



Pedagogical Section  
at the Goetheanum

# Journal



Corona – Space and Time – Stops along the Way – WTC

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## The Journal of the Pedagogical Section

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## Foreword

*Dorothee Prange*

*Translated by Steffi Cook*

*Dear Colleagues,*

An extraordinary year is nearing its end. The year was marked by a virus. In all probability we will have to live with the ripples of this virus for some time to come. It was a year that confronted us with many challenges: we had to stop making any long-term plans, we were not able to prepare lessons as usual nor meet children and parents in the usual way, we could not travel as we used to, nor go on outings, invite friends and relatives to visit us, neither could we visit them, and much more. Each continent was affected in a different way, and different measures, which had to be adhered to, were taken. An unusual scenario in modern life!

How do we deal with all this? What impacts are we experiencing on our social lives? All of us are continuing to feel some level of uncertainty, fear and stress each day.

We owe it to the pupils in our schools worldwide to extract the optimum potential from Waldorf pedagogy, thus offering them the best we can possibly manage.

At this very moment, the Section got the message that in the Indian school ranking for 2020/2021, Sloka School and Prerana Waldorf School are among the top 10 of day schools in Hyderabad.

Many schools rely on income from parents to continue their work. In her article, *Nana Göbel* describes how the Corona pandemic has affected the schools – in general as well

as financially. A great deal of aid has already been offered, and even more is possible!

In his contribution, our colleague *Albrecht Schad* addresses the virus itself, looking at its origin and development, our reaction to it and our efforts to comprehend it, if that is indeed possible, as well as the consequences and potential tasks arising from its existence.

The Pedagogical Section has decided not to send out personal Christmas cards this year and will instead donate the cost for these to the *Freunde der Erziehungskunst* to help them support the schools needing funds to survive. We will donate CHF 1,000 and maybe even twice that if possible!

Pedagogical questions arise wherever lessons are able to take place in one form or another, and this of course also applies to online teaching. What do I teach when and in what way? *Christof Wiechert* analyses these fundamental questions of place and time in his article. As usual, the joy of teaching and our insights into pedagogy provide wonderful experiences regardless of whether or not masks are used and whether we meet online or face to face.

*Claus-Peter Röh* has written a second article for the preparation of the World Teachers' Conference (WTC).

We would like once again to inform you of future changes in the Pedagogical Section. Current section leaders will remain in their positions until the summer of 2021. Claus-Peter

Röh will then move to the General Anthroposophical Section, Florian Osswald will hand over his work as section leader from the beginning of 2022. We are delighted that *Philipp Reubke* has been doing section leader work (50%) since 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 and is busy learning the ropes. In one article, Philipp Reubke describes how certain events in his life have influenced and marked his pedagogical activities and are continuing to do so. Constanza Kaliks will take up the task of section

leader in 2022 and is preparing for this challenge using her expertise as an upper school teacher.

Thank you all very much for your work with children and young people in Waldorf pedagogical institutions right around the globe. We wish you from all our hearts a blessed Christmas and all the very best for 2021!

*Your Pedagogical Section*

## The Situation of Waldorf Schools under Pandemic Conditions

*Nana Goebel*

Since February 2020, the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has led to political decisions worldwide that have significantly changed the lives and work of children, young people, teachers and parents. The question here is not whether these decisions were justified, but how the worldwide Waldorf movement dealt with it and how it mastered the most diverse challenges.

When the World School Movement gathered in Berlin on 19 September 2019 – by the way, many thousands took part in this great festival on the screen – everyone had a different view of the challenges of the second century of Waldorf Education. What we had in common, however, was the conviction that a further development of Waldorf Education would simply not happen by itself, but would need two essential efforts: an independent creative connection to the foundations of education, especially the anthroposophical understanding of the human being, and a new will to work together. The latter task seems even more urgent in view of the phenomena currently occurring in colleges and school communities.

The Corona pandemic hit many societies unprepared. While the health care system in Korea or Taiwan is comparatively well established, the health care system in many countries in Africa or Latin America leaves much to be desired. In countries with a rather weak health system, the measures were much stricter. Africa, for example, has come quite well so far through the crisis with regard to Sars-CoV-2, but with the effect that all schools remained completely closed for

many months. A large number of private schools in Kenya are already bankrupt. Schools and kindergartens in Peru or Argentina, for instance, had to close already in February 2020 and will have to remain closed until February 2021. The more autocratic governments are, the easier it is to enforce such measures. While in some countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Norway and Finland, state subsidies continued to be paid and in some countries, such as Chile, corona aid was even given to independent school boards, independent school boards in other countries, such as Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, South Africa, Kenya or Tanzania, got into dire straits. Kindergartens and schools in the latter countries are financed exclusively by parental contributions and donations. There are solid, large schools everywhere, with some reserves, which can survive such a crisis year reasonably well. Mostly it is the older schools with their own property, a large circle of friends and many former parents and pupils, schools with a good reputation and long waiting lists, which survive the crisis and the closures by their own efforts.

What it looks like for the children, who stay at home for so long and, if possible, attend classes digitally is another question. In countries with extensive digital equipment, as in many Asian and European countries, teaching has been moved to the artificial world. Which groups of children suffer more and which less has already been studied. However, in countries where the majority do not have computers and children are only reached via their parents' mobile phones and

school assignments are sent to parents via WhatsApp, it is difficult to track how students deal with their tasks, what they are really doing and how they are doing. The Rudolf Steiner School in Nairobi-Mbagathi was able to reach about 260 of its 320 students via WhatsApp, but the other sixty could not be found during school closures. Most of them are children who live in remote villages and stay in the school's hostel during school hours. If things went well, they had to work for their parents, if things went badly, quite different things happened. Nobody from the school could find out.

The situation is very different from the older, established schools for young parent initiatives that work in rented rooms and are completely occupied with building the schools on all levels. They have a lot of enthusiasm but no money. And of course all those schools are also badly off who want to make Waldorf Education accessible to children whose parents do not have money and who cannot pay school fees or do not care at all about the education of their children. And bad off are all the schools in tourist areas, whether in Turkey or Mexico, Argentina or Guatemala. These areas are often much more open to educational alternatives and much more liberal than the rest of the country, especially because of the tourists. People from the big cities often move to these areas because they have found work with the development of the tourism industry. And it is precisely in such places that Waldorf Schools are quickly emerging, for example along the coasts of Yucatan in Mexico. Several schools have been built there over the past ten years and are now all confronted with the fact that

their parents' jobs have disappeared and with them the parents' ability to pay.

So there are several levels at which a lot of work needs to be done. Within the framework of the Friends of Waldorf Education, we have been particularly committed to the economic survival of those kindergartens and schools that have been tremendously affected by the closures and are struggling to survive. Thanks to the many donors of the Friends of Waldorf Education, thanks to a number of foundations – in particular the Mahle Foundation, the Evidenz Foundation, the IONA Stichting and the Waldorf Foundation – and thanks to the Federation of Independent Waldorf Schools in Germany, we have already been able to provide financial support to 64 kindergartens and schools to the tune of almost one million euros. In many places this is not only a financial but also a moral support, because the experience of a functioning and solidary worldwide Waldorf community generates and promotes forces. Thus the impulse of Waldorf 100 has become very practical and very effective.

Regardless of this, the will to work together must become much, much stronger if the Waldorf movement is to be able to overcome the divisions and party formations that are currently emerging, the divisions that are surfacing as a result of differing views, and to cultivate the unifying spirit of the Waldorf school. In this respect the Waldorf movement is at a crossroads sooner than expected and must decide whether in future it should only function for particular interests or for a common, globally humane impulse to educate towards freedom.



## On the Corona Virus

*Albrecht Schad*

*Translated from the German by Margot M. Saar*

At the end of December 2019 a new respiratory disease, COVID-19, emerged in the Chinese metropolis of Wuhan. However, there are indications now that the virus may have appeared in France in December (November), even before China reported the first Wuhan cases to the WHO.

