



Pedagogical Section  
at the Goetheanum

# Journal



Crisis Management – Parzival – Training – Universal Humanity – In Memoriam

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## The Journal of the Pedagogical Section

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## Foreword

*Dear Colleagues,*

A beautiful blue summer sky is stretching out over Dornach as this introduction is being penned, the linden trees are starting to blossom and filling the air with the most wonderful aroma. St John's Tide indeed!

We are very happy to be able to publish our journal again.

And still the Corona pandemic is not over. The numbers of infections may be receding but new mutations are spreading. Lessons can be taught in person again in many places, however, distance learning via screen is still very much the norm, and everywhere we are sensing how people are longing for "normality" to return. There is a growing sense of fatigue at the measures that have come as part of the pandemic and are still partly in use.

How can we rediscover the enthusiasm and joy our pupils and teachers are experiencing in the classroom when they can be together? We are hearing reports from many that so much of that was simply lost in online learning. This resulted in a new project "The World is our Classroom". Find out more at [www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch](http://www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch)—click on News. We were pleased to receive so many reactions and offers.

New pedagogical questions emerged quickly and new approaches are being tried out everywhere. Practical questions on how to structure online lessons have been consciously taken up. We need to be creative in our teaching more than ever before, no main lesson or subject lesson can simply be transferred 1:1 from classroom to screen, this much became evident in no time. It is crucial

that the world situation and that of the children and pupils within it is part of our lesson planning—teachers must be able to meet the pupils and their questions in their teaching. What lives in the lessons? How can lessons support and help the pupils develop, and to what extent can pedagogical insights into the first seven years of life be reapplied here? How do we help the young person today, and going forward, to develop as a human being, to discover his or her skills and talents and to find his or her place and tasks in today's world? Not an easy task, but a wonderful one!

This task is the focus for several articles in this edition. *Philipp Reubke* uses the first seven years as the starting point for looking at opportunities within Waldorf education to build social skills which can be so helpful not only in times of crisis. *Carol Bärtges* gives us an insight into her experience of online teaching following a Parzival main lesson block in Class 12 in America. The Parzival theme is also being given wider significance as part of a graduate's research project, as further elaborated in contributions by *Katharina de Roos* and *Jost Schieren*.

We are currently very involved with the question of how to train new teachers. What do we mean by teacher training? What and how do we need to teach in our seminars to enable teachers to meet children and students of all ages – from birth to the end of the Upper School – and to help the pupils be themselves and to develop as discussed in the articles listed above? *Florian Osswald* has put together a report from the group's work.

And how do we pinpoint the general human aspects? What significance do they have in education and what do we really mean by them? *Christof Wiechert* is offering us his thoughts on this.

A special angle from India sharing thoughts about the threefold social order in times of the Corona crisis has come from *Bindu Chowdary*.

The two final articles focus on people who were very actively involved in education and have recently died. *Philipp Reubke* has written obituaries for Freya Jaffke, Henning Köhler and Richard Landl. The former leader of the Pedagogical Section, Heinz Zimmermann, died 10 years ago. His wife Ursula has just published a book where she gives in-

sights into various aspects of his biography. In his book review, *Christof Wiechert* points out, in his lively way, the many pearls that are hidden behind the anecdotes. So far the book is available only in the German language. Maybe there are friends among you who might be able to offer a version in English or Spanish? Heinz Zimmermann spent a lot of time especially in South America. Who knows, maybe there is a colleague who would like to take up this challenge.

Wishing all our readers happy times, joy for the tasks ahead and a restful holiday period for those colleagues with summer holidays just around the corner.

*Your  
Pedagogical Section*

## Waldorf Education as Preparation for Successful Crisis Management

*Philipp Reubke*

*Translated from German into English by Susan Howard*

Educators in Waldorf kindergartens know the phenomenon that the free play of a group of 3 – 6 year old children is subject to atmospheric fluctuations: occasionally there is calm, sometimes even a lack of initiative, suddenly there is a warm urge to create and it hums like a beehive, and sometimes there is great nervousness and aggressiveness. Often, as an educator, I could not clearly determine the reasons for the mood swings, and the search for culprits and the denunciation of bullies did not seem to make any more sense to me than being angry about a thunderstorm outbreak during a hike. But it was important for me to perceive the mood well, to hear the key and then to harmonize through non-verbal means what had become one-sided: Music, light, intervention in the spatial design, movement, etc.

In the way the Covid-19 crisis was managed by the respective leaders in the different countries and at the different levels of society, in the way we have all behaved since the beginning of the pandemic, one could also perceive a certain large-scale weather situation in which enormous tensions were occasionally built up, which then erupted in storms of relationships: in the family, in schools and institutions, within certain professional groups, and so on.

Some atmospheric phenomena that kept coming up, for example, were:

- Encouraging sensible behavior by making people afraid of danger

- Losing sight of the overall context in light of individual aspects of a dangerous situation.
- Not listening to those who think differently and feel differently, or excluding them
- Allowing only one theory, only one form of analysis, only one form of interpretation of the situation.
- Setting one ethical-moral value above all others
- Having the opinion that the only way to get out of the crisis is through a tight hierarchical organization.

These phenomena can be observed not only during the current pandemic, but also in other crises affecting society or individual organizations.

Some think that certain groups or individuals should be held responsible for this. However, educators know from daily experience that when a one-sided mood repeatedly occurs in free play or when a socially tense situation occurs at school, there is usually no single, isolated person responsible. Direct intervention and admonishment of individuals can only limit the damage. It is rather as the Swiss philosopher Michael Esfeld characterizes Corona measures: "It is a trend that has formed out of contingent circumstances and which then drags more and more social actors along

with it.”<sup>1</sup> In order to harmonize the situation permanently, patience and perseverance are needed, as well as a threefold rhythm, which Waldorf teachers practice again and again:

Firstly, they try to get as accurate a picture as possible of the phenomena and “perceive the trend”. Even if they personally would have the tendency to fall into anger, fear, or domination about it, they avoid this in kindergarten and in school and try in a second step to empathize with the children involved, to understand them, and also to feel their pedagogical ideals once again with enthusiasm and warmth. In a third step, they then hope that after a meditative review of the situation from a certain distance, as educational artists they will think of a gesture, a look, a song, a story, a game, a movement, an activity in the following days that will have such an effect on the group of children that the mood and the social situation will be re-balanced.

So there is a lot to be learned from educators for crisis management. The even better news, however, is that if one reconsiders some of the essential features of Waldorf education in the light of the Corona crisis, it turns out that they represent long-term homeopathic preventive measures against the psychosocial inflammatory side effects of crises in civilization. Let us imagine that there is a crisis, but the great majority of those involved have grown up in an atmosphere that can be described by the following characteristics:

1. From kindergarten to high school, interest and the relationship with educators are the driving forces for learning, not fear of punishment or desire for reward.<sup>2</sup> This is practiced for hours in free, self-initiated play in kindergarten, deepened in listening to the descriptions of the beloved teacher, and then strongly anchored in interest in subjects related to one's own existence and life during middle and high school. If in all pedagogical institutions of the world “child development and school learning ... would develop in trust-borne relationship of the child to the teachers to the surrounding space and in the perception of the world”, would we then still need social coercive measures<sup>3</sup>, so that all fellow citizens show a reasonable, meaningful behavior?

