

The Bard's Voice – Is Waldorf education's Class VIII play a theatre production or a rite of passage? ¹

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ABSTRACT. This study addresses the tradition within Waldorf Education of offering a major drama production to adolescents when they finish Class VIII (year 9, rising 14 years of age). The play is the culmination of an eight year educational cycle which has been under the supervision of a main teacher and is perceived as a bridge between Waldorf Middle and Upper Schools towards a greater degree of autonomy and consciousness. In this way, a programme of drama is carefully developed over the educational cycle. Through a higher level of professionalism, many schools choose Shakespeare at this time, possibly reflecting the dawning of new level of sophistication in the development of dramatic arts during the renaissance, placing that alongside a similar flourishing within early adolescence.

The study examines the tradition of performing Shakespeare across Waldorf schools and the primary pedagogical factors in producing such a play. Its methodology is postformal and its methods include a literature review, a survey of principal Waldorf school associations across the world, and a reflective case study of producing a Class VIII play undertaken during the researcher's postgraduate teacher training at a Waldorf school in the UK. It makes a number of conclusions that identify the Class VIII play as both theatre production and rite of passage, and suggests that both phenomena are consistent parts of all curricula, hidden or not, and recommends a more prominent professional and academic dialogue on rites of passage in education.

Keywords: rite of passage, pedagogical theatre, Waldorf Education in the UK

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG. Die Studie befasst sich mit der waldorfpädagogischen Tradition, Schülern zum Abschluss der Klasse VIII (entspricht Klasse IX in Großbritannien) die Erarbeitung und Aufführung eines bedeutenden Dramas anzubieten. Das Stück soll eine Brückenfunktion haben für die Förderung von Autonomie und Bewusstheit im Übergang von der Mittel- zur Oberstufe. Viele Schulen in England haben dieses Jahr Shakespeare ausgewählt; sie spiegeln damit möglicherweise das Erwachen einer neuen Stufe in der Aneignung dramatischer Künste wider. Die Studie geht der Frage nach, wie ausgeprägt die Tradition, Shakespeare aufzuführen, tatsächlich in den Waldorf-Schulen ist, und welches die vorrangigen pädagogischen Faktoren sind, die zu der Aufführung eines solchen Stückes führen. Ihre Methodologie ist postformal, und ihre Methoden beinhalten eine kritische Literatur-Durchsicht, eine detaillierte Untersuchung an internationalen Waldorf-Schulen sowie eine Fallanalyse, in der während der postgraduierten Lehrerbildung des Untersuchenden an einer Waldorf-Schule in Großbritannien ein Klassenspiel der Klasse VIII erarbeitet und aufgeführt wurde. Die Studie kommt zu einer Reihe von Schlussfolgerungen, die das Spiel der Klasse VIII sowohl als eine Theater-Aufführung wie auch im Sinne eines Übergangs-Ritus identifizieren. Sie weist darauf hin, dass beide Phänomene konsistente Bestandteile aller Lehrpläne sind und empfiehlt eine stärkere Ausrichtung des professionellen und akademischen Dialogs bezüglich möglicher Übergangsriten in der Erziehung.

Schlüsselworte: Übergangsritus, Pädagogisches Theater, Waldorfpädagogik in Großbritannien

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Introduction

‘For groups, as well as individuals, life itself means to separate and to be reunited, to change form and condition, to die and to be reborn. It is to act and to cease, to wait and rest, and then to begin acting again, but in a different way. And there are always new thresholds to cross: the thresholds of summer and winter, of a season or a year, of a month or a night; the thresholds of birth, adolescence, maturity and old age.’

Arnold van Gennep (1960, pp.189-190)

‘Pedagogical theatre is a discipline as important as any other pursued in school. It entertains, inspires and instructs in a way that is only possible when the human being, as an enactor, performs a story before other human beings. It creates moments of artistic communion that lead us to clearer understandings of what it means to be a becoming human being, both individually, and in community.’

Arthur Pittis (1996, p.31)

Waldorf education is a global community of pedagogical practice arising from the inspiration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Austrian philosopher, Rudolf Steiner (Steiner, 2004). Its curriculum is one that seeks to offer an experiential and holistic engagement with the natural world and human civilisation in a way that finds a correspondence between the content of the curriculum and the inner development of the child. Adopting a slow burn approach to conceptualised knowledge and a continental delay to formal literacy and numeracy until the age of 7, the curriculum is rich in art and crafts. It specifically uses aesthetics to integrate a broader ontology than that which is usually recognised by the consensus of contemporary Western culture, but one that is consistent with critical and postformal pedagogies (Freire, 1970; Kincheloe, 1999 & 2006).

This project is an exploration of how the Class VIII play in Waldorf Education engages with the changing consciousness of the adolescents of 14 years of age, in particular as a culmination of their second seven year developmental cycle. Its context and motivation is principally to support a deeper study and preparation for, and reflection on, the Class VIII play that I facilitated in June 2013 during a GTP-QTS training year. It will aim to contribute to the ‘Goethean conversation’ within Waldorf Education surrounding the Class VIII play, very little of which is in print.

The Class VIII play in Waldorf Education is a focal point and emblem of how that tradition has evolved and expressed itself from the initial indications of Rudolf Steiner. Even though Steiner himself did not give any guidance for pedagogical theatre in any broad context, let alone for the Class VIII play specifically, it has become a cornerstone of Waldorf Education. This is in all probability due to the structure of Waldorf schools where, typically, a single teacher will accompany a group of children from Class I (first year of formal schooling, rising 7 years of age - equivalence of year 2 in the UK), all the way through Class VIII (year 9). At this point, in many schools, the class will move to having a wider range of subject teachers and guardians who support the class. At the end of this eight year cycle a range of experiences are designed into the curriculum in a way that seeks to mark that transition creatively and transformatively. These are the Class VIII project (a major self-directed piece of depth-learning), the Class VIII trip (often abroad, although now less often a first time novelty for today’s children) and the Class VIII play.

In a broader context, theatre in education has a long history, sharing many themes with the role of drama and theatre in Waldorf Education, but also having a distinct lineage and diversity of practice, with distinct chapters in its evolution over the twentieth century that centre around the emancipatory work of such pioneers as Paolo Freire (1970) and Augusto Boal (1993). Whereas the therapeutic role of pedagogical theatre in Waldorf Education might attend to, in Arthur Pittis’s words, the ‘artistic communion’ of the ‘becoming human being’ (ibid), the specific tradition of Theatre in Education (TiE) that has crystallised since the 1960s also wrestles with any programme’s ‘educational agenda and its artistry, the one being moral and purposeful in its concerns, the other aesthetic and playful’ (Winston 2005, p. 310). Furthermore, within the range of drama and TiE projects, there is not as systematic a pedagogical structure relating drama and theatre to education (and particularly child development) as there is in the Waldorf model.

