class teacher lessons (in a more imaginative way with pictures) to the subject teacher lessons (in a more conceptual form).

11. The Class Teacher: the Idea of Waldorf Education takes Shape

Thus the class teacher is a fundamental motif of the conception of the Waldorf school. As far as is known to the writer, no parallels are to be found in other reformist educational school experiments. In my view the whole character as well as several essential features of Waldorf education are to be found in the second seven-year period, at least with regard to the educational tasks. Just as Rudolf Steiner spoke about the main lesson 'as the basis of education' (R. Steiner, GA 300c/161), I take the class teacher as the basis and living expression of the fundamental idea of Waldorf education. The idea of Waldorf education has taken shape through the establishment of the class teacher model!

Rudolf Steiner's remarks on the length of the class teacher time leave no room for doubt as to how long he pictured the time of teaching by a class teacher. It is founded in the requirements of the human soul forces as laid down by the good divine powers and lasts until the fourteenth or fifteenth year.

The successful mastering of this immense educational task is bound up with actively following the anthroposophical path of knowledge, which leads from specialisation to humanity in a heightened and more developed sense. Likewise the faculty for inner transformation in the sense of self-development is a necessary condition for class teaching.

What consequences might be drawn for the situation of modern Waldorf schools and what an appropriate way of dealing concretely and practically with this approach would be the theme of another study.

Tomáš Zdražil
translated by John Weedon

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Addendum

GA 53 (2 lectures only translated): Inner Development of Man (Berlin, 16.12. 1904) and The great Initiates in "Esoteric Development" (16.3.1905)
 GA 150 (1 lecture only): "New born Might and Trends everlasting (23.12.1913)
 GA 151: Earthly Death and Cosmic Lives
 GA 192: Introductory to the three-fold social Order (in transcript only) or A Social Basis for Primary and Secondary Education.
 GA 311: The Kingdom of Childhood
 GA 335: not translated
 GA 343: not translated

A new image for Waldorf Teachers

Comments on Tomáš Zdražil's views on being a Waldorf class teacher

Introduction

In recent years it has become apparent in the meetings of the International Conference that the concept of the eight-year class teacher period stipulated by Rudolf Steiner has come under pressure worldwide.

There are countries where the state restricts the class teacher period to six years and others where class teachers traditionally keep their classes for only four years. In some countries the class teacher period is split into two, sometimes three parts. We know of situations where two teachers share a class (known as team-teaching or co-sharing). It has also become more common for colleagues to leave their class in year two, five or six.

The German *Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen* has therefore commissioned a work group led by Walter Riethmüller to investigate the situation and make proposals. The work of Tomáš Zdražil (Freie Hochschule Stuttgart) is a first outcome of this study. Zdražil reveals Steiner's views on the class teacher phenomenon on the one hand and the related approach to the length of the class teacher period on the other. His work shows that the institution of the class teacher and the eight-year class teacher period are corner stones of the Waldorf method.

The question is how this can be made possible today.

1. The classic view of the Waldorf class teacher

Class teachers played a particular role in Waldorf schools at the very start and little has changed in that respect: they are seen as colleagues who, with much knowledge and moral commitment, lead their classes through the first eight years of school. One meets adults who speak about the lasting friendly relationship they have with their former class teachers and about how the eight years shaped their personality.

Such teachers are no doubt individuals who combine character and heart forces with pedagogical and didactic knowhow and who displayed a fortunate balance of idealism and realism during their class teacher period. Added to this was a strong sense of responsibility for the pupils and the school. These figures embodied what Steiner thought of when he said in the introduction to *The Foundations of Human Experience* that the task of the teacher was not only an intellectual-emotional but also a moral and spiritual one.

Most importantly, these colleagues probably hardly cast any shadows and if they did, their self-education brought so much light to these shadows that they didn't do any damage.

These teachers truly represented the school's identity.

There is no doubt that there always have been such colleagues, also among the subject and upper school teachers. And the upper school pupil who had such teachers will have kept them in good memory, too. (We all know how important it is to have such memories of one's school time).

