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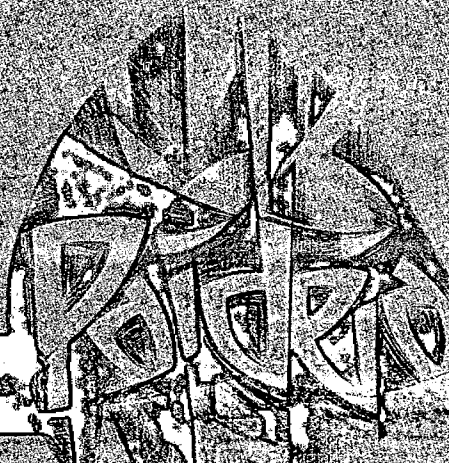
Working Together in a Waldorf School

edited by Martyn Rawson
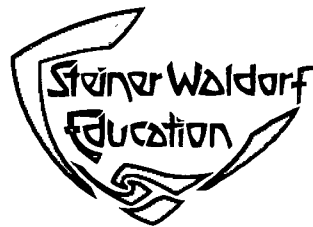
WORKING TOGETHER IN A WALDORF SCHOOL

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Contents

INTRODUCTION
What makes a school Waldorf in the first place?

Martyn Rawson

The theme of this book presents us with one of the great challenges in Waldorf education. I have frequently stated that Waldorf education, like one of the sarsen lintels at Stonehenge, is supported on two massive upright supports, the <u>curriculum</u> and the ideas of the <u>Threefold Social Order</u>. In other words, the educational approach on its own is insufficient. It needs the complementary structure of another body of ideas related to the social organisation of the school.

The Stonehenge metaphor, appealing though it is, can also unfortunately be misleading. There is nothing static about either set of principles. Just as the Waldorf Curriculum is not a prescriptive system, neither is the Threefold Social Order a blueprint for organisational development. Both sets of ideas are ways of seeing. Both are based on an holistic understanding of the nature of the developing human being.

Social forms are part of the education

The idea at the heart of these essays is that education always has to be seen in a social context. If that social setting embodies (and doesn't merely preach) mutually respectful, collaborative, inclusive and above all, conscious relationships, this fact will be a powerful element in the education itself – and that is quite irrespective of the content of the teaching. In age appropriate ways the social relationships among the adults within the school community work in a formative and morally influential way. That means through imitation in the early years (age 3 to 7), through emulation and through the authority of the teacher during the Class teacher years and through insight among the older pupils. The ethos of a school, what its vision is, how it nurtures a picture of the developing human being, and how it relates as an institution to the world, are all factors of pre-eminent educational value.

So how we work together is an educational factor. The education itself, and this is perhaps less obvious, requires certain collaborative qualities if it is to fulfil its real spiritual tasks. That is the really radical idea that Rudolf Steiner had when he created Waldorf education.

It does not always help to look back at the historical origins of Waldorf education, especially if we are looking for models of school organisation or working. The first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, like the other 850 there are now officially around the world, was a child of its time and place of birth, a product of certain people's biographies and certain historical circumstances. Waldorf education, however, is a gift of the Spirit of the Times. It draws its universal inspiration from that source. That is why there can be Waldorf schools in a Buddhist culture in Thailand, in an Islamic culture in Egypt, in a Hebrew culture in Israel and even in the heterogeneous cultures of London, New York or Forest Row.

The living ideas at the heart of the curriculum and the 'Waldorf' way of working together find their expression in a variety of organisational and social forms.

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This pluralism however, does not mean that *any* form is suitable to realise the ideals of Waldorf education. The fruitful way (and I can think of several *unfruitful* ways in which this question could be handled) of meeting this challenge of having to define what *can* and what *can not* be a Waldorf school, is to define what the aims and tasks of the education require of the organisational structure of a Waldorf School. This may seem simple and obvious but it does require us to clarify what we mean by Waldorf in the first place!

Just what is it that makes a school a *Waldorf* school? The following answers may seem challenging, but then Waldorf education *is* challenging.

Criteria for becoming a Waldorf school

I would describe a Waldorf school as a school in which the teachers have the autonomy to choose the curriculum and teaching methods they feel appropriate for the children in their care. That means that their reading of the developmental needs of the children as individuals and as a group determines what is to be taught. Nor does this occur within a vacuum, but happens within a specific social context. The developmental needs of the children and the social context are what determine the curriculum in a Waldorf school and not tradition or handed down prescriptions, let alone curricula determined by politicians or bureaucrats.

Furthermore the teaching in a Waldorf school has to aim to enhance the health of the pupils. This is a radical departure from other forms of education. To understand what Steiner meant by health, we need an holistic view of the developing human being, in which spiritual, biographical, psychological, cognitive, affective and moral aspects (what Steiner called the soul-spirit) are wholly integrated with the physiological development.

Enabling the child to build a basis for life-long health is not a matter of creating immunity to disease, though that may indeed be a worthy outcome to aim for. This is not about magic cures. It is about establishing the health-giving balance between body, soul and spirit. As a school doctor once said to me, "*health is not limited to avoiding illness; it is about how an individual deals with illness*". This gives us the clue that inner health is equally meant. In fact, rather than define health as the absence of ill-health (try finding a definition of health in a medical textbook), it helps to understand health as the condition in which an individual's potential is optimally furthered. Anything that limits or hinders an individual from fulfilling his or her potential is ill health. That may be physical, it may be psychological, it may simply be an external factor such as poverty, deprivation or oppression. All these facts limit individuals from growing, developing and realising their potential. So education should foster health-giving or health-bringing processes in the individual.

The third fundamental criterion for a Waldorf school is that it is socially inclusive. That means it is genuinely open to everyone. Furthermore it does not select its pupils, nor stream them, nor segregate them according to criteria such as ability or intelligence, nor obviously race, creed, social background, sexual orientation or gender (and that goes for the parents too). It is not possible to say, "*he or she does not belong in our school.*" It may be necessary to say, "*we cannot meet that child's specific needs because we don't have the qualified staff, resources or facilities*", because that is a very different matter. (It would be entirely wrong to say the latter but actually mean the former.) The second statement is a frank admission of deficit on the part of the school.

A teacher responsible for admissions in a large school with far more applications for Class 1 than available places once told me that she occasionally de-selected strong children from well-established families who clearly had a sound understanding of their children's needs (i.e. "good Waldorf families") on the grounds that they would better cope with the alternatives, that they would they thrive in more or less any reasonable school environment. In her view, it was the weak children from difficult backgrounds who most needed Waldorf education. She further added however that in a large class, a balance of children was essentially for the health of all the children. I'm sure both parents and teachers of that school would have been horrified by such a judgement but it showed me a real reading of the meaning of education towards health and social inclusion.

The idea of social inclusion is an ideal that most of us find hard to live with in reality. Do we really want our children to go school with all those ruffians and problem children? No we don't. The answer is to recognise the need for quality education for as many as we can possibly manage. So we have to found more good schools. Furthermore would hope that a Waldorf school would have teachers with the insight and skills to turn social inclusion into a learning field for social competence.

Social forms that reflect the nature of the task

So what organisational structures enable a school to meet these criteria? Well, certainly one in which methods are practised and developed that enable the individual teacher to 'read' the real needs of the children, beyond their need to read, write and pass exams. That means a school in which meditative, reflective study is done on individual pupils and groups of children. That means a school in which staff are expected to have a high level of responsibility towards the development of their pupils as whole human beings, including their spiritual nature. It means that those teachers share a common understanding, and more importantly, work together to cultivate an ever deeper understanding of the archetypal processes of child development.[1] Rudolf Steiner gave a comprehensive picture of the holistic development of the human being (referred to in German as *Menschenkunde* – knowledge about the human being). The quality most needed by teachers is pedagogical imagination, the ability to do the right thing at the right time to enable the children to learn. Steiner's advice was that this ability can be acquired through studying the nature of the human being, meditatively understanding it and applying it to the pedagogical situation. The studying part of this process is the core function of the teachers' meetings. That is why Steiner described the teachers' meeting as a "permanent academy" (17th August 1923). The pragmatic day-to-day matters of school life in such a school are always related to the larger, whole picture. In the end all decisions in a school come down to a very simple formula, *what is good for the children?*

It might be instructive in reviewing decisions and processes to measure them against this criterion; was it really good for the children?

Such a school would have the sharing of daily classroom experience, pupil study, and discussion of child development and curriculum development at the core of its organisational life. The heart organ of the school from which, and through which the whole life of the school flows, is the weekly teachers' meeting, in which practical reviewing, planning and research occur. This is just what Steiner

described as the function of teachers' meetings (see Thomas Stöckli's article on teachers as researchers and the teachers meeting as a focus for research). There may be schools that do this but do *not* base their ideas on Steiner's anthroposophy. That is less decisive than the on-going and *realised* commitment to basing everything on the needs of the children. What is decisive is that this is not just theory but really occurs.

Healthy forms

To fulfil the second criterion of health, one must first have a grasp of what health means and have some way of evaluating how this works. That means there must be a striving towards understanding through observation, reflection and dialogue of how children learn, how their experiences in school work-on in them and what activities can bring about the desired balance in the individual. The answer that Steiner gave was that education had to be artistic because only artistic processes engage the whole human being in a way they can develop through. As we know education as an art does not only mean education through art. It means that the teaching and the whole school experience should be artistic. It would take up too much space here to explore in any detail what that means. Let it suffice to say that artistic processes are always rhythmical, transformative and make use of living images and concepts, which can grow with the child. That is why the Waldorf curriculum is both spiral and rhythmical, rather than additative and subject driven.

The autonomy of the teacher is a tricky issue for society. Can we entrust the education of our children to autonomous individuals? What happens if they are wrong, misguided or simply inefficient? Autonomous however does not mean unaccountable. In fact it places a high value on individual responsibility. But real accountability can only develop in a supportive environment that is also honest and realistic. All forms of hierarchy weaken individual accountability. If someone else, higher than me is responsible, that reduces my personal accountability. If my accountability is dependent on someone being accountable for *me* in a chain of command, I am already serving two masters and possibly more. In reality I have only one master and that is the child I am responsible for educating.

Collaborative teamwork is without doubt the most effective form of quality assurance. Criteria can be established; work and progress can be monitored and assessed in mutually responsible groups. Hard decisions can be made and carried; problems can be tackled at the local and nearest level. Not all problems can be solved but the first place to start is close at hand. Teamwork goes hand in hand with mutual interest, shared aims, shared struggles, shared successes, unique solutions, regular, informed and informal feedback. Teams can then be accountable in quite different ways to parents, school trustees, governors or governmental authorities. Within teams people play to their strengths. In hierarchies people also struggle for position, influence, pay or power, whatever else they strive towards in terms of ideals.

Hierarchy does not preclude the pursuit of ideals, indeed it is often based on the ability to articulate ideals – the one at the top is often the one who can best convey the message. However it is always ideals *plus* status.

In judging what organisational structures are appropriate for a school, it is

important to note that there are no blueprints (or as Steve Briault puts it, 'purpleprints'). There is no one ideal organisational structure that can be applied everywhere. Each situation has to evolve its own (though not necessarily by inventing wheels within wheels). The important thing is to recognise the underlying principles at work within a given situation. Recognising the functioning principles of the Threefold Social Order (as Michael Harslem describes in his contributions) is a way of identifying the appropriate forms for different processes within the organisation, including balancing individual initiative and collective responsibility. Once the actual processes have been identified then it it possible to find appropriate organisational forms.

Leaders and followers?

Nor are teamwork and leadership incompatible (as both Christopher Schaeffer and Michael Harslem point out in their essays). Leadership is essential. But leadership is largely an individual quality not identical with role or position in an organisation. This is a hard idea to grasp in a culture that rewards its leaders with power, status and wealth. The vast sums paid to chief executives in industry are not simply a reflection of their leadership qualities – too many public failures in industry belie that claim. The leadership required in each situation may be different. In some circumstances leadership is a strongly moral quality, in a person who insists on what is right. In other circumstances, leadership in the form of creative ideas may be necessary. Calmness and steadfastness in crisis may be needed one day. On another day someone is needed who is able and willing to address angry parents or mediate between colleagues in conflict with each other.

There is of course a hierarchy of individual ability and initiative but that structure is fleeting and transient. An individual may have the right idea at the right time and can express it in the right way, but this role cannot be institutionalised. That is why the concept of leadership and service belong together (as Christopher Schaeffer points out in his article).

It is unlikely that any one individual would have all the qualities needed to make a true leader, so collaborative structures that enable the individuals with the appropriate gifts for the tasks to come forward in the service of the school are needed. Formal hierarchies, especially those underlined by pay differentials do not encourage the right person to come forward. In fact such conditions tend, in my experience, to push certain types forward. The ambitious, the status-conscious, the naïve, the one with a bee in his bonnet and the fundamentalists, are the individuals more likely to come forward than the dedicated and capable teachers. Furthermore the specialisation into Waldorf functionary and the teacher (i.e. *"those who can't teach go into teacher training or administration and those who can do neither of those, work for the Fellowship"*) creates artificial hierarchies. The idea of promotion for the capable sounds good in theory but, if we were really honest, does not stand up in practice.

The only way to counter this is to separate pay from rank and position and link it to the needs of the individual and the overall financial strength of the organisation in relation to the market value of the educational provisional (as I showed in an article in *Paideia* 16 [2]).

Structures meeting needs

I would describe the ideal structure of a Waldorf school diagrammatically in terms of an inverted pyramid. Instead of direction coming from the top, being filtered down the hierarchy and then implemented by the workforce, the workforce (in this case the individual teachers in the activity of educational transformation with the pupils) has needs that the rest of the organisation has to meet. The teaching needs resources and facilities, administrative backup, information, and of course the teachers need to be paid. The individual teacher also needs support from his or her colleagues who provide feedback, collaboration, research and ideas. The pupils need to be understood by the teachers, so that their needs can be more effectively met. Since there are many teachers, the diagram would have to have as many points as there are teachers and pupils. The purpose of the organisational structure is to optimise the support to the educational process. [See diagram].

Parents
School Community

The Council of
Management

The College of
Teachers

The School Organisation
Administration

SUPPORT   SUPPORT

The Educational Process
Teacher
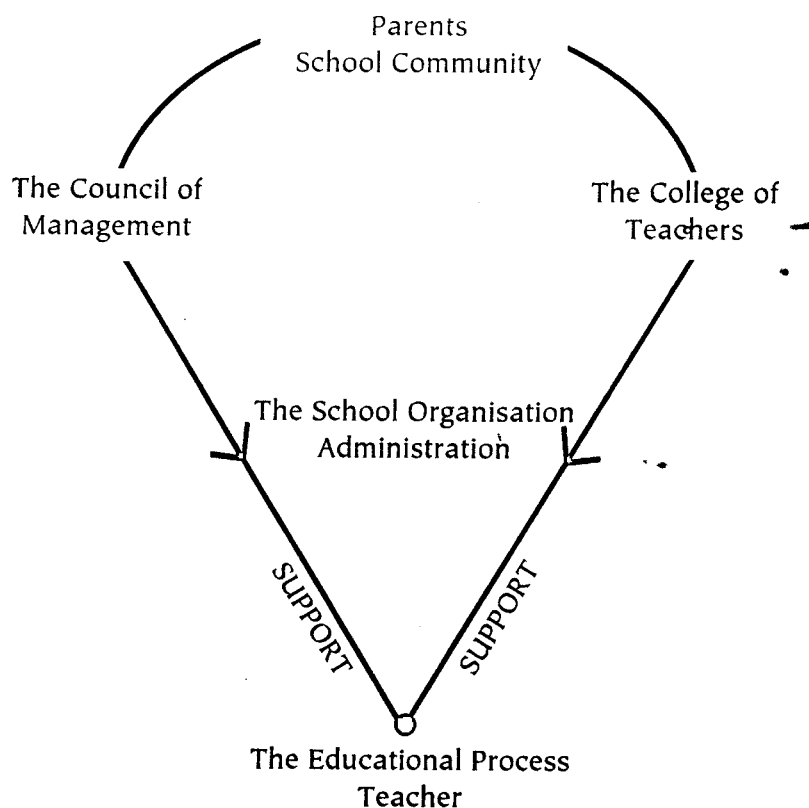
By having the corporate responsibility for the school shared between the teachers (the Faculty or College of Teachers) and the unpaid trustees (governors, council of management) of the charity, management is done essentially by delegation. Those who are delegated work within an agreed and evolving strategic plan which maps out the ways the school intends to realise its stated aims in the short and long term. Delegation is a key part of this process. There are many ways of doing this but essentially the roles usually taken by head and deputy head teachers (or school directors) are shared among the experienced members of staff who have equal status within the school. This kind of peer-based management structure can be very responsive as long the management skills and techniques are there.

A current TV ad has the actor Robbie Coltrane apparently doing Tai Chi and

grinning at the camera saying, *"we're all bank managers now"*. I think it would be fair to say that many Waldorf teachers have also performed the roles of property developers, financial directors, personnel officers, PR officers, marketing managers, book keepers, researchers and developers, maintenance managers in Waldorf schools over the past 70 or more years! We have performed these roles alongside being teachers. Nowadays the teachers share these roles with parents and administrators within the school's management structures.

There is no doubt that there is a place for professional managers and administrators within Waldorf schools but the point is that they should have equal status with teachers and be closely integrated into the pedagogical work. (Note Steiner's statement in the essay at the beginning of this collection that the *"administration of educational institutions... should be entirely in the hands of people who are simultaneously either teaching or otherwise productively engaged in cultural life"*). In practice administrators who are on the College of Teachers, who attend teachers meetings and share the research and child studies and who are actively engaged in the life of the school meet this criterion. In some cases the odd bit of teaching, often in the Upper School supplements this.

Accountability and professionalism

These two words often produce unease in Waldorf schools. They seem somehow not what we are about. They seem to refer to ways of working that smack of imposed standards and empty, bureaucratic procedures. Are we not beyond such things? Aren't Waldorf teachers supposed to be autonomous educational artists? Well, yes they are. In order to support that educational initiative that lies at the heart of a Waldorf school, we need however organisational structures.

The down side of collective responsibility is the risk that nobody is accountable when things go wrong. It does not actually help to say, *"we are all responsible for the mistakes and inefficiencies that have occurred"*. When it is clear that despite collective accountability, individuals are clearly personally responsible for failings, there is often a marked reluctance within Waldorf schools to deal with this. The conventional approach of name, blame and take the consequences is often deemed inappropriate. Sometimes one encounters a certain attitude of impatience with criticism, along the lines of, *"if you knew how much we sacrifice you would overlook such petty failings"*. Usually the reasons for denial are far more mundane. It is simply that criticism and admission of failure are just too painful and threatening.

It is true that some Waldorf schools and especially their teachers do sometimes find themselves in the position in which they feel themselves to be hard-pressed and misunderstood; a group of idealists battling against a harsh and unfair world. In such situations collective responsibility may mask collective insecurity and reluctance to take on board criticism and especially suggestions for improvement. Schools are emotional minefields because many adults, both parents and teachers have deep-seated scars from their own childhoods. They want their children to have the best. Teaching is a vocation that attracts people who want to change the world. In other words education is a field where ideals meet anxiety and the fear of failure is writ large over many encounters between parents and teachers, pupils and teachers and of course children and parents. (Michael Harslem describes the psychology of school very perceptively in his article on parents and teachers.)

However, as Jan Swann and I have tried to show in our booklet on *Quality Development*,[3] the creation of quality can be enhanced through collaborative ways of working, especially if they are built around the twin cycles of inner and outer development and planning-doing-reviewing. Accountability depends on there being a culture of transparency within a school. A culture that tolerates no mistakes generates a fear of failure and that leads to siege mentality, closing ranks and suspicion. A culture that works with the idea of learning from mistakes can be more accountable in the long run. Learning from mistakes also sometimes includes the recognition that things must be changed and some people are in the wrong job.

A spiritual ethos

The real cement that bonds a team of individuals together in such a way that the individual can give his or her best and in which the whole is more than the sum of the parts, is sharing an experience that transcends personality. That comes through a mutual recognition of certain spiritual values. These values should be of a universal, rather than sectarian or religious nature (though faith communities can form very effective teams). The teamwork that bonds the successful sales team of a company may be not only based on mutual self-interest. There may be even be a moral ethic (if the team are marketing organic, environmentally sound products that genuinely meet the needs of their customers, for example). The extent to which those individuals are serving a higher purpose will influence the quality of their work. However the ethos would need to be consciously and voluntarily shared.

What really bonds a community (or team) in freedom (to deliberately tempt the paradox out of hiding) is the conscious sharing of experience beyond the merely personal. To be serving a higher need, such as the needs of children or an even higher imperative such as the Spirit of the Times in ways that are not based on faith alone but on experience and insight, makes a qualitative difference.

What makes a Waldorf school different (though not necessarily better) than other schools is the conscious recognition among the individuals who carry responsibility for the school that we are individually and collectively linked to each other through our biographies in ways we may not be conscious of. There is a higher potential meaning to our relationships and work together, both adults and children. We have created the dynamic and potential for development through our inner connection to each other; a connection which has its origins beyond the here and now and whose consequences work long into the future. If there one idea Waldorf teachers in my view *have to* work with, it is the idea of karma and reincarnation as Rudolf Steiner described it in his basic works such the book *Theosophy*. I do not say a Waldorf teacher has to *believe in* these ideas, I say one has to be *willing to work with* them in an open-minded way.

Conditions for healthy working

A further aspect of this recognition is working with the realms beyond the daily exoteric life of the school. At one level we are called upon as individuals to school our own behaviour and attitudes in such a way as to enable us to be socially responsible, to enable us to be collegial and to enable trust and collaboration. The health of a community (especially in the sense of health outlined above) and the quality of its social relationships

is dependent on the adults, actively working on their inner development. There are many ways of doing this but one can identify a number of basic guidelines, drawn from the writings of Rudolf Steiner, such as those outlined in the chapter *The Conditions of Esoteric Training* in Rudolf Steiner's book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*. It can be very fruitful to apply these conditions to the life of the school community or College of Teachers. They are equally applicable to the individual s to the group.

Whilst space does not permit a full description here, I can outline the seven conditions.

1. Health. This applies to both physical and spiritual health. Healthy work rhythms and environment for all concerned are necessary, though duty can occasionally over ride health. Healthy attitudes that avoid all exaggerated tendencies bring about calmness and clarity of thought, equanimity under pressure. No task is too menial if it is necessary to the smooth working of the whole. A cared for environment is one that that liberates higher activity. An uncared for environment creates social disharmony (or at least it takes greater effort to create harmony). The routines and rhythms of a school contribute to its health. Too many meetings run in a-rythmical ways (i.e. not enough variation of pace, content, tension – everything that one might call breathing) contributes to the health of an organisation. In many respects this level addresses what one might call the bodily aspects both of the individual and the organisation.

2. Integration. This calls for the recognition that everything is inter-related. Steiner gives the example that if a pupil is not what I wish her to be, I do not direct the blame towards her but towards myself. Problems need to be owned. We need to ask what can I do to help resolve it? This quality requires the holding back of judgement in favour of accurate characterisation of the issues in question. In a community there should be no them and us, insiders or outsiders. Permeability is an important quality for organisations to have. It means they are open to other influences and views. The opposite is sensitivity of what effect one is having in one's environment. This flow and exchange between centre and periphery is what Steiner described as the relationship between the parents' evenings and the teacher's meetings. In the Ilkley course of lectures,[4] he referred to what flows from the parents and the wider community to the teachers in terms of feedback is what keeps the teacher refreshed in their ideas and prevents them from becoming stale. This quality has to do with being embedded in the life processes and of a school.

3. Right thinking and feeling. This quality stems from the insight that thoughts and feeling are as real in their effects in the worlds as deeds. The mood or tone of a faculty of teachers or within the wider school community is an effective force. It involves individuals trying to present let their higher selves speak (or more effectively be silent) in the group. It means actively carrying decisions one personally may disagree with and doing so in the most positive spirit possible. The corollary is of course also true; it is necessary to have courage for the truth when complicity might be easier. In the theatre of College or Council meetings one strives neither for monotonous conformity (a condition hard to imagine in a Waldorf school but theoretically possible) or the unresolved tragedy. Nevertheless complex issues have to run the course of complex processes of development. A consciousness and a

schooling of the awareness of the dynamic of decision-making processes is essential. This realm addresses the soul life of the individual and the organisation and calls for a strong social ethic.

