RoSE

Research on Steiner Education

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THE CRITICAL POTENTIAL OF WALDORF EDUCATION

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Editorial

Special Issue RoSE 2021

With this special issue, RoSE is aiming to establish an academic discourse on how Waldorf Education and themes related to different elements of its pedagogical theory and practice can be experienced as a critical voice in different social contexts today. The intention behind the special issue is to develop concrete perspectives and answers to the two great and deep questions: *How can children and young human beings learn to say no? How do they learn to think critically?*

Understanding Waldorf Education as a dialogical Pedagogy, it is crucial for Waldorf Education to enter into educational and academic discussions in order to receive new impulses and new questions. Which philosophers, sociologists and other theoretical thinkers should students, teachers and scholars working with Waldorf education take into consideration in order to develop critical views?

In this Special Issue, the authors address the critical potential of Waldorf education in different ways. Three contributions (Boland/ Muñoz, Steinnes and Tjärnstig/Bolland) deal with social issues. Here, Waldorf Education enters into a critical dialogue with different positions in the present. Tyson explores the potential of critical thinking in the tension between curriculum development and pluralism. Dahlin elaborates the critical potential of a particular aspect of Waldorf education. It illustrates that Waldorf education can be compared with other theories and educational concepts in the present and the past. Nome examines the question to what extent Rudolf Steiner and Hannah Arendt follow a similar pedagogical impulse. From a Wittgensteinian perspective, Holm attempts to ground the epistemology of aesthetic educational processes by using a performative exercise as a point of departure for entering into the world of imponderable evidence.

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Henrik Holm (editor of the special issue)

Education for freedom for all? The relevance of contemporary theory to Steiner education

Neil Boland

Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

Joaquin Muñoz

Augsburg University, USA

ABSTRACT. This article considers three current approaches to education for social justice: culturally responsive pedagogy, critical pedagogy and decolonisation. It is informed by the work of Gloria Ladson-Billings, Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux and Linda Tuhiwai Smith among others. It questions the degree to which Steiner education engages with and is informed by contemporary theoretical approaches. It asks in what ways Steiner education can benefit from these discourses and build on them in order to create anti-oppressive, decolonising approaches to Steiner education. It identifies areas of work which may more fruitfully be taken up by other authors, individual teachers and schools, nationally and internationally.

Keywords: social justice, critical education, culturally responsive pedagogy, decolonisation

Introduction

Education and the purposes of education have been stated and debated countless times over millennia. No one purpose has lasted more than a few decades and what characterises this debate is that every society works through the question of education anew, often it seems like once a generation (Beeby, 1988). On one level, it is curious that gains from one generation are rarely passed on intact to another, that the educational wheel appears to need constant reinvention. On another, it can be seen as not so much a reinvention as a constant task to adapt to changed circumstances and changed times. This paper asks if Steiner education is at such a moment, and if there are already existing approaches which may assist it in adapting to changed circumstances and changed times.

Specifically, we take three of these domains – cultural responsivity, critical pedagogy and decolonisation – and look at how they address themes and issues in contemporary society which have arisen in the past few decades. We characterise them with the intention to illustrate how such themes are addressed outside the realm of Steiner education and something of the depth and nuance of thought which has been developed; we then reflect on what these approaches can offer Steiner education as it addresses issues of the present day.

Background

In 1920, when Steiner education was beginning to be practised, Rudolf Steiner founded the Union for Anthroposophical College Work (Bamford, 2010). The members of this group were predominantly young,

interested in anthroposophy and involved in university study. They sought to deepen their university work with understandings gained through anthroposophy. To this end, a series of 'College courses' was organised, starting in the Goetheanum in 1920.

In order to deepen university work with anthroposophical understanding, Steiner said that,

> One would have to be armed with the ingenuity to wed absolutely clear crisp thinking with the intuitive sense that what flows through the steam of anthroposophy can truly bring to science what is needed. One must have the kind of holy fire that enables one to serve such an undertaking. (Sept 25, 1920, quoted in Steiner, 1922/2015, p. xiv)

Although Steiner was strongly behind this initiative, comments at the time and later indicate the presence of a view that such academic work was somehow not 'anthroposophical' and did not come from the same source. It is the beginning of an apparent rift discernible a hundred years later between anthroposophical traditionalists and 'activists' (see preface to Steiner, 1922/2015), between esotericists and academics. Steiner appeared to see no tension between these two, indeed he can be seen as a perfect example of this wedding of both, a role model of how to embody both academic rigour with anthroposophical insight.

In 1922, the College Course was held in Berlin, 6–11 March, attracting academics from a range of disciplines. The format of each day was similar. A lecture by Steiner on the anthroposophical approach or relation to a particular discipline was followed during the morning and sometimes afternoon by lectures on the same topic by experienced and academically trained anthroposophists. For instance, lectures on education were given by Dr Elizabeth von Baravalle, Dr W. J. Stein and Prof. Dr Schwebsch. Steiner's own lecture on education on 8 March, 1922 is relevant here in that, for an academic audience, he firmly links the anthroposophical approach to education to existing educational approaches, theories and theorists.

> In the area of pedagogy, anthroposophy does not wish to oppose in any way the pedagogical principles defined by the great educational theorists, especially during the nineteenth century. … It appreciates great educators as much as everyone else. (Steiner, 1922/2015, p. 48)

Over the last hundred years, we consider it fair to say that Steiner educators appear not to have linked their practice or approach to a significant degree to other "great educational theorists" and have tended to work in isolation from contemporary educational theory and educational science which has developed steadily since then (Ullrich, 1992).[1] This article is a modest attempt to address this lack.

Positionality statement

A convention more and more common in research writing is the positionality statement, important to support the reader in knowing the background of the author/s and, in doing so, indicate ways in which the author's positionality might affect their writing. Secules et al. (2021) go so far as to call it a "requirement for research quality…particularly when working on equity research" (p. 19).

Joaquin Muñoz is a tribal member of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Tucson, Arizona, USA, and currently lives and works in Minneapolis, MN. He is an assistant professor of American Indian Studies and Education at Augsburg University. He came to Steiner Education through the research of his doctoral dissertation (Muñoz, 2016) which focused on Steiner education in the United States and Canada, and examined the similarities and differences of Steiner and Native American and Indigenous epistemologies.

Neil Boland lives in Auckland, New Zealand where he is senior lecturer in education at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and associate professor at the National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan. He was born and brought up in Northeast England and is a white male. He has taught in Steiner settings at early childhood, primary, and secondary levels, as well as leading the undergraduate and graduate programmes in education at AUT. He works at an interface of Steiner education / anthroposophy and other pedagogies

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1.   Notable exceptions to this include publications such as Schieren (2016), but these are few and far between and frequently not in English.

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and philosophies, and considers his understanding of education considerably enriched by both. Aside from Rudolf Steiner, his philosophic influences include Foucault, Deleuze and the critical pedagogy movement.

Our first contact began through email exchanges between ourselves and other teacher educators, and our initial discussions included examining aspects of the curriculum of Steiner education, with an eye towards questioning conventional approaches in pedagogy, as well as investigating critical approaches in education. Along with our collaborative efforts, our individual positionalities are critical to our approaches to research in the area of Steiner Waldorf education, critical pedagogy, and topics for equity and inclusion.

By articulating our positionalities, we acknowledge the ways our identities impact our reading and analysis, as well as placing limitations on our perspectives. In doing this, we also seek to clearly illustrate the importance of identifying oneself in research, in order to empower diverse viewpoints in research, to highlight our privilege and power, and to acknowledge subject identity as critical to understanding.

Themes in modern society

Questions in contemporary society today examine fundamental questions about the human being, the place of the human being in society, and the role of society in relation to the individual. Education researchers have acted as points of resistance to calls for the privatisation of schooling processes and for those which dehumanise students, and are engaging strongly to counter the social inequalities of racism, sexism and oppressive ideologies. The number of educators undertaking this work is consistently increasing, and new teachers are beginning to be versed in theoretical approaches such as critical race theory, feminist theory, and cultural studies. These approaches have become more salient in the realm of education as movements such as Black Lives Matter, the #MeToo movement, #WaterIsLife and Extinction Rebellion have gained prominence in global discourses as well as forming the foci of protests and resistance worldwide. The presence and ubiquity of these topics in private, media and political discussions means that they are undoubtedly becoming topics for students and young people. Young people's thoughts about these topics thus lead us to ask: What responsibility, if any, do educators have to know and be informed by aspects of topics such as systemic racism, sexism, and economic and political oppression? To what degree do educators need to have worked with and through these discourses in order for this knowledge to inform their teaching for social justice?

To explore these questions, we take three approaches to social justice which have arisen during the course of the twentieth century and are still in the process of development. They are culturally responsive pedagogy, critical pedagogy and education for decolonisation.

Recent critical approaches in the education pantheon

For reasons of space, we cannot go into these approaches in detail but hope that what we write below serves to characterise each overall field. For those readers familiar with Steiner education, we ask that you read what follows with Steiner education in mind, to see if and how any of the points and questions raised here find response in Steiner practice or thought, and if and how the points raised have merit if applied to Steiner education. This will be discussed in the next section.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

A critical issue for educators today is the relationship of teaching, learning and schools and equity. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) offers one approach for schools to teach and support equity practices in schools. Because marginalised students often experience education where "invisibility is the norm" (Cammarota, 2006, p. 3), a culturally responsive approach is necessary

> For so-called minority children, especially in the contemporary social context, educational resources and opportunities must include integrating their language and cultural experiences into the social and intellectual fabric of schools, much as these have always been seamlessly integrated into the education of privileged White children. (Moll, 2010, p. 454)

Historically, education can be problematised for its construction and reification of particular identities. Educational institutions create social constructions of "the body as object and target of power" (Foucault, 1975/2019, p. 136). The individual as an object has produced the perspective of the student as an empty vessel, by which the "banking conception" of education to fill "the students with the contents of his narration" (Freire, 1994/2016, p. 71) emerges. Frequently, this narration is embedded within the dominant narrative which is constructed from a mythology of Western–White–European ideals and sensibilities that have occupied the curricular centre of education (Baines et al., 2018). Education is a conduit and constructor by which culture, politics and power shape everyday life (Giroux, 2000), creating a conception of the normal, of common sense, as a function of white/European ideals.

Initially conceptualised as a response to the needs of African-American children, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy supports the development of curriculum and pedagogy for many populations of students, including Latinx youth (Acosta, 2007; Acosta & Mir, 2012; Cammarota & Fine, 2010; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002), Native American students (Brayboy, 2005; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008) as well as Māori and Pasifik peoples (Ministry of Education, 2013, 2018).

Fundamentally, culturally responsive teachers highlight the task of education as enacting "social change" through pedagogy which addresses the "problems of public life" (Giroux, 2006, p. 4). This is similar to the aim of Steiner education expounded at the beginning of the *First Teachers' Course* (Steiner, 1919/2020). In theorising the need for educational stances which highlight equity and social change, Ladson-Billings identified several components of an effective pedagogy, including the incorporation of students' home cultures as a means to support their learning and the recognition of historic injustices in need of remedy.

In our conceptualising of CRP, we draw on the work of Ladson-Billings (1995 a; 1995b), Geneva Gay (2002) as well as critical pedagogues (Giroux, 2000, 2006) and liberation pedagogy (Freire, 1968/2011) as foundational to our understanding. We take four key components that comprise a CRP experience, in addition to the significance of student's lived experience, history and culture in the classroom experience (Krzyzosiak & Stewart, 2019; Larson, 2018):

1. Academic success: Key to this academic development are knowledge and skills in all content areas "in order to be active participants in a democracy" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160). The emphasis on academic achievement is also central to resist discourses which follow cultural responsiveness initiatives, which are sometimes said to sacrifice rigour in favour of self-esteem (Ladson-Billings, 1995a).

2. Cultural competency: Enacting a culturally responsive pedagogy challenges teachers to build spaces in classrooms that are affirming to diverse student experiences, especially when those students are culturally, linguistically and ethnically different from their teachers.

3. Cultural history knowledge: An essential component of CRP for teachers to possess as they engage with students is knowledge of student populations, and in particular, the "cultural characteristics and contributions… the cultural particularities" (Gay, 2002, p. 106) of different ethnic groups. Knowledge of alternative histories and factual information about students and their home cultures "is needed to make schooling more interesting and stimulating for, representative of, and responsive to ethnically diverse students (Gay, 2002, p. 106).

4. Sociopolitical consciousness: Giroux identifies schools as sites for "social and economic reproduction," (Giroux, 2000, p. 112), which maintain social inequities. Ladson-Billings (1995) identifies sociopolitical consciousness to engage students to "critique cultural norms, values, mores and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162). A culturally responsive pedagogy conceptualises education as an institution for resistance, to support a commitment to democracy and to reject commodifying impulses.[2]

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2. See Steiner's comments on the Waldorf School as "a means of reforming, of revolutionizing, education" (1919/2020, p. 16).

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It is worthwhile to reflect to what degree ideas like this are found or form the basis of pedagogical approaches in Steiner settings.

These tenets of CRP seek to create education as the true "great equalizer" (Katz, quoted in Rist, 1973, p. 2) and to actively work against inequalities that "challenge the education of students along various indicators: poor students faring worse than their more affluent counterparts; white students performing better than students of color and others" (Muñoz, 2016, p. 59).

CRP offers a number of responses to questions raised in critical education work, including responses to inequity and injustice wrought by racism, sexism and oppression. CRP also develops learning and educational environments which centralise humanising processes and approaches for students, resisting neoliberal education reforms that reduce students to matriculated digits through the "neurotic comparison of statistical evidence" (Facer, 2011, p. 21). CRP teachers practice humanising work that uplifts the experiences of minoritised groups, offering up schooling spaces as potential sites for healing.

> Culturally responsive pedagogy can construct generative sites for youth of color, Indigenous students, and other minoritized youth, because power is examined and critiqued, especially in considering students "whose language and cultural experiences [do not] count... and… must remain in the periphery." (Moll, 2010, p. 454)

CRP is often cited or enacted in spaces with marginalised youth, assuming it to be a direct method to support only those students; however, CRP is a critically important approach for all students, and is a necessary one to help White/European-descent students recognise the genius of black and brown peoples (Muhammad, 2020). CRP can become a site for critical and equity-minded learning for all students.

The New Zealand Māori academic, Georgina Tuari Stewart, has published strong critique of culturally responsive pedagogy (Krzyzosiak & Stewart, 2019; 2018; 2020) in a New Zealand context. Her view is that CRP by itself cannot undo systemic inequities which have been established over years in New Zealand. Since 1984, teachers in New Zealand have been tasked by policy makers with remedying the educational under-attainment of minority groups (specifically Māori and people of Pasifik descent), while the greater societal and macroeconomic issues remain unaddressed, so hamstringing teachers. Stewart and others call for disruptive approaches to be adopted which are allied more to critical theory (see following section) before culturally responsive pedagogies can begin to take effect. In short, CRP can become an ineffective, surface-level panacea which ends up laying blame at the feet of teachers for not 'solving' the under-attainment of minority groups, while policy makers avoid culpability.

Be this as it may, it is important to recognise that, like the other approaches discussed here, culturally relevant pedagogy represents both a method *and* a set of habits of mind that a teacher must embody in order to practise the method. One of the most critical misuses of CRP has been in failing to enact all of the constituent components of its action. While many teachers will profess the belief in high standards for students of colour and minorities, and some may venture to learn and develop *cultural competence* of the identities represented in the classroom, many teachers are either unable, or reluctant to engage the *sociopolitical consciousness* that is necessary, to "take learning beyond the confines of the classroom…to identify, analyze and solve *real world problems*" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 75, italics added). CRP is an approach, and a habit of mind, which requires a recognition and acknowledgement of the real world problems young people encounter, including the ones we may want to ignore and avoid, like racism, sexism, cultural invisibility, income inequality and climate injustice. CRP implores teachers to engage in "not-on-my-watch pedagogy" (Baines et al., 2018, p. 126) to identify and rectify oppression. It requires a willingness to recognise the challenges and concerns of all students, and a willingness to confront ourselves when these challenges are to the normalcy we may help engender and which may well be advantageous for social groups we represent. In this way, we disrupt oppressive processes that negatively impact our students' lives.

Critical Pedagogy

Another contemporary response to issues of inequity in schools and education is the work of critical educators, emerging from the intersections of critical theory and pedagogy; this includes elements of critical

race theory (Delgado & Delgado, 2017), tribal critical race theory (Brayboy, 2005), and similar approaches. Fundamental to these approaches is the question and critique of power, with a central focus on power dynamics to the functioning of institutions and a deep consideration of how power shapes assumptions of the nature of reality. In critical theory, "the immediate world of fact, the experiences of the senses, and even the given-ness of nature itself are not to be treated as if they were ahistorical and autonomous entities" (Harvey, 1990, p. 3). Critical theory seeks to question, and to cause institutions to question, the nature of their standpoints through an examination and critique of power as related to social position, axiology, ontology and epistemology (Walter & Andersen, 2013). In examining these standpoints, participants in institutions (and institutional organs themselves) can "critique existing affairs" in order to reconsider "social and material processes" (Harvey, 1990, p. 3).

In examining the operation of institutions, attention needs to be given to the ways in which institutions can produce control. Institutions like schools enact beliefs that align with power structures and status quo perspectives, which almost always disadvantage people of colour, women and other minoritised groups. Critical pedagogy attempts to critique and question the actions and mind-sets students are exposed to and then carry with them upon leaving school. Critical pedagogues attempt to denaturalise aspects of schooling, teaching and learning which, at first look, appear to be part of the normal function of schools, but turn out to be dehumanising processes for youth.

It is fascinating to view the history and development of the Steiner movement through this lens and to gauge the distribution of power in Steiner contexts. Steiner education arose out of the movement for social renewal (Steiner, 1919/1999) which seeks to renew society on egalitarian bases. Steiner education can here be critiqued by critical theorists to see the degree in practice to which it instead upholds, or fails to challenge, existing power inequities.

Critical scholars have examined schools and critical pedagogical practices related to schooling and literacy (Freire, 1968/2011, 1994/2016). Other scholars have critically explored implementation processes of educational policy, and examined the implications for the school, the teacher and the student (Giroux, 2000, 2006). Central to this work, and directly pertinent to Steiner education theory and practice, is the continued development of critical pedagogy practices which seek to uncover and undo biases, stereotypes and preconceived notions that essentialise and harm minoritised children and youth, those perceived as 'other'. Critical pedagogies seek to develop school spaces that support all students, focusing on the holistic development of individual capacities of students, while also challenging and critiquing unjust systems and institutions. Previous work examining the outcomes of Steiner education for students demonstrates a potential congruence with the aims of critical pedagogy and Steiner education (Boland, 2015; Muñoz, 2016).

Critical theory and critical pedagogy profess a number of key principles frequently applied in schooling domains. One primary concern is the presence and practice of democracy in society. The democracy articulated by critical pedagogues is one that is actively oriented towards justice, and is aimed at the well-being of society as a whole and of all its members. Critical pedagogy assumes that education is fundamental to a well-functioning democracy, and that a democracy cannot survive without a populace educated in critical ways of thought and action.

A second important aspect of critical pedagogy is an attempt to identify and oppose the so-called 'common sense' assumptions embedded within schooling and teaching practices (Kumashiro, 2015). These assumptions apply to epistemology, practice and content in the classroom. 'Common-sense' epistemology (i.e. the banking model of education), teacher practice (rules, disciplinary action, pedagogy) and content (i.e. that disciplines such as history, science, English are thought of as siloed) frequently disguise a particular cultural construction of these elements and articulate an unquestioned 'common sense' that is, in fact, embedded in a white/European cultural framework and presents itself as *acultural* knowledge. It serves to transmit a particular cultural view that "reproduces and legitimizes the dominant culture" (Giroux, 2011, p. 19). It would be worthwhile for all Steiner settings to audit what cultural knowledge they promote (and do not promote/silence) and what social constructions are endorsed.

A third principle is a recognition of the notion that neutrality in these issues is not possible. Teachers cannot remove themselves to an objective state, or be impartial or neutral in any situation, most especially situations which centre on issues of equity. Teaching is "always broadly political and interventionist in terms of the knowledge-effects it produces, the classroom experiences it organizes, and the future it presupposes" (Giroux, 2007, p. 2). Scholars of critical theory reject the notion that schools are designed as unbiased structures, but actually act as institutions of social and cultural reproduction, often without a critique of power in place (Giroux, 1997, p. 71). Thus, teachers must critically examine themselves and reject the notion of lacking bias or being impartial. This can be confrontational. The teacher must embrace both known and potential biases and impartialities, to prevent enacting pedagogy detrimental to marginalised students, but also to prevent the transmission of these ideas to students from dominant groups as well.

As with the other approaches outlined here, the promise of critical pedagogy, with its intentional focus to "develop a consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, connect knowledge to power and agency…as part of a broader struggle for justice and democracy" (Giroux, 2011, p. 152) can be lost as a function of translation. The work of teaching, including in Steiner settings, is so multifaceted and complex, that simple, pragmatic solutions are often sought to solve classroom situations. While this is understandable, it is problematic for a number of reasons. Not only does this reify tenets of neoliberal discourse in schools (Muñoz, 2016) but also because it can do a disservice to powerful ideas of critical pedagogy. The tenets and practices of critical pedagogy cannot be packaged and sold like a curriculum or syllabus – critical pedagogy can never become a tick-box exercise. On the contrary, critical pedagogy practitioners would vehemently resist ideologies and practices which instrumentalise teaching and learning. The purpose of learning is to comprehend the world in its complexity and contradiction, with attention to "strengthening the imagination and expanding democratic public life" (Giroux, 2011, p. 152).

Decolonisation of and in schools and classrooms

A further development in contemporary progressive education is decolonisation, or decolonising. Decolonisation is rooted in a long history of resistance by Indigenous/original Peoples to imperial or dominating powers that changed the worlds of the original inhabitants across the world and impacted every domain of life. Imperialism, and its expression in colonisation, brought about fundamental changes in economic structures, but also created crucial changes to views of Indigenous Peoples, ushering in attempts at subjugation, including land theft, genocide, religious, cultural and linguistic oppression, enslavement and internment. The process of colonisation altered mind-sets and domains of knowledge about Indigenous Peoples, and created discourses that reached "into our heads" (Smith, 2001, p. 23). This reach impacts the perceptions and identity of Indigenous Peoples, as well as those subject to further impacts of colonialism from enslavement (Emdin, 2016). Colonisation contributes to racist views, sexist views, ableist views, notions of hierarchy and myriad other oppressive conceptualisations of human beings through a fundamental reliance on the view of 'the other' (Smith, 2001). Ultimately, the process of colonisation has shaped powerful discourses about knowledge, ethics, values, and conceptions of reality, fundamentally disrupting power relationships in favour of Eurocentric models. It has shaped whose knowledge, ethics, values, and conceptions of reality are deemed 'correct', acknowledged to be of value and worthy of learning. Colonisation affects us all. Decolonisation seeks to address these historic traumas that continue to impact people today.

In its most basic definition, decolonisation is the process of removing elements of colonial oppression from public spaces. At the same time, it is an effort to repair the traumatic history of colonialism and its residual effects in institutions. In particular, it is the recognition, reconciliation and transformation of systems within structures that both historically and contemporaneously enact colonial processes which engender practices that dehumanise those who are colonised. While this process most frequently emerges in conversations around Indigenous Peoples (Bardwell-Jones & McLaren, 2020), it is critical to recognise that it is much broader than this. Crucial to an understanding of colonisation and decolonisation is a resistance to the notion of 'settler' or 'settlement' as a historic event rather than as an ongoing process (Arvin et al., 2013); the recognition of colonialism as a dehumanising act of erasure (Bardwell-Jones & McLaren, 2020) by

"dominator cultures" (Smith, 2001) and the need to constantly re-centre the understanding of institutions playing a continuously active part in the process of colonisation (Absolon, 2019). These understandings demonstrate the ways that education institutions, structures and practices can contribute to processes of colonisation, such as policies which have banned Indigenous People's language, contributing to loss of language and cultural histories. To those immediately hurt by colonising beliefs, colonisation in schools serves to perpetuate deficit views of groups of people, pathologising their behaviours and cultural practices, and centring their being in wrongness. To those who are members of the colonising group, the colonisation processes can give them a false sense of superiority, robs them of true connections to other people, and engenders false narratives of history and reality.

These are powerful statements which call much into question and can act as a destabilising influence on established traditions. As in critical pedagogy, the notion of 'acultural' expressions of schooling and pedagogy is challenged as decolonising approaches demand that educators identify ways in which they may be unconsciously and unintentionally perpetuating systems and habits of oppression. This work is as potentially uncomfortable in a Steiner setting as anywhere else.

In educational institution contexts, the challenges to these colonising processes are key for the health and well-being of marginalised and under-represented groups and those that have been rendered invisible, all of whom have experienced the unyielding effects of settler-colonialism. It affects all those who are 'othered'. Critical to the work of decolonisation is a basic acknowledgement that power structures of settler-colonialism persist, and continue to impact on those who have suffered through colonisation and colonial thought. Decolonisation reminds us that colonialism is not an "historical point in time away from which our society has progressed" (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 9). Within all schools, this should create an imperative to explore curriculum, pedagogy, management practices, community connection and engagement, and financial transactions for enactment of colonising processes, or as residual legacies of colonisation activity and thought that have remained unchecked.

Decolonising processes seek to uncover the hidden "colonial logics" (Byrd, quoted in Reese, 2008, p. 60) which inform not only the function of institutions, but the underlying assumptions about whom those institutions serve and what purposes they seek to fulfil. Decolonising practices work to unearth the metaphors that we use to justify actions and behaviours in the world, in an attempt to consider how other epistemological stances place relationships and responsibilities in the centre. Working in this framework, decolonising processes work "as part of a larger intent…to address social issues [and] social justice" (Smith, 2001, pp. 3-4).

The work of decolonisation is readily evident in the field of Native American and Indigenous Education (NA/IE), in the context of the United States, where issues of Indigenous People's sovereignty and epistemology are central. Work in NA/IE begins with the right of sovereignty as its central starting point, the assertion of which stands as a declaration against colonisation. A number of studies expand on the work of developing sovereignty within education, looking at it through a lens of decolonisation, and offer a possible "reconceptualization of the parameters for engaging Indigenous students within institutions" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 434).Decolonising sees the incorporation of principles of multicultural education (pluralism, an incorporation of diverse sources, intercultural understanding) as a starting point for the project. Central to decolonising is the attention to processes of *colonisation* and *colonialism*, activity perpetrated (both historically and contemporaneously) to attempt domination "over ways of thinking, knowing, valuing, feeling, doing, being, and becoming" (Reyes, 2019, p. 1). Schools must honestly and critically view how damaging aspects of racism and capitalism impact school practices and processes, while questioning the ways these ideas shape norms (Reyes, 2019).

Colonialism must be understood beyond romanticised versions of history in which intrepid (usually white) explorers fought bravely to bring civilisation to the world (see, for example, Thatcher, 1988). By understanding the continuation of colonialism as a structure impacting the everyday operation of life, not only is a reckoning of history possible, but a clear understanding of the present-day action of colonialism, and negative effects that disproportionately impact those perceived as other can be gained. Decolonisation

cannot be reduced to approaches, or to a programme or a system; rather, it is an approach to content and delivery that rejects the "persistent social and political formation in which newcomers/colonisers/settlers come to a place, claim it as their own, and do whatever it takes to disappear the Indigenous peoples that are there" (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 12). It is in this sense that Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us that decolonisation is an act of creating a preferred future, a civil rights based on justice for all.

