Steiner Waldorf Education in Transition: Critical Narratives Towards Renewal

Antonio J. R. Marques

Western Sydney University

Author Note

School of Education, Western Sydney University

A.Marques@westernsydney.edu.au

DEDICATION

To the many wayfarers who dare to journey towards the stars.

To those that have loved me and who have crossed the threshold, and who remind me, when I am listening, of their continuing existence, and therefore the reality of hope and love.

To the many souls I am yet to meet, like flowers in the ever-blossoming fields of life.

To companions who lighten the burden of sorrow and enflame the passion for life.

To the dear Earth that has enfolded me, and to the Stars that even now instil mystery into my heart.

May the work represented here lend a drop of living hope to the oceanic change that our hearts desire.

Dear Michael, you followed my journey with earnest interest… May you now offer your wisdom, transmuted by earthly Life’s surrender to a higher Life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of Western Sydney University, the Graduate School of Research and the School of Education.

I am indebted to the Commonwealth Government for providing funding to sustain this research project.

Dr David Wright and Dr Kumara Ward, supervisors and friends, have been tirelessly faithful companions on this, at times seemingly interminable journey. More than once, you have helped to extricate me from the thorny thickets. Your compassion and resilience have been a support where otherwise I might have buckled under the strain of setbacks. And there were a few.

Fellow travelers on the doctoral path who have always been an inspiration when we met and shared our travails.

Dr Susan Mowbray, for periodically dousing the community of doctoral travelers with useful tips on writing paragraphs, how not to give up and strategies for getting out of sticky situations. Thank you, too Susan, for your steadfast attention to detail during the thesis boot camps and writing spaces events. Although I didn't make better use than I might have, I always found them helpful and stimulating, feeling afterwards that each time I was another two or three steps along on the journey. I think that the human side of supporting doctoral students has come a long way since I first entered academia in the 1970s.

Friends and passers-by who have asked me about the PhD, each time making this lonely work more social and more real.

The many students and colleagues (over the years of my teaching career) who have inspired me to seek further answers and ask more questions about the great riddles in life, including education and the incurable craving for understanding, the academic's search for El Dorado?

Terry, my editor. Thorough and sensitive gaze over the draft chapters, which were in some cases in need of a firm hand.

Joe and Hari, who read my first chapter and gave me vigorous feedback. Hari, you have shown an abiding interest in this project, and each time we have met, you have enriched my understanding of the topics covered. Joe, Jaspah and Michael have kept faith, even if only to let me know that you cared about where I was at and offered to help me gain a clearer psychological orientation.

The fifteen brave souls who gave up their time, relived old wounds and illuminated my interest with their profound stories, each one full of hope and passion for children, our responsibility to prepare them for rich and meaningful lives, and the wonderful enigma that is Steiner Waldorf education.

My dear wife, Sandra, we were in the wilderness for (too) many years, but I know now that you always only wished me the good, the true and the beautiful, even when I doubted it. Thank you for checking in on me from time to time, "how are you going with your thesis?", helping me to find a healthier rhythm to accomplishing this work.

To the recent newcomers to our extended family, Neesa (2018), Mavi (2018), and now Ava (2019) who carry in their small bodies so much expectation, and yet whose ineffable presence is enough to make me know that this work is important and needed now more than ever.

To my dear parents, long gone on their astral sojourns, and no doubt reunited in celestial embraces, you are still with me, and your encouragement is as poignant now as it has ever been.

I read these words some decades ago, in an essay by T. S. Eliot,

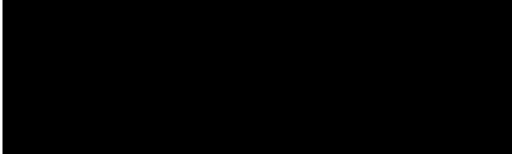
> No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead.[1]

Truly the academy bears, even in its contemporary form, a sacred forum whereby we may daily invigorate our love of learning, of ideas and of the great adventure that is research and the generation of knowledge, with the wise spirits who once walked the Earth in the flesh, but who continue wherever they are, to listen in on our conversations and continue to inspire and influence us.

[1] 'Tradition and the Individual Talent.'

Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.



…………………………………………………….. (Signature)

Note: All names of teachers or staff, schools or locations have been de-identified to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the individuals concerned.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used throughout the thesis:

AFPWA = Alliance for Public Waldorf Association

AWSNA = Association of Waldorf Schools of North America

CofT or College = College of Teachers

PD = Professional development

PL = Professional learning

PSG = Pedagogical Section (at the Goetheanum)

SEA = Steiner Education Australia

SW = Steiner Waldorf

SWE = Steiner Waldorf Education

SWS = Steiner Waldorf school

US/A = United States of America

UWS = Urban Waldorf School

Abstract

Steiner Waldorf Education (SWE) is undergoing a significant transition in its one hundredth year of existence. At a time when its influence across the globe is unparalleled, challenges are emerging that threaten to disrupt the traditional and stable model of SWE. There is also a heightening of concern that the gift of SWE may be corrupted. At the same time, there is a growing sense of criticality and reflexivity animating research and thinking about SWE and its global future. The intent of this critical study is to tease out from a hermeneutic engagement with teachers' lived experiences, areas of dysfunction in Steiner Waldorf (SW) praxis, as well as to offer new narratives that might contribute to the renewal of SWE in the 21st century. The study is framed as a heuristic-narrative inquiry into SWE in a time of transition. The Parzival question (*what ails you?*) is summoned to draw from teachers' lived experiences of working and living in SWE, problematic narratives and disruptive practices that underscore some of the commonly perceived though marginally articulated issues, confronting SWE. The study emerges from the researcher's own critical and appreciative experiences in various Steiner organisations, across a number of portfolios, focussing on 17 years teaching from early childhood to secondary education, as well as managing a high school. Fundamental to the study are fifteen dialogic conversations with former and current SW educators working in Australian schools. These dialogues contribute towards delineating key fault lines that reveal powerful tensions within the fabric of SWE and particularly the enigmatic and contested relationship between educational praxis and its anthroposophical theoretical foundations. A number of themes are distilled from the qualitative interviews, including anthroposophy, leadership, professional culture and learning, the learning culture and curriculum, emotionality, isolation and spiritual superiority. Two ubiquitous leitmotivs are chosen to further explore and interconnect these thematic links. The hermeneutic-phenomenological reading of teachers' described experiences is distilled to identify and promote innovative approaches and resistant questions that challenge the *status quo* of Steiner Waldorf praxis. The final chapters propose positive and individual narratives that may help to link more fully with the strong instinctive powers that undergird SWE and inspire teachers to stake their creative imaginations on idiosyncratic readings of Steiner and deeply etched images of their personal callings as Steiner teachers.

Contents

Abstract ii
Contents iii
List of Figures x
1 Introduction 1
1.1 Preliminary Remarks: The Global Context 2
1.1.1 Rudolf Steiner and the task of anthroposophy. 2
1.1.2 Introducing Steiner Waldorf Education. 4
1.1.3 Endangered species? Childhood and education. 6
1.1.4 An art of education for our times. 11
1.1.5 Two systems of thought. 13
1.2 Personal Exegesis 19
1.2.1 The way into the study: unlocking the question. 19
1.2.2 Why make this journey? 20
1.2.3 Lived experiences in SWE and anthroposophy. 21
1.2.4 The Parzival legend. 24
1.2.5 Positionality and reflexivity. 28
1.3 An Unfolding Set of Problems 29
1.3.1 Framing the study. 29
1.3.2 The research question. 33
1.3.3 Framing the question. 35
1.3.4 Rationale. 36
1.3.5 Research lenses. 39
1.4 Contribution to Knowledge 41

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis 42

2 Literature Review 45

2.1 Introduction 46

2.1.1 Aim of the review. 46

2.1.2 Rationale. 49

2.1.3 Scale or scope of review. 50

2.2 Steiner-Waldorf Education in Transition 50

2.2.1 A brief background to SWE in Australia and New Zealand. 50

2.2.2 The present situation in Australia. 51

2.2.3 Global growth. 53

2.2.4 Increased scrutiny. 54

2.2.5 Codifying SWE. 55

2.2.6 The closure of the Kings Langley Rudolf Steiner School: a cautionary tale 55

2.3 A Critical Transition 56

2.3.1 The unchanged character of SWE. 57

2.3.2 What *is* Steiner Waldorf Education? 58

2.3.3 The publification of SWE. 60

2.4 The Shift at the Turn of the Century: A Reflexive Turn in SWE 64

2.4.1 A wealth of academic research into SWE. 68

2.4.2 The Woods study. 75

2.4.3 Martyn Rawson. 78

2.4.4 Research in Australia and New Zealand. 79

2.4.5 Recent German studies. 81

2.5 Reflection Vacuum 85

2.5.1 Marcelo da Veiga: The “reflection vacuum.” 85

2.5.2 Jost Schieren: The scientific credibility of anthroposophy. 87

2.5.3 Georg Kühlewind: Meditatively reading anthroposophy. 89

2.5.4 Interlude: The Philosophy of Freedom. 92

2.6 Dissonances Between Theory and Praxis 94

2.6.1 Johannes Kiersch: the necessity for a hermeneutic reading of Steiner........... 94

2.6.2 Sagarin and Wiechert: Steiner-Waldorf myths. 97

2.6.3 Steiner-Waldorf teachers' biographical accounts... 103

3 Methodology 111

3.1 The Way In 112

3.1.1 The journey as dialogue. 112

3.1.2 Searching for a method.. 113

3.2 Epistemological Considerations 117

3.2.1 Situating the study. 117

3.2.2 Critical junctures. 119

3.2.3 Methodological pluralism. 125

3.3 The Heuristic Inquiry 126

3.3.1 Rationale. 126

3.3.2 The six stages of heuristic inquiry. 128

3.4 A Methodological Cornucopia 135

3.4.1 Anthroposophy. 135

3.4.2 Constructionism. 138

3.4.3 Narrative inquiry. 141

3.4.4 Phenomenology. 143

3.4.5 Hermeneutics. 144

3.4.6 Postmodernism. 145

3.5 Research Design 146

3.5.1 Ethical considerations. 146

3.5.2 In the company of theory. ... 147

3.5.3 Sampling the study ... 149

3.5.4 Data collection. ... 150

3.5.5 Data analysis. ... 155

3.6 Validity of the Study ... 156

4 Teachers' Narratives ... 161

5 Methodological Interlude: Background to Analysis of Teachers' Stories ... 162

5.1 Introduction ... 162

5.2 The Structure of Data Analysis ... 163

5.2.1 Biographical and conceptual narratives ... 163

5.3 The Process of Data Analysis ... 165

5.3.1 Transcribing the recording. ... 165

5.3.2 Informal coding of the interview text. ... 165

5.3.3 Formal coding process. ... 166

5.3.4 The coding procedure. ... 167

5.4 Hermeneutic Interpretation of Data ... 168

5.4.1 Modes of analysis ... 168

5.4.2 Hermeneutic perspectives. ... 170

5.4.3 Analytical continuities and concepts. ... 172

5.4.4 Impact of ethical considerations. ... 174

6 Analysing Teachers Stories – An Examination of Selected Themes ... 175

6.1 Schematic of Selected Themes ... 176

6.2 Anthroposophy: Wisdom of the Grail. ... 177

6.2.1 Encountering Steiner. ... 177

6.2.2 Representations and counter-representations of anthroposophy in the SWS. 180

6.3 Leadership: the Wounded King ... 189
6.3.1 Management. ... 189
6.3.2 Professional culture. ... 193
6.4 Learning culture ... 207
6.4.1 Characterisations of the learning culture in SWSs. ... 207
6.5 Curriculum ... 227
6.5.1 An interconnected curriculum. ... 227
6.5.2 Teaching Art as SW pedagogy. ... 229
6.6 Emotionality ... 232
6.6.1 Expressions of teachers' emotionality. ... 233
6.7 Isolation: the shadow of the social ethic ... 238
6.7.1 A common experience. ... 238
6.7.2 A pervasive phenomenon. ... 240
6.7.3 The risk of isolation. ... 243
6.8 Spiritual superiority ... 245
6.8.1 Iconicity. ... 248
6.8.2 Privileging of the light. ... 252
6.8.3 Denial of the shadow. ... 253
6.8.4 Hubris. ... 255
6.8.5 Shielding counternarratives. ... 256
7 Discussion - Developing critical narratives of Steiner Waldorf Education ... 258
7.1 Towards the Construction of New Narratives ... 259
7.2 Orienting Concepts ... 260
7.2.1 SWE in transition. ... 260
7.2.2 Reflection vacuum. ... 261
7.2.3 Dissonances. ... 261

7.3 Emergent Concepts and Leitmotivs 265

7.4 A Nomadic Survey of Data Analysis 265

7.4.1 Anthroposophy. 266

7.4.2 Leadership and Management. 270

7.4.3 The Learning Culture. 277

7.4.4 Emotionality. 280

7.4.5 Isolation. 282

7.4.6 Spiritual Superiority. 283

7.5 Two new leitmotivs 284

7.5.1 Ritualisation. 284

7.5.2 Spiritual blindness. 287

7.6 Towards New Narratives 293

7.6.1 Why new narratives? 293

7.6.2 Qualities of the new narratives. 295

7.6.3 The recovery of anthroposophy 298

7.6.4 Listening to teachers' voices. 307

7.6.5 From protection to freedom. 312

7.6.6 The shadow as the source of healing. 315

7.7 Epilogue 317

8 Conclusion 320

Glossary 324

References 325

APPENDICES 358

Appendix A: Methodology as Journey Metaphor: Etymology and the Oracle 358

Appendix B: Invitation Letter 361

Appendix C: Participation Information/Consent Letter 362

Appendix D -Teachers' voices - A selection of respondents' narratives 367

A brief note about privacy. 367

Overview of Teachers Narratives. 367

Teachers' Narratives 370

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Reciprocal interplay of theory and reflexive practice throughout the processes of data collection and data analysis 148

Figure 6.1: Schematic of selected themes 176

Figure A.1 Pythia at Delphi sitting on the tripodos. 358

1 Introduction

The Stars once spoke to Man.

It is World-destiny

That they are silent now.

To be aware of the silence

Can be grief to Earthly Man

But in the deepening silence,

There grows and ripens

What Man speaks to the Stars.

To be aware of this speaking

Can become strength for Spirit-Man

(Steiner, cited in Childs, 1999, p. 13)

………

Our lives are a battlefield on which is fought a continuous war between the forces that are pledged to confirm our humanity and those determined to dismantle it; those who strive to build a protective wall around it, and those who wish to pull it down; those who seek to mould it and those committed to breaking it up; those who aim to open our eyes, to make us see the light and look to tomorrow . . . and those who wish to lull us into closing our eyes. (Thiong'O, 2017, pp. 54-55)

1.1 Preliminary Remarks: The Global Context

What follows is a critical study of Steiner Waldorf education (SWE). The intent of this critical study is to tease out from a hermeneutic engagement with teachers' lived experiences, areas of dysfunction in Steiner Waldorf (SW) praxis, as well as to possibilise new narratives that might contribute to the renewal of SWE in the 21st century. Evident in the work of a growing body of insiders that I will gradually introduce in this chapter, this task is itself sustained by a mission that Rudolf Steiner regarded in 1919 with the utmost gravity and urgency: namely, the renewal of society through education.

> The further evolution of humanity demands new concepts, new notions, and new impulses for social life generally; we need new ideas which, when realized, can create social conditions offering to human beings of all stations and classes an existence that seems to them humane. Yet… social renewal must begin with a renewal of our thinking (1920/1983, p. 1).

As we consider this mission from the lofty vantage point offered us by the present, itself a position that we might assume with mindful regard for the untold suffering and severe trials that humanity has endured in the preceding century, we may recognise the prescience of Steiner's assessment both of the social ruin beginning to unfold around him, and the pivotal role ascribed to education in redressing this decline. When we lend to this grave image, the state of our home, Earth, in the present day, teetering on a precipice, we may well feel the chastening weight of grief that might bring about an awakening of our collective responsibility for our future and that of the Earth's beloved kin, both human and non-human.

1.1.1 Rudolf Steiner and the task of anthroposophy[2].

Rudolf Steiner was also a pioneer in the renewal of ways of knowing and being in the world. Indeed, for him this deed signifies the most urgent task each of us can perform. Like William Blake, Steiner was a visionary or clairvoyant[3]. This may be inferred through their personal writings (or poems, in the case of the former). Yet, in the case of the latter, born some one hundred years later, the fantastic visions of a proximal world of imaginations were rendered into a coherent framework

---

[2] Late in his life, Steiner defined anthroposophy as 'a path of knowledge, to guide the Spiritual in the human being to the Spiritual in the universe' (2007a, p. 13).

[3] Steiner's clairvoyance is discussed in a matter of fact manner in his autobiographical writing, *My Life* (Steiner, 1928/2000). Blake is more typically regarded as 'mad' (such as his contemporary William Rossetti concluded) or a 'mystic' or having a 'poetical clairvoyance' (Jameson, cited in Bloom, 2008p. 35). However, Richard Leviton (2010) argues that his display of imagination is already evidence of clairvoyance. The notion of clairvoyance, repugnant to so-called rational minds, is literally 'clear vision', a heightened power of seeing. Ironically, our increased acceptance of indigenous epistemologies around the globe, may yet open the door for other ways of knowing, which are not only different but enhanced modes of cognition.

of knowledge and cognition. Steiner was cognisant of the social decay that Blake lived through at close hand, but his response was different and complementary. Steiner was concerned with articulating the philosophical bases for a new conception of science, which continued the trajectory of natural science, but was unhindered by neo-Kantian limitations denying reality beyond the senses (the metaphysical "thing-in-itself"). Steiner posited that, within the human being, the potential lay open for a renewal of cognition through the collaboration of rationality with the streams of imagination that flow from the heart (1983). He articulated an enhancement of intellectual consciousness through the development of image-making, or imagination, which he saw as a heightened version of our ability to form mental pictures. This process could be developed through training and could lead to still higher stages of cognition which he called Inspiration and Intuition[4] (Steiner, 1918/1990, 1961/1994, 1978, 1987, 1994).

In some ways, one of the features of Steiner's personality and work that makes him hard both to understand and to appreciate is that he positioned himself between two disparate, even inimical camps: on the one hand, he rejected the sensationalism of theosophy and various forms of occultism that were not based on rigorous training and developmental methodologies; on the other hand, he saw limitations in the natural scientific epistemology, which denied meaningful reality to whatever phenomena lay beyond the reach of sensory experience. However, he applauded the scientific method, claiming that it could provide the foundation for its own enhancement, in the form of spiritual science, and enable the human being to consciously investigate realities beyond the immediate sensory world (Steiner, 1903/1967, 1911/2016, 1917/2004, 1921/1991).

Steiner's insistence that the value of both science and mysticism could be heightened through a conscious integration of the two may remind us of the aspirational claims made by pioneers of the new epistemologies that seek to integrate embodied, felt knowledges of the body and soul, alongside the reflexive voices of reason and intuition. Indeed, Steiner (1924/1971) was adamant that only a union of "reason and spirituality" could deliver hope to an ailing humanity. At other times, this union was referred to as the development of "living thinking" or "etheric thinking" or "heart thinking". These terms were used to distinguish a type of imaginative thinking that transcended the rigid, monocultural form of intellectual thinking. And the more one investigates Steiner's understanding of the epistemological task confronting humanity, the more it is possible to see in him a harbinger of the call for new knowledges and new species of scientific inquiry (S. Easton,

[4] These terms are capitalised to differentiate from the conventional designation attached to these words. See Glossary.

1980; Kühlewind, 1983/1988; Lowndes, 1996/2009; Steiner, 1961/1994, 1983; Sumser, 1994; Whicher, 1977)

1.1.2 Introducing Steiner Waldorf Education.

One hundred years after its inception, SWE is today the largest movement of alternative education in the world. Since its inauguration in post-war Germany, in 1919, in the premises of the Waldorf-Astoria tobacco factory, in Stuttgart, it has swept across the globe, establishing a presence in all inhabitable continents. In 2017, there were nearly 1,100 SW schools in just over 60 countries. In addition, according to the recent Waldorf World List (2017), there were over 1,850 kindergartens in 70 countries around the world. Furthermore, every continent has teacher training centres. The most rapid development of SWE is presently occurring in Asia. According to Cherry (2014), an experienced SW teacher and coordinator of the China Waldorf Forum, since its inception in 2004 in Chengdu, the number of early childhood initiatives has increased to “more than 300” and there are now “36 grade school initiatives throughout China, basing their work on Waldorf education” (p. 14)[5]. The interest in SWE in China is growing and there are signs that legitimation is gaining ground, through participation of SW teachers, such as Cherry and Wiechert[6], in a national educational body called New Education which is headed by a professor of education who also holds a senior position in the national government (p. 15). Interestingly, there is a perceived affinity “between SWE and traditional Chinese culture, particularly, Taoism and Chinese medicine” (IASWECE, nd). Cherry argues that

> what is happening now in the meeting of Anthroposophy with Chinese culture is very important… the longing in China is not only for an education which recognises the fullness of humanity in “spirit, soul and body” – or, to use the traditional Chinese way of expressing the same thing, “heaven, human being and earth”; it is also for ways of growing food, learning to work together and healing the environment, based on the same wholistic approach. The need for all aspects of the healing power of the anthroposophical way of seeing is urgent (p. 19).

We can see that SWE has found receptive soil in China. Moreover, there is a recognition that what comes together with SWE and its artistic communities is a renewing force, a “healing power,” which comes from the way of knowing and being, engendered by Steiner’s spiritual insights.

---

[5] This contrasts with the figures published by the Waldorf World List, which identifies 38 kindergartens and 7 grade schools in 2017.

[6] Christof Wiechert, formerly head of the Pedagogical Section of the Goetheanum, a body that represents the development of SWE across the globe, with its headquarters in a purpose-built location designed by Rudolf Steiner, in Switzerland, near Basel.

The extended and growing presence of SWE, and with it, the philosophical, spiritual and social impulses[7] of anthroposophy, in Asia, in the Americas, and in Africa, as well as traditional locations in Europe, the US and Australasia, is an indicator that SWE has something important to offer contemporary society. As I have intimated above and will demonstrate more fully in the course of the thesis, this is intimately related to the task of anthroposophy and the emergence of new ways of being and encountering the world.

What are the perceived benefits of SWE in the contemporary world? An independent British study (P. Woods, Ashley, & Woods, 2005) conducted early last decade highlighted a number of positive aspects of SWE. These have been summarised by one of the co-researchers (Ashley, 2009) as follows: SWE

- Works from the whole to the parts
- Is based on child development
- Aims for the development of the free individuality in each child
- Fosters positive teacher-pupil relationships
- Emphasises the oral tradition
- Makes use of rituals and routines (temporality and connection)
- Cultivates the Arts and creativity
- Employs a phenomenological approach to science teaching[8]

Freda Easton (1997) adds that “at the core of Waldorf philosophy” is the aim “to educate children to become whole human beings in the face of a scientific rationalism that views us as machines and technological advances that threaten to mechanize our lives” (p. 94). Furthermore, in her view, it provides a “framework” for the “renewal of thinking” that may expand our ways of cognition beyond intellectual reasoning into realms of imagination, inspiration, and intuition as already posited by Steiner through his research. The emphasis on renewing thinking is amplified in several authors (Oberski, 2006; Riccio, 2008a; Zajonc, 2009, 2011); as is the notion that it provides a non-denominational, non-religious spiritual education (Oberski, 2011; Zajonc, 2009, 2011). On the

---

[7] Among these are included biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophical medicine and medications (for example, WALA and Weleda), various therapeutic practices (chirophonetics, rhythmical or etheric massage), curative organisations for the care and schooling of children with disabilities, as well as similar organisations for adults with ‘special needs’, and financial institutions run on Anthroposophical principles. There are also numerous artistic impulses borne out of Steiner’s work, across all major disciplines, such as painting, music, sculpture, speech and drama, and eurythmy. In fact, among some of the early disciples of Steiner’s work include Joseph Beuys and Wassily Kandinsky.

[8] From my experience, this approach can be extended across other disciplines. The underlying principle is ‘discovery’ rather than instruction. This allows students to learn to construct their own knowledge and concepts. This methodology applies equally to the appreciation of art, lines of verse, character development in fiction, and composition of landscapes, to give a few examples.

other hand, Wylie and Hagan (2003) emphasise the “inclusive school” (p. 162) as core to the Steiner educational philosophy. Most, if not all of these aspects, represent qualities that are valued beyond the Steiner educational movement (Gidley, 2008a, 2009, 2012; Mamgain, 2010; Marshak, 1997; J. Miller, 2000; J. Miller & Nozawa, 2004; R. Miller, 1998; P. Woods et al., 2005).

1.1.3 Endangered species? Childhood and education.

However, my concerns are not parochially exhausted in establishing SWE as a distinctive, niche alternative educational movement. The growing interest and popularity of SWE attests to the declining state of educational institutions one the one hand, and the many dolorous signals of a global emergency (Slaughter, 2015). As a practising teacher, with a broad range of pedagogical experiences, and as a concerned member of humanity living in present times, I am alarmed at the unfolding global situation, on a number of levels. I have tried above (p. 2ff) to locate the scaffolding of some of the unfolding *potential* catastrophes of our present day in the corrosive influence of monocultural epistemologies. One of the most deeply concerning symptoms of this influence is the assault on childhood (Biddulph, 2018; Giroux, 2001, 2012; Stevenson, 2010; Thiong'O, 1993; Williams, 2006). Intimately connected with this is the fate of modern education. To me, the latter seems overshadowed by largely inert dominant public narratives about its role in our collective futures (Marshak, 1997; J. Miller, 2000; R. Miller, 1990; K. Robinson, 2008, 2013; K. Robinson & Aronica, 2016; Senge, 2012; Senge et al., 2012). The view ahead for childhood, education and humanity does not appear bright. To find a way through is the hope of dedicated educators who value their vocation, as it is mine. The introduction of SWE in the wake of a devastating war, one hundred years ago, was intended with the same urgent purpose. However, judging by the scale and scope of the calamities wrought upon the planet in a time of ‘peace’, the urgency only seems to grow right up into the present day and, no doubt, into the foreseeable decades of this century.

In the light of these broader concerns, my focus on SWE is simple. Some commentators believe that SWE has an important role to play in the renewal of humanity, which is so desperately needed. As House (cited inPopescu, 2005), a psychiatrist turned teacher, has articulated, SWE is “an intrinsically healing experience for children.” Moreover, “an urgent evolutionary task is for humankind to create cultural forms which help children to have healthy, empowering childhoods (np)”.

> Children are the future of any society. If you want to know the future of a society look at the eyes of the children. If you want to maim the future of any society, you simply maim the children. The struggle for the survival of our children is the struggle for the survival of our future. The quantity and quality of that survival is the measurement of the development of that society (Thiong'O, 1993, p. 76).

How will future generations judge our contemporary treatment of children? Will we look back in the same way as we now look retrospectively at, say, Victorian society, and behold with disdain the mistreatment and abuse of children? Will the future paint a picture of childhood that is now largely unrecognisable to us? I wonder if it is possible to pre-empt some of the details of this picture by regarding in an honest light the state of childhood in the present day.

What *is* "childhood"? In his philosophical novel, *Émile,* Rousseau portrays childhood as a separate stage of life (Applebaum, 2010). Moreover, he also articulated the notion of the "natural child" (p. 18), a construction that pairs nature and childhood in a manner that was later echoed by Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Blake and Novalis. According to the French historian, Ariès (1960/1962), our understanding of what childhood is has changed throughout history. For example, during the middle ages, there was "no place for childhood" (p. 33). Furthermore, he argues that our present-day notion of childhood was only constructed in the 17th century, largely in response to an escalated childhood mortality rate that triggered a corresponding interest and concern in the delicate lives of children. According to Ariès, this shift essentially led to a "culture of childhood", a focal change that has continued into the current century, if somewhat paradoxically. Although Ariès' ideas have been strongly contested (Wilson, 1980), they provide a prominent example of how the construction of childhood is shaped by our way of seeing the world. Compare, for example, Carol Dweck's (2017) claim that living in an environment that challenges children to grow ought to be considered a basic human right. Even today, how popularly held would such a construction of childhood be? Would this construction be sustained across different geographic, socio-economic, or ethnographic regions of the planet? And, how would our forebears of one or two hundred years ago regard such a conception? I would say that with few distinctive exceptions, such as Emerson (2009) and Pestalozzi (R. Miller, 1989), such an idea would have been considered idealistic at best, dangerous at worst. Charles Dickens (1995) illustrates this notion vividly in his novel, *Hard Times*, in a chapter titled, "Murdering the Innocents":

> "Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!" Said Mr Gradgrind for the general behoof of all the little pitchers. "Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! (p. 5)

It is, I surmise, readily apparent to anyone of my generation (I was born in 1959) or older, that the notion of childhood, for example, reflected in the attitudes of parents, society, media, and government, has changed dramatically in the span of our own lives. These changes have not been entirely sanguine. From where we stand today, Louis MacNeice's (1981) *Prayer before birth*, written at the culmination of the Second World War, may well sound oddly prevenient. And, as often seems to be the case with "prophecies", this poem sounds all the more poignant in its accuracy the further

our perspective shifts from its own time towards our own present. When MacNeice wrote these words, was he looking clairvoyantly into the future of humanity?

O fill me
with strength against those who would freeze my
humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton,
would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with
one face, a thing, and against all those
who would dissipate my entirety, would
blow me like thistledown hither and
thither or hither and thither
like water held in the
hands would spill me. (pp. 353-354)

Even so, has the passage of nearly 75 years sharpened our sensitivity to the ways that are today employed to "dissipate" childhood's "entirety"? And are these concluding words, "let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me/ Otherwise kill me," an ominous echo of the actual suicide that now accounts for the third most common cause of mortality among adolescents around the globe (WHO, 2018)?[9]

There has been a gradual shift of power away from traditional institutions such as the family, the local community and the school, towards distant and disembodied technocratic elites that more and more determine the horizons of the future, largely effacing practices of the past in deference to the exigencies of an invisible, powerful and largely anonymous market (Bourdieu, 2003; H. Cox, 2016; Korten, 2015; Steger, 2005). The representations of technology and the future appear across the global media as an inevitability, moving through our midst like an unstoppable *natural* force that can be no more diverted or halted than the direst of earth's calamitous weather events, and engrave the notion that our fate falls outside our own control. Ironically, as the technocratic ideology of modern science chews up atavistic concepts like "destiny" or "predestination", it spits out its own contemporary appropriations. In this light, the characterisation of modern science as the new religion becomes convincingly apt (Hansel-Hohenhausen, 2012; Polanyi, 1957; Sheldrake, 2012).[10]

---

[9] When road deaths (#1) and HIV (#2) are added to this picture, the prevalence of high risk behaviours leading to self-inflicted harm is increased.

[10] This characterisation is also applied *self-consciously* to the elusive 'market' and 'globalisation' (Cox, 1999; Steger, 2005). In other words, the idea that global markets operate *beyond* the decisions or will of human beings, or even states, is deliberately promulgated by corporate executives, US presidents and authors (Friedman, 1999).

As a teacher across various levels of education, from early childhood, through primary and high school, to tertiary education, I have seen this shift of constructed imagery, reshaping our accepted understanding of what childhood is. There are widespread concerns about the "commercialisation" (Linn, 2010; Stevenson, 2010)[11] of childhood, about "corporate culture's war on childhood" (Bakan, 2011; Giroux, 2001), about "corporate paedophilia" (Rush & Nauze, 2009), and paedophilia in general, as well the "sexualisation" of childhood. Here in Australia, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has just released its final report (Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2017). The Executive Summary of the Report states that the abuse of children is a "national tragedy", unambiguously demonstrating that "society's major institutions have seriously failed" (p. 5).

In addition, there is increasing concern for the drastic impact that screen technologies have made and continue to make on children, in particular, on their cognitive and psychological development (Carr, 2010, 2016; Greenfield, 2003, 2008, 2015). The childhood aversion to physical play and experience of natural environments is a major consequence of the remarkably precipitous shift from the pre-digital to the smartphone culture. Linked to rising levels of childhood obesity or other health conditions traditionally associated with adulthood, these concerns are widening, deepening and growing. Is it conceivable that, like animal and plant species, childhood, as a distinctive phase of the human biography, may become extinct (Hymowitz, 1999; Postman, 1985)? Have *we*, in our collective social self, become the loathsome Kronos, who would devour his own children? If it seems fanciful to speak of extinction or to compare ourselves to the brutal Titan of Greek antiquity, it may be sobering to recall Healy's (1990) groundbreaking work on *Endangered minds*, which appeared in the early 1980s, and whose message now finds amplification and further darkening in the second decade of the 21st century.

One of Steiner's great contributions to education was to not only remind us but also articulate the extraordinary mystery that is childhood. He drew to our attention the recognition that childhood is a critical "resource" in the development of the individual human being and human societies. Steiner's conception in this regard needs to be contextualised within the scope of anthroposophy, the foundational philosophy of SWE. Being incomplete, a phenomenon well understood and articulated across the biological sciences, the child contains much by way of possibility. Freire (1996) regarded education as a possibility that rested on this very incompleteness

[11] Linn (2010) lists the following as commercially engendered health problems in children: obesity, discontent about body image, eating disorders, sexualisation, youth violence, family stress, underage drinking, underage tobacco, erosion of creative play, capacity to make meaning in life.

of the human being. Consider, for example, the potential receptivity of the new born baby for acquiring exact language skills, which possibilises all unique vowel and consonantal sounds. Another way of framing this idea is to aver that spirituality is a kind of potentiality or plasticity that remains active in childhood, providing the platform for stupendous learning capabilities. Childhood is seen as a highly fertile soil upon which moral, intellectual, affective and cultural structures of being can grow. As adults, we provide the garden upon which our children grow. We cultivate our children (Gibran, 1999), as a forest cultivates her tree-children. Childhood itself is the rich compost from which the adult emerges, and every child that is born brings a delicate substance, a kind of spiritual leavening that renews the dying generations and infuses society with the vitality of new impulses needed for humanity and earth's renaissance (Kühlewind, 2001/2005). Indeed, this is palpably felt in the presence of a young child. The delicate openness of the child evokes the same in the adult onlooker. If only momentarily, the child evokes a renewal of interest, a reawakening of the senses, and, I would go so far as to say, of love in the onlooker. And yet, this is not a transient encounter, it is the promise of a sustained relationship with the child's natural state of grace. The child is placed in our midst, not for their sake alone, but also for ours, the human community; not for our disposal or shaping or moulding according to our own designs, but literally for the sake of the future, that there may be a future at all. Arguably, every child that emerges at birth into human community, bears in embodied and encoded form, in seed form, the very forces of renewal, what we recognise as childhood itself, that may promise a new way of being in the world and that seeks to find life-sustaining ways of engaging with the world and aims to promote the highest good of individuals.

And yet, despite our kinship with nature, as we are beginning to discover and realise with rude awakening, our *difference* from the natural world bestows us with grave responsibilities. It is perhaps comprehensible only now in the so-called Anthropocene, the gravity of the responsibility for custodianship of the natural world implanted in the first humans, as described in the Book of Genesis. This is, of course, not intended as an enactment of tyrannous rule, but a bestowal of custody, of servant leadership, to safeguard what was created for the benefit of all creatures and all kingdoms of life. Again, this profound awakening, which thanks to the scale of the problems now confronting humanity, is perhaps historically unique, even if it has been presaged by premonitory voices from the past.

Thank God our time is now when wrong
Comes up to face us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride of soul men ever took.

Affairs are now soul size.
The enterprise is exploration into God.
Where are you making for? It takes
So many thousand years to wake…
But will you wake, for pity's sake? (Fry, 1981)

Yet, perusing the discourse of present day education, its framing of children as inchoate global citizens and childhood as a preparation for participation in the "brave new world" of a highly technologized, automated, cyborg world, it seems that collectively we have not yet awoken, nor do we seem willing to take this "longest stride of soul" to meet the immense challenges of the immediate future. Quite the contrary, what we find is a thinly veiled blueprint for the social and economic exploitation of present and coming generations in service of the prevailing technocratic global state (Korten, 2015). Reality parodies fiction, as we come to resemble more and more a grotesque, yet vastly more sophisticated version of Huxley's *Brave new world* or Zamyatin's *We*. There is a groaning irony when we consider the hubris at work at our castigation of previous generations for permitting slavery or oppression, and yet we appear to sleepwalk into a future that not only marginalises children (and, ultimately, humanity with it) but actively seeks to exploit and sacrifice childhood at the altar of the new world order.

1.1.4 An art of education for our times.

Understandably, Steiner generated the impulse behind SWE in response to the crisis in European society, outwardly represented in the unheralded and hitherto unparalleled savagery of the First World War, but dimly ubiquitous in the rising tides of materialism, totalitarianism and globalism[12]. For him, the imperative behind the renewal of education sat within the severest challenges that he foresaw to the survival of humanity. This weighty realisation and its concomitant social task remain in the background of the founding, establishing and development of SWE around the planet, since the inception of the first school in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919.

The present day is characterised by increasing unease about the standard of current models of education, the challenges facing humanity in the present day, and the inevitability of changes and developments that have potentially catastrophic consequences. Much emphasis is placed on

[12] It is worth noting here that the spectre of totalitarianism is now globalised, contrary to the propaganda efforts of Western powers such as Great Britain and the United States to territorialise notions of 'freedom' and 'democracy' and shift the attributions of the totalitarian state to the three ignominious exemplars of the twentieth century, Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia and Communist China. Nonetheless, some of the most significant commentators in this field, Orwell, Zinoviev and Todorov have made it clear that the system of oppressive rule is now a function of globalised society. This 'open secret' is candidly related in Professor Carol Quigley's revealing works, *Tragedy and hope*, and *The Anglo-American establishment*.

extrinsic factors in education, such as funding, the audit culture, the use of technology in teaching and learning, the design of learning spaces, and the curriculum. However, understanding less visible aspects of education may offer new insights into contemporary discourses around the future development of education. As we have seen, commentators have been focussing attention on the epistemological basis of the crises confronting humanity since the early decades of the 20th century. Ironically, the solutions offered by anthroposophy, which was no less oriented towards the recognition of dysfunctional currents in social and political events in Steiner's time, now appear to resonate even more strongly, in the wake of the numerous cognitive turns, including the postmodern turn. This enhanced resonance may, in some measure, account for the seemingly inexhaustible demand for SWE.

SWE offers a powerful counterpoint to the dominant discourse in contemporary education. Its roots lie deeply in a mythopoetic landscape that maps contemporary events against a background of perennial philosophy and mystical wisdom. It brings together some of the best and radical thinking on education of the last three or four centuries, and frames this within a complex picture of human evolving and becoming. It does not, in its philosophical immediacy, set itself up to compete with other forms of education, but to infuse the educational discourse with perspectives that are in danger of being marginalised in the dominant globalised, technocratic narrative. SWE offers nothing short of a renewal of education and of society. The power of Steiner's conception of "childhood", as we have seen, is that it discloses an unparalleled resource for human becoming. Mythopoetically, childhood retains the Grail energy that can renew humanity. However, it is under attack and increasingly threatened in a world that is becoming toxic to childhood in physical and psychological ways (Clouder, cited inHougham, 2012)

As I have shown, SWE is a worldwide educational movement which is expanding into Asia at an extraordinary rate. A movement of this dimension and longevity clearly has a role to play in contemporary educational discourses. However, the movement is hindered by problems that have either not concerned insiders or have eluded their ability to resolve them. Much of the internal discourse within SWE remains defined by an uncritical and unreflected use of language that has changed little since its inception in 1919. And whilst there is clearly abundant interest in SWE, and particularly in its practical manifestations, this measure of interest is not matched by an understanding, let alone an engagement in the underpinning theory. Bringing theory and praxis into alignment is widely recognised as a critical success factor in organisational development. By contrast, maintaining a misalignment of the two subjects an organisation to largely unrecognised but ultimately undermining problems.

1.1.5 Two systems of thought.

This study on SWE is situated within the broad dynamic interplay of two systems of thought, largely working today as antagonistic sets of epistemologies and ontologies. It may be optimistic to characterise one as spent, or at least close to terminal exhaustion (though that is unlikely), and the other, as new and inchoate. On the one hand, I name the highly visible, powerful matrix of currents – political, economic, ideological – that saturate our contemporary life with vastly sophisticated technologies, globalised markets and increasingly globalised-state control over individuals and societies. These hegemonic currents work with inexorable impetus (Bourdieu, 2003; H. Cox, 2016; Freire, 1996; Steger, 2005; Stevenson, 2010). They engender and enjoin compliance and submission across global populations to dominant narratives that have become substitutes for everyday truth and credos of contemporary life (Friedman, 2012). These faceless, "oppressive realities" are "antidialogic" (Freire, 1996, p. 121). According to Steger (2005), globalism, "the dominant ideology of our time" (p. 11), is constructed from "convincing stories and cajoling narratives" (p. 16), that position it as "inevitable and irreversible" (p. 18), working like a "natural force" (p. 19). On the other hand, I have in mind a range of cognitive positions[13], positing a set of alternatives in how the world, and our place within it is understood. It may be summarised by the notion that humanity is in the process of a continental shift in consciousness, which is moreover sorely needed for our own survival and that of the earth herself (Böhm & Nicol, 2003; Kegan, 2013; Senge, 2011).

The dominant paradigm may be characterised as the Cartesian model of reality which privileges rationality and its chief instrument, "science"[14]. Its origins in modern times can be traced to the Enlightenment, and before then, to the Cartesian excursus into phenomenological self-observation, the *cogito*. Over the centuries, this model has become inextricably associated with a set of descriptors that effectively determine the mode of being through which science operates in the world and which has become imprinted in its vaunted methodology: disinterested, objective, uncontaminated, procedural, systematic, methodical and calculated. The influence of this worldview

---

[13] We are indeed 'betrayed' by language (J. Miller, 2000). To say something that has not been said before requires that the tension between word and concept is somewhat loosened (Heidegger, 1959/1971; Moll, 1959). The problem with semantic representation here is that the very notions of perspectivity (privileging seeing) or positionality (suggesting a fixed location) intimate an incorrect relationship to the alternative I am portraying here as a loose unity. A more fitting metaphor would be of sensing, which emphasises, in opposition to locality and fixity, the peripheral, as in peripheral seeing, which merges together with the cognitive sweep of feeling and intuition. This interplay between the centre or point and periphery forms the departure point of projective geometry, a field of post-Euclidean geometry that Steiner saw as illustrative of spiritual scientific concepts (Adams, 1978; Adams & Whicher, 1980; Whicher, 1989, 1977)

[14] Arthur Melzer (2006) calls the 'radical challenge' against the 'legitimacy of Western science and rationalism', 'the great intellectual predicament of our time' (p. 279). In his view, this challenge issues from two directions: 'the ancient force of religious orthodoxy [or, esotericism] and the "postmodern" one of historicism or cultural relativism.'

has encroached into the manner in which we ourselves comport our own modes of being to others, our communities and to the world itself: we are *encouraged*, by virtue of our complicity in an ecology of everyday life, which is dominated by the scientific model, to be disconnected, unreflected, fragmented, stereotyped, unconscious, conceited about our status in the world and egoistic about the satisfaction of our needs and desires[15]. This scientific paradigm underlies every aspect of human existence (Harding, cited in Olson, 2015). It reduces our experience of the world, through technology, science's offspring, to an *enframed* world, stripping it of mystery and inwardness (Heidegger, 1977b). Contrary to the hollow claims that science will "free" humanity, from the inherited perils of our collective loss of innocence[16], it seems more plausible that its intended purpose is to do the bidding of the state and corporate interests, marshalling under the combined arsenals of the state, the military and the economy, as coercive instruments. Meanwhile, the "us and them" paradigm keeps us locked into the liberationist narrative, that necessitates the othered enemy (Earp & Jhally, 2006; Keen, 1991) However, as Roger Waters (cited in Dwyer, 2018) discloses, "there is no 'us' and 'them'[17], there's only us". The "them", echoing Heidegger's "they", is always "the barbarian at the gate", the Other.

Critics of this model, ranging from Blake to Böhm, have long drawn our attention to the links which grow ever more visible, between the underlying rationalist ideology and the unfurling catastrophes of the past and the present centuries. Increasingly sophisticated analysis of our present-day problems seeks to find "patterns that connect" (Bateson, 1979) amongst the most diverse areas of human and more-than-human lives. A prominent example of this complexity was reported in the wake of the Second Gulf War, the invasion of Iraq by the "coalition of the willing", by the journalist Ron Susskind. Writing in the *New York Times*, Susskind (2004) related an interview with a GW Bush White House staffer. The staffer stated that the mass of ordinary people including journalists, belong to the "reality-based community". However, confessed the staffer, "that's not the way the world really works anymore. We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality – judiciously, as you will – we'll act again, creating

---

[15] It is curious to consider how the 'deadly sins' of Dante's *The divine comedy* have become almost completely subverted and inverted, such that we no longer consider it unethical to think about ourselves and our own needs before those of others. We are encouraged to take 'pride' in what we do, to license our desires, to want what others have and so on.

[16] The Judeo-Christian story of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and the subsequent origins of human suffering. The notion that science will free humanity is an ideological construction that issued from the Enlightenment and gained pace with the ascendancy of industrialisation just prior to World War 1. The work of Jules Verne is a testament to this optimism. At the same time, the notion of paradise in its modern construct as 'utopia' embodies this ideology (Rushby, 2007).

[17] Echoing the eponymous track on the rock album, *Dark side of the moon* by Pink Floyd.

other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors… and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do" (np).

This narrative suggests two important consequences of the extent to which unilateral control is possibilised by modern technologies of coercion. Firstly, if this account is taken at face value[18], the extent of narrative control extends as I have indicated above (p. 2ff), across all areas of human concern. Hence, not only economic and political "realities" are assumed to be true and moreover, "inexorable" and "irreversible", but at the same time, theological tenor is extended to military affairs and matters of foreign policy (here the rubric of "national security" steals into the shadows of the discourse). The theological analogy is developed in Cox (2016) in relation to the "market", although his argument equally fits those areas I have referred to here. Secondly, what is presented here is a clear epistemological, and ontological, divide between "us" and "them", between the "haves" and the "have nots". The claim that we are part of the "reality-based" world is a testament to the success of the Cartesian paradigm. We are indeed "naïve realists" when it comes to absorbing the news and "public opinion" (Bernays, 2004; Lippmann, 1997). However, what is posited also is that this "reality" is the epiphenomenon of largely illicit actions by the "invisible hand of the powerful" (Bourdieu, 2003). In other words, the "ordinary" view of reality is constructed by powerful elites who control the perception of that reality through the media. Their "reality" is largely unknown since it is rarely reported.[19] Notwithstanding, a tracing of this dark predicament is recorded in 20th century dystopic literature (Huxley, 1977; Orwell, 1977; Zamyatin, 1993) and contemporary science fiction film (Cuaron, 2006; Niccol, 1997; Truffaut, 1966; Wimmer, 2002).

Set against[20] this ubiquitous cultural behemoth is arrayed a diffuse gathering of evolving consciousness that is seeking to find new ways of knowing and new ways of being in the world that are genuine alternatives to monocultural rationalist epistemologies. This evolving consciousness reaches back to at least the Age of Romanticism, when William Blake (1988), one of its most creative and engaged exponents wrote, "if the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear

---

[18] The reporting of global events, whether of a political, economic or military nature, suggests that the portrayal of Western hegemonic power in the world does indeed operate in this manner. The lying and deception leading up to the start of the Second Gulf War, centred around Saddam Hussein's alleged complicity in the September 11 attacks, and his stockpiling of 'weapons of mass destruction', is a case in point. The absurdity of the media pronouncements that fuelled the 'neocon' obsession with a war of expansion in the Middle East (PNAC, 2000) was exposed in *Weapons of Mass Deception*, an insightful work of deconstructive history and news reporting by Rampton and Stauber (2003).

[19] There are a few exceptions, for example, Professor Carroll Quigley's *Tragedy and Hope* (2014) and *The Anglo-American establishment* (2013).

[20] Increasingly it is possible to see a shift in this 'against' to 'beside', since the notion of opposition misrepresents the intentions of many of the authors referred to here in this discussion. Rather what is prescribed is a sense of collaboration and dialogue. Gergen (2001) is a particularly vocal and compelling example of this spirit of multiplicity and openness.

to Man [sic] as it is, infinite" (p. 39). It is tempting to align the endeavours of countless individuals since Blake's time, working consonantly at the deep task of cleansing the doors of perception, portals and gateways that separate I from you, human from non-human, human from human, past from present, and ominously Nature from Us. Yet, as Derrida and Deleuze remonstrate, it is the very notion of binary thinking itself which is under stress. If only binaries were regarded as such, equally necessary, equally balanced, twofold, bivalent, dual and *collaborative*, the problem might shift from dethroning the old monarch and installing the new one, from replacing one order with another. However, the problem encroaches and mushrooms with the privileging of positions, labelling one true, the other false, white-black, rich-poor, powerful-powerless. The scale of dehumanization made possible by this divisive power is well documented, but its potential is literally unimaginable.

Who are the proponents of difference in this unequal dialogue? What do they say and where are they headed? Resistance to the scientific paradigm that ushered in the Enlightenment, and has since colonized our social, political and economic, and inner and outer spaces, as well as framing the horizons of our futures, gained ground in the Romantic era. One of its early spokesmen, Blake, wrote and depicted imaginal narratives that showed the ineradicable link between microcosmic and macrocosmic realities. His classic "Auguries of Innocence" (Blake, 1988, p. 490), portrays a moral ecology, where the commission of acts, however minor, is mirrored in the greater world, whether the earthly state or the divine order.

A Robin Red breast in a Cage puts all Heaven in a Rage
A Dove house filld with Doves & Pigeons shudders Hell thr' all its regions
A Dog starvd at his Masters Gate predicts the ruin of the State
A Horse misusd upon the Road calls to Heaven for Human blood
Each outcry of the hunted Hare a fibre from the Brain does tear…

These moral relationships owe their philosophical and ontological bearings to the credo expressed in the well-known lines,

To see the World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour

The cognitive bearings underlying the Romantic revolution privileged ways of knowing that had been rejected by science and rationality: intuitive, imaginal, embodied, interested, critical-political, emotive and aesthetic. Moreover, these new ways of knowing have become evident in the calls for change from disparate voices. Gradually, as we have come to terms with the decisive

influence of our way of being in the world on how we think and perceive the world (Abram, 1997, 2011), the shift from ways of knowing to ways of being has been increasingly signalled by some authors , and is reflected in the awareness that knowing is essentially an ontologically embedded mode of being (Heidegger, 1953/2001). Phenomenologists such as Heidegger (1953/2001) and Merleau-Ponty (1962/1992, 1964/1995) articulated this embeddedness with terms like "being-in-the-world", "being-with", and "reciprocity", as well as "world-flesh" and "chiasma". The mode of being underlying phenomenology may also be referred to as "participatory thought" (Böhm & Nicol, 2003), although the term participatory "being" would be more apt, since such participation is at once cognitive *and* ontological (Lundy, 2004; Palmer, 1989). Cognition is itself grounded on the participation of the body in our interactions with the world (Gendlin, 2007; Heidegger, 1953/2001; Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1992, 1964/1995; Todres, 2007).

By contrast, the rational mode of knowing, with its mood of distancing and fragmenting, has come to be viewed with increasing suspicion. Bateson (1979) refers to such modes as "pathologies of epistemology", or "wrong assumptions rooted in a kind of scientific hubris or arrogance, driven by narrow purpose and diminished sensibility" (p. 479). The "default epistemology," as Meek (2011) calls scientific rationalism, "leads to weariness, withdrawal, and cynicism in the knower. It also leads to a distorted self-image, a knower immune to the potentially transformative impact of the real" (p. 23). John Ralston Saul (1993) has encapsulated the malaise, the "dictatorship of reason," in an epigraph:

Reason is a narrow system
Swollen into an ideology
With time and power it has
Become a dogma, devoid of
Direction and disguised as
Disinterested inquiry.
Like most religions, reason
Presents itself as the solution
To the problems it has created.

In classical Hegelian dialectic, the emergence of new ways of knowing and being, as alternatives but also as resistant epistemologies, may act therapeutically, first as a kind of poison to destabilise the hegemonies of control, then as a remedy to bring balance to a system that has lost its way and is in danger of cataclysmic implosion: *pharmakon*: (Derrida, 1972/1981). This collaborative and conciliatory approach overcomes the raw binaries that have held back further development by

locking our thinking into the vicious circles they offer. Hence, we find represented in the transformative impulse of new modes of knowing and being, for example, alternative epistemologies and ontologies that are less new than renewed, drawing from the deep wellsprings of wisdom that have been preserved in the artefacts of old and ancient cultures, such as myths, legends, fairy tales (Graves, 1992; Romanyshyn, 2007), as well as the narrative symphonies that have gathered the collective wisdom and history of indigenous cultures (Abram, 1997). Reversing the paradigmatic trajectory of modern society, which has become infatuated, even “infantilised” (Bourdieu, 2003), by the ongoing paradisaical promises of technology, for example, Abram (2011) offers a healing alternative. It is a meditative regression that allows thankfulness to infuse our way of seeing the world and ourselves within it. “Becoming earth. Becoming animal. Becoming, in this manner, fully human” (p. 1). This is resonant with the ecological, political and cultural credo of the Dark Mountain Project. The focus of this Project is to encourage artistic work of the most varied kind that “own[s] up to the crises enfolding us”. It summons “writers as prophets, artists who spoke with honest tongues, who might not pretend to have answers but who didn’t hide the questions” (The Dark Mountain Project, 2017, p. 1). Contributor to the Project, Mike King (2018), writes of his encounters with an Austrian mountain that “reveals” to him the depth of humanity’s kinship with the seemingly inert world of stone and rocks and rivers. Stories such as those generated through the Project can counteract the deleterious effects of “disconnected knowledge” (Formenti, West, & Horsdall, 2014, p. 32). Furthermore, as narrative scholar, Formenti states, we need an “ecology of ideas” (p. 33) that can combine “thought, emotion and imaginative empathy” in order to weave cognitive narratives that are connected to the ubiquitous sources of wisdom in us, in others, and in nature.

There are many other discourses that diverge like lines of flight from an abundant source, a rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2005) of epistemological renewal. For example, from Palmer (2003) and Zajonc (2009, 2011), a contemplative epistemology of love. From John O’Donohue (1999, 2017), of presence and attunement to landscape. From Brady, Maier, & Edelglass (2006), a reaffirmation of direct experience. From Moore (1994, p. 208), “the spiritual longing for community and relatedness and for a cosmic vision.” Or, to make way for “new frontiers” and “new species of research” (Eisner, 1997), such as writing (Cixous, 1993) or memoir (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), or “nomadic social sciences” (Canclini, cited in Pryer, 2011), that dwell on the fringes and continually trespass boundaries that are based on exclusion; hence, inquiry that is oriented towards the shadows as well as the light.

Diverse as they seem, these vocabularies of dissent, or evocations of epistemological renewal, arguably wish only to find a voice in the polylogues (Kristeva, 1977) about our futures. It is a matter of how two languages approach one another: out of the impulse of colonising dissonance or “out of equality and independence” (Thiong'O, 1993)? The notion developed in this section is that Cartesian rationality has spawned a cultural revolution that has led to the wholesale exploitation of the living body of the earth, and the “mental and spiritual subjugation” (p. 42) of humanity. This is evident, as we have seen, in a survey of contemporary science fiction. The expunging of emotionality, a theme that is amply represented in the genre, is the underlying leitmotiv of Wimmer’s (2002) *Equilibrium*, itself modelled on Huxley (1977) and Orwell (1977), and in Truffaut’s (1966) filmic rendering of Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. Both films depict an all-out war against the very sensibilities that define us as human and humane creatures: the range of emotions, our ability to feel both at the sensory as well as affective level, and our capacity for aesthetic unity with the world around us and the reciprocal desire to pay homage to what emerges in our soul life through artistic creation and the expression of love. However, too often, it is the qualities previously associated with the rational Cartesian model – rationality, calculation, privileging of the mind over body, and the coercive exercise of power, like Orwell’s (1977) jackboot on a human face - that retain the ascendancy in these purported futures. Nevertheless, a stronger position is assumed by more radical exponents. Some argue that nothing short of a reversal of the dangerous ideologies governing present day life can restore humanness to humanity and perhaps allow nature to recover some of the lost ground. This is part of the uncertainty that attaches itself to our future.

1.2 Personal Exegesis

1.2.1 The way into the study: unlocking the question.

The journey metaphor, often employed by researchers to catalogue a research project, is unashamedly also used here[21]. For me, this doctoral project continues to be a journey on many counts. Not least, it has been a journey in search of answers to questions that I have long harboured and carried in an ageing body. Like Rilke’s fictional author, Malte Laurids Brigge, I have had to experience many things in order to write a single line of research. Therefore, this former journey has made possible the one that now winds towards another destination. It is widely recognised by qualitative researchers that engaging in this kind of inquiry is more akin to wandering about in a new landscape (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013) than travelling down a well beaten road. Even the notion of

[21] This metaphoric connection is explored in Appendix A: Methodology as Journey Metaphor.

methodology or prescribed methods is increasingly challenged (Hammersley, 2011; Lather, 1991, 2013; Lather & St.Pierre, 2013; St.Pierre, 2011; Weaver & Snaza, 2017).

António Machado (2004), poetically echoing Deleuze some eighty or so years before, has already chided us for looking for the "road", leaving us with nothing but "foam trails on the sea". It is, after all, sobering if without relief, to recall that in my own "wandering", I "make the road". I will attempt over the course of the next chapters to trace a way of many paths, for every journey has its detours, its disorientations and its pauses, leading to a destination which I am yet to discover. Now, in confessing to these side-tracks and momentary lapses, I have no wish to exculpate my errors, my delays, or my doubts. Quite the contrary, I embrace them, though not for "theoretical" reasons but because life has taught me to do so. As an amateur musician also, with a propensity for improvisation, I know that error is often the crack in the wall that leads elsewhere. Error makes our voice distinct (Proust, cited in Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/19887). It is with and in this frame of mind that I attempt to depict the way into the study.

The problem that this study set out to investigate lived more strongly in my body than in any words my mouth could speak. True to Gendlin's (2007) hypothesis, every time I tried to utter a sense of the study, its meaning, or the problem question, my body quietly but audibly gave its disapprobation. "That's not it! That's not it!" This inherent discomfort became less and less troubling the more I learned from experienced voyagers on the research path, researchers like Polanyi (Polanyi & Prosch, 1977), Moustakas (1990), Behar (1996), Todres (2007), Gendlin (2007), Romanyshyn (2007), and Anderson (R. Anderson & Braud, 2011). I began to understand that dissonance was part of the landscape, a sign of its resistance to too much linearity. So deeply embodied is this activity, what we call research, that reading their words, often no more than a phrase or a sentence or two, made my body rejoice. As Clark Moustakas reminds us, sourcing the problem question in the embodied biography of the researcher is the pivotal point of departure of heuristic inquiry.

1.2.2 Why make this journey?

The ambitious goal of this study is to contribute towards a critical renewal of Steiner Waldorf education (SWE). Explaining why this is necessary and significant, not only for the Steiner Waldorf (SW) movement, but for contemporary education in general, has been a key theme in the prologue to this Introduction, and will be a major undertaking of this thesis. In order to achieve this stated goal, a set of critical narratives, jointly constructed from research interviews with former and current SW teachers, will be analysed and a "collective story" (Richardson, 1990) composed to

reflect the disruptive narratives told by critical and reflexive practitioners who are all or have been, without exception, deeply committed to SWE.

Intimately linked to this goal, is a further aim, which is the attempt to locate the vast body of philosophical knowledge generated by Rudolf Steiner, as he claimed, through the practice of "spiritual science" or "anthroposophy" amongst contemporary and traditional alternatives to the "default epistemology". Whilst the primary purpose of this study is not to investigate anthroposophy in depth, gaining some level of access to this challenging vision and practice is nonetheless necessary given its imputed role in the professional training, development and self-identified praxis of the SW teacher. It is also implicated in the rationale for the primary goal, namely contributing towards the critical renewal of SWE.

1.2.3 Lived experiences in SWE and anthroposophy.

When I reflect on the nature of the doctoral journey, even casually, I become aware immediately that it is preceded by a larger journey. This is evident in a couple of immediate ways. Firstly, this project is only possible because I had worked as a SW teacher in several SWSs. As will become evident in the course of this chapter, this has been an indispensable "requirement" for conducting this research. Another important, though perhaps less obvious precedent has been my prior training in philosophy. In particular, the methodologies employed in this study have been informed by the nineteenth and twentieth century phenomenological movement associated with existentialism and then later, deconstructionism. Secondly, the decision to undertake the doctoral journey is inserted into a larger biographical journey in a way that seems clearly connected at first sight, but which is hard to describe. There are obvious connections, such as the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) Flagship Program, which I completed at the end of 2014; there is also my resignation from a SWS earlier that year. To sketch the connection between these events and the decision to undertake that journey, it is perhaps sufficient for now to say that the former stimulated an appetite for intellectual discourse and specifically academic research, whereas the second opened up the necessary "wound" (Romanyshyn, 2007) through which the research could connect meaningfully with my embodied experience as a SW teacher.

However, there is more to this link between earlier biographical events or conditions and the decision to undertake the research study. For one, my association with the Steiner movement has involved, in addition to working in education, also substantial periods working in disability services and aged care. In addition, I have studied the philosophical basis of Steiner education and other practical endeavours based on Steiner's ideas, for over 30 years. I have assumed roles in

various Steiner organisations, ranging from care worker to centre coordinator, chief executive officer to Board member. These diverse roles have enabled a continual shift of relationship to the primary ideas at the core of these practical endeavours. For example, working directly with people with disabilities entails a different set of skills, not to mention orientation to the theoretical constructs that frame that work, than supervising or training staff who perform that work. Working at a management and governance level within an organisation broadened and deepened the relationship to the core ideas even further. As I hope will become evident later, this background provides a loose framework in which many questions can be located that are relevant to and significant for the present study. It is, I think, also indicative of my commitment to SWE and the Steiner movement, more generally, that my three children have attended SW schools to at least Year 6 level, and one to Year 12. In addition, my wife has worked in a number of "Steiner" endeavours.

There is a further dimension I want to add here, which I have alluded to above (p. 21) with reference to the wound. Following Romanyshyn (2007), I would call this the soul dimension of the study. To begin with, the research study is itself a way of "being-in-the-world" (Heidegger, 1962/2001), a mode of relating to the world. It is deeply rooted in the personal biography of the researcher. It is neither inserted randomly into the course of that biography nor is it suspended above the vicissitudes of human existence. It belongs to that existence, and it is situated and lived as that existence, and promises and threatens to shape it further. But it is also shaped by it. Naturally, the problems that are dealt with in the course of the study have an existence that predate the study. Moreover, those problems[22] have been in preparation for some time, even before the decision to undertake the doctoral journey became conscious. I believe that if we, as researchers, wish to fulfil the embedded obligation to know "where we're coming from," that is to be reflexive about our philosophical and cultural prejudices, then this type of reflective immersion in the preparation of the research problem is a necessary element. Similarly, Rilke (1910/2009) frames this alchemical embedding of life in poetry as a transmutation of perception, through memory, into flesh.

> For poems aren't, as people think, feelings (one has those early enough); they're experiences… [yet] the memories are not what's essential. It's only when they become blood within us, become our nameless looks and signs that are no longer distinguishable from ourselves (pp. 6-7).

[22] The etymology of Greek 'problema' is instructive. The word breaks downs into two distinct semantic elements: 'pro' meaning forward, and 'blema'. The latter element is a substantive formation of the verb 'ballein' which means 'to throw'. Hence, the imaginal representation of the word 'problem' is something that is thrown or projected forward, which could be a task, a proposal, or a question (Online etymological dictionary).

At some point in my early years working in a Steiner organisation I experienced a clear perception that something was amiss in the way that Steiner's ideas were being transacted as praxis. This insight came in the form of a direct intuition. It was something that I saw inwardly and imaginatively. To convey the message simply, I realised, in an inner, dramatic and abstract picture form, that it mattered more *how* ideas were being employed, and less *what* the ideas were themselves[23]. Without pre-empting some of the more significant findings of this study, it gradually dawned on me that the way in which Steiner's ideas were being appropriated prevented the ideas becoming efficacious in social discourse. Steiner (1961/1994) referred to this enigmatically in an injunction to the spiritual aspirant:

> Every idea which does not become your ideal slays a force in your soul; every idea which becomes your ideal creates within you life-forces (p. 25).

Later, in the Literature Review, I will examine more closely the nature of this problem and the extent to which authors and researchers are aware of it. For the purposes of introducing the study, it is perhaps sufficient to identify that recognising the way Steiner is *read* as a critical issue signalled a turning point for me, at first working in a professional context, and then later at a more personal and intimate level.

My engagement in SWE came in two distinct stages. Initially, I became involved with a small community group on the south coast of NSW, whose aim was to establish a SWS in the region. At the time, my partner and I had moved to the area, with our two young children, in order to experience an alternative lifestyle and to raise our children in a rural setting. Later I became a class teacher, but the "cycle" lasted only two years. To this phase I can add a couple of years of relief teaching at another SWS, and an abortive move to undertake a class teaching engagement at a third SWS. This first stage lasted five years. During that time, I taught in a preschool setting, and worked as a kindergarten and primary school teacher. The second stage[24] was longer, lasting 12 years, where I worked primarily as a secondary teacher in two SWSs. I also assumed school management responsibilities for a couple of years, towards the end of this stage. Within a short time, beginning to work at this school, becoming immersed in the cultural atmosphere of the school, for better or for worse, I began to experience a significant measure of embodied discomfort. Curiously, this experience was counterposed by another equally vivid and pronounced experience, namely the

[23] Echoing Goethe's (1833/1984, p. 58) pronouncement in *Faust, Part 2*: 'consider the what, still more the how.'

[24] Between these two stages lies a period of eight years during which time I worked in the disability sector, almost exclusively in the Steiner field. During this stage, I worked as a careworker, supervisor, centre coordinator and CEO. I was also a representative on the executive committee of the Steiner umbrella body for disability services.

discovery that I loved teaching and that my students loved the content and the experience of my lessons. In the course of the teacher's daily life, swinging from one term to the next, from one year to the next, these deeply contrasting, and irreducibly contradictory experiences worked on in my soul life. The former was easier to share with colleagues, partly because it was recognisable by other teachers. Whereas the latter was not so easily shared, at least not beyond a few colleagues, who had similar experiences in the classroom. Ironically, the school's professional culture seemed indisposed to sharing teacher's classroom experiences, and such experiences were rarely, if ever, represented in professional development (PD). Nonetheless, the attempt to *reconcile* these disparate experiences was tiring and ultimately, so it seemed in my situation, self-defeating. The defeat became an actual event. After working at the school for 12 years, for most of those years never quite sure whether I would finish the year, or start the next one, I resigned on Easter Sunday, in 2014

I hope by this brief biographical sketch to highlight the fact that my attitude towards SWE has and remains a deeply ambivalent one. The dividing line between discomfort and fulfilment is clear from my above confession. Teaching was rarely a discomfort, or if it was, only a transient one. However, participation in the school culture, at all levels, from collegial meetings to cultural events, were rarely earnestly enjoyable experiences. To put it differently, I almost always felt at home in the classroom, with my students. I was myself and the teacher was a subjectivity that issued from my deepest sense of self. Yet, in social situations, whether professional or otherwise, I was rarely myself. The experiences were "uncanny"[25]. The sheer joy and fulfilment of teaching, I believe, kept me teaching longer than I expected, but eventually, it was not enough to keep me at the school. Admittedly, by this late stage, I was teaching less and working more as a school manager, a position that brought me closer to the cultural and professional milieu that challenged and frustrated me.

1.2.4 The Parzival legend.

The legends of Parzival and the Grail have played an integral part in the genesis of the study as well as providing a mythopoetic narrative that resounds closely with aspects of the problems under investigation. However fascinating such an exploration might be, I do not intend to mine the story for clues or correspondences, in order to show that it is intimately connected to the research problem at hand. I present the mythopoetry of the Parzival legend as an heuristic to prompt a livelier, more imaginative connection to the research problem.

[25] Pace Heidegger's (1962/2001) term 'unheimlich', literally 'unhomely'.

Around 2009, at the midpoint between beginning and ending my tenure at the SWS where I had taught for 12 years, I began to write as a way of trying to understand what I was experiencing at the school. The focus was on what I did not understand, which happened to be also that which gave me enormous and growing discomfort. Essentially, the "problem" I was facing at the social-cultural level, working in a SWS, became the principal research problem of this study: namely, asking SWE, the Parzival question. This is the archetypal and pivotal question which is *not* asked in the early stages of the story. The principal actions of the story are driven by the reciprocal *need* to ask the question and the *failure* to not having done so, until the closing stages of the Medieval drama.

It struck me, and later I saw that it struck others as well, that a basic discontinuity existed in SWSs[26] between the spiritual-moral "hyperculture" (Alvesson, 2013) and the day-to-day reality that was breathed and shared by members of that community[27]. In other words, the ideas that shaped and identified a school as a *Steiner* school appeared not to find reflection in the *ideal*. This *ideal* dimension was expected to be found in the everydayness of school life, between teachers and teachers, students and students, parents and parents. Moreover, this ideal is represented in Steiner's dictum: "the healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human being the whole community finds its reflection and when in the community the virtue of each one is living" (cited in Urieli & Muller-Wiedemann, 1995/2000). It is common, for example, for insider observers (McAlice, 2013; Schaefer, 2012) to notice that social problems occur with disturbing regularity in SW schools. The existence of these problems challenges the hyperreal pretensions of a spiritual community.

At the same time, some researchers and authors (McAlice, 2013; Schaefer, 2012; T. Stehlik, 2002) have referred to SW communities as "learning communities", acknowledging that the educational impulse extends beyond the students, to the teachers and parents of the school community. The strong emphasis on artistic creativity enhances this image of the SWS. There is merit in this characterisation, but it is one-sided.[28] It is "one story" among a number of possible

---

[26] I'm aware that this is a contentious generalisation. However, I am comfortable with it, on the combined basis of my own professional experience, my reading on the subject, and the findings of this study. Of course, it goes without saying that there are differences between schools, as the findings attest. Nonetheless, the similarities are so striking that to leave them unexamined is to forsake the testimony of all the other blind men for the benefit of one blind man's judgment of the object before him (the Indian elephant story).

[27] I am reminded of Peter Caddy's iconoclastic stories about the early days of Findhorn, a spiritual community founded originally in a caravan park in Scotland, that played on this basic but sharp discontinuity (pers comm, 1984).

[28] Biesta (2015) asks us to resist the temptation to fall for the 'learnification' thesis which has become widely popular in theoretical and political circles. He challenges the idea that learning is in itself a value that should drive the purpose of education, arguing for other values such as democracy, ecology and care (p. 7). At the same time, however positive it appears that SW communities engage parents in their learning communities, one has to ask, towards what end? What is the underlying vision of such a learning community? How inclusive is it? Is it based on particular anthroposophical beliefs?

narrative perspectives. For example, there is a sense in which the "learning", although appearing expansive and visually[29] beautiful, is also stereotyped and mannered. This is evident in the reproductive "styles" of "wet on wet" painting, the repetitive stylising of movement in eurythmy[30], and the privileging of particular performances as emblematic of the "Steiner" approach. To a newcomer, such creative artistic experiences may appear memorable and immersive, even where the subject matter may otherwise challenge the viewer[31]. However, the longer one is exposed to these performances, or rather to the way in which this creative knowledge is presented, one may begin to find such experiences unsatisfying and unedifying. There is a temptation to seek such cultural artefacts as reinforcements of the cultural ideology embraced in that community, something that may in fact have little to do with the core ideas of SWE or anthroposophy.

Whilst these observations and insights were forming around the time that I began to articulate my dissatisfaction with SWE, at least at the situated-cultural level, the mythological potency of the Parzival story began to emerge in a splendid way as a potential heuristic key to the problems that I was facing in my day-to-day professional life[32]. In hindsight, this emergence is perhaps less unexpected than I first thought. Firstly, the story of Parzival is one of those emblematic narratives in SWE. A "main lesson"[33] is taught in the penultimate year of secondary SWE. It is well known to teachers and parents, because, apart from its place in the SW curriculum, it is used to "teach" Steiner's ideas, for example, about adolescent development[34]. Secondly, around 2009, I began to rewrite the story of Parzival, to make it more readable, so that my students might be encouraged to read the story. During this process of re-translation, the story opened itself to me and began to offer insights about not only SWE but also about its underpinning system of thought, anthroposophy.

The story of Parzival has been a continuing source of inspiration during the course of this study. However, at the outset, three primary mythopoetic elements spoke directly to me in my search for answers about SWE. The first is the iconic missed opportunity that confronts Parzival

---

The need for questioning should not be cancelled out by overtly positive gestures that express narrative prejudices of the present day.

[29] There appears to be a sensory privileging of visual creativity in SWSs. This is evident in websites, brochures, or in the school itself and especially the classrooms. However, not all the arts work with the visual sense, and much of a student's struggle and achievement is not represented visually.

[30] See Glossary for explanation.

[31] For example, religious plays, such as those mentioned in Robert's account.

[32] I also found that the story assumed an unexpected role in helping me in my private life as well.

[33] See Glossary.

[34] Of course, I am referring to adult education.

when he happens upon the Grail Castle, early in the story and in the first stage of his “career” as a knight. This missed opportunity is his failure to ask the question. This event and its heuristic signification suggested to me a way of understanding the problem of reading which I have referred to above (p. 23). The binary of not asking questions, as advised by the Parzival’s mentor, the old grey knight Gurnemanz, and asking the question, is semiotically paralleled by the two levels of reading – one focussed on what is said, the other on how it is said. In other words, not asking questions, is likened to reading without awareness of the hermeneutic necessity, whereas asking the question signifies an entanglement in the interpretive moment. This binary was transposed, as it were, imaginally, to the task of reading Steiner’s words. So, it seemed to me, the first remains anchored in the stereotyped image of what is said, in this case by Steiner, and therefore is backward-looking; the second is suspended in the experience of the practitioner who explores a way of creatively inducing learning by entering into the space of the indeterminate new.[35]

The second vocative moment in the story is the image of the wounded king, Amfortas (literally, “without strength”). The missed opportunity to ask the question is intimately linked to this image, since it is Amfortas, above all, who misses the passive opportunity to be healed. The parallel to the study, as an initial lens, was the problem of leadership in SWSs, and Steiner organisations in general. The interlinking of these narrative moments also suggests a deeper mythopoetic or semantic connection. The one who has the power to heal the lame king is the innocent[36] knight who need only ask the question: “What ails thee, uncle?” It is an act of compassion, nothing more, nothing less. However, in this story, a moral deed (that is, asking the question out of compassion) is interwoven into a cognitive act (asking the question out of curiosity). This interrelationship was strongly articulated by Steiner (for example, 1961/1994). Moreover, today it informs an approach to research that emphasises and *celebrates* the necessity of subjective engagement coupled with academic rigour and self-discipline in the research process (Abram, 1997; Polanyi & Prosch, 1977; Meek, 2011).

---

[35] This is merely one way in which this profound narrative moment opened its meaning to me. More on this will be related later in the thesis. See, for example, Ben-Aharon (1999) on the law of decline of spiritual impulse. What confronts Parzival is a dying community. His naivete is a necessary element in its renewal.

[36] The juxtaposition of the innocent knight (that is, the ‘fool’), and the lamed king is echoed elsewhere in the story, for example, when Parzival first arrives at the court of King Arthur, and in response to his unexpected presence the Lady Cunneware laughs, thereby fulfilling a prophecy that when the greatest of knights appeared before the Round Table, the gloomy Lady would finally burst into laughter. The metaphoric power of this juxtaposition is self-evident: the laming that is associated with ageing, its weariness, loss of mirth and ambition only to dwell in the ‘mortal coil’, is suddenly overwhelmed by the exuberant and unrestrained liveliness of the young fool. The echoing of Christ’s counter-intuitive affirmation that foolishness according to human eyes is wisdom in the sight of the Father God is here evoked. Life renews death.

The third moment of the Parzival narrative signals a hiatus between the first part and the second parts of the story, a structural marking that is actually not indicated in the original text. Yet, the dynamic shift between the story to that point and the story after that event is self-evident. The event is the meeting of the Round Table on the banks of the river Plimzöl. Against this beautiful, bucolic scene is framed the ritual humiliation of both Parzival and Gawain. These conjoined events signal the transition from the past to the future, from the martial spirit of the Arthurian knighthood to the Logos spirit of the Grail knighthood (Stein, 2008). The significance of this shift is profound and has an instructive influence on our leading themes. At the simplest level, it signifies an important narrative transition. It is, in effect, a narrative deconstruction, which portrays the dismantling of Parzival's former self. As a result of this transition, he is no longer subject to realist illusions, nor to the ego-feeding pretensions of honour and fame, which previously defined his stature, literally his "standing" in knightly society. Formerly, he was recognised by the external appearance of his garb, which he unceremoniously took from the Red Knight. This external recognition reinforces the outward aspect of the Code of Chivalry, with its emphasis on deeds of chivalry, acts of physical prowess and courage. The transition to a new order, namely the Grail knighthood entailed a relinquishing of the external qualities of manhood which is catalysed by an awakening of shame through the sibylline Kundry. This transition also signals a complete transformation of the culture of the Grail community. This transformation is, of course, narratively focussed on key individuals, such as Parzival and Gawain, however, there are many others whose roles are distinct and essential, such as Sigune, the ailing King Amfortas himself, Kundry, and Parzival's half-brother, Feirefiz, to name a few, so that ultimately it becomes perceptible how an entire community of individuals, members of an "imagined community," (Benedict Anderson, 2006)[37] is needed to fulfil such a transformative deed. There are latent parallels here, I believe that may throw metaphoric light on the situation with SWE in the world today. This will be discussed in greater detail later, once something akin to the inner and outer landscapes of SWE has been outlined from the rich and detailed information provided by the project respondents.

1.2.5 Positionality and reflexivity.

The current section, "Personal exegesis", has been added for a number of interconnected reasons. Firstly, as I have tried to show, the personal dimension of this study enacts a rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2005) movement throughout the study. I have tried to make this activity

[37] I am, of course, reterritorializing (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2005, p. 105) Anderson's term. The invocation of an imagined community is that "which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (p. 37).

as explicit as possible, since this fulfils a second requirement that I have assumed as a researcher, namely, reflexivity (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Although this has already been hinted at in the foregoing discussion, I intend to elaborate further on the nature of reflexivity employed, and in particular how it has informed data gathering and data analysis, in the Methodology chapter. Thirdly, it is implied in the theoretical grounding of the heuristic study that the researcher will devote a good deal of attention, in an ongoing manner, towards his own experiences, attitudes, and embodied responses, as well as thoughts and feelings, as a constitutive part of the research process. It is especially important, given the inclusion and dependence on emerging data from teachers' narratives, as well as interactivity with that data, that the researcher is cognisant of his own responses as he is of the respondents'. Finally, I believe it is incumbent on me as a researcher, conducting an inquiry in a postmodern world, to extend the mirror of reflexivity further into the foundations of seeing and meaning-making as far as possible, in order to examine my own presuppositions about the nature of knowledge, and particularly how I conceptualise this activity which I have been undertaking for the last three years. Again, I intend to deal with these issues further in the Methodology chapter. However, I will also examine this in the next section, "An unfolding set of problems," which deal with the research problems and questions.