4. Inner and outer worlds. This task calls for the recognition between what we can discover through our own insight and spiritual work and what we perceive in the world. What the individual perceives as reality must permeate what he/she does. This principle also means that outer forms, be they organisational or literally architectural must reflect the inner qualities they are there to express. Everything from the school's headed notepaper to the things sold at the Christmas market must reflect the ethos of the school. Another aspect of this quality is that both individuals and the organs of the organisation must develop awareness of the needs in the world around them, seek what comes to expression within their symptoms and meet those needs with insight and resolution. This quality calls for recognition of the spirit at the core of what reveals itself to us through our senses.

5. Love of deed. This calls for the quality of resoluteness to carry out a resolution once it taken. As Steiner put it in such a wonderfully pragmatic way, *"nothing should induce (one) to deviate from a resolution he has taken, except the insight that he is wrong"*. Steiner tells us that the resolution is often more important than the outcome of the deed. It is the love for the deed, once decided upon that counts. Another way of putting this is to keep the aims you have in mind, keep focused on objectives and avoid being distracted or deviating from the essentials. This is also a call to seek the positive in every situation, not as self-delusion but as clear-eyed assessment. As the Dalai Lama put it, *"when you lose, don't lose the lesson. When you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it"*.

6. Gratitude. Be grateful for all that happens. Be grateful for what help we have been given and realise that without the others we are helpless to fulfil the task, even when they seem to be the greatest obstacle. Be positive towards setbacks and other people who make your life difficult.

7. Application. Apply the qualities described above to real life. Remember that form without spirit is empty but spirit without form remains inactive and ineffective.

Know that,*"...out of empty nothingness, nothing can be created, but also that the imperfect can be transformed into the perfect. Anyone who develops within himself the propensity for creative activity will soon find himself capable of dealing with evil in the right way"*. Above all Steiner calls on us to, *"delight in growth, in development"* in our thoughts, feelings and actions. That is a wonderful motto for working together in a Waldorf school.

Footnotes

1   I have described the relationship between individual development in relation to the harmonizing effect of working with archetypal pictures of the developing human being in the open chapter of *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*, edited by M. Rawson and Tobias Richter, SWSF Publications, 2000.
2   *Income, Price and the Fundamental Social Law*, in *Paideia* Nr. 16, April 1996.
3   Rawson, M., and Swann, J., *Quality Development in Steiner Waldorf Schools*, SWSF 2001.
4   Steiner, R., *A Modern Art of Education*, lecture 11.

THE THREEFOLD SOCIAL ORDER AND
EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM*

Rudolf Steiner

The public nurturing of spiritual and cultural life in education has in recent years become more and more a matter for the state. That the schools are the state's business is presently a notion so deeply rooted in people's minds that anyone who tries to dislodge it is regarded as an unworldly idealist. Yet this is the sphere of life that presents matter for the most serious consideration. People who complain of this brand of unworldliness have no idea of how far what they uphold is removed from the world. Our school system is marked particularly by features that reflect the tendencies towards decline in modem cultural life. The social structures of modern governments have not followed the requirements of actual life. For instance, they have taken on a form that does not satisfy the economic demands of modem humanity. They have also set this same backward stamp upon the school system which, having liberated it from the religious confessions, they have now brought into complete dependence upon themselves. At every level schools mould human beings into the form the state requires for doing what the state deems necessary. Arrangements within schools reflect the government's requirements. There is much talk, certainly, of striving to achieve an all-round development of the person, and so on. But the modem person unconsciously feels so completely a part of the whole order of the state that he does not even notice, when talking about the all-round development of the human being, that what is meant is moulding the human being into a useful servant of the state.

In this regard, no good may be expected of the way of thinking of those who today hold socialist views. They are bent on transforming the old state into a huge economic organisation. State schools are supposed to project themselves on into this economic organisation. This would magnify all the faults of present day schools in the most dubious way imaginable. Until now, much that originated before the state took control of the educational system has still remained in the schools. One cannot, of course, wish for a return to the old form of spirituality that has come down from earlier times; rather, one should endeavour to bring the new spirit of evolving humanity into the schools. This spirit will not be in the schools if the state is transformed into an economic organisation and the schools are redesigned to turn out people intended to be the most serviceable labour force for that economic organisation. People today talk much about comprehensive schools (*Einheitsschulen*). It is beside the point that these imagined comprehensive schools are a very fine thing in theory, for if they are made an organic part of an economic organisation, they cannot really be such a fine thing.

The real need of the present is for schools to be totally grounded in a free spiritual and cultural life. What should be taught and cultivated in these schools must be drawn solely from a knowledge of the growing human being and of individual capacities. A genuine anthropology must form the basis of education and instruction. The question

* Reprinted from Steiner, R., *The Renewal of the Social Organism*, Rudolf Steiner Press 1985, translated by E. Bowen-Wedgewood and Ruth Marriott.

should not be: what does a person need to know and be able to do for the present social order? but rather: what capacities are latent in this human being, and what lies within that can be developed? Then it will be possible to bring ever new forces into the social order from the rising generations. The life of the social order will be what is made of it by a succession of fully developed human beings who take their places within the social order. The rising generation should not be moulded into what the existing social order chooses to make of it.

A healthy relation exists between school and society only when society is kept constantly supplied with the new and individual potentials of people whose educations have allowed them to develop unhampered. This can be realised only if the schools and the whole educational system are placed on a footing of self-administration within the social organism. The government and the economy must receive people educated by the independent spiritual-cultural life; they must not, however, have the power to prescribe according to their own wants how these human beings are to be educated. What a person ought to know and be able to do at any particular stage of life must be decided by human nature itself Both the state and economic life will have to conform to the demands of human nature. It is neither for the state nor for economic life to say: we need someone of this sort for a particular post; so *test* the people we need and above all make sure that they know and can do what we want. Rather, the spiritual-cultural organ of the social organism should, following the dictates of its own independent administration, bring those who are suitably gifted to a certain level of cultivation, and the state and economic life should organise themselves according to the results of work in the spiritual-cultural sphere.

Since political and economic life are not something separate from human nature, but rather the outcome of human nature itself, there need never be any fear that a really free cultural life, placed on its own footing, will produce people who are unworldly. On the contrary, unworldliness results precisely when the existing governmental and economic institutions are allowed to shape educational matters according to their own dictates. For in the state and in economic life attitudes must necessarily be adopted in accordance with the existing order. The development of the growing human being requires entirely different kinds of thought and feeling as its guide. One can only do one's work as an educator when one stands in a free, individual relationship to the pupil one teaches. One must know that, for the guidelines of one's work, one is dependent only on *knowledge* of human nature, the principles of social life and such things. But not upon *regulations* or *laws* prescribed from outside. If one seriously wants to transform the present order of society into one in which social attitudes prevail, then one must not be afraid to place the spiritual-cultural life (including the school and educational system) under its own independent control because from such a free, independent system within the social organism men and women will go out with joy and zeal to play an active part in all its life. After all, only people who lack such joy and zeal can come out of schools ruled by the state and the economic system. These people experience as a lethal blight the after-effects of a domination to which they should not have been subjected before they had become fully conscious citizens and co-workers in the state and economic systems. The growing human being ought to mature with the aid of educators and teachers independent of the state and the economic system, educators who can allow individual faculties to develop freely because their own have been given free rein.

In my book *Towards Social Renewal* I have been at pains to show that the world view adopted by the leaders among party socialists is in all essentials simply a continuance (carried to a certain extreme) of the bourgeois world view of the last three or four centuries. The socialists cherish the illusion that their ideas represent a complete break with this world view. They do not represent a break, but only a peculiar colouring of the bourgeois world view with working class feelings and sentiments.

This is shown very markedly by the attitude these socialist leaders adopt towards cultural life and its place in the social organism. Owing to the predominance of economics in bourgeois society during the last few centuries, the spiritual and cultural life has fallen into great dependence on economic life. The consciousness of a self-sustaining spiritual-cultural life, in which the human soul partakes, has been lost. Industrialism and our view of nature have collaborated to bring about this loss. Linked to this loss is the particular way schools have been incorporated into the social organism in recent times. To make the human being serviceable for external life in state and industry – that became the main aim. That humans are above all beings with a soul who should therefore be filled with the consciousness of their connection with a spiritual order of things, and that it is through *their consciousness* that they impart sense to the state and economic system in which they live – all this was considered less and less. Minds were directed ever less towards the spiritual order of the world, and ever more towards the conditions of economic production. In the middle classes this became a manner of feeling, and instinctive psychological tendency. Working class leaders made it into a philosophy of life – or, rather, into a dogma.

This dogma would have disastrous consequences if it were to remain the foundation of the school system into the future. For in reality since, even at its best, an economically-determined social organism cannot make suitable provision for any genuine cultural life (particularly not for a productive educational system), this educational system would have to owe its existence first and foremost to a continuation of old thinking. The parties that claim to represent a new order would be obliged to leave the cultural life of schools in the hands of the representatives of the old world outlook. However, since under such conditions there could be no question of any internal link between the newly rising generation and the old, artificially prolonged culture, cultural life would necessarily become more and more stagnant. The souls of the this generation would wither away after being sown on the rocky ground of a world view that can give them no inner source of strength. People will grow up soulless beings within a social order arising out of industrialism.

So that this should not happen, the movement for the Threefold Social Order strives for the complete disassociation of the educational system government and industry. The place and function of educators within society should depend solely upon the authority of those engaged in that activity. The administration of the educational institutions, the organisation of courses of instruction and their goals should be entirely in the hands of people who are *simultaneously* either teaching or otherwise productively engaged in cultural life. In each case, such people would divide their time between actual teaching (or some other form of cultural productivity) and the administrative control of the educational system. It will be evident to anyone who can examine cultural life without bias that the peculiar soul vitality and energy required for organising and directing educational institutions

will be summoned only in someone actively engaged in teaching or some other cultural creativity.

Today few will fully concede this. Only those who are unbiased enough to see that a new source of cultural life must arise if our devastated social order is to be renewed. In the essay 'Marxism and the Threefold Social Order' I pointed out both the correctness and the one-sidedness of Engels' notion: 'The management of goods and the control of the means of production takes the place of governing people.' Correct though this is, it is nonetheless equally true that in the old order social life was possible only because, in addition to the economic processes of production, people themselves were guided and governed. If this joint governing of people and economic processes ends, then people will have to get their motivating impulses (which previously came from those governing them) from a free and independent cultural life.

Moreover, there is something else: The life of the spirit prospers only when able to unfold as a unity. The same exercise of the soul's powers that leads to a humanly satisfying and sustaining world outlook must also apply to the productive power that makes one a good co-worker in economic life. Men and women with a practical sense for outer life will emerge only from an educational system that is able to develop in a healthy way our innate longings for a loftier world view. A social order that only manages goods and controls processes of production must ultimately go completely awry if it is not kept supplied with people whose souls are healthily developed.

If, then, there is to be any renewal of our social life, we must find the strength to introduce an independent, self-sustaining education system. If people no longer govern their fellow human beings in the old manner, then it must be made possible for the free spirit in every human soul, with all the strength possible for the individualities of any one age, to make itself the guide of life. This spirit will not allow itself to be suppressed. Institutions that try to rule educational life from the point of view of the economic system alone constitute an attempt at suppression. This would lead the free spirit to revolt constantly from the depths of its own natural foundations. Incessant shocks to the whole social edifice are the inevitable outcome of any system that tried to organise education in the same way it controlled the processes of production.

For anyone who sees these things clearly, one of the most urgent demands of the times must be the founding of a human community that will strive with the utmost energy to actualise the freedom and self-determination of the educational system. Other needful demands of the times cannot be fulfilled as long as what is proper for this sphere remains unrecognised. It really only requires unbiased observation of our spiritual life in its present form – with its distraction and disunity, its lack of strength for sustaining the human soul – in order to recognise that just this is appropriate.

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RUDOLF STEINER'S SOCIAL THEORY: HOW THE WALDORF SCHOOLS AROSE FROM THE THREEFOLD SOCIAL ORDER

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The question of whether education should be concerned primarily with developing the individual person or emphasise service to society is as old as Western education itself. Some educators like Socrates placed greater emphasis on the pursuit of truth and the development of individual character, while others like Quintilian stressed the importance of virtue and public service, thereby establishing the terms of a debate that has persisted throughout the history of education until today.[1] The response in the progressive education movement of the late nineteenth and the first third of the twentieth century gave rise to the views of the 'individualists' and the 'social educators'. For example, A. S. Neill's ideas focused more on the needs of the individual[2] while John Dewey's favoured a more socially oriented education.[3] This paper will examine Rudolf Steiner's social theory, specifically the Threefold Social Order, in which a unique attempt was made to provide a solution that would combine freedom and responsibility, and reconcile the claims of individuality and social obligation.

Waldorf education

The Waldorf of Rudolf Steiner schools have tried to cater for both individual needs and the development of the social group by implementing, among a number of innovative features, a unique organisational structure in which the class teachers remain with the same group of children for the length of the primary years. This aims to achieve cohesiveness of the group as well as permitting teachers to attend to the needs of individuals.[4] Waldorf school educators aim to apply Steiner's 'Social Ethic' in the classroom as well as in their school communities. This ethic, the origin of which will be discussed later, states that:

> *The healing social life is only found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection and when in the community the virtue of each one is living.*[5]

The central social aim of institutions which have their basis in Steiner's philosophy (which he called Anthroposophy from *anthropos* = human and *Sophia* = wisdom) of which Waldorf schools are one, is to foster a society in which the community makes it possible for the individual to become even more of an individual who on his or her own part constantly strives to serve the community. In classrooms, a sense of respect for the individual is engendered, human relationships fostered and co-operation on a large scale achieved.[6] These are lessons of the greatest value for a happier social future and they have their basis in a philosophy of ethical individualism and social responsibility based on freedom. To answer the question of how this view came to be part of the Waldorf school movement we will have to become familiar with Steiner's social theory because, as the pioneer Swedish Waldorf educator, Frans Calgren rightly asserts:

> *Whoever wishes to understand Rudolf Steiner education in its full implications will have to come to terms with the ideas of the Threefold Social Order, because one of the*

fundamental goals of his art of education is the endeavour to awaken and to cultivate these social capabilities already in childhood and youth.[7]

However, before embarking on an outline of the Threefold Social Order and the educational movement that emerged from it, a brief and condensed review of Steiner's life and his work on social renewal will be given. This is necessary because Steiner was a prolific writer and there was a span of thirty years during which his ideas on this subject matured and came to light and eventually became rooted in Waldorf educational methodology and school organisation.

Biographical sketch of Rudolf Steiner[8]

Rudolf Steiner was born in 1861 in a border town between Austria and Hungary, now in Croatia, in relatively humble circumstances, his father being a railway telegraphist and station master. He entered Vienna Technical University in 1879 where he pursued a scientific course but maintained himself by tutoring in both scientific and classical subjects. In 1891 he was invited to work at the Goethe-Schiller Institute in Weimar where he was in charge of editing Goethe's large collection of scientific works. In 1894 Steiner was awarded his Ph.D. by the University of Rostock for his thesis *Wahrheit und Wissenschaft (Truth and Science)* which he subsequently extended and published as *Philosophie der Freiheit (Philosophy of Freedom)* [9].

In 1897 he became joint editor of the *Magazin für Literatur* in Berlin, where he made many associations with literary and dramatic circles. From 1899 to 1904 he gave lectures and courses to the Workers' Educational Institute in Berlin. In this period he was invited to address the German Branch of the Theosophical Society, of which he subsequently became leader from 1902 to 1912. As a result of differences in approach, Steiner withdrew from the Theosophical Society and in 1913 established the Anthroposophical Society with a majority of the German Branch theosophists who followed him into this new and independent movement. It made its headquarters in Dornach, Switzerland where it continues to this day.

Before his death in 1925 Steiner published 41 books and delivered about 6,000 lectures. The *Gesamtausgabe (Collected Works)* amounts to 200 volumes. Apart from Waldorf education, which is most widely known, Steiner inspired renewal in a wide variety of work spheres, and professional training institutions as well as practical working centres exist in Bio-dynamic agriculture, anthroposophically orientated medicine, curative education and social therapy, architecture, ethical investment and community banking, Goethean science research centres, Christian Community churches, artistic training in eurythmy, speech and drama, painting and sculpture. The widespread acceptance of his educational ideas is indicated by the fact that in 1994 there were over 640 Waldorf (Rudolf Steiner) schools, 1087 kindergartens, three hundred curative education centres, and sixty Waldorf teacher training institutes in more than fifty countries.[10]

Developments in Steiner's ideas for social renewal

In 1896 when Steiner was editing Goethe's scientific writings in Weimar, he published *A Theory of Knowledge Based on Goethe's World Conception.*[11] This slim volume provided

a philosophical foundation for all his later work by addressing the relation between the inner world of the human being (that is of *thinking*) to the outer world which is perceptible by the senses. It also contained a number of significant thoughts about social inquiry. In the section on the spiritual[12] or cultural sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) he stated that the cultural sciences have as their object of study the human being: "*It is human actions, creations, ideas with which we have to do,*" and that the task of these sciences is to "*interpret the human being to himself and to humanity*".[13]

Thus Steiner suggested that the social sciences are different from the natural sciences and that their task is understanding human consciousness as expressed in social creation. Laws, organisational structures, and political, social, and economic forms reveal the contours of consciousness: they are an external manifestation of the ideas and values of individuals and groups.[14] Since social and economic life is a human creation, reflecting consciousness, and social science has the task of interpreting human beings to themselves, the social or cultural sciences "*are in the highest degree sciences of freedom*".[15]

The next major step in the unfolding of Steiner's social ideas came in 1898 when he was in Berlin editing the *Magazin für Literatur*, in which he frequently commented on the social and political issues of the day. He formulated his 'Basic Sociological Law' as follows:

> At the beginning of culture humanity strives to create social arrangements in which the interests of the individual are sacrificed for the interests of the whole. Later developments lead to a gradual freeing of the individual from the interests of the community and to an unfolding of individual needs and capacities.[16]

In pondering the sweep of history and the gradual emergence of individual rights from Greco-Roman times to the present, this law or principle appears justified and points to one of the central aspects of historical evolution, the emergence of individual consciousness. Indeed, the evolution of consciousness is a central feature of Steiner's thought.

In 1905, while active within the Theosophical Society, Steiner formulated what he called the 'Fundamental Social Law' which states that:

> The well-being of a community of cooperatively working human beings is the greater the less individuals demand the proceeds of their work for themselves, or in other words, the more they make over these proceeds to their co-workers and the more their needs are met not by their own work but from that of others.[17]

This law represented an effort to make the principle of brotherhood and sisterhood practical within theosophical circles, and also to separate wages and work at a time when the German labour movement was concerning itself more with increasing the wages of its members than in seeking to abolish the commodity character of work, which Steiner considered to be wage slavery. He also understood that the purpose of the economic sphere was to deal with production, distribution and consumption of goods and, by this definition, the areas of land, labour and money (capital) were seen to belong outside the confines of economic activity.[18]

In a lecture in Zurich in 1912 titled "*Love and its Meaning in the World*", are expressed a few significant thoughts on the struggle between the forces of egoism and love, of antisocial and social tendencies within human consciousness. This struggle

between the social and anti-social forces became Steiner's fundamental concern as he experienced a Europe ravaged by World War I, during which he continued his lecturing, travelling mostly between Germany and Switzerland.

The period 1917-22 was the peak of Steiner's active engagement with the social questions of his time. The year 1917 can be seen as a turning point in modern history because it was the year of the Russian Revolution in which Lenin and the Bolsheviks came to power, and it was also the year in which the United States overcame its isolationist tendencies and entered the World War. In hindsight one can see how from this point onwards the United States and the Soviet Union were to play major roles in the evolution of Europe and the world.

Out of this war experience Rudolf Steiner gave birth to the threefold imagination of the human being and showed how this imagination could lead to healing social forms, in that a threefold ordering of society provided an alternative to both capitalism and communism. In 1919 the Waldorf school in Stuttgart had already grown out of the activity of Steiner and the League for the Threefold Social Order, and it was hoped that other successful models would follow. At the end of 1919 *Der Kommende Tag (The Coming Day)* a *"Stock Company to further Economic and Spiritual Values"*[19] was formed. In time it was to embrace some 20 organisations, including farms, the Waldorf school, research institutes, chemical factories, two printing companies, and the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory.[20] This practical experiment in the application of threefold ideas is not well known in the English-speaking world. In 1920 another step was taken when Steiner showed that the task of social renewal requires a path of individual spiritual development. The 'Motto of the Social Ethic', previously mentioned, captures the essence of his work for social renewal, showing that social life both reflects and shapes individual human consciousness.

> The healing social life is only found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection and when in the community the virtue of each one is living.[21]

From another perspective this ethic is deeply Christian, both in its insistence on the freedom of the individual and in its readiness to accept totally the fact of human interdependence.

Social conditions in Germany in the aftermath of World War I

In the social unrest in Germany following World War I, an initiative group of small industrialists in Wurttemberg attempted to find new forms for their impulse towards self-determination and self-administration. Steiner tried to focus their attention on a more far reaching perspective and his *"Guidelines for a Threefold Social Organism"*.[22] In his book *The Threefold Social Order* Steiner argued that the real causes of the First World War lay in the chaos and confusion which arose in 'one-fold states' when the three natural divisions of human life were not clearly separated.[23]

Steiner was convinced that much social unrest, and particularly the feelings of inferiority widespread among the working classes, was not due, as generally supposed, to frustration on political and economic grounds, but from cultural deprivation.[24] He believed that it was the experience of an unworthy, meaningless existence that had brought a cry for reformation of human social relations in Germany in the

aftermath of World War I,[25] that *"many men no longer consider their value determined by what they are as human beings but by a rank they have reached in the hierarchy of officialdom"*,[26] and that *"industrialism introduces something into our lives which in a higher sense makes man's will meaningless"*.[27] *"Capitalism and the machine... give the worker no substance with which to content his soul as a human being"*.[28] His views were not popular with established political parties or trade union organisers who mostly thought in terms of communist theory with regard to the struggle for workers to own the means of production.

Steiner saw the 'invisible hand' doctrine and the concept of enlightened self interest, as formulated by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*, as a mental straitjacket that distorted the meaning of work and of economic processes. He held that we work for meaning, not only for profit, and although the motive power of economic production is essentially to serve human needs as efficiently as possible, at its heart, economic activity is a cooperative, communal activity and not a competitive struggle for profit and survival, as rationalist economic thinking would have it.[29]

In the decisive years after the defeat of Germany and its allies Steiner addressed himself mainly to Germans. He aimed to establish in Central Europe a diversified social entity which by its example might mitigate the rigours of Western capitalism and Communist tyranny. His aim for Central Europe was to break down the power of the unitary state before it became completely totalitarian. He wanted to stem the intoxication of nationalism and to prevent the Germans from establishing another *Reich*. He tried to make the Germans realise that they could only influence the world if they concentrated on what was universally human, pointing to the cultural treasures, such as Goethe and Novalis, whom they could call their own but who, having concerned themselves with the universally human, had transcended what is purely German.[30] Such attitudes made Steiner a target for German nationalists who made an attempt on his life. As a result towards the end of 1922 he stopped lecturing in public to German audiences.

Steiner's social intentions are incompatible with the ethos of capitalism and in many respects more unconventional than communism. His ideas were radical, egalitarian, and anti-nationalistic[31] but although he withdrew from his extensive public efforts to influence social, economic, and political events, and the *"The Coming Day"* initiative finally closed in 1924,[32] the Waldorf schools continued to develop independently all over the world.

The development of the ideal of the Threefold Social Order

In eighteenth century France the call for *Liberty, Equality,* and *Fraternity* sounded forth from the revolutionary ranks. Steiner maintained that these three ideals continued to be sought in the society of his time and so developed a form for a social order that supported a life that would give to human beings a sense of worth and value. Steiner insisted that in order to thrive the social organism must reflect the threefold organisation of the human being. But where does freedom or liberty truly reside, and where do we find equality? And though the term fraternity or brotherhood/sisterhood is often heard, what does it signify and where do we meet it? Steiner explained that we meet it in the image of the threefold human being.