A medical study conducted by the Albert Schweizer Hospital retrospectively re-evaluated 2,450 pulmonary CT scans of patients in the hospital and found that the first cases had appeared as early as 17 November. One case of Covid-19 reportedly goes back to 27 December (four days before China): a Frenchman who lives north of Paris tested positive retrospectively when frozen samples were subjected to PCR testing.

Starting from Wuhan the virus, which has been designated Sars-CoV-2, spread throughout January, February and March, arriving in Thailand on 13 January 2020 and in the USA on 23 January 2020. On 2 February 2020 the first death occurred in the Philippines and on 15 February 2020 in France. On 23 February 2020 the first fatalities were reported in Italy. Italy became the centre of the pandemic in Europe, followed by the UK. Now, in the late autumn of 2020, case numbers are going up again, as was to be expected. Whatever the official figures in the different countries, the actual number of infections will be much higher because most people who get infected are not aware of this, but are nonetheless infectious themselves. This is the reason why it has so far not been possible to stop the spreading of the virus.

Whether or not this is desirable at all is still to be discussed.

Where does the virus come from? We don't really know. Viruses are ubiquitous. Most pathogenic viruses affecting humans come from the animal kingdom and have been transmitted to humans, such as the Ebola virus. The Sars viruses, to which the coronavirus belongs, are not unknown. They have always been involved in severe cases of pneumonia in humans. We have lived with the Sars viruses for a long time. This may be one of the reasons why many people seem to have developed a certain immunity to the current coronavirus. We know from the flu virus that it is able to mutate rapidly. We can assume the same for the Sars viruses. It seems therefore plausible that the coronavirus in China was transmitted from animals to humans. At this point in time we do not know whether this is a new mutation. Maybe it is, maybe it isn't.

How dangerous is Covid-19, the disease caused by this virus? The virus seems to affect different age groups differently. There also seem to be geographical differences, a fact that needs investigating. Why did so many people die in Lombardy but not in other parts of Italy? How is it in the UK, France or the USA? This is not the place to look at this question in more depth. And how will we get out of all this again? Vaccination is one way. A vaccine may soon be available. How effective vaccination is and how well it is tolerated remains to be seen. Other than that: allow for immunisation to happen

(keep kindergartens, schools and universities open), continue with 'social distancing' and protect the most vulnerable. The virus is in the world and we will learn to live with it. It is possible that its mortality is not all that different from that of common flu but that is not possible to establish because of the ambiguous data. At this moment in time (November 2020) it is impossible to tell because we don't know enough yet. More research is needed. In a few months' time we will know more. Until then we are well advised to respect the reality!

The Coronavirus (Sars-CoV-2) has changed our daily lives profoundly. What are viruses? They consist of a protein shell with some genetic material inside. This means that they have a programme that controls division and therefore replication. They are, however, unable to create their own metabolic processes. Viruses can't really do anything themselves. They can't reproduce, they have no metabolism and they certainly can't travel. They are, in other words, not at all autonomous. They need a host in order to exist. There is ongoing discussion among biologists whether viruses can be said to 'live' in the narrower sense of the word. The German virologist and cancer researcher Professor Karin Mölling associates the origin of life on earth with viruses and sees them therefore as living creatures (K. Mölling, *Viruses: More Friends Than Foes*, 2017)

'Life' always means the forming of fragile balances. Very complex ecological balance systems have emerged in the course of evolution. From the moment humans began to upset these equilibria, viruses that evolved into human pathogens were released. There is evidence of this as far back as the Neolithic Age, when humans began to settle and interfere with nature's balance. As a result of this, the measles and tuberculosis viruses are thought to have been transferred

from cattle, in which they are entirely harmless (apathogenic), to humans; the causative agent of whooping cough is presumed to originate in pigs and the flu virus in ducks (*Atlas of Globalization*).

There are more recent examples, too. As far as we can tell, AIDS originated in the Congo. When the Belgian colonial rulers penetrated the jungle, destroying it to build railways and cities, the lentiviruses that originate in Macaque monkeys adapted to humans and evolved into the HI-virus.

The earth's largest mangrove forests grow in the coastal areas of India and Bangladesh. In the nineteenth century the British East India Company cut down huge swathes of it for growing rice. As a result more and more people came into contact with the microorganisms residing in the brackish water there. This caused the first of seven major cholera epidemics.

More than 50 per cent of animals raised for fattening on factory farms in the USA are infected with EHEC (Enterohemorrhagic *Escherichia coli*, a mutation of our ordinary intestinal *E. coli* which causes bloody diarrhea and kidney failure). EHEC is harmful to humans but not animals. It enters the human food cycle in the drinking water, causing more than 90,000 EHEC infections in the USA every year (Venegas-Vargas, 2016).

In 1918, US soldiers brought the Spanish flu from America to Europe. The pandemic soon conquered forces on the frontlines and was spread across the continent by soldiers on home leave, by the injured and by prisoners of war. Millions died of it. In 1933, the flu virus was identified as its cause. In 2005, scientists were able to reconstruct the Spanish flu virus using the subtype A/H1N1. It is thought that the virus originated in pigs and

was transmitted to humans in the American mid-West.

It has just emerged that millions of minks in Danish fur farms are being culled. Why? The coronavirus has jumped over from humans to these animals. The minks themselves are little affected by this: they may develop symptoms of a light cold but recover within a week. The problem is, that the minks are kept in highly stressful conditions on factory farms. The virus has already mutated in the animals and has jumped back to humans. While it is not known yet what these mutations mean for us, it is probably right to be wary of them.

Visitors to China or other parts of Asia may be familiar with the 'wet markets' where live animals are sold, often kept in narrow cages piled up high, where they suffer a maximum of stress. They are slaughtered there and then for the customers. As a result of the stress these animals are under, viruses that can then be exchanged between animals and humans are released. The primary source for the current coronavirus epidemic is believed to be the Wuhan Huanan Wholesale Fish and Seafood Market, which now has been closed down. The causative agents of SARS, bird flu and other new epidemics originate in similarly disgraceful conditions or on factory farms (R. Wallace, 2016).

In all the cases described above, the animals in question used to live in symbiosis with the viruses without getting ill (apathogenic). It is only when humans destroy nature and expose animals to extreme stress, that viruses transfer to humans and become pathogenic. It is therefore true to say that epidemics don't originate in wild animals but in the conditions created by humans. This means we are part of a pathological system that rebounds on itself.

Thomas Hardmuth writes, "The best protection against epidemics is to have respect for living creatures and to protect nature. The pathological activity of microorganisms begins when we disregard the sphere of integrity in human beings and animals. Disease breaks out when humans and animals are under continuous stress, in crisis-hit regions where there is overcrowding, fear, poverty, alienation from nature, in factory farms and when huge numbers of people are held under inhumane conditions" (Thomas Hardmuth, 2020).

So, human cells carry the coronavirus. We humans, our lifestyle, our economic processes and political structures are the real cause of the spreading of this virus.

This brief excursion into viral biology was necessary because the coronavirus' biological functioning explains its cultural and social role. Humans, who carry viruses, are transforming the earth. At first we did this slowly and almost unnoticeably. But by now the extent of this transformation has become dangerous for the earth. We refer to the present era of transformation and human impact on the planet as the **Anthropocene**. The Coronavirus now attacks this human-made world: "The virus' rapid spread and transmission throw light on and test the Anthropocene world" (B. Scherer, *The Pandemic is not an Alien Invasion*, 2020).