It will also be evident, throughout the course of this study, that I embrace a positionality which collectively encompasses not only the broad aspects of qualitative inquiry, but also tries to work with the challenging reassessments that "post qualitative" (Lather & St.Pierre, 2013) or "post humanist" (Jackson, 2013) inquiry brings to the field. For the sake of the wider view, I retract my perspective to include within this positionality, an embrace also of embodied, felt and intuited modes of learning and knowing. And whilst the critical gesture underlies this study (namely, asking the Parzival question), criticality is not employed as a means to diminishing SWE. Far from it, my intention is to dare to place this social impulse within the broader field of human efforts that recognise the need and the urgency of bringing into alignment our deepest and brightest hopes for our species and for Life herself along with our deeds in the world. In other words, the critical wish is for SWE *to recognise its own authentic self in the other*, in those who do not follow in the footsteps of the Master, but who seek what he sought.

1.3 An Unfolding Set of Problems

1.3.1 Framing the study.

The heuristic approach to qualitative research is based on the work of Clark Moustakas, a well-known phenomenological researcher. It shares some of its underlying assumptions and

practices with transpersonal inquiry, exemplified by Rosemarie Anderson and William Braud. Its focus on the subjectivity of the researcher as the primer instrument of inquiry resonates with autoethnography (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008), self-study (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009), as well as the alchemical hermeneutics of Robert Romanyshyn (2007). The basic premise of heuristic inquiry is that the researcher occupies a privileged and inescapable position in the early stages of the research, particularly in its conception, gestation and early formulation.

An important consideration in heuristic research is the shift in emphasis away from external, so-called objectivist research, which tends to occlude or even deny the presence and participation of the researcher, and insodoing renounces the very notion of subjective knowledge. By contrast, heuristic research respects the distinctive grounding of the researcher in a particular mesh of relationships and perspectives which is both unique and resonant. The focus of this approach is similar to what is naturalistically adopted with narratives. That is, we are enthralled by the uniqueness of a personal narrative or story and experience a resonance that can awaken the voices in our own concealed or unarticulated narratives. We do not complain that the story is unrepresentative or that it is not supported by evidence. The evidence, so-called, is what is revealed, or literally "made visible" (Latin *e-videre*) in and through the story, and this making visible become re-presentative of what is spoken about. The story is absorbed as soul nourishment and acquires its value through an intuitive evaluation of this substance that we can sense transacted in the process of reading and reflecting on the work.

Working heuristically gave me license to work deliberately on my own experiences, both personal and professional, by recontextualising them in an academic setting. However, rather than accentuating self-immersion, it promoted and initiated a reflexive inner process which has grown during the compass of this project. At the outset, in accordance with the processual stages of heuristic inquiry, I began by writing various narratives about my experiences, at different stages, in SW school settings. These helped me to gradually unpack and unpick this complex mesh of experiences, emotions and thoughts to a point that I became able to experience some free mental space in an otherwise overwrought context-laden work situation. This was a challenging phase in the project, but it was also satisfying since carrying so much "baggage" from past experiences is tiring work and letting go of it, such relief!

What emerged as a mythopoetic framing of the research question (Anderson & Braud, 2011) represented a reduction of critical observations and insights, which acquired a mythic dimension in the context of a richly woven Medieval text. These observations and insights pertain to common experiences of the researcher as well as the anecdotal experiences of other insiders. Often, critical

responses arose out of two common situations, namely, initial contact and interaction with the school community, or as a result of conflict, typically between the child/student and teacher.

The study aims to expand the basis of critical observations and insights (the heuristic search for answers and new questions) to a broader set of insiders or former insiders (that is, teachers or ex-teachers). This shifts the methodological centre of gravity from heuristic study to narrative inquiry. The rationale for selecting teachers in this context is manifold:

i. As a former SW educator, I have gained many insights into various SWS organisations. In part, some of these insights have been acquired through conversations with other SW teachers. In particular, I have come to recognise that it is natural for educators to continually reflect on their work and the social-political[38] situation underlying their vocation. Typically, teachers rely on informal settings in order to be able to share what are notionally "subversive" perspectives (Postman, 1971) or stories that challenge the "dominant narratives" (Bruner, as cited in Turner & Bruner, 1986).
ii. There is an immediacy to teachers' experiences of the work of "education" through the classroom experience, lesson preparation, assessment and marking, maintaining a bridge between the students and the school, or alternatively being positioned between parents and the school as accountable agents of the school. The immediacy of praxis is most strongly felt in the teacher, as opposed to the lure of theory, which tends to captivate administration and management most readily. I have observed that in many cases the teacher acts by default as the student's advocate against the universality of an adopted educational method. They tend to care more about the actual student in front of them, than the theory or policy to which they are required to subscribe to. In short, teachers possess a unique perspective, at the intersection of theory and praxis, though more committed to the latter, and arguably may be better placed than others in the school environment to see and feel what is happening there, and especially to discern the needs of students. The tension between these two concerns is often the stuff of teachers' autobiographical accounts (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007; M. Gordon, 2016; Manning, 2012; McCourt, 2006; Stroud, 2018).
iii. The teacher is an educational professional. Their fundamental loyalty is (or, at least, ought to be) with the student's education, rather than to an ideology, of whatever kind. The teacher is an educated and thoughtful person, whose expertise permits them to make critical

[38] I'm using the word to refer to the mesh of power relationships that work in and around the school environment. It is only one or two steps further to perceive how the political dimension we are most acutely aware of intersects with the more personal and social dimensions.

observations and to offer critical insights into emergent problems within a school community. Even if informally the teacher practises a kind of reflective action research, or put differently, is engaged in ongoing learning, which includes reflecting on their own practice and its interaction with the school's ethical presence in the classroom.

The study aims to find out from the teachers' perspectives, what it is like to work in a SW school, within the Steiner philosophy. That is, it is based on their *lived experiences*. The intention behind focussing on lived experience is to try and capture the sense of immediacy referred to above.

The study invitation (see Appendix B) encouraged participants to *critically* share stories that shaped their experience and understanding of Steiner education in their situated contexts. It also aimed to articulate the sort of problems or issues that impact on teachers' lived experiences of SWE. Furthermore, it was anticipated that these issues have contributed to perceived problems in the culture of SW schools. The assumption behind focussing in detail on teachers' narrativising of critical issues is that their experiences may yield vital insights into specific problems and that patterns may emerge from an investigation of these problems.

Whilst a preliminary survey of my own experience of these problems and issues has yielded a number of important aspects, such as a lack of professional reflexivity and criticality, as well as dissonance between theory and praxis, it is anticipated that other issues will emerge from analysing the contributions of teachers. In addition, it is also expected that teachers' narratives will offer further rich accounts of characteristic patterns within the culture of SW schools. The leading heuristic question – "what ails SWE?" – is coupled to a preliminary observation, upon survey of relevant literature, as well as anecdotal evidence based on the researcher's own professional experience, the experience of other insiders and "allies", that SWE has been undergoing, and will continue to undergo a state of transition. In part, this state of transition is reflected in the previously identified aspects or leading themes, and is itself partly a symptomatic reflection of these issues.[39] There is a growing body of critical work by insiders, and professional reflexivity is increasingly seen as crucial for the healthy ongoing development of SWE, although how extensive this is and how effective in transforming school cultures and educational practices remains to be investigated and become part of the accepted discourse of SW schools. Nonetheless, it is inevitable that these developments will feedback into the lifeworld of SWE. Therefore, the co-constructed knowledge of

[39] For example, it could be argued that the shift of SWE from private to public settings, such as Charter schools in US, Academies in UK, public Steiner schools in NZ, and the Steiner-influenced government schools in Victoria and South Australia, reflects an attempt to widen the accessibility of SWE to a broader educational constituency At the same time, this shift has foregrounded fundamental questions about the primacy of the 'original' model of SWE, as well as the equivocal role of anthroposophy as an underpinning educational philosophy.

"what ails" SWE in the present day is set against a broader canvas of SWE in transition. Of course, a critical aspect of this transitional character is the broader global stage of education in transition.

1.3.2 The research question.

As I have shown, the initial premise of the study is that something is awry with SWE. And, as I have described above (p. 21ff), my own experience working in the Steiner movement, and primarily as a SW teacher and administrator, has been the chief source for framing the study, including designing the research around semi-structured interviews with SW teachers, both past and present. Locating the fundamental research question has, in turn, displaced a number of posited problems about the learning culture of SW schools, the need for renewal, and the nature of transition. However, in the irrepressible shadows of this unfolding cognitive drama, has lain the perhaps unutterable question from *Parzival*. And just as the convention in Ancient Greek theatre to refrain from disclosing certain actions on stage, and rather rendering them *ob skene* (literally, behind the backdrop), maybe there was something "obscene" about baldly asking "what's wrong with SWE?"

Therefore, the task of locating the research question meant delimiting the field of inquiry, not by design but by emergence, within the bounds defined by these overlapping problems: culture, renewal, transition and the Parzival question. The locus of the question lay there, somewhere, as yet unuttered, even if words already had been allocated the role of delimiting this question. After all, this is no ordinary question. Like the oracular question[40], it becomes the theoretical guide, Dante's Virgil, to not only the sibylline "answer" (data collection) but the theoretical dissemination (discussion) of the response.

However, in addition to the emergent multiplicity of research questions, in the course of conducting the study, to the point of commencing the final writing phase, it has become evident that two other significant aspects have emerged as research problems in their own right. The first of these two concerns methodology. Even articulating the problem as a single or even set of questions is not straightforward. The problem may be expressed in the following manner. Parallel to developing "the research question or problem," I sought advice on doing qualitative research (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013) and perhaps more importantly, in order to gain an orientation on the purpose and task of methodology in the research project. The decision to undertake the inquiry as a "heuristic" study suited the personal and professional exposure to the

[40] The metaphor of the Oracle and the mythopoeticizing of *theory* and *methodology* is explained more fully in Appendix A. The Sybil is a virtuous woman who receives the word of Apollo from the earth's womb, and the *theoros* is the messenger who conveys the riddled answer to the source of the question.

research problem. Along the way, and particularly in the recursive stage of data analysis, which began within the first year of the study, another multiplicity emerged with methodological orientations towards the investigated interview texts. Respondents' interviews called for an individualised approach, for methodological as well as ethical reasons. Different interviews raised different questions, challenging the conventional approach, whether phenomenological, narrative, or interpretive. Deconstructing one seemed appropriate but not the other. As Derrida has averred, deconstruction "happens"; "there is something that budges, that is in the process of being dislocated, disjointed, disadjoined, and of which I begin to be aware" (as cited in Barnard-Naude, 2011, p. 160). Hence deconstruction is less a matter of choice but rather of observing what is already happening to the text. Nor did I feel compelled to be "consistent" for purposes of validity. A kind of "free play" (Derrida, 1967/1997) entered into the analysis of respondent's narrative texts. I was more interested in seeing where the conversation was going, where it was taking me, than in harnessing themes or patterns too fixedly, too soon. In effect, I wanted to allow each story to "speak" to me in its own way.

The numerous challenges around methodology, for example, concerning the use of interviews as data collection, the processes of data analysis and the treatment of data, as well as key decisions around writing or representing the research study, impose theoretical tensions on the "framework" employed to guide the research process. The integrity of the fabric of research methodologies is stressed under such tensions, revealing that there are no smooth, seamless transitions from one to another, nor are they altogether incommensurable. Probing such matters led me naturally to journalising thoughts, questions, problems, images, even dreams that gathered around the nature of methodology. Moreover, the deeper I dove into and became enmeshed in the complexities of postmodern qualitative research (Freeman, deMarais, Preissle, Roulston, & StPierre, 2007; Lather, 1991; Lather & St.Pierre, 2013; St.Pierre, 2011) the more these problems and questions intensified. How is qualitative research in a postmodern era conducted such that valuable insights or knowledge may be generated?

There is a further problem which predictably links to the content of the study, namely Steiner's "anthroposophy" or "spiritual science". The problem arises because, even though the study is not specifically focussed on Steiner's theory of knowledge or his world view, it seems to me incumbent on the study to situate Steiner's philosophy within the compass of contemporary social science, in general, and educational theory, in particular. From the outset, it became apparent to me that there is a good deal of common ground between Steiner's "anthroposophy" and contemporary qualitative research. This is a significant preliminary finding because it can help to situate Steiner's

ideas, as mentioned above, but even more importantly, this commonality may suggest ways in which future research can cross-fertilise an understanding of Steiner's ideas as well as extend our understanding of the postmodern cognitive turn (Ben-Aharon, 2011b, 2013; Hougham, 2012; Lather, 2013; Lather & St.Pierre, 2013; St.Pierre, 2013).

1.3.3 Framing the question.

The title of this project focusses on key recurring elements in the study: SWE, transition, critical, narrative, renewal. A key term, employed in the title is the much-overused label, "critical". In employing this term here, I am appealing to its richly polysemic capacity for designating alternative meanings.

Firstly, the narratives are critical in the narrowest sense of the word, being able to draw out from the shadows areas in SWE that are poorly illuminated. In other words, the invitation to potential participants in this research study explicitly stated that a critical view of SWE would be undertaken. In my experience, free critical discussion on SWE is a practice not typically enacted in the open. For this reason, the study specifically invited respondents to "illuminate the shadows as well as the light" (Invitation Letter). A survey of secondary literature on SWE also shows that there is a dearth of critical perspectives. Hence, being able to see the dark outlines of SWE involves crossing a threshold for many insiders.

Secondly, they are critical in the sense that they represent both polarities of appreciation and critique and oscillate freely between the two positions. In this sense, the narratives map out positions or standpoints from which SWE is perceived and understood by practitioners. They illuminate the terrain and create maps by which others might orient themselves.

Thirdly, the narratives are critical because they represent not only an awareness of the future and of change more importantly, but, I suggest, are themselves part of the critical mass of change that is perceived and intended. In other words, criticality acknowledges here the necessity of openness, of reflexivity and of change.

The following assumptions are nested into the title of the study:

i. SWE is in transition. In other words, there is considerable evidence that the system has been undergoing substantial changes, ironically reflected in the protestations from many insiders that what is needed is a truer realignment with the original impulses of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, 1919. Changes have in effect accompanied the migration of the SWE system across the globe, as it has been transplanted into diverse cultural and social contexts. It could be argued that the lack of critical, reflexive understanding inside the system about

this transition is mirrored by what is effectively a near total oversight by academia of both SWE praxis and theory ("anthroposophobia", see Zander, 2013). In general, the practice of SWE is far better understood, and generally attracts far more interest, than its theory. It will be argued in this thesis that the healthy development of SWE may well depend on a renewed understanding of anthroposophical theory. Various insider authors have intimated this, connecting this task to the task of invigorating interest in anthroposophy by academia (Schieren, 2011; da Veiga, 2013, 2014).

ii. The empirical study of teachers' narratives was based on the premise that SW teachers would be both interested and willing to explore critically their own lived experiences in SWE. The narratives provide a range of viewpoints, eliciting different issues or problems experienced during their individual tenure in a limited range of SW schools. To use Derrida's phrase, their accounts shake loose the "structurality of structure," (1978, pp. 6, 279) enabling glimpses of an unsteady culture, especially at the collegiate level, whilst also suggesting possible remedies or even just alternatives to the privileged narratives within SWSs.

iii. The use of narrative inquiry in this study has proven efficacious for a number of important reasons (Bridges, 2009; Squire, 2013). This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

1.3.4 Rationale.

The research question and, by extension, the study are significant because the inquiry undertakes an investigation of previously limited areas or aspects of research into SWE. That is, the inquiry:

i. engages critically with SW praxis and Steiner theory;

ii. investigates the relationship between SW theory and praxis;

iii. provides the narrative perspectives of teachers' lived experiences;

iv. positions SWE within the present discourses around education;

v. aims to help bridge the chasm between Steiner and non-Steiner education at the level of the academy (by critically exposing professional and cultural issues in contemporary SWE and by bringing Steiner's philosophy into relationship with contemporary issues in education and research; and,

vi. finally, seeks to position anthroposophy or "spiritual science" within the compass of contemporary and recent work aimed at deconstructing the privileged ground of scientific materialism and contribute to a new way of being in world that regards knowing as a dialogic movement between the human and more-than-human worlds.

To the best of my knowledge and with few exceptions which will be discussed later in the Literature Review, most of the above rationales have not been attempted in the English-speaking academy.

Taking each rationale in turn:

1.3.4.1 Critical engagement with SW praxis and Steiner theory.

With the exception of a handful of German research projects, there are few studies adopting a genuinely critical attitude towards the practice and theory of SWE. This is a highly significant omission in the literature on SWE. Da Veiga (2014) refers to this lapse in the Steiner movement as a "reflection vacuum." Despite recent completions of postgraduate research degrees, within the last two decades, by a number of English-speaking researchers in Australia, the chasm between Steiner-related writing and the broader mainstream audience, including in academia, still remains. As Gidley (2008c, p. 101) has commented, this has led to a situation that "may serve to deter rather than facilitate dialogue between Steiner and 21st century academic discourses." Zander (2013), an "outsider" academic with an ambiguous interest in SWE and anthroposophy, has coined a term to designate this situation: "anthroposophobia". As I aim to show, this rationale functions like the rhizomatic (Deleuze, 1980/2005) source of the other five rationales.

1.3.4.2 Relationship between SW theory and praxis.

With a few notable exceptions (Kiersch, 2010; Masters, 1997; Sagarin, 2011; Wiechert, 2010a, 2012), this uncritical tendency is also apparent in the "interpretation" of Steiner's philosophy or educational theory, in relation to actual SW praxis. This is especially evident in Steiner's "indications". Particularly, Sagarin and Wiechert have been active in highlighting the body of practical mythology that has emerged over the century of pedagogical content that is putatively indicative of SWE. An investigation of this situation reveals a basic interconnection with the previous rationale. In other words, the "myths" that have populated SWSs in the decades since Steiner's death in the 1920s are symptomatic of the same problem, which is referred to above as the reflection vacuum. The broad epistemological basis for the reflective lapse and mythmaking is discussed at length in the Literature Review. The work of Georg Kühlewind and, particularly, his explication of *reading* Steiner, is valuable in this regard.

1.3.4.3 Narratives of teachers' lived experiences.

Considering that teachers' narratives have been employed in educational research for at least 20 years, one might expect that SW teachers might be represented in that field. I am not aware of any narrative inquiry being employed in research on SWE, let alone in an open critical manner.

There is a handful of biographical material by former SW teachers (L. Cox, 2009-10; Finser, 2001; Francis, 2004; Perra, 2011). This situation reflects the actual conditions in the school workplace, where teachers are rarely consulted about the effectiveness of the curriculum or other operational practices, and likewise changes at all levels, let alone their lived experiences or emotionality. Whilst not a peculiarly SW phenomenon, it is interesting to consider teachers' complaints that this sense of alienation from important operational decisions is evident even in the relatively small, "communal" scale of the SWS. Teachers stand in a peculiar situation, effectively functioning like a kind of skin between their students, and their "stakeholders", on the one hand, and the internal workings of the school, including administration and governance. Hence, not only do they shoulder enormous responsibilities, but they are also placed to gain large, multi-layered perspectives of the life of the school. In respect of this study, the teacher's view is especially desirable since it encompasses and is encompassed by the pervasive presence of anthroposophy or Steiner philosophy. Together, the influence of anthroposophy on the teacher's lived experience of their work in the SW setting and the reciprocal "uptake" of anthroposophy by the teacher create a palpable tension that plays out in the teachers' narratives. Gaining insights into this tension is potentially illuminating for the researcher. One way in which this tension is expected to be disclosed is in the difference between the personal, often intuitive dimension of the influence and its professional, socially constructed form. The deepening of this difference can easily become a source of dysfunction in the teacher's work life.

1.3.4.4 Positioning SWE in contemporary educational discourses.

Gidley (2008c) has compiled a list of Steiner-based academic research in Australia, as well as a summary of what she calls "kindred" educational research that she believes can form a "conceptual bridge" between SW educational philosophy and contemporary academic educational discourses. For example, she offers research sources in potentially overlapping curricular and pedagogical fields of discourse, such as spirituality, holism and imagination. I agree with Gidley's concluding remark in this regard, namely, that "Steiner education in the 21st could be revitalised by more engagement on the part of the Steiner/Waldorf teachers in many of these approaches" (p. 104). Investigating this issue reveals an overlapping interconnection with the other rationales, namely the reflective omission and its concomitant mythmaking culture. To activate Gidley's rational and salutogenic suggestion would signal an opening out of SWE, disclosing and foregrounding its otherwise obscure, esoteric theoretical conceptions. In other words, apart from whatever putative benefits would accrue in the classroom, crossing the bridge to kindred lands would ensure the growth of reflexive tendencies throughout the movement, but particularly in teachers and, to a lesser extent, in parents.

1.3.4.5 Building bridges to the academy.

The imperative of building bridges to the academy has already been signalled by a number of both insider (Bailey, 2011; da Veiga, 2013; Kiersch, 2010; Paschen, 2014; Schieren, 2011) and outsider (Zander, 2013) commentators. The combination of two effects has contributed to the division that has dominated the movement's relationship to the mainstream. This describes the relationship of SWE to mainstream *and alternative* education, inasmuch as it also depicts the broader anthroposophical movement to mainstream social, philosophical and artistic impulses (Kaltenbach, 2014). As Kiersch (2010) and Bailey (2011) have pointed out, SWSs present two irreconcilable "fronts": a positivist incorporation of Steiner's ideas and an uncritical adoption of esoteric language into its everyday discourse. Examples of the latter include terms like "incarnation" and "etheric body". These terms serve to alienate outsiders and, it is hypothesised contribute in no small measure to the appearance of knowledge hierarchies in SW settings.

1.3.4.6 Positioning anthroposophy in an ongoing paradigm shift.

Anthroposophy or spiritual science was developed by Steiner as an evolving cognitive methodology, firstly, to provide a ballast against the hegemonic mode of scientific inquiry practised at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and later as a model of renewal in the scientific method itself. Despite popular misconceptions, Steiner was not a mystic or medium. He admired the *form* of the scientific method but was critical of the epistemological and ontological restrictions it imposed on the objects of inquiry.

1.3.5 Research lenses.

The Literature Review has been focussed on three overlapping areas of concern. These areas of concern have emerged, partly as germinal shoots of the informal heuristic "inquiry" that preceded the initiation of this study, and partly as preparatory reading in the early stages of the study, prior to the articulation of the project for the Confirmation of Candidature. These areas of concern are:

i. Steiner education in transition
ii. Reflection vacuum
iii. Dissonances between theory and praxis

1.3.5.1 Steiner education in transition.

This section will survey the development of SWE since the end of the 20th century. The relatively unchanged character of SWE will be described, as well as the mythic reliance on Steiner's words and the use of the "model" of the first Waldorf school in 1919 as instructional and

organisational lodestone in establishing the praxis of SWE. Developments to bring SWE into the public sphere of education will be described, in Australia, New Zealand (NZ), United States (US) and Britain. More recent developments regarding the contemporising of management and governance practices in SW schools, as well as the promotion of greater engagement with academia and postgraduate research, which the author witnessed at close hand in the final years of his career as a SW teacher, will also be examined.

1.3.5.2 Reflection vacuum.

As indicated earlier, this section will investigate the (slowly) increasing self-awareness within the Steiner movement that there exists a reluctance to reflect critically on the theory and praxis of Steiner-inspired organisations and workplaces. Key figures (Ben-Aharon, 2007; Diet, 2003; Gordienko, 2001; Kühlewind, 1991/1992; Mosmuller, 2013; Tomberg, 1992; Zajonc, 2008) who have, in a sense, been pioneers of reflexivity will be examined more closely. More recently, da Veiga (2014) has noted that the Steiner movement has lacked a genuinely "constructive critical discourse." (p. 147). By adjusting the focus towards the epistemological epicentre of anthroposophy, it is hoped that a renewed understanding of its foundational principles and processes will become available for a wider audience. By definition, this is the primary step, since without engagement in "constructive critical discourse" no amount of change, initiative or adaptation, will contribute towards a deepened understanding of the place of SWE in the present day. This engagement signals an attempt to examine in greater depth some of the concepts commonly associated with anthroposophy or SWE, in order to arrive at the abovementioned principles and processes. A significant element in this examination will involve highlighting the difference between naïve positivist and more sophisticated hermeneutic readings of Steiner's work.[41]

1.3.5.3 Dissonances between theory and praxis.

The relationship between theory and praxis has been mentioned above in regard to the study objectives and purposes. It is easy to see this relationship in parallel with the problem of reflexivity, since an investigation of how theory is reflected in praxis and vice versa, how praxis elicits theory, already signals a critical engagement with established practice and entrenched constructions of Steiner's words. Some of the early signs of this critical engagement are evident in Masters (1997), Aeppli (2002), Riccio (2002, 2008a) and Kiersch (2010). More recently, Sagarin (2009) and Wiechert (2010a, 2010b, 2012) have developed this further, to the extent that the topic of "dissonances" has

[41] This is further developed in Chapter Three: The Literature Review.

become the focus of conferences and workshops. However, anecdotal observations and insights must also be included here concerning symptoms of “dis-ease” in SWE. Unfortunately, these voices have tended to be marginalised, perhaps for reasons similar to those that have arrested the emergence of a robust culture of critical reflection. It is anticipated that a significant reason for this dissonance is to be found in the lack of critical distance between followers and the figure of Steiner. Although this fundamental issue is gaining increased recognition, it is by no means widespread (Diet, 2003; Gordienko, 2001; Kühlewind, 1986, 1991/1992; Mosmuller, 2013; Steiner, 1995, 2009).

1.4 Contribution to Knowledge

The study is intended to make some contributions in the field of present-day education. These include:

i. Offering *critical* accounts of SWE from *insider* perspectives.
   This addresses the identified gap in critical discourse within the SWE movement by introducing teachers’ voices into the discourse. These voices articulate both appreciative and negative critical insights into SWE. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the range of their insights, hitherto SWE has not lacked positive or apologetic commentary. It is the absence of reflexive, critical inquiry that has held back a spirit of rational investigation into deeper aspects of SWE, such as the interaction between theory and praxis.

ii. Participating in a robust interrogation of SWE.
   Coupled with offering critical accounts of SWE, key assumptions or assumed linkages need to be interrogated, in order to bring into view more deliberately the theoretical framework with which practitioners operate and manage their knowledge of SWE.

iii. Encouraging academic engagement with SWE by stimulating a critical discourse around its immediate present and possible futures.
   The paucity of academic research of a critical nature into SWE has made it difficult for academics to engage with a field of study that has been largely represented through apologetic and uncritical commentary. It is hoped that by applying established methods of inquiry into SWE and critically exploring the culture of SWSs, academic interest into SWE might be furthered, with a view to sparking lively discourse across potential intellectual bridges, such as the role of imagination in pedagogy, learning and in education more broadly; understanding education as a spiritual necessity for the individual and for society as a whole; seeing Steiner’s philosophy as a historical forerunner of contemporary developments in qualitative research methodology, to name a few.

iv. Demonstrating a spirit of critical inquiry into SWE.
I suspect that in order to more fully actualise Steiner's philosophy of education, a practical realisation of anthroposophy or "spiritual science" needs to be grounded in the everyday praxis of Steiner educational communities. As mentioned above (p. 35), one area where I believe this may happen is by encouraging Steiner educational communities to integrate critical qualitative inquiry into their own work (for example, Burrows & Stehlik, 2014; Haralambous, 2016).

v. Contributing and participating in transformative renewal of SW educational institutions.
Some of the criticisms levelled at SWE are justified and reflective of a culture of uncritical imitation of praxis and minimal innovative engagement with the underpinning philosophical imperatives of Steiner's epistemology.

More specifically, the study may examine more closely the interaction between identified problematic issues in SWE and the school system itself. For example,

i. Investigate how a lack of professional reflexivity impacts on teachers' lived experiences and examine some of the problems associated with this lack, and conversely, how the effective employment of reflexivity encourages critical thinking that may stimulate creative and innovative practice.
ii. Demonstrate how the dissonance between theory and praxis is reflected in teachers' lived experiences and examine some of the problems as well as challenges associated with this.
iii. Encourage dialogue that critically explores cultural and philosophical problems associated with SWE, with a view to encouraging debate within the movement, as well as discourse between the movement and the broader mainstream.
iv. Explore and narrate teachers' stories about the Steiner school experience.

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured in the following way:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Introduction has discussed the broad context within which the study is situated. It attempts to locate SWE within the compass and gravitas of present-day realities facing education, as well as the exigencies of possible futures. In addition, the Introduction has attempted to locate the researcher within the wider context of the research study, highlighting important connections between embodied, lived experiences in various Steiner fields of activity, including education, and

the nature and structure of the study. Also included is an introductory section into the research design, focussing specifically on the research question, the research lenses, and the anticipated benefits of the research project. The Introduction also provides an outline of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Literature Review, as signalled in the Introduction, will examine key texts and ideas that have helped frame the research orientation towards three prominent themes or research lenses.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Some of the key issues affecting qualitative research are explored and discussed. These include questions around subjectivity, validity, and methodological multiplicity. Descriptions and explanations of the research study will also be provided, including sampling and data collection.

Chapter 4: Teachers' Narratives

This chapter will introduce teachers' narratives: the fifteen stories that were gathered in the data collection phase and reconstructed later in the data analysis phase. Presenting the narratives here will provide the contextual basis for Chapter Six. [The narratives have been relocated to the Appendix.]

Chapter 5: Methodological Interlude

A detailed discussion on the analysis of research data is provided, including the process of working through the data in order to discern thematic interconnections. Basic choices in the use of analytical instruments will also be covered in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis

This chapter presents the evidence garnered from a study of the interview material (transcripts) and the process for working with these documents, with a view to highlighting key themes, and then recurring leitmotivs across multiple interviews.

Chapter 7: Discussion

The Discussion will attempt to bring together the prominent themes (leitmotivs) arrived at in previous chapters. In particular, differences between anticipated (orienting) concepts and emergent themes will be outlined and discussed. Further topics that will contextualise the research study (locating anthroposophy) and offer future possibilities for contemplation and further research (renewing lines of flight) will be examined in this chapter:

- Locating anthroposophy;
- Leitmotivs in teachers' narratives;
- Rhizomatic connections in leitmotivs;
- Renewing lines of flight.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Finally, the Conclusion will attempt to gather together the many threads and lines of free play during the course of the thesis.

2 Literature Review

Let yourself be silently drawn by the strange pull of what you really love.

It will not lead you astray. (Rumi, 1996, p. 51)

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Aim of the review.

The problems associated with reviewing literature by and about Rudolf Steiner, anthroposophy or Steiner education are various. In Chapter One I positioned myself as a wounded insider, with a wide scope of experience in anthroposophical work and in SWE. Therefore, I write as a well-formed and well-worn traveller with some joyous and not-a-few injurious experiences in SWE. As Beaven (2011) acknowledges, an "insider" is someone who is characterised by the fact that "there is much that I *know* simply because I have lived it and know without necessarily being conscious of its origins or questioning its meaning" (p. 14). This admission expresses the reality of research bias. However, as Gadamer (1977, 1979) enjoins, it is our very prejudices that allow us to map out a more or less coherent picture of the world, albeit an incomplete one. Fulfilling (literally, *filling out*) this map or picture is surely one important purpose of doing research. Or, using Beaven's language, discovering the origins of my knowledge, and challenging its meaning. This is Gadamer's "truth of hermeneutic experience," which has both the power to disclose and the power to hide (1979).

A second problem, which is noted by critical researchers of SWE and anthroposophy (Gidley, 2008b; Whedon, 2007), is the scope and type of literature available in this field. Nearly fifty years ago, one of the first English-speaking researchers to study SWE, Ogletree (1974), commented on the paucity of literature on SWE or Rudolf Steiner. Later, Uhrmacher (1991) observes that little had changed. Today, we may acknowledge that, although there is a considerable body of *appreciative* literature on SWE and anthroposophy, there is still very little by way of critical, academic research in this field. Mazzone (1999) mentioned, in his doctoral dissertation on the history of SW teacher training in Australia, only *four* "critical" studies of SWE, and one work (about Steiner and anthroposophy) which he regarded as "unsympathetic or sceptical" (p. 11). Further, Mazzone notes that such critically opposing work, in addition to online critiques that were beginning to emerge at the time, "contribute[s] nothing of significance to the study" (p. 11).

Gidley (2008c) produced a report at the request of the Rudolf Steiner Schools of Australia: An Association (now known as Steiner Education Australia [SEA]), investigating the extent of postgraduate studies and peer-reviewed articles by Australian researchers related to anthroposophy or SWE. One important goal of her report was to identify current research that "has attempted to make conceptual bridges between Steiner's ideas, language and understandings and the academic discourses" (p. 102). Further, she opined that "there is a change afoot" wherein "Steiner-experienced educators" have demonstrated a growing interest in building such "conceptual

bridges," rather than continuing to write for an insider imagined community. She noted that especially in Australia, with its relatively small population, this growing interest was well represented.

There is a further dimension to the problem of conducting a literature review of SWE. This dimension is alluded to in Gidley's (2008b) dissertation, where she affirms that her doctoral study was "inspired by both the light of Steiner's work and the shadow of its reception" (p. 506). House (as cited in Popescu, 2005), a psychiatrist turned SW kindergarten teacher, has also observed that

> One of the most abiding mysteries of the twentieth century is just how one of its most inspired, original and wide-ranging thinkers and seers – Steiner – is so comparatively little recognised, or even known of, in the range of disparate fields on which he has had, and continues to have, such a profound influence (np).

Two separate, if interconnected issues are mentioned here: the "light" of Steiner's output and the "shadow" of his reception. Undoubtedly, both can be linked to the sheer scale of Steiner's opus, comprising in excess of 350 volumes, nearly 300 of which house lecture "transcripts"[42]. Added to that, he discussed, whether in writing or via lecture, every imaginable subject, "including history, religion and the occult, education and human development, sociology, sciences including medicine and agriculture, and the arts" (Rudolf Steiner Archive and E-lib, 2019, np). The problem may be summarised in this way: Steiner casts a huge shadow. Steiner exegesis is complicated by the fact that most of his lectures (and this comprises six times the written output) address topics from uncommon perspectives. Reading Steiner demands considerable suspension of belief, or a sense of "attunement" that yields meaning without necessarily producing clear understanding. Moreover, he claims that particularly the later work is not self-authored, but represents communications from the spiritual world that he deciphered into a linguistic form that may be understood by everyday consciousness. Every reader is enjoined to question his words but also to read carefully with neither blind acceptance nor blanket rejection. When added to this is the sheer scale and scope of his opus, as mentioned above, the exegetical challenge is monumental and readily open to error. To summarise, if one has not already rejected outright Steiner as unscientific or mystical (two descriptors that are commonly conflated), it is all too easy to be blinded by him. Like the prisoner who is dragged out of Plato's cave, and who is exposed to the sun outside, spiritual travellers who are new to Steiner are easily dazzled (as might be those who are not so new). Therefore, to remain

[42].Over 6000 lectures were delivered between 1883 and 1925. The vast majority of the transcripts, which have found their way into print, were unedited by Steiner, and at least initially, he did not wish them to be published. In addition, he wrote more than two dozen books, almost exclusively in his early 'theosophical' phase, and primarily of a philosophical nature. The period of lecturing was more public and consisted of so-called 'anthroposophical lectures' (Rudolf Steiner Archive and E-lib, 2019).

critical (in the sense of maintaining a cognitive balance between acceptance and rejection) means being able to position oneself *between* Steiner's light and his shadow, between what is visible and what is not, what is understood and what is not. I postulate that an uncommon level of intellectual honesty is required in order to sustain this position.

With these cautionary statements disclosed, I acknowledge that what is set out in this chapter represents an attempt to make the sources of my ideas palpable and to articulate my own meaning-making activity in the field of SWE and anthroposophy. Further, I have identified sources of critical insight that have supported the formation of my own critical standpoint and have informed it with clarifying concepts. Finally, I hope to show that whilst I approach SWE critically, I do so not because I reject Steiner, but rather because I wish to gain greater understanding of SWE; and neither do I seek to idolise him, which I believe does him and the world a great disservice.

Methodologically, an important task of this review has been to survey the available *critical* literature on SWE in order to identify critical *perspectives*. The focus of the review is almost exclusively academic and empirical studies or reports, peer-reviewed journal articles, as well as teachers' biographical writings. Online critical writings have been ignored with a few important exclusions, as has appreciative material. With what kind of intentions or "prejudices" was this survey guided? Whilst some of these prejudices are stated explicitly, many are not. Behind every sentence, there are countless conversations with colleagues, many hours in the classroom, many sleepless nights, and a few moments of insight; in short, a considerable amount of lived experience and with it, anecdotal evidence borrowed from others.

It is also necessary for me to mention here that since the inception of this study, and particularly, since the data gathering and analysis phases, there have emerged potentially significant critical publications on Steiner, which had the study's start been delayed by a year or two would surely have found their way into this literature review. I refer to seminal publications by established and new SW scholars: Haralambous' (2016) doctoral dissertation on the application of contemplative inquiry in school and academic settings; Dahlin's (2017) broad academic book-length study of SWE; and Gidley's (2017) elaboration of her vision of the role of evolutionary pedagogies in present day questions about the direction of education (including SWE). Whilst there appears to be some overlap between these texts and the present study, there is nonetheless sufficient difference in the nature of the research to support the claim, made in Chapter One, that a significant gap exists in the literature in relation to critical discourse concerning the lived experiences of SW teachers.

An important practical purpose of this literature review is to locate specific themes that might provide "orienting concepts" (Layder, 2013) or "hermeneutic lenses" (R. Anderson & Braud,

2011) to guide data collection and data analysis. The lenses have already been identified in Chapter One: transition, reflection vacuum, and dissonances between theory and praxis. In the initial iterations of this study, I considered including a fourth lens, namely Steiner's esotericism and vision of the future. However, during the drafting of this chapter, it became evident that continuing with this theme, however fascinating and potentially illuminating, would have added considerably to the size of an already large dissertation. Moreover, the subject forms at least part of Shirley Curson's (2013) dissertation on the influence of Steiner's esotericism on SWE's purpose and principles.

I have made no attempt to "describe" SWE in any comprehensive sense, partly because I am unsure of the merit of doing so, and importantly because I think what emerges from the accounts of the study participants allows a more dynamic, contradictory, real and palpable set of views of what SWE is. I am ambivalent, for example, about Alduino Mazzone's (1999) marvellously erected edifice to explain SWE.[43] I am sceptical, to be more specific, about the nature of explanations that posit abstract principles or structural components. Whilst there is much content and the connection between anthroposophy and SWE is consolidated, I baulk at the subtext and the inherent fragility of the structure: the principles are ideas that cannot be taken at face value but must be processed in the crucible of lived experience, yet they stand there all the same on the page like avenues in an elaborately planned city – finished and utile. I refer to the problem of reification, which does the opposite of what is intended, which is to maintain a living fluidity of concepts.

2.1.2 Rationale.

As I have described above, the overwhelming volume of literature on SWE and anthroposophy can be termed "appreciative" or "apologetic". Whilst anecdotal evidence from insiders suggests that, despite its many virtues and benefits, the praxis of SWE is fraught with significant challenges, this hypothesis is yet to be substantiated through a review of critical literature, or indeed empirical research. There is ample evidence (Boland, 2015a; da Veiga, 2013, 2014; Hougham, 2012; Kiersch, 2010; Schieren, 2011; Ullrich, 2008/2014; Zander, 2013) that anthroposophy and SWE wish to be regarded seriously in the broader academic culture. Increasingly it is recognised that this eventuality requires an earnest reflexivity on the part of the movement as a

[43] Valentin Wember's (2016) recent publication, *The five dimensions of Waldorf education,* seems to me to present an altogether more productive approach to describing SWE. Nonetheless, the elaborate divisions used in his taxonomy seem too contrived and abstract, suggesting that SWE is a complex hierarchical system. This appears to fly in the face of the notion that education is an art form, and the teacher's relationship to it and their students is an artistic one, rather than a technocratic one. Notwithstanding, these comments are the result of a cursory glance and selective reading of the book's contents. It does appear, however, to have much to recommend it, for example, its use of non-Steiner research to explain some of Steiner's pedagogical ideas, as well as its "layering" of characterisations and perspectives that in themselves offer potentially rich pathways for the imagination to engage with the highly complex matrix of concepts that constitute SWE.

whole. Notwithstanding, this is not a uniform attitude across the SWE movement, nor even a perspective modelled by the upper echelons of the movement, namely the Pedagogical Section of the Goetheanum (PSG) which "although it considers itself a research body to support and promote SWE across the globe, there is little if any engagement with the wider academic community of peer-reviewed scholarship" (Gidley, 2008b, p. 509). The failure to bring this about signals a potential loss on both sides: the inability or unwillingness on the part of the academy to take seriously SWE and especially its philosophical roots in anthroposophy hinders the understanding necessary to allow a mutual flow of ideas and innovations that could benefit SW, and other alternative and mainstream forms of education. As I have pointed out in the first section of the Introduction, the challenges facing education today are too onerous to be addressed with fragmentary voices of dissent or resistance. In the next section, I will describe the fate of a well-established SWS, which is in some sense indicative of the kinds of issues affecting SWE today, and that are later explored with the benefit of teachers' insights.

2.1.3 Scale or scope of review.

Given the paucity of critical literature on SWE, an earnest attempt has been made to locate and survey every available instance of critical texts, including dissertations, journal articles and lectures. Whilst a plethora of critical material is available online in popular websites (for example, Waldorfcritics [PLANS], OpenWaldorf, WaldorfWatch), a review of this material exceeds the scope of this study and only limited use is made of it for various reasons. For example, much of this material is tendentious and unrefereed, although there is also a lot of feedback of an anecdotal nature which could be investigated for common themes and issues (Powell, 2012). However, some texts have been used for specific reasons, for example, biographical accounts that are rarely available and which, for obvious reasons, provide intriguing pictures of SW institutions.

2.2 Steiner-Waldorf Education in Transition

2.2.1 A brief background to SWE in Australia and New Zealand.

The first SWS to open in Australia was Dalcross, in Sydney, in 1957; the school's name was later changed to Glenaeon (Gentle, 2001). Curiously, by then, NZ had already opened its first kindergarten (1939 – Lower Hutt) and first school (1950 – Hastings). Likewise, the first SWS incorporated into the state education system in NZ took place in 1989, under the auspices of the Private Schools Integration Act (1975), which had earlier safeguarded government funding for independent schools (van Florenstein Mulder, 2001). No such comprehensive absorption into the state system has occurred in Australia. Instead "Steiner stream" schools have gradually appeared on

the sites of mainstream schools in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland, the first of which was established in 1991 in East Bentleigh, Victoria.

In some ways, it appears that SWE in NZ has advanced well beyond the Stuttgart model. Certainly, compared to Australia, there is a greater participation of indigenous students in NZ SWSs. The Federation of Rudolf Steiner Schools in New Zealand claims, in its "Equity Statement," that "Steiner/Waldorf schools and teacher training centres are cultural safe havens for all" and, moreover, that it "celebrates the cultural richness and diversity in Aotearoa" (Steiner Education Aotearoa New Zealand, 1987-2019). By contrast, there is little evidence of cultural symbiosis between SWSs and the rich heritage of indigenous societies in Australia. Gentle (2001) comments that sixty years after founding the first SWS in Australia, very few Aboriginal children are taught in SWSs, despite the schools receiving funding from both National and State levels of government. She adds that low enrolments in many SWSs schools and a lack of SW trained, and experienced teachers present the two most striking problems facing SWE in Australia and in the 21st century.

Moreover, NZ has developed an internationally accredited Class 12 NZ Certificate of Steiner Education. It is legally recognised by the Lisbon Convention and, currently, is used in four countries around the world: NZ, Australia, UK and Austria. It may well be the only legally recognised Steiner matriculation qualification in the world (Steiner Education Development Trust, 2019).

2.2.2 The present situation in Australia.

A rich source of recent developments regarding the contemporising of management and governance practices, as well as pedagogical innovations in SWSs in Australia is described in Burrows & Stehlik (2014), *New Perspectives on Steiner Education in Australia,* an anthology of new research into SW praxis in the Australian context. Virginia Moeller (2014),[44] one of the contributors, opines that the goal confronting SWSs is "to create a conscious learning community to help set up a continuous cycle of energised renewal" (p. 74). Addressing what has emerged as a focal concern within the SW movement (see below under "Dissonances", p. 94ff), Moeller cites Gidley , who asserts that it necessary to "go beyond 'right and wrong'" by undertaking "generative dialogue on 'Steiner chestnuts'" such as 'wet-on-wet' painting, introduction to musical notation, reading and shaded drawing, and the dilemma of "process versus product" evident in attitudes towards the production of student "main lesson books" (p. 74)

[44] Moeller was project manager of the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework between 2009 and 2011.

One of Moeller's primary aims, as Principal of Kamaroi Steiner School, in Sydney, was to "connect and open up dialogue with the broad educational research community" (p. 76), by implementing a program of action research as a schoolwide professional learning project. In her view, working with the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP), to inform the action research "helped rather than hindered" (p. 77) the attainment of the school-based professional development goals. Reminiscent of Deleuze, Moeller urges SW educators to maintain "open-ended and dynamic" (p. 81) maps of SWE, as an important contributor towards building bridges with non-Steiner educational discourses.

During the final years of my tenure as a school manager in a SWS (2012-2014), I also witnessed at close hand some of these important changes, not least being the introduction of the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework (The "Australia Steiner Curriculum"). Similarly, a program of schoolwide improvement in professional learning was initiated, originally out of an emergent spirit of inquiry and research from within the high school teaching team, and later supported by a key assessment project associated with the Australian Association of Independent Schools (AIS) which I conducted as facilitator and high school coordinator at the school. The brief history of this project (just under six months), despite numerous difficulties and obstacles, showed me that such generative research is both empowering to the teaching team and inspiring to classroom pedagogy. Moreover, what was decisive in the enactment of this research project was the intersection and integration of Steiner's texts and teachers' lived experiences.

2.2.2.1 Management and governance of SWSs.

Maintaining and working effectively with the putatively traditional College model of school administration has been problematic ever since the first SWS was established in Stuttgart in 1919. Anecdotal evidence and personal recollection show that many, if not the majority of SWSs around Australia have moved or are moving away from the so-called "republican" (Gladstone, 2016) model of College administration to a traditional hierarchy (with a principal in charge) or hybrid form (possibly including mandate groups) (Richards, 2005; Schaefer, 2012), involving some form of distributed leadership framework. The main motivators behind this significant shift is the widespread recognition that decisionmaking processes are considerably weakened when a large number of participants are involved (often over ten or even twenty is not uncommon). There is also an understanding that an encroaching spirit of managerialism and organisational accountability demand a more flexible and responsive structure than is demonstrably possible in the traditional College system (I. Stehlik, 2014).

2.2.2.2 The Australian Steiner Curriculum.

The introduction of the Australian Curriculum in 2010 allowed the SW community in Australian to create an alternative framework to represent some of the unique features of SWE (Australian Curriculum, nd). This alternative curriculum framework appears to have met mixed fortunes across the Australian Federation, depending upon the vagaries of State government departments of education. This has resulted in an extensive program of “mapping” curricula. It is not clear to what extent this mapping program has substantively embedded the SW curriculum into SWSs, or if it has altered previous arrangements between State and private SWS systems.

Pedagogical innovations in SWE have previously been the exclusive province of anecdote. However, with their recent edited publication, Burrows and Stehlik (2014) provide examples of research-based innovations in curriculum delivery and pedagogical design in SWSs. The examples are singular and largely aphoristic. Nonetheless, they show contemporary SW teachers in the process of “re-inhabiting” (Boland & Demirbag, 2017) SWE, asking difficult questions, and addressing topical issues such as student engagement and contemporary relevance.

Despite its apparent success, I carry some concerns in relation to the Steiner Curriculum. Although its rationalisation is based on situating Steiner’s ideas within contemporary developments in education, psychology and so on, the apparent reliance on Steiner’s “indications” positions the approach to curriculum firmly within the traditional perspective that privileges Steiner’s contextualised interpretations over philosophical principles that are themselves the source of contextualised problem-solving encouraged by Steiner. Whilst the increased legitimisation of SWE, claimed by insiders, may signal a positive step, there remain questions around the efficacy of this new status: Has the ASCF contributed towards a greater understanding of SWE in the mainstream educational community, including in the Academy? Likewise, is there evidence that the bridge-building involved in formulating the ASCF has stimulated “open-ended and dynamic” (V. Moeller, 2014, p. 81) research into SWE and anthroposophy?

2.2.3 Global growth.

We have already seen in Chapter One that SWE has expanded around the globe to become the most common alternative school system to mainstream education. Indeed, the number of SWSs has doubled within the last 20 to 30 years. Further doublings have occurred in the 1990s (400-850) and in the 1980s (200-400). Once started, there are surprisingly few instances of school closures (Werner & von Plato, 2001). According to Werner & von Plato, “against the background of inhumanity in [the 20th] century, the failure of ideologies, the loss of illusions regarding the

possibility of modifying, it is understandable that a type of education which seeks in practical ways to understand human beings and their development should meet with increasing acceptance" (np). Furthermore, in their view, new developments and impulses to found schools emerge out of the expression of individual initiative. There is no systemic program or strategy for expansion. On the contrary, there is an element of risk incumbent upon parents, teachers and students in fulfilling the decision to participate in what are typically fledgling endeavours. Werner & von Plato further claim that "there has never been any particular need to adapt [SWE] to other cultures or those that are undergoing change. Experience has shown that in the way it approaches generally human aspects it 'fits in' with all ethnicities and cultures" (np). The problematic nature of this statement, in particular, will be followed up in this chapter, as well as later chapters where issues around place and contemporaneity as pedagogical imperatives are addressed.

In summary, SWE has been in "transition", the more widely it is disseminated and, as a necessary corollary of that dissemination, it has become embedded into diverse cultures and places. For example, it could be argued that the impulse toward equity and social justice common to Western, English-speaking countries, accounts for the proliferation of "public" SW schools, or at least public funding of such schools. Alternatively, the impulse towards "publification" of SW schools may be traced to the particular contextual founding of the initial school in Stuttgart, namely sourcing its students from the labour force of the Waldorf cigarette factory.

2.2.4 Increased scrutiny.

The more SWE has expanded across the globe, the greater is the degree and extent of reflection of its "essence", its "whatness", in the undulating, diverse and culturally rich soils where it has taken root. The allegation of racism provides a poignant example of this questioning (R. Brull & Heisterkamp, 2009). It is inevitable, given the spread of SWE into non-European cultural settings, that any suggestion or indication of racism, whether in the curriculum or in the underlying philosophical educational concepts, is inevitably exposed (de Souza, 2012). A kind of informal but deeply compulsive "audit" is conducted, chiefly by parents whose concern with the development of their children is heavily invested and readily projected onto the school setting. This reflective process is heightened where SWSs have been transplanted into non-European settings, and where the cultural oddity of white European narratives suddenly come into sharp relief against a backdrop of non-European cultures. This has been especially evident, for example, in the media reports released in Victoria over the establishment of SW schools within operational mainstream sites (Debien, 2008, 9 January; Slaven, 2007; Tomazin, 2008).

2.2.5 Codifying SWE.

An interesting development that may reflect SWE's entry into a new phase of uncertainty is the "codification" of SWE, through the promulgation of "Key characteristics of Waldorf Education" produced by the Hague Circle (2016), which effectively defines what SWE is and what principles are considered *de rigeur* as part of this identification. Ironically, this legal document uses a combination of ambiguous and prescriptive language, not least the grotesque oxymoron, "binding guidance" (p. 1). Alignment with these "key characteristics" is linked to inclusion in the Waldorf List, which perhaps explains why many quasi-SW ventures are not included. The 2019 variation to this list now yields over 1100 schools and kindergarten sites, including the few Steiner academies in the UK and Steiner stream schools in Australia, yet does not list the 44 charter schools in the US. Legally the name "Waldorf" is owned by the German schools association (Hague Circle, 2019) and its use is regulated by a separate procedure. As mentioned above, some elements appear "open-ended", others proscriptive. The curriculum is seen as "constituent" (p. 2) of SWE. A concession is made to SWSs transplanted into non-European provenances: "Western cultural values could be supplemented or replaced by cultural content of corresponding value as long as the educational effect is maintained" (p. 2). However, "Rudolf Steiner's specifications regarding general methodology and teaching methodology and the qualitative special characteristics of the various languages are definitive" (p. 2). Apparent contradictions abound, for example, despite the "definitive nature" of the pedagogical methodology, teachers are acknowledged for "develop[ing] their own methods and avoid[ing] ready-made methods as far as possible" (p. 4).

2.2.6 The closure of the Kings Langley Rudolf Steiner School: a cautionary tale

The recent closure of the Kings Langley Rudolf Steiner School (KLRSS), one of the oldest[45] SWSs in England, in July 2018, provides a poignant example of some of the challenges facing SWSs around the world. The school had repeatedly failed state audit inspections into standards of child safety, as well as management and leadership issues. The inspectors noted that some of the failings dated back many years. Ironically, the inspection report also acknowledged that many children continue to enjoy a good education at KLRSS, thanks to the many committed teachers and staff who are working hard to realise that mission and a hugely supportive student body (von Arnim, 2017).

Nonetheless, a process of reform was undertaken by the school Board and management. A school update in October 2017 stated:

[45] The school was over 70 years old.

> We believe that as a school we should embrace that adaptive challenge with enthusiasm, turning our heads and hearts outwards to see what we can learn from those around us – wherever they are from. If we continue to listen, learn and evolve as a school then we cannot fail to meet the challenges ahead of us and flourish in the future (as cited in von Arnim, 2017).

Jeremy Smith (2018), a former senior manager at the school, ten years before its closure, wrote in his blog site about the "tremendous damage" caused by the school in its "death throes," and "not least to the public reputation of Steiner Waldorf education." Smith offers a shocking picture of a dysfunctional school, at the level of leadership, management and collegiate operation. His most trenchant criticism is levelled not at the school's administration, but rather at the silence that has characterised the lack of response from either the British peak body, the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, or the international PSG. Ironically, Smith suggests that the new wave of government-funded, "public" SWSs in Britain, namely the Steiner Academy Schools, will be better served by the rigorous State inspection regime that at least offers security to parents and the community that the schools are properly managed to ensure the safety and welfare of their students.

2.3 A Critical Transition

It is a truism to say that we live in a state of continual change. Considering the state of SWE over the course of its lifetime, which reaches 100 years this year, a paradox soon becomes evident. Like Oberman (1998), we might observe that essentially it has remained unchanged since its inauguration in 1919. However, upon close scrutiny, and particularly within the last 20 or 30 years there is gathering evidence of significant change occurring. Whether these changes can be traced to social, economic, political or technological movements working into the larger society in which SWSs are embedded, or perhaps signs of something akin to an awakening within the movement remains an open question.[46]

In this section, I will explore the changing face of SWE. I will focus on the last thirty years of SWE. This will lead to a discussion of academic research into SWE which has generally accompanied the migration of SWE into the public domain. This migration has included a series of actual events, as well as a movement of ideas towards and away from SWE. In the first instance, I would like to address two contrasting images of SWE by American researchers at the turn of the last century. The

[46] John Burnett, speaking to Hougham (2012), uses the expression, 'Sleeping Beauty,' to refer to the 90 year slumber of SWE.

formulation of these contrasting images highlights some of the prevailing tensions in the conception of SWE and anthroposophy inside and outside the movement.

2.3.1 The unchanged character of SWE.

The relatively unchanged character of SWE is itself something of an oddity. In her doctoral thesis, *Fidelity and Flexibility in Waldorf Education, 1919-1998*, Oberman (1998) posed a set of overlapping questions concerning SWE's "fidelity and flexibility." She asks, how is it possible that hundreds of schools share the same "ethos and minute detail of instruction" (p. 2)? Moreover, she ponders, "How has Waldorf been able to avoid compromising this coherence, while at the same time adapting sufficiently" to survive in vastly different times and social settings [from its original birthplace in Weimar Germany]?" Some of Oberman's observations are easily verified: for example, the use of "semiotic supports: its symbols, motifs and rituals" (1997, p. 1) to generate the unmistakeable "Waldorf" or "Steiner" simulacrum.

A visitor to any number of SWSs in disparate locations will notice straightaway similarities in appearance: the colourful clothing of the children and adults, the organic nature of the architecture and interior design, the abundance of artwork in the classroom and on the blackboard, and the typically green surroundings, even in urban schools. The "Waldorf design" (1998, p. 27), according to Oberman, can be attributed to three principles "that shape how people define themselves and others around them" (p. 6). They are consistent "non-bureaucratic" structures that underpin the school cultures, such as the "memory of the founding school and Rudolf Steiner, its founder… the impact of teacher education and teacher network… [and] the substance of the underlying belief system" (pp. 6-7). How does Oberman characterise these principles?

i. Firstly, the founding school and its founder are models for teacher learning and behaviour. As Oberman puts it, "Teachers read about what Steiner did…, study his lectures…, and learn to follow his example… Through study of this school and its founder, Waldorf educators today receive direction in virtually all aspects of a school's operation, its teaching methods, even the physical architecture of a Waldorf school" (p. 7).
ii. Secondly, she avers that training colleges cover "all aspects of Waldorf education." In addition, via a network of study groups and conferences, both national and international, this knowledge network is extended, entailing a study of Steiner texts, performing artistic work as "he suggested" (p. 7) and sharing classroom experiences.
iii. Finally, "embedded" in the design of Waldorf education is the "belief system called Anthroposophy," which provides the SW teacher with a "comprehensive system of theory

and practice" (p. 7) that extends from "the study of nature" to "the essence of human life" (Steiner, as cited in Oberman, 1998, p. 8). Citing Steiner, Oberman states that "Waldorf education is not a worldview; … it is a method" (p. 8); however, she claims that the "view of human development" underpinning the "Waldorf method" "*is* Anthroposophy", and that Anthroposophy is "an ideology of practice" that provides SW teachers with "a detailed set of explanations and direction for why they do what they do" (p. 8).

Nonetheless, Oberman (1998) is ambiguous, as her doctoral title reflects, about how this tension ought to be resolved. She describes "the tension between fidelity to the original version and the needs of regional adaptation in executing reform plans" (p. 267). Elsewhere (1997), she cites approvingly a Dutch Waldorf teacher, who says that "teachers can't innovate when they are constantly obsessed with the miracle of the founding of a free school in Stuttgart." Further, she opines that "yesterday's sacred innovation" easily transforms into "tomorrow's servile imitation" (p. 11). But, as we have seen above, she also considers amongst the movement's strengths its allegiance and devotion to Steiner's teachings and his articulations of the task of education, both in concrete and in abstract terms (1998, pp. 7-9).

2.3.2 What *is* Steiner Waldorf Education?

In stark contrast to Oberman's characterisation of SWE, Stephen Sagarin (2004) proposed that what has become known as *Steiner-Waldorf* education is a reified notion of a "negotiation between 'promise', implementing the humanizing, spiritually based, artistically balanced, developmental education described by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) and 'compromise', alterations to an ideal necessitated by or chosen in order to further particular educational aims" (2004, abstract). In other words, Sagarin's approach does not start from a fixed preconception of what SWE is, let alone an assumption that the original school is the prototype for all others to follow, but rather from the idea that the "promise" of SWE is continually in transition from ideal into praxis via the necessary shaping resistance offered by compromise. This view is echoed by Mepham (2014-2015) who extends Sagarin's pairing of promise and compromise through an etymological exegesis of the common word *promise*. Literally, compromise means *to promise together* (Mepham, 2014-2015, np) or to undertake to do something with another (Partridge, 1983, p. 409). Far from the notion of being less than ideal, a compromise is "arguably, a movement away from ideals, dogma and triumph, yet it might be regarded as the seed-ground from which new and unknown change may grow" (Mepham, 2014-2015, np). It means creating space for the "uncertain roads out of the future" and leads us away from the certainty that tends to isolate us and turn our thinking into a barren wasteland.

Mepham refers to a striking passage from Steiner's address to the first SW teachers on 20 August 1919, the eve of the inaugural training seminar in Stuttgart.

> However, it is necessary that we make compromises, because we are not yet so far developed that we can accomplish a truly free deed. The state imposes terrible learning goals and terrible standards, the worst imaginable, but people will imagine them to be the best. Today's policies and political activity treat people like pawns. More than ever before, attempts will be made to use people like cogs in a wheel. People will be handled like puppets on a string, and everyone will think that this reflects the greatest progress imaginable. Things like institutions of learning will be created incompetently and with the greatest arrogance. We have a foretaste of this in the design of the Russian Bolshevik schools, which are graves for everything that represents true teaching. We have a difficult struggle ahead of us, but, nevertheless, we must do this cultural deed. We must bring two contradictory forces into harmony. On the one hand, we must know what our ideals are, and, on the other hand, we must have the flexibility to conform to what lies far from our ideals. It will be difficult for each of you to find how to bring these two forces into harmony. This will be possible to achieve only when each of you enters into this work with your full strength. Everyone must use his or her full strength from the very beginning. (Steiner, 1992/1996, pp. 29-30)[47]

It is clear from this passage that Steiner did not intend the school to shield itself from the educational, social or political context in which it operated. The "cultural deed," essentially a renewal of society through a renewal of education, involved bringing "two contradictory forces into harmony." It is certainly not a matter of rejecting the world, or even what is considered undesirable, but making space for everything that is taking place at the time. In conclusion to the address Steiner reinforces the message.[48]

If we project this message to the present day, it is inconceivable that the task of SWE can be seen in the same light as one hundred years ago: "the great needs and tasks of the times" are different now and require new solutions. Ron Miller (1998) echoes this important distinction. For him. SWE is a "superb expression of a more holistic worldview" (np). Yet, as it is practised, it fails "the test of radical openness to new experience and novel conditions." Miller acknowledges that the

---

[47] I have quoted Steiner at length in order to preserve the fuller context in which the discussion of compromise occurs.

[48] "Through justifiable compromises we can accelerate our cultural deed. We must be conscious of the great tasks before us. We dare not be simply educators; we must be people of culture in the highest sense of the word. We must have a living interest in everything happening today, otherwise we will be bad teachers for this school. We dare not have enthusiasm only for our special tasks. We can only be good teachers when we have a living interest in everything happening in the world. Through that interest in the world we must obtain the enthusiasm that we need for the school and for our tasks. Flexibility of spirit and devotion to our tasks are necessary. Only from that can we draw out what can be achieved today when we devote our interest to the great needs and tasks of the times, both of which are unimaginably large" (1992/1996, pp. 31-32).

Waldorf method possesses “an internal coherence” that is “tempting to mimic.” It is, effectively, a grand narrative that encompasses all grades of school education with its array of stories and teaching content and techniques for each “epoch”. An instance of this uniformity across time and space concerns the story content of the curriculum. Until relatively recently, the notion of the cultural appropriateness of imposing European stories on cultures with their own stock of legend and myth, was not considered problematic. Oberman (1998, p. 11) suggested that the charge of “Eurocentrism” had not yet shifted the great narratives of European mythic history, despite pressures from some quarters. She mentions the Urban Waldorf School (UWS) in Milwaukee, USA, which continued to teach Old Norse myths in Class 4,[49] as validation of the authenticity of the “original” curriculum. It is telling that her enthusiasm for the persistence of Steiner’s directions are still largely embraced today, even though the waves of criticality appear to strengthen each year (Boland, 2015a; de Souza, 2012; Rawson, 2010). Christof Wiechert (2009), whose ideas are discussed in more detail later in “Dissonances”, reinforces her enthusiasm, contending that “the problems experienced during the first six years of the Waldorf school are essentially the same we face today, even though the circumstances are different… All that happened during those six years is archetypal and as valid today as it was then. Maybe it can be seen as a mirror for the school movement today” (p. 105). But he also appears to abandon this position, having deconstructed the “classic view of the Waldorf class teacher,” he proposes a “new teacher’s image that meets the needs of our time” (Wiechert, 2013, p. 69) and enjoins the movement to “wake up, leave old images behind and have the courage to take new steps together with the teacher trainings” (p. 70). We may sense here a potential tension between two schools of thought, that polarise SWE into two ontological realities: the archetype and the simulacrum. Of course, this is a skewed binary. Insiders of the older generation of SW teachers and anthroposophists tend to see themselves as “purists” as though such a condition still remains, if it ever existed. As Ron Miller (1998) cogently articulates the dilemma, “to prescribe this [the Waldorf] (or any other) method as the complete and finished form of holistic education is to substitute technique for transcendence” (np).

2.3.3 The publification of SWE.

Historically, the willingness or pressure to make compromises and enact flexibility has led to a slow but steady migration of SWE from the private into the public sphere. Sagarin’s (2004) and Mazzone’s (1999) doctoral theses on the changing phases of SWE in the US and in Australia,

---

[49] The irony of this situation becomes evident below (p. 61) where it is disclosed that the student population of the Milwaukee school is almost exclusively African-American.

respectively, highlight the truism that change and adaptation have been a feature of the SW educational movement since the start. Since the early 1990s this has given rise to the establishment of Charter Schools in the US, and more recently, Academy Schools in England. A few years earlier, in 1989, the first SWSs in New Zealand were incorporated into the Government system. By 2010, there were seven SWSs that had become *stream schools*[50] in the Victorian State public education system. Compared to the schools mentioned in Australia, England and New Zealand, the US Charter Schools differ in that they are effectively state schools that have migrated towards SWE, whilst remaining state-funded and subject to state regulations.

The passage of SWE into the public domain has not been without its problems and critics. In Australia and New Zealand, issues have arisen around esotericism, religiosity and racism. The Steiner-stream in Footscray Primary School was a lodestone for these issues within five years after its establishment in 2001, culminating in its closure in 2011. In New Zealand, in 2014, allegations of racism were raised by parents in the Te Ra school, which attracted local and national media interest (Woulfe, 2014). Although such allegations are typically rejected by Steiner insiders, this commonplace claim often gains traction because of languaging issues. There are also moral and epistemological dimensions to this issue that demand further critical consideration.

The very notion of the transferability of SW pedagogy and curriculum, indeed the operational features of a SW school, into the public domain raises questions around the *core* beliefs of SWE. The first experiment in the transfer of SW practices into the public domain was the UWS in Milwaukee. The school was founded in 1991. It is a "Waldorf-inspired" school, though neither a Charter school, nor a private Waldorf school. In fact, it is one of a kind: a public Waldorf school, which is fully funded by the state. Unlike private Waldorf schools, however, the Milwaukee school has a predominantly African American student (98-99%) and staff (50%) population (Oberman, 1998).[51] It is now the largest "Waldorf" school in the US. The school has been the subject of several academic studies (F. Easton, 1997; Terranova, 2013)[52] and is also mentioned in both Oberman's (1998) and Sagarin's (2004) dissertations. It is presented as testimony that the SW educational method can work in a public-school setting, with a few modifications. In his book, *The Story of*

---

[50] These are SWS that operate as separate streams within the campus of a State school. Stream schools are run by State-appointed principals and fully funded by the government. Today nine are listed on the SEA website as 'associate members' of the Association.

[51] This socio-cultural snapshot provides a telling counterpoint to the situation in Australia, where despite sixty years since their founding in Australia, SWSs are poorly attended by indigenous children (Gentle, 2001).

[52] Curiously, there is by comparison a dearth of academic or empirical studies on SWE in Australia, including State-sponsored Steiner-streams.

Waldorf Education in the United States, Sagarin (2011) refers to the Milwaukee school as well as the numerous Charter schools as representative of a fourth wave of change in the US SW movement, the "Variations".[53]

Since the introduction and institution of the first public Waldorf school in 1991, the UWS in Milwaukee, there has been division within the SW movement about the feasibility and desirability of SW schools in the public sphere. Douglas Sloan (as cited in, Oberman, 2008, v) called the inauguration of the Milwaukee school, "the most radical and the most controversial" change taken in the SW movement. Oberman echoes this view, arguing that "the endurance of the Waldorf reform poses a challenge to scholars of educational change" (p. 2). According to Wood (1996), late in 1995, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWNSA) decided to no longer support further public Waldorf schools. A curiosity of this timing was that UWS became the only public school to retain the designation "Waldorf". Other public Waldorf or Charter schools were legally constrained from using that label and instead have had to content themselves with "Waldorf inspired" or "Waldorf methods" schools.[54] Nonetheless, this decision was "heartbreaking for the Urban Waldorf" (Wood, 1996, p. 156) school. It contributed to the categorical separation that still stands to this day. For example, the annual Waldorf World List (2017) does not include public SWSs. Moreover, Steiner-streams schools in Australia are not full but "associate members" (SEA website). This is a telling omission that helps to maintain a palpable tension between acceptance and rejection. Interestingly, Wood (1996) asks, "To what degree is adaptation and innovation a threat to educational quality" (p. 157)?

The Milwaukee School represents a significant milestone in the development of SWE in the US and perhaps also throughout the globe. Oberman (1998) compared the establishment of the Milwaukee School to the momentous event in 1919 when the first SWS opened its doors in the Waldorf Astoria tobacco factory. In fact, the Milwaukee School became the focal point for those educators who were seeking to situate SWE in the context of mainstream USA. It also served as a beacon for developing SWSs around the world. The focus shifted, as it did in 1919, to an industrial

---

[53] Contrary to Oberman who suggested three stages of historical development in the US Waldorf movement (purity, accommodation and evolution), Sagarin posits a fourth movement, apart from 'the Europeans', 'the Americans', and 'the Alternatives'. Rightly, Sagarin is critical of Oberman's Steiner-centric language which duplicates the 'inward-gazing quality of the schools' (2004, p. 3).

[54] Until this year, non-private SWSs could not be labelled *Waldorf* or *Steiner* schools, rubrics that were legally registered by the Association for Waldorf Schools in North America AWSNA), the peak body for private SWSs in the United States. However, as a result of an agreement between the Alliance for Public Waldorf Association and AWSNA, the label 'Public Waldorf;' can now be used by public schools that practise SWE methods (Burkam, 2018).

locality and population. Five years after its founding, the Afro-American headmistress[55] of the UWS gave a speech in Sacramento where another Waldorf Public school was being established. She made no mention of “anthroposophy” or “Stuttgart” but instead spoke about the “coherence of it all [referring to SWE]” (p. 258). A shift was in evidence as teachers at new established Waldorf Public schools referred to UWS in Milwaukee as the “model” they drew inspiration from (p. 261). There are now over 50 public or Charter schools in the US using some form of SW methods as their core educational mission (AFPWA, 2015).

According to Oberman (1998), the spread of Public Waldorf schools[56] placed a pressure on private SW educators to differentiate between the type of education that they practised and what they saw as the compromise taking shape in the “Waldorf-inspired” schools in the public sector. In her words, “the dialogue has erupted and fierce fencing in dispute has followed” (p. 261). Interestingly, this change has brought about criticism from both *within* the SW movement and from *outside* the movement, typically from ex-parents and ex-teachers. Prominent amongst external critics is Dan Dugan, who founded People for Legal and Non-Sectarian Schools (PLANS), arguing that SWE is a “cult-like religious sect” (Dugan, as cited in Oberman, 1998, p. 261), and as such contrary to the American Constitution which sets out the separation of State and Church agency. A similar argument has been advanced in Australia, in response to the insertion of Steiner-stream schools into existing mainstream school campuses in Victoria, South Australia and, recently, Queensland (Lans, Chidlow, & Menzies, 2008; Topfield, 2011).

Oberman (1998) identifies three principal “lobbies” (p. 262) within the SW community relating to the debate around the degree of fidelity maintained in the SW system: the *purists* (p. 263), the *accommodationists* (p. 263), and the *evolutionists* (p. 264). In brief, the purists rely on an elusive apprehension of “Steiner’s original intent” (p. 263). In the case of Lamb (1994, 2012, 2015), the critical issue is the independence of the SWS, which hinges on its detachment from government funding. The accommodationists “are committed to reaching all students and their teachers with Waldorf’s pedagogical meetings, and quite willing to minimize and even side-step mention of Steiner and Anthroposophy to do so” (Oberman, 1998, p. 263). Their energetic focus is on relanguaging “insights from 1919” (p. 263) that can bridge the needs and concerns of SW educators working in the

---

[55] Dorothy St. Charles was ‘an African-American educator and experienced district principal with a deep knowledge of the community and district and *without any prior knowledge of Waldorf education*’ (Oberman, 1998, p. 255). Nonetheless, she recognised that this type of education was ‘the integration of everything’ and it was therefore ‘practical and effective’ (p. 255).

[56] See footnote 54.

public-school system. A spirit of collaboration and diversity seems to inhabit this approach. The final group, committed to *evolutionism*, distinguishes between the "timeless" and the "time-bound" Steiner. A key reason for keeping private and public Waldorf apart has been the insistence by some figures that what is transacted as SWE in the classroom is based on anthroposophy.

According to some European critics of the public SW movement, the latter schools are as Zander (2013) has labelled them, "'Waldorf light'… a cocktail of progressive content, self-determined learning and holistic methods – with head, heart and hand, but without any objectivistic aspiration to scientific status and without theosophical occultism" (p. 144). There is a widespread concern that without a commitment to anthroposophy, that is, where the teachers do not work "out of anthroposophy," the heart and core of the educational philosophy disappears. However, it is curious to observe, for example, that in studies addressing this very issue, it is reported that only 54% of teachers considered it essential that the teacher "works out of anthroposophy" (Mazzone, 1999, p. 324). Despite this, Oberman (1998) concludes that "the jury is out on Waldorf's ability and willingness to reach into the public-school system and retain its identity" (p. 265).

More recently, Lamb (2015) has provided an astute critique of the tension between the private Waldorf and the public Waldorf school movement. He gives an honest appraisal of some of the losses borne by a public Waldorf system. For example, it is a watered-down version of the SW curriculum. In addition, the SW teacher is tempted into trading better employment conditions for the added stress of standardised testing and other governmental pressures. On the other hand, the focus on social inclusivity is admirable. Public Waldorf schools generally serve minorities or disenfranchised sectors of American Society. However, according to Lamb, the charter school movement is part of a larger project, generated and driven by powerful interest groups that are also responsible for the multiple crises that humanity is now facing, namely financial, environmental and political. In Lamb's view, the larger issue is "to create forums… to develop a new imagination and to work together to develop alternatives" (p. 55).

2.4 The Shift at the Turn of the Century: A Reflexive Turn in SWE

Some commentators (Gidley, 2008c; Randoll & Peters, 2015; Ullrich, 2014) have signalled that an important shift occurred in SWE and anthroposophy in the last decade of the 20th century and the first two decades of the new millennium. Moreover, this shift is multiperspectival (it concerns different aspects of SWE and anthroposophy) and reciprocal (it involves both centripetal and centrifugal influences). It approaches the Steiner movement from at least two directions; and it reciprocates the trajectory of change issuing from the outside world. This is particularly evident in

the public-school system in the US, as I have shown above (p. 57ff), but evidence can also be garnered elsewhere, including in other English-speaking countries.

To begin with, the shift has renewed an interest, from outside the movement (Ullrich, 2014), in SWE as a mode of education potentially offering benefits to the state funded system of education. From the outset, the Stuttgart Waldorf school was cast in a favourable light by a school inspector from Wurttemberg, who published a 7-page report on the school in the Wurttemberg Teachers' Journal of October 1926:

> I am also optimistically hopeful that ...very many teachers will at least feel the wish to get to know the Waldorf School through a lively personal association with it and will want to form intimate links with this interesting school which has developed so promisingly in such a short time and which fascinates anyone who has once felt its lively pulse. One criterium that demonstrates the value and quality of a thing is, as we know, whether we in our turn improve personally and become more capable professionally through concerning ourselves with it. From this point of view, I am all too sorry that I did not sooner have the good fortune of getting to know the Waldorf School both in the way it is run and in its psychological and educational foundations.
>
> I now feel able to say that my occupation with the Waldorf School has produced a valuable result in me in that ... I have taken a considerable step forward in coming closer to the spirit of the new state curriculum of Württemberg. For a 60-year-old, non-anthroposophical education official who is not involved in the Waldorf School, and whose orientation regarding teaching and method is in many respects different from that of its teachers, to make such a confession shows that he regards the Waldorf School and its ongoing development as being worthy of loving interest and concern on the part of the school authorities (Werner & Plato, 2001, np).

Ullrich (2008/2014) describes another unlikely source of interest, namely a report on SWSs to the Nazi administration in 1937, produced by a Berlin professor, Aldred Baeumler, a Nazi ideologue. Baeumler praised SWE as "the first fully fledged non-intellectualised educational system." He referred to them as "Goethe schools" and argued that the development of state schools based on the SW model ought to be "considered" (as cited in Ullrich, 2008/2014, p. 156). This interest in SWE goes some way to accounting for the weak opposition initially presented by the Nazi regime against SW schools. However, the spiritual and individualistic impulses of SWE were eventually seen as counter to the Nazi ethos of state loyalty and compliance, leading to the eventual closure of all SWSs in Nazi Germany by 1941, although some had shut down as early as 1936 (Oberman, 2008, p. 106).[57]

[57] The relationship between anthroposophy and Nazism has been controversially explored by Peter Staudenmaier (2010). Such 'relationships' poignantly highlight the exposure of the SW movement to potentially devastating, if not politically

Nonetheless, after the war, in parallel with the growth of SWE in Germany, scholarly interest developed in the practice of SWE,[58] whilst retaining a sharp scepticism towards its underpinning philosophy. Heinz Kloss, a SW sympathiser, conducted a study in 1955 to investigate the incorporation of SW methods into the West German state system. Some of the virtues he regarded were the "pedagogy of a world horizon" (Ulrich, 2004/2014, p. 158) and its "Goethean world view" (p. 159). Helmut Schrey, in 1968, found three aspects worthy of incorporation into the state system: the class teacher-pupil relationship, organisation of subject content, and the graduated nature of the instructional guidance. However, he regarded the underpinning philosophy as "dubious" (p. 159). In 1955, Siegfried Oppolzer produced a dissertation, the first academic work to deal with Steiner's philosophy in the context of the history of ideas. He left aside the question of credibility of anthroposophy as science, and instead focussed on the relationship between philosophy and educational praxis of SWE. Oppolzer's curious conclusion was that Steiner had failed to offer anything new or original to the history of education.

This set up a recurring pattern in academic research into SWE: praise for the praxis; disregard for the theory. One critical study, by Klaus Prange, sought to "unmask" SWE as a systematic "anthroposophical indoctrination" (as cited in Ullrich, 2008/2014, p. 163).[59] One of Prange's more provocative conclusions is the statement that "the Waldorf school imbues its pupils with an anthroposophical outlook which is all the more lasting in that it is not taught directly and in any controllable way but rather more or less instilled" (p. 164).