This study seeks to bring these two strands together, to compare the emancipatory agenda of critical theatre that has developed over the twentieth century and ask if it has any place within pedagogical theatre,

whether the correspondence in Waldorf Education between early adolescence and renaissance theatre (particularly Shakespeare) is valid and precludes any resort to other theatrical or pedagogical traditions, and to do this by asking other Waldorf schools what they are doing as well as narrating my own experience on such a journey. The literature review will provide a broad context for theatre in education and pedagogical theatre from a Waldorf perspective, before considering the changing consciousness of the adolescents of 14 years of age and rites of passage. I will make the case for a postformal methodology of bricolage, including an ethical stance that aspires to the 'tact of soul' described by Steiner (2004, p.45) as cultivating trust, rather than a legalistic and risk averse bureaucracy.

This study, draws on appropriate literature, is located within educational studies. Its findings and recommendations belong to this discipline and are also related to anthropology, sociology and psychology.

Literature review

Theatre in education

'It is an educational tool that does not just instruct children in theatrical practices but, by working with living, artistic imaginations of what it means to be a human being, in both the individual and social sense, it assists in bringing an ever more balanced relationship the soul faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing, essential for coming to a more complete understanding of ourselves.'

Arthus Pittis (1996, p.2)

The presence of theatre in education can range from the broad span of lyric, epic and dramatic forms of literacy within any language and literature curriculum to the more specific exploration and enactment of drama in schools, offered either by incumbent teaching staff or specialist drama educators. The key difference between drama in education and theatre in education is the extent to which any process might be placed upon a spectrum where its focus is either the experience of the participant (drama) or the interaction of the participant with an audience at a particular time and in a particular place (theatre). Thus, it is clear that drama skills will inevitably be valuable in preparing a theatre production, but that equally the use of role play within a history lesson in school will involve drama skills of improvisation and characterisation that do not necessitate any application within a theatre context.

The development of both drama and theatre in education began to take on a form of its own over the twentieth century, initially through the innovations of the English school teachers Harriet Finlay-Johnson and Dorothy Heathcote, and latterly as a response to the radical visions of Paolo Freire, Augusto Baol and Berholt Brecht, visions which, when applied to theatre in education, offered a child-centred process of discovery that had hitherto been alien within mainstream education. Finlay-Johnson had developed a nature-based and child-centred education at a small school on the Sussex downs in the 1910s, and applied to these principles an approach to drama in education that sought to help children converse rather than just listen (Finlay-Johnson, 1911, p.8). From the 1950s, Heathcote, a failed actress and untrained teacher, brought a powerful vision and practice of drama particularly to disadvantaged and excluded students and young offenders by using immediate situations as dramatic raw material. She upended the hierarchies of power within theatre through her 'mantle of the expert' technique in which student actors claimed authority and directorial control (Heathcote, 1979). Upon such foundations and aligned with the emancipatory practices of critical pedagogy, a distinct movement of 'Theatre in Education' was initiated by the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry in 1965 that saw a collaboration of social workers, educators and dramaturgists encourage school children 'to become agents in their own learning; to have access to the imagination and creativity of theatre within their own schools; and to be asked to engage with issues and dilemmas in a way that values their voices and their opinions' (Themen in Turner 2010, p.3).

Whilst the Theatre in Education movement has navigated the funding and policy crises of intervening decades, its relationship with scholarship and practice aimed at fulfilling aspect of the National Curriculum with regards to literacy are mixed (e.g., Kempe & Ashwell, 2000), and reflect a spectrum that places dramatic skills at one pole and emancipatory theatre at the other. In this context, John O'Toole has profiled the potential

goals of drama and theatre in education as either focusing on language, development, pedagogy or art-form (O'Toole et al., 2009). This tension and variance, however, is not limited to drama and theatre in education, as the discipline of acting had seen a similar revolution over the twentieth century, principally through the work of Constantin Stanislavski, who had brought the principal dynamism of acting from external skills to the 'method' of internally generated characterisation. Such a migration from the external to the internal shared themes with Rudolf Steiner's teachings on speech and drama, similarities that became blended in the innovative work of Michael Chekov, nephew of the celebrated Russian author and playwright Anton Chekhov. Chekov took elements of Stanislavski's method and, inspired by Steiner's work on imagination, developed a range of 'psychological gestures' that were central to his legacy, which led to acting schools at Dartington Hall in England and Conneticut in the USA and strongly influenced celebrated actors such as Marilyn Monroe and Clint Eastwood. Regardless of any practical value in affecting the apparent quality of acting achieved through such methods, the inner origination of acting methodologies and an involvement of the imagination meant that drama and theatre were evolving to a new level of consciousness, which Stanislavski himself distinguished as 'The one speech is theatrical, the other is human' (Stanislavsky, 1979, p.123). Thus, not only theatre, but also theatre in education shows itself to have evolved into an arena that, for Brecht at least, involves awakening rather than entertainment (Brecht, 1978).

Pedagogical theatre in Waldorf schools

'What is distinctive in Steiner Education is the attempt to match what is brought to the children in the content of the lessons . . . with what is really going on inside the child, their inner development.'

Alan Swindell (2009)

'Doing Shakespeare in eighth grade has become traditional in some North American Waldorf schools. There is much controversy surrounding this practice, and the major argument against it is that full length Shakespeare is too sophisticated and demanding for students so young. Badly done plays are the best proof of this assertion. But Shakespeare is the greatest theatre Western civilization has produced, and, as such, it should be explored and experienced by middle school students prior to their graduation into high school and the closing of their life together as an ensemble.'

Arthus Pittis (1996, p.29)

The Class VIII play in Waldorf education has been described as involving the first aspects of 'professionalism' in the children's experience of theatre (Rawson & Richter, 2000, p.119). But the academic and professional discourse on both drama and theatre in schools is problematic if transplanted immediately onto Waldorf education with its broader ontology than mainstream pedagogies and its intrinsic focus on the art of education, seeing the aesthetic as a bridge between the polar qualities of human consciousness present in thinking and willing (Fig. 1):

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| ↕ GROWING DOWN ↕ | THINKING AWAKE Upper school: 15-21 | LEVITY Nerve – sense pole | ↕ WAKING UP ↕ |
| | FEELING DREAMING Class teacher years: 7-14 | RHYTHMIC MEDIATION Rhythmic – heart & lungs | |
| | WILLING SLEEPING Kindergarten years: 0-7 | GRAVITY Metabolic – limb pole | |

Figure 1. Rudolf Steiner's threefold human.