2. As early as in kindergarten, cultural techniques are always practiced in connection with life, in connection with a larger context. For example, increasing vocabulary, grammar syntax, through stories, puppet theater, through intensive use of language in communication during free play. Even in the choice of toys, one prefers those that allow children to start from wholeness (plasticine, clay, dough, unspun wool) to those in which a wholeness is created by combining identical individual parts. In school there is no chopped up timetable, large subject connections can be deepened over a longer period of time and even in arithmetic and in the understanding of the essence of numbers, the unity is assumed, which is subsequently

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1 Michael Esfeld, “Vaccination Passport – a Path to Freedom or to a Closed Society”. In: Goetheanum No. 18/2021.

2 There are only three means of education: fear, ambition and love. We dispense with the first two ... «cf. the Martin Carle, “Fear, Ambition and Love in the Classroom,” in: *Erziehungskunst* October 2019; <https://www.erziehungskunst.de/artikel/wer-erzieht-wen/furcht-ehrgeiz-und-liebe-im-klassenzimmer/> <https://www.erziehungskunst.de/en/article/who-educates-whom/fear-ambition-and-love-in-the-classroom/>

3 cf: “Essential Features of Waldorf Education”, <https://www.waldorf-international.org/wesentliche-merkmale-der-waldorfpädagogik/>



differentiated.<sup>4</sup> If the majority of the population were accustomed from childhood to "going from the whole to the parts"<sup>5</sup>, would we still lose sight of the complex social and ecological interrelationships above an acute partial problem?

The importance of empathy and tolerance is not only preached, it is above all experienced and practiced daily. The young child has constant opportunity to have differentiated experiences with the body senses ("The sense of touch has the task of establishing a healthy mobile middle position between too strong and too weak impressibility, openness and limitation, sympathy and antipathy". It is a preparation for "sympathetic interest from unthreatened self-confidence."<sup>6</sup>) And in free play, it practices cooperation and compromise every day, experiencing the joy and increased possibilities when they succeed, and the pain of the consequences of one's own bullying or shyness. – Because there are stable class communities in the school over the years, the teacher can work thoroughly with the children on social skills<sup>7</sup>, placing a great emphasis on music and drama: here listening to one another, paying attention to one another, and including the disruptive and surprising can be practiced especially well. – If our social skills and our willingness to listen were also physically and artistically rooted in us in this way, would we still want to hysterically exclude those who think differently?

For years, nature is intensively experienced as something that can be seen, smelled, tasted and touched, and to which everyone in kindergarten is allowed to express the most diverse theories: It is getting dark because the sun is now getting tired and going to sleep, or: maybe someone is sitting behind the mountain and pulling on the sun with a string? If a mental understanding is to be developed by systematic learning in school, this is prepared by detailed consideration of the phenomenon and never ends in a definition, which is to be learned by heart, but in a characterization. The teacher in the upper school is then also someone who sets the phenomenological intellectual framework in which the young people themselves find terms and definitions. If we always, when we are confronted with new and unknown things, start from the phenomena in this way, wouldn't that be a good contribution against dogmatism and against the claim to sole explanation of any scientific direction?<sup>8</sup>

In the course of the first fourteen years of life, the child has not been confronted with a moral-ethical value system, the principles of which have been learned intellectually, but has had the opportunity, through a multitude of stories and mythological-religious narratives, to sympathize with the good depicted there. With the fairy tales, the descriptions from Hebrew, Germanic, Indian, Egyptian, Greek and still other mythology, with stories from Islam and Christianity, the child feels

4 Cf. Claus Peter Röh, Robert Thomas: "Unterricht gestalten", Verlag am Goetheanum, 2015: "It is important that we start from the One as the divine primordial unity from which the following numbers are derived." (S. 71).

5 Op cit., p. 73.

6 Henning Köhler, "Von ängstlichen, traurigen und unruhigen Kindern", Stuttgart, 2019, Freies Geistesleben, p. 93.

7 Valentin Wember develops this in detail in his introduction to a collection of Steiner quotes on "social capability," Stratosverlag, 2018.

8 "Absolute claims ... tend to make one intolerant. With the claim to absolute truth a dogmatism effect arises." Ulrich Kaiser, "The Narrator Rudolf Steiner", Info 3 Verlag, 2020, p. 60.

that the devotion and love to a divine world and the commitment to the good can have different forms, different weightings. The child experiences role models that help it to become morally and ethically independent. If we had learned to mobilize our moral-ethical forces ourselves in this way, would we still be in danger of adhering to a value declared as absolute by scientific or political authorities?

6. From the cradle to high school graduation, through free play to artistic, athletic or scientific project work in the upper school, children and young people have experienced that cooperation and improvisation sometimes go through difficult phases, but that in the end everyone could even increase their personal abilities through successful teamwork. In addition, the educators were role models for successful cooperation in the organization of their own work: In the way the school is run, a team spirit prevails that gives room for individual initiative and at the same time allows each individual to grow beyond oneself. – If we could manage

to have “all [in a school] develop significant non-hierarchical forms of cooperation” and if we jointly practice “transparency and accountability (instead of personal and institutional power)<sup>9</sup>,” wouldn’t that be the best preparation for a crisis situation? Wouldn’t we then instinctively feel that greater intelligence and dynamism is generated by forms of collaborative leadership than by solitary decision-making, by a few whom we have made into big bosses?

We are all responsible, not only “the others”. We all have to learn, have to develop and change if we want to go through this and coming crises more confidently. Waldorf education can provide important support in this process.

We could be motivated by the Corona crisis to work to rediscover and implement it more creatively in Waldorf schools and kindergartens, and to benefit an ever-increasing number of children in other institutions and contexts.

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9 Essential Features of Waldorf Education, Section: The School Community. Living together. [https://www.waldorf-international.org/fileadmin/downloads/1605\\_Merkmale\\_IK\\_Arles.pdf](https://www.waldorf-international.org/fileadmin/downloads/1605_Merkmale_IK_Arles.pdf)

## "Uncle, what ails thee?" Parzival and the Pandemic

Carol Bärtges

*Upper School Humanities, Speech and Drama*

Those of us who teach in a Waldorf high school know well the archetypal questions and observations that resound from the text of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*. Although in recent years I have dispensed with other "ur" main lessons, such as *Faust*, instituting instead a seminar on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century female authors, I have deliberately chosen to keep the *Parzival* block in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. From its strikingly modern and innovative themes of inclusion for example, *Parzival*'s brother, Feirefiz, born to an African mother, is essential to *Parzival*'s success in finally re-discovering the Grail castle; the influence and agency of the book's female characters is incontrovertible – to the text's exploration of the young soul's journey through life, this 12<sup>th</sup> century work is an invaluable well-spring for the questions and insights that students experience when studying the text in its entirety. (I am impatient with watered-down presentations and approaches to this work and strongly recommend that you give your students the privilege of reading von Eschenbach's artful, stem-winding prose in its entirety).

**So how can one teach *Parzival* in a pandemic?** How does such a significant moment in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum translate in the cyber world of remote learning? The New York City Rudolf Steiner School students and I had the following experiences this past April.

### Continuity was Key

The class "met" for 90 minutes every day throughout the four-week block. I had toyed

with meeting every other day as other colleagues were doing with younger grades but felt that the impact of the text would dissipate if we didn't deepen the discussions of the sixteen books through conscious review and elaboration day to day.