With these concepts in mind, we turn our gaze towards Steiner education, specifically to examine its similarities and congruencies with CRP, critical theory and decolonisation, as well as its differences. Here, we will both examine Steiner's own work and conceptualisations of Steiner education as being culturally responsive, and in line with social justice work. This article is an initial exploration of this territory. In it we hope to highlight potential opportunities for this work to occur rather than put forward answers, in order to promote the further expansion of social justice in educational settings.

Steiner education in relation to this work

In the previous section we have characterised three significant discourses which are prominent in thinking about and in education. What they all have in common is a wish to redress entrenched systemic inequities which exist between individuals and between groups in society, so that each individual can reach their fullest potential.

Rudolf Steiner called Steiner education itself an "education for freedom."

> …a teacher's primary task is to nurture the body to be as healthy as possible. This means that we use every spiritual measure to ensure that in later life a person's body will be the least possible hindrance to the will of one's spirit. If we make this our purpose in school, we can develop the forces that lead to an education for freedom. (1922/2004, pp. 48-49)

'Education for freedom' is a phrase frequently used to describe Steiner education. Yet, to what extent is its use justified? So long as systemic inequities remain unidentified and undisrupted, any educational approach is unlikely to achieve an 'education for freedom' for all its students. This is something of an irony and needs, we believe, to be considered carefully and seriously. The noble ideals of Steiner education can be subverted by unconscious bias and unquestioned societal norms which perpetuate what can be termed systemic racism, sexism and other -isms. We believe that most Steiner teachers and parents would state that racism, sexism and others are the opposite of the values they hold, yet until each person experiences "what it means to unlearn certain regressive behaviors, ideas, habits, and values that the dominant culture imposes on [them] as second nature" (Giroux, 2019), significant change will be unlikely.

This is uncomfortable. In saying this we have no intent to denigrate Steiner education – we have a keen interest in its wellbeing and development. Culturally responsive pedagogy, critical pedagogy and decolonisation are topics which all educators in all schools need to engage with: This includes Steiner educators in Steiner schools. Steiner education is sometimes portrayed as at the progressive forefront of educational practice, "the school of the future" (Pauli & Hennig, 2020), a way towards enlightened, holistic teaching. While this may hold good in some ways, in others the wider educational conversation has moved on and achieved advances in areas which appear to us not to be reflected strongly in Steiner practice or theory. It is important to emphasise that what is essential about Steiner education – Steiner's understanding of the incarnating child, his anthropology, the three essential pedagogies, and the nature of childhood – is untouched by these comments. They remain as valid as they were a century ago. It is matters of curriculum choice, resources used, as well as pedagogical traditions and attitudes which are more affected and which we believe need urgent attention. The work of Martyn Rawson into curriculum development indicates a possible direction here (Rawson, 2017; Boland and Rawson, 2021 in press).

Literature for Steiner teachers tends to be inward facing (written by Steiner teachers for other Steiner teachers) and to exist in something of a hermetic void (Ullrich, 2008). Quite a number of books in English on Steiner practice and curriculum available today are reprints of ones written and first published decades

ago, themselves quite often translations from German (Rawson, 2020). Plenty has been written about the tendency of Steiner education towards self-isolation and we applaud and encourage all those who are working to change this tendency. The number of publications which engage in depth with 'outside' literature and seek to explore Steiner education critically– that is, move beyond showcasing its attractions and advantages – is modest. There has developed a 'Steiner' way of doing things, a Steiner vocabulary (which can prove a hindrance to newcomers) and a Steiner way of thinking; literature can perpetuate accepted norms over time rather than extend, deepen and challenge levels of understanding and practice (Denjean, 2014). It is normal for any profession to gather its own vocabulary over time and for newcomers to be socialised into the profession, yet this comes with dangers as well as conveniences (Loughran & Menter, 2019).

Steiner said that "anthroposophy… appreciates great educators as much as everyone else" (1922/2015, p. 48). We question to degree to which this remains the case a century later. To what degree do Steiner educators, teacher educators and mentors engage with (let alone appreciate) great educators and significant educational developments from the later 20th or early 21st centuries? Steiner frequently referenced recent philosophers and related his own work to theirs (among others, see Steiner, 1894/1995). To what extent do Steiner practitioners and educators currently view Steiner education through a lens of contemporary philosophy, or see value in doing this?

Speaking to the needs of the present

In writing this article, in characterising these three contemporary approaches, we have tried not to talk about or even think about any one geography, society, culture or ethnicity. The article will be read in different ways, on different continents by people from different backgrounds, with different experiences.

Culturally responsive pedagogy, critical pedagogy and the decolonisation of education are three ways in which education has responded over recent decades to changing needs and trends within society. Teachers, philosophers, academics and activists have contributed to each field developing discourses of significant complexity and nuance. These discourses are constantly being challenged, refined and developed as educators work towards the distant and possibly unattainable goal of anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory education – a true education towards freedom.

We believe that this work can and should inform Steiner education in appropriate ways. These three pedagogical approaches have moved conversations and knowledge forward. What they lack, in our view, is the essential depth of understanding of the human being and human development which Steiner education offers; what Steiner discourse currently lacks is the critical depth of these pedagogies, which challenge the fundamentally unjust nature of society and which call for social justice to be enacted through education.

Looking forward

This fits well with the mission of Steiner education as it was articulated in 1919. To pick up the idea of Beeby's from the opening, a new impulse enters education once a generation. It is important to identify it and help it become established. A century after the establishment of Steiner education, can we identify new impulses seeking to find place in our societies? The one we have addressed here – social justice – is old yet emerging in new ways all round the world. The roots of social justice issues in Steiner education are long and deep. What are twenty-first century ways in which to work with them?

By engaging with the three discourses we have highlighted, Steiner education has the opportunity to benefit from work done by others in order to explore how these discourses can inform anti-oppressive, decolonising approaches to Steiner education. This could happen in a number of ways.

At the local level, there are already Steiner teachers who have brought anti-oppressive practices into their classrooms which have affected the choice of literature studied, how and whose history is taught, how the world is framed to students. Some of these teachers have gathered together to form groups and so benefit

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from each other's work. This is admirable and we acknowledge and applaud all the work which has been done in these areas. This needs doing on a schools-wide basis so all teachers can engage in its complexity and contradictions to find their own ways to address it.

At the same time, teachers are busy people, engaged at the chalk face, with competing demands on their limited time. They cannot be expected to all do the hard work which decolonising approaches require. Asking teachers to reinvent the wheel individually is a poor use of resources and time. Lack of time brings with it the danger that the work will not be done in depth and will remain superficial. So that it does not remain ad hoc, this needs to be taken up strongly by national bodies. For instance, following work by the then Federation of Steiner Waldorf Schools in New Zealand, a Māori curriculum document was drafted in 2015 to reorientate the taught Steiner curriculum to include and valorise Indigenous content (Taikura Rudolf Steiner School, 2015). In North America, the Steiner movement is promoting and organising a number of learning experiences for teachers, developing curricula to address racism and the invisibility of minority viewpoints, and seeking ways to engage with racial trauma in Steiner communities. Steiner Education Australia has drawn up a multi-year Reconciliation Action Plan to address similar needs (Steiner Education Australia, 2019). Other countries and bodies are doubtless engaged in similar work. Each country has its own demographic and societal needs which need to be addressed nationally. Engaging with these discourses in a deep and measured way rather than reacting to situations and seeking quick-fix remedies will allow more lasting and transformative progress to be made. Additivist approaches to the existing curriculum to demonstrate inclusion, swapping a story from a colonising culture for an Indigenous one, replacing three white authors with three of colour are steps forward but gives quick bolt-on solutions which fail to address the underlying issues which are systemic and are not susceptible to quick fixes (Boland, 2014). National projects can help carry this.

Likewise, there is undoubtedly work to do at an international level. There needs to be high-level discussion about potential Steiner responses to the undoubted systemic discrimination inherent in all education systems (not a specific Steiner problem, but something all institutions must do). This cannot be effectively devolved to schools which do not have the resources, time or necessarily the qualified personnel. Leadership initiatives need to be discussed to research this overall topic and find ways to most effectively address it.

What is possibly the most important way forward is for students in Steiner teacher education programmes to engage with these discourses. For this to happen, teacher educators and the leaders of these programmes need engage with them first. This is ultimately where lasting change will begin. If those with responsibility for the initial development of teachers and the further development of those already in the work (including mentors) are able to incorporate decolonised and decolonising approaches to their work, emerging generations of teachers will be able to learn ways through which they can transform Steiner practice. This way, they will be able to better reflect contemporary social, ethical and educational changes.

In the *First Teachers' Course*, Steiner commented that "teachers must understand the time they live in because they must understand the children entrusted to them in relation to that time" (Steiner, 1919/2020, p. 163). Part of understanding the time we live in, involves engagement with wider educational and philosophical debates to help ensure that Steiner education remains adaptive to new situations and new circumstances, that it does not become a boutique education for the privileged few but a vehicle to bring about social change, leading to an education for freedom for all. It is only in doing this that it will meet the hopes expressed at its foundation.

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The *Bildung* of Humanity and Earth.
The ecospiritual potential of Waldorf education

Bo Dahlin

Rudolf Steiner University College, Norway

ABSTRACT. This paper purports to identify the critical potential of Waldorf education within the context of environmental education and ecospirituality. It sees Steiner's thinking as a further development of early Romantic philosophy and takes both as rooted in Western esotericism. In line with this, the Romantic critique of the mechanistic view of Nature, characteristic of Enlightenment science and philosophy, has a parallel in Steiner's critique of the materialist world view, and how this is spread through mainstream education. Steiner's conception of the relations between humanity and the Earth/Nature is showed to have forerunners in the conceptions of Herder and Novalis. Hence, this is part of the ideational grounds of Waldorf education. The technocratic, neoliberal and capitalist regime, that rules globally today, stands in sharp contrast to the visions of Romanticism, as well as of Waldorf education. This contrast is illustrated by examples from the Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva. Finally, the participatory epistemology and vision of child in Waldorf education illustrate how its critical potential in environmental education and ecospirituality can be realized.

Keywords: ecospirituality, Herder, Novalis, Waldorf curriculum.

> Where there is no vision,
> the people perish.
> _____ *Proverbs 29:18*

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to delineate the critical potential of Waldorf education in the context of environmental education and what has lately been called ecospirituality (see f ex Smith, 2009; van Schalkwyk, 2011). Ecospirituality can be shortly described as a spiritual view of the connection between humanity and Nature or Earth. Drawing upon various sources, Smith characterizes it as the result of humanity beginning "to understand its deep connection within the evolution of the universe and that human wellbeing is intimately entwined with the wellbeing of Earth's ecosystems" (2009, p. 653). Such an understanding of human existence is in strong agreement with the anthroposophical underpinnings of Waldorf education (see further below). Generally speaking, in any form of schooling one may identify two kinds of curriculum elements; I call them ideational grounds and practical-concrete elements. The first consists of the visions, ideas and concepts that inform the *teachers*' understanding of what they are doing and why. The second refers to the subject contents and methods of teaching commonly applied.

Steiner put a strong emphasis on the ideational grounds of Waldorf education, claiming f ex that it makes a great difference for the students if the teacher personally devotes a lot of thought to the nature of human being and development, compared to if (s)he does not entertain such thoughts (cf. Steiner, 1992, p. 27).

Presumably, this would apply also to whether the teacher ponders questions of humanity's relation to the cosmos, or not. It probably affects the "imponderabilia" of the classroom atmosphere, as well as the feeling life of the students.

Against this background the question arises, what are the ideational grounds and practical-concrete elements of Waldorf education that potentially contribute to an ecospiritual environmental education? The notion of "critical potential" implies, that there is something that needs to be criticized, opposed, developed, or overcome. In the various strands of present more or less radical environmental movements, different things are targeted as such objects of criticism (cf. Taylor, 2008). Here, I will especially attend to the rationalistic, mechanistic and materialistic understandings of the human being, society and Nature, as being such targets of critique.[1] Waldorf education does not build on such ideational grounds but tries to overcome them; not in the sense of rejecting them, but by creating a wider, more inclusive, and holistic curriculum (Gidley, 2002).

In our cultural history, for a few decades at the end of 18th and beginning of the 19th century, the early Romantic thinkers also expressed highly critical views of the mechanistic ideas of Nature that developed within Enlightenment science and philosophy (Safranski, 2009). They would surely have opposed the views that we live on a planet that purely by chance has given rise to life and to a particular life-form called humanity (cf. Monod, 1972); a life-form that in itself has no inherent meaning. Neither does the Earth, according to this view, have a meaning, nor any other planet, or the universe itself. Even though they may be causally linked, ultimately the relations between humanity, Nature and the planet Earth are all contingent. They influence and depend on each other in various ways, but there is no essential (spiritual) connection between them.

The Romantics opposed the reduction of all relations to contingency, and the negation of deep connections between things (Safranski, 2009). However, their criticism has often been misunderstood as a rejection of science, research and progress (social and technological) altogether (McGrath, 2012, p. 22f). In fact, many of the Romantics had an *alternative vision* of what science and progress could be. This vision was to a large extent a result of their inspiration from Western esotericism (Hanegraaff, 1998), which also, in its own way, adheres to the ideas of science, progress and development (McGrath, ibid., same page). The Western esoteric tradition (to which anthroposophy belongs) is not opposed to science and progress as such; but it envisages other versions of them – ones which include the reality of the spirit. For this reason, Western esotericism can be called "an alternative Modernity" (ibid., same page) and, by extension, this can be ascribed also to Romanticism. The early Romantics further endorsed many of the social ideals of Enlightenment, such as individuality, freedom, anti-authoritarianism, and equality. But

> …they accuse the Enlightenment of having degraded these very ideals to atomistic individualism, rootlessness, selfinterestedness, and abstract legalism, and they aim to correct this by showing the way to an alternative. (Kleingeld, 2008, p. 269)

Steiner would surely agree with these criticisms (cf. Steiner, 1985). He appreciated Romanticism as an important spiritual impulse in Western cultural history, and often referred to the Romantic thinkers (mainly Goethe, but also Herder, Novalis, and Schelling) with approval, presumably because they anticipated many of his own insights. It is worthwhile to consider Steiner's ideas about education and human development in the context of especially two early Romantic thinkers: Herder and Novalis. Such comparison shows that Steiner really belongs to Western cultural history. Steiner and the early Romantics drew upon the same source of inspiration, viz. that of Western esotericism. In the Romantics, however, this inspiration is mixed with contingent influences on the level of individual biographies (Safranski, ibid.), whereas in Steiner's anthroposophy it is fairly coherently expressed as an organic "system" of ideas.

In the following I first shortly present Herder's and Novalis' Romantic understanding of the *Bildung* of humanity and of the Earth. This is also an important aspect of anthroposophy and therefore part of the ideational ground of Waldorf education. Second, leaning on Vandana Shiva and other critical voices I describe the human, social and ecological consequences of the techno-politico-capitalistic "machine" that

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1. I disregard here the many alternative perspectives that *also* exist in f ex educational science and research; none of which, however, have found a general acceptance among policy makers and teachers.

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destructively eats its way through the world. I believe it is necessary to see these threats clearly, in order to awaken the courage and energy to work against them. Serious study of these threats could be part of the Waldorf curriculum in higher grades. Finally, I will describe some ideational and practical-concrete elements of Waldorf education, having to do with a participatory rather than objectivistic epistemology, and the postponement of cognitive judgment until puberty. These, I argue, are important elements for a sustainable ecospiritual education.

The Romantic vision

Menschenbildung – the cultivation of humanity

The idea of *Bildung* is sometimes traced back to the medieval German mystic Meister Eckhardt, who based this idea on the biblical notion that the human being is created in the image (*Bild*) of God (Bechthold-Hengelhaupt, 1990). In stark contrast, the word today in common speech is most often used to denote knowledge personally assimilated as a kind of mental baggage.

The Romantic idea of *Bildung* is different from both of these alternatives. It is about the human being shaping her own humanity. This is expressed in the term *Menschenbildung*, which was coined by J.G. Herder in the 18th century (Herder, 1989) and has a deep spiritual meaning. Steiner (1987a) considered Herder as belonging to the theosophical fold, even though Herder never used the term himself. For Steiner, Herder was someone who studied the Christian scriptures in order to strive for higher soul development and to find a connection with the world spirit (*Weltgeist*) (Steiner, ibid., p. 442f).

Herder considered the human being as basically not a "being" but a becoming. Nothing in creation stands still, it is always moving and developing. But the becoming of humans is essentially *open*, not regulated by Nature in a pre-determined way. In this respect, humans are different from animals. An individual animal can only develop so much within the framework given to it by Nature; it would take numberless generations for it to change essentially as a species. The human individual, however, can in principle make quantum leaps in its *individual* evolution.[2] These changes are, in comparison to those of animals, open and not predetermined by Nature. Therefore, Herder could say that the human being is the first being "let free" of creation (Herder, 1989). *Menschenbildung* for Herder meant the evolutionary change of humanity, created out of humanity itself. Humanity's remoulding of itself and of its culture and life-conditions he called "the promotion of humanity" (*Beförderung der Humanität*) (Safranski, 2009, p. 23). However, the open, free, and autopoietic character of humanity's future *Bildung*, the absence of a predetermined goal, was not a nihilistic stance on the part of the Romantics. Herder, as well as Coleridge, Wordsworth and others, realized that the ideal of self-determination must be nourished by a moral or spiritual vision of what we ought to become (Engell, 1981, p. 247). For the Romantics, the production of such a vision was the work of *imagination*, which they considered to be a mode of transcendental knowledge, not to be mixed up with mere fancy (ibid., p. 176).

The idea that everything is history, even Nature itself, was a new way of understanding the world in Herder's time (Safranski, ibid.). By seeing the history of Nature as an evolutionary process, divine creativity is drawn into the process of Nature. Nature's developmental history has gone through the stages of the mineral, the plant, and the animal. Each stage contains the seed of the next one, and they are all pre-stages for the human. The specific nature of the human stage is that here the creative process is handed over to humanity itself. Nature abdicates its ruling position and gives it to humanity. The powers that enable humanity to take on this task are intelligence and language. The human being's relative lack of instincts and of protection against hostile environmental forces makes the task a necessity. Thus, our creative power is an expression of both strength and weakness.

For Herder (as for Steiner), there is a significant difference between a living and concrete intellect, and a dead, abstract one. Living thinking dives down into the unconscious and irrational elements of existence; into the creative, driving-driven *life*.[3] Abstract reason stays on the surface of life, most often content with

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2. This is in line with Steiner's view that human *individuality* corresponds to animal species (Steiner, 1987b).
3. Novalis would later propose the notion of the "night-side" of the human being (die Nachtmensch) and suggest its necessary

categorizing phenomena and mapping out the external relations between them. For Herder, the concept of "humanity" is actually such a dead abstraction. In reality there are only individual human beings, each one involved in their own specific process of becoming human. Certainly, nobody can live for themselves only, but society should be arranged so that everyone has optimal freedom to realize their potential (Safranski, ibid., p. 21).[4]

Not only is there no humanity in general, there is also no single faculty of reason for all mankind, as the Enlightenment philosophers liked to believe. Reason is culturally conditioned by its time and place in the world; and no cultural form of rationality is more valuable than any other. Just as childhood is not of less value than adulthood, each culture with its particular characteristics is of equal value to the whole.[5]

The role of knowledge and learning in becoming human is therefore pragmatic and contextual. Knowledge has no intrinsic value in itself, it is primarily functional. This comes to clear expression in one of Herder's followers in anthropology and linguistics, Wilhelm von Humboldt. For Humboldt, the purpose of higher studies in History, Greek, and Mathematics was not that the students should become learned scholars in these subjects, but that they should develop their spiritual capacities and human potential. Humboldt says:

> It is the ultimate task of our very existence to achieve as much substance as possible for the concept of humanity in our person, both during the span of our life and beyond it, through the traces we leave by means of our vital activity. This can be fulfilled only by the linking of self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestrained interplay. This alone is the yardstick by which each branch of human knowledge can be judged. (2000, p. 58-59; italics here)

Humboldt developed these ideas in the context of academic studies, but in Waldorf education they are applied already in the early school years. German didactic theories of *Bildung* has an interesting concept related to this: *Bildungsgehalt*, perhaps translatable as "educational formation content" (Klafki, 1963). Each subject has a certain content which has the potential of serving the child's or the student's "becoming-human", their *Menschenbildung*.[6]

Bildung der Erde

Herder's reflections on human development included cosmic issues. When seeing, he says, that the places which our Sun occupies in the galaxy, and that this Earth occupies in our "Sun temple" (the solar system), are determined by laws, I will not only be full of joy in stepping into the harmonious choir of numberless living beings, but I will also consider it to be my most sublime task to ask "what I in this place *should* be, and probably only in it *can* be?" (Herder, 1989, p. 21; my transl. and italics). In other words, what is the meaning of human life *on Earth*, considering that the Earth lawfully belongs to the solar system, and this in turn to the cosmos?

Novalis may have picked up this question of Herder's.[7] In one of the fragments in his *Pollen* (*Blüthenstaub*, #32), he says: "We are on a mission: we are called upon to educate the Earth".[8] The book consists only of inspired fragments, so there is no further explanation.[9] Wood (2007) mentions that Novalis' "Romantic Encyclopedia" (*Das Allgemeine Brouillon*) is a following up of this proclamation, but says nothing about how or why. The *Bruoillon* is Novalis' unfinished project of creating a Romantic version of an encyclopaedia

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integration with the "day-side" of rational consciousness. Cf. Steiner (1998; lecture 1).

4. Cf. Steiner's (1985) ideas for social three-folding.

5. Jensen, A.K., "Philosophy of history", *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* https://www.iep.utm.edu/page/7/?cat=-1#H8. (Accessed 2020-07-14)

6. In Waldorf education not only academic subjects serve *Menschenbildung*, but also practical and aesthetic ones.

7. Steiner considered Novalis a "foreboder" (*Vorboten*) of anthroposophy (1991a, p. 172).

8. "Wir sind auf einer Mißion: zur Bildung der Erde sind wir berufen." https://www.lyrik.ch/lyrik/spur3/novalis/novalis3.htm. (Accessed 2020-07-16)

9. The early Romantics favoured fragments and called them "tasks for thought" (*Denkaufgaben*) (Kleingeld, 2008, p. 279, note 32). Fragments were supposed to activate the thinking of the reader and they bore witness to the impossibility of capturing the whole truth in one single system of thought. The fragmentary way of expressing philosophical insight may seem to contradict the holistic principle behind the Romantic world conception. However, if all fragments are seen in the light of each other – even perhaps as mirroring each other in various ways – the "Whole" may be intuited as an implicit vision informing all the fragments.

The Bildung of Humanity and Earth. The ecospiritual potential of Waldorf education

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of all knowledge. The project of "educating the Earth" has often been interpreted as a political idea about educating the various people of the Earth in this Romantic knowledge (cf. Kleingeld, 2008). The purpose would be to elevate humanity to a higher level – "the goal of all goals" for Novalis and his Romantic friends (Wood, ibid.). However, I'd like to suggest that such an evolutionary change of humanity would, according to Novalis, also affect our planetary home, *the Earth itself*.

This interpretation is based on the conception that Earth and humanity are internally related, that they belong together in an inseparable way. During eons of time, humanity and the Earth have evolved in mutual interdependence (Bosse, 2019). In Novalis' world conception of magical idealism, everything in the world is mirrored in everything else (cf. Liedtke, 1999, p. 179). The Earth is constituted by the whole Universe, and the human being is constituted by the Earth. But humanity also affects the Earth, not only through its actions but through its inner state of mind. Earth and humanity are mutually related by their "sensibilities and irritabilities" (ibid.). "Bildung des Geistes ist Mitbildung des Weltgeistes" says Novalis (quoted in ibid., p. 179). We could also say, "Menschenbildung ist Mitbildung der Erde".

Steiner often pointed to such an inner connection between humanity and the Earth. He pointed to the necessity of being aware of the stage of the total Earth evolution that we are living in (Steiner, 1998, p. 9ff). The human being must find her place in the whole historical becoming of her planet (*Sich-Hineinstellen in das ganze Geschichtliche Werden seines Planeten*) (ibid., p. 12). Furthermore, in another lecture, he even claimed that human soul drives and a mindset of "practical materialism" (*eine praktisch-materialistische Gesinnung*) may influence deep levels of the internal planet, causing volcanic eruptions and other natural catastrophes (Steiner, 1989a, p. 42). Of course, this flies in the face of most modern (Western) people, schooled (or indoctrinated) as we are in the scientific-materialist world view. One should remember though that we cannot go deeper into the Earth than a small fraction of its radius; much of what we know about its inner depths is inferential and uncertain. However, I do not have the competence, nor is this the place to argue for or against Steiner's claim. Suffice it to note that it agrees with Novalis' view of the internal relation between mankind and Earth.

The practical-materialist vision

In this section I present some examples of how what Steiner calls "the practical-materialist mindset" is affecting our planet's biosphere as well as human/social life. I believe that these facts should be generally known and contemplated, *especially by teachers*, in order to realize the seriousness of our situation. About a hundred years ago, Steiner pointed to the potential disasters awaiting mankind, if materialist science and morals were not abolished (Steiner, 1980, p. 143). He also hoped that Waldorf education would play a significant part in changing the course of events. Are Waldorf schools taking on this challenge? Looking at the examples below, must we not ask ourselves how they can be addressed in the Waldorf classroom? If Steiner's hope is to be realized, teachers must inform themselves about the world situation, and present it to their students, in line with Steiner's (1993) recommendation that teachers in the higher grades should be *representatives of the world* to their students.

That humanity is seriously affecting the Earth is being more and more recognized today. It is expressed by the term anthropocene, denoting a new epoch of Earth evolution, in which humanity plays the main role, particularly by all the ways in which we disrupt the ecology of Nature (for a more elaborate discussion of the term, see Lewis & Maslin, 2015). Of course, humanity in its form of *homo sapiens* has always had a certain impact on Nature, but through the unprecedent development of science and technology in the last centuries, this impact has increased enormously. And the root cause of this development is precisely what Steiner called "the mindset of practical materialism", as mentioned above.

Inspired by Vandana and Kartikey Shiva's book *Oneness vs. the 1%* (2018), I use the term "TPC-machine" for the assemblage of technology, politics, and capitalism, and their interacting mechanisms for appropriating money and power over the future development of humanity and the Earth.[10] Shiva and

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10. For Deleuze and Guattari, a "machine" is anything that acts or make things happen. Human beings can be constituents of a

Shiva describe numberless examples of how biotechnology and financial/corporative capitalism buy into politics and threaten bio- and cultural diversity, as well as democratic developments of humanity's various interactions with the Earth.[11] The technology aspect includes GMO production, agrochemical technology, geo-engineering, and information technology. The latter is the common denominator of them all. The political aspect includes business and government co-operations, as well as the heavy use of lobby groups in order to bypass democratic decision making. The capitalist aspect includes above all financial capitalism – making money on money – and the merging of companies in ever bigger corporations in order to centralize economic power.[12] All of these areas involve more or less immoral, even outright criminal actions.

Vandana Shiva's evaluative perspective is that of biodiversity, of indigenous people, and of the small farmer. From this point of view the so-called Green Revolution of biotechnology is revealed as nothing but a fraud, launched by the TPC-machine and its servants. The strategy used is described by Shiva as follows:

> You create a new field [of GMO plants or medical drugs], you invest in it. You force governments to invest in it, you destroy the regulation. You destroy the alternatives, you attack the scientists. And you create a whole machinery for your monopoly.[13]

Shiva & Shiva (2018) give examples of how this strategy has been used by Western companies, especially in India and Africa.

