Foreign Language Teaching in Steiner Waldorf Schools

Rudolf Steiner's concept of an integrated approach to language teaching

by

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FOREWORD

With the demise of behaviourism and the consequent waning of hopes for totally programmed learning, the methodological field is currently wide open. In no area is this more striking than that of foreign language teaching, where since the late 70's new methods and discoveries have created a climate of opinion and practice which is very congenial to Waldorf education. Broad developments in the psychology of language acquisition have focused on its intimate connection with sensory perception and bodily movement, its subjectively active nature, its reliance upon moods and emotions and other semi-conscious processes associated with oral communication. In all these areas Waldorf education has much to contribute. It has always followed an artistic approach to language as an integral part of all teaching, but especially in eurythmy, choral speaking and drama, and as a rule offers two foreign languages from the beginning of Primary schooling onward. The language teaching methods used are based upon certain ideas in philology, physiology and educational psychology promulgated by its founder, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). These ideas, although since 1919 they have been instrumental in creating a tradition of classroom practice, have so far not found systematic expression. Since its inception, the Waldorf movement has grown to some seven hundred schools world-wide. Social change and an acute shortage of properly trained teachers has led in some quarters to difficulties with language teaching which make taking a fresh look at the original principles an urgent necessity. Foreign language teaching – in contrast, say, to biology or mathematics – is an under-developed area in Waldorf methodology. The present book, in attempting to tackle this difficult terrain, in no way claims to offer the last word on this score. Basically it has three aims: firstly, to offer a collection of all Rudolf Steiner's utterances on the subject of modern language teaching; secondly, to give shape to the anthroposophically-based method latent within them; and thirdly, to relate – doubtless in a provisional and fragmentary manner – the insights thus gained to those of modern research in this area.

The book came about as the first part of the final report of a research group, made up mainly of teachers from Waldorf schools in

North-Rhine Westphalia. Starting in March 1987, this group met regularly over a period of three years. The second, more practically-oriented part, based on extensive observation of lessons, is in preparation.

May I offer my heartfelt thanks to all colleagues involved in the project. First and foremost to Chris Lowdon who, by travelling around, did most of the field-work on curriculum research and practice in schools. Chris was to have written the companion volume to this one, but unfortunately he was killed in a tragic accident before he could complete the work. His death is a great loss to the Waldorf School in Hannover Maschsee, and to the Waldorf movement. To him this book is affectionately dedicated. Further thanks go to: Silvia Albert-Jahn, Ulrike Garrido-Weidemann, Ursula Nicolai, Gabriele Ould-Ali, Anemone Steche, Dorothee von Winterfeldt, Abdesslam Bereksi, Geoff Hunter, Uwe Kirsch, Hans-Wolfgang Masukowitz, Mathias Riepe, Thomas Scherz, Norman Skillen, Robert Sym and Hartmut Werner. For useful advice, thanks also to Gertraud Flegler, Helga Lauten, Magda Maier, Brigitte Morgenstern, Erhard Dahl, Christoph Jaffke, Georg Kniebe, Ernst-Michael Kranich, Rudi Lissau, Peter Lutzker, René Ricard and Wolfgang Schad. Thanks for their generous funding of the research to the Rudolf Steiner-Fonds für wissenschaftliche Forschung (Nürnberg), the Anthroposophical Society of Germany, the Gemeinnützige Treuhandstelle (Bochum), and – last but not least – the Pädagogische Forschungsstelle beim Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen (Stuttgart). For her unstinting help with the preparation of the manuscript, an especially big thank-you to Monika Weiß, at the Institut für Waldorfpädagogik, Witten-Annen. Norman Skillen, my friend and colleague in Witten-Annen, has produced an entirely new book by re-shaping my complicated German prose into beautiful and readable English, adding valuable discoveries of his own. If this book should meet some questions and demands of teachers and parents in the English-speaking world it will largely be due to his devoted endeavours. I owe him a great deal.

Johannes Kiersch

1. New Methods of Language Teaching – their Historical Development and Relation to Current Practice in Waldorf Schools

Scarcely any subject area has been a more fertile field of dramatic controversies and reversals of opinion than that of modern languages. And almost all the methodological stances taken in its development are still under discussion, both inside and outside Waldorf schools. It might prove useful at the outset, therefore, to call to mind the most important of them, and set them in relation to current language classroom practice in Waldorf schools.

Right into the latter part of the 19th century, foreign language teaching had been very limited in scope and had been taught exclusively through the classical method. This had been taken directly from the teaching of Latin and Greek in grammar schools, and rested exclusively upon learning grammatical rules and applying them for the purposes of translation – a purely cognitive process. Due to its intellectual refinement this method is cherished even today in some educational circles. With growing economic prosperity, reliable knowledge of every-day language assumed increasing importance. Apologists for the direct method thus began calling for a more 'natural' approach, with emphasis firmly upon learning through speaking and listening to every-day language. A particularly strong plea was made for this in Germany by Wilhelm Viëtor (1882). The new approach was welcomed by many, but remained controversial. A little later, the cross-cultural method arose. Based upon the educational theory of Wilhelm von Humboldt, and following his idea that each language has a particular folk-spirit behind it, this method set great store by exposure to beautiful literature in pure, unadulterated form. Today it is regarded with considerable scepticism, and this for a number of reasons. Firstly, the many attempts to develop a sound philosophical theory of the 'folk-soul' have proved somewhat tenuous. Secondly, it was felt that there was a danger of the main object of the exercise, namely the

practice of language, being pushed into the background by over-emphasis on purely literary themes and problems. Thirdly, the subject of folk-psychology has become an extremely sensitive area due to the ideological depredations of National Socialism. It would be naive to think that the folk-psychology developed by Rudolf Steiner and his followers could be immune from these difficulties. Nevertheless, the attempt to convey, in an unprejudiced way, something of the nature of different folk-souls and the characteristics of other cultures remains an essential part of language teaching in Waldorf schools.

In the USA around the time of the Second World War the *audio-lingual method* developed, largely inspired by the behaviourist theory of learning (J.B. Watson, B.F. Skinner). Language laboratories and learning machines were confidently expected to make possible the foolproof automation of language-learning, and, accordingly, reforms introducing these methods were undertaken from around 1970 onwards. Even though the goal of these reforms has proved unattainable, behaviourist influence is still very much evident in the types of exercises found in many textbooks: "pattern drills in many variations; clause-transfer tables and substitution exercises; gap-filling exercises; dialogue reproduction; sentence construction from single elements".[1] Anyone who is tempted to use exercises of this sort in a Waldorf school should be aware of the attitude to language and human nature they encapsulate, and also of the limits of their effectiveness, which, according to the latest methodological research, are somewhat narrow. With teaching methods in Waldorf schools they have nothing in common.

In Secondary schools, soon after the Second World War, the *integrated method* began to gain ground. It sought to combine the cultural leanings of the traditional grammar school with what is best in the direct method and with audio-lingual technology. In practice, there was a pronounced tendency to fall back into the grammar-and-translation style, but a certain pluralism of method, making it easier to find the appropriate way of dealing with the needs of particular groups of pupils, did indeed come about.

Since the 1960s there has been a growing wave of productive research into language learning and teaching. This has produced a body of scientific findings which have had a growing influence upon what happens in the language classroom and in teacher training. This meant that when a new *communicative method* was conceived in the mid-1970s it could be discussed from the outset at a very high theoretical level and begin to make its presence felt in practice relatively rapidly. Since then language teaching has paid much more attention to the immediate needs and capabilities of the individual pupil, placing value upon motivation, personal development, active learning and creativity. The teacher is now 'more an assistant in the learning process than an instructor or media expert'.[2] Much thought and research is devoted to the social design of lessons (individual, partner and group work as opposed to the hitherto dominant frontal instruction). Also care is once again being taken to match the content of lessons to the interests and comprehension abilities of pupils. In contrast to the era of media batteries and learning machines, there is a remarkable overlap between the most recent developments in language teaching and the approach advocated by Rudolf Steiner and the Waldorf schools.

And what further developments can be expected in the coming years? The signs are that the rapid advances currently being made in experimental neuropsychology will concentrate professional attention more strongly than before on the interaction between conscious and unconscious learning processes – between cognitive processes and those taking place at the level of 'dream' or 'sleep'. A typical grammar lesson would epitomise the former, while the latter are involved more in the natural learning of a language, in spontaneous conversation or in similar situations. Recent research has already been able to throw much light upon the nature of this interaction in terms of the different functions of the two halves of the brain and their contribution to language acquisition or of the connection between unconscious body movements and the apprehension of language (see below 5.5). In tune with this, is the recent shift in educational thinking which has placed new emphasis upon 'hands-on' experience of all kinds. The

effects of the holistic 'human potentials' psychology of North America are also beginning to be felt, spawning a whole range of techniques, developed to a large extent out of intuition, which have gone in recent years under the heading of *alternative methods*.[3] Whether these manifestly effective methods stand up to detailed scientific criticism or not, the fact remains that they offer a rich store of stimulating ideas for the further development of communicative teaching. The Waldorf approach to foreign language teaching parts company with them where they show tendencies towards manipulation and infantilisation of the learner, since it recognises that the cognitive element is an essential part of the learning process. Where this appears, as for instance in its aesthetic approach to grammar teaching or in its manner of treating literature, Waldorf education has a chance of effecting a fruitful synthesis between the colourful experimental field of the alternative methods and the more tradition-bound approach of the State schools.

2. Rudolf Steiner's Ideas on Language

2.1 *Anthroposophy, Philosophy, Anthropology – Steiner's Epistemology*

If Steiner Waldorf schools are known for anything at all, it is as places with their own special teaching methods. Looking into the thinking behind these methods raises many important questions, but none perhaps more decisive than that of the relationship between science, as generally understood, and spiritual science in the anthroposophical sense employed by Rudolf Steiner. In Germany, where Waldorf schools are a prominent feature of the educational landscape there is much controversy on this point. Some authors deny anthroposophy any connection with scientific thinking in any shape or form. They maintain it is only a body of metaphysical speculation, private belief, or at best a popular pseudo-science. Others are prepared to admit Steiner into the stream of educational progress as a provocative provider of eccentric working hypotheses.[4] Then there are others who look around, see anthroposophy at work, and readily allow that such impressive, practical results must be based upon something equally reasonable, a 'science' like any other.

Two years before the founding of the first Waldorf school, Steiner stated his own position on this question in *Riddles of the Soul*, his main work on the philosophy of science. He postulates that anthroposophy in his sense can be thoroughly compatible with unprejudiced empirical research, to which – consciously veering away from the normal sense of the word – he applies the term 'anthropology'. Indeed he sees these two overlapping without contradiction wherever they have arrived, each in its own way, at a coherent 'philosophy of man'.

"The philosophy of man arising out of anthroposophy paints a picture of him with materials very different from those used

for the same purpose within the context of anthropology; but anyone looking at the two pictures will find that they correspond in the same way as the photographer's negative plate does with the processed photograph."[5]

Steiner himself felt that such a 'philosophy of man' was built into Goethe's phenomenology. In many points, both of content and method, his pedagogical anthropology leads back to Goethe.[6] Besides, with the fading of behaviourist and sociological influence in educational theory, humanistic anthropology in general is enjoying an unexpected renaissance, so that the many similarities of approach between Steiner and this well-nigh forgotten school of thought are now strikingly apparent, and he can take his place beside its classic figures, researchers such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Scheler, Helmuth Plessner, Ernst Cassiver and Adolf Portmann.

If, however, we apply Steiner's above-mentioned theory in an attempt to bring together these empirically based models with the results of Steiner's anthroposophical research, peculiar difficulties arise associated with the different *modes of expression* of the two approaches. Steiner never formulated his educational ideas in a systematic form. Much that is contained in records of lectures and conversations is fragmentary; much is somewhat inscrutable at first glance, requiring painstaking commentary. For a thoroughgoing understanding this already presents considerable difficulties. Still more of a stumbling block for the impartial reader is the way Steiner keeps indistinguishably mixing 'anthroposophical' and 'anthropological' references and truths. Direct statements of fact, in the manner of a scientific textbook, will be found cheek by jowl with formulations intended as analogies, illustrative examples or meditation motifs. On closer inspection it will be noticed that in all of Steiner's presentations of a more intimate nature (e.g. the Stuttgart lectures for teachers) much of their content can only be properly understood as 'symbol', in Goethe's sense of the word.

Goethe, upon whose covert philosophy Steiner's interpretations have thrown much light, was well aware that the major truths, which are the whole point of education, reveal themselves in fortuitous moments through immediate, concrete, sensory experience. He saw also that mastering and absorbing them requires reverence, patient practice, calmness and deep sensitivity, in other words an artistic approach and not simply a narrow capacity for logical intelligence. This led him to distinguish reductionist scientific rationality from realistic reason by characterising the former as a thinking in 'allegories' and the latter as a thinking in 'symbols'. Symbolic thinking in Goethe's sense represents a thoroughly holistic approach to knowledge such as is now held possible by many modern thinkers, and no longer exclusive to New Age philosophers. It demands a total re-orientation of our habits of thought, amounting to what may be – in the language of the philosophy of science – a paradigm shift. Only when we have become thoroughly familiar with it will we begin to understand Goethe, and with him Steiner, properly.

There is an added difficulty. Steiner distinguishes strictly between scientific *research* which, if it is to achieve anything, must end in a *concept*, and educational *practice*, which must find a way of bringing concepts to *life*. For the teachers of the first Waldorf school, therefore, he sought to formulate 'active' concepts, malleable, unfixed and embryonic in character, and intended for individual, context-related verification. Steiner expressed these in mantric language in the form of 'conceptual images', which need to be put to meditative use along anthroposophical lines to show their true mettle – as tools for meeting the challenge of the moment in unique, unrepeatable teaching situations. I have set out the full implications of this elsewhere.[7]

Taking all this into account it is clear that interpreting Steiner texts is a matter of some delicacy. In what follows particular care will be taken not to lose sight of the distinction made in *Riddles of the Soul* between 'anthroposophy' and 'anthropology', and their reconcilability in a 'philosophy of man'.

2.2 *Approaching the 'Reality' of Language*

Human language is generally regarded as essentially a means of communication. This is the outcome of the 18th century rationalist interpretation of Rousseau and his contemporaries, according to whom language is a human invention fixed by convention for the purpose of rational discourse. In its modern guise this interpretation appears as the linguistic idea of the word as 'signe arbitraire' (F. de Saussure), the conventional cypher that has nothing to do with the true nature of what it signifies.[8] On this basis language comes to be seen as nothing but an interchange of 'signals', a cybernetic system for the transfer of information.

This reductionist attitude has become the ruling influence in educational practice. In contrast to it stand the results of a much more broadly-based form of language research that follows on from the work of J.G.Herder and W. v. Humboldt, and is associated with such names as Ernst Cassirer, Benjamin Lee Whorf, Otto Friedrich Bollnow, Johannes Lohmann and Mario Wandruszka. What these investigators all have in common is the attempt to derive language from the totality of human nature. In doing so they lend particular weight to historical and psychological observations. Thus it emerges (already in the writings of Herder) that language precedes thought. Man spoke long before he could think in the modern sense of the word. In the course of human history, just as in that of an individual life, development of language and of world view are closely interwoven. Our particular way of relating to the world is built into our particular language. It therefore transpires that the history of language is at the same time a history of consciousness. Humanity has gone through a series of clearly distinguishable stages of consciousness, and in doing so its relationship to language has changed accordingly. This is rendered particularly clear in the step from 'mythic' to 'logical' thinking taken at the beginning of Greek antiquity, and crucial for the development of our modern consciousness. We must imagine consciousness totally bound into the primeval life of language, and from this original unity our modern faculty of rational thinking emancipated itself only relatively recently. According to Lohmann the real split came with Descartes and Kant, and was only truly complete with the logic of the early Wittgenstein. Steiner's ideas on the science of language are very much in harmony with these insights developed in the spirit of Herder and Humboldt. He takes them further, however, arriving at his own concept of the nature of language and an appropriate method of research, which he thought capable of finding its place in modern science. He accordingly set about advancing his approach before university audiences.

It is based upon the theory of knowledge (see above 2.1) and the account of the inner processes of thinking, feeling and willing presented in *Riddles of the Soul*, a key work of anthroposophical pedagogy. Nowadays the physiological basis of all psychological phenomena is assumed to be the human nervous system. Steiner shows in *Riddles of the Soul* that only every-day *thinking* processes have their physical basis in neural activity. The processes of *feeling* depend, according to him, on the body's *rhythmic* activity, as particularly clearly manifested in the act of breathing, while *willing* is grounded upon *metabolism*.[9] Furthermore, each of these three types of psychological activity becomes conscious in a different way. Only thinking achieves the full clarity of the waking state. *Feeling*, by contrast, only reaches the level of *dreaming*. *Willing* is experienced like *sleep*. It appears to the attentive inner eye "like a black surface within a coloured field".[10]

The importance of this discovery for language research and its practical application is inestimable, but only thorough investigation of it will reveal the full implications. Steiner drew attention to this in the spring of 1922 by saying that the actual object of language research, the 'life' of language, is not objectively given in the manner currently assumed by neurophysiologically-based linguistics. Approaching it rather requires the development of a special 'attitude of mind'[11] which in Steiner's description of it closely parallels that required by Goethe in his theory of metamorphosis. It involves developing the imagination as a tool for grasping the relationship between observed linguistic change and

the movements of human consciousness, both historical and actual. Formative and semantic changes in language could then be correlated to inner events, rather in the way that Goethean processes of metamorphosis in plants and animals can only be observed in imagination.

> "The only viable approach to language is that which sets out to attain direct experience of inner metamorphosis in the way language is organised; for only then is the way cleared to the actual process which is language itself."[12]

In the light of the discovery set out in *Riddles of the Soul*, then, the main point is that attention should not be restricted to those phenomena of speech and language that appear in full waking consciousness, in other words to an 'objective realm' of precise concepts capable of lexical and grammatical description. Rather should the primary focus be upon those inner processes by which these phenomena are first called forth, and which take place on the dreaming or sleeping levels of consciousness, in the feeling-life and volition of the individual or of mankind as a whole. Not a description based upon external observation of what *has become* is the prime concern, but the inner observation of linguistic phenomena in the process of *becoming*. For this reason Steiner called for the future development of a 'psychological' science of language. In so doing he was envisaging the extension of anthroposophical insights into the early stages of language development in the history of mankind gained through his spiritual research (cf. 2.3 below) in the direction of an empirical science of language that is 'anthropological' in the sense intended in *Riddles of the Soul*.

Examples of Steiner's 'psychological' approach to language are collected mainly in the record of two courses of seminars he gave for the teachers of the newly-founded Waldorf School in the autumn and winter of 1919/20, but may also be found scattered through later lectures, and in an important essay of July 1922 *Sprache und Sprachgeist*. Here Steiner puts forward the view that the ability to enter into direct experience of the meaning of sound-shapes in language is something that can be learned. Upon achieving this, it will be noticed that *consonants* arise out of inner gestures through which the human being, as it were, imitatively identifies himself with the world of external objects; while *vowels* are founded upon inner experience of sympathy and antipathy. "Man thus uses the consonantal element in the life of language to reproduce, in metamorphosed form, the external world, whereas with the vowels he expresses his own inner relationship to it."[13] Much illumination can also be gained by following the *transformations in meaning* a language has gone through in the course of time, or by tracing the semantic transformations wrought by changes in the functions of certain *prefixes and suffixes*. Wherever one's gaze is directed, the immediate impression will always be of phenomena that resist exact definition but feel intuitively significant. The ordinary observer might be perfectly content to leave it at that. In interpreting such material, however, the investigator of language will try to arrive at a clear concept; but the path he follows will still be 'psychological', involving a concrete description of the *feeling* behind the particular word formation.

The investigation and indeed the encouragement of *dialects*, as repeatedly mentioned by Steiner,[14] is particularly important in following this line of approach. Another useful tool in this connection is that of *language comparison*. This is essentially the study of words as focal points of manifold strands of experience. Words regarded as identical for the purposes of translation might in their respective languages be related to widely differing areas of experience. Studying such 'experiential complexes' is a way of penetrating the real heart of language. Especially interesting here is the comparison between two words for 'head': *Kopf* (Ger.) and *testa* (Ital.) – an example used by Steiner on several occasions. Thus it appears in his lecture course *On Language*:

> "...translating words purely lexicographically produces largely artificial results, because the main thing that must be pursued is the underlying spirit of the language, which will most likely intend a meaning that cannot easily be reproduced. We say

that the German word *Kopf* = *testa* in Romance languages. Why do we say *Kopf* in German? For the simple reason that the genius of the German language is sculptural, it wants to designate the head's roundness. For *Kopf* is related to *kugelig* (i.e. 'round'); and whether we are speaking of a *Kohlkopf* ('head' of cabbage) or a *Menschenkopf* (human head) the formative gesture in language is basically the same. *Kopf* designates *roundness*. *Testa* on the other hand is connected with the inner nature of man, as in *testieren, bezeugen, feststellen* (attest, testify, ascertain). Thus one must take good account of the fact that things will acquire their designations from a variety of perspectives....It is therefore necessary to get down to the element of feeling at work in the shaping of language."[15]

Here it becomes clear that feeling one's way into an 'experiential complex' in terms of Steiner's 'psycho-linguistics' or 'semantics'[16] need not always involve etymological relationships alone. The modern High German word *Kopf* is historically derived from the Old High German *chyph* = *Becher*, and is related to Engl. *cup*. In a very similar way the Fr. *tête* and Ital. *testa* stem from the Latin *testa* = *earthenware crockery, pot, urn. Bezeugen, Testieren* (from the Latin *testis* = *Zeuge*, Engl. *witness*) are related to this only by their sound, not by their having any direct common root. The relationship highlighted by Steiner is not an etymological one. Nor can it be interpreted as a meaning created by an imaginative slip of the vernacular tongue. Steiner's approach is to use imagination to tease out the actual movement of mind that went into the making of the word; in other words, to reconstruct the activity of the spirit of language. We have to shift ourselves – thus he describes the process in connection with our example in another lecture – "entirely into the mentality of an individual who is at home in a particular language; into the way a German, for instance, makes the German language most fully his own by shaping it like a sculptor."

"If you study the Italian language you find that its development is profoundly related to the expression of emotion through body-movement, as indeed are all the Romance languages. They do not operate by outward contemplation. The German language is one that has been formed by this activity; Italian has developed out of an inner dancing, an inner singing, out of communicating through the bodily organisation."[17]

Seeking thus to grasp the character of a foreign language as a whole awakens awareness of that subtle music which provides the key to penetrating a particular 'experiential complex'. In this case it is the relationship between *Testieren, Bezeugen* and the Latin *testis*, in preference to the etymologically more correct but less psychologically convincing *testa* = *pot*.

The object of all this is – as summarised by Steiner in 1922 – to arrive at an experience of "concrete meaning in all its primaeval, pictorial freshness".[18] This provides a path towards the inherent, self-consistent 'reality' of language.

A further component in Steiner's approach takes us into the field of comparative linguistics. Here attention is focused upon investigating the relationship between *word* and *thought* in various European languages.[19] From occasional remarks in the last years of his life, Steiner clearly hoped that the few points of comparison upon which he laid his (purely aphoristic) finger would be extended into a *psychology of languages*, and thus contribute to mutual understanding among the peoples speaking them. It was to this theme of international relations that Steiner so tirelessly dedicated himself in his lectures during the Great War. His utterances on the varying nature of a number of languages have been taken up and pursued with great insight in a large body of essays by Herbert Hahn.[20] A remarkably close affinity to Steiner's approach is found in the work of the famous Romance scholar Mario Wandruszka on *Haltung und Gebärde der Romanen (Romance attitudes)*, or on the spirit of the French language. To him also we are indebted for his critical clarification of the problems involved in any attempt to describe "the nature of a particular language".

2.3 *On the History of Language*

The previous section was based upon Steiner's 1922 lecture *Anthroposophy and the Science of Language* in which his main concern is to make the case for a 'psychological' approach to linguistic understanding. By his own criterion in *Riddles of the Soul* this is straight 'anthropology', in that the evidence presented is perfectly amenable to the methods of empirical verification usual in modern science. When we turn to Steiner's utterances on the history of language, however, we are faced predominantly with the results of 'anthroposophical' research, for which the paths of verification are quite different (cf. 2.1). Especially in lectures given from 1909 to 1911, the years immediately following the publication of *Occult Science*, Steiner's fundamental work on human history and cosmology, the results of such research appear in the form of 'imaginal concepts' *(Bildbegriffen)* . Only through sustained and painstaking anthroposophical study can these become knowledge in any normal sense of the word. Steiner describes how higher beings, 'angels' as they are called in Christian tradition,[21] worked in such a way upon the microcosmic nature of man, long before the individualised self, the 'I', took conscious hold of it, that unconscious prefigurations of speech arose. Only later did the self learn to use this pre-formed language to express its cognition, emotion and volition. According to Rudolf Steiner, then, language does not begin life as an immediate expression of the self, but rather as something impressed from outside through primeval man's spontaneous, reverential awe before the things of this world – in other words, as a gift of the "spirit of language" who, like an artist, shaped the bodily organisation of man in preparation for speech.