This threefold human is a model for Waldorf Education with the curriculum crafted not from an array of content, but rather from the particular qualities of physiological development and inner experience present

at each stage of child development. Thus, the pivotal moments of the second dentition around the age of 7 and of puberty around the age of 14 mark the principal framework for how Waldorf Education is structured, with the threefold aspects of Kindergarten, Lower School, and Middle and Upper School addressing the pedagogical needs of children in very specific ways. Uniting all of the approaches to these classifications, however, is an approach to aesthetics, of the realm of feeling as a mediator that aspires to a commitment to truth, goodness, and beauty, the transcendental virtues of classical Greek philosophy and many perennial philosophies since. Steiner ascribed these virtues to the physical, etheric and astral (physical, metabolic and emotional) aspects of the human respectively (1986). These he saw to serve as the foundation for individuation and the emergence of the human ego (understood in the stricter terminology of an autonomous self rather than the coarser modern usage of instinctual avarice). In this context, pedagogical theatre takes on a particular importance at the time of puberty when the child's astral (emotional) body comes on line more fully and, following Steiner's pedagogical law, the teacher's role is to bring into play their own individuality as guide. Thus, the threefold human of willing, feeling and thinking extends into a more complex ontology of the sevenfold human that provides a map of development in consciousness, with clear transitions that may lead to rites of passage (Fig. 2):

| Sevenfold human (& natural correspondence) | Potential age | Child's evolution of consciousness | Acts upon | Teacher's modelling |
|---|--|--|----------------------|---|
| 1 – Physical body (mineral world) | 0-7 | Will , structure | ← | Vitality / models to imitate (etheric) |
| 2 – Etheric body (plant world) | 7-14 | Vitality , metabolism | ← | Feelings / authority to emulate (astral) |
| 3 – Astral body (animal world) | 14-21 | Feelings , animalistic self | ← | Thinking and autonomy / rules & patterns to follow (ego) |
| 4 – Ego body (human world) | 21-42 | Thinking and autonomy : waking / cognitive / cortical consciousness | ← | Imagination : enlightened animalistic self |
| 5 – Spirit self body | Potential evolution of consciousness | Imagination : enlightened animalistic self | ← | Inspiration : enlightened metabolic self |
| 6 – Life spirit body | | Inspiration : enlightened metabolic self | ← | Intuition : enlightened mineral self |
| 7 – Spirit human body | | Intuition : enlightened mineral self | ← | ??? |

Figure 2. Steiner's Pedagogical Law and conception of the sevenfold human as a basis for individual development (after Steiner, 1994; Lachman, 2003; Hougham, 2012iii).

Swindell (ibid.) observed that Waldorf Education aims to align the essence of consciousness within the curriculum with the developing consciousness of the child. This is applied as the Class VIII child is introduced to the political and cultural renewal of autonomous human agency that occurred during the ages of renaissance and revolution and that might be compared to a parallel emergence within the consciousness of the young adolescent. Where Shakespeare lies within such a historical stream and the applicability of his plays within a school curriculum formed part of my consideration of how such pedagogical insights might be applied.

Rites of passage

'The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted.'

John Keats (1994, p.60)

A report for the UK government's Department for Schools, Children and Families in 2008 looked at successful transitions between primary and secondary schools, specifically from the perspective of inclusion and socio-economic status (Evangelou et al., 2008). In identifying social adjustment, institutional adjustment, and curriculum interest as factors that enabled a successful transition, the principal criteria in making such a judgement was the smoothness of that transition. Despite this transition being for rising 11 year olds and socially constructed by the organisation of schools into primary and secondary rather than aligning to any physiological or psychological transition arising in the children themselves, the Evangelou report clearly values transitions in how invisible they can be. This smoothening of experience is clearly opposed to the purposeful emphasis of crisis present in traditional rites of passage. The French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep both coined the terminology of 'rites of passage' as well as delineating crucial aspects to their intricate infrastructure. This includes processes of dying to an obsolete part of the self, entering into a suspended state of liminality (Turner, 1992), undertaking a journey of trials and dangers (typically through both a psychological and physical landscape), to then be integrated into a new strata of social organisation and privileged with secret knowledge. The admission into secret knowledge includes a process whereby the 'sacra are unveiled to the novices... the exposing of these bogeymen of their childhood is the central event of the ritual' (van Gennep, 1960, p.79). Such a distinction between the world of the child and that of the initiated adult involves the revelation of individual and social agency in the drama of life, van Gennep gives the example of Hopi novices being shown the adults of their family behind the Katchina masks of the tribe's cosmic drama, a clear adoption of responsibility within that cosmic drama, and an induction into a participation in its agency (ibid.). This participation in the stage management of destiny has clear implications for educationalists and teachers who are at all concerned with the existential aspects of student centred learning. Van Gennep also notes, however, that initiation rites marking the 'transition from childhood to adolescence' (1960, p.68), even though they surround puberty, are complicated in how 'physiological puberty and social puberty are essentially different and only rarely converge' (ibid., p.65). Whilst there is a clear variation for individuals and groups as to the timing of their transitions and whether rituals, rites and ceremonies are constructed for either those individuals or groups, their timing will be initiated by an ontologically wide range of triggers including the physiological (e.g.: the onset of menstruation for girls) or psychological (e.g., dreaming of an 'arrow, or canoe, or a woman' (ibid., p.69).

Rites of passage persist within many indigenous societies with varying levels of care being taken for the autonomy and wellbeing of the initiate that conveys something of the emancipation present within those societies. Within contemporary non-indigenous societies the apparent lack of rites of passage has been cited as part of societal dislocation and alienation (Estes, 1993; Bly, 1990 & Meade, 1993), yet attempts to remedy this situation have led to artificial endurance tests that despite a strong ecological focus, lack the reintegration aspects of fully functioning rites of passage (Cushing, 1998). Also lacking in such attempts to reproduce initiation rites through intense physical experiences is an effective cosmology which offers an interface of human agency and transformation with the mysterium of the cosmic. Looking at a functional model for rites of passage where the 'sacra are unveiled' (ibid.) necessitates an ethical phenomena of the sacra in the first place, regardless of any metaphysical status afforded by the delusions of either Dawkins (2006) or Sheldrake (2012), but perhaps liberated by the pragmatic realism of De Landa (1997). Such unveiling is not a debunking cynicism but rather a collaborative immersion in the stage-management of destiny that has clear parallels with cultivating autonomy in adolescents.