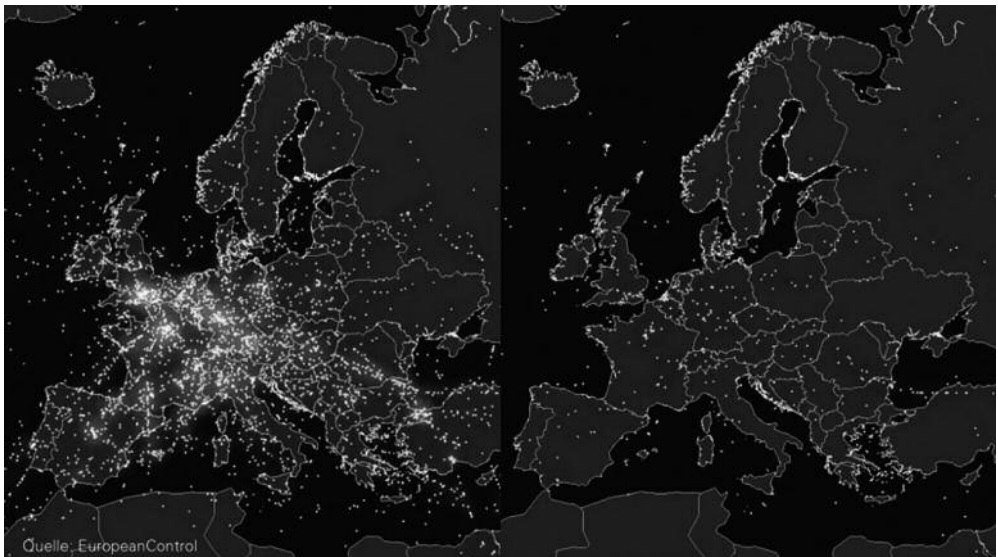
What characterizes the Anthropocene? The technologies and infrastructures we have created and that now massively impact life on earth. We are not only transforming the planet, but we upset the balance of its life processes. We cause climate change, that is, the rise of the earth's average temperature. The oceans are turning acidic, as is apparent from the widespread dying of coral reefs. We use disconcerting quantities of water. And we

bring incredible amounts of plastics into the world – that we encounter everywhere now in the form of microplastics. We take in microplastics daily with our food. We buy meat in supermarkets but we don't see – and often don't want to see – the unbearable conditions in which the animals are kept. By consuming excessive and unhealthy amounts of meat, we not only accept this horrendous cruelty to animals, we also contribute considerably to increasing CO<sub>2</sub> production and to the creation of huge amounts of excrement.

The problem here is that we don't notice all this right away. It all seems to be invisible. We notice rain and temperature, but not climate change, which develops over a longer period of time. We notice the plastic bottles that have been thrown away, but not the microplastics and what they do to us (allergies?). We don't take notice of the suffering of animals.

We like travelling but don't realize what that entails; what does it mean that every day

more than 200,000 airplanes transport millions of passengers around the globe? We have got used to jetting to New York for the weekend. If you look at costs, you'll find that in European countries domestic flights are often cheaper than taking the train. Public transport to the airport in Brussels is sometimes more expensive than the flight from Brussels to Berlin. Mobility and trade have increased exponentially. And it is precisely this mobility that provides a vehicle for the virus. Not one country seems to be left on earth, where the virus has not made an appearance by now. There is no place left to go to in order to avoid it. And there is no place left where we could escape the destruction and pollution that we have caused – apart from space. We are changing the entire world. As the "actors we are also part of what is happening. We are permanently creating the world that we are then exposed to. Thanks to the mobility of its host the coronavirus is spreading around the planet. ... We must learn to see our actions and our thinking as an intrinsic part of these processes.



*Air traffic over Europe before and during Corona*

The idea that we can dominate the world with our knowledge turns out to be an illusion." (Bernd Scherer, 2020).

We have lost touch with the world and with life on earth; and we have lost touch with our fellow human beings.

Over the last decades, we have largely invested our exponentially growing knowledge in technologies and economic profitability. And this is linked to the logic of acceleration. We have hardly used our knowledge for the benefit of society, humanity and the earth and have instead created structures that prevent our own future.

"The world of the Anthropocene rests upon gigantic technological infrastructures that encompass the entire planet: dams, refineries, airports, road and rail networks, oil pipelines, supply chains between different production sites and digital infrastructures with global cable networks and server systems. These infrastructures are increasingly digitally connected and are forming a sphere of their own: the **technosphere**. The technosphere is very capital-intensive and leads to the accumulation of economic power" (Bernd Scherer, 2020).

The effects of these gigantic structures with their global digital networks have now been uncovered by the Corona crisis.

1. Creating these infrastructures that have made the acceleration of the Anthropocene world possible, has devoured vast funds – funds taken away from causes that are not considered productive. These funds are missing elsewhere, above all in **health care**. Hospitals are now required to generate profit. The consequences of Corona are most strikingly apparent in countries that are far advanced in this

process, such as the US and the UK. The funds are also missing in **schools** and in the social sphere in general, including nursing.

2. Agriculture only makes profit when it exploits the world of life. Life itself is oriented towards sustainability. Modern agricultural methods go against all of life's laws. Animals are tortured and exploited, the earth exploited and polluted.
3. As the agents of the globalized world we cross frontiers and continents for economic reasons or as tourists. But this is how we spread the virus. In the south, people are exposed to the virus without benefiting from globalization. They are unable to stop the virus from spreading. Millions of itinerant labourers in India are losing their work, their livelihoods, because their movement is restricted. They will not just become poorer, they will actually starve. It is the same in Africa – but we take no notice.

"The infrastructures of the technosphere have become so complex that they can no longer be controlled. They curtail our freedom and spoil our future" (Bernd Scherer, 2020). Countries like China or South Korea seem to have demonstrated that combating the virus requires total supervision and control of all social processes. Suddenly, total control seems acceptable.

The promise of Western modernity has long been guaranteed autonomy, civil rights and liberties. But we have failed to notice that this has come at the cost of those who don't live in Western states. Over the past decades this promise of freedom has been transformed into the right to unlimited consumption: to be able to buy everything and to travel anywhere at any time. We are now

fighting everything to do with life at every level. And out of this sphere of life something has emerged now, the Corona virus, that radically confronts us with the consequences of our actions.

Viruses are not only part of our living environment. They are connected with the beginning of life. They are everywhere, playing a crucial part in evolutionary processes. Around half of our genetic make-up is of viral origin. Viral genetic material is found without exception in the genome of every living creature. Viruses are part of the microbial world that, as the surrounding lifeworld, enables the life of humanity and of the earth.

The implications of the war against microbes, against the virus, illustrate that we cannot win it. All of a sudden it seems acceptable to curtail basic civil rights and to reduce the economy to an extent that threatens the existence of working people. All of a sudden it seems acceptable to exert overall control if it comes with the promise to make the virus go away.

No, the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic gives us the chance, one could even say it forces us to re-think how we want to shape our future:

- We have to build a new relationship with the earth because if we don't we will destroy it further.
- We have to learn to work with nature again.
- What technologies can we develop so that our agriculture is in harmony with

nature and its processes; what machines so that we no longer need to use toxic substances?

- We must understand again that plants and animals are our brothers and sisters. That we are one with the earth and we share the same sphere of life. We owe ourselves to the earth (cf. A. Schad, 2019).
- We cannot win the battle against the virus. We must learn to work in harmony with life. We must develop immunity. Life has learned long since how to deal with microbes.
- At the same time we need to protect those for whom the virus constitutes a serious threat.
- We have to establish a new relationship with one another.
- As part of this endeavour we should do all we can to make sure that the medical services we so urgently rely on are not expected to generate revenue. The thought of caring for others needs to take the place of profit-oriented thinking.
- Current satellite images of the earth show what our future could look like: an earth with a clear atmosphere. An atmosphere with clean air. The earth seems to be catching its breath – for now, a short reprieve.

Together, we need to answer the question as to what kind of a world we want.

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## Space and Time in Education

*Christof Wiechert*

*Translated from the German by Margot M. Saar*

### Introduction

All living creatures partake in the great polarity between space and time. This fact is so natural for us that we give it little thought, although our consciousness leaves space and time every night and slips back in as we wake up.