Naturally, this is not an appreciative judgment. Quite the contrary, Ullrich (2008/2014) views these comments as further testimony to the imputed "deception tactics [of] Waldorf pedagogues" (p. 164). Yet, it is a mystery that despite his antagonism towards the philosophical basis of SWE, Prange, nonetheless, praised its "traditional" pedagogical forms, which he felt were absent in the contemporary educational values of the prevailing system and which contained "forgotten truths" whose loss came with dire consequences. These included: the uses of mimesis in early childhood, the cultivation of the senses and aesthetics, the respect for history and development in the

undermining criticism. This is in evidence, for example, in the ongoing battle between PLANS and the two associations of private and public Waldorf schools in the US, as well as the tensions in Britain and Australia over the public presence of SWE and anthroposophy in the Academy schools and stream schools respectively.

[58] Commentators have noted that certain northern European public educational systems bear striking resemblance to SWE practices, for example in Finland and Denmark. Finland is enigmatic: it does not allow independent private schools and yet there are several SW schools in that country.

[59] Interestingly, this is an issue that is touched on in Uhrmacher's doctoral study (1991) as well as finds resonance in the autobiographical writings of Gregoire Perra (Perra, 2011, 2014a, 2014b), French SW graduate, ex-SW teacher and formerly senior figure in the administration of SWE and anthroposophy in France.

curriculum, as well as collegial responsibility for the educational work. According to Ullrich (2008/2014), this contradiction expresses the consistent view of many educational scholars in relation to SWE and anthroposophy. Prange's ambivalence towards SWE reinforces the powerful tension that has underpinned much research into Steiner's system of education: a widespread embrace of praxis, amidst a forceful rejection of his theory.

The shift or turn in SWE at the turn of the last century can be broadly contextualised in the light of growing concerns in Western countries over the need to renew or reform the prevailing educational system. This has intensified the search for alternatives to the current practices that define the educational system in the West. "Education faces challenges that are without precedent" (K. Robinson, 1999, p. 5). These challenges are widely recognised as stemming from the unprecedented rate of change as well as the alarming risks now facing humanity's future. Education is seen, almost universally, as that field of activity ultimately bearing responsibility for humanity's long-term response to these challenges, indeed as "the primary vehicle of cultural transformation" (R. Miller, 2008, p. 14). Sir Ken Robinson, a prominent voice in the ongoing debate about the future of education, has been a strong advocate of a more balanced approach to education, in which the arts, creativity and imagination are given equal measure of attention to the traditional subjects. The strong emphasis on aesthetic education in SWE is now widely recognised (F. Easton, 1997; Goral, 2009; Simon, 2011). In the view of some commentators, the principal challenge to education transcends the development of high-level skills to meet the employment requirements of future globalised citizens. Instead it should be to target the kinds of skills that can address questions such as "what does it mean to be human, what kind of future [do] we want for the human race" (Abbott, 1997, p. 9)? Hargreaves (2010) argues that "the 21st century skills agenda will do best if it learns from the reforms that came before it and those *that exist in systems elsewhere in the world*" [my emphasis] (p. 345). Kemmis (2013) proposes that a "twenty first century education" must "foster dialogue" and must be founded on "recognition and respect between people with different views, of different ages and backgrounds (p. 22)".

However, it is important to recognise that concerns about the direction of educational futures, and indeed, recognition of its potent latency as a social force for change is not an exclusively current phenomenon. We have seen above, SWE was itself a child of the turn of the century, one hundred years ago. As Noddings and Lees (2016) said, we must "rethink" education, a task that "is happening slowly" (p. 4). The development of rethinking SWE and its slowly unfolding renewal can be traced in the generation of new research over several decades.

2.4.1 A wealth of academic research into SWE.

As we have seen above (p. 60ff), the opening of the first public Waldorf school – the UWS in Milwaukee – stimulated a number of key academic studies to emerge, investigating the pros and cons of SWE, with a view to assessing its viability for incorporation into the public system. The "discovery" of SWE was akin to a revelation in the future of education (Oppenheimer, 1999; MacDermott, as cited in Prager, 2004). The guiding question underpinning much of the research on SWE was: How can the public educational system benefit from SWE? Examples in this category include the following dissertations and empirical studies: Uhrmacher (1991), Carroll (1992), Easton (1995), Wood (1996), McDermott et al. (1996), and Prager (2004).

Uhrmacher (1991) engaged in a critical study of SWE in the US, as an interested outsider. His analysis is refreshing, highlighting a series of "slippages" (or what I call, "dissonances") and "tensions" in SW praxis. A crucial example of the former is the administration of the school. A significant part of Uhrmacher's brief was to investigate the possible consequences of SWE for public schools. Uhrmacher notes that "much of Waldorf literature lacks a critical distance that would be necessary to persuade the mainstream scholarly community of the merits of Waldorf education" (p. 11). Despite some of the apparent attractions of the College system in SWSs, like other researchers (Richards, 2005; Wagstaff, 2003), he cautions against the corrosive force of a loss of trust in SW organisations, citing the example of a school that closed primarily for this reason, according to the testimony of one of his respondents (p. 252).

In other respects also, Uhrmacher's study is prevenient, highlighting critical issues that have only been acknowledged by other researchers much later. For example, he notes the modesty with which the Steiner impulse to renew social life through education was undertaken. The opening extract from Steiner is instructive: "The principles of Waldorf School education are in no sense revolutionary. In Waldorf School education there is full recognition of all that is great and worthy of esteem in the brilliant achievements of educationists of all countries during the nineteenth century" (Steiner, 1961/2004, p. 18) Further, he quotes Steiner's address to the original teachers, affirming that "we are [not] so vain or proud as to imagine that we, of ourselves, should initiate a new worldwide order in education" (Steiner, 1992/1996, p. 30). What is distinctive in SWE is the realisation that there is a transformative imperative that can be linked to the *zeitgeist* of the epoch (Steiner, 1919/1996).

Uhrmacher (1991) also tackles the issue of the influence of anthroposophy in the SWS, suggesting that its symbolic and imaginative presence is palpable in the SW classroom, and therefore

"to suggest anthroposophy does not enter into the classroom is not entirely accurate" (p. 255). Uhrmacher exposes but does not further develop the inconsistent meaning and understanding attached to the term "anthroposophy". There is much to commend about his thesis, even now, some 28 years later.

Like Uhrmacher, Carroll (1992) conducted research into SWE with a view to investigating its practical application to the public education system. Although largely appreciative, Carroll's analysis highlights interesting original and critical observations. For example, he likens SW educators to fundamentalist Christian teachers, in the sense that their concept of mission or purpose "flows" from the core spiritual beliefs (p. 294). Carroll is critical of SWSs that are "too exclusive", that is that cater primarily for "an ideal group of children" (p. 297), whose parents have specifically chosen SWE, in contrast to public school parents who rely on local, mainstream schools that are largely determined by their social, ethnic and economic milieu. Carroll is sanguine about SW educators integrating into the state system, arguing that they "would improve the educational experience of children in public schools" (p. 300). He also suggests that achieving an understanding of anthroposophy is not necessary for parents to participate in this type of schooling but interestingly finds that there is confusion even amongst SW educators about the nature of anthroposophy (p. 300). Carroll's study is an insightful and typically positive examination of the nature of SW educators. This study amplifies the quality of critical research undertaken in the US into SWE in both private and public settings.

Freda Easton's (1995) doctoral study on SWE is perhaps one of the first to review "constructive postmodern social theory" (p. 15) in its examination of SW theory and praxis. Her study is firmly embedded in the perception that "the current educational crisis is rooted in a cultural crisis" (p. 15) which, moreover, was connected to a broad epistemic shift evident throughout the twentieth century towards the overcoming of materialistic thinking. Against this backdrop of concerns, she raises the research question: "What is the image of the human being we seek to educate" (p. 2)? Like her predecessors and many of her successors, Easton found that SWE promises a positive solution to the problems besetting modern Western societies. In addition, like her peers she also found areas of dissatisfaction or controversy. For example, she found that there was an inadequate level of attention focussed on sports and physical development. Another area of concern was the continuation of the main lesson teacher or Class Teacher through the eight primary grades. She found that there were instances where the intended benefits did not accrue to the class. Teachers and students, in particular, were vocal about promoting alternative sequences, such as 1-4 or 1-6 (p. 339). As we shall see below (p. 81ff), some German research also challenges the

transitioning between primary and secondary schooling. Moreover, Easton was concerned about the integration of teaching and administrative roles amongst SW educators. She noted that the three sample schools that she investigated were all exploring alternative options of administration. Further, Easton raises issues around the languaging and design of the curriculum by considering the racial and ethnic diversity of public Waldorf schools in particular (pp. 340-341). However, she also reads signs that the schools' leadership is open to examining these problems, which are also problems pertaining to the mainstream (p. 341).

Easton (1995) highlights "differences in interpretation of Steiner's philosophy and the relationship of Waldorf educators to anthroposophy" (pp 342-343). There appears to be a promising dialogue in development between an orthodox cohort of teachers who espouse working "from the anthroposophic tradition" and other educators "from the wider educational community" providing the possibility of a richer discourse that "can broaden the perspective of all teachers" (p. 343). Despite aspirations towards building SWSs as communities (F. Easton, 1995, p. 344; McAlice, 2003; Schaefer, 2012; Stehlik, 2002, 2003), there are complex reasons why some members of the school community feel that the school "falls short of achieving its aim to create a supportive community" (F. Easton, 1995, p. 344). Another offshoot of this problem is the considerable amount of criticism around parent participation. However, Easton's own personal experience has been positive, namely that parental involvement "promotes the personal development of both teachers and parents and increases their commitment to the school in ways that strengthen a culture of learning in the whole school community" (F. Easton, 1995, pp. 346-347; T. Stehlik, 2002, 2003). As a contributing researcher in the McDermott et al. (1996) study, Easton (1995) confirmed the positive gains made at the UWS from inception of modified SW pedagogy. These gains also reflect the "reinventing [of] the Waldorf model" by teachers at the school, in response to the students' specific inner-city needs. Easton concluded that "Waldorf educators are and need to be in a constant process of re-examining and renewing their vision of what it means to educate towards freedom in a pluralistic society in which there are multiple communities, multiple perspectives and competing claims" (pp. 356-357). Easton is optimistic that SWE can make a fundamental contribution "to the larger educational dialogue" in the US and beyond (p. 359).

Both Wood's (1996) thesis and McDermott's et al. (1996) report focus their attention on issues of race and culture. They engage in robust interrogations with the praxis of the first public SWS, situated as it is in an inner-city environment rife with racism, disadvantage, crime and poverty. Wood seizes on the language that inspired the founders of the UWS, namely SWE as a "healing"

education,[60] echoing the contextual similarity between the "war zones" in contemporary inner cities and the devastated urban landscapes in Germany following the First World War in 1918. The primary question of his doctoral study was to examine the notion of cultural continuity as the determining factor in the effectiveness of the SW educational model (p. 149). Wood finds that SWE does indeed provide this, but cautions against orthodox tendencies in the conservative elements of SWE. For example, he singles out the curriculum as potentially providing opportunities if allowed to undergo innovation and adaptation to counter racism and the cultural hegemony under which large minorities such as African Americans live.

Similarly, McDermott et al. (1996) consider the curriculum as the potential vehicle for liberation and emancipation in a social-political environment that is likened to an "American apartheid" (Massey and Denton, as cited in McDermott et al., 1996, p. 133). The authors posit that SWE "may be a good antidote to the competitive extremes of American elementary education" (p. 135). However, they stress that a successful incorporation of SWE into the inner-city educational culture depends equally on its capacity to "live in confrontation with the wider dilemmas of the wider culture" (p. 135), and it "must be willing to engage the problem [of racism] again and again for the good of children everywhere" (p. 138). The authors cite Steiner's statement that "the Waldorf idea was born from the social reality of the times" (Steiner, as cited in McDermott et al., 1996, p. 133) to confirm that in changed times the Waldorf idea "must adapt" (p. 133).

Interest in SWE grew in the new millenium, as individuals, communities and even national governments in Anglophone countries looked to radically rethink the form of education in their respective provenances. In the US, research into SWE continued apace, focussing on empirical studies that examined the value and outcomes of SWE, both in private and public domains. Some of the research under the category of evaluative and appreciative studies includes:

i. Oppenheimer's (1999) popular survey of SWE in a public setting, "Schooling the Imagination" for the periodical, *The Atlantic*.

ii. Prager's (2001) doctoral dissertation, which applies a case study approach to the integration of the SW method to an inner-city public school. She argues that by providing a caring environment, and an arts-based and spiritual curriculum, the SWE can offer powerful solutions to the "crisis in urban education" (p. 1ff).

[60] Oberman writes that the Board Members of the Milwaukee school were 'attracted by "the healing language" of reform' (1998, p. 254).

iii. Uhrmacher's (2004) examination of the concept of environment in a SW context, which encompasses both cosmic and earthly contexts. Additionally, Uhrmacher points out the importance of the broader aesthetic conception in SWE, which includes the architecture of the SWS.

iv. Oberman (2007) reports on a large study of private Waldorf and "Waldorf-methods" (or public Waldorf schools), in which she argues that the "new 3 Rs," namely "rigour, relevance and relationship" animate SW pedagogy and promote successful outcomes in state-sponsored test measures, as well as internal measures, such as student satisfaction and personal growth. She opines that "a shift has happened in the research community," generating considerable interest in SWE (p. 2). Oberman investigated the basis on which free access to Waldorf-inspired schools might benefit "the traditionally underserved" in American communities, that is children in poorer, marginalised communities. This "grand experiment for democracy" (p. 31), namely the introduction of Waldorf methods into public education, is as Goral (2009) states, "one of the best kept secrets in North America" (p. 1) and ought not become a "missed opportunity" (Oberman, 2007, p. 31).

v. Reece (2007) doctoral study to investigate the efficacy of SW pedagogy applied to a secondary school for at risk individuals. Her conclusions found that students' self-efficacy and engagement in learning improved.

A number of other studies have investigated the benefits of SW in the public, as well as the private sphere. For example, Dahlin, Anderson & Langerman (2005) and Schieffer & Busse (2001) explored the academic gains in private schools. Babineaux (1999) and Oberman (2007) have done the same in the public Waldorf schools. Rowlands & Cox (2001) focussed on the development of high level creativity skills; whilst Dahlin et al. (2005) and Hether (2007) examined the relationship of SWE to the development of moral reasoning.

In addition to these studies, there is a growing body of research that probes more deeply into the nature of SWE and the esoteric dimensions of its philosophy. Some of this research is described here.

i. Riccio (2000) investigated in his doctoral study, the extent to which SWE, as it finds expression in SW educational literature and theory, "reflect[s] the pedagogical theory, method of thinking, and purpose of its founder, Rudolf Steiner" (p. 2). Describing what he terms Steiner's "organic method of thinking," Riccio argues that the present form of SWE "is only a compromised approximation of Rudolf Steiner's intentions" (p. 2). Riccio's

thesis is that a basic misunderstanding stands at the root of SWE: "the greatest damage is done to the Waldorf school when people think that they can acquire a set of precepts in a teacher training institute, and simply become an educational fix-it man" (p. 102). Instead, Riccio argues that "the teacher should teach out of an ideal" (p. 102). He cautions against becoming "spellbound in the 2,000 pages of educational suggestions Steiner gave" (p. 102). Riccio's emphasis on Steiner's "morphological thinking" (p. 105) is echoed by Kiersch's (2010) groundbreaking essay on "a new hermeneutic approach" to understanding Steiner's educational esotericism, which is discussed below (p. 94ff) in more detail. Despite his enthusiasm for a deeper connecting with Steiner's esotericism, it is worth noting that Riccio is sceptical of incorporating SW pedagogical principles into non-SW settings (2000, pp. 106-111).

ii. Jelinek and Sun (2003) undertook a study of science education in SWSs in the US out of the "strong need for empirical evaluation of Waldorf education" (p. ii). The title of the report poses the question, "Does Waldorf offer a viable form of Science Education?" The research findings challenge the notion of a SW science curriculum. Exploring these findings and their implications goes beyond the scope of this study. However, it is worth signalling that key issues raised by the authors concern the relationship between SWE and anthroposophy, and indirectly, the nature of anthroposophy itself, something that they could have further explored. The authors concluded that "as a first step Waldorf should disregard Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy as the source of accurate scientific concepts" (p. 63). The study is perhaps indicative of the kind of research into SWE that is much needed. It is critical in the sense that it makes important distinctions between aspects of SWE that produce effective learning (in mainstream terms) and those that are inclined to lead to erroneous or undisciplined thinking. In effect, it attempts to gauge the scientific credibility of science teaching within a SW context. It also challenges the notion that SWE and anthroposophy are inseparable (pp. 63-64).

iii. Whedon's (2007) doctoral dissertation on SWE examines the esoteric foundations of some of its key concepts employing a postmodern perspective. She explores the SW construction of key ideas such as childhood, motherhood and nature. Whedon challenges the idea of protecting children (p. 69), arguing that "overprotection" is a common complaint by parents (or students). She raises important questions about student agency, and also disputes the idea that childhood is a time of arationality (p. 72). The complementary issues of secrecy and power are also examined. Whedon argues a

strong case for the re-examination of the construction of childhood in SW praxis, particularly as it is recognised that the transition to late adolescence is typically problematic in SWSs (Graudenz, Peters, & Randoll, 2013; Randoll & Peters, 2015; Woods et al. 2005).

iv. Mary Goral's[61] (2009) adaptive presentation of SWE is oriented towards the so-called "Waldorf cadre," or teachers interested in SWE but working in the public mainstream system. As a mainstream teacher for eleven years, Goral stepped into her first SWS, describing the experience as "I knew I had come home" (p. ix). She was convinced that "all children deserved to be taught this way" (p. x) and that the use of SW teaching methods could renew public education in the US. She felt that it was incumbent upon SW educators to promote an understanding of SWE, so that its ideas and principles could gain a wider recognition and acceptance. Her motivation for writing *Transformational Teaching* was to help willing mainstream teachers to adapt to the so-called Waldorf-inspired methods.

v. Larrison, Daly & Van Vooren (2012) reported on the efficacy of SWE in the public education sector, arguing that public Waldorf is a "reliable and valid" (p. 16) approach that ought to be encouraged for further growth. It offers a holistic experience for its students and ensures academic success in K-8 primary level education. Furthermore, the authors contend that SWE is supported by recent developments in neuroscience, specifically the use of music and arts-based learning, not only as a means of enrichment, but as a means of "building cortical circuits" (p. 17). Larrison and Daly (2011) and Larrison (2013) have further explored the consonance between *mind brain education* and SWE.

vi. Caldarera (2013) explored in her doctoral dissertation, the role of morality in education, with a specific focus on SWE. Referring to Gardner (2008), she argues that character is more important than excellence. She sees SWE as future-oriented, affirming that it is a 21st century education with its emphasis on creativity, collaboration and moral education (p. 61). Caldarera recognises that SWE can be "too tied to its 20th century roots and not connected to the currents of the time" (p. 60). Nevertheless, she affirms that the "time for Waldorf education is now" (p .63).

[61] Under a former name, Mary Sturbaum, Goral conducted a doctoral study, "Transformational Possibilities of Schooling: A Study of Waldorf Education" (1997).

vii. Munoz (2016) attempted, in his doctoral thesis, to integrate SWE, indigenous epistemologies and critical pedagogy. He presents a highly adaptive view of SW principles, showing how anthroposophy overlaps with indigenous epistemologies and spiritualities. Unlike many authors and researchers, Munoz is unconcerned by divergences or differences, for example, in the interpretation of anthroposophy. Rather he adopts a pragmatic approach and sees anthroposophy as a “shamanic” world view, in harmony with North American cosmologies. His ethnographic account shows how SW principles can be applied in diverse contexts including tertiary education with indigenous students. Munoz’s narrative is an endorsement of the versality of SWE and its responsiveness to adaptation in different settings.

The plethora of important, largely critical academic and empirical studies conducted in the US in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century amplify Schieren’s remark, quoted below (p. 87), that the current century brings with it the critical task for anthroposophy (and by extension, SWE) to establish its validity and criticality. In addition to the voluminous American research cited above[62], there are selected studies from Britain, Australia and Germany that have also contributed to this task.

2.4.2 The Woods study.

Woods et al. (2005) conducted a comprehensive analysis of a large number of SW schools in Britain. The study built on protracted negotiations between the UK Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) about “the possible entry of Steiner schools into the maintained sector” (p. 14). The report was commissioned by the DfES as part of its feasibility inquiry into SWE and the Academy schools’ program.[63] The study was also aimed at investigating the potential benefits of sharing and integrating SW practices in mainstream schools, and vice versa. The report was based on mixed methods methodology, including a survey of 23 schools using structured interviews, as well as a survey of around 200 school leaders and teachers (p. 4). The study made recommendations about aspects of SWE and the SW schools administration that it considered worthy of further research or possible adoption by mainstream government

[62] The American research cited in the above section represents only a portion of what is available. For example, some of the more prolific authors, such as Uhrmacher or Oberman have produced dozens of papers on the subject of SWE, in both its private and public guises.

[63] There are currently four Steiner Academy Schools in England.

schools. At the same time, it found a number of issues of concern that could become obstacles to integration into the mainstream system.

The study established that research on SWE (up to the time of the study) had been largely unreliable because of small sampling and lack of rigour (pp. 4-5). With this proviso, a number of benefits were highlighted. These are summarised in Chapter One. Below I identify some of the critical remarks:

i. The issue of sharing and adopting practices across the two systems (SW and the maintained sector) is treated with caution. The authors identify some key concepts or "themes" that could serve as "bridges to facilitate dialogue and interaction," for example "rhythm, narrative and holistic education, relational consciousness and the capacity for spiritual awareness and distributed leadership" (p. 7).

ii. It is suggested that the SW sector could benefit from "mainstream management skills and ways of improving organisational and administrative efficiency" (p. 8). This would involve the development of "new skills and capacity for change in Steiner schools" (p. 12), in areas such as leadership, record keeping and accountability.

iii. Likewise, the researchers suggest that SWE could benefit from observing how the maintained sector works with older adolescents, as well as assessment and record keeping.

iv. The study promotes the development of opportunities for dialogue between sectors. However, this sharing needs to be supported by enhanced research practices within the SW sector in order to improve the evidence base and relative effectiveness of SW practices and transfer models for adoption by the maintained sector.

v. Furthermore, in order to develop potentially useful dialogue between the two sectors, it will be necessary "to enhance the capacity for self-critical review" (p. 11) in SWE, including broadening SW teachers' research base to encompass "developments in theory, research, policies and practices" (p. 11) in the mainstream sector.

vi. At the same time, SW schools could benefit from a better appreciation of mainstream classroom management practices. Within a dialogic framework these opportunities would arise to enhance capacities in both sectors to reciprocate innovative developments in classroom practice and pedagogy.

vii. The study also identifies issues concerning the certification of teachers' qualifications.

viii. Some of the challenges raised by SW teachers in respect of SWE entering the state sector include potential loss of the SW ethos, maintaining the integrity of the pedagogy, and sustaining the connection to Steiner's spiritual approach (p. 115). Other understandable concerns revolved around the loss of autonomy.

In addition, there are several emergent issues that could be dealt with more adequately:

i. The treatment of Steiner educational philosophy follows the conventional approach adopted by most insider authors, namely as a set of principles that can be translated into practice, with little or no interpretation required. The admirable intention to promote "an informed understanding of Steiner education and the educational philosophy," (p. 11) partly to improve levels of understanding among the public, including school parents, is similarly challenging. Indeed, Woods et al. (2005) are right in assuming that this is a necessary step in promoting effective dialogue. However, it poses a challenge to the SWE movement to undertake the required kind of intellectual and reflexive work. A further problem is signalled by the responses to the question, "What proportion of staff would call themselves anthroposophists?" (p. 93). The responses ranged between one-third to the entire faculty. What is meant by the term "anthroposophist" in each case is far from semantically determined. However, the larger issue is how does this self-identification or its absence translate into day-to-day engagement with teaching, collaborating and otherwise shaping the culture of the school. Or, to reframe the question, what are the ideological or attitudinal influences that shape the school ethos and its culture? In view of the problems posed by da Veiga (2014) and others below (p. 85ff), the relationship to anthroposophy acquires a larger presence than might appear to be the case.

The authors' understanding of anthroposophy and its relationship to SWE appears to be largely uncritical and most likely borrowed from the appreciative literature. Statements like "Steiner education is grounded in the principles of anthroposophy and Steiner's educational philosophy" or "Steiner schools are not faith schools" (p. 97) are made without any attention given to epistemological issues or any regard for counter-narratives. The problem of language is nowhere more recalcitrant than with regard to this fundamental relationship. The authors' apparent lack of awareness is at times puzzling.

ii. The collegial approach in SW schools is contrasted to the hierarchical system operational in "maintained schools" (p. 7). However, Woods et al. (2005) argue that the non-hierarchical approach in SWSs shares similarities with more recent "distributed and flexible styles of leadership" (p. 7). Another highly contested statement made by the authors is "the collegial

running of schools is an integral aspect of Steiner pedagogy" (p. 99). Furthermore, some of the perceived benefits may readily be deconstructed into shadowed shortcomings, for example, the notion of "ownership" collapses into *territoriality* and *exclusiveness*. It is chastening, for example, to contrast Woods et al.'s (2005) enthusiasm for the SW collegial establishment with Mazzone's (1999) finding that nearly 4 in 5 teachers felt that problems with running the college system was responsible for teacher stress and burnout. The authors' reading of the benefits of the collegial model may be difficult to sustain, in view of Kiersch's (2010) contention below (p. 94ff), as well as a deep contextual absence of reflexivity.

iii. Woods et al. (2005) maintain that "teachers' reflective awareness and heightened awareness" (p. 8) in SWSs could inform mainstream practice. This finding flies in the face of Rawson's (2014a) study of professional development in SW schools, which highlights the lack of genuine reflexivity as a large stumbling block towards renewal within the system. This has been established in the preceding section. Similarly, the approving nature of the authors' remarks concerning collegiate structures in SWE is puzzling, particularly since this is one of the most controversial and potentially dysfunctional aspects of SWE as identified by insider commentators, parents and outsider critics (for example, Randoll & Peters, 2015; Wagstaff, 2003).

Woods et al.'s (2005) study is instructive in its ability to inform constructive debate about the relevance of SWE in a contemporary educational discourse, identifying both potential benefits and challenges to entering a more conscious dialogic relationship with the mainstream sector. However, it is also indicative that its timing places it at the start of the emergence of a critical phase in the development of SWE. It is, itself, arguably a major contributor to this emergence. Notwithstanding, as I have shown, a number of key remarks concerning anthroposophy, the collegial form of management, and the issue of reflexivity in teachers' practice, in particular, highlight a lack of epistemological criticality that would not be accepted today.

2.4.3 Martyn Rawson.

It is worth mentioning the work of Rawson, currently a practising SW teacher, in Germany, who has for the last two decades continued to produce valuable research studies into developing aspects of SWE, most notably curriculum (Rawson, 2017; Rawson & Avison, 2014; Rawson, Masters, & Avison, 2013), professional development (Rawson, 2010, 2012, 2014a) and assessment (Rawson,

2005). Rawson and Richter (2013)[64] have updated the traditional curriculum manuals of Stockmeyer (Stockmeyer, 2015) and (Heydebrand, 1966), which for many decades after the establishment of the first SWS, were regarded as the lingua franca of the SW curriculum. More recently, Rawson (2017) has produced a set of "guidelines for developing a global Waldorf curriculum locally: a generative approach" (np). His distinctive approach is based on the belief that "being Waldorf is a state of *becoming*" (np) to which practising teachers make significant generative contributions. Rawson's reading of the so-called SW curriculum is based on dynamic pedagogical principles and acknowledges that SW pedagogy is not an exact science and therefore resists pedantry even where it arises from internal, "Steiner" sources (Rawson, 2014b, 2017).

2.4.4 Research in Australia and New Zealand.

Research into SWE in Australia, up to 2008, was catalogued in Gidley's (2008c) report to SEA. A survey of this research shows that it is largely appreciative, with selected critical commentary. In comparison to the output and criticality of research studies in the US, the work performed here in Australia is relatively indigent. In particular, although public Steiner-streams have been in existence since the early 1990s, around the same time that the Milwaukee school was established, I have been unable to locate any empirical study on this important and growing phenomenon. There has been, by contrast, a tendency to engage in historical studies (Bak, 2018; Mazzone, 2010; Mowday, 2004).

Two important fields of research that have been developed in Australia include adult education (Stehlik, 2002) and mindfulness in education (Burrows, 2014). Whilst these authors have written extensively in their fields, it is not known to what extent their innovative approaches have made headway in non-Steiner areas of academia, or indeed in SWSs. Similarly, Thomas Nielsen's (2004) dissertation, *Pedagogy of Imagination*, has provided important insights into the way in which the imagination serves SW pedagogy. Despite this innovative study, once again, there appears to be little evidence that this sort of work has been further developed by other researchers or educators in the SW field, at least in Australia.

The research and writing of Jennifer Gidley, a former SW teacher and school leader, is a poignant exception to this pattern. Her doctoral dissertation (2008b) is an outstanding example of a critical study whose primary purpose was to situate Steiner amongst ideologically similar thinkers, such as Wilber (1998) and Gebser (2005). Much of her research work has elaborated on this fundamental premise: "My lived experience of working creatively with Steiner education had

[64] Formerly Rawson & Richter (2000).

revealed both its educational power and the weakness of its isolationism, leading to my interest in creating conceptual bridges between Steiner and the academy" (Gidley, 2008c, p. 397). Her primary focus has been to situate Steiner philosophically within the integral movement and pedagogically within the evolutionary pedagogy movement, for example Aurobindo and Montessori (Marshak, 1997; Yonemura, 2015). It has, however, remained largely theoretical and has not addressed SW praxis directly, so far as I can tell. Nonetheless it is a valuable contribution to advancing the critical academic study of Steiner, a task that she foresaw in her dissertation. Apart from Gidley's broad philosophical, psychological and educational excursions into contemporary thought which are conceptually enriching, of practical value to SW educators is her alignment of kindred spirits in various pedagogical fields with characteristic aspects of SWE, such as artistic, futures, imaginative and spiritual education (2008c, p. 104).

Neil Boland, a New Zealand SW educator and academic, has made significant contributions towards the renewal of SWE in an increasingly globalised setting (Boland, 2015b, 2017a, 2017b). Recent articles highlight a primary focus on vivifying a topical and temporal approach to the interpretation of Steiner's primary educational concepts. Boland's work appears to have borne fruit in its uptake, for example at the Hononulu Waldorf School where an "an audit of time and place" (Hougham, 2012)[65] was conducted. Boland and Demirbag's (2017) dialogue on *re-inhabiting SWE* provides a case study of action research undertaken at this school with oversight from Boland, the academic researcher and educator and Demirbag, an administrator at the Hononulu School. Key findings from the research resonate strongly with anecdotal evidence on teachers' attitudes and perceptions of SWS cultures. For example, issues around SW's "self-referential" (Hougham) and "self-institutionalising" (Ulrich, 2008, p. 167) nature abound, in addition to the more common perceptions of Eurocentricity and Western cultural hegemonising in the curriculum. In particular, given the focus of *this* study, there emerges a powerful reinforcement of two messages: the necessity for robust and uncensored reflexivity in renewing SWE and the imperative of the *social* process of discoursing or dialogising this reflexivity (Shotter, 2008). Interestingly, despite the indication of the collected data, the latter appears to have been overlooked in Boland and Demirbag's (2017) conclusions.

It is interesting to compare Boland's remarks concerning the othering of colonised spaces and realities with Munoz's (2016) enthusiastic appropriation of SWE as an adaptive instrument used

[65] The phrase appears in Paul Houghman's recent book, and is attributed to Aengus Gordon, an interviewee in Hougham's study.

to enrich indigenous education across a range of modalities in South West US. One has the impression that the publification of SWE in the US has been engendered by a strong drive that has readily and pragmatically distinguished the “essential” from the “inessential” in SWE, thereby overcoming issues of cultural hegemony that have otherwise continued to vex other sites of transplantation. Nonetheless, the work of Boland and Rawson, for example, in asking difficult questions, as some American researchers have been doing for since the 1990s, points to an integral process in the renewal of SWE across the globe.

2.4.5 Recent German studies.

2.4.5.1 Graudenz, Peters and Randoll (2013).

The German study, “What is it like to be a Waldorf teacher?” breaks new ground in a range of areas of investigation into the professional experience of SW teachers. This large-scale mixed methods study surveyed just under 2,000 teachers in over 100 SW schools in Germany. Target areas of interest included “training, salary level, professional behaviour and challenges to the future.” In addition, the authors focussed on “critical points” that emerged in this study. This brief review will address these critical points, although there are many other issues which merit further investigation, especially here in the Australian context.

Some of the critical points that emerged in the study include:

i. The practice of participatory management in SW schools.

The findings in this German study echo the results of an earlier NZ study (Wagstaff, 2003) and an Australian study (Richards, 2005). Identified problems in this area include: inefficient decision-making processes, inadequate information flows, lack of open and transparent communication, and strong influencers of the “climate of opinion” (so-called “hidden headmasters”) (Graudenz, Peters, & Randoll, 2013, p. 109). There is also an alarming trend of small groups of teachers “opting” out of this participatory model, and not attending college or teachers’ meetings. This management form is also seen as time- and cost-intensive. In view of the financial constraints operating in German SW schools, this is hardly justifiable. The authors note that adoption of the “mandate system” has become increasingly more popular(D. Brull, 2013; Schaefer, 2009, 2012), although it is not free of problems (Wagstaff, 2003). Schaeffer (2009, 2012) has expanded on some of the problems associated with participatory form of management, which he nonetheless recognises as desirable and in consonance with Steiner’s intentions, in other words, they represent for Schaeffer, opportunities for personal and collective growth. However, there is a failure, within SW organisations, to “understand, value or support” (2012, p. 102) the notion of leadership, as well

as to gather the required social and administrative skills for effective self-governance. Schaeffer speculates that SW communities have not yet "developed a deeper understanding and commitment to being a service culture" (p. 102).

Other perceptions associated with this management system are the lack of evenness in distributing tasks and responsibilities and the lack of recognition or appreciation. Within a financial environment where SW teachers are paid below State teachers' wages, this is an undesirable status quo. Curiously, the teachers that most commonly reported a lack of appreciation are overrepresented in the artistic disciplines, including eurythmy. Given the emphasis in SWE on artistic education this finding is something of a riddle.

ii. The inadequate level of quality in teacher training at SW training institutions.

Teacher training is a particularly incendiary issue. Graudenz et al. (2013) argue that for a number of decades now "there has been a failure" to maintain currency in new "developments in educational research" (p. 109) and to incorporate this knowledge into practice (Paschen, 2014). Conversely, SW institutions have adopted the "opposite gesture" (Graudenz et al., 2013, p. 109) namely to separate more completely from academia and potentially bridge-building discourse (Mazzone, 1999). Further, these researchers contend that SWE barely evinces innovation or development, whilst at the same time, falling behind in gaining an augmented "repertoire" of pedagogical skills to match content knowledge. It is worth noting here that Graudenz et al.'s (2013) comments about teacher training parallel Schieren (2011) and da Veiga's (2014) advocacy of a more open attitude towards dissemination of Steiner's philosophy. It is also intimately related to the next point below, on the issue of recruiting teachers.

The issues of teacher stress and burn out were also investigated by the researchers, finding that nearly half of all SW teachers regard their job as a "source of strain upon their mental health" (see also House, 2001, as cited in Woods et al., 2005). This issue was signalled earlier in Mazzone (1999) where it was reported that 78% of SW teachers regarded the collegial system and participatory management as key contributors to teacher stress and burn out (p. 338).

iii. Ageing and recruitment of teachers

The recognition of anthroposophy as foundational in the work of the teacher is concentrated in the older group of teachers and diminishes with the group of younger teachers. Although there is a widespread acceptance or "buy into" of anthroposophy, as teachers retire this relationship is bound to change. Younger teachers are more likely to advocate or undertake a reform agenda, whilst older teachers tend to follow a traditionalist, conservative line, namely that all the knowledge

required to be a successful SW teacher resides in Steiner's archives. The ageing of the SW teacher population will have a dramatic impact: the authors found that over the next ten to fifteen years, "every second teacher will have to be replaced by a younger one" (Graudenz et al., 2013, p. 105). Considering the existing obstacles to recruiting young teachers, this will also become an "immense challenge" (p. 105).

iv. Further development and renewal of SWE

Perhaps the most critical issue researched is reflected in the following question asked: "In your opinion, what are the three greatest challenges facing Waldorf schools in the future" (p. 111)

The first four groups of responses (organised into thematic categories) were:

a. "further development, renewal of the body of anthroposophical thinking, rethink[ing] the spiritual 'anchorings'" 23.5%

b. "recruiting new teachers and students; improvement of the financing of schools and teachers" 21.9%

c. "Maintaining hold on the anthroposophical foundations" 19.7%

d. "Keeping abreast of new developments in childhood and youth; maintaining a workable relationship with parents; how to deal with media and media consumption" 13.6%

According to the authors, the first set of concerns sit with many respondents, who, they contend, "have a keen awareness that Waldorf education is in need of transformation." At the same time, they are also concerned about losing the "roots" or "foundations" as part of that process.[66]. Some of the responses recorded, such as "Steiner's thinking must be carried further," and "not set in tablets of stone," imply an imminent "debate on the renewal of Waldorf education" (p. 111).

In contrast to these developmental remarks, there is a slightly smaller group that advocated the holding on to tradition and loyalty to Rudolf Steiner's own words, not to mention the notion of practice based in that loyalty. This is the kind of devotion that easily lends a quasi-religious overtone to the reverence for Steiner and the inevitable allegation of cultic behaviour (Ahlback, 2008; Ashley, 2009). The report concludes with an extract from one of the founding teachers, von Heydebrand, who stated

> Rudolf Steiner did not want us just to take in what he said about the nature of the human being and his relationship to the world, learn it off by heart and then

[66] These concerns mesh with the wider one about the relationship between anthroposophy and SWE. These issues suggest further research and reflection.

> use it as a sort of instruction manual for what to do in the classroom. We were supposed to be – as he wished – free human beings and act out of our creative powers (as cited in Graudenz et al. 2013, p. 113).

A new phase is thus ushered in where SW teachers "face the challenge of rethinking, re-evaluating and re-interpreting the writings of Rudolf Steiner" (p. 113) something that is likely to work into the future.

2.4.5.2 Randoll, Graudenz & Peters (2014).

This study[67] was titled "The learner experience of the Waldorf teacher system – *an exploratory study*." The authors claim that the findings have, of themselves, generated important insights for the training and further training of class teachers' (p, 98). The theme of the class teacher period or cycle was recently the subject of the journal *Erziehungskunst* (The Art of Education) in 2014. The current debate traverses a number of interrelated issues. Predominantly however, it is focussed on the duration of the cycle, which typically has been 8 years in traditional SWSs. The authors ask: "Is [it] still [in keeping] with the times?" Some schools, we are told, have already relinquished the principle and adopted more flexible means such as splitting a class at the end of year 4 (student age 10); reducing the cycle to 5 or 6 years; or employed the "Bochum mobile classroom model" (p. 97).

Key findings of the study include:

i. Student approval of the 8-year cycle was 57%, whilst 37% considered the period too long.

ii. Class teachers fulfilled many positive roles for students, such as mentor, problem-solver, counsellor, confidante, as well as educator and helper.

iii. However, there were numerous pedagogical complaints (from Year 8 students) such as too much copying from the board (70%), wishing for more specialist teachers (70%), not covering the basics (67%), teacher-oriented learning (60%), lack of consequences for not doing homework (50%), lessons not relevant to the present (67%), lack of group work (80%), and lacking use of digital media (97%).

iv. Attitudes towards main lesson learning were generally positive, and 60% thought doing a main lesson book benefited their academic progress.

v. Readiness for high school was mixed (50%).

[67] Interestingly, the survey upon which the Randoll et al. study was based was commissioned by the regional student council of Hesse, a German state, that is, by an authority external to the SWS movement.

Other comments proffered by students included: “in the dark about your own level of achievement,” “wasting time on [artistic activities],” “feeling of learning nothing,” “babyish” or “lame [content in languages and science]”; “teachers out of their depth,” “no variation, everyday exactly the same”; “you don’t have any free space of your own for making decisions,” “too much about control,” “too intimate a relationship between pupils and teachers” (Randoll et al., 2014, pp. 115-116).

Some of the students’ recommendations included: bring in more qualified specialist teachers, shorten the class teacher period, more relevant choices of teaching topic, youth-related subjects such as sex education, more integration of new media, priority given to learning how to learn, more individual study, more independence and less control. Additionally, students commented that there should be some reforming of “old” Waldorf principles in line with reality and more extensive use of textbooks (p. 116).

Randoll, Graudenz, and Peters (2014) challenge the notion that Steiner’s words on the looping system necessarily “leave no room for doubt” (Zdrazil, 2013, p. 60). Students report feeling “over-protected” (Randoll et al., 2014, p. 117); their relationship towards the class teacher changes over the eight-year period from leader to facilitator (p. 117). An indicator of the difficulties students face in the transition to high school is found in the high proportion of Waldorf students requiring learning support (38%). The reliance of copying from the blackboard also raises serious concerns about the currency of some of Waldorf’s pedagogical methodology.

Another study by Randoll and Peters (2015) has corroborated research from these aforementioned studies and from other German empirical studies conducted in the new millennium. It also provides useful starting points for new lines of research. For example, the issue of rejection or lack of fit between teachers or students and school has not been adequately researched. There are also areas where substantial gaps are felt by alumni, such as social justice, political and historical education, and competitive sports. Further, there is a sense that students are overly protected even in senior high school. Given that some of these issues are also highlighted elsewhere (for example, Woods et al., 2005), a detailed and open study or group of studies would be warranted.

2.5 Reflection Vacuum

2.5.1 Marcelo da Veiga: The “reflection vacuum.”

The term, “reflection vacuum,” was coined by Marcelo da Veiga (2014, p. 147), in an article entitled, “A new paradigm in dealing with anthroposophy.” The purpose of da Veiga’s essay is to explain the curious phenomenon that a Catholic historian, Helmut Zander, has become the default

public expert to be consulted by the German media in the case of queries about anthroposophy, as well as Waldorf educational theory. Da Veiga's account of this apparent anomaly is straightforward. Since the death of Steiner, 20th century anthroposophy "has had a basic tendency to engender fear of intellectuality" (p. 147). Sardonically, da Veiga chastises anthroposophists for elevating their status on the basis of their "biographical or textual closeness to [Steiner]" rather than any "discursive analysis" which has tended to be frowned upon by the Steiner community as "abstract and unnecessarily fastidious" (p. 147). The reflection vacuum is an outgrowth of this "lack of constructive critical discourse" in anthroposophical circles (p. 147). Furthermore, argues da Veiga, the response from the academy has been "anthroposophobia", a reluctance to engage in serious dialogue with anthroposophy. He also explains that, whilst anthroposophical endeavours in the practical domain are generally regarded favourably, the cost of this approval is a disinterest in the underlying philosophy and its founder, Rudolf Steiner.

Earlier, da Veiga (2013) had added to the small chorus of anthroposophical writers (for example, Schieren, 2011) seeking to establish the "scientific credibility of anthroposophy" (p. 90), identifying that Steiner's approach to spiritual investigation differed from science by being "more concerned with direct experience, with achieving intuitive union with reality" (da Veiga, 2013, p. 129). Nonetheless, Steiner was himself adamant that any person could verify the validity of his spiritual insights through experimentation and critical appraisal, and moreover, be prepared to exercise a high level of reflexivity. Da Veiga offers a further insight, which is disarming in its self-evidence, and at the same time, poignantly critical of the laxness with which Steiner's pronouncements are repeated by insiders as though their veracity was guaranteed by his authority. Steiner's so-called "spiritual facts" (p. 129) are "hypothetical" in character and "fundamentally fallible" (p. 130). This fallibility is a reported feature in studies on intuition (R. Anderson & Braud, 2011; Bastick, 2003; Kahneman, 2011; Petitmengin-Peugeot, 1999; Sinclair & Ashkanasy, 2005). Hence, the "validity" rests unequivocally on "their relationship to the reality of which they speak" and certainly not "upon the authority of their author" (da Veiga, 2013, p. 130). Citing Steiner, da Veiga reinforces this simple but potentially far-reaching message: "it goes without saying that in certain cases the assertions of a so-called spiritual researcher could contain grave errors" (p. 130). As we can see from da Veiga, the aim of establishing an insider community of "constructive critical discourse" about Steiner's work, effectively translates into a fundamental step towards gaining greater academic acceptance for anthroposophy, thereby promoting its legitimacy as a reliable method of knowledge-generation in its own right (p. 130).

2.5.2 Jost Schieren: The scientific credibility of anthroposophy.

Jost Schieren goes so far as to claim that the relationship between anthroposophy and science is "the crucial issue confronting anthroposophy in the 21st century" (2011, p. 90). Anticipating da Veiga's earlier comment about practical acceptance, Schieren argues that the "cost" of leaving this task aside, namely validating anthroposophy as a scientific method, in what has been effectively the first century of existence of anthroposophy and SWE, is that spiritual science "continues to be regarded as an *obscure body of spiritual teaching*" (p. 90). Citing *Der Spiegel,*[68] Schieren tells us that "what people want… are *Waldorf Schools without Steiner"* (p. 90). Furthermore, he notes that this "sell-out" of the fundamental ethos has already affected some schools and other Steiner-based endeavours (Kiersch, 2001).

Schieren explains that the urgency of the task of establishing anthroposophy as a legitimate source of knowledge is substantiated by two observations. Firstly, changes in higher education, in Europe, referred to as the "Bologna Process" (European Higher Education Area, 2018), have permitted SW teacher training to be recognised in the European academy. However, the fate of anthroposophical teacher training centres has been mixed. For example, the certifying body in Germany, the *Wissensschaftrat* (or Science Council), granted ten years accreditation to the Alanus University[69] on the basis that the organisation is engaged with "the ongoing, discursive concern with the thinking and works of Rudolf Steiner in relation to art and science" (Wissenschaftrat, as cited in Schieren, 2011, p. 90). Another Steiner training organisation, the Mannheim Academy, had their accreditation refused on the basis that there was a perceived risk "in basing the work of a university-level institution on an extra-scientific theory of education involving methodology influenced by a particular worldview" (Wissenschaftrat, as cited in Schieren, 2011, p. 90). Schieren sees these developments as opportunities to move beyond the traditional "vigorous apology for anthroposophy as science" and instigate "an open discussion" that would permit "anthroposophy its place in the scientific landscape" (p. 90).

A second critical issue, in Schieren's view, is the profusion of critical studies (Traub, 2013; Ullrich, 1994, 2008/2014; Zander, 2013) of anthroposophy and SWE by representatives of "established" science (that is, by outsiders) and founded on considerably researched knowledge of Steiner's work. Schieren's concern is that although members of the academy are weighing into the worth of Steiner's work, the opportunity for "serious dialogue" (p. 91) is missed because only very

---

[68] no specific reference is given in the text.

[69] Both da Veiga and Schieren hold academic positions at Alanus University.

few insiders are responding to the challenge. One example of this response is Bo Dahlin's (2013a) critique of Heiner Ullrich's (2008/2014) critical treatment of Steiner's pedagogy and philosophy in the Bloomsbury Library of Education Thought series.

For Schieren (2011), the problem of raising the academic profile of anthroposophy quickly becomes merged into a "long-range project" (p. 92) that must contend not only with the dominant positivist paradigm still operating in the academy, but also the challenges posed by postmodern thinking. The gap between "the untestable assertions made by Rudolf Steiner" and the concept of "supersensible knowledge" (for example, Steiner, 1922/1983, 1981; Steiner, 1987) cannot be bridged, as anthroposophists are wont to do, by a "gesture of trust" (Schieren, 2011, p. 91). Rather any anthroposophist, earnest about the academic project of elevating the profile of anthroposophy, must deal with the diminished standing of esotericism, on the one hand, and the deconstruction of essentialism, on the other hand. Schieren recognises that the former blends into the foreseeable overshadowing of the "scientific enterprise," particularly as it comes more and more into view as the technocratic worldview responsible for "ever more disasters and destruction (social breakdown, environmental damage, climate change etc)" (p. 91). It is curious that, in this article, Schieren does not engage with the wider discourse on these issues, even considering the relatively sheltered nature of anthroposophical critical discourse. For example, in the first instance, the study of esotericism is gaining a foothold in academic studies and is a recognised field of inquiry (Brinzeu & Szonyi, 2011; Granholm, 2013; McCalla, 2001; A. M. Melzer, 2006; Stuckrad, 2005; Sumser, 1994). In the second instance, a discussion of qualitative and post-qualitative methods of inquiry would possibly enhance the standing of anthroposophy as a radical alternative to scientific positivism as a methodology for investigating liminal phenomena. My study of some of these non-positivist methodologies suggests that there would be opportunities for dialogues with anthroposophy (Ben-Aharon, 2011a, 2011b, 2013; Dahlin, 2017; Hougham, 2012). For example, aspects of certain emergent research methods show a remarkable overlap with Steiner's project of developing an alternative approach to inquiry beyond the arbitrary limits imposed by natural science (R. Anderson, 2018; R. Anderson & Linder, 2019; Montuori, 2018a; Taguchi & St.Pierre, 2017; Tang & Joiner, 2011).

Nonetheless, Schieren is both trenchant in his analysis of the conditions that cripple anthroposophy's standing in the academic world and constructive in his strategising of possible solutions to this problem. He is unreserved in his critique of epigonal reception of Steiner's work, labelling it as "uncritical", "embellished with speculations," and "musing" on subjects without "any independently thought-out contribution to the content" (p. 92). Schieren uses as comparison the image of someone frequenting art galleries, in the hope of one day painting like Raphael. Further, he

concludes that it is the lack of "rational detachment" in approaching Steiner's work that renders anthroposophy the appearance of being unscientific. Like da Veiga, he is critical of the tendency amongst devotees, to treat Steiner's statements as "indubitable facts" (p. 92). The upshot of these attitudes and dispositions towards Steiner's work is that "anthroposophy is often misunderstood as a body of teaching about the spiritual world" (p. 92). This not only misrepresents the nature of Steiner's intellectual and spiritual labours, but it also undermines his painstaking and selfless recognition of human freedom as a fundamental ontological premise of his cosmology.

As mentioned above (p. 87), Schieren advances a number of important strategies that may ensure a voice in the contemporary academy for anthroposophy. For example, he states that Steiner needs to be positioned within the history of ideas, as he himself undertook to do in his own philosophical maturation. Of equal importance, anthroposophy needs to engage in current academic discourse, which of course, also means that anthroposophists will have to learn to integrate the language of that discourse into their own esoteric terminology, thereby bringing about a re-languaging of anthroposophy, as some have already attempted (Dahlin, 2013b, 2013c; Gidley, 2008a, 2008b; Kühlewind, 1986; Moll, 1959; Stein, 2001; Wagemann, 2011; Zajonc, 1995, 2008). Other key proposals in his strategy include, the cultivation of critical detachment within the Steiner community, such that his statements are regarded as hypotheses and not factual declarations. Schieren appeals to anthroposophical authors (especially) to exercise restraint in explicating knowledge, taking extra care to differentiate between the knowledge of the author and Steiner himself. This ethic of academic integrity is evident in both Gordienko (2001) and Diet (2003), who engage with the writings of prominent figures in the Steiner movement, highlighting deficiencies in their approach to "spiritual research." The central focus of their methodology is to examine how Steiner's related work is read and subsequently (mis)used, as already indicated by Schieren (2011) above.

2.5.3 Georg Kühlewind: Meditatively reading anthroposophy.

Reading anthroposophy is a key, recurring theme in the work of Georg Kühlewind. In his (1991/1992) little book, *Working with anthroposophy*, Kühlewind deconstructs a range of "habits" adopted by anthroposophists in their approach to Steiner's work. "The aim of studying anthroposophy, therefore, is not knowledge of some contents falsely considered as information but is an activity, an event" (p. 11). In other words, as both da Veiga (2014) and Schieren (2011) affirm, anthroposophy cannot be regarded, at least primarily, as a body of knowledge that can be accepted or rejected. Kühlewind (1991/1992) asserts that in order to read texts that do not provide readymade knowledge but actually engage the reader in a transformative process of discursive

consciousness, requires a kind of reading that is slower and more recursive than we are accustomed to. This is because the reading has to lift awareness from the words themselves to the "true, spirit experiences" that the words point to (Steiner, as cited in Kühlewind, 1991/1992, p. 81). The cognitive process of this esoteric reading is exoterically explained by Polanyi (1977) as the migration of attention from the "functional" to the "semantic" (p. 35) region of cognition. In other words, words on the page are alone insufficient for understanding, which requires a further layer of sensory-cognitive interpretation.

According to Steiner, a major obstacle to understanding what a spiritual researcher communicates is the expectation with which we burden the words we hear. We do not allow them to speak to us, but instead, insist on their meanings according to our own prejudices. For this reason,

> knowledge of spiritual things… must not be formulated as a sum of absolute dogmas… Others will come in the future [who] will see truer things than we ourselves can see precisely in relation to what we are able to present today. Actually, the spiritual evolution of human beings depends upon this. And every hurdle, every hindrance to the spiritual progress of humanity ultimately depends upon people's not wanting to admit this and wanting instead to have truths transmitted that are not truths of a particular time period, but rather absolute, timeless dogmas (as cited in Kühlewind, 1991/1992, p. 87).

In other words, notions of meaning and truth are historically conditioned. This is why it is sometimes felt necessary to reinterpret the "classics", to renew the stories that we have been told before. For them to be appropriated anew, they have to be reexperienced, renewed and rewritten. There are two salient consequences from this insight. Firstly, Steiner's understanding of the process of knowledge-generation is thoroughly postmodern, which as I have indicated above (pp. 34-35) offers a potential bridging location. Secondly, it is remarkable that against the backdrop of Steiner's postmodern epistemology, there remains a nominalist-essentialist enchantment, in SWE and anthroposophical circles, with the indefatigability of Steiner's "indications"[70] on methodology or curriculum, and the loyal fixation on "what Steiner said". One of Steiner's most creative, yet, after his death, increasingly marginalised disciples, Valentin Tomberg, dramatically captured this enchantment.

> 'The Doctor said…' This formula still lives on. With it, all independent striving has come to an end. A stop was put to all questioning and endeavour. Rudolf Steiner, who always said that it was a bad thing for authority to become decisive, became an authority in this [anthroposophical] community – not a great, impulse-giving, moral example, but an authority in the fruits of knowledge in his words. Thus all

[70] The notion of Steiner's "indications" is dealt with below in greater detail, see p. 114f and p. 263f.

> his words were crucified, nailed down, with the formula, 'The Doctor said…'
> (1992, p. 109)

The same criticism can be laid at the idealisation of the first Waldorf school as the "real" Steiner school upon which all others must be modelled. The question of Steiner's role in the proliferation of potentially counterproductive attitudes within the movement, as hinted at in Tomberg's explanation, remains open. Nonetheless, I find it curious, for example, that in the Faculty Meetings, Steiner reports about a French anthroposophist who wanted to start a school in Paris: "I told her I could recognize what she wants to form in Paris as being in the spirit of the Waldorf School only if they formed the school in exactly the same way that we formed the Waldorf School" (1975/1998a, p. 117).

This section has adjusted the focus towards the epistemological epicentre of anthroposophy, and in particular the reception culture that has built up around it in Steiner organisations. This survey has shown that the external perception of anthroposophy, for example, in the academy, is influenced by the attitude of Steiner's followers towards his work. The culture that has developed around Steiner's ideas and words has not been conducive to the development of inner critical discourse. The consequences of this for SW praxis are predictable. For example, Rawson (2014a) reports that despite the importance and stress placed in SW schools on professional development and teacher learning, there is little evidence of criticality or reflective activity. By applying a contemporary, postmodern lens to his study of teacher learning in SW schools, Rawson exposes a cluster of received notions that hinder the generation of new knowledge. An example is the belief that "expertise is understood as a property of individuals and transferable as know-how" (p. 60). Furthermore, it is also believed that "the existing Waldorf body of knowledge" is sufficient to meet the current and future needs of teachers. A serious consequence of these beliefs is the marginalisation of knowledge that is generated "through reflection or collaborative teacher research." This extends to an "ambiguity" about the validity of "anthroposophical" or Steiner pedagogical knowledge that can be individually generated through study, research and reflexivity (p. 60). Although Rawson is optimistic about the benefits of knowledge-generation within a collegial structure, which still exists in most SW schools, he is nonetheless cautious, arguing that "a more effective teacher learning than currently exists in many places" is needed. This important issue will be developed further in the next section.

It is hoped that by raising the sorts of problems and challenges above may lead to a renewed understanding of the foundational principles and processes of SWE, and that this understanding will become available for a wider audience. By definition, beginning to practise critical reflection is the

primary step since without engagement in “constructive critical discourse” no amount of change, initiative or innovation is likely to result in a deepened understanding of the place of SWE in the present day. For the purposes of this study, this engagement signals an attempt to examine in greater depth some of the received ideas as well as cultural tropes commonly associated with anthroposophy or SWE. A significant element in this examination will involve highlighting the difference between naïve positivist and more sophisticated hermeneutic readings of Steiner’s work.

2.5.4 Interlude: The Philosophy of Freedom.

The importance Steiner attached to his early philosophical treatise *The Philosophy of Freedom*[71] is generally not well known among insiders. It achieves more than merely providing the epistemological basis for his later spiritual research. It demonstrates and *enacts* the path of cognition to achieving spiritual knowledge (Riccio, 2008b, 2016). Some commentators have pointed out the high regard with which Steiner held this work. He considered this book as his single, greatest achievement in the establishment of anthroposophy as a living reality in the field of modern culture (Prokofieff, 2014, p. 460). He stated that this book contained all of the knowledge that was later elaborated in the so-called anthroposophical lectures. “Anyone with sufficient interest can find the principles of anthroposophy in my *The Philosophy of Freedom.* I wish to emphasise that this refers with inner logic to a spiritual realm which is, for example, the source of our moral impulses” (Steiner, 1923/2008b). In Steiner’s view, this book contained two primary messages: the spiritual world exists, and we are connected to this world through our inner life. It also exemplifies in its approach to the subject matter, namely freedom and thinking, the statement formulated by Steiner as follows: “it depends on the human being whether he merely conceives of anthroposophy or whether he experiences it” (as cited in Prokofieff, 2014, back cover).

In other words, the dichotomy which I have tried to highlight in this section, between passively acquiring knowledge and actively engaging in the process of cognition, is again raised by Steiner. Leading into the next section on “Dissonances”, it opens a number of questions about the realisation of Steiner theory into praxis. It reinforces the notion that essentially Steiner’s ideas are not repeatable recipes for action. The task of each newcomer, whether they be a teacher, or practitioner in some other aspect of anthroposophical endeavour, is to pursue their own path of

[71] The original German title, *Die Philosophie der Freiheit,* is variously rendered as ‘The Philosophy of Freedom’, ‘The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity’, and more recently, ‘Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path’. The original German edition also bore the subtitle: *Grundzüge einer modernen Weltanschauung. Seelische Beobachungsresultate nach naturwissenschaftlicher Methode*, which can be translated as ‘Essential elements of a modern worldview. The results of inner observation in accordance with the natural scientific method’.

awakening, not to imitate Steiner's. As Steiner related to his friend, Rosa Mayreder (as cited in Prokofieff, 2014, p. 460), what was written down in this book was actually "lived experience." There he "attempted to seek the suitable paths immediately for others." He navigated his own path and only when he had finished, or accomplished his goal, did he commend this journey to others. Hence, questions about anthroposophy's role in the life of SWE can have little to do with adopting or rejecting belief systems. Further, the significance of Steiner's statements enjoining teachers to pursue their study of anthroposophy or even to *be* "anthroposophists" (1975/1998) must be seen in the light of what has been characterised here as a path of living cognition, and not as the accretion of a belief structure.

2.6 Dissonances Between Theory and Praxis

This section deals with perceptions of dissonance within the SW system from a number of sources. Considering the size and scope of the movement, the number of sources is nonetheless small. These perceptions will be analysed according to the various kinds of sources. Firstly, the critical focus, in the previous section, on anthroposophy and the challenges of reflexivity, now shifts towards the application of theory to SWE praxis. Of special, though not exclusive interest, is the manner in which the so-called "indications" from Steiner have been appropriated into praxis. Further, it should be easy to see this relationship in parallel with the problem of reflexivity, since an investigation of how theory is reflected in praxis and vice versa, how praxis elicits and is based on an interpretation of theory, already signals a critical engagement with established practice and entrenched interpretive constructions of Steiner's words. Some of the early signs of this critical engagement are evident in Masters (1997), Aeppli (2002), Riccio (2002, 2008) and Kiersch (2010). More recently, Sagarin (2003/2009, 2011) and Wiechert (2010a, 2010b, 2012) have developed this further, to the extent that the topic of dissonances, "Steiner myths" (Sagarin, 2008, 2012) or "Waldorf myths" (Wiechert, 2010b) has become the focus of conferences and workshops here in Australia, if not elsewhere. This has brought a critical focus onto SW practice that has been sorely needed.

2.6.1 Johannes Kiersch: the necessity for a hermeneutic reading of Steiner.

A recent paper by an established practitioner of and author on SWE, Johannes Kiersch (2010), has identified a potentially critical milestone in the renewal of SW educational practice. Kiersch's observations and insights conceptually resonate[72] with those of da Veiga and Schieren, examined here, although his central concern is the application of Steiner's educational ideas, whereas the other two are primarily focussed on the question of anthroposophy's epistemological status. At the outset, Kiersch identifies a stark contrast between the insider's view of the relationship between Steiner theory and Waldorf praxis, as a "precise, practical application of this knowledge [that is, anthroposophical research]," and "the summary rejection of this view by mainstream educational theorists" (p. 64). Citing one critic, Klaus Prange, a philosopher of education, the edifice of SWE is "built on sand" (as cited in Kiersch, 2010, p. 64). The well-known commentator on SWE, Heiner Ullrich, reinforces this message in a starkly contrasted view: "a remarkable practice entangled with dubious theory" (as cited in Wagemann, 2017).

[72] I am making this observation on the conceptual logic of the claims made and investigated. I am not, however, suggesting that Kiersch owes his understanding to either da Veiga or Schieren.

Interestingly, Kiersch (2010) highlights a significant distinction that is hardly at all made by Steiner commentators. He clarifies the nature of the original training course imparted by Steiner to the future teachers of the Waldorf school, who were "all more or less convinced anthroposophists," and some of whom were private esoteric students of Steiner's. The opening lecture of this course was delivered with the "ceremonial solemnity" of a religious ritual. The undertaking was quasi-sacred: "We can accomplish our work only if we do not see it as simply a matter of intellect or being, but, in the highest sense, as a moral-spiritual task" (Steiner, 1992/1996, p. 33). In other words, the tone of the lecture course, and indeed the entire training program over a period of two and a half weeks, between 20 August and 5 September, in 1919, was *esoteric* and not academic. The source material for Steiner's pedagogy was based on his anthroposophical esotericism. For Kiersch (2010), this fact amplifies and appears to justify the academy's "suspicion" of the historical and philosophical construction of SWE (p. 65).

The central obstacle to the acceptance of anthroposophy as a genuine alternative to the generation of reliable knowledge appears to be its grounding in esotericism, and specifically esoteric modes of consciousness and ideation. As we have seen above (p. 85ff), this continues to engender concern in academic circles about the scientific credibility of anthroposophy. However, this raises a different concern for Kiersch. In short, the failure on the part of anthroposophists to differentiate between Steiner's anthroposophical esotericism, which as we have seen, underpins SWE, and empirical research, which Steiner designates as "anthropology" (p. 66), has led to the uncritical acceptance by SW practitioners of Steiner's so-called "indications", the numerous signposts doted throughout Steiner's educational lectures about applying esoteric pedagogical concepts. This misconception is still reinforced in the translators' introduction to the 1996 edition of the publication of *Foundations of Human Experience*, even though the word "anthropology" only occurs *once* in the text[73]: "Here we have a truly fundamental anthropology in which the vibrantly *alive* human being steps forth to reveal the dynamic and active relationships of our threefold being" (Steiner, 1992/1996, pp. 23-24). Taking these "indications" at face value exemplifies the situation, described in Rawson (2014a), where established tradition supervenes innovation. This error had been pointed out earlier (Aeppli, 2002), but now Kiersch provides a systematic, epistemological basis for its identification.

---

[73] This is in lecture 6, where Steiner says, 'only later will we discuss human nature in the way done by anthropology, namely, how the human being appears in the physical world' (p. 106). Clearly, Steiner has in mind after the lecture course.

The relationship between esoteric research and empirical research is, according to Steiner, like that between the photographic negative and the processed photograph (as cited in Kiersch, 2010, p. 66). Elsewhere, he distinguishes between eating a sandwich and digesting it. Evidently, they are not identical processes. Furthermore, the translation process is not codified, such that, for example, an esoteric idea could be entered as input into a software program, and an exoteric, practical application, would appear as the output. To use Kühlewind's graphic negative analogy: "a spiritual scientific book is not like a toothpaste tube from which, in response to gentle pressure, the "content" flows forth ready to use (Kühlewind, 1991/1992, p. 24). Rather than an "empirical fact", the anthroposophical concept (the esoteric indication) is a "heuristic" concept (Kiersch, 2010, p. 66), or as Steiner often referred to them, as "living concepts" (Steiner, 1897/1928; 1992/1996, p. 153).

Kiersch credits Rittelmeyer as the first anthroposophist to draw attention to this particular problem:

> Could it not be that the recurrent confusions and anachronisms with the anthroposophical movement – more particularly – in Waldorf education rest upon the fact that things articulated by Steiner are construed in terms of empirical fact rather than in terms of heuristic principles (as cited in Kiersch, 2010, p. 66)?

Understanding the difference between "living concepts" and "rigidly fixed mental structures" (Steiner, 1985, p. 269) is paramount to understanding Steiner's method of communicating the results of his spiritual research. Hence, it is also critical to understanding how such knowledge may be used. Steiner is explicit, for example, in showing that although sensory images are used to describe the supersensible (or spiritual) world, such images ought to be "read" metaphorically as *pointers* to living experiences. This translation process is thoughtfully explained in an article by Bailey (2011), including the difference between anthroposophical and anthropological statements. "There are people," explains Steiner(1918/1990), "who are disappointed precisely because the spiritual researcher has to tell them that, when he expresses himself through images borrowed from sensory experience, he is only illustrating what he has seen" (np). Elsewhere, Kiersch (2012) has articulated a similar message, though attributed to Steiner's educational theory, suggesting that anyone approaching his basic pedagogical work *Foundations of Human Experience* (Steiner, 1992/1996) or *The Study of Man* (Steiner, 1932/1966), and expecting to find "a simple introduction to Waldorf pedagogy… will be disappointed" (Kiersch, 2012, p. 86). The message is amplified in Smit (1991/2012, p. 16), who claims that the founding of the Stuttgart school marked the "first time in history that, from its inception, an esoteric schooling was the source of a concrete educational activity". Nonetheless, the "thought forms" used in these lectures follow a Goethean

model, and would be likely, in Kiersch's view, to "appeal more to an artist than to the prevailing analytical thinking of a scientific researcher" (2012, p. 86). Quite the contrary, these "thought forms" are "incomplete, open on all sides, and designed for ongoing development" (p. 87), and as such demand further intensive work from the reader. This kind of work that is needed to make these concepts one's own is "meditative" (Kühlewind, 1991/1992, p. 19).

In characteristic understatement, Kiersch (2010) suggests that the "tendency" to *read* the foundational lecture course as "containing 'anthroposophical' knowledge has not been entirely without consequence" (2010, p. 69). The picture is stark: from the teacher training centres to SWSs, "a false picture of Steiner's educational teachings took shape" (p. 69). Moreover, these teachings acquired a prestige as an "eternally valid corpus of scientifically anchored truths," which in the public mind have "increasingly, *and quite rightly*, been felt to be dogmatic" (my emphasis, p. 69). Kiersch's concluding words are far-reaching, I believe, if we have in mind the renewal of SWE. Referring to the changes in public perception about the kinds of values that ought to permeate a modern educational system, and the rejection of dogma in educational theory or practice, he states: "with this in mind [that is, the installation of progressive, contemporary values], an attempt to re-interpret the fundamental texts of Waldorf education in heuristic terms could greatly assist in its further development" (p. 69).

2.6.2 Sagarin and Wiechert: Steiner-Waldorf myths.

Next, I will trace some of the valuable work done by Stephen Sagarin and Christof Wiechert, in challenging what have come to be known as Steiner myths, as well as broadly inspiring the introduction of a critical spirit into insider discourse about SW pedagogy and curriculum. Stephen Sagarin (2003/2009), a former SW student and teacher, and educator in the US, has produced an important critical text, if somewhat understated in its title, "What is Waldorf Education?" The material was originally included in his book, *The History of Waldorf Education in the United States* (Sagarin, 2011), which was based on Sagarin's PhD dissertation. The article, along with the earlier published blogs on Steiner myths (Sagarin, 2008, 2012) have stimulated wide critical discussion within the SW movement, in the US and Australia. This is evinced by Sagarin's keynote presentations focussing on issues raised in these texts in recent years at the request of SEA. I will begin with Sagarin's article on Waldorf Education. The article raises a number of key issues concerning the interaction between Steiner theory and Waldorf praxis.

i. To begin with, Sagarin provocatively opines that there is no such thing as "Waldorf education." He argues that most, if not all aspects of Steiner's educational thinking can be

traced to an earlier source, such as Emerson, among others (for example, Herbart, see in Ullrich, 2008/2014). Having established that the content is not unique, he then asks about the method. Here, Sagarin cites Michael Lipson, psychiatrist, educator, and translator of books by Steiner and other anthroposophical authors, such as Kühlewind, who suggests that Steiner employed a "methodless method" (pers comm, as cited in Sagarin, 2003/2009) which only works if it becomes a capability in the teacher/researcher. This notion strikes me as thoroughly postmodern, reflecting the view that methodology can be derived or guided by a concept, where "concepts can be thought of as *answers to questions posed by the world*" (Taguchi & St.Pierre, 2017, p. 647).

ii. Sagarin reviews various theories about what constitutes Waldorf education, concluding that it is not a thing but a "quality of education". Along the way, he confronts various attitudes towards SWE, which he deconstructs, undermining their epistemological bases. For example, he describes the view that a SW school is a SW school – its outward appearance determines its inner form. This view derives from the "belief" that the first school established in the Waldorf Astoria factory in 1919, was the archetypal school. To take one instance of this approach: because the first (and most) SW schools teach eurythmy then SW schools *ought* to teach eurythmy and any school that does not is deprived of a significant feature of SWE. This reinforces Sagarin's argument, advanced earlier in the article, that no "property" of SWE is necessary, and indeed that any features that can be identified as essential to describe SWE are, in fact, contingent. They could, for example, be applied in other, non-SW settings, without making them SW schools, as indeed they might be removed from a "SW school" without necessarily robbing that school of its distinctive character.

Sagarin contests Barnes' view of SWE as consisting of two essential principles: namely the spiritual "image of the human being" (as cited in, Sagarin, 2003/2009) and the process of incarnation or human development, on the basis that Barnes' discourse "speaks best to education in general, not to 'Waldorf' education." I would argue, by contrast, that these principles are subject to the conditions outlined in Kiersch (2010) and Bailey (2011). In other words, they cannot be used as categorical indicators since, as heuristic concepts, they demand interpretation.

By contrast, Sagarin favourably advances Douglas Sloan's view that Steiner's "conception of education must as a whole remain open and subject to revision." Sagarin echoes Sloan, suggesting that "Waldorf education is an evolving model of educational thinking, research

and practice, and must be created anew in each application if it is not to devolve into prescription or dogma" (2003/2009, np).

iii. Sagarin speaks approvingly of Steiner's Platonism, namely the view that concepts live an existence independent of human beings, and that therefore "ideas, like apples… may be plucked by anyone" (2003/2009, np). Extending the metaphoric conceit, he adds that the ideas may not be divorced from their ecological context. This interpretation of concepts is supported by Steiner (1922/1983, p. 28ff; 1922/1984, pp. 53-56), where he characterises thoughts as "the forces which govern the world and are spread throughout the cosmos" (1922/1983, p. 30). For Sagarin, this has important implications for SWE. Above all, it empowers individuals (that is, teachers) to recognise their own capacity to "pluck" the ideas that Steiner introduced them to. This connects to another significant insight of Sagarin's: the truthfulness of Steiner educational philosophy follows "not from [his] authority but from a perceived reality" (Sagarin, 2003/2009, np). This may seem self-evident, however, as da Veiga, Schieren and Kiersch have each pointed out, one of the major obstacles to the presentation of anthroposophy as a serious intellectual discipline is the uncritical representation of Steiner's ideas by followers as undisputed facts. In this article, Sagarin is merely tracing the consequences of this attitude into the praxis of SWE, both as "theory-in-use" (Argyris & Schon, 1974, pp. 6-7) and as actual practice (Sagarin, 2008, 2012).

iv. Against "purist" SW educators who oppose the "Public Waldorf" movement, or Charter Schools on the basis that it "compromises" the anthroposophical impulse behind SWE, Sagarin presents the countervailing notion that any form of implementation of SWE in the world will involve some sort of compromise.[74] This is validated by Steiner's opening words to the first training course: "it is necessary that we make compromises" (Steiner, 1992/1996, pp. 29-30).[75]

v. Perhaps one of Sagarin's (2003/2009) most powerful affirmations of what SWE is comes from the translator Nancy Parsons Whittaker. In her view, "the educational movement Steiner founded drifted very far from its source the moment [the act of] founding schools became more important than examining the quality of education." Although, what is called SWE have come to be associated with a particular set of curricula and a largely stereotyped

---

[74] For example, see Lamb (2012, p. 25): students at the newly opened *Freie Waldorfschule* [independent Waldorf school] had to attain learning goals of their State-educated peers in third, sixth and eighth grade, to facilitate transfers to the State system, should parents wish to do so.

[75] See p. 59 above for a fuller extract.

way of presenting content, according to Whittaker, this has nothing to do with the "original intent". For her, this intent was to

> offer an education in a way that gave each child a fundamental, true introduction into the foundation of his or her society while at the same enhancing the child's ability to accurately perceive life around him or her without damaging the child's innate capacity to be sensitively aware of the Creative Love behind the visible (np).

Further, she argues strongly that this type of education was never intended to be "separated from society at large, nor model a particular belief system" (as cited in Sagarin, 2003/2009, np). Such goals allow for many paths and ways of travelling towards their destinations. Citing Steiner, Sagarin also contests the received notion that Steiner intended to create a system of education:

> The true aim and object of anthroposophic education is not to establish as many anthroposophic schools as possible," but to "enable every teacher to bring the fruits of anthroposophy to their work, no matter where they may be teaching or the nature of the subject matter" (Steiner, 1924/1997, p. 18).

Sagarin effectively conducts a deconstructive exegesis of common narratives about SWE postulated by insiders, in order to create a space to install his own narrative composed of fluid, living concepts. This is a much needed and admirable intellectual deed. It models a process of hermeneutic deconstruction that is incumbent upon any practitioner of SWE. The transition from Steiner's authority to the authority of the individual teacher has to traverse the open ground between anthroposophical concepts and anthropological practice. This transition cannot be made by means of fixed concepts. The affinity between the arts, or more accurately, an artistic temperament, and SWE finds its reflection here. As Kiersch stated earlier, the nature of living concepts leaves them open, plastic and unfinished, something that is closer in temperament to the artist than the scientist.

Like Sagarin, Christof Wiechert, former head of the Pedagogical Section of the Goetheanum, has been active in dispelling Steiner myths, and encouraging teachers to challenge established practice. Wiechert (2014) urges teachers to ask, "why do we do that?" He has become a regular speaker in national conferences organised by SEA since 2015, and around the world. Both Sagarin and Wiechert have gained wide recognition within the SW movement, especially in Australia, that I am aware of (Steiner Education Australia, 2018). Of particular interest is their exposure and discussion of so-called Steiner myths.

There are numerous examples of Steiner or Waldorf myths, that Sagarin and Wiechert have exposed. What are these myths? In Sagarin's words, they are "external characteristics or trappings… about which… Rudolf Steiner himself had little or nothing to say," Steiner's indications that have not found their way into practice, or which leaves open many possibilities of practical interpretation

(Sagarin, 2008, np). Sagarin argues that like hermit crabs, American SW schools have "crawled" into the shells of other SW cultural traditions, specifically the German and British, in order to establish their identity of SWE. Some of these cultural practices, the Steiner myths, have become ritualised as pedagogical or curricular practices, which may be ineffective or worse potentially dangerous. They range from the imaginary use of "gnomes" in teaching Maths, avoiding the use of the colour black (sometimes right into the senior years of high school), teaching art vs artistic pedagogy, College (or faculty)-run schools, and avoiding intellectuality, to fantasy vs imagination, among others. As Sagarin rightly concludes, the existence and proliferation of these mythic rituals suggest the need for ongoing, *critical* reading of Steiner, as well as a present attention to the practice of education *now*.

This critical attitude has become a fundamental part of Wiechert's work as mentor for SW schools and teachers. Through years of observation and questioning of SWE, Wiechert has developed insights, which challenge some of the assumptions that have become integral to certain collective practices. Like Sagarin, Wiechert raises questions about whether indications can be found in Steiner's words to justify particular practices, but more importantly, he tries to discern the possible motivations underpinning such practices. This is a key distinction which navigates the discourse away from the imputed *a priori* nature of Steiner's words, towards the "perceived reality" (Sagarin, 2003/2009, np) to which Steiner refers. A vivid illustration of this is the example of the "house building" block lesson in the 3rd Grade. Wiechert explains that the idea of every 3rd Grade class building something on the school grounds becomes farcical when taken to extremes. What is intended is that young students are exposed to the reality of an "archetypal profession" (Wiechert, 2014, np), which depending on where they live may be fishing, farming, baking, mining, metalworking, or any number of other possibilities.

According to Wiechert (2010b), asking fundamental questions about "the habits of teaching" is necessary "in order to shape the future of the art of [Waldorf] education." His approach, although apparently similar to Sagarin's, seems more oriented towards linking practice with Steiner theory at the heuristic level (see Kiersch, 2010). For example, he addresses the praxis of "main lesson" teaching, with its traditional division between the "circle time," work time and storytelling. Wiechert shows, through careful observation, how the broad anthroposophical concepts introduced in Steiner's *Foundations of Human Experience*, such as "rhythm" and "breathing" are actually subverted by certain inherited practices. Some of the practices that come under scrutiny include the use of stamping rhythms to wake up children, early morning recorder playing and the overuse of storytelling. Wiechert does not oppose any of the practices he names, but rather challenges their insertion into uncontextualized settings. In other words, he advocates a more mindful, reflective

approach to the development and implementation of Waldorf praxis, rather than the uncritical manner with which some traditional practices are adopted and multiplied.