In this context, the Class VIII play is clearly more than a drama production, focused as it is towards a specific phase of child development and typically dominating the surrounding curriculum. Whether it might be considered a rite of passage in the above sense is the global context of this study, and how this impacts its pedagogical strategies, the specific inquiry.

Methodology, methods and ethics

Methodology

Within academic traditions the revelation of any inquiry's methodological approach, that is, the theory it adopts about the nature of inquiry itself, is an important preface to deciding which methods are most appropriate to the inquiry at hand and how the questions posed are best answered. Reflecting broader philosophical developments over the past two centuries, the spectrum of methodologies that are available to a researcher tend to be either quantitative or qualitative, and dominated by either statistics or experience respectively (Cresswell, 2003). In the last fifty years, a more moderate approach has seen the use of mixed methods that involve aspects of both, with the social sciences unpacking the complex dynamics present in how the questions we frame necessarily determine the shape of the answers we receive back. Within such a history have been discourses that question the very infrastructure of research scholarship and its inability to transcend its own epistemological, ontological, and political assumptions. In this context, the work of the American educationalist Joe Kincheloe was pivotal in developing the critical, emancipatory work of Paolo Freire and challenging the sleep-walking consciousness of most all education in the West as ignorant of diversity in both its demographics, economics, and cultures (Kincheloe, 2006). Most importantly, however, has been the challenge to reductive and restrictive ontologies – our landscapes and capacities of consciousness - that are admitted into research programmes, and Kincheloe's championing of a post-colonial ethic in educational research has enabled a renewed engagement with dreams, intuitions, songs and stories into a critical ontology broadly described as postformalism. Here, Kincheloe had identified a range of consciousness emerging beyond the stages of human development identified by Piaget that culminated in 'formal operational' cognitive skills (1926 & 1952) (Fig. 3):

| Age | Stage | Activity |
|-------|-----------------------------|---|
| 0-2 | Sensorimotor | Expansion of reflex into object relations. Egocentric. |
| 2-7 | Preoperational | Magical thinking oversees motor development, egocentrism weakening. |
| 7-11 | Concrete operational | Retention of logical thinking, no longer egocentric |
| 11-16 | Formal operational | Abstract reasoning |

Figure 3. Jean Piaget's developmental phases.

A central part of Kincheloe's work in postformalism was to bring forward the role of 'bricolage' in research methodologies. This built on the well established practice of triangulating evidence – providing a number of vantage points on the same phenomena in order to increase the security of any truth gleaned by the research process – and elaborating it into the multiperspectival – a multiplicity of methods that Kincheloe blended with the patchwork qualities of consciousness described by Jacques Derrida (1978) and Deleuze & Guattari (1972). These central characters of mid to late twentieth century French philosophy had taken the common usage of the word bricolage (amateur DIY) and applied it to cultural studies, giving rise to a very authentic and human narrative description to how knowledge is developed rather than the linearity and formalism that had previously prevailed in academic discourse.

The themes of postformalism and bricolage have been explored extensively and applied to the praxis of Waldorf Education by the Australian educationalist Jennifer Gidley in her 2008 doctorate. I have also previously addressed them and related them to the diaphaneity of aperspectival consciousness – a capacity whereby through an awareness of our temporal, spatial and cultural context, insight can become radiant with the experience of limitation, and paradoxically reaches towards periphery of consciousness itself (Hougham, 2012ii). This process of engaging with epistemological limitation goes to the heart of Goethean observation, a central theme within Waldorf education, that at a very immediate and practical level within both the classroom and staffroom might be expressed as the injunction to 'sleep on it' in recognition of the digestive function of sense experience and consciousness. More theoretically, it is a method of observing the world that seeks to restrain conceptual classifications enough in order to be able to observe and experience phenomena

within a stream of time, space and consciousness rather than merely limiting them to an isolated event that can be neatly labelled. This ‘delicate empiricism’ is so named because:

‘It doesn’t impose a theory, but nor does it deny the human faculties their role in coming to know the world. But the faculties have to treat the world with delicacy in order to find the world rather than find our specifically human faculties reflected in it.’

Isis Hazel Brook (2009, p.37)

So, it restores the freedom to Plato’s forms and brings back to consciousness a participatory bliss in co-creating the world. For example, within a model of Goethean observation, a leaf is nothing static or defined, but extends backwards and forwards in time, is further extended by its location and its relationships within that location, and is extended again by its participation in any cultural significance and creativity within the realm of observing conscious beings (humans). For some more limited narrators of the scientific tradition the vast array of variances in culture need to be controlled and eliminated in order to arrive at any valid knowledge. For the Goethean observer these variances are integral to the epistemological process. This by-water of scientific method from the early nineteenth century is finding new resonance beyond its traditional champions in anthroposophy in the postformalism of Kincheloe and the neo-realism that Manuel de Landa ascribed to Gilles Deleuze (de Landa, 2002) where the world itself is a constant becoming:

‘Instead of making the world depend on human interpretation, Deleuze ... achieves openness by making it into a creative and complexifying space of becoming.’

Arturo Escobar (2000, p.127)

Here, research methodologies emerge as practical, honest approaches to how we as individual humans can learn and extend our insights whilst being aware of traditional forms:

‘This is how it should be done: lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times.’

Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari (1980, pp.160-161)

It is this image, for me of an eagle upon a ledge, surveying the plain below within an instinctive ecosystem of a learning community, that has guided my research.

Methods

The methods for this study were threefold. Firstly, the above literature review offered a context for pedagogical theatre in Waldorf schools and specifically linked this tradition to the broader context of theatre in education.

Secondly, a survey of other Waldorf schools provided a selective snapshot of what similar schools were producing this year as a Class VIII play, including reflections by their teachers. The sampling involved here was largely determined by the resources available, which included a lack of translation facilities and a lack of time to contact each Waldorf school individually. In order to maximise any potential response I emailed all Waldorf school associations listed in the Waldorf World List (Pedagogische Sektion am Goetheanum 2012) in geographical regions with over 30 schools, apologising for communicating only in English, and asking for my email to be forwarded. These regions were: Europe, the UK, New Zealand, Australia, North America, South America, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Italy, and the Netherlands. The survey included an open (public) inquiry as to which play they were producing and closed (confidential) questions with regards to any renaissance focus, teacher longevity, aspects of therapeutic casting, and student autonomy.