### Movement was Essential

What worked was to begin with movement – sitting for a Zoom meeting for 90 minutes would have been debilitating. We spoke the morning verse, standing, and then our Upper School eurythmy teacher, Alexandra Spadea, began our day – working with Rudolf Steiner's indications for the planetary movements and their corresponding colors and moods. Students stood behind their "desks" at home as we moved together to the gestures and sounds conveyed by Ms. Spadea:

Sun:	AU, white –	the complete human being
Venus:	A, green –	loving devotion
Mercury:	I (ee) yellow –	egotistical potential
Moon*:	Ei (i) purple –	creative potential
Mars:	E (ay) red –	aggressive potential
Jupiter:	O, orange –	wisdom
Saturn:	U, blue –	"Tiefsinn", deep pondering, memory of times past

Moon is a central place of balance – the only gesture that does not move – imagine a lemniscate around the place where your wrists cross, and experience the above and below at the crossing where your wrists meet.

The views of planets and their influence are mentioned several times in the *Parzival* text; in later Zoom discussions, fruitful connections were made by the students between the gestures they were learning and the astrological import of these movements. As distant as we all were during our Covid spring, moving together to begin the main lesson united us.

### Break-Out Rooms:

Being able to discuss specific questions and themes in smaller groups was invaluable. Using the Zoom option of breakout rooms gave students time to debate and educate one another on the topics set the day or week before. Being able to "visit" each room allowed me to answer questions as they arose and share further thoughts before moving on to the next group. I really enjoyed the function that allows the host to end the breakout sessions at the same time for all. I'm sure many of my fellow high school teachers have had the experience of running all over the school to gather back small discussion groups which become so immersed in their discussions that they "forget" to return to the main classroom.

### Timely and Immediate Response to Student Work

At the end of the week, students sent me cell-phone pictures of their artwork and emailed their Journal entries and essays on an almost daily basis. I could correct these as Google docs and return immediately for revision and final entry into their main lesson Journals. The rhythm of daily and weekly gathering and the immediate return of corrected work kept the momentum going, kept a check on who was not completing assignments, and most importantly, kept the intensity of the main lesson experience alive.

### Individuation

With more time at home, it was important to encourage students to be creative and

individual in their approach to the study of the text. Students were asked to keep Journals into which artwork and personal essays were crafted every few days. Perhaps being isolated at home gave the students the time and space to think more deeply about the questions concerning individual freedom and destiny that the *Parzival* text brings so vividly alive. Students had more time throughout the day and week to do outstanding artwork and truly reflective writing on topics such as:

- A. What is the Grail and what does it mean as a symbol, both in *Parzival* and in our lives today? *Parzival* is described as a "Brave man slowly wise." How does a person find the Grail? What qualities are needed? – for *Parzival* and for any individual?
- B. Who are the main, female characters in *Parzival*? What roles do they play in the book? How do they both visibly and invisibly move the plot?
- C. Describe the role of polarities or opposites in *Parzival* – black and white, joy and sorrow, love and hatred, alertness and dreaminess, physical love and spiritual love, innocence and experience, etc.

Here are some examples of work from student Journals:

**Journal Entry 5: The sorceress, Cundrie, who reveals *Parzival*'s disgrace in front of Arthur's court, can be seen as representing an alter ego, or shadow side of *Parzival*'s persona. Do you have a "shadow side?"**

*I have never been a patient person. Even from a young age, if something wasn't coming easily to me, a mild tantrum was about to ensue. My parents always tell me that I was an easy and docile child, but the small-*

*est things could frustrate me. My first enemy was learning how to put on my socks. After my mother would calmly explain that there was no "left" sock and "right" sock like the shoes that I was already fairly adept at putting on myself, I expected to be able to just pull them on my feet and be done with it. Sadly, this was not the case, as half of the time I would put them on upside down so that the heel was bulging on the top of my foot. This would make me suspicious, thinking that maybe my mother was wrong; I would switch the socks from one foot to the other. Of course, the socks would be upside down again, causing me to rip the socks off my feet and throw them across the room.*

*Although I eventually did figure out how to put socks on correctly, I had quite a few other learning curves that caused me great frustration. I was the very last child in my grade to learn to read, and after hours of programs and games and exercises I would ball up my fists and swear that I would never be able to do it. Similar to my sock dilemma, however, I overcame my aversion eventually and became an avid and passionate reader a few years later.*

*I have developed more patience with myself at this point in my life, and have even developed a perseverance for accomplishing things, once I put my mind to it. I have found a way to harness my impatience with myself as a power source which feeds my determination. Out of stubbornness (that is also a definite shadow side of mine), I refuse to allow my frustration to get the better of me. I try to recognize my impatience as an expectation that I have for myself, and it acts as a driver to push me towards my goals.*

*Julia Byrne '21*

**Journal 6: Love and its many manifestations is a dominant theme in Parzival. What are your thoughts on Love?**

*Love is the bond between two beings. It is often a sense of safety that one feels in the presence of another. Love does not have to be mutual; in fact, some people find it easier to love someone who does not love them back, someone who does not reciprocate their feelings.*

*Not all love is romantic. Two close friends may have love for each other that is created by their reliance on one another. But when one person loves another, and it is not mutual, it can hurt. In Gawain's case, the love that he feels for Orgeluse is initially only based on her outstanding beauty. His attraction to her is amplified when she teases him and denies him. This is because of Gawain's curiosity and pride. Gawain is not used to being rejected by women, which is why Orgeluse stands out to him. The evolution of their relationship is one of my favorite parts of Parzival. It is revealed that Orgeluse used to have a husband whom she loved dearly, but he was killed. This is the reason she pushes Gawain away and tests him so severely. This fact reveals that there is always more to someone than meets the eye. And only when Gawain learned to feel someone else's pain could he truly love in a truly selfless way. Love is about feeling: if you cannot feel someone else's emotions you can never understand them. And if you cannot learn to have patience for someone else's love, then you will wait for it forever. When you truly love someone and feel like you are completely bound to them, it will feel like you are on fire.*

*James Hixenbaugh, '21*



*Illustration by Leah New, '21*





Lucia Villanueva, '21

### Conclusion

Remote learning cannot take the place of what Waldorf education prizes so highly – the spontaneity and inspiration inherent in a live, classroom setting. Waldorf teachers know that there is an invisible but palpable spiritual substance built up through the person to person engagement of human beings: nothing can substitute for the community experience that teachers work so hard to achieve in the “trenches” of the daily classroom.

On-going study, mediation and collaborative research allow Waldorf teachers to strive to be ever flexible and creative. Although our Covid spring's work was challenging and exhausting, I found that the remote learning platforms I learned to use for teaching high school literature classes were possible to shape and direct to achieve a semblance of the participation and immediacy that makes teaching a course like *Parzival* such a rich gift for students and teacher alike.

## Graduate School for Waldorf Education

*Jost Schieren*

*Translated from German into English by John Weedon*

The Graduate School for Waldorf Education was founded at Alanus University in 2015. It promotes research and fosters a new generation of academics in the field of Waldorf education; it has set itself the goal of picking up and pursuing research questions in Waldorf education and thereby integrating Waldorf education into academic discourse on an academic basis. It awards scholarships to doctoral candidates (currently, at most 1,500 Euros/monthly for 3 years) and accompanies the doctoral work with study events, research students' colloquia and further academic courses.

The Graduate School is under the academic tutelage of Alanus University and it co-operates with other universities, nationally and internationally. It is financed by funding from the Software AG Stiftung (a software foundation), the Educational Research Centre of the Waldorf School Association (in Germany), the Waldorf Foundation and other sponsors. In December 2020, the first person to complete their doctorate at the Graduate School, Frank Steinwachs, received his doctorate on the theme "Teaching Methods for Literature and German Teaching at Waldorf schools. Education Theory, pedagogical Implications, Curriculum and Teaching Method in German Lessons at Waldorf schools in the Context of the current Discourse about the Approach to Teaching Literature in the Case of Class 11 ("Parzival"/ Novel showing the Development of a Character)."