In a report of a study into the “looping” of eight-years, which forms an operational backbone of most SW schools in the primary grades, Zdrazil and Kindt (2014) discuss the variations of this temporal relationship that has become emblematic of SWE across schools worldwide. Despite alerting us to this situation at the outset, Zdrazil (2013) nonetheless concludes elsewhere, following a thorough exegetical investigation of Steiner’s words, that “Rudolf Steiner’s remarks on the length of the class teacher time leave no room for doubt as to how long he pictured the time of teaching by a class teacher” (p. 60). Further, he asserts that “successful mastering” of this “immense educational task” [the eight-year loop] is founded on the teacher actively undertaking “the anthroposophical path of knowledge” and thereby committing to a journey of personal transformation or self-development. These imperatives, which Zdrazil has elicited from Steiner’s words, are presented as final. By contrast, he is avowedly unconcerned with investigating present day teachers’ lived experiences, nor with “sociological findings” about changing life conditions of childhood or adolescence. This polarising of a problem considered central to SWE is unhelpful, and reinforces the hegemonising influence of Steiner’s imputed voice, further disempowering the student or follower of his work. Wiechert (2013) addresses Zdrazil’s Steiner-based contentions by gathering an opposing picture, which is phenomenologically acquired through actual observation of real teachers over the course of their looping periods and beyond. This is more aligned with the empirical study conducted in this doctoral project.

Furthermore, Wiechert has identified interesting heuristic concepts from Steiner’s work that could themselves become the subject of further research. For example, in his book, *Teaching, the joy of Profession,* Wiechert (2012) states that in Steiner’s view certain aspects of the educational imperative of a particular time and place are necessitated by the demands of the culture and the society. In other words, they are oriented towards acclimatising the individual to the characteristics of their community and society. However, these demands do not necessarily produce what is inherent in the individual as their own inner worth or direction, and in fact may work against their unique determination of self. On the contrary, other imperatives are derived from the unity of the individuality with what is learned, for example, their own “element”. This is of course precisely the discourse that Sir Ken Robinson (2009, 2011, 2013) has introduced onto the global educational stage about creativity, talent and self-determination.

2.6.3 Steiner-Waldorf teachers' biographical accounts.

Finally, I turn to the few biographical accounts available in the English language, including translations. Teachers' accounts, of course, reinforce the main data source for the project. Aside from these sources, there are also considerable anecdotal observations and insights that indicate symptoms of "dis-ease" in SWE. Unfortunately, these voices have tended to be marginalised, perhaps for reasons similar to those that have arrested the emergence of a robust culture of critical reflection within SWE. As Francis (2004) has indicated in his autobiographical *The Education of a Waldorf Teacher: Memoirs and Reflections of Keith Francis*, seeing the benefits of SWE is a relatively easy task, but "coping with the way things actually turn out is more difficult" (p. xiii). The few available biographical accounts of SW teachers repeat, amplify and corroborate much of this anecdotal criticism.

2.6.3.1 Lani Cox (2009-10).

Cox, a young beginning teacher, produced a blogged account, "Missing teacher,"[76] of her tenure as an early childhood educator in a US SWS. The account is humorous, insightful and contains trenchant criticisms of the Waldorf culture. Cox touches on aspects of the SWS culture that are anecdotally reported by other teachers, and perhaps recognisable to many insiders. For example, she is critical of the "democratic" pretensions of the College, which is however used to precipitate personal attacks against individual teachers.[77] She challenges the lack of professionalism or professional boundaries within the school, painting a picture of a workplace that is dominated by political factions and where particular parents (for example, who hold administrative or governance positions) yield disproportionate power. In short, her account of the school is of an aesthetically beautiful environment that is nonetheless morally and emotionally unsafe.

2.6.3.2 Keith Francis (2004).

Francis writes as a critical insider (a rare breed), who is unquestioningly committed to anthroposophy and SWE, whilst offering numerous criticisms of SWE praxis.

i. Francis holds to a traditional notion of the relationship between anthroposophy and SWE. He asserts that SWE is "firmly based on the anthroposophical knowledge of human evolution" (p. 178). Also "ideally everything [that is taught in the SWS] would be based on

---

[76] The blog version has been updated and is now available as a print and ebook, Lani Cox, 2015. *The Missing Teacher: A Memoir.* 2015. The Buffalo Publishing/Amazon Digital Services LLC.

[77] A similar story is reported by Andrew in Chapter Four: Teachers Narratives.

anthroposophy but in practice that doesn't always happen" (p. 179). Clearly, Francis' view of anthroposophy is that it is a body of knowledge that can be readily accessed by reading Steiner's published material.

ii. Francis discusses the relationship between Christianity and SWE, stating that is "a matter of serious debate" (p. 179). He confides that "significant numbers of teachers… would like to suppress all reference to Christianity in Waldorf literature" (p. 184). This echoes Sagarin's discovery that in the early years of transplanting SWE into the US, when the German influence of the Stuttgart school was decisive, the occult dimensions of anthroposophy were kept in the shadows, for fear that this knowledge might spook the American public. A variant of this secrecy has become normalised in SWE around the world. This is an important issue which unfortunately cannot be taken up in the study.[78]

iii. Like Steiner, Francis is critical of the attitude, amongst SW teachers and anthroposophists, that shows a general disdain towards modern science (p. 25). He reprises Steiner's view that modern science has carried the mission of enabling human freedom (representing the Enlightenment argument) but at the cost of losing interconnectedness with nature and the spirit world (Romanticism), what he terms "the fallen human condition." He adds, "Anyone who thinks that anthroposophical activities are somehow exempt from the effects of the fallen human condition is seriously deluded" (p. 25).

iv. Again, echoing Steiner, Francis is critical of the tendency towards secularism within the Anthroposophical Society and Steiner communities in general. "The desire for the comforts of like-mindedness is not what anthroposophy is about." Francis argues that the "age of the consciousness soul" determines a kind of "stranger"[79] experience between people (p. 34), where understanding must be forged through conscious inner activity, rather than arise from membership of a special club or group. Francis asserts, "One of the most off-putting features of the anthroposophical personality" is the notion that by virtue of belonging to a group, anthroposophists have entry into a superior body of knowledge (pp. 60-61).

v. Francis identifies what he calls, "scholastic chauvinism" (p. 59). This is the notion that some schools more clearly follow "Steiner's wishes" than others and carry "the sacred flame of Waldorf education" (p. 60).

---

[78] This issue clearly relates to the problem of esotericism. This is an inescapable problem that confronts the earnest interpreter or researcher who wishes to locate Steiner within mainstream fields of inquiry, whether in education or in philosophy.

[79] This counter-intuitive notion was developed philosophically and artistically by Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky to name two of the main exponents of existentialist thinking.

vi. He complains that main lesson books are presented with great attention to aesthetic quality but little regard for "all kinds of errors" (p. 131). The content contained is basically identical, even in high school. As Francis puts it, "Copying is the curse of the Waldorf schools" (p. 132).

vii. He attributes this situation to the inability of teachers (particularly in years 7 and 8) to effectively manage such a wide range of subjects without resorting to superficiality and reliance on one or two sources of information. Material is often copied from teaching guides reproduced by other teachers (pp. 131-132). Students and teachers tended to be judged on the aesthetic quality of their workbooks.

viii. One consequence of the devaluation of intellectual knowledge is that gifted or even simply motivated students lose interest because of the lack of intellectual challenge in the last few years of primary school or early in the transition to high school.

ix. He notes, "As anthroposophists we are enjoined to practice veneration and to silence the inner voice which is apt to be saying, 'But… But…'" Francis is scathing of the pretensions to becoming "an anthroposophical guru." Whilst there are certainly individuals with "genuine insight" there are also those with "bumbling sincerity" and "a few… self-serving charlatans" (pp. 61-62).

x. There is also a tendency to project problems to "external opposing forces"[80]. This tends to mask internal tensions that are usually the source of problems (p. 94). Connected to this is one of Francis' most concerning observation, namely that "there is a tendency for anthroposophy to bring out the very best and the very worst in people" (p. 99). This has a serious impact, he argues, on decisionmaking and maintaining an alignment between theoretical ideas and praxis. He relates stories of "loose cannons" who can hijack the operations of a consensus-based group such as the College of Teachers, and eventually drive away "good people… because they couldn't stand it anymore" (p. 103). Worse, such character-driven antipathies can lead to outbreaks of civil war within the school's teaching body and cause "serious damage" (p. 102). The tendency just mentioned can merge with the sense of righteous indignation such that individual teachers can appear gripped by fundamentalist beliefs about whatever appeals to them. Francis poses the question, Does this megalomaniac behaviour derive from anthroposophy or is it borne out of what anthroposophy can appear to offer, that is the feeling of having superior knowledge?

[80] These can be represented as opponents of SWE or anthroposophy and/or reified as spiritual antagonists, Lucifer and Ahriman. Refer to footnote 198.

Francis' autobiography provides a rich compendium of autoethnographic details about the social and professional culture of SWSs. Despite his reflexive admissions, in the "Author's Note" at the start of his book, that much was left unsaid, in particular, "the more depressing episodes" (2004, p. xi), Francis reveals serious and persistent problems with how SWE is enacted in SWSs. Since he worked in several schools in England and the US, his account offers a compelling view of what ails SWE. These are issues that I have also recognised in my own experience as well as through anecdotal evidence provided by former colleagues. Curiously, the autobiographical writings of Gregoire Perra, another former SW teacher, disclose very similar observations to Francis', despite an obvious difference of attitude towards Steiner and anthroposophy.

2.6.3.3 Gregoire Perra.

Perra is an online author who attended a SWS in France for ten years, was a SW teacher for 12 years, and rose to a position of prominence in the Anthroposophical Society, his involvement lasting 14 years. His participation with the Steiner movement lasted altogether nineteen years, until 2009. He has written a number of articles on his experiences in the Steiner movement. For example: "The Anthroposophical Indoctrination" (Perra, 2011); "The Anthroposophical Christ in the Waldorf Pedagogy" (Perra, 2013); "My Life Among the Anthroposophists" (Perra, 2014b); "Masks, Misrepresentations and Manipulations Within Steiner Waldorf Schools" (Perra, 2014a); and "Ethical Invidividualism – the Anthroposophists' Alibi" (Perra, 2015).

In these articles, Perra outlines a highly critical view of SWE and anthroposophy, which extends so far as arguing that SWSs should not be allowed to operate because they impose a "mental confinement" on students and operate without full disclosure of their occult origins (2014a, In Conclusion). Despite the numerous criticisms, Perra acknowledges that there are many sound pedagogical practices employed in SWE that facilitate the development of free thinking in its students. However, he argues that the beneficiaries of this development are typically students who "could often show original and profound thinking in their remarks" (2011, Section 4,1).

There are two especially disturbing aspects of Perra's critique of SWE: firstly, it is informed with considerable experience and familiarity with SWE and anthroposophy; and secondly, many aspects of his criticisms are attested by anecdotal, personal, and some research evidence. His critique is therefore compelling, and to my knowledge has not been addressed by the SW movement as a whole or in part, despite its apparent validity and self-evident gravity.

I will itemise and develop Perra's criticisms below:

i. He argues that SW pedagogy and curriculum is essentially a disguised "subtle indoctrination" (2011, Section I.1) of anthroposophical ideas. Moreover, these ideas are presented as objective facts rather than ideological constructs. Such anthroposophical "knowledge" replaces all conventional knowledge in the sciences, the arts and social sciences, effectively providing an alternative worldview, which is absorbed by students and teachers and eventually regarded as valid without question.
ii. Perra suggests that "Waldorf schooling has a subliminal character" (2011, Section I.2). This is apparent, for example, in the contradiction between what constitutes the "rhetoric" of SW teacher training, which preaches creativity and originality, and the passing on of "decades-old methods" in pedagogy that had not changed since the First World War. Moreover, this "doctrinal training" inculcates the teacher trainee with anthroposophical ideology, or fixed beliefs about the various subjects.
iii. Contrary to the oft-repeated rejoinder that anthroposophy is not taught to students, Perrra highlights the many instances in the *Konferenzen*, or "Meetings with Teachers at the Waldorf School" (Steiner, 1975/1988) where this is plainly contradicted by Steiner words.
iv. Perra describes the continual ritualisation of daily life through the practice of reciting verses, celebrating Christian festivals, and relating of spiritual-mythic narratives. This led to the feeling that one was "living in a kind of monastery" (2011, Section 2.5). This reflects one of Perra's main contentions against SWE and anthroposophical communities in general: the privileging of a mystical-religious consciousness and a concomitant minimisation of rationality.
v. Further, Perra asserts that the development of reason and criticality is "mothballed" in young adolescents. Perra goes so far as to claim that whilst students are encouraged to think at the level of pictures, "they were unable to raise questions and thoughtful analyses" (2013, Myths and Tales). There is a general inability in both students *and* teachers to think conceptually. He also relates this to the "dysfunctional administrative operation of these schools," because of an inability to communicate effectively, or make timely decisions. The dual influence of an accentuated mystical-religious consciousness and a dampened intellectual development works on all members of these communities, whether children or adults, or students, teachers or parents. Those who do not subscribe to the prevailing culture find it difficult to belong to such communities (Perra, 2011, 2013).
vi. This has the consequence of an "overemphasis on the ego and exaggerated exaltation of the mystic realm" (2011, Section 1. 5). He relates that SW teachers would agree that "in principle a good Waldorf education should slow the maturation of students' intellectual

faculties as far as possible." Some of the signs of this include: many students did very little academic work for years; sometimes preparations for rituals, festivals or other non-academic activities took over the timetable such that "actual schoolwork is reduced to a trickle." According to Perra, at the school where he worked, less than 40% of students attained the baccalaureate.

vii. Perra argues that SW is a "reference system that is closed on itself" (2011, Section 2.1). Here he has in mind the consistently different forms of expression and materials used in SWE: for example, the use of a distinctive grading system (in France)[81] that did not correspond to the State system; the use of special writing and artistic materials; artistic practices not taught elsewhere; the class teacher system; use of daily rituals; specific preferences for stories. Perra cites an anecdotal story of a former student who found it difficult to "make himself understood by others who have not had the same educational experience" (Section 2.1)

viii. He contends that "deceptive practices and concealment from authorities" (2011, Section 2.2) are used, for example, to facilitate inspection processes. Often this involves recruiting students into teachers' ruses, such as replacing teachers without qualifications with those with qualifications. These practices are acknowledged and then celebrated in teachers' meetings.

ix. Perra challenges the conventional wisdom of SWE that the class teacher system cultivates positive family-like relationships between teachers and students, arguing that this kind of closeness is inappropriate and may lead to unprofessional conduct. The "psychological closeness" that Perra relates sometimes leads to unethical conduct and even abuse (2011, Section, 2.3). He argues that "a confusion of roles" (Section, 2.4) exists within SWSs, that conflates familial and professional relationships.

x. The absence of definite hierarchical systems of management and administration lead to "power games and other profoundly unhealthy influences" (2011, Section, 2.4). Following on from the above comments, instances of misconduct tend to not be discharged according to external or even legal requirements, but are handled internally in a manner dictated by

[81] This is also the case in the primary years where conventional grading methods are avoided as far as possible and written reports used, typically eschewing critical comments. This practice may also continue into high school. When I worked as high school coordinator, I attempted to introduce more formal grading and feedback systems on student performance to replace the previous system which was informal and haphazard and lacked genuine criticality. As soon as I left the school, I was informed that the changes that had been introduced, with the support of most teachers in the high school, were reversed.

political interests within the teachers' collective. This can lead to a tolerance for unethical and even criminal behaviour.[82]

xi. Perra believes that the Steiner movement operates as a large secret organisation that functions effectively like a cult, where knowledge is controlled and power is concentrated at the top. He cites an instance of a student (Year 11) who complained to the overseeing SWE body in France about inappropriate pedagogical conduct from a teacher (the teacher taught a month-long lesson from the contents of a book by Steiner about Atlantis). Perra notes that it is common for teachers to teach anthroposophical beliefs explicitly, since these ideas are often the full extent of their "cultural universe". Nonetheless, the matter of the complaint was "covered up." Perra points out that the oversight body had "sufficient overview to realise the systematization of these practices and the recurring problems they cause" but did not act, other than to "obscure the possible impact from the public and not to treat the problem at its root" (2011, Section 4.1).

xii. Perra highlights the "intellectual saturation" of anthroposophy. Namely, the sole focus of most anthroposophists and SW teachers is to "read nothing but Steiner" (2011, Section 4.2). This reverence is coupled with an exaggerated belief in Steiner's infallibility. Perra muses that questioning Steiner's authority was not possible in public. He goes so far as to assert that "the Anthroposophical community effectively bans any internal questioning, as I have often had occasion to realise, not only as a teacher but also as an editor in their various journals."

xiii. Perra is critical of the languaging around Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy. For example, he notes that, instead of using the expression, "Steiner says…," it is not uncommon to see this rendered as "Steiner gave an indication for…" (2011, Section 4.2). In other words, Steiner is not merely another author or researcher, he is the "giver of eternal truths." The distinctive use of so-called anthroposophical language becomes pervasive in a school environment, such that one loses sight of it altogether, since it permeates the framing and delivery of lesson content. The denial that anthroposophy is taught in SWSs becomes an act of "autosuggestion preventing one from seeing reality."

xiv. Perra also challenges the conventional Steiner view that schools ought to be run exclusively by teachers, suggesting that this expectation needs to be reviewed in the light of contextual changes since then. He observes that "school management is therefore undertaken by

[82] We see this phenomenon played out habitually in relation to the failure to protect children in religious institutions especially.

unqualified personnel who are not paid for this work" (2011, Section 4.5). He argues that this leads to the "slow, awkward decision-making process" that SWSs have become associated with.

xv. Perra links the "constant inefficiency" (2011, Section 4.5) of this management system to the phenomenon of "moral and physical exhaustion."

xvi. He cites several examples of teachers who were "harassed" by colleagues, leading to eventual depression, or worse, on the part of the victims. A distrust in the laws and conventions of the "outside world" means that redress is rarely sought, and that the ethical perspective of certain types of social behaviour remains narrow. Perra observes, in a condemnatory manner, that "teachers of SWSs – who are both the indoctrinators and the indoctrinated, the persecutors and the persecuted – do not find fault in the system to which they are committed" (2011, Section 4.5).

The scope of Perra's critique of SWE is broad and detailed. His criticisms are consistently supported by accompanying anecdotes. His account (2014b) of being a student in a SWS is particularly revealing. However, much of what is stated there is represented again in the main article from which the above comments were drawn.

3 Methodology

Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the Masters,

Seek what they sought.

(Basho, as cited in Qui, 2005, p. 63)

Proverbs and Songs, No. 29

Wanderer, your footsteps

are the road, and nothing more.

Wanderer, there is no road,

the road is made by walking.

Walking you make the road,

and turning to look behind

you see the path you never

again, will step upon.

Wanderer, there is no road,

only foam-trails on the sea.

(Machado, 2004, p. 281)

3.1 The Way In

Every new object, clearly seen, opens up a new organ of perception in us.

(Goethe, as cited in Robbins, 2005, pp. 114-115)

3.1.1 The journey as dialogue.

The above verses, from Basho and Machado, show that the path of journeying has piqued the imagination of poets over the centuries. Often, this interest is aroused whenever life awakens the incomprehensible and teases the heart as well as the poetic imagination with a harsh trial. Often the way is no less uncertain than the destination. Perhaps, as in the case of Basho, an encounter with a "Master", or hearing tales of the Master's acclaim and achievement, may have conjured in the poet's mind a dream-vision of the quest's terminal, a holy Grail of a kind. Yet the journey, even the path, the journey's reflection, its very essence and lifeblood, is uncertain. For this journey cannot be reproduced. And all the odes and all the legends that charm it into existence can do no more that fill the listener with visions and inspirations. The walking makes the path. There is here no mere instrumentalist sense of action; it is the deed of walking itself, the event, that makes the path, in all its uncertainty, its grief and longing, its travail and the exultation of solitude.

I stand here, now, at a hiatus, a moment's pause brought on by exhaustion and confusion. Machado's road has metamorphosed into a cascading river. The watercourse is wild, tearing apart the surface of the water with its restless searching. Making my way is no easy task, for rapids crisscross my path, *creating* my path, which is uncertain, unpredictable and hazardous. They are imaginal impressions, hatched out of the body that always knows "more" (Gendlin, 2007), and grappling with methodologies, literally finding the way through. I realise now in one of those serendipitous moments of defeat, which have a habit of dredging up into awareness all manner of unpleasant sensations, that I have to confess something. All along, following me like a shadowed presence, I have been struggling with questions of methodology - its language, its concepts, its rituals – since formalising this project. Only the "grappling" or the "struggling" weakly state what has been a tumultuous ride down cascading contradictions and paradoxes. Like St.Pierre (2018), I discovered postmodernism too late to redesign my project; unlike her, whether foolishly or not others will judge, I have decided to embrace this incursion in my horizon as part of the journey. I should say to be more accurate, that the radical insights that Derrida, Deleuze and others have introduced me to, were not altogether foreign. They invite a whirlwind of questioning where the dry

dust of fundamentalism and received ideas gather in thick layers. However, in their questioning they elicit resistant voices, and dialogues erupt. I welcome that.

3.1.2 Searching for a method.

Observe, how nature is a living book, Unfathomed although not unfathomable…

Goethe, personal communication to Merck, as cited in Richard Friedenthal (2010, p. 107)

3.1.2.1 The research question.

I have already spoken, in Chapter One, about the genesis of the research question. There I described the process, more or less consonant with the heuristic inquiry methodology, of arriving at an articulation of the research problem by borrowing from von Eschenbach's (2015) archetypal question, in the twelfth century legend of Parzival and the Grail. Translated into the community of SWE in the twenty first century, the question focusses attention on selected issues that, I hypothesised, pervade the praxis of SWE in recent times. These issues were identified as a system in transition. Further, I signalled the need to ensoul the question in such a manner that it could bear a sense of "perplexity" (Heidegger, 1953/2001, p. 19) necessary to convey the scope of its questioning, rather than appear as mere instrumentality of unmitigated criticism. Again, I have hinted at this scope with reference to personal and professional events that formed a loose mesh substantiating the question by infusing it with emotionality, embodiment as well as insight and reflexivity. As Romanyshyn (2007) points out, research is a *re-search* for something that has been lost or forgotten. And since the Parzival question is itself the most basic (Heidegger, 1953/2001) of questions, the perplexity concerns "our inability to understand the expression, 'Being'" (p. 19). As Plato reminds us, the source of wisdom is wonder. It is curious that, as simple as the question is, "What troubles you?", a vernacular form of the *Seinsfrage* or the question of Being (Heidegger, 1953/2001), the emplotment of Parzival's failure to ask this question necessitates the conduct of at least half of the book's "adventures" or chapters. One can gather from this that this is far from an ordinary question, whose substance resides in the instrumentality of its utterance. It is rather the gateway for a transformative journey that encompasses self-discovery, prolonged self-abnegation and devotion, and eventual recognition of the deeply veined kinship of humanity. Hence, like Dante's own ambitious psychic adventure, *The Divine Comedy*, crossing the threshold of this Medieval tale, beckons us to our own shadowed being, and to those places in the "imaginal world" (Corbin, 1964) that are often the source of our disquiet, and about which we know very little. Nonetheless, it is unsurprising that we, as citizens of our fateful times, should be drawn to such questions.

It is, also, little wonder that in recent times forms of research have emerged that have self-consciously attempted to delve into the unknown inner wilderness, formulating new offshoots of qualitative inquiry (R. Anderson, 2018): for example, heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990), autoethnography (Ellis et al., 2001), alchemical hermeneutics (Romanyshyn, 2010), and intuitive inquiry (Anderson & Braud, 2011). For Moustakas, the purpose of heuristic research is to facilitate the process of gaining access into the "nature and meaning of experience" and to establish "methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis" (p. 3). For Romanyshyn. a "poetics of research, as opposed to an empirics of research, seeks to offer a plausible insight into the work by staying near it, by inhabiting the work as one might take up dwelling in a house" (2007, p. 11). Further, "metaphoric sensibility" is the cognitive modality best adapted for this type of research process (p. 12). In Esther Meeks' (2011) ruminations on epistemology, attention is given to the "cultural fallout" (p. 17) of the "default epistemology" (p. 23) of Western science and philosophy. By contrast, a form of "epistemological therapy" is called for to rehabilitate ourselves and our place in the world, and to awaken the experience that "knowing is more about transformation than it is about information" (p. 6).

Articulating the question, employing the question, returning again and again to the question over the course of the study, is in each case an event in the journey which, inasmuch as it has served to guide me towards the goals of the research, it has also made use of me for its own articulation, making sure that I do not remain the same as I was when I started it. I have come to see this as a fundamental characteristic of qualitative inquiry. But its significance for the research inquiry is that working with the question is not exhausted at the outset, but arises anew at each stage, with each participant, with each new challenge to analyse their words and reconstruct their stories. It requires as Polanyi (1975/1977) averred, "a completely reflexive-indwelling – a full conviviality with our subject" (p. 63) or to borrow a phrase from Esther Meeks, "blowing the coals of our care" (2011, p. 33). This is a question that I have cared about and continue to care about a good deal, although the nature of the "caring" has shifted since I have stepped outside the circle of Steiner organisations. It remains, as I have said, a matter of wonder and perplexity that lies at the epicentre of the question.

The Parzival question must not be thought of alone as a critical question, in the sense that a wrong is perceived. Rather, and ultimately, it is an invitation to healing, or making whole. The perception of dysfunction or illness must be accompanied by a desire to heal, otherwise the perception itself is morally flawed. If what is pointed out is not accompanied by the impulse to heal then the indication compounds the problem. The key to this riddle is to be found in the consciousness of Parzival, the young fool upon whose shoulders a great responsibility sits, without

his knowing. Had he developed the sense of compassion needed to be able to sense the wounded king's suffering, he might have uttered the healing words. Instead, he was transfixed by the wonderment of this tragic event. How curious that such a tragedy can be "concealed" within such wonder and ostentation?

Hence, the research question must be seen as two inseparable parts:

i. Asking what is wrong, and seeing what has fallen from the condition of health and vitality; *and*

ii. Committing to the impulse to healing what emerges as the source of illness.

Curiously, the Parzival text does not suggest that the first part, asking the question, is an invitation to a lengthy confession or dialogue. Rather it is a performative speech act. Asking the question is the deed. What unfolds from the deed is the healing.

At the same time, Parzival's impulse to heal the wounded king, which grows slowly but definitely after several encounters, each one more stark than the preceding one, does not arise out of any kind of self-knowledge or search for a remedy. Again, the remedy is the wandering that occurs after the momentous "failure" in the Grail Castle. Counter-intuitively, Parzival brings nothing more to the wounded king, when he returns a second time to the castle, than the words that he could have uttered on the first occasion. Furthermore, these are no more than the words that he intended to utter but could not since Gurnemanz's advice sat so deeply in his conscience. But what he brought now, together with those words, was a transformation in his soul powers. The soul and spirit that spoke the words for the first time bore not only the awareness of Amfortas' deep suffering but also the love and compassion to heal the wound that was carried by the entire Grail community. Hence, it was the relationships that formed the community, and not a single human being, that formed the site of the healing words. Like the researcher, Parzival is changed in his quest; like Parzival, the researcher must be prepared to receive deep, soul-stirring change to arrive at her quest. As will become apparent throughout this thesis, transformation or renewal figures as a leitmotiv crisscrossing the direction of the study and winding its way into many of the key subplots. It is tempting even to say that it is the protagonist of the drama.

3.1.2.2 An emerging method.

When I began to research qualitative methodologies, the form of inquiry that made the most impression on me was "intuitive inquiry," an approach to research that legitimizes the use of non-linear, non-rational means of data collection. As its name betrays, it is particularly concerned with working intuitively in 'honouring the archetypal, symbolic, imaginal, and the possible latent in

all human experience' (Anderson & Braud, 2011, p. 17). Like the heuristic methodology, its starting point is the biographical locus of the wound that alerts the researcher to the presence of a living and embedded mystery, which in time becomes an invitation to do re-search, to recover in the buried folds of flesh, a new meaning that promises self-transformation and living renewal.

Researching intuitive inquiry made my heart sing with joy. Every word and every insight resounded with an inner sense of what I was seeking to achieve with the research project. However, at that point in my project, without quite understanding why, I deemed that my topic was not suited to intuitive inquiry. With hindsight, I can see that the focus of intuitive inquiry tended to lie with phenomena or experiences that were difficult to describe or even observe through other, more conventional forms of qualitative inquiry, and yet straightforward to circumscribe. At the time, that did not seem the case with my own inquiry. However, ironically, I *now* realise that the *form* taken by my research project bears notable similarities to the structure of the intuitive inquiry. Further, the *spirit* of intuitive inquiry is at least an ally, if not an inspiration along the way. Without realising it, my understanding of what I was undertaking was being framed by the intuitive process – a hermeneutic self-study (heuristic) that drew strongly on other modes of knowing, including intuition, dreamwork, and imaginal use of metaphor, in addition to deliberate forms of coding and classification. Nevertheless, this is not altogether surprising given Anderson and Braud's (2011) admission that intuitive inquiry was created "in order to carve creative space or capacity within scientific inquiry for the active contributions of intuitive insights" (p. 69). In other words, it is recommended, wherever fitting, to apply some of the epistemological strategies used in that form of inquiry, including the use of guided meditations as a way of connecting intuitive modes of knowing with the content and challenges of the various stages of the methodology.

Furthermore, I was so moved by the intuitive inquiry method that certain features remained firmly etched in my itinerary. For example, the use of "hermeneutic lenses" (Anderson & Braud, 2011, p. 42) arising out of the Literature Review (Cycle 2), the appeal to aesthetic connection for the formulation of the research question (Cycle 1), the license to work intuitively and to incorporate a range of modes of knowing throughout the whole project. And perhaps the most direct and influential impulse was the notion that the "wound" was the gateway between the inner drive and the external content of the project. It is certainly not without irony that only now as I am writing the Methodology chapter I come to acknowledge what my unconscious always knew. By way of these reflective meditations I aim only to characterise this study in its immediacy.

3.2 Epistemological Considerations

3.2.1 Situating the study.

The ambiguity surrounding discussions of methodology in contemporary qualitative inquiry parallels the surge in new methods and the differentiation of older approaches. For some researchers this represents one of its greatest strengths (Higgs & Cherry, 2009), whereas for others it leads to an "embarrassment of choices" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 20) and a "blurring of genres" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 254). These conditions, together with the gaining legitimization of postmodern paradigms (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003), invariably leads to new questions about methodology. This is graphically illustrated in Martyn Hammersley's (2011) provocatively titled, *Methodology: Who needs it?* Increasingly the shift is occurring from considerations about methodology to epistemological and ontological questions (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Grant & Onsaloo, 2017; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) emphasise the need to establish "theoretical" and "conceptual frameworks" as critical preliminary steps in the research process. However, even the notion of "theoretical",[83] let alone the more transparent "framework", is underpinned by a metaphorical patterning that predetermines the methodological approach. The architectural metaphor employed by Grant and Onsaloo (2017) validates the notion of design based on the relationship between a building blueprint and the actual construction of the building. The relationship is programmatic and mechanical. Compare this to Creswell's (2007) characterisation of qualitative study as "an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colours, different textures, and various blends of material." The loom that holds together these manifold threads are "worldviews and perspectives" (p. 35).

Further, consider St.Pierre's (2018) insistence that "post qualitative inquiry" is focussed on "things in the making" not on "things already made up" (p. 2). The ecology of cognition and living experience with which we isolate the phenomenon under investigation, not only influences how we perceive the phenomenon, it changes it in the process. A builder will perhaps acknowledge that they too have established a relationship with their construction. I do not wish to compare one thematic view of the research inquiry with another, but merely to identify the intimacy that enters into this relationship, which underpins its instrumentality, and encourages a more respectful, interactive reciprocity between researcher and researched.

[83] Refer to Appendix B: Methodology as Journey Metaphor.

In this spirit of reciprocal inquiry, where the researcher is as much researching as being researched, I try to put aside the rigid, three-dimensional physical structures that are often employed to represent the research process, and instead wish to invoke processes that drift in space and time, echoing between physical and non-physical realities, between the finite here and the infinite there,[84] and particularly offering to dwell in our inner dimensions of being. Such processes are inherently creative, and notoriously hard to circumscribe.

To cite one example: the German multi-instrumentalist, world-music composer, Stefan Micus' approach to composition is most likely not unique, although it is perhaps reflective of the tradition of wandering musicians who perform a kind of reverse colonialism, by absorbing the musical culture of a place, learning its instrumentation, and then returning to their home culture with new musical languages, and giving birth to unexpected artistic synergies.[85]

I take from Micus' musicology, an awareness that human phenomena are always cast against a wider and greater background, where wide rhythms of life and regeneration complete their unimaginable cycles. When exploring human life experience, the researcher, and Micus confessedly sees himself as such, will invariably brush past these interminable movements that cannot be seen, even if we discern the marks they leave behind. Yet even this fleeting experience is enough to swell our enthusiasm for inquiry, assuring us that the greatest mysteries are only one breath away from uncovering.

Micus' musical philosophy may perhaps be translated onto the research field as the mindful experiencing of research as a kind of thoughtful and embodied communication between the researcher/observer and the world through which she travels and explores. The twin foci of the eternal and the transient permit a dynamic to work within the field of perception and experience of the researcher. These twin presences presence their being in the experiencing body of the

---

[84] See reference to projective geometry, in footnote no. 2, p. 3 in Chapter One.

[85] The following passage captures an essential aspect of Micus' musicological "methodology":

> Some years ago, while travelling in a bus in Nepal it became clear to me how the perfect music should be. It was a very strong experience. We were driving through a valley at quite low altitude, maybe four to five hundred meters. In that area the landscape was very fertile. There were rice fields, water buffalos, children, trees, parrots and colourful villages full of vibrant life. Behind all of that one could see the mountains standing seven, eight thousand meters high, an inhospitable zone where no one can live. They appeared to be a symbol of eternity and with their shining snow peaks, also of purity. These two things side by side, colourful life and the eternal pure and unreachable, sometimes one dominating, sometimes the other, struck me to be the image of perfect music. The two opposites complemented one another; the fields would not have been so interesting without the mountains, and the mountains without the fields simply too cold. In my music I intend to have both of these elements present, the love of life's emotions and this dimension of the eternal, unreachable. Music which emphasizes only one of these aspects becomes either too sweet or too cold. The perfect balance of course, will appear for each listener to be in another place.' *From an interview with the magazine "Die Bühne", Austria* (ECM, 2019).

researcher, offering illumination as well as tragedy, insight as well as emptiness. This juxtapositioning echoes Silverman's (2007) advice that qualitative research give expression to the extraordinary, or put it in the converse, that nothing, however mundane, is regarded as ordinary and uninteresting, in the realm of human experience. Indeed, from the reverberative perspective described by Micus, there is nothing ordinary that is not on the other side of the sensorium, a longing for the infinite. It is hoped that the researcher will learn to dwell in a tensioned field that is resonant with the being of the eternal as it is with the being of the transient.

3.2.2 Critical junctures.

> Questions are paths toward an answer. If the answer could be given it would consist in a transformation of thinking, not in a propositional statement about a matter at stake. (Heidegger, 1977, p. 373)

Heidegger's mythopoetic understanding of inquiry is echoed in Shotter's (2006, 2008) notion of the performative nature of both question and answer. There the emphasis shifts from the representational (with its Cartesian overtones) to the relational, signifying the emergence of dialogic, heteroglottal modes of discourse (Bakhtin, 1981). This is what I have tried to convey in this chapter: methodologies are discourses. Like Micus' musical eclecticism, they can be shared, partitioned and may participate in creative dialogues that do not remain confined within any particular language.

> A view of knowledge that acknowledges that the sphere of knowledge is wider than the sphere of "science" seems to me to be a cultural necessity if we are to arrive at a sane and human view of ourselves or of science.
>
> Hilary Putnam, *Meaning and the Moral Sciences* (as cited in, Bernstein, 2011, p. 2)

The concern articulated by Putnam is encapsulated in "the opposition between objectivism and relativism." This opposition betrays an "underlying anxiety" about further binaries such as, "rationality versus irrationality, objectivity versus subjectivity, realism versus antirealism" (p. 2). The sense of "urgency" with which both authors approach this theme is carried over into this study. Towards this end, I have tried to find movement between these binaries, without any wish to discard them, because I believe they have heuristic value when they work collaboratively, rather than only adversarially.

The underlying epistemological direction of this study issues from two currents of philosophical thinking that encompass some similarities whilst retaining important and dynamic differences. On the one hand, I have long admired the *phenomenological* tradition; its focus on direct experience and the application of multi-modal observation have resonated with my poetical

and contemplative orientation towards life. Likewise, and especially through prolonged immersion in media studies, literature, and comparative philology, largely arising out of my work as a high school teacher, I have come to appreciate the seemingly inescapable mesh of *social constructionist* knowledge. Nonetheless, I am not unsettled by the obvious contradictory juxtapositioning of the experiences of "discovery" and "construction" which cleave to the two philosophical traditions. At times, it seems to me that the world or life does indeed reveal things to me, or that I discover something that I was unaware of before. Similarly, the experience of seeing the world anew leads to a new construction of reality. The two, though apparently opposite in their ontological and epistemological positioning, seem to me to work hand in hand. In fact, their collaborative functioning is instantiated and substantiated by Tang and Joiner's (2011) characterisation of "differences-transcending" as a fundamental moment in "synergic inquiry" or Esbjörn's "capacity to tolerate opposing forces within oneself" (as cited in Anderson & Braud, 2011, p. 62) which arises in intuitive inquiry. The tensions aroused in holding on to the differences between these positions gives rise to "the development of new and practical strategies that manifest expanded consciousness, which in turn enhances the transformative journey" (Tang & Joiner, 2011, p. 69). I am also moved by Kenneth Gergen's view that "constructionism is basically a dialogue, that is, a meaningful exchange between speakers, a social event, a co-active process" (as cited in, Aceros, 2012, p. 1003).

As I have shown in the Chapter One, the scaffold methodology employed in this study is heuristic inquiry. Moustakas' (1990) advice to intending heuristic researchers is to let the "the research question and the methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration" (p. 11). In other words, the *how* of the journey (the *hodos*) is contained within the *what* of the burning question living within the researcher. The deliberate focus is therefore the human subjectivity of the researcher. What is normally kept out of traditional, positivist approaches to scientific investigation is here welcomed, embraced and honoured. This parallels Gadamer's (1979) assertion that what is typically maligned as 'prejudice' provides an entry point into the interpretive process as 'presupposition'. Gadamer theorises "prejudices as conditions of understanding" (245ff) – that is, as "fore-structures" that place us historically in a situation, within a delimiting horizon (269). Understanding a text, another person, or a situation, always involves a shifting of our own horizon (Linge, as cited in, Gadamer, 1977, p. xxi).

"I begin the heuristic investigation," Moustakas tells us, "with my own self-awareness and explicate that awareness" (1990, p. 11). He avers that there exists "an unshakable connection" (p. 12) between what is apprehended as phenomenon and what is inwardly experienced as "reflective thought, feeling, and awareness" (p. 12). The same attitude is manifest in Anderson's intuitive

inquiry: “human subjectivity is a source of knowing, not dismissible as solipsistic expression or opinion” (Anderson & Braud, 2011, p. 64). Hence, the working epistemological commitment underpinning the study is that prolonged, considered and contemplative immersion into subjectivity can lead to valuable knowledge. Dahlin and Majorek (2008) and Dahlin (2009) argue that this is an initial step leading towards “pure thinking” (Kühlewind, 2008, 2011; Mosmuller, 2013, 2016; Riccio, 2016; Scaligero, 1964/2001, 2015; Steiner, 1897/1928), at which point the subjective/objective binary appears as a function of thinking itself. Echoing Steiner and Heidegger, Dahlin and Marjorek remind us that, in general, “we do not know what it means to think” (p. 1). What is ordinarily considered to be thinking is the (largely) passive process of having thoughts. Thinking, as a dynamic agency that the human being is capable of, is something else: the conscious creation of thoughts (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994). The possibility remains that the capacity for thinking, which lives in us as unfinished potential, can indeed unite human and non-human worlds in mutual, reciprocal dialogue.[86] As Heidegger (1957/1969)said:

> A belonging to Being prevails within man [sic], a belonging which listens to Being because it is appropriated to Being…. For it is man, open toward Being, who alone lets Being arrive as presence… Man and Being are appropriated to each other. They belong to each other (p. 31).

I now wish to focus on certain concepts that consistently (and perhaps unavoidably) emerge in methodological literature. The basis of the qualitative “revolution” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1995, p. ix) in the social sciences, especially, is founded on a number of “turns” that have come to characterise our postmodern world (Gidley, 2012), including the “narrative” (Ricoeur, 1984-1988)and “linguistic” (Fendler, 2012) turns. In our present day, we even hear of a “post truth” phase in contemporary global history. Casper Grathwohl (as cited in, BBC News, 2016) from Oxford Dictionaries, has labelled the 2016 international word of the year (that is, “post truth”), “one of the defining words of our time.” It is symptomatic of the asynchronous cycles that engage academic knowledge generation, on the one hand, and public opinion, on the other, that the Oxford Dictionaries has formalised what has been argued vehemently in certain academic quarters for the last few decades and can be traced back at least to Lyotard (1997), if not to Nietzsche’s (1992) seminal essay, “Truth and falsity in their extramoral sense,” written in 1873.

---

[86] The ‘phonosemantic’ view of language, developed in recent times by the linguist Margaret Magnus (2001, 2010), posits that phonemes are intrinsically descriptive, that is they describe physical and non-physical phenomena. Her PhD dissertation established that this view has accompanied the long lineage of Western philosophy since Plato’s *Cratylus*. It is also enhanced by recent work on the natural origins of language (Changizi, 2011), and by, among others, Kühlewind (1986), Barfield (1978), Heidegger (1971) and Vernon (2019).

Particularly in the field of qualitative inquiry, we are reminded over and again, that "truth" or "reality" or "objectivity" are no longer possible, or even desirable. And whilst some researchers (Alvesson, 1995; Kitching, 2008) welcome the liberation from "totalizing frameworks" (Alvesson, 1995, p. 1055) and the renewed creativity unleashed by postmodern thinking on methodology, they also challenge some of the consequences. Particularly concerning is the notion that postmodern critique aims to be only "parasitic" (Rorty, as cited in Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009, p. 205) without offering alternatives of new modes of research. The attempt to expose postmodernism (a loose term that is generally aimed at late twentieth century French philosophy) reached a peak in the so-called "Sokal affair" (Sokal, 2008), a literary hoax perpetrated by the American physicist, Alan Sokal. There is something telling, if unedifying about the theatre of academic debate, in this case, between proponents of positivism and realism, and those of social constructionism and relativism, that descends into polarized polemic. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) wisely, in my view, suggest that it would be more productive to engage in dialogue, acknowledging the ground under each position, and perhaps refine the inquiry towards "how much of reality is interpreted, and how" (p. 211). Gergen (2001) echoes this conciliatory solution, promoting a refreshing form of plurality in our thinking: "One need not be religious to appreciate the beauty of a medieval cathedral or grow up in Japan to enjoy sushi" (p.13). This is also the intent of "synergic inquiry," a definitely staged process of research that shifts from knowledge of self and other, towards holding differences and finally, transcending differences. The last stage is achieved, not by hegemonising the binary, self and other, but by "growing" a form of consciousness that can live within contradiction. And, as Hammersley (2015) argues, denial of self-knowledge or direct knowledge of ourselves and the world, however flawed, is to invite "complete epistemological scepticism" (p. 26).

In Heidegger's epigraph opening this section of the chapter, we can discern two contrasting views of knowledge: the transformative and the representational. Simply, these two views characterise the duality considered at the outset of this study, between the emergent ways of knowing and the "default epistemology." Depending on which view is afforded, traditional concepts such as "truth", "knowledge", "reality", "objectivity" or "subjectivity", will evoke quite different meanings. The differences are, of course, attributable to the context. The representational view of thinking, expressed in the correspondence theory of truth, affirms that the proposition is the bearer of knowledge. This is validated in the articulation of the proposition. Interestingly, this is reflected in the legal term "sentence" which confirms the decision of the court. The judgment, although it bears the "representation of truth," is itself not efficacious. It is its communication to the convicted through the agencies of power that sustain this model of truth, that authenticates this notion. The

agencies of power, such as the justice and penal systems, the police force and the state, are essential to this process. This system parallels the religious system with its theological doctrines and dogmas, and the coercive extension of power through church hierarchy. Again, the power of knowledge or truth does not reside in the statement or in the representation of truth, but in the exercise of power that "justifies" the statement. Whereas, in the case of transformative knowledge, there is no appeal to an external power or agency. The power of the transformation lies in the experience itself. It is the encounter with the other, with the world, with life, with reality, with truth, which impresses the power of transformation.[87] Arguably, the power, and hence the possibility of transformation exists everywhere there is dialogue between human beings or with the non-human world.

To deny veracity to the power of transformation, inherent in human experience, is, I believe, an act of cultural nihilism, since much of the power of literature, what is admired with broad appeal, is precisely its capability to deliver to us insights and embodied experiences of the human condition in its actuality.[88] This is what echoes in Solzhenitsyn's (2014) eponymous acceptance speech to gaining the Nobel prize for literature in 1970: "One word of truth outweighs the world" (np). I fear that the postmodern reaction to the traumas of the 20th century, if it does not move beyond mere denial, may lead us further away from the "truth" and from perceiving our human condition. For, whilst we may rail against the moral excesses of capitalism and indeed science, we would wisely account for these excesses in the "default epistemology" that allows us to marginalise the other or to devalue the world spread out before us. But to doubt our capacity for knowledge or that we might arrive at an understanding of ourselves and our lives, would seem to me to court even more disaster. As I said above, if literature teaches us anything of value, it is the importance of truth, a vital substance without which our body, soul and spirit would become impoverished.

The search, that I have initiated with this study, is aimed at uncovering truth as *alitheia* (Heidegger, 1972). It is a gesture of hope, of intention and above all, of waiting, for such truth cannot be prised by its roots. Like the Grail, it cannot be found by seeking. Prosaically, this is the

---

[87] The epiphany of Saul on the road to Damascus (Bock, 2005), or Emperor Maxen (The Mabinogion, 1985)on the eve of the barbarian invasion of Rome are examples in history and legend that demonstrate the principle of transformation in experience. Further afield, the world of fairy and folk tales are replete with the same principle as a stable narrative feature. It is, of course, also prominent in the 'hero's journey' of Joseph Campbell (1993)

[88] Consider, for example, how the essential truths of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (for example, lust for power, susceptibility to self-fulfilling prophecy, destructiveness of inner conflict) are rendered into a geographically and temporally distant culture, namely Kurosawa's *Throne of blood* (1957). I'm not sure that the historical drama that is compressed into 'world literature' can be easily dismissed with supervening concepts of 'power' or 'hegemony', or reduced to apparently simplistic privileging binaries. This is an instance of the very totalizing of theory that postmodernism seeks to uproot.

"illumination" that Moustakas speaks of as the fourth act in the heuristic drama. The "enlightening" of *alitheia* cannot occur through intellectual grasping, but through our "comportment" towards Being, we may be invited into its territory, to dwell there in waiting and pondering, weighing its existence with our questioning. In other words, seeking such transformative knowledge is an event in our biography.

My intent here is to give account of a reflexive attempt to map out the territory within which this study occurs, insofar as that is possible. I am aware the very purpose of research is to bring us closer and deeper into the unknown. If it merely operated in the realm of the known, then what would be gained? Hence, the notion of 'truth' here is central to the task. Truth represents what can be 'trusted'. What is tendered as evidence, not in the pragmatic sense, but in the sense of what is revealed and becomes visible or discernible (cf Latin, *e-videre*, to make visible). It is not concerned however with establishing grand narratives or claiming universality or authority.

This imaginative rendering of the being of truth also finds reflection in the mystical verse of Mabel Collins (1885/1971):

> These rules were written for all disciples; attend thou to them!
> Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears.
> Before the ear can hear it must have lost its sensitiveness.
> Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters,
> it must have lost the power to wound.
> Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters,
> its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart (p. 1).

To this end, I have deliberately sought to instigate a series of dialogues that might generate transformative stories. Of course, this is an ambitious goal. Further, my wish that SWE changes for what I regard as her betterment will always remain individual, personal and subjective. I have seen close up how error can pile upon error, all the while I thought I was doing good. However, there is also a sense in which transformation becomes a matter of process, something that is set in motion, even though its destination cannot be predetermined. The study does not aim to establish a set of representational statements that approximate the truth or reality of SWE, however such statements might appear, let alone what authority would compel their acceptance or belief. It does, however, set out to generate stories that can offer insights into the nature of SWE in the present day, and that can illuminate possibilities of change and renewal within this system of alternative education. Moreover, the story is perhaps the most effective and moral vehicle available for transformation (Buber, 1961). I have tried to show that to realise these outcomes, it is necessary to embrace the

shared subjectivity that allows dialogue to kindle and engage deeply and honestly with lived experiences.

3.2.3 Methodological pluralism.

It is with no small measure of recognition that I read in Grbich (2004) that "notions of complexity and chaos… have emerged strongly and are currently being used to underpin both scientific and social research" (p. 52). This commentary on the nature of contemporary qualitative research certainly echoes my own experiences over the last five years of this study. It is customary to read that qualitative research is "messy" and "unpredictable" (Bochner, 2000, p. 267) and that the notions of linearity and deliberate design do not adequately account for what actually takes place in the field. Kathleen Gallagher (2008) also speaks to this situation, indicating that "wrestling with dilemmas of methodology has provided me with some of the greatest sources of clarity in this ongoing quest to resist the facile binaries of thought and action" which are implied in the "artificial bifurcation of art and science" (p. 67).

From the start, guided by a question or questions that resisted definite articulation, I sought a methodology or methodologies that resonated in a largely intuitive, embodied sense with the research problem as it lived in me. This approach is encouraged in much of the qualitative inquiry literature (R. Anderson & Braud, 2011; Lamont & Swidler, 2014; Moustakas, 1990) and is axiomatic in "post qualitative" research. Finding a way of shifting the questions and problems into the light so that an inquiry could be developed and undertaken has always seemed to rely on the resonance between this embodied sense of the research task and the "feel" of the various methodologies that I investigated. In other words, without my being aware of this process as clear conscious activity, a dialogue had already started between an embodied cognition and the cast of methodologies.

This methodological dialogue preceded the formal design process, but in a very real way, it has never dissipated. Through the five years that I have been working on this project, I have produced over a hundred of pages of what I have called methodological "tesserae", brief reflections of various aspects of methodology that emerged from data analysis or from an ongoing dialogue with the journey (*methodos*). Moreover, these dialogues are not instrumental, but intrinsic, for their own sake, like a parallel study about the nature of research, knowledge, and self.

In the course of these reflections, I have come to view methodology as a kind of language, a way of dialoguing with the world, but also a way of identifying myself as a researcher, of reflecting aspects of myself, or occluding others. They are ways of traveling: meticulously observant, like a keen landscape photographer, or joyously admiring the folds of hills, the lustre of foliage, like an

artist. But also, the rollicking joyousness of the child, maybe pursuing butterflies or sheep, without seeming regard for the aesthetic qualities of the countryside. Indeed, perhaps, there are at least as many ways of moving through a landscape as there are types of "intelligences" or ways of knowing. In a way, it is also an invitation to becoming, to showing oneself to the world, and being in the world, being with the fullness of being. Dialoguing with different methodologies, or even between methodologies, creates a broader language, a more inclusive language that allows different methodologies to speak together. I have become increasingly interested in understanding and working with postmodern theorists such as Derrida and Deleuze. I'm also aware that there appears to be a widening gap between "humanist" and "post" qualitative inquiry (St Pierre, 2011, 2018), but also at the same time, an infiltration of postmodern concepts into "traditional" qualitative discourse. My experience of working with qualitative methodologies leads me to think that commensurability is more likely than incommensurability, as it is in human social-cultural-linguistic discourse.

In the following section, I discuss in more detail each of the methodologies that I have found helpful throughout the course of this study. In each case, I try to locate those features or aspects of the methodological "languages" that have been employed, including concepts, methods and attitudes. Later, in Chapter Five (where the methodological cornucopia is most evident) I discuss further this broadening of the methodological base in order to meet the demands and challenges of individual interviews. This discussion mirrors the accompanying "methodological reflexivities" that were sketched side by side with many of the individual analyses, almost as ethnographic meta-reflections.

3.3 The Heuristic Inquiry

3.3.1 Rationale.

The nature of the musing and the questioning which led finally to the Parzival question brought me to edge of the next stage of the journey: how will I find an adequate answer to this question? I knew that I had wanted to involve other teachers, to speak with them, to discuss their insights, to broaden my own understanding, to hear their stories. But the questions that emerged now were different, more searching, more abstract than before. Looking for a methodology begins with searching oneself again, but now differently, for a "way of seeing", or a "way of being". What did I expect to find upon asking other teachers? Confirmation of my own beliefs, my own thoughts, my prejudices and anxieties? Would I come full circle and collapse into myself even before the study got underway? I realised that the reality of the wound, what made me fit for the study, also acted as a dead weight. I would take one or two steps forward, gaining insights into the process, asking

worthwhile questions only to collapse back onto myself with prefabricated statements of my guiltlessness, my naivete, my recriminations, all signs that I was still trapped in an unhappy past. And yet this was precisely what kept me from finding the way through. In Dante's *inferno,* the entry to the cavern, the beginning of the journey, was barred by three mythic beasts, representatives of the soul's vulnerabilities: fear, hatred and doubt. I was paralysed by each one in equal measure. Does Moustakas (1990) not say that early into the journey of inquiry, there takes place an encounter with one's own shadows?

> You see the beast that forced me to retreat;
> Save me from her, I beg you, famous sage,
> She makes me tremble, the blood throbs in my veins.
>
> "But your journey must be down another road,"
> He answered, when he saw me lost in tears,
> "If ever you hope to leave this wilderness;
>
> This beast, the one you cry in fear,
> Allows no soul to succeed along her path
> She blocks his way and puts an end to him."
> Alighieri (1995, p. 21)

I have had many guides along the way, but at the early stage that I'm now describing, as I listlessly and somewhat naively searched for a ready-made methodology, a recipe to show me the way through, I came upon my own Virgil, in the form of Rosemarie Anderson (Anderson & Braud, 2011). From the moment I saw the title and cover of the book, *Transforming Self and Others Through Research*, I began to have embodied responses in a way unlike reading other books or material on methodology. The very simple but profound message of the title spoke to me directly, viscerally but also intellectually. I recognised that I was searching for my own transformation, beautifully rendered in the artwork of the cover page depicting a butterfly. But I was also buoyed by the notion that others might experience their own transformations as a result of participating in my research project, as well as those who might happen upon the study after its completion. This prospect filled me with great hope and anticipation that this would be a worthwhile project. Of course, I had heard others, some former colleagues, or friends in the Steiner movement, or outside it, express these sentiments, but they did not touch me in the same way as now, through the voice of an experienced, creative and fearless researcher who had forged new territory in the great unknown wilderness that skirts the small clearings of research inquiry.

"Then he moved on, and I moved close behind him" (Alighieri, 1995, p. 22).

There were several key insights of Anderson's "intuitive inquiry"[89] that made sense to me:

i. The recognition of the "wound" (Romanyshyn, 2007) as the starting point for earnest transpersonal research;

ii. The inclusivity of multiple modes of knowing in the cognitional methodology; and

iii. The intimation that intuitive research, what Romanyshyn calls "research with soul in mind" (2007, p. 11), is actually a sacred ritual, since it connects the most deeply spiritual in the human being with the most deeply spiritual in nature. Here we find an echo of the beckoning call of the Ephesian Mysteries, as Steiner describes them:
"Speak, O Man, and thou revealest through thyself, the evolution of the world" (Steiner, 1989, p. 52)

Recognising the significance of these insights gave me a sense of freedom and fearlessness that helped me gain both an appreciation of and access to the concerns of research methodology. Whilst Moustakas' heuristic framework seemed fitting to dealing with a research problem that arced back into some intensely lived experiences in SW schools and Steiner organisations, I admitted to myself that it would not be sufficient to frame the entire research project. To begin with, a large part of the project entailed interviewing teachers and hence, working narratively with the transcripts. Furthermore, narrative inquiry is such as broad field of qualitative research that the question of analytic methods or techniques involves canvassing many potential candidates. Hence, I dabbled with not a few, including deconstruction (Derrida, 1976/1997, 1978) and postmodern hermeneutics (Ricoeur, 1984-1988, 2016). More recently, I have exposed myself more and more to postmodern, post qualitative thinking (Freeman et al., 2007; Lather, 1991, 2013; Lather & St.Pierre, 2013; St.Pierre, 2011, 2013, 2018; Taguchi & St.Pierre, 2017) with unexpected and exciting results. In time, it became self-evident that the journey (what I have rendered as the *methodos*, the search for meaning) does indeed take many turns.

3.3.2 The six stages of heuristic inquiry.

> There is no substitute for direct, comprehensive, accurate first-person accounts of experience, for the importance of self-inquiry and self-dialogue in discovering the nature and meaning of one's own experience and that of others. (Moustakas, 1990, p. 90)

[89] This topic is also discussed above on pp. 115-116.

3.3.2.1 Initial engagement.

At this early stage, the researcher is urged to find the research question or problem in his biography. Indeed, Moustakas tells us that this has to be "lifted" (p. 13) from within, as though lying in the body like a sunken treasure. Surprisingly, when the rescue operation began, access to the problem or question seemed quite straightforward. There were unmistakeable clues: the "wound" of leaving the school, the journal "essays" that tried to catalogue the problems I encountered at the school, and the exultation of completing the "Flagship Program", a leadership course I had undertaken in the final year of my teaching and leading at the school.

Of course, there was also the fortuitous encounter with Parzival. The insight came in the course of retelling the story, which I had started two or three years before resigning from the school. The "insight" was singular, but it was in the nature of this intuition that its roots reached into the dark recesses of the story, where I imagine further connections and elucidations lay in waiting. From these "influences" came separate themes or questions:

i. The Parzival question: "What ails thee?"
ii. The sense that SWE was in need of renewal; and
iii. That its potential was unfulfilled.

The personal dimension within which this initial engagement took place was composed of very mixed feelings about my professional experiences at the school. I felt, as I said, deeply wounded, coupled with a sense of betrayal. I had grown alienated from a school that I had come to love. This, despite never feeling that I really belonged. I had come to realise also that neither was I allowed to belong. As one of the school leaders said, at a significant College meeting, addressing me: "it must be difficult for someone to come to our school who does not feel himself part of our karmic community." Many years later, his wife (also a teacher at the school) wrote to me and affirmed that her husband had indeed tried to "get rid of me many times before," without success. Of course, that statement also affirmed the support of those teachers and parents (and students) that wanted me to stay. However, in the final stages of my tenure, it all seemed to count for nothing. The forces of reaction, literally wanting to unwind developments that had been made, were overwhelming and unstoppable.

The end of my teaching life at the school signalled a larger end – an association with anthroposophical organisations that stretched back for thirty years. This phase was also the incubation of a slow death to my marriage of twenty years. Apart from the emotional scars, there were numerous questions, giving voice to my restless confusions and bewilderments. Perhaps, supervening all others was the question, what is happening with my life? What had happened at the

school? Why did other teachers and parents not speak up more vehemently against the reactionary voices that gradually drowned everyone else out? How could such subterfuge and deception go unnoticed? It began to dawn on me that I had made some large mistakes. Did I overestimate my ability to steer the school through the common debris of decay, corruption and ineptitude? And did I expect too much from open rational dialogue? Should I have realised that deep currents of emotion and vulnerability ran through hidden veins of the school community? Could I have done things differently? What could I have done differently? Was this after all just unavoidable?

Only in separating from the school did I begin to feel in my own body the sense of liberation that had lain in waiting for me. Despite all the effort, and the optimism, and the shared vision of a few colleagues, the experience of being at the school had become toxic for me. Perhaps I too, in turn, had become toxic for the school? The air began to clear. The culmination of the Flagship Program, and particularly working on the final paper, a 5000-word essay, whetted my appetite for academic inquiry. It also offered a gateway through which I might be able to work through the many unresolved feelings and thoughts.

I have to mention, as an expression of gratitude, the encouragement of an old friend, Joanna who had not long before completed her PhD. Her incitement was that I should aim higher (I was planning on converting a large essay on my experiences in SWE into an article and submitting it to a popular SWE journal) and undertake a doctoral study. She offered her support and encouragement mainly by acknowledging that this type of critical study was definitely needed. Having been a SW teacher herself, with many other connections to the anthroposophical movement, and continuing to work out of the philosophy, but now in dramatherapy, she was ably situated to offer this feedback.

Arriving at the question is only the beginning of the process of framing a research question. In my case, the question was already there, waiting, in the story of Parzival, and before that in the brief journal writings I'd made in late 1990s, and also in the many lived experiences working in SWE. The fact that something was wrong with SWE and the anthroposophical movement, in general, was already evident to me in the mid-1990s. However, what to do with this question? With this "knowledge"? A kind of abeyance existed before the initial engagement, a long living in the body of circumstances before the active re-searching (Romanyshyn, 2007) for what had become lost. This is soul work, as much as it is intellectual labour, and signals a fundamental aspect of the heuristic process: it is self-transformative (Moustakas, 1990, p. 9). Fundamental to this transformative activity is the construction of a story - the researcher's story. "When a story is formed with the embedded wholes of the transformation in it, the story itself contains the power to transform anyone who dares to surrender to the listening" (Sela-Smith, 2002, p. 64) Or as Moustakas (1990) put it,

"Allowing all aspects to come into awareness is essential to the eventual formulation of a clear question" (p. 41). Forming the question is an event in the journey. It matters perhaps less what the question is, and rather more how it sits within the constellation of biographical moments in the researcher's life. Echoing Goethe,[90] the question is not the beginning but the awakening that we are underway, and that we have long before left our home.

3.3.2.2 Immersion.

In this second stage, the researcher "lives the question" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). There is a strange metamorphosis that occurs here. The question is no longer contained within me, but rather becomes itself the vessel that sustains my everyday life. Could this be the awakening to the reality and being of the archetype that Jung spoke of (Romanyshyn, 2007, pp. 37-38)? This decentring of the ego is tantamount to a decentring of subjectivity. In other words, the self undergoes a transformative experience in and through the research process. The phenomenon and the researcher are both object and subject. As in the case of poetry, the words find their way to the surface, not through the efforts of the poet's personality (Eliot, 1921),[91] but by virtue of the latter's occlusion. A strange alchemy is at work in both cases. The self becomes the stage upon which the world reveals itself, not as an object for study but as a revelation that acts on the self and reverberates beyond the epiphanic moment. Knowledge is thereby not gained or collected but becomes apparent in the changed demeanour of the self, in its renewed relationship to itself and to the world. Research "with soul in mind" is no longer disinterested or objective in the traditional sense of these words, but it acts to implicate the self, more deeply *in* the world, and it achieves this precisely by de-objectivising the attitude of the self towards the world. Rather the self is engaged in an act of self-surrender, which is deeply subjective, in order to find itself "in the world," no longer a putative "part" of it, but made of the same "flesh" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964/1995). According to Abram (1997), this was the primal condition of humanity in the pre-literate phase of human development.

According to Douglass and Moustakas (as cited in Moustakas, 1990)

> learning that proceeds heuristically has a path of its own. It is self-directed, self-motivated, and open to spontaneous shift. It defies the shackles of convention and tradition. … It pushes beyond the known, the expected, or the merely possible. Without the restraining leash of formal hypotheses, and free from external methodological structures that limit awareness or channel it, the one who searches heuristically may draw upon the perceptual powers afforded by … direct experience (p. 17).

---

[90] Cf Chapter One, footnote 23.

[91] "The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" (Eliot, 1921, Section 1)

This stage of the heuristic inquiry bears similarities to the literature review. However, the notion of what is written needs to be extended to include what experience herself inscribes on our bodies, the invisible markings that become visible when the psyche becomes conscious in the imaginal world (Corbin, 1964).[92] Given the emphasis laid on the inner dimension of the research problem (at least in these early stages), this phase takes on a hermeneutic character. The immersion in one's memories, thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, intuitions and dreams, is coupled to the external immersion in the literature around the phenomenon under investigation. From each side, from within and from without, stimulus can arise that initiates further paths of discovery, as indicated above. Living with the question means living with the phenomenon. This means that dimensions of the phenomenon gradually open towards the periphery, through conversations, casual encounters, or observations, hearing an interview, catching a piece of music or a poem, noticing the flight of a bird, or the laughter of children, in short encountering layers of reflection across a number of domains of human activity: aesthetic, natural, social, economic, political, psychological, philosophical and spiritual. In this way, the immersion helps to complete the hermeneutic circle, where "understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth" also enables "growing self-awareness and self-knowledge" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 9). Interestingly, this circle finds expression also in Steiner's descriptive "definition" of anthroposophy: "anthroposophy is a path of knowledge to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe" (Steiner, 2007a, p. 13)

3.3.2.3 Incubation.

The phase of incubation is a "retreat from the intense, concentrated focus on the question" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). The gesture at work here is that of detachment. However, this need not be seen exclusively as a kind of inner sleep. Rather, the researcher becomes removed from the preoccupation with self by extending the gesture of immersion into the world, and literally into the world of others. In the case of this research project that gesture was signified by conducting the research interviews. It is worth noting that just the very act of turning away from oneself, which is the focus of the first two stages, already induces a shift of consciousness. The preparation for the ethics review, alongside framing the invitation to the study, developing interview questions,

---

[92] Here I am appealing to the latent metaphor in many words we use to denote writing or some form of written expression. To take a few examples: Latin *litera* = "letter", from whence comes literature and literary; other examples include "scribe", "inscription", "describe" (basic meaning = to scratch) (Partridge, 1983, p. 597-598) and "graphic", "grammar", "program" (basic meaning = to carve or scratch) (p. 265). In esotericism, this hidden understanding is grounded in the idea that every action or movement is written as an invisible inscription in the Akashic chronicle. There all history, major and minor, is written in indelible ink (Steiner, 1975/1998b).

conducting pilot interviews, and the data collection itself, all contributed to bringing about this shift. Whist the first two stages had fashioned a seed (question), this stage nourishes and cultivates it (gathering data), so that a full flowering (analysis) and eventual fructification (discussion and conclusion) can occur in subsequent phases.

Leonard (1992), an aikido master and author of spiritual development texts, refers to this stage of development as the "plateau". It is a phase not generally well understood or appreciated by students or practitioners. Moustakas explains that this stage allows the "inner tacit dimension to reach its full possibilities" (1990, p. 28). In other words, it is a process of integration, an embodying of what has been achieved prior to this stage. It may be misconstrued as a phase of no growth, where nothing happens, but this is because the locus of activity has shifted elsewhere, not only into the body, but also into the other and into the world.

Conducting interviews is effectively an immersion into the other and into their narrated world. Whilst the researcher's inner voice remains, despite best intentions, the natural rhythm of listening asserts itself, so that after a few interviews, this inner voice recedes and surprisingly I find myself wholly given over to the other's words, their stories, their lives.

A key aspect of the heuristic methodology is the acknowledgement that "each research process unfolds in its own way" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 43). As a result, the methods employed are "open-ended" (p. 43). The telling criterion for any method is effectiveness in revealing the phenomenon more fully (Keen, as cited in p. 44). In other words, Moustakas promotes an approach to method (to the research journey) that derives from an immersive honouring of the subject matter itself, that which is the focus of the research inquiry. Hence, in the case of data collection, the key is that whatever method or technique is used "must relate back to the question" and must "disclose the nature, the meaning, and essence of the phenomenon being investigated" (p. 44).

3.3.2.4 Illumination.

Illumination has occurred in different forms. Yet, there was a sense of major change in the study, after analysing around 10-12 participants' interviews. The inner sense of this change was like the experience of climbing a mountain and suddenly the sense of release which occurs in the chest, as the breath is released and expands into the surrounding horizon. The feeling of release, of finally making out the destination in the distance, the certain knowledge that the journey would come to fruition and that what has been sought was found. Curiously, though, this profound epiphany approached me *before* the most dramatic and overt sense of illumination: the discovery of the link between light blindness (Saramago, 2006; Spoelstra, 2009) and the cluster of themes around

spiritual superiority, privileging the light and the denial of the shadow, and the many attendant manifestations of social dysfunction.

The illumination was itself an act of good fortune, of fascinating timing, that coincided two significant threads of my life, my study and my personal life. My estranged wife came to visit and, during the stay, told me about a book she was reading by the Portuguese author Jose Saramago. It prompted a memory of seeing his name in association with a philosopher that was tangentially connected to my study. Later that evening, I was motivated to try and find the place where I had seen Saramago's name. I had already tried to find it a few days earlier without success. It was the same this night, except… I found an article that linked Saramago to organizational culture. I did not have to read more than a few sentences to realise that I had struck upon something of immense value. Instantly, I saw how the idea of organisational light blindness or "brilliance" connected to the many themes that I had gathered from the interviews. It was like the beating heart of what had been spoken about, what many participants related in one way or another, without really understanding what was meant in a wider sense. It is also ironic that the illumination itself was self-referential: an insight into brilliance! This meets me with an air of caution...

3.3.2.5 Explication.

An important consideration at this fifth stage is to provide an experience of the whole inquiry, everything that has been gained and learned about the phenomenon under investigation, without losing sight of the individual stories. Key to the individual presentations are the "portraits" that have been composed of each participant's narrative. At the same time, a complex picture or map of the themes and interconnections is produced, with a view of subsequently reducing this complexity to a set of "core themes" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 50). Moustakas recommends developing "two or three exemplary portraits" which, though singular, nonetheless represent the whole group. Here Moustakas affirms that "explication" is a natural consequence of data analysis. In the hierarchy of understanding, it is a continuation of analysis into the region of evaluation and higher order analysis. In the case of *this* project, it has not been possible to "reduce" the enormous content offered by respondents as data down to two or three exemplary portraits. However, perusal of the data analysis and discussion chapters (Chapters Six and Seven) will reveal that a small group of respondents have been relied upon to highlight the major themes and patterns investigated in this thesis.

3.3.2.6 Culmination.

The heuristic project culminates with a "creative synthesis" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 50), which, according to Moustakas, is often artistically rendered. It should be elicited from the whole and make it visible and palpable. In this study, this stage culminates in the generation of "new narratives," of *other* stories that might be told about SWE, in order to break the hegemonic grip of familiar and often outdated stories. Unsurprisingly, given the curious organic nature of the heuristic method, these stories were already emerging long before this phase began. Or, put differently, this phase began long before, just as these new stories were emerging from the data gathered in the conversations. More is said about this in Chapter Seven.

3.4 A Methodological Cornucopia

3.4.1 Anthroposophy.

A study of SWE cannot avoid an investigation, however cursory, of Steiner's philosophy and its epistemological and ontological foundations. At the same time, my immersion in Steiner's work over a period exceeding 30 years has embedded in my ways of knowing and appreciating the world an orientation towards the spiritual science[93] he developed. For this reason, anthroposophy is one of the main sets of theoretical assumptions underpinning the study. As we have already seen above, in Chapter One, for Steiner (1920/1983), philosophical questions were deeply interlinked with pressing social and cultural concerns.

In Steiner's ontology, human beings are situated within a cosmos which is populated, not by inanimate things but by living and conscious beings. Translated into an increasingly popular postmodern worldview, it emphasises the connectedness between humanity, nature and the cosmos (Steiner, 1961/1994, 1984). Knowledge was for Steiner less about acquiring or extracting data from a mute and passive world, but rather more about entering into *dialogue* with the beings who live "behind"[94] and engender observable natural phenomena. In effect, this dialogic interaction

---

[93] The exegesis of the German word, *Geisteswissenschaft*, from which spiritual science emerges as a common translation, is instructive. The German word was used by Dilthey to differentiate the study of the human being, a process which he designated by the concept of *Verstandnis*, or understanding, from the natural sciences, which, according to him, were engaged in the explanation of natural processes. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer (1979) accounts for loss of distinctive meaning that invariably came with the translation of the term into 'human science' or in its plural form as the human sciences. The obliteration of idealism was signalled with the disregard for the crucial term 'Geist' which, in the German language, means not only 'spirit' but also 'mind'. Although the designation, 'spiritual science' is stark to contemporary ears attuned to scientific rationalism, it revives Steiner and Dilthey's wish to develop a non-materialistic science that could facilitate the study of human beings, as opposed to minerals or plants.

[94] This "behind" only indicates, in Steiner's view, that our consciousness is focussed on the physical attributes of the knowledge experience. For one seeking to experience the being of the object, the physical form has to fall away,

is what enables human beings to construct order and meaning out of their experience of the world, as expressed in Heidegger's neologism, "being-in-the-world" (1953/1996).

Steiner believed that the development of thinking could be heightened into an organ of seeing, able to gather ever more complex concepts with increasing powers of explication or "construction" from observation of the phenomenal worlds of the senses and inner perception. And whilst the dialogic relationship is primarily embodied, in order for human beings to ascend to "higher knowledge," consciousness must learn to experience itself in a "body-free"[95] state (Steiner, 1918/1990, 1961/1994, 1978, 1984). However, cognitive development is founded on the development of the relationship between the thinking "I" and the body, for example bringing the impulses and sensations of the body into harmony with the consciousness of the "I". In effect, it is an education of the "I" that must take place out of the wisdom of the body (Steiner, 2009). According to Steiner, there are three stages beyond the level of rational-intellectual discourse: Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition. Each stage opens the human being to higher realms of knowledge and world processes. Ontologically this means developing relationships with beings of varying "hierarchies" (Steiner, 1984, 1987, 1994). I believe this approach is consonant with that of constructionism, in the fundamental emphasis that is placed on the knowledge experience as an experience of relationship, rather than a solipsistic apprehension.

> And if we abandon the traditional goal of research as the accumulation of products – static or frozen findings – and replace it with the generation of communicative process, then a chief aim of research becomes that of establishing productive forms of relationship (Gergen & Gergen, as cited in Etherington, 2004, p. 226).

However, this process of spiritual development needs to be accompanied by progress in moral development. For Steiner, the process of gaining knowledge of the spiritual world entailed a reciprocal responsibility for the spiritual researcher (Steiner, 1918/1990, 1961/1994, 1994, 2007b). The balance of attention and therefore responsibility between seeking knowledge and acting ethically is expressed in the dictum, "For every step you take in your spiritual development, take three steps in your moral development" (Steiner, 1961/1994, p. 57). In his "Exegesis to *Light on the Path*," a commentary on Mabel Collins' (1885/1971) meditative verse, Steiner articulates the delicate interaction between morality and knowledge: "As long as you impress your wish on a single

imaginatively, in order for the dialogue to ensue. This notion re-emerges in Heidegger's concept of *Gelassenheit*, a process of "releasement" into the presence of Being (Heidegger, 1959/1966)

[95] The notion of "body-free" consciousness is neither unusual nor is it especially complicated. There are numerous accounts in the mystical literature (for example, Jakob Boehme) and increasingly in modern scientific literature as well. A particularly outstanding example is provided by a neuro-anatomist, Dr Jill Bolte Taylor (2009). Rupert Sheldrake (1988, 2003, 2012) has long held to and worked to demonstrate evidence for the notion of the 'extended mind.'

thing without this wish having been born from the thing itself, you are wounding it. But as long as you are wounding anything, no Master can listen to you"[96] (2007b, p. 133). In "Evolution of Consciousness," Steiner (1923/1966) states,

> what is revealed through Intuition can be attained only by developing and spiritualising to the highest degree the capacity for love. A man must be able to make this capacity for love into a cognitional force.

The significance of the moral-cognitional nexus is emphasised over and again by Steiner. It resounds in the work of Arthur Zajonc and Parker Palmer as contemporary advocates of "contemplative inquiry" (Palmer, 1993; Zajonc, 2008, 2009). It is the same message promoted by Sir Ken Robinson's recent books (2009, 2011, 2013).

Steiner's (2007a) poetic description of anthroposophy as "a path of knowledge to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe" (p. 13) emphasises the path of development as a journey. This is consistent with the numerous, traditional uses of the "life is a journey" metaphor (Lakoff & Turner, 1989), and, as I showed above (p. 19ff) , the nature of research is readily seen through the same lens. Of course, the word itself, "research", designates a particular kind of journey, namely a search. Spatially, the search can be conceived as a movement from a "centre", where the current status quo resides, where I am as the researcher, and the "periphery", an unknown, the mysterious horizon of the present, a place of shadow. Steiner's (1989) description of the Ephesian mystery teaching captures this situational dynamic of the research journey:

> Speak, O Man! and thou revealest through thyself the evolution of the world.
>
> The evolution of the world is revealed through thee, O Man! when thou speakest
>
> (p. 52).

However, this "teaching" was performative, not didactic. He explains that the student was guided to speak the first line as he entered the mystery school, and then utter the second line upon leaving the school doors. "The saying 'know thyself' gained a sacred significance because it was uttered not merely theoretically, but because it was inwardly, solemnly felt and experienced" (p. 53). Hence the exhortation to self-knowledge carries within it the responsibility to turn towards the

---

[96] An equivalent notion is expressed in Heidegger's essay, (1971) "The origin of the work of art."

Language speaks… To reflect on language thus demands that we enter into the speaking of language in order to take up our stay with language [remember it is the 'house of Being'], ie, within its speaking, not within our own. Only in that way do we arrive at the region within which it may happen – or also fail to happen – that language will call to us from there and grant us its nature. We leave the speaking to language' (Heidegger, 1971, pp. 188-189).

world in a state of wonder, of active questioning.[97] These statements express a powerful epistemological and ontological reciprocity, which is only later in the 20th century articulated and embodied in the phenomenological stream (especially, Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1992, 1964/1995), but which at the same time has become foundational in qualitative social inquiry.

In summary, Steiner's epistemology offers several important assumptions which are relevant to this study:

i. The debate about the primacy of subject or object is "overcome" through the notion of a dialogic relationship between human and spiritual (natural) beings. More technically, the awakening to "pure thinking" or "living thinking", that is the experiencing of thinking as an activity, rather than the awareness of its products, namely thoughts, reveals the subject-object binary as the creative play of thinking itself, and not as an ontological reality.

ii. The experience of knowledge is embodied, however "higher knowledge" requires the development of "body-free" or "pure" thinking. Nonetheless, the development of embodied awareness, or cognitional kinship with the wisdom of the body, is the precondition for higher forms of spiritual cognition.

iii. Gaining "higher knowledge" is a moral act, entailing a commitment from the researcher to engage in a process of moral development. Since the whole human being is the instrument of cognition, every aspect of the human being is called into play in the adventure of spiritual-cognitional development. Equally, all knowledge has moral consequences. There is no "disinterested" inquiry.