But another picture emerged in the discussions mentioned at the beginning: the classic image of the class teacher in Waldorf schools is somehow under pressure. This "classic" image refers to teachers who accomplish the eight years, ruling supreme in their realms like kings or queens. Everything they do is done well. There is no question: the class teacher knows what he or she is doing and no one would ever interfere. The door is closed and nobody comes late. These teachers strongly put their mark on the class community. Subject teachers find them difficult. The mind of the class teacher is made up and there is no discussion. Student teachers, if they are granted access to the kingdom, revere this class teacher but feel a slight shudder: how impressive when someone does it so well – but we won't do it that way later.

The parents are subdued and grateful because all is in good order and the class is held well. Those who would like to see a change are soon persuaded of the futility of such an endeavour. If need be the cudgel of anthroposophy is held up to them.

The 'collateral damage' does not become apparent until years later: there are children who suffered for years from the climate, from the teacher's opinion, from not being understood and from being pigeon-holed.

The teacher's strong personality casts significant shadows which are not lit up through self-education, nor are they attenuated by the influence of colleagues. As a result individual colours predominate in the life of the school, leading to one-sidedness and disharmony.

A colleague when asked why he taught at a Waldorf school once replied surprisingly that 'Here I can do as I like.' One needs to have attained high levels of development to justify such a statement!

This attitude of 'I do what I like', even if presented with rational explanations ('it is what the parents want, no "retro-school", think of the A-Levels!') has paved the way for an unprecedented culture of conflicts in Waldorf schools.

But the king (or queen) goes down in the history of the school as one of its pillars and he or she certainly was this to an extent. (There are all kinds of nuances and shades of this set-up which we will not discuss further. They are easily imagined.)

This is another "classic" image of the Waldorf teacher.

How could it come to this in such a short time?

It has remained largely unnoticed that Steiner based his knowledge of the human being on the distinction between the upper and lower human being.

In the first lecture of *The Foundations of Human Experience* he defined education from a spiritual point of view rather apodictically as helping the upper human being (soul spirit, spirit soul) to integrate into the lower (physical and ether body). He referred to this also in some detail at the beginning of his cycle on *World History in the Light of Anthroposophy* (GA 233). This integration makes us autonomous: it helps us to realize our potential rather than being dependent on a body that has not been taken hold of by the higher organization.

We live, however, at a time when our soul forces are separated at the transition of the threshold. We experience this split of soul forces increasingly in all kinds of contexts. Many of us have to make a great effort to keep these forces together.

Their splitting can result in a pathological interpenetration of the two poles. We observe this increasingly in society and in people's life situations. We could also say that we need a lot of energy to hold ourselves together. Historically speaking one could call it the wound of Amfortas from which we suffer more and more and which prevents many teachers from complying with Steiner's wish that teachers ought to be "silent healers".

The future image of the teacher needs to address the following questions:

- a) How can the self hold the soul forces together?
- b) How do we deal with the errors on the path of inner development that manifest in schools as well?
- c) How do we help each other at the threshold, how do we support each other and protect ourselves?
- d) What are the paths that can lead us to a "social esotericism"?

We will try to carefully formulate an approach that can help us to work on these important questions and develop an image of the teacher that is suitable for the future.

2. The new image of (class) teachers in Waldorf schools

Teaching is generally seen today as a difficult, thankless and highly stressful task. Interestingly, one often hears that the work of Waldorf teachers is particularly challenging. But this image has, to an extent, been corrected by the research of Dirk Randoll.¹

Some tendencies shall be described here that play a part in the teaching profession today. We will look at the teaching as such, the work with colleagues, other tasks, work with parents, the "swimming against the stream" of general trends of our time and the relationship with anthroposophy.

1 Dirk Randoll, *Ich bin Waldorflehrer*, Springer VS. 2013

a) Teaching

Teachers often say that their work would be pure joy if they could concentrate on the teaching alone. While this is understandable we need to be careful with such statements. The Waldorf school is part of a social impulse and that impulse does not end at the classroom door. Why is there a wish for such a boundary? From school administrators one hears such wishes also more and more often. People want to be left to themselves because things then (hopefully) work out. This form of individualism is justified when it comes to the inner essence of the work. But one is part of a community and this necessary individualism must fit in with it.