### **Head of Faculty**

*Prof. Dr. Jost Schieren* (Alanus University)

### **Faculty Members:**

*Prof. Dr. Gabriele Bellenberg*  
(Bochum University)

*Prof. Dr. Gert Biesta*  
(Maynooth University (Ireland) / University of Edinburgh (Scotland))

*Christian Boettger*  
(Educational Research Centre of the Waldorf School Association)

*Prof. Dr. Volker Frielingsdorf*  
(Alanus University)

*Prof. Dr. Till-Sebastian Idel*  
(Oldenburg University)

*Prof. Dr. Guido Pollak*  
(Passau University)

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(Educational Research Centre of the Waldorf School Association)

*Dr. Dirk Rohde*  
(Marburg Waldorf School)

*Prof. Dr. Wilfried Sommer* (Alanus University)

*Prof. Dr. Michael Toepell* (Leipzig University)

*Prof. Dr. Marcelo da Veiga* (Alanus University)

### **Current Scholarship Students / Thesis Themes:**

*Dr. Julia Schilter:* "Settling down Processes of young Children in Waldorf Kindergartens. An ethnographic Study of Research into Practice"



*Larissa Beckel:* "Educational Experience of Adolescent Refugees at the Kassel Waldorf School"

*Philipp Gelitz:* "Quality of Education in Waldorf Kindergartens and Nurseries"

*Moritz Gritschneder:* "The Possibilities for interdisciplinary Teaching for the Class Teacher at Waldorf Schools in the Classes 6 to 8"

*Florentine Mostaghimi-Gomi:* "Examination of anthropological Lines of Reflection and

Ways of Conveying at the Interface between the Promotion of Health and general Teaching Method in Waldorf Education"

*Neelashi Mangal:* "The Role of Experience in Waldorf Education"

11 further doctoral scholarships are being awarded. Information and application guidelines about the Graduate School for Waldorf Education and the awarding of scholarships at [www.graduiertenkolleg-waldorfpaedagogik.de](http://www.graduiertenkolleg-waldorfpaedagogik.de)

## Parzival Lessons in Waldorf Schools

*A Research Study*

*Translated from German into English by John Weedon*

Frank Steinwachs, a scholarship holder at the Graduate School for Waldorf Education in Germany has successfully completed a thesis on the subject of the teaching method for medieval literature, taking "Parzival" as an example. He is an experienced Waldorf teacher and a tutor at the Hamburg Waldorf Teacher Training Course. In an interview with Katharina de Roos (Alanus University) he talks about his research and its value for Waldorf education.

*Mr. Steinwachs, in your recently completed thesis you concerned yourself with the fundamentals of method for teaching German literature in Waldorf schools. What moved you to tackle this theme on an academic level?*

The theme of 'Parzival' in German literature lessons already absorbed my attention as a pupil. This work left a profound impression on me. However, when I read Germanistik (German Studies), I discovered that what I experienced was out of step with the discourse of academic research. To exaggerate slightly, what I experienced in this work was disputed in Medieval Studies. On the one hand, this was irritating, but, on the other, it also awakened my sporting, academic, ambitious nature. Therefore, during the course I occupied myself intensively with medieval literature, particularly with 'Parzival' and I wrote my final dissertation on it. I was then able to link up with it in my research project. University academics involved with the teaching method for German medieval literature are endeavouring to get the subject

implemented into state curricula, but with little success. The converse applies to Waldorf schools: here, although an extensive period of time is allowed for the treatment of medieval literature in the lessons, the academic foundations along with the roots in the teaching method are only communicated in a handful of short articles. I have therefore endeavoured to pick up the suggestion of contextualising the results in the research discourse and working through all the areas mentioned, including an approach for classroom practice.

*You yourself can look back on a number of years of 'experience'; has it helped you with your research work?*

Definitely. So I see my thesis not only as a product of four years' work, which I have carried out alongside my teaching work. The study also integrates the experience gained from seventeen years of teaching and certainly in the meantime about ten 'Parzival' main lessons. Of course, that has expanded my view of the research and influenced my judgement in relation to possible teaching approaches and their limitations in a productive way.

*You could thus connect your teaching experience – besides your work as a Waldorf teacher you were a tutor for Waldorf education training – with the work on your research project?*

Yes, absolutely! For a research study, especially for one on a specialist teaching method

with its connection to teaching itself, it is always important to have the connection to teaching experience so as not to lose yourself in theoretical constructs. And I have experienced it that way myself too. In the research and writing process it was important for me to be reminded daily of the actual target group of my research, the pupils. Moreover, it was very helpful to test aspects which I had been dealing with theoretically or had fathomed as well. Thus I was able to examine my theoretical thinking critically in my teaching work. In addition, the exchange of ideas with colleagues at the school and the training course was valuable. In the academic field, the Waldorf Education Graduate School stood by my side to help me, more or less as a basis for the academic study. Looking back on it, I feel linking up giving lessons, research and theory was really exciting and helpful, there is no doubt about it; however, I personally experienced it as a tricky balancing act to be inwardly fully present for the pupils or students, accompanying them, and yet at the same time pursuing my research in a focused way. Here I was unable to consistently live up to the standard I would have wished for, at least vis-à-vis the pupils in the final stages.

*You were a scholarship holder at Alanus University. How did you find studying there and what opportunities does it offer?*

The Graduate School was of existential value, financially and academically, for the success of my studies. Besides giving me the possibility of reducing my set teaching hours at school in order to be able to write in the time afforded, the tutoring and the exchange of ideas were most helpful.

The staff of the Waldorf Education Graduate School are topnotch and do not all have a Waldorf background. This broadened the discourse and required me to back up my

own assumptions and hypotheses on Waldorf education with arguments. There arose a broadened and general academic perspective of Waldorf education, which showed me, after seventeen years of teaching – also as a tutor in teacher training – new perspectives pertinent to Waldorf education in the light of educational theory and approaches to teaching this subject.

The way the Graduate school was set up is very accommodating for scholarship holders, spread as they are across the country: Over a number of years there were definite study days, planned over a long period, at which we received input – also from invited experts – and could discuss it. An important aspect was also the opportunity to present the latest developments in one's own research and to get critical feedback. This could then be discussed. Furthermore, there was the opportunity to ask questions in general and to hold conversations with individual colleagues of the Graduate School. Here I experienced a great openness on the part of all the participants. Overall I found the set-up very supportive and enriching.

*Do you see a need for further research in the field of Waldorf education?*

Speaking about the approach to teaching literature as well as medieval literature in particular, despite an increasing number of publications in recent years, there is a dearth of fundamental studies to engender a robust debate. The prevalent major themes in education such as "what, when and how in which period?", important though they may be, do not outweigh in importance the question of research into teaching methods formed by the experience of teaching, research that looks beyond the end of our noses. Questions of structuring, epistemology or approaches in the sense of literary theory are

by no means exhausted. By way of example, there is no Waldorf literary theory, but 'only' exciting teaching practice, which is oriented towards the aesthetics of the way it is received. The same applies to the significance of the so-called 'latent questions', an anthropological paradigm that is only to be found in Waldorf education, which is essential for the planning of literature lessons. Moreover, systematic reflections on methods are still to come: the impact of formulations of tasks, specific considerations of the approach to conversations and those which concern writing in the field of tension between analysis and individual reflection in the sense of Waldorf education. But also the question of spiritual themes, which are accepted in world literature and which have a specifically meaningful significance for the pupils, should be the focus as themes. This is something that literary didactics has not – with one exception – dared to tackle so far. Of course, all this could or should be supported empirically. So much for some considerations of further possible areas of research. At any rate, it is obvious that a lot still remains to be done. It is just important not to bow down to a supposedly academic attitude of expectation with such studies. Rather the genuine sources of Waldorf education should be drawn on and worked through, content-wise and method-wise, in the wrestling with academic requirements so that they become a stronger part of a pluralistic academic discourse.