3.4.2 Constructionism.

The other main set of theoretical assumptions employed in this study derive from *constructionism*. Constructionism is consonant within Steiner's epistemology. Both epistemological viewpoints see positivism as an ineffective means of gaining knowledge about the "*Geisteswissenschatften*" (human sciences, literally "spiritual" sciences), a term Dilthey employed in contrast to the "*Naturwissenschaften*" (natural sciences) (Crotty, 1998, p. 94).

---

[97] The epistemological consistency of Steiner's philosophical outlook can be seen in the repetition of this ancient mystery teaching in his exhortations to SW teachers to develop a keen interest in the world and in the present day. The human being gains orientation only in relation to what moves and stirs around her. Modern philosophy and modern science have arrived at this fundamental truth of reciprocity (Barad, 2007).

Essentially, constructionism regards the human being as a meaning-maker[98], and sees meaning as a human "construction" through which sense can be attributed to human experiences (Crotty, 1998, p. 9). This central notion links to Steiner and Heidegger in two powerful streams of thought. Firstly, it repositions the human being *in the world*, as opposed to at a distance from it, as dictated by positivism. And secondly, the human being is seen as a creative, meaning-making entity. This idea is expressed by the ancient Greek word, *Logos*,[99] with its rich field of semantic associations issuing from the root verb, *legein*, "to collect or gather" (Lidell & Scott, 1990, pp. 416-417). Steiner's esotericism connects the human being to the Logos-being (Christ) through the creative agency of language. Anthroposophy is seen as the path that leads from microcosmic meaning activity of the human being (constructionism) to the macrocosmic creative power of the spiritual Logos-Christ (Steiner, 2007a, p. 13).

Constructionism, or social constructionism, sees social interaction as a kind of dramatic exchange, not unlike Shakespeare's life-as-theatre conceit in *As You Like It*: "all the world's a stage." However, in order to survey any present day "drama" requires us to interpret the manifold cultural and institutional constructions that have evolved and shaped our current "understanding" of the world. As a researcher, this has significant consequences since we must reckon not only with the constructions of our objects of study, which should come into view through the research process, but perhaps more contentiously, with our own constructions, which may remain unconscious, however much we try and cajole them into view. This inherent problem of cognition and perspective meets us along the path of research. Reflexivity plays an essential role in mitigating against this inescapable problem, which is of course also an ethical issue. Nonetheless, constructionism offers the researcher the tool for perceiving constructed meaning in the world, shifting attention, as it were, away from the finished nature of reality to its ongoing remaking.

Social constructionism, as framed by Kenneth Gergen (2001), posits a dialogic approach to knowledge generation. He recognises, namely, that whatever discursive experiences of the world we may have are already contextualised according to perspectives, mostly embodied and unavoidably languaged, which inescapably "territorialize" our observations and impressions in a manner that

---

[98] This is the essential insight in Viktor Frankl's (1984) *logotherapy*, articulated in *Man's Search for Meaning*. On the other hand, the moral ambivalence of this insight led Primo Levi, another well-known survivor of the *Lager*, to the ultimate tragedy (Anissimov, 2000). It could be argued that the sheer incomprehensibility of what survivors like Levi lived through continued to overwhelm their capacity to find meaning in those experiences. In Levi's case, such an endeavour seemed somehow perverse: how could a God insinuate meaning into human barbarity?

[99] The term employed by Frankl highlights the link between making meaning and the mythopoetic creative power of the Ancient Greek name for the principle of cosmic creation.

largely escapes our reflection, let alone our self-awareness. Heightened reflexivity, according to Gergen, cannot unburden us of this limitation, though it can make us aware of our positioning in the discourse. However, I am especially impressed with Gergen's (2001) reluctance to denounce alternative views of the world, or to precipitate a fundamentalist notion of constructionism. Quite the contrary, Gergen's constructionism is inclusive. For him, the field of inquiry is shifted to the social-linguistic interaction of "competing" views or constructions of reality. To *speak* of reality, independent of our discursive engagements is unwarranted and unachievable, in a manner reminiscent of Kant's unknowable "thing-in-itself". But this does not imply, or lead to a logical denunciation of rationality, a surrender to epistemological anarchy. It prescribes a new kind of social tolerance of difference, borne of the realisation that contrary views can be as enriching as they might be intimidating.

Thus, the locus of inquiry is shifted away from "objective truth" to meaning or coherence. This is significant for the study since it establishes the purpose or aim of the research study as the apprehension of meaning in a group of SW teachers. There is no pretension to establishing the "truth" about SWE. Whatever sense that might have is, in any case, questionable. Would such a truth prescribe all human behaviour? Or might it actually leave a space for individual determination? It is, of course, unfashionable to speak of it, nowadays. Perhaps we have lost touch with whatever sense there lies in the word "truth". Accounts of the holocaust, such as those of Primo Levi and Viktor Frankl, are perhaps testimony of the difference between *lived* truth and the truth that we read on a page, or see on a screen.

Meaning counts for more than truth. For truth, however compelling, suggests that our participation in the formation of reality, or our own future, is deferred to an abstract logic that supervenes individual human will or desire. By contrast, the value of meaning is that it honours each one, irrespective of context or culture. Meaning promises to connect, to create familiar bonds between self and world, or with others. One could scoff at its subjectivity, yet it is precisely this subjectivity that allows meaning to be valued at all. "Objective meaning", on the other hand, has all the empty hallmarks of objective truth. Here subjectivity, much maligned under the aegis of a dominant patriarchal scientific materialist society, is the missing ingredient that possibilises intimacy and radical insight.

In summary, constructionism frames the study with the following epistemological assumptions:

i. knowledge of the world is socially constructed;

ii. human interaction with the world is mediated through the embodied activity of meaning-making;

iii. language and cultural artefacts reveal how reality is socially constructed for particular groups.

In social constructionism, the world is “waiting to be discovered” or “pregnant with meaning”, so that it can be interpreted through language and culture. Human beings participate in the crucial process of constructing and disseminating meaning (Crotty, 1998, pp. 42-65).

3.4.3 Narrative inquiry.

It is no small wonder that the age-old craft of storytelling should emerge in the twentieth century as an earnest approach to the generation of knowledge. The cumulative re-acquisition of this craft, at least in the West, has been going on for some time. For example, the tales of the minnesingers (of which von Eschenbach’s *Parzival* was one, related in the 12th century), first surfaced in the preceding centuries. In modern times, the collection of fairy and folk tales and legends can be attributed in seventeenth century France to the work of Charles Perrault (2012) and Marie d’Aulnoy (2017), and later in the nineteenth centuries, when the Grimm brothers (Grimm, 2007) and Franz von Schönwerth in Germany, Elias Lonnrot (1989) in Finland, and later Joseph Jacobs (2003) in England gathered tales that still endured in the extant oral tradition. In Ireland, the poet and mystic WB Yeats (1975), also collected Celtic fairy tales, an interest that coincided with his mystical orientation, evident in much of his poetry. In fact, the development of narrative research, perhaps unsurprisingly, was stimulated by literary analysis and, in particular, formalism (Propp, 1968) in the early part of the 20th century, as well as phenomenological and hermeneutic research (Czarniawaska, 2004). The application of narrative to the various social sciences began in earnest in the second half of the 20th century. A key notion, articulated by Ricoeur (2016), is that the theory of literary interpretation shows that there is “an intermediary link between the procedures of literary criticism and those of social sciences” (p. 176). In other words, social behaviour, including conversation and speech, can be studied and interpreted like a written text.

A “narrative revolution” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 1) – the emergence of narrative inquiry as a mainstay in social research - occurred largely as a response to the methodological dominance of positivist and post-positivist paradigms in the social sciences. As I have shown in the opening chapter, the dominant Cartesian paradigm marginalises many voices seeking not only knowledge about the world, but more fundamentally acknowledgment that humanity must reconnect with the earth and the more-than-human world that sustains and encompasses our

existence. Storytelling has always played this role in indigenous societies and it still re-enables the communion that we are lacking in our endangered present times.

> I will tell you something about stories,
> They aren't just entertainment.
> Don't be fooled.
> They are all we have, you see,
> all we have to fight off
> illness and death.
> You don't have anything
> if you don't have the stories.
> Leslie Marmon Silko in *Ceremony* (1986, p. 2)

The telling of stories is a democratising act. It promotes multivocality or heteroglossia. Bakhtin (1999) contended that the introduction of "polyphonic narrative" by Dostoevsky forged a revolutionary shift in literature. In a community of practice oriented towards professional development and learning, as a SWS community self-consciously is, the shift from hegemonic storytelling that perpetuates fixed worldviews and structural hierarchies towards open, democratic discursive institutions is salutogenic and liberating. We shall see to what extent this intimation is borne out in the narratives of teachers recorded, reframed and analysed in this study (see Chapter Four "Teachers' Narratives" and Chapter Five "Data Analysis").

Whilst teachers' stories are their stories, rather than the "sacred stories" of the institution or the imagined ethos, they do more than provide "individual" perspectives (Zilber, Tuval-Mashiach, & Lieblich, 2008). We cannot clinically separate our world from another's world. At a minimum, I am context for the other, and the other is context for me. This is reciprocity (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1992), heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981), and entanglement (Barad, 2007) in living interplay. Speaking and listening are both communal and private. The lifeworld is both communal and personal. When we listen to a story we are "fore-present" in the telling: the "we" appears before the "I" (Horsdal, 2012). Hence trust plays a fundamental role in securing the interchange of honest, truthful dialogue between researcher and respondent (Garvis, 2015)

Narrative is a form of fiction, albeit a form that draws from lived experiences. Narrative inquiry gives voice to individual experience, which is "the fundamental category from which all inquiry proceeds (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 38). It is a way of making meaning or sense out of lived experiences, reflecting the "ways we create meaning in our lives" (Clandinin, 2006, p. 44). But every story, however similar or connected or related, carries within itself "complex variation"

(Winslade, 2009, p. 335). The commitments of researchers and participants alike inhabit borderland spaces, that are filled with tension and conflicts, where experiences and realities are contested, and "where our lives are crisscrossed by multiple lines of subjectivation" (p. 335).

Narrative inquiry is a way of knowing (Czarniwaska, 2004; Horsdal, 2012). It is, however, less conscious and less deliberately manipulable than opinion or commentary. Narrative offers both participants and researcher an alternative way of representing reality and meaning. As such, it is better suited for exploring phenomena or topics that might otherwise be too sensitive, for emotional or political reasons, to approach directly (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2008). This enables teachers to tell their own story, rather than reprising official narratives (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007; Horsdal, 2012), which holds a key importance in this study.

Telling stories is also transformative. It builds community, allowing participants to feel respected, since they become the centre of listening. Stories can make connections otherwise not possible through more direct, intentional methods, and they invite resonance. Mulvihill and Swaminathan (2017) highlight the notion that "the way in which we construct life events or experiences and narrate or perform our interpretations can create the conditions for positive social change" (p. 4).

The independent existence and dynamic of the narrative is exemplified in an excerpt from *The Truth About Stories* (King, as cited in Clandinin, 2006, p. 44): "Once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world. So you have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told."

3.4.4 Phenomenology.

Phenomenology plays a key role in this thesis in the following ways:

i. It is not a theory about the world, but rather an encouragement to seek for a "deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (van Manen, 1990, p. 9). It is therefore not experienced in abstract contemplation but in an encounter (Vagle, 2016). It promotes confidence in our capacity to observe, by extending the notion of observation into liminal spaces where outer seeing merges into inner seeing.

ii. Vagle (2016) argues that phenomenology is also a "way of living" and a "craft" (p. 12). After a while, it can inhabit consciousness, and there become embodied, contemplative and mindful. For Heidegger (1977a) it is also a way of seeing that allows things to show themselves ("letting-appear," p. 384).

iii. With Heidegger, arguably the most influential philosopher of the 20th century, a rich compendium of language was introduced and became available to express embodied knowledge, that had before him been largely impossible. To the terms already in use by phenomenology, such as the pivotal concepts of *lived experience*,[100] from Dilthey (Heidegger, 1953/2001, p. 72), and *lifeworld*[101] from Husserl (cited in van Manen, 1990). Heidegger introduced a plethora of neologisms, for example *being-in-the-world*, *being-with*, *world-time*, *projection*, *Gelassenheit, and alitheia.* Merleau-Ponty took the embodied disposition of Heidegger's phenomenology further, as evinced in terms such as *reciprocity*, *flesh-of-the-world*, and *chiasma.*

Phenomenological language and concepts have been employed as useful guides in the stage of data analysis. Together with other important hermeneutic concepts drawn from postmodern thinking, embodied in the work of Ricoeur, Derrida and Deleuze, this language enables seeing the complex traces of subjectivation in respondents' narratives. This expanded seeing also permits discerning resonant patterns and themes across their horizons.

3.4.5 Hermeneutics.

The hermeneutic method is employed here as the main approach to examining key texts, including written, verbal or embodied texts. The hermeneutic inquiry of relevant texts moves through the three main themes. Its primary focus however is on the theme of Steiner's epistemology. Given the relationship of this philosophical basis to SWE it is meaningful to try and understand how anthroposophy, Steiner's "spiritual science," relates to present day understandings of science and its relevance to the practice of qualitative social research.

The hermeneutic approach is essentially interpretive. It seeks to bring the text into movement by creating interpretive polarities through which its textual structure can yield layers of meaning and structure. Depending on the specific approach, the "circle" moves between the whole and the part, or between the text and tradition, as in the work of Schleiermacher and Dilthey (Crotty, 1998, pp. 92-95). However, with the "ontological turn," Heidegger (1953/1996) theorizes hermeneutics as interpretation as a mode of existential being, no longer merely concerned with texts but with being itself. Heidegger all but ceases speaking about hermeneutics after *Being and*

---

[100] Heidegger explains that the term *Erlebnis* is etymologically linked to the ordinary word for life, *Das Leben.* Hence, the designation, *Erlebnis,* is distinguished from *Erfahrung*; both words translate as "experience", but only the former has the sense of living through an event. It is literally "lived through".

[101] Gadamer (1979), a student of Heidegger, describes the "lifeworld" as a "communal world" (p. 219) and as "the antithesis of objectivism" (p. 218).

Time, but his "method" of interpretation is amply demonstrated in his poetical hermeneutics (for example, 1971). Hence, it is readily apparent in the essay, "The Thing" (Heidegger, 1971), where he explores, through phenomenological observation, the network of relationships apparent in an old jug or vase, that are carried in language itself, and which presences together the earthly and divine, the mundane and spiritual dimensions as the object's context of being.

This method is especially significant given the difficulties associated with understanding Steiner's philosophical and esoteric work. As I have shown in reference to reading Steiner's texts, the limitations of naïve realism, the de facto "common sense" way of understanding texts, are particularly telling. A hermeneutic approach allows us to "deconstruct" the text by bringing it into relation to the reader's own processes of interpretation. The significance of this, in relation to the study lies in the potential to throw up interpretations that are novel, especially considering the relative scarcity of critical insider interpretive research.

The language and practice of hermeneutics brings interpretive possibilities that extend and enhance the notion of interpretation. Ricoeur, an important contributor to postmodern hermeneutics, proposes an alternating, circular gaze that shifts from "belonging" to "distanciation" (2016, p. 51), and that views the text through the active binary lenses of "faith" and "suspicion" (Ricoeur, 1970). The contrasting "hermeneutics of faith" and "hermeneutics of suspicion" allow a psychic-cognitive movement that possibilises different entry points into the text (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, pp. 58, 94-95). This interpretive dynamic acknowledges Gadamer's insight that what is ordinarily shunned as "prejudice" actually signals a mode of openness to the world (1977, p. xv), which can lead (through the binary dynamic of belonging-distanciation and faith-suspicion) to a "fusion of horizons," and an enriched understanding. At the root of the hermeneutic methodology, however, is the expectation that dwelling in the hermeneutic circle will lead to "a *revelation of something hidden*" (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, p. 57, italics in original). This hidden element is in each case the "original structure of properties buried at the root of our existence," in "objectivist hermeneutics;" the "underlying pattern of metaphor or narrative," in alethic hermeneutics; or "something shameful" in hermeneutics of suspicion (p. 58). The emphasis on interpretation as disclosure also finds resonance with the Grail narrative, and the importance of "wounding" as a narrative and thematic archetype.

3.4.6 Postmodernism.

For me, the attraction of particular postmodern concepts is the disorientation and reorientation that such cognitive playfulness may effect in the study of familiar texts or texts whose

vitality and interpretive responsiveness have become lamed through over-familiarisation with privileged narratives.

According to Derrida, the reorientation of our hermeneutic disposition is aided by a process he calls "deconstruction" (1967/1997). An important goal of deconstruction is the revealing of "the structurality of structure," (1979, p. 279) a transition that hovers between coherence and incoherence, between "lability" and "destruction". The virtue of deconstruction, as a hermeneutic concept, lies in its penchant for opening novel perspectives that reveal multiple voices (Bakhtin, 1981) resounding in the text. This marks a "disruptive" episode in reading texts or situations, allowing for a transformative integration of ideas and experiences across textual or situational horizons.

Deleuze's major contribution to hermeneutics, a role he might object to on epistemological grounds, is the idiosyncratic nature of his original, neologistic language that disrupts familiar patterns of seeing and understanding. The source of Deleuze's philosophical language betrays his transdisciplinary sense of cognitive adventure. Terms like *rhizome*, *lines of flight*, *territorialisation* and *deterritorialisation*, *Virtual and Actual*, *nomadic thinking*, and *functionaries* are vestments we may also apply to radicalise our responses to texts.

3.5 Research Design

3.5.1 Ethical considerations.

The research proposal was submitted to the Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Committee) via a National Ethics Application Form (NEAF) in September 2015. The project was considered "Low and Negligible Risk". A number of key ethical criteria were addressed in the application to the Ethics Committee, including research merit, beneficence, risk and benefit, consent, privacy and confidentiality. The ethics application process also required the design and use of a "Participant Information Sheet", "Invitation Letter", and "Consent Form." Copies of these are provided in the appendices. Although an interview script was required, given that the intended form of data collection was a "semi-structured" interview, no script was used, but instead a list of possible questions or prompts was generated. As per the requirements of the Ethics Committee, an annual report has been completed and submitted every year since the start of the project in 2015 to the Ethics Committee.

In addition to the requirements imposed by the Ethics Committee there are a number of ethical considerations that bear on the project as a qualitative inquiry (Hammersley, 2015). Of particular concern for this project are the following issues: respondent confidentiality (Kaiser, 2009),

trustworthiness (Rossman & Rallis, 2010), and reflexive transparency (Rossman & Rallis, 2010). Firstly, the issue of confidentiality is particularly concerning given the small size of the SWE community in Australia, and the risk of "deductive disclosure" (Kaiser, 2009, p. 1). The case of Ellis' (1986) doctoral dissertation is a case in point, particularly when the thesis was published as a book some years later, and the ethnographic participants "found" themselves in the text despite Ellis' efforts to maintain privacy and confidentiality (as cited in Kaiser, 2009). Since the confidentiality of the participant is paramount, this risk can only be circumvented by significantly limiting the disclosure of potentially specifying information. In order to circumvent this risk, it has been necessary to carefully and selectively withhold the kind of data that would pose too high a risk of disclosing the broad context within which the respondent's narrative was situated. This would necessarily limit details such as the participant's schools of employment, her areas of professional expertise, or broad educational activities. Secondly, trustworthiness is likened to the "ethic of care" (Noddings, 1995, p. 187). The encounter between researcher and participant occurs in a "caring" state (Noddings, as cited in Rossman & Rallis, 2010, p. 384). This echoes Meek's (2011) reciprocal view of the cognitive excursus as an act of care, and of course, resonates with the epistemologies of love promoted by Zajonc (2009, 2011) and Palmer (2003). This care must extend, I believe, beyond the interview location and time. This will be referred to further in Chapter Five. Finally, reflexivity is ethical awareness. As Schön (1983, p. 151) has observed, the researcher is "in the situation that he seeks to understand." The attitude of instrumentality, that I am doing something *to* the world, has to be replaced by the notion of care. My being in the situation with the phenomenon is an "entangled state" (Barad, 2007, p. 270) that defines me as much as it defines the object. We are locked into a morally bound situation. Perhaps an equivalent term that addresses this relationship is the sense of shepherding. As researcher, I am the shepherd of the data as it lives in the participant.

3.5.2 In the company of theory.

A fundamental feature of the research project, consonant with the intentions of heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990) and intuitive research (Anderson & Braud, 2011) has been the noticeable interplay between theory and doing or praxis. In both cases, the researcher is advised to pursue methodology that promises to elucidate the phenomenon under investigation. My experience has been that every stage in the research process, and indeed every new instance of data collection, as well as data analysis has been preceded and accompanied by a strongly reflexive period of theoretical questioning. This can be represented diagrammatically in the following manner:

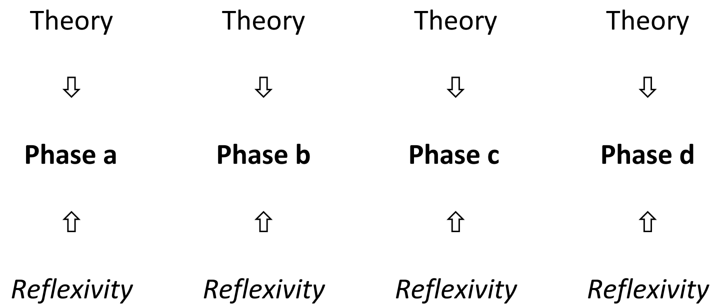


Figure 3.1: Reciprocal interplay of theory and reflexive practice throughout the processes of data collection and data analysis

As some researchers (Savin-Baden & Powell, 2013) aver, theoretical considerations are not exhausted in the early stages of designing the research project. In fact, theory plays a continuous, critical accompanying role throughout the project. With each new phasic change in the project, indeed with each disturbance of the flow of the research momentum, the vocative presence of theory arises. How should I deal with this new stage? What does it mean that I feel unable to think through the problems now confronting me? How do I manage with this complex data set that threatens to paralyse all the best laid plans that I had set in place? These and other questions arise invariably throughout the research project. It is, of course, natural for the researcher to become disturbed by this occurrence. However, it is possible to retrace the steps that lead back to the path of inquiry by reorienting one's own thoughts. Specifically, the role of questioning or doubting can be repositioned as an essential mode of progress in the research project. In other words, doubting oneself is transferred into doubting the constructions of meaning, so carefully and earnestly erected in order to stabilise the existing viewpoint. Hence, the prime act of questioning, which is the vehicle for doubt to operate, can bring about a radical rethinking of the relationships and the configuration of familiar social-political forms, in this case of SW communities.

In raising the ambiguous face of doubt at this point, I am reminded of von Eschenbach's developmental framework in narrating the various transformations of Parzival. Critical amongst these changes, as I have alluded to in Chapter One, is the onset of doubt, which begins immediately upon retiring from the Grail procession. This is the ritual ceremony to which Parzival had been invited by the Fisher King (Amfortas), and which he witnessed without any visible sign of reciprocating response from the young knight. Of course, the failure to ask "the question," did not become evident to him until his cousin, Sigune, once more elucidated what was manifestly unknown to Parzival. This encapsulates the significance of the transition. Prior to asking questions, though not "the question," Parzival lives in a kind of stupor that von Eschenbach (2015) calls *Dummheit* (or dumbness). It is the shock of the experiences surrounding the Grail castle that awakens doubt in him. Narratively, it is doubt that guides Parzival out of his impasse, and eventually to the Grail castle

a second time, something that had been deemed impossible. In the language of the study, doubt is the bringer of theory, or *theoros*, a new way of seeing. Interestingly, this is not a characterisation of theory that dictates practice or action before the unfolding event of the research journey. Rather it is a companion, one who accompanies the seeking researcher.

3.5.3 Sampling the study.

The design response to the research problem was to conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with SW teachers, both current and non-current (n=15). The motivations behind this have been discussed above in Chapter One, where I have also discussed the benefits of employing narrative methods as an integral part of this heuristic research.

In accordance with ethical requirements of the research, two letters were composed: An Invitation Letter and a Participation Information and Consent Letter. These were given to intended participants prior to providing formal consent, which was ratified through signing the consent form at the start of each interview, or in a few cases, in advance of the interview at the respondent's request.

Originally, I intended to disseminate invitations through the Steiner Education Australia network (the peak body for SW schools in Australia). The idea was to approach schools via email, in the hope that the email addressees (school administrators or Principals) would circulate the invitation to potential participants within the school. However, given the sensitive nature of the research, I decided against adopting this strategy. As I have explained in Chapter One, criticality was a significant criterion for selection of participants. This was signalled in both letters. Participants' attention, in the Invitation Letter, was drawn to "problems and frustrations" faced in their work. The research project was referred to as a "critical study of SW education." Other key words that suggested criticality include: "challenges facing SW education," "struggles and aspirations of practitioners," "need of renewal," "facing challenges." In addition, the Participation Information sheet also referred to "critically explore," the notion of "wounds" introduced by the Parzival story, and the enigma of the unasked question, "what ails thee?"

Upon careful consideration, it was decided bypass any formal school involvement for two other important reasons: logistics and ethical fairness. The prospect of travelling across the Australian continent to conduct interviews in, potentially widely dispersed sites, presented the researcher with an unenviable prospect of conducting significant long-range travel. Since the researcher was working sessionally during university teaching terms, the only available options for conducting the interviews were term breaks. In order to make interviewing economical and

achievable, it was more efficient to organise them in clusters. In this way, it was possible to make a trip to a single location and conduct two or three interviews within a week, at relatively low cost.

Fifteen interviews were conducted between 8 November 2015 and 1 October 2016. The interview sites were spread across three states (ACT, NSW and Victoria). Each interview lasted on average two hours, although individual interviews ranged from one and a half to two and a half hours. Nine of the interviews were conducted in participants' homes, as requested by them. Three were located in neutral sites (for example, a University library study room and a private consulting room); two were located in the researcher's home (at participants' requests); and one was conducted in the participant's school office (during term break). The interviews were audio recorded using a portable Olympus sound recorder. During more than 30 hours of recording, fortunately, there was only one mishap, where 30 minutes of interview time was not recorded. In this case, the contents of the interview were recalled by the researcher after the interview, transcribed and then sent to the participant for a member check. Some additions were made, but overall the content had been accurately rendered from memory.

Teachers were selected according to the "purposive sampling" rationale (O. Robinson, 2014). Six were selected and directly approached by the researcher; the other nine were snowballed. No participant asked to discontinue after agreement to participate was given. Two prospective participants (one snowballed, the other a personal contact) did not wish to be interviewed, after receiving the Invitation Letter. Another four prospects (two snowballed and two personal contacts) were not followed up, since already 15 interviews had been conducted, and a decision made to cease gathering further data at this point. The decision to do this was based on the "theoretical saturation" (O. Robinson, 2014) of data, and the accumulation of an already substantial body of data to that point. According to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) theoretical saturation occurs at around 12 interviews, although metathemes begin to emerge after just six interviews. These findings were certainly validated in the present study.

3.5.4 Data collection.

> *What is more glorious than gold? Light. What is more alive than light? Conversation.*
>
> (Goethe, as cited in Spock, 1983) from the play, *The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*

The principal form of data collection in this project was the interview or conversation. Consonant to the philosophical considerations described above, the conversation provides the vessel

for a dialogic interaction between researcher and participant (Akkerman & Niessen, 2011; Kaplan, 2005). This interaction involves a mutual giving or sharing which issues from a common ground or field of experience and possibilises discourse between them. I stress that although the researcher approached the conversation with a set of questions, the actual realisation of the conversation was intended to allow a free movement of discourse around experiences, ideas or issues that concerned or interested both participant and researcher. This type of "interview", as I have mentioned above (p. 146) is called "semi-structured" in the qualitative literature (Galleta, 2013). As Galetta avers, it is particularly suited to "fine-grained" analyses of "multi-dimensional" lived experiences that are normally considered "unproblematic" (p. 2).

In this type of interaction, the ethical sensitivity of social constructionism becomes paramount: in other words, the recognition that each person is responsible for shaping their own experience of reality, and moreover that the interaction of conversation brings about a dynamic interplay of two different worldviews (Shotter, 2008). This requires an important moral shift if meaningful conversation is to take place. German psychologist, Michael Möller (2002) has articulated this shift in his eponymous manual on self-help conversations as, "the truth begins to divide." Literally, when two or more people engage in dialogue the truth divides, multiplies according to the centre of perception of each one in dialogue. This communication model is echoed above (p. 120) in Tang and Joiner (2011).

I have already indicated, in Chapter One, reasons for interviewing SW teachers: potentially, they are a rich source of data collection. This approach was, on reflection, far more powerful than I could have imagined. It was both intellectually and emotionally satisfying. In addition, Moustakas (1990) recommends opening out the heuristic study to others who have experienced the same phenomenon. Whilst investigating SWE is significantly different from exploring, say loneliness or shyness or feeling unconditionally loved, or growing up in a fatherless home,[102] the common factor is the targeting of "lived experience" as the means to gaining insight on the multi-layered, multi-dimensional lifeworld of SWE, as will become evident in Chapter Six.

Like other phenomenological research, heuristic inquiry is primarily focussed on lived experience: What does it feel like to experience X? What arises from this or related experiences? The potential scope of the responses is, of course, indeterminate. Echoing van Manen (2003, p. 53), "the lifeworld, the world of lived experience, is both the source and the object of phenomenological research." Of course, the notion of "data" is becoming problematic in qualitative inquiry, with its

[102] These are all examples of heuristic studies mentioned in Moustakas (1990, p. 10).

resonant overtones of the "hard sciences" and positivist, behaviourist research into the human sciences. This challenge comes largely from a postmodern critique of social research which argues that the epistemological primacy ascribed to data in qualitative inquiry is untenable[103] (for example, Freeman et al., 2007; Jackson, 2013; Lather, 1991, 2013; Lather & St.Pierre, 2013). That aside, drawing on the word's etymological provenance, van Manen (2003) argues that the term is valid, say in the interview situation, where metaphorically something is given;[104] there is an exchange of experiences, opportunities, stories, and so on, that is nonetheless not quantifiable.

Whilst accounts or recollections of experiences are not the same as the original experiences themselves, they are nonetheless "transformations of those experiences" (Manen, 1990, p. 54). What emerges therefore is less a phenomenologically pure description of the participant's lived experience, although that is often present, but rather their way of constructing meaning and reality out of those experiences. The researcher enters into compromising territory in the interview space. Despite good intentions, there is a suggestion of elevated power, since the researcher bears the weight of the academy behind her. And whilst the early stages of preparation have a formative influence on the researcher, a development that is enhanced once the actual data collection process is initiated, invariably the researcher is confronted with her own prejudices. As indicated in Chapter One, a commitment to continual reflexivity, at each step of the process is necessary in order to guarantee the integrity of the study.

Nonetheless, there are some researchers who contest the validity of interviews as a means of gathering data, suggesting, for example, that collecting "naturally-occurring" data is more reliable. Further, it is asserted that interview data are largely unambiguous and therefore does not require interpretation (Silverman, 2007). Whilst there may be situations where both propositions demonstrate their validity, taken generally these statements belie an entire philosophical tradition of hermeneutic interpretation. Since the linguistic turn, at least, it is well recognised that texts of any kind require interpretation and invite the reader to position himself. Transcripts of interviews with

---

[103] I believe this critique rests on a too restrictive view of language. Essentially, the critique attacks the notion that transcripts or recordings of participants' words can be regarded as data (ie as material given without prior interpretation or construction), and at the same time, be used as concepts or categories to organise the data. In the postmodern view, all data are constructed. It is not possible, therefore, to separate out the use of words as data and as concepts. This is, I believe, an erroneous view. The distinction can be made, making use of Polanyi's (Polanyi & Prosch, 1977) exact description of the construction of 'meaning', between the 'functional' and 'semantic' levels of attention. For example, in the phenomenon of listening to a foreign language spoken, the words are phenomenologically experienced as data. However, when listening to a native or learned language spoken, the words resonate with meaning. In the first instance, words are living data, perceived as subsidiary elements in the process of understanding; in the second, they are constructed into concepts, perceived through focal awareness, and therefore meaningful. More exactly, in the second instance, the words are experienced *both* as subsidiary and semantic phenomena.

[104] Latin 'datum'.

professionals, such as teachers, can certainly be read by any interested person, but to one familiar with the particular "language games" (Wittgenstein, 1958) employed, much more is revealed. This is obvious in the reverse to anyone confronted with a script of a language unknown to them.

It is also worth noting that respondents in certain professions are inhibited for social or political reasons from disclosing their lived experiences (Czaniawaska, 2004). Being interviewed can give such individuals a renewed sense of freedom in articulating what they have long held buried inside them. This is amplified by Squire (2013) who argues that narrative inquiry is especially effective where "things are quite new, perhaps not spoken very fully, difficult sometimes to speak about… [and] you give people some space and time to develop what they're saying. So, you get a more complex and deeper picture than with some other forms of research" (np). Asking SW teachers to tell stories draws on a "mode of knowing" (Czarniawaska, 2004, p. 6) that permits alternatives to the "dominant narratives" (E. Bruner & Turner, 1986, p. 6) of SWE. And, since "meanings are co-constructions" (Horsdal, 2012, p. 30), in conversation with the researcher, respondents may experience a legitimising of their own stories. The phenomenon of "transformative dialogue" (Way, Zwier & Tracy, 2015; Anderson & Braud, 2011) will be addressed more fully later in Chapter Five.

As mentioned above, the conversations issued from a semi-structured frame, which was intended to assist the respondents to explore their lived experiences in SWE. Some of the guiding questions employed were as follows:

i. What was/is it like working in a SW school?
ii. What are some of your experiences of working in a SW school?
iii. How did you become aware of the school/SWE?
iv. What attracted you to the school/SWE in the first place?
v. Can you tell me about your initial impressions of anthroposophy?
vi. What was/is the role of anthroposophy in your classroom/school?
vii. What do you think are some of the challenges facing SWE today? Do you have a particular story that relates to that?
viii. How would you explain what SWE is to someone who has never come across it?
ix. What are the most valuable aspects of SWE for you? Can you tell me about what you've personally experienced or reflected on?
x. How have you personally changed as a result of working in a SW school?

Throughout the conversation, other questions are asked to probe further, or seek clarification, or otherwise move the conversation along, perhaps changing directions. Respondents may also be asked, towards the end of the interview, if they have other burning issues that they wish

to speak about, including a topic already touched upon. Despite the use of guiding questions, a script was not followed, nor were conversations similar in the flow of content or questioning. Allowing respondents to start at any point in their recollection of events or experiences literally generated fifteen different starting points. In some cases, the conversation began before starting the recording, simply because we "struck" up conversation naturally as two interested parties might.

It is evident that the stages of data collection and analysis cannot be strictly separated. It is unavoidable, as a researcher, to stop oneself thinking ahead of the participant's responses to potential conclusions about the nature of the experiences related and the lifeworld of the school depicted. However, it is necessary to hold this process in check, especially during the conversation since it splits off attention that is needed in order to participate effectively as an interlocutor. Nonetheless, it is in the very nature of this type of conversation to allow free play to the questioning, as much as what is shared with the respondent. The epistemological and methodological premises of the means of data collection demand this of the researcher. What is taking place is not a strictly controlled survey, but a free-ranging conversation by experts in a particular field of education about their experiences, insights and challenges.

I would also like to comment on my experience of "interviewing" as a researcher. Engaging in conversation is highly challenging as I have alluded above. In most cases, the conversation flowed freely, back and forth between researcher and respondent. Although I guided the conversation, to some extent, in some cases it was clear that the respondent had spent some time considering the interview, and perhaps had been stirred by anticipation of some aspect of the topic. This was often apparent immediately upon meeting the participant, since it seemed that, in some cases, they were "ready" to converse with me. In many situations, this was acknowledged prior to the "official" conversation in the preliminary greeting and chatting. However, in a few cases, the conversation was faltering, and I found that it was necessary to fall back on to the questions that I had formulated prior to beginning data collection. In these situations, it became readily apparent that a conventional interview is far less stimulating and satisfying for research purposes, and also as a mode of meeting another person, than a free-flowing conversation. There is a very real, embodied sense in these situations that what is given (the datum) is limited by some kind of inhibition.

Finally, I want to remark on temporality as an important factor in the data collection (and later data analysis). In a qualitative study, time is a critical factor. The actual interview time is only one aspect, if indeed, the least important. Time enters into the being of the would-be respondent as soon as they begin to contemplate their involvement in the study. As I mentioned above, it was obvious to me that for many participants, the reality of the study preceded the interview by some

margin. Then, during the interview, there is a sense of expectation surrounding the completion of the study. Many participants expressed an interest in not only reading their own transcripts and perhaps even more importantly the subsequent analysis, as well as reading other teachers' stories. It seemed to me that the invariable delay between interview and receipt of the analysis and story, may have discouraged some participants from further engagement in the project, for example, responding to the member check.

In another sense, time plays a distinctive role in the study. Unlike quantitative study where the instance of an individual's data is randomized and therefore contingent, in qualitative inquiry, the participants stand within a sequence, firstly of data collection and then, data analysis. Being first is not the same as being second, or third, or for that matter, last. There is a sense of building towards a point, despite the researcher's attempts to remain impartial. Subjectivities clash, merge and separate forming different alliances throughout the whole process. Each participant has their own sense of purpose or aim, partly depending on their backstories – their own reasons for being interviewed. There is an invariable cathartic experience for them, as there is for the researcher, when the interview is concluded. Unknown to the participants however is the curious outcome of sequence. With each new interview, the researcher connects more deeply and widely to the project. This feeds into the next interview. There is a sense for example of discovering something that now becomes a conscious target in the next interviews. The alternating recursivity between analysis and collection also plays into this dynamic. The process of discovery is intensified in the context of data analysis, revealing metathemes, shared metaphors and patterns. This fulfils, I believe, the purpose of the heuristic method: to engage the researcher in transformative acts of shaping knowledge of self and content, with the co-operative participation of others and phenomena of interest. Nonetheless, what is shaped and transformed concerns potentially a wide range of people, far beyond the researcher and respondent.

3.5.5 Data analysis.

This section will be dealt with later in a separate chapter, in advance of discussing the findings of the study. Some of the topics covered in this section will include:

i. Basic structure of analysis – coding and storying of narratives
ii. Methods or approaches employed
iii. Ongoing methodological reflexivities

3.6 Validity of the Study

The notion of validity is increasingly contested. This is largely a function of the growing influence of poststructural and postmodern thinking in social research (Denzin & Guba, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1995, 2005, 2013; Lather, 1991; StPierre, 2011, 2018; Weaver & Snaza, 2017). The language of validity, for example, “triangulation”, reinforces the primacy of the positivist prejudice towards measurement, as well as imposing metaphoric imaginaries that privilege two dimensional “maps” of the world. Even the insistence on “criteria”, argues Bochner (2000), reflects the objectivist desire to avoid the pitfalls of subjectivity and value, by containing freedom, limiting possibilities and resisting change. In effect, “all standards of evaluation” (p. 266) reflect a learning community’s paradigmatic values. In other words, the privileging of binaries (here objective over subjective; physical over non-physical) underpins this bias. Like all biases, it narrows the vision of the beholder.

The notion of distanciation through instrumentality and measurement as a means of ascertaining verisimilitude is opposed to the traditional concept of *Verstehen* which has dominated the social sciences since Dilthey. By contrast, Ricoeur (2016) has argued that our inherent interconnectedness permits a different way of being connected to the phenomena, which in social research, are after all other people. “Understanding” others, behaviour, culture and so on, cannot occur at a distance, in an unprejudiced or disinterested manner. We are “implicated” and “entangled” in the very phenomena we investigate. This makes it “messy, complicated, uncertain, and soft” (Bochner, 2000). Shotter (2006) similarly argues that research that transacts as dialogical activity (that is, human relationships) is unavoidably participatory and transformative. Qualitative inquiry, according to Shotter, only occurs when “we allow ourselves to enter into the inter-involvement” (p. 7) with the other.

However, the idea of validity, as its etymology reveals, is related to both “value” and “valour” or strength (Partridge, 1983, pp. 760-761). We may consider both terms as belonging together: what has value has strength by virtue of its power to influence human behaviour. Hence, a study that has validity is capable of influencing others. The influence is related to the outcomes of the study. It is, after all, seeking to establish a position in the academic field. Axiological considerations of the study therefore encompass a fundamental question, namely, what am I seeking? The response: to produce a *worthwhile* document that outlines the research journey, proposes findings and stimulates further inquiry. The goal of my striving is to generate a record of my research path, offering new insights and new ways of looking at familiar situations. I am also seeking to challenge readers, not only in SWE, but also other educators, to examine their motivations for being educators. I want also to stimulate movement along personal paths of

knowledge, that encourage collegiacy between individuals, irrespective of what school they work at or what modality they practise.

In this study, I have sought to work co-constructively with the participants. A fundamental principle of the epistemology of the study is the idea that dialogue is the form of *being-with* that allows for an authentic meeting to happen between human beings, as well as with beings of the more-than-human dimension that have long been recognised by indigenous cultures as participating in our earthly existence. Striving to work dialogically is a precondition of reflexivity, which asks us to adopt the viewpoint of a different self. As I have alluded to in a few places, the approach towards working with people, with data, with ideas has resonated with the transformative steps outlined in synergic inquiry, which have as their goal the expansion of human consciousness such that it may encompass and learn to live with contradiction. It is obvious that holding the other in respectful care is both a precondition of and enhanced consequence of such expanded consciousness.

In conclusion, I evaluate the study's "worthwhileness" according to Tracy's (2010) "eight tent criteria" as follows:

i. *Worthy topic*: the research design has incorporated the importance of this topic as a subject for research inquiry. SWE is on the eve of reaching a significant milestone: 100 years of existence. Against the backdrop and within the foreground of deeply challenging problems, the need for consciousness-shifting has never been more urgent. SWE unabashedly promotes this shift as its chief goal. It is positioned also within this study, as the global context for the study, the methodological pathway for the study and a fundamental lens through which findings are located and accentuated. Because the study addresses a wide compass of issues in a school setting, particularly in the liminal space between theory and praxis, it may itself serve as a useful narrative for considering similar challenges in other, non-SW school settings.

ii. *Rich rigour*: a survey of the research design both in this and the preceding chapters will highlight the level of care that has been exercised in all aspects of data collection. Data analysis is dealt with in Chapter Five. The underlying intention of the research is to generate new insights into the praxis of SWE, with a view to providing alternative narratives to the grand narratives that have held SWE in a state of suspension. Every interview has been considered in its own right. Even as overlapping themes began to emerge, the burden of examining each transcript as an indivisible whole, and the expectation of finding a jewel in the minutiae of lived experiences prompted an earnest attempt to investigate each one with equal attention. The experience of the integrity and the sincerity of each response always

supervened any temptation to close the investigation, because its relevance might not have made itself apparent.

iii. *Sincerity*: reflexivity has been a vital, ongoing part of the study. The thesis tries to reflect some of the elements of this process at various stages in the study. Figure 3.1 above (p. 148) illustrates this in a simplified manner. Moreover, the study has emerged from an embodied sense of responsibility and a sense of inquiry which I have carried within myself for at least 20 years.

iv. *Credibility*: all of the elements listed in Tracy's table are accounted for in the Chapters Four and Six, Teachers' Narratives and Data Analysis, respectively. In Tracy's summary of credibility as one of the eight "big-tent" criteria, she lists four further criteria:

a. *thick description*
b. *triangulation or crystallisation*
c. *multivocality*
d. *member reflections*

Teachers' narratives provide authentic, first person accounts that have been extracted from interview transcripts. These narratives contain detailed descriptions of lived experience and help to create a composite picture of the lifeworld of SWSs, from the perspective of teachers. In addition, analysis of interview data makes ample use of respondents' voices in order to illustrate, support or explain critical insights made by the researcher, as well commentary offered by other respondents. Insofar as this is possible, respondents are presented within the context of their own narratives, although this occasionally raises problems with repetition.

In highlighting critical comments, multiple accounts are drawn from in order to enhance the insights proffered by individual teachers. Effectively, critical commentary is validated from a number of perspectives, forming a crystallised (Ellingson, 2009, 2014, 2017; Richardson, 1990) picture of the critical content: teachers' narratives, research papers, teachers' biographies and well-developed insider reflection on the issues. In addition, my own experience, as well as the body of accumulated anecdotal evidence, reinforces and is in turn consolidated by these crystallised accounts of the SWE lifeworld. The thematic use of the Parizval story also adds a mythopoetic dimension to the analysis, further augmenting the effect of crystallisation.

Multivocality (Bakhtin, 1981, 1999; Wertz et al., 2011) is provided by the fifteen voices of respondents who contributed to the research project with a good deal of material, personal insight and passion, as well as dedication and devotion to their work as SW educators. This is

also evident in the use of member checking, which confirmed the researcher's use of transcripts to highlight specific insights or develop overarching themes, both within each response and across responses.

v. *Resonance*: the notion of sympathetic resonance is strongly indicated in intuitive and heuristic inquiry. At its most immediate, such resonance is evident in the interview context. Further, through member checking or reflections, this resonance is heightened or at least consciously articulated. The thesis is written with a latitude that promotes the researcher's voice alongside the voices of participants and others who have or are following a similar path. Ultimately, resonance will prove to be a critical factor: will the study find an audience willing to grasp its basic arguments and to adopt a critical stance in relation to Rudolf Steiner's work?

vi. *Significant contribution*: it is, of course, premature to spell this out definitively. However, the study proposal has passed two significant hurdles prior to the final stage of writing: namely, the Confirmation of Candidature and Ethics approval. In both cases, significant contribution was a crucial factor. Moreover, the study has worked creatively and rigorously with a range of methodological concepts and approaches, in a spirit of experimentation and cognitive playfulness. It is animated by and its findings are directly drawn from the voices of teachers speaking about their own lived experiences. Their contributions are, as their comments and narratives attest, certainly significant, and in my view, demand a wider audience.
Echoing the observation from the previous point, ultimately the work's contribution will be found in the extent to which its content is accepted into contemporary SW educational discourse. Contribution implies reciprocity.

vii. *Ethics*: I believe I have adequately discussed and engaged with the main considerations of this criterion in an earlier section.

viii. *Meaningful coherence*: with hindsight, the task undertaken has been onerous. Yet, I am not sure that given the intention to ask a core question of SWE, that this could have been avoided. The findings of the study have yielded considerable responses to the primary research question. The interpretive task, of translating these findings into clearly enunciated "solutions", still remains. In the Discussion chapter, I conclude with a sketch of four "new narratives." These are contributions towards a reorientation of SWE, one that is consonant with its esoteric imaginaries, as well as the demands of our time. Insofar as the project is concerned, there is an evident coherence between aims, methods and results. What remains is the further elaboration of what has been disclosed in the data. This will certainly involve

further interpretive work, but it will also involve a response or responses that wish to continue to work in a spirit of criticality and compassion.

4 Teachers' Narratives

Refer to Appendix D, p. 361

5 Methodological Interlude: Background to Analysis of Teachers' Stories

5.1 Introduction

The separation of respondents' narratives into themes is a creative, if also uncertain process that entails abstracting what is present in the storied accounts as interlinked experiences. Themes and experiences belong together. In the narrative, themes emerge out of storied accounts, showing their interconnection with other themes that are also embedded in the soil of other experiences. In this way, the narrative continually reminds us that concepts or thematic abstractions grow out of the flesh of teachers' lived experiences. For this reason alone, it is imperative that themes are always seen in their dynamic interaction with other themes and embedded in lived experiences.

There is, of course, an obvious value in isolating themes, if only to see how comments made by teachers overlap, enhance or contradict each other. However, a significant drawback arises when themes are narrated out of context of the fuller picture, namely the teacher's own story. In order for the reader to gain this fuller picture, it is recommended that respondents' comments and insights are considered against the background of their story. Some of these narratives are recounted in Appendix D. In addition, some narratives are discussed in greater detail such that the interaction of themes and experiences becomes evident.

For the reasons highlighted just now, it is unavoidable that a certain amount of repetition and recapitulation occurs in the course of the foregoing analyses. As I have intimated, when respondents speak about their lived experience of working and interacting within the social structure of the SW community, their observations and comments cut across abstract divisions such as attitudes towards anthroposophy, management and leadership styles, or the professional and learning culture. These varied aspects present different views of an educational community. We are confronted with a reality, discerned by Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2005) as "nomadic", that underpins our knowledge of the world. Whenever we turn our gaze onto something in our field of vision, the view is enhanced, but only at the cost of excluding other aspects from our awareness. Disclosure always involves concealment (van Manen, 2014). The appearance of knowledge is a nomadic adventure. Cognition has to be followed in its tracings across the field of attention. This theorises thematic compartmentalisation as a temporary wayside along the concept's journey from concealment to disclosure and back again. In the meantime, the nomadic thought has alerted us to the interconnected nature of our insights and experiences. This is the fuller picture referred to above, which tends to get lost in the act of compartmentalising themes. Chapter Seven will attempt

to reintegrate the themes and comments that are pulled apart in Chapter Six for the sake of analysing teachers' views and perceptions of the lifeworld of SWSs.

5.2 The Structure of Data Analysis

Fifteen "semi-structured" interviews or dialogic conversations were conducted with former and current SW teachers. The first two interviews served as "pilots" in the following senses:

i. in the approach to the conversational event;

ii. in achieving a balance between setting the agenda with prescribed questions;

iii. in allowing the respondent to determine their own content;

iv. in clarifying the scope and purpose of the interview;

v. and in consolidating the approach to data analysis.

As a consequence, these pilot interviews allowed me as a researcher to "find my feet." In particular, the second interview became the basis of a template for approaching data analysis, that was split into two parts - the narrative and the analysis – and was used in each subsequent individual analysis. Typically, a methodological introduction was also included in most analyses, identifying particular methodological issues associated with interpreting the individual transcript.

A detailed narrative and analysis were produced from each transcript. Altogether the fifteen interviews yielded a consolidated document totalling 150,000 words. In order to convert these individual analyses into a consolidated set of statements, as evinced in Chapter Six, *Analysing Teachers' Stories*, a second level of coding was conducted, whereby recurring or significant comments were coalesced into single or clustered themes. These are represented schematically at the beginning of Chapter Six.

5.2.1 Biographical and conceptual narratives.

The collected narratives of fifteen respondents have yielded an enormous amount of data about the life world of SWE. In this study, I have constructed a division between biographical narrative (the teacher's story) and conceptual narrative (the teacher's account of their insights into SWE and the culture of SWSs). This is reflected in a conceptual pairing that emerged from early in the stage of data analysis, namely "outline" and "node". This pairing of concepts is intended to reflect an embodied experiencing of teachers' narratives, which recognises the "big picture" in outline form, yet at the same time, notices a crowding or clustering of narrative lines of flight around particular bundles of ideas, events and experiences, which I have termed "nodes", or to use a

particularly dynamic concept from Deleuze (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2005): "rhizomes". Both are, I believe, necessary in order to gain meaningful ideas about the data provided. In the first instance, an outline of the teacher's biography brings into relation their experiences with SWE, providing a sketch of potentially critical or decisive events, with their biographical trajectories as well as inner impulses or aspirations. Put simply, the outline brings their experiences in SWE into a broader context within their own biography. However, it also illuminates an even larger canvas which is ever-present in the background, which is the field of education, specifically SWE. What becomes visible from observation and consideration of these outlines are key nodal bundles that address fundamental issues in contemporary education and SWE.

Each teacher's narrative offers a view of a specific school which claims to work out of the principles of SWE. However, this is not an ethnographic study of the SWE movement. Although the study is concerned with the concept of culture, as it applies in a SW context, its focus on this concept is not exclusive. Neither does it make any pretension to comprehensiveness in its insights, nor generalisability in the concerns it raises. Nonetheless, the issues that emerge from individual teacher's accounts are, I believe, widespread in SWSs. They are echoed in numerous anecdotal accounts, in the few autobiographical accounts by former SW teachers, as well as observations and concerns related in the *Literature Review* over the last thirty years of research into SWE. The links between these previous observations and the emergent insights from teachers' narratives will be articulated more clearly and more fully in the Chapter Seven, *Discussion*: *Developing Critical Narratives of SWE.*

It is important to recall that this study is not intended to examine specific aspects of SWE, but rather to highlight those criticisms that teachers have made out of their own experiences. It is instructive for me, as researcher, to note the many significant differences between teachers' accounts despite the fact that some have worked at the same schools. Of course, there are also similarities. But just as we should lend equal weight to the individual differences in assessing the range of issues facing SW teachers working in SWSs, so too should we regard the similarities as reflective of individual experience rather than necessarily attributing them to the shared context. What matters more than simply knowing which experiences, attitudes, expressions and so on are common in teachers' experiences of SWSs, is understanding what these shared or unshared experiences point to in the lifeworld of SWE.

5.3 The Process of Data Analysis

In this part of the study, I detail the processes undertaken in order to convert the substantial amounts of data into manageable thematic extracts and ultimately, themes and metathemes that highlight traceable patterns or motifs across the face of SWE.

5.3.1 Transcribing the recording.

Immediately after conducting each interview, the recording was transcribed: the first four data sets were transcribed by the researcher, the remaining eleven by a commercial transcription company, Transcript Divas. Whilst the process of transcribing the recordings was personally gratifying, it was also time-consuming and unsustainable, given other time pressures. For this reason, the bulk of the transcription task was handed to the commercial company. Although the overall quality of the commercial transcription was adequate, there were numerous errors, which I felt obligated to correct prior to passing them on to the respective respondent for their member check.

The initial researcher-conducted transcriptions were performed thoroughly. I tried to transcribe as accurately and literally as practicable the words spoken in the respective conversation. In this process, the data were sifted through several times in an informal way. This sifting process involved listening to the same passage repeatedly, in some cases doing so with a few words at a time. This preliminary iterative, recursive and *initial* hermeneutic process ensured that the researcher was familiarised with the text before beginning to conduct any formal analysis.

5.3.2 Informal coding of the interview text.

This preliminary stage of *informal* analysis suggested potential points of interest in the text: significant moments, episodes, responses, observations, insights, as well as unusual or revealing metaphors, potentially emerging or confirming themes, as well as illuminating potential patterns in the text. The appearance of these points further informed the conduct and framing of other interviews. For example, it became worthwhile to investigate each respondent's initial encounter with SWE, taking note of their early impressions or attitudes, as well as their initial reflective experiences. This dynamic, organic process of analysis fed into the formal data analysis. In a sense, it is a kind of tasting and manipulating (viz. "handling") of the data before they are digested into interpretive chunks of information. It is not uncommon for questions to arise, or for connections within the text and with other texts to emerge. These are recorded in a "research log" (in both handwritten and typed digital format, as dated journal entries).

5.3.3 Formal coding process.

Formal analysis began with the extraction of “meaning-units” from the interview text. These “meaning-units” were selected in the previous phase or emerged from a closer study of each transcript. Although, as discussed later, I have employed a number of key orienting concepts, awareness of these did not play a conscious role in selecting parts of the text for coding. As Polanyi (1975) argues, the theoretical “grounds” of seeing the world, which he terms “subsidiary awareness,” cannot be examined at the same time as we are engaged in searching for meaning, which requires “focal awareness” and depends on the subsidiary attention to those grounds. “We cannot make these ‘discoveries’ before we do in fact make them” (p. 63). This is what is meant by “tacit knowing.” Our theoretical spectacles help us to see, but we cannot examine them with the same spectacles. Polanyi’s “resolution” to this dilemma is to enter into a “completely reflexive indwelling – a full conviviality with our subject” (p. 63).

I experience the coding process as just such an immersion into the subjectivity of the participant, which is at the same time an immersion into my own subjectivity. In other words, by listening over and again to the voice of the participant, dwelling on single words or phrases, hearing the tone rise or fall, the occasional chuckle, or sensing an understated pathos, I find myself deeply moved. There is no “objectivity” in the experience; it is pure intersubjectivity or living into intentionality. What I feel in the other, I feel in myself. Letiche (2008) captures the intimacy of this mood in the following passage:

> I believe that acknowledgement of the chiasms of interrelationship reveals complex processes of enfoldment taking place between researcher and researched, writer and reader. All of them are enclosed in what Merleau-Ponty called the enfoldments or flesh of the world; which makes it very difficult to determine who touches whom and who is touched by whom. Research, when it tries to see, interpret and study the other, focuses on the visible of touching and being touched; but these inherently carry with them the invisible of the same actions (p. 63).

Therefore, the “selection” of meaning-units is a “co-operative” process between researcher and researched. One could also say that, at times, they appear to select themselves, but that is not entirely correct. Into the space of intersubjectivity, the participant herself projects what is meaningful for her: as I’ve said below (p. 168), through intonation, through emphasis, through silence which sometimes announces the arrival of meaning, the inner light of “eureka”. There is a mutual touching that occurs in the intersubjective space, in the flesh-body of the world itself. Then, what is “selected” is nothing other than what announces itself in that felt mutual touching. Of course, at times, I am called back into myself, away from the participant’s subjectivity into my own

orbit of associations and connections. Then, the interplay of data and the orienting concepts in the background reveal something that illuminates the orienting concept itself. A latent significance is heralded.

However, the researcher's selection will be tested later as the process of analysis becomes more refined and focussed. Analysis will test the fit between the data and the concept that has been selected to harness them. A further test will come from the committed participant who has agreed to provide a "member reflection" on the researcher's interpretations and constructions from the selected meaning-units.

5.3.4 The coding procedure.

Using a table, meaning-units are listed on the left-hand column. A column is also used to indicate the page and line numbers where the extract is taken from. Next to each meaning-unit the researcher notes down explanations or comments. At first, preliminary interpretive comments are made, which serve several functions. For example, they may situate the meaning-unit into the larger context of the interview as a whole or the interviewee's biography; they may explain a term that is used which may not be known to the potential reader; or they may constitute an attempt on the part of the researcher to highlight or at least signal connections that arise, either rationally or intuitively. Initially, the comments are not intended to outline any detailed analysis of any of the meaning-units, however, they do attempt to disclose some of the cognitive processes taking place within the researcher, prompted by the interviewee's responses. As the coding process continues in a recursive fashion, going back over previous meaning-units, checking carefully for nuances, comparing them to later instances of the 'same' code, the analysis begins to take shape. In a sense, with each reading of and reflection upon the listed meaning-units and the whole text itself, the static themes come into movement. In other words, themes begin to interact with each other and with themes or concepts that may not be overtly indicated yet which resonate with those that are. At this point, modifications or extensions to the orienting concepts are suggested, and even new concepts, potentially explanatory of elements of the data, emerge.

Overall, the identified themes and patterns create a kind of tesserated mirror of the interviewee's lived experience, as it is characterised in this particular instance. One interviewee noted that after the conversation she recalled many other items which she could have spoken about but did not. This suggests that follow up interviews (perhaps with a smaller sample) may have been

useful for this purpose, if not for others as well.[105] By presenting the interviewee with an opportunity to review the transcript and to comment on the member reflection, it may well be that new insights emerge, for example, about what was both said and not said.

5.4 Hermeneutic Interpretation of Data

Data analysis is essentially an interpretive process, or series of overlapping, concurrent hermeneutic movements. I would suggest that much more is going on in this process than the researcher is aware of. However, by engaging with this process as consciously as possible, through reflection and by admitting multiple ways of knowing such as intuition (Anderson & Braud, 2011), contemplative inquiry (Zajonc, 2008), focussing (Gendlin, 2007), the researcher may participate more fully in these movements.

5.4.1 Modes of analysis.

The process of data analysis entails many different modes of relationship between the researcher and the text (conversation, recording and transcript).

5.4.1.1 Engaging in the conversation.

As a living phenomenon, unlike the recording or transcript, both of which can be paused at any time and allow recursive examination, the conversation has to be experienced in the moment of its happening. This immediacy provides the conversation with its most potent and its weakest force by imposing a need on the speaker to decide what to say next and to construct their story for this occasion. Similarly, the listener/conversation partner is also required to be present in order to stay in the conversation. There is no or little time to reflect, to come back to the conversation, to pause, to review what was said, except through reliance on what is remembered. This immediacy means that what is said and what is heard are more likely to issue from an embodied sense of what is deemed fitting for the occasion. Things are said that had previously remained unsaid; coherent thoughts become less coherently spoken words; sense emerges from shadowed experiences, memories or attitudes. We tend to surprise ourselves whenever we speak. In fact, we are hardly in control of what we say, at least not to the same extent as we are when we have an inert text before us.

[105] Unfortunately, this was not practicable and not done. However, in a research study of this kind, where the initial conversation is likely to rake over a considerable amount of content, a second conversation would be desirable, even though not all respondents might agree to do so.

5.4.1.2 Listening to the recording.

Here attention is given to the quality of the voice, including emphasis, understatement, dramatization; the quality and mode of the narrative (that is, conceptual, discursive, biographical). The narrative "style" may represent events and characters with a sense of immediacy, or conversely by projecting a sense of distance. These contrasting attitudes may also alternate in the same interview. Other elements may also appear during the course of the conversation, for example, truncated sentences, chuckles, laughter, pauses, dropped thread, displays or undertones of emotionality.

5.4.1.3 Reading the transcript.

Following the aural interaction with the recording, attention now shifts to reading the transcript. Hermeneutic phenomena encountered at this stage includes incomplete thought or sentence, progression of thoughts, digressions, logical stream, metaphors, binaries, privileged positions and so on.

5.4.1.4 Axial coding.

By this stage, I have already experienced, heard and read the text of the conversation. Already after the interview, I will have formed an impression of the speaker, what was said, how it was said, as well as what was not said, or felt to be held back. More consciously I may notice repeated words, recurring themes (words), events, names, numbers, and patterns.

5.4.1.5 Deconstruction.

This occurs wherever a disruption is experienced, that is heard, felt, thought or sensed at an embodied level. Disruptions relate to what is unsaid, what is oversaid, what is denied, excessive praise, demonisations, metaphors/imagery, what is held back or what is resisted. It may also alert the reader to inconsistencies in emplotment or characterisation. It is a window into the shadow that is cast by the light of writing.

As Derrida asserts, deconstruction "happens" (Barnard-Naude, 2011; Boje, 2001, p. 20). It is not a technique or a method, but something that occurs naturally wherever structures are erected. I would argue, however, that it needs to be observed or sensed. One may look for "instances" of deconstruction and not find anything, or find something, yet it does not lead to deconstructing. Since deconstruction is a phenomenon of constructions, it is quite possible that examining a particular structure, for example, an interview, may bring one into contact with another structure,

another interview, or even a number of interviews, or all interviews, or other structures apart from the collected data, such as articles, books or others' experiences.

5.4.1.6 Nocturnal inspiration.

It is perhaps more accurate to refer to this phenomenon as nocturnal cognition. This is a kind of thinking, though one more steeped in feeling and imagination than daytime thinking, and therefore arising at the boundary between waking and dreaming. The 'strength' of the thoughts or pictures is not stable enough to endure further sleep or dreaming. At the point of awakening, I sit upright and write as much of the experience or insight as I can recall. I owe, in particular, a lot of linking or connecting ideas and images to this form of 'research'. It is closely connected to the next, perhaps even a subset of it.

5.4.1.7 Intuitive apprehension.

This is associated with a contemplative approach to research. Contemplation can be distinguished from active thinking in that the force or flow of thinking is directed at a particular image or concept, without engaging in a discursive inner dialogue with it. It resembles a kind of cognitive resting on something. Examples include meditative approaches to various aspects of the learning journey, as well as attentiveness towards dreaming, such as keeping a dreaming journal, and grace itself – the latter being imponderable and ineffable, the blessings of wisdom and deep connection.

5.4.2 Hermeneutic perspectives.

The interaction between researcher and respondent is a complex one, echoing the statement below (p. 171) that more is going on than the researcher is aware of. The following hermeneutic "perspectives" (modes of interaction) emerge in the analytic-interpretive relationship between the researcher and respondent:

i. The researcher approaches the interviewee/respondent from the outside. As Bakhtin (1981) argued, the "exteriority" of the observer is key towards understanding a situation. "In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his or her creative understanding – in time, in space, in culture" (Bakhtin cited in Kelly, 1993, p. 61). Moreover, this is not an impoverished standpoint. Some things can only be seen at a distance, and outside of the object of attention. Of course, the inner attitude of the researcher can have a decisive influence on what is experienced as well as how it is experienced. However, objectified interaction can easily descend into objectification with its concomitant ethical disregard for the subjectivity of the other.

ii. The researcher approaches the respondent with empathy and interest. An attempt is made to experience the world from within the other's perspective. Healers or therapists sometimes report having embodied experiences of their patients' ailments or conditions – a form of telekinesis (R. St John, 1983, pers comm; M. Hook, 2017, pers comm). This is also echoed in Gendlin's notion of "interembodiment" (cited in Todres, 2007, p. 31).

iii. The researcher is aware of a difference between points of view, or ways of relating to an idea, phenomenon or situation. Ironically, this can lead to an unexpected experience of neutrality in the researcher's perspective. In other words, *both* the respondent's and researcher's perspectives, as clearly identifiable sets of ideas and beliefs, become externalised and detachable. Just as the researcher can 'see' the other's way of looking and thinking about something, so too they can 'see' their own belief structure, repetitive pattern of thinking and speaking. This is an 'uncanny' experience because becoming detached from one's own ideas and beliefs causes them to appear 'alien' or 'not-mine'. I believe this uncomfortable situation is an ongoing milestone in reflexive inquiry.

iv. Contrary to this is the sense of blending between the respondent's words and views and the attention of the researcher. Again, this is also not necessarily an impoverished standpoint. On the contrary, it is, I would argue, to some extent necessary for this to occur if genuine understanding or sharing of communication is to occur. Of course, it must, at some point, be countervailed by difference and distance, so that what has been absorbed from the other can be allowed to resonate with the researcher's own field of awareness and knowledge. The hermeneutic tension referred to here is characterised by Ricoeur (2016) as "belonging" and "distanciation", and this dynamic finds further expression in the dialectical movement between the "hermeneutic of faith" and the "hermeneutic of suspicion" (Ricoeur, 1970). In other words, where the blending leads to an expanded horizon (which one would hope occurs every time), this expansion has to be experienced inwardly and its consequences also be allowed to work into the awareness of the researcher. This process, however, goes further than this. Because it is theoretically possible, or even likely, that this process will have occurred with every respondent, to some extent, the 'blending' also happens between respondents, even though they never meet, nor are they made aware of each other. In other words, it is through the hermeneutic activity of the researcher that the worldviews of respondents start to blend, either with their knowledge (I make the connection for them), or without their knowledge (they remain unaware of the connection). This enriching activity invariably leads to the free and playful emergence of thematic links between narratives.

v. Sometimes, the distance between conducting the interview and reviewing the transcript (usually six or more months apart in the case of my study) can yield surprising results. For example, I can have the sense at the time of the interview, that I have not been particularly engaged in listening, and therefore, that the content does not leave me with much of an impression. However, later when I listen to the recording and read the transcript, I am pleasantly overwhelmed by my level of interest in what is being said, as well the richness of the content. This is a confirmation of the necessity of being able to externalise oneself from the close atmosphere of the interview. Incidentally, the reverse has not happened in the fifteen interviews conducted, that is, they have always seemed *more* interesting and rich *afterwards*.

Data analysis occurs in various stages, not necessarily sequentially or completely. As mentioned above, it is also the case that processes occur concurrently, in other words, insights or interpretive moments intersect.

5.4.3 Analytical continuities and concepts.

As mentioned in Methodology chapter, the practice of hermeneutic reflection provides the critical continuity in the analysis of each respondent's narrative and commentary. Arising like musical motifs from this continuity are various concepts that stimulate the process of lifting out of each story heuristic themes that project lines of flight towards, across and beyond other stories.

Essential to the analytical process is Gadamer's concept of 'horizon' (1979). The interaction of researcher and respondent, which occurs at various levels identified above, but which can be summarised as happening at the face-to-face (conversational), textual (transcript) and analytical (conceptual) levels, involves a merging of horizons. Naturally, this merging involves an expansion of the researcher's point of view. But at the same time, there is a 'con-fusion' that occurs, whose ambiguity is marvellously betrayed by the word's etymology. The joining or fusing together, also suggests a confusion of views, such that they are less easily distinguished, their boundaries blurred and identities mixed. This 'con-fusion' is perhaps a necessary experiential outcome of the horizonal merger.

My own phenomenological self-reflection attests to this confusion, with its additive as well as diminishing properties. Simplistically, I can perceive at the outset of this project an identity characterised by fixed opinions and received ideas that dominated the exterior husk of my social self; inwardly, a much larger space was filled with questions, most of which were unformed or poorly articulated. Looking back at the project, over the last three to four years, a different picture

emerges. Though I'm sure there still remain far too many fixed notions, I feel inwardly transformed by the myriad experiences associated with the PhD journey. There are fewer certainties, and altogether many more questions, arrayed one after the other, or cramming together, seeking liberation in being voiced. This is not as chaotic an experience as perhaps I have made it out to be. Rather, it is a picture of life streaming into the thinking process. It is both a truism and a matter of honour that I acknowledge the merging of horizons with the fifteen respondents as an act of grace that has filled me with greater understanding and insight than I could have harnessed on my own. And although I am at a loss to find *a* methodology that can communicate this realisation "reliably" or indeed "validate" its findings, there is an inner sense of certitude that is unshakeable, because this experience has been transformative.

It is interesting to consider that the process of "translating" the meaning across texts, whether they are transcripts, or the social texts of dialogic conversation, involves a linguistic reconstruction in order that the meanings may be merged. At this level of interaction, words cannot function merely as data but tend to drift into an imprecise metaphoric realm where meaning has to be intuited. The process of translation described by Steiner (1961/2009) and Bailey (2011) applies equally well here. I think that such theorizing of the translation process, that is as a matter of *common* understanding within the same language, may help to account for the argument delivered against data by postmodern critiques (for example, Lather & St.Pierre, 2013).

In re-presenting teacher's commentaries or narratives about SWE, I have necessarily integrated their perspectives into my own. That is to say that because of a merging of perspectives, the reconstruction is neither entirely mine, nor entirely theirs. If I were to try to separate my own 'prejudices' or 'fore-structures of understanding' (Heidegger, 1953/2001), I would have had to present the entire transcript in full. Yet, that would still carry some vestige of my presence, since, in the case of the majority of the commercial transcripts, they required a careful proofread, upon receiving them from the commercial transcription company. This gave them a form, however slight, that they would otherwise not have had.[106] Even then, as the interviewer or interlocutor in the dialogues, I gave shape to the nature of what was spoken about, perhaps more in some cases and less in others. So that, arguably, the merging of horizons already began when the dialogues commenced. Therefore, what I have decided to do is to settle for a compromise; moreover, as I have tried to show, an unavoidable one. Of course, this is primarily *my* heuristic journey. I have invited the

[106] The transcriptions were, on the whole, not especially accurate. For example, punctuation was inconsistent. Pauses were not indicated. There were numerous spelling errors. I felt that before submitting these to the respondents for their feedback, I had to 'clean' up the transcripts.

respondents to join me along the way. The invitation allowed them to choose their own level of commitment. Some have retained a pressing interest, while others have relinquished any further involvement. Hence, the task continues largely out of my own self-appointed responsibility to complete the journey. Like the *theoros*, I am charged with the task to return the semiotically encased message (the *sema*) to the open air of the forum.

5.4.4 Impact of ethical considerations.

I have spoken above (p. 146ff) in Chapter Three about potential compromise in handling the data, specifically around the issue of confidentiality. At the same, it has to be acknowledged that maintaining ethical distance from specific contexts has also provided certain advantages in the study, particularly through keeping participants and details of their contexts anonymous. Such considerations, for example, preclude any reference to their personal or professional interconnections within the SWE movement. I have avoided making those interconnections explicit in the text, although it is possible that a persistent and well-informed reader may make them. I'm not sure that it is possible to *completely* mask participants' anonymity. I have nonetheless attempted to minimise this possibility as far as possible. But I believe that the likelihood of anonymity brings with it the advantage that the individual respondent's story is heard all the more clearly and unequivocally, since the possibility of linking it to another story by means of a common school is largely excluded. The individual story has to be considered in its own right, as one teacher's response to the lived experience of working in a SWS. As soon as the focus shifts from the individual story to extrinsic factors, such as the school they worked in, who worked with them, when they worked there and so on, the phenomenologically revealing 'lived experiences' of the teacher take second place and are all too easily dismissed, as "only" their experience. Just as SWSs are not universally good or bad, so too the same can be said of teachers. Listening to individual testimony of whatever kind, becomes the basis for a truly open, collaborative form of collegial learning.

6 Analysing Teachers Stories – An Examination of Selected Themes

> If a way to the better there be, it exacts a full look at the worst.
>
> Thomas Hardy (1962, p. 36)

6.1 Schematic of Selected Themes

The themes selected here have emerged from the conversations with respondents. Naturally, the research lenses outlined in the first chapter are visible in the comments made and extracted here, but they have been gathered under rubrics that, to a large extent, have been suggested or inspired by the respondents themselves.

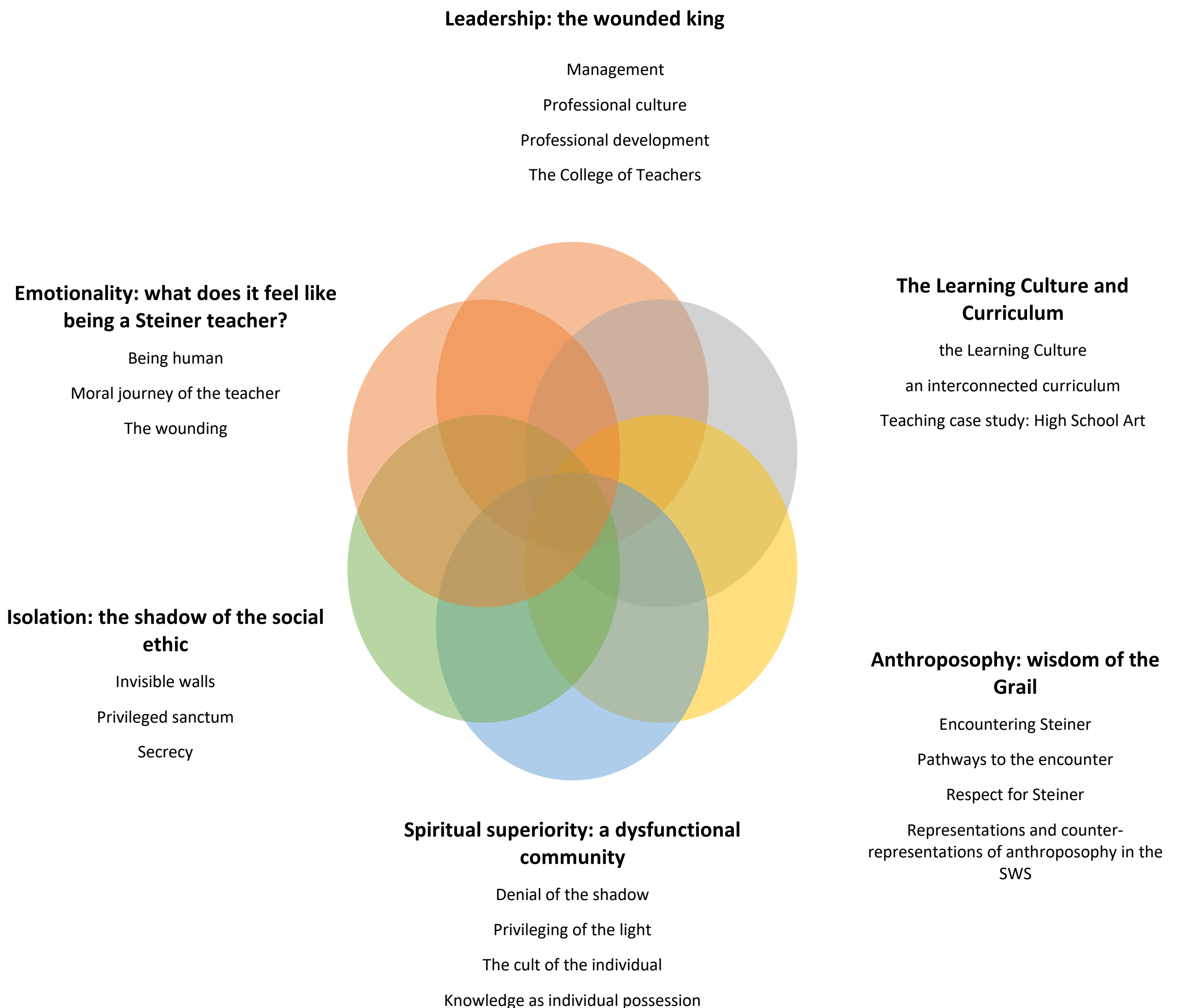


Figure 6.1: Schematic of selected themes

6.2 Anthropsophy: Wisdom of the Grail.

In the story of *Parzival*, the presence of the Grail is shrouded in a certain ambivalence. Its attributes suggest an artefact that transcends any simple categorisation. It is a cup or stone, a fragment fallen from the crown worn by Lucifer during the War in Heaven, which is depicted in the Book of Revelation. Yet, it is not merely a symbol, for its function within the Grail community, is to keep alive the Wounded King, Amfortas, and his large company of Grail knights, servants and ladies. All are nourished by the Grail. Yet the Grail, in all its splendour is intimately tied to cosmic rhythms. Every year its power has to be renewed, otherwise it could not bestow its life-giving powers on mortals. Moreover, every time it is brought into the presence of the King, an act that is necessary to sustain his life, in the face of an otherwise mortal wound, a re-enactment of his wounding occurs. This re-enactment brings about a re-experiencing of the grief and shame associated with the King's transgression that precipitated his wounding in the first instance, but now it becomes a public event. Here we see how the entire community must bear the grief and the shame of the King's wound. No-one can escape it. Parzival's unexpected arrival at the court of the Wounded King brings momentary relief to the company, but he does not ask the question that would relieve the King and the community's tragic suffering. Only through his own wandering, in re-search of the Grail, that which "cannot be sought," will Parzival restore healing to the Grail community. Parzival's search for the Grail becomes a metaphorical search for wisdom, for the personal transformation that will make him fit to become the next Grail King. The fool who announced himself to the court of King Arthur at the beginning of the story reappears at its close as the new Grail King, an event that is written in heavenly script on the Grail itself.

6.2.1 Encountering Steiner.

6.2.1.1 Different pathways to the encounter.

Teachers' encounters with Steiner, or more specifically, with his written work and his numerous lectures, on education as well as other subjects, tend to occur simultaneously with their first encounters with SWE. However, there are a few notable exceptions, such as Simon, Jennifer, Andrew and Ian. For example, Steiner's work may be encountered in the course of academic study, particularly in the study of education, although it is not unusual for individuals to also meet it in other areas of interest, such as drama, art or esotericism. It is likely, although not necessarily given, that in such cases, the length of time to "digest" the complex content of Steiner's worldview, may help the teacher to develop a more balanced, and less one-dimensional understanding of anthroposophy and SWE. This is certainly apparent in Andrew and Ian's accounts. Their long and

varied associations with anthroposophy and SWE (to a lesser extent) are reflected in the versatility of their discourses. It is also evident that their engagement with this esoteric philosophy reaches from the personal to the professional domain. In other words, the ideas become effective not only in their professional domain but they have also permeated their personal development and to some extent their self-identity. This is the situation that is reported by many respondents, for example, Robert notes that working in a SWS has been "a kind of training" that has "formed" him "in some way; in a positive way." The encompassing nature of anthroposophical ideas is also reflected in Susan's account, where finding anthroposophy fulfilled a search for "something that had a clearer purpose, a clearer spiritual orientation." As she puts it, "it was really important to encompass or to live those values in as many ways as we could… rearing our children, building our house, biodynamic gardening around the house, the school." This apparently seamless fit between theory and practice is also found in Julia's story. As an already experienced mainstream teacher with an open mind, she was able to perceive how SWE worked positively into the children she observed, not least her own son. Moreover, alongside the informal training she received at the school and her own reading, she found that she "just came on board with the philosophy and the practice." It was for her "just so natural… like coming home."