Even the best classroom work needs to breathe with the community so it does not become poisonous.

b) Working with colleagues

One also hears more and more colleagues say that they don't get anything out of teachers' meetings. Some schools try to do without meetings or reduce them to a minimum. Some try to delegate the work to small groups or 'surrender' to a management team.

Not many are aware of the *heart* – or as Steiner also referred to it – *the soul of the school* as something they want to be part of. This is also a result of the individualization process but it will lead to isolation. Schools might lose their inner coherence even if all the people involved do the best they can! What Waldorf education can achieve is also due to the pupils' experiencing that the teachers like to work together and that they do this well. This is what makes the school feel humane rather than institutional. Do parents, for instance, when they come to a parents evening experience the institution and the slight chill that goes with it or do they experience an invisible network of human relationships?

c) Other tasks

Teachers have other tasks such as marking, preparing, drawing pictures on the blackboard (also during school hours), preparing the classroom, attending teachers' meetings, making home visits, meeting parents, maybe even working on one of the school's administrative organs responsible for school festivals, timetables, finances, school maintenance, daily school business, to name but a few.

These commitments create a great tension in the life of a teacher. Somehow the experience has gone lost that variety in the working life is meant to be refreshing.

Is my work a vocation that involves my whole being or is it a job and do I have a right to 'a life of my own'? Even if this is putting it strongly – in many schools these aspects are seen as opposites. But this kind of polarization leads to the wrong conclusion. We can experience our professional life as a vocation and still have a private life. The problem is that ever more people are unable to

practise the ‘art of life’, the simple but high art that – once we have mastered it – makes the impossible possible.

For teachers, mastering the art of life is as important as having common sense. It can begin with the insight that ‘having no time’ is in fact a question of priorities. All self-education begins with prudent time management.

(The situation is aggravated by the fact that many schools have no code of practice that would alleviate email correspondence with colleagues or parents). Some colleagues are inundated daily with emails from any part of the school community. But there are schools – also in the main stream – that have introduced restrictions in this area.)

d) Working with parents

Dealing with parents is increasingly seen as a burden. This is understandable to an extent since the ability to bring up children is generally decreasing in the average family home. But teachers often find it difficult to put themselves into other situations or circumstances in a way that would help them build a relationship of trust with parents. It is also true that parents today tend to have an attitude towards school that is more demanding than empathizing. They are no longer happy with statements such as ‘all will be fine in the end’ but expect factual statements. In many cases both parents are working and bringing up the children is one task among many. Things are becoming more factual.

This is the smaller problem, however. The bigger problem arises when children are very demanding, either due to the way they are or due to the socialization they are exposed to. We need competences such as empathy and moral tact, but at the same time we need to become more self-assured and develop more inner steadfastness. How can we learn this? What conditions do we need to develop moral tact? What kind of inner strength helps me to remain firm and steadfast?

e) Swimming against the stream

How is it with the recognition of Waldorf schools in society? What changes do we see there? How do Waldorf teachers experience themselves in an environment that rejects them? (This is not about rejections from within, i.e. from colleagues, ‘consultants’ or ‘scientists’.)

Many colleagues might not say it but they long for ‘normality’, for being like other schools which are, after all, ‘not all that bad? Haven’t things changed there? They have their advantages: the methods they use now are not so bad. It saves me time if I use them.’

Teachers might not say it out loud, but they do it. And aren’t the ‘scientists’ somehow right? Why do things always *have* to be different in Waldorf schools?

We must be clear here too. The signs of our time that were described earlier are not going away. The splitting of the inner personality is something we not only perceive in ourselves and our contemporaries. The tearing apart of soul

forces is like an unconscious programme that runs through the prevailing teaching methods. It is apparent in the fact that modern methods and contents have lost all connection with the developmental ages of children or pupils.

This is a fact for which the 'education sciences' need to take responsibility.

f) The relationship to anthroposophy

A tricky subject since talking about anthroposophy is easy enough; putting it into practice in teaching is another question and one where it is difficult to know what it means.