The practical-materialist mindset creates monocultures of people (cultures), as well as of crops. GMO crops often yield impressive harvests for the first couple of years – provided the patented seeds are supplied with expensive fertilizers and pesticides. After a long time of persistent use, the crops may again be decimated by pests (Shiva, 1993; see also Hawthorne, 2002).

The TPC-machine is one of the main contributors to the climate crisis. Industrialized, fossil fuel-based agriculture contributes 50% to global warming (Shiva & Shiva, 2018, p. 63). At the same time, Monsanto (now Bayers) is using digital technology

> …to pirate climate resistant seeds that farmers have bred, turn climate data and soil data into new commodities for new monopolies, and link them to insurance. The company sees a 3 trillion USD market in agriculture with the convergence of data, insurance, seeds and chemicals. (ibid.)[14]

The plant world may be the main focus of industrial and GMO agriculture, but such agriculture contributes to global warming, which in turn influence the emergence of new viruses, or the spread of the already existing ones.[15] And so does global deforestation, which has been clearly described by science journalist Sonia Shah (2016). The TPC-machine relates to animals with the same senseless crudity as to plants and forests. Animals are subjected to horrible tortures in order to provide data for the creation of new medicines. They are often subject to terrible stress when transported to be slaughtered, and in the slaughterhouse itself. The emotional stress that they suffer creates good conditions for virus transmutation and the emergence of new infectious diseases (Glöckler, 2020).

Anthropocene will perhaps be a rather short period in Earth's history as our cosmic home may soon become uninhabitable. Some time ago Stephen Hawking announced humanity's need to find a new planet to colonize within 100 years, because the one we have lived on so far is collapsing.[16] The logic of colonization

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machine, f ex of the capitalist machine (2004, p. 504ff).

11. The book is a bit unsystematic in its disposition and not all of the events described are verified by sources. But enough of them are.

12. How financial capitalism is linked to information technology has been marvellously described by Schirrmacher (2013).

13. See f ex "Why the Bill Gates global health empire promises more empire and less public health", available: https://thegrayzone.com/2020/07/08/bill-gates-global-health-policy/ (Accessed 2020-07-20).

14. Cf. "Monsanto to acquire the climate corporation, combination to provide farmers with broad suite of tools offering greater on-farm insights", available: https://www.monsanto.com/news-releases/monsanto-to-acquire-the-climate-corporation-combination-to-provide-farmers-with-broad-suite-of-tools-offering-greater-on-farm-insights/ (Accessed 2020-07-18). For "tools" read digital gadgets, for "insights" read data.

15. See "Viruses and climate change: how the two threats converge", available: https://www.bbva.com/en/viruses-and-climate-change-how-the-two-threats-converge/. (Accessed 2020-07-20).

16. "Stephen Hawking: We have 100 years to find a new planet", available: https://www.ecowatch.com/stephen-hawking-bbc-2392439489.html. (Accessed 2020-07-21).

is also part of the TPC-machine's construction. Capitalism needs new markets, or new land from which to extract raw material (Shiva & Shiva, 2018, p x-xi). In times past, these drives joined forces with the military to conquer new territories. Today, violent aggression is less needed because softer but more fraudulent means have been found to achieve the same goals. Colonization seems now, however, to take on cosmic proportions. Herder's question, what can humanity become *on Earth***,** has been neglected for a long time. Today it is probably forgotten that there once was a human being seriously asking it. How do we deal with these issues in the Waldorf school?

What we have looked at so far fall outside of the usual framing of Waldorf education, which is commonly conceived solely within the horizons of Steiner's lectures and books. However, the vision of the Romantics and the activist criticism of Vandana Shiva (and others) could easily be incorporated into the ideational grounds of Waldorf education; in my view they could even be subject contents of the curriculum. In the next section I deal with elements which fall more directly within the horizons of Steiner's educational thinking.

Specific Waldorf curriculum elements that have a critical potential for environmental education

A participatory epistemology

Technology is based on science – the two are becoming ever more inseparable – so technology becomes a Trojan horse for the scientific materialist world view. The "T" of the TPC-machine therefore brings along conceptions of mainstream science, its epistemology and its "dogmas" (Sheldrake, 2012).[17] Unfortunately, science teachers in general may become unintentional servants of the TPC-machine by transmitting the "dogmas" of science and its epistemic stance of objectivism and subject-object dualism. Teachers, of course, are not supposed to proclaim any particular world view, but scientific materialism remains implicit in the very discourse of science, unless one keeps strictly to observed facts only (cf. Dahlin, 2001; see also Bosse, 2019, p. 494ff).

We noted in the beginning that for Humboldt, the only value of knowledge from an educational point of view is how much it contributes to the *linking of the self to the world* in a most general, animated, and unrestrained interplay. How much can science education contribute to the realization of such an ideal? Of course, those students who for some reason find science interesting and rewarding will in it also find a link to – primarily – the world of science and research. But for all the rest? Some basic epistemic elements of natural science are 1) subject-object dualism, 2) impersonal and objectifying observation, and 3) physicalist reductionism. Therefore, in the picture of the world that it presents, we find nothing of our soul and spirit; we are essentially left out of it. How then can this knowledge link us to the world? I am not saying that it cannot, but in order to find the link we have to move into another epistemological stance than that of present science. The early Romantics were the first to elaborate such an epistemological alternative (Goethe, Novalis, Schelling, a.o.); and Steiner further developed it.[18] The alternative I consider most interesting in this context is that of *participation*, suggested by Tarnas some decades ago (1998, p. 433ff). Tarnas sees the Romantic philosophers as forerunners to this epistemology. It is based on the insight that Nature does not exist as an independently given reality external to the human mind. "Rather, nature's unfolding truth emerges only with the *active participation* of the human mind" (ibid., p. 434; my italics). The mind is not outside the world as a passive observer; it actually participates in what is perceived and cognized.

Steiner's philosophical and educational ideas are based on a similar conception (Schieren, 2012). For Steiner, the participation aspect of cognition means that the *will* is actively involved in thinking and the formation of conceptions. Waldorf pedagogy and curriculum are constructed so that students may come to see, or at least feel subconsciously, that they participate in the phenomena they study (cf. Dahlin, 2017, p. 100f). In studying the world, they in a certain sense study themselves. A good practical example of this idea

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17. Sheldrake identifies ten "dogmas" of science; these include for example "Nature is mechanistic", "Matter is unconscious", and "Nature has no purpose".

18. Nowadays there are of course a number of alternatives to objectivist epistemology, but they are mostly discussed outside of natural science itself (see f ex Harding, 1998).

is the "working and learning on a farm"-project, described by Schieren (ibid).[19] Naturally, the participatory epistemology is not an explicit content of the curriculum, but an underlying guiding principle for teaching and instruction. As such, it probably works better against the subject-object dualism of mainstream science epistemology.

Awakening interest in the world

Genuine participation implies active interest. According to Steiner's development psychology, if teachers cannot awaken an active interest in the world in their teenage students, the students' interests will turn back on themselves, on their own pleasures and wellbeing (Steiner, 1993). Thus, one may wonder if the widespread self-centred attitudes of modern societies are (at least partly) the result of boring school experiences; of lessons that have been unable to awaken a sound interest in the world and a healthy disregard of one's own self?

Already in 1929/30 Ita Wegman, close friend of Steiner's, published an article in which she prophesized that the times were not far off when humanity would need to become more responsible for the future of the Earth (Wegman, 1929/30). She realized that the history of humanity and the changes of Nature would become ever more intertwined and that humanity's responsibility for the Earth would increase. Since that time, there have been many alarm bells ringing and calling for action against the ecological crisis. One wonders why the majority of us still not heed these calls enough to *really* change our lifestyles and policies. Is it because we are actually more interested in our own comfort and pleasure, than in the planet and its future? Is this due to having spent our teenage school years in too many non-enthusiastic, boring lessons, unable to awaken any impulse to link up with the world in active, non-self-centred ways? Have the effects of such boring lessons perhaps been amplified by media and advertisement, pushing us to become dutiful consumers of things that enhance our own "well-being" (Ewen, 1976; Wearing, McDonald, & Wearing, 2013)? Meanwhile, the TPC-machine has gathered and developed its forces.

Postponing cognitive judgment

In connection with the possible loss of interest in the world, it is worth mentioning one result from the evaluation of Swedish Waldorf schools carried out by some colleagues and myself about fifteen years ago (Dahlin, Nobel, & Liljeroth, 2007). Comparing the engagement in social and moral questions among Waldorf and mainstream school students, we found a higher level of such engagement among Waldorf students, when comparing responses from the twelfth school year (the late teens). Comparing the responses from the seventh school year with those of the twelfth, the engagement *rose* among the Waldorf students but remained the same or even sank – in some respects – among mainstream students (cf. Dahlin, 2010).[20] In line with this, another comparative study by Gidley (1998) noted that upper secondary Waldorf students showed more willingness to act for a better future, and were less likely to merely refer passively to general technological development as the solution for ecological problems.

The postponement of cognitive judgments to later school years is a well-known aspect of Waldorf education. I hypothesize that the greater interest shown by late teenage Waldorf students in social and moral problems is due to not having been exposed in early years to information that demands making individual cognitive judgments. This is partly supported by Ashley's (2005) reflection on the comparative study of British Waldorf and mainstream schools: such early exposure may result in "early closure", i.e., losing interest. This illustrates the importance of right timing. Ordinary developmental thinking very often follows the simplistic logic of one-dimensional, linear models. A common notion is therefore that if something needs to be learned, it is best to start as early as possible. Child development is however more complex than that, and Steiner recognized this. He therefore carefully pointed out the suitable age for bringing in various teaching subjects and methods.

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19. The farm was organic, the students were in the nineth year, and they were living on the farm for two weeks.
20. This was based on the analysis of cohorts, not on longitudinal data.

Thus, in the teenage school years, soul forces are liberated that seek answers to the "big questions" of life (Steiner, 1993). Students instinctively long for the teacher to narrate and explain not only the causes but also the purposes and goals that drive world events. The teacher is no longer a storyteller for children, but a narrator of *real-life* stories for becoming adults.

The Earth is a living being

The real-life stories told by the teacher could be about the TPC-machine and its ravages – but then also about the resistance to it. One relatively recent expression of this resistance is the rights of Nature movement. It launches the idea that "Mother Earth is a living being"[21] and should therefore be given judicial rights.[22] Steiner himself said humanity has to learn (again) to see itself as inextricably part of the life of the Earth, and that it would give our cultural life a huge impulse toward morality if already in childhood we came to understand that the Earth suffers from our immoral deeds (1989b, p. 129f). Some Waldorf schools are lucky enough to have a school garden, which may provide the opportunity for such intimate experiences of Nature and Earth.

Summary and conclusion

To sum up, this paper has identified the following ideational grounds (points 1-3 below) and practical-concrete elements of the Waldorf curriculum (points 4-5), that have the critical potential to counterbalance scientific materialism and capitalist/consumerist exploitation of Nature:

1. the Romantic view of especially Herder and Novalis, that humanity and Earth belong together in an essential/spiritual sense;

2. the participatory epistemology inherent in Steiner's understanding of knowledge and learning;

3. promoting the experience of Nature/Earth as a living being;

4. awakening a moral interest in the world in the higher grades; and

5. postponing cognitive judgment to these grades.

The views of Herder and Novalis, the participatory view of learning, and the experience of Earth as a living being are all "romantic" elements that can be found in Steiner's anthroposophy. They are also in agreement with the principles of ecospirituality (Smith, 2009). The postponement of cognitive judgment to higher grades goes together with awakening interest in the world in the same grades. These latter points are important contributions of Waldorf education to a fruitful ecospiritual approach to environmental education. Without them, what is possibly achieved in lower grades may be undone in higher grades through "early closure".

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21. See https://pwccc.wordpress.com/programa/. (Accessed 2020-07-23).
22. See for example https://www.earthlawcenter.org/, and https://therightsofnature.org.

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Art as Practice of Differentiation: From a Performative Exercise to the Epistemic World of Imponderable Evidence

Henrik Holm

Rudolf Steiner University College Oslo, Norway

ABSTRACT. How does art help to differentiate reality for us? My reflections start by describing a small performative exercise in a teaching context. What kind of knowledge arises when we experience a shift in the reality we expect to encounter in teaching contexts? How can we understand such aesthetic shifts in an epistemological and academic context? Wittgenstein creates an intellectual environment in which it is possible to reflect on artistic processes as tools of differentiation. Thus, new, critical perspectives on how we experience the world we exist in are made possible – through art, through participation in artistic settings and not least through reflecting on art. In this article, I only indicate some central Wittgensteinian patterns in aesthetic epistemology.

Keywords: Art and reflection, Performance, the Art of Teaching, Wittgenstein, imponderable evidence

> Perhaps what is inexpressible
> (what I find mysterious and am not able to express)
> is the background against which whatever I could express has its meaning.[1]
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A thought-provoking experience:
My little performative exercise as an example of differentiation

Some time ago, I was thinking about whether I could use surprises and new settings in order to break with the expectations of my students. When attending my lectures, they enter the room with the usual expectations, and three minutes before I begin they always know what is going to happen. One day, I wanted to startle these normal and everyday expectations. The day before I had told them to give a brief introduction to Adorno`s *Aesthetics*, and then we would begin to discuss his great essay "On Lyric Poetry and Society". We had a course on aesthetic experience and philosophy of art. I decided to enter the room five minutes early and turn on some funky soul music.[2] Then, I wrote "aesthetic experience" on the blackboard and sat down waiting for the students to gather in a circle, which is how we usually sit. About ten students were present that day. I was very excited to see their reactions. They were all quite relaxed and had smiling faces. Some of them asked questions about the music, but no one asked why we were listening to this music in the first

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1. Wittgenstein 1980, p. 16.
2. I used this remix: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZcLBeba6eY (16.11.2020).

place. I felt that the music put them in a good mood and gave them a feeling of liberating happiness. Now, I was presented with a challenge as to how I should proceed. I decided to just sit there on my chair, halting my introduction on Adorno. I asked them instead whether they liked the music, and in fact everyone did. The following questions came to my mind and I couldn't get the following questions out of my mind: Is it possible for me to experiment with the moment right now? What does it mean to play with the moment right now? Does it make sense to experiment with the moment right now? To just break off the whole situation would be embarrassing. I felt that I had to start with a discourse on what we were doing. So I asked them the simple question: What are we doing now? By asking this, I felt better and more comfortable with the situation. The students gave some answers. However, at the same time I was listening to them, I felt a sort of weakness and insecurity: Had it been a sign of weakness to begin with discourse? Would it not have been better to expose myself a bit longer to the situation back when no one knew how it would progress? In the moment, I felt an impulse that I had not been anticipating while I was preparing this little performance. I decided to act on the impulse and, while feeling that what I was about to say would open up for a new uncontrolled experience, I confessed to my students: "You know, I feel very unconfident and I am unsure how long I can let this pass. This feeling disturbs me." They were laughing and began to comfort me by saying things like "we should listen to more music", "I find it cool", "Shall we dance?" and so on. I noticed that the mood in the entire room had changed for the better. I had been honest about my insecurity and by opening up like this, my students opened up for new forms of participating in return. The new mood created an atmosphere in which they could be more open-minded to each other. "Ok, let`s start by describing what is happening now", I said, while pointing to the blackboard on which the words "Aesthetic experience" were written. Is it possible, I wondered, to capture this moment by describing it? "What is happening now?" I asked my students. We entered into an interesting discourse on the descriptions of the aesthetic experiences and while talking we noticed how we were moving away from the music. Perhaps this is symptomatic of the tension between experiencing and reflecting at the same time. What caught my attention and got me thinking, was the fact that the music had inspired the reflections of the discourse. After a while we tuned into the funky music again and stopped the reflection. For me, this was reason enough to ponder on the happening itself. I turned the music off after twenty minutes.

Reflecting upon the little performative exercise

When I am trying to figure out how I would describe the performance in my lecture, I am fascinated by the attentive and thought-provoking movement of stepping in and out of both the musical-aesthetic experience and the reflections on it fascinating. In my view, they were triggering each other. I will use my little exercise in performance as a reference for the following reflections on the performative art of teaching. Does it really make sense, one could ask, to write about my exercise? I can never reach an understanding of the unique situation by describing it with a few words. The reason for writing about it is to open a reflection process on performative teaching. My little performative exercise serves a possible point of departure for reflections on art as a kind of differentiation practice. As shown in my example from the lecture, performances can provide a new openness when done correctly. The whole enterprise can of course fail very easily, but to expose oneself to the possibility of failure is perhaps the most exciting part of the process. Even the smallest things can leave you with a feeling of embarrassment, but the potential outcomes of using the performance as a medium for a new openness are worth the risk. What is this performative openness, then, and in which way is the performance a medium for acquiring the openness? In the following, I will look into three fields of openness.

First field: A performance exercise would miss its point if the teacher would be able to control and calculate the openness before it takes place. The openness turns every participant into an actor. Exposing everyone in the room to this possibility of sudden action is part of the indefinite openness. To break with our own expectations in order to feel the moment in terms of its difference to the situation we had expected changes our attention and reaction. Am I a part of a game? What is my role? Trying to define one's role on the performative scene is an ongoing process happening while willingly or unwillingly taking part in the situation. It includes paying attention to the performative elements of the whole situation (in my example, the funky soul music) and to the other participating actors (the students). This form of openness is a formal

openness. How we experience it depends on how every individual responds to the performative elements. It is difficult to say anything about whether the good feeling in the group was inspired by the music we were listening to. I did in fact calculate that a good mood would arise when choosing this particular music. With other types of music, the performative situation would obviously not be the same. Although no performative situations are identical, the performative use of a particular device, such as my funky soul music, evokes similarity in different contexts. The experience of similarity is one thing that makes reflections on performative teaching interesting.

Second field: An inexplicable feeling emerges and shapes new expectation. Every participant is wondering what is going to happen next. In anticipating the next moments, they lose the presence of the given moment, which is a presence of being in the music. The students may become distracted by wondering whether the teacher carries out some didactic intention by playing the music. If the teacher mentions didactic reasons too quickly, he or she will lose the tension in the situation. In my view, the teacher should never provide the students with evidence-based or clear reasons for doing what he or she does. The performance has to stay in uncomfortable openness. The task of the teacher is to improvise in the situation and to let the students be aware of how unsure he or she feels in the situation despite having the power to control the proceedings. I was shocked to notice that the whole situation depended on the amount of power I could choose to impose on the discourse.

Third field: The openness was an opening of the discourse itself. I said things I never would have said in academic lectures. I felt the freedom to play with thoughts because it was an open question whether my statements were fictional or meant seriously. This uncertain atmosphere creates possibilities for experiencing freedom of speech. It is a dangerous risk to take and it depends on our courage to leap into the situation with thoughts that can be expressed because their ontological status becomes open in the performative situation.

As we have seen in these three fields, the openness of the performative situation relates to the participation in the moment, the uncertain and uncomfortable feeling that allows the teacher to be honest, and the experience of freedom of speech. The performative situation breaks with expectations and allows students to participate as actors on an open scene. The music turns the room into a scene where we follow momentary impulses. The question is what kind of knowledge this small performance provides. I regard it as *aesthetic knowledge*. As the philosopher Dieter Mersch points out, aesthetic knowledge has to do with reflections made through and with aesthetical material. This kind of knowledge has its own epistemological status. He describes aesthetic knowledge as follows:

> Our interest is in the stimulation of effects or leaps rather than directional intentions or calculated efforts that follow a precise plan and aim for closure in a manner imagined at the work`s inception. Instead, these consequences and jumps serve to create moments of unlocking or freeing, and all that can be said about them is that they happen at the site of aesthetic practices and involve art`s use of media and materials. Put another way, this "unlocking" apostrophizes something that creates an opening or openness that does not specify what it is or will become. [3]

Artistic settings are settings of differentiation by letting the peculiarity of the smallest little insignificant thing emerge; it gives meaning to what we do not want to see and it allows us to experience the uniqueness of every sensory experience. Art reflects the hidden, forgotten and repressed micro-perceptions of reality. It reflects reality through and in its own media. Therefore, art is a result of artistic reflection processes. It divides the sensual in new ways and thus allows reality to emerge in a new light. Describing art means to touch on what it shows of differentiations in and through the sensuous in an environment of what Wittgenstein calls "imponderable evidence". I will now look into some perspectives of Wittgenstein`s thinking on this concept, seeking to understand it against a background of his reflections on the relationship of music and language.

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3. Mersch 2015, p. 11f.

The imponderable evidence

We cannot recognize different artistic expressions in the same way that we can recognize x and y as different types of chairs. This means that there is no direct representation between the artistic expression and our conceptual apparatus. But they are comparable. In this context, Wittgenstein comes into consideration. For Wittgenstein, art and language are in an alternating relationship. An expression of one of them serves to illuminate something in the other. A good example is the following short text about the relationship between music and language:

> Understanding a sentence is more akin to understanding a piece of music than one might think. Why must these bars be played just so? Why do I want to produce this pattern of variation in loudness and tempo? I would like to say "Because I know what it`s all about." But what is it all about? I should not be able to say. For explanation I can only translate the musical picture into a picture in another medium and let the one picture throw light on the other.[4]

Here, Wittgenstein says that an understanding of music takes place through images. Therefore, one can use a metaphorical language when trying to describe the art experience. Putting the art experience into words can never give a general, comprehensive description of the content of the art. One can only direct certain questions to the artistic expression, with the appropriate attention to something specific in it. Therefore, any description of an art experience comes in the form of a perspective, aimed at something specific.

The interpretations of art are infinite because there is no fixable uniqueness in artistic expression. There are no restrictions on how a work of art can be interpreted. This helps to justify the freedom of art. Let's look at another quote by Wittgenstein to shed light on the relationship between language and art. Using another musical example, Wittgenstein writes aptly that tender expression in music

> isn't to be characterized in terms of degrees of loudness in tempo. Any more than a tender facial expression can be described in terms of the distribution of matter in space. As a matter of fact it can't even be explained by reference to a paradigm, since there are countless ways in which the same piece may be played with genuine expression.[5]

A key idea of Wittgenstein's is that we are always within imponderable evidence in aesthetic matters. Towards the end of *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein explains what imponderable evidence means. Key to understanding this concepts is his remarks on the philosophy of psychology, presented in the second part of *Philosophical Investigations.* One of his goals is to show that there exists a form of understanding that is not empirical-scientific. This type of understanding opens up for art and a way of looking at nature that differs from the methodological canon of science. Wittgenstein sees Goethe's color theory, for example, as another way of looking at nature that is not meaningless to people living in a scientific world. Wittgenstein does not develop a general theory of what science is; his approach is based on an everyday conversation between two people. When person X tries to understand person Y, X will not push Y into general concepts, but rather try to understand the credibility or correspondence between his or her external expressions (like gestures and acts) and verbal utterances. Understanding is not achieved through methods, but through long experience between people. For example, parents can quickly see what a child means because they know their children. But how can one say anything about this form of knowledge? It is in this context, then, that Wittgenstein characterizes the concept of imponderable evidence (The original German text speaks of *unwägbare Evidenz*). The intention of this concept is not to show that this form of evidence is on thin ground, but that it has other parameters than scientific knowledge. With such parameters, one can talk about people who have a completely unique human knowledge. But because we today partly reduce knowledge to scientific knowledge, we have difficulty understanding that we can learn something from art, literature and music. In Wittgenstein's words: "People nowadays think that scientists exist to instruct them, poets, musicians, etc., to give them pleasure. The idea that these have something to teach them – that does not occur to them."[6] In line with the idea that we can learn something from artists, Wittgenstein tries to elucidate how we gain knowledge about what the subject of imponderable evidence is. His reasoning is as

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4. Wittgenstein 1974, p. 41.
5. Wittgenstein 1980, p. 82.
6. Wittgenstein 1980, p. 36.

follows: Wittgenstein wonders if there is an expertise when it comes to emotional expression. We all believe that there is a difference in people's empathetic abilities. Some people understand emotions better than others do. The next question will then be whether one can acquire such knowledge? The only way is through experience. One cannot take a course in emotional knowledge, and then be an expert in emotions. But can anyone be a teacher in emotional knowledge? They can only help by giving good advice, which ideally comes in the form of correct judgements:

> What one acquires here is not a technique; one learns correct judgments. There are also rules, but they do not form a system, and only experienced people can apply them right. Unlike calculating-rules. What is most difficult here is to put this indefiniteness, correctly and unfalsified, into words…[7]

Evidence that the teacher's assessment is correct is imponderable. We feel confident that he or she is not fooling us. Wittgenstein's thought goes no further than to be left with such imponderable evidence. We can distinguish between an ingenious and a non-ingenious novel, but to say clearly where the difference lies is difficult. Only trust in the teacher's judgment or personal experience can confirm the imponderable evidence.

In summary, if we ask what properties knowledge with imponderable evidence has, we come to the conclusion that it has to do with particular knowledge and that a person's experience is the only way to be able to form an opinion on whether it is true or not. One example: For research in the art of musical interpretation, this means that descriptions of listening examples remain descriptions of a single performance seen from specific perspectives, and that the measure of whether this description is true can only be given through experience. My experience forms the background for my concepts. Only someone with long experience with the same research object can really say anything about it. This is in contrast to empirical-scientific verifiability. Philosophical research is always subjective like any other research in the humanities. Therefore, the results cannot be measured and weighed. Seen in Wittgenstein's perspective, this is not a weakness, but a strength. We are not dealing with so called facts, but with hermeneutic processes. With ideas like imponderable evidence and a philosophical understanding that differs from the empirical sciences, it is important to emphasize that Wittgenstein does not seek to explain, but to describe. Descriptions imply an opinion that cannot be given through a collection or accumulation of information.

Example: Music and language

Wittgenstein compares understanding a musical phrase to understanding a facial expression. I cannot look at myself to know what understanding a musical phrase is. I have to look at another person. As Wittgenstein shows in the *Philosophical Investigations*, we learn to understand through the expressions of others. When one formulates sentences such as „he experiences the theme in an intensive way", one tries to put the expression in relation to an experience. This involves the entire environment (German original: *Umgebung*) of the listener. The description of the impression „He experiences the theme in an intensive way" is then explained with the help of language. Wittgenstein goes on to say that:

> If I say for instance: here it's as though a conclusion were being drawn, here it's as though someone were expressing agreement, or as though this were a reply to what came before, - my understanding of it presupposes my familiarity with conclusions, expressions of agreement, replies.[8]

Comparing music with language means grasping some of the meaning in the music. For example, tempo can be an important factor in understanding music. It is exactly the same thing that happens in language: "Sometimes a sentence can be understood only if it is read at the right tempo. My sentences are all supposed to be read slowly."[9] In *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein discusses once again what it means to understand a musical phrase. He does not come up with an unambiguous answer, but rather tries to show that different forms of expression can say something about whether one has understood the music or not. The understanding of music is an expression of life (German original: *Lebensäußerung*). Here, a new element is

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7. Wittgenstein 1984, p. 574.
8. Wittgenstein 1980, p. 51.
9. Ibid., p. 57.

introduced: Understanding music means understanding how people react to it. But to know what musical understanding is cannot be achieved through music alone. Other branches of art can contribute in this regard. A methodological conclusion based on this important text is that the descriptions of aesthetic art experiences may be different. Sometimes, opening a particular show may be appropriate. Other times, making a story out of what you hear can contribute to the understanding. In some cases, incorporating analytical knowledge of music may help to unpack the meaning of the artwork and to inform the interpretation of it. There are no rules here; the ways in which one can choose to describe music are indeed limitless. The only criterion for being able to say something about whether the description is correct is the reference to the imponderable evidence. This opens a discourse, where others with a certain understanding of music can form an opinion about my description. I could ask: Does my description express something that you can hear in the music? Or do you hear something completely different? The discussion about the description will then develop into a dialogue that moves between experience and knowledge.