*Which impulses are you hoping for from your research project on the practice in Waldorf education?*

It is obvious that doctoral studies are barely taken on board by teachers in their every-

day lives. Nonetheless, I would hope that my research will be taken up into the didactics of literature and the framework of Waldorf teacher training courses, and that the way medieval literature is dealt with in Waldorf schools thereby receives an impulse that is both self-critical and soul-searching to the same extent. On the other hand, I hope to have done something concrete to enable a lively discourse on the methods of teaching medieval literature at Waldorf schools.

Since medieval literature in the upper school of Waldorf schools takes up a pretty extensive space compared to regular schools, a further aspect comes into it: teacher training. Nowadays it can no longer be taken for granted that German Studies graduates have a basic, let alone a deep knowledge of medieval literature and language. These areas tend to be neglected in these courses (particularly in teacher training), something that – at least viewed superficially – would need to look differently in Waldorf teacher training. This is where my thesis could be effective as a kind of study book, since I mention and discuss the basis for this.

*How does the future look for you?*

In the summer of 2020 I started a full-time post at the Hamburg Waldorf teacher training course, which also offers the Master's courses of the *Freie Hochschule Stuttgart* (Stuttgart Independent University). There I have the opportunity to bring in not only my practical experience, but also (to some extent) my newly acquired knowledge of Waldorf education and teaching method into my tutoring work and, of course, to continue to pursue my academic research.

# Towards Pedagogical Creativity

Florian Osswald

*It is true that it is the spirit  
of a thing that matters  
and not the form.  
But just as the form without  
the spirit would be void,  
so the spirit would be dormant  
if it did not create a form.*

By mid-2021 the "International Teacher Education Project" (ITEP) will present a paper entitled "Towards Pedagogical Creativity," which describes the core aspects of the education of teachers and teacher educators. ITEP began in 2017 at the Pan-African Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. Today, the project team includes Aina Bergsma (NO), Neil Boland (NZ), Marcel de Leuw (NL), Jon McAlice (USA), Trevor Mephram (UK), Vanessa Pohl (CH), Carlo Willmann (AT) and Florian Osswald (CH).

The original English text will be available in German, Spanish, Portuguese and most likely in Chinese.

As communicated in previous newsletters, the text covers the core aspects of teacher education programmes for all age groups and, in a second part, the core topics of education programmes for tutors and lecturers. The project's main aims are:

- To ensure sufficient, consistent and high-quality education for teachers to support the provision of professionally trained and mentored teachers for children and adolescents of all age groups.
- To develop guidelines that support quality, equivalence, validity, and reliability in

international teacher education for all age groups.

- These guidelines are culturally inclusive and appropriate. They actively promote diversity and respect for others. They are consistent with an anthroposophically oriented path of knowledge. They are research-based. They seek partnerships and alliances with others. They are professional and have contemporary relevance.

## Education of teachers for all age groups

The way Rudolf Steiner designed the education of teachers for every age group had a specific focus: the pedagogical encounter between teacher and child and teacher and young person. The underlying reason behind this approach is to take account of the differences between the teacher's lesson preparation and actual classroom practice and to seek to harmonise these differences in the immediate encounter.

With a view to the future of Steiner pedagogy, the ITEP has approached the question of teacher education accordingly. What are the different areas of learning that can help a teacher access his/her own source of pedagogical creativity in ways that resonate both with the pedagogical impulse of Steiner pedagogy and with societal expectations of teachers?

The ITEP document, "Towards Pedagogical Creativity", consists of two parts. The first part describes the core aspects of teacher education and is organized into eight sub-categories: development of knowledge practices, the arts, self-development, teaching as inquiry, basic knowledge, teaching and learning, expanded understanding of human nature, education and societal change.

These eight areas have been discussed in different educational institutions around the world, and in response to feedback, another core aspect was added: legal responsibilities, finances, regulations.

Education is never complete. Therefore, the nine areas can also be used as an orientation for continuous research and reflection across kindergartens and schools.

### **Education of lecturers**

To date, there are no internationally recognized requirements or agreed expectations for lecturers in the Waldorf movement. A clear picture of professional standards and professional development is currently lacking.

Lecturers work under a wide variety of conditions. They prepare student teachers and trainee teachers for their work across the range from early childhood to secondary schools, in full-time and part-time courses, or in intensive courses. They teach in weekend courses in their own countries and as guest experts in programmes that require translation.

Lecturers seek to prepare teachers how to teach children who, in some cases, are not yet born. They need to stay up to date with contemporary developments, both in adult education as well as in pedagogy.

Further, the expectations for people who lead an education programme are different from those for individuals who teach just a few days a year or have just begun their work as teacher educators. However, we believe that the guidelines developed are valid for all lecturers.

Today, teacher education is implemented in many ways. The first course for teachers, given by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, was appropriate to the situation at that time. It was a prelude to a whole series of courses which address questions of daily classroom practice and deepen the spirit of the original impulse. An important aspect of the 1919 course was the connection between three central aspects. In the morning there was a lecture on anthropology, followed by seminars in methodology and didactics, which were subsequently discussed and debated.

The paper "Towards Pedagogical Creativity" describes the "spirit" of Steiner's pedagogical impulse. It is up to the people who come together and aim to educate themselves and others to find appropriate forms to implement that impulse afresh. The spirit of an idea is always moving and must continuously be found anew. The same is true for the forms which allow the spirit to come to life.

## Universal humanity in the art of education

Christof Wiechert

Translated into English by Margot M. Saar

On 19 August, eight months after the fire at the Goetheanum and four months before the Christmas Conference, Rudolf Steiner lectured in the Welsh town of Penmaenmawr.

He had left Stuttgart on 3 August to travel via Hook of Holland to Harwich where he was met by Erich Kaufmann. They then travelled on via Cambridge to Ilkley. At the invitation of the Education Union for the Realisation of Spiritual Values and its president, Margaret McMillan, Steiner presented a lecture cycle there on spiritual life and education (published later in English as *A Modern Art of Education*, GA 307). On the train journey there he had read her book *Imagination and Education* and thought that with her one could have founded an educational movement.<sup>1</sup>

The lectures made a deep impression and to this day one can read reports on the conference in the Ilkley town archives. On 18 August Steiner journeyed on to the Summer School at Penmaenmawr to which he had been invited by the British general secretary Daniel Dunlop and by Henry Collison. It is the first lecture cycle presented in Britain that dealt exclusively with anthroposophical top-

ics (GA 227, *The Evolution of the World and of Humanity*).