What does this polarity mean in education? We can approach an answer to this question if we consider that the essence of education is best described by referring to the 'sculptural-musical' understanding of human nature; everything sculptural is, after all, related to space and everything musical relies on time as its medium.

The advent of image-based media in teaching makes the subject even more relevant.

Lastly, an attempt will be made to explore and understand the physiological effects of education.

### Overview

A trial conducted in the U.S. in the 1990s to assess the proportional usage of visual and verbal teaching found that around 90 per cent of learning was visual and less than 10 per cent auditory.

In an upper school biology lesson, for instance, the teacher explains the tsetse's reproductive process and then asks the stu-

dents to watch a video on the topic on their laptops that shows the process in detail. Chemistry, physics and biology labs are expected to become obsolete in schools because all the processes and experiments relevant to these subjects can now be watched on YouTube, Apps and video. All major educational publishers are increasingly substituting images and imagery for words. The input of teachers is reduced to the provision of methods aimed to help the students if necessary. A big Swedish furniture company has long since suspended verbal instructions for assembling its products and instead uses smart pictograms that show buyers how to put their newly acquired bookshelf together. Thanks to internationally recognized pictograms in stations and airports we (luckily) no longer depend on language skills to find the right exit, gate, platform or entrance.

In Waldorf Education the role of the teacher has never been that of a provider of materials. Waldorf teachers speak, teach and present content verbally. This may have led to the much critiqued chalk-and-talk method, but it is the teacher who speaks and instructs. (Steiner was always critical of frontal instruction and expected teachers to develop the content in dialogue with the students.<sup>1</sup>)

The counterpoise to this activity, the main lesson book – this ingenious invention intro-

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1 Cf. *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, GA 300, Volumes 1 and 2. Anthroposophic Press, Hudson, NY, 1998, transl. R. Lathe, N. Parsons Whittaker. The term 'chalk-and-talk' had not yet been coined in Steiner's time. In the faculty meeting of 27 March 1924, he criticized teachers who were in the habit of lecturing from their 'Olympic throne'.



duced by Rudolf Steiner and the first Waldorf teachers – has not been sufficiently considered and understood.<sup>2</sup> When main lesson books are used in the right way, the students transform the auditory experiences absorbed in the lessons into images. The very act of writing brings the words 'down into the limbs', while drawings, diagrams, lists and tables complete this visualizing and spatializing of content that unfolded in time during the lesson.

The teacher's awareness in using both those worlds and keeping them in balance in the lessons will contribute crucially to a healthy and health-promoting education – as long as he or she understands what happens in this process.

### Occurrences and their effects

The following question is both old and always new: How do auditory and visual experiences affect us and how do they affect the children? A wealth of literature is available on this question and teachers should make use of it. We will start by looking at the processes involved phenomenologically. The visual process has an initial direction, proceeding from the eye into the world, that is to say, from the inside out. The basic direction of the hearing process is from the outside in.

(Anthroposophically speaking, the process is differentiated further in reverse direction,<sup>3</sup>

but we will focus for now on the fact that we see from the inside out and we hear from the outside in.)

When we are awake, our astral body is inside, when we are asleep it is outside our body. When we perceive things in the outside world, our astral body is pulled out through the sense of vision, seeking to connect with them.<sup>4</sup>

Excessive and overly intense perception makes us tired: we fall asleep and then the astral body is 'outside'.<sup>5</sup>

Some people drop off after fifteen minutes of watching telly. We've all had the experience when visiting a museum of looking intently at pictures. Then, after about three quarters of an hour, as we enter yet another room, we start looking surreptitiously for somewhere to sit down. Museums make us tired.

Equally, we know the experience of walking home from a concert, feeling refreshed and energized: our astral body is wholly present in us and we feel enriched and awake.

This effect of pictorial and musical *activities* requires further investigation. We know that music-making does not tend to make us tired.<sup>6</sup> How is it with drawing and painting, or modelling and sculpting?

2 Cf. footnote 1, vol. 2, conference 54 of 25 May 1923.

3 Rudolf Steiner, *Balance in Teaching*, GA 302a, Anthroposophic Press, Great Barrington, 2007, Lecture 3, 22 September 1920, transl. R. Push, R. Querido. Cf. Rudolf Steiner, *Foundations of Human Experience*, GA 293, Anthroposophic Press, Great Barrington, 1996, Lecture 8, 29 August 1919, transl. R. Lathe, N. Parsons Whittaker.

4 Rudolf Steiner, *Man and the World of Stars: The Spiritual Communion of Mankind*, GA 219, Anthroposophic Press, Hudson, NY, 1963, Lecture 7 ('Inner Processes in the Human Organism. Sense-Perception, Breathing, Sleeping, Waking, Memory'), transl. D.S. Osmond.

5 Ibid.

6 The conductor Herbert von Karajan commissioned studies to investigate if and how music-making makes people tired. Even after playing Wagner operas for four hours at a time, hardly any signs of tiring were detected Cf. Flyer of the Herbert von Karajan Foundation, Cologne/Berlin.

We need to ask when the right time is for singing with classes. In the morning? Is it best to play recorders in the morning or should we do it later? What is the right moment for drawing and for book work? Do we have to tell the stories at the end of main lesson or could it also be done in the afternoon?

According to Steiner's ideas of a healthy timetable, learning should happen first thing in the morning, practising later in the morning and all artistic activities should take place in the afternoon.<sup>7</sup>

It goes without saying that teachers must alternate speaking and pictorial activity in a meaningful way. The different dispositions of the students depending on the time of day – morning, midday or afternoon – must be considered. This fact has not only been corroborated by chronobiology,<sup>8</sup> it was also described by Rudolf Steiner on the basis of his spiritual-scientific research.<sup>9</sup>

The lesson structure should accommodate this: lessons should move in rhythms. We need to ask what the right rhythm is for the morning or for the afternoon. When we study this in greater depth, we will soon find that the often-cited dividing of main lessons into a rhythmic, a working and a story-telling part has no basis in child development. It is therefore not surprising that Rudolf Steiner never mentions such a division.

### The macrocosmic significance of image and sound

If we see ourselves as citizens of two worlds – which used to be natural in the not too distant past – we must ask about the effect that images and sounds, or space and time, have on us.

A more one-dimensional view, on the other hand, that defines human beings solely by their physical aspects and present existence, will hardly inspire a deeper interest in teaching and educating. In that view, education is more like programming, a concept that has been suggested as long ago as last century.<sup>10</sup>

If this citizenship in two worlds – above and below, or inner and outer – is a reality for us, we must ask ourselves: What else is there outside of me in the wider universe (not only on earth) or within me?

Asking this question is in itself significant because this kind of thinking has become rather unusual in the present time.

Let us start with a simple experience. We are walking out in nature on a warm summer's day, enjoying a view of the mountains from our hilly path, along which forests and meadows alternate. Suddenly we are struck by the incredible beauty of nature or creation. This feeling is evoked by the senses, the sense of vision above all. And we can't help asking, 'Where does this come from? Is there something 'behind' all this?

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7 According to Rudolf Steiner a timetable that was not healthy, would be "destructive". He did not mince his words when he spoke of this, referring to timetables as the "arch-enemy of anything to do with genuine education". Cf. Rudolf Steiner, *A Social Basis for Education*, GA 192, Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications 1994, Lecture of 1 June 1919.

8 Alfred Meier-Koll, *Chronobiologie*, Verlag C.H. Beck 1995. Performance levels are generally highest between 8 and 11 a.m.; for sports they are highest in the afternoon.

9 Rudolf Steiner, *Cosmosophy* Vol. 1, GA 207, Anthroposophic Press, Hudson, NY, 1985, Lecture 3 of 30 September 1919, transl. A. Wulsin.

10 The behaviourist view that learning is conditioning continues to inform the educational sciences. Cf. B.F. Skinner's work.