Understanding musical language, based on tonality, analogous to linguistic forms of expression is a method that can discover meanings in music is a method that can discover meanings in music. The context in which this meaning is produced has to do with the tonal logic of music. The appearance of the tones is understood in relation to each other and gives meaning as a relational unit. Therefore, this method can be called an analysis of the meaning connections of the tonality based musical language. Wittgenstein had no faith in musical modernism. His intuitive cultural ideal extended to Schumann's time.[10] When I talk about meaning contexts in music and understand music in analogy to language, I apply the context of tonality based music in European art music (as Wittgenstein does), in which understanding music means understanding how the tones follow each other based on the effect they have in the listening process.

Family resemblances in artistic expression

Against this background, the following thought from the *Philosophical Investigations* is important: We use words in a context. A shout can have a huge variety of meanings. Wittgenstein's famous example is that of a man shouting "Plank!". With this example, Wittgenstein shows that words do not have meaning in themselves; their meaning is based on a relationship to a situation and a context. The task of philosophy is to describe these contexts; rather than seeking an all-encompassing knowledge of language, philosophy must show how language works. In this context, Wittgenstein talks about the family resemblances of language games. Wittgenstein's understanding of the method of philosophy is simply to understand the meaning of words based on how they are used. This cannot be done in the form of a theory, but with the help of examples. Therefore, Wittgenstein's texts are mostly collections of examples taken from most contexts in life. In his words: „Practice [*Praxis*] gives the words their sense.“[11] He does not deliver a language theory, but analyzes how we use language in daily life. Here, he shows that it is our actions that form the basis of our language, claiming that our acting "lies at the bottom of the language game".[12] Language is therefore always situated in a context of life. Wittgenstein talks about life forms in his often cited statement: "And to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life."[13]

Describing how a practice works has become a separate scientific branch in all art disciplines. In a musical context, it means asking questions such as the following: How are the different means of expression used,

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10. Wittgenstein 1980, 2: "I often wonder whether my cultural ideal is a new one, i.e. contemporary, or whether it derives from Schumann's time. It does at least strike me as continuing that ideal, though not in the way it was actually continued at the time. That is to say, the second half of the Nineteenth Century has been left out. This, I ought to say, has been a purely instinctive development and not the result of reflection." Scruton 2009, p. 36 (italics, H.H) comments on this: "Many of his remarks suggest that he believed musical modernism (at least in its more austere varieties) to involve a mistake about the nature of listening. When I listen to a piece written in the idiom of twelve-tone serialism I may recognize that all the notes of the series have been exhausted except one – G sharp, say. I then know that G sharp must follow. And someone might be misled into thinking that this is just like the case of someone listening to a piece in the classical style, who hears it settle on a dominant seventh, and therefore is led to expect the tonic. *Musical understanding is in each case a matter of grasping the way in which one musical event compels the next one. And satisfaction comes from perceiving order and discipline in what, from the acoustic perspective, is no more than a sequence of sounds.*"
11. Wittgenstein 1980, p. 85.
12. Wittgenstein 1975, p. 204.
13. Wittgenstein 1953, nr. 19.

and why are they used in this way? In other words, it is not just a matter of describing a practice, but also of working out its meaning. Only then can the practice be understood. „The conductor of an orchestra slows down in tempo 28" is a statement without a particularly deep meaning. But to ask why the conductor slows down in bar 28, based on what was and what is coming, makes more sense. Bar 28 is then part of a whole. By looking at the connections of meaning and the family resemblances, an understanding of the practice is formed. Of course, one can discuss different ways of interpreting the tempo change. People have different views on a practice. Wittgenstein does not strive for a new scientific positivity based on the descriptions. Therefore, according to Wittgenstein's thinking, studies of practices are not based on securing factual knowledge, but on a desire for an ever deeper understanding. Different practices and contexts require different types of descriptions and different types of attempts at justification. In aesthetic descriptions, there are no external criteria other than the discussion of whether it is a good or bad description. But the fact that we are able to form an opinion about the quality of the description shows that we have a relationship with our linguistic means of expression that enables us to be critical.

Foreground and background

The foreground of any musical expression is based on a specific background. This background is not a collection of certain propositions about music, but rather an expression of a worldview. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein tries to understand how it is possible to have certainty about something without possessing empirical evidence (empirical evidence, in Wittgenstein's perspective, is ultimately an impossibility). His thesis is that all our sentences, which we assume to be true without being able to prove it, are based on a particular worldview. We have not acquired this worldview through experience; it is something that is given to us from a very young age. We are given a background that lays the foundation for our propositions. It is this background that gives us the criteria for what will apply as right and wrong. The following example illustrates this:

> It is quite sure that motor cars don't grow out of earth. We feel that if someone could believe the contrary he could believe everything we say is untrue, and could question everything that we hold to be sure. But how does this one belief hang together with all the rest? We would like to say that someone who could believe that does not accept our whole system of verification. The system is something that a human being acquires by means of observation and instruction. I intentionally do not say «learns».[14]

Our whole perception of reality is built up under a belief in certain things as a matter of course. Wittgenstein then turns to skepticism and shows convincingly that a radical skepticism is not possible because in order to doubt that X exists, one must necessarily master the language game that makes us understand what we mean by the concepts of "X" and "doubt". Perhaps it is worth it, then, to think about whether performative exercises open up a field of experiences that allows us to break with our normal and everyday expectations and categorizations of reality. In such reflections, I see a great critical potential in educational contexts.

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14. Wittgenstein 1975, p. 279.

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Teaching as love for the world and love for the child

The critical potential of Waldorf education in the light of Hanna Arendt

Dag Øystein Nome

University of Agder, Norway/Rudolf Steiner University College Oslo, Norway

ABSTRACT. This article is a theoretical discussion where the critical potential of Waldorf education is articulated in the light of Hanna Arendt's philosophy of education. Her essay *The crisis of education* is the basis for the analysis together with Rudolf Steiner´s pedagogical lectures and contemporary descriptions of Waldorf school practices at an elementary school level. I find that Waldorf education represents an embodiment of Arendt´s ideas of schools and teaching, while Arendt adds new arguments for the critical potential of Waldorf education. Despite some ontological differences, Arendt and Waldorf education share the paradoxical idea of teaching as a conservative, teacher-centered practice on one hand, and as a preparation for emancipation and democratic citizenship on the other.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy; Waldorf education; Hanna Arendt; elementary school curriculum

Introduction

In 1958, Hannah Arendt wrote her widely debated essay, *The crisis of education*. Her philosophy of education presented in this essay has been taken further and inspired many contemporary educational thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Gert Biesta, Jacques Rancière, and others (O'Byrne, 2005). Their common agenda is in different ways to argue against the instrumentalization of education and renew its critical, democratic, and even revolutionary potential. Thus, to be educated should not be an adjustment to the existing social and economic order, but a possibility to acquire tools to transform it. The question is what kind of education suits this purpose best.

Arendt's originality among these critical educational thinkers lies in her paradoxical emphasis on teachers' authority as representatives for the world. She advocates for schools to stay conservative and rooted in tradition to prepare the next generation for their task of renewing the world. The necessity of the teacher's authority is also emphasized in Waldorf education (W.e.), at least on an elementary level, and so is the emphasis on traditions and cultural expressions from the past (Dahlin, 2017). It seems like W.e. practices the way Arendt preaches. *This article is an attempt to rethink the critical potential of Waldorf-education. by applying Arendt's educational thinking, to give critical educational praxis a possible way forward.*

This attempt rests on the assumption that W.e. has a critical potential. I will argue for the validity of this assumption. To do so, a description of W.e. is needed, both how the basic purpose of education is expressed and how its forms and content are described in the elementary school curriculum. In addition to Rudolf Steiner's own educational lectures, I lean on a variety of contemporary descriptions of W.e. praxis. But first,

I will examine Arendt's philosophy of education further, based on the essay, *The crisis of education* (Arendt, 2006).

Arendt`s philosophy of education

Arendt's philosophy of education is part of the larger family of critical educational thinkers that goes back to the impulse from critical theory and the Frankfurter school in the 1930th (Jay, 1996). In the post-world-war era, critical theory inspired several educational ideas that in different ways expressed the purpose of education as liberation, democracy, responsible citizenship, and to establish immunity against barbarism and totalitarianism. Theodor Adornos *Education after Auschwitz* (Adorno, 1998) is an example of the latter. Habermas, Klafki, Freire, Ranchiere, Biesta, and Arendt are other voices with different approaches to sharing the same idea.

Arendt's essay *The crisis of education* was first published in Partisan Review in fall 1958. Her educational interest arose from the question concerning the civil-right movement in the US at that time. One year earlier, Elisabeth Eckford made the headlines by being pictured as she approached Little Rock High School in Arkansas, a school mainly for the white population. Eckford became a visual icon for the struggle to get equal access to education for both white and colored students. Following that event, Arendt wrote what she called *Reflections on Little Rock* (Arendt, 1959). The article became a subject for intense debate. What Arendt did was to use the black community in Arkansas' choice of action as a symptom of an adult world that refused to take responsibility, that had abdicated and let their children take the fight on their behalf. Eckford, 15 years old, confronted the mob of angry white citizens together with her peers without support from the adults in her community. She was labeled by Arendt as the unwanted child in the white community, and at the same time, the abandoned child in the black community (Lebeau, 2004).

Her reaction to the Little Rock-affair shocked the US's progressive public life since Arendt normally were linked to progressive ideas like equal right for all to take part in every aspect of public life, regardless of race, social class, or gender. Though her critique of the black community perhaps was done on failing foundation[1], Arendt made her point for the sake of progressivism. This seemingly paradoxical position points towards what she about the same time developed in the *crisis of education*, her discouraging diagnoses of education in general.

I will point out two main arguments in Arendt's essay. 1) Her diagnosis of the culture, especially her view on childhood and adulthood. 2) Her idea of the schools as institutions and their form and content.

Arendt´s view on childhood

Arendt's point of departure is her distinction between the political and the private sphere, and that children need to grow and develop within the shelter of family life, or the private sphere, and hence, being protected from the rights and responsibilities in the political sphere. But this statement needs to be seen in the light of one of her most important concepts, *natality*, or being *newborn* in the world.

This concept was developed in her perhaps most important work, *The human condition* (Arendt, 1998). Here she describes *human action* or deed as the only things we do in freedom, and the thing we do that makes us human. She distinguishes between *action* and two other forms of human activity, *work*, and *labor*, which are things we do, based on external demands from nature or society. Work and labor are things we do that are expected of us, that we are determined to do.

However, by our actions, we can put something into this world, which is new, unseen, and cannot be predicted. Arendt writes:

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1. She was, e.g., unaware that Eckford´s parents and other adult relatives were strictly advised against showing up outside the school that morning by the police (Lebeau, 2004).

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The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. And this again is possible only because each man is unique so that with each birth, something uniquely new comes into the world (Arendt, 1998 p. 178)

Hence, the world is somehow recreated by every newcomer, and *natality* is the ability to act as if history did not exist. With every newborn, the world starts all over again every single time. But the concept of natality or newborn is not referring to physical birth. Arendt writes: „With word and deed, we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance" (Arendt, 1998, p 176). In her essay on the crisis on education, this second birth, the birth of a political being, must be interpreted as being an adult or finally educated.

To be a child is to arrive in the world with a potential for renewing and reshaping it. This potential needs to be sheltered from the existing world, like the child's eyes have a potential for seeing long before the physical birth but are sheltered in the uterus as they are developing.

To shelter the newcomer from the old world also means shelter the old world from being destroyed by the still not developed potential for reshaping it that every child carries with them. Children must be kept away from the world and sheltered in the private sphere by their parents both for the sake of their development as for the sake of the old world.

This basic idea of childhood is, according to Arendt, at stake in postmodern societies. She writes: „The crisis in education is most likely connected with the crisis of tradition, that is with the crisis in our attitude toward the realm of the past" (Arendt, 2006, p. 190). Here she describes one of the most conspicuous aspects of the postmodern world. Man is no longer connected to the past, to the traditions, beliefs, and values of their ancestors. Consequently, no one can by the laws from the past be regarded as natural authorities in society, as it was in the Roman-Christian tradition that we have left behind.

Arendt does not want to re-establish the Roman-Christian tradition. She points out some of the positive outcomes of a postmodern democracy, such as the liberation of the woman and the working class and the acknowledgment of every man's right to be heard as equal in all aspects of public life. The crisis in the postmodern society, however, occurs when the same right is given to children.

Children belong by nature in the private sphere, shield from public life by their parents, according to Arendt. At the start of her essay, she criticizes the tendencies, especially in contemporary sociology of childhood, to look at childhood as a social class representing their own culture. Children as a group must then be granted rights to be seen and heard as equal participants in public life like other sub-groups, e.g., women, the working class, and ethnic minorities. She calls this a betrayal against children and their right to be sheltered in the private sphere as they are developing.

The betrayal is twofold since it not only exposes children „in the light of the public existence" too soon (Arendt, 2006, p. 188) but also makes them dependent on the brutal social laws among their peers. She writes: „by being emancipated from the authority of adults, the child has not been freed but has been subjected to a much more terrifying and truly tyrannical authority, the tyranny of the majority" (Arendt, 2006, p. 178). The point she makes here is that any kind of rebellious act is impossible to do against the majority of peers. Since she declares rebellious acts as the ontological purpose of being newborn, children need to be embedded in the adult world, which they eventually will revolt against. By being emancipated from the authority of adults, children are deprived of their ontological purpose.

The term *ontological purpose of being newborn*, indicates that to be fully human, is to make changes for the better in the world, as also stated by Paulo Freire (2018)[2]. To expel children from the possibility to become someone that makes such changes, is to deprive them of their humanity.

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2. "At all stages of their liberation, the oppressed must see themselves as women and men engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human" (Freire, 2018, p. 65-66).

For Arendt, *the authority of adults* is, as previously mentioned, primarily a question of family life. The privacy of family life is, according to Arendt, a *pre-political sphere* „where authority seemed dictated by nature itself and independent of all historical changes and political condition" (Arendt, 2006, p. 188). There are historical examples of how other social groups, e.g., women and non-white, were seen as, by nature, under the authority of others, the white male. While these examples of alleged natural laws were rejected a long time ago, children as a social group should be treated differently. The reason is, according to Arendt, that: „childhood is a temporary stage, as preparation for adulthood" (p. 181). They are still in the process of becoming human. This way of perceiving childhood sounds highly controversial in the present educational discourse, as it did in the late 50th. Based on the UN's declaration of children's rights, every modern curriculum speaks of children as competent agents with a right to participate in decision making and hence have a voice in all aspects of public life (Verhellen, 2000). Consequently, Arendt's idea of childhood gave birth to a perception of schools that differs from current ideas of democratic education.

Arendt´s view on schools

Schools should be, according to Arendt, a link between the private and the public sphere. They „represent the world, although it is not yet actually the world" (Arendt, 2006, p.185). Schools are still a place for protection, not only to protect children from public life but also to protect them from the private sphere. A school creates an autonomous space in between both. Arendt further discusses the autonomy of schools in an unpublished article from 1971. Here, she argues strongly against the tendencies to adjust the content and forms in education to the needs and fads in the society, and she stated that „… learning can exist and flourish only if it is done for its own sake" (Arendt, 1971, p. 12)[3]. This non-instrumental way of conceiving education coincides with John Dewey's pedagogical creed, where he states that attending school is „… a process of living and not a preparation for future living" (Dewey, 1897, p. 79).

In schools that exist and work somehow disconnected from both the private and the public share, children meet teachers whose task is to display and explain the old world for them. Anne O'Byrne interprets Arendt like this:

> If the elementary school teacher is in the process of introducing her pupils to the world, she must share with them the somewhat sheltered place of the school. Still, she must stand, as it were, at its edge, in the place where she can gesture towards the public world, describing it as ‚our world' (O'Bryne, 2005, p. 398).

To stand *at the edge* of the school, pointing toward ‚our world' implies that teachers need to be representatives of the world and take responsibility for it as they face the children. Arendt writes: „In education this responsibility for the world takes the form of authority" (p. 186). In other words, the natural authority that is inevitably absent in the postmodern society must still be a living reality in the sheltered space called *a school*, but only if it is embedded in responsibility for the world which the teachers represent.

If teachers, by taking responsibility for the world as it is, are to become authorities in schools, two things need to be done with the content and form of teaching, according to Arendt. First, schools need to be conservative, and second, the progressive idea of *child-centered education* needs to be problematized.

Conservatism is again an unexpected term for an educational philosopher in the tradition of critical theory. Hence, Arends states that „In politics this conservative attitude – which accept the world as it is, striving only to preserve the status quo – only lead to destruction" (Arendt, 2006, p. 189). Consequently, other radical educational thinkers, like Paulo Freire (2018), would turn the school into a revolutionary workshop, where the ability to reshape the world is being practiced by students and teachers together. But since education, according to Arendt, do not belong to politics but exist as an autonomous space between the political and the private, conservatism is possible and even needed, and here is the reason why:

The child whose task is to reshape and renew the world, needs to do so in absolute freedom when the time comes, which implies that the progressive teacher who foresees this needs to restrain himself to make this happened.

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3. This remark was originally aimed at higher education.

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„We destroy everything if we so try to control the new, that we, the old, can dictate how it will look“,

Arendt writes, and goes on:

„Exactly for the sake of what is new and revolutionary in every child, education must be conservative; it must preserve this newness and introduce it as a new thing into an old world“ (Arendt, 2006, p. 189).

As an implication of the school as conservative, Arendt seems to be strongly against the progressive idea of child-centered education. She raises a strong argument against the tendency to shape the content and forms in school based on children's lives, interests, and experiences.

It is, according to Arendt, two reasons for this. First, the teacher cannot be an authority who takes responsibility for the world unless the content and forms in school primarily come from the teacher´s own lived experience. It is impossible to point toward the old world and call it `our world` if the child´s world is in the center of attention. Second, it is not easy to make school an autonomous space outside both the private and the political sphere if the social demands of the private sphere or the political sphere's economic needs dictate what is going on there. Children need to be introduced to something unfamiliar in school. To teach is somehow to hand over a gift that neither the child nor society have asked for.

The school needs to be what Ranciere (1991) calls *thing-centered*, not child-centered, and to do so, the teacher needs to take the anachronistic role of authority, and the school needs to stay conservative in form and content. Schools need to be both thing-centered and hence, teacher-centered. However, the teacher can be in the center only if he or she shows and makes the children aware that certain things matter, that something is worth paying attention to in this world (Vlieghe, 2018). Arendt calls it the teacher's love for the world.

Waldorf education as a conservative, teacher-centered practice

The idea behind this article is to investigate if Arendt's philosophy of education can be a way of articulating the critical potential of W.e. This idea is first and foremost based on the assumption that W.e. has a critical potential, meaning that educational institutions based on W.e. principles have an emancipating purpose toward the child and a humanizing and transformative purpose toward the society. It rests on the assumption that W.e. is conservative in its form and content, and at the same time, teacher-centered. I will, in the following, argue for both premises.

The critical potential of WE

The impulse behind W.e. in its origin had a social and cultural engagement far beyond acquiring skills and knowledge (Carlgren, 2008; Mazzone, 2001; Nome, 2019). If the common idea of critical pedagogy awoke in the aftermath of WW2, as demonstrated in Adorno's essay *Education after Auschwitz* (Adorno, 1998), W.e. appeared in the aftermath of WW1. One could say that Rudolf Steiner's main idea behind the Waldorf school initiative was to create an education that could ensure that such a catastrophic social disaster never happened again (Mazzone, 2001).

Steiner himself articulated this idea several times. The social and political potential of W.e. was, e.g., discussed in the six lectures he held in August 1919 just as the first Waldorf school started, called *Education as a Social Problem* (Steiner, 1984). The question Steiner askes in these lectures is this: „How we have to deal with children so that they, as adults, can grow into the social, democratic, and spiritually free areas of living[4] in the most comprehensive way?“ (Steiner, 1984, p. 13). Steiner's idea is further developed in the book *The* th*reefold social order* (Steiner, 1972).

According to Steiner, *the threefold social* order is a model for how society as a healthy social organism should be organized. It implies that society can be schematically divided into a cultural, a political, and an economic sphere. It will only be a healthy organism if the three main qualities from the French revolution, *Freedom*,

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4. In the original German version, *the spiritually free areas of living*, is called „*das liberale*“

Equality, and *Fraternity*, are applied in these spheres in the right manner. Freedom should be applied in the cultural sphere, equality in the political, and fraternity in the economic sphere (Mazzone, 2001).

The way education can serve this process, according to Steiner, is by letting imitation of role models dominate early childhood, letting a relationship based on authority and discipleship dominate elementary school-age, and letting independent judgment and responsibility dominate secondary school-age. Imitation in early childhood will be transformed into the ability to conduct freedom in cultural life as adults. Discipleship in elementary school will be transformed into executing equality in political life, and independent judgment as adolescents ensure the sense of fraternity in economic life (Mazzone, 2001; Steiner 1984).

Hence, the aim of W.e. is to make it possible to shape society into a healthy social organism by caring for the next generation in a specific way in school (Mazzone, 2001), and it has since the 1920th been an important motivation for Waldorf school teachers (Carlgren, 2008). In addition to *Freedom, Equality*, and *Fraternity*, the development of an intuitive moral engagement has also been a goal for W.e. through the last century, as expressed by Joan Armond (1997, p. 3): „The overarching goal [of W.e.] is to help children build a moral impulse within so that they can choose, in freedom, what it means to live morally." Bo Dahlin puts it this way: „Teaching is the art of helping the students to realize their essential humanity" (Dahlin, 2017, p. 85). The form and content in W.E. are organized according to this greater good that reaches far beyond acquiring skills and competencies.

To make this possible, schools need a sheltered place in society. The idea of *the threefold social order* also implies that educational institutions should be considered as part of cultural life. Hence, teachers should be granted the same liberal rights when teaching as those who perform art. According to Steiner, school is not part of either the economic or the political sphere and should not be ruled based on the principles of either *equality* or *fraternity*, but should entirely be based on liberty (Mazzone, 2001; Steiner, 1972).

Basic elements of the form and content in WE.

As I stated, the ability to conduct equality in the political sphere rest on specific ways in which teaching is performed in elementary school, according to Steiner (1984). The following examples of the form and content of W.e. are taken from the elementary school curriculum. Elementary school age is the age where education and teaching are introduced to a child for the first time, hence, where the nature of education gets the most visible.

When Dahlin (2017) explains what education is from a W.e.-point of view, he states that to be taught by others is basically an unnatural thing. Teaching tends to cause resistance in a child, a resistance that needs to be transformed into a willingness to be taught by the teacher due to his or her authority. This is a perspective that differs from the mainstream reform pedagogy or progressive educational principal, in which the teachers´ role is to be supportive facilitators of self-regulated learning based on the students` own lived experiences (Hayes, 2006).

According to a W.e.-paradigm, the world, organized as it is in the different school subjects, must be given to a child by someone who has the authority to do so. Dahlin (2017, p. 89) states: „… the teacher must be ensouled by the subject taught, and the subject must be surrounded by the authority of knowledge and culture, which the teacher must embody". In contrast to mainstream progressive education, it is the teacher's lived experiences with the world's phenomenon that matters, not the child's own experiences. The teacher's role is to represent the culture as experienced by him or her through an oral and affective presence in the classroom. The term *culture* must not be narrowed down to a specific national or ethnic frame but ideally be expanded to include all global human heritage.

Another element of W.e., as to form, is the emphasis on class-teaching. The teacher addresses the whole class, and the teacher's role is not to be an individual coach based on the idea of serving every child's own preferences (Dahlin, 2017). Thou, the guidelines in the curriculum regarding when a child should be introduced to specific content and methods, are based on Steiner´s ideas on child development (Uhrmacher, 1995), it is not strictly child-centered in the way I use the phrase in this article.

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In this article *child-centered education* is used as the idea of every child's right to have an individually designed education based on his or her desires, needs, and abilities, much like what we know as *adapted education* (Mordal & Strømstad, 1998). W.e. at an elementary level is based on collective class-experiences as a core quality, and hence, nuances the idea of adapted education. To be a pupil is to listen to, respond to and work with a content given by a teacher, together with others with nothing else in common than a shared sense of the teacher's natural authority.

While working with the letter `B` for several days in class one (Burnett, 2007), every child in the group is occupied with it, though some might know this letter well in advance. Beyond learning the letter `B`, the outcome is the experience of meeting this particular part of the cultural world in a particular way as a group, and that it is given to them by a teacher.

Hence, it is not up to the individual child to define what is worth paying attention to. It is defined in advance what is considered valuable and worthy of attention. Consequently, classical cultural expressions, myths, art, and biographies from the past are often emphasized in the Waldorf-curriculum (Uhrmacher, 1995). The curriculum should "… lead the children in a vivid and imaginative way through the various stages which man himself has passed through in the history of civilization" (Steiner, 1995, p. 37).

It is neither coincidently *how* a class is supposed to work with specific content. The value of specific methods is also given and managed by the teacher in a W.e.-setting. A teacher that introduces pupils to the capital letters, seeks carefully for images where initial sound and pictorial form are integral. Pictures of "… A bear lumbering forward with outstretched paws; the billowing sails of a boat or the folded wings of a butterfly" (Burnett, 2007, p. 324) can be drawn and painted, out of which the child gradually gets a capital 'B' based on the shape of the bear, boat, or butterfly. To link the image to an adjective adds an aesthetic and even moral dimension to the letter and its sound. The *Kind King* is better than the *Cowardly Courtier* (Van Alphen, 1997). Hence, teachers exercise basic moral and aesthetic judgments on behalf of their pupils by their choice of content and methods.[5]

To sum up so far, W.e. is in its origin and traditions, oriented toward a broader horizon than acquiring skills and competencies. It shares many of the same basic ideas that we find in critical pedagogy. In W.e. it is articulated as shaping society into a healthy social organism by caring for the next generation in a specific way in school (Mazzone, 2001). Alongside, it seems obvious that it also has conservative, teacher-centered aspects, at least at an elementary level.

The fact that classical cultural expressions, myths, and biographies from the past are emphasized, and that the teacher´s action in the classroom should be an embodiment of this heritage, is what I interpret as conservatism. The fact that a child´s willingness to connect to a specific content, rests on the teacher´s authority in the classroom, is what I interpret as teacher-centered education.

In the following discussion, I will place W.e. under the lens of Arendt's educational critique, to see if this paradoxical way of schooling is a way forward for critical educational praxis.