In the anthroposophical *weltanschauung* the human being is differentiated

into three qualitatively very different modes of experience which are never isolated from the rest of the world. The human form, as well as its various functions, is considered to be a microcosmic expression of ever widening forms and systems in the macrocosmic world. The form of 'threefoldness' may be encountered in a number of contexts. In 1904 in his book *Theosophy*, Steiner describes the human being as a threefold being, consisting of *spirit, soul,* and *body*.[33] In 1917 he first gave out his description of the threefold organism in which he shows how the body consists of three distinct though closely related organisations, a nerve-sense system centred in the head, a rhythmic-circulatory system centred in the chest, and a metabolic-limb system centred in the abdomen. He goes on to describe however that in the human body,

> There is no such thing as absolute centralisation... *and moreover, each of these systems has its own special and distinct relation to the outer world, the head system through the senses, the rhythmic or circulatory system through the breathing, the metabolic system through the organs of nourishment and the organs of movement.*[34]

There three systems are co-active in every part of the body: where there is nerve there is blood, and along with the blood, respiration and metabolism. They represent three different principles: the nerve-sense system comprising brain, nerves and senses is related to the conscious life of *thought*; the rhythmic-circulatory system comprising lungs, heart and circulation as the centre of the rhythmic functioning of the body to the life of *feeling*; and the metabolic-limb system to the life of *will*. The table clarifies the relationship between the various elements.

HUMAN BEING	HUMAN SOUL	PHYSIOLOGICAL SYSTEM
Spirit	Thinking	Nerves/Senses (centred in head)
Soul	Feeling	Rhythmic (centred in chest)
Body	Will	Metabolic/limbs (centred in abdomen)

This human threefoldness is deemed to be reflected in the threefold nature of the social organism. Within the threefold social order the 'cultural' sphere is that realm of the organism where the expression of individual freedom or *liberty* can find its rightful place. In the realm of the human soul freedom may be experienced in thinking, and this is expressed through the body's nerve-sense system. The political or 'rights' sphere comes into play where individuals live in relationship with others, and this usually entails relinquishing some personal freedom out of respect for the interests of others and for the sake of social harmony. The human rhythmic system, the physical basis for feeling and where the air we breathe in common with others is processed, is analogous to the 'rights' sphere of society. *Equality* belongs to the political sphere of society, where the legislation of human rights is enacted in parliaments and enforced through the courts. The 'economic' sphere is concerned with what is most efficient and sustainable in the production, distribution and consumption of resources, such as goods and services. In reality, no one works for themselves alone, rather the work of each person helps to provide for the needs of others, just like the metabolic organs serve the whole body. The key principle in this sphere is therefore not liberty or equality, but *fraternity*.

It will then be evident that human cooperation in the economic life must be based on

fraternity... In the second member, the civil rights system, which is concerned with purely human, person-to-person relations, it is necessary to strive for the realisation of the idea of equality. And in the relatively independent spiritual sector of the social organism it is necessary to strive for the realisation of the idea of freedom.[35]

With this formulation Steiner integrates the various parts of the human body and the human soul and unites them into the spheres of society of which we are a part and to which we are inextricably united. The table should clarify the interrelations between the various elements.

SOUL ACTIVITY	SOCIAL ATTRIBUTE	SOCIAL SPHERE
Thinking	Liberty	Cultural (Spiritual life)
Feeling	Equality	Political (Legal/rights)
Willing	Fraternity	° Economic

But a healthy social order, like a healthy body, is found when the three organisms are working harmoniously. That is, when the principles of *liberty, equality* and *fraternity* are working in their appropriate sphere. Where this does not occur and there is a crossing boundaries in social principles, an unhealthy social order is the usual result. For example, when the ideal of *liberty* dominates the *economic* sphere, as in the cult of individualism in free market capitalism, the freedom of the few is often at the expense of workers whose exploitation results in a widening gap between rich and poor. By measuring every human activity by its degree of profitability, capitalism destroys not only our environment but also the cohesion of society and the morality of the individual. But Steiner most of all attacked the hallowed principle of market forces. In October 1919 he observed that the 'body social' had become unhealthy because the economic sphere was dominating the whole social organism, and as a result education, which belongs in the 'cultural-spiritual sphere' and therefore should be developed out of the ideal of freedom, had become subject to market forces.

The economic aspect of life has to a great extent overspread everything, because it has outgrown both political and cultural life, and has acted like a suggestion on the thoughts feelings and passions of men. Thus it becomes ever more evident that the manner in which the business of a nation is carried on determines, in reality, the cultural and political life of the people. It becomes ever more evident that the commercial and industrial magnates, by their position alone, have acquired the monopoly of culture. The economically weak remain the uneducated. A certain connection has become apparent between the economic and the cultural, and between the cultural and the political organisations.

The cultural life has gradually become one that does not evolve out of its own inner needs and does not follow its own impulses, but, especially when it is under public administration, as in schools and educational institutions, it receives the form most useful to the political authority. The human being can no longer be judged according to his capacities; he can no longer be developed as his inborn talents demand. Rather is it asked, 'What does the state want?' 'What talents are needed for business?' 'How many men are wanted with a particular training?' The teaching, the schools, the examinations are all directed to this end. The cultural life cannot follow its own laws of development; it is adapted to the political and the economic life.[36]

The passage is quoted in full because this analysis seems prophetic concerning the consequences for the education sector, of government economic rationalist policy, in the latter part of this century.

The usual outcome when the ideal of *equality* pervades the *cultural* sphere is sectarianism and indoctrination. This may be seen in religious fundamentalism or uncritical promotion of say, communist ideology as in the 'Cultural Revolution' in China. Another example of a confusion of principles in the social order is when the ideal of *fraternity* dominates the *cultural* sphere. The consequences of collectivisation in both Soviet and Chinese society was communal ownership of the means of production but at the cost of the suppression of the freedom of the individual. For Steiner this one-sided tendency, in which 'the hand' ignores the needs of 'the heart' and 'the head', was anti-social because the needs of one aspect marginalised the other two. He believed that such one-sidedness was the consequence of miseducation, commenting that such:

> Anti-social conditions are brought about because people are turned out into social life not educated to feel socially. People with social feelings can only come from a mode of education that is directed and carried on by persons who themselves feel socially. The social question will never be touched until the education question and the question of the spiritual life are treated as a vital part of it.[37]

Thus Steiner saw education as playing a pivotal role in bringing about social renewal, stating that:

> If we will to bring about a true form of society in future it must be prepared through people's education... We must strongly develop the forces that can be developed in children's souls, so that later on they harvest the fruits of their childhood learning.[38]

Steiner clearly believed that the new generation should not be made to be what present society wants it to become, insisting rather that:

> We shouldn't ask: What does a person need to know or be able to do in order to fit in to the existing social order? Instead we should ask: What lives in each human being and what can be developed in him or her? Only then will it be possible to direct the new qualities of each emerging generation into society. Society will then become what young people, as whole human beings, made of the existing social conditions.[39]

The Threefold Social Order and the Waldorf Schools

Although no comprehensive national movement for a threefold social order ever developed in the sense hoped for by Steiner, the campaign for a new social order had been especially well received in the big Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany. The employees there had heard Rudolf Steiner speak on questions of further education, and wanted a new kind of education for their children. The director, Emil Molt, supported them and on April 23, 1919, asked Rudolf Steiner to take on the planning and leadership of a school for the children of the workers of the factory.[40] This school was founded in September 1919 *"in conformity with the ideas underlying the threefold social order"*.[41] In regard to the founding of this school, Steiner states:

> At the foundation of the school I not only endeavoured to give shape to externals, corresponding to the requirements and the impulse of the threefold order. I also strove to present pedagogy and didactics to the teaching staff of this new kind of school in such

a light that the human being would be educated to face life and be able to bring about a social future in accordance with certain unconquerable instincts in human nature... The pedagogy of the future will not be a normal science. It will be a true art, the art of developing the human being.[42]

In developing the first Waldorf school, Steiner connected the three areas of social life (cultural, rights, and economic) and the three universally human ideals (liberty, equality, and fraternity) with the three main developmental stages of the growing young human being – infancy, childhood and adolescence – and the educational principles which should prevail at each stage, namely imitation, authority and independence.[43] Steiner refers to the aspects of the human being which are developed in the first three seven-year phases of life by the terminology 'physical', 'etheric', and 'astral' bodies.

...upon this threefold educational basis must be erected what is to flourish for mankind's future. If we do not know that the physical body must become an imitator in the right way we shall merely implant animal instincts in this body. If we are not aware that between the seventh and fourteenth year the ether body passes through a special development that must be based on authority, there will develop in man merely a universal cultural drowsiness, and the force needed for the rights organism will not be present. If from the fifteenth year onward we do not infuse all education in a sensible way with the power of love that is bound to the astral body, men will never be able to develop their astral bodies into independent beings. These things intertwine.

Proper imitation develops freedom;
Authority develops the rights life;
Brotherliness, love, develops the economic life.

But turned about it is also true. When love is not developed in the right way, freedom is lacking; and when imitation is not developed in the right way, animal instincts grow rampant.[44]

Life stage	Soul activity	Pedagogic mode	Social sphere
Infant 0-7	Willing	Imitation	Economic
Child 7-14	Feeling	Authority	Rights
Adolescent 14 +	Thinking	Freedom/responsibility	Cultural

With these comments Steiner indicated firstly, the importance of developing the moral forces in childhood and youth through an education which is founded upon the threefold image of the human being, and secondly with developing a pedagogy aimed towards helping the children strengthen the qualities that would allow them to respond to the social ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. The implications of these ideas for a practical teaching methodology are covered in a wide range of books on Waldorf education and will not be detailed here.

Threefoldness and School Organisation and Management

The school community may be considered a miniature society which also has a cultural, rights and an economic sphere. Steiner places education within the spiritual-

cultural sphere, insisting that all responsibility for the management of institutions within this sphere belongs to those directly involved in its day-to-day running. In other words the educational policy of a school should be formulated and executed by the teachers, since it is an institution of the free spiritual life, though social and economic policy will involve other stakeholders.

Although, according to Steiner, the school belongs to the spiritual-cultural sphere, the other two branches of the threefold order are necessarily present. School structures usually comprise the College of Teachers, which is made up of the teaching staff, a School Council or Board of Directors, and a Parent Association made up of the parents of the children who attend the school. While these three spheres of activity serve in common the whole school community, they are differentiated because they each have separate functions. The arrangement of the human organism into three systems, emphasises Steiner, *"is not a spatial delineation of the bodily members, but is according to the activities (functions) of the organism... Nevertheless, the three functional types are, according to their natures, sharply separated".*[45]

The College of Teachers, which normally has the responsibility for directing a Waldorf school, has the primary task of ensuring that the students receive the education that it claims to offer, mainly an 'education towards freedom';[46] secondly, it must maintain as paramount the staff requirement for academic freedom in order that individual teachers' creativity may be sustained; and thirdly, it must defend the freedom of the school from interference by the state or other interests, such as business or industry, in matters concerning curriculum and methodology.[47]

By virtue of the fact that these three groups contribute to the health and well-being of the school community, they may be pictured as adopting the function of one of the three spheres of the social order. Thus, education, *"lying as it does at the root of all spiritual life, must be put under the management of those people who are educating and teaching"*[48] and therefore rightfully becomes the responsibility of the College of Teachers. But this freedom should not only apply to Waldorf schools.

Even the schools which directly serve the state and the economy should be administered by the educators: law schools, trade schools, agricultural and industrial colleges, all should be administered by representatives of a free spiritual life.[49]

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTE	SOCIAL SPHERE	SCHOOL SPHERE	RESPONSIBLE BODIES
Freedom	Cultural	Education	College of Teachers
Equality	Rights	Communication	School Council (Parents + Teachers)
Fraternity	Economic	Financial	Parents Association

Much more work needs to be done in both articulating and implementing appropriate forms and working structures for the Rights and Economic spheres of Waldorf schools.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the First World War Steiner tried, unsuccessfully to influence the

reconstruction of German social life towards adopting his Threefold ideas. However, the impulse of the Threefold Social Order did not disappear as if it had been just another unworkable utopian fantasy. It is evident from the preceding pages that Steiner believed, and vigorously asserted, that through education the foundations can be laid for a new form of society. This is a clear recommendation that Waldorf schools which he inspired should strive to structure themselves in a threefold way because it was out of this impulse for social renewal that they had their beginning. To ascertain the effectiveness and extent to which 'threefold' ideas are being applied in practice in Waldorf schools around the world today requires further research. Indications are that this most distinctive characteristic of Steiner's social theory has tenaciously been applied in the educational and organisational forms of most Waldorf schools since 1919, indicating that the vision of a social future created by socially responsible individuals lies at the heart of the social aims of the Waldorf school movement.

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PARENTS AND TEACHERS WORKING TOGETHER IN SCHOOL
Aspects of a Dynamic Relationship

Michael Harslem

Schools – and not only Steiner Waldorf Schools – are special areas of social experience. This atmosphere is imbued with all manner of fears and expectations which have been pre-determined by past experience. Every adult who has a connection with school, is themselves influenced in their attitudes by positive and negative experiences, even if these remain on the whole unconscious. One can assume that practically everybody today has, alongside their positive impressions, more or less strongly traumatic experiences of school. Such experiences were in the main caused by teachers – for example, through being treated unfairly without being able to defend oneself, or perhaps through a feeling of powerlessness, of being unprotected and exposed to the dominance of the teachers. Equally, pupils may suffer from their dependency on teachers. These and other experiences have, on the whole, gone from our consciousness, apparently forgotten. In psychology this mechanism is known as *repression.*

That such experiences are not totally forgotten, however, can sometimes be heard at class reunions when people, whose damaged self-esteem has in the meantime rebuilt itself, take delight in telling countless anecdotes about how they annoyed the teachers. One could call this a form of delayed verbal revenge!

The point is, none of us can relate to school in a wholly open, unprejudiced way. In the depths of our souls old experiences of teachers and school slumber and may, however unconsciously, influence our adult relations in this context. At any rate, when it comes to school, nobody is neutral.

In view of this fact, relations between parents and teachers in the school generally, but perhaps particularly in Steiner Waldorf Schools, should be handled with great care and attention.

A special school awakens special expectations

In Steiner Waldorf schools there is another significant aspect which makes the relationships even harder to work with. Waldorf parents and teachers are in a special situation since they place themselves outside of the usual school forms and norms by their very choice of school. This requires, on the one hand, courage and conviction and tends to create a defensive attitude towards others whilst, on the other hand, it leads to very high expectations for the schools which one has consciously chosen and made sacrifices for. Parents therefore have high expectations of their children's teachers, but also of the school organism as a whole with regard to its social qualities. Teachers have equally high expectations of their colleagues and of parents. All of them are motivated by idealism; all want to improve things, thereby putting themselves and everyone else under pressure of those expectations of high standards of achievement. This can result in a climate in which tensions and conflicts flourish wonderfully – in fact, it is a situation pre-destined to lead to a sense of disappointment in parents and teachers through human and organisational weakness. Disappointment can express itself in

emotional outbursts, rumours, defensiveness, conflict and even animosity.

This whole problem is further complicated by the fact that Steiner Waldorf Schools are not only alternative schools in which different teaching methods are used: they are also schools which attempt to educate the whole child – head, heart and hands – on the basis of anthroposophy and the anthropology of Rudolf Steiner. This is linked to the expectation that the teachers will continually strive, through personal spiritual activity, towards cultivating a capacity for human love, moral qualities and the deepening of understanding which this education depends on – all this as well as their professional expertise and skills as a teacher of various subjects. Education in a Steiner Waldorf school should, after all, become the *art of education* which means that all teaching should become an artistic process that works in a stimulating, creative, challenging and encouraging way in the different pupils, and should bring about optimum development of a well-integrated personality in each one of them. It is clear that, as a teacher, one can only be *on the path* to such a goal – one could never claim to have achieved it.

This usually leads to teachers setting themselves very high levels of attainment, which can and does often lead to the feeling of not being good enough to meet one's own standards. This is compounded by the fact that one cannot actually attain success in the short-term in education. Parents in particular expect results quickly, whilst arising out of this intensive self-reflection on the part of the teacher, an acute sensitivity to criticism from others can manifest itself. Parents who do not realise the cause of this will not comprehend this over-sensitivity in the teacher.

It is often these idealised goals that lead to parents of children with difficulties seeking out Steiner Waldorf schools – a fact which only serves to further burden the already difficult parent-teacher, teacher-pupil, parent-pupil relations, especially since wonders are often expected. I have more than once experienced parents, who were greatly relieved to have their child, who might otherwise have had to attend a special school, accepted at a Steiner Waldorf school, but who had forgotten this ten years later when complaining about the fact that their child had not automatically passed their A-levels.

The process of learning and disappointment – the other is always to blame

School basically consists of social interaction. The goal of this interaction is to stimulate the learning process in each individual child, adolescent or adult. The process of learning is always accompanied by painful experiences in relation to one's own limitations but it is through such pain that one's own will to change is activated. The satisfaction derived through success at learning, through the joy of new knowledge, comes later. Often a certain amount of suffering through oneself and through the subject itself, is necessary until the process of learning gets under way. As a rule, a phase of the learning process that has begun with enthusiasm runs into a phase of stagnation and crisis which has to be overcome. This kind of situation is also prone to disappointment and resulting conflict. It is especially here that a well-known mechanism occurs – the shifting of the blame for one's own problems outwards and on to other people or circumstances. This way of responding to inner conflicts and tensions is so common that one could term it normal. This is known in psychology as *projection*.

Such a transference of inner conflict outwards, has the initial effect of relief and removes the burden of dealing with the matter from the subject since the blame is now

to be found elsewhere. Now you can test for yourself how far such projections are to be found in your own school. Schools offer a good target for projecting blame at. You often hear: "It's the teacher's fault," or "the child is to blame," or "the parents are the cause of it." Here one should alertly listen in, and ask oneself what is going on.

The question should also be posed as to what forms the school in question has found to work in a fruitful way with disappointments, accusations of blame, or conflict between parents, teachers and pupils. These will need to be forms of discussion that allow communication on such subtle themes as expectations, fears and inner blockages.

In the Age of Individualisation

The difficulties I have described up to now are exacerbated by the fact that we, as modern people, find ourselves in the middle of a process of progressive individualisation. This has, on the one hand, the positive effect that the individual personality can develop more strongly and realise itself more completely. On the other hand, however, this can also express itself in the negative form of self-centredness, personal ambition and getting one's own way, all of which lead to a reduced perception of the other person and the whole environment. These tendencies are also demanded of us by all the civilised acquisitions which make all forms of comfort possible and which place us therefore under the continuous stress of trying to acquire them.

The Steiner Waldorf schools stand right in the middle of these social developments and are even more exposed than other organisations or communities because we assume the task of realising new forms of community consciousness. We have therefore abolished many of the mechanisms that other social organisations have, which counter the various forms of egotism, without however, having developed new ways of working with them.

In the Steiner Waldorf school we differ from many other schools in how we constitute our school classes, in that we group children by age and not by ability. In this way we reject selection and all the sanctions and disciplinary options that go with it.

We also attempt to follow other paths in regard to collegial working. There is no head teacher with the sanctions and authority that usually go with that position and that make it such an important role in other schools in terms of leadership, direction and management. These tasks are undertaken on the basis of collegial self-administration. This begins with our collective teacher development based on the study of the human being which we do regularly in our teacher's meetings and on the training of our common perception and understanding of children through case studies and is continued on into the school's administration. Here we try to perform all the administrative tasks, from the admission of children to the employment of new staff, partly through responsible delegation and partly in College meetings where matters are discussed and decided if possible by full consensus.

All this gives considerable scope for individual initiative and responsibility-taking. It makes, however, very high demands on the individual and the community. Above all this way of working finds itself stuck for long periods in an initial stage of development in which such methods have not yet been really mastered or successfully applied. On the other hand the expectations placed on Waldorf Schools – particularly in the area of community building – are very high indeed. This provides an ideal setting for misunderstandings, disappointments and the conflicts arising out of them.

A picture of the Steiner Waldorf School as a basis for communal working

In order for parents and teachers in the Steiner Waldorf schools to be able to work together fruitfully, we need shared pictures and concepts. Even when we speak of Steiner Waldorf schools – to a greater or lesser extent we all mean different things. For some this means the teaching of the children, for others the term is identified with the College of Teachers and therefore sees parents as being thus outside of the school. Therefore I would like to develop a picture of a Steiner Waldorf school on which we can perhaps agree as a common basis of understanding.

The reason why we found and support Steiner Waldorf schools in the first place, and why we take all this upon ourselves – is our children. They stand in the centre of the life of the school – and in the middle of my drawing. The central purpose of our 'business' is to enable the children to have – as we always like to put it – a child-centred and human developmental education. This occurs in the school in individual classes that are grouped according to the children's age.

These children are taught by class teachers and subject teachers. I'll draw the teachers on the outer edge of the class circles that look like a flower, as dots – obviously most teachers teach more than one class. This encompasses what takes place daily in the school. These teachers don't only work in each class together – what appears in the class-meeting of teachers who teach a particular class – but also all together in the College of Teachers. The individual class-meetings form organs for the work in each class; the College of Teachers forms an organ for the work of the whole school.

Around each class we have the parent body who send their children to the school to be educated. We must not forget that children and adolescents spend most of their time outside of school – mostly at home. The parental home forms a part of their community and partly they contribute to the whole community of the school.

Association

Organs of the Association

Teachers and College of Teachers

Children

Classes children and their parents

Wider community

The whole parent community, together with the teachers, forms the legal body which carries the school, usually in the form of an association.

[Editor's note: the UK forms are not identical to the German legal structures for schools. Here we have two levels: a PTA and a School Association of which the Council of Management is the executive. All UK schools are charitable companies with responsible trustees i.e. Council of Management. Not all schools open membership of the Association to all parents, teachers and regular co-workers.]

The School Association has certain forms and regulations and has procedures, committees and so on. These include a Council of Management, an AGM, the College of Teachers, various mandates, working groups such as a finance group, parent financial interview group, building group, fund-raising group and others whose tasks go beyond the classroom.
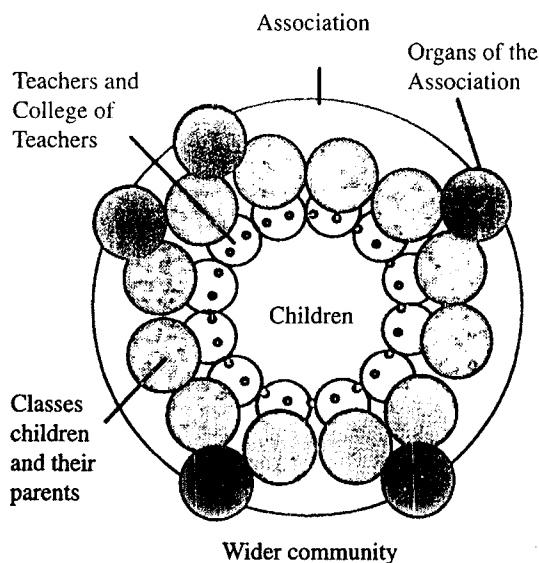
System-boundaries and environment of the Social Organism of a School

Outside this school community we have the social environment of the school. That includes the relations and friends of the school families and extends to the local community, including other schools and Kindergartens, the parish councils and local authorities, the local and regional press and so on. Around the school parents and a few friends who carry the school I see a boundary which is like a skin surrounding the social organism of the Steiner Waldorf school. In the following, when I refer to 'school', I mean the whole framework I have included in the drawing above, which includes children, parents and teachers of the school and Kindergartens. Everything that lies outside this boundary is the actual environment of the school. All the people outside have an insight into the daily work, into what happens regularly in a Steiner school, and what they do know is second or third hand.

Becoming conscious of this boundary is important in that, whenever there are disturbed lines of communications within the school, those with concerns and problems tend to seek discussion partners outside the school community. I notice this time and again in meditation work. This arises because people don't find (don't believe they'll find or simply don't want to find) someone to talk to within the school. People often don't trust that they can openly express their concerns, let alone their criticisms.

The social environment around the school, however, can usually offer little towards solving problems within the school. On the contrary it often functions as a sounding board for problems which are carried outside from within the school and may have an unfortunate effect of amplifying and reflecting problems back into the school. So it happens that the social environment is often better informed about a problem than those directly affected. The positive achievements of the school, however, do not create as much resonance. You may have experienced something of this in your own school.

Let us once more recall the picture of the school I drew. In the middle stand the children. They are the focus of all the care, work and sometimes the worries of the parents. Around the children we have the circle of professional co-workers who have united themselves existentially with the school (perhaps even a bit more so than the parents who have brought their children to the school do). The staff of this school (including teachers) see their work in the school as their main task in life and they are physically and psychologically dependent on the school. Then around this circle stand the members of the Association and so on, most of whom are parents who through their financial commitment demonstrate that they want this school and are prepared actively to support the existence of this school. All these forms and procedures in a school have, however, a pedagogical effect and must be structured with this consciously in mind.