Or another experience: you are absorbed in a book that touches you deeply. You are even somewhat shaken by the thoughts presented. It is as if you were conducting a silent inner dialogue with yourself. You 'hear' this conversation and you know that it must bring you very close to yourself. What is this being 'in' oneself? What kind of threshold does one meet?

These are two ways – one leading outwards to the boundaries of the world, the other inwards to the boundaries of our self. Steiner calls the first way centripetal and says that it is 'cold' and 'old'.

When we are sleeping we are in the part of the spiritual world that is adjacent to the sensory world, the world of the nature spirits.

Rudolf Steiner calls the second way centrifugal and 'warm'. He says that the metabolism resides there and that it is the 'young' way.<sup>11</sup> The world this refers to lies 'below' memory. We enter it when we break through the memory threshold.

The world that lies behind the tapestry of our sense perceptions is the oldest one. It goes back to Saturn and used to be 'warm' but it is 'cold' now.

The centripetal and centrifugal forces find their balance in the human centre, in the rhythmic organization.

This is not only a continuation of the descriptions in *An Outline of Esoteric Science*,<sup>12</sup> it is also a riddle. The riddle can be solved

when we learn to understand the human 'I', which does not reside in the head, in the world that is old and cold, but in the metabolism, through the will – in the world that is warm and young.

We shall call these two ways the way of the eyes, of seeing, and the way of the ears, of hearing. In Lecture 8 of *Foundations of Human Experience* Rudolf Steiner presents an overview of the twelve senses. He continues this thread in the four lectures on *Balance in Teaching*, one of which is devoted entirely to the eye and the ear. We learn that these two senses are not only interconnected, but that our whole being is involved in both these sensory experiences. This lecture holds many unsolved riddles (certainly for the author of this article), but we cannot consider these here.

In all the great myths, stories unfold over time. The creation story speaks of six days. The expulsion from paradise and the Flood are occurrences, not images. The occurrences in Greek mythology unfold in time, the Battle of the Titans, for instance. The Titan Cronus emerges from this battle as the victor and, as a result, time is born from timeless eternity.

With the Chinese and Indian myths we remember the events and create the corresponding images ourselves.

The conception of time, not of space, was crucial. Conceiving of space, visualizing space, means creating space. It is typical of our time. We live in a time of visual and spatial concepts. *Our entire soul is focused on*

11 Rudolf Steiner, *Spiritual Science as a Foundation of Social Forms*, GA 199, Anthroposophic Press, Hudson, NY, 1986, Lectures 11 and 12, of 29 August and 3 September 1920, transl. M. St. Goar, A. Howard.

12 Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Esoteric Science*, GA 13, Anthroposophic Press, Great Barrington, MA, 1997, tr. C.E. Creeger.

*the spatial dimension as a characteristic of the present time.*<sup>13</sup>

The American study I mentioned earlier examined the ratio between auditory and visual learning and found that more than ninety per cent of tuition was based on visual images.<sup>14</sup>

Twenty years have passed since then. Image-based media are everywhere now. Major educational publishers focus more and more on image-based materials. Clips, videos and other short films are used to present complex processes in biology, physics and chemistry lessons. Most upper school classrooms have a projector suspended from the ceiling. There is a discernible trend towards, in the long term, learning and teaching without language and without teachers.

Diagnostic methods in medical science rely increasingly on imaging technologies such as ultrasound and other scans. Society today uses more and more pictograms for communication – it seems almost Egyptian ....

Now, in the midst of a pandemic, we can at least communicate with one another via screens, and smartphones are increasingly used as image-carriers.

Let us look, in contrast to this, at an essential aspect of Waldorf Education: because Waldorf teachers continue to present content and to speak, there is also more listening. This art of education, if it is rightly understood, creates a balance between images and sound.<sup>15</sup> As a

side effect of this the teaching profession has required a new profile (and dignity).

Generating the right balance between pictorial and auditory learning experiences is one of the key tasks of education. The musical-pictorial (or sculptural-musical) knowledge of human nature includes the creating of this balance as part of its method, a method that has the health-giving effects one hopes for in education.

Rudolf Steiner once said that, ever since the fifteenth century, with the beginning of a new age, souls have come down to earth carrying strong, image-free forces (probably in order to be able to stand up to the spiritual world and gain freedom). But he also goes on to say that the souls coming down to earth currently bear strong inner pictures. *These have to be enlivened during life, for there will be a rebellion otherwise.*<sup>16</sup>

### Citizens of two worlds

If we do take the statement that we are citizens of two worlds seriously, a further question will rise up in our soul. Our world has many beings, some of whom we meet and are able to know. This suggests that the other world must also be 'populated' with beings; and this is indeed the case, even if we only know them indirectly, through the effect they have. Here too, spiritual science can assist us in important ways in finding access.

We use the term 'hierarchies' for the beings on the other side. They, too, seek ways of working together with human beings.

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13 Rudolf Steiner, GA 219, cf. Footnote 4, Lecture 6, Dornach, 17 December 1922.

14 Po Bronson, Ashley Merryman, *Nurture Shock. New Thinking about Children*, Hachette, New York, 2009.

15 It should be obvious that this does not mean frontal teaching. Actual frontal teaching is a variation of what is referred to here and should no longer be practised.

16 Rudolf Steiner, cf. Footnote 11, Lecture 16, Berlin, 11 September 1920. For a further deepening of this topic cf. the both powerful and moving presentations in *The Work of the Angel in Our Astral Body*.

Rudolf Steiner describes this as follows: "All this is based on a deeply significant cosmic truth. The conception of space is something entirely human. The Gods with whom we live together in the most important period of life between death and a new birth have a distinct conception of time, but they do not have the conception of space that human beings acquire on earth. This conception of space is specifically human."<sup>17</sup>

Then he continues, "Since the fifteenth century, western civilization has fully embraced this conception of space. When it is used in the right way, however, when, by spiritualizing the pure knowledge of space, bridges are built again to the divine world, then this knowledge of space acquired by human beings – above all in the period of time of their greatest emancipation from the divine world (from the fifteenth century onwards, that is) – will become relevant for the divine-spiritual world, too. And human beings will conquer a new portion of the world for the Gods, if they do this in the right way, if they do not limit themselves to space but reintroduce the spirit to their conception of space."<sup>18</sup>

What is meant by this spiritualizing of spatial knowledge? Certainly everything connected to Goetheanism, everything that is phenomenological, the kind of science that has been frowned upon since the 1980s.

What does it mean for education?

When teachers present the content of lessons in words, something happens inside the students: they absorb what they hear and transform it into inner pictures: time becomes space (inwardly). Teachers present facts in history or biology, the students take

them in and form mental pictures. These mental pictures have a different value from facts that have only been presented in pictures because in this case the forming of mental pictures does not take place.

We experience this strikingly with films or videos, where the pictures are provided and where no inner representing occurs because it is not activated.

Now the opposite situation: a teacher has painted with her Class 3 children. When they have finished and the paintings are dry, they all look at the pictures together. No mental images rise up in their souls now; they are evaluating what they see outside, without images. Picture contemplations in upper school art history lessons have a similar effect: the inner picture becomes temporal.

Both situations have in common that inner activity is stimulated. This inner activity is not spatial, it is purely temporal.

This can mean that teachers look at space and time with a new awareness; that they use images and words with new enthusiasm, relating them to each other. Then, something as 'inessential' as the main lesson book can gain a new meaning as a counterweight to the spoken word; in its simplicity it may even acquire another dimension, when it resonates with the spoken word in the right rhythm. Everything in us is rhythm.

In eurythmy both streams come together: a new art is born.

### **Cosmic education**

The passage cited above also describes how we give something to the Gods when we

<sup>17</sup> Rudolf Steiner, GA 219, cf. Footnote 4, Lecture 6 of 17 December 1922.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

spiritualize our conception or knowledge of space: *"Human beings can conquer a new portion of the world for the gods"*.