Discussion

The critical perspectives in both Arndt's philosophy of education and in W.e. give similar paradoxical pictures of what education for emancipation may look like and how an emancipatory teacher may work. However, the critical perspectives in W.e. and in Arendt's essay have slightly different forms of expression. While Arendt (2006) writes about *the revolutionary potential in every newcomer* and their *renewing of the world*, W.e. spokesman use phrases like *realizing the essential humanity, building a moral impulse within,* and *creating a healthy social organism* (Armond, 1997; Dahlin, 2017; Mazzone, 2001). However, despite these differences, both share the same basic idea. The form and content of education impact how society can be transformed,

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5. One of the most stunning examples of aesthetic judgment is how Steiner gave instructions on how to introduce combinations of colors to children in class one. After painting two pictures with a yellow background, one with a blue field in the middle, and one with a green one, the teacher was instructed to give the class an aesthetic judgment about the difference by saying: Blue on a yellow background is more beautiful than green on a yellow background (Steiner, 2011, p. 45).

and there are similarities in how teaching should be done to get there. In this discussion, my main point is how both W.e. and Arendt address the task of teaching as a *gesture of love.*

Waldorf education and Arendt vs. progressive education

Progressive education since 1900 has roughly been divided into two different traditions. One is mainly concerned with the individual growth and development of each child, and the other is more concerned with the social, political, and democratic growth and development of societies (Mazzone, 2007). Steiner emphasizes the individual psychological aspects of it. For him, a healthy social organism is an extension of the healthy individual human constitution. Education aims to facilitate the development of a harmonic relationship between the cognitive, emotional, and physical sides of a human being. The individual child's healthy constitution is his main concern, and a healthy society follows (Steiner 1984).

For Arendt, as mainly a political thinker, her main concern is how democracy is constituted as a plurality of different actions, intentions, and desires on the common ground we all share. She sees democracy as a dialectic process between the different individual actors and the community they constitute (Arendt, 1998). Her educational philosophy is an argument for how a child should be cared for to become such an individual political actor or grown-up.

Though they share the idea of emancipation and moral responsibility as the ultimate goal of education, there are obvious differences. Steiner leans strongly on idealistic metaphysical images of man, and Arendt leans strongly on dialectic political theory. However, when it gets down to the form and content of schooling, there are striking similarities between W.e. and Arendt.

They both share the idea of schools as autonomous institutions and hence, argue against instrumentalization, politicization, or commercialization of education. They also seem to be out of tune with mainstream progressive pedagogy, where non-hierarchic dialog, self-management, non-directivity, and individualization are ideals (Hayes, 2006). The progressive movement that, especially in the 60th and 70th, revolted against authorities started with the schoolmasters (Gadotti, 1996). Both Arendt and Steiner went the opposite direction and strived to reinforce teacher's authority in school in the name of the same progressivism (Dahlin, 2017).

In W.e., authority rests on the fact that teachers have embodied the cultural heritage. The phrase embodied point to the fact that the teacher's oral, affective, and bodily presence in the classroom makes the cultural heritage visible and audible for the children. That is why W.e. at an elementary level have limited use of textbooks and other media representations of the world except what the teacher can embody himself. Consequently, storytelling by heart as a method, is essential (Dahlin, 201).

Love for the world and love for the child

For Arendt, the teacher's authority rests on the fact that he or she carries the responsibility for the world. What this implies gets clearer at the end of her essay, where she states: „Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it" (Arendt, 206, p.193). She claims that it is the teacher's ability to show love for the world and the cultural heritage that constitutes authority in the classroom.

In a W.e.-classroom, *the love for the world* is shown through storytelling and the grand narratives that represent the norms, aesthetic values, and moral impulses that a child is born into and narratives that represent the knowledge and skills that are valued and cherished as parts of the global human heritage. Telling fairytales in class one is a way to display the love for the moral impulses embedded in these agent stories, and the love for the letters and numbers that is valued as basic knowledge and skills. Both the letter `K` and the moral qualities in the king's brave fight against the dragon are retrieved from the same narrative.

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According to Arendt, it is not only the world that needs to be loved by the teachers. She continues:

> And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world. (Arendt, 2006, p. 193).

Education is a gesture of love toward the next generation from the previous one. For Arendt, the *love for the child* is complex. As she states in the quote, the love for the child implies „not to expel them from our world". She calls *expulsion* the tendencies to look at childhood as a social class of its own, and hence as a group that should be granted rights to be seen and heard as equal participants in public life. Children are consequently left alone totally depending on the brutal social laws among their peers, and what Arendt calls „the tyranny of the majority" (Arendt, 2006, p. 178).

She calls this a betrayal against children and their right to be sheltered in the private sphere as they are developing. In schools, children are brought into a middle-ground between the private and the public sphere, but where they still should be sheltered from being exposed „in the light of the public existence" (Arendt, 2006, p. 188). Democratic education, according to Arendt, is paradoxically not being democratic in school.

W.e. takes the same paradoxical position. Education for freedom is not to grant freedom to children in school. Dahlin states: „Only a child who in the period between seven and fourteen years old has felt genuine respect for their teacher, can later develop true personal freedom" (Dahlin, 2017, p. 95). Genuine respect is what I have referred to as *discipleship*. Steiner puts it even more harshly: „Nothing is worse than for a child to get accustomed to making his so-called own judgement too early, prior to puberty" (Steiner, 1984, p. 15). So, it is also in W.E. an act of love to protect children, in this case, protect them from making their own judgments and conduct their freedom too soon.

The Transformation from discipleship to equal rights.

In W.e., the bridge between discipleship as pupils in elementary school and experiences of equality in the political sphere as an adult is not easy to grasp or articulate. This bridge is one of many complex images of transformations in child development in Steiner`s thinking. Many of them rest on his metaphysical reflections, or *spiritual science* as he calls it. This one might not be all that esoteric, though. One could say that pupils in a class, despite individual differences, are equaled through being disciples under the same law of what is right, valuable, and beautiful that the teacher represents.

They can then transform this experience, of being equal under the same law, into accepting the democratic principle of equality in society. Despite differences in intentions, needs, and desires, we are all been granted the same rights to be seen and heard, and we all share the same responsibility for the society we are part of. This transformation is a consequence of class teaching. If teaching gets too individualized and customized to each child´s preferences, a non-such transformation could occur.

Arendt adds another dimension to this idea of transformation. For Arendt, education is a process of preparation. It prepares the next generation, or the newborn, for their task of reshaping the world. Reshaping the world needs to be done in absolute freedom by every new generation, as something unpredicted to the previous generation. Hence, teachers need to restrain themselves from pushing their ideas of what the world could look like, and that could only be done if teachers are fully committed to and responsible for the world as it is. That is why education needs to stay conservative, and teachers need to be authorities in their classes based on their ability to stay responsible for the world. Consequently, children should not be put in a position in the school where they are left with the responsibility for a world that is not theirs'. If the newborn should be able to reshape the world and renew the social, political, and economic life, they must not be stuck with the responsibility for faults of the past.

Conclusions and limitations

Education in critical pedagogy aims to educate for social changes, for liberation and empowerment, for the sake of mankind and the nature it is a part of. Schools should be a place for preparation for the newborn that someday will make this happen. According to Arendt, where the natality of those who will renew the world is sheltered from making independent judgments and being a responsible public citizens as they grow and develop.

Like the human body is sheltered in the uterus before the physical birth, the potential for a revolutionary act is sheltered under the wings of the teacher, whose authority hangs on his or her ability to love the world enough to undertake the responsibility for it. She also loves the children enough to provide an autonomous sheltered place for them between the social demands of the private sphere and the political demands of the public sphere. That is what we call schools.

Arendt's philosophy of education is an abstract construction of thoughts and not easily transformed into concrete educational practice. She gives us, however, a stringent idea of schools, of childhood, and of teaching that provides a sustainable theoretical argument for important elements of W.e., and hence, an argument for its critical potential.

The long tradition of W.e. practice throughout the world has developed educational forms and contents that operationalize teaching as performing liberal art in autonomous schools, and on an elementary level, based on the teacher's authority. Through his or her oral, affective, and bodily presence in the classroom, the world as it is, and the world the teacher loves, is displayed for the children. That is why it is the life experiences of the teacher that matters, not the life experiences of each child, as Steiner said: „When a child undertake what he does because a revered personality in his surroundings says to him `This is right, this should be done`, then it's the greatest blessing that could happen to him" (Steiner, 1984, p. 15). This attitude is what Arendt refers to as love for the world and love for the child.

This position is out of tune with many of the current ideas of education. Still, it might just be what makes education for emancipation and social change possible, according to Arendt. My claim is that W.e. represents an embodiment of her idea of schools and teaching, while Arendt adds new stringent arguments for the critical potential of W.e. In my view, W.e. seen through the lens of Arendt might represent a fruitful way forward for critical pedagogy.

There are, of course, limitations to this claim. Steiner's metaphysical reflections on child development and its impact on education are far more complex than transforming discipleship in school to equality as grown-up democratic participants. Some of it rests entirely on his alleged clairvoyants and what he refers to as man's spiritual nature. I have deliberately chosen some of the more accessible ideas in his educational theory. This limitation is not done to disregard other parts of his theory, but to recognize those parts suited for a dialog with Arendt's critical educational thinking. One could say that both parts of a dialog need to have the same limit to their senses to get a real exchange of ideas.

Another limitation is that I have reduced Arendt's educational thinking to a question of elementary school practice, even if she does not make this limitation herself. By narrowing my field of view this way, I have been unable to reflect thoroughly on the totality of the critical potential in W.e. To do so, one needs to pay more attention to the idea behind the didactic choices in early childhood and secondary school. I will give an example of the latter.

W.e. implies a transformation of practice from elementary- to secondary school, from authority-based teacher-centered teaching to a more cooperative dialog-based relationship between teachers and students.

One interesting premise remains, though, that still makes Arendt relevant. W.e. keeps on being world-centered and not child-centered. The difference is that *the world* is no longer represented by the teacher's oral, affective, and bodily presence in the classroom. It is being investigated by students and teachers together, as facts of life that are worth paying attention to, that exist independent of both students' and teachers' own life experiences. Despite the lack of teacher authority, this is still possible to argue for based on Arendt's thinking.

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In W.e., it is, e.g., an idea that the existential burdens of being adolescent could escape unhealthy narcissism if it is mirrored in the reading of great biographies from the past (Dahlin, 2017). Some of these biographies reveal the forces behind important historical and social changes in a way that could transform self-pity into critical thinking. I will end with one short example.

The story of Galileo Galilei and his revolt against the authority of the church and its alleged truths vs. science could be mirroring the growing will to revolt against the world as it is delivered from past generations, what I have referred to as *the ontological purpose of being a newborn*. So, it would be fruitful to continue the dialog between Steiner and Arendt to further rethink the critical potential in Waldorf-education.

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The Europe of Knowledge – or a Europe of Lost Spirit?
-Rethinking Politics of Education in Neoliberal Times

Jenny Steinnes

Rudolf Steiner University College, Oslo

ABSTRACT. This article seeks to listen out for contemporary echoes of the concerns and descriptions of social and political challenges Rudolf Steiner gave 100 years ago. It aims further to compare, with an emphasis on politics of education, Steiner's perspectives on social renewal with the perspectives of three contemporary intellectual and political activists: Simon Critchley, Slavoj Žižek and Bernard Stiegler. The article concludes that such echoes can be found, and that they can inspire to work for the autonomy of educational institutions.

Introduction

Rudolf Steiner's book *Die Kernpunkte der sozialen Frage in den Lebensnotwendigheiten der Getenwart und Zukunft* was first published in 1919, translated to several languages and sold in more than 80.000 copies. In English translation, the book was titled *Basic Issues of the Social Question: Towards Social Renewal*. Here, Steiner presents ideas of how to rethink society after the devastating consequences of World War I. In a preface to the Norwegian edition Waage notes that the reviews of the book were highly positive at the time (Waage 2008). Many politicians expressed their interest and inspiration. However, as we know all too well, politics and history took a different direction.

Steiner describes modern cultural life in 1919 as entirely dominated by political institutions and economic power, resulting in chaotic social and political situations. He sees this as a direct consequence of man's spiritual and cultural dependence of economic forces. Children were given over to a state educational system that seemed to shape their upbringing in correspondence to economic circumstances and interests. According to Steiner, the whole problem revolved around the shape of contemporary spiritual life.

Since the 1980s, politicians in the entire western world have taken an ever firmer grip on the educational institutions, inspired and promoted by economic motivation, interests and institutions. Political governance of the educational systems is performed by means of goal measurement, competition and a rhetoric taken from the business world. Steiner's description of children's upbringing in correspondence to economic circumstances and interests seems to fit perfectly to the current situation.

These economic forces underlying educational institutions may in part be explained by the term neo–liberalism. In a lecture held in 1979, Michel Foucault traces the roots of an economic ideology and practice identified as neoliberalism back to post-World War II politics, with ideas of economic growth and human

capital as some of its basic elements (Foucault, 2008). For more than 40 years, these ideas can be traced behind pervasive educational reforms in most European countries, and beyond.

These reforms are analyzed by De Groof, Lauwers & Dondelinger in *Globalization and Competition* in *Education* (2003). They identify three important factors behind the reforms: a) Economic globalization fronted by international organizations like The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and The World Trade Organization (WTO), b) a political wish to counteract economic stagnation by means of higher competence in the population, and c) to make it possible to educate a larger number of the population at a lower cost, this under the much used slogan *The Europe of Knowledge*. All three factors come from explicit economic motivation.

In *PISA, Power, and Policy: The emergence of global educational governance* (2013), Heinz-Dieter Meyer & Aaron Benavot present and problematize the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), sponsored, organized and administered by OECD. According to them, PISA promotes worldwide educational standardization from a principle of economic efficiency and leads to a sacrifice of the educational system's role in preparing students for independent thinking and civic participation.

The state of the educational systems, then, seems to be a consequence of the general politics identified as neoliberalism. This has been problematized by a lot of researchers from different angles and with different approaches on how to promote change, up to now with little political effect. Economic motivation seems to have an impressively firm grip on society and political institutions, educational institutions included.

In my attempt to listen for contemporary echoes of Steiner's concerns as outlined above, I have selected perspectives from three contemporary thinkers, who seem to pose similar or at least comparable questions concerning politics and education to those posed by Steiner. All three have comparable diagnoses of the current political situation, stressing how capitalism in the form of neoliberalism is forming both society and the individual in its image. Two of them, Slavoj Žižek (b. 1949) and Simon Critchley (b. 1950), are still active. Bernard Stielgler (1952-2020) passed away in August 2020. I have chosen to delve deepest into Stiegler as I find him the most fruitful and maybe the one closest to Steiner's ideas.

This article seeks to meet and treat the following question:

How are Steiner's concerns of politics of education echoed in some of today's critical thinking?

In a short article like this there is, of course, no way of doing these thinkers justice. All three have published numerous volumes on a wide variety of subjects. I have chosen to look into just a few, searching for some comparable principles central to my question. The limits of this article allow for no more than a scratching of the surface; its findings will hopefully still be of some interest and importance.

I will start with a presentation of a selection of Steiner's ideas as presented in *Towards Social Renewal.* I will further compare Simon Critchley's rather individual approach in *Infinitely Demanding, Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (2007) and in *The Faith of the Faithless* (2014) to Slavoj Žižek, who suggest a more radical political change of the entire capitalist system in *The Relevance of the Communist Manifesto* (2019). I will then present Bernard Stiegler, who will be given most space. Central titles here are *The Lost Spirit of Capitalism* (2014); *What Makes Life Worth Living: On Pharmacology* (2013); and *The Age of Disruption: Technology and Madness in Computational Capitalism* (2019). In *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations* (2010), Stiegler emphasizes the importance of schools and educational institutions in a rescue operation of the human mind.

My aim is to compare Steiner's ideas of educational policies and institutional autonomy with the ideas of these three contemporary thinkers. All three have expressed deep concern with today's political situation; two of them include concern for the educational institutions.

To promote ideas about a future society is a difficult and even potentially dangerous matter. During the last 100 years, utopian thinking has been discredited, especially so in the aftermaths of Nazi ideology and a Soviet version of communism. Ideas of ideal societies tends to take a path towards totalitarian politics. However, all four thinkers seem to open for a possible future without making their suggestions into fixed utopian systems. Steiner claims explicitly that his book is not utopian. He states that

this book is not meant to be the least bit utopian. No hard and fast theories are found in it which say that things must be this way or that. On the contrary, its intention is to stimulate the formation of communities which, as a result of their common experience, will be able to bring about what is socially desirable. (Steiner, 1977, p. 15)

In my reading of them, this holds true for all of the thinkers presented in this article, in spite of their differences. In the following, I will look for centers of gravity in their approaches, some of which may be identified as the individual, institutions and/or the entire political system; and the role education in this.

Steiner's approaches to social renewal and the role of education

In *Towards Social Renewal*, Steiner writes about the cause of the state of affairs at the time and calls it anti-social. This has much to do with an educational system that, according to him, dictates what to think and do instead of promoting individual responsibility. People are brought up to adapt to society rather than to become active civic participants:

The current anti-social state of affairs is the result of individuals entering society who lack social sensitivity because of their education. Socially sensitive individuals can only develop within an educational system which is conducted and administered by other socially sensitive individuals. (…) It is anti-social to allow youth to be educated by people who themselves have become strangers to reality because the conduct and content of their work has been dictated to them from without. (Steiner, 1977, p. 15)

Steiner states here that the problem is part of deep structures in society, as well as individuals who have not developed individual thinking. In order to promote socially sensitive individuals, the cultural realm has to be liberated from political and economic power. This will have to include challenging the state's control over the educational institutions. Educational institutions must be thought of as a social organism, allowed to unfold independently.

This book, Steiner states, should not be seen as a program or a model, but as inspiration to let the experiences of life form the base on which people come together to find and fill social work and tasks. Steiner does not talk so much about concrete possible ends, as about possible steps to take. However, when discussing strategies for promoting possible social renewals, he is clear about what he sees as a main error of his time.

This involves attacking certain wide-spread errors. For example, the political state's assumption of responsibility for education has long been considered to be beneficial for human progress. For people with socialistic ideas it is inconceivable that society should do anything but shape the individual according to its standards and for its service. (Steiner, 1977, p. 11)

A turning away from this object of shaping the individual according to society's standards was, according to Steiner, long overdue. Human culture has, in Steiner's eyes, matured towards freedom within the framework of the state. However, to exercise freedom, requires autonomy of action. Education is one of the main factors for cultural development, and must, according to Steiner, be turned over to the educators. No parliament or congress should have anything to say about the structure and content of education. According to Steiner, politics and economy will benefit from an educational system liberated from both. He also stresses that educational institutions should be led by those engaged in practical matters. The educational reforms since the 1980s have put much emphasis on research and expertise; less so on the autonomy of the practical performer. For Steiner, this is no recipe for success. Such experts will never be able to "turn out practical individuals who are equipped for life by their education" (Steiner, 1977, p. 15).

The schools should be established as free cultural institutions. The state would then be enriched by living ideas that can only arise within a free spiritual environment:

Within a spiritual life of this nature society would encounter the men and women who could grow into it on their own terms. Worldliness does not originate in educational institutions organized by so-called ‚experts', in which impractical people teach, but only in educators who understand life and the world according to their own viewpoints. (Steiner, 1977, pp. 15-16)

Steiner links the idea of state control over the educational institution to socialist ideas. The last 40 years of educational reforms have, however, shown that this understanding in no way is limited to people with socialist ideas. To shape the individual according to society's standards and for its service is in fact one of the most distinctive features of neoliberal politics, all the way from the principles of early intervention up to lifelong learning. Educational policy is still being used to promote national interests, but even more so the interests of a global economy with a clear goal of shaping the individual in its image. As the queen of neoliberalism, Margaret Thatcher, stated in 1981: "Economy is the method; the object is to change the souls" (Thatcher, 3 May 1981). We will have to acknowledge that she succeeded.

Instead of presenting an alternative to the capitalist system, such as a socialist system, Steiner presents an alternative structure all together, with different contents and motivations. He states that the socialist claim for a more just distribution is highly recognizable. Socialism has traditionally drawn the conclusion that the means of production should be transferred from the private sector to the state. However, according to Steiner, this is not the only solution. The realm of economics could instead be formed on a model of limited ownership, in which ownership circulates in given time periods within the associations. The profit motivation is then arguably transformed into a model of division of labour driven by an impulse of fraternity, while education, as part of cultural life, is given the liberty to form its own structures and content.

Simon Critchley and Slavoj Žižek on social renewal

The three contemporary thinkers that I am presenting in this article have rather similar views to Steiner's in the critique of a society driven by mere economic motivation. However, in their ideas of how to promote change, they seem to have different emphases on factors which I above identified as centers of gravity, namely the individual, the cultural institutions as well as the political systems. This will have impact on the role of the educational system.

In *Infinitely Demanding* (2013), Critchley states that philosophy starts with disappointment, and that his book comes out of political disappointment. He claims that globally, the political situation is dominated by extreme injustice, with increasing social and economic inequalities. His hypothesis is that there is a lack of individual motivation at the core of secular, liberal democracies. As a counteraction he proposes to develop a moral philosophy based on normative principles that can foster people's abilities to meet and confront the present political situation. He proposes a theory of ethical experience and subjectivity that results in an ethic of commitment and a politics of resistance:

> Our time, which is characterized by an enormous political disappointment, lacks a motivating invigorating ethical concept which can meet and confront the dominating tendency, an ethic which can confront and actively enter into the actual political situation. (Critchley, 2013, p. 46)

Critchley seems to have little faith in institutions driven by the state in general, the educational institutions included. Instead, he proposes to see politics as initiatives at internal distance to the state; as networks of cooperation in all human areas of action, a horizontal working together of free individuals. In a classical Marxism state, Critchley says, revolution and class form a continuous unity. But the revolutionary proletarian subject has, according him, vanished in our time. In its place, he sees a need to establish an ethical subject. He states that ethics is about disturbing the status quo. Ethics is a form of anarchic metapolitics in which one constantly poses questions from below during any attempt at establishing order from above. "[P]olitics is to make an internal distance to the state, to make new political subjectivities" (Critchley, 2013, p. 51).

Slavoj Žižek seems to largely agree with Critchley's description of the current political situation, but he proposes different approaches to bringing about change. Their differences lead them to face each other in a public debate in which severe accusations were levelled in both directions.[1] Critchley accused Žižek of glorifying violence, and Žižek accused him in return for lodging non-committal protests on the premises of the system.

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1. For more information on Critchley and Zizek's differences, see http://www.nakedpunch.com/articles/39 and https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v29/n22/slavoj-zizek/resistance-is-surrender.

However, both of them seem to agree on a critique of a society dominated by economic globalization, and that this domination has consequences for the individual as much as for society. Žižek expresses a concern for the educational system. He states in *The Relevance of the Communist Manifesto* (2019) that this neoliberal economic globalization has paradoxically made the state stronger in relation to the educational system: "Far from disappearing, the state is becoming stronger today" (Žižek, 2019, p. 9). He links this to an economic motivation and to a competitive job market:

> …fictitious capital is upheld in the expectation that valorization will occur in the future. Thus the reproduction of labour power is put under pressure so that those not labouring in the present will be ready to labour in the future. This is why the topic of education (in its productive-technocratic version: getting ready for the competitive job market) is so important today, and is also intertwined with debt: a student gets indebted in order to pay for his or her education, and this debt is expected to be repaid through self-commodification, that is, when the indebted student will get a job. Education also emerges as one of the main topics in discussions on how to deal with refugees – how to make them into a useful workforce. (Žižek, 2019, pp. 27-28)

According to Žižek, social control is presented by politicians as individual free choice. We are told to be entrepreneurs of the self, acting like a capitalist. He goes on to say that "one can risk the hypothesis that today, in the new epoch of global capitalism, a new era of slavery is also arising" (Žižek, 2019, p. 36). He calls this situation a new apartheid, occurring not by accident, but because it is a "structural necessity of today' global capitalism" (Žižek, 2019, p. 37).

Žižek seems to promote a total change of the political system, while rejecting Critchley's claim that his suggestions necessitate violence. In an interview with Gisle Selnes, he puts it this way:

> One and the same action can, depending on context, appear as violent or non-violent. Sometimes a polite smile can be more violent than a violent outbreak. As I have often underlined, the biggest threat is not to be passive, but pseudo-activity, the imperative that you should take part, engage yourself, and thus hide that in fact nothing is happening. Power brokers always prefer "critical" participation and dialogue before silence; they want us to engage in debate to bring an end to our alarming passivity. (Selnes, 2012, p. 32, my translation)

This pseudo-activity will take place on the premises of the system. Žižek identifies much of the events and proceedings in common democratic processes to be cases of pseudo-activity. He seems to include Critchley's approach in this identification. In terms of what needs to be done, he states the following:

> Sometimes I say that we need a big event that can change the system radically, other times I say that we shall … do nothing, still other times that we shall take part in the parliamentary game or other pragmatic political contexts. (…) Why a categorical divide between these different alternatives – to do nothing, a radical overturning intervention and more pragmatic, particular interventions? Politics is the art of choosing between these possibilities. (Selnes, 2012, p. 33, my translation)

Žižek seems to emphasize change of the system while Critchley seems to put his trust in the anarchistic, but responsible individual. However, both of them are concerned with the understanding of the human subject, inspired by Freud's psychoanalytic approaches as well as different approaches to traditional religious thinking, without accepting any religious dogmas (Žižek, 2008; Critchley, 2014). They both seem to indicate that religious texts have something our time needs (Critchley, 2014; Žižek, 2012). In any case, both of them emphasize and put their trust in intellectual and political interventions rather than taking action to promote concrete practices in the form of social experiments. The next thinker on my list, Bernard Stiegler, seems to move in the latter direction.

Politics as libidinal ecology: Bernard Stiegler.

In *The Lost Spirit of Capitalism* (2014), Stiegler arguably comes closest to Steiner out of the three when he describes the current cultural situation as one in which spiritual misery reigns. Stiegler describes what he sees as a form of libidinal economy, which originated in the late nineteenth century and is seemingly heading towards the destruction of capitalism. Capitalism is in fact, Stiegler says, destroying itself from within. He does not propose a total change of the system in a more traditional socialist approach as Žižek seems to do.

Instead, he goes into deeper understandings of the driving forces in the individual as well as in society. The concept of libido, in what he calls the current state of libidinal economy, is here understood through its application in psychoanalysis as the energy of life, and death; the most basic of human driving forces. In the last decades, libido has, according to Stielger, been captured in an ever more dominant consumerism.

In *What Makes Life Worth Living* (2013), Stiegler is concerned with what he sees as a current instrumentalization of knowledge, and how culture has been subordinated to profit. This has created a consumerism which Stiegler sees as another stage in a process of proletarization, a term taken from Marx – this time not limited to economy, but also applicable to the human mind. This proletarization of the human mind is brought about by a superefficient marketing machinery and by infantilizing and stupefying mass media.

Stiegler links the proletarization of the mind to what Marcuse called *automatization of the super-ego*:

> [I]n order to think ethics, manners and morality, that is, the super-ego – in their relation to justice and law – that is to politics – at a time when capitalism is substituting the authority of the super-ego with what Marcuse already called, with good reason, the automatization of the super-ego, we must think the originary technicity of desire, and we must think it as a process of adoption, that is, as an originary potential for the libido to be diverted towards libidinal objects (…) (Stiegler, 2014, pp. 2-3)

Stiegler claims that consumerism has taken over this energy of life, the libido, and captured it, resulting in passive adaption and in different forms of addiction. The super-ego, as the norms of society, have become automatized, making us less able to connect our libido to objects, to the physical world, to other people, and to the world in general. This automatized super-ego is unable to take care of itself as well as its surroundings. As a result, many forms of addiction arise, whether it be to media, passive entertainment, the use of new technologies or drug-related addictions. To counteract this, one should seek to liberate the libido from this captivity and facilitate a society and an educational system in which active adoption of ideals and cultural values can occur. This process of adoption is presented as the individual's relation to the world through what he calls individuation. Individuation can only be achieved in relation to a we, in which the individual actively adopts collective traditions and in this way connects to cultural and physical surroundings. The I as well as the we are here understood as an ever-ongoing process, not as a state.