Steiner started by introducing his audience to Anthroposophy and this presentation was characterized by a particular tone. We must keep in mind that, at the time, the Anthroposophical Society was torn apart by inner conflicts, the Goetheanum had burned down and Steiner was struggling to see how the impulse of the anthroposophical movement could find its right vessel.<sup>2</sup> He said to his listeners,

*Today, we need to work directly into life, we need a vision of what is and what can be in human beings. And we need to make clear to the world that the anthroposophical movement is different from other movements in that it is universal, free from bias and prejudice and free from dogma; that it simply strives to be an experimental method of presenting what is universally human and the phenomena of the world.*<sup>3</sup>

Anthroposophy should be universal, free from bias and prejudice and free from dogma. And this culminates in the statement that it was simply '*an experimental method of present-*

1 See epilogue by Christof Wiechert to the Dutch edition of GA 307, published by Christofoor.

2 Rudolf Steiner, *Das Schicksalsjahr 1923 in der anthroposophischen Gesellschaft. Vom Goetheanumbrand zur Weihnachtstagung* [1923 – the year of destiny in the Anthroposophical Society. From the fire at the Goetheanum to the Christmas Conference], GA 259.

3 Rudolf Steiner, *Lecture of 19 August 1923*, GA 259. An English translation can be found in: Rudolf Steiner *Speaks to the British, Lectures and Addresses in England and Wales*, Rudolf Steiner Press 1998, transl. J. Collis. Karl Martin Dietz published an important article on this in *Erziehungskunst*, the German monthly journal for Waldorf Education (February 2011).

*ing what is universally human.*' It could not have been phrased more openly and one already senses the mood of the Christmas Conference.<sup>4</sup>

This openness allows for breathing. One feels called upon to consider what is meant by 'universally human'. How does one know if something is human? Is it an inner certainty, just as ethical individualism only finds its certainty within? An inner certainty, an inner authority, tells us whether something is human or not. (We will not consider the expression 'human, all too human' here). If we look around, we experience world phenomena, in politics, for instance, or in economic life, in the sciences or arts, where we sense how they either are or are not in tune with humanity.

One enters an office and senses: this is (or is not) about the human being. One steps into a hospital: is it tangible whether or not this place is guided by principles of humanity? A train station or a police station; a school or kindergarten: can one feel whether they are primarily concerned with the children or rather with the building or the teachers. What is human? Are they about humanity or about human beings? Rutger Bregman describes this ingeniously in his search for the decent human being.<sup>5</sup>

### Universal humanity and the school

What is clear – and Karl Martin Dietz be-  
moans this in the article referred to earlier

(see footnote 3) – is that when structure be-  
comes the ruling principle, when the exist-  
ence of an institution depends on organiza-  
tional safety, then the education and human  
considerations are in danger of being lost.

It can be assumed that this has been recog-  
nized by now.

The more interesting question is: how do we  
experience school and what effect does hu-  
manity have? In other words, does the art of  
education as such already contain traces of  
what is universally human or does this need  
to evolve through living together?

From the very beginning, Rudolf Steiner in-  
sisted that struggling children would not  
have to repeat a year;<sup>6</sup> this was not going  
to be part of the new education. There are  
many pedagogical reasons for this today.<sup>7</sup> For  
Steiner, it was a deliberate act: we shall not  
do this – a gesture of universal humanity. It  
cannot be the school's task to expose chil-  
dren and make them feel ashamed for some-  
thing that is not their fault.

Steiner's approach to children or pupils who  
misbehave continues to be misunderstood  
but is very powerful once it is rightly under-  
stood. Applying rigid punitive measures was  
wrong, he said; children or pupils must not  
be exposed or humiliated; one should con-  
demn the deed but not the perpetrator. Every  
wrong step holds the potential for develop-  
ment, it must only be taken up.

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4 Just before the Christmas Conference, there were considerations to call the new society '*International Anthroposophical Society*' but Rudolf Steiner then decided even before the Conference to call it '*General Anthroposophical Society*'. Hella Wiesberger, introduction to GA 260a, *Konstitution der Allgemeinen Anthroposophischen Gesellschaft* [The constitution of the General Anthroposophical Society], p.10.

5 Rutger Bregman, *Humankind – a Hopeful History*, Bloomsbury, 2020.

6 Translator's note: In German state schools, children who do not achieve the learning targets by the end of the school year are required to repeat that year – an approach that is controversially discussed today.

7 *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, GA 300, Volume I, second meeting, 26 September 1919, Anthroposophic Press, 1998, transl. R. Lathe, N. Parsons Whittaker.



I would refer the readers to a meaningful story Rudolf Steiner once recommended for the lower end of the lower school, to be used on the following day, but not as a humiliating method of correction.<sup>8</sup>

By introducing the 'main lesson' (a designation used even in the very first faculty meeting of 8 September 1919)<sup>9</sup>, an 'environment' is created, a kind of 'home' for the children and pupils, where they come together again and again and that they can always return to; something that is there for them for many years; something of pedagogical and, above all, human value. We are not always aware of the effect an unexpected change of teacher or the leaving of a classmate can have on children or young people.

The same is true for the school building and its surroundings (playground, school garden). Christian Rittelmeyer has shown with his research that the design of a school and its sur-

roundings affects the children's wellbeing.<sup>10</sup> Can the children and young people 'inhabit' it, does it belong to them, do they feel good there, or is it a cold, empty and uninspiring space?

From the very beginnings of Waldorf education, the principle of community building was practically applied in the weekly meetings, where the teachers worked together on shaping and fostering the school's identity. This creates a very different mood in a school than when teachers are merely doing their job.

If one has seen many schools that don't look like Waldorf Schools from the outside, one often asks oneself how it is that one senses, even smells, as soon as one enters that the art of education is practised there? Where does this impression come from? Is it just the pictures and the colours or is the effect of the universal humanity?

8 Erich Gabert, *Die Strafe in der Selbsterziehung und in der Erziehung des Kindes* [Punishment in self-education and child education]. Verlag Freies Geistesleben Stuttgart, 1961. The use of meaningful stories, p. 89. The style of the book belongs to a different time, but it nonetheless contains excellent and timeless advice.

9 *Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner*, GA 300, Volume I, first meeting, 8 September 1919 (see footnote 6).

10 Christian Rittelmeyer, *Schulbauten positiv gestalten. Wie Schüler Farbe und Form erleben* [Creating school buildings positively. How pupils experience colour and form], Wiesbaden, 1994. And *Einführung in die Gestaltung von Schulbauten* [Introduction to the design of school buildings], Frammersbach, 2013.

## Covid-19 & a New World Order

Based on the Threefold Social Order by Rudolf Steiner

*Dr Bindu Chowdary*

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – the concept from the Maha-Upanishad – which means that 'the world is one family', has been proved by the pandemic that the world is experiencing today. There is no discrimination of class, caste, colour, creed, country, or continent. The whole world is suffering hardships due to the outbreak of the threat that has engulfed all of us. It seems as if we are all one – in pain, in our effort to prevent the further progression of this pain, and in finding the solution to this newly emerged, unusual, unforeseen and unique problem.

The onslaught of the corona virus has led to many speculations. But that is not the topic of discussion here. The current situation, the spreading of the corona virus – the disease and the deaths – has been incessantly flashed on social media ever since it became known. That need not be reiterated here.

We need to awaken to the lessons it has taught us and surely the world will not be the same after the lockdowns are lifted. It is now time to ask: Will a new social order emerge or can a new world order be established after this massive occurrence that has jolted people all over the globe?

Here, an attempt is being made to understand the impact of this pandemic on the three realms of human existence – economic, political/legal & social/cultural.

Dr Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian philosopher, social reformer, architect and a spiritual scientist, put forth his idea of 'The Threefold So-

cial Order'. He propounded that the three domains of human activity – economic, legal/political and social/cultural have to be understood as operating independently of each other. Only when mankind recognises and comprehends the characteristics of each domain and organises society in such a manner that each sphere enjoys autonomy, can the existence and continuation of a healthy society become a reality at a local and a global level.