The interaction between children, parents and teachers

We are always dealing with a three-sided relationship between parents, children and teachers, and these three partners relate in various ways. The whole of school life is based on their interaction. Naturally there is much interaction within each of these groups, between pupils, between teachers and between parents. I will focus on the most important of these relationships, between parents and their children and between the teacher and the child. Here one can find various pointers for an understanding of the relationship between parents and teachers.

Parents usually have a strong emotional bond to their children that is imbued with many kinds of wishes and expectations as well as feelings of guilt and anxiety. Most parents strongly identify with their child so that they experience an 'attack' on their child as an 'attack' on themselves. Parents who send their children to a Steiner Waldorf school want to achieve the best for their child. On top of this comes the widely felt fear of parents that they will lose the love of their child if they allow the child to experience uncomfortable situations or if they don't give in to their will.

This often involves many situations in which parents indulge or spoil their children without recognising it as such. It is often the case that even young children are treated practically as equals – and this is not restricted to one-parent family situations. In such relationships, too much can be demanded of the children in terms of maturity and this in turn influences the child's relationship to other adults including teachers who usually have other expectations for the roles of adults and children. Thus tensions and conflicts are almost unavoidable.

In many cases parents see the relationship of their child to the teacher as one fraught with anxiety and therefore not objective. This anxiety can take many forms: the worry that their child is not being challenged enough, the concern that the child has been unfairly treated or that the child is suffering in a particular class or suffering under this or that teacher. Parents' main perceptions of the school come through their children: what they bring home, what they tell of their experiences in school, the class or the teachers. Naturally parents are not in a position to judge when the child's experiences are one-sided, distorted or where misunderstandings or simply false impressions exist. Thus the picture that the parents have through the children is on the one hand very lively and often powerful but, on the other hand, it is often one-sided and sometimes also false.

The teacher, however, is not only dealing with individual children but with 30 or so different children and their parents. Even when the teacher starts from the individuality of each child – as do each child's parents – the teacher always sees this in relation to all the other children in the class. Thus the way a teacher responds to each child will always be influenced by all the others. The teacher therefore has another perspective on each child in comparison to the whole class and thus his or her pedagogical judgment will be influenced by the fact that the development of the individual child has to be seen in the context of the class as a whole community.

This shows that parents and teachers start from different points of view with regard to their relationships to the children. Here lies a further source of misunderstandings and wrong interpretations. It is therefore necessary that parents know and learn to understand the perspective of the teacher and likewise that teachers – especially if they themselves have no children – learn to appreciate the feelings of parents.

Both parents and teachers have to learn to understand the child out of a deepened knowledge of the nature of the human being in order that they can recognise the developmental principles that come to expression through the perceptible phenomena of the developing individualities.

We need a mirror of the effects of our Social Behaviour

Here begins a social task. On the one hand, parents and teachers must become conscious of the social mechanisms at work here whilst, on the other they must have the courage and the openness to discuss their questions and problems directly and at

the right time. The home visit of the teacher provides an opportunity to do so in another environment outside of the school, one in which parents and children are 'at home'. This offers new dimensions of getting to know one another and for building trust.

The parents' evening is a further ideal opportunity to bring together the various individual perceptions and judgments without claiming to being generally valid, and thus to form a common picture, one that can help overcome the tendency to one-sidedness. For the teacher, if he or she can take it in a positive way, this is an opportunity to receive a mirrored reflection of his or her activity in the class. Thus the teacher can gain valuable insight into their own working and the various effects this may have.

Often, however, the possibility of such feedback and criticism has the effect of arousing open or hidden fear in the teacher that may express itself in discomfort or defensiveness. In social life there is a basic principle which can be applied to all social relationships and particularly to teaching and the relationship of teacher to child: what is of primary importance is not the *intentions* that somebody has, but the actual *effect* they have. What has reality in the social sphere then, is not the intentions of the person who does something, but what effect those deeds have on the others who are affected by them. One cannot realise often enough how much this basic principle is at work. How often do I experience the astonishment of people that have a negative effect on those around them, because they are convinced that they only meant to do good!

These necessarily sketchy examples point to the fact that we as teachers (who because of their role are put under such pressure) and parents (inasmuch as we are equal partners in the education of our children) must all work with the basic principles of communication, psychology and group dynamics. There is much that we can learn from the knowledge that has been acquired by these social sciences and which, in connection with the insights of anthroposophy and in particular with the activities of the anthroposophical path of moral and spiritual training, can make our work together in the Steiner Waldorf school fruitful. One could also say: develop healthy common sense and let the light of consciousness penetrate the unconscious realms of our soul activities – thinking, feeling and willing. This can lead to a deepening self-knowledge which is the precondition for a more conscious forming of our social relationships.

This is an extremely interesting area of research which is open to us in every waking moment, either when we are alone or together with others. For the teacher, it is of particular significance in his or her effect on the pupils, because the teacher works (above all) on the pupil through his or her personality, through what he or she is, rather than through what is said.

The more we concern ourselves with these matters, the more we notice that the development of our personality needs other people, above all, people who openly reflect how we affect them. Thus we receive the possibility of gaining further self-knowledge.

Constructive and destructive forces in us

In bringing the first part of the study of parent-teacher working together to a close, I would like to mention two special points of view that Rudolf Steiner referred to with regard to understanding social interaction. He spoke of the fact that every person has both constructive forces for positive development within them – that he called 'I' or 'higher self – as well as destructive forces that can bring about negative development.

These latter forces he grouped within the concept of the *Doppelgänger or Shadow*. G. G. Jung, in his 'deep psychology' also referred in this context to the 'shadow' of the human being.

Each one of us has these forces within us and can observe how they determine our feeling, thinking and willing in certain moments. It is particularly in personal relationships that they come to expression, in situations where one person can bring another (a child, a parent, or a teacher for example) to a boiling rage or where spontaneous feelings of fear or defensiveness can arise. Each one of us can find many such examples in our experience. Evil in the world does not exist independently of people but is within each one of us as possibility, as ever-present potential force. It is, among other things, a question of our socialisation, our own attitudes, sense of values, self-consciousness and self-control, as to how far this 'Shadow' comes to expression in our thinking, feeling and doing – how far it determines our behaviour. Here one can observe that it is particularly the 'shadow-being' in other people that speaks to this side in us and prompts us quite spontaneously – often before we have even noticed it – to react.

A deepened knowledge of the human being – one that enables us to recognise these forces in our research – can help us not only to perceive the above described phenomena, but also to grasp intuitively, to sense and to understand that nature of these forces within the soul of the human being. In this way we can experience that anthroposophical spiritual science can prove to be a valuable supplement to the results of conventional social science as well as being a help to self-knowledge and an understanding of the world.

The second part of this study will examine further aspects of the theme and in particular focus on the threefold nature of the social organism, especially its relationship to Steiner Waldorf schools.

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THREEFOLDING IN THE WALDORF SCHOOL: STRUCTURING SOCIAL PROCESSES

Michael Harslem

In the first part of this study I focused more on the question of the social relationships between pupils, parents and teachers from the point of view of practical psychology. It was not possible in that context to go more deeply into human nature and the anthroposophical path of spiritual development. My intention was merely to point to the possibility of finding appropriate relationships through the path of self-knowledge and to provide the psychological aspects with a connection to spiritual science.

In what follows I will examine the social structures of Steiner Waldorf schools against the background of contemporary historical currents. This seems necessary in order to regain a deeper understanding of the basic principles and aims as they express themselves in today's forms, which have in part come down to us through tradition and which have also undergone a change.

Much of what we have today as social structures in Steiner Waldorf schools originates in the prototype or model of the first Waldorf School in which many of the fundamental forms are to be found. Those original structures are really only fully understandable when one knows the historical situation and above all the aims that were bound up with that school model at that time.

Briefly, then, let us recall that the first Waldorf school was founded in 1919, in the years of social upheaval following the First World War, at a time when old forms were breaking down and new forms being sought. This school-founding represented a pioneering act of pedagogical renewal based on deepened understanding of the nature of the human being as the foundation of all educational activity. On the other hand, this founding should be seen in direct connection with the 'Movement for a Threefold Social Order' *(Bewegung zur Dreigliederung des sozialen Organismus)* which began in April 1919 and which became ever more popular, with increasing numbers of activists throughout Germany, primarily in Stuttgart.

In April 1919 Rudolf Steiner published his book *Towards Social Renewal*, in which he put forward the idea of a threefold membering of the social organism as a starting point for social regeneration. This saw a new separation of society into the functional areas of spiritual sphere, the sphere of rights and the economic sphere and their structuring according to their appropriate principles of freedom, equality and brotherhood. Steiner outlined these ideas in the widely read book referred to above, as well as in many lectures during the summer of 1919 and, above all, those to the workers in the factories.

The movement for a Threefold Social Order initially met with a widespread and positive response. Steiner gave lectures in over-crowded public halls. From this activity arose the Works Council Movement *(Betriebsrate)* which promoted the co-operative working together of all levels within an industrial concern. This initiative became increasingly well-known and attracted attacks and boycotting by both the political Right and Left until it collapsed politically. Out of this same impulse, the limited company *Der Kommende Tag* arose, in which various firms in and around Stuttgart merged in order to work together according to the principles of the Threefold Social Order.

The basic idea of the Threefold Social Order saw the three great areas of social tasks: cultural life, the sphere of rights and economics, as existing alongside each other with equal status in mutual interdependence and working co-operatively, no one sphere dominating.

Each realm was to work according to its own principles: in the cultural or spiritual sphere the appropriate principle should be freedom, in the rights sphere the guiding principle was to be equality and, in economics, the determining principle was to be brotherhood (see bibliography).

I will apply these principles to the specific situation of a Steiner Waldorf school.

Threefold Social Order – an historical reminiscence?

In most Steiner Waldorf schools today this dimension has largely been forgotten or is only seen as historical heritage. Though the term Threefold Social Order is still often used, it is rarely applied in its full sense and is even misused. One often hears schools being referred to as organs of the cultural sphere, therefore ruled wholly by the principle of freedom. This can have dire consequences if falsely applied to questions such as teachers'' salaries or parents' financial contributions.

It is, of course, correct when speaking in broad social terms of the cultural, rights or economic systems to refer to institutional areas. I do not wish to address these macro-social principles in this study, but want to examine the principles of the Threefold Social Order in the context of the individual school. Some representatives of this Order argue that one cannot apply these principles to small social units. I would like to contradict this assumption. If the ideas of the Threefold Social Order are understood as starting points for healing social relationships by virtue of the fact that certain areas of the social organism can be correctly structured according to their inherent principles, then the broader idea of threefolding can be applied at different social levels – but only as long as threefolding is understood as a principle of function and not as an institutional ordering.

It was Rudolf Steiner's achievement to place the ideals of the French Revolution into real life situations so that they could be socially fruitful. He pointed out that these ideals – or these functional social principles – *freedom, equality and fraternity*, require certain conditions in order to function in a healthy way and that if they are applied in the wrong situation they can have detrimental outcomes.

Thus the functional principle of freedom can be assigned to the cultural sphere, so that one can speak of a 'free cultural or spiritual life'. This is not appropriate when applied in an institutional sense, but when one defines an area of work which has to do with creative spiritual activity, with knowledge, ideals, setting aims and so on. These tasks or spheres of activity can be found in practically all areas of society, institutions, businesses and so on, though to different degrees. So, for example, a research institution, a university or a school would have a higher proportion of 'cultural, spiritual' activity than a manufacturing or service industry. The latter could not function, however, without setting itself aims, planning, research or development, all of which would constitute 'cultural, spiritual' activity, whose governing functional principle is freedom. Anyone who has worked in research will know that, even with predetermined tasks, freedom in thinking is absolutely necessary if one wishes to be innovative or gain knowledge. Likewise, everyone can experience that a discussion aimed at gaining knowledge of something is only meaningful when each participant is free to develop their own thoughts and can express their ideas freely.

The opposite pole in terms of functional processes in a social context is economic life. This includes everything that has to do with meeting needs, where a person meets the needs of another through their activity and where the other takes their 'products'. In response, the 'consumer' sees to it that, through payment or tax, the 'producer' is adequately recompensed to meet his or her living expenses.

In this area the functional principle cannot be freedom. Here mutual help is necessary – the principle of brotherhood or brotherliness. This soon becomes clear when one examines an economy based on a division of labour, which involves a social differentiation of tasks within a company. Here we can see that no-one actually works for themselves, but always for each other. The best example of this is that of people who work on assembly lines, whether constructing cars or refrigerators that they cannot themselves use but are continuously produced for others. Even in the work process, each worker is dependent on others, so that one has to work hand in hand with others to produce a given product. A situation where somebody works alone for their own consumption is extremely rare. Everyone involved in a work process knows that working co-operatively is more productive than working against each other, and

that the functional principle comes to expression in mutual help. Having entered into a working process out of a free decision to do so, one then has a duty to work in a pre-arranged way. One therefore does not have the freedom that one would have in forming one's own thoughts or striving for knowledge.

On the other hand, this consciousness is often replaced by the motivation of earning money, so that the idea of mutual help and working for others is often lost sight of in a co-operative work ethic or through an emphasis on customer orientation, this motivation can reappear. The principle of freedom, if applied to the work process, would lead to chaos and unreliability. At the same time, one can experience that in the search for knowledge and truth, the principle of brotherliness cannot be the guiding one, but rather that each individual should be able to develop as freely as possible.

I will now come to the third functional principle of social life, the 'sphere of rights'. This concept must be extended to include everything that involves arrangements between people. Whenever we create rules or arrangements we find ourselves in the rights sphere. This includes all the decisions that people make to do with regulating how people work together, including political decisions. In this area the principle of equality finds its functional application. Why is this appropriate? When one tries to get a sense of this question, one notices that the rights sphere has to do with the right feeling – we speak of something 'feeling right' or 'feeling just'. We feel, for example, that we can only make meaningful agreements with others as free and equal partners. Every time that this does not occur, relationships based on power and compulsion arise, which at the level of agreements, feel unfair. The statement that 'all are equal before the law' expresses the idea that, in this area of social relations, differences of class, race, money or religion are not relevant. By seeing their inner qualities, one can feel that the functional principles of brotherliness or freedom are not appropriate here. Freedom in the rights sphere leads to arbitrariness, and brotherliness leads to sleaze and nepotism.

Freedom, equality and brotherliness in the school community

The realm of the cultural-spiritual life is relatively easy to describe. Nevertheless, it is important to define this area quite precisely so that we can see where the functional principle of freedom can be meaningfully applied in our mutual dealings with each other. When we look at this in a differentiated way, we can see, for example, that the teachers' meeting or College meeting cannot be placed wholly in one area of work, but has a range of tasks. The teachers' or College meeting has on the one hand the work of studying the nature of the human being, child development and individual child studies. This clearly belongs to the realm of the cultural-spiritual sphere since it has to do with deepening our knowledge. The same goes for teacher development, in-service work or when the teacher is at home preparing his or her lessons. Here we have to do with gaining knowledge or developing individual abilities. When the College of Teachers discusses fundamental issues of policy or the aims of the school, then we are again in the free cultural-spiritual realm.

It is quite a different matter when teachers discuss organisational questions or matters involving staffing. Here we are in the rights sphere. Here we make arrangements and come to agreements between colleagues on organisational matters or with one colleague with regard to his or her employment, work and possibly the termination

of that work. Questions of deployment, salaries or parental contributions and school fees belong to the sphere of rights in which we must ensure that the principle of equality is respected, so that people's sense of justice and fairness is not hurt. One must be particularly careful in this respect when dealing with pupils in disciplinary matters or when students have to be expelled. This is a particularly sensitive area since teachers have a tendency to make individual pedagogical decisions without sufficiently involving the parents to the extent that many parents do not feel treated as equal partners by the teachers.

If you ask which areas of the school fall within the realm of economics, the usual answer is: obviously, the finances. This common cliché is in many ways not true. On the one hand, when it comes to parents' financial contributions, many schools allow the principle of freedom in allowing self-evaluation of the level of contribution. Is this a matter of the free-spiritual realm? The fact is that this is not a matter of freedom in the quest for knowledge nor that it involves free creativity argues against this view. On the other hand, one often finds that schools set a minimum or average contribution. Does this mean equality? If so, we are in the rights sphere. One can often find the gesture of social balance in schools' contribution systems in, for example, the banding of contributions according to income or the use of a percentage-of-income formula. These approaches are designed, on the one hand, to spread the burden equally and, on the other, to realise the principle of brotherhood. One can also find the principle of brotherliness where bursaries are offered or 'Godparents' pay for someone else's child. One can see how difficult it is to come to a clear understanding of the concepts involved.

The matter becomes clearer when one looks at what actually happens with regard to parents' contributions. An agreement is made about a payment to the school. This is fundamentally a question for the rights sphere. The principle of equality between partners is valid; arrangements most be negotiated in such a way that both sides have the feeling: this is fair – we have found the right balance.

Where do the other two functional principles come into this example? If one follows the process back, one can see that the various functional principles of the Threefold Social Order come together and have to work together if we want to strive for healthy social relationships. This means that in a contractual relationship, equality must be there in the first instance, the equality between contractual partners who freely enter into a relationship in which each respects the free individuality of the other. However, freedom needs to be balanced with the motivation to offer mutual help, towards fraternity, otherwise freedom becomes arbitrariness. Thus all three functional principles work in the sphere of rights.

We are dealing with threefolding in which the different functions interplay as they do, for example, within the human organism. There the nerve-sense system, the metabolic-limb system and the rhythmic system interpenetrate each other, determine each other and are nevertheless, in a sense, independent systems.

Regarding parental contributions, one could argue that, when money is paid to the school, it is a question of meeting concrete needs in the sense that teachers' salaries are paid and costs covered by this money. This is basically correct except that it is an indirect relationship to meet needs through the medium of money as an expression of the rights sphere. The actual meeting of needs occurs directly in the production and consumption of goods and services. Therefore one would seek the actual economic function of the school in the classroom, in the teaching of children. This is a school's

primary function. This is where the actual meeting of needs occurs, namely those of the children and their parents. It is not the primary aim of a school to meet the teachers' individual needs by paying them. This is actually a secondary effect which only comes about because lessons are taught in school.

The teaching in the classroom is, however, not only governed by the principle of brotherliness, by a general human love towards developing human beings, but also – in order that this love can come to expression – through the respect and esteem shown towards the individualities and their sphere of freedom. As well as this, the observance of the principle of equality is required where there are matters of justice or legal arrangements to be made. Children's sense of fairness and justice can be hurt if a teacher creates and then rigorously enforces rules which they themselves do not keep to. On the other hand, the principle of freedom is valid in the teacher's choice of teaching methods, provided that they are orientated towards the child's developmental needs.

We can see that the principle of brotherliness must form the basis of the teaching if successful development in the sense of Waldorf education is to be possible. If here the principle of individual freedom were to rule, and if working together were not imbued with a sense of love, that also came to expression in the mutual help children give each other, then school would be reduced to cold-hearted competitiveness.

These few examples should make it clear that, while the functional principles of the threefold social organism each have their own special quality and a role to play, they are all three nevertheless bound closely together – they both determine and make demands on each other. I feel it is important that in all our relationships – between parents and teachers, teachers and pupils, teachers with each other – and in all our various working groups we try to establish what kind of tasks we have. We need to recognise all three functional principles – freedom, equality and brotherliness – and find the appropriate emphasis, choose the appropriate method of dealing with the questions and problems that arise.

In this way a discussion aimed at deepening our knowledge or defining our goals win need to have a different style of conversation, a different structure and a different inner attitude from a discussion about colleagues working together in a class or between parents and teachers sharing views on a child's education. Again quite a different approach is needed when general agreements and arrangements are discussed and voted on in the school community. Here the rules of democratic decision making procedures are to be followed, in which, while each person has an equal right, the majority decides. Questions of knowledge or insight cannot be solved in this way, nor questions of mutual help or working together.

My intention, in this incomplete and fragmentary study, has been to identify and describe a few aspects of the social ideas that form the foundation of Steiner Waldorf schools and to apply them to various areas of school life. They could serve as an impetus to take these thoughts further and perhaps awaken an awareness of them in the individual school, bringing them into the conscious structuring of social processes.

Translated by Martyn Rawson

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LEADERSHIP AND SELF-ADMINISTRATION –
ARE THEY COMPATIBLE?

Michael Harslem

Some might regard the term *leadership*[1] as questionable, the Implication being that if there is a leader there must be others who require to be led. Leadership involves telling others what to do, having power over them and imposing one's will on them. The current image of a *leader* is that of someone who knows better, who is responsible for others, understands the whole situation, represents the whole company, enterprise or school and, in the last resort, is the one on whom everything can be blamed. In countless variations – beginning with the family and ending with large industrial concerns, where *top management* is the term used – this is the image of leadership that dominates the way society conducts its affairs today. It involves there being a clear hierarchy not only in knowledge and ability but also in power, income and esteem. No-one doubts that leadership, i.e. management, is necessary in any enterprise, including educational enterprises such as schools and universities.

Self-led enterprises, including Steiner Waldorf schools, are an exception. Here it is often thought that there must be no leadership because leadership is seen as being incompatible with self-administration.

Outwardly, self–led enterprises, including Steiner Waldorf schools, often present an impression of being leaderless. Parents and also other partners in the work frequently find that there is no–one who is in a position to answer their questions or who can be regarded as responsible for anything. They are fobbed off with references to some group or committee that might take weeks before getting round to tackling the subject the enquirer has raised.

In large, self–led enterprises like Steiner Waldorf schools with 50 to 60 teachers (or 120 to 130 if the school has parallel classes), the internal leadership structure becomes unclear, so that outsiders, parents, pupils and others who work there assume that there must be hidden leadership structures. They begin to ask who is pulling the strings behind the scenes, who is the hidden head teacher or most influential group. [This phenomenon is not unknown in schools with only 20 teachers. Ed.]

Any serious discussion on self-leadership must include the question of how the enterprise is to be run. In most Steiner Waldorf schools this remains in the realm of the unconscious or is seen only in its negative aspect of a power structure.

All Steiner Waldorf schools are based, more or less consciously, on the ideal of a self-led republic of teachers. This form can be elaborated in all kinds of ways to fit in with the existing College of Teachers and the different delegated areas of management.[2] How the college of teachers should reach its decisions and what responsibilities can be delegated to mandate groups remains eternally debatable. This article will not go further into the question of republicanism versus/or/and democracy, since this is covered adequately in essays by Lehrs, Brüll and van Manen in the journal *Erziehungskunst* (including bibliographical references).

Many conversations have shown that the question of leadership is always seen in terms of personnel. This bias, which inevitably leads to the linkage of leadership with

power, makes it very difficult to talk about the subject at the functional level that relates to the kind of leadership exercised by different tasks in an enterprise. These two levels of leadership cannot be separated. It always has a functional and a personnel aspect since you cannot separate leadership tasks from the persons who carry them out. On the other hand, some leadership tasks presuppose specific qualifications. So leadership is always a question of human, social and specialist capacities as well as of consciously building leadership tasks into the structures and processes of an enterprise.

Leadership qualities

To enable us to discuss leadership qualities in a self-led enterprise such as a Steiner Waldorf school we shall seek to approach the subject from the angle of leadership qualities before clarifying this in a concrete field of research.

Having an overall view of an enterprise is one of the main characteristics of leadership. Since it is impossible for most of us to have a full overview of an enterprise as complicated as a full-sized Steiner Waldorf school I shall not use a school as my concrete field of research. Instead, I shall discuss leadership with reference to a field about which each one of us can have an overall view, namely the individual human being. I shall try to examine the functional dimension of leadership at the personal level of the individual human being. I shall therefore refrain from referring to the various leadership models to be found in different management theories.

A discussion of leadership or management in connection with enterprises calls for the use of certain concepts such as management, setting goals, policies, planning, organisation and supervision.

When this is applied to our selected field of research, the individual human being, we have to ask: What does this mean with regard to my own person, with regard to me as a human being? In what situations, at what moments in my daily life, do I have the experience of applying leadership to myself? In what situations do specific circumstances, pressure of time, other people, determine what I do? What is my inner situation in one case or another? In looking at these different questions we shall endeavour to track down the qualities leadership can have.

We are all only too familiar with situations in which our actions are determined more or less unconsciously and largely by external circumstances. Many times every day we react to situations mechanically, out of habit, laziness, or resignation and so on instead of shaping them consciously. Or perhaps we either cannot or do not wish to shape them ourselves. On the other hand it is essential for a considerable proportion of our lives to run along routine lines if we are to be able to act at all. This does not mean, though, that we have to be unaware that this is happening.