> "Before man became a conscious individual in the modern sense he was shaped within by a spiritual artist whose work of art was language."[22]

Having formed in this way, language then went through a series of characteristic, historically observable changes, Steiner's account of which can be found chiefly in his lecture cycle of 1919/20 *On Language* (*Geisteswissenschaftliche Sprachbetrachtungen*). Here, among other things, he considers the well-known consonant shifts in the Indo-European languages, i.e. d – t – z, b – p – pf, g – k – h (ch). These he regards as evidence of a turning inward of the original, totally sound-related participation in the life of language, a transformation which is part of a general process whereby the individualised human spirit is moving language ultimately towards the pure concept, towards 'non-verbal thinking'. A parallel process of abstraction can be seen in the three steps by which language went from the ancient participatory experience of sound-shapes directly related to the 'external' world, to the experience of syllables and words connected to mental pictures and sensations, and thence to experience of whole lexical contexts. In the course of this the world of speech sounds was severed from that of every-day ideas. "The sound-shape sank into the unconscious; the mental picture rose into consciousness". Steiner illustrates this using changes in gender and the disappearance of inflexions as examples. In connection with the initial transformatory step in our relation to language he points to certain changes in the use of pronouns.[23]

In describing this process of abstraction occurring in the development of Indo-European languages Steiner anticipates the work of J. Lohmann whose insights, both from an 'anthropological' and an 'anthroposophical' point of view, are of the greatest interest. According to Lohmann "the leading motif of 'Indo-Germanic' linguistic history is *the birth of the concept*".[24]

2.4 *On the Physiology of Language*

What has language to do with the human body? Steiner's account of the way 'super-sensible' beings – the 'spirit' or 'genius' of language – worked upon primeval man, imbuing what are now the

physical and etheric bodies with the formative capacity for language, long before the 'I' learned to speak for itself, is entirely a product of his spiritual research. However illuminating this may be, its factual content remains completely inaccessible to assessment by the normal methods of 'anthropological' empiricism. The case is quite different with the pioneering ideas put forward in Appendices 5 and 6 of *Riddles of the Soul* (1917). Here we find a fully-substantiated theoretical account of "the mutual dependencies between the physical and spiritual aspects of human nature" (the theory of threefold organisation), and the first published version of a "complete theory of the senses" (see above 2.1 and 2.2). Steiner felt that these would be open to empirical ('anthropological') verification in the normal sense of the word, and as such he intended them as a challenge to scientific debate. When we look into these, what do we find?

Let us begin with the senses. Since the early 17th century, the time of Descartes and Locke, the scientific attitude to the nature of human perception has been plagued by a certain prejudice, namely, that not all human senses are equally reliable. A misinterpretation of the way sensory delusions arise and certain ideas about the purely physical nature of matter, light and sound have combined to produce the assumption that only that which can be touched, weighed or traced as a movement can be described as real. All other sensory events were regarded as 'secondary', in other words as inferior, subjective phenomena present only in consciousness, over against which stood the real world of physical objectivity, cold, dark, colourless, tasteless, consisting of minute particles, oscillations and blind forces. In the 19th century this attitude was propped up by the theory of "specific sensory energies" (Johannes Müller, Helmholtz). Although this has long been philosophically old hat it continues to exert an influence upon popular science, and consequently upon our general world view. Already in *The Philosophy of Freedom* (1894) and in his book on *Goethe's World Conception* (1897) Steiner had taken sharp issue with this theory. Then in 1917, with his theory of the twelve senses, he succeeded in demonstrating that all the senses are *equally* involved in the construction of

experienced 'reality'. The doctrine of secondary qualities was dreadfully restrictive, seeking to deny objective validity to the activity of all senses except those of touch, balance and sense of movement. With his new approach Steiner puts the picture to rights. He shows that colours, sounds, sensations of warmth, smell and taste are all just as 'real' as impacts and pressures, the sensation of gravity or perceived changes of bodily position. It transpires that the old attitude reduced the world to the impressions of the 'lower' senses, that is the ones which give us information primarily about the state of our own body.

Steiner's account of the senses has not only managed to rectify an influential error through more exact insight into the nature of the 'lower' senses, it has also offered a fresh solution to a problem which has always defeated research. This is the question of how the perception of events in other people's inner lives occurs. Traditionally this type of perception has been interpreted as based upon an analogy. We know that we have an inner life, so we conclude from other people's external resemblance to us that they have an inner life of a similar nature to ours, and attempt to *infer* its details from their bodily expression. Steiner shows that beyond the sense of hearing, the 'highest' among the traditional senses, we have a further three 'higher' ones, with whose help we are able, as it were, to leave our own body and *identify ourselves* with the inner life of the other person through *direct perception*. These are the *sense of language*, the *sense of thought* and the *sense of selfhood*. [25]

In its detailed application this view of the senses, while bringing with it a number of unsolved problems, opens up an abundance of new perspectives. We will need to take a closer look at the physiology of the sense of language in a later chapter (see 5.5). Here my main concern is to demonstrate the full import of Steiner's comprehensive approach. Although space precludes substantiating them in detail, Steiner's discoveries, given their verifiability, may safely be regarded as epoch-making contributions to a thoroughgoing *theory of the senses* and to the *physiology of inter-personal understanding*, both of which have direct educational implications.

From what has already been said about the results of Steiner's early anthroposophical research on the steps leading up to the development of human language, it is readily apparent that the faculty of speech cannot be construed as primarily a product of the world of every-day thinking (see above 2.3). In ancient times the "spirit (or genius) of language" was involved like an artist in shaping the living processes of the physical, etheric, and astral bodies, without our conscious participation. And in using the developed language of today we still experience in a 'dreaming' or 'sleeping' way much of what was then 'written into' us in our primordial state. This is why the scientific investigation of *rhythmic processes* and bodily *movement* is essential for a proper understanding of the human facility for language. For the purposes of language teaching Steiner advises the teachers of the first Waldorf school to take the *intermediate* system of his psycho-physiology as their starting point, and concentrate on the rhythmic aspects of the feeling life. "Language will not have been understood...until it is seen...as anchored in human feeling."[26] In a later course on education he shows the relationship of various finger, arm and leg movements to certain elements of speech production and language comprehension.[27] We will return to this topic later.

3. The Aims of Language Teaching in Waldorf Schools

As we have seen, according to Steiner we do not get at the reali of language by breaking it down into its supposedly objecti lexical and grammatical components, but by following a *psychi logical* line of approach which tries to re-construct the inn transformations that have occurred in *the way language is organise* Both historically and ontogenetically these have their source in t *formation of speech sounds*. This process we can imagine as complex intermingling of the formative tendencies of vowels an consonants which is at the same time an interweaving of sympath and antipathy, all this being subject to further formative influenc emanating from activities of the limbs. Physiologically, therefo the shaping of language is primarily dependent upon the *rhythm* and *metabolic-visceral* systems within the human organism, an only secondarily, insofar as it is *re-shaped*, as a reflection waking consciousness, upon the *nervous* system. The more arch levels of language, then, are closely connected to the life *sensation* and *movement*.

Hence Steiner's repeated contention that access to the actu process of language development is only to be gained by 'artisti sensibility, and that by implication the teacher in his capacity language user should be an artist. "Only artists in the usage language will be able to grasp the creative-spiritual element in i inception."[28] Hence, also, Steiner's efforts towards renewing th art of creative speaking or 'speech formation', his original contr butions to the theory and practice of dramatic art, and his inventio of eurythmy as an art of 'visible speech'.

In the light of all this, what then are the aims of langua teaching in Waldorf schools? We saw in the introduction that education generally the outstanding aim of foreign language teach ing is a pragmatic one, namely, to give pupils a sufficient comman of the target language. It may also have an emancipatory

cognitive purpose, and at grammar school level may be used to widen literary and aesthetic appreciation. The overall objective of language teaching in a Waldorf school, on the other hand, is to give pupils *individual experience of the reality of language* in the 'psychological' sense intended by Steiner. This means that its essence is neither conceptual, nor literary, nor utilitarian, but *sensory*. It is not primarily in the business of sharpening cognitive capacity, or of passing on traditional educational values, or of training communication skills. If it is good it will be effective in these areas too, but its *raison d'être* is to deliver an untarnished, living experience of an essential area of sensory reality. On this basis, language teaching in a Waldorf school will ideally have certain definite features. Through being given concrete experience of the sounds that colour a particular language and the shapes its words take, pupils will learn to trust their own artistic sensibilities in relation to such sensations. They will learn to be quiet, to wait, to listen attentively, so that they may be able to take delight in the surprises, the dark ambiguities and strange turns of the foreign language. In the process they will become tolerant of such ambiguity and consequently capable of imaginative guesswork. All this in turn will serve to add to "the rich store of inner experience". At the same time they will be learning to identify with the perceptions and feelings of *others*. Thus, ideally speaking, Waldorf foreign language teaching is a schooling of empathy. It is 'education for peace' which 'raises consciousness' not through discussion or the spreading of information, but through improving the *faculty of perception*. "For even between people who speak different languages there is no barrier as long as each is in tune with the concrete elements in his own".[29]

This would seem to put language teaching in a very special category as regards its contribution to the spirit of international brotherhood, even beyond the place normally afforded to it in Waldorf education. In accentuating it like this Steiner takes a sceptical stance in relation to all recognised codes of education together with all definitions of learning objectives derived from the needs of society, or anywhere else, for that matter.

> "The question is not: what knowledge or skills does a person need to have in order to benefit the existing social order. But: what pre-disposition does this person have, and what is capable of development? Then it will be possible to channel new energies from the rising generation into the social order. Then the rising generation will not be fitted into the mould of the existing society, rather society will be what these newly recruited adults make of it."[30]

The view expressed here is radically incompatible with any large-scale attempts to standardise learning processes, whether in the name of science or of democratic idealism. And this gesture of rejection is not made in defence of such items on the curriculum as 'communicative competence', [defined as] ' the pupil's ability to formulate and defend his or her own interests and sentiments. What is at stake is something infinitely more precious and correspondingly vulnerable. Namely, a learning process, individual in character, which inculcates *the ability to trust and apply personal experience*. This is something that can grow out of sheer enjoyment and imaginative use of language through 'free play' in the sense used by Schiller in his *Aesthetic Letters*. Young adults equipped with this sort of "communicative competence", secure in their personal knowledge, will be much more likely to use it to understand and defend the interests and sentiments of *others*, and will need no higher sanction for their developed sensibilities.

An educational approach like that of the Waldorf school, which rests so firmly upon the teacher's practised eye for children and his or her artistic ability in relation to language may quite naturally be regarded with suspicion and concern. This question will be considered in detail in a subsequent chapter. Our first concern, however, has been to give a clear, uncompromising outline of the ideals implicit in Steiner's ideas. What becomes of them in real life will depend upon the particular qualities of each actual school. So far experience shows that where they have been practised with any conviction there is no reason to think them in

any way incompatible with normal educational objectives. Quite the contrary: more than many another method, language teaching in Waldorf schools, with its emphasis on individual sensory experience, can make a useful contribution to *the art of living*.

4. A Survey of Steiner's Observations on Method

In school life, everything depends upon the teacher's discov the nature of his or her 'relationship to the world' and fu nurturing such awareness. In this way Rudolf Steiner summar as it were in a formula, a series of significant thoughts on teac methods in relation to factors affecting school-life in general. formula occurs, a bit like a sentence from his will, in the lectures he gave on education in Germany. What counts success in the classroom, more than any single detail of curriculum or methodological know-how, is the teacher's pers relationship to whatever he or she is trying to teach. In connection the language teacher in a Waldorf school is faced special challenges. Steiner's philosophy of language, plus all can be gained from the esoteric side of anthroposophy for understanding of linguistic phenomena, presents an altoge overwhelming abundance of stimulating insights. How muc this can be taken in and worked through is a question of pers interest. Steiner's well-known observation in his *Anthroposop Leading Thoughts* is particularly relevant here: "Anthroposoph then, will only be people who feel certain questions about nature of man and the world with the same absolute urgenc hunger and thirst." What resonates in us when we hear Wal children at a festival reciting the opening words of St. John's gos Do we feel ourselves reminded of the Logos-doctrine of anc Greece? Do we connect anything in it with Steiner's talk of the w of angels, language spirits and folk-souls in the life of langu Have we really grasped the fact that Steiner's ideas on hu physiology and the senses call for a fundamental overhau language teaching?

On a par with such formulaic utterances as the one we be with is Steiner's repeated casting of the teacher, and especially

language teacher, in the role of *artist*. But what makes for an *art* of language teaching? Have we understood what movement and rest, rhythmic changes of mood and pace, the creation of a heightened atmosphere of relaxed alertness, in other words what Michael Chekhov calls 'the feeling of ease', can mean for language teaching? Are we aware that such imponderable ingredients of a lesson can be 'played with' in Schiller's sense of the word? Seeking to come to terms with all this inevitably leads us to consider the workings of certain polarities, a conceptual account of which is given mainly in the Stuttgart lecture courses for teachers. There Steiner talks of the polarity of blood and nerve, of imagination and abstraction, of the dynamic interplay between sculptural and musical qualities,[31] of the literal 'pulse' between guided and unguided classroom activities, of the 'incarnating' and 'excarnating' effects of particular lesson components.[32] It will also be necessary to consider how the teacher can learn to emulate Steiner's ability to perceive the activity of the spirit of language, and how an eye, or perhaps we should say ear, for what is concrete and alive in language can be cultivated. The importance of artistic speech will also claim our attention.

Only when we have dealt with such broader perspectives will we be able to look without exaggerating their importance at those methodological observations of Steiner's directly concerned with language teaching. These occur in his pedagogical works from August 1919 onwards, the first of them in lectures 9 and 10 of *Practical Advice to Teachers*. Here, with aphoristic brevity, is described a series of simple ploys which form a catalogue of the classic features of Waldorf language teaching. These will receive systematic treatment later. At this stage a list of them will suffice. Steiner recommends:

- instead of word-for-word translation, re-telling texts or stories in the pupils' own words, and formulating pupils' own thoughts in the foreign language;
- conducting conversations in the mother tongue and then recalling them in the foreign language;
- guiding children into conversations to which the teacher does not contribute;
- using what has been learnt by heart as a source of material for discussion;
- keeping the teaching of grammar separate from reading
- preserving the rules of grammar and forgetting the examples;
- as far as possible only reading for homework;
- movement and active participation as the key to language learning.

In lecture 10 comes Steiner's first mention of the three different styles of lesson that relate to developmental phases within the 7 to 14 age-group. This whole subject is then treated in greater detail in the so-called *Christmas Course*, and as such can be taken as the developmental basis for the structure of foreign language teaching through the Lower and Middle Schools.[33] The curriculum guidelines subsequently recorded in the College Meeting Minutes of 2nd June, 1924 are drawn along the same lines.[34]

The approach to reading is epitomised by the much discussed observations on *Dickens' A Christmas Carol* found also in the College Meeting Minutes.[35] Many more useful suggestions are scattered through the later courses for teachers, the College Meeting Minutes and public lectures given in connection with the pioneer phase of the Waldorf School. They will be discussed as appropriate in what follows.

5. Background Considerations

5.1 *The First Three Seven-Year Phases*[36] *of Life*

From the anthroposophical point of view human development from birth to full maturity occurs in three distinct seven-year periods. The major transition between the first two is marked by the change of teeth, while up until this time the structuring and restructuring, both outwardly and inwardly, of the child's physical body is taking place. The child itself makes an essential contribution to this process by virtue of an inborn power of imitative participation[37] which at this stage has an intensity never to be recaptured. This means that the phrase *sense impression* may be taken quite concretely, for the child's senses are so open that it is virtually at one with its surroundings. These impressions aid the work of the etheric body in imbuing the physical body with qualities individual to the child. The child, of course, is not in the least aware of all this. Its 'spiritual head', as Steiner says, is still 'asleep'.[38] Being asleep, however, does not prevent it from shaping the physical body like a sculptor working on a statue.

> "Age 0-7: the human being is shaped by the formative power emerging from the head; he is pure sense organ and a sculptor."[39]

The child's speech develops at this time purely as an unconscious *habit* closely bound up with sense perception and movement. The child has no idea that it speaks. Children who grow up with more than one language will shift smoothly from one to another according to whom they happen to be addressing, usually without noticing the changes. And they perform this feat with such unconditional attentiveness that they pick up the subtlest nuances of the other speaker's intonation, facial expressions and gestures just as effortlessly as they learn words and idioms. Up to at least the age of seven the learning of one or even several languages seems to present no kind of intellectual strain. If a child's fate grants it a sound, well-adjusted physical nature, then it learns its language or languages as a matter of course.

With the transition to the second septennium this situation changes. By the time the new teeth come through, the child has been provided with a body totally re-modelled in keeping with his or her individual nature, the new teeth being the hardest products of this process of renewal. It is now that some of the formative power of the etheric body, freed from its initial sculptural task, becomes available for other uses. The inner soul life of the child begins to unfold. Faculties of imagination and memory arise in new and richer forms. This in turn brings about a change in the child's relationship to others and to language. During this second period the child takes its first steps towards distancing itself from its surroundings.

Respected figures of natural authority can at this time provide a psychological 'buffer zone' within which the child can try out its new-found faculties. Whereas the world of the infant is well-nigh inaccessible to mature consciousness, an inkling of the child's new relationship to the world in this second phase can still be had by the adult soul through what it experiences in moments of artistic enjoyment. Looking at paintings or listening to music ,the adult may have moments of total identification with the object of perception. But inevitably, like an in-drawn breath, self-awareness returns. This shift of perception, if repeated enough, is indeed like breathing. And this is the chief characteristic of the child at this stage. It experiences the world in *rhythms* now absorbing impressions, now expressing something of its own. Thus the hub of development in this phase is the *intermediary* system of the physical body, the respiration and blood-circulation system.

> "Age 7-14: the human being is structured by the activity of his respiratory and circulatory system; he is wholly listener and musician."[40]

During puberty young people, especially boys, tend to become rather gangly and clumsy. This is because the growth spurt which forms part of the transition to the third septennium has disturbed the 'golden' proportion their limbs had in the second one. But there is another reason. While the body has been growing up, individual consciousness has, as it were, been 'growing down', and it now extends its domain right into the musculature and bone structure, thus gradually effecting a much closer identification with the physical body. This is simply another way of saying that the inevitable separation of self from world, that has been underway for some time, now begins to move towards completion. The corollary of this is that, assuming development is healthy, the young person begins to have a fully-fledged inner life. The self takes up residence, as it were, in its own inner chamber, to which no-one else can be admitted. This private space must be repected by teachers and parents, nor can they seek to decorate it to their own tastes. The two most important faculties that develop in connection with this new inwardness are *individual imagination* and *personal judgement*. It is now up to the young person alone to find out what his or her aspirations and beliefs are. This is why teaching for this age group has to be 'scientific'. At the same time the modern ethos of the free individual may now also be experienced in other ways. The world of the drama opens up. Steiner's motto on this third phase runs:

> "Age 14-21: the human being develops imagination and judgement. From the age of 12 on drama gradually becomes his element.[41]

By taking into account other results of Steiner's research and those of his anthroposophical successors, this short account of the developmental structure of childhood and youth could be enlarged upon with a whole wealth of detail to give a much more differentiated picture. For our purposes, however, the next step is to have a close look at language development in infancy and in the 'middle years' (*Müller-Wiedemann*). Before we embark upon this, let us, by way of a summary, list the three Steiner mottos used as our points of departure:

> "Age 0-7: the human being is shaped by the formative power emerging from the head; he is pure sense organ and a sculptor."

> "Age 7-14: the human being is structured by the activity of his respiratory and circulatory system; he is wholly listener and musician."

> "Age 14-21: the human being develops imagination and judgement. From the age of 12 on, drama gradually becomes his element."

5.2 *The First Seven Years: Language from Sense Perception and Movement*

Anthroposophically speaking, the human physical body, the most highly evolved of man's several 'bodies', is specifically designed to accommodate the 'I', or self. Incarnating from its pre-birth existence, the individual self gradually takes hold of the physical body through the activities of upright walking, speaking and thinking – normally in that order – and not without a certain amount of adult help, of course. During this time, and subsequently right up to the change of teeth, the child is unconsciously engaged upon the internal shaping of its physical organs. The etheric body as 'inner sculptor' is at work. Later this second body will be involved in the unfolding of the child's own inner life, but at this point it is not free for this purpose. Thinking in images and concepts independent of sense impressions is still far off. From an adult perspective, therefore, it is hard to understand how learning at this pre-cognitive level takes place at all. It occurs primarily as a sequence of *activities*, which are not yet mirrored in consciousness nor transformed into

language. From ethnological research and recent historical studies of different mentalities we know that in archaic cultures there have been – and in cultures outside Europe there still are – ways of addressing the world similar to this. Philosophical enquiry into the nature of symbols has shown that in this type of mentality we have to do with experience in the mode of *ritual*. When Steiner speaks of the infant's naturally religious attitude to its surroundings, he obviously had something very similar in mind.[42] Thus when he speaks of *imitation* as the main channel of infant learning, he is not using the concept in its normal cognitive sense, associated with mental picturing, but referring to a thoroughly active, participatory learning process. Anyone who seeks to work with children under seven in a way appropriate to their age must match this all-embracing power of participation with exemplary deeds. If you wish to teach them anything, it is not what you say, but what you do, that counts. Just as you cannot reason with a sleeping adult, you cannot appeal to the common sense of a toddler. Already in his 1907 lecture *The Education of the Child* Steiner draws attention to the fact that among the sense impressions of its 'physical environment' participated by the child are all bodily expressions of psychological states or conditions, and that every instance in this participatory process has the power to effect physical change.

> "Healthy sight develops if the right colours and right relationships exist in the child's surroundings; and the physical structures necessary for a sound moral sense form in the brain and circulatory system if the child experiences good moral behaviour in the people around it....Among the powerful influences affecting the form of the physical organs, then, is joy – joy both in the environment and emanating from it. Also mirth, and above all love, honest and not forced. Surroundings permeated with the warmth of such love will incubate, in the truest sense of the word, the forms of the physical organs."[43]

All twelve senses are involved in this participatory activity, including the sense of language. Its sphere of activity, however, encompasses not only spoken language, but also everything conveyed through gesture and facial expression. Such percept also have lifetime effects upon the somatic and morphological disposition of the physical body. Steiner stresses this point in one of his later lectures on education: "Right into the structure of the most complex tissues"[44] the human being (as opposed to the animal) absorbs the linguistic expression of psychological states. Quite apart from any personal colouring, language as a whole has profound effects upon the physical constitution.

> "Through the process of being acquired, the mother tongue takes deep root in the respiratory, circulatory and vascular systems. Thus not only a person's soul and spirit are at the mercy of the vagaries of his mother tongue, but his body as well."[45]

A further finding from the anthroposophical study of human nature, relevant to our present inquiry, appears for the first time in the course of lectures given at the founding of the Waldorf School in 1919. Here the infant's faculty of participation is explained in a highly remarkable way. Steiner points out that when a child emerges at birth, its *head* appears fully-formed in comparison to its *limbs* which at this stage are relatively undeveloped. As regards consciousness, however, the situation is reversed. In its limbs it is active and awake, whereas the head is 'asleep'. Now, when asleep the human being is quite literally 'out of himself', namely, in the surrounding psycho-spiritual sphere.

> "With his sleeping spirit and dreaming soul, the child is outside his head. His mind is merged with whatever is around him. This is why the child is an imitative being."[46]

From this point of view the task of bringing up and educating children is a path via the *will* and *feeling* towards the goal of 'awakening' the 'sleeping' head. The corresponding pathway in bodily terms is from 'visceral man'[47] via 'chest man' to 'head

man'.[48] The very earliest step in this waking process occurs, as it were by nature, through the effects of mother's milk, as Steiner says in the same context. The next major user of this limb to head pathway is *language*.[49]

Co-ordinated bodily movement such as occurs later, say, in gymnastics or eurythmy classes, is initially lacking in the infant. Even in the very earliest stages of development, however, language can facilitate co-ordinated movement. It is well-known that even adults listening to a speech will tune in to the speaker's breathing and phrasing, his coughing or clearing of his throat, that indeed their larynx and even their oral musculature echoes the fine detail of the language they are hearing, without their being in the least aware of this. According to recent physiological research, any perception of language is associated with scarcely noticeable but nonetheless co-ordinated changes of posture and gesture.[50] It is not inconceivable that this spontaneous, imitative type of movement is what Steiner is referring to when he tells the teachers of the first Waldorf School that the very first words we speak to a child constitute an 'attack on the will'.

> "Then the will activity set in motion in the vocal organs[!] by the first words invades the spiritual tranquillity of the head, and begins to wake it up."[51]

Language itself is thus the artist that begins the educational process, working upon the young child with a degree of genius that no parent or teacher can match, they being its mere mediators.