The Economic sphere is concerned with converting natural resources – mineral, plant and animal kingdoms – into commodities that fulfil human needs. According to the threefold perspective, economic activity should be organised and carried out in the spirit of **Brotherhood** with the sole purpose of meeting the needs of all human beings on this earth.

Now, what has the corona virus done to the world? We see this Brotherhood surging and spreading 'the importance of need vs profit'. Countries have come forward to help each other, whether it is the United States of America, for example, asking for medicine from India or whether it is helping other countries.

The wealthy have donated huge amounts to fulfil the needs of the people whom they don't even know, but only because they are a part of human society. These humanitarian acts reflect the principle of Brotherhood not only within a society, but also among nations. So, as the principle goes, it is now

very evident that the haves need to take care of the have-nots. The pandemic has helped to arouse this sentiment in human beings at large. This humane attitude needs to be propagated, cultivated, sustained further, even in the future.

The middle realm of the threefold social order is the Legal or Political Rights sphere. Rudolf Steiner believed that this sphere should ensure people are treated equally. From the threefold perspective, this sphere pertains to human rights which cannot be hampered by business entities. Political questions regarding human rights are solely the subject matter of the political/legal realm. The principle to be applied here is **Equality**, the implementation of which cannot be compromised under any circumstances, irrespective of caste, colour, creed or gender.

Now, what has the corona virus done? The holders of political power (Prime Ministers & Presidents) are now emphasizing the importance of a common purpose, that is, protecting the right to life of everyone in society. Here they are compelled to apply the principle of Equality. There can be no discrimination in the effort to save lives. This has been the sole and the most significant endeavour of the political realm since the lockdown was announced by various governments. Everyone needs to follow the rules laid down and the governments are taking the implementation of these rules very earnestly. People, belonging to different strata of society in every country, are affected. No government can afford to neglect any section of society.

The lesson learnt for the future is that everyone's life matters and the right to live is a fundamental right of all in society. The political/legal system needs to embrace this thought and put it into practice.

The third domain – Cultural or Social – recognises that human capacities are spiritual endowments. It has the task of finding the best way to unfold these capacities. Here the key principle is **Freedom**. The cultural/social realm includes education, science, art, religion and work of the judges. It aims to bring about some form of cooperation among human beings based on the free interaction and free association of individuals with individuality without any external force or compulsion – political or economic. Such external forces only hinder the expanding of the innermost nature of human beings. It is only through perfect freedom that one can bring forth what lies deep within one being.

What the corona virus has brought about in this sphere is difficult to gauge. But every individual is experiencing a kind of freedom to do what he or she likes because there are no external restrictions on people's freedom except the rule to stay at home to be safe.

Teachers have started developing innovative ways of meeting their students. Those from the field of arts are expressing themselves freely through poetry, painting, music, etc. People have become more spiritually inclined and have begun a process of introspection for which they rarely found the time and inclination before the epidemic. People, from all strata and all walks of life, have experienced a new-found freedom to recognise their individuality since they have been able to free themselves from the rut of routine. It is very important that individuals maintain this freedom to evolve and this can happen if brotherhood and equality become the norms of human society.

If society understands 'freedom' as a characteristic of this realm, then even when the

lockdown ends, this cultural realm can exist in freedom. The minimal interference of the political/legal authorities in the fields of education, art, science will help people to enrich their inner selves in particular, as well as society as a whole, making life meaningful and beautiful.

To quote Rudolf Steiner here is important because it reflects the essence of what is being said. He said: "A healthy social life is found only when, in the mirror of each soul, the whole community finds its reflection, and when, in the whole community, lives the virtue of each one".

The three principles of Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood comprised the famous outcry of the French Revolution. It was then that the need for a threefold social order was felt very deeply. The three spheres Social/Cultural, Political and Economic need to follow the corresponding principle to create a new social system within every country and also among the countries of the entire world. Only then can the idea of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' fructify.

Therefore, let us become aware of these qualities belonging to the specific realms of the society, reflect on their implementation and bring about the much-needed change. The pandemic has a purpose – Nature has cleansed herself. Let us take this opportunity to create a new world by continuing the practices that started during the present period of crisis by following the great and fun-

damental principles of Brotherhood, Equality and Freedom.

This has been a brief sketch of the threefold social order and what this pandemic has done to society. The idea of this new society can be mooted and ultimately made into a reality, making this planet a better place to live.

Can the world's leaders speculate, study, stimulate and start working towards a New World System based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity?

Can the younger generation start a movement for the propagation of these essential elements to adorn human society and create a wonderful life on earth?

Can a New World System of Co-operation rather than blatant Competition, Assistance rather than Assault, Compassion rather than Cruelty be initiated and established?

It may seem difficult, it may take time, but can the beginnings be made?

About the writer: Dr Bindu Chowdary has been a social scientist and an educator for 40 years. She has established two Waldorf Schools in Mumbai and currently manages one of these schools. She has a PhD in International Politics. She has published a book on how to teach Hindi, the national language of India, in the Waldorf way and also translated this book from Hindi to English, entitled: 'The Journey through Latkapur'.

## In Memorial

*Philipp Reubke*

*Translated into English by Susan Howard*

In recent weeks, three personalities have crossed the threshold who decisively shaped the practice of Waldorf education in Central Europe and throughout the world over the past 50 years.

**Freya Jaffke** (May 2, 1937 to June 1, 2021) Waldorf kindergarten teacher in Reutlingen from 1960 to 1990, co-founder of the International Association of Waldorf Kindergartens and the Waldorf Kindergarten Seminar in Stuttgart, respected lecturer at conferences and training courses in Germany and many other countries, and author of 16 books on the idea and practice of Waldorf kindergartens, which have been translated into many languages. As a member of the Board of Trustees of the International Association of Waldorf Kindergartens, she was actively involved in the international expansion of Waldorf kindergartens in the 1980s and 1990s. Two sayings have remained in my memory in particular. "When are we finally going to start working?" she admonished again and again when the discussions in the Board of Trustees revolved for too long around the quibbles of organizational development. In 2005, when the kindergarten movement was reorganizing, she explained, "I can understand that you young people want to work much more internationally, but don't forget: every spiritual cultural movement needs a heart, a center from which everything starts and flows back, the ideas, the feelings, the initiatives. If this is no longer to be physically in Stuttgart, you must form it soul-spiritually."

**Richard Landl** (August 23, 1943 – May 22, 2021) Natural scientist, eurythmist, Wal-

dorf teacher, active for many years in the coordination of Waldorf schools in North Rhine-Westphalia and on the board of the Federation of Independent Waldorf Schools, a collaborator in the development of a quality procedure for Waldorf schools, and until the end president of the European Council for Steiner/Waldorf Education (ECSWE). Qualities and tendencies which are often distributed among many different people were united in Richard Landl's nature and biography: natural science and also art; a sense for efficiency and pragmatic solutions as well social tact, warmth and unobtrusive interest; leadership as well as restraint; and tireless commitment to the political-social framework of Waldorf education as well as intense interest in the cultivation of the life of soul and spirit within the framework of the School of Spiritual Science.