Looking more closely, we realise that our reasons for acting in a certain way, the reasons that lead us – without our becoming aware of them – come not only from the outside but also from inside ourselves. There are many occasions when a sudden wave of feeling makes us do something, react in a certain way or utter some specific comment. Often we are swayed by moods, either gloomy or euphoric. Frequently some prejudice or prior experience prevents us from approaching a person, a situation or a subject without bias. Repeatedly we decide on a course of action and then fail to carry it out. Time and again we start out on a train of thought only to find ourselves thinking about something quite different, or we want to discuss something specific but talk

about all kinds of other things instead. Over and over again we find ourselves in situations we have not consciously arranged but into which we have stumbled unawares. Does all this imply that one may no longer be allowed to express one's feelings spontaneously and without embarrassment? Must one be guided solely by one's cool and sober intellect? Would this not mean denying oneself? Obviously this is not what is meant! But if one intends to be fully honest about the degree to which one actually applies self-leadership to one's thoughts, feelings and actions in daily life, one will have to look at one's situation frankly and without any frills in order to be true to oneself Not that one either can or must carry out this self-leadership consciously all the time and in every situation. One should, however, be clear about the degree to which this quality of alert, conscious self-leadership is present in one's daily life.

An important prerequisite for observing anything to do with one's own self-leadership is to have learnt to accept oneself as one is, with all one's strengths and weaknesses. Not until one has achieved this will one be able to discover the impulses that motivate one. Only if one accepts one's immediate situation as it is, and refrains from trying to paint a picture of oneself that is untrue, will one be free to recognise one's accepted but also one's dark and hidden motivations. If one can succeed in observing how these work in oneself, one is also likely to discover a few of the enemies of self-knowledge. If one wants to be one's own leader one cannot avoid tackling this these matters within oneself.

If one regards oneself as a physical, psychological and spiritual unity that desires to be its own leader, then you could say that as an organism one 'manages' and 'leads' oneself In a psychologically healthy human being all the components of his or her being and all his or her activities of soul together form a total personality in which the ego as the core of the soul is the actual authority capable of handling the different soul activities in such a way as to make meaningful thought, feeling and action possible. In this sense one is justified in using oneself as an example of a self-led organism when trying to analyse questions of leadership.

Levels of leadership in the individual human being

A human being functions on three levels in which self-leadership can be observed: firstly in doing, secondly in thinking, thirdly in feeling. Important differences can be observed in these three types of activity.

If we observe our actions we notice that most of them happen by themselves without our guiding their every detail consciously. They happen as though automatically e.g. walking, eating, riding a bicycle, writing and so on. Normally we are only aware of the result, and even then only if we pay proper attention and concentrate. For example, it is quite easy for us to forget whether we locked the door or turned off the oven before leaving the house this morning. Seen externally the action is often identical, regardless of whether we are aware of doing it and carry it out purposefully, or whether we do it automatically as a matter of routine. But there is a difference. A purposeful deed requires us to direct consciousness and concentration towards our actions. We notice that if we want to wake up in our actions we have to take hold inwardly of our consciousness and direct it purposefully towards what we do.

What is the quality in us that brings about this awareness, this alertness, this purposefulness and concentration of consciousness? We notice that we have to

activate ourselves to a specific degree, that one has to develop a raised ego-presence in oneself. This in turn necessitates a raised effort of our will in order to make it take hold of our thinking. We lose this power, this possibility of self-leadership as soon as we 'let ourselves go', if we allow ourselves to be distracted, if we do several things at once, or when our consciousness is lowered by external or internal factors.

Looking at our thoughts we initially gain the impression that it is easier to be awake in them, since that is where we are usually most conscious. However, if we observe our thinking as well as our thoughts and see how far we think them on purpose and how far they merely 'occur' to us, we realise that consciousness in thoughts does not necessarily guarantee self-leadership in thinking. Even for this we have to exert and school ourselves inwardly. If we seek out the authority that is responsible for this effort, we arrive once again at our ego. It is from our ego that we have to apply our will to guiding our thinking of we want to take charge of it.

Looking at our feelings we find that what applies to acting and thinking is equally relevant here. If we pay attention to this activity of soul we notice that we are only partially aware of many of our feelings. Conversely they can grow so powerful that unbeknown to us they begin to determine or paralyse our thinking or indeed our actions. What we have to do here is to bring our feelings into consciousness through our thinking and take hold of them and guide them through our will.

We find that in his six basic or subsidiary exercises Rudolf Steiner has given us a method of systematically developing and schooling these qualities of conscious leadership by the ego of all three activities of soul: thinking, will and feeling.[3]

If we want to play an active part in thinking, feeling and doing in the world around us as self-led personalities, we shall have to develop a further quality, over and above this alertness and consciousness in the activities of our soul. Instead of calling a halt when we reach our own boundaries we must go beyond them and enter into a conscious relationship with the world outside ourselves and especially with our own deeds and their social consequences. We shall only be social beings once we are aware of the overall situation, as well as of ourselves as a part of that overall situation. Since we are not alone in the world but live in various relationships with many others, we can only say, 'I am master of myself and master of my situation, I am my own leader,' once we have developed this overall awareness.

All these observations and perceptions of ourselves and of other people depend on our having schooled our senses to the degree that makes these perceptions possible. I shall here include a brief summary of the twelve senses that cover all our fields of perception.[4] Through Rudolf Steiner's spiritual science we learn that apart from the five external senses (hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch) to which Steiner added the sense of temperature, we also possess others, which recent research is beginning to verify. On the spiritual side these are the sense of speech or words, the sense of thought and the sense of ego; and on the bodily side the sense of balance, the sense of one's own movement, and the sense of life. I shall not go into further detail here, but it is obvious that we can handle a number of these senses consciously, while if we want to become conscious of the perceptions provided by others we first have to increase our awareness or work at schooling these senses. This applies for example to our sense of life through which we perceive our own well-being, our own awareness of how we are feeling e.g. whether we feel well or ill. Our sense of ego, as another example, helps us to comprehend the inner being of another person. These two instances will suffice to show that the effort

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to take on board the senses of which we are normally unaware is also a part of genuine self-leadership. So in order to make good use of all our bodily and psychological instruments in leading ourselves, we must go beyond consciously training our activities of soul and beyond cultivating an overall awareness of ourself as a person in a social context, and in addition consciously school our senses. Schooling our senses can be practised by means of phenomenological observation but above all by means of artistic activities, for example in painting, making music, modelling/sculpting and doing eurythmy – and also practising conversation as an artistic process.[5] Working in the arts requires enhanced perceptiveness and also an increase in alertness in all three spheres of soul activity: doing, thinking and feeling.

There are still further differentiations we might explore, but I shall now draw this attempt at describing self-leadership to a close. It is a field of research accessible to all of us at any time. It is always possible to use oneself in exploring the different activities and problems of leadership.

I shall now attempt to apply the knowledge we have gained regarding self-leadership of the individual to the social organism of a Steiner Waldorf school.

As with the individual, the capacity for self-knowledge is the basic prerequisite for leadership in a social organism. It calls for mutual efforts to be honest and frank in recognising the social organism's strengths and weaknesses. This alone is not enough, however. In teachers' meetings, for example, we also need specific knowledge, abilities and social techniques in order to reach a common picture and judgment about the social organism. It becomes apparent that individuals who do not want to develop these qualities with regard to themselves, or who actually resist doing so, will have difficulties in developing the necessary qualities with regard to the common purpose.

In discussing the leadership qualities in self-led social organisms using a Steiner Waldorf school as an example, we shall have to begin by asking many questions that each school community can use for testing its own situation. The positive qualities and defects discovered will differ from school to school.

Levels of leadership in a Steiner Waldorf school

If we look at the levels at which the 'social organism Steiner Waldorf school' functions, we discover a great variety of activities that are on the whole carried out unconsciously by the younger and older pupils but which ought to be led consciously by the teachers and parents. Looking at the diversity of life in a school you realise how difficult it is to become aware of how this social organism functions inwardly and outwardly when you are a part of it. We can look at and think about all the separate activities together as one overall activity, the functioning of the overall organism. Just as you can draw conclusions about an individual's character by observing his or her actions, so does the character of a Steiner Waldorf school represent an overall view of its activities, to which each individual act contributes a specific nuance.

In a social organism, where is the authority that corresponds to the ego in the individual human being, that authority that is aware of the whole gamut of actions, that activates the organism as a social being, and that leads its actions? A social organism, too, can 'let itself go', can act without awareness, can have a dull consciousness and so on.

Trying to observe how thoughts come into being in a social organism, how a

social organism thinks, is much more difficult than in the case of an individual. When does a Steiner Waldorf school think? Do all the thoughts formulated by individuals go to make up the thought world of this social organism? When does the social organism of a Steiner Waldorf school think through and in the individual? When does it think communally? What can the individual do and what can the school community as a whole do, to allow the thinking of the social being to be experienced and become effective? How does a community take hold of its thinking with its will?

In many schools an awareness of this dimension has scarcely developed hitherto. Occasionally a Steering Group, a College of Teachers, a Council of Management, or a PTA might become aware of the way the thinking of the 'social organism Steiner Waldorf school' functions in connection with a specific situation or problem. I witnessed this after the Chernobyl accident, during the Gulf War, when a pupil died suddenly, and when a teacher died. The social organism in its entirety was so perturbed when these events occurred that you felt it had woken up and was taking responsibility for the thinking of the whole school. In everyday life there is usually not much awareness of this.

Similar questions can be asked about the realm of feeling in a Steiner Waldorf school. An outsider taking part in a meeting e.g. the teachers' meeting, can detect certain moods and overall levels of feeling which show that a social organism does have feelings above and beyond those of its individual members. However, the group itself usually remains unaware of these feelings. Sometimes a state of feeling such as this can actually be described if the mood becomes particularly intense.

Genuine self-leadership in individuals includes an awareness not only of themselves but also of their relationships with the world around them and the effects their actions have on that world. In the same way a Steiner Waldorf school as a whole organism must be aware not only of itself i.e. of its inner stirrings, feelings, thoughts and actions in self-leadership, but also of its position in its surroundings, the effects of its actions and also how the outside world affects it. There are sure to be a few individuals in every school who do have an overall view of these things or who make efforts in that direction, but this does not as such amount to a quality of self-leadership in the school. A *communal* awareness is required if a school is to be counted as being self-led.

It is difficult in a social community to arrive at a mutual awareness of the community as a whole because for this to happen each individual must have the courage to articulate his or her own perceptions within the community. In addition there is the question of how the perceptions and articulations in the community can be schooled. Working together in an artistic activity is one possibility. Another is the conscious shaping of conversation processes in an artistic and social way.

How can a community learn to lead and shape itself consciously? One possibility would be to apply to the community as a whole the basic exercises mentioned above in connection with personal schooling.[6] I have experienced these exercises as being very helpful in a number of situations where a community has taken a more conscious hold of thinking, feeling and will.

Can anyone be a leader?

Colleagues in self-led establishments often question the matter of leadership, and this derives from their wish for everyone to play an equal part in running the establishment's

affairs. Against the background of what we have pointed out this can be formulated as a direct question: Can anyone be a leader? The above-described capabilities of perception and self-leadership will be found in varying degrees in the different individuals working in a Steiner Waldorf school. How can these become the self-leadership and overall awareness of the social organism? Is it not a contradiction in terms to speak of a self-led establishment being led by individuals? Yet how can the quality of self-leadership come about communally?

One thing is obvious. Those individuals who do not develop the above-described qualities of awareness in self-leadership cannot take on leadership tasks in a social organism. This means that in a self-led establishment not all the colleagues can participate in its self-leadership since they lack the specific capabilities necessary for this, which does not mean that they lack other valuable capabilities for other tasks in the social organism. The variety of human qualities and capabilities thus brings it about that at least in certain realms some colleagues lead while others are led. This will be different in each realm and will be constantly changing, depending on the questions under discussion.

Just as a horizontal division of labour is thus acceptable in a self-led establishment, so should a degree of vertical division of labour be accepted as well. This is where, at the very least, things get difficult in many self-led establishments. To what degree are individuals prepared to accept analyses, plans and decisions made by others if these have implications for themselves? Many people appear to find this incompatible with self-leadership. This is the core problem in the leadership of self-led establishments, for leadership always implies acquiescence by those who are led. This is particularly the case in self-led establishments that have no formal hierarchy and thus no formal structures or sanctions that could impose leadership against their will on those who are led (which does not mean to say that informal mechanisms do not sometimes have this effect in some situations).

This means that in a community like a Steiner Waldorf school, that sees itself as being a community of equals, an awareness must be developed of the fact that equality is acceptable in situations where everyone involved is capable of forming a judgment about the matter in hand. Only in such a circumstance is it right for everyone to participate in equal measure. This applies especially to the realm in which agreement is reached about how individuals will live and work together i.e. the life of rights. When special capabilities are required, on the other hand, we are no longer all equal; here there are clear differences between individuals. This leads to 'capability hierarchies' that people find very difficult to tolerate nowadays, since they apply their wish for equality not only to the realm of rights but also to the realms of knowledge and of collaboration. I suspect that this arises out of experiences in which the realm of capability-hierarchies sometimes infringes individual rights and individual freedoms.

Leadership of a large social organism requires specific capabilities. If we can succeed in discovering and developing these capabilities and in accepting the differences in ability amongst colleagues, then we create one of the prerequisites for the acceptance of functional leadership. Another essential prerequisite for leadership in the social realm is that this leadership should be based on a general love of other human beings. Only if communal leadership involves the element of respect for the freedom of the individual, for equality in the realm of agreement, and for fraternity in collaboration can it work in a healthy way in a Steiner Waldorf school.

Reaching judgments in the social realm

So far we have chiefly been endeavouring to describe the necessary leadership conditions in self-led establishments. Now we shall turn to the quality and the possible form of leadership in self-leadership. We have seen that it is not enough for individuals to develop an overall awareness of a social organism only within themselves. This is so not only because a single individual has too few opportunities to apply this overall awareness to the whole social organism, but also because in the social realm the quality of a judgment is enhanced when several people share it; a variety of different viewpoints and individual interpretations will make both the picture and the judgment more realistic. Rudolf Steiner went so far as to say that in the social realm individual judgments were always wrong. This leads to the conclusion that an overall awareness and an overall judgment must be formed within a group so that the group itself can develop leadership qualities with regard to the social organism. This group ought to consist of individuals who are endeavouring to develop the above-described qualities with regard to their own self-leadership as well as with regard to the whole social organism.

In practice this group will, as a rule, be involved not only with leadership matters but also with numerous other tasks, so that the problem arises as to how it can learn to distinguish between the leadership questions and other activities and advisory tasks. In the everyday routine of a Steiner Waldorf school one is constantly experiencing how difficult this is. Usually those who possess an overall picture and feel responsible are so busy with the tasks that arise through the very fact that they possess this overall picture that they have little time left to deal with actual leadership matters.

This brings us to an important problem experienced by self-led establishments, namely the fact that those who bear the responsibility for decision and initiative taking are often overburdened.

In applying what has been said above to Steiner Waldorf schools, we find that there are usually three organs that could and sometimes do participate in the leadership of the school. These are: in the realm of education the College of Teachers; in the realm of rights and finance the Council of Management, which also has outward-facing leadership functions; and a Parent-Teacher Association, which can be the social consciousness organ of a Steiner Waldorf school. Collaboration between these three organs is an important function with respect to leadership. Only when all three collaborate in leading the school will their leadership be accepted by the whole school community. When differences or conflicts between the organs cannot be solved, this weakens the quality of self-leadership.

The College of Teachers is always in danger of carrying out administration rather than leadership i.e. executing self-administration instead of dealing with questions of self-leadership. If they do achieve self-leadership now and again it is in most cases not realised that they are then dealing with quite a different level of consciousness calling for a different quality of awareness in their discussions. Therefore a leadership group in a social organism must develop certain quite specific qualities of awareness, just as one must do as an individual if one wants to act with awareness and on one's own responsibility. The same goes for the Council and the Parent-Teacher Association.

What are the prerequisites for the development of leadership qualities by a College of Teachers, a Council and a Parent-Teacher Association?

Among other things it is essential that an overall picture of the 'enterprise' or social organism must be developed mutually over and over again. This includes not only an awareness of the present stage of development but also a mutual picture of future development. There must also be a sense for the overall state of health of the school. Included in this are answers to questions such as: How are the teachers feeling? Are they overworked? Can they cope? Do they feel overburdened? Do they feel pressurised by the parents? Do they set themselves aims that are too low or too high? What is the atmosphere in the school building? Are the pupils happy or depressed? Are they fresh or tired, jolly or aggressive? How many individuals are off sick? What picture do the parents have of the school and of the teachers? What is the mood of the parents like? What questions do the parents have? and many similar questions.

The aims of leadership

It is most important for the leadership groups in a Steiner Waldorf school i.e. the College, the Council and the PTA, to maintain and develop their awareness of the common aim of the school. This common aim should become so alive and be so clear to everyone that it can be a guideline in all fundamental decision-making. All colleagues and parents should be able to experience this and sympathise with it. This does not mean primarily the 'operational' aims, the aims in the realm of actions, but rather the spiritual aims, the aims connected with the idea of a Steiner Waldorf school as such and of the specific Steiner Waldorf school in question. Working with these ideas one can experience how these common spiritual aims become bridges between human beings that, on the one hand, leave intact all personal contrasts and differences while, on the other, helping to overcome these at a higher level. One can even find how these differences, that are often experienced as obstacles or disturbances in daily life, seen from the higher level of the overall aim, are actually necessary and fruitful and prevent the whole from becoming too one-sided. This helps one see the differences amongst one's colleagues in another light in daily life also.

The mutual search for and discovery of aims then contributes to a further quality that the leadership groups must develop: that is the capacity to integrate. They must be capable of tolerating, incorporating and integrating the different opinions, feelings and impulses into the whole without losing sight of the basic common aim.

Leadership in self-administration

One might ask whether the above-described self-leadership of a self-administrated organism is possible at all and how one can succeed in achieving the requirements formulated here. If we look more closely we are likely to find that in any Steiner Waldorf school one or other element of leadership has been developed to a greater or lesser degree. It is not as though none of this had been achieved. In my opinion, the important thing is to work at bringing this element of leadership more strongly into people's common understanding. It needs to be more strongly practised as a quality both by the individual and in the whole school community – its various bodies and organs – so that the whole organism's capacity to carry out self-leadership is developed and improved.

One step towards this is individual and mutual work on the spiritual foundations

of Steiner Waldorf education in order, through an expansion of perceptive capacities, to develop an expanded understanding in all situations arising in the school's everyday life. This can be present as a quality, as an effort of awareness, in all questions that are the concern of a College, a Council or a PTA, or of the whole school community. But only when we all take it into our consciousness and all stand by it shall we succeed in making out of it a quality belonging to the whole community. When these qualities are developed, leadership loses its external connotations of leading and being led. Instead it becomes a source of strength and a guideline, a motif and a stimulus for the solution of current problems.

A further step in the work of a College, a Council or a PTA would be to pay more attention to the quality of conversation appropriate for leadership questions as distinct from questions of administration. Leadership questions require an enhanced awareness of the organism as a whole, the ever-presence in one's consciousness of the aims, and a conversation technique that allows a quality of community in conversation to arise.

We have seen that the question of leadership must be considered with the greatest care in self-led social organisms. Using the Steiner Waldorf school as an example we have endeavoured to specify what factors must be taken into account to achieve it. The quality of leadership is especially important for these establishments, and at the same time it is especially difficult to achieve. Although personal leadership qualities are essential, it is not solely a question of these. Groups of responsible, capable individuals must be formed. As bearers of initiatives they must develop the overall awareness, they must carry the overall responsibility, and they must become aware of these qualities of leadership in their meetings. A qualitative barrier has to be crossed when a group of people, who have just been discussing how a particular task should be handled, now turn to questions of leadership. Their whole attitude must change so that the group attains a quality of leadership and an awareness of leadership. Leadership as a necessary function and quality of a social organism is then no longer a matter for individuals who have to be regarded as leaders. It becomes a mutual task of development amongst those individuals who take on, or who are asked by the community to take on, this specific responsibility.

Translated by Johanna Collis

Footnotes

1 The original German term *Führung* can mean leadership, direction or even guidance. The title and theme of this article has to do with *Schulführung* for which there is no English translation. We have used a variety of terms in the translation and hope that the overall concept becomes clear through the context.

2 See Dieter Brüll, *The Waldorf School and Threefold Structure*, AWSNA books; Manfred Leist, *Parent Participation in the Life of a Waldorf School*, AWSNA; David Mitchell, Ed., *The Art of Administration: Views on Professional Management in Waldorf Schools*, AWSNA.

3 See Rudolf Steiner, *How to Know the Higher Worlds: a Modern Path of Initiation*. Tr. C. Bamford, Spring Valley, New York.

4 See Willi Aeppli, *The Care and Development of the Senses*. Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications.

5 See Heinz Zimmermann, *Speaking, Listening, Understanding*. Lindisfarne, 1996.

6 See note 3.

SCHOOL FORMS IN WALDORF EDUCATION:
ENHANCING THE LEARNING PROCESS

Christopher Schaeffer, Ph.D.

There is today a crisis in education, particularly in public education. The primary partners in the educational enterprise – teachers, parents and children – feel isolated, alienated and powerless. Many good teachers are leaving the system. Many children are not being educated. Many parents want to take their children out of the system and, if they are able to, do so. There is an obvious need for radical change, and attempts at reform and restructuring are being made in many parts of the country.

Waldorf education has something to contribute to the discussion about school reform. Regarding aims and methods, for example, Waldorf education holds that schooling should serve human freedom and creativity. Education should not aim primarily at creating employable, skilled adults, but rather at helping children to become self-aware, creative and responsible human beings. In Waldorf education, there is an effort to educate the whole child, the capacities of thinking, of feeling and of will. Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf education, not only described these three soul faculties in detail but also proposed a curriculum in which each is addressed in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Waldorf education can also speak fruitfully about school organisation. The organisation of a Waldorf school aims to bring to consciousness and foster the right relationships between the partners of the school community. School form can and should help create a healthy school and a healthy sense of partnership.

The partners in a school community are the teachers, children, parents, administrators and friends (alumni, alumni parents, supporters). In a healthy school form, the basic aims of each of these partners are recognised and furthered. The organisation of the Waldorf schools is such a form, enhancing the learning partnership in the school.

After many discussions with people involved in schools, I believe that each of the partners in the educational enterprise has several primary concerns.

Teachers want to be able to meet the children in a free and creative way through offering a curriculum that responds to the children's need for an age-appropriate, stimulating, and holistic education. Because of their experience in education and their love of children, they want freedom in the classroom and, with their colleagues, a voice in determining the content and nature of the education. Also, teachers want a say about who their colleagues will be.

Children want first of all to be met, to be seen by the teacher and to be appreciated as the individuals they are and can become. They want to be encouraged and inspired to learn with enthusiasm.

Parents send their child, that which is most precious to them in life, to school. They hope that their child will be encouraged, inspired and educated. They want to understand the education their child is receiving and to support it financially and with their time, energy and knowledge.

Administrators, if they have not been brainwashed by corporate models of education, want to support and nurture the educational process. They want, in their

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myriad administrative tasks, to be perceived by teachers and parents as equal partners in creating a healthy school.

The alumni, former parents, friends and supporters of a school also wish to have the possibility of helping, of getting involved, financially and in other ways.

In many State [USA: public] schools, the school form does not meet the needs and wants of these partners. Teachers have limited freedom and responsibility. They are controlled by a hierarchic school bureaucracy that tells them what to teach and how and when to teach it.

Children are often being educated toward only two basic ends: to achieve high scores on standardised tests and to become skilled workers in the competitive economic system.

Parents feel left out of the educational process. Often they have no choice about the school or the teacher their child will have.

Administrators have become the managers rather than the supporters of education, making pedagogical decisions that they may not be qualified to make. The higher one's position in the administrative bureaucracy, the less contact one has with children. Administrators are often perceived by the other partners in education as managers or adversaries rather than as partners.

The principles of Waldorf school organisation provide an interesting and useful alternative to the centralised bureaucratic model of State [public] education.

There are over 120 Waldorf schools in the United States and Canada. Each school is independent and self-administered and linked to other schools through the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). There is no one standard school form. Each school is striving to find the structures and relationships that best fit its circumstances. However, most full Waldorf schools (Kindergarten-Class 12) have the following form.