A powerful thought! We humans are able to contribute to the Gods' knowledge of the earthly world. Humanity can become comprehensible to the Gods. In a next step this can lead to working and resonating together. But we have entered the age of the consciousness soul and that means that freedom has become possible. We can now live freedom in the proper sense of the word. This is why an oppositional power has entered the world, a power that has its own direction of development which it hopes and strives to pursue. Rudolf Steiner says of this power, "As he goes along, he would like to capture space from time."<sup>19</sup> From time to

space! The electronic age started with the telephone and the radio, then moved on from the tele-phone to tele-vision. Now, in the twenty-first century, we can say that none of the social media applications used today – Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, Snapchat – existed in the year 2000. The first touchscreen phone is only just sixteen years old. All these images that are cast on our society! They constitute educational tasks of a cosmic dimension. Will we be able to remain citizens of two worlds?

This will be important, not only for the earth, but for the cosmos, too because *'The Gods meet through the human being'*.<sup>20</sup>

As teachers we should, now and again, contemplate such dimensions.

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19 Rudolf Steiner, *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*, GA 26, 'The World Thoughts in the Working of Michael and in the Working of Ahriman', Rudolf Steiner Press, Forest Row, 2007, transl. G. Adams, M. Adams.

20 Rudolf Steiner, GA 199, cf. Footnote 11.

## The Human Being as a Swing of the Pendulum – Part II

### Or the Art of Awakening the Intellect out of the Whole Human Being

Claus-Peter Röh

Translated from the German by Christian von Arnim

The Swiss paediatrician and author Remo Largo died in November. His commitment to a deeper understanding of the child's individuality could be experienced impressively during the World Teachers' Conference at the Goetheanum in 2012. In his heartfelt desire to acknowledge and obtain greater insight into the uniqueness of each child, he was able to provide orientation for many parents and educators.

With such an approach as his starting point, he has in the last few years taken a clear stand on the effects of standardisation trends in recent curricula. With a view to health and zest-for-life at kindergarten- and school-age, he warns against imposing on children developmentally inappropriate external demands based on adult thinking. Thus it says in an interview in the *Baseler Zeitung* newspaper: "Tutoring centres for pre-school children are popping up like mushrooms."<sup>1</sup> He describes reactions of mental withdrawal and "over-adaptation" as the effect on the young person's individuality of such standardised and inappropriate requirements.

In the interview, in response to the question what good teaching and a good school should look like, Remo Largo talks about a teaching methodology which always enables

the young person to have a real encounter with the given content and to take independent learning steps: "Learning only works via concrete and autonomous experiences." As an example, he describes an experience from Class 3 which made a deep impression on him. The teacher had enabled the pupils to form a number range inwardly by bringing along meter sticks which she let them lay end to end until the thousandth stick had been laid down: "Since then I have known exactly how long a kilometre is. If pupils only juggle figures on a sheet of paper, no inner mental image of a range of numbers can arise."

The path described here of embedding a conceptual picture through physical activity and sensory experience has also been investigated in recent years by embodied cognition research. Thus Christian Rittelmeyer writes about the connection between cognitive learning and physical processes: "The concept of embodied cognition refers to the scientific discovery that all of our cognitive processes – even very abstract thoughts – have their roots in elementary physical proceedings, including outside the brain."<sup>2</sup>

The following contribution intends to build on this description. The focus will be on the question as to the way that the rhythmical

- 1 Remo Largo, "Kinder werden zu überangepassten Wesen", interview in the *Baseler Zeitung*, 24 October 2018.
- 2 Christian Rittelmeyer, "Vom Sinn der Sinne für die menschliche Bildung", in Johannes Weinzirl, Peter Lutzker, Peter Heusser (eds.), *Bedeutung und Gefährdung der Sinne im digitalen Zeitalter*, Witten Colloquium Volume 5, 2017.

middle of the human being enables the metamorphosis from physical action to inner understanding, but also also the other way round from conscious thought to action.

### Who drills whom? – Mental images and concepts have a biography

In the first part of these reflections,<sup>3</sup> two polar shaping forces faced one another: the roundness of the head formed out of cosmic forces of the past and the radiating shape of the limbs brought about by earth forces. Since the expression of both poles extends into the physical form, Rudolf Steiner says *"The human being is at the mercy of these two tendencies – either of being made a pillar, a radius, by the Earth, or of receiving a spherical form from the Cosmos. Circle and radius actually underlie the forming of a human being."*<sup>4</sup>

Whereas the head shape forms the conclusion of a development, the limbs are the still early beginning of a future metamorphosis.

In this sense Rudolf Steiner says of the limbs in *Study of Man* that *"these organs are the most human of all"*<sup>5</sup>.

This is the reason why the common thread of a paradigm change runs through all the lectures in *Study of Man* and *Practical Advice for Teachers*: a fundamental approach of the methodology used in Waldorf schools is to take brain work and the thinking beyond the mere acquisition of abstract knowledge to ways of learning which involve, as far as possible, the whole human being. If it becomes possible to form ideas and thoughts out of a

process of will activity and feeling, a different quality of thinking develops. In the example of Remo Largo above, the mental picture and concept of a "kilometre" is enriched in this way and becomes more vivid and inwardly connected. Experience shows that such methodological processes of awakening and understanding have to be rediscovered at each developmental stage of the children.

To begin with, a look at the lower school: in wonder, the pupils of a Class 1 in Frankfurt follow as their teacher begins by telling a gripping story and in a next step then creates a picture in front of and with the children. The painting of colours and forms develops out of the inner picture from listening until out of the combination of two shapes, two vowels, the "new" sound "EI" separates out. Some children recognise the EI, others awaken out of their work in wonder and quietly form the shape of the sound. Steiner gives the reason in the eleventh lecture of *Study of Man*: *"When, for instance, we make an 'F' on the board for the children, and let them look at it and follow its form with their hands, we are then working through perception directly upon the intellect. That is the wrong way round. The right way is, as far as possible, to awaken the intellect through the will. We can only do this by passing over to intellectual education by way of artistic education. Thus, even in these early years ... we must teach them reading and writing in an artistic way."*<sup>6</sup> Anyone who experiences the way in which children in a Class 1 discover qualities and connections between picture, movement, colour, form and sound sees the opposite of "drilling": the newly formed, discovered and understood

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3 See *Journal of the Pedagogical Section* No. 69, Midsummer 2020, p. 8.

4 Rudolf Steiner, *The Bridge between Universal Spirituality and the Physical Constitution of Man*, Lecture 1, 11 November 1920, (in German: GA 202, p. 20).

5 Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man*, Lecture 10, 1 September 1919, (GA 293).

6 See note 5, Lecture 11, 2 September 1919.



sound has the process of its creation inscribed in it out of the individual activity of the child. In this sense each concept carries its own biography within itself.

The same applies to the term "artistic". The conventional understanding of the word has to be extended here. The artistic part in the practice of such an educational method or such an "art of education" describes an extended activity which encompasses the whole lesson situation:

- It transforms distinct, individual activities into an artistic whole.
- It enhances the attitude of all those involved to include emotional activity and the participation of the will.
- Through individual active involvement it leads to a directed and focused attentiveness.
- It combines intensive sensory perception with simultaneous self-awareness.
- It transforms the outer experience of time into an individually situational experience of time.