Sometimes the encounter with Steiner highlights a living contradiction between what is perceived and its mental construction. On the one hand, the respondent is captivated by the visual and tangible aesthetic of SWE, but may find herself nonplussed by elements of the philosophy, at least insofar as they are represented by an assumed authority. Wendy provides a humorous account of a group of parents (and prospective teachers) at her school, who listened to the kindergarten teacher speak about nature spirits in a manner that she felt was incredible.

> The gnomes and the sylphs and the salamanders… Beautiful! A beautiful spirituality… and visually stunning. I can easily get swept up in that. Um, but the kindergarten teacher came in and talked to us, and then when she left [chuckles] I remember other parents sort of going, "she actually, she actually thinks that they're real." But, not "real" in a spiritual sense, it's like I can meet that. But in a physical sense.

Perhaps remarkably, this type experience is not commonly related by the respondents, with one or two other comical exceptions. Typically, their apprehension of Steiner's ideas is "felt" as "truth", despite their inability to couch such inner experiences within a rational schema. Clearly, the juxtaposition of a practical, physical application of these ideas, in the form of SWSs made the transition in thinking possible, where it might otherwise be quite challenging. This suggests that a predisposition towards anthroposophy is a common, if not indispensable feature of the encounter. The predisposition perhaps articulates Gadamer's (1979) counter-intuitive use of the term

"prejudice" to designate a preliminary and necessary connection to the world that makes possible the experience of understanding. In other words, the predisposition or "prejudice" brings the individual closer to the phenomena so that their experience is not dominated by intellectuality but reaches into the cognitive structures of felt, embodied knowledge, which is already an approaching spiritual intuition.

6.2.1.2 Respect for Steiner.

There is, in every account, an underlying deep respect for the figure of Rudolf Steiner. In fact, much that is critical and directed at Waldorf praxis, is lent additional weight by comparison to Steiner's words on the topic at hand. Simon provides a clear articulation of this approach to evaluating teachers' lived experiences. He states that before undertaking any formal academic training he had already noticed

> behaviour concerns and quality of education concerns, along with the human concerns of treating people in a nice kind of way, of finding a spiritual way of dealing with the human, with respect and I guess that was the most disempowering thing, to be involved in the Grey Gum Steiner School and be totally unrespected which is the antithesis of an apparent message of a spiritually based education.

In another context, Wendy argues that Steiner was

> very progressive, very progressive, very open and very intuitive. He was all about change. He wanted to change everything, uh, so I'm sure that's not… He did not intend to write a dogma of education. He intended to raise questions, and um… It's interesting that it's become quite opposite to what he intended.

However, what she encountered at her school was a desire for "comfort" and a "resistance to change."

Whilst there is widespread respect and regard for Steiner as an educator, philosopher and individuality, this attitude does not descend into idolatry. Rather what is found throughout the teachers' narratives is a view of Steiner as a tremendous helper, whose "truth" is felt and intuited rather than apprehended intellectually. Many respondents refer to the tremendous help that they derived from reading Steiner and contemplating his words. For example, Wendy spoke about the guidance that came to her in approaching students in the classroom; the developing and deepening of knowledge of her subject and the moral task associated with it; the reinforcement of her insight into the importance of contemporaneity; and the critical need to challenge students, especially in high school. For Julia, this help manifested as a set of moral imperatives in the classroom, a sense of the sacredness of the task of teaching. As well it stirred her passion and deep interest in the wisdom of the curriculum and clarified for her the links between SWE and contemporary interest in brain

development. For Andrew, after many decades of working with anthroposophy and SWE, he gained a deep personal spiritual orientation, as well as insights into the essential teaching methodology of SWE. Michaela arrived at a respect for the curriculum, and particularly its focus on values education. For Rosa, Steiner brought her to a deeply felt vocational task to "save the prep;" for Bernard, it was a practice-based approach to the teaching methodology and the crux of integrated learning; for Sally, Steiner remained in the background as a critical friend who helped her to frame her critique of SW praxis. In Susan's case, the work of Steiner became a lodestone not only for her work as a kindergarten teacher, but it provided direction and purpose in everyday living, a way of engaging in the world, out of a personal sense of spiritual connection.

In summing up her story, Julia speaks about the debt to Steiner's earnest positivity. He encouraged human beings, she recalls, to maintain an openness to the future, to be able to deal with "all this stuff around us. [As Steiner said] 'We must work with absolute equanimity and trust that is given to us by the ever-present help of the spiritual world.'" Her own personal connection to Steiner is clearly developed in her narrative, particularly around the classroom experience as well as her insights into the curriculum. (This aspect will be more fully covered in the section "The learning culture.")

6.2.2 Representations and counter-representations of anthroposophy in the SWS.

The absorption of anthroposophy and Steiner's pedagogical thinking into SW praxis is directly addressed by many respondents. Indeed, the link between anthroposophy and the practice of SWE has been indirectly researched in the past, albeit in a very rudimentary way (Woods et al., 2005 ; Graudenz et al., 2013). Although not a primary research question, the study sought to explore the nature of this link, in a narrative form. For example, the special role that experienced teachers might play in this task is directly referred to by Bernard, who throughout his narrative expresses concern for and establishes the significance of meaningful professional development: "there's a huge potential to awaken [as there was in the short-lived program established by an interim administration at his school] the capacity of an enormous wealth of personal experience because people have [been] in that school for a long time… You carry all of these moments [after many years of teaching]."

The idea that anthroposophy, or loosely, Steiner's philosophy of education, is "represented" in SW praxis needs some explaining. It is evident from reading the preceding sections on "Encountering Steiner" that teachers' relationships to Steiner vary. A survey of the transcripts, which I have attempted to represent authentically in the preceding and current chapters on Teachers'

stories and Analysing the stories, respectively, reinforces this reading. There is surprisingly little reliance on Steiner terminology, and much of what is said is presented in each respondent's own language, suggesting that their incorporation of Steiner's ideas has been earnest and transformative, rather than constituting "remembered" knowledge[107] that can be repeated or rehearsed in particular situations.

Just how anthroposophy is represented in SWSs can be presented here as a list of fundamental beliefs or attitudes. Whether or not these beliefs or attitudes actually represent anthroposophy or Steiner's thinking is a moot point at this stage. In effect, what is given voice are the prejudices that operate within SWSs, leaving aside, for the moment, the question of their source of origin.

Further, considering the foregoing list, it can be argued that many of these attitudes or beliefs represent commentary on SWE rather than a philosophical position about anthroposophy. Whilst this may in fact be the case, it is not clear to me at this stage whether making such a strict division would be fruitful. On the contrary, the listed attitudes are underpinned by beliefs about the nature of anthroposophy and its "presence" in the lifeworld of the SW teacher. Understanding these underpinning beliefs may well be facilitated by seeing them in context.

6.2.2.1 Representations.

The teachers interviewed in this study convey, in their narratives, not only their own direct experiences and understanding of SWE and their relationship to a range of philosophical beliefs and attitudes about anthroposophy, but also offer perspectives and opinions about how others, typically other teachers see and interpret Steiner's ideas as part of their own relationship to SWE and their work. In other words, reading and hearing their narratives can yield not only putative representations of Steiner's ideas ascribed to *other* teachers, but also their own "counter-representations", which are statements negatively framed against what has become accepted as common knowledge within SW, and anthroposophical communities for that matter. For example, to take the most obvious yet rarely stated received idea that SWSs are in need of critical reimagining, such a statement would have seemed unimaginable since Steiner endeavours (including SWE and the Anthroposophical Society to mention the most obvious) have tended to be regarded as seamlessly linked to the being of Rudolf Steiner himself. Any critique of, what is effectively, his

[107] Comment related by a eurythmist: 'anthroposophy has become a library' (MN pers comm, July 2018)

intellectual and spiritual offspring would be tantamount to a critique of Steiner himself. As we have seen in Chapter Two, such a consideration would not be possible within Steiner circles.

The following is a sample of representations of anthroposophy and SWE as divulged by respondents:

6.2.2.1.1 Anthroposophy provides a guide and help to the teacher.

Respondents speak about the pedagogical, moral, existential assistance provided to them by Steiner's words, which are employed as a heuristic for contemplative understanding of classroom situations, difficulties with particular students or questions about presenting particular topics. Andrew regards the meditative spur that Steiner provides as integral to the practice of teaching. For Julia, he lends a moral uprightness to the teacher who stands in front of her class. At the same time, there is an encouragement to know her students through powers of observation and sensing what they need.[108] In Wendy's narrative, the influence of Steiner is immediate, emotional and powerful; for example, in her view, he preaches a kind of universal "love" that works into the classroom, into her interactions with the students and into her representations of the contemporary world: "a lot of it is about love… not being judgmental…, loving the world, the current world, not what it could be." Michaela also sees a strengthening value in SWE because "everybody [having] this spiritual belief together is something that makes us much stronger than other systems."

6.2.2.1.2 Threefolding.

In Steiner circles, the notion of the *threefold* is usually applied to the idea that societies function most healthily when there is a clear division between the realms of culture, rights and economy. Steiner's idea echoes the virtues of the French Revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity. Ian, in particular, argues in favour of this idea as the social and political model of the SWS, and sees in the CofT, its collegial expression. This idea is contentious, and a strong challenge has been mounted by Wagstaff (2003) and others. In addition, the idea of "threefolding", as a cognitive catch-cry finds frequent expression in Steiner circles. For example, in the educational context, one hears the familiar phrase, "head, heart and hands," or "thinking, feeling and willing." These phrases are intended to characterise, in a simplified form, the essence of the SW pedagogical impulse. They are shorthand for the holistic type of education offered by SWE. Their ubiquity can lead to hearing them

[108] Interestingly, in Steiner circles the focus is mostly on what students 'need', rather than what they ask for or say they want. Whilst this may be understandable and pedagogically acceptable, to a certain extent, in the early years of childhood and primary education, its compulsive logic diminishes when we consider older adolescents.

as though their constituent individual parts have merged and become fused into one concept.[109] The role of intellectual thinking in SW pedagogy is particularly vexed.

6.2.2.1.3 Comprehensivity.

Michaela, a Masters student, declared that "Steiner education… has an answer for that." According to her, encountering contemporary questions in values education, Steiner has most if not all the answers. She affirms that "we have it all there [in Steiner's writings or talks]."[110]

This view is often implied in what is said by insiders about SWE. Very few teachers, including those in this study, actually challenge the primacy of Steiner's words or ideas (with certain exceptions). From my experience in Steiner circles, overtly and directly challenging Steiner is a "kiss of death" to open discourse on SWE or anthroposophy. No-one will take any notice of what you say, if you question Steiner.[111] The idea that Steiner contains everything that a teacher needs to know underpins much of the professional learning (PL) within schools, as well as between schools and at an international level (Rawson, 2014a). This is perhaps one of the most dangerous ideas associated with SWE and anthroposophy. It flows into the classroom, where teachers look for "anthroposophical" content to teach their students, instead of teaching or at least presenting contemporary knowledge, for example in the realm of science (see Appendix D below, p. 386, in "Andrew's Story", and the teaching of nuclear physics). At worst, it excludes "conventional" knowledge entirely. An unintended but compelling corollary is the 'teaching' of a naïve epistemological position where ideas are either right or wrong and belief systems, whether Steiner or not, are accorded an infrangible truth-status. This kills off any potential for discussion or conversation between belief systems. Arguably, it also compromises students' development as they transition from the relatively closed world of SW to the open world where ideas clash and often cross-fertilise one another.

---

[109] One of the dangers of misinterpreting Steiner's concepts is evident here. The 'idea' is a kind of conceptual image, a set of triangular relationships among three signposted concepts. The key to these ideas is not found in the definition of each member, but rather in the perceiving of a dynamic relationship amongst them all.

[110] Michaela's comments partly explain why it is so attractive for experienced Steiner teachers to continue to focus their research one-sidedly on Steiner's lectures. The use of the term 'we' is instructive since it universalises casually a very significant and far-reaching concept.

[111] It is a telling curiosity that early in my candidature, upon discussing my project with a friend (we both share a long history in Steiner circles) who had recently completed a PhD, touching on Steiner's work, we were able to openly voice reservations about certain ideas of Steiner's as well as acknowledge to each other how such open voicing is almost incomprehensible in Steiner circles. Interestingly, relatively new teachers in SWE often have few reservations about expressing their ideas, whether or not they appear to contradict statements attributed to Steiner. Whilst in some cases, such contradictions may arise out of a lack of knowledge, in some cases, they may represent a genuine insight into the nature of Steiner praxis, or the translation of Steiner theory into practice situations.

A corollary of the notion that Steiner has it all is referred to by Andrew in his narrative, where he challenges the idea, expressed by some of his colleagues, that all problems could be solved by returning to Steiner's words or advice. This could lead the school, for example, to reject outside assistance in areas where there are typically skill shortages in SWSs, such as administration, governance, and management systems.

Ian provides another example of a teacher who is highly regarded at his school, "an extraordinary teacher" with a "very deep and profound [sic] understanding of Steiner education." She is "the person who doesn't take a great deal of interest [in contemporary affairs]." Her approach is to "work deeply out of an anthroposophical kind of core." This is in contrast to the school principal who "is obviously very deep but he likes to keep in touch with what's going on… his talks and presentations… show that he has a contemporary grasp." Ian attempts to justify this fundamental difference in approach with reference to an idea from Steiner, namely the zodiac as representative of twelvefold cognitive positions. No position can be ascribed priority.

6.2.2.1.4 Identity.

Closely connected to the above notion of comprehensivity, is the idea of identity. Identity finds overt expression mainly in the context of a fear that what is distinctive about SWE might be lost, for example in the "crossover" (Ian) if there were greater "interactiv[ity] with the wider culture." This fear is voiced by several respondents. In addition to Ian ("loss of this sense of belonging," and the risk that "you could just become blended"), Michaela rues a number of threats to her school and by implication SWE, since each one is seen as potentially undermining the integrity of SWE. These are the threats of: managerialism, the loss of the democratic ethos, the loss of the sense of "togetherness", internal conflict, loss of identity and over-assessment.[112] The strong sense of the "Steiner" identity is also felt in the curriculum, or in adherence to a particular view of the curriculum. This identity bleeds easily into a stereotype of what SWE is: rainbows, watercolours, stories, academically unchallenging, children doing what they want, and so on (all things that have been mentioned by respondents). This stereotyped image of SWE emerges from the newcomer's interaction with early childhood and the lower primary classes. Nonetheless, this image is often projected across the whole of SWE, and even into its adult equivalent. Anti-intellectualism is one

---

[112] Of all respondents, Michaela probably gives expression to the most conservative view of SWE, yet she also shows a lived criticality, that is she has taken the step to the academy, to explore the context of Steiner education in the academic world and to expand her own teaching and learning experiences, beyond SWE into the mainstream and into indigenous education. I'm not sure that this fits the stereotyped picture of the hardened SW teacher. Reading Michaela's concerns in the context of her narrative presents a more balanced picture. Most of her comments are contextualised by a management approach which she characterises as 'whirlwind and changes.'

resistant trend that finds its way into so-called “Steiner” adult learning situations. As Susan points out, in her school, it was “advocated that not going to university was better, and that reading secondary sources [about Steiner or SWE] was not recommended.”[113] In another view, the idea is formed that watercolour is *the* Steiner medium for painting, as Wendy discovered to her chagrin.

6.2.2.1.5 Specialised language.

Anthroposophy has its own body of specialised language, which is regarded as foundational for understanding the concepts and systems that constitute anthroposophical knowledge. Although respondents’ narratives are generally quite light on anthroposophical jargon, nonetheless some terms surface such as “karma”. Some narratives, such as Rosa’s, are especially rich in jargon, including (Archangel) Michael with his sword fighting the serpent energy, dragons, lightworker, sound healing, battle, darkness. Of course, the word “Steiner” is itself the quintessential piece of Steiner jargon: as in Simon’s humorous quip that “I’ve got a black stripe on my trousers - that’s unSteiner,” or “being a *Steiner* teacher” (where the word Steiner is uttered in hushed reverential tones, suggesting that someone has “kudos”). For Sally, “being Steiner” is like having an aura that certifies the teacher’s actions or practices, such as validating her “boards”[114]. Robert opines that having this specialised language is used to discriminate those who belong from those who don’t, a kind of code that is used to distinguish individuals in an unwritten hierarchy. This narrative is particularly evident in the high school, where there are many specialist teachers without prior SW experience or training, or even knowledge of Steiner’s ideas.

6.2.2.1.6 The knowledge hierarchy.

This is implied in various ways. Language, vocabulary, and the capacity to speak in “anthroposophical language” suggest that the bearer “has” knowledge. So too, referring to specific works by Steiner. Appealing to the comprehensivity of anthroposophy, and to the artefacts that constitute a school’s identity, also signal a higher standing on the knowledge hierarchy. According to Whedon (2007), this “hierarchy of knowledge” is something that sits uncomfortably with many

---

[113] Worth exploring the kind of epistemological assumptions inherent in this view. One of the senior teachers at the school where I worked, went so far as to state that ‘research is boring,’ exclaiming that he saw no purpose in it all. He must have not realised that everything Steiner stated he claimed was the result of spiritual *research*! It may be surprising to the outsider to hear this confession, but as a ’Steiner insider’ for over three decades, this is run of the mill. Echoing Tiago Forte, ‘you can’t understand a paradigm from within it’ (www.fortelabs.co).

[114] The quality of a primary teacher’s blackboards, which are particularly judged by the artistic presentation of the day’s lesson, is raised in Michelle’s and Sally’s narratives. The former’s, especially, reveals the ‘arms race’ that unofficially sets in when teachers try to do their utmost to keep up with expectations to produce consistently artistic quality drawings. It is not entirely clear whence such expectations arise, but Michelle’s narrative makes it clear that trying to uphold her own sense of artistic standard consumed many hours of her private life.

parents (p. 167). A fundamental part of this knowledge hierarchy is the belief that anthroposophy is a superior spiritual ideology, that it surpasses anything that exists today, for example, in the New Age movement, and any indication given by Steiner, whether it be about education or any other topic, is preferred to pronouncements made by contemporary commentators, authors or researchers. This mood of superiority pervades respondents' accounts of their school cultures. Occasionally, it is evident in their narratives, as their own voice. More will be said about this notion under the heading of "Spiritual Superiority."

6.2.2.2 Counter-representations.

Counter to these attitudes are those advanced by some of the respondents, usually aware that they are challenging the status quo (as well as specific beliefs or situations).

6.2.2.2.1 Against dogma.

"If he was alive today you've got to ask what would he want?" asks Julia.

> And partly he didn't want his work to be put down in writing because he didn't want it to become dogma. And hey guess what? It's become dogma but I believe we have the choice about that and I don't think there's enough questioning of that.

This view is amplified in a comment made by an artist-academic, whom Wendy met attending the former's lecture based on her recently completed PhD on Spirituality and Art:

> *Steiner would be turning in his grave*, if he knew what was happening in Steiner schools today, because it was not what he intended and that people were misinterpreting what he wrote and the way it was being interpreted and the dogma, the way it was being used as a dogma in the classroom was certainly not what such a progressive and contemporary man would have intended.

6.2.2.2.2 Anthroposophy as dangerous knowledge.

The "danger" highlighted here by Robert is that anthroposophy becomes weaponized to encourage exclusion and for division to fester within its communities. Moreover, it creates the impression that anthroposophy stands on a pedestal, as something that has to be earned, not through personal effort or striving, but through "knowledge" of specific anthroposophical "facts", or even by association with recognised "authorities". In effect, it becomes a ritualised practice, with its own liturgy, offerings, and routines. "We know all this stuff. We know about the astral body, and we know what all that is. We know the shadow, and we know all of that. Therefore, we can just ridicule the New Age." Here Robert articulates a personal frustration that anthroposophists not only differentiate themselves from other movements or knowledges but position themselves above them. This is mirrored in Andrew's narrative also. There, the too strong attachment to

anthroposophy and supposedly "Steiner" ideas became obstacles to the school being receptive to outside help (albeit from the parent group) that was potentially invaluable. In addition, Robert notes that "a lot of high school teachers" were "criticised… for having no interest in Steiner Education." They were "just rubbished." Whereas, in his view, the role of the "management group" is to "inspire them… to inform them." Most teachers who come to the school, are "genuinely interested." However, according to Robert, if they are met with a "didactic and very. judgmental approach," they recoil, because no adult wants to be "treated like that."

6.2.2.2.3 Anthroposophy as part of an ongoing tradition.

The notion that anthroposophy is entirely new is challenged by a number of respondents, namely Wendy, Peter, Jennifer, Andrew, and Ian. They regard it as part of a continuous historical stream of ideas, which reaches right into the present, regardless of whether we have in mind the philosophy of pedagogy or the epistemology of spiritual research. It is therefore embedded in its own intellectual, cultural and spiritual history, which continues to find expression in the present. This view of anthroposophy, which, from an academic perspective, is considered unremarkable, focusses on its ideas rather than on the personality of Steiner or other individuals who have been influential in the anthroposophical movement. Looking directly at its ideas rather than its personalities allows connections to be made to similar or related concepts in current or recent intellectual history, as well as seeing continuity in questions and problems across historical periods. This is a significant challenge to the default *insider* view of Steiner and anthroposophy as comprehensive, ready-made knowledge and points of view that essentially obviate the need for further inquiry. According to Ben-Aharon (2011b), Steiner provides a vast framework with which, for example, recent and contemporary cultural developments, including science, philosophy, spirituality, and the arts, can be better understood. The question of tradition also arises in Andrew's account, specifically in relation to positioning SWE within the educational traditions that include Emerson and Pestalozzi. However, the broader question is not linking SWE to educational theories, whether past or present, but educational *praxis* itself. To a certain extent, the whole notion of educational theories is questionable. The idea is entertained in Andrew's view that

> the task of the Steiner education [is] to take things which had been done as it were instinctively in the past and put it into a form… It seems to me a whole body of culture which could well disappear in the world and yet to some extent it has been kept alive within the Steiner schools.

The narrower point of Andrew's argument is that SWE represents a conceptual remembering of what has gone before, perhaps practised in isolation by individuals who were themselves deeply interested in the age-old phenomenon of education, but "in a form which makes

it still valuable in the world today." The broader point echoes that of academic commentators, particularly in Germany.

Julia's interpretation of Steiner's philosophy is that "we're never ever there, we're always becoming. So, what are we becoming? We're becoming in this world that we're in, we're becoming aware. And if we close ourselves off those wonderful learning opportunities will be lost."

6.2.2.2.4 Resistance to definition.

Robert states that "it's a soul gesture to me," "it can't be about how much people know." "You could probably know very little and have the right gesture, and you're doing anthroposophy... To berate people because they haven't read the right lectures or that kind of thing is just so wrong. That really, really put me off."

6.2.2.2.5 Anthroposophy as a shield.

Further, he explains that "Anthroposophy as a practice or as an idea can be used as a cure-all and also a bit of a shield." It leads to the idea that "we're shielded from actually having to do any real work because we've got anthroposophy."

6.2.2.2.6 Exclusion.

According to Robert, the prejudice against the New Age movements is galling because it excludes people who "are really searching genuinely in a really real way." The idea of having "Steiner standing behind me," the protective shield, "can provide an excuse for a multitude of sins."

The idea of "karma" appears in respondents' narratives, in many and varied aspects of the SW school life. For example, it is employed to account for students' learning deficiencies ("this thing Karma, or destiny is pulled out of the [hat]... it's not their Karma to learn time in Year 5 if they missed it in Year 3") and predetermine them to particular vocations - "maybe it's his karma to be a gardener" (Sally); or, it is used to potentially justify the fact that someone is bullied, or worse, abused (Jennifer). It may be used to rationalise the division between "us" and "them", between insiders and outsiders, which means that it justifies power imbalances or apparent differences in knowledge or the capacity for knowledge, such as the value of interpretations of what Steiner said.

6.3 Leadership: the Wounded King

Amfortas, *the one without strength*, is the Wounded King of the Grail community. As mentioned above (p. 177), his tragic fall from grace, which resulted in his mortal wounding, imperils the entire community, that was established to guard the Grail. We might consider the Grail a gift from heaven to help humanity establish a new paradise[115] on earth. It is no accident, perhaps, that its chief feature lies in its life-giving powers which are periodically renewed on Good Friday. And, since the whole community is sustained by the Grail, we might say that the fate of the community is intimately bound up with its relationship to the source of inspiration that unites the community into a common purpose, as keepers of the Grail. Within this matrix of relationships, the one between the Wounded King and his retinue has the strongest influence. However, the fate of this community lies outside its own hands, in the fool who would become its next King.

6.3.1 Management.

In SWSs, management and leaders are seen in a polarised light which creates sharp contours between leaders who are, on the one hand, overbearing and controlling, and on the other, selfless and “amazing” individuals who embody the loftiest aspects of a spiritual aspirant, effectively colouring SWE with a quasi-religious political aesthetic. This representation is particularly stark in the light of teachers’ narratives that highlight personal dilemmas and struggles, such as those related by Sally, Jennifer and Michelle.

In order to distil a composite picture of the state and nature of leadership within SWSs I posit the following characterisations presented by various respondents. Again, these representations are set out in no particular order. The aphoristic nature of the comments is intended to retain the raw nature of some of the observations.

6.3.1.1 Characterisations of leaders and leadership in SWSs.

6.3.1.1.1 The old guard.

Bernard’s school leaders are referred to as “the two old farts.”. Whilst he expresses some respect for these senior teachers, he is scathing of their inability to recognise what he considers to be the priority tasks of leadership, and their capture of these in the past.

Simon and other teachers use similar language to refer to management as the “old guard.” This and other terms are used to designate the older generation of teachers. Descriptors employed

[115] Von Eschenbach describes the Grail as the gift of paradise: ‘the root and blossom of the Paradise garden’ (2015, p. 46).

are suggestive of their conservative detachment from contemporary life and inhabitation of a kind of suspended thought life in the golden era when Steiner's words, or those of an assumed surrogate guru, rang with unimpeachable authority.

> They [the "old guard"] think they know what's going on. But they're there to direct only. Not to listen, and certainly not to aid anyone. It is certainly very much a sink or swim atmosphere (Simon).

Sometimes, however, the founding teachers are seen in a positive light (Andrew) as bearers of a genuine impulse and as exemplary individuals. Andrew describes this group of teachers as possessing a more open and inclusive view of SWE and anthroposophy and a personal commitment to gaining knowledge and experience from a number of sources, and in addition to Steiner. This is contrasted to the next generation of teachers that is seen as more conservative and less inclusive in their approach to sources of knowledge and points of view.

6.3.1.1.2 The problem of power.

School leaders are variously represented as exhibiting a surreptitious form of control,[116] relying on the use of secrecy[117] to maintain a knowledge hierarchy: "domination... surreptitious control… underhand… silent power control, working things behind the scenes… dirty machinations… dirty behaviour" (Simon).

Claims to power, or superior knowledge rest upon the individuals' membership of an inner circle or group. Often admission to the inner circle is based on an avowed proximity to the founding group of individuals.[118]

Julia sees the management of SWSs as the main problem facing SWE today. She points to the need to compromise as a fundamental recurring challenge, that she believes no Australian school has yet solved.

Although the prevailing view of leaders differ, many respondents see them as authoritarian, overbearing, lacking empathy or compassion, distant and aloof, making unilateral decisions and

---

[116] The 'hidden headmaster' in Graudenz et al. (2013) study. The 'monsters' in Susan's narrative.

[117] Cf Whedon's thesis (2007).

[118] This is described by Schieren (2011), but whereas he stresses the nearness to Steiner as the original source, I transfer this nearness to the school founders who acquire a kind of hero status. Their vision of the school or institution is ascribed by subsequent followers a sanctity that borders on religious devotion.

lacking people skills (for example, Michaela, Michelle, Rosa, Julia, Jennifer, Sally, Robert, Simon, Peter, Bernard, and Ian).

Robert was involved in the management team of his school. This followed a period of disarray and reorganisation, where “the style of management… [became] very top-down.” It seemed to him that the school went “from this system whereby everyone was having a say in everything to no-one having a say in anything.” The system has become “very compartmentalised and much easier to control.”

> Teachers “don’t bother to have an opinion or to try and input anything, because it’s not welcomed, it’s not wanted. It’s very much everyone has their own area, and they don’t go outside of that area because that’s not your job… Don’t talk about this; you don’t know anything about it.”

Robert adds, ironically, that enrolments have since increased and, on a day-to-day level, the school is “running much more smoothly.” He opines that “probably the parents are a bit happier, but something’s gone out of the spirit of it.”

A few respondents have more complimentary views of leaders (Michelle, Alison), whilst still maintaining a critical view of the way the school was managed. However, their acceptance of flawed leaders comes with serious reservations. Some leaders are praised for being inclusive, for trying to encompass the parent community, and for trying to reach out to the immediate region and its human capital (for example, artists, small business owners, researchers).

Ian, Julia, Michelle, and Michaela laud certain teachers who are not necessarily leaders, but typically experienced teachers as “amazing” or “extraordinary”. Because of the collegial nature of the school culture, such teachers often exert influence beyond any title or delegated authority. As Michelle points out, this can lead to internal political tensions between such individuals and actual delegated leaders.

6.3.1.1.3 Monsters.

However, Susan holds a starkly ambiguous view of the leaders she has worked with. On the one hand, she lauds them as “creative” and “visionary” figures; and on the other hand, although they may have started out as spiritually striving individuals, they have turned into “monsters”. In a few cases, the leader is seen as a strongly galvanising individual with larger than life characteristics (“monster”, “spiritual superiority,” “power hungry,” “first amongst equals”: Sally, Jennifer, Robert). Ian’s characterisation of the school leader typifies this ambiguity, reinforcing Robert’s view of the professed leadership as a team of equals or “the first among equals” that is quickly degraded into “just first.”

6.3.1.1.4 Leadership as a function of external pressures.

The problem of management and leadership is, in the case of a small minority, singled out as a major source of problems in SWE (Julia, Ian, Andrew). Typically, such observers highlight the difficult relationship between management and College, particularly with the establishment of principals in many schools. However, in some cases (Julia and Ian) it is suggested that pressures from the State are largely responsible for these problems. At the same time, particularly in Ian's narrative, alternative modes of managing creative organisations such as schools that rely on applying a radically democratic ethos across the entire school are presented. In some cases, it appears that what has transpired is a reversal of this gesture, that is a shift towards managerialism and compartmentalisation. Julia sees the management of SWSs as the main problem facing SWE today. She points to the need to compromise as a fundamental recurring challenge that remains to be adequately dealt with in SWSs.

6.3.1.1.5 Compliance of sheep.

College members are referred to as "sheep" (Simon). Whilst more will be said on the professional culture of the school, under which rubric I will touch on the controversial topic of the CofT, it is nonetheless worth considering this appellation in relation to the implicit view of the school leadership. If the teachers are "sheep" then are the leaders "wolves", or perhaps more charitably, the "shepherds"?[119]

6.3.1.1.6 The recruitment of leaders.

Julia reflects that appointing school leaders who have proven themselves as "amazing teachers," is not necessarily a good decision. She refers to a common syndrome, particularly among managers: "This is what you do in life in so many situations, when you begin to make judgments: you superimpose your life and your judgments onto other people."[120] In other words, what works in the classroom may not work so well in the meeting room. Nonetheless, the cult of the personality encourages teachers to consider themselves apt for leadership positions on the basis of their prowess as teachers or their knowledge of anthroposophy.

[119] Cf (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011) on 'metaphors we lead by'.

[120] This model of leadership or management runs counter to the principle of distributed leadership, where the notion of collaborative co-operation is active, a notion that aims to capitalise on the professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) of the organisation.

Characterisations of school leaders and leadership issues within SWSs have to be seen within a broader context, namely the professional culture of the school. Naturally, this is partly framed by the formative belief systems that dominate the school's lifeworld. However, here I want to look at what is said about school leaders in relation to the broad professional culture of the school, from the ways in which colleagues interact with each other and their belief systems to the ways in which students enter into this matrix of relationships as they manifest in and out of the classrooms.

6.3.2 Professional culture.

The CofT has been, until recently[121], the central stage on which are played out the pedagogical, cultural and political challenges of the SWS. Everything that flows into the school, from Government regulation and policy, social and political trends, global issues and so on, finds some reflection in the College, even if that reflection is a kind of muted resistance. Of course, things are changing, as we learn from the respondents. Some of the more radical changes include a disintegration of the College concept and the adoption of single Principal-type leaders. The official SW narrative (Finser, 2011; Pewtherer, 2011) is that such changes run counter to what is readily assumed to be Steiner's original intention for the Waldorf-Astoria school in Stuttgart at the end of the second decade of the twentieth century.

There is almost universal recognition and expression, in the respondents' narratives, of critical failings in the College system of school governance. It is a feature of SWSs that the conventional approach to organisational governance, where the role of employees and employer are clearly delineated, is challenged. The underlying ethos is quoted in Bernard's narrative where he voices the words of one of the school's long-term leaders: "Look, actually you don't actually work here, you don't work here as an employee. You are the school. You are…" Bernard accepts this principle in earnest: "And that is a great slogan, the sense of identity with the place… You… we as individuals create this being in a way through what we're doing." At the same time, his narrative provides one of the most critical analyses of the role of the College in the SWS.[122]

---

[121] As discussed above (p. 52), since early 2000, many Steiner schools in Australia have been reinventing their Colleges of Teachers. Whilst there has been a growing realisation that administrative and management pressures placed upon schools by various legislation and state funding agreements have surpassed the capabilities of ad hoc or part-time leadership structures that have been a feature of teacher-led administrations, the role of the College has been the subject of much internal scrutiny.

[122] Typically, in a SWS, the College is composed of teachers only (although it is not uncommon that some administrative staff may also be members). From this body of teachers, a small handful participate on the Board, which is the true seat of governing authority within the school, as a corporation under Australian corporations law. However, as we will hear from the respondents' testimony, the role of College is greatly compromised, as an additional third presence beside the Board and Management of the school. We have already seen some of the issues raised by German teachers in the Graudenz (2013) study.

Again, I turn to respondent teachers' own characterisations to gain a comprehensive possible picture of the College within the social and political fabric of the SWS.

6.3.2.1 Characterisations of the professional culture in the SWS.

6.3.2.1.1 Hitting the wall.

There is a boundary between a teacher being on the "inner circle" or being on the "outer circle." Although all teachers refer to this division, whether directly or indirectly, some stress greater emphasis on it. For example, Peter expresses confusion and dismay at rising from within the ranks of the school's parents to become a key high school teacher.

> I never felt like I was an insider… senior management wanted to carve their position and protect what they saw as the morals and ethics of the school… …you're kept on the outer circle, your opinion, and your, um contribution is not valued… you try and contribute….

For Peter, it was less a matter of political status and more about wanting to "understand why I'm there." It was important for him to "glean the inner knowledge that would help me to understand what [is] the difference between a Steiner teacher and a mainstream teacher."

In Peter's account, the "inside" of his experience is represented by an honest immersion in his own emotionality and self-awareness of inner or spiritual growth. The presence of these boundaries is particularly acute for him since the career change to teaching had arisen out of a search "for something different" from his business-oriented IT career. This "something different" emerges throughout his narrative as a search for "growth" and "inner knowledge."

Other instances of feeling like one is on the "other" side of the division between in and out, between us and them, abound in the respondents' narratives:

- For Wendy, it a sense of not being accepted into "the bigger picture," or the sense that, despite all her experience and expertise, gained before and after commencing her duties as an Art teacher in a SWS, she was never recognised, never valued for what she had achieved in her lessons and in her various roles supporting adolescents at the school.
- For Michelle, the reality of an internal division (between "us" and "them") only dawned on her when things started to go wrong. Membership of "them" meant being Steiner-trained and being "totally into the church".[123] Then she recognised that she was not part

[123] Many SWSs are associated with local or national Christian Communities, or Christian churches that were connected with the anthroposophical movement at the start of the 1920s, and have since spread around the world, where SWSs have also flourished. It is important to recognise that the association is informal and unprescribed. Schools adopt their own attitudes towards their involvement or otherwise with the Christian Community.

of “them”, or the College members. She felt that “they look after them better than they look after us.” They were the “real ones.” She even saw that the school’s unofficial but actual sabbatical program was weighted in favour of the “real Steiner” teachers.

- An echo of this otherness resounds in Julia’s account. As a mainstream teacher going into SWE, Julia was well placed to be able to contextualise what she gradually absorbed about SWE, against the wider backdrop of mainstream education and science. One sense that this may have worked against her, perhaps not unlike Wendy, who seemed to have theorised SWE in the same terms as part of a broader pedagogical and philosophical movement. Andrew’s observations are consonant with those of these two teachers.[124] There the division between us and them meant that neither teachers nor Board members were accepted into the full confidences of the school leaders or guides, irrespective of their expertise or worldly experience.
- In Ian’s account, the separation becomes legitimated into the structures of the school. For example, the former function of the College meeting - to bring together staff from all across the school and to encourage genuine debate - is supplanted by a formal hierarchy which fragments the various parts of the school, so that the forum of discussion and debate once provided by the College or staff meeting is replaced by a department-based administrative structure. Ian explains that this was established in order to overcome the invariable conflicts that the previous College system brought, but at the cost of dampening creativity.[125]

6.3.2.1.2 The shock of dissonance.[126]

There is an incongruence between the profession of spiritual beliefs and the practices of the school’s leadership body. Again, this is referred to widely. Simon articulates the incongruence in this way:

---

[124] A common picture emerges here: teachers feel themselves shut off from the ‘bigger picture’, from the larger conversations that are important in situating SWE and the individual school itself, and seem to have to contain their own experiences, or share them informally with likeminded colleagues. Under no circumstances does it seem that there were formal avenues within the school or the SWE movement itself to discuss these critical transition issues.

[125] This leads to a retrograde situation. Stephen Harris (pers comm, 2014), formerly head of the innovative Northern Beaches Christian School in Sydney deliberately tried to break down these internal structures by situating teachers across all teaching and admin spaces in order to avoid the kind of parochialism that is encouraged here. Culturally, what both are guarding against is a kind of monoculturalism in the school’s learning culture.

[126] The term ‘shock’ is used advisedly. The experience I’m referring to is literally shocking and totally unexpected. Like any sort of shock, there is an after-effect, a kind of numbness, eventually followed by a realisation that one’s sense of reality has shifted. Jennifer explains it in this way: ‘I needed to take back my projections and I needed to take back anything that I had put onto that school or those people that actually wasn’t warranted but simply sat in my own hopes and dreams for

> It was a shock to see that in a Steiner school, which basically claims, you know, to have membership to, you know, a body of spiritual knowledge and respected, that promises to treat people with respect and improve your spiritual outlook.

Here, Simon is referring to the shock of experiencing in a SWS "gross misconduct" and "inefficiencies, laziness, lack of thinking, lack of will to engage and actually do any true honest teaching" that might have been expected "in other schools" but came as a surprise to him that it was happening in a SWS.

Jennifer's experiences are probably the most striking demonstration of this dissonant shock between spiritual theoria and actual praxis. In her whistleblower story, she describes that despite the school's pretensions to standing on lofty moral or spiritual ground, there was a disturbing unwillingness to act against an alleged paedophile. Further, she details the conspiracy waged by some school leaders against the disclosure of truth to the relevant state department and the school community itself. Ultimately, it is the whistleblower who is persecuted.

6.3.2.1.3 An elusive but alluring ethos.

Peter was drawn to the school because it seemed to address his personal search "for something different." As someone already interested in spiritual practices and ideas (not unlike many of the parents who are drawn to SWSs around the world), Peter sought to deepen his connection to the school. His exclusion from the inner circle meant that he had to take on the search for answers about anthroposophy and SWE, which he had perhaps understandably assumed would be part of his training and elevation to the status of a teacher in the school. We find a similar yearning for knowledge in other stories. For example, Michelle came to SWE out of a search for alternatives to the dry forms of education she found around her. When she "arrived" at SWE, she was not a convert, but rather worked to assimilate its theoretical and practical advice in order to realise her ambition to teach children. However, her experiences at the school, which finally brought her to an unhappy ending, resulted in challenging her prior conceptions about anthroposophy and SWE: "Why did I think this was utopia?" "Is it all veneer?" "Have I just been in this bubble for three years?" Jennifer, too, relates a similar deep questioning, that made her re-evaluate many decisions that she had earlier made about the moral character of the school and especially its leading figures, coming to the conclusion that there was "a very deep sickness in that school carried by particular individuals." Nonetheless, as we shall see, she remained very positive about aspects of SWE,

---

my kids and the kind of education I wanted and what I wanted to see. So that was painful because I had to take that back and just really see these people for who they actually were.'

continuing to apply what she had learnt and gained from her few years' experience as a SW primary teacher, in her subsequent role of teacher in a government school.

6.3.2.1.4 Reluctance to change.

A number of respondents commented that deep conservative attitudes ran through the SWSs that they became involved with. Peter comments that the culture is "non-confrontational" and possesses a "strong resistance to change," observations that are also echoed by Wendy.

> As a Steiner school we need to be comfortable. Everyone needs to be happy, comfortable, um the teachers need to be, they don't want to be hard, they want to make any tough decisions, the parents want to be comfortable and happy, the students want to be comfortable and happy. Um, so change is hard. Anything that was difficult or took anybody out of their comfort zone, or made anybody had to make any unpopular decisions then um, everything just got watered down and taken back to this position of comfort.

Peter shifts this idea into a psychic dimension, where, he claims, SWSs

> [SWSs] tend to attract students who have problems or don't fit into other schools. But it also attracts teachers that are like that. So, you know, the teachers that even refuse to fit it or don't fit, or they're a bit odd, think differently. I include myself in that, because I certainly thought that way.

One way of cementing the lack of mutability is enshrined in the phrase, "we don't do that at [insert name of school]!" Peter identifies the school's unwritten code as "not to confront anything" and "not to talk about those uncomfortable things."

6.3.2.1.5 Team spirit

Team spirit is ambiguously represented in the data. Some respondents, for example Andrew, extol former colleagues who were "extraordinarily creative and gifted and committed people" and who tried to introduce "spiritual content" into College meetings, as well as attempted to "develop efficient decision-making practices." Likewise, Ian and Alison are also optimistic about working collegially, whether in or out of College. But whilst respondents appear to be split on their attitudes towards the College, there is an almost universal acknowledgment that working collaboratively is not a strength of SW staff teams. In fact, the critical voice is much stronger than the appreciative voice. For example, Peter highlights a social environment where the team spirit is weak and new teachers, like himself, receive little support, or are even treated with some hostility. This insight

highlights the strongly hierarchical leadership and knowledge culture within the school:[127] "the unwritten policy of do-it-yourself, struggle through, manage it yourself and do the best you can."[128][129] Bernard uses similar language to expose the pitfalls of what he calls the "DIY" (do-it yourself) attitude. Curiously, he is dismissive of this attitude in relation to teachers participating in the College, whereas he readily acknowledges that what attracted him to SWE and this school particularly was recognising that he would have the freedom to "become the school" as opposed to being instructed in every respect of his role. Wendy's account of colleagueship at her school was mixed. With a "few" colleagues the relationship was strong, otherwise, "not at all." However, a recurring criticism is the lack of integration, of seeing what she calls the "big picture" and being able to collaborate at that or any other level. Ian also refers to the demise of meaningful team "spirit" in his school. He links this to the leadership's decision to overcome conflict and the eventual installation of a top-down management model, ostensibly in an effort to avoid the pitfalls of the CofT. So too, both Michaela and Julia testify to a management regime where creative discursive dialogue is stifled, and staff meetings merely serve to "rubber stamp" decisions made by the school's executive.

Under the same rubric, two sub-themes further develop the notion of social dysfunction: "lack of care for colleagues" and "toxic relationships."

i. Lack of collegial care. The SW staff culture is portrayed adversely in Peter's account. Lacking teaching experience, though not emotional maturity, Peter found himself without adequate support for much of his short-lived teaching career. He explains his inability to share highs as well as lows with other teachers: "No there didn't seem to be that sort of interest… I didn't feel comfortable sharing that with anybody. Likewise, Julia felt that no-one had expressed any interest in her opinions, despite her years of teaching experience across SW and non-SW settings. Michelle's quiet suffering seemed to go unnoticed and not even her pained resignation brought any sign of compassion or care, only the inconvenience of finding a replacement. These situations arose irrespective of whether mentors had been appointed by the school. Simon, Peter and Michelle challenge the very notion of such a role, and its

---

[127] This is of course dramatically ironic since one of the premises of a SWS is the notion of political colleagueship, that is the sharing of power. The data portray a different picture. Further this is confirmed by studies already mentioned (Graudenz et al., 2013; Randoll & Peters, 2015).

[128] This 'unwritten policy' reflects the pioneering phase of organisational development described by Lievegoed (1969/1973).

[129] It is relatively easy to connect this cluster of attitudes, which ironically thoroughly individualises teachers, parents and children, in an environment that is ostensibly community-oriented and socially supportive, with the received notions of karma and destiny. Jennifer's story exemplifies this reality in the dark corners of the school life.

effective deployment in their circumstances. Like Michelle, Robert did not realise at first that his disengagement from the school community was the result of "burnout". His need to withdraw and seek work in a different educational environment was an expression of self-preservation, the need to care for himself: to escape the ultimately self-defeating accusation of being seen as a "spiritual slacker," of failing to measure up to unreal expectations of limitless "self-sacrifice."

ii. Toxic relationships. The less than functional social environment inhabited by teachers and staff in the SWS is characterised by Wendy as though it were a "toxic relationship." It is governed by the need to "be popular," not challenging the students, and avoiding change at all costs. For her (and others), there is also the sense of not being acknowledged or valued. In Jennifer's story, relationships between teachers and school leaders become twisted and impersonal, resembling, for her, a "cult", where her departure brought with it the realisation that she had been "a bit mindfucked." Michelle's awakening made her "question everything", in particular her relationship with colleagues. Andrew realised that being party to "the intimate details of another person's behaviour or being," as a member of College, sitting in "a circle of 30 members," was something he did not wish to re-experience "ever again."

6.3.2.1.6 A sense of superiority.

This sense is palpable among senior colleagues: "I am superior, I have advanced knowledge and you're not there yet. And I'll make sure that you don't get there, because I will be threatened" (Peter). In Jennifer's story, the sense of superiority is cast against a background of child abuse and the abuses of power that are generated to occlude the nefarious deeds of certain teachers. However, the notion of superiority is widespread throughout the respondents' narratives and is dealt with below (p. 243ff) under a separate heading.

6.3.2.1.7 Interpretation of SWE (the task).

Teachers' and schools' relationships to Steiner's words and to the task of SWE are far from uniform. However, it becomes evident from a survey of respondents' testimonies that there is a tendency towards a certain rigidity in this interpretation. The most commonly expressed notion is the stark opposition between what are considered to be "Steiner" ways or attitudes or practices, and those that fall outside of that circle. For example, Andrew sees in some "anthroposophist" teachers a tendency to avoid "academic and intellectual rigour." This is consonant with a view that all solutions had to come from themselves and from their "anthroposophical study and striving."

Moreover, this even leads to a "suspicion" of parents bringing influences that lay outside the "field" (of anthroposophy) and therefore exclusion from positions on the Board or management. Particularly crippling for Andrew was this idea that only anthroposophy could provide "answers". A similar atmosphere of exclusivity is intimated in Wendy's account. She challenges the way that SWE is interpreted in her school, for example, not challenging students intellectually, repeating educational or cultural practices from year to year, and not working contemporaneously, that is, not acknowledging modern artists or the modern world in general.

6.3.2.2 Characterisations of the CofT.

The CofT is the focus of consistent attention by most respondents. To some extent, the best and the worst of the professional culture of the SWS is evident in this body. And whilst much of the attention is focussed on its negative, dysfunctional aspects, it is sometimes regarded favourably, for example by Andrew and Ian, as a place of creative and community-building possibility. It seems that when it functions most effectively, the sense of colleagueship is exemplary. Andrew speaks of an earlier period where the bonds between College members was strong, largely due to the collegial work on studying Steiner's texts. From time to time, he describes that the phenomenon of the "invisible College" was perceptible. This term highlights the special nature of the working together, and describes an inner experience where College members feel their collective presence in a manner that appears to transcend physical proximity. And whist Ian decried changes to the management structure of his school, which would precipitate a sudden deficit in collegial discourse and creativity, he extols efforts by Colleges in other schools, that focussed on building professional capacity through shared learning activities.[130] Julia's view of the College is also positive. She sees it as an indispensable part of the SW framework. It plays a "valuable role" in communicating from the "coalface" "what's happening in the school." However, she cautions that for it to work effectively, "you have to upskill your staff in their personal awareness." Her suggestions point towards a new narrative concerning the importance of social development within the SWS environment: the need for "vulnerability" in order "to be able to hear," to be open to "making [different] choices," being attentive ("eyes open"), "informed", and patient, in order to "make good decisions." However, "it's really sad to see that the skills that everyone needed weren't even given to them."

[130] This resonates with Haralambous' (2016) research into the College as an 'academy' of learning within the SWS, and in particular, her privileging of mindfulness as the chief vehicle for professional development within the SWS.

6.3.2.2.1 "A half-baked notion".

Most respondents are, nonetheless, highly critical of the professional culture of the College. One of the most strident of these is Bernard. His criticism is especially pertinent since for thirteen to fourteen years, he was an actively engaged member of College, including a stint as College Chairman for a couple of years. Nonetheless, at the end of that time, he has come to realise that the common intention to oversee the administration, management and governance of the school through the College process is not only unrealistic, but also counterproductive. It has taken more than a decade and a "crisis where things got more demanding and more challenging that these thumb screws were put onto even harder that you realise something's gone wrong," for him to come his many insightful conclusions about the nature of the College and its relationship to the school culture as a whole. Bernard's criticisms of the College are as follows:

a. It is an "idea on paper", a slogan "we govern ourselves approach, we're there to have a voice" but it is "ineffective". "It didn't lead to anything."
b. It is a "half-baked" notion of "teacher involvement." It was "unprofessional".
c. "Drain your own energies" and divert them from the core role which is to teach. "You have lost already so much spark and energy from the endless meetings and discussions."
d. "This DIY attitude dilutes the energy and capacity of people to the point where very little gets done."
e. It is a "useless and obsolete kind of participation." "We were turning in circles." "Things getting bogged down in group processes."
f. "It takes a long time to lift this mantle of disguise that says, 'we can run the school, aren't we great!' And realising this is not the case."
g. A team of colleagues who cannot "produce answers and directions [only] more question marks."
h. After a while, "you start to buckle under the pressure of weird, completely exhausting scenarios of things don't - aren't going anywhere that from frustration and exhaustion I had to withdraw."
i. "I was involved on a… more intimate level… gave me a chance to actually totally understand, critically look at it, assess it and then realise that this is actually a whole lot of nonsense. It doesn't work like this."
j. However, Bernard suggests that a way out of these problems might be delegating "one or two decisionmakers" that can prevent important decisions from getting "bogged down." Further, the effect of releasing himself from College obligations, has led him to

find a "big breath of fresh air," finding himself "very connected" to what he's doing, "generated a lot of energy" for his other extramural projects, including the social justice construction projects.

6.3.2.2.2 Politics of the College.

In his twenty odd years working in SWSs, Robert never joined the College. He cites "an instinctive fear of politics." "They seemed really unhealthy, somehow. I think it was a sort of self-preservation thing." Anecdotally, he heard that meetings would go on until 11pm, before decisions were made, even after teachers had been teaching all day. "It was very unwieldly." He observed that "there was actually a little power group outside of the CofT that were making decisions, and it was all based on people who'd been at the school forever or who were related to the people who started the school, and all that sort of stuff, and it didn't seem very healthy."

6.3.2.2.3 Ethical concerns.

Like Bernard, Andrew came to the conclusion, after many years as a prominent member of the College, that this collegiate body had lost much of its efficacy. He perceived that it was no longer effective as a decision-making body and became interested in seeking alternatives. This began to set him apart from his colleagues, many of whom would not even consider changing the status quo. He also challenged the ethics of its method of operation, where the "dirty laundry" of an individual's life was ventilated for all to behold, typically in cases where the professional conduct of a teacher would come under review. Curiously, this impact did not reach him fully until he found himself on the receiving end of the College's attentions.

6.3.2.2.4 A hidden instrument of power.

In Jennifer's story, the College appears as an instrument of power within the school, which is nonetheless manipulated by "hidden headmasters." She draws attention to a deep irony within the school: there is a "deep sickness" which is "carried by particular individuals." Out of a reluctance to "actually deal with the shadow" and instead, to "rest in a place of light," there is generated a "kind of dumbing down of a mystical understanding." The upshot of this "sickness" is a condition that makes possible "things to thrive that shouldn't." In Jennifer's view, the College plays an altogether passive role in this grievous social and spiritual situation. Two prominent themes issue from this situation: a cult of spiritual superiority and the denial of the shadow (both are dealt with later under the rubric, "Spiritual Superiority." It is interesting to contemplate how different teachers' experiences and insights into the College system arrive at intersecting moral or ethical dynamics.

Jennifer emphasises how the College became a kind of sound box to amplify and validate the unethical behaviour of a few powerful individuals. It was "uninterested" in looking at the institutional or individual shadows. Similarly, Andrew concluded that allowing such an organ to sit in judgment of individuals, with the inescapable conflicts of interest, became unthinkable for him and, caused him to withdraw from the body. Likewise, Julia, an avid supporter of the College, recognised the challenging nature of sitting and working effectively in that organisation, and identified the critical need to introduce professional training into the school organisation. Finally, Bernard's "epiphany", after thirteen to fourteen years of intensive participation in the College, rested on a realisation that such an organ was thoroughly unfit for the task that had been ascribed to it.

6.3.2.2.5 "What is the point of the CofT?"

Michelle's story- "what is the point of the CofT when you go to them and they don't do anything for you." Michelle had suffered the indignation of being yelled at by a parent, just outside her classroom, in plain sight and within ear shot of any parent, child or colleague that was nearby. Gazing back at this incident, she recalls, "that's what broke the camel's back." She became dismayed that the CofT did not intervene in the very public conflicts or tensions that she experienced, particularly with teachers. Nor was any sort of direct support offered, beyond the mentorship she received that was, however, only focussed on educational matters.

6.3.2.2.6 The bastion of conservatism.

Sally's story, echoing Wendy's narrative, clearly highlights the CofT as a bastion of conservatism within the school. Her innovative music program was continually rejected on the basis that it did not comply with the College's expectations about acceptable pedagogy in a SWS (see Sally's story in the Appendix). This attitude was usually a cover for the notion that only "Steiner"-indicated approaches could be used.

6.3.2.3 Professional development in SWSs.

Professional development does not receive a direct mention by many respondents. Those who do, make interesting comments and observations that are, I feel, worth noting and considering. In particular, Wendy's observations touch upon some of the more hidden aspects of the professional culture of the SWS. The prevailing view of professional development in SWE, for example, as captured in Rawson's (citation) recent studies, or gleaned from readings of insiders, or indeed available through anecdotal communications, comprises a number of relatively stable components that tend not to be questioned. Examples of these include practising artistic activities such as eurythmy, speech, painting, sculpture, and singing; study groups based on the reading of texts by

Steiner; speaking verses composed by Steiner; and the child study. Some smaller schools have begun to innovate by stepping outside the boundaries of what are considered to be typically "Steiner" activities, such as receiving training in non-violent communication. The views expressed by respondents show that the assumptions underlying professional development in SWSs have their critics.

Julia is critical of some of the routine professional development offered to SW teachers, for example in inter-school conferences, saying that it tends to be "all touchy feely and wonderful, and everyone would go, 'wow, that's wonderful!'"[131] This attitude needs to be contrasted to Michaela's, who participated widely in SW conferences and workshops, including the World Teachers Conference in Dornach, the SEA national conferences, and local interschool workshops, where she felt that she "just soaked it up [and] everything about" it "fit" with her.

Julia's criticism of professional development also links with her comments about the College, and her perception that teachers need to be adequately trained in order to participate effectively in a forum to which she attaches some significance. One area of development that she singles out is communication. She recalls that there were "difficult conflict situations that became divisive" that called for "good communication facilitators." The implied judgment is that members of the College were not "good communication facilitators." Sagely, she adds that "personalities are elastic" and as such, need to be "continually stretched into a new shape." Practically, this can only mean that the task of developing communication capabilities, adequate for full participation in the collegial model, so highly prized by many SW teachers, needs to be prioritised and become a matter of recurring training.

6.3.2.3.1 Eclecticism in PL.

Ian is optimistic about some of the new initiatives in SWE in Australia. He cites a few examples where schools are collaborating to present conferences on topics that are intended to "deepen" the schools' connection to anthroposophy. For example, in one case, a week-long conference has been organised on "deepening their understanding of the human being from a medical point of view." The intention is to infuse their educational work with this expanded (anthroposophical) medical model of the human being. In another venture, three different schools along the eastern coast of Australia are organising conferences on three different stages of SWE, namely early childhood, primary and secondary education. Ian refers to this as an "experiment",

[131] This is an instance of what I have labelled as 'spiritual blindness.' It also perhaps indicative of what Steiner refers to as spiritual 'sensuousness', an unhealthy 'enjoyment' of spiritual experiences.

because the focus on adolescence and secondary school is an area of SWE that tends to be neglected.[132] Ian is atypical of SW teachers in his eclecticism,[133] given that he has developed expertise in teaching both English and Mathematics at secondary level, and readily attends mainstream and Steiner conferences and workshops. Of all the respondents, only a handful of teachers compare favourably to his eclecticism (I have in mind, Sally, Wendy, Andrew and possibly Julia).

Andrew is critical of the lack of openness to new and current knowledge, and the lack of capacity to drop "anthroposophese" and find new forms of expression that can transact dialogue across contemporary fields of knowledge and educational paradigms.

Bernard is passionate about the need to develop clarity about what SWE is in the 21st century, to draw this knowledge collaboratively from the collective experiences of SW teachers, and to forge new understandings out of this in-house research. He rues his school leaders' seeming inability to take on this task, or even recognise its importance.

Jennifer offers insights about the inherent values of SWE that can be (and have been) successfully incorporated into mainstream or non-SWSs.

Wendy states that although the school considered itself "really strong and committed to personal development… their personal development isn't progressive," nor is it "relevant to the education of young people." It is "more about strengthening the *old* culture and not losing the *old* ways." The practices associated with professional development, such as regular artistic and social activities, and reading Steiner texts are about "making sure that we don't change… We'd be reading Steiner verses to remind us what our spirit was about, and not to lose sight of it… Or do speech and eurythmy." However, Wendy argues that doing these things is "far removed from the day to day physical happenings in the classroom." There would be "so many, so many meetings, rarely would education or curriculum be on the table, in fact if *ever*." In other words, professional development, being past oriented, and immunity from change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) had become ritualised.

---

[132] In 2013, I attended a meeting of delegates from SWSs, where this phenomenon was acknowledged, and an impulse articulated to attempt to remedy this omission. Traditionally, much of the professional development in SWE has been directed at early childhood and primary age children.

[133] Ian's eclecticism lends weight to the tension between inward-focussed Steiner and outward-focussed professional learning with which he is preoccupied in his narrative. There is strong anecdotal evidence, supported by some indirect evidence (for example, Graudenz et al., 2013), that new SW teachers are more outward-focussed, and less interested or loyal to the kind of inward-focussed SW training that has tended to dominate in SWSs.

For different reasons, non-attendance at College meetings presents as an issue. There are two main situational reasons that see some teachers attend and others not. As we have already seen, there is a boundary between the inner and outer circles of teachers. Sometimes this boundary also determines who is a College member and who is not. However, it also occurs, as Robert, Wendy, Bernard, and Andrew show, that genuine members voluntarily avoid College meetings. In Robert's case, he had already determined, after some experiences already in Britain, that College is a politicised environment, where "nepotism" prevails. Andrew, who like Bernard, had been a dedicated and committed College member for many years, eventually withdrew from College attendance, because it had become an ethically questionable forum for airing personal matters, as well as an ineffective decision-making platform. Like Bernard, he also recognised the enormous amount of energy consumed by being a College member, something that invariably came at the expense of the teacher's classroom preparation time.

Wendy's aforementioned criticisms of the professional culture of the College, as an organ of conservatism and unwavering dedication towards the past, go some way to explaining the lack of attendance by high school teachers, who eventually stopped going to College meetings at all, largely considering them "not relevant," "demoralizing" and "a waste of time." Bernard's detailed diagnosis of the malaise of College culture supports Wendy's symptomatic picture.

Wendy's critique of the College culture goes further than simply levelling the charge of preserving the past. As she puts it, the focus of the meetings shifted towards "staying true" to the "mythology and dogma that they created," and "to maintain this culture." Wendy encapsulates this culture earnestly, though not without a hint of humour: "It was a religious thing… If you're having difficulties in your life, you pray. If you have difficulties in a Steiner school, you say a verse, and that would fix everything." Her comments suggest a view of life and an approach to dealing with issues, within the small, self-enclosed community of the College that do not operate with a confidence in rational, deliberate modes of decision-making. Rather, there is a tendency to operate outside the bounds of rationality that are considered foundational in Western society. It is perhaps understandable how appeals to "karma" and "destiny" can have decisive impact on mundane discussions about student or colleague misbehaviour; and on whether or not someone should remain in the school community (for example, see Simon's narrative). What is highlighted here is graphically reinforced in Jennifer's account of how College responded to allegations of abuse from within the staff body, in effect, from within the College itself.

6.4 Learning culture

The learning culture in a school is not a secluded ecology that can be sealed within the classroom. As many commentators have pointed out, the learning culture of an organisation permeates every aspect of that organisation (Bob Anderson, 2010, 2012; Bridges, 2009; Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010; Duignan, 2012; Senge, 2006). Learning is as much an activity that grows and blossoms in classrooms, as it is the atmosphere within the organisation that provides a larger ecosystem for that process to prosper. Duignan (2012), in particular, has identified the critical role that the school leaders or leaders play in promoting favourable conditions for learning to prosper within school environments.

For this reason, it may seem a somewhat artificial process to extract from respondents' narratives, comments that relate specifically to their teaching experiences in the classroom. Such experiences have to be seen against a wider contextual backdrop that includes cultural artefacts transacted at the collegial and management levels, as well as the prevailing and operative interpretations of an underlying philosophy. In other words, classroom experiences need to be widened in order to locate them within the greater cultural territory of the school. On the other hand, cultural and philosophical artefacts have to be traced to their normative influences in the classroom, and in the minds and hearts of the teachers at the school.

6.4.1 Characterisations of the learning culture in SWSs.

6.4.1.1 A concrete philosophical basis.

One of the most commonly referred to aspects of SWE is that there is, as Robert expresses it, a "concrete philosophical basis" to the curriculum and pedagogy, the cultural life of the school and the "way we're supposed to relate to each other."

The last point makes Simon and Peter's complaints against the unethical behaviour, for example, of their mentors, or the school leaders, poignant. The ethical basis for social behaviour, which Robert claims is provided by anthroposophy, is an important influencing factor in attracting parents and teachers. Alison and Robert have referred to this social-ethical aspect, as have many respondents referred to the aesthetic-moral appeal of SWE. It is therefore a serious matter that deserves consideration, where the failure to translate this theoretical ideal into praxis occurs, even if only sporadically. Unfortunately, from what has been gathered through the interview data, as well as other sources of evidence, which are mentioned in the Literature Review, it appears that this is more likely to be a widespread issue. It is sobering and promising to hear anecdotally in private

conversations with current teachers that some schools are turning towards the fostering of healthy relationship and communication ecologies as primary professional developmental goals.

Susan's narrative provides a full account of how the comprehensive nature of anthroposophical ideas and beliefs can be adopted not only by an individual, but by whole families and whole communities. In part, this strong compulsion to push anthroposophical ideas to every horizon of one's life, from the sacred to the everyday, arises reciprocally in response to the holism presented by Steiner. Everything is seen as interconnected. What actions or even attitudes a teacher adopts towards a student in early childhood, reaps consequences in later life.

Jennifer, a postdoctoral academic at the time of the interview, lent this philosophical basis an informed articulation that can be grasped without reference to Steiner's cosmological language. In her view, SWE assumes "the recognition that, as somebody living right now today, there is this incredible lineage of tradition that comes into this moment." This understanding "gives us soul and a human kind of substance and weight and you stand knowing that you're not thin." Interestingly, after leaving SWE, Jennifer was inspired to adapt much of the fundamental SW pedagogy to mainstream learning situations, suggesting that what Steiner provided was not only the philosophical basis for SWE but also the basis for good education anywhere, a view that also informs Andrew's understanding of anthroposophy and SWE, which he relates was inspired by the Swedish educator, Arne Klingborg.

Jennifer's vision of the moral depth evident in SWE finds a corollary in Julia's account which uses the language of neuroscience to characterise the teacher's relationship to her class. She affirms earnestly that "you are patterning those children; you are imprinting them with you. And you must constantly ask yourself, am I a good human being, what do I need to do to be a better human being? Because otherwise you give them your baggage, you give them your stuff. That is huge."

6.4.1.2 Lamenting the "big picture": a lack of integration.

The reverse aspect of the above aspect is that this large background cosmology is challenging to grasp and to put into practice. The symbiotic nature of the school learning culture is evident in accounts provided by Robert, Ian and Wendy. The "bigger picture" or "philosophical background" is a grand narrative about human and natural evolution that is recapitulated in the human biography and therefore also in child development. This movement from the whole to the part, from the periphery to the centre is practically demonstrated in the pivotal role of the Main Lesson, especially in Primary School, as the thematic sequence (time) and contextual field (space) that is intended to unite all learning across the various curricular areas.

Despite these possibilities being embedded in SW praxis, Wendy laments the lack of integration and collaboration between teachers and subjects that, on paper, should share natural affinities and points of connection, such as Art, Music, and History. Her deep frustration lies in not being involved in the kind of discussions that would lay bare the underlying "big picture" or global context in which all teachers (or at least, all high school teachers) conducted their work. This is discussed more directly later in the case study of her Art program (p. 243ff), and under the theme, "Isolation" (p. 253ff). Further, despite the apparent freedom to develop a work ethic and an independent learning culture in her Art classroom, the "big picture" at the school, with its professional and leadership cultures, imposes influences that reach into every classroom, irrespective of the individual circumstances. She cites the example of students entering her room, which they recognised and appreciated as a place of vigorous intellectual and educational activity, carrying the lethargy and disinterest of earlier lessons where the focus was on other (questionable) pedagogical values and goals. Added to this, as Sally points out, the lavish productions of class plays enhance this "big picture," irrespective of the disruption they cause other programs, such as literacy or numeracy lessons, or in fact ordinary lessons conducted by specialist teachers.

A further, important aspect to the challenge of integrating theory and praxis in SWE, is the attitude or stance adopted towards contemporaneity and the development of knowledges since Steiner's time. Andrew highlights what he considers one of "the most important qualities of a Steiner teacher, particularly in high school": they should "love" and "know" their discipline, have a "good grounding" in it, and "be open to developments in it." In his role of parent educator and teacher trainer, he was confronted by adults who were "grounded in contemporary knowledge and academic standards." Nonetheless, he presents us with an interesting paradox. One of his "dear colleagues" was a teacher with exceptional credentials, a major contributor to writing high school science textbooks for mainstream use, a student of Physics, and "an absolute expert on relativity" who commonly attended international conferences on the subject. Despite this, he admitted that he could make no sense of Steiner's ideas on Physics and he "felt there was an abysmal lack of understanding amongst the anthroposophical or Steiner based science teachers." He also expressed "disappointment" at the "narrowness of some Steiner people" in relation to developments "in the contemporary field of science." His reciprocal difficulty in embracing Steiner's worldview was

perceived by other teachers as a "cultural difficulty." For Andrew, this presents a "very interesting paradox."[134]

6.4.1.3 SWE as teaching methodology and self-development.

It is perhaps from contemplating paradoxes such as those presented here that Andrew was led to original ways of understanding and theorising SWE. It has already been mentioned that Andrew's roles across his school led him to contemplate this very task over and again for three decades. Based on his prior academic learning, he approached such tasks with rigour and discipline, qualities, he says, that are not generally found with all SW teachers. According to Andrew, "Steiner developed a method which would enable people to become that good teacher[135] and that is I think, to know how to draw on your own creativity as a teacher and your enthusiasm and your love of your subject and your love of the world." His practical experience as a teacher, trainer and speaker has allowed Andrew opportunities to find a language that would bridge the enclosed world of anthroposophical jargon and the contemporary language understood by the majority of mainstream teachers and parents.

SWE as teaching methodology, integrates the teacher's self-education in anthroposophy, which is understood as a consciousness-raising activity, or inner development, rather than acquiring external knowledge; in other words, this self-education is about developing capacities for learning and teaching, and it should be the ordinary practice of all teachers.[136] It is a dynamic methodology which has "not necessarily so much to do with curriculum or particular structures within schools," but is underpinned by "the whole idea of how you work with yourself and connect with spiritual reality that you then impart or convey a sense of to your students."

A particularly good example of a teacher working out of this synthesis of subject discipline and thoughtful inquiry is Bernard. Not only does he employ the phenomenological method in a conscious manner in his science lessons, but he is a student of the methodology. For example, he is aware that for the experience of learning to really approach the student, to some extent, it has to unsettle them, breaking into their comfort zone. He uses the example of *tasting* salts to show this,

---

[134] Andrew presents two other interesting paradoxes: the Steiner graduate who was a 'brilliant administrator' but maintained 'a great scepticism about a lot of Steiner's concepts'; and the young man who, impressed by Ralph Nader, was told by the celebrated activist to 'get out of anthroposophy' if he wanted to change the world. Refer to his story in the Appendix.

[135] In the dialogue with Andrew I mention Montuori's fascinating account of his kindergarten teacher (2008).

[136] We can think of this in terms of Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) concept of human capital, but it is intended to encompass the other two forms of capital mentioned in their book, namely social capital (the capacity for group collaboration) and decisional capital (wisdom).

and to link the abstract cognitive experience with a more intimate, inward experience which confronts the student's anxieties or rigidities, and potentially can contribute towards their social and emotional liberation, as well as teach them about science.

Bernard demonstrates one aspect of the "holistic" nature of SWE. Another aspect is articulated by Julia, who states that, every teacher, in addition to the students, "arrives at this moment in time but there's actually a sense of there being a connection greater than the egoic self". We are all on a "spiritual journey" and everything we encounter is a part of that: "the kind of family I lived in and the kind of conditions that I faced meant that I needed to do."

6.4.1.4 The languaging of SWE.

So fundamental is the languaging issue to a critical view of SWE, that it is alluded to in every conversation with respondents. Whilst only a handful directly addressed this issue, it is universally understood, almost like an insider joke. For example, when Simon refers provocatively to a sartorial deviation ("I've got a black stripe down my trousers, so un-Steiner"), the ubiquitous label "Steiner" is comically challenged, as it is in the phrase, "he's a Steiner teacher," where the hushed tones emphasise the same label. Of course, this is merely the surface of a deep reservoir of labels and terms that are incorporated into Steiner-speak, in its educational form. Jennifer's account of disclosing potential acts of child abuse in a College forum reveal the extent to which the insular language (and with it, ways of thinking) of certain individuals within SWE has strayed from accepted social norms in Western society. For example, the idea that a prepubescent girl can be labelled "seductive" in the context of discussing adult behaviour that may be regarded as abusive is a striking incongruity. By the standards of Steiner's theories of child development, this labelling of a child's behaviour begs the question, how are such judgments arrived at? Andrew's strong case for adopting contemporary language, for example, in the sciences, in literary theory, to mention a few, is punctuated by his observation that "the brightest and the best of our young people won't necessarily respond to the traditional anthroposophical language because they find what they need in some of these new forms of knowledge… They'll have to work with the context of their present society."[137] Andrew is also convinced that some of the arcane language that comprises the still

[137] There are two important ideas here: firstly, is the matter of accessibility and credibility in the social domain. These are the underlying themes which surface from time to time, as SWSs become more common and more public. The debate about SWSs in the public school system picked up on language as a guide to both access and credibility (terms like 'incarnation', 'verse', 'etheric', 'astral' etc disclose an arcane world view where the teachers function in secretive ways that parents and outsiders would find hard to connect with. Secondly, and perhaps even more significant is the inevitable release of tension between Steiner and non-Steiner world views that young adult graduates of the SW system must experience early in their adult life. Andrew's observation here is sobering and suggests a task ahead for SW high schools,

current discourses inside SWSs would be more fittingly replaced by more contemporary language. He cites the binary, "matter" and "spirit", suggesting that it is outdated, no longer reflecting the most advanced scientific or philosophical discourses of contemporary times. However, the inability to link into these discourses is, according to Andrew, "deeply counterproductive."

Jennifer provides a rich characterisation of SWE in a language that is drawn from her engagement in contemporary academic studies. She highlights the following qualities as instrumental in establishing SWE as a potentially positive educational force in the world:

i. The use and cultivation of creativity is prominent in both the pedagogy and curriculum;
ii. There is a "recognition that, as somebody living right now today, there is this incredible lineage of civilisation that comes into this moment." This is the kind of "lineage" that allows someone to be traced from. "It gives us soul and a human kind of substance and weight and you stand there knowing that you're not thin."[138] This awareness or recognition is perhaps what strikes newcomers as the deeply spiritual basis of SWE and anthroposophy, which is nonetheless distinct from the religious belief systems of faith-based schools.[139]
iii. Jennifer also identifies SWE as contextual (its theoretical or intellectual content is taught contextually), whole-learner focussed (it is multimodal in terms of appealing to multiple intelligences).
iv. Interestingly, like Robert and Sally, Jennifer found that many pedagogical or curricular aspects of SWE could be adapted into a mainstream setting.[140]
v. The reverse is advocated, particularly by Sally and Wendy. For example, Sally relates the introduction of a non-Steiner musical program which she used to re-energise a "tired"

especially. It also revives the crucial question: teaching anthroposophy or teaching out of anthroposophy? In other words, is anthroposophy the content of SWE, or is it the methodology?

[138] Though Steiner's conception is deeper and more extensive, it is possible to hear echoes of this view, for example in Robert Starratt (2005): 'As human beings we are both embedded and privileged by these worlds, bound to and in partnership with these worlds' (p. 401). The 'worlds' referred to here are the world of 'nature', 'culture and society', and 'history'. Starratt argues for a 'moral' pedagogy and curriculum that acknowledges and reinforces individuals as 'natural beings', 'socio-cultural beings' and 'historical beings.'

[139] I would not overstress this point, though it tends to represent a contemporary prejudice. I prefer to subscribe to Tacey's (1995, 2000) view that spirituality is a kind of doorway into truly religious experiences which we seem to baulk at because of the encrusted languaging that has built up around the world, 'religion' (Ferrer, 2011).

[140] This is a point of departure that SWE 'purists' like to defend, namely the position that the 'parts' cannot be detached from the 'whole' without loss of meaning or efficacy. I would like to address this issue by suggesting that the 'whole' cannot be reduced to a prescriptive discourse and therefore cannot be used to restrict how the so-called parts are to be employed. This 'flexibility' in the pedagogy has been commented on by other respondents as well as anecdotally by teachers who have worked in both SW and mainstream educational settings. Teachers, like Mary Goral (2009), who is involved in the Public Waldorf movement in the United States, and Munoz (2011), working with SWE in the indigenous sector in the United States have demonstrated this at school and tertiary level, respectively. Closer to hand, Haralambous (2016) has worked with contemplative inquiry based in the work of Rudolf Steiner, in a university setting.

program that students did not enjoy. Curiously, the non-Steiner program was found to be more engaging by the students and helped the class to engage more socially with the local community, including an aged-care facility. Wendy stressed the importance of showing students current artwork in exhibitions, that addressed the same issues or artistic problems that students were learning about in the classroom, in other words, allowing them to see how their own learning was embedded in the contemporary world.

6.4.1.5 Spiritual dimension of teaching.

This is a large aspect of SWE as commented upon by respondents, and indeed in the primary (Steiner, 1920/2001, 2004) and secondary literature (Goldschmidt, 2017; Schieren, 2014; G. Woods, O'Neill, & Woods, 1997). Within this aspect can be identified several components.

6.4.1.5.1 The classroom as a spiritual space

Julia draws our attention to the nature of the classroom space, as deeply moral-existential. For example, the experience of standing before a classroom of students confronts the teacher with a palpable silence that admonishes the teacher: “look at” the children and ask, “What do you need today?” This involves “drinking in who they are and them drinking in who you are.” Julia represents, in a practical sense, Steiner’s injunction that “the children will tell you what they need.” With this comes a sober invocation to the teacher to “improve” herself in all manner of ways, some practical such as musical and artistic skills, others of a more soul-spiritual nature, to be able to offer “more”[141].

6.4.1.5.2 Education as a moral-spiritual path of development

This view finds expression in the oft-quoted dictum: “Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives” (Steiner, 1943/2010).[142] The view that the classroom is a kind of moral workshop to help the students develop themselves as human beings is definitely articulated by Wendy and Andrew, each interpreting their discipline as a potential pathway towards such self-actualisation. This is perhaps one of the fundamental premises of SWE.

---

[141] Consider the use of the term, ‘more’, for example in connection with Gendlin’s psychological spirituality. The ‘more’ is an embodied experience, and it relies on the teacher having a strong sense of their own embodiment as well as being able to manage knowledges that issue from the wisdom of the body.

[142] This dictum is almost exclusively attributed to Rudolf Steiner, yet credit needs to be given to Marie Steiner. The source is her Foreword to the lecture series, *Education*, which has reappeared in other volumes, most prominently in *A Modern Art of Education*, which no longer includes Marie Steiner’s Foreword.

6.4.1.5.3 The vocation of teaching is a path of spiritual development for the teacher

Again this view is widely recognised by many of the respondents in this study. Peter provides a particularly rich characterisation of his journey into teaching as a spiritual odyssey involving many trials which encompass both personal and professional dimensions. In Susan's story, a stark yet moving account is provided of the teacher's initiation into the classroom, which encompasses, like Peter, profound personal and professional changes. In addition, Andrew has theorised how the task of self-development is integrated into the practical application of SWE. From my own experience, this is a common pattern in SWE, yet there appears to be little recognition within SWSs that it is the social responsibility of the school, and not merely a matter of personal concern.