In Waldorf schools, there are no principals or headteachers. There are chairpersons of the College (or Council) of the Faculty and often of the High School and Lower School. The College of Teachers (or the Faculty Council) is usually the main decision-making body of the school. It makes curricular and staffing decisions and also decides on important aspects of the budget and salaries. The College meets weekly and usually sees itself as inwardly and outwardly carrying the main life of the school. Membership in the College is usually open to full-time teachers and to administrators who have been at the school one year or more.

The weekly faculty-staff meeting is a time for study and information sharing. It is often a place where committees report and where schedules are shared. The main faculty committees, reporting either to the College/Council or to the full faculty staff meeting, are usually a curriculum committee, a personnel committee, a festivals committee, and a budget committee.

Most Waldorf schools have a small administrative staff – a book-keeper, one or two secretaries, a development person, and sometimes a main administrator. The administrative staff of the school reports to both the Board and the College and is seen as serving the educational process. It is the servant of the teachers and the school – not the manager, which today is the case in many schools and colleges. Most teachers are involved in administrative tasks as well, and some teachers spend up to a third of their time in committee or administrative work.

In a full Waldorf school (K-12), there are also separate High School, Lower School, and Kindergarten faculty meetings.

Waldorf schools have a parent representative for each class. The class representative works with the class teacher (in the lower grades) or with the high school class advisor. Generally, there is also a Parent Council or a Parent Teacher Association which has a variety of functions – from planning adult education work, to running fairs and special events, to raising issues of concern at all-school community meetings.

Parents also are on the school Board of Trustees, often comprising a majority. There they provide the legal, financial, real estate, public relations and fund-raising expertise needed to develop the school. The Board is an active partner in the life of the school, seeing that tuition and donations support the operating budget and working hard to provide adequate facilities. Board committees usually include Finance, Development, Building and Tuition Assistance. These committees, like the Board itself, are composed mostly of parents, former school parents and friends of the school.

In the typical Waldorf school form, the main decision-making bodies of the school are the College of Teachers and the Board of Trustees. The College carries the main pedagogical, internal responsibility, and the Board, the main financial responsibility. Both these groups and the main committees work with a consensus process of decision-making in which all members have to agree to the decision being made.

Teachers, having the central role in determining the content and form of the education, can fall into the error of not valuing the concerned, and at times critical, parent as a true partner in the process.

Thus, in a Waldorf school, the teachers – the people most intimately involved in the education of the children – have the responsibility of running the school and deciding on curriculum and pedagogy. The children are being taught by individuals who want to nurture them as full, creative human beings. The parents have many opportunities for involvement in the decision-making processes of the school, as Board members, class representatives and as members of the Parent-Teacher Association. Administrators have a supporting role, making possible the functioning of the school. They are not the directors or managers of the school.

Friends and supporters of the school have opportunities to help. One woman I know, a former public school teacher, had not known about Waldorf education when her children were young. She is now a committed supporter of Waldorf education and spends countless hours in school Board meetings, helping a new Waldorf school to grow in her community.

In Waldorf schools there are, of course, considerable struggles and difficulties. Teachers, having the central role in determining the content and form of the education, can fall into the error of not valuing the concerned, and at times critical, parent as a true partner in the process. Also, since there is no hierarchy, there is the issue of teacher evaluation. Who evaluates whom and on what basis? A clear teacher evaluation policy and program for professional development are important. In some Waldorf schools, this has been implemented. In others, it has not, and parental disenchantment and dwindling enrolment can be the tell-tale signs of the need.

Usually, though, the Waldorf school creates communities of unusual vitality. Teachers, administrators, children, parents, and friends are actively engaged in and committed to the life of their school. The rapid growth of Waldorf education in the USA and Canada testifies not only to the value of the educational philosophy but also to the validity of its principles of school organisation.

The principles that underlie Waldorf school forms go back to the origin of

Waldorf education in 1919. In the chaos of post-World War I Europe, Rudolf Steiner suggested an alternative approach to social organisation, which he called the Threefold Social Order.

Steiner held that society has three distinct spheres – cultural, political and economic. Each of these spheres has its own concerns. Each is governed by its own law which, if followed, maximises the effectiveness of activity in that sphere. In the cultural sphere, the principle is freedom. In the political or rights domain, the principle is equality. In the economic life, the principle is fraternity and co-operation. According to Steiner, each sphere should function independently of the others. It is especially important that the cultural / spiritual sphere should not be controlled by the political sphere or State.

Education is part of the cultural sphere. Therefore, in Waldorf education, the freedom of the teachers and of the school from the State is held to be very important, as is the freedom of parents to choose a school for their children.

The school, like every social institution, has itself a threefold division. The teachers play the dominant role in the cultural/spiritual life of the school. They have substantial freedom in the classroom, exercised within an agreed-upon philosophy and curriculum of education. The teachers make all pedagogical decisions together and also most personnel decisions, usually in consultation with other members of the school community. The teachers help parents and the other members of the school community to understand the education and its underlying view of child development. Here, leadership is individual. The teacher teaches in his or her classroom, using his or her individual capacities and judgment. And the teachers together make decisions on all pedagogical matters.

The rights sphere of a school concerns questions such as moving the school, disciplinary procedures, dress code, salary and tuition policies, structure and principles of school governance, long-term planning, and the school schedule. These are all areas that affect the members of the school community more or less equally. On these issues, all the adult partners – teachers, administrative staff, parents, and friends – should have a voice. Issues are discussed by all, and decisions are reached by consultation and consensus. In Waldorf schools, this area of rights and responsibilities, of agreements between partners, is often the aspect of school life of which people are least conscious.

The economic sphere involves budget, tuition and salary decisions. The Faculty and school Board confer and work together to produce a viable financial policy. If, in the cultural life of the school, the teachers help the parents understand the education, so in the economic sphere, the parents – with their tuition and their expertise – help the teachers by making the education possible. The principle of fraternity is evident in tuition aid to needy families and, in some schools, a salary system that takes into account individual circumstances (for example, the number of children in a teacher's family). In the economic sphere, leadership is republican, being based on competence, and delegated to individuals who carry out the work on behalf of the whole.

When these principles are consciously worked with and implemented (as they are in most Waldorf schools), an unusual vitality results, with all partners in the school community involved and dedicated to the life of the school. This is because the body, soul, and spirit of the institution and of the individuals involved are all being nourished.

Another important principle of Waldorf schools is that of collegiality, of non-hierarchical forms. Behind this is the idea that hierarchical forms block the proper meeting between individuals and do not allow people to be effective partners on the path of

mutual development. In the struggle to arrive at consensus, as equals, in faculty meetings or on the Board, we are encouraged to understand and value each other's thoughts and to bring to consciousness our own one-sidedness. We are encouraged, coaxed and sometimes pushed to meet each other at deeper levels. For Steiner, modern Western consciousness is increasingly isolated, self-conscious and cut off from others and the world. Thus, the search for social forms that encourage people to meet at deeper levels is an essential aspect of social reform.

In most institutions of State [public] education, the reverse of these principles is in effect. State education is controlled by a political and economic process. Teachers have limited freedom in the classroom and little voice in the discussion of the mission and purpose of their schools. There is no partnership among teachers, parents and administrators in arriving at agreements on rights and responsibilities. Hence, relations are often adversarial, and agreements are often not honoured.

There is also an unconscious economic relationship, since State [public] education is tax-funded. The result is limited creativity, adversarial relationships and pronounced individual or group egotism in the schools. People are prevented from truly meeting. Education suffers. Everyone suffers, especially the children. In Waldorf education, we need to consciously study, work with and experiment with the social forms suggested by Rudolf Steiner and with his underlying sociological perspective. Steiner sought forms that bring to consciousness the right relationships and the right attitudes between the partners in any commonly willed activity. Along with the rich curriculum of Waldorf education, he provided appropriate principles for building effective school partnerships. We need to understand those principles and to share them with those seeking educational reform today.

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP, LEARNING, AND SERVICE IN WALDORF SCHOOLS

Christopher Schaefer, Ph.D.

In my work as a consultant to organisations, I visit and become involved with many Waldorf schools. Most of these use new social and community forms suggested by Rudolf Steiner, forms that are collegial, non-hierarchical, and spiritually based. These forms help to create institutions in which human beings can participate fully, can meet at deeper levels, and can experience that they are brothers and sisters on a shared path of development. [1]

Yet, this rich tradition of new social and community form does not seem to be sustaining us. I see in many Waldorf school communities – their substantial accomplishments notwithstanding – a lack of energy and direction, an absence of leadership, and a dearth of joy that is worrying.

This situation calls for us to improve our work in three areas: leadership, learning, service. We need to better understand, value, and support leadership. Also, we must take the time and energy to learn the social and administrative skills

necessary to make our non-hierarchical institutions work effectively. And we must strive for a deeper understanding of and commitment to being a service culture, one that supports all the members of our school communities as partners.

Encouraging Leadership

To develop a new culture of leadership, we must raise to consciousness our existing image of leadership and then search for a new concept that meets the needs of self-administered schools, and communities. Most of us carry old images of leadership – of the charismatic pioneer generation of the school or of the more manipulative "command and control" leaders in the corporate world. Not wanting these, we retreat into an ideology of collegiality – in which everybody needs to be involved in everything – and we fall into a morass of meetings, inadequate decision-making processes, chaos, and conflict. Leadership may be present, but the people exercising leadership functions such as the faculty chair, the board president, and the head of the personnel committee often feel undermined and hesitate to exercise initiative.

We need perhaps to see leadership in a new way – to understand it as service or stewardship. Peter Block, in his book *Stewardship*, writes that the essence of leadership is *"to choose service over self-interest"*.[2] Robert Greenleaf writes:

> Servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. The best test is: "Do those served grow as persons – do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"[3]

The qualities of the servant leader for both Block and Greenleaf include listening, empathy, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, and stewardship.

Also, we need to delegate leadership responsibilities consciously. This is often not done in our schools. Authority is given to that volunteer who, though overworked like everyone else, is willing to take on yet another responsibility. Leadership then is given to those who are willing to serve on four committees rather than on one. The assumption is an optimistic one, that if the person endures long enough, he or she will gain the experience and the power to be an effective leader. The result is that leadership is not explicit and that often the best people are not asked. The type of leadership desired is not discussed, and people are not freed up from other tasks to provide effective leadership.

The failure to define and to consciously give leadership responsibilities on the basis of competence is a weakness in many Waldorf schools. Perhaps we do not want to limit people or do not want a situation of clear administrative authority. In any case, this lack of clarity undermines leadership and leads to the hidden exercise of the real power in a school by the 'workhorses' within the school community.

Toward a Culture of Learning

Our school communities need to become true cultures of learning. Not only the children, but every person involved with the school – each parent, teacher, administrator – should be learning. Our collegial, non-hierarchical institutions require a high level of "practical social understanding", to use Rudolf Steiner's phrase – a high level of social skill. This means learning from experience. It means regularly and

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carefully reviewing committee forms, decision-making procedures, and the exercise of leadership. It means consciously learning about group process. Each person involved needs to know the function of a chairperson and of a "process coach", needs to know how to work with disagreements, and how to improve listening and communication skills. Community-building, the art of social creation, involves an ongoing commitment to learning from our social experiences. It means weekly and monthly and yearly reviews to assess what is working well and what isn't.

We can also use the many fine psychological insights and community-building methods of other groups. These include the work of M. Scott Peck and the Foundation for Community Encouragement; the approaches to servant leadership developed by the Robert Greenleaf Center; decision making by consensus, stemming from the Quaker tradition; and the many insights of humanistic psychology. We can also learn from the fields of business management and of non-profit administration, in particular, about the realm of board responsibilities.[4]

Developing this kind of learning and sharing means overcoming our aversion to psychology and being interested in what other groups and institutions have done. It involves also developing a learning network among Waldorf schools, curative communities, community supported farms and gardens, adult education centres, and co-operatively run businesses. This is an exciting challenge for the Waldorf movement at a time when it is entering a new stage of institutional maturity and needs to learn the complex skills necessary to administer complex institutions.

Part of the challenge of learning in our institutions is to encourage conscious personal development. Many conventional organisations ask their employees to meet with their superiors and their peers in quarterly and annual performance reviews. While such practices can be punitive, they do involve a conscious assessment of performance. In our schools each person, after consultation with others, could formulate a personal development plan. In addition to describing that person's particular responsibilities as teacher, receptionist, development staff member, or parent co-ordinator, it could include three basic aspects:

1. **Aims and goals regarding inner development:** for example, working with Steiner's six meditative exercises, observing nature on a regular basis, developing a deeper knowledge of the stars, having fifteen minutes of quiet every morning,
2. **Aims as social beings:** for example, improving facilitation skills, working on listening, working through our difficulties with colleagues, speaking more in co-worker meetings, acquiring mediation skills.
3. **Vocational goals:** for example, improving presentation skills, enhancing computer literacy, learning more about adolescence, improving time and project management skills.

Such development plans could also include courses or conferences that people plan to attend to acquire particular insights and skills. These plans can be shared with a personnel committee, a care group, or with a smaller group of colleagues. They can be reviewed annually as well as being looked at more briefly during the course of the year. A development plan of this kind can then be the link to a review of how well each person is carrying out his or her particular role or function. It can encourage learning and growth.

Waldorf schools are profound learning communities for children but are seldom conscious learning communities for the adults involved. A school might establish a committee to foster community learning, asking each group within the school to assess their approach to learning and development. Teachers – speaking as individuals or as members of the faculty as a group – parents, members of the board, and administrators could each describe his or her learning activities. A 'learning committee' could organise an annual learning festival in which each member of the school community shares what she or he has learned during the past year. Such a festival could be a joyous community celebration and could enhance the knowledge of community-building.

A Culture of Service and Partnership

We can also foster a more conscious service culture in our Waldorf communities.

Part of creating a culture of service involves being more aware of our partners in our activities. A Waldorf community consists of teachers, parents, children, and administrators, all working together. The adults involved are all dedicated to the care and education of the children in the school. But they can and should be interested in serving, helping, and supporting each other as well. A school can act as a community serving all its members. We need to bring the nature of that partnership to consciousness. This is basic to creating a service culture and to building community. Like a business, we need to ask: Who are the people I as an individual and we as a community are serving? How do we serve them better, and how do we explore with them what kind of job we're doing?

Accountability is one aspect of partnership. In most non-profit organisations it is the board of trustees that is legally responsible, and it is the board that represents the public interest. In collegially run institutions with limited hierarchy, the question of accountability is critical. It must be made clear how each segment of the school – faculty, staff, parents, board – is accountable to the others. To spell out mutual expectations between board, faculty, staff, and parents based on a clear understanding of roles helps greatly in avoiding misunderstanding and conflict.

This explicit statement of mutual expectation can be included in the school handbook. It is more than just a task description, though. It needs to state how the parent association, the board, and the faculty are involved in key decisions, such as the raising of tuition and other matters that affect all or most members of the school community.

Part of developing a service culture is to make sure that each decision-making group has clear criteria for evaluation and a transparent process of review. If the faculty makes all pedagogical decisions and hires, evaluates, and fires teachers, it must be clear exactly how the faculty carries out these tasks. The same applies to the board in fulfillment of its responsibilities. There should be a process for auditing and evaluating the board every year or two. There should be criteria for board membership that are explicit, consciously shared, and adhered to.

Underlying the notion of service is the valuing of competence. Volunteerism – giving a person a job primarily because that person is willing to do it – has its place in the pioneering phase of a Waldorf initiative. But the need for professional skills and competence grows as a school enters maturity. The filling of every position of responsibility – from the Christmas Fair chairperson to the kindergarten assistant – must be based on a clear understanding of the task and the skills and attitudes needed to carry out that task. There must be a conscious selection of individuals and groups

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on the basis of competence. This is the essence of republican leadership and of a service culture, for it suggests we have a concern about quality and a gratitude toward people who give generously of their talents and time.

Building Community Consciously

By developing a more conscious culture of leadership, learning, and service we can strengthen Waldorf communities and bring the social imagination of Waldorf Education into reality. Through developing a more conscious culture of learning and of leadership, we deepen our connection to the spirit of the school and the spirit of Waldorf Education by serving higher ideals. In becoming more conscious and skilled in meeting, we enliven the souls of our institutions; and in being more conscious of our partners, of those we serve, and of how we serve them, we expand the culture of service. Developing a stronger culture of leadership, learning, and service asks that we recommit ourselves to community-building, to making our institutions healthier, more joyous places to live and work.

We must meet this social challenge so that our communities may give hope to this new century. The powerful imagination of what it means to be a human being – an imagination contained within the Waldorf curriculum – needs to be brought more consciously into our social life, so that our communities can be places where people can more fully experience the light and blessings of the spirit.

References

1 For the rich spiritual perspective that Rudolf Steiner brings to social questions of community life, please consult the following:
Rudolf Steiner, *The Inner Aspect of the Social Question*. Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1974; idem, *Social and Anti-Social Forces in the Human Being*. Mercury Press, Spring Valley, N.Y., 1984; idem, "How Can the Social Needs of the Time be Met?" a lecture delivered in Zurich on October 10, 1916.

2 Peter Block, *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-intent*. Berrett Koehler, San Francisco, 1993, 6.

3 In Larry Spears (ed.), *What is Servant Leadership?* Robert Greenleaf Center, Indianapolis, 1994, 4.

4 For example: Peter Drucker, *Managing the Non-profit Organization*. Harper Collins, N.Y., 1994; Peter Senghe's book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (Doubleday, New York, 1990) is an excellent introduction to issues that concern schools.
See C. Schaefer's essay "Enhancing the Learning Partnership" in this book.
See also the excellent book by Stephen Covey, *Principle-Centered Leadership*. Simon & Schuster, New York, 1990.

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READING THE BOOK OF THE FUTURE:
Vision-building in the school community

Steve Briault

Powerful "visions" underlie our attempts to realise the aims of Waldorf education: a vision of child development as the progressive incarnation of a unique individuality; a vision of a curriculum which reflects and nourishes this process; a vision of a free cultural life in which the teacher-as-artist, unconstrained by political intervention or commercial pressures, interacts creatively and lovingly with pupils and colleagues. We owe the clarity and inspiration of these visions to Rudolf Steiner: but can we claim an equivalent quality of vision in the way we lead, manage and develop our school communities?

Often, the closer our ideals and images approach daily reality, the more blurred, ambiguous and controversial they become. Within the picture of "republican self-management", for instance, which specific decisions, if any, should be taken by the College of Teachers – and how? Within the ideal of "partnership" between teachers, parents, Council/Board members and supporters, how should each group be involved in formulating the school's development strategy, policies and priorities? The fascinating quotations in Francis Gladstone's book *Republican Academies* reveal that such questions were neither absent, nor easily answered, even when Rudolf Steiner was working directly with the founders and teachers of the first Waldorf School. Should we find this worrying, or reassuring?

Each school will have to find its own approach, based on its own unique circumstances and community of stakeholders. Neither blueprints nor 'purpleprints' will be helpful – but sharing and learning from each other's experience can be. This chapter will describe some perspectives and examples around the process of trying to build a common image and shared resolve regarding a school's future development, drawing on my experiences as administrator, Council/Board member, adviser and facilitator to a range of schools over the last 20 years.

Vision-building: what is the purpose?

In a hierarchically-run organisation, the overall direction and strategy can be set and owned by one person or a small group at the top, whose leadership ensures consistency and constancy of purpose towards the goals which they set and monitor, and towards which they manage the work of subordinates. The limitations of this "top-down" approach are apparent even in conventional businesses – but in Steiner school communities, it would clearly be inappropriate and dysfunctional (which is not to say it has not been tried in some places...).

The decentralised, participative approach to management and leadership practised in our schools often runs the opposite danger – that group decisions are made piecemeal, issue by issue, based on untested and unshared assumptions about values and priorities, in the absence of any clearly articulated set of goals and policies – or worse, that each person acts out of their own perceptions and opinions without

reference to any common vision at all. Parents are often confused and concerned by the inconsistencies that then arise.

The process of jointly building and agreeing a common vision of the future, and deriving specific strategies, policies and initiatives from this vision, is therefore a central and crucial part of sharing responsibility for the school as a whole.

Vision building: who should be involved?

To gain and retain the commitment of all those whose time, energy and resources – spiritual, social and material – will be required to make the vision into reality, the process of vision-building needs to be inclusive. One formulation that I have found helpful is "all those individuals who recognise themselves and each other as both outwardly and inwardly committed to the future of the School" – in other words, who have consciously connected their personal destiny with that of the institution and its community. At the very least, all members of the College of Teachers and the Council of Management/Board of Trustees should meet this criterion; but it will also be likely to include others such as administrative or maintenance staff, members of management groups, committed long-term parents, and – if the School is fortunate – some ex-parents and local supporters.

It can be very helpful to identify this wider group formally, perhaps under a title such as Carrying Group or Association, and to put procedures in place for regular reviews of its composition and membership. This group can also usefully take on the – often-neglected – tasks of the membership of the Trust and/or Company, which constitutes the legal form of the school, and which is formally responsible for electing the Trustees/Directors. Conducting vision-building sessions with this group ensures inclusiveness and breadth of contribution, whilst bringing a consistency between the location of moral responsibility and legal responsibility for the school. (The separation of these types of responsibility can otherwise easily cause tension between, for example, the College and the Council/Board.)

In some situations, however, even a broad but defined grouping such as this will be felt to be too "exclusive". Provided the internal decision-making structures of the school are clear and accepted, vision-conferences can also be held on an open basis, in which all parents, staff and friends are invited to participate. Such inclusiveness can enrich the process and enhance commitment – but requires careful preparation, facilitation and follow-up, to avoid the danger of the process being "hi-jacked" by people with a particular axe to grind, or of false expectations arising about "democratic" decision-making.

What can vision-building produce?

There is a range of possible outputs from a vision-building process, any or all of which may be relevant and valuable at any particular points in the biography of a school. None of them should be regarded as permanent, and all will require regular re-visiting, though probably with differing frequencies. These possible outputs include:

- *a mission statement for the school*
- *a set of guiding principles for how the school will operate*
- *an image – in words, pictures and perhaps other media – of how the school will be in the future (e.g. 3-5 years)*

o   *a development plan setting out the key strategies, objectives and actions required to make the vision a reality*

Mission statement

This means a short statement of the basic purpose and identity of the school, and its core aims and values. Teachers often respond to this idea with: "It's obvious, our mission is to provide Steiner / Waldorf education!" This reaction however, whilst understandable, is inadequate. Within such a statement, which applies to all Steiner schools world wide, there is tremendous variation possible. Provide for whom? In what environment? What range of provision? On what financial basis? What style of teaching? In which elements (crafts? music? drama? horticulture?) will the school specially strive to excel? What kind of parental involvement and relationships?

The value of such a statement is to act as an enduring reference point for future development, and a focus for regular review: how far are we fulfilling our basic intentions? Which aspects are not (yet) realised? What may we be neglecting? Where do we need to focus our efforts more intensely? It can also be very helpful for the orientation of new parents and staff, provided it is an accurate reflection of the real intentions of those responsible for the school's future. The danger can be that it becomes a bland formulation, which no one disagrees with but no one is inspired by. In such a case it may need to be re-visited and re-enlivened. In general, however, the basic mission of the school is unlikely to change too much too often: only at key crisis or turning points in the school's biography – for example, if the existing mission fails to sustain people's commitment, or proves unrealisable, or the opportunity for a different source of funding arises – will it be appropriate to consider a radically new formulation.

Guiding principles

If there is variation between the mission and identity of different Waldorf schools, there is even more variation between the way in which they work. Working on a set of agreed 'guiding principles' can be extremely helpful in the creation of a clear and consistent approach to all aspects of school management. The principles spell out the basis on which decisions will be made, initiatives taken and relationships handled. In the early part of a school's development, these will evolve fairly rapidly and may need to be reviewed at least annually: in a more mature school, re-considering them every few years may be quite adequate. It is important to ensure that the principles do not become legalistic, sclerotic or dogmatic – to approach them open-mindedly, but then, for the period they are agreed as valid, to adhere to them faithfully.

Image of the future

Perhaps the most inspiring outcome of a vision-building process is when a group succeeds in jointly creating a vivid picture of how they want the school to be at some specified time in the future. It is important that such images are *ambitious but realistic*. They must be believable and achievable, as well as exciting and motivating. The fact that the danger of utopian fantasising is an obvious one, does not (in my experience) guard against it! What does help is to insist that the pictures are as concrete as possible

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– how many pupils / teachers / classes, what annual income, what range and size of buildings, which community cultural events organised by whom, and so on.