Thirdly, a case study involving my own experiences in producing a Class VIII play in June 2013 was undertaken using an action research model strongly influenced by positive psychology (Lewis in 2011), contemplative inquiry (Zajonc in 2009), and appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney in 2005),

methodologies that have framed previous educational research that I have undertaken in and around Waldorf Education (Hougham, 2012ii, 2012iii, 2013i, 2013ii). Interspersed throughout such explorations was a bricolage of reflections and insights that arose within the action research case study and were admitted to the study despite their lack of adherence to any formally circular or spiralic processes of reflective practice. As an overall atmosphere for the project as a whole the Grail quest of seeking questions that would unlock the vibrancy of the landscape was always sought, and the blending of postmodern bricolage and Goethean observation provided the framework from within which to ask such questions.

Ethics

The ethical dimensions to this study extend across its various methods. Both the survey and the case study raise questions as to agency and reputation, where the process and results of the research itself might involve an objectification and disempowerment of any actors either directly or tangentially involved. In approaching the case study as an opportunity for pedagogical reflection and narrating my own experiences as reflective practice, the location of insight in my own practice moved the focus of agency to my work as a teacher rather than the experience of the children themselves and addresses to some extent the dangers involved in educational research that may not be cognisant of the effects on other players (Clough, 2004).

Any process of reflective practice involves an approach to the experience itself that is not neutral, but carries with it the biography of the researcher. Here, any ethical integrity is achieved not through removing all vestiges of individuality and bias, but by declaring what is known of them, and aspiring to a level of trust in the rigour of the gaze, allowing it to be appropriately admonishing and celebratory where necessary, and being clear and transparent about the known origins of the researcher's particular 'stratum' upon which he or she 'lodges' (Deleuze & Guattari, *ibid.*). Within this context, therefore, and particularly within a dialogue that involves social and cultural variances, it is important to note that I am a white British male of a suburban middle class demographic, Anglican by religious tradition, a postmodern neo-realist by philosophical inquiry, engaging a shamanic medicine path by spiritual practice, university educated to Masters level, and a mature trainee teacher - adopting teaching as a second profession after a professional background in traditional acupuncture and executive management. Within the arena of teacher training, I have completed the UK's national teacher training programme and a Postgraduate Certificate of Education alongside the Art of Education course offered by the West of England Steiner Teacher Training. Undertaking all three programmes has arisen from a commitment to quality and access in education and a judgement that Waldorf Education seems to offer both a method and an approach that is intrinsically ethical and effective (Elkind, 1997). The detractors of the tradition frequently cite a covert alliance of anthroposophy and Waldorf Education as a symptom of the schools' bad faith, and whilst I note the complexity of such questions I choose not to address them here, in part as I have already explored them in some depth (Hougham, 2012ii), but also due to a more pressing interest in the dynamics of consciousness and ethics rather than any policing of its institutions. Accordingly, it is important to elaborate that the philosophical and ethical frameworks from which I approach this study from are decidedly postmodern (and particularly postformal), critical (valuing the emancipatory role of education), and pragmatic (I want to know what works). Finally, it is important to note that I approach the nomenclature of anthroposophy and Waldorf Education with caution, and consider that it can carry something of a cultural supernaturalism not present in the spiritual monism at the heart of Steiner's thought (Cruse, 2004). As discussed above, it is the neo-realism of Deleuze (*ibid.*) and the pioneering histories of Manuel de Landa (1997) that I experience as carrying forward crucial aspects of the exploratory work of Goethe and Steiner.

Data and analysis

Surveying the Class VIII play

The response to my email sent towards the end of May 2013, some 3 weeks before the main lesson block for the play started, was good, with some 24 schools responding. I had previously been advised by colleagues

that teachers don't tend to take part very extensively in such surveys, and whilst one national organisation declined to forward the email on to individual schools, most were courteous and professional, although understandably the principal response was from English speaking schools in Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada.

Out of 24 respondents (see Fig. 5), 7 schools reported having produced a Shakespeare play in Class VIII, and of these 7, 2 were in regions where English was not a first language (Germany and the Czech Republic). Of the remaining 5, 2 were in the USA with one each from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Whether the fact that around 30% of those who responded put on a Shakespeare play in their Class VIII is a significant proportion is clearly open to interpretation.

Some of the methodologies and traditions around looking to Shakespeare for the Class VIII play are not firmly embedded in the Waldorf movement worldwide, and what emerged from the rest of each discourse with respondents was a high level of therapeutic casting and student involvement in the productions themselves. The confidential part of the survey addressed a number of areas of specifically pedagogical interest (Fig. 4).

Is there any renaissance focus to the play or to the setting in which it is being performed?

How much are you casting therapeutically?

How long have you as a class teacher been with the class?

How much student autonomy has there been in play selection, casting, setting?

Any other comments:

Figure 4. Confidential aspects to the Class VIII play survey.

| School | Geographical region | Play |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Willunga Waldorf School | South of Adelaide in Australia | <i>The Loathely Lady</i> |
| Castlemaine Steiner School & Kindergarten | Australia | <i>The Tempest, by William Shakespeare</i> |
| Calgary Waldorf School | Alberta, Canada | <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> , by Frank Baum |
| Portland Waldorf School | Milwaukie, USA | <i>Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat</i> |
| Cincinnati Waldorf School | Ohio, USA | <i>The Great Brain</i> , by John Dennis Fitzgerald |
| Cape Ann Waldorf School | Beverly, Massachusetts, USA | <i>An Inspector Calls</i> , by J B Priestley |
| Highland Hall Waldorf School | Northridge, California, USA | <i>The Importance of Being Ernest</i> , by Oscar Wilde |
| Waldorf School of New Orleans | Louisiana, USA | <i>The Shadow</i> - an original screenplay by the class |
| Michael Hall | Forest Row, East Sussex, UK | <i>Les Miserables</i> , by Victor Hugo |
| Waldorf school, Ostrava | Czech Republic, Europe | <i>Romča and Julča / Romeo and Juliet, by William Shakespeare</i> |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| York Steiner School | UK, Europe | <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> , by Chaucer, adapted by Martin Riley |
| Spring Garden Waldorf School | Copley, OH, USA | <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>, by William Shakespeare |
| Taikura Rudolf Steiner School | Hastings, New Zealand | <i>As You Like It</i>, by William Shakespeare |
| Freie Waldorfschule Graz | Austria, Europe | <i>Einen Jux will er sich machen</i> ('A Day well spent' by Oxenford) adapted by Johann Nepomuk Nestroy |
| Waldorf School and Lyceum | Semily, Czech Republic, Europe | <i>Balada Pro Banditu</i> , by Ivan Olbrach, adapted by Milan Uhde |
| Santa Cruz Waldorf School | California, USA | <i>You Can't Take It With You</i> by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman |
| Freie Waldorfschule Augsburg | Germany, Europe | <i>Much about Nothing</i>, by William Shakespeare |
| Charlottesville Waldorf School | Virginia, USA | <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> , written by Michelle Vargas with songs added by the class |
| Waldorf School of Princeton | New Jersey, USA | <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>, by William Shakespeare |
| Waldorfschol Gladbeck | Northwestern Germany | <i>Suddenly millionaire</i> by Frederike Wandersleb based upon "The one-million-pound-note" by Mark Twain |
| Rudolf Steiner Schule Nürtingen | Southern Germany | <i>The Wave/die Welle</i> by Morton Rhue |