**Henning Köhler** (May 21, 1951 – April 8, 2021). Social activist, curative educator, educator, therapist, lecturer and author of more than a dozen books on educational topics published by Verlag Freies Geistesleben, columnist for the magazine "Erziehungskunst" and member of the advisory board of the magazine "Info 3". Through his profound and original studies of Rudolf Steiner's Study of Man, infused with warm-hearted commitment to children and young people, he inspired countless people to become therapists, educators and teachers. Not only in his lectures, but also in his writings he unfolded an astonishing power of the word, through which the originality of his personality resonated strongly and through which he was able to make Steiner's pedagogical ideas

understandable and "put them to the heart" of many people. Here is an example, a paraphrase by Köhler of "what we can achieve as best in education": "A strong will turned towards the world, strengthened by trust in the good; a rich emotional life, fed by the experience of the beautiful, the truly awe-inspiring here in this place on earth; warm, heartfelt interest in the world, which can only grow

out of that primordial trust, that attitude of reverence, but not out of one-sidedly cultivated high-minded intellectual thinking."

The strength of these three so different personalities will be missed by the worldwide Waldorf movement – and hopefully will be able to flow in another form in difficult times.

## Heinz Zimmermann – Impressions of a Life by Ursula Zimmermann-Baur

Christof Wiechert

*Translated from German by Margot M. Saar*

*A few weeks before his death – it was during the summer break – we were both tidying up. As I entered his room, he was holding a pile of books in his hands, saying to me whilst placing them on a shelf, "And these are my books." Inside the front cover of these journals, for that is what these 'books' were, it said, "This book belongs to Ursula Baur (we were not married yet when he wrote this), in case of my death."*

*So, I felt called upon to read in these journals. I discovered traces of a person who practised self-assessment and self-education ceaselessly and with profound honesty.*

*I came across stringent appraisals of his own weaknesses – then, again and again, self-wrought victory and the blessing of the higher world.*

*"12 January 1998 I need to expect death at any time.*

*What do I take with me? What do I leave behind, unfinished? What do I leave behind, laden with guilt?"*

This fragment (p. 109) from the biographical sketch, presented by Ursula Zimmermann-Baur on the tenth anniversary of her husband's death (he died on 6 September 2011) reveals two things: firstly, that she was able to convey an impression of his life, in which her closeness to him became the strength to objectively describe his being and character; and secondly, that an example has been

given to posteriority of an esoterically striving person, a modern esotericist.

The term 'esotericist' is used widely, but here it is accessibly practical; here we can read what it really means to work esoterically and thus become an esotericist.

Many contemporaries make an appearance in this biography: we experience his 'cheerful nature', his way of gently but resolutely breaking through anything that is mere semblance in order to get to the reality, to the truth. The decision to deviate from a predestined academic career to become a Waldorf teacher: we get a sense of how much his upper schools students loved him, of how he was there for them, how he, in his lessons, in his drama productions, lived and realized his artistic and intellectual talents. We follow him on his way to the teacher education seminar, to when he was called to the Goetheanum to be head of two Sections and join the Executive Council of the General Anthroposophical Society; we rejoice in the appreciative words dedicated to his loyal colleague Wiltrud Schmidt – many wonderful things!

What makes this biography stand out, however, is the way Ursula lets the reader take part in Heinz Zimmermann's inner life journey: she does this in a subtle, almost tentative way, by affording brief insights into the journals. But these brief glimpses can be like sparks of light for the reader, because lived self-education kindles self-education.

Filled with awe we enter the sanctum of the individuality, granted an ephemeral impression of its path.

The esotericist is characterized by a gentle touch and spiritual strength, which the body first had to prepare. Four intense moments of death he had to endure (two of them in Tintagel!) and the first half of his life was marked by illness and much pain. Spiritual experiences occurred.

A former student dies in a car crash. In the journal: *'Encounter with E.M. He is there. I promise him to read the Lazarus chapter tomorrow. I tell him the beginning of the Gospel of St John. He is calmer now.'*

Or: *'14 January 1974 Dream. Rudolf Steiner in the house. Diseased child's body. No-one is admitted. But I do get in. His eyes penetrate me wholly.'*

Encounters with the double follow, *'First I see myself as in ordinary perception, reflected in the car mirror; suddenly alive, gazing towards me, eyes raised in vanity, the whole image has something ugly; I do not like myself at all, again great fear and physical shudders ...'*

Also from the journals: *Processing life 1991. What does community building in the modern sense mean? 1. Saying willingly Yes to the other as a solemn vow belonging to karma. 2. I will acknowledge the spiritual goal as my firm ideal. 3. I will recognize the other as the companion of my destiny. You belong to me, I to you.'*

Ursula speaks of his awareness that, in destiny communities, he always stood in between, holding the balance, of how he was at the same time firm in his spiritual orientation and leaving others free in theirs.

These impressions of a life also contain transcripts of lectures he gave. Even reading in these transcripts, one senses the power of the spiritual certainty out of which he spoke; one senses the evident truth, but also the infinite struggle: *'I'm growing ever more conscious of my shortcomings and of the increasingly urgent question of the justification of anthroposophical representation.'* (Looking back on the year 1994).

It is pleasing how this biographical sketch shows – not loudly and therefore the more clearly – what it means to inhabit the different worlds as an esotericist.

At the age of 38 he wrote in his journal, *'My life's goal and task is to serve the word, the Logos.'*

This life's task encompasses many perspectives: over the years the great 'Zimmermann themes' emerge: the development of a Goethean grammar, the work on the connection between thought and the spoken word, his research into the essence and purpose of conversation as the task of community building, on the importance of anthroposophical studies, the great theme of the Column Words and the zodiac, the work on the Leading Thoughts and the Class work in general and, above all, his unceasing devotion to the Christ impulse.

All these themes are not merely touched upon but made visible and accessible; there is so much in these few pages that is inspiring! And on top of all that he was an excellent pianist. His way of working was musical. *'It is my ideal to experience conversations like flowing music, harmonies, where something new emerges and where one parts from each other feeling rejuvenated.'* (Journal, 1978). The following is his description of living thinking, which he compares to a



waterfall, *'As I sit and observe, an image rises up in me that reveals to me all at once what living thinking really is: it swirls, made translucent by the sun, burbles, disperses into spherical drops, whirls in order to soon rush down, faster (...) Everything reveals how water is always moving, in unison with the sun, the rock, the wind ... how many tones and sounds it unites: roaring, splashing, whooshing, swirling, spraying, streaming – everything coalesces into music, the music of never resting life, of never resting change.'* (p. 50)

A former pupil, Martin Malcherek, describes his experience of him in the Youth Section, 'With him, almost everything was about education and self-education. If anyone embodies the refutation of the accusation that anthroposophy is a dogmatic, dried-out event for uncritical, humourless Steiner disciples, it

is Heinz Zimmermann. (...) One did not have to convince him of revolutionary ideas – that would have meant pushing at an open door!' (p. 87)

The short biography is clearly structured according to life situations and the various themes Heinz Zimmermann was working on. So much that awakens and inspires is contained in this slim volume. A bibliography suitably completes the picture.

We must thank Ursula Zimmermann for her work on this biographical impression.

*Ursula Zimmermann-Baur: Heinz Zimmermann – ein Lebensbild, self-published Dornach 2021, CHF 24 / EUR 21. Available (in German) from the Goetheanum Bookshop, Dornach (CH), in all other countries from Kooperative Dürnau (Germany) or in bookshops.*

## Agenda

2021

October 30 – November 2, 2021

Conference for Support Teachers

November 5 – 7, 2021

International Conference of the School of  
Spiritual Science of the Pedagogical Section

November 17 – 21, 2021

International Forum in Dornach  
(on invitation)