It is also important to capture in some form the desired *qualities* – educational, social, environmental – which will be striven for. Words may not be the best or only medium for this – collaborative painting, drawing, collage or modelling may help people to express their hopes in new forms together.

Such future-pictures should be reviewed and re-created regularly, in the light of emerging realities, breakthroughs and constraints: a yearly, twice-yearly or even termly rhythm will be appropriate, depending on the pace of the school's development.

Development plan

All of the above elements, if they are to have real effect and influence in the work of developing the school, will need to be translated and encapsulated into a strategic plan for the school's immediate and medium-term future. This needs to be a living document, "owned" by all the key groupings (College, Council/Board, Finance etc.) in the school community, and kept up to date by a small defined group who are in touch with all of these. It will identify specific objectives in relation to e.g. recruitment and retention of pupils, finance, personnel, facilities development, curriculum, adult education, etc., and list all the main actions and initiatives required – with target dates and names of those responsible – for the achievement of these objectives.

Regular progress reports in relation to this plan should be given to parents, staff and supporters. In time, such progress reports may well become the first step in a next round of vision building.

Vision-building: the context

Developing a common vision requires a different rhythm from the regular weekly or monthly meetings that take place in the school. It needs a longer space of time, but less frequency. It may well involve a larger group of people than other meetings, possibly a group that only meets in this composition for this purpose. It will need more careful preparation and facilitation than some other meetings, and the process may be more complex. I have found it best to approach the task through some kind of "internal conference" lasting from one to three days. (The word "internal" is not intended to preclude the participation of invited "outsiders", who may indeed be able to contribute valuable insights and perceptions.)

On the following page is an example of the outcome of such a vision forming process (taken from a Waldorf school in Nairobi, Kenya).

An important part of the context is also the creation of the right *mood* for the endeavour. Vision building is a serious and joyful task, every bit as "spiritual" as joint study or individual inner exercising. It needs to be approached with full attention and engagement. Reluctant or partial attendances, distractions, personal agendas, time pressure, are all unhelpful. Warmth of enthusiasm, open-mindedness and creativity are the key qualities which participants need to contribute: these cannot of course be coerced – but they are in fact the same qualities, here applied to supporting the development of a social organism, which teachers and parents need to bring to supporting the development of their children...

VISION WEEKEND REPORT

Guiding Principles

1. We place the needs of each individual child at the centre of a sensitive and dynamic educational approach.

2. Our teaching is inspired by the spiritual understanding of human development, known as Anthroposophy, articulated by the philosopher and educator, Rudolf Steiner.

3. We recognise that the art of education requires teachers to be free to select and adjust the content of their lessons so as to nourish both child and teacher.

4. We strive for educational excellence, attaining high academic standards while building confidence and self-esteem, preparing our children to meet life's challenges as free individuals.

5. We are a self-governing, non-profit institution, independent from governmental, political and commercial influences.

6. We strive to integrate children and families from different cultural and social backgrounds, so that our school community reflects the diversity of Kenyan society.

7. We promote participation, involvement and partnership between parents, teachers, support staff and the wider community.

8. We strive to apply equitable and transparent criteria to determine salaries, fees and contributions, and make the education as accessible as possible to all social groupings.

9. We will operate according to ethically and financially sound business practices, ensuring day-to-day viability as well as providing for long-term development.

10. We will provide appropriate permanent facilities in aesthetic surroundings, creating a nurturing and inspiring physical environment.

A further essential element, especially where fundamental changes of direction and/or culture are being considered, is the *willingness to change* on the part of leading figures in the school. In our communities, people can become very enthused and motivated by ideals and visions – but if the implementation of these is then blocked or sidelined, disillusion quickly sets in. A stalled vision can be more disheartening than no vision at all.

Process elements in vision building

Each "vision-conference" will need to be artistically designed to reflect and stimulate the specific characteristics and situation of the school and the participants. However, a number of key elements will probably need to be included in one form or another, namely:

o *Scene setting and goal-setting.* The welcome and introductory session will need to include as clear as possible a statement of aims: what do we hope to have achieved by the end of the meeting? Brief background information and a summary of developments since the last such event will also be important to ensure a common and up-to-date starting point.

o *Meeting each other in new ways.* Vision-building is a social process: distance and unfamiliarity between human beings will impair it, as will fixed pictures of each other based on past experience, perhaps over many years. We want to create new pictures - also of each other – in which future potential becomes visible. Introductory exercises, and the inclusion of activities in which individuals are invited to experience themselves and each other in new ways, can help to create this quality of open anticipation.

o *Exploring and sharing motivation.* The future is created out of human motives and commitment, not out of ideas or theories. Therefore an essential starting-point must always be the true intentions of those who will carry the school into the future. Perhaps in smaller groups, these need to be investigated and articulated sensitively and honestly, recognising and expressing what is common without denying or avoiding differences. If time allows, some biographical sharing can be an excellent route into such questions. Each person can share what he or she feels able, about the contribution they want to make through working at the School. What brought me here? What makes / will make me stay? What values do I want to work out of? What purposes do I want to serve? What do I need to feel part of, in order to give my best to children, colleagues and community? Don't discuss, only reflect and clarify. Listen for and record common threads.

In the plenum, an image of "What intentions unite us?" can then be built up.

o *Recognising what the world is asking of us.* The inward focus of motivation must be balanced by a clarity of outward orientation towards the needs of the school's stakeholders and the wider social context. What continuing, new and emerging needs do we perceive in the children, parents, the local, national and international community? What does the wider Waldorf movement need of this school? What do the authorities want from us?

The participants can try to identify key aspects of 'pull' that the School could / should respond to in the coming years.

o *Dialogue between Motives and (external) Needs.* How should our intentions respond to others' wishes and requirements? How do we find the balance between these, without trying to impose something on the world, which it doesn't want, or becoming externally conditioned? Where are the opportunities for creative response rather than mere compromise? What new paths should we explore? What boundaries should we set?

From such questions, it should be possible to formulate provisional criteria and guiding principles, and to identify key opportunities.

- *Painting the picture.* Try to imagine how the School could / should look in 3-5 years' time. What will be different from the present? Consider specific aspects such as numbers and profile of children, physical / financial developments, pattern of provision etc., and qualitative / cultural features like morale, parental perceptions and involvement, educational 'blossoms' etc.

  Participants build the picture together as far as possible, expressing it in words and/or other artistic media, and then present their future-pictures in the plenum.

- *Ways forward:* Reflecting on all the pictures which have been developed and shared, participants try to agree specific strategy / policy proposals which will carry the School closer to making them reality. A few of these that are considered especially important are developed further. People are encouraged to try to "live into the consequences" of the steps they are proposing.

  The contributions are then synthesised and evaluated, and next steps are agreed.

It is essential that the outcomes of these sessions are faithfully recorded and preserved: ideally, a comprehensive account should be drawn up and circulated to all who were there and any who were unable to be there. Implications for the strategic development plan can be worked through and drafted later (but not too much later!), as can the actions, which need to be undertaken by specific management groups or individuals.

The journey is also the destination

Vision building involves a process of outer and inner research: to answer wisely and responsibly the questions that it raises requires scrupulous investigation of present realities as well as future trends and opportunities. Just as "the child is the book" in which the teacher reads what pedagogical steps are needed, so the community and society constitute the "books" from which future-pictures can be drawn.

Equally important as the outcomes of vision-building efforts, is the community experience that the process provides. In striving to build a common vision of the future – even if the attempt seems less than fully successful – we are working out our destiny with the being of the school, with each other and with ourselves. The process can connect people – and sometimes divide them – more powerfully than almost any other. It creates social and spiritual substance which can fulfil Rudolf Steiner's memorable phrase; *"Teachers don't educate: communities educate".*

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WHAT IS THE SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL TRYING TO TELL US?

Martyn Rawson

Anyone who has an overview of the Steiner Waldorf schools' movement would confirm that the question as to how schools should be managed is becoming increasingly critical. Many schools are re-evaluating their management structures, many are at some stage of crisis and others have problems that they have not yet addressed. Those schools that can afford to engage outside consultants (and a few who can't) have invested heavily. The long term results of such advisory work is often not encouraging.

The nature of the problems that arise are often related to the age of a school. A school that is in the first flush of founder fever has quite different problems to a school that is trying to raise the enthusiasm to celebrate its 50th or even 60th anniversary. Whatever stage a school has reached along its developmental trajectory, there is always one central question that needs to be asked: Who can recognise what the *spirit of the school is* seeking to bring to expression?

Rudolf Steiner used the term spirit of the school *(Schulgeist)* in connection with several other spiritual beings. He spoke of the relationship between the spirit of the school and the *spirit of the times.* He also referred to the *spirit of Waldorf education.* In using such terms he was not speaking metaphorically but was referring to spiritual forces or qualities that have a real and direct influence on the education of the child. On the evening of the 20 August 1919, just prior to the preparatory teacher training seminar he gave to the future teachers of the first Waldorf School, Steiner spoke words of thanks to the school founder Emil Molt: *"in the name of the good spirit whose task is to lead humanity out of suffering and misery, in the name of the good spirit whose task is to lead humanity to a higher level of development in education".*[1] Not long afterwards he made it very clear to parents and pupils at the Waldorf School that the spirit active in the education was the spirit of Christianity. Speaking at the assembly at the end of the first year Steiner said, *"There is something else present, something that I would like to call the spirit of the Waldorf School. It is meant to lead us to true piety again. Basically it is the spirit of Christianity that wafts through our rooms, that comes from every teacher and goes out to every child, even when it seems that something very far from religion is being taught, such as arithmetic, for example. Here it is always the spirit of Christ that comes from the teacher and is to enter the hearts of the children – this spirit that is imbued with real human love".*[2]

It is clear in this context that Steiner was not referring to any denominational form of Christianity but to that universal quality which Steiner saw at the heart of all true religious experience whatever its outer cultural form.

Whoever serves the spirit of the school and the education is also serving the spirit of the times, which is itself an aspect of the universal human spirit that Steiner saw as the spirit of Christ. This is a truly daunting and humbling perspective on our work. It is in this sense that one can understand what Steiner was alluding to, when he inaugurated the first Waldorf School, by referring to its founding as being of great cultural significance. He described the work of Waldorf education as, *"in the highest sense ... a moral, spiritual task".*[3] It is the task of those who carry responsibility for

Waldorf schools to work in such a way that their school creates a living connection to those spiritual powers that seek to work in the world to bring about social harmony and human development.

Some years ago, Jürgen Smit spoke at the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the 'Mother School' in Stuttgart. He described how schools have a biography like an individual and that each life phase brings its own task. He also offered the view that the spiritual powers most closely associated with Waldorf education are essentially youthful by nature, reflecting the nature of the child. He described them as impatient to fulfil their task and liable to lose interest in a school which was no longer able to create an effective vessel for their work, suggesting that they would soon move on to more suitable initiatives. Their role would be taken over quite naturally by other beings with the task of accompanying the processes of decline and dying, just as the plant must draw in its forces once its seed has been set. It was a challenging picture: he, not busy being born, is busy dying.[4] The question any school must ask itself is: Are we still of interest to the spirit of the education or are we no longer able to create an environment where these spiritual powers wish to work? As a former colleague at that school I think I can state that the 'Mother School' is, despite its age, still moved by the creative forces of youth and clearly still of some interest to the spiritual powers that be. Indeed she is a very active 'mother' nurturing many Waldorf babies at home and abroad. So the question of being receptive to the spirit of the education is not one of outer chronological age but one of inner activity.

The model of the Waldorf school is supported by two unique inner structural elements, the curriculum and the social form Steiner gave the school. The first is itself based on the understanding of the nature of the human being that Steiner elaborated in his preparatory seminar, and usually referred to as the *Study of Man*. The second, the social form, arose out of the principles of the *Threefold Social Order*, which are themselves based on Steiner's insight into the spiritual nature of the human being and human activity. The curriculum is here not our concern. The social form has received scant attention in comparison with the curriculum, though like the curriculum, it is sometimes over-simplified to the point of meaninglessness. Apart from which, everyone thinks they know how it is supposed to function and if only everyone else would listen, there would be no problems!

It is worth recalling the origin of this rather unique arrangement. On the evening before the *Study of Man* seminar course, Steiner spoke about the need to find a balance between the ideals of Waldorf education and the need to be flexible *"to conform to what lies far from our ideals"*.[5] In order that this balance be found everyone...

must use his or her fun strength from the beginning.

Therefore, we will organise the school not bureaucratically, but collegially, and will administer it in a republican way. In a true teachers' republic we will not have the comfort of receiving directions from a head teacher, rather we must bring our own contributions towards the solution of problems and take full responsibility for what we have to do. Each one of us must be completely responsible.

We can replace the supervision of a departmental administration with this preparatory course, and through the work, receive what unifies the school.[6]

So in place of the usual hierarchical structures there is the unity of purpose created by collective study of the human being. Steiner went further and gave the

original founding group a unique meditative form which provides the actual framework and model for how the people carrying the school are to work together. For many years this meditation, usually referred to as the 'picture meditation' or 'College Imagination', was passed on to new Colleges of Teachers in hand-written form. Steiner had originally requested that the stenographers stop recording the meeting at the point where he first described this meditation. Later the texts were printed and made available internally within the schools' movement. In recent years, in keeping with the policy of publishing all Steiner's esoteric works, this 'unprinted passage' has been printed in all new editions of the *Study of Man* lectures. In the new Anthroposophic Press edition, *The Foundations of Human Experience*, the relevant details are placed at the end of the first lecture.

This meditation is unusual in many ways and all who have worked with it have known it to be a very special experience of community building. This perhaps also explains the shock many colleagues experienced when they discovered that this was now available for all to read. It was felt that something intimate and precious had been exposed. One can understand such feelings, but the obvious dangers of trying to preserve confidentiality in what was anyway a widely accessible matter are, I think, also clear. Apart from which, there is an equally strong feeling that what was once relevant for a limited circle with more or less direct links to Rudolf Steiner, is now relevant to everyone who wishes to take on the responsibility of working with its substance, indeed uniting their destiny with it. For me that is the crucial point. In an age in which freedom is the highest imperative, the question of individual responsibility is paramount. It is not for one group to decide what another group should have access to.

This is not the place to describe the *College Imagination* in detail but it may be useful to characterise the three levels of activity it evokes. Steiner made it clear that its purpose was to create a vessel, or a medium through which the spiritual powers working in the education can manifest themselves. This working would reveal itself in the thoughts, feelings and above all in the deeds carried out in the name of Waldorf education. This includes everything that we would normally term management of people and resources.

The first level calls upon the individuals to work upon themselves in such a way that we can offer our gifts in service without personal or egoistic influences getting in the way. These means exercising the qualities of positivity, open-mindedness, inner equilibrium, listening, concentration and focus, in trying to understand the intentions of the other person. These are all essentially moral qualities that only the individual can cultivate through exercise.[7] It also means finding common ground with others through working together, arriving at a common picture, sharing thoughts and concepts. The overriding quality we need to be able to do this is inner strength of character.

The second level goes beyond what Johannes Tautz[8] described as the 'horizontal level of discussion', in which each view is equally valid. The higher level is attained vertically in that the consciousness of the group goes beyond the sum of the individuals present. This is achieved through discussion of a dynamic, creative kind. This goes beyond the warmth of spontaneous conversation between people who know and cherish each other and it goes beyond the cold, clear light of reason, logic and carefully crafted argument. It involves a blend of the light of knowledge and the warmth of encounter. It

is akin to an artistic process. The best description of this kind of enhanced conversation is given in Heinz Zimmermann's book *Speaking, Listening, Understanding*.[9] To go beyond what one already knows and is sure of, to go beyond the existing consensus and above all to reconcile opposing views, requires courage.

Going to this level means undergoing transformation so that something new can come about and it is often exactly this that needs to occur. Many of the problems that arise in our schools are new problems and do so precisely because we are attempting quite new things. There are no ready-made solutions. We often first have to formulate new questions before we can get anywhere near to answers that can bring about real change in the world. Of course, not all of our problems are 'new'. Many are plain, old, familiar issues that have perfectly adequate, tried and tested solutions that everyone else has used for years. It is part of our task to sort out what really does need an innovative approach. When polarities and contradictions keep occurring for valid reasons, that is a good indication that we have an issue that can only be resolved through a *"faculty of judgment founded on a true relationship with the spiritual realities"*, as Tautz called it. Such spiritual powers can only work through the kind of living group process that working with the *College Imagination* implies.

The third level is reached through the deeds of a group of people. Only time will tell if those decisions and their implementation were done in the name of the spirit of the school and meet the criteria set by the spirit of the times. These are dimensions that we can only work towards. What one can do, of course, is to create an awareness of the spirit of the school.

Just as the individual clothes their spiritual core in the garments of the soul and the body, so too the spirit of the school. The outer building is not a picture of that spirit but how that spirit lives in that inherited body is. Does it permeate every last corner, or are certain wings, rooms, back yards neglected? Is a building, however impoverished, imbued with loving care, living plants, artistic touches, however modest? How does a school welcome those who enter it? Is it friendly, warm and welcoming or does one have the feeling that one is intruding into some secret organisation with its own language and gestures? Does a school wear its heart on its sleeve or is it impenetrably obscure? Are there inner circles where everything gets decided and nobody knows? Is the school harmonious, homogenous, a rainbow of vibrantly different personalities, or is it a loose federation of fiercely independent non-conformists? Is there a big spider at the centre of the web? Is the school embedded in the local community? What do the locals think? Are they mystified about, proud of, alienated by their neighbourhood Waldorf school? Do the teachers speak the same language as the locals? What is the school best known for – its A Level results, its concerts, its late night meetings or pupils who smoke all over the streets?

All these questions and many more, help to characterise the spirit of the school's attempts to incarnate. Simply being aware of some of these things will help focus on the essentials. But it is one thing to have a picture of where we are; it is another to have a picture of where we are going and how. This is where the social form of the Waldorf school is so crucial. It is difficult enough to 'deliver' the Waldorf curriculum, it is harder to create the right organisational forms so that we steer a path between the dangers of heroic individualism and collective paralysis. The function of the social form of a Waldorf school is to provide the means and the structures to support the actual process of education. That means leadership and management which is all about

making choices, the right choices at the right times.

How did Steiner envisage this form? The inner form, the way in which we have to work together, is exemplified in the *College Imagination*. But that might lead one to suppose that the College of Teachers would meditate and then decide how much money to spend on the leaking roof. Some Colleges do indeed work like this. It is clear, however, that Steiner saw the primary role of the teachers in working on the curriculum, developing teaching methods, discussing children and other essentially educational tasks. What slightly confuses the issue is the expectation that teachers should run all aspects of the school.

What Steiner was most concerned to avoid is the situation we presently have in the British maintained schools sector, in which politicians and the demands of the economy determine what and how children are taught. Steiner wrote in 1919: *"A healthy relation exists between school and society only when society is kept constantly supplied with new and individual potentials of persons whose education has allowed them to develop unhampered. This can be realised only if the schools and the whole educational system are placed on a footing of self-administration within the social organism".*[10] Later in the same article he went on to say:

> *The administration of the educational institutions, the organisation of courses of instruction and their goals should be entirely in the hands of persons who themselves are simultaneously either teaching or otherwise productively engaged in cultural life. In either case, such persons would divide their time between actual teaching (or some other form of cultural productivity) and the administrative control of the educational system.*

What Steiner was getting at is, I think, clear. He wanted no bureaucrats and ministry officials writing the curriculum and managing the resources. He was thinking of schools within a State system which provided for the education but left the educating to the teachers. He was not thinking of private schools, let alone private fee-paying schools only accessible to the wealthy. Interestingly, the qualification for who should be involved in school administration also included non-teachers, but these must be people who were otherwise 'culturally productive'. This has often been overlooked, possibly because nobody knows what it might mean.

In the lectures Steiner gave during the summer course in Ilkley in August 1923, he described the function of the teachers' meetings as follows: *"These meetings are really the living High School (academy) for the College of Teachers – a permanent teacher training seminar, as it were ... All the experience and knowledge acquired from the teaching should be put into the pool at these meetings. In this way the College of Teachers in spirit and soul becomes a whole where each member knows what the other is doing ... The College of Teachers becomes in effect, a central organ whence the whole life blood of the practical teaching flows and helps the teachers maintain their freshness and vitality... instead of growing old in soul and spirit".* So just as the teachers' meeting is the heart organ of the school organism, *"so too, at the periphery, the parents' evenings ... are of the greatest importance ... we set great store by this understanding for the child's school life on the part of the parents ... Since we do not draw up programmes and schedules for our teaching, but draw it from life itself, we cannot adopt the attitude which says, 'I have done the right thing because I have carried out the timetable and curriculum as it was laid down.' And these echoes that reach the teachers when we have these parents' evenings, bring life to what the*

teachers especially need to maintain their own inner vitality".[11]

So the primary function of the teachers' meetings is education research and development. The parents' evenings are important so that the parents understand what their children are experiencing in school and so that the teachers can see what life brings to the children outside of school and adjust their teaching accordingly.

The administration of the first Waldorf School was partly carried out by the founder, the industrialist Emil Molt and presumably his office, and partly by a small committee of teachers elected for a period of office by their colleagues. One can follow the evolution of this system and difficulties encountered in Francis Gladstone's compilation of Steiner's thoughts on school structure in transcripts of College meetings in Stuttgart when he was present. This can be found in the small book *Republican Academies.*[12] It is clear that Steiner foresaw delegation from the beginning.

The real question for us today is how to translate these basic principles into the new situations in which we find ourselves. I would argue from long experience that no independent Steiner Waldorf school can or indeed should be solely self-administered by teachers. There is the specific profession of administrator in a Waldorf school, though as yet we do not have a training. Parents, or indeed others, who take up positions as members of Councils of Management, or become Trustees, should obviously be familiar and in sympathy with the ideals of both the education and the principles of the *Threefold Social Order*. It would be sensible for schools to offer prospective members of such groups some introductory training in these fields, just as it would be sensible if teachers who take on specific administrative duties or become Council members should undergo some training in administration and financial management. I can strongly recommend both the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship *Code of Practice* and David Mitchell's *The Art of Administration.*[13]

Whatever training is undertaken, one would be well advised to consider the ideas that Michael Harslem explains in his three articles. Having worked with Michael for the past 7 years in a working group devoted to researching the principles and practice of structuring teachers' meetings and school administration, along with Heinz Zimmermann and several other experienced colleagues, I can confirm that these ideas are based on insight and experience. What was given to those founding teachers (and non-teachers such as Mr and Mrs Molt) holds good for anyone involved in carrying responsibility for a Waldorf school in any capacity. It is our task to evolve appropriate forms arising out of those central principles to suit the situations we find ourselves in.

What was given as the *College Imagination* was intended primarily for a group of teachers already committed to an anthroposophical path. My feeling is that it nevertheless provides all groups who see their role in terms of being answerable to the spirit of the school and all that that implies, with a model for how the work should be carried out. Whatever forms we create within our management structures, we would do well to consciously take account not only of the functional principles of the *Threefold Social Order* but also the qualitative approach implicit in the *College Imagination*. The task of administration is to provide the means whereby the education can work to fulfil its moral spiritual task to alleviate misery and generate harmony in society. The scale of the task requires thinking in large dimensions and deeds done in consciousness of the spiritual powers that work within Waldorf education.

References and Footnotes

1   Steiner, R., 1996, *The Foundations of Human Experience*, (formerly *Study of Man*). Tr. Henry Barnes. Anthroposophic Press, p34.
2   Steiner, R., 1996, *Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf School, Lectures, and Addresses to Children, Parents and Teachers*. Anthroposophic Press, p58.
3   Steiner, R., *The Foundations of Human Experience*, p33.
4   I quote the American singer and poet Bob Dylan, not I think inappropriately.
5   Ibid p30.
6   Ibid p30.
7   Steiner gives a description of such exercises in the chapter which outlines the criteria for spiritual development in his book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*. Michael Harslem described this as the basic text for all advisors and management consultants.
8   Johannes Tautz in *Towards a Deepening of Waldorf Education*.
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10 Steiner, R., "The Threefold Social Order and Educational Freedom", in *The Renewal of the Social Organism*. Anthroposophic Press, 1985.
11 Steiner, R., *A Modern Art of Education*, lecture 12, pp208-210.
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PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH AND TEACHERS' MEETINGS

Thomas Stöckli

Practice-based research was a radical new idea that arose alongside many other *bottom-up* approaches during the 1970's in positive response to the need to replace *top down* methods of research and renewal in many academic and scientific fields. We can see this trend in a number of disciplines, most notably in the study of history (the history of ordinary people and not only the famous and powerful), in ethnology and anthropology (allow the people being studied to describe their own societies in their own words), in medicine (the trend towards 'bare-foot doctors' and holistic medicine as a counter to medical technology and mass health programmes), economic development ('help towards self-help' projects in the Third World) and also in the field of education. Developed in pre-National Curriculum Britain, action research in education sought to place the initiative of educational renewal and innovation in the hands of the practitioners, the teachers and away from the academics and politicians.