That which is 'set in motion' in the vocal organs by the first percepts of the sense of language[52], that still unconscious but nonetheless co-ordinated will activity by which the head is first roused from its 'spiritual sleep', develops during the second year of life into independent, though still imperfect, language. This achieves its individual form not through participatory imitation, but through the type of motor activity peculiar to early infancy. In several lectures of 1923 and 1924 Rudolf Steiner describes in what

subtle ways the human capacity for speech is predisposed by th occurrence of certain leg, arm and finger movements. Thus h maintains that the structuring of language in sentences is antici pated through vigorous, regular movements of the legs, goo pronunciation through harmonious arm movements, and a sens for the 'modification' of language through the child's 'experiencin the life in its fingers'. The heaviness or lightness of a child's ste foreshadows "the stress laid on syllables, [while] the skill wit which a child bends or stretches its fingers" bears a certain relatio to the 'modulation' of words.[53]

The significance for educational science and language teaching of such results of Steiner's becomes clearer when they are seen in relation to recent insights from the fields o neurophysiology and language acquisition research. Also in terms of 'anthropology' there are now very good grounds for accepting the existence, beyond the sense of hearing, of a sense of word, speech sound or language, as described by Steiner (see below 5.5). It is now known that the phonetic combinations of meaningful words as well as nonsense syllables mainly enter consciousness through the left (dominant) brain hemisphere, and that the right hemisphere has a preference for all other acoustic impressions – tones, melodies, noises of all kinds. Moreover, in the case of functional disturbance of the dominant hemisphere the perception of phonetic sounds becomes unclear *according to certain fixed patterns*, or else is restored. But most remarkable of all is the fact that the parts of the brain fixed as linguistic centres vary from individual to individual. In very complex ways these localisations are, as it were, written in, products of pure *activity*. This comes very close to Steiner's idea of the morphological effects of human language as regards the *brain*. That the influence of language also permeates the circulatory system and the fine structure of the total body tissue is still overlooked. It is already widely held that the development of the fine motor activity of infants, of the goal-directed movement of hands and fingers, is very much connected with the later facility for language. This

relationship, however, is still far from being established in the concrete detail that , according to Steiner's observations of 1923, should be discoverable. Steiner assigns much greater importance to the physical body *as a whole* than recognised research has so far given him credit for. The anthroposophist – one might say paradoxically – lays greater emphasis upon the physical body as an organ of language acquisition than does the 'anthropological' empiricist.

Current research on language acquisition is hampered in this regard by its fixation upon neurological factors. The influence of language on the structure of the human body must be sought not only in the brain but also in the rhythmic system and at the physical level. The awakening of the power of language, when understood as 'waking the head from its spiritual slumber', has nothing to do with information transfer or verbal *input*. Rather it is a process that begins with sensory perception through the *sense of language* and with *limb activity*. Only when all this is taken into account will the empirical approach to the physiology of language yield its full pedagogical harvest.

It is nevertheless clear that it is worthwhile following the advice contained in *Riddles of the Soul* and viewing Steiner's ideas in conjunction with the results of empirical 'anthropology'. This is evident also in connection with the important question of how far language acquisition occurs through imitation or through inherited factors. Imitation has notoriously been favoured by the behaviourist school, inheritance by the linguistic school of Chomsky:[54] In the last few years there has been a certain *rapprochement* between these two positions. The affective and socio-cultural factors involved in the process of language acquisition have been more clearly recognised. Mutual criticism, at least in the area of psychological development, has brought the two sides closer together. Els Oksaar, whose well-documented account we are following here, gives favourable mention to a possible resolution of the situation. This is a theory proposed by William Stern which sees language development as a product of the convergence between the speech acts continually pressing in up the child from its environment and the child's own inner need a ability to express itself.

This sounds like banal common sense, but the theory al fails to overcome certain difficulties which have stumped both t environment and heredity camps. Neither can explain how ch dren learn language so amazingly *quickly*. With this spee acquisition they are also able to express themselves in a co pletely *individual* way. It is something of a mystery how t creative ability blossoms from the first imitative stirrings of t speech organs and then far outstrips anything the child h actually heard. Both sides have only been able to offer fragme tary explanations of this mystery, since such imaginative spee production cannot be construed as simple reproduction of en ronmental stimuli, nor as genetically pre-determined in terms Chomsky's universals. The way forward may be to follow the li already taken by questions concerned with the special 'creativi of the language acquisition process. Children – so much is alrea known – acquire language neither as the sum of perceived wor and sentence structures nor through an inborn acquisition stra egy. Their output, contrary to any mechanical feedback syste always over-reaches their input. The reason for this is that th are far more capable than any adult of absorbing the 'spirit' something, the undefined, living whole. Every human langua breaks the bounds of the concept. Scientific description, howev exact, cannot do justice to the actual *life* of language. If we ta Steiner at his word and assume that the 'spirit' of language in immeasurable totality, its profound wisdom, permeates the i fant's physical body via its own special sensory pathway, a that the movements of the infant's limbs help lend the growi capacity for language an individual form, then we have – at lea in outline – a competitive theory, with the added advantage being comprehensible and practicable. In a recent book on t nature and functioning of the sense of language Peter Lutzger h gone a long way towards substantiating such a theory.[55]

5.3 *The Second Seven-Year Period: Language as Living Rhythm*

In healthy development, the mentality of the first seven-year period persists into the first few years of the second one. There is a gradual ebbing until, usually at the age of ten, the naive, trusting oneness[56] with the world that rules the first period, is finally replaced by the greater self-awareness of middle childhood. Interestingly enough, this is the point up to which foreign languages can usually be acquired without an accent coloured by the mother tongue. This step in development – known in Waldorf circles as the 'rubicon' – must be treated with special care and attention by the teacher. The change in awareness the child now has to cope with also alters profoundly the relationship to language. Hans Müller-Wiedemann has written an excellent account of this phase of childhood, in which the latest findings of developmental psychology are viewed in relation to the anthroposophical approach to biography. Drawing upon the work of Iona and Peter Opie he emphasises the delight nine to eleven year olds take in testing the possibilities of language through *word games*, thereby following a playful urge to distance themselves a little from their freshly acquired mother tongue, the language of grown-ups. According to Müller-Wiedemann, this activity employs language which obeys the bounds neither of logic nor of the sense world.[57] The bounds it does recognise are those of *ritual*, for with such games children are trying out, in ritualised form, the social world beyond the parental home. 'Secret languages' are invented. Parodies and spoofs of all kinds are indulged in. "Parody gives an intelligent child the chance to demonstrate its independence without being a rebel".[58] Müller-Wiedemann solemnly warns that the child at this age should not be abandoned to its linguistic environment. It is potentially very liberating, but also fraught with compulsive dangers. If the child is not to get stuck in certain forms of expression "[these] need to be re-moulded through dialogue with adults".[59] This underlines how important the *hearing* of language is between the ages of nine and twelve, and how much care must be taken over the transition from the world of concrete, pictorial language in which the child is then at home, to that of the abstract concept, the hurdle which confronts the child at the age of twelve when causal thinking awakens.

Where Müller-Wiedemann has provided an account of this process that reflects its complexity in a wealth of empirical detail, Steiner resolves the whole sequence into a 'symbolic' formula, the intricacies of which must be filled in by meditation. In the *Christmas Course* of 1921/22, while on the theme of training the will and encouraging aesthetic sensibility between the ages of ten and fourteen, he stresses the need to adapt teaching methods, whatever the subject, to the developmental steps that take place at ages ten and twelve. He describes how, before the 'rubicon', the child's attention to the content of lessons involves its whole being. The style of teaching appropriate to this he labels 'formative'. After the 'rubicon' at age ten lessons can no longer rely upon the involvement of the child's whole being, and so need to be geared towards engaging the feelings.[60] This style he calls 'descriptive'. Only in the third phase of the second seven-year period does the teacher bring into play a further element, which we would nowadays term 'cognitive': "Then, around the age of twelve, the *formative* and *descriptive* elements can be joined by the *explanatory*, which takes account of cause and effect and makes full demands upon the power of reasoning." In their specific application to language teaching, Steiner gives these three methodological steps different labels. Before the 'rubicon' he talks of instilling a 'sense for *grammatical* correctness' (this *before* grammar appears as an actual subject!). In middle childhood he recommends nurturing a sense for the *rhetorical*, while the phase up to puberty should involve developing "the ability to infuse language with the power of persuasion, in other words, the *dialectical* element". The same thing is expressed in another way, as follows:

"The gradual unfolding of language capability should occur in such a way that first of all a sense for what is naturally *correct*

arises, then a sense for what is *beautiful*, and finally a sense for the *power* language confers in the conduct of life".[61]

This conceptual framework provides the key to the sketch of language teaching Steiner gave in the 1919 course for teachers. It appears again in the College Meeting Minutes for 2nd June, 1924, but nowhere does he go into it in such detail as in the *Christmas Course*. There, in summary, he remarks:

> "It is much more important that the teacher become familiar with such things than that he be given some kind of ready-made curriculum with fixed targets. In this way he will be able to match his material and teaching style to the age of his pupils."[62]

The meditation motifs that crystallise out of the above do not take the form of sentences, but can only be arranged as a formulaic table of corresponding concepts:

Formative	Grammar	Correctness
Descriptive	Rhetoric	Beauty
Explanatory	Dialectic	Power

5.4 *The Third Seven-Year Period: Individualised Language*

With the onset of puberty the close attachment to a particular teacher, which up to this point has been a basic need, normally begins to fade. With this goes a change in the relationship to language. What the underlying reality of the situation is remains mysterious, but outwardly there is awkwardness, a tendency to slip into slang and deliberate improprieties or to take refuge in silence. In the education lectures he gave in 1921, the so-called *Supplementary Course*, Steiner describes in detail the disposition of pupils at this age and the sort of behaviour it leads to. The teacher becomes the focus of many expectations that remain either unspoken or inarticulate. Meeting these, he advises, involves mobilising the pupils' attention and moral sense along two main avenues of approach. One is that of *beauty*, both in art and in nature, the other is that of *ideals*, "ideas endowed with practical purpose". In this connection he draws a careful distinction between the sensibilities of girls and those of boys. An Upper School conducted along such lines should also give pupils scope for applying their own individual imagination and critical judgement. The 'subjective' must be enabled to make 'healthy contact with the objective'.

A clear impression of what Steiner wanted for this age-group can best be gained by considering the polarities between some of the classic themes of the Waldorf curriculum. In Class 9 a comparison of Egyptian and Greek sculpture or painting from Giotto to Rembrandt in the main-lesson on aesthetics stand in contrast to electrical theory; in Class 10 the history of ancient civilisations and poetics is enhanced by land surveying and technology; in Class 11 Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzifal* rubs shoulders with the industrial practical; in Class 12 the Cosmos in a whole range of forms – as world history, as the history of architecture, as a consideration of the twelve main orders of animals in zoology – is balanced by the carrying out and presentation, in both written and practical form, of an individual project.

In keeping with this, foreign language teaching in the Upper School will attempt to marry *aesthetic appreciation* and *goal-directed practical usage*. The analytical techniques normally associated with the subject would only be brought into play in connection with certain public exams, and as such are external to the Waldorf curriculum.

5.5 *Language and its Sense Organ*

Is there a sense of language with its own sense organ? The great change currently taking place in the scientific discussion of this

question is a very telling example of how anthroposophical discoveries of Steiner's, which at first seemed purely speculative and totally beyond the critical pale, can suddenly become thinkable through unexpected results of new research. Up until very recently the ruling assumption was that human language was to be understood as a purely acoustic phenomenon, a particular species of noise. It has since been realised that this was more of a presumption than a reasonable assumption. There is no clear one to one correspondence between particular speech sounds and acoustic invariants. Language cannot be reduced to tones or sounds. It is a phenomenal realm in itself, as clearly to be distinguished from the world of physical sound as smell from taste, or touch from vision. When it comes to interpreting the facts of language acquisition, researchers who, through their adherence to conventional neurophysiology, with its emphasis on models based on the computer analogy, have failed to notice the essentially *sensory* nature of linguistic phenomena, find themselves in a tight corner. They are forced to assume that children at the age of two are already able to master highly abstract cognitive operations that in the normal run of intellectual development are only attainable by the age of twelve.[63] Could it not be that language acquisition has initially nothing to do with such operations? It is possible that infants apprehend speech sounds in the same way as they distinguish red from green or sour from sweet. Steiner strongly contended that apprehension of speech sounds *precedes* the ability to form judgements. Recognising the existence of the sense of language creates difficulties "because the unadulterated perception of what lies in the sounds of speech is nearly always coloured by all sorts of judgmental activity". Exact reflection upon the matter shows, however, "that in the hearing of the sounds of language a relationship subsists between pure percept and perceiver, which is every bit as direct and free of external associations as that between colour and its corresponding sense organ".[64] From this point of view new research showing that babies only a few days old can identify speech sounds as clearly as they can distinguish colours is in no way surprising.[65] Equally significant in this connection is the fact that between the short 'babble-phase', when every possible combination of phonemes is tried out, and the actual onset of speech itself there is very often a period when the child appears to have made a vow of silence.[66] What is happening during this time? Does the child's silence perhaps indicate intense perceptual activity? Steiner's anthroposophical observation, that the child's speech organs are activated by the process of *listening*, would tend to support this idea.

Empirical research on language acquisition has not so far concerned itself with the question of whether there is a special sense organ for the perception of language. The first person to address this question was John Davy, who devotes a whole section of one of his books to it.[67] Georg von Arnim, a pupil of Karl König's, has subsequently attempted a new interpretation of Steiner's all-too-aphoristic utterances on this matter.[68] He comes to the conclusion that the voluntary musculature of the whole human body is to be understood as the organ of the sense of language discovered by Steiner. Steiner himself speaks of this as "the system facilitating bodily movement, [and as] the human potential for movement".[69]

To conclude from this that bodily movement serves the perception of language would be to interpret Steiner's words too loosely. A clearer idea of what they mean can be gained by considering the sort of language we use every-day for getting children to listen to something, and the gestures that spontaneously accompany it. For instance, Sshh! with index finger on lips, or listen! with raised eyebrows and index finger pointing upwards. In both cases a *movement* comes to *rest* for a short moment. It is then that the sense for speech sound and word is opened. According to Steiner this goes for all language perception.

"I understand what someone says through the fact that when he is speaking...as it were only my fingertips are stirred, while

in the rest of the physical organism the movement is held back, stilled, stalled."[70]

In connection with this certain discoveries of the American physiologist William S. Condon are of great interest. Since the sixties he has been investigating the relationship between language and body movement by means of film analysis. From this it emerges that all speech acts are accompanied both in speaker and listener by spontaneous, scarcely perceptible body movements which are entirely unconscious and follow characteristic patterns. In listeners with normal language perception capability these subtle movements – perhaps they should be called *precursors* to movement or, using Steiner's term, *stalled* movements – match the pattern of perceived speech exactly with a slight delay ('entrainment') which varies minutely according to how loud the speech is. In listeners with disturbed language perception, irregularities rather like an echo effect occur in this synchronisation ('multiple entrainment'), although characteristic patterns are still discernible.[71]

These discoveries have been taken up and discussed in detail by Peter Lutzger in his book on the sense of language.[72] This book contains a great wealth of information on all aspects of this research. In it he also manages to place Steiner's ideas on the senses firmly within the realm of 'anthropology'. The argument centres around treating language capability as a *gestalt* in Goethe's sense of the word. The 'components' of this *gestalt* are three in number. One is the 'organ' of the sense of language, which he defines as "the linguistic-kinesic potential of the entire body." Another is an innate capability for what Lutzer terms 'temporal integration'. This he postulates because the integrated patterns of micro-kinesic movements observable in response to speech become perceptible as an 'organisation in time.' The third has to do with interaction between senses, or synesthesia. Lutzger postulates an innate synesthetic capacity, innate because it does not seem to be the interaction between particular senses that is decisive, but the capacity to interact itself. In action these three together make for language perception as a "process of simultaneous synesthetic integration... dependent on the temporal synthesis of sensory perception." The inherent tenor of the language in which this is described is unavoidable because the *gestalt* and its integrated functioning are all of a piece.

Precisely what follows from all this for the methodology of language teaching is still unclear. It does, however, provide a good case for paying particularly close attention to processes of *body movement* in language lessons. How do the subtle modifications of gesture and posture described by Condon relate to children's movements in general? Do certain patterns of movement aggravate others, or block them, or drive them to extremes? Are there characteristic *rhythms* we should respect? How is the situation affected by modifications in the teacher's voice (pace, pitch, volume), bodily tension, posture, gestures and facial expressions? The most obvious implication is that the movement system should be kept *at rest* if it is to serve the purpose of language perception. Arnim, on dealing with this point, draws upon observations of handicapped children and upon his own personal experience. "Too much unruly movement is just as incompatible with concentrated listening as over-tense or cramped muscles. A sort of 'active relaxedness' in musculature and posture is the best way of fostering the *inner* mobility that listening requires."[73] We may go on to ask whether it might not be advisable in the light of Steiner's remarks to take a thorough look at *the interplay of movement and rest* in language teaching. Perpetual rest could only make for listless lethargy or fear-ridden inertia. It is in the *transition* from easy movement to 'relaxed alertness' that the most fruitful moment for the shaping of a successful language lesson may well lie.

At all events Steiner's approach deals out a strong corrective blow to the transmitter-receiver model of conventional language physiology. Perception of language reveals itself as a process involving not only passive receptivity but also autonomous activity. From this point of view Arnim is able to interpret so-called 'perceptual disturbances' in handicapped children as the

'malfunction of particular senses'.[74] Learning to speak must therefore involve both bodily *movement* and calm, relaxed *listening*, since the one emerges out of the other and this mutual interplay is pedagogically indispensable.

This view creates a dramatic upheaval in the didactic landscape. Up to now foreign language teaching, under the influence of conventional neuro-physiology, has been almost exclusively focused upon the *conceptual* aspect of language. The digesting of clearly defined phonetic units, grammatical rules and lexical meanings has been the order of the day. A sound grasp and perfect reproduction of these structural elements is, so the thinking goes, the surest way to mastery of a language. Is this really so certain? No-one seriously imagines that years of wading through harmonic theory and the laws of counterpoint is the best way to learn music. We sing and dance with our children, let them try out various instruments etc. long before we begin telling them about keys and intervals and what the various notes are called. Most of us are more than happy to leave knowledge of dominant sevenths and twelve-tone inversions to specialists. We just get on with the pleasurable business of making or listening to music, and many people develop considerable musical skill simply by using their eyes and ears and a minimal amount of theory. There is every reason to expect that in language classrooms a similar approach will yield similar results.

5.6 *Remembering and Forgetting*

Scarcely any area of Rudolf Steiner's educational thinking is so important for clarifying certain key issues of language teaching as his views on memory. As regards the nature of memory, of course, there is currently a well established scientific paradigm stemming, just as did the previously mentioned central idea on the nature of the senses, from 17th century English empiricism. From John Locke's theory of the human mind as a *tabula rasa*, a clean slate, upon which all life's sense impressions are gradually inscribed, th path of thinking has inevitably led, via the highly effective model of cybernetics and electronic data-processing, to the image o memory as a data-bank, from which stored information can b retrieved at will. Hence brain research is now dominated by th computer analogy and its associated terminology, as indeed i research on language teaching.

The success and plausibility of this view of brain functior make it well-nigh unassailable, but in comparing it with Steiner's thinking on the subject there is one assertion he repeatedly makes that very strikingly clashes with it. This is the idea that the act of remembering is not simply a retrieval of stored images but is a renewed act of *sense perception*.

The question is, of course, how the act of remembering is to be understood as a perceptual process. From the well-known lecture of 1907 *The Education of the Child in the Light of Spiritual Science* it initially emerges that remembering occurs within the etheric body, that is in direct involvement with the processes of life and growth. About ten years later Steiner significantly modifies this original view, in that he describes the process of remembering as a product of interaction between the etheric and physical bodies.[75] According to this new perspective all mental images resulting from acts of sense perception[76] involve the etheric body in 'movements', which in turn are 'impressed' into the physical body. This impression he calls an 'engram'. The attempt to remember something then sets the etheric body in motion anew, causing it to mould itself into the corresponding 'engram' in the physical body. Once this occurs the image is perceived afresh, lights up in the mind, and is thus 'remembered'. Around the same time Steiner describes this same process along clear abstract lines in the first appendix to his book *Riddles of the Soul*:

> "For an act of sense perception to take place there must first be activity in the bodily sense organ, out of which a mental picture then arises. If I wish to remember such a mental

picture there must be an inner bodily activity (of a very subtle nature) which is the polar counterpart of the sensory process, and out of this arises the remembered mental picture....Images available to memory, while still unconscious, are to be sought in that organ of the human make-up which in my writings is called the etheric body. The activity, however, through which the images anchored in the etheric body are remembered belongs to the physical body."[77]

Why does Steiner lay such stress on this distinction? Could it have something special to do with the practical consequences he expected to flow from his theory of memory? Could consideration of so seemingly arcane a question as the relative functional contributions of the etheric and physical bodies to the remembering of lesson contents improve our performance as language teachers?

Pursuing such questions leads on to further remarks of Steiner's which carry the clear implication that he envisaged *two different kinds of memory*, between which sound and effective teaching should create a *balance*. Just as he distinguished between 'flexible' and 'rigid' concepts,[78] so he sets 'conceptual images'[79] against 'mechanical' memory.[80] It is interesting here that S.T.Coleridge makes a similar distinction. He speaks of a 'mechanical memory' which operates purely by the law of association, and contrasts this with a process of recalling by an act of conscious will. The former is the basis of *fancy*, which can only produce arbitrary combinations of fixed images; the latter is equivalent to *imagination*, to which Coleridge assigns a recreative, modifying capability. It would seem, therefore, that mechanical memory works by associative recall of fixed ideas, while imaginative memory is a process of creative recollection, which is indeed how it appears in Wordsworth's theory (and practice) of poetry as 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'.[81] Steiner reveals a further aspect of mechanical memory by referring on several occasions to a 'salt deposition process' brought about by one-sidedly mathematical and abstract forms of thinking that do not engage the imagination. If it were not dissolved by 'the restorative of sleep', this deposit would cause the body to degenerate.[82] It also makes for a memory that works by reflex action and a mind bereft of its independence.

"It is no longer you who remembers things, rather the things make use of you. You become an automaton."[83]

Steiner then goes on to speak of how a healthy balance can be achieved between what he terms 'constructive' and 'disintegrative' tendencies. The educational implications of this distinction are then voiced mainly in the *Supplementary Course* of 1921, where imaginative children are set against those with a weak memory. The former can become 'prisoners' of the memory images they construct, while the latter may not remember anything at all clearly. In this connection Steiner again calls the salt problem to mind.[84]

This makes the implications of the interaction between the etheric and physical bodies much clearer. Perceptions, thoughts, images, while in their 'forgotten', unconscious state are preserved in a form different from that in which they were experienced. They are 'anchored' in the etheric body and become embroiled in the constant living motion of its super-sensible mode of being. 'Remembering' them takes place with the help of the 'engrams' laid down in the physical body as a result of the original etheric activity, so that they re-enter the field of consciousness from within as newly constructed sense perceptions. The physical body, which here, as in the original process of perception, performs the function of a 'mirror', gives them the clear outlines they need in sense-bound waking consciousness.

The puzzling observation repeatedly made in 19th century psychology (Schleiermacher, Dilthey) that *imagination* plays a part in memory finds its explanation in this view of memory as renewed perception. Just as imagination has a strong active role between the outer and inner worlds in the process of perception, so in memory it acts in a way that moderates both the 'constructive' and 'disintegrative' tendencies identified by Steiner. If the act of memory is too closely tied to the functions of the physical body,

it becomes automaton-like, 'mechanical'. Unmoderated, these would turn into obsessions. If the disintegrative end of the polarity dominates, the upshot is a weak memory. In extreme cases it would mean complete loss of memory. So obsessive behaviour and weak memory can both be construed as a failure of imagination.

In the first Stuttgart lecture course for teachers Steiner adds another important aspect to his thinking on memory. By way of a splendid analogy he dubs forgetting as the 'falling asleep' of an image complex, remembering as its 'waking up', and challenges his audience to pursue the comparison in detail.[85] Some years previously he had observed that forgotten images 'work' on the etheric body, thereby contributing to its vitality. Images forced by whatever classroom practice into the treadmill of waking consciousness would be lost to the etheric body, with a corresponding loss of vitality.[86] Here Steiner goes on to impress upon his listeners – the founding teachers of the first Waldorf school – how important it is for learning, and for the smooth running of the school, to have a healthy rhythm of remembering and forgetting in correspondence to the natural one between sleeping and waking, and how disturbances in these rhythms prevent the children absorbing their lessons in an individual, unforced way. There are two sure means of guarding against such disturbances. One is to have all aspects of the children's lives regulated by appropriate *habits;* the other is to stimulate their *interest.*

> "For memory must draw its strength from the realms of feeling and will, not from mere, intellectual exercises and the like."[87]

Sound Waldorf education, therefore, will not expect pupils to keep everything they have learned in their heads and reproduce it on demand. It will rather take care that remembering alternates with forgetting in a healthy rhythm that echoes the rhythmic nature of all living processes. Here the thinking on memory finds its practical connection to Steiner's idea of the threefold nature of the soul.

From 1917 on he spoke of its three functional levels correlating thinking with wakefulness and neural activity, feeling with dream and respiration, and willing with sleep and metabolism. As the first Waldorf school progressed, Steiner continued to develop his ideas on these interconnections step by step. In the third lecture of the 1920 course for teachers the threesome he deals with is that of perception, understanding and memory. He warns his hearers in this connection 'to keep a proper pulse-beat in the classroom between mere listening and individual work."[88] This would be of benefit to memory.