Research today is beginning to describe the effects of what happens when the activities in a lesson are organised artistically as a significant deepening of the intellectual part. To quote Carl Peter Buschkühle: *"Art replaces abstraction acceleration and animation with the deepening, deceleration and increased independence of study. Abstraction can be described as what staged media images pursue in relation to reality. (...) Far from merely being compensation for 'hard' subject areas,*

*art is an integration of knowledge and creation."*<sup>7</sup>

### The Transformation of the Swing of the Pendulum in the Middle School

The character of such an "integration of knowledge and creation" or the swing of the pendulum between will activity and awakening understanding, which was described for Class 1, changes fundamentally seven years later. What remains, for example, in physics lessons in the middle school is the goal to awaken independent thoughts from out of active sensory experience. The stages *experience – description – cognition* or, as it says in the ninth lecture of *Study of Man*, *active conclusion – descriptive judgement – conceptual comprehension* are now shaped by the awakening power of judgement of the pupils to a significantly greater extent. Thus the last colloquium on middle school methodology intensively worked on the connection between the so-called "triad" and the rhythm of the day-night-day experience:

- How does the immersion in the experiment on the first morning of the lesson take place?
  - How can marvelling thoughtful attentiveness take shape?
  - How can what has been experienced be successfully called up and resonate inwardly once more – without sight of the equipment – without falling prey to premature interpretation?
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- How can we discern next morning what the pupils (and we ourselves) bring along from out of the night in pictures and questions?

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7 Carl Peter Buschkühle, "Bildet das Ästhetische? Überlegungen zu einer ästhetischen und künstlerischen Bildung". *Pädagogische Rundschau* 5 (112), 2015, p. 467-486.

- How do we formulate our questions such that they neither provoke mere repetition nor precipitate interpretations?
- In any such consideration, are there also impulses from the pupils to change the experiment in a direction to follow up a question?
- How can a law ultimately be understood in such a way that the biography of what has been experienced still echoes in the concepts that have been acquired?

From current experience in middle and upper school classes, the question arose in the colloquium as to the way that the current media lifestyle habits of the pupils influence what is lived through in the steps described. Further questions followed: How can the relationship between contemporary phenomena, the shape of the curriculum and methodological developments be looked at and worked on in a new way? Does it become possible, for example, to develop a different emphasis and different methodological approaches depending on the individual situation of the class? A second question looked at the whole of the school biography: How can abilities of thoughtful attentiveness be established in the lower school as the basis for the steps in the thinking which follow at a later stage?

The work on the methodological questions of the middle school clearly revealed the reciprocal relationship between limb activity and the thinking pole of the head. It seems that the goal of awakening the thinking pole out of the whole human being can only be achieved when, in the example of physics lessons, both poles enter into a true swing of the pendulum – otherwise there is the risk of one-sidedness: if, say, the grasp of abstract concepts begins to dominate over the exper-

iences of the pupils and what they have done themselves, there is a risk that their own will forces will be "drilled". But the over-emphasis of the will and sensory activity can lead to a pronounced one-sidedness: if, for example, experiment follows experiment, experience follows experience without making the effort to pause, describe and intellectually process, the impressions piling up on one another can lead to an inner merry-go-round of images and chaos.

### **The Riddle of the Rhythmical Middle between Intellect and Activity**

The consideration of these imbalances and the description that we, as human beings, are basically "stuck, locked in" between these two poles of the head and limbs which form the body, leads to the question as to the middle of the human being. A more precise observation of the examples quoted from the lower and middle school reveals the middle, rhythmical system of the human being as being existentially involved in what happens in the lesson and in learning: precisely where the transitions occur in Class 1 – from being welcomed to listening, from the inner picture to becoming active, from painting back to attentive observation – the language, tone of voice, gestures and posture of the teacher play a mediating role. The dynamic of these alternating happenings could also be described from the perspective of the children as a kind of oscillating circular movement or as a supporting breathing.

In physics in Class 7, these breaths have extended to greater arcs and longer rhythms: there they lead from involvement in the experience of the experiment to describing the qualities that resonate afterwards and to the next lesson steps. On the following morning, this breathing in the processing can then transition to intellectual questioning and observation. In other words, a constant con-

veyance upwards of earthly will forces and conveyance downwards of cosmic thinking forces encounter one another in the middle of the learning and teaching human being. Such constant interaction is described by Steiner as being supported by the breathing movement of the heart and circulatory system: *"What is this trunk- or torso-man? He is essentially the rhythmic man who causes the cosmic to swing down continually towards the earthly and the earthly to swing up towards the cosmic. We have circling round in us a continuous stream from the limb-system and this finds its way to the head through the breathing, while a stream from the head makes its way through the breathing to the limb system. So that there is always this wave movement, this surging to and from between limb-system and head."*<sup>8</sup>

This description is remarkable also because it refers to something that is "merely" intermediary and enabling as a kind of strength and independence of the rhythmical human being which keeps causing the cosmic to "swing down" and the earthly to "swing up". It does both "through the breathing" so that the interaction between the head and limb poles becomes possible for human beings. If we go one step further in respecting the riddle of the rhythmical human being this way, we can think of it – perhaps as a thought exercise – also as a big sense organ. The heart-lung human being in us is clearly always facing in two directions in its perception: on the one hand, facing the head, it can accompany each word and every thought with feeling – while at the same time, imbued with feeling, experiencing every movement and action.

Could we conceive of or experience this heart-lung human being as perceiving tendencies to become one-sided in the one or other direction during the lesson? Then this human "sense organ" would, to begin with, probably notice a great wealth of vitality, creativity and sense of self in the activity of the limbs. But if this creative activity gets out of hand, the need can arise in the perception of the whole human being to change back to the other pole, to reflection and cognition.

In the Ilkley lectures Rudolf Steiner describes this process of the swinging pendulum as developing the body and health of the child. The consequences of a premature, not child-appropriate emphasis on intellectual activity is described as a physical hardening. But at the other pole, too, a one-sided emphasis of the will can call for a counter-movement: *"...; 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."*<sup>9</sup>

In view of the current situation in which schools find themselves, the following question arises: Many teachers have in recent months increasingly used online teaching to

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8 See note 4, (in German, p. 22).

9 Rudolf Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education*, CW 307, Lecture 7, Ilkley, 11 August 1923. SteinerBooks, Hudson, N.Y., 2004 (in German: GA 307, Dornach, 1986, p. 125).

handle meetings and their responsibilities for their classes. Can we learn to ask the "educational observer" of our rhythmical middle what perceptions were possible in doing so? Did a need for a counter-movement, for example, arise *"of itself"*?

It becomes clear as we look in conclusion at the threefold human being that everywhere where a free swing of the pendulum and the re-establishment of a balance by the rhythmical human being is enabled, the quality of humanly educational freedom can blossom.

## Stages on the Journey of an Educator

Philipp Reubke

Translated from the German by John Weedon

For over twenty years I have worked as an educator in Waldorf kindergartens and I have had wonderful colleagues, from whom I have learnt everything. When the findings committee of the Education Section was looking for people to join the work of the Section's leadership, one of these was meant to be a woman and a Waldorf kindergarten teacher too. Indeed, a woman was found – Constanza Kaliks, upper school teacher with a doctorate in education – and I was asked to join as someone who had gathered experience, working in a Waldorf kindergarten. Apparently, my colleagues had such a positive influence that my inconvenient gender background was not felt to be so disturbing. I would like to thank them for this, for without them the findings committee would never have had the idea of asking me.

In order to describe some concerns that I bring with me, I would like to relate the life circumstances in which these concerns have found me.

**Verdun.** On the battlefield of the First World War there are a few trenches and skeletons, preserved as a museum. *"Egoism, indifference and xenophobia lead to destruction and war"*, Helmut von Kugelgen said to his Class 8 of the Umlandshöhe Waldorf School in 1974, who were listening to him under the French flag on the war cemetery. *"Become ambassadors for interest, empathy and brotherliness!"*

In whichever area we encounter what is different or foreign – opinions, culture, religion,

style, language, country, looks or habits – what can we do to learn from the encounter, uncomfortable, painful and shattering though it may be? To learn instead of fighting running battles, whether in the pedagogical meeting or with parents, neighbours or partners! All countries and regions are marked more and more by cultural variety.

**Berlin.** On the stage of the Dahlem Rudolf-Steiner School there stands a giant and he tells the participants of the international conference for Waldorf pupils and alumni in his unforgettable Norwegian accent, *"You have a wall here in Berlin. But a much more impenetrable wall lies in our hearts"*. Jürgen Smit's (1975-1991 Chairman of the Executive Council of the General Anthroposophical Society as well as leader of the Youth Section and Education Section) remark in 1978 was a shock with lasting effects.