Figure 5. A profile of plays produced by Class VIII's in Waldorf schools across the world in 2013, with plays by William Shakespeare highlighted.

In nearly all cases, the choice of play was determined by the pedagogical needs of the class rather than having any renaissance focus, even if it did have some connection to the curriculum either in terms of time period or subject matter. Almost all teachers cast therapeutically to some extent, one correspondent describing a near universal experience:

'In general, there always has to be a balance between putting each student in a part that is right for them, as well as putting together a full cast that is able to function and create a play that they are proud of. What I mean is that if you put each student into a part that is opposite from their temperament, or is in some way very difficult for them, you can raise the frustration level too high and cause damage to the whole production. On the other hand, if you put each student in a role that is too easy for them to play you will lose the real opportunity to extend them into an area that they normally wouldn't go You will never get it completely "right" and there is always bound to be some controversy, whether from the students themselves or the parents.'

Respondent # 1 (28/05/13)

There did, however, seem to be a level of consensus that the entirety of the process offered therapeutic opportunities, one respondent saying of their play, that 'about 75% was deliberately therapeutic, but in the event, nearly all of it turned out like that' (respondent # 12, 03/06/13).

The length of time each teacher had been with the class was surprising, as I had expected to hear that most all Class VIII plays would have been produced by the Class Teacher at the end of their 8 year tenure. However, of the respondents who answered this question (15), 2 had been with the class for only one year,

and from that there was a fairly even distribution, with the mean being just under 5 years.

With regards to student autonomy, there was little in terms of the selection of the play, some consultation happened for casting, but nearly all respondents reported extensive collaboration with students in terms of the setting of the play, costumes and set as well as blocking, acting and musical interludes, with a class at one school writing an original screenplay and filming it. This also offered the opportunity for learning the technical skills of film-making of which the class teacher reported:

‘I am really excited about what we have accomplished, since we not only created a pretty amazing product (if I do say so myself) but we also were able to follow Steiner’s indications about learning an important practical trade in the students’ world. They now have a much deeper understanding of and appreciation for the production of visual media.’

Respondent # 11 (02/06/13)

The vast majority of schools, however, saw the class teacher choose the play, sometimes after having read through a number of different plays and discussed various options with the class. This was similar to casting, where teachers typically consulted the class but then made the final decision. The survey’s final question yielded some interesting comments relating to rites of passage that, whilst present in my own deliberations and preparations, had not been mentioned in the survey itself:

‘I thought you might be also interested to know that in class 7 (your equivalent class 8) we take the students on a 10 day camp to the outback - it’s actually a camel trek and serves in many ways as a Rite of Passage for them. It is the first time they have been away from their families for such an extended period of time. They walk about 15 - 20 kms each day. Each morning they break camp, walk, and at the end of the day set up a new camp for the night. It is a wonderful experience and they come back very changed in many ways. They go straight into a 2 week holiday period at the end then return to school for their final term of primary school, which includes their class play.’

Respondent # 2 (28/05/13)

Other respondents spoke too of the level of independence achieved by most classes in producing their play as a central feature of their projects’ aims and objectives. This was also central to the play I produced with the students themselves taking over operation of the school’s complex lighting array for the first time, and initiating a new level of student ownership in the management of stage technology. That production is now discussed.

The case study: critical incidents and golden moments

Through the happenstance of my teaching role during my training year and my facility with teenagers, I was tasked to take the Class VIII play as the last main lesson of the year for this particular class. Whilst the Class VIII play frequently features as part of a culmination of the ‘class teacher’ years in Waldorf Education with one teacher taking a class through from Class I, I was entering into a new relationship with this class over my training year that culminated in the Class VIII play. My role as Class co-guardian was both pastoral and pedagogical, delivering a variety of subject lessons, including geometric art and English, prior to taking on the play. The school tradition was to perform Shakespeare in Class VIII and in recent memory of the past decade only one class had deviated from this tradition, to some consternation within the community. This chimed with the tradition in North America for Class VIII to perform Shakespeare (Pittis, *ibid.*), specifically his comedies:

‘Some of Shakespeare’s romantic comedies can be done very well by eighth graders if the plays have been carefully shortened and the students understand Shakespeare’s language and how it is used. The romantic comedies truly have something for everybody, and the key to success is capturing the plays’ pure theatricality and honouring their language, not sporting velvet brocade, long gowns, floppy hats and sagging tights.’

Arthur Pittis (1996, p.29)

By early Spring I had settled on *The Comedy of Errors* as a suitable play, predominantly through an intuitive process that was seeking a therapeutic and transformative experience for the class as a rite of passage,

as described above. This arose through a perspective of the class's needs that, whilst inhabiting the strata of consciousness appropriate for early adolescence, artfully described by Steiner as both boorish and coquettish (Steiner 1996, p.82), saw a level of foolery and petty scrapping in the boys and a reticence of voice in the girls that called for particular attention. The challenge, therefore, had been to select a play within which foolery could be taken seriously and the iniquities of class violence and the subjugation of women could be challenged within a dramatic experience. The Comedy of Errors seemed to meet this challenge:

'There is domestic drama, certainly, in the tensions between Adriana and her husband, and Luciana and Adriana debate the issues of womanly compliance and assertion. More interesting, perhaps, is the master and servant relationship. Indeed, the dark side of the comedy coincides with a principle of farce: that much of the action, if taken at all seriously, is simple cruelty ... being sane in a mad world bears hard upon the servants, the shock absorbers of the social system.'