Instead of a political alternative system from the left, Stiegler proposes to start with saving the spirit of social life by turning economy into what he calls a libidinal ecology:

> From this it follows that politics – understood as the care a society takes of itself, a care that is inherently perverse, given that its spiritual and social energy, libido, by its very nature attaches itself to that which destroys it – faced as it is with the careless negligence (incurie) that hyperindustrial capitalism has become, must be thought as a libidinal ecology. (Stiegler, 2014, pp. 3-4)

Politics are here presented as care. And this care is currently lacking. The situation is described as a hyperindustrial capitalism that, by being careless, has allowed the libido to become attached to processes that destroy the social energy and obstruct its essential role as the driving forces, the driving spirit.

In *The Age of Disruption* (2019), Stiegler sees the loss of spirit as a loss of real content; therefore, he describes our time not as an epoch among other epochs, but as an absence of an epoch. There is not enough content to really confront our time, to question it in a fruitful way, or leap beyond it. We will have to start work on taking care, of individuals as well as of society. And we will have to start through minor experiments in practice, in concrete communities and institutions.

In *The Lost Spirit of Capitalism* (2014), Stiegler states that at present, 50 years after 1968, the control that was challenged and questioned by the student protests at that time now comes back in the form of prohibitions: "An epoch seems to have come to a close, and it has opened onto a spiritual poverty, in the name of which we see a return of all the forms of control that existed prior to 1968: as *prohibition*" (Stiegler, 2014, p.85).

Consumer capitalism has, according to Stiegler, promoted spiritual poverty. The libidinal energy is reduced to a mechanism of the drives in the absence of libidinal ecology of the spirit (Stiegler, 2014, p. 86).

He asserts that

If it is true that the heart of capitalism is its libidinal economy, and that this is leading to the destruction of sublimation and the super-ego, then we must now enable this economy to move to a stage of libidinal *ecology*. The danger associated with any socio-pathological discourse is obviously that it will maintain the illusion that there is such a thing as social health, and that this is what must be *achieved*: that it *exists*. What must on the contrary be posited as a first principle of such a socio-pathology is that this kind of health does not exist, that society is always diseased, that there is no revolutionary Great Day, no horizon of redemption, whether hygienist or instinctual, but that, *nevertheless, health consists*, and that there would be no way to give up on it, as horizon of consistencies, without giving up on *everything*. (Stiegler, 2014, p. 92)

Here, Stiegler warns against any utopism, any final solution, any Great Day, as he warns about giving up. This mirrors his many concrete initiatives, like the think tank *Ars Industrialis* and his role in The Institute of Research and Innovation at the Pompidou Centre[2]. He proposes to rethink the more common understanding of work, promoting in its place what he calls a *contributory income* as part of an economy of contribution based on a new type of value production and social justice. *Plaine Commune*[3] is a concrete social experiment in which these ideas are tried out. In an interview translated by Sam Kinsley, he offers a little more detail on how one might go about creating an *economy of contribution*. He proposes Plaine Commune as a *'territoire contributif'*: a sort of region of contribution, a territory or zone delineated as an area in which the economy of contribution might take precedence:

Plaine Commune is a bit like Bangladesh: the people there are exercising a remarkable energy. [Various] actors, businesses and residents are aware of the urgent need to invent something radically new, which is to use the mechanisms of contribution to develop a common in a project that promotes the development, exchange, and transmission of practical knowledge [savoir-faire], life skills [savoir-vivre] and theoretical knowledge [savoir théoretiques] among the younger generations, associations, businesses, public services of the area, and doctoral students from around the world. Researchers will have the mission to facilitate and work alongside these changes. (Kinsley, 2016)

Stiegler claims that the aim is not limited to building a specific local economy and that its ultimate goal is to transform the macro-economy. By reshaping motivation, this experiment might be the first step in changing economic systems from within. The researchers and their pedagogical abilities will have a major role to play in the development.

In his book *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations* (2010), Stiegler is explicitly concerned with education. In an examination of the history of education, he points to the traditions of critical thinking and shows that the skills it requires are threatened today, maybe more than ever. Here he states that we as a generation of parents have allowed a powerful marketing machinery to take hold of the attention and the libido of the younger generation. This has made it difficult to give them the care they should have had. In many ways we have failed to defend them and have let the educational system be modelled upon the same motivation that sustains the dominant ideology of economic growth. Such motivation disrupts the process of individuation, which Stielger sees as the essential aim of education.

Schools' fundamental mission is obviously not to produce anything like "national identity": on the contrary, it expands national differences and alterity in that it intensifies the process of individuation psychically as well as collectively, always pushing it to new singularities. Individuation is never finished: it never exists as *identity* (as a stable state), but consists as process: individuation is always to *come*, and thus it always open only to a future. (Stiegler, 2010, pp. 68-69)

In order to take its mission seriously, the school must be a place where the marketing industries are held at arm's length. Stiegler seems to think of schools as well as universities as important institutions in a new and intensified work of taking care, of new generations and of society at large. This culture of taking care will foster a new moral being, de-proletarianized, and once again capable of intellectual dreaming.

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2. See https://www.iri.centrepompidou.fr/ for more information.
3. See https://plainecommune.fr/ for more information.

Discussion: The Europe of Knowledge or a Europe of Lost Spirit?

I introduced this article by raising the following question: How are Steiner's concerns politics of education echoed in some of today's critical thinking? So far, I have presented the perspectives of selected contemporary critics; moving forwards, I will examine and compare more concrete instances of the echoes I set out to find.

'The Europe of Knowledge' has served as a slogan for the last decades of international educational reforms. However, the emphasis seems to have been put largely on a rather narrow understanding of knowledge as competences in a work force that promotes economic growth; not so much on knowledge in a wider scope. Both Žižek and Stiegler use harsh words in their description of what this has brought about. Žižek talks about a modern form of slavery; Stiegler talks about proletarization. All three have their proposals for counteraction: Stiegler calls for the de-proletarized moral being capable of intellectual dreaming, Critchley calls for an ethical subject at an internal distance to the state, and Zizek calls for more than pseudo-activity on the premises of the system.

In spite of the efforts of a lot of researchers and philosophers, the situation today is just as dominated by political institutions and economic motivation as it was in Steiner's time, the educational systems included. The political left seems to have been unable to do anything about what Stiegler calls hyperindustrial capitalism. The educational systems are captured, not so much by a project of nation building, which was the case in Steiner's time, as by a global consumer capitalism. Some contemporary echoes of Steiners's descriptions of political situations in 1919, could thus be specified as follows:

Culture as dominated by political and economic institutions

This is a most distinct echo, sounding through the century. According to all three thinkers, culture seems to be as dominated by political and economic institutions, now as it was a hundred years back, if not more.

Spiritual misery

According to all three, Žižek, Critchley and Stiegler, spiritual misery seems to reign no less now than it did in Steiner's time. Steiner describes spiritual life as anti-social. Both Žižek and Critchley find inspiration in religious texts, though they see themselves as atheists. Stiegler does not deal with religious texts to the same extent, but he does seem to be the one most concretely concerned with lost spirit. For him, the spirit, which has been captured and passively adapted to consumer capitalism, is connected to the innermost human driving forces. This echoes Steiner's notion that people are brought up to adapt to society rather than to become active civic participants.

Concrete practical initiatives

The website *Steiner worldwide* lists 2.656 different initiatives inspired by Steiner and launched regardless of different national, political and ideological situations around the world. Steiner's ideas have become concrete practice in the most convincing way[4]. Compared to this, Stiegler's Plaine Commune seems rather minor. However, when it comes to political change, the fate of these initiatives is shared between the two. Stiegler's idea has been that small scale practice in due course will change politics, not only on a local level, but also on a national and international level. In spite of Steiner's 100 years old ideas, and the 2.656 worldwide Steiner initiatives, these ideas and initiatives have not so far changed national of international politics. Steiner's thoughts about politics as social renewal have to this date produced rather meagre outcomes. The educational institutions are either formed and driven by state politics, or they are increasingly given over to a private marked. In both cases dominated by the ideology of the last decades of international educational reform policies.

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4. Details can be found here: https://www.waldorf-100.org/en/worldwide/

How to understand politics

While Stiegler sees politics as care, as libidinal ecology linked to concrete communities, Critchley presents ethics as anarchic metapolitics in which one constantly poses questions from below during any attempt at establishing order from above. To reiterate his own words: "politics is to make an internal distance to the state, to make new political subjectivities" (Critchley, 2013, p. 51). Critchley's political project can be described as an inspiration to form an ethical subject of the future, an *ethics to come*. Žižek on his part describes politics as the art of choosing between radical change of the system, doing nothing, or being pragmatic and taking part in what he calls the parliamental game.

In spite of their differences, all of them tend towards political activism, a wish to intervene, to promote change. In the preface of *The Ticklish Subject* (2008), Žižek states that this book "is first and foremost an engaged political intervention, addressing the burning question of how we are to reformulate a leftist, anti-capitalist political project in our era of global capitalism and its ideological supplement, liberal-democratic multi-culturalism" (Žižek, 2008, p. xxvii). While Žižek is challenging capitalism as such and Simon Critchley is suggesting a politics at internal distance to the state, Bernard Stiegler proposes to dig deeper into capitalism in search for its lost spirit, transforming economics to ecology by a new understanding of inherited traditions. Much like Steiner, Stiegler seems to dig into the realm of economy in order to rethink politics and the social systems. Most of Steiner's book is dedicated to economy and capitalism. They both seem to put emphasis on a transformation of the economic realm rather than to suggest alternative political systems.

Education and politics

In what might be seen as Steiner's political manifesto, *Towards a social renewal,* he is explicitly concerned with the role education must assume in this renewal. This is also the case in Stiegler's *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations*, which emphasizes an educational system able to hold a powerful marketing machinery at arm's length in order to counteract the instrumentalization of knowledge at the core of The Europe of Knowledge. Žižek mentions that the state has an ever firmer grip on the educational institutions, though he seems to be most concerned with macro political systems. As far as I have been able to find out, Critchley does not put much emphasis on educational institutions and educational policy. He seems to be more concerned with teachers and teaching[5].

Education has a long history of being given its justification outside its own chambers, earlier linked to religion and the church, later to the enlightenment and to a nation building project. For the last four decades, economic motivation and interests have been dominant in setting the standard.

100 years back, Steiner was challenging the state's control over education. This challenge has not, up to the present, given much result. If anything, the control is now in the hands of even more economic motivation, in which the state takes the role of a bureaucratic control apparatus. In order to open a free space for education, which Rudolf Steiner called for in 1919, the path seems to have to go through politics.

In countries like Norway, Waldorf schools have public funding. However, this arguably comes with a price. Public funding gives the state reason and opportunity to prescribe structures, content and outcomes. It takes a resoluteness and good argumentation to hold these prescriptions at arm's length. So far, this has been done rather successfully, but more and more adjustments are being made towards an ever ongoing political educational reform process. The best defense, then, could be to work for a transformation of the educational system in general, which may be difficult without changing politics.

The Europe of Knowledge or a Europe, and a World of Lost Spirit: echoes, concerns and a calling?

The ideas behind educational policy under the slogan 'The Europe of Knowledge', as described by De Groof, Lauwers & Donelinger (2003) and Meyer & Benavot (2013), seem to be challenged from different angles

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5. See https://www.pdcnet.org/philtoday/content/philtoday_2017_0061_0002_0291_0303 for more about Critchley on Education and Philosophy.

and by many critics. Those presented in this article, however different, agree on a diagnose and on taking a responsibility to become intellectual and political activists.

At the end of *Towards a social renewal*, Steiner states that the three social systems, the spiritual-cultural, the political and the economic, must be seen as inter-independent spheres, much like different bodily systems, in which for example the respiratory system has its functions beside the nervous system. He states that a political system can do nothing else but to destroy economics if it takes over, as the economic system loses its life forces if it is made into politics.

While socialism in Steiner's understanding tends towards the first, that is to destroy economics, neoliberalism will tend towards the latter, to lose its life forces. Looking at today's situation, Steiner seems to be right. Internationally, the economic system has in the last decades been made into global politics in the form of an economic war of all against all, and it seems to be losing its life forces, its spirit, much like Stiegler states.

Steiner can be seen as an activist, launching initiatives in a wide range of directions. The fruits of these initiatives are impressive in content and scale. However, his political activism has so far borne little fruit. When Stiegler points out that the social norms challenged by the 1968 generation now comes back as law, as prohibitions, it should serve to remind us or the need for new interest in the political realm. Today, this might be one among many indicators suggesting that the time is right to rethink the basis of society, and especially to reshape and rethink the political, democratic system. Looking around, political questions seem to be raised with precaution in Hong Kong and China, in the US and Britain, as well as in European countries like Poland and Hungary[6]. In 1968, the young generation turned against the university in order to challenge narrow norms and outdated ideas. Today, the young generations take to the streets to protest against a political system in alliance with economic interests that threatens the climate, the planet and human existence. The less productive protests in the US and elsewhere are also directed towards the political system, but here the economic system seems to escape critics.

As in Steiner's time, the outcome of a crisis might go both ways, for the better or for the worse. Altogether, the most diverse protest initiatives and activism worldwide, including its highly destructive variants as well as the more constructive ones, seem today to be directed towards politicians and political systems. The agenda for a non-utopian activism will be to take actions to counteract a deeply felt spiritual misery. This will have to include educational institutions insisting on autonomy from both state and economy, which paradoxically can only be achieved through political means.

There might be echoes, concerns and a calling for those of us who have found inspiration in Steiner's texts, to not let ourselves be content with involvement in one of the practical initiatives, like Waldorf schools, but to also engage ourselves in social and political processes, in conversation with contemporary voices.

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6. See the following New York Times article for more information: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/19/books/review/twilight-of-democracy-anne-applebaum.html

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Educational Equity in the sphere of *Bildung*? The alternative case for Waldorf education

Leif Tjärnstig

Waldorf University College, Sweden

Jan-Erik Mansikka

University of Helsinki, Finland

ABSTRACT. Inclusive and equitable quality education is one of the Sustainable Development Goals ratified by the General Assembly in 2015. The principle that equity is provided through education has become one of the key values that govern policy in education systems worldwide. This article problematise the development of politicised and instrumental use of equity in educational policies. We argue that the politicised use of equity has entailed instrumentalisation of education, whereby fundamental pedagogical ideals and humane values have been delimited and lost. The politicised rhetorical use of "educational equity" is in the article scrutinised through the lens of *Bildung* and the didactics of Waldorf education. We suggest that the didactical practices established in Waldorf schools exemplify an education that operates according to a broader principle of equity, including "spaces for becoming" and subjectification. The article summons up, suggesting that it is a crucial issue for the future of a democratic and equal society that teaching in schools rests up such a border understanding of education, teaching and learning.

Keywords: Equity, *Bildung*, subjectification, didactic, Waldorf education

Introduction

The notion of educational equity has gained ground since the turn of the millennium, and seems set to replace earlier debates on efficacy, efficiency and quality. The very principle has become one of the key values guiding policy-making in educational systems around the world, and it is a pivotal starting point in comparisons of different educational cultures (OECD, 2013). It brings education for social justice to the fore, in which fairness and inclusion play key roles (Castelli, Ragazzi & Crescentini, 2012).

Educational equity is based on the conviction that access to knowledge and education paves the way for the successful inclusion of individuals in society. One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ratified by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 is "inclusive and equitable quality education". Equity in education is considered vital in the development and improvement of all aspects of individual and national health, identity and prosperity. Education on all levels must be unreservedly inclusive and "leave no one behind" (Qureshi, Malkani, & Rose, 2020, p. 8). In the view of educators and educational policymakers, therefore, educational inequity is seen as a strongly negative factor that affects the potential of pupils in terms of well-being, career path, and both economic and social status. Moreover, the failure of the individual to achieve success and prosperity also affects societal economy. For this reason, equity as a

concept has assumed a key role in the debate on educational alignment and comparison not only within but also between countries (Castelli, Ragazzi & Crescentini, 2012; Englund & Quennerstedt, 2008; Palomino, Marrero, & Rodríguez, 2018).

Indeed, very few would oppose educational equity as a central element in a democratic school system. Nevertheless, it would be worth investigating how the politicised and discursive use of the term "educational equity" affects teaching practices. What are the consequences when this idealistic informed language moves between national and international levels of politics and policies to the practices of individual schools and the relationship between teachers and pupils? The levels of politics and jurisdiction are, by nature, distinct from pedagogical practices in classrooms. The assumption that compensatory structures serve to guarantee educational equity is based on political ideology. A further assumption is that classroom practices easily and seamlessly align with these ideals. In reality, this causes conflict and becomes an "impossible mission" for teachers (Ryffé, 2019). The rhetoric underpinning equity through compensatory structures in the school system could be seen as an agenda of political ideology that currently drives educational debate. These structures originate in neoliberal and meritocratic ideals that are inconsistent with humanist-oriented pedagogical philosophy and human ethics (see Crawford, 2010, Biesta, 2013; Willbergh, 2015).

Our aim in this article is to scrutinise the politicised rhetorical use of "educational equity" through the lens of *Bildung* and the didactics of Waldorf education. Through this lens we problematise dominant ideas from previous decades claiming that equity can best be achieved and secured through compensatory structures within the educational system. What happens in schools and education when equity is measured, standardised and apprised, and quality is "secured"? Does educational equity have to be primarily understood in terms of structures, systems and jurisdiction to even out encumbering factors in pupils' backgrounds, rather than to create a space for subjectification and "becoming"?

We argue that the politicised use of the term has entailed the instrumentalization of education whereby fundamental pedagogical ideals and humane values have been delimited and lost. As an alternative, we suggest an emancipatory perspective, rooted in practice on equity from the position of Bildung. A one-sided focus on learning in terms of qualification has led to the disregard of emancipatory educational elements within the pupil's space for subjectification and self-formation. Moreover, we intend to show that the didactic practices established in Waldorf schools exemplify an alternative to the rational-technical view of educational equity, whereby the humanistic view of man from the tradition of *Bildung* comes to the fore.

The article is structured as follows. After this introduction we trace the emergence of compensatory societal structures through equity. We then focus attention on literature claiming that the global discourse on educational equity implies a certain instrumentalization of educational practices. Thereafter, we consider the tradition of *Bildung* in the light of emancipation, and asses its current relevance. Finally, we look at Waldorf education as a case of alternative practice whereby educational equity is conceived of as an attitude in practice, as a point of departure rather than an outcome.

The emergence of compensatory structures through equity

The critical perspective in this article requires some distinct framing. We do not purport to accomplish an in-depth scrutiny of educational politics in recent decades, and rather lean on literature that exemplifies shortcomings in teaching practice attributable to the instrumentalization of educational values. This, in turn, problematises the principle of compensatory structures within the educational system, and its capacity to provide equity and justice for each pupil. We are especially interested in studies examining the consequences for everyday life in classrooms of having an over-regulated, quality-secured and compensatory educational system.

Equity has long been considered a central concept in the development of Nordic welfare states. The Nordic model of education that developed over the decades following WWII was a political project, aimed at modernising society by means of rationality, science and the democratic participation of citizens in a form

of societal engineering. Characteristic principles included a high degree of inclusion, social justice and equity (Gustafsson & Blömeke, 2018; Imsen, Blossing & Moos, 2017; Lundahl, 2016; Toropova, 2020).

However, the definition of what counts as inequality has shifted over time. Up until the 1990s, inequity was largely regarded as a circumstance or characteristic beyond the control and responsibility of the individual. Differences in educational quality both in school results and between schools were perceived as quite unchangeable and were thus accepted as such. There was a common understanding of inequity as something given and naturally caused, which reflected societal norms of diversity regarding race, class and gender, for example. The practice of multicultural education and the compensational structures for altering these norms were undeveloped until relatively recently (Castelli, Ragazzi & Crescentini, 2012; Gustafsson & Blömeke, 2018; Florin Sädbom, 2015; Mickwitz, 2015; Toropova, 2020).

According to the more recent perspective on inequality, circumstantial factors do not predict the potential of individuals to enjoy good health, success and prosperity. Neither do they determine the outcome of education. Compensatory structures within the system of education are acknowledged as a levelling tool that could "free" the individual from any encumbering background factors – and provide equal opportunities for all pupils (Crawford, 2010, Gustafsson & Blömeke, 2018; Mickwitz, 2015; Perryman, Ball, Braun, & Magurie, 2017; Ryffé, 2017).

Currently, the value of educational equity is a salient feature in policy documents concerning compulsory education within the Nordic countries. Let us take Swedish legislation as an example: the responsibility rests with the individual school to ensure that every pupil receives sufficient support to reach the set goals. The Swedish legislation bill for education from 2010 states: "[e]ducation within the school system shall be equivalent within each form of school, regardless of where in the country it is organised" (Sveriges Riksdag, 2010, section 9). Thus, strong juridical writings point out that educational equity is a legal right for every pupil, regardless of socioeconomic background or life circumstances. Simultaneously, in conformity with many Western countries, educational policy in Sweden is influenced by international trends, including those that focus on competence and given standards for evaluating educational goals. Politicians tend to control the curricular content in schools, whereas the role of teachers is to "transform the given curricular instructions into practice" (Englund & Quennerstedt, 2019, p. 13-14).

The shift in the reception of educational equity in the new millennium emphasises the need to assess educational systems to ensure that each school and each teacher delivers "equal opportunities" for all and everyone (Perryman, Ball, Braun, & Magurie, 2017). A consequence of this is that researchers and politicians are gunning for measures to calibrate the equity of educational opportunities in every detail. Consequently, it is the outcome – the results for each school and for each individual pupil – that measures the extent of equity and the compensatory structures. These results could also be utilised to assess educational alignment between nations (Mickwitz, 2015; Palomino, Marrero, & Rodríguez, 2018). According to an extensive report from the OECD (2013), equity in teaching is a crucial factor in determining validity, trust and efficiency in schools and in education. Equity, for example, functions as a tool for linking teaching appraisal and student outcomes that "... properly identifies teachers who adopt the practices that enhance educational equity in addition to overall efficacy" (OECD, 2013, s. 61). This puts pressure on teachers to ensure that their teaching aligns well with the standards and requirements of compensatory structures, which raises the question of measurement and evaluation.

The diminishing autonomy of teachers and devalued practices

Some recent studies problematise the technical-rational trends in education from the perspective of the potential downsides for classroom practice (Ball, 2016; Biesta, 2007; 2010; Florin Sädbom, 2015; Lilja, 2013; Mickwitz, 2015; Perryman, Ball, Braun, & Maguire, 2017; Toropova, 2020; Willbergh, 2015). On the basis of these studies, we argue that the downsides relate to the displacement of educational values, the move from a humanistic and holistic to a technical-rational view of development, learning and education.

This change has manifested mainly on the linguistic level. Through its given privileges, governmental language produces discourses of truth, sheltered from criticism and thorough scrutiny (Ball, 2016; Mickwitz, 2015). The language used in educational policy documents has the power to promise development, progress and success if (and only if) the stated rational principles and guidelines are followed. The technical rationality informing this language creates narratives of educational aims, schools, teachers, teaching and learning as a safe and quality-secured transition towards societal goals (Biesta, 2010; Crawford, 2010; Mickwitz, 2015; Willbergh, 2015). Although concepts such as inclusion, equity, justice and fairness flow through the text of these educational steering documents, fundamental educational values connected to school practice are diminished or even lost (Ball, 2010; 2016; Biesta, 2013; Mickwitz, 2015).

One example of how such value displacement affects teachers on the practical level is the type of narrative that implies their incapability of instating new and rational methods in their teaching (Biesta, 2019; Mickwitz, 2015; Perryman, Ball, Braun, & Magurie, 2017). In practice, this means that teachers are not trusted with professional autonomy in terms of planning, deciding on and organising their teaching. As a consequence, they are continually in need of Continued Professional Development (CPD), systematic support, in-service training and supervision to do their job correctly (OECD, 2013). CPD connotes continuous life-long learning, whereby constant "updates" take turns with new and more knowledge. Poor achievement among pupils is attributed to shortcomings in teacher competence. This leads to both professional devaluation and a lack of trust, with potentially negative consequences for classroom practice (Mickwitz, 2015; Perryman, Ball, Braun, & Magurie, 2017). It also widens the gap between teachers' own educational judgment and what they feel obliged to do. They refer to tension between doing what the system demands and trusting their own professional knowledge, which leads to emotional and ethical stress and a feeling of inadequacy in their teaching (Bornemark, 2018; Florin Sädbom, 2015; Mickwitz, 2015; Toropova, 2020).

McKernan (2010) describes how a system of educational objectives tends to foster perceptions of curricular objectives as given and fixed categories of knowledge, whereas an experienced teacher tends to treat curricular content as a starting point, an invitation to discuss and even to refute the validity of the content. Qualified teachers also know how to inspire, challenge and widen their pupils' knowledge, and to open their imaginations to future possibilities. When the focus is rather on applying compensatory measures, which often implies the formalisation of content, teachers find that their professional space and teaching autonomy are delimited. (Frelin, 2012; Hansson, 2012; Lilja, 2013; Linderoth, 2016; Toropova, 2020).

In another expression of value displacement, the language of the system-world occupies classroom life-worlds and conceals the voices of subjective uniqueness (cf. Habermas, 2004). The silencing is brought about by shifting the focus of the talk from life in schools, education and teaching towards systems for assessing and measuring the practice. The voices of teachers working in classrooms are silenced through these discourses (Ball, 2016; Mickwitz, 2015). The more subtle ethical deliberations and practical decision-making in classroom interactivity are not to be guided by systems, structures or appraisable factors. The diverse challenges as well as the combination of interaction, adversity and joy that constitutes the life-worlds of learning and development are the basis on which the human understanding that guides day-to-day educational practice is built (Hansson, 2012; Lilja, 2013; Wedin, 2007).

There are qualitative studies that exemplify the complex and multidimensional tasks of teaching and learning from a lifeworld perspective, in which relational and informal dimensions alongside curricular content and formalised goals constitute the intricate ethics and practices of classroom life (Aspelin, 2016; Bingham & Sidokrin, 2010; Frelin, 2012; Hansson, 2012; Lilja, 2013; Rinne, 2015; Wedin, 2007). As these studies show, a wide range of informal professional practices tend to encompass formal learning.[1] This informal professional knowledge is also a key element of teachers' professional autonomy (Tjärnstig, 2020; Tyson, 2017).

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1. In this article, therefore, we refer to formal learning and formal knowledge in line with Anglo-Saxon usage. We are well aware that the concept of *formal learning* has another meaning within the central European *Didaktik* tradition, according to which material aspects refer to curricular content whereas formal learning refers to fostering the individual (see for instance, Blankertz, 1987).

In sum, we have argued that the rhetoric and politicised discourses of educational equity tend to reduce the pedagogical space of the teacher in two ways. Firstly, it diminishes autonomy by increasingly focusing attention on compensatory measures towards achieving defined goals; and secondly, it silences the voices of teachers by ignoring informal educational practices as an important element of their professional knowledge. What kind of educational implications will emerge from this deficit?