People tend to either repress the whole question or it is pushed away and not addressed. Or they have the vague feeling that they are not living up to their own standards. It's not quite a bad conscience but a sense of dissatisfaction: 'shouldn't I?'

Whether we like it or not this unconscious feeling weighs on us and affects also our conscious working life.

The task for the next years is to find a way of dealing with these matters in a way that allows Waldorf schools to move forward. Can a newly conceived image of the teacher contribute to this?

3. Summary

Looking back over what has been said so far we can conclude that the profession of the teacher has, on the whole, remained the same, but that the outer circumstances have become much more complex than they used to be even 25 years ago. These circumstances are closely linked with the changes in the human constitution as we perceive it. In addition to that, we see a strong individualization in the way people see their lives. Because collegiality is no longer a given, teachers do their own thing where harmonious working together would be required. Idiosyncrasies, and also the shadows cast by strong characters, are met with tolerance (or tiredness). Steiner's adage that 'the effect of our thoughts unites us' very rarely lives in schools.

Schools – just as society in general – experience a certain fragmentation that is apparent in the effort teachers have to make today. We are a far cry from experiencing teaching as healthy. The fragmentation is also apparent in social problems among colleagues. Often, the school structures are blamed and one seeks to solve the problem with expensive outside consultations – with little success. It is high time to wake up to this reality.

4. A different class teacher image

The following proposal applies not only to class teachers but to all colleagues and much of it clearly needs to be addressed during teacher training. It refers to four aspects: transparency, collegueship and objectivity, responsibility and personality, performance and flexibility.

a) Transparency

We must save each other from the threat of isolation. Teaching happens with the door open, as it were. Every teacher has a close colleague whom he needs to let know how his or her lessons are going. Unsuccessful lessons that go on for months behind closed doors are bad for the children, for colleagues and for the school.

New class teachers inform the parents in good time – at parents’ evenings or by other routes of communication – about their learning goals and the appropriate steps they have taken towards achieving them. This means that teachers present clear learning targets at the beginning of the year and let the parents know at the end of the year what has been achieved and how.

If lessons do not work out, parents are informed at an early stage about what is being done to remedy the situation. It is okay if one cannot do certain things (yet), but it is not okay that nothing is being done about it.

The new professional ethics for teachers includes that they share their experiences and ask for help.

In the past, teachers used to be perfect and anything that was not perfect was kept quiet. We know today that nobody can do everything well from the start and that it is professional to ask for help. It is an ability that belongs to the consciousness soul.

b) Collegueship and objectivity

The new generation of teachers must be trained in a way that makes ‘loners’ a thing of the past. Collegial friendships can be practised from the first year of teacher training. Two future colleagues could, for instance, carry out a project together, or do the same thing with two different classes during their teacher training. One learns to work together, to respect and learn from and take the edge off one another.

Teacher trainings must awaken the students’ interest in people and in the world on matters that lie outside education. This is a wonderful exercise in warding off any kind of (vain) narrow-mindedness. Trainee teachers must show that they are able to develop an interest in the world.

Another quality that is needed is what I would call ‘new objectivity’. Have we ever looked at the *balance between the main task (learning) and the sidelines*? That it is the most wonderful experience for pupils when they feel they have learned something? And only when that happens does everything else make sense. This must be considered in the preparation of each lesson as well as in term and year plans.

And we must not forget that teachers are also nourished when they see that their pupils have learned something.

(To be clear: I am not referring to drumming knowledge into pupils. Learning – the main task of our schools – must be in keeping with the art of education. For much too long it has almost been seen as a by-product of school life).

If we strive for this balance we will experience how our school life becomes more regular, healthier and, above all, less hectic. Waldorf education is *not* defined by the extras. In education we call this the right appreciation of reality.

c) Responsibility and personality

What is responsibility? That one feels responsible for something one isn't responsible for.

We see a colleague and ask how he is. We go towards him and ask. A colleague does something impressive in a school festival; we go and tell her how impressed we are. We notice that the rubbish bins in the playground haven't been emptied for a while. It is somebody else's job but we do something about it.

This capacity for responsibility is only possible if future teachers learn to experience themselves as *parts of a whole*. This has to do with working on one's personality and people must ask themselves if that is what they are prepared to do (particularly if they are mature students for whom teaching is a new career).