Ralph Berry (1988, p.22)

A further challenge, was to meet the inner need of adolescents for privacy and tend to the dislocation caused by the development of a sense of 'shame or embarrassment' which Steiner described as feeling as though 'I must have something in my individual, inner life that is mine, that I do not wish to share with anyone else; I must have secrets' (Steiner, 1996, p.80). The Comedy of Errors seemed to serve such a purpose well with its constant existential duplicity: 'In this most binary of plays, there are always two sides to events: what it looks like, and what it feels like' (Berry, 1995, p.78).

Central to my pedagogical approach was a student-centred methodology adopting a broad range of moral dialogics as pertinent to Waldorf Education as they are to critical pedagogies (Freire, 1970; Bohm, 1996; Armitage & Thornton, 2010). As described above, Steiner frames this as a pedagogical law whereby each human 'body' is influenced in its development by the influence of other 'higher' bodies surrounding it, typically through the agency of the teacher (Steiner, 1972, p.41). This then impacts upon the activity called for in the person of the teacher whereby for the rising 14-year-old adolescent emerging within the chrysalis of their astral body (the flux of their emotional life), it is the directorial and dialogical qualities of the teacher that play a central role in guiding the healthy emergence and integration of such flux. Involving the students, therefore, in as many aspects of the production as possible, within the overarching scheme of my own directorial grasp of the project, was my principal pedagogical strategy. This worked well and from the inception of the project a blending of formative assessment (Heritage, 2011) and moral dialogics (Alexander, 2012) proved very effective in both navigating the lessons themselves, but also helping validate the students' own perspectives and autonomy. In establishing the assessment criteria for such an approach the students developed a powerful expression of their own hopes for the play (Fig.6):

My hopes are that it will be the best Class VIII play yet.
 I hope that no one forgets their lines and everyone enjoys themselves.
 Everyone should put effort into it and do as best they can whilst trying to enjoy it.
 A play can only be good if all the separate pieces come together and all work well.
 Lots of comedy and no scenes that are boring.
 I hope that everyone works hard so the end result is really good.
 Good make-up and costumes.
 If we do it well it will give us responsibility so we can be mature.
 After the play, I hope everyone will be more confident and feel super good about themselves.
 Deciding together where we are setting the play and what things we are putting in to the play.
 I hope that we can look back and be proud.

Figure 6. Class VIII hopes for the play.

Part of the breadth of student led creativity involved in the early stages of the project a consideration of an appropriate setting for the play that addressed the themes of identity, commerce, flirtation and courtship, and violence. The class itself veered over a number of lessons between the settings of a nihilistic nowhere, World War II and Las Vegas. The Las Vegas suggestion I had thought inspired, grasping the quality of the play where 'much of the fun comes from seeing primal fears crowd in upon the merchants' (Berry 1988, p.21). Whilst some of the implications of these settings were considered by the class under my guidance, a parents' evening saw a concerted expression on behalf of the parent group in favour of using Elizabethan costume for the play, partly due to the school's traditional approach to the class VIII play, but also due to a suspicion of the more critical elements involved in a modern setting, considering the latter too experimental and consciously awake. As a teacher, I had not seen this coming, nor was I anticipating any need to defend my pedagogical approach in the way that would have been required to sustain my plans, and so I quickly acquiesced to the will of the parent group. In fulfilling a commitment to take responsibility for the decision rather than disingenuously play politics between the children and their parents, I did present the revision to the students in a way that placed the consultation with the parents in the context of theatre life in general, and specifically the dynamics of financial backers, angels and sponsors, who all contribute to the viability of any project. I also, genuinely, conveyed a personal view that the reversion to Elizabethan costume would be a potentially helpful support for each of them to step into character. Despite this, the atmosphere in the room as I shared this information was palpably painful. Some students argued that they should decide, rather than the parents, but this was argued weakly, as if they already knew the events of the parents' evening, and my experience at this point was of letting the students down. In the event, the Elizabethan costumes, supplied in toto by another school angel, worked very well, and it may be that the parents were correct. But the creative deflation in both myself and the class took some time to recover from, and in future productions a far earlier consultation process with the parent group or a stronger liaison with colleagues within the school supporting the class teacher's pedagogical lead, is clearly necessary.

The pedagogical role of the class teacher in providing a clear direction for the students whilst also allowing as high a level of participation as possible is a spectrum or tension that is part of contemporary teaching discourse and perhaps most clearly present in the growing culture of co-operative learning (Slavin, 1994). I adopted this approach to teaching and differentiation by developing small groups from and with the whole class that were given specific and appropriate tasks. This bore similarities with the differentiated aspects of role play described by Rick Lee (Fig.7) and the varying focus afforded by different frames of experience:

| ROLE | FUNCTION |
|--------------------|---|
| Participant | I am in the event |
| Guide | I show you how the event was: I was there |
| Agent | I must re-enact the event, so that it must be understood |
| Authority | I must re-construct the meaning of the event because it has occurred |
| Recorder | I clarify for those in the future so they may know the truth of the event |
| Press | I was not there but I provide a commentary as to why I think the event happened |
| Researcher | I research the event for those who live now |
| Critic | I critique / interpret the event as event |
| Artist | I transform the event |

Figure 7. General role function in relation to frame distance. Adapted from Lee (1996, p.67).

Such a landscape of intimacy describes the distance of the observer from the focus of attention and echoes the collapsed liminality present in theatre between the audience and performers. It also provides the essential reintegration component of effective rites of passage and that are missing from some adventure based outward bound contemporary versions (ibid.). Also lacking in such attempts to reproduce initiation

rites through intense physical experiences is an effective cosmology which offers an interface of human agency and transformation with the mysterium of the cosmic. The presence of such an interface will determine whether any learning inhabits an existentially neutral and ontologically narrow 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1997) or takes on the potentiated liminality of initiation (Turner, *ibid.*).