The beneficial effects upon memory of *rhythm* in the physical and emotional life of the child is given still stronger emphasis one year later in the first lecture of the *Supplementary Course* of 1921. There he begins by recapitulating the key points of anthroposophical thinking on memory, and then lays particular stress on the fact that it can best be mobilised via the *life of feeling.* The "feelings incidental to the normal run of teaching" need to be cultivated: humour and sadness, tension and relief, the motivational effects of things half-known or unknown. "There are no better memory aids than such feelings".[89] In conjunction with this he then underlines the significance of the human dimension:

> "By bringing everything in the world into relationship with man you place it in the realm of feeling. And that is so important".[90]

Finally he reiterates the importance of a rhythmical alternation between listening and doing, of marrying the physical and the spiritual, so that the teacher's words have 'weight' and at the same time 'wings'.

> "The thing is to have both; so that you do not, on the one hand, overwhelm the child with mere rhapsodic flights, nor on the other simply weigh him down with the learning of certain skills."[91]

In the Ilkley course of 1923 Steiner summarises the educational application of his thinking on memory in three formulaic sentences:

> "Concepts burden the memory;
> the concrete and artistic develops the memory;
> exertions of will fortify the memory."[92]

5.7 *Living Concepts and Dead Concepts*

In his lecture courses for teachers in 1919 and 1920 Steiner deals in several places with the forms of logical thinking. The special way he interprets this 'anthropological' subject has decisive implications for what goes on in language classrooms, particularly where grammar is concerned. We cannot, therefore, avoid making a sally into this area, even though it will involve touching upon difficult philosophical questions.

Since the time of the Greeks the view has been held that the most basic elements in the process of thinking, apart from axioms, are single *concepts*. These we put together like building blocks to produce *judgements*. By weighing up the relative merits of various judgements we then form *conclusions*. What we have in this sequence, Steiner points out, is an artificial construction. If we look at the way individual concepts arise in the context of *real life* (i.e. not in the abstract context of the syllogism) we will notice that behind each one stretches a background of long experience in the form of unspoken judgements and conclusions, which we apply to the given situation. Even a glance at the life of language shows that a concept, whatever it may be, cannot be apprehended without thus placing it within an extensive web of such cognitive relationships. In other words, the 'concepts' by which we live are in fact conclusions. For this reason Steiner reverses the three basic steps of logical thinking, neatly summing the position up as follows: "In life conclusions come first."[93]

This radical change in perspective is no longer so unusual as no doubt it was at the time the first lecture course for teachers was held. Steiner had laid his finger on something which had already figured in *Dilthey's* account of "elementary understanding [and] the categories of life", and which later appeared in *Heidegger's* discovery of 'pre-conceptual apprehension', but above all in the categories of the newer so-called pragma-linguistics and in *gestalt* psychology.

For our purposes it must suffice to clarify the educational intentions implied in Steiner's position. For him the important thing was "to see logic in connection with the whole human organism",[94] not simply as a neural function. This is perhaps another way of saying that the mind is not the brain, or indeed that there are two types of logic: the brain-bound syllogistic type and the type that is in fact a three-step living process (the former being a particular instance of the latter). In terms of this total living process, then, Steiner connects the forming of *conclusions* with the *legs and feet*, the framing of *judgements* with the *arms and hands*, and only the producing of *concepts* with the *head*, since they require its mirroring capabilities.[95] In the same way as with other concepts derived from the normal discussion of human nature ('anthropological') which have been previously dealt with, this set of correspondences could also serve as a focus for meditation.

For Steiner, all this brings with it a number of consequences for what goes on in the classroom. What happens when we make use of the three basic components of logical thinking in lessons? We observe, for one thing, that approaching the area of the child's being where he or she is deeply involved in the forming of conclusions is a very delicate matter, and any teaching material which is organised programmatically in terms of learning targets will be a threat to it. The reason is that, just where the child is wide open to the infinite richness of experience, such an approach narrows the field of attention to certain clearly defined units of information. The task in the classroom, then, is to convey the chosen information according to plan, easing the discomfort by means of certain palliative tricks and decorations designed for the

purpose. Ambiguities, riddles and grey areas, where even the expert is at a loss, are passed over or simplified for the sake of efficiency. This makes for what Steiner calls 'ready-made conclusions': hypotheses turned into simple models, pat definitions which can be stored and 'accessed' much more easily than the original phenomena. Such 'ready-made conclusions', whose merely partial validity is not apparent to the pupil, cannot be 'forgotten' in any healthy way. At an unconscious level they generate confusion and fear, a sort of psychological indigestion.

According to Steiner, therefore, rather than simply delivering conclusions, healthy teaching should bring the *process of forming conclusions* out into the open, into full *waking consciousness* through classroom discussion. It is entirely desirable that the lively exchanges thus involved should leave behind riddles and questions, for in the long run this promotes self-motivated learning (see below 5.8). It also renders more comprehensible a remark of Steiner's relating to language teaching. He said, in effect, that if it were 'lively enough', it would be possible "while teaching to generate those abilities required by the particular lesson".

> "You should think about how you are to generate the abilities required by a lesson. The children do not need to posses to any full extent the abilities they use; rather you must have the skill to call forth such abilities, which then ebb away when the child is outside the classroom."96

Only that which has 'ripened' into a concept through a learning process conducted along such lines can be 'forgotten' in a healthy way. [97] Instead of rushing into definitions – "too much definition drains the life out of teaching"[98] – the material should be 'characterised' in a variety of ways. Only then do 'living' concepts that do justice to the complexity of the world come about, each one ultimately an aspect of the comprehensive 'idea of man', which the Waldorf curriculum as a whole seeks to convey. As a deep-seated, slowly ripening conclusion, capable of being raised to conceptual expression in a wide range of contexts, "the idea of man may legitimately subsist."[99] It 'works', as Steiner says, through the 'sleeping soul', the deep unconscious, on the child's body and keeps it healthy.[100]

It is important to realise, especially in connection with the teaching of grammar, that Steiner does not envisage the formation of concepts always involving the slow, comprehensive ripening process required for those that define the child's existential relationship to the world as a living whole. There are also concepts "which do not really need to be flexible [and which can provide the child with] a sort of mental skeleton".[101] Such sharply defined concepts can be retained and remembered without this doing any harm. Indeed, where the lively interplay of conclusions is being used, as will ideally be the case in grammar lessons, too, they provide a secure framework that helps to keep things moving.

5.8 *Anticipatory Learning*

To this account of the thinking behind foreign language teaching in Waldorf schools let me add a few considerations of my own. The computer model of language learning, which currently rules the minds of almost everyone researching the field, has begun to betray its shortcomings. There is a growing realisation that it leads to a dead end. Just like Ptolemy trying to save his geocentric system with epicycles, bits are desperately being added to it, but no-one can tell what the coming 'Copernican revolution' will look like or where it will lead. One thing is certain, the new direction can no longer remain estranged from *life*. Language research, and with it language teaching, must begin to take account of the inner realities of volition and sensibility, of sense perception and bodily movement, of socio-cultural factors, of the learner as a person with an individual biography. Exactly how this affects teaching methods can so far only be vaguely discerned, but the change is underway. This shows, for instance, in the holistic approach which permeates much recent methodological literature.[102] In the meantime, however, we should continue to keep our eyes open for what might

appear from beyond the horizon of conventional science.

J.G. Herder notes in his famous *Essay on the Origin of Language*, written in 1772: "When children learn language from their parents they invariably add their own inventions." Could this perhaps have something to do with troublesome observations made in recent years on the active contribution children make to the learning of a language through playing imaginatively with it and making 'systematic errors'?

Schleiermacher, in his psychological writings, sees in the purely intuitive way young children take in languages a special form of 'divinitory' understanding at work. This he sets against 'comparative' understanding, arguing that it develops in adults into the ability to penetrate and comprehend the *personality* of others. What dimensions would this view, which is by no means peculiar to Schleiermacher, take on if it were subjected to closer investigation in the light of Steiner's account of the higher senses?

Moritz Lazarus, a follower of Herbart, observes how in the infant the perceived sound of language is met by a mental picture which is initially quite indistinct and rudimentary, and only gradually takes on sharper contours. The original word thus fades into this new form and is apprehended as such.

> "The word as sound is, as it were, a seed planted in the soul; the soul's own inherent activity, however, penetrates and fertilises it with spiritual nourishment (with the relevant mental pictures), so that it is spiritually quickened and begins to grow....At first this mental picture is so indistinct that it is only retained *in the form of speech sounds*; only gradually does the soul form the word into, or imbue the word with, a mental picture which, in the process, becomes detachable from it i.e. definable."[103]

Lazarus illustrates the fluid nature of these embryonic mental pictures with a beautiful example from *Green Henry* by Gottfried Keller:

> "He tells how as a child he would see the Alps in the distance and 'for all that my mother kept telling me they were great *mountains* and mighty witnesses of God's majesty, I could not, nor had I any inclination to distinguish them from the clouds to whose equally majestic comings and goings I devoted almost all my evening hours, but whose name for me was just as much an empty sound as the word mountain. The distant snow-caps, now shrouded, now bright, now sombre, white or red, I took to be something as alive, glorious and powerful as the clouds.' "[104]

Are we then justified in assuming that when the child has reached school-age similar mental processes based on the still half-dreaming but livelier and more flexible activity of the imagination can be relied upon for the learning of a second language ? This would imply that the first, all-important steps on this long road are in no way founded upon a clear, definitive *comprehension* of the vocabulary involved. And it does indeed seem to be the case that the more fluid, open and undefined these early mental processes are, the more retentive is learning. Hence Steiner's fondness for quoting Jean Paul:

> "Do not worry about lack of comprehension, even of whole sentences; your expression and intonation, plus your hearers' urge to sense the meaning open up one half of what you say; and, given this, time will open up the other. Intonation is for children, as for the Chinese and for seasoned globe-trotters, the half of language. ... Have trust in time, the great code-breaker, time and the context."[105]

In this way Steiner throws light upon an important Waldorf principle: before puberty no demands should be made upon *conceptual* understanding. Instead use should be made of the undefined, direct impression or the pictorial description which can grow into full understanding when the child is older. In an essay

written on the founding of the original Waldorf School he says that beyond the 'appropriate level' one should not aim at the child's 'understanding' everything he is taught.

> "Such an attempt would no doubt be made with the best of intentions. But it does not reckon with what it means for a person to have simply memorised something difficult or subtle at an early age and then to re-awaken it at a later stage of life, finding that from his new-won maturity he is able to understand it for himself. This, of course, assumes that the teacher will have conveyed the content in a way lively enough to overcome any reluctance the pupil might have had towards memorising it in the first place. The best way to ensure that pupils gain this rewarding experience of re-awakening and bringing fresh understanding to things long since memorised, is for the teacher to put his whole heart into his teaching. And this refreshing process of recollection cannot but enhance pupils' knowledge and widen horizons. If the teacher can manage to pave the way for such strengthening experiences, he will have given the children something of inestimable value to take with them on their path through life. By the same token he will be able to avoid his 'direct methods' falling into banality through pandering to the child's 'understanding'. Although to do so might seem to be making it easy for the children to work on their own, such material will have lost its lustre long before they have grown up. The quickening spark which a good teacher can kindle in a child with things that in some respects are still 'over his head' retains its inspiring glow for life."[106]

Steiner's advice on the importance of using the unfamiliar or half-familiar in lessons as a way of cultivating the children's feelings and thereby keeping teaching effectively in tune with life, has already been referred to. His recommendations on how to deal with the history of language go in a similar direction. It should not be treated as a self-contained subject, rather historical observations are better made simply in an *incidental* way, as they come up in the course of a lesson. This, he says, is a sure way of 'catching the imagination'.[107] Here, also, Steiner clearly prefers the *aphoristic observation* as more fruitful and helpful than information in the style of a textbook or handbook. The latter might be useful for the adult learner, but will be too pedantically detailed and therefore too prematurely 'ripe' for use in school. Naturally the pathways by which the former type of observation eventually becomes effectively intelligible will be very obscure. We have already spoken of the 'sleep-state' which is the result of healthy forgetting and how waking from it results in increased independence of mind. Could we then be right in assuming that an electrifying observation, once it has been taken in, needs to go through a period of incubation before it can begin to function as knowledge? Friedrich Copei, who has compiled a rich store of such examples in an attempt to pinpoint "the fruitful moment in the educational process", speaks of a 'cleft' between the initial 'aperçu' and the unexpected dawning of the mature insight.[108] Could it not be that such intervals promote the individualised assimilation of knowledge, that is so often found lacking in today's schools?

Such considerations lead to the question of whether there are effective forms of learning – applicable also to language teaching – which have a much longer reach than the curriculum-bound methods currently regarded as 'state-of-the-art'. Are there forms of learning which follow the intricate pathways of individual biographies and in this way generate truly practicable results? In his *Faustus* novel, Thomas Mann, having given a magnificent example of this, invents for it the happy expression 'anticipatory' learning. This learning in the face of apparent ignorance he feels to be the most intensive, perhaps the most beneficial way of learning. And with guarded confidence he has his narrator, the teacher Serenus Zeitblom, remark on this point: "It might be thought to be a teacher's job to embody the contrary view, but well I know that young people strongly prefer it, and I have little doubt that, with

time, the gap skipped over fills up by itself."

We have no wish to deny the problems which still, at least for the time being, prevent 'anticipatory' learning being consistently put into practice. There is no shortage of such problems, both imposed and self-created. That, however, should not hinder us from keeping our priorities right and our eyes open for possible solutions.

6. In the Classroom

6.1 First Steps

Among the best-known peculiarities of Waldorf education is the fact that foreign language teaching starts in Class One. For Steiner, this followed quite naturally from his developmental psychology, and so at the founding of the first Waldorf school it was introduced from the word go. Three periods per week in each of two languages, either English and French or English and Russian, is currently normal practice in Germany. The classes tend to be large and at this level are not divided. In contrast to State schools, where the possibility of an early start on languages has been mooted from time to time, but never tried out on any scale apart from a few currently running experiments, there is a broad field of experience in this area in the more than six hundred Waldorf schools world-wide. The most important characteristics of language lessons at primary level in Waldorf schools have been described by *Christoph Jaffke* in a book full of well-chosen examples from his own English teaching.[109]

In keeping with Steiner's educational ideas, Waldorf language teaching in the first three years sets great store by the principle of *participatory imitation*, which carries over from the first septennium and remains active until the 'rubicon' at the age of ten (cf. 5.3). Taking proper advantage of this means that the source of the foreign language is the teacher speaking directly to the children, framing and supporting the spoken word with practised facial expressions and well-rounded gestures. The new language then impinges upon the children's senses, primarily as a combination of sound-shape and rhythm, and only secondarily as the carrier of meaning. This, of course, does not rule out the possibility that meaning will be perceived directly in the sound-shapes themselves. Rudi Lissau has described the children's mental state at this time as 'penumbral awareness',[110] which means that their sense of

language is only marginally disturbed by the exacting demands of conceptual rationality. In this 'penumbral' state, then, words and usages are playfully participated and absorbed into memory to be grasped in their exact meaning only much later. At this stage, poetic material is particularly appropriate. In using it, the children will be involved in oral repetition, mime, choral recitation, song and dance – artistic activities which parallel the painting and modelling that go on in other lessons. If certain expressions are repeatedly used in enjoyable contexts, such as little dramatic dialogues or guessing games, this will serve to anchor certain structures in readiness for their being lifted into consciousness at a later date. In this way, over the course of three years a wide basic vocabulary and a host of useful expressions can be absorbed, and thereby form the basis for future grammar work. It is all to the good when the texts thus learned outstrip the children's understanding to some extent.

Jaffke describes what a Waldorf child of average ability will have retained after three years of foreign language teaching in the following terms:

> "She[111] has a command of the important phonemes of the new language and has a sound feeling for its patterns of intonation. She understands appropriately told stories and is capable of coping with a part in a small play. She can take part in simple conversations about the weather, family and school and has a store of rhymes, poems, songs and games of various kinds. She has an elementary active vocabulary, covering, as a rule, the following areas: parts of the body, objects in the classroom, spatial directions, prepositions, colours, numbers, time, plants and animals, weather, days of the week, seasons and festivals, crafts and professions. Grammatical structures of varying complexity underlie all her spoken language. Of these a certain number are laid down through practice; the children use them, but they are no more consciously aware of the existence of grammar than they were while learning their mother tongue. Among the most important elements of grammar in the first years of school are: present (simple and progressive), past tense, singular and plural forms of nouns, personal and demonstrative pronouns."[112]

From the very outset, according to the insights that have emerged from Steiner's thinking on the sense of language, it is of prime importance in lessons for moments of *productive activity* to alternate with moments of *attentive listening*. These represent two different moods, the former more outgoing and involved with movement, the latter more still and inward. At the *transition* from one to the other these two 'moods' interpenetrate, mutually enhancing each other, and after several such transitions this mutual enhancement results in a state which is the optimum for the effective functioning of the sense of language. This balanced state has been called *relaxed alertness*. The teacher needs to be able to work with the subtleties of feeling involved in such a process, the 'feelings incidental to the normal run of teaching' already mentioned (cf. 5.6.). The artistic ability to create a rhythmic interplay of suspense and relief, expectation and enjoyment, gravity and mirth, is the decisive factor in the success of language teaching, more so than in other subjects, and especially with very young children.

Part of the picture also is the situational context. The children should be enabled to feel at home. A basic atmosphere of well-being, which satisfies the 'sense of life' (i.e the sense which answers the question *How are you feeling?*) works wonders in language teaching. Hulloes and goodbyes, done with form and style, are a great help in this regard. How a lesson begins depends greatly upon whether the previous one was rounded off in the right manner. In the first years of school, much more than later, children love the imaginatively varied repetition of an established lesson pattern. The structure can be very simple, but it should be preserved over a long period of time. It should not be under-estimated what patient loyalty to a well-known pattern means for the

children's feeling of security in lessons, and consequently for their motivation. They settle themselves into such a pattern rather as if it were a familiar house, where everything has its place and the atmosphere is cosy. The first stage of learning and speaking a language is bound up with quite specific *situations*. It is therefore very advisable to enlighten parents on this matter, just in case they wonder why Waldorf pupils almost invariably behave outside the classroom as if they had never had any access to the school's progressive language teaching. It can take years before children are able to free what they have learned from the classroom situation and use it outside school.

Finally it may be pointed out that even early on it is perfectly possible, and indeed useful, to encourage in the children certain learning strategies and attitudes which recent research has shown to be conducive to success. For language acquisition is not so much a question of intelligence, concentration and hard work as may have been thought. Rather, an outstanding 'talent for languages' is widely thought to be a function of the following characteristics:

- an uninhibited readiness to confront and cope with problems and difficulties, described as a form of anxiousness which is *facilitating* (as opposed to *debilitating*, which is unfortunately all-too-common in language classrooms),
- a willingness in situations of doubt to take calculated risks – the faculty of *moderate risk-taking*,
- healthy self-esteem in relation to language capability, which can lead to positive, adventurous behaviour, described as *constructive assertiveness*,
- an ability to put up with, perhaps even to relish, multiple meanings, described as *tolerance of ambiguity*.

From these qualities arises a series of useful learning strategies The successful language learner takes pleasure in *solving puzzles*. He has a strong *urge to communicate*. But this is not associated with inhibitions of any kind, so that he is not afraid of being thought stupid. He is *prepared to make mistakes*, as long as he can learn and communicate in the process, and he is not put off by a certain amount of vagueness.

Children should be encouraged to develop such qualities as early as possible. This means, from the word go, plenty of praise, imaginative guesswork, experimental games, a minimum of criticism, and never the pedantic fussiness that mars so many language lessons. But it also means – for the purposes of recitation, learning by heart and introducing the use of dialogues – no banal texts; but rather – not worrying about difficult vocabulary – language of a high standard and aesthetic appeal, drawn from the finest poetry. As to how far one can go in this respect, the mother-tongue teaching in the Waldorf school shows us the way and there is no reason why foreign language teaching should lag behind. For the children only the best in language is good enough.

6.2 First Steps in Writing and Reading

As with the mother tongue, writing precedes reading in the foreign language in Waldorf schools. The arguments in favour of this we owe above all to Erika Dühnfort and Ernst-Michael Kranich.[113] It is indeed one of the best substantiated areas in the whole field of Waldorf education. Usually the first exercises in writing begin towards the end of Class Three. "In the foreign languages, turn to writing as late as possible," says Steiner, as recorded in the College Meeting Minutes.[114] At this stage the spoken word still has precedence over any kind of fixed text.

With the onset of Class Four begins the fine task of recording all that has been learned so far, together with much that is new. All this is written into books which follow the pattern of those used for main-lesson work. Each one is a sort of hand-made textbook. Being ten, all the children now have the 'rubicon' behind them. Consequently they are capable of observing and describing regularities in the structures of language, and what is more, of *playing* with

them. Here the first grammar lessons have their proper place (see below 6.10).

Each child takes great pleasure in writing up and illustrating his or her own language book – *My First English Reader, Mon Grand Cahier de Français*. After one or two years it contains a hoard of all that is worth knowing out of the early years: many poems, an elementary vocabulary of a few dozen key words, the most important grammatical rules. This painstakingly recorded material will accompany the children on their adventurous journey into the Upper School. Dorothee von Winterfeldt has provided an example of what such a book would be like and the care that goes into its making. She recommends a concentrated extract of the total content of the lessons.[115] Betty Heyder argues in another example for a strict separation between reading and grammar lessons. Her idea is to leave the fixing of grammatical rules until Class Five.[116]

The children may indeed end up with several books – one for reading, one for grammar, according to what their teacher prefers. But however the contents are organised, these language books provide the opportunity of injecting a certain aesthetic appeal and enjoyment into the dry business of early grammar and orthography. Considerable time can be devoted to this activity, for ultimately it economises effort. To go through the gradual and often amusing process of discovering and formulating rules of spelling or grammar, and finally of entering them in one's own personally decorated book of rarities, obviates the need for painful repetitive drills. Once finished, the book can be used at leisure as a source of other discoveries in the realm of language.

6.3 Recitation and Singing

Just as in main-lesson, singing and recitation – to as high an artistic level as possible – have their place in language lessons in Waldorf schools. The principal guidelines on this can be found in the 1919 course *Practical Advice to Teachers*.[117] Here, following on from the well-known observations in *Study of Man* on the polarity between blood and nerve, the artistic realm of the plastic-sculptural is set against that of the musical-poetic. Their coming together in a dynamic synthesis (in Goethe's sense of the term) to the mutual enrichment of both is hailed as the guiding motif for the education of the future. Nietzsche cast this polarity in terms of the Dionysian and Appollonian, and in these lectures Steiner takes this up, developing the idea further in subsequent courses for teachers. In singing and reciting with the children we combine the Dionysian element in language and music with the Apollonian power of form. The effort should therefore be made to preserve a practical connection between recitation and singing.

> "The music teacher and the teacher employing recitation should stick together, so that the one follows immediately after the other and a living connection grows up between them."[118]

And even if the language and singing teachers only rarely manage to visit each other's lessons as Steiner desired, it is still possible for the individual teacher to get a clear picture of how educationally effective this interplay between poetry and music can be.

Reciting and singing can both be backed up by various exercises. During his training the teacher will most likely have encountered the ingenious speech exercises invented by Steiner, some of which were tailor-made for the seminars given in conjunction with the lecture course of 1919.[119] In the process of developing his musical skills he may also have experienced the singing exercises of Valborg Werbeck-Svärdström, founder of the *Schule der Stimmenthüllung*, which traces its roots to Steiner and is now led by Jürgen Schriefer.[120] While these are of limited use for the purposes of foreign language teaching, the teacher may use them as a source of inspiration for inventing his own exercises. Otherwise he can turn to the folk tradition of each particular language, which will contain a rich store of tongue-twisters,

riddles, limericks, etc. well-suited for use as speech exercises. The singing exercises, not being bound to specific words, will of course not be so restricted in their application as those for speech.

Naturally singing and reciting are done in a standing position, and, until well into the Upper School, by ear i.e. without a written text.[121] The sense of language can be relied upon to make this possible. Observers are always astonished with what ease and accuracy well-trained Waldorf classes can repeat a text or melody spoken or sung (by heart) by the teacher. Such feats, of course, are not performed for the purposes of interpretation or analysis, but for enjoyment. Accordingly, the whole process can never be simply a mechanical learning by heart. Rather, the *heart* is the important ingredient. For mother-tongue language work Steiner recommends a sort of *prefigurative* interpretation (see below 6.5), which, through narration by the teacher, or through discussion, prepares the ground for the understanding of whatever text is coming. This may mean, especially in the foreign language context, anticipating certain difficulties, but it does not mean giving a summary of the contents. What the teacher says may not touch the contents of the text directly at all, but it will nonetheless seek to open the pupils' hearts to all the details of what is coming by stimulating their imagination or curiosity with well-chosen pictures. The principle is always the same: first awaken the feelings, which will later provoke individual understanding.

> "The long and the short of it is that nothing may be learnt by heart before the child can connect a precise feeling with all its details."[122]

On several occasions in the Stuttgart College Meeting Minutes, Steiner draws attention to the fact that while children can be carried along by the group spirit that forms through choral speaking, their ability to speak alone might suffer in the process. It is important, therefore, not to rely exclusively on choral speaking, but to make sure it is regularly interspersed with individual exercises which keep the children on their toes.