6.4.1.5.4 The special status of the SWS

One shadowy consequence of this notion of a spiritually connected school, is the idea that the school is especially regarded by the "spiritual world," and that this special regard functions like a protective effect, for example, against bullying, against abuse and against economic misadventure (Sally and Jennifer). A similar belief is described by Wendy, namely that a key function of College is to maintain a kind of spiritual alignment with the protective spirits of the school, through ritualised verse saying, eurythmy performance, and reading sacred texts (from Steiner). This generates a familiar tension found in religious cultures, namely between faith and responsibility (Hadot, 2009)

6.4.1.6 The fearless critic: a creative and reflexive ethos.

The notion of the "fearless critic" is introduced in Ian's narrative. With this idea, he contemplates the prospect of an alignment between the healthy functioning of management and classroom cultures. In effect, he advances the notion that there is an underpinning learning culture that influences pedagogical activity in both the classroom and the meeting room. If we accept that critical reflection is indispensable to a healthy learning culture (Senge, 2006), then an "ideal for a Steiner school would be that it is confident enough in itself that it can handle severe criticism".[143] A Steiner school that "is able to take and listen… would be a very strong learning environment." Ian posits that such a phenomenon would be a "good sign of health." He argues convincingly for an organisation-wide commitment to creativity and research, citing contemporary art theatre settings, such as Theatre Complicité or in the work of Canadian playwright Robert Lepage, where he sees such practices already at work in the mainstream. In addition, this approach to the cultivation and

[143] It is a sad reflection perhaps on the state of SWE that in response to my question, 'Have you been to such a school?' we both break into loud laughter. But exposing ideals as dangerous insularities in our thinking is a necessary task. Because the ideal does not live it becomes an obstacle to life in the ones who bear the ideal.

development of creativity, which he sees more commonly in "the wider society," also displays a greater capacity "to cope with criticism than [in] a Steiner school." In an educational setting, this translates to a commitment, also mentioned in Ian's narrative,[144] to the growth mindset (Dweck, 2017) as a normative cultural principle across the whole school. As above, so below: the projection of creative expectation within the teaching body also illuminates the classroom ecology.

However, Ian is circumspect about his own school, suggesting, "I don't think that we are quite doing that at Green Wattle." There is instead a "struggle" about what is the "main emphasis of the school": is it going to be on achieving high marks in the (….)[145] or is it going to be on producing a well-rounded human being?"

Closely linked to his conviction that the whole school ought to encourage creative work and research is the need for each school to have a space for dissenting voices - the fearless critic. Translated into the learning culture, these two elements describe an environment where originality and innovation are encouraged and rewarded, instead of conformity and routine.

6.4.1.7 Asking questions.

The practice of reflexivity is promoted throughout the conversations with teachers. This promotion assumes different forms: Julia, for example, leverages diverse viewpoints in order to raise many wide-ranging questions about SWE, the role of the teacher, the College, managing SWSs, professional development, the curriculum, parent learning, to name a few. One of Julia's most salient criticisms of SWSs and their professional learning cultures is the absence of critical questioning. Like Wendy, for example, she avers that Steiner needs "a lot of interpretation, a lot of insight and [needs this] at different stages," hence it was troubling to her to find that, when attending Steiner conferences, "if you questioned one of Steiner's ideas, you would be completely frowned on."[146] Quoting and partly paraphrasing Steiner,[147] Julia enjoins the SW teacher to "be more

---

[144] Ian relates a meeting with the Principal of a Catholic Girls School. She was once the Mathematics Head of Department. Now she encourages all her girl students to attempt Maths at the highest level available. The goal is not to achieve high marks per se, but to push the students to exceed their expectations.

[145] Name of secondary matriculation examination deleted.

[146] Not only is this observation confirmed by other respondents, it also tallies with anecdotal evidence and my own experience working in SWE. Further, it reinforces the allegation of a 'cult', and regrettably it also confirms Steiner's judgment that the Anthroposophical Society was already becoming sectarian in the 1920s. Any community that has established a relationship of unmitigated trust in any one voice, whether it is Christ or Buddha or Steiner, can no longer listen to the voices that are in its midst, and cannot recognise what individuals offer out of their own soul impulses. This phenomenon finds poignant expression in the Gospel story of the Blind Man. In a very real sense, such idolatry, irrespective on who or what it is based, stops history, or rather refuses to continue to participate in the present and future. Moreover, its relationship to the past is static and therefore disconnected from the present or future.

[147] Julia recalls a well-known verse from Steiner's collection of verses and meditations:

open, open to the world." However, it is "upsetting" for her to realise that "people in Steiner education were absolutely the opposite." Echoing Steiner, Julia affirms that "a good creative education teaches you to be open to what comes." Yet, instead SWE has "become dogma."

The theme of asking questions seems to run parallel to the spiritual or professional growth of the teacher. Two instances that come to mind are Peter and Jennifer. Both confess to approaching the task of being a Steiner teacher with some reverence, even uncritical devotion. However, in the course of their entanglement with key figures, they realise that understanding the philosophy and its application is not beyond their capacity. Teachers like Wendy and Sally seem to have gained a deeply personal and original relationship to SWE, moving with relative confidence between Steiner's ideas and their own understanding of the subject matter they work with.

This attitude is also articulated by Julia: "So we don't have a patent on education, we've got an idea that we think works and we're practising it, but it doesn't work for everybody and again, you've got to be open for that… And if you believe that you've been put there to learn for yourself as much as being educated then you will, as Steiner said, you'll be up for that."

6.4.1.8 The kingdom mentality.

The term "kingdom[148] mentality" is colourfully introduced by Sally in this way:

> you get your class and you're the king or queen and they're in your kingdom and so specialists were kind of like visiting minstrels or something, they're just

---

We must eradicate from the soul
All fear and terror of what comes towards man out of the future.

We must acquire serenity
In all feelings and sensations about the future.

We must look forward with absolute equanimity
To everything that may come.

And we must think only that whatever comes
Is given to us by a world-directive full of wisdom.

It is part of what we must learn in this age,
namely, to live out of pure trust,
Without any security in existence.

Trust in the ever present help
Of the spiritual world.

Truly, nothing else will do
If our courage is not to fail us.

And let us seek the awakening from within ourselves
Every morning and every evening.

(Steiner, 2013)

[148] Curiously, the term "kingdom" is also used by Christof Wiechert (2013, p. 63) to characterise the distinctive colouring of the atmosphere of a Class Teacher's classroom.

> coming to visit and go out again and they're in everyone's classes so they're not really part of it.

This idea is also intimated in Alison's narrative. As a new Class Teacher who also has some prior experience and with postgraduate training in education, she is able to "read" the unwritten social codes associated with being a class teacher in a SWS. For example, she recognises the "full authority" that is given her as a Class Teacher: "This is your class, you do with them what is right." Yet, she laments the lack of collaboration, "fearing" the "potential power" that is invested in one teacher having the same class for seven or eight years.

The self-imposed isolation of the kingdom mentality is evident when children of one class form a self-enclosed social community that tends to remain within itself. Again, Alison promotes an antidote to this common arrangement in SWSs. She confides that she seeks to instigate as many shared social experiences between her own class and other "neighbouring" classes. For example, they "play morning teas with different groups," read to each other across class groups, or watch their older/younger siblings perform, using it as an excuse for the whole class to be involved. Understandably, when she was confronted with the following situation, she recoils in horror, "Are you kidding me? This is cultish."

> And the classroom is their environment and the garden outside that's theirs and they play with their own class members and it doesn't spread and there's a real danger in that. Because I think there's something in one of the handbooks for Steiner teachers or Waldorf teachers, How to make your class unteachable by other teachers,[149] and it had got this list of things that you basically should be doing.

Sally adds that the handbook further instructs the class teacher on "how to make your children love you so much that they… can't be taught by anybody else." It is effectively a training *against* "resilience". Some teachers at Sally's school "have to debrief their class after a specialist has had their class." Her remedial suggestions are "to see more collaboration… see more classes shared." Moreover, she challenges the idea of one teacher having a class for seven years, suggesting it is not "healthy".

---

[149] The actual title is not known by Sally. The title given here is intended ironically. Interestingly, this 'manual' was also mentioned by another respondent. The handbook referred to here is Avison (2016), 'A Handbook for Steiner-Waldorf Class Teachers.' Curiously, the section from which both Sally and Alison's extracts are derived, has since been deleted from the publication.

6.4.1.9 Looping: the long cycles of a primary teacher.

This is regarded as a core practice of SWE (Zdrazil, 2013). It is also contentious, with objections raised by both parents, students and teachers. Comments offered by respondents in the study touch on many key issues:

6.4.1.9.1 Realistic expectation?

According to Robert, "it was a nightmare" and "seemed completely unrealistic in some ways." His perception is echoed by Michelle: "I don't know how someone could sustain a whole cycle?" With each new year, when there was new content to learn, Michelle found that she could learn it more quickly. However, she also noticed that she would push herself into learning more. There was a "continual trying to keep up." She would have preferred starting with Class 5, arguing that she is less capable with earlier classes. At the point of her mental and emotional collapse, she finds out that the school is now considering splitting the eight-year cycle, thereby shortening the length of the normal loop. She indicates that this has been precipitated by the difficulty of finding suitable teachers.[150]

6.4.1.9.2 Spiritual burdens and sacred tasks.

Susan highlights the judgmental tone that is sometimes directed at a teacher who is unable to fulfil the "commitment for seven years." It is presented almost as "an abrogation of duty." Both Jennifer and Michelle left their primary classes midway through the cycle. In both cases, they were excluded from seeing their classes after they had left; Jennifer was not even allowed to bid her class farewell. These actions reflect some of the animosity faced by these teachers as a result of prematurely ending the teaching cycle, irrespective of their cause or context of their leaving.[151] Similarly, Robert relates that at his school there was a "huge amount of workaholism." He opines that SWSs tend to attract people who want "to save the world," and so talking about limitations is harder to do in a Steiner school because one leaves oneself open not only to charge of being a

---

[150] This is an interesting conundrum, supported by research from Graudenz et al. (2013). It was common, where I worked, to employ a new class one teacher on the basis of one available candidate only. During the 12 years I worked at the school (less than two cycles in primary school), at least half a dozen, nearly a full cohort of class teachers, were unable to complete their cycles. I also witnessed an understandable reluctance to take disciplinary action against underperforming class teachers, because they were hard to replace. Of course, this calls into question the whole effectiveness of the recruitment system.

[151] It was reported to me, towards the end of my time in SWE, by an outgoing class teacher, that she was verbally harassed by an experienced class teacher, who told her directly that she was doing 'irreparable damage' to the students in her class by leaving them. The outgoing teacher's circumstances seemed to make no difference, neither her ongoing illness, time spent caring for and managing her aged parents' affairs, nor her own issues with the school. The issue at hand was her unstable management of the class, and her unreliability. Nothing else appeared to matter.

"slacker" but a "spiritual slacker." Curiously, Robert is also disarmingly open about the "temptation" he experiences to become a Class Teacher, despite everything he knows from his long 30-year association with SWSs. Moreover, he suggests that part of this attraction may be that he is "addicted to stress," to the sense of living "on the edge," of never feeling that one is quite managing. A number of respondents' narratives echo this counter-intuitive reality (Susan, Michelle, Simon, Peter, Bernard, and Andrew).

6.4.1.9.3 Alternatives to the looping model.

It is perhaps no co-incidence that some of the "younger" teachers (currently working in SWSs), such as Alison and Sally argue passionately against the established structures of the "Steiner" system. For example, as a new class teacher, Alison challenges the wisdom of investing so much expectation and responsibility on one teacher to manage a class of 25 to 30 young students. She emphasises the African social motif – "it takes a village to raise a child" - in order to promote greater collaboration among teachers who are by default, so it seems, insular and protective over their little kingdom. Of course, Sally's comical critique of the "kingdom mentality" highlights some of the shadow aspects of the one teacher/seven to eight year cycle: the concentration of power and responsibility on one teacher, the potential for social fragmentation within the school, the lack of collaboration necessitated by the structure of the class teacher system, to name the most obvious.

Jennifer, perhaps because of her deep insights into the shadow side of the SWS, warns against the "potential to groom" children, which she saw as "massive" in the school where she worked. Like other observers, already mentioned, she sees that "there's something in the structure that gives the class teacher way too much power." The lengthy period of interaction, the reliance of storytelling as a medium of communication, and the use of metaphor, gives the teacher "an enormous amount of power and that does sit inside there." This theme is closely interwoven with the issue of "spiritual superiority" which is discussed below (p. 283ff).

The teachers' weight of **responsibility** – The abovementioned view of the role of the SW teacher as a heroic sacred task finds reflection in Robert's comments about "stress" and "workaholism", as well as "slacker". The view of the teacher as hero brings with it an enormous baggage which potentially condemns the teacher to an unwinnable situation, where perhaps the most likely outcome is demoralisation or burnout. This is discussed more fully discussed in the section on "Emotionality".

Some of the consequences associated with carrying this responsibility are identified in the respondents' narratives include: "A lot of hours of preparation" (Julia); the appearance of

"Waldorphans" (Julia) and "Waldorf widows" (Pastoll, pers comm, 22 March 2016) as "collateral damage" in the tension between work and home life. The criticality of preparation is also raised by other teachers, such as Bernard and Andrew (particularly, in relation to the efficacy of College membership and participation); enormous energy and output, particularly in new teachers and new schools, leading to perhaps inevitable burnout in teachers (Susan); and the very large amounts of work required of class teachers, for example, blackboard drawings, reading and recalling stories, researching new content every year for class teachers, developing new lessons every year, responding to parents' needs (Alison, Sally, Michelle, Michaela and Robert). There is also an awareness of the tremendous responsibility upon the teacher for the care and development of students, and knowing how much is at stake spiritually, physically and psychologically.

The importance of acknowledging the sheer weight of responsibility borne by SW teachers is twofold: firstly, it alerts us to the scale of emotional labour performed, and with it the high risk of burnout or demoralisation; secondly, it raises questions about overreach, and in particular the wisdom of expecting teachers to participate in such practices as College membership. An added and connected question concerns the prioritisation of roles, which seems problematic wherever one goes today into the workplace.

6.4.1.10 The question of art.

SW teachers consider themselves to be artists and therefore have a special understanding of the nature of art - a view that influences their perception of the role of the arts in education, as well as the role of art in human culture. Wendy challenges both aspects of this self-perception among SW teachers, theorising the notion of the "art" of teaching (Harwood, 1958; Keppie, 1997). Citing Harwood, Keppie (1997, p. 269) explains that a "feeling awareness" is cultivated in SWE, which is more akin to an aesthetic-cognitive mode of consciousness, rather than an exclusively intellectual-rational mode of consciousness. The centrality of "art" in SWE is linked to the importance of "cognitive feeling" (Kuhlewind, 1986) in developing more encompassing forms of consciousness through anthroposophy. However, Keppie (1997) also raises the dangers associated with this artistic approach, which precedes analysis with experience (that is, a phenomenological approach), where the teacher frames learning by presenting experiences of a kind to children before they learn to analyse and interpret such experiences (p. 270). This is an important insight by Keppie. It reinforces the tremendous responsibility that teachers must shoulder in presenting experiences as well as content to their students. It is also a reminder to teachers, as Julia contended, that they are 'patterning' their students. This means that a moral-ethical dimension necessarily cuts across all aspects of pedagogy and curriculum, irrespective of whether the teacher is aware of this or not. It is,

of course, also within the compass of SWE, as Steiner presents it in numerous lectures and books, that morality plays a fundamental role in the education of children.

6.4.1.11 SWE between primary and secondary schools.

Tensions exist within SWE as it manifests in primary and in secondary education. The former is also referred to as the Class Teacher period, the latter as the Guardian period. Whilst some respondents address the tensions within the looping process (the Class Teacher period), little is said about the issues concerning "guardianship". Nonetheless, some of the issues concerning looping are themselves symptomatic of the uneasy relationship between these two time periods in SWE.

There are many aspects that contribute to this tension. There is a sense in which the tension reflects a historical necessity, namely that the early childhood and primary classes were established before the secondary classes. A cursory glance at Steiner's educational lectures and writings appears to reinforce the emphasis on early and primary education – there are many more lectures about the early years of childhood, and the introduction of learning in primary classes. Less is said about adolescence. Other factors include the fact that the transition from early childhood to the final years of high school spans the protected world of the "children's garden" (Kindergarten)[152] and necessarily should prepare the adolescent for life amongst adults.[153]

Some of the recurring issues that contribute towards the above tension include attitudes towards intellectual development, academic rigour and contemporary knowledge. Issues around testing and assessment are also relevant here. In effect, the way childhood is framed changes across the twelve or thirteen years of schooling. Despite Steiner's encompassing characterisations that are intended to encourage imaginative thinking about key concepts such as goodness, beauty, and truth, or wiling, feeling and thinking, there is a tendency to stereotype what SWE is *in its praxis*.

[152] The etymology of the word 'garden' is relevant here. Note the semantic orientations of the etymologically cognate terms, *yard*, *guard*, *ward*, *guardian*. The garden is therefore a protective space, which carried over into early childhood, is suggestive of the Greek term *schole*, a precursor of *school*, meaning 'leisure or rest' (Liddell & Scott, p. 687). The idea underlying the Greek term is a space that is removed from work or worldly affairs (Kemmis, 2013).

[153] This is a huge transition and merits far more attention than it currently receives. From the imaginative realm of fairy tales, elementals and fantasy worlds, the child's consciousness must transition into the factual realm of realist fiction, history and contemporary life. To a large extent, the onus falls upon the adults (parents and teachers) to reconcile this very large difference. Wendy makes the intriguing comment that some parents (and she counts herself among this group) have the view, at least initially, that they seek a place for their children where they are not challenged and where they can remain protected from external world. This, of course, is the attitude of Herzeleide, Parzival's mother, who raises her child in isolation from the world of human beings.

6.4.1.12 Intellectual development.

Andrew has already referred to the lack of rigour in the primary school, particularly in the area of science: he is "appalled at the ease with which teachers taught primary school children ideas which [he] felt had no real grounding in real science,"[154] and which he said, "verged on new age rubbish." In general, as a SW teacher with a thorough grounding in academic learning, he is also concerned about the intellectual content of secondary teaching in SWSs. Indeed, attitudes towards the development of the intellect in SWSs are somewhat vexed. Andrew is cognisant of the "difficulty of the transition from the primary to the secondary… because of the demand of real rigour, scientific rigour when teaching young adults." The expectation that primary teachers will be able to offer the same level of sophistication in specialist subjects is one reason often raised against the "tradition" of looping, at least beyond primary school age. Sally has also intimated this, as well as provided interesting links to further tensions around assessment and testing (testing is "a dirty word") in SWE. Many respondents raise important questions around these key learning challenges. Sally is one of the most articulate in this regard. She challenges the culture of mimesis which appears to be ingrained in many aspects of primary and even high school teaching.[155] Her proclivity for working in different learning environments has brought Sally into contact with good practices in other, non-SW environments, and given her cause to reflect on the relative merits of SWE at her school. She is apprehensive about the capabilities of her SW students compared to students she has been teaching in other environments. "Growth mindset, resilience, work ethic, independent learning, critical thinking, all of these new things that people are talking about are the things that I'm not seeing in my Steiner school as much as I'd like."

The compromise that many SWSs and teachers are unwilling to make, for example in relation to assessment, flies in the face of the American experience of Public Waldorf and Charter schools which has shown that the "compromise" presented to SWSs to engage in outcomes-based testing or otherwise submit to government regulations makes possible the "promise" of SWE reaching a wider audience that Steiner would no doubt have endorsed. Indeed, the founding of the

---

[154] His observations and those of Simon re Mathematics echo Jelinek and Sun's (2003) study on the teaching of Science in SWSs.

[155] I heard a SW teacher with more than 20 years teaching experience in SWE once affirm that having students copy the teacher's work from the blackboard, even in high school, is educationally justified because it allows the 'slower' students to participate in the lesson, and thus not feel stigmatised by their lower level of intellectual ability.

original Waldorf school also demonstrates this willingness as a prerequisite for achieving official State recognition.[156]

6.4.1.13 The "Steiner" curriculum?

Ian suggests that contrary to high school teachers, Class Teachers are naturally exposed to the basic concepts of SWE simply by following a set curriculum and basic Steiner pedagogy. However, as Sally comically highlights, this "set" curriculum and pedagogy is, in some cases, no more than the repetition of tradition.[157] Her discovery echoes a familiar assumption about SWE: namely, that it is, more or less explicit in the early years of schooling. This is contrasted to the case with high school teachers who, it is said, lack the equivalent level of direction in teaching specialist subjects (Ian and Wendy). The distinction between primary and high school, both in terms of pedagogy and curriculum, underscores a problematic interpretation of SWE which may have its roots, in part, in the unequal distribution of direction provided by Steiner to teachers and schools across these two levels of schooling. Of course, it also highlights the perception that somehow SWE is complete and unequivocal in the primary years but open and unfinished in the secondary years. This unfinished nature perhaps suits SWE to a freer interpretation and engagement by secondary teachers; whereas, the seemingly finished nature of primary school contributes to the notion that SWE is already fixed and given, at least in the early years of primary education. A number of respondents commented on this issue:

- Wendy - the Art program was "too much determined by primary school culture, rather than high school culture"; the divide between primary and secondary was also reflected in College – "[The high school teachers] wouldn't even attend [the CofT] because it wasn't relevant to what they were doing."
- Robert – the high school teachers are "continually criticised a lot for having no interest in Steiner education, and [management] just rubbished them."
- Sally – whilst she does not weigh into the debate about primary and secondary education, she clearly argues for more intellectually challenging learning activities in primary school. She notes that, especially in primary school, copying from the teacher's hand on the blackboard is still a standard pedagogical approach. She concludes from this

---

[156] The dilemma of compromise/promise is discussed in Chapter Two.

[157] Sally relates that upon commencing Class One, the Class Teacher at her school was given a box of Main Lesson books, representing the previous two or three teachers' representation of particular lessons. To her consternation, Sally noticed, upon closer examination that each iteration of the lesson was exactly the same. In other words, the lessons around any given topic had been repeated, literally word for word, by successive teachers.

observation three important insights: first, there is minimal checking of students' work, since the main object is to "complete" the work, with particular attention to its artistic presentation; second, it negates individuation of learning, since there is no space left for that – students merely repeat what and how the teacher has represented the given knowledge for that lesson; third, it invalidates questioning or at least free discussion, as the teacher's word is the authority on the subject.[158] Regrettably, this practice also creeps into high school teaching.

- Ian – distinguishes between primary teachers who, he believes, have a more "lived experience" of SWE by simply practising it, whereas high school teachers are essentially "specialist teachers" and hence "a lot of the high school teachers are not actually teaching a total Steiner curriculum from seven to twelve."[159] Mostly, SW high schools teach according to the requirements of the local State educational authority, which means that students "are not likely to put all their heart and soul into the main lesson because they know that it is not really where the [academic progress] reports are going to come from."

6.4.1.13.1 The portrayal of childhood

The portrayal of childhood as a state of innocence is central to the self-understanding of SWE, at least in the manner in which it has been traditionally applied (Whedon, 2007). This view of childhood also contributes to the abovementioned tension between primary and secondary schooling. In the "classic" Steiner model, as one encounters it in action, childhood is in need of protection or safeguarding from the influences of contemporary society (Rosa, Michaela), a need that is all the more acutely evident in early childhood and in the primary years of schooling. This notion is often associated with other satellite concepts such as the sacred task of the SW teacher, justification for the expenditure of large amounts of emotional labour by the teacher, especially performed in early childhood and early primary (Rosa, Robert). However, there is a danger that the protective gesture of the parent-teacher in the early years of life and schooling is projected abstractly into adolescence, where it is no longer relevant in the same way (Wendy, Bernard; see

---

[158] Ironically, it is possible to see in this flawed practice an historical vestige of the kind of practices that were common in Steiner's day. At the same time, it is also possible to see how a Steiner teacher might wish to 'justify' the practice on the basis that it reinforces the teacher's 'authority' which is one of those so-called 'indications' from Steiner, namely that the second seven-year period is regulated by the principle of the teacher's authority.

[159] This idea, which might be regarded as self-evident, warrants closer examination. What is the basis of the assumption that SWE is more recognisable in primary aged education, and less apparent in the secondary school? Of course, the unspoken question concerns the nature of SWE itself.

also results of German studies, mentioned in Chapter Two). This raises interesting questions about the transition to adulthood and how teachers in SWSs do or do not deal with this.[160] Wendy's observations in this regard are particularly revealing.

As a parent and teacher, she acknowledges that she was "misled" into thinking that what her learning-challenged child needed was "protection", when in fact what children, in general, need is "to learn strength. They need to learn to stand up… to stand on their own two feet and find their own way and then to be able to trip over and be challenged and do badly in things." According to Wendy, this does not happen because parents are misled into thinking that what their kids need is to feel "comfortable". Further, she believes that a "laxness comes up in the high school years, because they haven't learned these fundamental lessons that they need to learn in their primary school years." She relates College or staff meeting discussions where "problem" students are mentioned. Rather than addressing remedial action that focusses on the areas of difficulty, such as completing academic work, or challenging them to overcome their difficulties, the kind of solutions suggested invariably involve the use of artistic or therapeutic activities. In her view, whilst such activities certainly have their place in the SWE curriculum, they often involve the "comfortable" approach and leave students unchallenged. Wendy believes there is a serious "cost" to these omissions, namely that students leave high school without adequate preparation "for the world."

Nonetheless, the broader issue remains about the SW teacher (and this applies particularly to class teachers): whether they are able to accompany the child on their journey of maturation. A cautionary example from Sally: A Class Teacher introduced the four main mathematical functions to her Class 1 students. She did not use the more abstract labels, "taking away" or "subtracting", but following the [unspecified] suggestion to insert a "moral gesture" into the teaching, preferred the expression "giving away." However, in Class 7, she still insists on using this term, and consequently, her students are unfamiliar with alternative forms of designating or employing subtraction in basic mathematics. The "moral" argument is perhaps moot, since after seven years of mathematics, some of the students have not grasped the concept of subtraction, responding to a practice question, "What's the difference between 20 and 16?" "One's got a two and one's got a 6, that's the answer." Sally adds that this is a problem which is potentially aggravated by the continuity of the class teacher across the first six or seven years of primary education.

---

[160] The way in which this concept is transacted within SW communities highlights a problem of interpretation which has by now been well ventilated. In other words, Steiner employs concepts in ways that require a high level of interpretive liveliness. As soon as the concept is reified it loses its efficacy and easily leads the cognitive user into error.

6.4.1.14 Leaving SWE.

The earnest teacher (or student of Steiner) will take the many insights provided by Steiner's writings and lecture transcripts literally and seriously. Therefore, after a (typically) long period of inculcation of the anthroposophical worldview, it is unsurprising that unexpected experiences can happen to teachers who leave SWSs, institutions that are richly steeped in SW rituals and activities. Some of these unexpected experiences are given voice by Jennifer, who felt "a bit mindfucked," or by Andrew, who experienced a sense of "freedom" and that "life [has] flourished" since leaving the SWS that he was involved with for over three decades. What these and other respondents articulate is the sense that although seemingly all-consumed by the culture and philosophy of SWE during their periods of association, upon separating from it, a certain clarity and energy release ensues. Perhaps, Michelle best expressed it when she asked rhetorically: "Have I just been in this bubble for three years?"

Despite this, leaving behind SWE can be a traumatic experience, as intimated by Jennifer's sharp response above. Teachers like Wendy ("I feel a bit burned"), Jennifer, Michelle ("is it all veneer?") and Andrew ("bitterness" and "anger" that "had grown deep" and led to a heart attack), give voice to their deep love of working in SWE, of leaving behind valuable colleagues and friendship, but most of all the bittersweet experience of saying goodbye to their classes or students, and particularly in the high school, their disciplines.

Andrew: "My actual teaching in my engagement with the students and my love of my colleagues was still 100 per cent, but my dealings perhaps with administration were very disappointing towards the end."

Michelle: "It was important for me to… convey the feeling that I wasn't actually abandoning them [her students]."

Jennifer: "My decision to leave there was a very hard decision to make because of my class and at the same time in terms of my own personal, professional, spiritual integrity."

> The school refused to allow me to say goodbye to my class which is just so disrespectful to me and to the children and just indicated a complete lack of understanding about what needed to occur for those children's closure irrespective of mine.

She was told that

> you're breaking a so-called spiritual contract… that had devastating consequences for me for many years, many years, because they didn't allow me to see them, they didn't allow me to talk to them, to send a message to them, to

> anything, so from my point of view there was no respect for them of that spiritual contract.

Jennifer was cast as the "baddie" even though she alerted the school and the authorities to a sexual predator.

The teacher who leaves her class is seen "a bit of pariah," "it's just no on, to walk away from your class."[161]

Wendy:

> I feel I achieved so much… I made a difference to so many young people. It's disappointing that none of that is going to go anywhere. At the end of the day, as soon as I step out, it all grinds back to this old… dead… kind of, anyway, none of it is sustained. And I find that really sad.

6.5 Curriculum

6.5.1 An interconnected curriculum.

Comments on the SW curriculum are by no means central to the concerns of respondents. However, in a few isolated cases, a respondent will offer considered opinions about the curriculum, including possibilities for development or innovation. There are numerous comments about the beneficial nature of the curriculum, its healing quality and so on.

As we have seen above (p. 193ff; p. 207ff), Wendy provides particularly detailed and thorough observations and insights into the professional and learning culture of the SWS, as it impacts in the classroom as well as the teaching team. In one instance, she acknowledged the potential or promise in the curriculum for deep interconnections to be activated by the individual teacher, but also to provide a creative basis for teachers to co-operate in the teaching of their overtly disparate subjects. Her focus is almost exclusively the teaching of Art in the high school, which represents her main field of teaching activity. Her additional roles in Learning Support and Student Support add significant weight and perspective to what is an already deeply informed picture of teaching and learning in a SWS.

6.5.1.1 A lack of questioning.

The lack of questioning by SW teachers is critically raised in Julia's narrative. She offers interesting perspectives on curriculum and SW pedagogy that, she believes, may help to position

---

[161] This is part of the framing of superiority, of elevated status etc, and ultimately it is a consequence of the blindness. The 'spiritualisation' of everyday problems (see Zdrazil and the 'sociology' of looping) hijacks the situation, claiming that it is a 'spiritual' matter, as distinct from the human, social problem. A way of colonising the narrative.

SWE in the 21st century. Some of the innovations identified include teaching computer programming, not only because it is "useful" but as a creative activity in its own right. She is also positive about the potentially fruitful links between SWE and brain plasticity. She draws stimulating connections between brain development and the dynamic interplay of the various arts in the everyday ecology of learning in SWSs. For example, Julia mentions the teaching of knitting and the regular clapping dances used in early primary school, as examples of left-right brain patterning. In addition, she refers to the connection between "re-patterning" that is involved in rewiring neural pathways and the emphasis on movement in SWE, especially in eurythmy. She states concisely that on the physical level, SWE "is a good way of forming a good brain," whereas on the spiritual level, "music touches the soul, art taught in the right way touches the soul, soul food that I believe our society needs" (Clouder, 1998; Gidley, 2008a, 2009, 2012; Goldschmidt, 2017; J. Miller, 2000). However, she sees that other schools are capitalising on this knowledge, whereas SW schools may be lagging behind. "If Steiner education isn't careful and prepared to open their eyes and look… we'll miss the boat."[162]

Julia believes that SWSs need to position themselves in relation to modern developments in this area, not only for marketing purposes, but also to participate in contemporary debates about innovative education. Importantly, her interest in brain development has been stimulated by personal circumstances (she has had considerable personal and professional experience with ABI). Julia believes that her brother's recovery from his brain injury was in some measure attributed to his artistic, musical and creative temperament. "Creative artistic education creates healthy neural pathways," she tells me. Prouty (2008) has examined the extent to which SWE develops "multiple intelligences" (Gardner, 2011), and related this to the "neurodevelopment of intelligence" in early SWE particularly. There is a growing body of work demonstrating this link from within SWE (Amso & Casey, 2006; Larrison, 2013; Larrison & Daly, 2011) and in mainstream arts education as well (Croft, 2011; Singer, Golinkoff, & Hirsh-Pasek, 2006).

---

[162] Here Julia provides an instance of the convergence between SWE and contemporary science. All too often the manner in which this type of resonance is positioned in SW circles is to use it as 'proof' of Steiner's prescience. Whilst this is understandable, from a historical perspective, this attitude has become a hindrance to the integration of anthroposophical thinking into educational organisations, such as Steiner schools, mainstream educational institutions, including academia. This is unfortunate, since it limits the possibilities inherent in cross-mapping Steiner's ideas against contemporary scientific concepts, so that a common language may be developed, as far as possible, to refer to phenomena described in each system. If done in an open, transparent and rigorous manner, it is likely that this kind of research could go some way to lifting the academic profile of Steiner's ideas and instilling some confidence in the perception of SW researchers as scientists in their own right. This seems to be the motivation behind a lot of Jennifer Gidley's work (for example, 2008b, 2017).

Julia is representative of those respondents (nearly all) who give voice to their deep admiration for SWE: "The curriculum and the community is wonderful, absolutely wonderful." Her main positive observations are:

i. "It gives the children what they need when they get it." That is, "it mirrors child development."
ii. "It is an education in the classics."
iii. "It is grounded in common sense." The relationship between geometry and botany, for example, becomes evident through the practice of sound observation. Therefore, it reinforces the notion that knowledge is possible, and moreover that nature is an excellent teacher. Epistemologically, it affirms the kinship of "the heavens" and "the earth."

6.5.2 Teaching Art as SW pedagogy.

Much of Wendy's testimony concerns the nature, meaning and purpose of teaching Art in SWSs. She explains for example, that although there are other Art teachers in her school, and specifically a colleague in the high school, she feels alienated and solely responsible for the "artistic education of the students." She feels that she "was pretty much the only Art teacher," because she saw herself as "the only artist… with knowledge around Art education and the Art world." She recognised that her views about Art were "controversial" in the context of a SWS, where "a lot of Steiner teachers do think of themselves as artists." However, she challenged this preconception, arguing that what is taught is "more a craft than an art." She concedes that this provides foundational skills and capacities but appears not to be developed further in the high school, where teaching Art needs to transition into "more about voice and expression and connection and the contemporary world," contextualised against "the great history of Art."

Art plays a prominent role in SWE.[163] This is recognised by many researchers (F. Easton, 1995; Keppie, 1997; Munoz, 2016; Nordlund, 2006; Uhrmacher, 1991). Many newcomers to SWE see it as "an artistic education," and in the absence of specific knowledge about SWE, a SWS is often seen as "the *Art* school." This association with art is "automatic" according to Wendy. However, she challenges this notion, arguing that this "fundamental belief" has actually become "a myth about

[163] The anthroposophical misunderstanding of Art is compounded by an ambiguity in the word itself. Although highly regarded as one of its chief benefits, the role of Art in SWE is not well understood. For example, Steiner speaks of the 'art of teaching' or the 'art of education'. This refers not to the practice of painting or sculpting in the traditional sense, but rather to a creative capability which can work cognitively with these concepts in an 'artistic' manner. This is certainly not the same as teaching Art or practising various art forms such as sculpture or movement. Refer to footnote on page 272 re Kaltenbach.

Steiner education." In her view, "it misses the whole point of Art," particularly in the education of adolescents.

In adolescent education - and remember that Wendy's professional life took a long detour into adolescent health and education before arriving at SWE - the practice of Art is "all about process and understanding and making mistakes and making a mess, every now and then." It is very difficult to reconcile "the pressure to produce beautiful artwork with providing authentic artistic development." In other words, in her view, the core orientation of an artistic education is not necessarily consistent with the goal of generating beautiful artwork.[164]

As an Art teacher, she had "young people that [she] needed to engage in the artistic process." These "murky adolescents" didn't care about painting "pretty Turneresque landscapes." That would have been "really disengaging" for them and led to "all sorts of problems in the classroom." Whilst she did not discourage students from producing "beautiful" work, she was also aware of the need for "enabling those students who wanted to do something else."

For Wendy, "Art is the zeitgeist." This means that the SW Art teacher needs to introduce "contemporary currents into the classroom." It also means "working in a current mode" otherwise "[your] lessons are dead." Adolescents live in the present day; "they live in a saturated visual world." This has moral consequences for the teacher, who has to be "honest and true with them." "You can't pretend that things weren't happening," she argues. And though it was always a priority for her to work "dynamically" with students, "engaging" them in giving expression to their "voices", this self-appointed goal became difficult in the face of tacit injunctions to "toe the line" and "produce what was considered to be appropriate work for a Steiner school."[165]

"The most obvious example of the editing process that goes on [is] the Open Day, or the Art Exhibition," Wendy suggested. For artwork to be admissible it had to meet certain "criteria of what

[164] The transition from beauty as a key pedagogical driver in primary school education to truth in high school is called into question here. A fundamental mistake which seems almost endemic in SWSs is the transfer of pedagogical principles that may work effectively in the lower school, with younger children, into the upper school, where different approaches are called for, considering the newly awakening soul forces in the adolescent. The shift in the perception of beauty required in this transition is aptly represented in 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', included in Chaucer's collection, *The Canterbury Tales (2003)*. This is an example of the 'loathly lady' archetype identified by Stith Thompson (1977).

[165] Wendy is alluding to the visual/aesthetic bias that seems to dominate the self-created identities of SWSs. This is evident in a search of terms which yields colourful photos of visual artwork, main lesson books, coloured cloths, painted rooms and so on. This visual bias represents a conceptual privileging of light and a concomitant denial of the shadow. As will be explored further this pair of themes pervades SWSs across different levels of reality. Wendy reveals the other side of the initial impressions gleaned by many first-time visitors to SWSs. That is, the notion of beauty and aesthetics commented on so frequently is deliberately and socially constructed. As Whedon (2007) has shown, the constructed values of SWSs have much in common with other contemporary social movements in overlapping areas of concern such as motherhood and nature.

people would expect from a Steiner school." What was shown had to be "beautiful in a traditional sense or harmonious." If it wasn't, it was not displayed. And although her students "were doing amazing work… a lot of it… was very contemporary and a little bit controversial, modern," she could not display it, at least not until something shifted. The "editing" was, of course, largely tacit and unspoken, and as already intimated, it derived from the aesthetic mood "determined by primary school culture rather than the high school culture."

Nonetheless, Wendy's Art program "got very strong and very popular," and she "got a bit bolder." She learned to "push that boundary," to "advocate strategically" so that "the work that needed to be shown" could be shown. Progressively, "the exhibitions became more and more contemporary." But this came only after 10 years at the school, advocating "changing the culture in the school" not only in attitudes about education, but also about "how it embraced Art." She saw the "potential", the "good that happens there artistically," the "technical education," and the "fantastic" work "that comes from the primary school." She saw the possibilities latent within such a fertile environment for "developing students that could be artists in the world."

There were positive signs that her approach was working. For example, parents would see their children's work exhibited and "were always amazed at how much their children loved Art." These were not teenagers that "would normally love Art, or found it very easy or had talent, or prior interest." However, feedback from her peers was mixed: some appreciated the "dynamism" of the work; some, typically "older teachers," wondered, "what's going on here, what's that about?" The latter "were steeped in the primary school culture" and didn't 'really have an understanding of adolescents and young people and what their needs are. Who they are in the world."

This last statement is a scathing indictment of the professional development of SW teachers. Child development, one of the foundation stones of SWE, is here questioned. Do teachers understand what this means? Are class teachers actually able to transform themselves sufficiently through the seven to eight years' journey such that they remain relevant to their rapidly evolving cohort of students? Is there sufficient understanding of the differences between primary age and secondary age students? Rosa is particularly strident in her defence of adolescence, suggesting that "adults just don't know how to deal with teenagers." Her perceptions echo those of Wendy. She is also critical of SW praxis around the issue transitioning from primary to secondary schooling, arguing that "somewhere between primary and high school it gets lost and they don't understand teenagers." Further, Rosa observes that adolescents have a "radar for rawness and if you are not clear with what you say and how you deal with them they will get you."

6.6 Emotionality

Teachers' accounts of their emotional experiences present a refreshing perspective on the school culture: the recognition that teachers perform enormous amounts of emotional labour; that teaching is an emotional vocation, requiring high levels of emotional intelligence; that pedagogical emotionality reveals a good deal about the ecology of the school environment (all respondents reflect this in some way). As Hargreaves (1998) demonstrates, teaching and learning are "emotional practices" (p. 838). These emotional practices feedback strongly into a teacher's self-perceptions about their role and their effectiveness or otherwise. It is therefore unsurprising that Denzin (as cited in Hargreaves, 2001) contends that "emotional practices make people problematic objects to themselves" (p. 1056). Recent studies have shown that understanding emotionality in organisations offers significant insight into the less visible though no less important aspects of organisational culture and life (Beatty, 2002). Much of what is defined as "functional stupidity" (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012, 2016; Paulsen, 2017) owes it character to dissociated emotionalities freely operating in the work environment. Examining the related lived experiences of SW teachers shows that SWSs as social realities do not differ significantly from mainstream organisations as places where "emotional silence" tends to prevail (Hargreaves, 2001; Beatty, 2002). In other words, the emotional sphere remains occluded by other political interests that serve to maintain existing power relations, including emotional and political "geographies" (Hargreaves, 2001).

Highlighting respondents' emotions is warranted in a phenomenological "lived experience" approach for other reasons also. Feeling and ideation provide co-active influences in our experience of the world (Damasio, 2006). In fact, a focus on emotions reminds us that our experience of subjectivity is "fundamental to our notion of reality" (Beatty, 2000, p. 335). It also provides a reliable indicator of how we are connected to others around us (Denzin, 2007; Hargreaves, 2001)

Kuhlewind (1986, 2008, 2011), following Steiner (for example, 1961/1994), stresses the importance of "cognitive feeling" in leading consciousness toward imaginative insight. This link underlies the "whole mind" notion which joins rationality, emotion and lived bodily sense into a model of a comprehensive way of gaining "more meaningful understanding of people" (Beatty, 2000; Pert, 1998) as well as the realities in which they are enmeshed.

Examining respondents' accounts shows that they are highly aware of their own emotionalities and of the "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1979, 1985) operating within their particular social and professional environments. Moreover, it is also evident that emotionality is itself

problematic, particularly at the collegiate level and between teachers and parents. However, the focus of most attention is on the relationship between teachers and school leaders.

6.6.1 Expressions of teachers' emotionality.

Studies (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2007; Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002; Brown, 2011; Ye & Chen, 2015) have confirmed that educational leaders are exposed to significant emotional stress and emotional wounding in the course of their work. Moreover, as leaders, they set the tone for the level of emotional honesty within their schools, according to their own emotional modelling. Nonetheless, evidence provided by the current study has shown that teachers, in general, are also subject to varying degrees of emotional wounding, in addition to demoralisation and burnout. A characteristic example of this is provided by Wendy. She confides that she felt wounded, as a result of her experiences in SWE. She tells us that she "invested a lot," but felt little sense of "value" or "respect" for what she "took to the school." Her wisdom and experience were not recognised, and despite her experience and expertise, she still felt that she had to "prove [her] worth." "So much was achieved," but once she stepped out, "it all grinds back to this old, dead… none of it is sustained." She saw this as a tragedy: "It's a brilliant opportunity… to create something in a beautiful place… just sad that it never happened." Other representations of emotionality are summarised below.

6.6.1.1 A hostile environment.

In the account of an inexperienced but mature aged teacher (Peter) who has been invited to teach at his daughter's SWS, the school is portrayed as a hostile environment, where *they*, an often-anonymous entity reminiscent of Heidegger's *das Mann*, though implicitly referring to the "insiders" or "management", appear as a menacing presence - "We just humour you and ignore you." The teacher's worth is reduced to a single judgment: "You're not a Steiner teacher". Peter's employment of language, when relating his narrative, highlights the emotional distance he senses between himself as a teacher and management as an amorphous entity that remains largely unaccountable and unrecognisable. A similar picture is evoked in Simon's account, culminating in his dismissal (which was framed as a "redundancy") and his address to College in the form of a plea. Ironically, the mentor who had continued to reassure him that his position was not in jeopardy and that his work or performance was not in question, was not present at either occasion. Although one or two respondents offer positive and supportive pictures of school leaders and management in general, the most common image to emerge from the accounts, is of dysfunction, animosity and anxiety. The notion that a SWS is a democratic political organisation where the interests of the individual are

protected is gainsaid by the more common picture that strong political divisions exist within a socially-challenged community.

6.6.1.2 Lack of interest in the other's story.

Julia plaintively admitted that "nobody's asked me these questions so probably you're the only person that sees these ideas that I had *because I feel like nobody else is interested to hear them*" [my emphasis]. Alongside Peter's confession that his teaching epiphany had never been shared with anyone prior to his telling me during the interview, this is an instance where teachers' emotionality seems not to figure in their interactions with colleagues. It reflects a lack of awareness of the other's presence, as though other imperatives hold sway, such as economic or political (M. Gordon, 2016). The risk of losing valuable empirical knowledge, potentially conveyed in teachers' stories, emerges because people appear to be not "interested to hear them" (Julia). This seems to me unconscionable and incomprehensible. I recall again Bernard's insistence that teachers have an enormous part to play in renewing our understanding of what SWE is and where it is going, since this is what they embody in their day-to-day work.

6.6.1.3 Burnout or demoralisation.

These phenomena are remarkably ubiquitous across the respondents' narratives. With few exceptions, they are either raised directly (Robert, Bernard, Michelle, Andrew, Sally) or indirectly (Peter, Jennifer, Wendy, Julia). Some of the common explanations that are given include mental or emotional exhaustion, illness, a loss of meaning, or professional differences between the teacher and the school. There is a generalised overcommitment of emotional resources to the workplace or to particular problems within it.

The notion of "wounding", which was raised in the Introduction, also relates to these issues (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2007; Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002; Beatty, 1999, 2000, 2002). Wounding is an intense representation of emotionality, which may not reveal itself until a certain threshold of emotional hurt is reached. Santoro (2011) suggests that "moral depression" precedes demoralisation. The notion of meaning-making is particularly important in relation to burnout or teacher demoralisation (M. Gordon, 2016; S. Gordon, 2018; Santoro, 2011). For example, Michelle attempts to make sense of her experiences, finally decoding a senior teacher's advice to her that "it may look like utopia, but nothing's utopia." By this time, however, she has lived through a number of experiences that cumulatively had worn her down physically and emotionally. And however revealing the aphorism remains, it begs key questions about professionalism and collegial care and support, qualities that seem to have been in short supply at her school, and which by her

account, may have made considerable difference in supporting her to achieve a point of emotional balance in her professional commitments. Reflecting on many years of teacher service at her school, on what was achieved and on what was established as good teaching practice, Wendy ultimately felt that nothing would be retained upon her imminent departure. Like Michelle and Jennifer, the wounding that she sustained is palpably linked to a sense of being undervalued, and eventually a sense of loss, and particularly a sense of loss of meaning. Jennifer muses on the feeling that she was betrayed by her colleagues and especially the senior teachers, who rather than act with moral integrity turned on her, let alone offering her support for her courageous disclosure of child abuse.

6.6.1.4 Michelle's story.

Michelle's account is particularly instructive for a number of reasons. Recalling her narrative, we find that she encountered problems early on in her transition to SWE as a Class Teacher. Her pleas for assistance ("I can't cope.") were met with the counter-intuitive, indirect language of SWS culture, such as "Class One is an initiation," "It'll get easier," "Your boards are fantastic," "It's great! You've got a difficult class." Moreover, the relanguaging of her problems into a kind of stereotyped Steiner-speak discounted the emotional realities and the inner conflicts that were real and present to her. One could argue that the relanguaging reinforces the professional culture by reiterating the conventional, "sacred" narratives that privilege the light but are uncomfortable dealing with the shadow sides of teachers' experiences. They also evince the notion of political distance between the professionally assumed ethos of teachers as agents of a sacred task, and teachers as imperfect, emotional entities. Using Steiner-speak this binary could be rephrased as the difference between the "higher" and the "lower" ego.

This pattern of avoidance or deflection, whether it was performed consciously or not, was repeated at least once more, when Michelle's raised her doubts about her capacity to continue teaching at the school. Only when she realised that help was not forthcoming did Michelle begin to question and re-evaluate her own participation in the school. She began to wonder if a social division or hierarchy within the staff team determined the kind of help received from the College and management. She explains:

> what started to happen was it was sort of like us and them. 'Us' being the ones that weren't Steiner trained and 'them' that were totally into the church and the whole thing and I think there started to be that us and them. They look after them better than they look after us. I don't even know if that was subconscious, but there was definitely… it started to be, 'Oh yes, if so-and-so says it, then everyone comes up.' If we say it, oh, it's because we haven't done this right or that right.

Michelle also describes the instance of jealousy over knowledge. In this case, a highly experienced and knowledgeable primary teacher came to work at her school. Curiously, she noted, he was not accorded “us” status. “Jealousy” arose over his purported knowledge of SWE and discomfort over his recent arrival, when the others had “been here for all this time,” and yet he was credited with knowing “everything”.[166]

Making the “right decision [to eventually leave her class in mid-cycle]- the weight of what is the right decision for the children” - almost made her “sick”. She began to experience migraines, which always seemed to start on Fridays. However, once Michelle made the “right decision”, she felt “calmness” and the “rest of that half-year went very, very well.” Interestingly, though, making that decision enabled “cracks” to appear. Light began to fall upon the shadowy corners of the school, for example: below award-level teachers’ wages and inequalities in the sabbatical program (which privileged “real” Steiner teachers).

Michelle remained “in turmoil”. She did not feel she could “chat” with anyone about what she was going through. The opening of other cracks further alienated her and made her “critical” of the school. To some extent, this mirrors experiences related by other teachers.[167] For example, Wendy and Peter both confided that once they felt emotionally disconnected from the school, they lost interest in their work. A process similar to the one described below (p. 237) by Jennifer, of leaving behind a “cult”, had already set in, but was accentuated in the final months. Two prominent emotions are described by teachers on the point of leaving. One is the sense of not being appreciated, as though there is no legacy left, no recognition of that teacher’s contribution to the school. Wendy describes it as the feeling that “nothing” of her legacy remains. In her case, the sense of not being appreciated was already experienced in the context of meetings, for example, where her ideas were “dismissed”. Later, in the final months of her tenure, she felt “disappointed” and “sad” that despite achieving “so much” and feeling that she’d “made a difference to so many young people… none of that is going to go anywhere.” Jennifer amplified this disappointment, suggesting that the school could have treated her very differently by, for example, acknowledging her courage to speak up and become a whistleblower. In the context of recent global public interest around child abuse by established institutions, including religious and educational organisations, the lack of recognition intimates a darker condition underlying this community’s behaviour and its response to

---

[166] This links with the notion of spiritual superiority, suggesting that the rarefied world of ‘Steiner says’ allows for competition to fester. Cf footnote, p. 206: ‘anthroposophy’ as the ‘library’.

[167] This is particularly evident in the next section, Isolation: The teacher who has inwardly pulled away from the school ethos or cultural circle begins to see the world around them with different eyes.

an open allegation of child abuse. Of course, there are other, more "positive" responses to emotional situations where teachers find themselves on the "outer" of the school community's cultural sway. For example, Sally experienced setbacks in her attempts to initiate vibrant (Music) and rigorous (Literacy and Numeracy) programs into her school. Like many of the teachers spoken of in this section, she withdrew from the school, in order to pursue her professional career elsewhere, partly it seems, to reflect on her vocation and her own identity as a teacher and human being. However, unlike other teachers, she returned and, so it seems, managed to effect some positive change in the areas that she had advocated for a time. Unfortunately, her story is rare amongst the narratives that were recounted to me.

Michelle's story also highlights another important critical emotional decision which is not uncommon in the professional lives of SW teachers. In her case, she made the hard decision to leave her class in Year 3, barely halfway into the looping of six, seven or eight years. In her case, she was asked at the outset to commit to six years, something that she admits she was not able to do. Despite her protestations ("I didn't know how someone could sustain a whole cycle. I couldn't, I couldn't.") and entreaties to be given a shorter loop, she was told that this was not negotiable. Yet as her cycle got underway, it was obvious that the school was experiencing problems finding suitable people to work as Class Teachers. Michelle saw that teachers were offered to work less demanding cycles, for example, 1-5. This made her angry. Why had they not listened to her? She opines that the in-house training of teachers was not done "well enough" (consider Simon's and Peter's account of promised training that did not eventuate.) "There were too many. Too many," where this did not happen.

6.6.1.5 Jennifer's story.

Despite giving a dispassionate account of her brief years at a SWS, Jennifer's lived experience narrative highlights a number of key indicators of emotionality:

Firstly, she points out that it is important for the teacher to know him or herself. The insight is attributed to A. S. Neill, founder of the Summerhill School. The importance of this, whether "in life" or "in teaching," she explains, is that it helps the individual to guard against projecting their "own things," their "triggers", or their "own shit" onto the children that they work with. Ironically, later in her narrative, Jennifer recognises that she herself had projected the Socratic injunction onto the teachers she met at the SWS, who she saw has having "more enlightened understandings" than her.

The appearance of higher "creativity" and "spirituality" in the community she entered encouraged her to feel "honoured", even "privileged" to be asked to become a Class Teacher.

As a teacher, Jennifer gained access into a world that she did know as a parent. In this shadowed realm, she saw "abuses of power". It was "a slow process of disillusionment." The way parents were talked about "horrified" her. She was also mortified by the "ways of thinking about the CofT as a body that was somehow elevated," and which justified the languaging around parents, teachers and students.

Awakening to these realisations, Jennifer "had to take back [her] projections" onto the teachers, as well as the "school that actually wasn't warranted" but which nonetheless "sat" within her "hopes and dreams" for her children. It was "painful" for her to see all this and to see "these people for who they actually were."

However, when Jennifer first noticed "deeply concerning" behaviour that suggested a possible instance of sexual abuse by a teacher at the school, she was "shocked" by the "spiritual responses"[168] given. At the time, as a young female teacher, who lived somewhat under the spell of the school's putative spirituality, she was unable to confront the "bullshit". Instead, she shut down and conceded, "Oh, I haven't understood this."

Later when she eventually left the school, she felt like she'd "been caught up in a cult… I felt like I'd been really somehow a bit mindfucked."

6.7 Isolation: the shadow of the social ethic

Each narrative touches on the phenomenon of isolation in the lived experience of a SW teacher. Some are more heavily inflected with it, others less so. Nonetheless, what emerges is a powerful indicator that problems exist within a system that is ostensibly and promotes itself as, more socially oriented, more collaborative, and more collegial than mainstream approaches to education: "The healthy social life is only found when in the mirror of each human soul, the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue of each is living" (Steiner, 2013, pp. 116-117).

6.7.1 A common experience.

The experience of isolation is surprisingly common among the respondents in this study. It is mentioned in relation to various dimensions of participation within the school community. For

[168] For example, "well, those sort of people just don't get attracted to our school."

example, Simon describes the sense of being left to himself to grapple with the challenges of teaching Mathematics to a difficult Year 9 class, despite, having an experienced mentor allocated to him. Peter, also a new teacher, feels frustrated because, despite his enthusiasm for teaching in the school, and embracing many of its apparent spiritual values, he too feels that he must manage without direction or pedagogical support. Both single out classroom management as the key aspect of their pedagogical experience most in need of support.

However, careful attention to each narrative suggests that there is an underlying difference in fundamental attitudes towards learning, coping, encountering obstacles and finding solutions. In fact, Peter eventually realises that he must take his own training in hand, since very little actual support is forthcoming from the school leaders. This includes organising peer observations with other (supportive) teachers. Despite bringing up issues and questions in staff meetings, Simon discovers the same thing: namely, that there appears to be an unwritten and unspoken credo at the school that one must learn to "swim or sink."[169]

Michelle's story is the most dramatic example of the risk of isolation in the SWS. The tribulations she faced as a Class Teacher are echoed in Susan, Alison, Robert and Andrew's accounts. Notwithstanding the apparent support of two mentors, positive relationships with the school leaders, and on the whole a supportive parent body, Michelle suffered burnout[170] and eventually resigned three years into her first cycle of teaching. Her narrative provides a cautionary tale into the dysfunctional social mechanisms of SWSs, particularly in relation to staff support and teacher well-being.[171] Although a relatively young and inexperienced teacher, commencing her first cycle of primary teaching, Alison highlights the dangers of isolation, which she perceives new Class Teachers as being particularly exposed to. Her arguments for greater integration and collaborative co-operation amongst the teaching team are especially convincing and forward looking. Her concerns apply both to teachers and to students. She invokes the notion that "it takes a village to raise a

---

[169] I have witnessed this and heard it justified in an appeal to the individual's karma. This is based on a non-interventionist view of karma, which even questions the validity of the 'good Samaritan'. This view of karma can also be used to justify not intervening, for example, in incidents of bullying (anecdotal comments by parents).

[170] The question of whether Michelle's story is an account of burnout or moral demoralisation is potentially instructive. Although there appear to be personal elements in her story that influenced the outcome at her school, it is undoubtedly true, also, that the elements intrinsic to the school, perhaps to SWE, played a leading role in her downfall.

[171] This is another instance of the risks involved in perhaps normalising the school's unsustainable expectations of teachers' output of emotional labour, as well as allowing teachers to adopt these expectations, as a kind of 'buy into' the school's unwritten ethos of self-sacrifice. At bottom, however, we are faced with an unexpected irony (one of many) that we encounter in SWE settings: whilst great care and attention, and ideational support is marshalled for the benefit of children and adolescents, the same cannot be said about adults, that is the teachers. There seem to be two standards that apply: one for children and one for adults.

child," in order to appeal for a broader based approach to primary education, and a greater sharing of responsibilities between teachers, rather than expecting the Class Teacher to manage independently.

6.7.2 A pervasive phenomenon.

Wendy's account introduces and explores the theme of isolation in great detail by tracing its presence across various dimensions of the school's lifeworld. This makes her account especially informative and compelling. Initially, isolation becomes palpable as the counterpart to an enriched and joyous sense of belonging that comes from working with considerable freedom in her Art classroom with high school students. This sense of isolation is multilayered and can be characterised as follows:

Although the school ostensibly had a number of art teachers (for example, all primary teachers taught Art to their classes, in accordance with popular thinking about the role of the Class Teacher in a SWS), including a second teacher in the high school, Wendy *felt* that she was "the only Art teacher" in the school. This comment requires some contextualising. Wendy is critical of the *literal* way in which Art is conceived by other teachers at the school. This view limits teachers' conception of Art as a powerful transformative vessel, for example, in relation to the turbulent development of many of the adolescents that she worked with. The lack of alignment behind her expansive, transformative view of Art and the somewhat limited conception held by her colleagues is most readily evident in the school's culturally normative Open Day, which incorporated an Art exhibition.

Consequent to that was the sense that teachers engaged with teaching Art "never actually worked together." Of course, this was not peculiar to Art teachers. It was the norm across both primary and secondary schools. Sally's characterisation of the individual primary classes as "kingdoms" graphically highlights this social and cultural fact about primary school classes in SWSs. Whether this can be justified by reference to a putative "Steiner indication" remains to be established. Ian's comments on the changed nature of his school's professional culture, arising out of a centralisation of management power, reinforce this point that collaboration is not encouraged by virtue of the arrangement of power in the school. In a school where conflict is not tolerated,

dissent becomes feared, and so, free and open discourse is kept to a minimum, and then only so long as it serves the goals of the leadership.[172]

Wendy held a view of Art that she considered, probably with some justification, "controversial" at her school. This is described in more detail in the previous section, "Curriculum". Of course, the view *is* "controversial" by virtue of its apparent divergence from "Steiner indications." This had two consequences: (1) her voice was regarded as dissenting, and (2) her status as a "Steiner" teacher was brought into question. Her enthusiasm for contemporary artistic forms of expression was itself considered as a sign of inexperience in what was assumed to be the "real" Steiner approach to teaching Art.[173] Wendy characterised this approach as one that worked with "watercolours and wood." Even one of the artists she met, who had tried to present her doctoral work on Steiner and Art, was critical of SW teachers for their reluctance to paint with materials other than watercolours.[174]

She felt that she was solely responsible for the "artistic education of the students," especially in the high school, where many of her colleagues "didn't really have an understanding of Visual Art." What is particularly curious here is that she actually had *a* view or way of understanding the role of Art in the adolescent's development towards adulthood. The same could not be said about many Art teachers working in the SWS. Their "view" typically echoed Steiner without further individual development.[175]

Wendy's sense of isolation was further heightened because she saw that, although the curriculum has the potential to be "connected and working across things thematically… that didn't really happen very much." In other words, the interconnectedness, that could potentially create a

---

[172] It is plausible to ask the question: does this multi-layered situation betray a hidden aspect of anthroposophy, namely a tendency to over-individualise human beings, even to the point of influencing behaviour to the extent described in the narratives? Or does this over individualisation represent an easy temptation in the face of the circumstances confronting practitioners of anthroposophical endeavours? (Uhrmacher, 1991)

[173] Recently deceased artist and former General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Australia, Karl Kaltenbach OAM (November 2014, pers comm) has challenged the assumptions behind this view of the Steiner approach to Art, in an unpublished paper, "The Tragedy in Contemporary Art and the Collective Karma of Humanity: Critical Epistemological Points of View on the History of Traditional Anthroposophical Art."

[174] This results in an intellectual isolation, a division into ideological clans and the learning culture of the school must needs suffer in such circumstances. It is also easy to see how such divisions also lead to demoralisation of teachers.

[175] My own direct experience of this issue supports many of Wendy's concerns. The attitude towards the use of artistic modalities in SWE typically followed an attitudinal prejudice which has become established in the primary school years, that is, where Art is a vehicle for the expression of beauty, with its concomitant predilection for certain types of manifestation of beauty. One of Wendy's central arguments is that Art is a powerful medium for self-understanding and self-discovery. These are perspectives that have become widely recognised in contemporary pedagogy (for example, Eisner, 2002)

thriving community of teachers whose teaching was interlinked and could be cross-fertilised by other teachers' work did not achieve its possibility.[176]

Her attempts to bring pedagogical issues around student classroom behaviour and learning culture to the College invariably led to frustration and further withdrawal into her classroom as the conflicts in attitudes towards learning and teaching, towards Steiner and towards the role of Art, became evident. These meetings intensified her awareness of her own isolation amongst her colleagues. Despite her deep desire to work in a more collegiate fashion, it just seemed impossible, so long as she tried to work in the manner that seemed to her to honour her role as an Art teacher.

Three stark examples are provided by Wendy of a "closed shop" mentality: attending a conference on "spirituality in Art" given by a postdoctoral researcher; a Steiner House talk given by a practising artist with a Steiner background; and a conference on Visual Art at the Museum of Contemporary Art, where artwork was exhibited by a well-known artist with avowed interest in Steiner artistic studies. Each of the three individuals that she met on these occasions had taken Steiner's ideas on Art further than she had been aware of and were therefore inspirational to her. As she puts it, she returned to school "with renewed enthusiasm." However, she found in each case, when she tried to share her enthusiasm with her colleagues, there was abject rejection of anything new. This might be termed isolation from the contemporary world (a phenomenon which Wendy speaks a great deal about in her narrative). In her excursions outside her school, she may have gained a temporary sense that there was a greater receptivity in some SW schools, yet she nonetheless felt "deadened" and had "nowhere to go with these impulses." Her wish to work in a manner that was "more connected to the bigger picture and open," was thwarted. Her return to school made her all the more aware of "very strong walls" determining "what was coming in and what was going out." It was about maintaining the "status quo."

Not being able to share her vision of her Art program, or her sense of the kind of learning culture that went with it, furthered Wendy's sense of isolation. For a time, the Art program "flourished", but the isolation and the "detaching and putting [on] blinkers" took "its toll." The isolation went hand in hand with "frustration", a sense of "not being able to be part of something

---

[176] There is an emergent sense in which the ubiquitous experience of isolation within SWSs may represent a particular kind of response to the challenge of bringing together certain kinds of individuals who are highly motivated by lofty moral ideals and a measure of self-belief to undertake the kind of tasks bestowed upon them by the school ethos. It may, in fact, in the scope of this kind of way of working educationally, that being isolated is easier than being connected. This problem of isolation appears to intersect with the problem of sectarianism, identified by Steiner (see footnote p.271). Just as there has been a tendency within the Anthroposophical Society towards this self-imposed isolation, so too within SWE this tendency is manifest as a fragmented social structure, where teachers are more or less 'left to themselves.' The most obvious, though far from the only case is the Class Teacher.

bigger," feeling that she could not "integrate what you're doing into the bigger picture." She kept "coming up against the same walls." Although she tried to set clear boundaries for students' expectations when they came into *her* space, she could not shield it from "students who are coming into your room who've been switched off for three hours," drawing "pretty margins on the page," not thinking, not awake. All the energy, the thought and the planning to get hold of them and "light a fire under them again!" She concedes that "it becomes tiresome, it becomes frustrating… and you become resentful against the system… It did for me anyway."

6.7.3 The risk of isolation.

The notion of "risks" underlying SW praxis is intimated in some of the narratives. Teachers, like Michaela, are deeply concerned about the risks facing SWE. She warns against a series of "threats" that she perceives confront "a beautiful safe haven" and "a wonderful system."[177] Ian, who advocates building communicative bridges between SWE and other systems of education, including mainstream, is cautious about the "danger" of "becom[ing] blended" and the subsequent "loss" of a "sense of belonging." For him, this is not an unavoidable danger, but "just a question of having enough strength in what you do." Other teachers, like Robert and Bernard, although eager to embrace renewal on some level, are cautious about the need to preserve what is distinctive about SWE. While these are not risks associated with the phenomenon of isolation identified here, they are, threats that some teachers believe beset SWE in its contact with the outside world, in a sense justifying the *tendency* towards isolation that has characterised SWE over the last hundred years.

Wendy introduced the phrase, "the risk of Steiner education," in her narrative. She suggests that SWE has basically "sprung from the writings[178] of Rudolf Steiner" which are "now, very dated." She adds that much of the focus is on primary school education and on "childhood". The adolescent years are only dealt with in general terms. "A lot of what's happening in Steiner schools is really just sort of interpreting what he wrote and then sort of for their schools. If they're not looking outside of Steiner education, and if they're not looking beyond, I think it's a very limited view." This

---

[177] These are listed above in Section 5.2.1. (p. 163ff).

[178] This is not entirely true, but consideration of the error is revealing. Most of Steiner's insights and suggestions about education came in oral form. Of course, these lectures were eventually written down, although not all revised by him. However, the interpretation of his words has found its way also into the written form and has thereby gained a kind of authority that is not entirely justified, nor even helpful. Kiersch's (2010) preliminary exegesis of the foundational lecture series (*Study of Man* or *Foundations of Human Experience*) that Steiner provided to the first cohort of SW teachers in 1919, is a case in point. All of Steiner's lectures and books (with a few exceptions) call on the reader or listener to engage in thinking acts that are not ordinarily applied. Moreover, he does not fail to remind the reader or listener that this reciprocal activity is necessary if there is to be a meaningful exchange of knowledge.

perspective, she reminds me, runs contrary to Steiner himself, who was a “visionary” and “incredibly progressive.” SWSs face the risk of “becoming very cloistered and resistant to change.”

Another aspect of risk considered in her narrative is the small school syndrome. It is not uncommon for SWSs, particularly in high school, to operate with only one teacher in each subject, offering little scope for development. “It is difficult to grow, to get something to happen.”

Julia’s narrative is also concerned with the risk of isolation. Her comments on the limitations of the College have to do with a lack of development. As a measured observer (that is, Julia has come to SWE with many and varied years of experience in mainstream education), she is able to identify its limitations and see possibilities, which many insiders cannot because of their ideological captivity. From my experience, Julia occupies a position that is common with teachers who come to SWE with other substantive life and professional experiences. She sees its benefits, what it offers, but also perceives critically what is lacking, and, most importantly, how it could be developed. Invariably, this plays into the tension that is there already between maintaining the status quo, however worn out, and opening the school to new impulses.

The same dynamic is evident in Andrew’s narrative. As he recounts, once he began to perceive limitations in the working of College, he realised that there was a significant point of difference entered into a series of relationships that previously had appeared to be dependable. He could no longer avert his inner gaze from the problems that beset the school’s administration.

Another interesting instance of the attendant risks of isolation is displayed in Bernard’s account. He notes that a consequence of renouncing his membership of the College is that he has in effect, taken on a self-imposed isolation (not unlike Andrew, Robert and Wendy). He no longer participates at the level of a College member. Although he observes instances of inadequate performance in some of his less experienced colleagues, something that he might have felt obliged in earlier times to raise with senior teachers, he now allows that observation to recede, since he no longer wants to “participate on the level of a College [member].” He tells himself: “I focus on what I’m doing… management can deal with it… it’s not my job.” It would be interesting to follow up with Bernard how this consequence has played out in the time since I interviewed him. Unfortunately, I have not been able to do that.

It is possible to summarise the key areas in which isolation occurs and is felt, as follows:

- Isolation from one’s peers (social);
- isolation from the overall school culture or ethos (professional);

- isolation from one's own pedagogical principles (moral); a sense of frustration that one is hindered from working in the classroom out of one's sense of pedagogical tact (van Manen, 2016) or "what is called for" in a given situation; or the sense of frustration that despite what one does in one's classroom, other influences that are perceived as indefatigable and deleterious to learning nonetheless infuse the energy of the classroom space;
- isolation from one's own teaching ethos (ethical); and an overall sense of frustration that one is unable to activate pedagogical ideals that are perceived as fundamental to the vocation of teaching and the responsibility for educating subsequent generations of children.

Viewed from the opposite perspective, these lived experiences of isolation highlight the following consequences:

- a lack of unity or collaborative energy amongst peers;
- a lack of alignment between an individual's goals and attitudes and those representing the most influential normative group within the school (which are not necessarily the actual leaders, although they often are);
- a lack of consistency or clarity about pedagogical purpose; underutilization of the professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) of the teaching community;
- alienation of good teachers; there is an unintended subversion of the necessity for maintaining a succession plan, not only at the leadership level, but across all levels of teaching at the school.

The fact of isolation within the SW school community highlights other potentially serious problems beyond those already mentioned. Isolation, as I have characterised it here, of the kinds related by respondents in this study, runs counter to the ethos and moral composition of the SWS. It diminishes and ultimately alienates good teachers, who are naturally critical and clear thinking about SWE, and therefore may be necessary for the future survival and thriving of this form of education in challenging times. It may well be that such teachers carry within them the germ of renewal, the need of which is the primary contention of this study.

6.8 Spiritual superiority

"Spiritual superiority is a problem in Steiner education." This is how the term is introduced by Susan in her account. The remark is preceded by a strong characterisation of a phenomenon perceptible in SWE:

> the effect that working as a really committed anthroposophist and Steiner teacher has on you in terms of personal development and growth can turn people into *monsters* – absolutely – and then those people can become pretty damn difficult to work with. They are good at what they do, they create like no-one else, but that doesn't mean that they're good with other people. It doesn't mean that they're good with adults. It doesn't even necessarily mean that they're good teachers. I've seen some pretty appalling behaviour on the part of teachers as well.

Unpacking Susan's characterisation of the "monsters", we may provisionally assume that the term "spiritual superiority" overlaps with her insightful depiction. For example, it suggests an individual who:

- is motivated to work with Steiner's anthroposophy as a form of personal development and growth;
- has a degree of professional competence and creative capability;
- has, generally, poor people skills or team collaboration;
- may have an uncertain teaching competence;
- may tend to "appalling behaviour" in the classroom, and
- may be hard to work with.

Further, Susan states, "As much as I like some of the people and I respect the work they do, I'm not sure I want to be involved in that even as a parent and friend-participant." Her final remark, "I don't want more conflict in the Steiner scene," suggests an underlying mood that is evident in her narrative.

The phenomenon of *spiritual superiority* in SWE appears in the form of flesh and blood human beings,[179] but there is a sense in which it also pervades the social and cultural atmosphere of the SWS. This is an experience familiar to the outsider when first confronted by SWE in the school setting. Alongside the positive sentiments of enchantment and aesthetic sensibility, described by most respondents and anecdotally by many observers, there is also a sense that a particular mood prevails, across the school community. Interestingly, not many respondents give voice to this ambivalence, almost always focussing on the so-called "positive" experience. However, Simon, Jennifer and Andrew do. Respectively, the initial observations offered by these respondents point to a moral perplexity in the appearance of a spiritual community; abuses of power; and signs of cult-like behaviour. In my experience, this "mood" is commonly sensed, but not necessarily consciously

[179] Much that is related above in the section on leadership and management reinforces what is stated here.

grasped or understood. In some cases, its reality is only fully encountered when there are problems between the school and child/parent or between the school and the teacher.

Jennifer's account provides one aspect of this encounter. She describes how the atmosphere of spiritual superiority was not easy to recognise at first because she was misled by self-deprecating feelings that undermined her own judgment. For example, she did not see herself as a Steiner teacher at first,[180] since she did not feel that she was "worthy". She felt that she was "not creative enough," "not spiritual enough," and she carried "shame around [her] background." When she was "selected" to become a Class Teacher, she felt "definitely privileged" by the fact that people she projected as having "this creativity" and "this spiritual path" had actually "chosen" her. She saw the teachers there, particularly, the head teachers, as "having some more enlightened understandings." Eventually, following a "slow process of disillusionment" she had to "take back [her] projections" because ultimately, they weren't at all truthful. Jennifer's judgment was sobered by "seeing abuses of power."

Although the phrase "spiritual superiority" does not appear in any other narrative, what is suggested by the term is ubiquitous in teachers' accounts of their lived experience of SWE, for this richly rhizomatic theme intersects with many others. It may be helpful to see this theme in relation to some of its more obvious aspects, such as:

- Iconicity (the cult of the personality and the sacred task);
- Privileging the light (amazement, lack of criticality, unwillingness to confront problems, assuming infallibility of Steiner and the so-called "indications");
- Denial of the shadow (the other side, emerging shadow of adolescents, karma-discourse, the possibility of error);
- Hubris (power excesses);
- Denial of, or shielding from, counter narratives or perspectives that can "see" into the shadows that are obscured by too much light

Because the images and issues highlighted by this complex theme re-emerge under a broader thematic matrix, namely "Spiritual Blindness," which is discussed in the next chapter, I will

[180] This idea of not being ready or worthy is common to some respondents, eg Sally, Robert, and here Jennifer. There are two aspects presented in the narratives – the projection of 'spirituality' that easily overwhelms a new teacher, as well as the realisation that much is expected of the teacher in acquiring knowledge of the necessary content, especially in the class teacher role.

sketch out the theme of Spiritual Superiority, giving a sense of its breadth and characterising aspects that provide highlights and shades of the SWS culture.

6.8.1 Iconicity.

The notion of mimesis is contested in SWE, particularly when we turn our attention towards its cultural manifestation, how it sits within a particular community, how it is organised and promoted, and how it evolves or doesn't. We start this set of observations regarding "spiritual superiority" from the symbiosis which occurs when the "cult of personality" is joined to the notion of a sacred task. The two elements are brought together, not because they belong together as a formal indication from Steiner. Rather they represent an inherent pitfall, identified by Steiner (1923/2008a) when a certain kind of sectarianism is linked to the work of the anthroposophical society. As he showed, this has a toxic effect on anthroposophical endeavours. Judging from respondents' comments, this sectarianism and toxicity appear to still be present in SWSs.[181]

Taking these elements separately, we find the following relevant observations from the respondents' narratives.

6.8.1.1 Cult of the personality.

A school leader, one of the pioneers of a new school, is described, on the one hand, as a "charismatic and forceful figure." She is lauded for her "ceaseless" work to "really build that school," her "very strong sense of commitment," her intellect and her sense of "industry", and her "vision". On the other hand, she acts as though she were entitled, for example to wages, when other teachers had to wait for financial circumstances to improve. In addition, unilateral decisions were occasionally justified by "rolling out" "the spiritual imperative," essentially making an "appeal to secret knowledge" that others were not privy to. This situation is not singular, but merely indicative of a strong pattern that emerges from respondents' accounts. There we find "strong egos" who gravitate to positions of power, where "everything revolved around" them, and "you couldn't have a different perspective." "Their word was the last word… [they were] the karmically ordained nominal leader."

[181] This was, of course, acknowledged by Steiner (1923/2008b). He warned against the emergence of a strong egoism in the spiritual aspirant; and teachers were encouraged to become spiritual aspirants for reasons that become obvious with even a cursory reading of Steiner's philosophy of education. The temptation towards hubris and arrogance is also indicated in Kuhlewind's (1991/

1992) brilliant monograph, *Working with anthroposophy*. The injunction in *Knowledge of the higher worlds*, one of Steiner's better-known works, namely to treble one's efforts towards moral development for every step towards spiritual development, points towards the same dangers and offers the same solution.

The concentration of power in the upper echelons of the school happens "in the context of how anthroposophy and Steiner's work get positioned" (Jennifer). One obvious consequence of this positioning is the languaging around "the anthroposophical viewpoint.". Effectively, it becomes a reification of a *particular* way of thinking – "you don't question it, you do it my way, because I've done it. This is my way" (Simon).

The "elevated status" of the "anthroposophical viewpoint" acts like a prism through which a certain kind of spiritual power is refracted. In College, it is evident in the dismissive manner of speaking about parents and individuals (Jennifer). For Andrew, this raised ethical questions about the role of the College in dealing with internal matters, eventually pulling him away from the school. It also acts as a repellent to external influences, however useful or potentially effective. Again, Andrew's account critically engages with the isolationist and insular attitudes that negate the potential incoming influences that might energise a teacher's discipline or provide much needed administrative or financial support.

Peter suggests that the feeling of superiority appeared like a cultural malaise; and everyone was susceptible to it. He perceived the attitude: "I am superior, I have advanced knowledge and you're not there yet. And I'll make sure that you don't get there, because I will be threatened." Peter speculates that, "after a long time of teaching that [one] could develop an ego of substantial proportions that you carry yourself in superiority to everybody." The point is reinforced in Jennifer's account, where the term "sickness" is used explicitly to describe the dishonest and corrupt behaviour of the senior teachers (pp. 196, 202, 254-255).

The newcomer, whether teacher or parent, becomes aware of the "closed doors" (Alison). We have seen that these doors are found in various places, to separate open from closed spaces, isolating and delimiting power in the College as well as in the classroom. The College seems to a newcomer like a "special club" (Alison); the classroom like a separate "kingdom" (Sally). This bounded reality is expressed with a number of cultural binaries: "us and them" (Michelle), the "silent power control" and its opposite (Simon), "inside" and "outside" (Peter). As a parent, then teacher, Peter saw that "the senior management wanted to carve their position and protect what they saw as the morals and ethics of the school."

It is not uncommon for respondents to refer to colleagues or individuals and to their vocation as SW teachers in "glittering generalities"[182] or highly positive and morally desirable terms.

[182] The term is borrowed from the study of propaganda (Sproule, 2001). The whole languaging of SWE and anthroposophy merits further study. It is not only a matter of exploring the kind of internal language or dialect that is used to differentiate

For example, Michaela's school leaders are described as "extraordinary people;" one of them, was "just wonderful to talk to, just wonderful." These characterisations echo Susan's observation that such individuals are "good at what they do" and are highly creative. They are also highly motivated towards advancing their own spiritual development and growth. Their ability to translate this into rhetorical speech earns them high praise and regard amongst their peers.