Everything arbitrary must be avoided.

We call it feeling part of the whole school organism. This is what forms the school's identity.

d) Performance and flexibility

As part of this new kind of collegueship achievements need to be made visible. What has been done? What has been achieved? This happens in the teachers' meetings, but there also has to be ongoing mutual peer evaluation.

'Ongoing' means that evaluation is an integral part of everyday school life. The independence of Waldorf schools relies on teachers carrying out this kind of evaluation within the college of teachers. There are procedures today that allow such quality assurance inside the school without any additional bureaucracy.

It ought to be the rule in Waldorf schools that teachers give evidence of further training and development, not by acquiring certificates but by displaying competence.

And there must be a transparent procedure for these tasks as well as ways of communicating them to parents.

Parents pay a lot of money to have their children in a Steiner school. They need to be able to see that quality education is the backbone of their school. Everything else is of secondary importance.

A new kind of transparency, objectivity, collegueship and the practice and application of responsibility in conjunction with the teacher's active character development can lead to a new teacher's image that meets the needs of our time. This active character forming means also that during training (be it in training centres or at the schools) colleagues learn how they have to develop their personality as they move up with their pupils from class to class. The Class 1 teacher speaks to the children in a particular way. How does he or she speak to

them once they are in Class 3, 5, 7 or 8? We need habits as teachers but we also need flexibility.

I am convinced that this was the real problem for colleagues who were unable to take their classes all the way to Class 8; much more so than problems with teaching content.

Schools need to find new strength and maybe this is where a beginning can be made.

Some of what has been presented here is being applied in schools. The Waldorf movement needs to wake up, leave old images behind and have the courage to take new steps together with the teacher trainings.

Christof Wiechert
(translated from the German by Margot M. Saar)

In the Beginning is the Word

‘Our contemplations have shown what un-thought-of significance creative speech and the creative word possess in the life of the growing human being. It forms the small child’s organs, it gives form and life to the forces of the soul and sets free the spirit of the adolescent. Without words human beings would be unable to reach their humanity, so no growth and no development would be possible. *‘In the beginning was the word.’* We are becoming newly acquainted with the profound truth of this ancient Biblical statement in face of the catastrophic deterioration of language and speech in our time ...’¹

‘... It is possible for adults to be of service to the creative, formative universal word. But they will always have to admit to themselves that, although they are the ones who speak the word and without whom the word would remain ineffective, nonetheless the power of the word does not emanate from them. It is they who have been made human by the word and it is they who pass on its power to children so that they, too, may become true human beings.’

In this leaflet, both the decline of language, and the wonder of speaking and its significance to being human has been described.

But what exactly does language, does speech demand of us?

How can we as teachers and educators of children today, have a furthering and forming enough influence, to be able to counter-balance this decline of speech?

In New Zealand we are offering the following courses:

- A four-week ‘Orientation Course’, and intensive course especially suited for teachers and others working with the word and language.
- A one-year ‘Certificate Course’ in two four-week blocks, two long weekends and ongoing private tuition close to home. The first block is the ‘Orientation Course’.
- A two year ‘Diploma Course’, following on from the ‘Certificate Course’ (course duration: three years)
- A one-year ‘Graduation Course’, following on from ‘Certificate’ and Diploma 1 and 2’ (course duration: four years)

The block-format, with long weekends and private tuition is maintained throughout the whole training. Each course is a unit in itself and can be done separately over time.

See also the web site: www.anthroposophy.org. under ‘events’.

Astrid Anderson

¹ Leaflet No. 4, ‘Childhood Falls Silent’ by Rainer Patzlaff, Stuttgart, Germany. Originally published 14 years ago in the Series: ‘Recht auf Kindheit ein Menschenrecht’ (The Right for Childhood a Human Right), in the International Association of Waldorf Kindergartens inc., Stuttgart.

Agenda

Forthcoming Pedagogical Section Conferences and Events at the Goetheanum, 2013

October 18 – 20, 2013 Pedagogical Conference (in German)

October 27 – 30, 2013 Conference for Extra Lesson Teacher
(in German)