> "One must see to it that the children can also do on their own what they do in chorus, especially in language teaching."[123]

The teacher should, of course, beware of using individual speaking as a disciplinary measure.[124]

6.4 Drama and Improvisation

In his previously mentioned book on early language teaching, Christoph Jaffke shows how the children learn the names of the objects in the classroom. This occurs through their being repeatedly mentioned in connection with the carrying out of some action, so that, as Steiner says, "word and thing become linked through an activity"[125] and not through translation or abstract naming drills; i.e not "This is the floor," or "This is the ceiling,", but "I stamp on the floor," and "I stretch up to the ceiling," accompanied by appropriate actions. Once words and things have been connected in this way they can be used as names in a whole variety of little exercises, which in turn can be linked together to form so-called 'action chains'. With this we have taken our first tiny step in the direction of drama, and it is only a small step further to the beginnings of *written parts*, which gradually crystallise out of choral recitation and in turn lead to genuine dramatic dialogue. The previous sentence did not take up much space, but in time, of course, it spans a period of six or seven years. From the main-lesson work of Waldorf class teachers a series of collections of little plays have been made, in which experience has matched form, style and content to various stations on this time-span. Similar things have also been attempted for foreign language purposes,[126] compiled, at least in the case of English, partly from native-speaking main-lesson sources. Up until the age of twelve, acting the written parts is normally kept within the context of choral speaking and singing, and basically in the epic-narrative style. The 'casting' changes continually, so that all the players are simultaneously actors and bystanders and are not attached to any

particular role. Everyone speaks the whole play, even at places where, according to the external action, they are apparently silent. It is this that facilitates the fluidity of the casting, for when everyone knows all the parts the play can be cast differently each time it is played. After the 'rubicon', however, the children are likely to get increasingly restive about this style of performance, so the teacher should use discretion to create variations in the choral speaking, and to decide which passages could be spoken individually.

Theatre proper begins with the transition to the Upper School. Then the children are ready for fixed casting and real dramatic action. Besides the play traditionally done to mark the end of Class Eight, there is an abundance of theatrical activity in Waldorf schools, ranging from sketches for the summer fête to full evening programmes. For the latter the classics are generally preferred, but this does not (and should not) inhibit experiments with newer material.[127] In style these productions may often be influenced by Steiner's ideas for the renewal of dramatic art[128], or by Stanislavski or Michael Chekhov. But they may also be done out of pure enthusiasm. In the midst of all this, foreign language plays also have their place – traditional in some, but by no means all, schools. The arguments for expanding the tradition are very strong, however, both from an educational and a language point of view. By virtue of such plays cultural horizons are widened and appreciation of the foreign language deepened. Large scale foreign language productions are often done in Class Eleven, and are not really to be recommended before ClassTen. Before then – roughly the age of sixteen – pupils do not have the requisite feel for situation and language to be able to cope with a full-length play in a foreign language.

In recent years there has been a movement towards the use of dramatic improvisation techniques in language classrooms, those of Waldorf schools being no exception. These techniques and their application have been described thoroughly in a well-known work by Alan Maley and Alan Duff.[129] They are not to be confused with *role-play*, in which language learners are assigned artificial identities and in this way involved in various forms of pre-set situations. This is also a useful technique which well deserves a place in the Waldorf classroom, perhaps, indeed, as a way of anchoring things discovered through improvisation. But the main advantage that the techniques advocated by Maley and Duff have over the artificiality of role-play is that they set up genuine problem situations, which are open-ended, calling upon imagination and humour and injecting an element of surprise. They also require intense listening and reading of the intentions of others; in other words they are exercises in coping with ambiguities in direct interpersonal communication. When they work well they have the power to raise learners' language performance through getting them so involved in the situation that they forget they are speaking a foreign language. In such activities, then, the aims of modern communicative language teaching merge with Rudolf Steiner's thinking on the sense of language and its general pedagogical implications. They therefore deserve a place in Waldorf classrooms from the Middle School onwards.

6.5 Working with Texts

Shortly before the opening of the first Waldorf school in 1919, Steiner gave his first sketch of foreign language teaching, which is recorded in *Practical Advice to Teachers*. Here, next to the importance of straightforward speaking, he lays great emphasis on how to approach reading. For the oldest pupils in the school at that time (thirteen fourteen year-olds) he recommends carefully choosing passages for reading, which, once read, would be re-told in the pupils' own words with comment and discussion. Among the main ingredients of language lessons, he tells the teachers, should be:

> "Reading, accurate, well-pronounced reading, achieved not so much by instruction in the rules of pronunciation as by your reading aloud and the pupils then following your example; then re-telling, including the pupils' own thoughts about the passage read, these thoughts then expressed in the

respective foreign language – grammar and syntax would, of course, be dealt with separately from this....So much on the framework for language teaching."[130]

The next lecture deviates from this one in recommending that passages for reading first of all be spoken (by heart) by the teacher and repeated by the pupils. Most likely Steiner has Class Four or Five in mind here, the idea being that passages for reading should initially be treated in the same way as those for recitation, and once the children have 'understood them by ear' they would then be read from the book. Moreover, this reading would best be done at first as homework.

"To read aloud in class with the children following it in their books is simply to rob them of part of their lifetime."[131]

Among experienced language teachers, therefore, it is common practice to have the younger children read *in chorus*. Solo reading should not be begun too soon, and then only with familiar texts.

Asked at a later date about reading in Class Seven English lessons, Steiner replied:

"If each pupil has a copy of the reader, it is extremely instructive to call them up one by one to read out a passage from it straight off. In this way they will not only be reading but also thinking together."[132]

So, the younger pupils 'read by ear', and the older ones 'read by eye'? There are strong indications that a phase of *aural* understanding can be of benefit as a prelude to reading right into the Upper School, and indeed even with adult learners. In the words of the well-known writer on education F. Lionel Billows:

"Only when the pupils have become thoroughly familiar with a passage through hearing it read should they be permitted to feast their eyes on it."[133]

The teacher should decide when is the right moment to change over from hearing to seeing the text, but he should not skimp on the aural phase.

Now, in a Waldorf school the purpose of reading encompasses much more than simply the hearing and subsequent visual recognition of a piece of writing. The text, as a work of language and thought, should be *understood* as thoroughly as ever possible; but above all it should find a place in the pupils' *hearts*, or at least be *appreciated* with interest and enjoyment. They should be enabled to form a personal relationship to it, taking inspiration from it each in their own way. In this Steiner is very much in tune with recent trends towards a pupil-oriented approach to literature. In a similar vein *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, in an incisive speech to teachers of German, depicted the total failure of the practice of linguistic interpretation, which has invaded schools as a result of mistaken ideas based on the dictates of scientific theory of knowledge: "Reading is an anarchic act. Interpretation, especially if it claims to be exclusively correct, exists for the sole purpose of thwarting this act."[134] Steiner's earliest remarks on the interpretation of texts in school are no less drastic. His view is expressed, for instance, in somewhat diffuse form in lecture 3 of *Practical Advice to Teachers*:

"A lesson must be conceived and shaped as a whole. That which is necessary to the understanding of a poem must be implicit in the rest of the lesson."[135]

Four days later, in the sixth of the *Discussions with Teachers*, Steiner goes on to give two fully-fledged examples on introducing reading in the mother tongue. These set the general pattern of the Waldorf approach to reading. The thing is not to give the text a good academic going over, to dissect or analyse it into oblivion.[136] Rather is the whole aim of the experience of reading to give 'enjoyment' and 'unimpaired satisfaction'.

"I want to stress that you should never jeopardise the possible

effects of a piece of literature.....upon the pupils' sensibilities by reading it through with them and then pedantically explaining it. Psychological intuition will tell you that a passage of prose or a poem should affect the soul in such a way as to bring it satisfaction."[137]

However, we know, at the very latest since Dilthey's discovery of the 'hermeneutic circle', that any *experience* requires conscious *understanding* in order to attain the 'satisfying' vividness and fullness that characterise aesthetic enjoyment. But where is the necessary clarity to come from if not from the hard work of analysis and classification, or, as Steiner has it, from the fall into conceptual 'paralysis'?

For younger children the answer appears to be easy. Steiner recommends talking with the class in such a way that all the images, concepts and figures of speech that occur in the piece to be read have been touched on *before* reading begins. This means that the children should literally be 'touched' by what they hear, having been brought into a provisional state of 'dreaming' comprehension, which is nonetheless capable of picking up 'all the nuances' of the text such that 'nothing remains inexplicable'.[138] It would seem that what is meant here is a state of aesthetic anticipation, the state that sets in when all elements of the content have become accessible to personal feeling but not yet been given their ultimate conceptual shape. In the introduction to his book *Poetic Diction*, Owen Barfield speaks of poetic experience as that which produces a 'felt change of consciousness' and it is the possiblity of this entirely individual event occurring that the process here advocated seeks to keep open. In doing so, however, the teacher has to walk a fine line between saying enough to facilitate the experience, but not too much to predetermine or foreclose it. If this succeeds, the child will know what subtleties to look for and will already have been through a range of emotions in relation to the piece, through the whole will have remained open. The situation is resolved, but in no ultimate sense of course, when the piece is finally read and enjoyed, this 'enjoyment' itself being the aim of the whole process and the basis of the potential change of consciousness. This method, contrasting so sharply as it does with the normal 'scientific' way of dealing with texts, may be called *prefigurative* interpretation.

"Poems or pieces of literature....do not require learned commentary; the thing is to achieve full comprehension of a text without sacrificing the child's feelings. Hence the actual reading ... always comes last, and all that is required for the purpose of understanding is dealt with beforehand."[139]

Similar principles will be found to lie behind Steiner's suggestions on how to approach mother-tongue literature in the Upper School,[140] so that the answer to our question in relation to younger children would seem to be broadly applicable to the older ones as well. This impression is reinforced by observations relating to foreign language teaching contained in the College Meeting Minutes.

Here Steiner issued a challenge which so far has proved somewhat daunting to most Waldorf teachers. As early as the second year after the opening of the first Waldorf school he had suggested using extracts form *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens as reading material in Class Seven English lessons. In the Minutes for 24th April of the following year (1923), in answer to an English teacher who had objected that Dickens was too difficult even for Class Eight, he spoke of this again:

"You can rest assured that it ought to be possible for you to read Dickens with those children who still know next to nothing, and whatever they need to learn can best be derived from what you find there. Tell them how the story goes on. For the best way to solve your problem is most likely to familiarise them first of all with the content, and then to choose extracts that are not so difficult for work in class. It

must be possible to overcome these difficulties. Particularly for beginners this story is just the thing."[141]

Three clear principles for approaching reading are discernible in all that has been said so far, and here we find them implicitly summarised once more:

1. *the principle of prefigurative interpretation* ("familiarise them first of all with the content");

2. *the principle of conveying the essentials of the whole piece* ("tell them how the story goes on");

3. *the principle of selection* ("choose extracts that are not so difficult for work in class").

Magda Maier has given an exemplary account of these principles in action in a description of her work with a Class Eight. The process entailed: selective incorporation of material from other lessons, specific vocabulary exercises, agreed target dates for finishing each of the passages chosen, strategically placed written exercises (résumés, dictations), biographical and historico-political background, alternation between more intensive and more cursory reading. "In working on a foreign language text, reading comes last."[142]

A final commentary on the content of the story, which may for once be written in German (or whatever the mother tongue happens to be), is regarded by Magda Maier as a good way of rounding off the process properly.[143] Similarly Steiner felt that it was permissible to insert little mother-tongue narratives from time to time to enliven lessons, provided they had something to do with the foreign language,[144] and that pupils could be required to give synopses in their mother tongue as an alternative to translation.[145]

Finally we should mention scattered remarks of Steiner's to the effect that issues related to the reading material are best dealt with in an incidental, aphoristic way, as long as they do not go off at a tangent. This, for instance, is the recommended way to stimulate interest in the history of language.[146]

"Often from a word or a quirk of syntax you can create sparks and turn the searchlight upon whole epochs."[147]

Instead of abstract punctiliousness it is better to focus on characteristic examples. "The inspirational element in teaching comes through the concrete example."[148]

But what are we to make of this previously mentioned remark of Steiner's of the Minutes of 24th April, 1923: "You can rest assured that it ought to be possible for you to read Dickens with those children who still know next to nothing, and whatever they need to learn can best be derived from what you find there... Particularly for beginners this story is just the thing"? The key to this seems to me to lie in Steiner's repeated insistence upon the importance of the 'emotional atmosphere' of lessons (see above 5.6). Any Dickens text, at least in the unabridged version, presents an inexhaustible richness of *emotional* appeal. The social message based on bitter experience, the incongruous settings, the scurrilous characters, the many little dramatic effects (how well *A Christmas Carol* lends itself to being dramatised!), the lively interplay between unabashedly sentimental seriousness and gentle or rumbustious mirth create a wonderfully varied emotional tapestry. A teacher who appreciates this himself, and who relishes the delights offered by such a text, even while preparing it for class, will infect the pupils with his own enthusiasm. Thus he has a chance particularly of reaching the less intelligent pupils, who would have little purely cognitive grasp of the text. This indeed is much more likely to be the case than if he were to use some banal English reader or a less demanding text which made him yawn. His lack of interest would be sure to be noticed and affect the pupils' motivation accordingly. It is the 'less able' pupils who benefit most directly from lessons that involve action and engage their sympathies.

6.6 Conversation

Steiner said very little about the use of conversation in language lessons, but fortunately his remarks were as clear as they were brief. In lecture 10 of *Practical Advice to Teachers* he recommends that from as early on as possible the children be encouraged to engage in conversation in the foreign language and that the teacher should merely guide it.

> "You will notice that the children very much enjoy the experience of talking to each other in the foreign language, with the teacher only joining in to make small corrections here and there, or at most to guide the conversation. This means, for instance, that if someone talks about something boring he would steer it towards something more interesting. The teacher must be really on his toes. You have to imagine the children before you as a choir you are conducting, but at the same time you pay more attention to their inner state than a conductor normally does."[149]

In keeping with his basic educational principle of effecting a balance between 'listening' and 'individual work' (see above 5.6), he sees *reading* and *conversation* as the two key activities of language lessons after the age of 9/10, where the mainly passive receptivity of the former with its 'prefigurative' phase would be counterbalanced by the active, individual nature of the latter. Put forward in 1919, this idea stands in marked contrast to the translation method typical of the time.

> "Reading and expressing one's own thoughts in the foreign language are far more worthwhile activities than translating back and forth."[150]

The first Waldorf teachers seem to have had difficulties keeping to this. Later on in the College Meeting Minutes we find:

> "Your language teaching must be more of a dialogue ... Don't just spout, but get the children talking as much as possible."[151]

The exercise of retelling what has been read occupies a middle position between reading and conversation and could, it is suggested, serve as a bridge from one to the other, especially when the reading matter is a play.[152]

Currently, it would seem a weak point of foreign language teaching in Waldorf schools that conversation, at least in the middle years, is not practised enough, nor are the necessary steps taken to encourage it. This challenge must be met through the use of appropriate exercises in further training for teachers. Ida Bisaz has observed that language performance in the Lower School has not reached the levels expected by Rudolf Steiner and consequently takes the view that the 'imitation method' of the first three years should be succeeded by a special 'middle school method' which would have a large component of translation and vocabulary learning. With all due respect to her long experience, I feel that a regression to such obsolete methods provides no adequate answer to the problem.[153]

The solution to the problem can only lie in encouraging the children from the very beginning to be *individually active*. It is perfectly possible in the first year of school to begin with this. Even with the small vocabulary they have in the first year it is perfectly possible to foster the spirit of play, so that the children not only imitate but speak on their own initiative. Like the previously mentioned, successful language learner (see above 6.1), they will delight in taking creative risks, however small they might be. Perhaps such experiments need only take up a few minutes of each lesson, perhaps longer. At the moment we have too little experience to say definitely what would be most effective. Nevertheless, every Waldorf language teacher should feel called upon by Steiner's recommendations to venture a bit more in this direction than is the norm. And that goes especially for

teachers of children in 'the heart of childhood'. When could such an approach be more appropriate?

6.7 *Vocabulary Work*

Even in Waldorf schools there is debate from time to time as to whether it is worthwhile to 'learn vocabulary'. On this issue the defenders of artistically oriented language teaching find themselves confronted with 'hard-liners' who view the toil of learning words by heart as a virtue and proof of success. Behind this attitude stands the conventional notion of the memory as a data-bank. If pocket calculator-style electronic dictionaries can produce the foreign equivalent of any German wordat the touch of a button, surely with a bit of effort – input/output – this must be possible for pupils too. And do we not want to turn our children into hard-working human beings, properly equipped for 'the struggle of life' (or at least make sure that they pass their 'A'-levels)?

In answer to this, Waldorf education can begin by pointing out the health risk involved in vocabulary learning. Steiner warns of a harmful acceleration of physical growth, of pallor, anxiety and a disposition to metabolic disturbances later in life (migraine, sclerosis).[154] But – so the counter-argument might run – is this all founded on scientific evidence? And even if it were, do we not take many medicines without worrying about our long-term health even though they have harmful or painful side-effects?

More convincing is the argument, put forward with great force in the educational debates of the sixties and seventies, that points out the primitive banality of all learning processes broken down into their smallest steps in the manner of a computer programme. No-one – except for a few die-hards – believes any more in the effectiveness of learning machines in any educational processes that have to do with *individual development*. Even here, however, there are still open questions. Why should schools not retract a high ideal in favour of a specific, practical goal, as is common in the 'real world' for instance, for the purposes of passing examinations? And what use is a brush with the genius of language or knowledge of noble literature if pupils cannot book a room in the foreign country or read a menu?

We have shown that out of Steiner's pedagogical science, his insights on the physiological basis of thinking, feeling and willing and his psychology of perception and memory, broad new perspectives open up for foreign language teaching (see above 2.4, 5.5, 5.6). Viewed in that light, the special problem of vocabulary seems to pale in significance. According to the detailed description by Christoph Jaffke of early language teaching in Waldorf schools (see above 6.1), children develop a fairly comprehensive, if at first *implicit*, vocabulary in the course of the first three years. It is gained from poems, songs, and many kinds of games, and not in the form of clearly defined 'items of vocabulary'. With skilful guidance they can be taught the main structural words of the target language, which account for nearly half the vocabulary of a text of medium difficulty, and still have a few hundred more at their disposal.[155]

A difficulty which should not be underestimated, however, lies in the fact that all the speaking done in the first school years, whether it be simple repetition or freely composed sentences, is completely attached to the habitual classroom situation. Young children need to be particularly keen and confident to use what they have learned outside the classroom. Only those very talented in language will do so at first (see above 6.1), and with this we can be perfectly satisfied up to the end of Class Three. But after this, it is a question for Waldorf language teachers of finding the right moment to start out on a new tack with fresh demands.

In this connection it should not be forgotten that at no time does the acquisition of vocabulary come more easily than during the so-called 'middle of childhood' (Müller-Wiedemann), between the ages of nine and twelve. At this stage the children's natural state of development is suited to the discursive handling of language in a way that it never was before or ever will be again, and they are thus very open to the learning of new words. For this reason it

seems completely misguided to carry on with the imitation-based style of teaching used in Classes 1-3, as is sometimes done. Instead the children must be challenged into being inventive, even artistic. At this age there is nothing they like better than competitive games which are played in gymnastics, but can equally well form an element in music, painting and drawing, and mental arithmetic. Similarly in language lessons, the practising of words and idioms, the application of grammatical rules, the searching and guessing games and the acting out of dialogues can also be given this playful touch. What is meant here is not objective assessment through multiple-choice tests or other such mindless methods; rather something closer to the spirit of the competitive games of Greek antiquity, of whose mentality the 'middle of childhood' is so reminiscent. The teacher can use the necessary tact to ensure that every child 'wins' at some point. Particularly for this age-group, however, the achievement expected should not be set too low.

In this connection – as in arithmetic or spelling in the mother tongue – suitable tests can be worthwhile, as long as they do not put weaker pupils under discriminatory pressure.

To aid progress in learning it is also advisable to bring parents into the picture by showing them the results of "freer" Waldorf methods. How would it be, for instance, to have little school-festival-type performances in individual classes? Appearing in the main hall, before the whole school community, is only possible for younger children if they have a fixed text. In the cosy parental circle of a particular class, gathered together on a Saturday afternoon in the eurythmy room or the gym like one big family, in addition to the well-known ring-games and guessing games, they could risk trying out little improvised dialogues. In this way the parents would see how creatively – even if with restricted vocabulary – even the youngest and weakest can express themselves in the foreign language, and what fun they have in doing it. By means of little demonstrations like this it can be shown how quickly, and in what amusing ways, foreign words can be learnt through hearing, or what dramatic improvisation or other modern teaching methods can achieve. Extracts from reading lessons (see above 6.5), from work with text variations and word-fields could then follow. Perhaps the guest could be encouraged to try things out for themselves. Nothing can be more convincing!

The Waldorf movement as a whole now faces the question of whether it should not at last submit its language teaching methods to scientific evaluation. Today there are suitable diagnostic methods, developed on the basis of comprehensive experimental research in this field, which would certainly not undermine to the special qualities of the Waldorf method. In the critical area of vocabulary work, appropriate investigations could do much to boost confidence that we are on the right lines.

6.8 Translation

In the first three school years all kinds of translation work are to be strictly avoided, according to Steiner. Although dictionaries must inevitably give the impression that there can be direct equivalence between words of different languages, this masks the fact that any given word constitutes an 'experiential complex' made up of scarcely definable shades of feeling and meaning, and that it is here we should look for the inherent 'reality' of the particular language (see above 2.2).

> "If we designate differing things as 'equivalent' then we are no longer attending to the different feelings they provoke."[156]

That is why, at the beginning of foreign language learning, speaking relates directly to objects, without any reference to what they are called in the mother tongue.[157]

But also in connection with the later school years Steiner speaks rather sceptically of translation as a learning technique. It may be convenient for the teacher, but it wastes time, is uneconomical,[158] and is only very occasionally the right thing to do.[159]

In the College Meeting Minutes of 2nd June, 1924 Steiner

makes a summary sketch of the developmental course of the second septennium. In addition to the first three years, which are conducted wholly in the foreign language, he names two further stages: from Classes 4 to 6, and from 7 to 8. For the former he envisages free renderings into the foreign language of short texts or conversation extracts; for the latter re-tellings of stories and, 'only occasionally', translations in the narrower sense.[160]

Children who cling anxiously to their mother tongue – "what does that mean in German/in English"? – should be given special care and encouragement.[161] One should not, however, give in to their urge to have the unsettlingly unfamiliar language defined by giving one to one translations. Only by struggling through this discomfort can they acquire the ability to tolerate ambiguity, which is one of the keys to successful language learning (see above 6.1).

6.9 With or Without Textbook?

This is a controversial question in Waldorf education, in spite of the fact that Steiner's attitude on the issue is relatively clear. He touches on the delicate point just a few weeks after the opening of the first Waldorf school in a series of remarks on the mistaken teleological mentality evident at the time in popular scientific textbooks. He says the teachers might well use them for preparing their lessons, but nevertheless recommends the old edition of Brehm's Tierleben as a book in which 'current trivialities' are avoided.[162] In a similar vein, in the *Supplementary Course* of 1921 he complainsof the triviality of currently available readers, and advises the teachers to compile for themselves suitable material "from the classics or elsewhere".[163] In 1922 and 1923 the topic comes up on many occasions in his meetings with the teachers.[164] In the Minutes, which were never very thoroughly recorded, there is a statement which at first sight appears to be a glaring contradiction. It was made in answer to a newly-arrived teacher who asked if any kind of textbook should be introduced in language lessons:

> "I have nothing against introducing a textbook; none of the textbooks is any use. The class has no common thread that ties them together. Choose a textbook, and show it to me when I return."[165]

Is this the voice of resignation striking a compromise while taking into account the special needs of a new, inexperienced colleague? Or is it an uncharacteristic piece of English irony? It would have been useful to have heard Steiner's intonation as he said this. In any case the problem appears to remain unclarified for the time being. A good year later, Steiner is complaining about lack of commitment and motivation, when we encounter the following:

> "For instance, we really must put a stop to the use of these appalling, trashy school textbooks."[166]

And two weeks later comes the suggestion:

> "It would be good if the Waldorf staff could set about putting together decent textbooks that take account of our pedagogical principles."

There were already some fairly good compilations, such as Richter's collection of legends and sagas, which was neither trivial nor too demanding.[167] If there is still room for doubt that proper textbooks are meant here, and not just useful collections of story material, this is dispelled a little later when he talks expressly of a *Lehrbuch* ("That would be very good").[168]

At the meeting of 14th February, 1923, proposal is put forward to write and publish a *Guide for the Teaching of Mathematics and Geometry in the Upper School*. This would be in two volumes: one for the teacher and a shorter one for the pupils , which could be written in the manner of a novel and used accordingly. It is apparent from the context that Steiner was also thinking in terms of geography and grammar books.[169] At that time, however, the college of teachers

was beset by difficulties, both internal and to do with the wider anthroposophical movement, and so the proposed textbooks never materialised. In this situation, Steiner proposed that in the meantime lessons should be recorded in writing as an aid to the following year's lesson preparations.[170] On the question of ordering a history book for Class 12 in connection with the run-up to their *Abitur* he suggested that the pupils build up their own books out of summaries dictated to them.

> "Would it not be possible to have the pupils make notes on the lesson contents in such a way that we could do without an actual textbook?"[171]

Steiner, then, had no objections in principle to the use of textbooks in a number of subjects. Indeed, he was in favour of the writing of such works. At the same time, however, he set certain requirements as to their form and content. The difficulty we have today consists in deriving from these requirements agreed criteria for assessing the merits of specific textbooks.