This aim may have failed in the short term but practice-based research has in a sense been rediscovered through the new emphasis on process-orientated learning and on the application of the principles of organisational development and lean management techniques in social and cultural organisations, such as schools.[1] It is proving to be an extremely valuable tool in many schools. Why not in Waldorf schools too?

1. Why do we need practice-based research?

Isn't it already difficult enough to keep on top of the daily teaching load, not to mention all the other responsibilities a teacher has? How can find we enough time to prepare and review our lessons. Aren't the teaching and the preparation the most important things? Practice-based research is a response to both of these concerns and offers support for the central tasks of the teacher.

Practice-based research involves methods that can enhance a teacher's abilities by:

- Improving the lessons and generating new enthusiasm
- Helping to structure one's own interesting research projects
- Actively developing research into the curriculum and teaching methods
- Encouraging pedagogical renewal, improvements and innovation based on insight into human nature rather than mere pragmatism
- Renewing and enlivening the work of teachers' meetings (Waldorf teachers spend on average 4 to 6 hours a week in education meetings)

The methods of practice-based research (also known *as action research*) don't actually offer anything fundamentally new or special. Since teachers are expected to develop their own curriculum through dialogue with their colleagues, whilst using the Waldorf Curriculum as a frame of reference, one could say that action research has always been practised in Steiner Waldorf schools. The main purpose of practice-based research is to make this educational

research more conscious, methodologically more effective and to enable more fruitful collegial work in the teachers' meetings.

2. The teachers' meetings as an "on-going living academy"

These teachers' meetings are not there merely in order to prepare the school reports, or deal with the organisational business of the school and the like... these teachers' meeting are actually there as an on-going living academy (or university) for the College of Teachers. They are an on-going teacher training seminar.

Steiner, Ilkley, 17/8/1923

3. Working methods in teachers' meetings: exchange and practice-based research

Each experience the teacher has in the classroom or in school becomes a subject for his or her own learning, for his or her own education. In the teachers' meetings all the knowledge gained through the teaching should be exchanged. Thus the Faculty of Teachers can become a soul-spiritual whole in which each one knows what the other is doing, what experiences the others are having and to what extent they have progressed through what they have learned in their work with the children.

Steiner, 17/8/1923

4. What is practice-based research?

Research carried out by a practising educator is characterised by the following qualities:

- The approach is provisional, process-orientated and developmental
- It involves 'local knowledge', i.e. it is context-orientated
- Research and development includes only those directly involved
- Action and reflection are kept in active relation to each other

Thus we have research in the context of practice.
This circulation can be diagrammatically expressed as follows:

Reflection on the action

Action   practical theory

Ideas of action
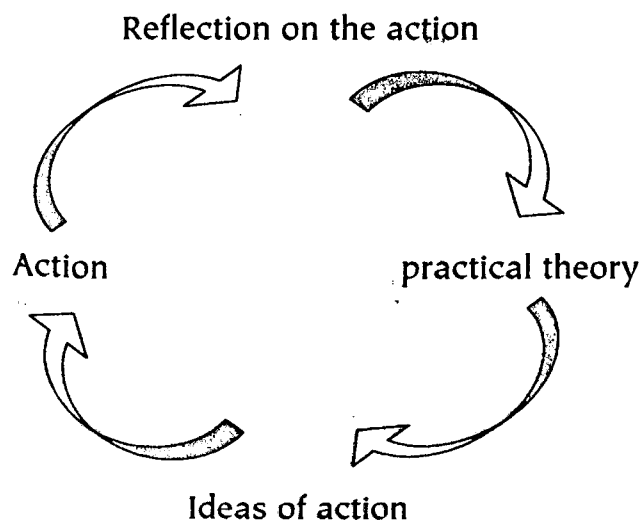
In this research cycle the reflection on the action taken, involves a further circulation in that this is deepened through the anthroposophical study of human nature *(Menschenkunde)*.
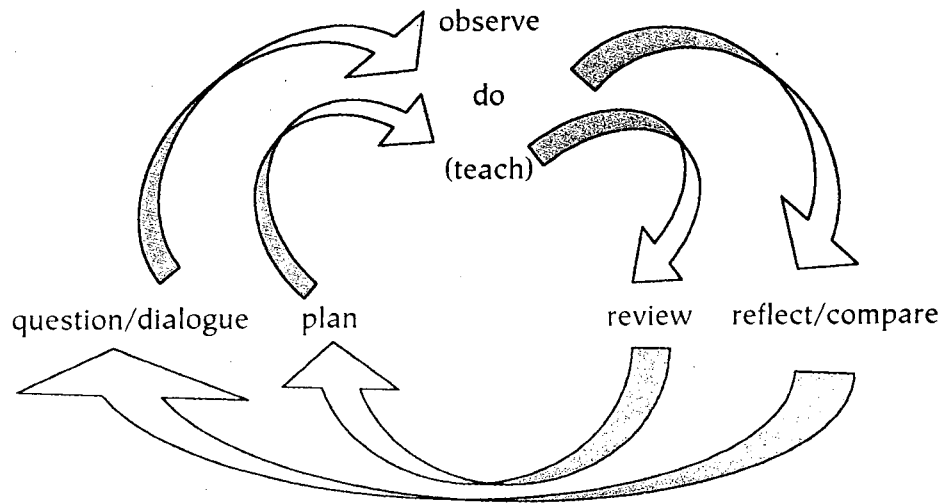
The outer cycle in the diagram involves both deepening through the study of human nature and dialogue through collegial exchange. In this way the research is always linked to both the practice and classroom observation and to the study of the archetypal processes of human development. In other words, provisional practical theories (working hypotheses) are developed based on actual practice and living theory.

Practice-based research does not seek to invent anything new, it only seeks to support the circulation and make the process conscious.

Practice-based research can involve:

- Following through the consequences of one's own pedagogical actions
- The confrontation of different perspectives. (An example of this would be the use of pupil or parent surveys and interviews to gain the non-teacher perspective on educational practice). Discrepancies between perspectives can be the springboard to research and further development, as well as the motivation for further training.

Some of the basic principles of practice-based research include:

- The integration of individual research within a professional community (i.e. groups of practitioners, who meet as colleagues and critical friends for exchange and dialogue).
- The establishment of ethical rules for collaboration (i.e. those involved, including pupils, have control over the start, duration and end of any project or evaluation.
- The publishing of research outcomes. The preparation and presentation of studies through workshops and conferences open to all other colleagues.
- It is particularly important that practitioners be given the opportunity to share their experiences.

The basic idea of action research is as follows: the teachers shouldn't only teach, they should also be able to establish themselves as researchers within their own field. Teachers are involved through a network of projects and linked to teacher training centres and universities. It is however not easy to win teachers over to action research. The pre-conditions have to be established during initial teacher training.

5. Getting started

It makes sense to start practice-based research in relation to a question in which one is already interested. This helps with the motivation and enables one to focus on the real issues involved. It is also important to consider the following aspects:

- One's personal freedom – the researcher chooses to undertake this work and doesn't do it because he or she is forced by any external instance.
- The research in question is within the context of the school's education vision, as articulated in an educational development plan i.e. it is not merely a personal hobby-horse but relates to an overall school question.
- The question of values – every action is the expression of a value (an act is a value that has become tangible). It is important within practice-based research to 'read' the value implicit in each action (i.e. what comes to expression when I do this?)
- The further development of the question being researched requires further development of the researcher. In normal methods of empirical research, the question cannot be changed halfway through the project. In action-research this step is actually desirable since the question should evolve with the research.

6. Aims and methods

What research methods are used in action research? Practice-based research has a broad spectrum of methods at its disposal but it is more important that a process involving further development can be set in motion than the choice of particular methods. The aim and orientation of the research is more important than the orientation towards particular methods. Pluralism of method is desirable.

It is not important which method one begins with. It is more important which one helps us to progress. On the other hand it is difficult to work with more than one method at a time. Therefore it is advisable to use one at a time (i.e. not questionnaires and interviews at the same time).

7. How can action research be used in the teachers' meetings?

The cultivation of a fruitful culture of teacher development is the basis for educational quality development. Every teacher development event provides a challenging learning situation. It is important that the teachers themselves take

the initiative in teacher training and further development. The time between meetings is as important as the meetings themselves.

A teachers' meeting that provides time for practice-based research could have the following structure:

- Class-based meetings for all the teachers who teach a particular class
- Presentation of individual research projects in small groups with collective evaluation and processing
- Plenum to discuss general issues and for organizational announcements
- Choice of various artistic activities

It is essential to retain the overview and long-term perspectives within the pedagogical work in teachers' meetings. This calls for a small carrying group who can work efficiently to maintain continuity and carry the preparation and planning.

Not all points can be discussed and not all matters dealt with in a large plenum. It is often necessary to work in smaller groups with delegated tasks and a more seminar-like working style. Such differentiation includes tasks such as working with teacher training students, quality development groups, mandate review groups, delegation of specific tasks, the preparation of reports and the minutes of meetings. In this way research projects can flow back into the plenum once they have reached a level development. From there this research can network with other schools and with the teacher training centres.

8. Examples of practice-based research projects

The students at the practice-based teacher training course in Dornach in Switzerland have covered a wide spectrum of topics. The students on the training course are already working as teachers. The following projects have been started and continue being researched:

- *Gardening – a new concept for the Lower School* (see Barbara Beideck's article in *Erziehungskunst*, September 2000)
- *Overcoming crisis in a Waldorf school through a joint programme of further training involving parents and teachers* (out of which a training centre in Liechtenstein was founded by Arnulf Clouder)
- *Learning support and its various aspects* (out of which project arose a therapeutic centre and training for learning support teachers in Basel, *Förder Praxis*, project initiated by Andrea Raiser
- Projects include small class-orientated projects such as: a farm-based *Project week on working with wool*; in curative education a project on *Language development in children who don't speak*
- Another of these projects has developed into both a network of research contacts, as well as generating working-material and a forthcoming book on Mixed-age Group Classes by Urs Hauenstein (see *Erziehungskunst*, Number 7/8 2000).
- Yet another project is working on pupil report writing, pupil self-evaluation and reporting and recording methods.

o   In Britain there are also research projects that are using the methods of practice-based research. The topics being worked on include: foreign language teaching, Upper School projects, experiential learning in the Middle School, play in Kindergarten, life-skills through the curriculum, process-orientated pupil evaluation and a range of topics related to quality development, teacher appraisal, educational planning, curriculum research, and the study of individual pupils.

Conclusion

Out of the sense of being overwhelmed by the work and yet out of a sense of responsibility we are seeking new ways of bringing renewal to Waldorf education. Practice-based research offers us a way forward.

The ideas in this article are based on a workshop given by Professor Herbert Altrichter at the Hochschul für Anthroposophische Pädagogik in Dornach (HFAP) and the contributions of the participants. The article was translated and supplemented by Martyn Rawson.

The Initiative for Practical Research (German partner organisation, IPF, Initiative für Praxis Forschung) has been founded to promote this work and to publish examples of practice-based research. At present these initiatives develop and publish material in German and English but soon hope to add other languages.

A working guide to practice-based research, Teachers as Researchers; using the teachers' meetings as a focus for practice-based research, *edited by Martyn Rawson is available from SSF Publications.*

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Footnote

1   See Herbert Altrichter and Peter Posch, 1998, *Lehrer erforschen ihren Unterricht*, Klinkhardt Verlag.

TEACHING IS LEARNING

Christopher Clouder

A school is a community and although its task and raison d'être is to work education-ally with the child, it is nevertheless a community that also consists of adults. This statement may appear to be a truism but if considered properly, it has profound implications. All adults connected to the processes of childhood, whether as parents, professional teachers, administrators, support staff or academic researchers, are, essentially, educators. Although not everybody is directly concerned with the curricu-lum as such, their activities, abilities, input and attitudes are part of the pedagogical impulse of the school.

In a lecture Steiner gave in 1921, entitled 'The Fundamentals of Education', he gave a basic outline of what he felt should be the principles behind the new school he had founded:

> However paradoxical it might sound, the child is the teacher par excellence in the Waldorf school. For Waldorf teachers are fully convinced that what they meet in their children, week by week, year by year, is the outer manifestation of the divine and spiritual beings who have come down to earth from a purely soul and spiritual existence in order to evolve in a physical body on earth between birth and death. (Steiner, 1995).

This view of a greater dimension to the everyday reality we experience implies that it is through the children that the school exists at all and ultimately it is their decision to be there. The rest of us are there to support them in this choice and make it fruitful. It also highlights the task of the teacher in that the child must be inwardly approached with reverence and also learnt from. "From the daily revelations of this mysterious spirit and soul existence, they discover what they as teachers must do with their children."

According to this principle, being involved in Waldorf education is a demanding vocation as well as a rewarding one. It provides an opportunity for individual development, as the teacher becomes a part of the daily task to try to perceive the realities behind the outer appearance and to work with them creatively. However, to do this with any hope of success requires, as a precondition, the insights, positive approach, observations and critiques of other colleagues and adults in the school.

Working towards an understanding of the spiritual as the basis for a sound pedagogy has practical implications. Steiner, when establishing the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart in 1919, replaced the function of the head teacher with the collective work of the teachers on deepening their knowledge of the nature of the human being. The alternative to the kind of departmental administration found to this day in practically all other schools is little short of revolutionary. It is an increasingly relevant challenge for those in education. This approach anticipates how people will need to work in many walks of life in the future. In some progressive areas of business management and organisational planning, such ideas are beginning to find increasing application:

> Any management tasks, pleasant or unpleasant, that are indeed better undertaken by teachers rather than administrators should be shared and rotated and all teachers should see themselves contributing to the formulation of school policies as well as to their

implementation. A much. flatter professional hierarchy is essential to more collegial structures, and collaborative styles are appropriate for high quality teams of professionals. (Hargreaves, 1994, p23).

Steiner Waldorf schools around the world have practised this form of self administration for over 70 years and this has not inhibited their growth in numbers to about 800 at present.

The daunting task requires the school to have an organisational structure that enables such research to be practised and supported; hence the formation of what is known as the College or Faculty. The term 'college' is used to denote colleagueship rather than an institution. This group of teachers will generally meet on a Thursday evening. The role of the College is to carry responsibility for the education in the school. This includes appointing and deploying staff, research and development of the curriculum, evaluating the educational provision, formulating educational policies and administering the daily life of the school; in short, taking collective responsibility for the matters usually in the hands of a headteacher and deputy head.

It is a challenging and demanding way to work and requires a high level of individual responsibility. To achieve this, the individuals in the circle have to be prepared to constantly examine themselves and reflect on their experiences, for without this willingness and human nature being what it is, such high aspirations are likely to founder. This method of working means that all involved have to be prepared to face the question that Heidegger posed: 'In what mode of existence do I participate when I live the way I do?' This is a form of continual teacher training and one in which all the practicalities of running a school have to be dealt with, alongside the philosophical and pedagogical aspects.

As educators we have to learn to deal with our prejudices, to examine our capacity for courage and honesty, to make the effort to really listen to what is being said, to practise imagination and foresight and, often the most troublesome, to take decisions. When this works, it is not only the result of the meeting itself but also the consequences of each individual considering the matters thoughtfully in the course of the week as well as diligent study of the philosophy on which the school is founded and having the perspicacity to comprehend what the children have been telling us in multifarious ways during the lessons. The children in the care of the school are intuitively aware of the inner work on the part of the teacher without having to be directly told of it, as it percolates into the atmosphere around them, to which all children are highly sensitive. In this manner the whole question of human value is approached, not as the result of preconceived and immovable dogmas to which everybody is expected to adhere, but rather a field of individual and collective work. To do this, the teachers will look to forces that are beyond the individual for a source of strength and inspiration.

The absence of a hierarchical structure also ensures that successful and skilful teachers are not promoted out of the classroom into a bureaucratic or managerial position, although they are expected to take on areas of responsibility alongside their teaching. Their only ambition can be to become even better teachers and this is to the direct benefit of the child. Experienced teachers become, of course, increasingly involved in supporting and mentoring new colleagues and in contributing to the process of teacher training. This does not draw them out of the classroom but rather adds another dimension to their own teaching by opening avenues of self-evaluation and the discovery of innovative approaches. Nobody can act a vacuum, as every teacher is

part of a whole to whom they have obligations, and in turn the school is intimately concerned with their strengths and weaknesses which cannot be masked by reference to a higher authority.

Members of the College are usually teachers or administrators who have worked in the school for at least a year or two and feel themselves to be committed to the ideals and life of the institution and are also prepared to shoulder the responsibility this involves. It is therefore far less likely that one lone individual can set the tone and direction of the school with the consequence that it might change when they do. The leadership is a shared responsibility in which the aim is to draw forth talents that might even be unsuspected. This allows an element of continuity to co-exist together with the possibility of responding immediately to any challenges that present themselves. For all members of staff there are weekly staff or pedagogical meetings at which individual children or whole class groups are considered and where discussions about curriculum are held. Items of common concern will be shared and preparations made for events in the week ahead. To help develop a greater sensibility for community, staff will also work together artistically, which also brings another dimension into the consideration as well as just the theoretical. In addition, there will be regular interfaculty meetings for class teachers (those who have responsibility for a primary class), upper school (secondary level) teachers or specialist groups such as those involved in modern languages or learning support. All in all, great emphasis is given to working together in order to improve all facets of school life.

Meeting and working together in this intensive way is intended to enable a conscious assumption of responsibility and simultaneously create a 'heart organ' for the school. Just as a class of children is changed by the addition or subtraction of one child, so the spirit of the school is created by mutual co-operation of everybody involved. If, as John Hull suggests "Children and young people are educated spiritually when they are inspired to live for others" (Hull, 1996), this attitude has to be reflected in the whole community to be of any consequence.

Exploring values

Mutual support and concern is a gesture towards each other and the world that has the potential to enable the teacher to discover hitherto unsuspected strengths. This is a parallel to a good teacher's approach to teaching and to the individual children in the class. The children learn most from the unspoken gesture with which the teacher relates to the subject and to them. Values are implicit in whatever teachers do, whether acknowledged or not.

> *Chemistry can be taught in myriad ways, but however it is taught, the teacher will always be giving directions, explaining, demonstrating, checking, adjudicating, motivating, reprimanding, in all these activities displaying the manner that marks him or her morally developed or not. Teachers who understand their impact as moral educators take their manner quite seriously. They understand that they cannot expect honesty without being honest, or generosity without being generous or diligence without themselves being diligent. Just as we understand teachers must engage in critical thinking with the students if they expect students to think critically in their presence, they must exemplify moral principles and virtues to elicit them from the students.* (Fenstermacher, 1990).

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A path to this end,, that is expected of all Steiner Waldorf teachers, is a willingness to work on their own reflective life. This can take the form of placing in one's mind's eye the pupils who are going to be taught the next day, before starting the preparation of the lessons the evening before. In this way, the pupils are considered as individuals and in the task of remembering what they wore, their mood, interests and working during the day, a closer clearer conception is built upon what they will need in the next lesson. At the same time, such non-judgmental thoughts about other people have the potential of facilitating relationships and overcoming difficulties if taken into sleep. Many who have practised this exercise experience it as enlivening and as making the actual teaching more productive. Steiner also gave meditative exercises that teachers can use to develop a greater awareness of their own personalities and to strengthen their relationships to others and the world. Through these quiet moments of reflection they can work on themselves and their capacities. It is also common practice to start important meetings, such as a College meeting, with a common verse so that in sharing thoughts the participants are drawn together in a common purpose.

Each lesson is prepared by the teacher anew, taking into account the particular class, the integration possibilities with other subjects or simply the desire to take a new angle on unfamiliar material. The idea is that the teacher will adapt the material to suit different classes. This is one reason Steiner Waldorf schools do not teach from textbooks, as they do not allow that degree of flexibility and, although the children will take normal GCSEs and A levels and usually do well, they reach them by a different route than that prescribed by the National Curriculum. The effort required to grasp and then to teach something which is unfamiliar can give rise to a sense of discovery and warm enthusiasm. For the children, this experience is palpable and in turn it assists them in retaining their own natural curiosity and zeal to learn. For the teachers, new vistas are opened up and they do not then find themselves merely repeating year after year things they had learnt during their own education and training. If the world becomes an object of continual interest and engagement for them, a similar gesture will animate the children as well.

Inner work works

Good teaching therefore comes as much from the heart as from the head and this has to be developed like other human skills. The republic of teachers is not a utopian ideal with little bearing on the reality of the world, but rather a form that engenders growth in the adult and consequently the child. Steiner often draws parallels between this attitude to teaching and the myth of Prometheus. In bringing fire to humanity, he kindles something that until then had been the province of the gods and it is this gift that enables humanity to develop independent thought and freedom. Knowledge imbued with warmth, however hard-won, is of greater value than that found in the confines of cold tradition.

We do not have any real notion of what sort of world the children we are bringing up will have to face nor of the problems that will confront them in the future. The pace of technological change constantly accelerates and where this will lead us is unimaginable. We cannot just assume that the wisdom we wish to impart will be of any practical value in the future and as educators, it is important we can

acknowledge this and recognise the futility of trying to turn future generations into replicas of ourselves with similar views and abilities. What we can impart, however, is an attitude to knowledge and learning, in which the challenge of its acquisition is life-enhancing and generates genuine enthusiasm for our social and natural environment – a form of practical 'moral ecology'. Life-long learning is not only a question of accumulating knowledge but is based on the ability to learn from experience. The faculty is established in childhood and the teachers should serve as living examples and practitioners.

It was the American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) who proposed a concept for education that stands in stark contrast to the goal-orientated linear form that is so prevalent today:

> Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn; there is no end in nature [this symbolising] the Unattainable, the flying Perfect, which the hands of man can never meet. (Emerson, 1971).

For an adult, just as with a child, the self is paradoxically both attained and unattained. In perceiving education as a circular gesture, we can become aware of an outer space that is not circumscribed by what we know and into which we can still grow. But entering this space we become aware of yet another circle that surrounds us and so, like the flowing ripples on a water surface, we are within a process of growth.

> We require a sense of otherness to ourselves, exceeding the conceptions of ourselves which we can muster. We are forever partial with no final settlement. And others see us so. We are to be understood in terms of discourse. Our thinking is not characterised by the clutching or grasping or containment suggested by the concept, the Begriff. (Standish, 1995).

We can never claim to be complete. This is the gesture of an embrace which then cares for what is learnt, whether intellectually, emotionally or socially, and yet never assumes that there is no more to explore and discover.

This is not to suggest that Steiner Waldorf schools are havens of co-operation and social harmony. Like all institutions, they have their areas of strength and weakness that need close scrutiny, consideration and improvement. No community can expect to create a template that will last forever and of necessity undergoes a process of continual change. A school working on such principles can readily slip into an insular existence and begin to take on the trappings of an enclosed order which ultimately does the children a disservice. When this happens, processes are necessary that bring about a re-invigoration so that the children receive an education that has a genuine relationship to the contemporary world. It is therefore important that this approach and the value base on which it rests are developed and questioned in the general educational culture, rather than only being practised in certain institutions.

In the initial address to the teachers in the first Waldorf school, Steiner referred to this endeavour:

> We dare not simply be educators; we must be people of culture in the highest sense of the word. We must have a living interest in everything happening today, otherwise we will be bad teachers for this school. (Steiner, 1996).

The statement that teaching is self-education has ramifications for the whole community and its simplicity masks a plethora of difficulties and possibilities that we are just beginning to grasp. As educators, we share a common task in attempting to

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improve what we offer the children in our care. A differing philosophy of life should not act divisively but awaken an interest in how the consideration of an alternative view can be used to improve our skills:

> What unites all of us who are concerned with the spiritual development in education is surely our desire to liberate and nurture that inner light which dwells, however dormant it might sometimes appear, in every one of the girls and boys entrusted to us. (White, 1995, p41).

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