The various attitudes that you frequently encountered as a West Berlin citizen with regard to the Wall, built in 1961, suddenly turned into vivid pictures: denial (people would act as if there were no wall and no East Berlin), passive acceptance (it was difficult to deny the wall's existence, but, as it was too demanding to cross the border, people would just go without encounters on the other side), speculation (people had not been there, but would think they knew that it was like this or that on the other side), postulating (it is hell there, absolutely evil, or there is a paradise of social justice there, etc.). Taking an interest in an unprejudiced way seldom happened (listening to the tales of others

who had been there, investing time and effort to get a visa for a short time oneself).

Harsh criticism of Waldorf education results from some of these attitudes towards the "wall": as Steiner declared that he was able to cross the threshold, Waldorf schools and kindergartens were accused by the "deniers of the wall" of their educational approach being solely based on "dangerous esotericism",<sup>1</sup> and by those who postulate dogmatically, it was said that Steiner's accounts of his journeys in the spirit world are made up. Even colleagues are sometimes inclined towards one of these two attitudes: Waldorf education is better without esotericism, or we take Steiner's descriptions to be dogmatic postulates. What can we do to ensure that unprejudiced interest grows and also the willingness to, first of all, just take note of what people, like Steiner, relate? How can we set an example and show that we are interested in these accounts "from the other side" out of freedom and love because we feel that we thereby can understand and help the child much better?

**Colmar (1).** As an inexperienced teacher of German as a foreign language and history in this Waldorf school, I had a conversation with colleagues from the kindergarten during a break in the college meeting, while they showed me their kindergarten rooms. What kind of boring work that must be, I was thinking, in which the same rituals are constantly repeated in contrast to all the interesting class discussions which you can have in history lessons (just then it was autumn 1989). Before I was able to take on a group in the kindergarten myself in 1996, I considered it important to gather arguments

for the opposite being just as right: what a pity that so many behavioural and learning habits are so firmly established with the 16-year olds. It is so interesting to find out how the sensory surroundings and available activities of the small child can be fashioned in such a way that the joy of discovery, perseverance, willingness to co-operate, gratitude and initiative just pour out. The most important foundations for later development are laid by the inconspicuous work of the kindergarten teacher, directed to the senses and the body: through rhythmical alternation of rest and movement, of independent and organised activity, light and dark, inside and outside, putting clothes on and taking them off, listening and free play, etc.

How can we show that finger games, bread baking, walks in the woods and free play with benches, chairs and cloths are not a romantic way of passing the time, but mathematics, literature, biology, chemistry and down-to-earth living thinking in a different form? In the nursery and in the kindergarten forms of thinking are practised that are gained for the body and the senses. If thinking is developed completely from the senses, from the body, then it will appear in a form in which it will not lead to the alienation from one's own body and to the destruction of nature.

However, how can it be shown, documented and plausibly presented for educationalists and politicians? A lot depends on this at a time, when formal learning is introduced from the age of three in a lot of countries, as if the child would only consist of an enormous head. The theme of the next World Teachers' Conference is connected to this

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1 z.B.: <https://www.welt.de/wissenschaft/plus219014110/Gefahrliche-Esoterik-Waldorfschulen-erziehen-zum-irrationalen-Denken.html>; or: André Sebastiani: *Anthroposophie, eine kurze Kritik* (Anthroposophy, a Short Criticism). Aschaffenburg 2019.

question: "Mind the gap! The Battle over Intelligence".<sup>2</sup>

**Colmar (2).** Among the staff of the *Ecole Mathias Grunewald* there was a mood of heartfelt warmth, the willingness to help one another and to learn from one another, authentic interest in anthroposophy, a high degree of spontaneity and a gift for improvisation in modest, sometimes adverse circumstances. As a result, the school that had been founded in the late 1970s grew to 12 classes in 1990. The fact that there was no financial support of any kind from the French state went hand in hand with the privilege of having genuine educational freedom which revealed a high potential of creativity in everyday school life. This showed through in the social and economic realms: hours were not counted, each year the teaching hours were settled afresh according to the individual's possibilities and abilities and, of course, these had no correlation with income. People would talk about pay with a committee, which was selected for this task by the staff and, which determined the level of pay according to the financial circumstances of the person concerned. Everything was discussed openly, people knew and trusted one another. This atmosphere did not last forever, of course. To the extent that routine increased and trust diminished, we thought more about social structures and forms, ways to ensure quality, etc. After endless debates we had two possible models, which we presented to Heinz Zimmermann (1988-2008 Chairman of the Council of the General Anthroposophical Society as well as Leader of the Youth Section and Education Section), who had come to visit the school. Which model is the better one in his opinion, we asked him. For me his answer is unforget-

table: Basically it does not matter which form we choose; all that's important is that we do not take years talking about social forms. Making a decision after a relatively short time, then trying out the form in life and then, after a certain period, adjusting it *through the experiences gained through life* – that was his recommendation.

**Dornach.** In 2004 the Committee of the International Association of Waldorf kindergartens had its spring meeting here. The most important point on the agenda was: The formally German association with its seat and administrative office in Stuttgart was to be transformed into a truly international association in which the Waldorf associations from all over the world have a voice and which works in a completely decentralised way. Administrative offices should simply be where co-workers are for a certain time. Freya Jaffke said at the time, the danger lying here is that without a central place the movement will lose its heart, losing the rhythmical pulsating between centre and periphery. Her objection seemed justified, but the new association (IASWECE= International Association for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education) was set up after a short time with a central office in Järna in a pretty decentralised way after all. In the many years in which I was working for this association I sensed the danger of which Freya Jaffke had spoken. However, through particular care in two areas my colleagues were able to compensate, firstly, through regular meetings that always took place at the same times of the year, and secondly, through the strong nurturing of mutual interest in one another. Gradually it turned into a concern of mine: creating a counterweight to the gradual loss of a central place

2 18<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> April 2022. For more on this: <https://www.goetheanum-paedagogik.ch/welt-lehrer-und-erzieher-tagung>

with a more conscious nurturing of rhythm and human interest.

**Paris.** After the election of Emmanuel Macron in 2017, Francoise Nyssen was appointed Education and Culture Minister. It was generally known at that time that she had some sympathy for Waldorf education. Yet, from this time on, no new era of official recognition of Waldorf schools was ushered in, but rather a time of criticism that got louder and louder. In the media, anthroposophy was ridiculed as a dogmatic, sectarian movement, in the schools stricter inspections have taken place more and more frequently, in 2019 school education from the age of three was introduced, and from September 2021 home schooling will be forbidden. In 2017, the Council of the "Fédération Pédagogie Steiner-Waldorf en France" met with co-workers of a PR company, from whom we wanted to take advice in this situation. *"Actually all well-known artists, committed intellectuals and alternative enterprises have opponents, so-called trolls,*

*when they operate on the internet and in social media", said one of their co-workers. The question is just what position you want to take inwardly towards your opponents. Do you only focus on the wish that critics and opponents should simply get lost and be silenced?"* He would advise against it, for this would actually never happen. *"But if you take the trolls in such a way that they are people who have sensed certain weak points in you and who through their hostility basically offer you an opportunity to reformulate what you really want, then you have a chance. Cultivate the inner attitude that opponents are basically partners and can sometimes actually become people who can call forth your creative potential, to make of yourself what you always wanted to become."*

At a time of growing opposition, spreading from West to East, not only to anthroposophical spiritual science, but to any form of spirituality or religion, I find this an important viewpoint.



## Agenda

*2021*

Conference about Cleaning in Schools

3 – 6 March, 2021  
(only in German)

*2022*

World Teachers' Conference

18 – 23 April, 2022  
(different languages)