A case in point is the controversy sparked off among Waldorf language teachers by Susanne Kohn.[172] She argued that the use of a good textbook makes for economy in teaching, not, of course, across the board, but certainly in Classes 9 and 10, where it can provide a basis for the grand recapitulation of the language which then takes place. She did not approve of the prevalent practice of distributing photocopies of selected texts. As an alternative many textbooks were indeed unsuitable on account of their visual style and/or content, but in the fifties and sixties there had been a number published "which deal with topics from cultural history in a sensible way and are, at the very least, optically bearable".[173] This, then, was a plea in favour of the limited use of critically selected textbooks with children old enough not to be seriously harmed in the process. Faced with the somewhat less than ideal situation of foreign languages found today in Waldorf schools as a result of inadequate teaching in the Lower and Middle schools, Steiner himself would presumably have agreed. Nevertheless, he is very unlikely to have thought it worthwhile to work "with sequences of related texts specially designed for language teaching"; nor would he have agreed that "the development of a basic vocabulary, which is delivered by the textbook and facilitates the later reading of good literature", could no more be managed single-handedly than "the compiling of a dictionary"; and he is equally unlikely to have thought it "senseless to ignore the work of all the experts who produce this material".[174]

Certainly it would do no harm for the Waldorf language teacher to be in the picture about the relative frequency of words and which ones need special emphasis and practice.[175] But when word frequency statistics are used to write books with a graded series of related texts 'specially designed for language lessons', the Waldorf teacher can only be repelled by their contrived sterility. Such books contradict every central tenet of Waldorf education. The direction of Steiner's thinking on this point is exemplified by some remarks he made about the Fröbel[176] and Montessori[177] learning materials.

> "I would never introduce things for use in school that do not exist anywhere in real life. No living relationship can develop with that which has no life in it. The Fröbel materials are artefacts contrived for school. Only genuine cultural artefacts taken from real life should find a place in school."[178]

A quick, overall solution to the problem is probably not to be had. We will probably have to accept it – let us hope – temporarily as an unavoidable necessity that in some schools individual teachers, who through their training have come to rely upon such material, will make use of textbooks in the restricted way described by Susanne Kohn. Be that as it may, the following guidelines remain:

1. No graded textbooks before Class 8.

2. Instead, good collections, available from bookshops in the

form of anthologies, the already existing Waldorf material,[179] or compilations according to individual taste.

3. *As background*, reference works (dictionaries, grammars, standard works on literary history, land and culture).

Ultimately we will only make progress in the whole matter by improving the effectiveness of language teaching in the Lower and Middle School (see above 6.6), and that means putting in place opportunities for both full-time and further training in the subject. Textbook or no textbook is a question of teacher training.

6.10 Teaching Grammar

How much and what kind of grammar teaching best serves the purposes of learning a foreign language? Among experts there is still much disagreement on this question.[180] Some, as scientists themselves, tend to over-rate the importance of exact grammatical knowledge for success in language learning; others plead for a more pupil-oriented approach, placing the emphasis upon "individual production and exploration of language"[181] and consequently restricting the dosage of grammar. A particularly radical position has been taken up by a high-ranking official from the Bavarian Ministry of Education. Writing under a pseudonym with great originality, he argues that, for language learning, grammar is completely superfluous, and should be reserved for the intellectual élite in grammar schools, where it would take its place beside such special interest subjects as logic and literary aesthetics, completely separate from the ordinary process of language acquisition.[182]

Among laymen the matter is viewed more simply. Most people think of grammar as a system of rules which enable speech to function properly in the same way as the objects of the physical world obey the mathematical laws of mechanics. According to this view, a grammar book is to foreign language teaching as a technical handbook is to car maintenance: an instruction manual for constructing words and sentences. Such an attitude comes naturally to a world of education, permeated, as ours still is, with the Cartesian thought patterns of the exact sciences. Words, however, are not like spare parts. Rather they are – as we have known at least since the time of Wilhelm von Humboldt – flexible elements of flowing utterance, continually changing their form and meaning. In our time no-one has reinforced this view more strongly than Owen Barfield, who, in considering the history of such changes, has described them as "flashing, iridescent shapes like flames – ever-flickering vestiges of the slowly-evolving consciousness beneath them".[183] Thus language appears as a multi-layered, living reality, to which individual words provide access. This is all entirely in keeping with Steiner's view of the 'reality' of language and its accessibility (see above 2.2). How, then, does this affect the teaching of grammar in Waldorf schools?

The first thing to be noticed is that Steiner's approach – as with all areas of Waldorf methodology – is to encourage in the children *perception through feeling* and *active experience*. Erika Dühnfort, in her basic work on the subject of mother-tongue grammar teaching, has developed for this the well-turned formula: "To and fro between language *experience* and language *awareness*."[184] She points to the particularly instructive insights in the lecture course for teachers given in Basel in 1920, where Steiner advises directing the children's attention towards grammatical phenomena that they had long ago internalised through the every-day experience of speaking.

> "The children are encouraged to speak sentences with which they are very familiar, in terms both of meaning and of shape. And then we begin drawing their attention, in an appropriate manner, to the things they have been doing unconsciously. This need not be turned into a pedantic analysis, but by taking hold in various ways of the grammar that the child has so far simply lived – through his or her ability to speak – you can raise it into consciousness. The whole of grammar is thus at your disposal."[185]

For Steiner, this basic approach would most probably be applicable also to foreign language grammar teaching. Grammar is not to be taught 'pedantically', as he says in the College Meeting Minutes, it is "only a means of 'feeling' language".[186] Indeed he never tired of inveighing against pseudo-scientific pedantry, banality and tediousness in grammar lessons. In 1923, in a special college meeting on therapeutic questions, he observed that the way grammar was normally taught was damaging to health, that "a substantial amount of grammar"[187] was taught at the Waldorf school, and that pupils were overtaxed by incomprehensible philological terms.

> "The point is that the children should be able to express themselves properly, not that they know what an adverb or a subjunctive is."[188]

There was, he said, "too much terrorising of the children with undigested terminology".[189]

As an alternative in keeping with his anthroposophical account of the spirit of language, Steiner calls for a 'living' approach to grammar. "The teacher has to live and breathe the genius of language!"[190] Anyone attempting to answer this call would do well to begin by putting all curricula and examination regulations aside and setting off on a single-handed voyage of exploration into the fascinating realms of language. Just here, where at first sight one would expect reliable regularities, things discovered spontaneously out of personal interest are what counts.

Nevertheless, it is perhaps not inappropriate to have a look at some indications of Steiner's specially concerned with this area. It is striking to see how emphatic he was from the very outset that grammar teaching develop ideally out of open classroom *discussion*.[191] Already in 1919 he put forward this view in the 'logic' lecture (no. 9) of *Study of Man*, enlarging upon it in the *Supplementary Course* of 1921 (see above 5.7). One key problem that has remained unresolved from that time is the distinction made between 'ready-made conclusions', which should be avoided, 'living concepts', which 'take shape organically' in the course of the child's development, and concepts "which do not really need to be flexible, [and which] provide the child with a sort of mental skeleton".[192]

All premature definitions are designated as 'ready-made conclusions' ("Too much definition drains the life out of teaching"[193]); likewise the sample sentences given in illustration of grammatical points in grammar textbooks. Steiner always stresses that such sentences should not be committed to memory, but generated anew for the given classroom situation. Indubitably we could also include all forms of *pattern drill*, and all gap-filling exercises involving *one* correct answer under this heading. They allow no scope to the imagination.

What Steiner means by 'living' concepts I have attempted to describe elsewhere. The implication is not only one of 'characteristic qualities' as opposed to 'definition', as is stated in *Study of Man*, but also one of a type of image or imaginative form which is very closely related to Goethe's idea of the 'symbol'.[194] In language lessons we touch this area any time we call forth *images* in the children that correspond to some reality. This may occur in reading, in dealing with some aspect of culture or style, but equally well in grammar lessons. Again Erika Dühnfort, who has developed a practical method for depicting the movements of sentences, has provided the most comprehensive guidelines in this area, including interpretations of the relevant Steiner passages.[195]

Steiner recommended that grammar teaching proper should begin after the 'Rubicon' at age 9/10, and that working out grammatical inductively *rules* through classroom discussion would contribute to strengthening each child's newly-awakened feeling of selfhood. These rules we are probably justified in regarding as 'skeleton concepts'.

On the occasionally raised question of whether grammar should be dealt with in the foreign language Steiner did not adopt a fixed position.

> "You can do it according to inclination and conviction."[196]

In this context, he then goes on to speak of the possible benefits of well-rounded descriptions or explanations of points of grammar given in the foreign language. To me, however, it seems extremely doubtful whether the *discussions* on grammar, on which Steiner lays so much weight, could have the necessary spontaneity and fluency outside the mother tongue. Here every child must have the opportunity to make a contribution; and performance in the foreign language will only very rarely be adequate to the task. Choosing and getting used to the *terminology* is already demanding enough. The pupils have to be enabled to link their *feeling* to an unfamiliar technical term, which is to become for them an every-day concept. And this word must occur in a *meaningful context*, which each can reproduce from his or her own point of view.

> "It is not only the children's fault if they don't pay attention in language lessons. Why should they be interested in what an adverb is? That is just a barbaric noise. It will only be any use if you forge a reliable context, within which they can come back to such words again and again."[197]

How much time is wasted, also in Waldorf schools, in crabbedly re-explaining cursorily introduced technical terms, each explanation more cursory than the one before – for after all it is only a time-consuming repetition – a chain of systematic demotivation! And how economical, by contrast, is the open discussion, which gives free scope to the children's own perceptions, suppositions, sensations, suggested solutions and terminological suggestions, and for just this reason is remembered with pleasure. Once again, Erika Dühnfort has given a description of how this looks in practice.[198] It is worthwhile at the start to devote plenty of time to it. Also it is essential that all the language teachers for a particular class consult together on how the basic grammatical concepts are to be introduced in the main-lesson on language, what Latin terms will be added to the native ones, and when and what other ones may be necessary for foreign language purposes.

The question of what aspects of grammar should be taught at what age will be considered in the next section (6.10). Summing up this one, it would seem to be Steiner's opinion that modern language teaching can get by with relatively little explicitly theoretical grammar, rather in the same way as a high musical standard can be achieved in many Waldorf schools with a minimum of music theory. What little is done, however, needs to be anchored very carefully and imaginatively in each child's perceptual and feeling life if it is to enlarge their cultural appreciation of language and increase their knowledge. As in *cordon bleu* cookery, so in language learning, the quality of the starting ingredients is all important: The language main course is a choice blend of *listening*, artistic and conversational *speaking*, and sheer *involvement* in the life of the language. To all this, grammar is the seasoning. You only add what is necessary to make an enjoyable and digestible dish.

6.11 Curriculum, or no Curriculum?

The 1919 course *Practical Advice to Teachers* contains Steiner's very first sketch of a foreign language curriculum.[199] Apart from a few aphoristic remarks in connection with something else, the subject is not considered again until the Summer of 1924 in one of his last meetings with the teachers, where it came up in connection with the difficulties that continued to surround foreign languages in the new school. He began by reminding them of the problematical fact that year after year children were having to be admitted with no previous knowledge of foreign languages, so that it was impossible to devise a 'strict' curriculum. Asked then if such an age-specific plan would be desirable or whether they should content themselves with something along more general lines, Steiner surprisingly took a completely different tack. Contrasting it with the more firmly established contents of the main-lesson curriculum, he stressed the more 'discretionary' character of language teaching and the fact that, in principle, he

was not in favour of any restrictive plan for this area.

> "All in all, our language teaching has something more discretionary about it. What goes on in the first two periods every-day [i.e. main-lesson] is for us the foundation of education. Language teaching must also in the future be allowed more scope for flexibility."[200]

What does this mean? If we interpret Steiner's words in terms of the situation, the clear implication must be: even should we arrive at some future date at a more regular intake, we would still wish language teaching to be less tied in curricular terms than other areas of the school. We would wish it to have the same leeway as other artistic subjects.[201] The general guidelines worked out at the meeting in the summer of 1924 have acquired the name 'the loose curriculum'.[202] Steiner does not even consider division into strict age-groups necessary for language lessons.

> "We should not organise things so strictly by classes for language teaching. It has come about that way, but basically there it no need for it."[203]

If one adds to this Steiner's remarks on choice of reading material or on the aphoristic treatment of language history and grammatical phenomena (cf. 6.5 and 6.9), it becomes abundantly clear just what scope for *imaginative, circumstantial discretion* is built into the process of language teaching in Waldorf schools. Ordering foreign language teaching and learning processes into a graded series of operational steps in terms of the latest in curriculum theory is somewhat unthinkable for the Waldorf school.

Accordingly, any attempt to fix this subject's content class by class will always remain questionable, and completely in the hands of the staff of the particular school. They will be responsible for deciding the case for or against such measures in response to staffing and local conditions. It seems doubtful to me whether arrangements of this sort on a wider-than-regional basis – say, to facilitate smooth transfers of pupils from one Waldorf school to another – are worthwhile. Be that as it may, it is only when we turn to Steiner that we find anything like a clear curricular framework for the teaching of *grammar*. The basic format is :

1. no explicit grammar before the 'rubicon' at age 9/10;
2. theory of word formation between the ages of 9 and 12;
3. syntax only after the age of 12.[204]

Following this ideal, all systematic grammar should be concluded with the grand recapitulation of Class 9.[205] In the four succeeding years, grammar, apart from emergency repetitions, should only be treated aphoristically, in conjunction with poetics, stylistics and general aesthetic questions.[206]

In connection with reading Steiner does give some aphoristic suggestions related to specific situations, but no binding format. The only thing that is clear, apart from the classics, to which he often refers, is that he felt modern literature, together with an overall survey of literary history, to be important in the upper classes. Nevertheless, in curriculum matters the spontaeneous interests of pupils and teachers are still the surest roads to success.

6.12 Perchance to Stream

In May and June, 1919, before the actual founding of the Waldorf School, Rudolf Steiner gave a series of three lectures on a theme which today we would probably call *Education as if People Mattered*. They were held before members of the Anthroposophical Society, and in them Steiner made a passionate statement of an ideal which today is still waiting for its complete realisation. This is the ideal of a 'single school for all people',[207] with a programme of 'general education' for people from all backgrounds and as preparation for all occupations, the academic as well as the manual.[208] There

would be no scientific specialisation, which is a matter for higher education, even though at that level it is also a problem.[209] Even a university ought to be nothing other than 'a cross-section of real life'.[210]

The inaugural lecture courses held in the following August and September are imbued with the same spirit. In the new school, no child should be kept in, and the teachers are enjoined to have complete respect and patience for the differing pace of each child's development. They should not, so Steiner advises in connection with his very first suggestions on language teaching, 'jump to conclusions' about the abilities of the children in their care.[211]

Through the medium of the College Meeting Minutes we can follow how this ideal was modified by necessary compromises during the first phase of the new Waldorf School. In the previously mentioned lectures, Steiner had already envisaged foreign language instruction for all children as a part of "general education".[212] And in *Practical Advice to Teachers* he gives advice on how to cope with the difficulties of teaching languages to children of all ages from Classes One to Eight who have never before encountered a foreign language.[213] Then on 25th September, in the very first college meeting after the opening of the school, there is talk of splitting classes into beginners and more advanced pupils,[214] of the "problem of gifted and less-gifted children",[215] and of streaming children "according to their abilities".[216] I.e. in the face of such 'jumping to conclusions' Steiner stood firm.

> "The children often do not reveal what they have inside them ... There will always be some who are weak in this or that subject. This can often be due to habitual mistakes which at some point suddenly stop. These then drag on through childhood until, in a particular class, the child suddenly sees the light and throws them off."[217]

But the difficulties evidently turn out to be somewhat intractable. Towards the end of this first school year the setting up of a separate course for new admissions to the Upper School is being mooted. Steiner's response – branded 'impracticable' – is to wonder whether for language lessons it might not be a good idea to have groups made up of pupils of different age levels, although it is not clear how wide an age difference he had in mind.

> "On the whole one can say that, in languages, mixed-age classes are perhaps appropriate, for the younger pupils would learn from the older ones, while the older pupils would benefit from having to help the younger ones along."[218]

Here also he quite clearly rejects streaming according to ability.

There is only one place where Steiner appears to have spoken in favour of streaming. But even from this one hastily written note it is by no means unequivocal that he ever wavered from his stance on this matter. This note was written at the end of the 1920/21 school year and envisages groups "with similar levels of knowledge and ability".[219] But this might well have referred to the specific problems arising from the continual flow of new pupils to the school.[220]

In any case Steiner expressly advises, a few months later, that children should not be lifted out of their classes (unless language teaching be organised independently of age *across the board*),[221] and in 1922/3 he once more underlines the fact that, in principle, he is against streaming by ability. He is more inclined to put up with the resulting difficulties and try other ways of coping with them.

> "Everywhere else the practice is to downgrade the less able pupils in the Upper School classes. This is even common in Primary Schools. As this will not be part of our practice, we will have to overcome our inclinations in this direction. We will always have a pot-pourri of the gifted and less gifted."[222]

Finally, a few weeks later, a workable compromise seems to have

been found, whereby smaller groups would provisionally be formed, especially for newcomers to the Upper School, and be timetabled alongside the normal classes which would remain largely unstreamed.[223]

In general we can say, then, that Steiner kept consistently to the same line all the way through the Minutes. He was by no means averse to mixed-age groups for language lessons, but he summarily rejected any suggestion of streaming by ability.

Can this uncompromising stance be preserved today? Are not the demands made upon language teaching many times higher than they were in Steiner's day? In the curriculum of the first Waldorf school, Latin and Greek took up much more room from Class 5 on than they do now,[224] and Steiner's optimistic assertion that English – "if it were taught with zest"[225] – would only need to take at most six years can only be regarded as practicable in terms of the modest requirements of that time. It is also likely that, before the Second World War, modern languages would not have been under anything like as much pressure from public examinations as they are today. These, then, are two reasons why it was easier to organise language teaching in a way that avoided streaming.

Nevertheless, in my opinion no thoroughly convincing reason has as yet arisen for deviating from the line taken by Steiner. Since the sixties there have been many empirical studies done on the problems surrounding streaming by ability or by achievement. The findings show fairly clearly that grouping high achievers together does *not* benefit them in any special way, whereas such separation works to the disadvantage of the low achievers.[226] In State schools, therefore, there is widespread scepticism about streaming according to achievement, and instead forms of differentiation *within* classes are being sought. The diversity of artistic and creative methods in normal use in Waldorf schools would no doubt be of service in this search. For Steiner, the solution to the problem rests upon three things: the teacher's enthusiasm for his or her subject; directing the pupils' attention to its wider implications and connection to the world at large;[227] and using imagination to shape and deliver the content of lessons.[228]

Due to examination pressure and the acute lack of properly trained teachers, many Waldorf schools have decided in recent years to opt for streaming. At first this was only in the Upper School, but now it is not unknown also in the Middle School. Perhaps here and there it has been reluctantly introduced as an unavoidable necessity after careful consultation. But scepticism is still fully justified. The splitting of large classes for the purposes of language teaching should indeed begin early, not later than Class 5, but not according to ability or achievement criteria. It should happen for pedagogical reasons, so that children can be given individual attention and consequently have the chance to develop individual competence in speaking. For certain children it might also be sensible to do only one foreign language. Having said all that, the fact remains that there is no compelling reason for streaming by ability or by achievement.

6.13 On the Choice of Language

Early on in the setting up of a Waldorf school the question will arise of what modern languages are to be taught. Many schools take a pragmatic approach and proceed according to what teachers are available. Others will treat it as a contentious question of principle. At large schools, capable of offering several languages, the parents will find themselves faced with the same decisions. On turning to Steiner do we find any enlightenment on this question?

Steiner feels that it is important for children to learn *several* (at least two) languages from the very beginning. The reason is that language, by virtue of the young child's power of participatory imitation, can have profound effects, right into the bodily constitution; and if several languages are learned, the effects of one will balance the effects of another.[229] Apart from this, his attitude to the choice of language is entirely pragmatic.

"What is important is that other languages are learnt, the choice is immaterial."[230]

Fragmentary notes from a long college meeting discussion appear to show that Steiner – apart from the early start principle – was not only flexible as to choice of languages but also as to the order in which they should begin, and that he was very much in favour of considering the wishes of parents.[231]

There is no reason to think that Steiner's attitude on this point was ever anything but as flexible and open as it here appears.

It must also be emphasised that no utterance of Steiner's offers a compelling reason for thinking one language of more *value* than another. Certain disparaging remarks about French may be robbed of their barb when seen historically in the light of the tense atmosphere that existed during the occupation of the Ruhr area by French troops.[232] But we must also beware of thinking certain languages superior or of higher educational value by virtue of their position in Steiner's teachings on the cultural epochs. This is not uncommon, even though it runs counter to Steiner's understanding of history. We would do better to emulate Herbert Hahn, the outstanding language teacher of the first Waldorf school, who, with exemplary tolerance and loving appreciation, characterised the whole diversity of the languages of Europe.[233] We ought also, perhaps, to take the trouble of *learning* the languages before forming any judgements about their nature and pedagogical effects.

6.14 Homework

Homework is always one of the most sensitive issues in any discussion of language teaching in Waldorf schools. As with the questions surrounding the usefulness or harm of vocabulary learning, this problem is fraught with deeply ingrained habits and expectations, in teachers, parents and pupils. There is a widespread attitude that good, solid teaching and homework go hand in hand. The latter, to paraphrase the old schoolmaster's injunction, is the 'inward digesting' of what has been 'marked' and 'learned', and secures examination success. Parents and pupils are therefore inclined to accept without complaint homework that may be of a very questionable nature. Teachers who have trouble finding their way into the artistic teaching methods of the Waldorf school, if they do not have guidance, are likely to fall back on a wholly inappropriate, rigid homework routine which brings dim resentment and boredom into language lessons and robs the children of their free time. Precisely in the area of homework, which makes such inroads into the pupils' home-life, there needs to be a carefully considered and wholehearted partnership between parents and school; and both parties need guidelines on how to achieve this.

The first thing it is useful to know is just how far educational opinion has distanced itself from the usual type of homework. In the most recent literature, homework which involves simply repeating the ground already covered in a lesson is portrayed as at worst senseless, at best merely superfluous. It is therefore considered obsolete. In place of this we find an emphasis upon tasks that involve individual exploration and seek to increase motivation, while at the same time serving as part of the *preparation* for the lesson. Erich Geißler and Heinrich Plock call the traditional form of homework, with its repetitive exercises, obligatory and identical for every pupil, "a very crude educational tool, of doubtful merit both didactically and pedagogically".[234] They call for it to be replaced by "homework, the scope and method of which is decided by the pupil, and which draws upon his or her personal initiative".[235] Horst Speichert points in a similar direction with his suggestions for the incorporation of mime, role-play, inventing riddles and picture games into the process of working on foreign language texts. As 'creative homework' (for individual and group work from Class 5 on) he suggests the following:

- (topic – circus): write out a lesson plan in the foreign language;
- (topic – where I live): draw your own dream house and label it in the foreign language;
- (topic – food/restaurant): put together a menu of your favourite foods;
- (topic – fruit, groceries etc): draw a shop window and label it;
- (topic – daily life): invent little scenes and do them as role-plays (e.g. at the breakfast table, in the supermarket, on the sports field, in the bus, in the restaurant, on the ferry to England, etc.);
- (topic – land and people): collect brochures from travel agents, showing places you would like to visit; make collages from them and add your own text;
- (topic – historical figures and events): put the events into your own little newspaper, with your own texts (every pupil takes on a particular detail), complete with announcements, small-ads, etc.[236]

Rudolf Steiner was equally sceptical about the usual kinds of homework. Thus, in 1919, in *Practical Advice to Teachers*, he says:

> "In foreign languages as little homework should be given as possible; certainly not until the later classes, in other words, after the age of 12. But then it should only be something that occurs in real life: writing letters, memos and the like."[237]

Free composition (evidently much in favour at the time) was to be avoided, whereas oral descriptions given by the children of their own experiences were to be encouraged as a way of strengthening their powers of observation.[238] From the very beginning Steiner also stressed the element of individual responsibility in all this:

> "Homework should be voluntary, not obligatory. It should be up to the children whether they do it or not!"[239]

The same tone is heard again in 1921 with a clear statement of the reasons behind it:

> "Homework can only be set on condition that the children are keen to get to grips with the particular assignment. It must somehow activate the children's enthusiasm, so that they do not feel intimidated and discouraged by it. For example, say you have just dealt with a certain topic; exercises can then be derived from it by saying: tomorrow I will be using this to show you how to deal with the following calculation problems, and then waiting to see if any children can drum up enough interest to try working it out for themselves beforehand. There will always be a few willing to try, and their keenness will then rub off on others. Schoolwork carried over from one day to the next should appeal to the children's sense of personal involvement – they should do it because *they* want to."[240]

During the following school year, Steiner, in only thinly disguised critical tones, once more underlined the 'ideal' of 'economising' teaching such that children could be spared the 'drudgery' of homework. He stated his belief in the need for a 'modified' kind of homework. The fragmentary conference notes from this time give us a sense of what he meant:

> "In maths we will not have the children doing reams of homework, but in the areas of literature and history of art we will certainly give them individualised problems to solve at home. We would also do well to encourage those who are hard-working to practise something at home, although we must be sure that we are not thereby overloading them. Homework should never feel like a burden. They should take pleasure in doing it, and that is why the manner in which it is set is of cardinal importance."[241]

Especially interesting, particularly in connection with teaching in

the Middle School, is Steiner's remark in *Practical Advice to Teachers* to the effect that foreign language homework should largely be confined to *reading*.[242] Although the point of this piece of advice is not immediately apparent, it receives surprising empirical corroboration through the results presented in a report entitled the Haringey Study, which looked at the effects upon English working class children of reading aloud at home.