In seeking to maximise each student's investment and interest in the project production groups were differentiated according to set design and construction, lighting design, musical composition, wardrobe and make-up. These groups all pursued their tasks reasonably well, reporting back to the whole class during plenary sessions. A cross curricula strategy also worked well with the music, games, handwork, art, learning support and religion teachers all adapting their lessons or offering additional lessons in support of the play. From the third week the whole class was not only off time-table in terms of their usual lessons, but also with regards to the structure of their breaks. This was a risky strategy in terms of holding the infrastructure of the class and their rhythmic landscape, but both necessary and useful in taking them into a altered state of non-ordinary reality where they were not only expected to self-manage their wellbeing within an unfamiliar routine structure, but also to identify and respond to their own priorities for their roles in the production. But as one aspect of the framework around them loosened, another aspect became much more focused and structured as one of the spontaneous reactions to the class and the project.

Within Waldorf education a morning verse, differentiated according to lower school and upper school, is something that unites the tradition across the world. Whilst using spiritual language, it is not considered religious, but rather an honouring of the sacredness of the child and their place within nature and a dedication of the day towards healthy work and growth. My observation in a number of contexts has been that the higher up the school the children move the more surly aspects of adolescence play a part in a mumbling exposition of this verse. As we entered the main lesson block, I began working with posture and voice systematically in a way that included limbering and voice exercises prior to speaking the morning verse, and having the students adopt a centred and neutral standing posture that I was introducing from my own background and training in Chinese health arts, specifically *qi gong*. This level of discipline started to have a positive effect on the class, and I allied it to imaginative work with the range of the class voice itself. At the beginning, I asked the class to imagine their voices reaching to the trees in the surrounding courtyard, the following day it was to the hills surrounding the school, then the mountains, rivers, on to the coastline, the further mountains of Europe and beyond and culminating in a world-wide reach that specifically included all other Class VIIIs in Waldorf schools. At this point, I had received enough response to my survey to share with them the names of those other schools and the plays which their Class VIIIs were producing, for this to have a deeper meaning for their projected voice. The list of productions attracted much interest over breaks. As we continued in to the main lesson block, the impact of individual student absences began to be felt in rehearsals, and in an attempt to work with this positively in terms of the group dynamic, I brought the register into the growing ceremonial aspect of the morning verse by starting with a limbering up and adopting an appropriate posture for the greeting whilst I did the register, pausing on absences and asking for good wishes to be sent to those not present, recognising that we were only as strong as our weakest link. This ceremonial aspect evolved towards the end of the project as an attempt to let off steam by allowing Shakespearean greetings or insults to take the part of the traditional 'Good morning Paul'. Thus, 'Marry sir, I am here!' was an accepted alternative, as was 'Fie on thee wretch, I am here!', although the latter seldom arose. In all, the framing of the day in this way was a indication of how the class as a whole were working with their broader 'gesture' and both posture and language were swiftly changing, affected by a digestion of the language of the play and the requirements of their characters' postures on stage. Thus, under the guise and mask of theatre, they were experimenting with their own expressions, postures, selves.

Seizing the moment soon became a feature of my own directorial skills and was most evident in the penultimate week of preparation when many of the students had still not learned their lines and the class effectively crashed. My best moment as a teacher during this main lesson was, in response to a few students' request to have additional rehearsals over the weekend, to say that I was available but that I needed for them to have a class meeting without me present, to decide what their will was, and to let me know. Accordingly, one student came in for personal tuition on the Saturday and nearly all of the Class came in that Sunday for

extra rehearsals, visibly changed as a result of acting of their own volition. This was balanced by a moment on the following day, the day before the first performance, where I delivered a carefully timed director's rant (suggested by one of the helping parents) that reflected to them precious moments being lost to pettiness rather than at each moment grasping the play and ensuring that all lines and cues were to an appropriate standard, which they were not, even at that late stage. Despite such clear interventions, something must have worked well to the extent that the productions, whilst varied, were good, the final one exceptional, and the class came away feeling good about the production itself and that they had done it themselves.

Conclusion (resonances and wonderings):

'In the last week of June, Class 8, after 4 weeks of precise and dedicated preparation, put on four productions of 'The Comedy of Errors', a play written by William Shakespeare in 1594. They had two casts; the Red Cast and the Blue Cast, and a handful of people had roles in both casts. They made the production almost completely by themselves, doing the sound, lighting and set design; choreographing all the scenes, and introducing the performance with their own MC'

Gnome's Yearly – Class VIII Good News, July 2013

'In a visual age which values spontaneity and sensation over technique, the knowledge of how to play Shakespeare's texts and how to read them may very well not survive. It is urgent that we learn to value his form again and that we learn from form rather than distrusting it.'

Peter Hall (2000, p.70)

The over-arching model for Waldorf Education is that of young human as emerging from a chrysalis of potential rather than a fractured tearing or an imprinted domination. My most immediate experience of this has been observing the difference between the subtle beneficence that iambic pentameter offers the structure of the young adolescent's emerging consciousness, and the apparently brutalising impact of teaching systematic synthetic phonics to 5 year old children who are clearly not ready to 'bite down' on experience in a way that such language acquisition demands. Concerns for a healthy birth and emergence are reflected in Steiner's consideration that our current epoch's cultural challenges are a symptom of the renaissance spirit not having been fully born. So, too, there is a concern for a healthy emergence of the adolescent into their own renaissance, honouring the nurturing restrictions of their childhood but knowing too the powerful liberation of the storms ahead, and how to navigate them. These revolutionary aspects to early adolescence must be navigated with reference to the existing foundations from which such revolutions will arise, and in particular the surrounding cultures of the school and the student's home life.

Shakespeare performed as a reactionary and ill-illuminated homage to Elizabethan imperial glory was not the goal of the production I was involved in, nor did it seem to be reflected in the aims of my global peer group. Almost inadvertently, however, many aspects of our production were Brechtian in their cultivation of consciousness for both the audience and performers. The address to the audience at the beginning of the play, an interspersing of modern songs within the action, the emphasis of various characters' asides to the audience, and the open staging and visibility of set changes all held aspects of Brecht's 'distancing effect' (Thomson & Sacks, 1994). This aspect of critical theatre seeks not to suspend disbelief in the anaesthetic aspects of entertainment, but to awaken human insight into the nature of our situation and condition. Thus, the 'voice' of the bard, liberated in its freedom by the form of Shakesperian verse, provides an internal infrastructure for human expression that is potentiated at during the liminal transitions of rites of passage. The Class VIII play in Waldorf Education is clearly both a theatre production and rite of passage, but maybe elements of drama and liminality are at the heart of all curricula, whether explicit or hidden, and maybe a more prominent professional and academic dialogue on rites of passage in education would serve the healthy development of the bard's voice.

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