A useful concept in this context is Biesta's (2006; 2010; 2020) notion of subjectification as a fundamental purpose of education that, overshadowed by qualification and socialisation, usually goes unnoticed because it is much more difficult to delimit and evaluate. Subjectification is not about "educational production of the subject" in some form, but rather refers to the teacher's responsibility to bring "the subject-ness 'into play'", and "helping the child or young person not to forget that they can exist as a subject" (Biesta, 2020, 94-95). From this perspective, equity in terms of the future potential of pupils is not merely a technical-rational problem, to be tackled within the system's compensatory structures. To establish a position that allows for constructive criticism and alternative ways of talking and thinking about equity in teaching and learning, therefore, we take an emancipatory approach through the tradition of *Bildung* and the practice of Waldorf education.

The tradition of *Bildung* in the light of emancipation

It is not possible to give a distinct definition of *Bildung* as a concept. It has played an important role in educational and cultural discourses since the Enlightenment, but it is also controversial and contested. Although strongly related to the German language and to early-19th-century educational reforms, it seems to have been rediscovered in contemporary educational discourse and has been the subject of many theoretical explorations in recent decades, not least in the Nordic countries (Burman, 2014; Gustavsson, 2007; Løvlie, 2002; Sörlin, 2019; Siljander & Sutinen, 2012).

Bildung is frequently associated with the intellectual and cultural canon, a body of high culture literature, philosophy and works of art mainly originating in Western society. Despite its religious roots, stemming from medieval Christian mysticism, in modern times it represents a counter-movement –against both one-sided Enlightenment and the dominant role of religious thought (Beiser, 2003). In the 19th century it served a regulative purpose related to different aspects of social change: individualisation, societal modernisation and education. Its principles, ideals and practices were then mainly associated with bourgeois life, academic achievement, and a learned and moral attitude (Myers, 2004).

Interestingly, around the turn of the 20th century the working class also adopted the concept of *Bildung* as an emancipatory ideal. Whereas the upper class conceived of it as a privilege attached to their ways of life, to the working class it was something for all people, a prerequisite of a democratic society (Burman, 2014). Since, then *folkbildning* [Folk-Bildung] has become a central concept in the Nordic countries, meaning non-formal and emancipatory education that is free from political control and voluntary for the participants. The ideological framework for the movement was developed by N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872): as the founder of the institution of *folkhögskola* his aim was to educate the lower classes in Denmark, most notably peasants (cf. Gustavsson, Andersdotter & Sjöman, 2009). In other words, *Bildung* relates to the emancipation and liberation of the unprivileged masses from the bondage of illiteracy and poverty.[2]

Given these diverse historical contexts, what kind of relevance does *Bildung* have nowadays? Siljander and Sutinen (2012) refer to two general features in the modern version of the concept. On the one hand, it stands for a creative process in which, by means of his or her own activity, a person shapes and develops him- or herself as well as the surrounding cultural environment; on the other hand, it implies human growth and improvement, which is worth striving for as a more advanced form of life. As Løvlie (2002) points out, the idea of human self-formation according to an immanent *telos* is no longer current. It should therefore be

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2. "Folkbildning" has also had a big impact on the development of different social conditions, including voting rights, women's emancipation, gender equality and workers' rights.

emphasised that *Bildung* refers to a process by means of which human beings become subjects through free interplay *with* the world.

The idea of human autonomy and freedom intertwines with the pedagogical idea of *Bildung*. However, within the liberal philosophical tradition freedom usually connotes freedom from constraints whereby societal institutions impose restrictions on human action and the freedom to choose. On the other hand, there is a strong (communitarian) tradition according to which social institutions and communities are seen as *enabling* human freedom, in the sense of human development and transformation. The former notion has been referred to as negative freedom, and the latter as positive freedom (Berlin, 1969). It is from this latter perspective that Hannah Arendt (1993) claims that the idea of human freedom is distorted when it is removed from the social or intersubjective sphere to the inner sphere of the human being. It is only in this intersubjective sense that human autonomy and freedom are meaningful in relation to *Bildung*, and it is in this light that the process of *Bildung* is "a prerequisite for the advent of democracy, as all human beings must be equipped to be self-responsible, responsible for others and for society as a whole" (Willbergh, 2015, p. 341).

There is an interesting interpretation of both the intersubjective and emancipatory elements of *Bildung* in a small book from Finland written by Reijo Wilenius (1982) and entitled *Ihminen ja sivistys* [The Human Being and Bildung]. Wilenius makes a distinction between what he calls three capacities of *Bildung*,[3] which function as overarching ideals for education and correspond to the view of humans as thinking, feeling and willing beings.

The first capacity is familiar from the Socratic era, and refers to the inherent capability among humans to examine themselves and their traditions with a critical eye. Socratic education had an emancipatory aim, namely, to encourage pupils to be responsible for their own thinking. It is crucial in a democracy to have citizens who think for themselves, and do not blindly follow authorities (cf. Nussbaum, 2010). As Wilenius (1982) points out, this is not about learning specific contents, it is about thinking in a wider sense and constantly being ready to change formerly held conceptions (p. 23). This requires an attitude towards the world whereby different perspectives are perceived as varying points of reference. Such thinking needs to be active and lively to be able to navigate in this open field.

The second capacity identified by Wilenius concerns feeling and sensing the world. The more empathy and feeling one brings into the world, the more meaningful one's relationship with it becomes. This requires the development of imagination, to feel and sense what it is like to be in another person's shoes. Literature and artistic activity more generally play a major role in developing human sensitivity and imagination (cf. Nussbaum, 2010; Eisner, 2002). According to Wilenius (1982), such a capacity makes people more receptive to different qualities in the world. He even holds that every human being has a unique quality, which is acquired as an aesthetic experience (p. 27).

The third capacity of *Bildung* is the ability to conceive of oneself as part of a bigger whole, specifically concerning how one places oneself in relation to 'the other'. It is desirable that people integrate into the world, and do not place themselves at its centre. Such thinking embraces responsibility and ethical demands (cf. Biesta, 2019). According to Wilenius (1982), it is a capacity that is somewhat difficult to influence: it is deep-seated and expresses itself as the direction of the will. Nevertheless, those who develop it come to regard it as natural to act for the good of other people, or nature as a whole, rather than only with regard to themselves.

In this context, the three capacities of *Bildung* exemplify elements that matter in education, but that are rarely operationalised as measurable learning contents. They exemplify how pedagogical processes and practices may contribute to the development of human subjectivity in the sense of a unique individual 'coming into being' in responsiveness to alterity and difference. In that sense, these capacities have an emancipatory function in integrating the individual into the world, in an individualised way. It is a question of developing educational experiences of thinking *alongside* others, feeling *with* others and acting *for* others.

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3. fi. sivistysominaisuuksia.

From such a perspective, *Bildung* also has political-democratic undertones: it is about how people should live together, guided by the ideal of the communicative, reflective, responsible and participative human being (cf. Sörlin, 2019, p. 22-23).

The concept of *Bildung* is clearly incompatible with a strong system-oriented view on education. It is also clear that there is a close relationship between *Bildung* and Biesta's concept of subjectification: both imply that education "should provide spaces for the possibility of becoming someone you are not, which is an open-ended, unpredictable, and risky process, through practices of resistance against neoliberal subjectivities" (Rawson, 2019, p. 7). An education that is oriented towards *Bildung* and subjectification emphasises ethics and interaction in everyday educational practice, and it brings the voices of teachers and pupils to the fore. We now turn to Waldorf education as an example of such a practice.

Waldorf education as a case of alternative practice promoting educational equity

We suggest that Waldorf education leans on many ideals and educational principles in line with the tradition of *Bildung*, providing pupils with equal and just educational opportunities - without a strong emphasis on compensatory structures. Although there is comparatively little empirical research on the teaching in Waldorf schools, existing studies describe open-ended alternatives and didactical designs that exemplify how the principles of *Bildung* are applicable to didactic practices.

Waldorf education evolved from the need for social change, introducing a radical and new form of pedagogy that would bring education and emancipation to the under-privileged. This social pathos was strongly present in the inauguration of the Waldorf School in 1919. Before its opening, Rudolf Steiner gave several lectures on the social tasks for this new school. The emphasis was on equal education for both sexes and a common school for children from all social classes. The basic task was to bring about social change in society, promoting liberation and equity for all (see Steiner, 1989).

One noticeable characteristic of Waldorf education is the overall curricular structure. The comprehensive thematic progression over the school years in which all subjects are covered and interrelated constitutes a pedagogical framework aimed at supporting and mirroring the development of the child to adulthood. The practical foundations of such a framework lie in a century of trying out, adapting and refining the contents and progressions, based on Rudolf Steiner's anthropological[4] view of human beings (Sommer, 2014). Given its deep-rooted anthropological origin, the Waldorf school curriculum is not a curriculum in the traditional sense: there are no explicit goals, grades or measures, nor does the content selection reflect national political programmes or ambitions. Instead, the structure, the progression and the thematic content are understood as a common, universal framework within which the individual pupil undertakes his or her individual journey – and in which freedom and self-formation play a significant role (Boland, 2017; Mansikka, 2007; Mazzone 1999; Rawson, 2019; Sommer, 2014; Tjärnstig, 2020).

Another distinguishable feature of Waldorf education is its holistic approach to learning (Boland, 2017). The basic idea guiding the didactics is that teaching should not be limited to the pupil's intellectual faculties, "the head", and should also engage in developing emotions, feelings, motor skills and will. It is just as important to engage in practical work involving arts and crafts or learning to master specific tools as it is to do academic work. Schieren (2012) points to the need for "limb learning" instead of just "head learning", which expands the concept of learning beyond conceptual knowledge. Instead, learning begins with engagement, new attentiveness and interactivity within this domain. The aim is to enable each pupil to relate to new concepts and to understand their origin in the outside world. Teachers in Waldorf schools draw on a broad didactical repertoire, encouraging the multidimensional engagement of pupils with the educational content presented (Schireren, 2010; Sommer, 2014).

As Rawson (2019) points out in his study of Waldorf education, practical engagement allows pupils to immerse themselves fully in new domains of knowledge, giving them a "bodily experience that stimulates all

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4. Steiner (1996) expounds his spiritual view of the human being as anthropological, based upon his theory of the wholeness of the bodily, emotional and spiritual aspects of human existence.

the senses" (p.10). Such an approach to learning, which strives to balance the pupil's ability to act, emotional engagement and thought expression, cannot be limited to predefined goals within curricular categories. Learning is perceived as open-ended, focusing on the pupil's indefinite future rather than striving for pre-defined goals in terms of conceptual categories of knowledge.

It is clear that the teaching in Waldorf schools focuses equally on creating meaningful relations with the world and enhancing conceptual understanding. The role of the teacher is therefore to open up the content, using a broad range of pedagogical means such as artistic expression, drama, music and crafts. Waldorf teachers must have the capacity to address and engage the class in active participation with something new and unknown. In this, the Waldorf approach largely relies on the teacher's presence in front of the class. The teacher should be seen as a trustworthy authority in that student learning builds on activity with the new and the unknown (see Binetti, 2020; Nielsen, 2004; Solomon 2017; Stene, 2018).

Teachers consulted in Tjärnstig's (2020) study of Waldorf didactics describe their relationship with the class as an "informal contract" of trust. The pupils' experiences of meaningfulness in the classroom are directly related to their confidence in devoting themselves to the activities that teachers introduce. The contract that maintains the teacher's authority has to be re-negotiated continuously, as the trust between the teacher and the pupils must be confirmed every day. The teacher's authority is therefore not formally given, and it has to be re-established by the pupils repeatedly.

Both Nielsen's (2004) and Solomon's (2017) studies also relate the teacher's authority, in a Waldorf context, to the ability to convey the content to be taught imaginatively, characteristically in vivid and personal oral presentations. This didactic practice leans on the presupposition that teachers who create an atmosphere in the classroom that stimulates the formation of "imaginations"[5] in their pupils' minds inspire in them "wholeness and completeness of experience" (Nielsen, 2004, p. 2). Imaginative presentations by teachers could open up and allow students access to a world that is very different from their home situation or background.

Nevertheless, the educational aims extend beyond submission to specific activities or immersion in an imaginative wholeness of the subject conveyed, to the establishment of a point of departure for the pupils' own reflections and self-formation. The longer-term and overall objective is to foster the pupils' capacity for autonomous and self-regulated reflection, judgment and action (Schieren, 2010). We exemplify this with reference to Tjärnstig's (2020) study in which four experienced Waldorf teachers reflect upon their own didactic practices. According to one teacher, commenting on a teaching situation in which the pupil does everything the teacher has prepared for, "[s]he [the pupil] doesn't learn anything here, [she] just does everything I have planned for. She must overcome my teaching" (Tjärnstig, 2020, p. 142). The open-ended objective of Waldorf education, which is closely linked with the tradition of *Bildung*, is visible in this comment.

In sum, pupils at Waldorf schools are not expected simply to reproduce or assimilate curricular content (see Boland, 2017; Binetti, 2020; Nielsen, 2004; Solomon, 2017; Stene, 2018, Tjärnstig, 2020). Learning is primarily understood as experience, encompassing and engaging with the richness of nature and human culture, awakening responsibility and the capacity to show empathy and decisiveness (see Steiner, 1996). The educational aims connected with such an approach to learning are to allow for a dynamic and personal relationship with the curricular content, the world and oneself. From this perspective, the aim of teaching is to invite pupils into a pedagogical space in which they enact curricular content and become active.

In this sense, the didactive approach of Waldorf education is "critical and constructive" (cf. Klafki, 2014, also in Sommer, 2014), whereby the personal and active construction of meaning in relation to specific content enables the pupil to examine it critically. Moreover, and in line with the concept of *Bildung*, learning is not solely an individual and cognitive matter: it requires emotional and social engagement. Individual self-realisation must be conceived of in relation to integration into society as a whole. The aim of education is to

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5. The idea of presenting teaching content as imaginations is important in Waldorf education and was emphasised in Rudolf Steiner's lectures on education (see Steiner1996).

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realise the potential of pupils in themselves so that they may connect with the world and society in "general, lively and free interaction" (cf. Klafki, 2014, p. 38).

Conclusions

Our starting point in this article was to problematise the politicise and instrumental use of equity in educational policies. With support from the literature, we argue that inherent in the idea that each school and every teacher should apply compensatory arrangements are practical limitations and downsides (Ball, 2010; 2016; Crawford, 2010; Englund & Quennerstedt, 2008; Palomino, Marrero, & Rodríguez, 2018; Ryffé, 2017; Toropova, 2020). Among other negative consequences, teachers are torn between allocating a large proportion of resources to a few pupils or using them to benefit the whole group (see Raffé, 2019), which may arouse feeling of insecurity and "ethical stress" among them (Bornemark, 2018).

References to equity in educational steering documents tend to be limited to equal opportunities in reaching certain goals (Palomino, Marrero, & Rodríguez, 2018; Ryffé, 2019; Toropova, 2020). In practice, therefore, it is understood as an objective such that all pupils achieve pre-established learning outcomes. Equity is thus conceived of as equal opportunities for each individual, and pupils' learning becomes are formalised and considered only in the light of individual traits and achievements. The problem with such an understanding is that it leads to a certain instrumentalization of education, which in turn fosters inequality in that those who privately have access to a dynamic and vivid social context are at an advantage. Thereby, the dimensions of meaningfulness and individual growth in interplay with the social context become invisible.

The definition of educational equity should therefore be broadened, which we have attempted to do through the concept of *Bildung*. From this perspective, education is not only about individual learning: it is also a matter of individual integration in a broader social context whereby individuals deepen their relationship with the world by appearing as unique subjects. As Biesta (2006; 2019; 2020) argues, the process of subjectification is an essential dimension of education, but it is too subtle to be treated as if it was evidence-informed or quality-secured. Care should therefore be taken not to adopt educational concepts such that the subtler aspects of education disappear and render teaching and learning merely a tool for "producing citizens" (cf. Ball, 2010; Biesta 2019; Lawy & Biesta, 2006).

We suggest that the didactical practices established in Waldorf schools exemplify education that operates according to a broader principle of equity. As many examples show, the basic ideas of Waldorf education have spread around the world and have become established in different cultures, religions and social settings. One of its main characteristics is the high degree of adaptation of both the original pedagogical principles and the range of didactical practices (Boland, 2017; Rawson, 2019; Stene, 2018; Nielsen, 2004).

Qualitative studies of life in Waldorf classrooms yield examples of how teachers struggle with the informal and fostering aspects of teaching, which are closely linked to the process of *Bildung* and subjectification. Teachers reviewing their own work in these classrooms emphasise education for growth and the development of the whole person (cf. Tjärnstig, 2020; Tyson, 2017). This open-ended education differs in direction from compensatory arrangements that guide individual pupils towards pre-given goals. The studies also show that it is not possible, as a teacher in a classroom, simultaneously to provide an open-ended, risky space for undefined becoming and to secure a safe transition to strongly standardised qualification.

We have shown that putting too much emphasis on the system level within educational discourse easily results in deafness towards day-to-day educational practice. The ideals and principles of *Bildung* may constitute a counter-narrative to this deafness. The educational praxis of *Bildung* gives voice and professional autonomy back to teachers and increases respect for contextual and diverse classrooms. In this sense, Waldorf education as a *Bildung*-oriented alternative avoids the limitations of standardisation and could foster openness to future possibilities. We argue that this fundamental dimension of educational equity cannot be accommodated within a system of compensatory structures.

Securing education that is genuinely fair and equal requires a bottom-up perspective on teaching and learning. We can see the advantage of strong, value-based pedagogical practice, ensuring autonomous didactic

space for schools and teachers. Such a value orientation broadens the scope of education on a general level. Nevertheless, teaching in schools is a practical matter, and it is essential that the ideals and values that inform the educational system do not "fly over the head" of the teachers and restrict rather than encourage them.

The case of Waldorf education is a viable and interesting example to examine further. How can the ideals of Bildung and the view of human existence inspire teachers today? We argue here that these issues are crucial for the future of a democratic and equal societ

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One pedagogy – many practices: variations on formal and enacted curricula in Steiner/Waldorf schools

Ruhi Tyson

Waldorf University College and Stockholm University, Department of Education, Sweden

ABSTRACT. This article focuses on the problems and potentials inherent in including significant deviations from the standard Steiner/Waldorf curriculum in publications that present it. The main issue lies with the apparent homogeneity that current practice suggests when a closer look demonstrates a significant variety of formal and enacted Steiner/Waldorf curricula. Two of these are discussed more closely, the formal curriculum of the Hibernia school that integrates vocational education and Steiner/Waldorf education and Wilfried Kessler's enacted social development curriculum. Based on these it is concluded that the emphasis on a singular curriculum serves to inhibit innovation and development, makes it more difficult for novice students to understand the dynamic character of foundational concepts in Steiner/Waldorf education and generally argues that we need to make a more systematic effort to promote pluralism in curriculum and didactics research as well as practice.

Keywords: Curriculum; Steiner/Waldorf education; Vocational education; Social development; Bildung

Introduction

After 100 years of development Steiner/Waldorf[1] pedagogy displays a variation in practice that is seldom visible in published curricula (Waldorfskolefederationen 2016; Mathisen 2014; Rawson & Avison 2013; Avison & Rawson 2014; Richter 2016). This variation manifests, in part, on the formal level where eg. the Hibernia school in the German state of Nordrhein-Westfalen has developed a vocationally oriented form of the Steiner curriculum. It also manifests on the enacted level, ie. in what teachers and schools practice, where there is a significantly larger plurality in the pedagogy than what the published curricula tend to express (see Gabriel & Schneider 1996, pp. 322-324 for a similar, critical, perspective).

This is not to imply that the published versions of the "orthodox", henceforth called "standard", curriculum make strong claims to represent the totality of the Steiner educational tradition. Statements such as the following make this abundantly clear (Rawson & Avison 2013, p. 13, italics in original):

> "The present new overview must not in any way be regarded as a prescription of how things *ought to be done*. Teachers' own imagination is their greatest treasure and must not be curtailed in any way."

It should also be regarded as self-evident that the standard curriculum is far from unchanging, something the many editions testify to, owing both to a need for development as times change and in reaction to changing national laws and policies on education.

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1. Known by both terms and often called Steiner-Waldorf in contemporary texts, henceforth called Steiner pedagogy or Steiner education (two terms I will be using synonymously) in this article.

Finally, this is not, to my knowledge, an issue limited to Steiner education but one that is ubiquitous in how we describe curricula and other matters where there is a formalized, written element and a practical application of it in some way. The tendency is generally to describe an average or idealized practice and seldom, if ever, to include deviations. This could be taken as a good argument against doing so since no one else seems to be. As I hope to show this is more an effect of cultural habits than any overt reflection of what might best promote development and understanding.

The general problem with this kind of homogeneous presentation was noted at least as early as 1935 by Ludwick Fleck in his book *Genesis and development of a scientific fact* where he distinguishes (in relation to medical texts) between journal science and textbooks. The former is heterogeneous and difficult to synthesize since it consists of sometimes conflicting arguments. The latter is ordered so as to provide a coherent view of a field but in the process tends to obscure the many uncertainties and variations that exist in journal science. A similar issue is at hand here regarding curricula but there is no reason why a textbook in principle shouldn't be able to incorporate at least some of the variations and uncertainties of practice (practice being analogous to journal science in this case). The problems with not doing so can be outlined briefly.[2]

First, it reinforces the perception that Steiner education is comparatively homogenous, especially together with publications such as *The seven core principles of Waldorf education* (Leibner 2017) where the focus is on the common or essential aspects of Steiner education. This is not to deny that there are many aspects that are constant across Steiner schools and throughout the first century of the curriculums' existence or to claim that there are no core principles. But an exclusive focus on average or standard curricula (both formal and enacted) together with core principles increases the difficulty of enacting innovative practice and research runs the risk of simplifying what is, in practice, a significant diversity.

Second, we understand ideas and practices not only through what they have in common but often just as much through tracking their boundaries, eg. it is sometimes easier to comprehend how conflict resolution works by studying unusually successful "deviations" from the norm (cf. Tyson 2016a). Thus the standard curriculum can also be understood better through the documentation of deviant curricula. This is especially important for novice teachers given that beginners have a tendency to interpret guidelines more like rules and thus the presentation of a singular form, no matter how couched it is in language emphasizing the need for flexibility and imagination, tends to be taken at face value. Novices benefit from having ideas presented together with cases that illustrate major differences in how the ideas are enacted. Thus, proceeding from the core principles or foundational ideas of Steiner pedagogy a standard curriculum has developed. But, proceeding from those same ideas several formal deviations from the standard curriculum have also developed. To say nothing of the variations in enacted curricula.

Third, the cultural habit noted above of thinking in singular terms reinforces the prejudice that there is a one-to-one relationship between idea and practice as well as the accompanying sense that there is a singular orthodoxy where the only alternative is full relativism. The possibility of systematically explored pluralism is then overlooked. From a pluralist point of view there can still be clear differences between curricula and a comparative valuation of them. However, the point is that when we do not actively pursue an interest in difference, we implicitly enforce an unnecessary conservatism both in research and development something that the sociology of science as developed by eg. Bordo (1987), Fleck (1935/1979), Kuhn (1962) and Hacking (1999) provides ample evidence of, even if these authors are not always aligned with the full argument presented here.

The purpose of this article is to argue for the value of systematically exploring the concrete diversity of Steiner educational practice and to suggest ways in which this can also be incorporated in the publication of formal curricula on the national and international level as well as how it can enrich comparative curriculm research.

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2. There is an interesting comparison to be made between Fleck's arguments and those of the anthroposophical author Owen Barfield in his book *Saving the appearances* (1988) where both refer to similar phenomena in the middle ages and make use of the same anthropological research by Levi Bruhl and Durkheim. Fleck's conclusions seem to be reached from an implicit subjective idealism or constructivism whereas Barfield's result from the standpoint of an explicit objective idealism.

One issue, it should be noted, with exploring diversity is that ad-hoc documentations run the risk of providing one-sided views on diversity compared with more systematic reviews since it is difficult to know if the entire field is really covered. It is not within the scope of this article to provide such a systematic review but rather to argue for its value and potential, to suggest ways of achieving it and to provide an example of where this might take us through two case studies, one focusing on the integration of vocational education in the standard curriculum at the Hibernia school and one focusing on the integration of a craft-based social development project at the Waldorf school in Ulm, Römerstraße. Thus, the examples provided need to be approached with some care since there are other ones not included in this study that are of significance to our understanding of the potential expansiveness of the Steiner curriculum in the fields of vocational education and social development work (for a more systematic exploration of the former see Tyson 2019).

Finally, the general context of this kind of study is what Flyvbjerg (2001) has called phronetic social science, based on the Aristotelian concept of phronesis or practical wisdom. The aim of such research is not primarily to develop new theory but to increase our understanding for the purpose of acting wisely. Briefly put, Flyvbjerg's argument is that too much social science research has tried to generate theories on par with natural science theory, ie. capable of prediction, something he argues is impossible in social contexts. What we need instead is more research where the aim is to increase our capacity to act for the greater good in the Aristotelian sense of human flourishing or eudaimonia. This perspective fits well with pedagogical research where it is especially clear that it is difficult to avoid implicitly normative matters. When we teach there is no neutral baseline or final, perfect, approach since we are concerned with the ethically charged issue of intervening in the life of other individuals. Similarly, with the creation of curricula, each curriculum is an ethical stance on what we consider wise (implicitly or explicitly) regarding how and what to teach. As such, it cannot be viewed as anything more than a temporary construct until a time comes where we recognize wiser constructs. The kind of comparative research argued for here is meant to be a more systematic approach to the continuous development of pedagogy and curricula.

In what follows I will begin with a general discussion on the Steiner curriculum considering it in relation to the issues raised in the introduction. After this a section on method and research design considers both the general framework for this kind of case study and the specific methods followed in documenting the two cases. These are then presented and a discussion follows after which a final section outlines the main conclusions and suggestions.

Curriculum studies and the Steiner curriculum

A common distinction in curriculum studies is that between formal, enacted and experienced curricula (eg. Billett 2011). Formal curricula consist of that which is written and published as a curriculum as well as the general structure of lessons, etc. Enacted curricula consist of the actions of teachers in the classroom and may diverge significantly from whatever formal one they proceed from. Finally, what students experience is a third aspect of a curriculum that needs to be studied in its own right. Such student-centered studies are especially important in the evaluation of formal and enacted curricula and sometimes enacted curricula are only possible to explore from the point of view of the students who experienced them (eg. when the original teacher is no longer around to describe his or her action).

Not all formal curricula need to be written, it is also possible that they are transmitted as part of the oral culture of an institution. This complicates things since it may require more or less extensive visits to a school in order to document those aspects of its formal curriculum that have not been committed to writing.

The original, formal, Steiner curriculum was first established in writing by the teachers Caroline von Heydebrand and E A Karl Stockmeyer (Heydebrand 2010, Stockmeyer 1991). These have been the basic templates for the main part of the later curricula and today the most common text is Richter (2016) translated and edited into English by Richter & Rawson (2000) and, according to Rawson (n.d. possibly 2015), into a further 17 languages. It contains a vertical progression for each subject starting in grade 1 and culminating in grade 12 as well as a horizontal consideration of the interrelations between the subjects for each grade. At its foundation lies the understanding that the curriculum can be "read" from the child, ie. the child provides us

with the knowledge we need in order to create a curriculum (content wise and structurally) that corresponds to the child's current and future needs (cf. eg. Skiera 2010, p. 248). Or as Gabriel and Schneider write (1996, p. 315, my translation): "the child is the curriculum". It follows that any formal, written, curriculum is dependent on such a "reading" and can be modified or discarded in situations where "further reading" has invalidated previous ones. Although Steiner provided a large corpus of indications regarding how to "read" from the perspective of spiritual science (eg. Steiner 1984, 1986, 1992) this does not preclude that, especially as the curriculum became formalized in writing, several other elements came to influence it. Not least the social and practical context of the first Steiner schools (cf. Skiera 2010). The variations across Steiner educational practice suggest that such "reading" is far from straightforward.