> "Astonishing conclusion: even when the parents could scarcely speak English or were unable to read, those children who read aloud at home to their parents always made greater progress than a control group which was receiving remedial lessons in school."[243]

For success in foreign language learning, much depends, as indeed it does for all learning, upon the child's home environment providing an atmosphere of supportive interest in school-work, together with an absence of undue pressure. Increased pressure is often the last thing children who have difficulty with languages need. If language teaching is to work at all, however, it requires regular communication and mutual understanding between parents and teachers.

6.15 Audio-visual Aids

Looking at the current language scene one could be forgiven for thinking that audio-visual aids have had their day and that arguments against them are therefore a waste of energy. The behaviourist psychology of learning, which in the 1960s looked set to sweep the field of education, is no longer taken seriously anywhere, learning machines and language laboratories are scarcely used any more, *Sesame Street*, once hailed as the great remedial panacea for underprivileged children, has been shown to be ineffective. Be that as it may, tape recorders and videos are still a normal part of modern language-learning material. In fact they are often specially recommended for 'creative' language-learning, for learning games and project work. It may here be appropriate, therefore, briefly to explain why in principle Waldorf education avoids the use of such media.

First of all we should beware of concluding that electronic media are harmless simply because their use is unquestioningly accepted and very widespread. We spent decades polluting our environment, driving animals and plants to extinction and building unnecessary motorways and nuclear power stations before the dreadful consequences of doing so were noticed. We have no grounds for thinking that it could be otherwise with our use of electronic media. In the event, the truly modern school would be called upon to lead the way towards the necessary transformation of perception by offering concrete alternatives.

Helmut Schrey was probably the first from within the ranks of educational academics to take an interest in Waldorf education's sceptical attitude to the media. He approached the problem by means of carefully formulated questions form the point of view of developmental psychology.

> "At what age may a child be confronted by its own voice and way of speaking? From what age does fixing the pupil's speech on tape facilitate self-reflection?"[244]

In the thirty years since these first tentative questionings an extensive and diverse critical literature on media has built up. The Waldorf attitude has been encapsulated most clearly in a phrase coined by Hartmut von Hentig, the former head of the laboratory school in Bielefeld. He speaks of the "gradual disappearance of reality"[245] in school and in the lives of our children.Hentig's penetrating analysis opens up gloomy perspectives. Waldorf education, however, steps out of the gloom by offering a therapeutic counter-strategy. It does this by the practical implementation not only of Steiner's 'anthropology', but above all of his physiology of

sense perception (see above 2.4 and 5.5).

In this connection the first thing it is important to realise is the reduced nature of any act of perception determined by electronic media. Impressions reaching us in this way always represent a narrowly restricted and one-sidedly fixed *selection* from the sum of sensations we could have had through direct perception, in other words a *diminished* reality, which comes about *without any involvement on our part*. Whether intentionally or otherwise, the medium will, to a greater or lesser extent, turn this diminished reality into a *caricature*. *Mickey Mouse* and *Donald Duck* are just particularly striking instances of the media's tendency to distort phenomena.

Moreover, without our being very much aware of it, such distorted phenomena lead us to alter our behaviour. We become used to treating the world as a conglomeration of dense objects, from which all subtle sensory qualities have been removed, a world with neither twilight nor coloured shadows, a toneless, odourless, tasteless world, lacking all those fine gradations of sense which are the hallmark of the active, individual perception of *directly* accessible reality. Can we really be so sure that this will have no harmful effects upon our humanity or upon our relationship to the world at large?[246]

The cognitive precision, which material presented in school through media can sometimes achieve, is a meagre compensation for the lost reality. This goes for all subjects. On this point Ernst-Michael Kranich says the following in his critical study of programmed learning:

> "A plant with its living processes, a historical era with its whole diversity of events, a landscape or a state are all phenomena bearing the stamp of reality. If the body of a plant is divided into separate parts, its life into separate processes or if a complex historical event is broken down into single facts etc. the resulting data no longer belong to natural or historical reality but to analytical reason. The latter has been at work dissecting the given objective complex according to more or less conscious criteria. The single products of this analytical procedure bear as little resemblance to reality as does the isolated stem, leaf or blossom to the totality which is the plant. If, therefore, analytical reason is permitted to dismember some aspect of reality in this way, and if the human mind applies itself to understanding the resultant bits without preserving some awareness of, or feeling for, the original whole, then it has entered a realm of abstraction and unreality."[247]

With regard to foreign language teaching, the tendency of media-centred learning to be one-sidedly cognitive and slavishly prescriptive has been criticised in depth by Heinrich Eltz.[248]

All this helps us to understand why Steiner attacked the innocent cinema of the 1920's, with such surprising vehemence, as 'extremely harmful' to the etheric body and the sensory organisation of the spectator. Materialism, he said, was thereby 'absorbed right into the habits of perception'.[249]

Nowadays our children are exposed to the media on all sides. The major source of this influence is the home and all sorts of recreational activities. Even extensive use of media in school would seem marginal by comparison. So we may assume that, even in Waldorf schools, pupils of the middle and upper classes will be experimenting with tape recorders and video machines, not to speak of computer games, the internet and virtual reality. Most likely they will also be trying to improve their language skills through TV courses and foreign language films in the original. If this is done with enthusiasm perhaps the benefits might outweigh the damage. The fact remains, however, that electronic media should be used as little as possible in school, the younger children being protected from them entirely.

6.16 Examination Pressure and Individual Achievement

There is nothing which distorts foreign language teaching more than the annual ritual of state examinations. The great Stat

hurdle, which separates the future winners from the also-rans, spreads its influence from the highest classes right down, not uncommonly, into the Middle School. This not only has social consequences, in that it increases competition among pupils at a time when co-operative effort is particularly appropriate, but also methodological ones, in that it forces teaching in the direction of textual analysis and all the overloaded intellectual pedantry that goes with it. In this way the gulf between those who are 'good at languages' and those who, according to these criteria, are not, is artificially widened on two fronts.

Would we not do much better to side-step all this and concentrate upon meeting the demands of *life* rather than those of the State bureaucracy? We ought to realise just how absurdly unnecessary all the rigmarole we have to go through in preparing for exams looks through the eyes of one not directly embroiled in it. One such is the diplomat and author, Harold Nicolson. On the subject of language learning he writes:

> "If a boy [or girl] is intelligent he can, on leaving school, or on leaving the University, learn any Continental language (with the possible exception of Hungarian and the Slav group) by spending eight months in the country... No very great linguistic proficiency is required to understand and read everything and to be able to say what you wish in such a manner as to be easily and quickly understood. To reach a higher standard than that takes several years, and the surplus which is thereby gained is of little practical utility. It ministers merely to your vanity, and you end by becoming a querulous and embittered charlatan... I am all for people knowing foreign languages as long as they are modest about it. But linguistic arrogance is Hell."[250]

We should perhaps guard against gauging our work solely by the criterion of 'practical utility', but is it not indeed the case that as language teachers we are constantly being surprised by the fact that pupils who, according to the normal standards of analytical competence ought to be classed as failures, are just the ones who, when abroad, take to the foreign language like a fish to water, showing much more fluency and efficiency than others we were forced to regard as 'better' in the school context? There can be no doubt that language teaching, freed from the pressures of social channelling[251] and the marks system, and conducted according to a modern concept of achievement based on individual capability, could be much more effective than anything found in any school at the moment. It would not only be better in the area of language competence but also in that speciality of the language classroom – co-operative social behaviour.

As hopeful and reassuring as these considerations may be to those involved in language teaching in Waldorf schools, they are unlikely to be able to stem the canalizing effects of public exams and the associated worries of parents, unless they are backed up by demonstrable success. Success, of course, cannot be conjured up by talking. It must be readily apparent from the school's beginnings, carrying right the way through till it appears as good public examination marks.

The question is, how is this to be most effectively achieved? Should we just submit to the pressure? No. Simply toeing the line is the worst course of action, as this brings with it all the disadvantages inherent in the system: fear, pressure, one-up-manship, cognitive bias and hair-splitting pedantry, disguised as literary appreciation. A school can uncompromisingly reject all this and still achieve excellent results in public examinations by seeking instead to encourage direct, unconstrained use of living language through drama, improvisation, discussion and reading for enjoyment, project work, individually geared assignments, creative writing, visits abroad, correspondence with pen-friends and other apparently '*unprofessional*' activities. This way of working cannot be done 'by the book', whether textbook or curriculum, but it can nonetheless be very effective – not least as a preparation for examinations, if they are unavoidable. Whatever intellectual 'tricks' are needed to pass them can easily be learned when the time comes.

7. Teacher Training

We have seen in the course of this book that language teaching involves a complex interplay of all levels of human nature – not just the expressive skills of the body, but the imaginative participation of feeling and intellect as well. In other words, it is an active interweaving of the full resources of body, soul and spirit. It is therefore obvious that any training for this demanding activity must address the student on all these levels.This means that the principles of academic teacher training and the ideals they embody, while remaining indispensible, will need to be broadened considerably. Language teachers need to be familiarised with the momentous discoveries made in recent years in language teaching research, going into why it has now effectively reversed our idea of how language learning occurs. The remarkable results that have emerged from the most recent studies in aesthetics and research into the nature of symbols must also become familiar territory to them. From this they can gain awareness of the non-verbal, pre-conceptual aspects of learning, and of the fact that *artistic activity* and *practical experience* can safely be regarded as valid sources of knowledge. They need to realise, moreover, that their profession requires that they become *artists* first and foremost and men or women of letters second.

What then are the main requirements that a training for language teachers in Waldorf schools, or indeed any training that seeks to be up-to-date, must fulfil? At the very least, the following:

1. Language teachers – and this goes particularly for those of *younger* children – should be fluent in the target language to the extent of having a command of colloquial speech. To this end they would need to have visited the relevant country for an extended period.[252]
2. Language teachers should be able to speak their chosen language with *grace* and *style*, and to employ it *artistically*. They should also have a command of the speech exercises that facilitate this artistic speaking, and have a wide repertoire of aesthetically demanding texts – including stories, which they can recite or narrate by heart – as well as knowing how to use them in a classroom situation. They should be well-rounded in acting, singing and dancing.
3. Language teachers – probably to a greater extent than other teachers – should have humour, empathy, an ability to grasp the moment; should be able consciously to direct their emotions and moods, and to create a relaxed, expectant, productive atmosphere. They should have a well-developed sense of timing.
4. There are certain *techniques* which a language teacher training course ought to deliver. Among these are techniques of: relaxation, dramatic improvisation, directing, choral conducting (for both singing and speech), movement games, storytelling, doing plays with pupils and puppetry.

The course plan of a Waldorf institute of foreign language teaching would accordingly set great store by a communicative approach. As a rule acquisition of the target language would involve spending a year abroad. Through set reading, exercises and seminars it would also provide for a broad knowledge of literature in the foreign language. It would keep the specialised technicalities of criticism and linguistics to a bare minimum. The time spared in this way could then be devoted to artistic activities and practical exercises. In its totality the training would most closely resemble a course of study at an *art* college. The language teacher of the future will be trained side by side with teachers of drama, singing and dancing, rather in the all-round way now applied to those destined for the American musical stage. Of the old ideal of the private scholar, the media technician or the laboratory specialist not much will be left.

Can such a programme be realised? Old hands, who suffered under the narrowness of their own traditional training may well

have mixed feelings about this vision of the future. This is perfectly understandable. My only answer to this is to place my trust in the changing mood of the times and the power of initiative the rising generation of teachers brings with it. These young people, now beginning their training, have grown up in a much more liberal climate than before. Sociology has noted the gradual change in young people's aspiration that has been taking place since the 1950's, away from a value system based on 'duty and conformity' (discipline, obedience, deference) towards one based on self-development (spontaneity, unattachment, self-reliance). This is by no means simply an expression of mental decline, as one might be inclined to think. Even today, language teaching and the teacher training behind it, whether Waldorf or otherwise, is still dominated by conformity values in conjunction with the cognitive bias previously described. The negative effects of this situation have already been enumerated. Must it remain thus? It is surely not impossible that in the not too distant future the liberalising tendencies already underway will introduce more freedom into the whole education system. It must be the job of training institutions to facilitate this process in a responsible and professional way. Language teachers *as artists* will then be the rule and no longer a Utopian dream.

APPENDIX to New Edition *by Norman Skillen*

CLOWNING AND IMPROVISATION AS TOOLS IN THE TRAINING OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS

1. Language as a Sensory Reality

I am telephoning someone in Britain. Having dialled, instead of a ringing tone, I hear the following: "Good afternoon, this is a BT answering service. The number you have called in engaged at the moment, but I can take a message if you would like to speak after the tone..." The voice is female, bright, cheery, efficient, the intonation friendly and reassuring, but a certain clipped, hollow quality in the diction tells me that this is a computer-recorded voice. The "I" here is non-existent, and so the meaning of "take a message" has been rather stretched. Had I spoken after the tone the message would simply have been electronically recorded and passed on using *my* voice. The truth is that, although computers have already got beyond simply cueing a recording and can sample and measure sound and translate the data into electronic impulses that elicit an appropriate 'spoken' answer, they cannot be expected to perceive language in the full sense that 'taking a message' implies. The reason for this is that they neither have, nor indeed can ever hope to have, the 'potential for movement' which, as this book has amply demonstrated (see 5.5), constitutes the sense organ for the sensory phenomenon of language. Our discomfort in responding to a computer voice stems, I believe, from our instinctive recognition of the absence of the sense of language.

In a language classroom the situation is radically different. There is very considerable 'potential for movement', and the teacher is called upon, as the ideal is expressed in this book (ch. 3), "to deliver an untarnished, living experience of an essential area of sensory reality". In other words, the teacher is required to practise an art of teaching which mediates between language, conceived of as a sensory reality, and its sense organ; conceived in whole-body

terms. Is it possible to learn such an art; and if so what might this entail? By addressing the second part of this question I hope, in what follows, to answer the first part.

Language as a sensory reality effectively means the spoken word. Speech is indeed the primary state of language. For by far the greater part of human history it has been the main vehicle of linguistic expression, and even today only a handful of the world's several thousand languages possess a well-developed literature. In other words, most remain firmly rooted in what is commonly called the world of orality.[1] Orality was the cradle of humanity, and it remains the cradle of human individuality, and in school literacy, as one of the chief aims of education, can only develop in a wholesome way if due attention is paid to orality. This has been very powerfully demonstrated in a recent book by Barry Sanders,[2] which details the collapse of individuality that can occur when orality is ousted in early childhood by electronic media, with literacy subsequently failing to develop properly. It is indeed in the crucial early stages of language learning in the life of an individual that the sense of language is most open and active, its primary percepts, of course, being given by the spoken word. We may surmise that during this early phase the sense of language develops certain habits of perception which, by the time the mother tongue has been learned, have become fixed. The second-language teacher's task then is to re-open access to this sense, and this must be done using materials and processes analogous to those of primary orality. So, in its early stages, language teaching must be a kind of 'applied orality', which is why it should begin in Class 1. But even when the stage of literacy is reached, oral values dare not be neglected, for in them lies the very life of language. An art of teaching which makes creative use of the sense of language will therefore be one which nurtures and applies oral values.

1 In the last twenty years or so a considerable body of work has built up on the subject of orality and the ways in which it differs from literacy. A good introduction to the subject is *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word* by Walter J. Ong (Routledge 1982). Also stimulating in this connection is *ABC - the Alphabetisation of the Popular Mind* by Ivan Illich and Barry Sanders (Pelican 1989).

2 *A is for Ox - the Collapse of Literacy and the Rise of Violence in an Electronic Age* by Barry Sanders (Vintage 1995).

2. Oral Values

What is meant by this term? Each year for the last dozen years or so I have had the fortunate task of directing a play with foreign language students. Almost without exception at some stage in the process the question will be asked: "What is the point of all this; surely the people won't be able to understand what we're saying anyway?" I have usually been able to re-assure the students on this point, but they do not really believe it until they hear the reactions of the audiences. From them we invariably hear things like, "*Ich kann kaum Englisch, aber ich hab' alles verstanden.*" (I can hardly speak any English at all, but I understood everything.) How can this be explained?

For our literate, adult consciousness, what we think of as 'a word' is text-determined. In other words, it is the whole rational ethos of the visually internalised text that dictates how we think, feel and remember words. This attitude to words is primarily what convinces people that they 'hardly understand English'. A play has the effect of shifting language in the direction of orality. Suddenly great trouble is being taken (if the play is well done) to direct language towards the ear while the eye is assailed by a host of impressions and perceptions which directly or indirectly affect a range of other senses. The theatrical word is embedded in a context of facial expression, gesture and whole-body expressiveness which affect, as well as the general sense of well-being, the sense of balance, the proprioceptive sense and perhaps even the sense of warmth. The combined activity of these senses creates a sort of pre-verbal, sub-verbal or peri-verbal realm which in turn has a direct relation to the body's 'potential for movement' and hence to the sense of language. This state of heightened sensory awareness accounts for the untoward ability to understand. Oral values are in operation, and will be in any situation where words are conveyed to consciousness via the sense of language without any complications created by the eye.

It is clear from this that such a theatrical event is analogous

to the classroom situation, whereby the teacher is the play and the class the audience. Is the teacher capable of matching the play in the heightening of sensory awareness? Just as the play is the end result of a long process, so it is hoped that what goes on in language classrooms could be equally polished. Moreover, on account of this analogous relationship, it is to be expected that, by looking into some elements involved in the preparation of plays, we will at the same time be identifying training-tools for the classroom. This will, of course, involve paying almost exclusive attention to the oral, peri-verbal realm already mentioned.

I would therefore like to explore two sequences of exercises that I have used in connection with drama preparation as illustration of how they increase awareness and competence in this peri-verbal area which is so important in gaining access to the sense of language. One sequence is taken directly from the realm of clowning, my little knowledge of which I owe to my long-time friend and collaborator Vivian Gladwell, while the other is more drama-oriented. Both involve improvisation.

3. Clowning and Drama

Before I begin, however, it might be well to say a word or two about the differences between clowning and drama. There are many differences, but two main ones will serve to point them up.

Clowning depends upon constant direct contact with an audience. In whatever situation has been set up the clown's eyes and face are always keeping the audience up to date on how he feels about it. The dramatic space, by contrast, even when the scene is improvised, is more self-contained and self-enclosed. And this in turn is related to the other major difference. Drama is concerned with the conscious creation of a meaningful illusion. All movements and inter-relations that take place on stage are done in subservience to the fictional universe that has been established. Clowning also works with fictional situations, but the protagonists are always aware, and are always making the audience aware, of the fact that they are pretending. A clown may pick up a brush and use it as a guitar, but sooner or later he is bound to discover, and show the audience that he has discovered, that it is really a brush. The clown does not act – how often have I heard Vivian Gladwell say, 'Don't act!' – he uses what is really there, and of course one of the things that is most immediately present is his own personality with its own way of inhabiting the peri-verbal realm. In drama the peri-verbal is the raw material of the fictional universe, surrounding and informing the dialogue. In clowning the peri-verbal is a direct expression of the clown's personality as it tries to cope with whatever space or situation it finds itself in. The upshot of this is, of course, that clowning tends to stay more in this realm; indeed, for clowning purposes often, the less that dialogue is used the better it is. In terms of the peri-verbal, therefore, clowning is primary so I will begin with it.

4. The Two Sequences

4.1 *The Clowning Sequence*

The first stage in this sequence of exercises can be called the *Circle of Imitation*. The group stands in a circle. The focus of attention moves from person to person round the circle, the basic idea being that *everyone* imitates as exactly as possible everything the focus person does. Everyone has a turn being the focus of attention and they pass it on by tapping the next person on the shoulder. Imitating everything means precisely that, including expressions of shyness, reluctance, embarrassed giggles, the involuntary movements and facial expressions people make when they do not know what to do next, etc. The group should attempt to feel their way into the quality of movement and facial expressions of each individual in turn. This simple exercise can generate a tremendous atmosphere of concentration if it – with its enormous potential for humor – is taken seriously! Its success really depends upon how intensely the group enters into the participatory activity required. However intense this may become it nevertheless remains clear at any given moment who is leading and who is following. We have 'give and take', but the impulses all flow in one direction.

The next stage is to complicate the exercise by removing this strict separation of giver and taker. Now the circle is broken and groups of between three and six people formed. It should be emphasised that the stages of this exercise can all stand as exercises in their own right, and need not be seen in a sequence however related they might be. Hence, this present one requires a piece of preparation in addition to the circle of imitation, for as well as breaking the circle it introduces a further element – the voice. Using the voice in clowning basically means giving vent to emotions through the use of vowels, although consonants are not forbidden of course (nothing is forbidden), but they must be 'voiced'. Once this has been introduced in a suitable way[3] a second stage can be attempted: it involves quite simply everyone imitating everyone else simultaneously. This sounds impossible, but it works. With the addition of voice there is also the ever-present possibility of little emotional escalations of one kind or another. And for emotion the scope is wide, for each small group is cast adrift in the peri-verbal realm and there is no telling what storms or calms may come. One thing is clear – everyone is responsible for everyone else, and the dividing line between self and not-self, between individual intention and group intention is breached. The leadership wanders spontaneously, from person to person, but the ideas and impulses are not necessarily coming any more from 'inside'. It may, of course, happen – and this goes for all the exercises described here – that one person will continually grab hold of the leadership to protect themselves from the radical uncertainty of the situation, while others will gladly let the rest determine what happens. In reviewing this activity there is an opportunity to learn of one's dominance or reticence with a view to overcoming it subsequently. It is the beginning of being able to respond to the peri-verbal world, and of learning that the imagination does not only live 'inside'.

Through such exercises, imagination is moved away from its normal bondage to the conceptual and becomes more perc*eptual*. Imitation becomes *participation*. The exercise of imagination in this sensory mode (what might be called the peripheral imagination) is all-important for developing a two-way flexibility in the peri-verbal; for language teachers must be able not only to give their own words an appropriate physical context, but also to adapt moment by moment to what comes from the class. They must be able, as it were, to attune their personal verbal environment to that of the class.

3 One way of doing this is to use an exercise in which people move in decisive straight lines always aiming for some object in the room. Once arrived at the object they are encouraged to 'commune' with it in sound, in other words to let the object 'tell' them what sounds its shape, colour etc. are made up of. This is a fairly crazy exercise, but very enjoyable once initial inhibitions are overcome.

In the next stage of this sequence, sensory imagination is intensified in that each small group is asked not only to have everyone imitating everyone else, but to focus upon objects, real or fictitious. Still there are no words involved, only voice, and perhaps also a further feature which can be introduced in some special way, just as voice was before: the principle of emotional amplification.[4] Basically this means that any impulse which arises will be received by the others, not by their simply imitating it, but by their amplifying it. Giggles become belly-laughs, fear becomes terror, tenderness becomes overwhelming sympathy, etc.

We now have the phenomenon of several people, transformed into one participatory entity, seeking to relate in a unified way to their environment – for a moment I considered using the word 'harmonious' here, but that would not be quite appropriate! Harmony or no harmony, however, I know of no zanier way of overcoming the Cartesian split! At this stage of the sequence, increasing demands have been made upon the peripheral imagination within the peri-verbal context, but the imaginative focus remains diffuse, a matter of chance. The next phase sharpens this focus. It should perhaps be pointed out that this sequence is best spread over several days, or even longer, so the next phase would probably be done on the following day.

Now each group is given an imaginary animal. They are told that this animal is wayward and unpredictable, and their task is to tame it. Now the group are in a position of having to find out, first of all, through imitative/participative actions and sounds, what sort of an animal they have got: what size is it, what it will and not do, etc. Each member is in a situation which models in the peri-verbal realm the typical plight of the language teacher. One group will be trying to convey the notion 'tiger'. For another the animal will be an armadillo; for another a ferocious guinea pig, and so on. How do you convey such a notion to the others without being able to use the word 'tiger' (etc.), while at the same time attending to their interpretations of your actions *and* going along with *their* intentions, with the aim of all finally arriving at mutual understanding?The miracle is that it works.

The final stage completes the classroom analogy by placing the group before an audience. Having tamed their animal and mutually understood it (although the group must tolerate a certain ambiguity here!) they now have to demonstrate it to the other groups. The animal, of course, like all the best laid plans of language lessons, remains unpredictable.

4.2 *The Dramatic Sequence*

Unpredictability is by no means the sole property of the peri-verbal realm, nor does the sensory imagination operate only in the absence of words. The first sequence of exercises provides a neat opportunity to practise awareness of the peri-verbal, but now this must be combined with speech. For this we take a step away from clowning in the direction of drama, though it may not appear so at first. The sequence has five stages, of which 4 and 5 are the important ones, the first three being the lead-in.

In the first stage the group forms into pairs. The partners stand face to face and tell each other a story simultaneously, i.e. each tells a *different* story, completely invented. The noise-level in the room may increase somewhat at this stage! This sounds like a crazy thing to do, but people regularly find that doing it enables them to invent a story effortlessly without getting stuck. The secret is, I think, that in such a situation the story comes as much from 'outside' as from 'inside'. At this stage people do indeed report that they spontaneously 'steal' bits from their partner. That is entirely in keeping with the exercise, for the next stage requires just that.

The situation is repeated, with yet another different story each, but this time each may incorporate elements from their partner's story into their own. There is a tendency now for the

4 This can be done by means of mirroring exercises in which exact copying is gradually replaced by amplifying.

stories to begin to resemble each other. At this stage people regularly report becoming so fascinated by 'the other story' that they stop telling 'their own'. And this is the task in the third stage of the sequence.

Each pair is asked to tell one story, which should alternate back and forth without any planning. The story can be taken over by either partner at any time, either because he or she is flagging and needs support, or because a new idea demands an interruption (again, as in the previous sequence, there is much scope here for either dominant or submissive behaviour). Now, for the first time something like a dramatic universe begins to develop, supported still by the clowning elements of spontaneity and absolute acceptance of what happens. When a story-line has been developed in a certain way and then been taken over by your partner it is sometimes very difficult to relinquish the reach of your own intention and accept what the other person makes of it, for they are very unlikely to read your intentions accurately. When this happens people sometimes begin trying to show their partner what they meant, or what 'ought' to be happening, and with that we have the next stage of the sequence.

In the fourth stage a story is narrated by one partner and acted out by the other, with narration and acting swapping places periodically – again without planning. Now we have a situation which effectively mirrors stage two, except that, instead of borrowing bits from your partner's story for your own, you see the common story mirrored in your partner's movements – with the ever-present possibility that you will read the intentions revealed in these movements and change the narrative accordingly.

To strengthen the occurrence of these reciprocal effects between narration and acting out, which are the essential element in the whole sequence, the final stage then fixes the roles of narrator and actor. One person narrates, one person acts out, and the story weaves between them. Or, to translate it into the terms I have been using here: one person embodies the verbal, the other person the peri-verbal realm and the exercise practises awareness

of the reciprocal effects between the two. Having arrived at this stage, we are now building upon the peri-verbal competence exercised in the first sequence.

To become proficient in such an exercise is a very worthwhile endeavour for prospective language teachers for in it quite a number of skills are being practised simultaneously. What are they? I have identified seven, but there may be more. They are not given in any order of importance.

- First we might mention the obvious fact that practice is being gained in the inventing of stories; a kind of verbal serendipity involving the happy discovery that there are so many stories lying around waiting to be told. For some students it is like entering a treasure house they did not know was there, and consequently increases confidence in their ability to generate teaching material.

- The second is flexibility. In this exercise the narrator may suddenly say something or, which is more likely, the actor may suddenly do something unexpected, which has to be integrated immediately into the story. This ability to integrate the unexpected is a skill that needs to be highly developed in language teachers, for a class's reaction to any given lesson content is bound to deviate from the lesson plan (which is in no way an argument in favour of scrapping lesson plans).

- Probably the most important thing this exercise does is to give, if not direct experience, then at least an impression of how the sense of language works. In it we have the relation between word and movement made palpable. The narrator speaks and the actor translates the words into movement, the actor moves and the narrator brings the movement to rest in words. This polarity of movement and rest in action generates what I can only call a 'feel' for the workings of the sense of language. Moreover, it is also best to do the exercise at least

once before talking about the sense of language. It does in fact provide a good phenomenological basis for talking about this difficult subject.

- Closely related to this is the experience this exercise delivers of the imagination as a sensorial, participatory process, rather than as a purely inner source of invention and inspiration. This was also a strong element in the first sequence, and here it is translated into the verbal realm. In this exercise concepts can be freed from being merely associative and join together in dynamic new ways. This is not to deny, of course, that a lot of what happens in this exercise may necessarily be purely associative, but it is the novel, imaginative linkage which electrifies the narrative universe.

- A fifth effect of this exercise is to develop in the students a feeling for story structure. This has to do with the previously mentioned principle of acceptance. In obedience to this principle the students will learn that they must put themselves in the service of whatever narrative ingredients are generated. Actor and narrator must work co-operatively on a third element: the story. If a witch is mentioned at the start then she must continue to figure in the story, stray details must be re-integrated, etc. This sticking with what you have got could also be described as developing a *feeling for the whole*. Sometimes this exercise will degenerate into a chain of inconsequential details, and quite naturally produce the feeling that it has not worked. This is because the imagination, to paraphrase Coleridge, strives for wholeness. It somehow knows that a real story is a dynamic whole with beginning, middle and end, loose ends being sewn up in surprising ways. This has obvious spin-off for the understanding of form and style in literature, and may also help with the ability to structure lessons. It also helps to develop a feeling of what might be called *narrative tact*, for what works as a story and what does not.

- Another important element of this exercise is that it provides practice in mime and gesture. If an actor seeks to influence the course of a story in a certain way, the accuracy, or otherwise, of his mime and gesture will instantly be reflected in the narrative, assuming, of course, that the narrator is paying due attention to the spirit of acceptance. The ability to make clear, telling gestures as a context for one's words is another skill essential to the language teacher.

- Last but not least, the students through this exercise have an opportunity to learn something about themselves. They become familiar with the way their minds work, with what sort of stories they are capable of generating, with the 'cut' of their imagination. Again, this is something which it is important for a language teacher to 'know'.

5. Conclusion

In the training of language teachers the most important question is what is the most effective means of equipping students for the classroom situation. Obviously it is important for them to become acquainted with the stages of language development and the methodological approaches appropriate to them, and even to try these out in seminars. But there often remains a gulf between being told and being able to perform, between theory and practice. The sequences of exercises described here are valuable tools in the training of language teachers in that they do not seek to imitate classroom situations or provide recipes, but rather consist of processes, which give direct experience of the verbal and non-verbal aspects of language, and in which classroom situations are *implicit* or present as analogues. At the same time they inculcate skills which, as I have tried to show, are essential if teachers are to be able even to attempt to live up to the ideal stated at the beginning of this chapter. These exercises, then, in promoting oral values, do go some way towards answering the first part of the question with which I began. The art of teaching implied by the ideal is learnable. Moreover, these skills, which we could sum up as the habit of creative flexibility combined with the facility for artistic improvisation, are needed not just in the Lower School, but all the way through, especially in making the communicative use of language enjoyable, and in bringing literary texts to life.

Of course the exercises described here are no panacea. They need to be backed up by a host of other course contents: artistic speech-work, grammatical theory, cultural background, history of language, etc. And there is no substitute for teaching practice in school when it comes to learning methodology. But these exercises, and others like them, can nevertheless provide a confidence-building background which permeates the whole process of becoming a language teacher.

References

1 *Neuner* 1991 p.149.
2 ibid p.151
3 Among these is *suggestopedia*, emanating from the Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Losanov, and termed *psychopedia* by Rupprecht S. Baur with *superlearning* as a derivative of this. Then there is also *confluent education*, *community language learning* and *the Silent Way*. In close affinity to these stand S. Krashen and his followers with their *natural approach*, and James Ashers with his *total physical response* method, although these last are more linguistically based than the others. An attempt to bring all these approaches together into one comprehensive method has been offered by Wil Knibbeler from Holland in his *Explorative-Creative Way (1989)*. Useful summaries of these methods and copious references are given by Knibbeler, and a further account of them can be found in Earl Stevick's book *A Way and Ways* (Cambridge).
4 Rittlemeyer 1990
5 GA 21 p.32f
6 Schad 1990
7 Kiersch 1990
8 This philosophical attitude is masterfully characterised in the final scene of *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco – *Stat Rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus Eco*, 1982 p.635.
9 GA 76 and 81
10 GA 21, 6, Appendix; see also Schad, *Man and Mammal*
11 GA 21 p.153
12 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture 11.3.1922
13 GA 36, p.298 Sprache und Sprachgeist.
14 *Practical Advice to Teachers* Lectures 9 and 10
15 Rudolf Steiner Lecture 11.3.1922 *The Spiritual Guidance of the Individual and Humanity*, Lecture 2. Anthroposophic Press. 1922; *Practical Advice to Teachers* Lecture 2. Rudolf Steiner Press 1976.
16 GA 299
17 GA 20 p.124, GA 299 p.18
18 Lecture 11.3.1922
19 ibid
20 Herbert Hahn
21 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture 18.12.1916
22 GA 307
23 Rudolf Steiner, GA 299
24 Lohmann, 1975 p.216
25 These senses are all designated in German by compound nouns which are very hard to render in English. Their names also vary: thus the first is called

the *Laut-, Wort- or Sprachsinn*, and the second the *Begriffs-* or *Gedankensinn*. The third one is called simply the *Ichsinn*. In translating this I have used the word *selfhood*, because 'sense of self' has an entirely different meaning, and something like 'sense of I-ness' is simply impossible! See Aeppli, W. *The Care and Development of the Senses*, Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications 1993; Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Lecture 8, Anthroposophic Press 1996

26 *Practical Advice to Teachers*, Lecture 2.

27 GA 306 p.169

28 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture 20.1.1910

29 GA 36 p.299

30 GA 24 p.37

31 Rudolf Steiner, *Balance in Teaching* Mercury Press 1982

32 ibid

33 Rudolf Steiner, *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education* Anthroposophic Press 1986

34 see. *Conferences* Vol. 4, Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications 1989 (Note: *Minutes of the College Meetings* usually referred to as the Conferences).

35 Stockmeyer, p.49, Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications, 1991

36 The word for this in German is *Jahrsiebt*, a rather unusual compound word, and awkward to translate. However, it appears to have been formed on the pattern of *Jahrhundert* (century) and *Jahrtausend* (millennium). Transferring this pattern to English, therefore, it would seem possible, as a direct equivalent to the German compound noun, to coin the term *septennium*. I therefore propose to use this word for *Jahrsiebt* in what follows.

37 This is a rendering of the German word *Nachahmungskraft*, which is often translated as 'power of imitation'. The child, however, at this stage of life, does not 'imitate' in the sense of observing and doing the same. That is a faculty that arises only later. Whereas the fact is that the child, being totally involved with or merged into everything around it, cannot but do what its environment does. For this reason the term *participation* was thought more appropriate. Rudi Lissau recommends the word *empathy* in this context, but I felt that it involves too much conscious volition to describe the child's state of compulsive spontaneity.

38 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* p.173, Anthroposophic Press 1996 (until recently *Study of Man*).

39 Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy, Anthroposophic Press 1995 Lecture 14.4.1922.

40 ibid

41 ibid

42 Rudolf Steiner, *Human Values in Education* Rudolf Steiner Press 1971 Lecture 3.

43 Rudolf Steiner, *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy* Rudolf Steiner Press, 1965.

44 Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness and Waldorf Education* Anthroposophic Press 1996 Lecture 2.

45 Rudolf Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education* Rudolf Steiner Press 1981 p.173

46 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Anthroposophic Press 1996 p.173

47 These three terms occur in C.S. Lewis's little book *The Abolition of Man*, so it seemed appropriate to adopt them as equivalents for *Gliedmaßenmensch*, *Brustmensch* and *Kopfmensch*. 'Visceral' is a particularly useful word for translating anything to do with *Gliedmaßen*.

48 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* Anthroposophic Press 1996 p.174.

49 Very interesting insights on the relationship between breastfeeding and the development of language can be found in Chapter 6 of *A is for Ox – the Collapse of Literacy and the Rise of Violence in an Electronic Age* by Barry Sanders, Vintage 1994.

50 Condon 1985

51 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* p.176

52 The word used here is *Lautsinn*, which might best be translated as 'sense of speech sounds'. This, however, is a rather cumbersome expression. Another term commonly used for this sense is *Wortsinn* – 'sense of word'. I have chosen to translate all these, including the sense's normal appellation *Sprachsinn*, with the term 'sense of language'.

53 Rudolf Steiner, *Modern Art of Education* Lecture 6; *Human Values in Education* Lecture 3.

54 A useful account of this scientific battle can be found in John Davy's essay 'Inner Language and Outer Language' in his book entitled *Hope, Evolution and Change* Hawthorn Press 1985. Also see Rawson, M., 'Language: Logos and Linguistics' in *Paideia* 14 1997.

55 Peter Lutzger, 1996 *Der Sprachsinn* Verlag Freies Geistesleben. The book was originally written in English but exists in this language only in manuscript form. Peter Lutzger can be contacted through the Waldorf School in Düsseldorf, Germany.

56 This phrase does not imply, as might be thought, some starry-eyed infant paradise. It may mean that if the child is lucky enough, but a child's totally impressionable sensibilities at this stage of life will assume that any milieu is right, no matter what it is. It is this absolute vulnerability that makes infancy such a fertile ground for tragedy.

57 Müller-Wiedemann, 1989 p.188

58 ibid p.191

59 ibid p.193

60 Rudolf Steiner, *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education* Anthroposophic Press 1986 Lectures 10 and 12.

61 ibid

62 ibid

63 Felix, 1982 p.275
64 Rudolf Steiner, *Anthroposophy a Fragment* Anthroposophic Press 1996 Chapter 2.
65 Condon, 1975; Eimas, 1985.
66 Jakobson/Waugh, 1986 p.67
67 John Davy, Hawthorn Press 1985
68 Arnim, 1978
69 The two German phrases here are *der physische Organismus der Bewegungsfähigkeit*, and *der in sich bewegbare Mensch*. In translating the latter, I thought of putting in the word 'inherent' before 'human', but this is unnecessary as the idea of inherence is contained in the word 'potential'. The subject of these phrases will subsequently be referred to as the 'movement system'. GA 170 p.143
70 ibid, p.246
71 Condon, 1985 [see footnote K 121] copy.
72 Lutzger, op cit
73 Arnim, 1978 p.75; see also concept of 'relaxed awareness' as used by Bancroft 1984, p.20
74 Arnim, 1978 p.78
75 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture 15.3.1916 and 5.11.917
76 "mental images resulting from acts of sense perception" – this expansive phrase is all subsumed into the word *Vorstellen* in the German original.
77 GA 21 p.134
78 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* Anthroposophic Press 1996 Lecture 9.
79 The German word here is *imaginativ*. Although optically the English word 'imaginative' suggests itself, 'imaginal' has been preferred as closer to the German meaning.
80 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture 22.3.1913.
81 Coleridge's relevant views on this can be found in Ch. XII and XIII of the *Biographia Literaria*. Wordsworth's theory of poetry can be found in the *Preface* to the *Lyrical Ballads*.
82 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture 27.3.1911
83 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture 20.10.1922
84 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture 15.6.1921
85 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* Anthroposophic Press 1996 p.132
86 Rudolf Steiner, Lecture, 2.11.1908
87 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* p.136
88 Rudolf Steiner, *High School Education* Anthroposophic Press, 1996 – formerly *The Supplementary Course*
89 Rudolf Steiner, *Education for Adolescents* Anthroposophic Press 1996 Lecture 1 & Lecture 3
90 ibid
91 ibid
92 Rudolf Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education* Rudolf Steiner Press 1972 Lecture 11.
93 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* Lecture 9.
94 Rudolf Steiner, *Education for Adolescents* Anthroposophic Press 1996 Lecture 2.
95 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Lecture 9.
96 Rudolf Steiner, *Practical Advice to Teachers* Rudolf Steiner Press 1976 Lecture 9.
97 Rudolf Steiner, *The Foundations of Human Experience* Lecture 9.
98 ibid
99 ibid
100 ibid
101 ibid
102 See, for instance, the books of Mario Rinvolucri, or Alan Maley and Alan Duff.
103 Lazarus, 1857 p.133
104 ibid p.134
105 Rudolf Steiner, *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy* (1907)
106 GA 24 p.91
107 GA 299 p.56
108 Copei, 1969
109 Jaffke, 1994
110 This phrase comes from a conversation I had with him (in German: "wie im Halbschatten des Bewußtseins").
111 The German pronoun here is *es*, i.e. 'it', so to avoid lots of the clumsy 'he or she's' I have opted to use 'she'.
112 Jaffke, 1984, p.85
113 Dühnfort/Kranich, 1984
114 Conferences Vol. I Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications 1986 p.43
115 Winterfeld, 1984
116 Heyder, 1984
117 Rudolf Steiner, *Practical Advice to Teachers* Lecture 2.
118 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.51
119 GA 295. A complete list of Steiner's speech exercises is given in GA 280.
120 Werbeck-Svärdström 1969.
121 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.146
122 GA 302 p.69.
123 GA 300/1 p.269; GA 300/1 p.141, 172 and 248; GA 300/2 p.107.
124 GA 300/1 p.248; and GA 300/3 p.136.
125 *Jaffke*, 1984 p.74. See also GA 300/1 p.161. The method here is well known outside Waldorf schools e.g. Palmer, 1959.

126 cf. Jaffke, 1984 p.84.
127 Masukowitz, 1984 Clements, 1984.
128 GA 280/82
129 Maley/Duff, 1985. See also: Care/Debyser, 1978; Petcovic 1979; Heathcote 1979; Löffler 1979; Edelhoff/Liebau 1988.
130 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.139.
131 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.146.
132 GA 300/1 p.274.
133 Billows 1973 p.43.
134 Enzensberger 1988, p.34. See also Dahl 1986, Weinrich 1988.
135 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.51
136 GA 295 p.65. See also F. Lionel Billows, 1973 (especially p.91, 111 and 177) and Harald Weinrich, 1988 for stimulating suggestions on discursive reading.
137 GA 295 p.61.
138 GA 295 p.61.
139 GA 295 p.61.
140 Kiersch, 1986; Lutzker, 1991.
141 GA 300/3 p.32.
142 Maier, 1984 p.131.
143 Maier, 1984 p.137
144 GA 300/1 p.77.
145 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.129.
146 GA 299 p.56.
147 GA 299 p.83.
148 GA 299 p.83.
149 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.145.
150 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.130
151 GA 300/2 p.106.
152 GA 303/3 p.163.
153 Bisaz, 1984 p.52.
154 Study of Man p.168 etc. In his last Lectures to the teachers in Stuttgart, Steiner gives a metaphorical picture, in the form of a Goethean polarity, of the difference between abstract and pictorial teaching. The mental effects of the latter he compares to carbon dioxide sparkling in spring water; the mental effects of the former he compares to methane rising from a swamp.
155 Vogt, 1967 p.6.
156 GA 311 p.108.
157 GA 299 p.27; GA 303 p.142; GA 311 p.105; Jaffke, 1984 p.74.
158 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.130
159 GA 303 p.143
160 GA 300/3 p.162.
161 Maier, 1984 p.125.
162 GA 300/1 p.105.
163 GA 302 p.62.
164 GA 300/2, p.39, 63, 147, 176, 200,291; GA 300/3, p.40 & 52.
165 GA 300/2 p.39.
166 GA 300/2 p.147; similarly GA 300/3, p.40.
167 GA 300/2 p.176.
168 GA 300/2 p.201
169 GA 300/2 p.291.
170 GA 300/3 p.40.
171 GA 300/3 p.52.
172 Kohn, 1984.
173 Kohn, 1984 p.145.
174 Kohn, 1984 p.145.
175 Kaukler, 1948 p.245.
176 GA 300/1 p.133 & 270; GA 300/3 p.92.
177 GA 303 p.359.
178 GA 300/3 p.91.
179 Materials for Language Teaching at Rudolf Steiner (Waldorf) Schools, ed. Christoph Jaffke in co-operation with the Pädagogische Forschungsstelle of the Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen. The volumes available are:
Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School
Plays for the Lower and Middle School
More Plays for the Lower and Middle School
Tongue Twisters and Speech Exercises
Riddles
Proverbs and Sayings
Poems for the Middle and Upper School
Poemes, Chants, Jeux et Comptines (cl. 1-4)
Poesies, Textes et Chansons (cl. 5-9)
There are also Russian materials available from the Bund.
A wide range of German materials is available from the publishers Verlag Freies Geistesleben and Urachhaus – material specifically for German as a foreign language is still in preparation. Contact Salam Bereksi, Institut für Waldorfpädagogik, Annener Berg 15, 58454 Witten-Annen, Germany. A curriculum for German as a foreign language is available from the SWSF, Forest Row.
180 C.f. Quetz, 1989.
181 Kahl, 1990 p.242.
182 Aliusque Idem *1986.*
183 Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction* p.75.
184 Dühnfort, 1980, p.82.
185 GA 301 p.101.
186 GA 300/2 p.114.

187 GA 300/2 p.265.
188 GA 300/2 p.272.
189 GA 300/2 p.274.
190 GA 300/2 p.273.
191 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.134.
192 *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Lecture 9
193 ibid p.155
194 Kiersch, 1990. Incidentally, it also bears a close resemblance to Coleridge's characterisation of the symbol: "...a symbol is characterised by a translucence of the Special in the Individual, or of the General in the Especial, or of the Universal in the General. Above all by the translucence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal. It always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the Whole, abides itself as a living part of that Unity, of which it is the representative." from: *The Statesman's Manual*.
195 Dühnfort, 1980.
196 GA 300/2 p.115.
197 GA 300/2 p.274.
198 Dühnfort, 1980, p.109, 165, 213.; on the method: p.216. See also Heinz Zimmermann, 1980.
199 *Practical Advice to Teachers* Lectures 9 and 10.
200 GA 300/3, p.161.
201 In the Christmas Course we find: "The rest of the morning is then given over to more flexible matters....above all modern languages." (GA 303).
202 GA300/3 p.164.
203 GA 300/1 p.171.
204 *Practical Advice to Teachers*, p.142; GA 301, p.144; GA 303, p.224; GA 300/3, p.161. See also Dühnfort, 1980 p.202 & 316.
205 GA 300/3 p.164. On this point Lauten 1984 (b).
206 Morgenstern, 1984 argues differently.
207 GA 192 p.19.
208 ibid p.27.
209 ibid p.25.
210 ibid p.34.
211 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.144
212 GA 192 p.21
213 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.129.
214 GA 300/1 p.69.
215 GA 300/1 p.75.
216 GA 300/1 p.77.
217 GA 300/1 p.75.
218 GA 300/1 p.171.
219 GA 300/1 p.283.
220 Erich Gabert, in his introduction to the 1975 edition of the College Meeting Minutes has given a compelling description of the rapid growth of the first Waldorf School.
221 GA 300/2 p.50.
222 GA 300/2 p.160.
223 GA 300/2 p.183.
224 GA 300/1 p.67
225 GA 300/2 p.161.
226 Klafki, 1985 p.119.
227 GA 302a p.79.
228 See GA 300/2 p.93 ff. in conjunction with the Lecture on Upper School teaching of 21st June, 1922. Also Dühnfort, 1980, and Kiersch, 1990.
229 GA 307 p.200. C.f. the remarks in the Minutes for 5.12.1922 of the interplay between French and English. (GA 300/2 p.200)
230 GA 311 p.143.
231 GA 300/2 p.182.
232 The whole problem here goes back to certain remarks Steiner made in the College meeting of 14th February, 1923. It was, he said, the language of a "culture of formalised rigidity". The facts of the situation were that, French troops having occupied the Ruhr area, a prominent parent (Prof. Richard Karutz) had demanded that a stop be put to French teaching in the school. Steiner, to avoid an embarrassing confrontation at a forthcoming parents' evening, had invited him to the teachers meeting, and although he had no intention of allowing French to be stopped, he nevertheless, for the sake of diplomacy, allowed himself to be drawn into the tone of the ensuing conversation. This was when the contentious remarks were made. French continued, as it does to this day in very many Waldorf schools across the world. The language and culture of France are also mentioned on many occasions throughout Steiner's works, and nowhere in anything remotely approaching a tone of disparagement. The incident in the teachers meeting must therefore be regarded as a historical curiosity. Steiner's followers Hans Erhard Lauer and Herbert Hahn have both written highly appreciative studies of French language and culture, which underline what must have been his own attitude. See also Steiner's remarks on the value of the experience of the French language in the Torquay Course (GA 311, p.143.) A splendid way of countering prejudice against French is Mario Wandruszka's beautiful study: *Der Geist der Französischen Sprache* (The Spirit of French), Reinbek, 1959.
233 Hahn, 1981.
234 Geißler/Plock, 1981 p.35.
235 Geißler/Plock, 1981 p.49.
236 Speichert, 1987 p.194.
237 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.146.

238 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.147
239 GA 300/1 p.118
240 GA 300/2 p.40
241 GA 300/2 p.108
242 *Practical Advice to Teachers* p.146
243 Butzkamm, 1989 p.14
244 Schrey, 1968 p.66
245 Becker/Hentig, 1988
246 There is ample evidence to the contrary, which indeed has been accumulating since the very early days of the media. For instance, in his final statement to the War Crimes Tribunal in Nuremberg, Albert Speer, one of the most powerful figures of the Third Reich, said that the dictatorship under which he had lived "was...one that employed to perfection the instruments of technology to dominate its own people...Through technical devices such as radio and public address systems, used as they had never been used before, eighty million people were made subject, uncritically, to the will of one man." (from *Albert Speer, his Battle with Truth* by Gitta Sereny, p.594 in the Picador edition.)
247 Kranich, 1969 p.26
248 Eltz, 1971 p.56
249 GA 303, p.357
250 Nicolson, 1938 p.194
251 The German word here is *Berechtigungswesen*, which is a system peculiar to Germany, whereby a particular type of school, coupled to a particular examination, irrevocably predetermines what further education and professional or vocational pathways are open to you.
252 Native speakers with suitable training are ideal. [editor's note]

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