It is difficult to give a brief summary of this curriculum especially since the deviations considered here both more or less conform to its basic tenets. They are largely deviations *within* the basic framework. One comparison might be with the critical-constructive Bildung ideas of Klafki (see Sommer 2014) since the Steiner curriculum can be described as a distinctively Bildung-oriented curriculum. However, this is beyond the scope of the article. Instead, since the aim is first and foremost to explore what deviant curricula can contribute, the main differences between them and the standard curriculum are presented together with the case studies so that it is possible to at least get an idea of what they are deviating from (since neither represents a deviation from the standard curriculum in its totality).

Furthermore, countries also have to square this standard curriculum with their own national curricula and these tend to then go through various stages of development and change (compare eg. the iterations of the Swedish curriculum *En väg till frihet* from 2007 and 2016). A separate study would be needed to compare such iterations of formal curricula in selected countries and to make a cross-country comparison of how the Steiner curriculum has been adopted and changed as it migrated from one cultural context to another.

Already in the Nordic countries this would present significant differences, especially on the upper secondary level where several changes over the last 20 years have taken place. For example, the Swedish Steiner schools had to adapt their curriculum to the new national curriculum in 2011 creating a number of issues with how to square the standard curriculum with it. This also meant that the latest iteration of the Swedish Steiner curriculum is written in order to outline how it fits within this new national curriculum. However, on an institutional level, there are several schools where the Steiner curriculum has been further changed in various ways. One such place is the agricultural vocational track at Järna Naturbruksgymnasium (Järna agricultural gymnasium) resulting in an amalgam of the Steiner curriculum with various agricultural courses that are, in turn, treated from a biodynamic perspective.

Another, particularly interesting, example from Sweden can be found from the 1980s when a group of students, mainly from the Solvik school (itself a significant variation on the standard Steiner curriculum) started an independent upper secondary school together with the teachers Erik Norlin and Ivar Heckscher. This is all the more interesting since one of its main characteristics was an almost complete lack of formal curriculum. Instead the interests and will of the students were placed at the center. This included that the students largely financed their education themselves and found their teachers among various practitioners as they went along (Norlin 1986). The project was done in two cycles somewhat apart from each other, the first one being documented in the above-mentioned publication and the second one documented in manuscript form only.

Beyond this there are a number of documented examples. To take a few from the German-speaking context there are variations on the traditional Steiner curriculum represented by the previously mentioned Hibernia school, by the Steiner school in Gröbenzell, by the Intercultural Waldorf school in Mannheim (all in Germany), and by the Regionale Oberstufe Jura-Südfuss (ROJ) in Switzerland. All have seen more or less extensive evaluations over the years and one, the Hibernia school, will be considered further below (Brater 2000; Brater & Munz 1996; Brater et al. 2009; Rist & Schneider 1979).

It seems that the greatest diversity exists at the upper secondary level at least on the level of formal curricula although this would require a more systematic study to be concluded with certainty. A possible

reason for this is in the nature of most central European and Nordic school systems which select into different tracks, generally somewhere between 6th and 10th grade. These selections are mainly done with the purpose of sending students to vocational tracks or to tracks preparing for higher education. Already within the first decade of its existence this was an issue facing the original Steiner school/s where a tradition established itself of mainly preparing for the "Abitur", the German track for higher studies at the university level. This has largely been followed, at least in the Nordic countries and in Britain as well as the US. It belongs to the exceptions that Steiner schools have developed ways in which to incorporate vocational elements or tracks at the upper secondary level. This selection issue has been at the center of an ongoing discussion in the Steiner educational movement resulting in different approaches. The wide-spread disregard in most societies for vocational education and accompanying appreciation of academic training has been a contributing factor as well.

Turning to the enacted curriculum this has seen a variety of single or multiple case-studies over the years (eg. Berg et al., 2003; Tyson 2018a, b). These studies can be viewed as part of a wider trend in curriculum research where one prominent focus has been on Martin Wagenschein's genetic-socratic-exemplary didactics (eg. Berg 2003; Berg, Klafki & Schultze 2003, 2001; Wagenschein 1991; Westbury, Hopmann & Riquarts 2000). As they relate to Steiner education, the studies have mainly served the purpose of documenting individual innovations in subject didactics rather than exploring their relationships to the Steiner curriculum in a wider sense. Here the issue is also complicated by the difficulty of conducting such research in any systematic way given the comparatively large number of schools world-wide. Several smaller studies would perhaps need to be made on a national and regional level in order to explore systematically the variations across practice that can be found. One might also focus here on specific subject areas such as the teaching of history. In such cases it would be easier to systematically cover practice and potential variations across it. Such documentation could then be related to the formal curriculum, expanding its general concepts, functioning as supplemental material that clarifies interpretive variations and finally providing a more stringent presentation of Steiner educational didactics that doesn't give the impression that there is a given single norm for how to teach a subject.

Finally, on the level of the experienced curriculum there are any number of ways in which research has been conducted. On the biographical level there are large scale studies such as that of Barz & Randoll (2007) using questionnaires to explore some of the experienced effects of the Steiner curriculum. There are also biographical studies such as that of Gessler (1988) focusing on the experienced effects of individual schools, in that case the Hibernia school. Common to both are a wider biographical perspective. I am not aware of any studies in Steiner education focusing more on how students experience the daily enacted practice in schools, as is the case with eg. *Bildungsgangdidaktik* (cf. eg. Hericks et al. 2001; Meyer & Reinartz 1998).

Methodologies and research design

This discussion has two aims, first to outline how the two case studies were documented and second to provide some remarks more generally on how this kind of study can be conducted. As such it is based on the work done in Tyson (2018a, c, 2016a, b) where the purpose was, in part, to develop a framework for this kind of research.

Generally speaking, the methods available for documenting cases are relatively straightforward. Regarding formal curricula they are already, for the most part, present as written sources. This is also the case with case study 1 on the Hibernia school. Beyond this, the documentation of mostly orally transmitted formal curricula can require both interviews and observations. Interviews to the degree that the participants are easily capable of articulating them and observations when this is not the case. However, any systematic approach here is bound to be difficult since it is hard to know as an outsider if such curricula exist at a particular institution. Thus, finding out about them and accessing them is perhaps the main difficulty. For example, the Kristoffer school in Sweden has long had variations in its formal crafts curriculum where a brief course in bookbinding is included in 9th grade as well as 11th grade and where the 12th grade consists of a full year of specialization in one chosen material rather than several smaller courses (cf. Tyson 2018b). This

represents a significant deviation from the standard craft curriculum and the inspiration for it came, as I have been told but with no real possibility to verify, in the late 1970s or early 80s from the Hibernia school.

Enacted curricula are open to be studied both through interviews and observation as well as by looking at the lesson plans, weekly curriculum- and other documents of an individual school. The interviews can be done with teachers or students, in person or through written testimonies. In case study 2 on the social development project, a combination of interviews and reviews of informal documents has been used. The appropriate method depends on the kind of enacted curriculum in question, is it a major block of educational activity or a specific aspect? Is it easy to grasp its major elements through condensed writing/retelling or does it require a more detail-oriented approach? However, for the most part one can expect interviews/written reports to be sufficient since the focus is on enacted curricula close to the level of formal curricula rather than to didactical practice. For example, a written report of the craft tasks given at the Kristoffer school (as detailed in Tyson 2018b) is sufficient from a curriculum perspective whereas observations might be needed in order to clarify the way in which this is taught, ie. the practical didactical aspects. These are clearly not two distinctly separate matters but rather represent two ends of a continuum.

Studies of experienced curricula are mostly conducted in a similar fashion to those of enacted ones.

When it comes to method of analysis it is fundamentally comparative. It does not, however, necessarily involve any specific analytical tools (although this depends on the context) but tends to work with conceptual comparisons and these concepts are grounded in the cases chosen. Thus, in case study 1 the concepts are mainly related to crafts vocational education given that these are the concepts that have been most heavily influential in how the curriculum has come to deviate from the standard one. In case study 2 the concepts are social work combined with craftwork since these are at the center of the case. Other deviant curricula such as that at the Solvik school mentioned in passing earlier would proceed from the concepts that are central to their deviation (probably intuitive pedagogy and the movable classroom, see for example Schönherr-Dhom 2014).

The purpose of such comparative conceptual analysis is, following the phronetic approach, the development of practical wisdom rather than theory. Thus, the analysis or discussion is interesting and relevant to the degree that it can increase our understanding for the purpose of acting wisely in practice, ie. increasing human flourishing (Tyson 2017 pp. 94-96). Thus, what might be considered lacking in empirical analysis from other research perspectives represents a different research aim. This, of course, does not free the researcher from the responsibility to argue clearly and coherently. But the question of validity relates more to the case studies' capacity to enrich our practice, a pragmatic kind of validity as Flyvbjerg calls it (2001).

Common to all of these methods is a research design oriented towards extreme cases (Flyvbjerg 2001) where cases are actively sought that deviate from the average norm. The average norm is not simply a given but, in the current context, can be considered to be the national standard curricula as well as established textbooks that remain close to their formulations when suggesting ways in which to enact their prescriptions in practice. In Sweden this would be eg. the national Steiner curriculum *En väg till frihet* (Waldorfskolefederationen 2016) and perhaps literature such as the book *Waldorfpedagogik* (Liebendörfer & Liebendörfer 2013).

One also needs to bear in mind that there are highly interesting deviations from didactical practice that nevertheless do not significantly represent a deviation from the standard curriculum. An example of this, as far as I can tell, is the approach of the Swiss Waldorf teacher Christian Breme to embryology where he has developed an extensive class that centers on modeling the stages of the embryo's development in clay (Breme 2012). Such case studies of didactical practice are at least as important as the curriculum studies suggested here and some indications of their potential can be found in Tyson (2018a).

Exemplifying the approach – vocational and social developments in the Steiner curriculum

Case study 1 The Hibernia school

A good way of testing the main thesis of this article, that deviant versions of the Steiner curriculum are largely marginalized, is to look at the impact that the most widely discussed one has had internationally. The Hibernia school, founded by Klaus Fintelmann in the 1950s, represents a significant modification of the curriculum from grade 7 onwards mainly through an integration of vocational elements including a full apprenticeship-training at the upper secondary level. The standard Steiner curriculum otherwise normally qualifies students at the upper secondary level for further academic rather than vocational studies.

As a consequence of these changes at the Hibernia school some of the more advanced natural science and social science contents of the standard curriculum were left out of the curriculum for grades 10-12 and reserved for an optional two-year Kolleg where students could go in order to get their Abitur. Other than this, the standard curriculum is largely followed so that the additions of the apprenticeships (and more general considerations on practical Bildung that will not be further discussed here) represents the main difference. This take on the Steiner curriculum was extensively documented in the 1970s and 80s culminating in a UNESCO study by Rist & Schneider (1979). Furthermore, it also represents a significant deviation from conventional apprenticeship-based vocational education and training in Germany.

Within the German-speaking sphere this and other similar initiatives in Kassel and Nürnberg have seen a good number of works devoted to their curriculum innovations and generally to the integration of vocational elements in upper secondary curricula (cf. eg. Edding et al. 1985; Fintelmann 1991; Fucke 1996, 1981). There have also been further developments in more recent years (cf. the special edition of the journal *Erziehungskunst* February 2018 for a review). However, it is not mentioned in the German standard curriculum (Richter 2016) and none of this seems to have had any impact in the English literature on Steiner curricula or Steiner education more generally. From the Hibernia school UNESCO published the aforementioned study by Rist & Schneider (1979) and one chapter that reiterated elements of that study in a larger compilation (Loose 1988) in English and that is all. The only research articles or dissertations mentioning these matters are not directly concerned with Steiner education but rather with vocational education (Tyson 2015, 2017). A reasonable assumption is that the combination of language barriers and the weak position of vocational education in most countries has contributed to this. However, the point here is that had there been a concerted and systematic effort to explore deviations from the standard Steiner curriculum these and other initiatives could not have been overlooked. As it stands, more than 50 years of development and experience remain to be discussed and learned from, at least outside of the German-speaking context.

The basic ideas behind the Hibernia curriculum are that students at this stage in their biography benefit immensely from a kind of general vocational education or Berufliche Bildung (vocational Bildung). The argument can be summarized in three points:

1. That training of manual skills is a general education of the will (where arts, humanities and sciences tend to involve a general cognitive and emotional education).

2. That (manual or crafts) vocational education for all students is a path of overcoming the social division of labor.

3. That vocational education is a way to introduce a biographical relationship towards work and of supporting both the transition to work after school and the capacity for self-directed lifelong learning.

Fully exploring these matters or even summarizing more than the bare minimum would be beyond the scope of this article. Here I will focus on the main deviations from the standard curriculum.

The school began as an apprenticeship training at the Hibernia chemistry factories in the Ruhr area where its founder Klaus Fintelmann was invited to take responsibility for their general education. He introduced elements from the standard Steiner curriculum such as the so-called main lessons in the mornings where the same subject is taught over the course of 2-4 weeks and in time the initiative grew to form a comprehensive school. Owing to this beginning in vocational education and Fintelmann's ideas about the general educational value of a vocational education at the upper secondary level, the school came to develop its main deviation from the standard curriculum. Basically, this consists in having all students at the upper secondary level in grades 10-12 train in a vocation to the point where they are able to complete a journeyman's test and earn their vocational certificate. The students are able to choose between several crafts such as carpentry, tailoring, the now discontinued chemical engineering at the Hibernia factories, tool making, electrics as well as childcare for those not interested in a more traditional craft education. The curriculum also impacts grades 7-9 because the students, up until the second semester in grade 10, are exposed to the basic elements of all crafts thereby making their choice of specialization midway through grade 10 with approximately the first apprenticeship year completed in all of them. For those that wish, there is the possibility to remain at the school after graduation to attend their Kolleg where one or two-years of further study allows for the acquisition of an Abitur or other certificates that give access to the various levels of German post-secondary education.

The main innovation then is in including vocational education, mostly in crafts or industrial crafts. These are then generally taught in a conventional way and Fintelmann notes that the technical world of work is functionally divided today so that most work-tasks are dispersed to such a degree that an immediate experience of the full context is no longer possible. This, he argues, creates a situation where workers need to be taught how to act out of insight and knowledge of the whole process they are engaged in. He goes on to say that the implication of this is that we need to foster a motivation among workers to understand the aims and purposes of their work even if the sense of it cannot be experienced immediately but only through synthesizing experiences across a wider field. This, in turn, presupposes a kind of education that prepares one for it, something that needs to be taught before one enters the workforce since at that point the division of work-tasks is already in practice. His concluding argument here is that (Fintelmann 1985, p. 124f, my translation):

> "No one can carry out a socially qualified planning if he isn't – in principle – able to carry out the tasks he is planning for. And no one should be forced to carry out what he – in principle – wouldn't be able to plan and imagine, ie. the ability to cognitively understand the context of one's work. Thus, on the practical *Bildungspath* of the Hibernia school the work-tasks are from the start created in such a way as to allow a shared participation in the experience of their solutions. The learners are asked to develop their own drafts and to independently carry them out with the responsible co-thought of the workshop teacher. [italics in original]"

This not only outlines something of the potential differences between the way the vocations are taught at the Hibernia school compared to conventional vocational education and training (although that is a massive simplification, it can be assumed that there is significant variance in the "conventional" way as well, cf. Tyson 2015). It also clarifies the fundamental aim of including vocational education in a general educational curriculum. We cannot expect that students will learn these things today after school when entering vocational education because at that stage the training is already fragmented.

Although this brief introduction to the Hibernia school doesn't qualify as a full review of its curriculum it exemplifies the central aspects of it enough that it should be clear how it offers a distinct deviation from the standard Steiner curriculum. In effect it constitutes a Steiner educational perspective on vocational education together with a practical enactment of it. Its, and similar variations', absence from standard curricula enforces the impression that Steiner education has little to offer in relation to vocational education and that vocational education has little to offer Steiner education.

Case study 2 The social development project

The second example is of an enacted curriculum in social work, reported and discussed more extensively in Tyson (2016c).[3] Social work is a phrase intended to cover those elements of a curriculum where students are directed outwards into society for the purpose of engaging in some kind of social development work. In the standard Waldorf curriculum a tradition has established itself where students go on a social practicum (generally at the upper secondary level) for 2-3 weeks. Often this entails working in childcare or in homes for the elderly or disabled. The case presented here represents a deviation from this both regarding continuity and focus. It has been kept short, focusing on these deviations to the exclusion of detail and other aspects since the relevant issue here is the comparison with the standard curriculum.

The case stems from eurythmy teacher Mr. Wilfried Kessler who works at the Freie Waldorfschule Römerstrasse in Ulm.[4] From 1992 until today he has carried out a developmental project together with students in the village of Masloc in Romania. During these decades they have assisted in the construction of an anthroposophical clinic, herbal garden for medicinal herbs, a small medicine making facility, a youth center, staff accommodation, a large clinic park with swimming pool and chapel as well as the renovation of a kindergarten and a retirement home. There is also an ecological waste treatment plant that purifies the sewage from the buildings.

This development in Masloc has been the result of repeated visits by Kessler and student groups, initially the students he was class sponsor for, and later students from all of the upper secondary school (grades 10-12), mostly visiting for a week or two and working at the site. Almost all building materials were donated by large firms making the project an important example of resource redistribution and recycling. For example, one large firm making radiators turned out to have a person working full time with donating equipment that had been returned by customers for reasons other than technical issues. Generally, the construction work was done with the full participation of the village and many of its inhabitants, beginning with the first trip down after purchasing the land when it had to be cleaned as it had been used as an informal landfill until then. The purchase was made possible through the staging of a play by the students where they collected the money needed for the initial piece of land.

Compared to standard practice the case is one in which developmental work is done mainly through construction, ie. in the field of crafts rather than working with children, the elderly or the disabled (something that can well be done through crafts but that is another matter to consider). The long continuity, more than 25 years, has also made it possible to increase the scale of the developmental work allowing it to achieve lasting and extensive changes even with relatively few weeks of actual work. The developmental project also provided a focus for many of the cultural activities undertaken by the students, allowing those activities to contribute resources to its further development.

Of central importance to the present discussion is that the majority of this developmental project was done outside of the formal curriculum and sometimes in conflict with it. Generally, it took place during holidays and similar spaces free from the demands of formal schooling something that seems to be common when social development projects are integrated into schools. This example of an enacted curriculum is therefore easy to overlook as a curriculum since it has resisted formalization. Which leads me to the discussion.

Discussing the cases and rereading each through the lens of the other

Before returning to the issues raised initially it is important to engage in a brief discussion of the two cases outlined in the previous section since this illustrates the potential of the comparative method noted previously.

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3. The report is mainly based on personal communication with Wilfried Kessler and complemented with some information from published news articles and pamphlets.
4. Eurythmy is a movement art established by Rudolf Steiner.

The cases are at opposite ends of a spectrum regarding length. The Hibernia curriculum is given here more briefly than a full presentation would entail and the social development project only in order to outline its relevance as an enacted curriculum. As parts of a standard curriculum text the relative brevity is warranted and in the context of more systematic reviews they could well be categorized as variations on vocational education curricula and social development curricula.

Presenting the cases together also allows for a rereading of both where they cast light on each other.

Schools as drivers of social development represent a massive and largely untapped resource at the upper secondary level. If ways could be found to turn part of education outwards into society where today the students spend the absolute majority of their time in classrooms this potential could be unlocked. As the example of Wilfried Kessler's project demonstrates even in circumstances where the formal curriculum contributes little it is still possible to achieve extraordinary results, but this relies almost exclusively on individuals who possess an unusual engagement with the issue at hand.

What has remained largely unrecognized at the formal level is the potential that especially craft-vocational education contains in this respect. The results of craftwork are often such that they could be made part of social development projects and since students need to practice in order to learn their chosen craft it would be possible to integrate social development into the formal curriculum in many if not all vocational education programs. Thus, each case can be viewed through the lens of the other and this suggests that vocational curricula could profit from integrating social development projects and upper secondary education from integrating vocational elements in order to drive social development.

In effect the two deviations presented here have produced, I would argue, a potential major innovation in education predicated on someone actually combining them. What other possible innovations remain unknown to us because they are either documented in isolation and not in relation to other variations or not documented at all?

On a methodological note, these reflections do not follow in any direct way from the presentation of the two cases, rather they stem from the kind of comparative and imaginative conceptual analysis discussed in the methods-section. Curriculum studies with a phronetic approach could be expected to yield such results given that the aim is to improve and enrich practice.

Conclusions

The first conclusion follows immediately from the preceding discussion; a lack of systematic documentation and comparison deprives us of possibly important educational innovations. This conclusion is clearly not limited to Steiner education. In effect Steiner education as a whole serves as a deviation from education in general making the issue easier to clarify using it as an exemplifying case. State-issued curricula can be compared as reforms change them but tend otherwise to be fixed at the formal level. Given the vast number of schools they are more difficult to explore systematically on the informal, enacted level. Thus, Steiner education also provides an interesting look at what can happen when the formal curriculum is not as completely "owned" by one national actor and instead is relatively open to change at the institutional level. Perhaps this might even result in an argument that more diversity among formal curricula would be beneficial.

A second conclusion is that the two cases that have been taken as examples for the purpose of this argument about curriculum research and development illustrate the issues raised initially. The standard curriculum takes on the same character as a textbook that glosses over important matters of controversy or difference. In particular the formal curriculum of the Hibernia school is an example of how the exclusion of deviations in standard publications simplifies Steiner education to its own detriment. One might be of the view that presenting diversity has not been the established purpose of curriculum publications and that such discussions are better suited for other kinds of publications, however, it is precisely this matter that is up for debate here. If curriculum publications have not, hitherto, been written with the purpose of highlighting pluralism the argument here is that they should be. This could be done in at least two ways, the

first being to expand standard publications with some chapters on deviating Steiner curricula together with a more principled discussion on what a comparative approach can bring. The second would be a separate publication focusing more extensively on this matter. Nothing precludes both, since the space available in publications focusing on the standard curriculum would of necessity be limited and a more extensive treatment is probably warranted.

A textbook focusing on deviating Steiner curricula would be especially valuable for teacher education where the inclusion of cases such as the ones presented provide teacher students with a more dynamic view of the Steiner curriculum. Although this argument refers specifically to Steiner-teacher education, it holds validity across all teacher education. It becomes easier to perceive the biases and perspectives taken in standard curricula through such deviations. A singular curriculum reinforces narrow and exclusionary views and impedes reflective practice (Schön 1983, 1987).

The two cases presented also highlight the importance for researchers unfamiliar with Steiner education to be cognizant of the diversity in practice. Especially when doing empirical studies. Depending on the cases selected, eg. the particular schools studied, one can develop quite different lines of inquiry. For instance, the Hibernia school represents an important case to compare with regular vocational education and training whereas most Steiner schools have much less to offer.

It remains an open question for further empirical research to determine if, and then to what degree, the emphasis on a standard curriculum has reinforced conservatism in Steiner educational research and development. Perhaps a systematic look at the various deviations from the standard curriculum would rather support the conclusion that either or both research and development are characterized by innovation and plurality in practice. Be that as it may, the active and systematic inclusion of deviations in published curricula can hardly be expected to reduce such innovation and plurality.

Finally, an ongoing question for the Steiner school movement is its purpose. Is it a major alternative pedagogy that needs to preserve a distinct tradition or is it a framework for ongoing pedagogical research and development?

This is hardly an either-or-question. Steiner education has developed a curriculum that is largely Bildung-oriented (cf. Tyson 2018a) and as such potentially appeals to those teachers, parents and students who desire this kind of educational focus. However, a one-sided focus on this runs the risk of marginalizing the importance of Steiner education to the larger educational community by positioning it as one of several alternative pedagogies catering to the minority that are unsatisfied with "regular" schools. Both researchers from within and from outside of the Steiner educational context could potentially contribute to the general development of pedagogy and didactics by focusing some of their efforts on cases that represent interesting developmental initiatives. This is perhaps even more important for the teacher training institutions who in many ways function as gatekeepers for what we count as Steiner pedagogy. If teacher students are taught only, or almost only, what counts as the pedagogical and didactical norm or standard, this inhibits systematic development. Steiner education has the ongoing potential to be a significant source of curriculum innovation that can enrich society at large (to the extent that there is a shared interest in Bildung). However, unless there is more of a systematic cooperation between teacher training institutions, researchers and individual schools interested in actively enacting such innovations, the potential for this will remain largely untapped.

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Authors of RoSE Special Issue
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Neil Boland lives in Auckland, New Zealand where he is senior lecturer in education at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and associate professor at the National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan. He has taught in Steiner settings at early childhood, primary, and secondary levels, as well as leading the undergraduate and graduate programmes in education at AUT. He works at an interface of Steiner education / anthroposophy and other pedagogies and philosophies.

Bo Dahlin is Professor Emeritus of Education at Karlstad University, Sweden. He maintained an interest in the spiritual aspects of education throughout his academic career. In 2003–2005, he led an evaluation of Swedish Waldorf schools. He was part of planning and starting up a Master's program in Steiner Education in Norway. Retired in 2012, he has continued to publish on the philosophy and spirituality of education.

Henrik Holm is Professor of Philosophy and Head of Research at the Rudolf Steiner University College Oslo. He is also affiliated with the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and the director of the Norwegian Musicology Society. He has a PhD in Philosophy and a PhD in Musicology. He is the author of several books, articles and essay in Norwegian, German and English. He works on topics in Ethics, Philosophy of Education, Philosophy of Music and Philosophy of Religion.

Jan-Erik Mansikka is university lecturer at University of Helsinki. He has published on diverse themes within education, e.g. philosophy of education, intercultural education and early childhood education. He is also part-time teacher in music education at Sibelius-Academy, Helsinki.

Joaquin Munoz is a tribal member of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Tucson, Arizona, USA, and currently lives and works in Minneapolis, MN. He is an assistant professor of American Indian Studies and Education at Augsburg University. He came to Steiner Education through the research of his doctoral dissertation which focused on Steiner education in the United States and Canada, and examined the similarities and differences of Steiner and Native American and Indigenous epistemologies.

Dag Øystein Nome works as an associate professor in pedagogy at the University of Agder in Norway and Rudolf Steiner University College. He is a graduate preschool teacher and has worked for 25 years in school and kindergarten. Nome has a PhD in child-child relationships among toddlers in kindergarten, and he has written several articles and book chapters on play, sociology of childhood and philosophy of education.

Jenny Steinnes was born in Ålesund, Norway in 1954. From 1990 – 2000 she worked as a class teacher at Ålesund Steinerskole. She did her MA in education in 2001, and her PhD on the philosopher Jacques Derrida and education at NTNU in 2006. From the same year she got a position as associate professor at Lillehammer University College/Inland Norway University of Applied Science, and became full professor in 2011. From 2020 she works full time as a professor of education at Rudolf Steiner University College, Oslo. Her publications are inspired by philosophy, as well as expressions of art and literature.

Leif Tjärnstig is organising the subject teacher education at the Waldorf University College in Stockholm. He has a background as a long time Waldorf upper school science teacher and holds a PhD in pedagogy.

Ruhi Tyson studied bookbinding and education. Dissertation at Stockholm University 2017. Senior lecturer at Waldorf University College and Stockholm University, Department of Education. Bookbinding-teacher at Kristofferskolan.