At the same time, teachers tend to acquire seniority in SWSs because of their apparent superior knowledge and (supposedly) deeper understanding of anthroposophy, which gives them an aura of power that appears impressive for new teachers or parents who are newly confronted with the complexities of anthroposophy. However, this appearance is often flawed or, in time, disarmed. For example, to Bernard, his school leaders are "brilliant" and inspirational. They have helped him to bring his knowledge and expertise into his work, to recognise that "you are the school." But they are also "pathetic". "They have a clear notion of how the primary [school] ought to operate," but they lack a "deeper vision of the high school." Moreover, in his view, they lack the capacity to drive the school strategically in areas that he considers important, such as professional development and accountability.

Andrew describes some of his colleagues as "extraordinarily creative and gifted and committed people." At the same time, working with some of these likeminded colleagues brought a "sense of close connectedness." Yet, these are the same colleagues that he eventually found himself "at odds with" in relation to the efficacy of the College; or who "underrate what's going on in the world outside themselves;" or who wish to "isolate themselves from the rest of the cultural and intellectual world." They would also actively suppress the initiative of parents or friends who would "set up systems which would enable the school to flourish and thrive into the long term economically," insisting that all answers have to come from within themselves or from anthroposophy.

The sense of spiritual superiority can also creep in through the artefacts of SWE. For example, Alison recounts, in her interview, her first experiences observing in the kindergarten. Immediately, she gained a sense that "this is sacred." She was referring to the teacher-constructed stories that were used consciously and deliberately to correct children's perceived inappropriate behaviour.

---

anthroposophy from other worldviews, but the ethnographic employment of language that privileges, idolises and otherwise circumscribes the hallowed spaces within which anthroposophists or Steiner insiders prefer to habitate.

Upon entering the school for the first time, Michelle saw the “most glorious blackboards.” She reflected that she was told her own “blackboards were magnificent,” but she had to “go in on a Sunday and stay there seven hours.” She “felt [she] wasn’t up to what the other…” and wondered if she was “doing a good enough job?” Later she commented that “the ceremonies throughout the year… are beautiful.”

Susan recalls the long hours spent in training, learning and practising eurythmy, speech, form drawing and watercolour painting, where “very formative experiences” were imprinted into the teachers of the fledgling school over a period of 15 years, throughout her term of teaching and managing at her school. It was, as she describes, a period of “incredible personal development” and “personal growth.” The extensive training and practice infused teachers, like Susan, with great confidence in the classroom, empowering them to fulfil the lofty burden of the sacred task. Ironically, both Michelle and Susan eventually suffered from burnout, and had to leave behind the vocations that they loved.

The privileging of certain activities such as eurythmy, speech recitation or study group (based on a Steiner text) is referred to by various respondents (Wendy, Bernard, Susan, Michelle, Sally, Julia and Ian) and has already been mentioned in relation to professional learning and development in the SWS. The often-unspoken view is that these and other activities “indicated” by Steiner are superior to other forms of professional learning, as might be practised outside SWSs. The idea that particular rituals or activities are integral to the practice of SWE also inculcates and entrenches a deep belief in the special nature of SWE and its proponents. The greatest accolades are, of course, reserved for Steiner himself. This goes some way towards explaining the seemingly unshakeable confidence of SW educators in what has been presented by Steiner as advice or knowledge. However, as Wendy highlights ironically, this “sacred information,” referring to SW innovations in education, such as experiential, phenomenologically-based learning, is no longer exclusive to SWE. She and others (Sally and Andrew, in particular) open up the idea that educational innovation is not the preserve of SWE. Sally’s example of the dynamic music program (non-Steiner) that introduced new energy and enthusiasm to her primary class is illustrative. It attracted a natural suspicion from colleagues simply because it was “not Steiner,” to the point that it was rejected, and Sally left the school for a period of time. Eventually, when she returned and was re-instated, the program was provisionally accepted, although it was not allowed to be practised during the “sacred” time of Main Lesson.

The phenomenon of isolationism is evoked when such ritualised behaviour is considered. However, the extension of power that maintains a sense of what is permitted within the SWS is

controlled through the promotion of a kind of "spiritual teaching" or "spiritual power." According to Jennifer's insight, this power is derived from an "abuse of spiritual teaching," which she regards as a "dumbing down" of mystical wisdom. Some respondents problematise the extension of this power, for example into the looping system. Again, Jennifer believes that there is "way too much power," invested in the Class Teacher. Her concerns are echoed by Alison, Michelle and Sally. Jennifer argues that spiritual communities pose "specific challenges of power." In addition to the "normal" display of power relations within organisations, the spiritual adds a "really potent mix." "Both strong and vulnerable people seek to bring their kids to these schools and when there's vulnerability, there's a doorway into potential abuses of power."

6.8.1.2 Sacred task.

In *The Study of Man* (1932/1966), Steiner establishes the founding of SWE, variously, as "a moral-spiritual task," "a cultural deed," and "a great task." The "question of education" is seen as "one of the most burning spiritual questions of modern times" (p. 29). Further the success of this "cultural deed" rests in "your hands," in other words with the teacher. It is, therefore, completely understandable that the gravitas with which Steiner introduced SWE into the world has been absorbed into the soul expression of SW teachers around the world. Robert expresses this most dramatically when he conceives the purpose of SWE as "saving the world," and the role of the SW teacher as "indispensable". Rosa's a major career change, moving from high school to early childhood was motivated by the resolve to "save the prep."

Ironically, Wendy sees College, which was largely intended as a forum for professional development, as a vehicle for "strengthening the resolve of teachers within Steiner education to stay to this sort of mythology and dogma that they had created, that they had attached themselves to, as though if they were to lose that then everything would fall apart." The injunction to utter verses, as a religious person might pray underlines her perception that the core culture of SWE evinces a tendency towards religious behaviour.

6.8.2 Privileging of the light.

The next two sub-themes are intimately related, like two sides of the same coin. In the case of the privileging of the light, the emphasis is placed on aesthetic brilliance and beauty, stressing positivity, excessive optimism, and an unsubstantiated confidence in the anthroposophical belief system, typically ascribed to Steiner, although this too is largely assumed and not substantiated.

The term, "privileging of the light," is borrowed from Jennifer's account, initially arising in the context of the complementary binary, "denial of the shadow." These terms are advanced in

order to contend with the issue of power that Jennifer perceives operates within SWSs: the "enormous" power of the class teacher, the hierarchy of power within the collegial system and the structure developed by Steiner within which this power sits. The latter, especially, is seen as a reflection of his era. She states that these symptoms are apparent not only at the SWS where she worked and where her primary narrative occurs, but also at the SWS where she eventually moved her children. Jennifer contends that there is a "real inability to deal with the shadow, and kids themselves aren't allowed to really explore that shadow either." She presents the practice of wet on wet painting, as an example of privileging of the light, specifically, "the whole ideal" such paintings "needed to look [like] and the light that needed to be in them."

A couple of examples may indicate how this notion works in the context of the SWS. We have already seen, that a significant tension existed in Wendy's Art program. Her primary concern as a high school Art teacher was to engage the students in finding their voice and giving expression to their struggles and achievements. However, the view that held sway, and is still typically represented by the seasonally held art exhibition or fair, was the iconic belief that all art work should depict beauty and celebrate the world. It is easy to see how the framing of "beauty", for example, excludes the important role that Wendy believes Art plays in the adolescent individual's journey of self-discovery and making meaning of their occasionally turbulent experiences.

Another instance is provided in Michelle's account. There we are exposed to Michelle's gradually deteriorating physical and mental health condition. Her attempts to signal her difficulty in coping with the mounting pressures appeared to fall on deaf ears. She was reassured that her boards were wonderful and that she was managing a difficult class. Yet, the emotional acknowledgment and support that she needed was sadly lacking. Curiously, Susan faced an almost identical predicament later in her career as a SW teacher, and eventually resigned when, like Michelle, she could cope no longer.

6.8.3 Denial of the shadow.

Complementary to the previous sub-them is the notion of the denial of the shadow. Again, the term is borrowed from Jennifer,[183] who uses it, particularly to examine a range of phenomena associated with Silver Wattle Steiner School.

[183] Jennifer refers to the 'inability' or 'difficulty to deal with the shadow.' She also refers to the 'sickness which actually uses that belief [in an ecstatic vision of spiritual life] to actually not deal with the shadow.' Her view is that this vision is a 'dumbing down of a mystical understanding.'

A number of examples are offered by Jennifer, to illustrate the concept of the shadow and teachers' and students' inabilities to deal with it, which she perceives in SWSs:

As mentioned above, in the preceding section, the inability appears first with teachers and is then extended to students (through prohibitions of the use of certain colours, for example). Curiously, Wendy "discovers" that parents also appear to be "misled" by a view of SWE that challenges a fundamental precept, namely "to protect the child".

Another commonly mentioned instance, here recalled by Jennifer, is the use of black colour in Art. Whilst the common examples typically refer to the use of black (crayon) in the early primary years [Sagarin], in this case, the proscription was against an adolescent using charcoal in a self-portrait exercise. No artistic reasons are given, other than that the students weren't "allowed to use black."

Adolescents need "to meet [their] shadow," says Jennifer. She links this to the perceived "anti-intellectualism and narrowness of expression," citing, once again, wet-on-wet painting as an instance of this. There is a formulaic way of approaching something like painting: "This is how you do this, this is what you do, a rigidity." Again, her critique echoes Wendy's articulate commentary on the teaching of Art.

Jennifer mentions "the Parzival journey," arguing that unless one is willing to look at one's shadow side, one is "not actually taking up" this journey, "which is, in fact, to really look at this, actually you don't get anywhere without actually looking at this and really working with it and really working with it."

The problems of dealing with the shadow are indicative of a "sickness". The "symptoms" of this sickness have been mentioned above (p. 202): the use of language to minimise serious abuses of power; the yielding of such power by a definite hierarchy, which is nonetheless disguised under the cloak of collegiality; and the lack of transparency and honesty in dealing with serious issues, including actual crimes against children.

An example of relanguaging that deflects personal and collective responsibility is the reliance on "spiritual responses" to the allegations of sexual abuse, for example: "Well those sort of people just don't get attracted to our school."[184]

---

[184] The implied 'anthroposophical' concept is that the school's 'karma' would not permit such a thing. Alternatively, it may be that karma is raised as an 'explanation' for an individual's tragic situation. I am now straying into anecdotal comments that I have heard firsthand, or that have been reported to me secondhand. The familiarity of such 'thinking' is testament to its veracity; in other words, this is the sort of thing that is commonly heard in SWSs. The media reports, from the early

Another example is the story of a child of seven years, who had been sexually assaulted on the bus trip to school, and who was talked about in the College meeting. It is not clear who the abuser was, or even if this person worked at the school. The child was described as "seductive", implying that she had "seduced the man on the bus." Hearing this, Jennifer outed herself as a survivor, then she stated that seeing a seven-year old child as "seductive" was an "adult projection." College "couldn't go anywhere with that," "they minimised it... and were willing to almost blame her [the child] for it." Her self-disclosure before her colleagues was counter-productive, as though "I somehow saw this in this teacher when it wasn't really there."

Jennifer contends that this sickness allows individuals to manipulate beliefs around spirituality in order to "simply rest in a place of light" and not "deal with the shadow."

6.8.4 Hubris.

The sense of hubris appears to emerge from the feeling of "spiritual superiority," the sense that the school's task is sacred, hidden, even counter-intuitive, and that those who participate in its activities, and particularly those activities that sustain this spiritual core, are regarded in a glowing light of acceptance and even idolatry.

Together with the concentration and obfuscation of power that cleaves towards the school leaders, who are usually the most articulate in relation to anthroposophical ideas and beliefs, the situation is set up for abuses of power.

A few examples will suffice to show how such abuses occur almost 'naturally' in the context of the SWS.

i. In Susan's account, the newly established school was unable to afford teachers wages for a couple of years. However, during that time the school leader formed the only exception. Michelle uncovers a similar situation at her school, when she realises that the sabbatical fund which operates at her school is selectively applied to the "real Steiner teachers." Although she is entitled to it, she is not offered it, despite her obvious need.
ii. Bernard describes in great detail a series of realisations concerning the CofT, of which he had been a particularly active member for over ten years. He uncovers the self-deception and hubris that maintains this system and becomes aware that it is not an effective forum for serious decisionmaking.

2000s in Victoria, show how such languaging can cause distress and confusion when it ceases being private language and crosses over into public language.

iii. In her initial year as a Class Teacher, Alison recognises the potential risks associated with the insularity of the classroom "kingdom" (Sally). She is overwhelmed by the responsibility devolving on the class teacher and is concerned that a collaborative approach is needed to overcome the power concentrated in the class teacher. In other words, this is a parallel issue to the concentration of power in the few individuals at the top. It also raises questions about the accountability of each class teacher. Michelle's story is a salutary case in point.

iv. As we have already seen, much of the hubris or sense of superiority is conveyed through language. It is perhaps subtle compared to other forms of abuses of power, but it is powerful and effective. Robert has alluded to it, especially in relation to specialist teachers in the high school, who, so it appears from his account, are deliberately alienated from anthroposophical language. Andrew has also intimated this, recognising that a major task for SWE is to overcome "the language that divides us," a reference to the arcane language that is still favoured in many SWSs, and the "Steiner educationalists [who] isolate themselves" with "counterproductive" consequences.

v. Other instances of hubris have been alluded to already, such as the "appeal to secret knowledge" and the "spiritual moralising" (Susan). As Jennifer indicated, a peculiarly potent mix occurs when the constellation of influences and expectations that bear upon SWSs intersect each other. This potency is revealed on one side as the latitude for abuses of power, instilled out of a sense of righteousness, although this can only occur if there is little check to these excesses. The inability of political and administrative structures to deal effectively with this phenomenon in SWSs is also described in respondents' accounts (Sally, Bernard, Jennifer and Susan).[185]

6.8.5 Shielding counternarratives.

Once again, it is possible to see a dynamic structure operating within the school ecology, to assert and establish the mood of cultural superiority. Not only is "the anthroposophical viewpoint," in its characteristic form developed by the individual school, evident in the school's hyperculture, it is also strongly active in delimiting and excluding other influences or counternarratives that advocate for a more inclusive kind of relationship between the school and the surrounding community. In other words, there are active tendencies at work that shield the school from such counternarratives. In Robert's words,

[185] This is also confirmed by Woods et al. (2005)

> I think that that sense of separateness when you are in an anthroposophical institution can be very strong, and it can really shield you from a lot of good things as well. I know it's good to have the identity and keep it intact to some extent, but it can also make you feel like you're on another planet or that everyone else is somehow wrong and bad or different. But they're just people.

The "shielding" phenomena include the following:

- Proscribing against non-Steiner educational programs (Sally, Wendy, Julia and Ian);
- Resisting change to and innovation in the way that Art is interpreted and taught, firstly by not engaging in theoretical discussions and secondly by refusing to alter practice (Wendy and Andrew);
- Avoiding potential influences of professional learning from non- Steiner sources, partly justifying a total devotion to the works of Rudolf Steiner, as the sole source of professional wisdom (Ian, Bernard, Wendy, Andrew and Julia);
- Attitudes and expectations that maintain an isolationist stance in relation to external or non-Steiner influences (Andrew, Wendy and Jennifer).

The next chapter will explore more fully some of the common themes associated with these counternarratives.

7 Discussion - Developing critical narratives of Steiner Waldorf Education

> If I am still vulnerable to joy, then it would be delivered by the release of that man of sorrow from his mortal agony. I see you wear his sword. Do you know its magic charm? You can do battle without fear of loss. Behold its edges run perfectly parallel. The maker is noble Trebuchet himself. At the first blow the sword remains unscathed but the second will shatter it. If you take it back to the spring of Karnant, whence it was fashioned, it will be made whole again by the moving waters. But you must seek the water at its source, beneath the rock, before the light of day touches it. And you must have all the pieces, for the spring water will put them together again. Nothing will be lost, in fact, the edges will be stronger than before. Did you learn the magic spell to use the sword? I fear you did not. Oh if you were to know it, then fortune would sprout from your word!

Signune speaks to Parzival, upon his exit from the Grail Castle.

(von Eschenbach, 2015, pp. 50-51)

7.1 Towards the Construction of New Narratives

This chapter will attempt to draw together the various threads that have been gathered throughout the thesis in order to weave a coherent picture of what is presented here as a contribution of critical new narratives towards the renewal of SWE. Firstly, the three orienting concepts or research lenses will be assessed against the analysis of respondents' narratives. Secondly, the emergent themes and leitmotivs will be highlighted that appear to better integrate the numerous perspectives offered by these narratives. Thirdly, the thematic analysis of the preceding chapter will be summarised and integrated, in order to characterise the lifeworld of SWE, as represented by the study's fifteen participants. It is hoped that a survey of the range of comments offered by respondents will help to crystallise some of the *privileged* metanarratives (Ochs and Capps, 2001; Turner and Bruner, 1986) as well as counter metanarratives. Finally, the main findings of the study will be examined and selectively presented as "new narratives." The idea of a new narrative does not necessarily prescribe novel or previously unknown practices or insights by teachers in this study, although this may appear so to some readers. More importantly, these narratives are presented as "new" in the sense that they challenge existing privileged narratives. I am particularly concerned to ensure that the voices of these occasionally radical narratives may be heard in the ongoing discourse, and therefore be accorded "narrative rights" (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 32).

At this point in the thesis, before results are interpreted, it is worth addressing an objection that could be raised against the study findings. This is simply that the study can offer no meaningful conclusions about the state of affairs in SWSs or in SWE since it is based on the subjective opinions of fifteen teachers, one researcher, and perhaps a dozen researchers or authors mentioned in the Literature Review. At best, it can only be "representative" of a small cross-section of the SW community, so the anticipated rejoinder might say. I will address this potential criticism by working backward from the different types of study "participants".

To begin with, insider criticality of SWE appears to be growing, a movement that, as evinced by Christof Wiechert, reaches towards the heart of SWE in the Goetheanum, or spiritual home of the SW movement. As we have discussed in the Literature Review, the criticisms are serious, and they are becoming increasingly more effective in their influence on praxis. For myself, my own experiences with SWE, anthroposophical endeavours and communities, and with anthroposophy itself, have generated insights and knowledge that overlap with most of what has been attributed to the group of dissident thinkers within the SW circle, including teachers that have responded to the call to participate in the study. Moreover, the accounts of the respondents themselves cannot be

discounted as subjective opinions. Their individual stories merit our attention. When, to each narrative, is added those of other respondents, whose described experiences match or resonate with others', we need to consider that perhaps we are privy to symptomatic patterns that may be operating within SWSs. Further resonance with the experiences of the researcher and the few teachers who have written biographical accounts about their experiences in SWE, builds the case for the veracity of these patterns and attitudes. In addition, we are confronted with research findings from empirical studies that have captured some of these patterns and attitudes. It seems to me that it would be foolish to ignore what has been presented here as a symptomatic picture of the problems that have been dogging SWSs for some time. There may well be schools that are or have been dealing with some of these problems. It is clear, nonetheless, that *problems* do exist. To quote Uhrmacher (1991), "To read them [anthroposophical books] one would think that Waldorf educators do not suffer from educational dilemmas or problems. The work is characteristically positive and hides whatever doubts or criticisms these authors may inwardly hold" (p. 11). In the foregoing, I attempt to theorise some of these problems, relying on Steiner's own words, but also on the research and thinking of other authors, some anthroposophical, though mostly not.

7.2 Orienting Concepts

Chapter One outlined three primary orienting concepts or research lenses that have informed data collection and data analysis. These were elaborated and further developed in the Literature Review chapter, by examining key authors at the leading edge of critical perspectives on SWE. These perspectives were focussed around the orienting concepts, SWE in Transition, Reflection Vacuum, and Dissonances. To summarise the main characteristics of each concept:

7.2.1 SWE in transition.

Although the character and appearance of SWE has changed little, even as it has spread across every inhabitable continent of the planet, there is a growing tide of criticality, from without and within the movement. This tide can be traced to the postwar period in Germany when critical literature on SWE began to appear (largely from outsiders), and more recently, in the English-speaking world, since the last decade of the previous millennium. The US has, in particular, seen a profusion of academic studies exploring the theory and praxis of SWE, often with a pragmatic view in mind to encourage fertilisation of mainstream education with the potentially beneficial pollinating energy of SW pedagogy. Researchers in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have also contributed to this expanding critical landscape.

One of the key themes that emerged from this preparatory survey of SWE in transition is the publification of SWE, its growing presence in the public domain. This change has swollen into a powerful trend in the United States, where student enrolments in public Waldorf schools outnumber those in private Waldorf schools (Sagarin, 2011). In part, this presence has gained momentum because the acceptance of SW methods into the public sphere has also heigthened resistance among detractors who claim that SWE is fundamentally religious or racist in nature. This has begun to generate a culture of public debate, albeit on that is only weakly informed by empirical or academic studies. Results from this study suggest that some of the critical claims are reflected in teachers' lived experiences in SWSs. At the same time, there are clearly unsolved issues within the Steiner system, not least the relationship to anthroposophy and reliance on "what Steiner said."

7.2.2 Reflection vacuum.

Key figures, such as Kiersch (2010), Schieren (2011), and da Veiga (2014), were examined as representative of a growing criticality within the SW movement. The focus of this critical review has been the epistemological basis of SWE or anthroposophy. Of particular concern, and in line with the trends identified in the previous section, has been the recognition of a need to bring anthroposophy into the purview of scientific research, such that communicative bridges may be developed between the Academy, on the one hand, and the anthroposophical and SW educational communities, on the other hand. This endeavour has brought renewed impetus to reading Steiner in a new way. Other key figures, such as Kühlewind (1991/1992), Gordienko (2001) and Diet (2003), have also contributed towards this renewed approach towards anthroposophy. Two important consequences of this renewal include the awareness of a "reflection vacuum" towards anthroposophy and by extension, SWE and the challenges of translating Steiner's "spiritual" communications into praxis, and especially in the context of SWE. The lack of a culture of reflexivity seems to have hindered the development of SWE. In particular, issues around administration and management, as well as PD, are still dominated by narratives written in the second decade of the 20th century. Prejudices against contemporaneity seem to stem from these aging narratives.

7.2.3 Dissonances.

Questioning the epistemological basis of Steiner's words has led to a spirited discussion about the nature of SWE, right down to the level of classroom practices. Primarily, this has been initiated by Stephen Sagarin and Christof Wiechert. Challenging assumptions about what is and what is not SWE has further stimulated more widespread questioning about the deeper underlying questions and insights into SWE. Issues around cultural diversity and contemporaneity have begun

to occupy conferences and research projects (Boland, 2017b). Collectively, the awareness of dissonance as a fundamental undertone of SWE, promises to reshape the fundamental nature of SWE, including the way it is represented (both to insiders and outsiders), the way it is disseminated in training colleges, and ultimately how it is practised in the classroom.

What light do the results of the study throw on these orienting concepts? Conversely, what do the research lenses bring into view in the results of the study?

i. SWE in Transition

- Criticality, or the need for questioning, is recognised and well developed among many of the teachers interviewed.
- Some teachers relate pedagogical experiences where SW pedagogy (for example, use of narrative, use of artistic teaching methodologies) has fertilised their mainstream teaching.
- Conversely, teachers who began their careers in mainstream education slipped into SWE without significant transition, several of whom expressed the initiation into SWE as "coming home."
- The movement between SW and non-SW learning environments introduces the anticipated sharing of ideas, perspectives, and tools. Together with this cross-fertilisation there occurs a re-evaluation of SW practices. This movement is only made possible by actual teachers moving between learning environments in a vocational sense, that is, teaching across different pedagogical systems (Julia, Ian, Robert, Andrew, Jennifer and Sally are exemplars in this respect).
- Some teachers have arrived at highly individualised "interpretations" of SWE, which they draw from their own connection with Steiner's ideas. In most cases, they would relish the opportunity for more engaged discourse with colleagues. That, however, seems less than likely given the capacity for critical or reflective thinking is not strong among many SW teachers, preferring to remain in the Steiner archive.
- Pedagogical imperatives of cultural diversity and contemporaneity are keenly felt by some teachers. This also includes drawing inspiration and insight from sources outside of Steiner or the anthroposophical knowledge community.

A rich plethora of information was provided by respondents in relation to this topic. It is interesting, from a methodological perspective, at least, that "responses" to this particular problem

emerged without direct soliciting. By asking teachers to reflect on their experiences in SWE and giving them licence to talk about problems and dysfunctions in praxis, was sufficient to elicit the kind of information that I allude just above. It is also important to acknowledge that, despite some serious critiques of SWE in praxis, the feeling of love and devotion to the ideals of SWE never abated. As a researcher in this area, with my own story in the background, I felt inspired by their responses, and I felt my own prejudices schooled by deepening insights into subtleties of the subject. So much knowledge and wisdom and suffering and tragedy was poured out that I could not but be deeply moved and changed as a result of this process. I certainly became a "vulnerable" observer (Behar, 1996).

ii. Reflection Vacuum

- As indicated above, teachers have begun to "read" Steiner out of alternative, non-rational epistemologies. Arguably, this is altogether more widespread in modern Western society, as Chapter One shows. There is less concern about "understanding" Steiner *exactly*. Whether systematic or not, there is an awareness that understanding Steiner requires a contemplative approach, which is moreover integrated with actual classroom practice. This highlights the necessity, in some respondents' minds, for sustained reflexive practice. The absence of this practice at a collegiate or school wide level is confirmed by many narratives (Simon, Peter, Bernard, Wendy, Robert, Andrew, Jennifer, Michelle, Michaela, Rosa, Sally, Julia, and Ian reflect on its absence in fundamental ways; whereas Alison and Susan praise their school leaders for instituting good practice). It is important to note that this reflexive practice is not only concerned with questions around pedagogy and curriculum, but also social and emotional dimensions in the teacher's role and relationships with others.
- As mentioned above, there is a degree of criticality expressed by most, if not all teachers. This criticality is expressed through commentary and insight into various levels of school operation: pedagogy, curriculum, hidden curriculum, professional development, attitudes towards Steiner, school culture, leadership and management, to mention the most obvious. The CoT is a particularly common target of teachers' criticism. But it is important to note that criticality is rarely one-sided. What is intended here by the term is the tendency and capacity to make an independent assessment.

What is striking for me about responses to the issue of criticality and reflexivity is that they were enacted rather than just discussed. In one way, this is an unsurprising result since the invitation to the study clearly targeted individuals who were willing to address their lived experiences in a critical fashion. This was an intentional aspect of purposive sampling. However, in actuality, the reality of receiving such honest criticality in abundance had a disruptive impact on me. Together with the growing critical literature that I was finding, my sense of isolation, of living with personal knowledge, gradually grew into a disarming but ultimately gratifying sense that much of what I was discovering might become mutual knowledge for many within and without the movement, as it was becoming for me.

iii. Dissonances

- Examples of dissonances abound in respondents' narratives. Sometimes, they represent a clash between the teacher's assumed pedagogical values, such as work ethic, growth mindset, positivity, challenging students, on the one hand, and the established habitus of the school, on the other hand. Or, it reflects the distance between forward-thinking Promethean innovation, say in professional development, and the circumspect Epimethean honouring of past rituals and past "glories", that harken back to the putative Golden Age of the school's baptism in SWE. Other perceived dissonances give expression to tensions between pedagogical approaches to teaching certain subjects, such as Physics and Mathematics, as well as Art. These tensions were underscored by other prominent themes that emerged from respondents' narratives, such as commitment to contemporaneity in curriculum development, and inclusivity in approaching difference in knowledge fields (Steiner and non-Steiner). Of course, the experience and perception of dissonances is underpinned by a growing criticality in the consciousness of teachers.

It should be evident, then, that I approached the project with relatively undefined research lenses that, at most, indicated that something was happening in SWE, indicating potentially significant changes were afoot. On the other side of the equation, these changes were optimistically cast against perceived failings in reflexivity and theoretical alignment, again without specifying what these might look like in detail. Of course, I had my own experiences to call on, but they had not been systematically organised, as I had now begun to do, in relation to the empirical and critical research on SWE and my own research project with its fifteen dynamic voices. And whilst *most* of the results pointed in the direction of the orienting concepts, they brought a large volume of data to bear such that at times the task seemed overwhelming and interminable. What was unaccounted for in the

findings, in other words, what did not fit into the orienting concepts, quite apart from the resistant data that suggested emergent concepts, was an emotional depth of disclosure that created dynamic tensions between respondents' critiques and their profound sense of gratitude and love for Rudolf Steiner. This brought its own challenges, both at the preliminary stage of data analysis (namely, the teachers' own narratives in the Appendix and the voluminous individual analyses, which have not been included in this thesis, but whose findings have been incorporated particularly in Chapters Five and Six), and then later in the categorisation of results (Chapter Five). The recurring feeling at these two stages was expressed by an insistent internal questioning, "Are you sure you have captured *everything* important?"

7.3 Emergent Concepts and Leitmotivs

Considering the open-ended nature of the orienting concepts employed, it is unsurprising that a number of concepts emerged during the course of data collection and analysis that had not been predicted. At the same time, the thematic terrain criss-crossed in respondents' narratives quite naturally engraved intersections and lines of flight that, over time, suggested important connections and interconnections between their narratives, in the form of lived experiences, common patterns of events, responses and outcomes, as well as insights and observations. It would be fair to state that many more themes emerged than could be effectively managed in this study. No doubt, a revisit of the data would yield different themes according to the interests of the would-be researchers. An examination of the themes analysed in the previous chapter, and the nomadic survey below, will highlight the relative novelty of the themes investigated. Of course, as I showed in the preceding section, the orienting concepts have been justified to some extent, albeit as broad labels to capture the wealth of data from the study. The labels employed in the analytical stages of this thesis arguably provide more detailed and informative views of the issues raised by critical authors and respondents alike. It is further intended to briefly survey two more comprehensive themes, referred to in this chapter as *leitmotivs*, in order to explore deeper dimensions within the data.

7.4 A Nomadic Survey of Data Analysis

The previous chapter attempted to present comprehensive views of respondents' richly varied accounts, in which were shared their insights, stories, experiences, and emotional journeys. From this rich tapestry of information and confession, a loose framework of six largely interrelated themes was woven. The texture of the fabric is not necessarily consistent; neither is its content. However, it is possible to glean from this collection, a set of themes or leitmotivs that may illuminate

the whole, or at least, make significant inroads into addressing the research problem and its attendant questions. A further step beyond hermeneutic-heuristic[186] analysis of the data is the selection and identification of dynamic cross-currents across respondents' comments. These cross-currents are manifest typically as tensions, attitudes, contradictions as well as disruptions. Below I identify these as they occur under each thematic rubric.

7.4.1 Anthroposophy.

Attitudes towards Steiner and anthroposophy are interestingly consistent amongst respondents. It seems to me that commentary on Steiner and anthroposophy should be seen in the light of teachers' engagements with SWE, which, as teachers, is understandably their main avenue for experiencing the broader philosophical background. In other words, there is less a distinction made between Steiner and SWE or anthroposophy as there is between theory and practice. This is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, in relation to the conundrum about whether SWE as praxis needs anthroposophy as theory, it is clear from reading teachers' narratives that there is an implicit trust in and understanding of the importance of anthroposophy. It is after all what Steiner *says*, with its bearing often translated into educational praxis. Secondly, teachers participating in this study hold nuanced views about what anthroposophy is and how it links to SWE. Although some of these views and links are idiosyncratic, many are common across the cohort of respondents. Finally, a survey of respondents' commentaries on anthroposophy shows that a particular ecology emerges which links beliefs, structures and interactions amongst the community of teachers, parents and students. Moreover, the ecology describes social, psychological, political and cognitive aspects of these beliefs, structures and interactions, such that, starting with this, first theme, it is possible to then employ this imaginative construction as an ecological pattern to explore the other five themes.

To begin with, this broad theme highlights a marked relationship between teachers and Steiner, as well as the body of work that underpins his educational philosophy and methods. We can surmise from the responses that:

i. Steiner is deeply respected and regarded positively by all the teachers interviewed.

---

[186] This validates two aspects of the analytical process: a textual analysis, whereby the meaning elements or extracts are related hermeneutically to the whole text, as well as *all* the texts used in this study. The purpose of analysis is to determine, as far as possible, how concepts and experiences are socially constructed as much as they have individual meaning. In addition, as a heuristic inquiry, the experiences of the researcher sit in the background, like a running backdrop against which respondents' experiences are continually mirrored, occasionally stimulating memories, insights, contradictions, questions and so on.

ii. He is seen as an inspiration and a guide, both in their personal and professional lives. The main consequence of the inspiration of anthroposophy is that teachers feel motivated in "how" they might approach their task as teachers. This "how" supervenes the "what" in teaching.

iii. The cognitive relationship to Steiner's texts is transacted mostly through the felt sense (Gendlin, 2007), enabling respondents to experience its embodied truth. Less comfortably (with few exceptions), respondents connect with Steiner through forming rational concepts.

Together, these three attitudes towards Steiner and anthroposophy anchor the relationship between beliefs, on the one hand, and structures and interactions, on the other hand.

Between attitudes towards Steiner, on the one side, and perceptions of anthroposophy (a mix of beliefs, structures and interactions), on the other side, there stands a crucial threshold: *reflexivity*. At this threshold, each teacher is enjoined to observe two fundamental tenets of investigation of the rich tableau of ideas issuing from Steiner's spiritual scientific research. In the first instance,

> I request you not to believe me concerning these things [esoteric investigations], but to test them against everything you know in the course of history, even more, against everything that you can experience. I am completely calm about this fact: that the more precisely you examine these things, the more precisely you will find them confirmed. In the age of intellectualism, I am not appealing to your belief in authority, but to your intellectual examination. (Steiner, 1911/2008, np).

The other fundamental tenet is articulated in Steiner's preliminary text on spiritual science, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds:*

> …for every step you take in your spiritual development, take three steps in your moral development (1961/1994, p. 57).

These threshold reflexive activities, which are of course, necessarily ongoing, will impact on how a teacher makes the transition from theory to praxis. Hopefully, the survey I am now conducting will make sense to the reader, if this transition is held in focus. In other words, I contend that it makes a great deal of difference whether or not a teacher observes and takes earnestly Steiner's injunctions to undertake reflexive-mindful consideration of these two aspects of developing understanding of knowledge generated from Steiner's spiritual research. As will have been gleaned from reading the previous chapter, respondents have commented not only upon their own experiences and their own insights, but they have done so in relation to others' views and attitudes, as they perceive them.

Let me take an important concept as an example, *comprehensivity*. This concept is fundamental to esotericism, or the "claim of higher knowledge" (Von Stuckrad, 2005, p. 88). It posits "a vision of truth as a master key for answering all questions of humanity" (p. 88). Nonetheless, most respondents find this concept problematic. However, not all do; some believe that Steiner really does "have it all." Moreover, it is arguable, that to some extent most will find that this idea has an allure that is difficult to resist. The underlying idea is that Steiner's method of generating knowledge about social life, education, work, the arts and sciences, to name a few topics which he investigated, was potentially capable of producing knowledge on any conceivable subject. In an educational context, this phenomenon has been characterised as an "archive" (Rawson, 2017), or a "library" (M. Neil pers comm). The common idea underlying these metaphors is that Steiner's writings or transcripts on education and anthroposophy in general as so immense that one has only to search the archives or the library in order to come to a solution to one's questions or problems. Some teachers believe that this is all that is necessary (Rawson, 2014a) in order to find conclusive answers to own's troubles in teaching. Unsurprisingly, most teachers in this study do not subscribe to this view.

Nonetheless, this idea, which serves as a "threshold concept" (Cousin, 2006) in observing and understanding anthroposophy, is ubiquitous in the preceding chapter on analysis. For the moment, I will point out four problems with this idea:

i. It leads to a rejection or, at least, an eschewing of contemporaneity, in the history of educational philosophy (Ullrich, 2008/2014), pedagogy and curriculum (Graudenz et al., 2013; Schieren, 2014), as well as in administration and management (Wagstaff, 2003).

ii. It stifles original, creative thinking about Steiner's ideas. Taken literally it means that it is unnecessary for any of us to engage in creative activity. The only skill required is exegetical.

iii. It leads to an ineffective approach to teaching natural science (Jelinek and Sun, 2003) and is criticised by former SW high school students (Randoll et al., 2014).

iv. It encourages a DIY attitude, which although useful in certain contexts, is a throwback to the pioneering phase (Lievegoed, 1969/1973), and unhelpful in specialist domains. Further afield, we see that this attitude also encourages teachers to push their capacities beyond reasonable limits by being expected to teach specialist subjects in the middle school years.[187] This attitude, encouraging over-individualisation, is also antagonistic to the social

[187] This will be discussed later in relation to the practice of looping, or the class teacher cycle.

development of SW communities, evinced in the Motto of the Social Ethic, which gives expression to an esoteric principle of social initiation practices (Ben-Aharon, 2013; Ferrer, 2011; Schreiber, 2012; Steiner, 1920/1983).

We also find that comprehensivity is a key principle in establishing the *identity* of the SWS. This identity draws mainly from the early childhood and primary school experience of SWSs. It is readily stereotyped as rainbows, watercolours, blackboard drawings and gnomes. This link between the identity and early and middle childhood establishes the recurring myth (Ian refers to this) that SWE is better reflected in primary school than in high school, where the proportion of non-anthroposophist specialist teachers increases. The central idea behind the notion of the Steiner identity is that there is a purist original form of SWE (the first school in Stuttgart) which is at risk of becoming lost because of external government or political pressures, or merging into the mainstream (Oberman, 1998). This purist form of SWE sees the school as a "safe haven", reinforcing the idea that the community should be exclusive and inward-focussed. All solutions lie within the archive or the library.

Interestingly, there is also a rejection of rationality. The perception is that Steiner is too hard to understand, although it is questionable that he is any harder to read than say, Hegel or Foucault (Gidley, 2008). This has, I believe, led to the phenomenon marked by Sagarin's exposition of "Steiner myths" and Wiechert's exposure of misinterpreted practices, namely the accumulation of practices and supporting beliefs that are attributed to "Steiner" or "Waldorf", and yet represent no more than individual prejudices, albeit inherited and empowered by repetitive use and authoritative recommendation.

Just as comprehensivity and identity are aligned, so too the next three concepts which explain how the fundamental beliefs that are associated with anthroposophy acquire currency or are transmitted. Narrative, language and knowledge hierarchy (Whedon, 2007, p. 166) also belong together. The knowledge hierarchy establishes that whoever can interpret world events in "anthroposophical language" gains the authority of a SW group. The authority of the group, its identity, is conveyed in anthroposophical language and by means of the dominant narratives. The dominant narratives convey and control identity; they are encoded into every social interaction; and they convey an unstated reality which is that anthroposophy is the superior spiritual ideology in the world. Whoever controls these narratives has considerable influence over the SW group or community.

When we turn to the "counter-representations" of anthroposophy, the commentary evinces reflexivity, as I have indicated above (p. 180ff). Taking one of the observations, Against Dogma (p.

186), from the perspective of the adherent, they are simply following what they regard as Steiner's indications. They would not think it appropriate to question what Steiner has said, or even what an informed secondary source has said Steiner meant to say. As Julia related, challenging Steiner broke serious intra-cultural norms; or as Sally evinced, using non-Steiner pedagogical programs severed unstated taboos about what was and what was not considered "Steiner". It is ironic, however, that the enshrined goal of SWE, freedom, is recapitulated in this oft-repeated school motto:

> Our highest endeavour must be to develop individuals who are able out of their own initiative to impart purpose and direction to their lives (Steiner, 1943/2010, preface),[188]

and yet the practice of questioning, the display of criticality, is regarded as inimical. Is it possible that the internalised belief that Steiner is the infallible teacher (the archive) (Ahlbäck, 2008) shifts to the self-belief that SW teachers must also be generously endowed? This self-belief is encouraged in a handbook for class teachers, referred to by some of the respondents (Avison, 2016). Is this why SW teachers can sometimes appear overconfident and arrogant?

This leads to another counter-representation, Anthroposophy as "Dangerous Knowledge." This is a logical extension of the idea of the knowledge hierarchy and the power of languaging. Yet, fundamentally, it requires an epistemological reduction of anthroposophical knowledge to learnable *facts*. Knowledge of and facility in wielding these "facts" then determines authority and power. The metaphor of the "shield" is used by Robert in two contrasting ways: weaponised anthroposophical language can shield the "safe haven" (the stereotyped identity of SWE) from deleterious external influences, but just as easily shields *other* ideas, individuals and communities from potentially bringing benevolent and kindred influences (whether contemporary or historical) into the anthroposophical enterprise.

7.4.2 Leadership and Management.

Leadership and management have been seen as central problems in SWE for some time (D. Brull, 2013; Mazzone, 1999; Schaefer, 1996, 2012; Wagstaff, 2003; P. Woods et al., 2005). Understandably, the SW leader has a tarnished image. He is characterised as being ineffectual, power-hungry, a "smiling assassin," or a "dragon" or even as a "monster". However, he may also be creative and visionary, even charismatic. According to Schaefer (1996), "Waldorf Schools do not seem to understand, value or support leadership" (p. 1). This assessment by an "elder" in the SWE

[188] This statement has become a kind of default mission statement of SWSs around the world. Curiously, the statement, which is attributed to Rudolf Steiner, was actually articulated by Marie Steiner, his wife and colleague, in the preface to an early publication of educational lectures delivered by Rudolf Steiner. This preface was removed from later editions.

movement, is borne out by the numerous critical remarks made in the study about leadership and management. For example, there is a recognition that the school "leader" (whether in a College-run school, or appointed position – Principal, or in some hybrid arrangement) has a difficult task, navigating between Scylla and Charybdis, between internal and external pressures. Neither is he able to effectively exercise authority in a system that, as Schaefer observes, appears ambivalent about the very role. Like *Parzival's* Amfortas, the leader bears a terminal wound, that is only sustained with the magical life-giving properties of the Grail. Added to this, the lack of transparency and the failure to appoint people on the basis of competence (Schaeffer, 1996, p.3) can make the role of school leader somewhat of a poisoned chalice.

The school leadership is seen largely as a small minority of gurus, or spiritual leaders, sometimes self-usurped, who are typically at the top of the knowledge pyramid. They are self-appointed guardians of the school ethos, its past and its traditions. They control the school's narrative, representing SWE to the parents *and* to their colleagues. "Two classes of faculty," (Brüll, 2013, p. 84) naturally arise: those with responsibilities and those without. A hidden judgment is attached to the determination of who may enter the "esoteric circle" (p. 86) and who may not. Followers (that is, other teachers without responsibilities, or who fall outside the circle) are described as "sheep" (Simon). Leadership operates in a system that is governed by the "hidden exercise of power" (Schaefer, 1996, p. 3), that is where the "social enactment of esotericism functionally acts as secrecy" (Whedon, 2007, p. 148). In other words, it is in the nature of esoteric knowledge-hierarchies to cleave towards fragmentation of communication and controlled secretion of information. Knowledge becomes "a scarce and precious resource, a valuable commodity, the possession of which in turn bestows status, prestige or symbolic capital on its owner" (Urban, as cited in Whedon, 2007, p. 152).

Some teachers, often experienced, though not necessarily positioned as leaders, are portrayed in glowing terms as "amazing" or "extraordinary". Even where these teachers do occupy positions of leadership they are depicted as ineffectual. In other words, they may be understanding, good listeners, wise and so on, but they are not capable, for example, of relieving the stress experienced by a young teacher, or providing meaningful assistance to a teacher struggling with classroom management, both of whom had sought help from their "leader" colleagues.

7.4.2.1 Professional Culture.

Turning now to the Professional Culture as represented in respondents' statements, we find similar or related systemic issues that were used to highlight attitudes to the practice of anthroposophy in the SWS. To name a few of these attitudes:

i. The threshold concept of comprehensivity, in the pioneering phase of SWSs, generates an optimistic, industrious attitude which is labelled "DIY" by one of the respondents. It affirms that the safe haven of the SWS is a self-enclosed entity, replete with all the conceptual resources to undertake any task demanded by the Steiner narrative. On the positive side, the teacher is empowered to work from their inner resources. As Bernard characterises it, "that breadth [of the role] is fascinating in the sense that it gives me a lot of authority and a lot of involvement but... it is more demanding."

This is an attitude that privileges self-reliance and self-sufficiency, and decries external knowledge or involvement, even if it comes from within its own community, such as parents or teachers who bring worldly or professional capabilities to advance the operation of the school.

ii. This DIY attitude subtly leads to a state of complacency, affirming that there is no need to change, because SWE "has an answer for that" (Michaela): for every problem that may arise. There are other consequences to this attitude. In accordance with the Steiner narrative, there is an invisible division between those inside and those outside the "esoteric circle." As we saw, the narrative determines norms and codes that reflect the identity of the school. Uniformity and conformity to these norms and codes leads to a culture of "agreement" or "comfort", as noted by insider critics such as Wendy, Sally and Julia. This, in turn, gives rise to a culture of exclusion and isolation, where discourse or dissent is not generally welcome, and particularly where the "fearless critic" is silenced. Additionally, co-operation is also minimal, especially where teachers take on the responsibilities of their own "kingdoms" (see also Wiechert, 2013, p. 59).

iii. Unsurprisingly, this atmosphere of exclusion and isolation, of conformity to a pioneering narrative, leads to a social culture that can at times appear toxic. As the pioneering phase gives way to the "administrative phase," a "crisis of confidence" occurs (Schaefer, 2012, p. 118). The "relational intuitive consciousness" (p. 118) of the previous phase must yield to a more deliberate form of relational intelligence, which relies on policies, codes of conduct and standards that normalise the workplace to the community expectations of the surrounding society. The shock of dissonance arises where this does not occur, typically in a dramatic fashion. This shock describes the encounter between these expectations and what outsiders, under certain circumstances,[189] meet in their interaction with the school. As

---

[189] These circumstances are outlined in the data: a teacher under emotional stress of dealing with the pressures of running her class; a parent-turned teacher struggling with the exigencies of the classroom; a newly trained teacher adjusting to the

Francis (2004) observed, "the tendency for anthroposophy [is] to bring out the very best and the very worst in people," such that "the problems of making good decisions and keeping the school on course" (p. 99) is compounded.

iv. A powerful feature of the Steiner narrative is the spiritual imperative embedded within it. As we saw, this narrative encodes privileged behaviours as explicit representations of the school's identity. The sacredness of the task of the teacher in a SWS, for example, is an essential aspect of this narrative, and as such it encourages a feeling of indispensability in working teachers. It also demonises the "spiritual slacker" (Robert).

v. Another significant phenomenon, which is clearly part of the shock of dissonance is the lack of social care (Schaefer, 1996; 2012). Schaefer (1996) has noted that SWSs are "seldom conscious learning communities for adults" (p. 4). He also asks if the attitude of "deeply caring" for children can "be extended to the relationship with adults" (p. 5). In part, this phenomenon may highlight a lack or undervaluing of emotional and relational intelligence in the workplace culture (which is, of course, not distinctive to SW workplaces). For example, Michelle's story clearly shows that her signals of distress and her pleas for support, fell on deaf ears. Her plight was rather relanguaged in a way consonant with the Steiner narrative, that is, new teachers undergo an "initiation" and hold to an unspoken belief that it is a matter of bearing the spiritual struggle. Strangely, the characterisations of social life in SWSs appear to challenge the received truth of the Motto of the Social Ethic.

vi. The Steiner narrative contains an alluring ethos, one that is captivating at first sight. Nearly all respondents speak fondly and favourably about the first encounters with SWE. For example, Peter noticed "the general well-being of the people and happiness of the primary [school students]." Wendy was mesmerised by the aesthetic beauty of the school – "it just sang to me." Michaela exulted that "this is my home!" Rosa, like Peter, recognised the SWS as the kind of school what she would have like to go to as a child. To Michelle, it seemed like a "utopia"; three years later she challenged her own sense of reality. Jennifer's story was intense, having raised the alarm about a fellow teacher. In her struggle to comprehend what was going on, she sensed how deeply the shadow worked into her school. As we have seen above (for example, p. 225, 235), the default condition of the school was to remain "comfortable", and to resist change.

vagaries of a new school culture; a very experienced teacher who become the subject of a prolonged College investigation; a teacher who disclosed allegations of sexual abuse against a student.

Certainly, it appears as a recurring motif in teachers' narratives that the Steiner narrative projects onto the life of teachers and school such high expectations of moral virtue that very few are able to actually meet these standards. With such light-filled expectations, is it any wonder that the shadow acquires monstrous proportions?

7.4.2.2 The College of Teachers.

Much has already been said in the above section about the CofT. It is perhaps worthwhile to summarise a couple of important points

Firstly, it is acknowledged that respondents' views concerning the College, as it is typically referred to, are mixed. Essentially, despite the many sharp critical comments offered, nearly all respondents believe that the College plays a valuable role in the SWS, or at least, believe that it could do. Perhaps, at its best, the College can develop into what Andrew calls the "invisible College." For others, the virtue of the CofT is that it enables representation of the "coalface" (Julia), allowing teachers the ability to be represented, especially in educational matters.

However, there is considerable criticism of the CofT, much of which is actually addressed at its practical operation. Below I list a few salient comments:

i. One of the most striking observations comes from Julia who had considerable expertise in both Steiner and non-Steiner teaching systems. She argues that for the College to function effectively teachers need to be supported through adequate training, in particular, in the area of communication. In addition, there needs to be ongoing work in developing ethical capacity: "You have to be vulnerable enough to be able to hear." She intimates that external assistance is vital for the level of communication that is required for the CofT to work effectively.

ii. A vexing insight highlights deep issues related to the operation of power in the CofT. Given the lack of clarity, structure and transparency, the operation of the College is widely exposed to manipulations of power and corrupt behaviour. As Schaefer (2012, p. 122) has observed, the influence of nepotism in SW administration and management is evident, for example in the recruitment and appointment of positions. Expectations of ethical behaviour are unfortunately not supported by adequate structures or, as pointed out above, training. However, I fear that the inability to take action in either direction, as Andrew observed, was due to sheer bloody-mindedness, the unshakeable view that solutions could only come from the comprehensive set of knowledge known as anthroposophy.

iii. Bernard was a strident critic of the College. For over 12 years he had participated as an active member, even holding the position of Chairperson for a number of years. He is naturally an outgoing person who relishes in consultation. However, a number of events conspired to turn him away from the College. He resigned and took no further part in this forum. His many criticisms can be summarised as follows:

   a. It is "an idea on paper" that does not work in practice. Decisions go around in circles, and there is little motivation to find problems.[190]

   b. It fulfils a narrative that encompasses the DIY approach, the feeling of status and power amongst its participants, the *illusion* of participation in management decisions.

   c. Finally, it is a deep drain on teachers' limited resources, negatively affecting their capacity for teaching.

It is evident that the idea is widely favoured in theory. However, without an earnest injection of attention and desire, it is unlikely to succeed. Perhaps, of all the issues raised in this study, this is one of those that shows up well the limitations of remaining with "what Steiner said." As commentators point out (Tautz, 1982; Wagstaff, 2003), even the first school ran into serious problems with management and administration. Moreover, Rudolf Steiner was present for many years in the early days and functioned effectively as the Principal. The requirements for operating a school have since become far more complex and more demanding (Bak, 2014; Puckeridge, 2014; I. Stehlik, 2014). In addition, working with State curricula has also further burdened teachers with imposing administrative tasks. It may serve SWSs well by undertaking a review of the role of the College of Teachers, giving due consideration to the operational, administrative and governance tasks and responsibilities. The same ought to be conducted of teachers' administrative tasks. For the sake of rigour and thoroughness, these processes ought to marshal the objectivity of external sources of facilitation and reflective discussion.

7.4.2.3 Professional Development.

The development of professional learning in SW communities is a matter of concern and interest to a number of respondents. The issues identified can be itemised as follows:

[190] This fact alone can make it extremely frustrating for the person who raised the matter onto the agenda.

i. There is some division over the value of the “traditional” SW professional learning activities, including artistic activities, Steiner study, use of verses, as opposed to more mainstream, skill- and role-based - innovative practices. Critics of the former argue that much of it is “touchy feely and wonderful” (Julia), or that it is not “progressive” and “not relevant to students” (Wendy). Above, I mentioned Julia’s plea for adequate training for teachers to effectively participate in decisionmaking in the College.

ii. There is also a strong argument against the *culture* of the CofT. This is implied in a number of respondents’ narratives but is more clearly articulated in Wendy’s narrative. Her criticism focusses on ritualistic nature of proceedings in a College meetings: the use of verses; the overreliance on stock solutions, such as therapeutic artistic intervention; and the subsuming of present issues (for example, student behaviour, curriculum, learning support to name a few) under a relanguaging of SWE which recapitulates the belief that nothing needs to change. There is an avoidance of rational discourse and an implied reliance on vague, “intuitive” language, such as discussing the student’s or the class’ karma. The use of language in the College meeting reflects what has been identified above about a divided community, and the strong influence of the Steiner narrative.

iii. A few (assertive) voices contend that focus needs to be directed at the curriculum. This is a symptom of the already mentioned languaging issue. It is asserted that more focus ought to be placed on the teachers’ experiential resources to articulate a 21st century curriculum that is distinctive to the school, local to the community, history and geography, and relevant to the students. This is perceived as an antidote to the generalised and abstract reliance on studying Steiner texts, where the connection to present issues is not always evident and can even be demoralising. There is a sense that *relying* on old practices, such as *only* studying Steiner, reflects a loss of contact and connection to the present.

iv. One respondent (Ian) is enthusiastic about some of the developments in PL, particularly carried out in other SWSs or by SEA across the states. He is unique in that he is positive about attending both SW and mainstream conferences. This reflects poorly on the scope of vision that SW educators apply to their own PL.

v. Finally, there is a growing phenomenon, strongly represented in the respondents’ narratives, of fragmented attendance at College or staff meetings. Whilst CofTs are being effaced from some schools, in those that still retain them, there is an increased non-attendance by teachers, who seem to use this stance to enact dissidence within the school community. There are probably many reasons for this, but of those mentioned in the narratives, the

main one seems to be that teachers make a political statement against dysfunction in the College meeting, and a cognitive dissonance between those who embrace the practice and those who do not, by removing themselves from this forum.

7.4.3 The Learning Culture.

A survey of the theme of the Learning Culture, reveals similarities to the previous theme, Leadership and Management, and importantly reflects the dynamic pattern established under the theme of Anthroposophy. To recapitulate, a belief-structure adheres closely to the key observations around which the edifice of anthroposophy, SWE and the learning culture are built up. Examining the Learning Culture, two subthemes appear tightly interwoven and self-supporting, casting light on the chief characteristics of SWE's learning culture: one, anthroposophy as a philosophical-cosmological narrative and two, anthroposophy as a pervasive spiritual dimension. In turn, each subtheme or thread is held in tension by competing counternarratives. Likewise, it is possible to see these tensions as representations of a duality between light and dark, between illumination and shadow. Let us examine these more closely:

i. Firstly, anthroposophy is a richly layered philosophical and cosmological narrative. Because of its scope and esoteric content, most of this narrative can be neither accepted nor rejected by an honest initial assessment, and the impartial reader is enjoined to listen without judgment. Contemplative consideration of this narrative entails making interconnections that might serve to highlight this scope and content. It is a totalising system that draws towards itself a number of exegetical connections.

    a. For example, this narrative (the "Steiner" narrative) derives from a highly comprehensive field, that is, everything is included. It is also conceptually highly integrated, that is, it is ontologically and systemically interconnected, such that everything relates to everything else. The concept of "breathing" which Steiner employs in the seminal lecture cycle, *The Study of Man*, demonstrates this interconnectivity. Harwood (1948), an eminent commentator on Steiner's work, observed, the centrality of breathing in Steiner's spiritual pedagogy has to be thought of as a contemplative leitmotiv which undergoes numerous metamorphoses in order to create an elaborate picture of the relationship between the teacher, student and world. In effect, education is something that occurs as a human intervention that is interwoven into the fabric of earthly, bodily and cosmic breathing processes.

b. As Jennifer observed, this narrative is highly potent since it posits an arc of history, culture and tradition that stretches back to the mythological reaches of human existence and surges into the present providing "cultural continuity" (Wood, 1996) with the current generation of students. Its epistemological and axiological optimism are alluring and efficacious. However, it would be a grievous mistake if it were employed to generate only preconceived meanings. Rather, it ought to empower individuals to generate entirely new or discovered meanings of their own.

ii. Secondly, anthroposophy is permeated with a spiritual dimension that underpins all aspects of SWE and without which the latter loses its intelligibility. This dimension pervades SWE in three fundamental ways:

a. SWE is conceived as a sacred *task* which lends the SW teaching vocation convictive and social power. According to Lynch (2014), the sacred "is a central means for making sense of our world" (p. 9). This is a heroic motif in the Steiner narrative. We have seen in numerous examples how it interdicts the human relationships between teachers especially, which appear to normalise a lack of emotionality in social interactions.

b. The classroom is conceived as a sacred *space*. The interactions between the teacher (especially the class teacher) and the students have moral-existential gravitas. Ironically, this also makes the classroom a kind of refuge from the less hallowed social space.

c. One of the main issues under discussion in recent years in SWE concerns the phenomenon of looping, the class teacher cycle. This completes the spiritual dimension by sacralising *time*. In addition, the vocational journey of the teacher is itself is conceived as a moral journey; whereas for the student, her educational journey is a path of spiritual preparation and liberation.

This rich philosophical tradition and spiritual cosmology that is embedded into SWE *in praxis* has been widely praised by observers and commentators. It was greatly admired and promoted by the founder of the Public Waldorf school in Milwaukee, for example. Even outspoken critics, like the German academic, Klaus Prange, extols the traditional pedagogies that he adjudges are present in SWE, including the basis of its pedagogy in sense perception and aesthetic experience, as well as its respect for history and development in the content (as cited in Ullrich, 2008/2014). Of course, the

attitude towards anthroposophy is less generous, as we have seen above.[191] Nonetheless, the general receptivity towards spirituality (Ferrer, 2011; Lynch, 2007) reflects the acceptance of spirituality as a key, guiding aspect of SWE (Woods & Woods, 2009; Woods et al., 2005; Schieren, 2014; Goldschmidt, 2017). This is also corroborated by all respondents.

However, we may well ask, in respect of SWE, what lives in the shadow cast by the confluence of these twin focal points of illumination? The mood of the response to this question has already been established in the survey of previous themes. We find, unsurprisingly, that just as an idea exhibits the power to unite and coalesce, it also possibilises fragmentation, exclusion and isolation. A few examples will help to clarify this antagonism between light and shadow.

Let us take the idea of the "moral-spiritual" task (Steiner, 1932/1996, p. 33) which is SWE, the sacred task. Lynch has argued that "sacred forms," that is socially constructed notions of what is considered to be sacred, "create powerful tides of emotion around our individual and collective lives" (2012, p. 2). One way the Steiner narrative achieves this is by casting the teacher as a heroic figure, Parzivallian in his and her striving after spiritual freedom and fulfilment. As we have seen above, this powerful social construction means, in practice, that, *potentially*, teachers are also pushed to the brink of stress, workaholism and exhaustion (Mazzone, 1999; House, as cited in Woods et al., 2005; Graudenz et al., 2013), without necessarily questioning if this is "normal" or "healthy". The terms "Waldorphans" (Julia) and "Waldorf widowers" (G. Pastoll, pers. comm., 23 March 2016) have arisen in this climate of excessive dedication to "The Work"[192]. The expressions are humorously self-explanatory, but beneath the comic veneer there is human suffering and wounding. Robert related that in SW organisations the reality of giving up is met with disparagement and derision, evinced in the term "spiritual slacker." It is not simply a matter of making a rational choice to safeguard one's health, or family, or wellbeing. Especially, if it is a class teacher who "abandons" her class, the sacred period of 7 or 8 years, then the relentless relanguaging of SWS cultures ensures that ordinary decisions like this one are met with particularly sharp recriminations laced with spiritual innuendo (Michelle, Jennifer and Susan's stories give ample evidence of this).[193]

---

[191] Cf Literature Review.

[192] The expression, 'The Work' is idiomatic in SW circles. It refers to any aspect of anthroposophical endeavour that contributes to the greater good, which is the reification of anthroposophical thinking becoming ordinary human activity.

[193] I recall one example from my own experience. The 'culprit' was a middle-aged woman, a single mother, with ageing parents. Around the start of Year 4, she began to take an inordinate amount of time off, sometimes at inconvenient junctures for the school and her class. She also became sick. It was clear that she was not coping. I was not aware of any supportive or mentoring process, nonetheless this teacher's problems and issues continued to surface in College meetings. No solutions were offered, mostly just talking that, at times, became indistinguishable from gossip. At one point, I heard

There is another element to the notion of sacredness as it operates in SWSs. It is the ritualisation[194] of certain actions or attitudes. Echoing the lyrics from Nick Cave's 2001 ironically titled song, "God is in the house," SW communities are subject to a kind of ritualisation that Cave sensitively mocks in this song.

> The tipsy, the reeling and the drop down pissed
> We got no time for that stuff here
> Zero crime and no fear… (Wikipedia/Cave, 2001)

The special status of the community, as evinced by its sacred nature, so it is claimed or thought, for example, means that bullying or abuse cannot possibly exist within its walls (Jennifer). Interestingly, Steiner's (1975/1998b) depiction of the Essene community, with which John the Baptist was particularly involved, is also ironic and critical. We have seen in Wendy's narrative, especially, how the Steiner narrative easily lends itself to a ritual observance of the past in College meetings, in PL activities and in problem-solving. There are two further, important and interrelated points of tension that issue from the dynamic described above, namely, the question of looping and the transition between primary and secondary school; they will be the subject of a new narrative below (p. 312ff).

7.4.4 Emotionality.

The theme of Emotionality is important for a number of reasons. As a study employing a phenomenological analysis of "lived experience" accounts of current and non-current SW teachers, it is not surprising that these accounts would be saturated with expressions of the respondents' emotions and feelings, as much as it details their opinions, attitudes and insights. There is also an interesting reciprocity between focussing on respondents' emotionalities and the primary focus that SWE education places on aesthetic or emotional experience.

I contend that the emotional health of an organisation is a key barometer of its operation. One of the leading researchers into emotionality in educational leading and teaching, Brenda Beatty, theorises that "professional silence on matters of emotion ensures that the iron cage of bureaucratic hierarchy remains impersonal and resistant to change" (2011, p. 262). An important antidote to the cold silence that pervades many workplaces, SWSs included, is the cultivation of "a professional discourse grounded in emotional meaning making" (p. 263). This is essentially what the fifteen interview-conversations have sought to do.

---

from a trusted colleague, who was close to the struggling teacher, that a senior primary teacher (she was on her second cycle through) accused the teacher of 'ruining the karma of those children for future lifetimes to come.'

[194] This term is dealt with below (p. 284) in this chapter, under the eponymous heading, 'Ritualisation'.

In summary, what have these emotionality discourses disclosed?

i. SWSs can be hostile environments, contrary to the unreflected positive impression that a first encounter can have on the newcomer (refer to *Professional Culture* above, p. 193ff).

ii. The *us* and *them* division of privilege and poverty functions remorselessly, like an organisational instinct that operates at the level of an immune system, accepting what is Self and rejecting what is Non-Self, that is what is Other.

   a. This is reflected in Boland (2016) in his account of the study on cultural inclusivity which he undertook in 2013, with qualified indigenous SW teachers. Whilst there was a strong resonance between the "lived spirituality" of the schools in the study and indigenous Maori culture, there were prejudicial relational qualities that were perceived by the informants as culturally encrusted in the SW communities examined. For example, members of the SW communities were "disinterested in others" (p. 4) and showed no real desire to understand them. They were also "unconsciously arrogant."

   b. The lack of interest in another colleague, in their highs and lows, their achievements, their challenges, is particularly poignant. There is a tragic irony at work here. Respondents have confided in me their lived experiences, their reflexive struggles, often over a period of many years, and their insights. By disclosing their private knowledge, they have made possible the disclosure of an extensive field of powerful "mutual knowledge" (Pinker, 2007; Pinker, Nowak, & Lee, 2008) that may help others to become liberated from the many misconceptions and undocumented practices in SWSs.

   c. Another dimension of the apparent lack of emotional care of the Other, which in some cases becomes a more active antagonism towards difference, is the appearance of mental and emotional exhaustion in colleagues that may lead to burnout or demoralisation. Whilst this outcome may not be intended by others, it is clear from respondents' accounts that action initiated by schools' leaders or administrators or other teachers, have had grievous consequences. Worse of all, perhaps, is the apparent lack of care or receptivity to these types of human problems within the collegial community.

The emphasis of emotionality and bodily wisdom, which I have appealed to, in this study, was laid out in the introduction, in relation to the importance of the personal wound as a source of

meaning and purpose in research with soul in mind (Romanyshyn, 2007). I have suggested without entering into elaborate running commentary that there is nonetheless an interesting parallel between the Parzival story and the cultural archetypes of SWE communities. The emotionality theme employed here refers to the King's wound, as well as to the performative Grail procession which imaginatively pictures intense emotions such as joy, fear, pain and relief. It would not be overdramatic to describe the Grail community as a wounded family. I have already drawn the connection between the display of emotion in the Parzival story and particular aspects of the SWS narrative.

7.4.5 Isolation.

The theme of isolation is constructed from a range of lived experiences: Alison's anxiety about being solely responsible for the growth and development of a class of 25 children; Sally's observations about the kingdom mentality; and Peter's realisation that his training as a SW teacher was entirely left in his own hands, to name a few. It is fair to say that the narrative of each respondent is touched by an awareness of isolation.

A close consideration of the phenomena disclosed and selected shows that the isolation takes on various forms.

7.4.5.1 Social-moral.

This aspect of the SW culture has been dealt with above, under rubric, *Professional Culture*. As we have seen it compromises one of the fundamental principles of social development within SW organisations, namely the Motto of the Social Ethic. It remains to state the obvious, that is the social isolation of individuals within SW organisations becomes a precursor for unethical behaviour towards the marginalised individuals or group. This is no more than acknowledging that the Other loses human status in this process (Bandura, 1999).

7.4.5.2 Intellectual-cultural.

Likewise, an internal isolation reduces open discourse between colleagues, or between the parent and the teaching communities, creating a missed opportunity to fertilise the cultural life of the school. Wendy's multiple experiences of returning to school after experiencing stimulating instances of artistic and spiritual innovation are poignant reminders of the cultural stagnation that can cripple a school.

7.4.5.3 Collegial-pedagogical.

Similarly, isolated or alienated teachers neither are informed about the "big picture," nor are they likely to share with their colleagues on the other side of the boundary between us and them. The possibilities of an integrated curriculum are also lost without open discourse. This risk is aggravated by what Wendy has called the small school syndrome.

7.4.5.4 Philosophical-spiritual.

Steiner pleaded with the first group of teachers that they would need to contribute to the development of anthroposophy (1975/1988a), as well as engage in teaching. This task signals the most dangerous risk associated with isolation: namely, to become isolated from the *source* of Steiner's impulse. But this has nothing to do with adopting beliefs or points of view. Instead, as I have described below (p. 298ff), it is mistaking the method or instructions for the methodology, which articulates and grounds a way of relating to the world.

7.4.6 Spiritual Superiority.

A fundamental aspect of the Steiner narrative is the notion that anthroposophy is a superior spiritual system. It is comprehensive and highly integrated. The superiority of this system is evinced through its languaging, namely the use of arcane terminology, the postulation of speculative content as facts, and a dismissive disinterest in non-Steiner content (unless it appears to confirm what Steiner has said or has been recorded to have said). Observations of Boland's (2016) respondents are disarmingly similar to those made by respondents in this study. Individuals in SWSs are seen as:

- "guardians of the truth";
- more interested in distributing knowledge;
- unquestioning; and
- mono-cultural (pp. 4-5).

Many of these observations are also echoed in Freda Easton's (1995) doctoral study, *The Waldorf Impulse in Education.* For example, criticisms are made that teachers are more open with students than with parents (p. 320); communication could be "more open and reciprocal" (p. 320); the use of "esoteric language" is a "turn-off" for some parents (p. 320); the CofT is "sometimes too insular, rigid, and unresponsive to parent input" (p. 321); teachers' "defensiveness" leaving problems unresolved (p. 321); "need to update a dogmatic interpretation of Steiner's philosophy" (p. 321); "faculty resistance to parent input, giving parents a feeling that teachers think they 'know better'"(p. 321). Her comments resonate with the critiques developed here by the study's

respondents, once again showing that these observations cannot be dismissed as incidental or unrepresentative.

As von Stuckrad (2005) asserts, the notion of "higher knowledge is closely linked to a discourse of secrecy" (p. 89). The links between esotericism and secrecy, and superiority has also been made by Whedon (2007), whose case study of two private Waldorf schools gave her access to parents' views of the schools' cultural norms. Some of the comments collected in her study include: there was a "veil of secrecy about an inner truth,", "a paternalistic attitude," and "an attitude of superiority over parents" (p. 148). These observations are reinforced by Sagarin's observations concerning the concealment of esoteric or occult aspects of SWE in the early years of SWE in the US, as a deliberate ploy to avert negative opinions from parents and the wider community (2004, p. 166; 2011, p. 32). According to Sagarin, it was not until the 1990s that these texts of a more esoteric nature were made available to the general public (2011, p. 49).

However, these comments have a secondary relationship to the primary focus on spiritual superiority. This primary focus is developed further below (p. 315ff) under the heading "The Shadow as the Source of Healing."

7.5 Two new leitmotivs

7.5.1 Ritualisation.

"The object of ritual is to secure full life and to escape from evil" (Hocart, as cited in Becker, 1975, p. 6).

The rationale for this leitmotiv, or recurring theme, can be connected to four important characterisations made by Wendy, Jennifer, Andrew and Sally. The first relates to the tendency observed in the CofT to ritualise, or provide predictable responses to problems raised in that important school forum. Rather than engage in *new* discursive debate, for example, raising issues, looking for *new* solutions and so on, Wendy observes that there is an inclination to appeal to readymade responses, which usually involve some kind of repetitive, ritualistic behaviour, that may not address the issue or problem raised. The second refers to the relationship between perceived ethical lapses in the school's leadership and the way "anthroposophy and Steiner's work gets positioned" (Jennifer). Here Jennifer is attempting to theorise a position of spiritual elevation that justifies the lack of responsibility shown by senior teachers, and disguises morally reprehensible behaviour as authoritative action. Thirdly, Andrew indirectly articulates a tendency in the College to repeat ethically questionable behaviour without any apparent self-awareness. Finally, there is a story related by Sally concerning her godmother's children who attended a SWS long before Sally

became a SW teacher. The eldest of the three children experienced learning difficulties that impacted on his schooling. The teacher referred to "karma" as the cause and predicted that he might be best suited to becoming a gardener and work with his hands. He is now an adult, working in the corporate world in IT. These situations are almost indicative in the context of this study of SWE. They are reinforced, for example, by numerous other instances where practices and responses are not questioned, but follow prescribed ways of speaking, thinking and behaving. What is the significance of all these comments? The problems that are raised or require resolution are not looked at on their own merits, as current issues, perhaps reflective of the condition or circumstances of the school, the College, the students' experience of learning, or even of social-cultural changes taking place in the wider society. In other words, a problem is not addressed as an inalienable part of the *present* situation and the teachers do not feel themselves somehow *invested* in the problem. Instead, it signifies conflict; it disrupts the perceived equilibrium of the community and its attempts to ward off negative influences, reinforcing Hocart's (as cited in Becker, 1975) thesis. The unsaid assumption is that the SW community does not see itself as part of the greater social system within which it is embedded but tries to distance itself from that system as far as possible.[195]

Further, these situations also reinforce the view that there is a particular relationship to anthroposophy and anthroposophical ideas that borders on uncritical devotion, and which has its shadowed counterpart in the absence of conscious deliberation that might illuminate the excesses that are permitted by this lapse. The ritual is merely the re-enactment of a perceived truth[196] or event in the history of the (imagined) community, but it is carried out in a somnolent condition. The absence of a wide-awake reflexivity marks this phenomenon as an example of *reproductive spirituality* (Ferrer, 2011, p. 4).

Hadot (2009), a French philosopher, who studied in a seminary during the Second World War, coined an expression to characterise the Catholic Church's failure to take responsible action in the face of serious abuses of human rights within its ranks: *supernaturalism.* Hadot employs the term to refer to a recognisable Church predilection for prayer over human intervention. For example, when a young priest confesses to a senior member of the clergy that he has unnatural

---

[195] The comparison with the Essene community, which Steiner discussed in *The Fifth Gospel*, and to which I have alluded above (p. 280), is inescapable.

[196] Of course, the notion of such a truth is contestable, since what is implied is that such truths exists over time, regardless of the context of the circumstances. Gadamer challenges this when he contends that 'what is said originally must be modified, so that it can remain the same' (1977, p. xxvi). In order words, the phrasing of a 'truth' has to continually change in order to signpost the reality it indicates. Words, meanings, realities, truths – all move in shifting terrain. Understandably, a major task of hermeneutics is to maintain contact with these shifts. Like ancient stories, SWE needs to be 'modified' for it to continue to provide a source of meaningful education.

feelings for young boys, rather than removing him to a location and role where he is not confronted with this daily temptation, suggests Hadot, he is instructed to pray, in the "knowledge" that God does not set believers spiritual burdens that they cannot bear. Rightly, Hadot chastises the Church for a lack of psychological intelligence. The similarity to Wendy's observation is remarkable: "If you have difficulties in a Steiner school, you say a verse and that would fix everything."

Let us look more closely at the example offered by Wendy. A problem is brought to the College meeting, perhaps a student with "behavioural problems." Whilst this formulation of the phenomenon is certainly true, it only expresses the teacher's perspective, and then only for the point of view where a certain level of complaisance is considered normative and disruptive behaviour, that is behaviour that is not "on task" is considered unacceptable. Wendy's point was that the student's behaviour is a reaction to the poverty of his curriculum, or the teacher's manner of interacting with him. He is, in effect, the "fearless critic." In any case, when this individual is mentally and emotionally brought before the scrutiny of the College, what is seen in the mirror of this institution is someone who has not been sufficiently served by the therapeutic generalities of SWE, such as painting or eurythmy or even play. Now, these activities may well be effective, but there is little to no discourse about the wider context, including the curriculum, the pedagogy, the school ethos, the learning culture of the school community to effect meaningful change (Argyris, 1977, 1993). Problem-solving is resolved to a ritual: repeat this or repeat that.[197] There is an absence of *social* or *relational creativity* (Montuori, 2018b, p. 4). The *complexity* of the problem is flattened out, with a corresponding loss of detail and texture. Understanding only goes so far as it triggers a ritualised response: "What does Steiner say to do in this situation?" Literally, it would not be uncommon for one of the senior teachers to say this very thing: "I think Steiner suggests X in these cases." The trap is sprung. No free, loose, wandering thinking is permitted!

Ritualisation involves repetition – the belief that the best response to present-day problems is to recapitulate the practices of the past. This means also that the best ideas, the most efficacious solutions also lie in the repetition of the past. The practical consequences of this inescapable

---

[197] I recall a similar incident from my own experience as a high school English teacher. I had recently read and marked the first assignment of the new high school class early in the year. I was amazed at the lack of basic grammatical knowledge, and so decided to raise this concern at the next high school meeting. Upon doing so, there were concessional remarks offered by various teachers, suggesting that this was a widespread problem, not only at our SWS. One senior teacher pensively suggested that we should review the Year 4 grammar main lesson, as though this might be locus of the problems. There was also an interest in identifying the class's class teacher in primary school, followed by the judgment that this teacher was not 'strong' in English. Altogether, the issue was minimised and cast into neverland where no action was required. It did not occur to anyone that perhaps grammar was a topic that needed continual refreshing, since a one-off main lesson was unlikely to serve the students' needs for the future high school education and beyond. It also seemed strange to me to accept that a cohort of students would have to resign themselves to less than competent teaching because their teacher lacked the necessary skills or expertise in a given topic.

suspension in the past, as respondents have amply demonstrated, is an inability to live in the immediacy of the future. Ritual is mediation (von Stuckrad, 2005 p. 82). It is the responding to life by the mediation of other powers that have no capacity to live in the present, let alone the future. The appearance of difference is a disruptive arousal of life, but within which, in the absence of reflexivity conveys the unassailable methods of past practices.

Expanding on Hocart's thesis, Becker (1975) argues that this "most powerful concept," *ritual*, has the goal of "giving life." It is a practical technique for "control of life" (1975, p. 6). This agentic control is evident in the uniformity of the SW stereotype: soft colours, organic shapes, resilient narratives, exact curriculum and so on. The whole passage of the school year, the looping cycles of six, seven or eight years, the progress of festival celebrations throughout the Christian calendar is rigidly ritualistic. It is also present in the PL practised in CofT. Again, referring to Wendy's account, "it is a strengthening of the *old* culture and not losing the *old* ways." The rituals performed in the CofT meeting are about "making sure that we don't change." Reading Steiner verses ensured that we would be reminded "what our spirit is about and not to lose sight of it."

In a sense, SWE has become a simulation of itself. It is a simulacrum. In other words, the original source of SWE, in the words and visions of Rudolf Steiner have become reified in the artefacts just mentioned above. Each school itself is *the* SWS. Rather than evolve, unfold and *diversify*, has it congealed into the self-referential simulacrum, an accessible representation of a way of thinking that belongs elsewhere and elsewhen?

We find in this leitmotif a confluence of other themes already discussed. For example, there is a lack of criticality, a tacit acceptance of past practices (harkening to the "original" SWS, or the pioneer phase of the current school for guidance), together with notions of superiority and aloofness from the contemporary world. Interestingly, too, these themes dovetail with the next leitmotif, Spiritual Blindness.

7.5.2 Spiritual blindness.

Swedish organisational research Sverre Spoelstra (2009) has, in my view, uncovered a fascinating leitmotiv which potentially interlinks with a number of previously identified themes that have emerged from the narratives of SW teachers and are discussed in the previous chapter. He attributes his discovery to the fiction of Jose Saramago, a Nobel Prize winner, specifically, his novel, *Blindness* (2006). Spoelstra's debt to Saramago lies in the latter's account of blindness as a condition that approaches the human being from two sides: one, from darkness; the other, from light. In other

words, blindness can result from the absence of light, just as it can be precipitated by excessive light. As Spoelstra explains, "white blindness" can be "caused by 'organisational brilliance'" (2009, p. 4).

Mythopoetically, white blindness is the excessive illumination, graphically portrayed in Plato's (2007, Book VII) allegory of the cave, which emanates from an "external" source. In Plato's allegory, illumination is bestowed on the released prisoner, a metaphoric reference to the intellectual brilliance provided by truth (or light). The prisoner, like his peers, was previously shackled to the ground, with his head fixed such that he was forced to observe the unfolding flickering of shadows on an illuminated wall. His "release" into the world brought him into contact, for the first time, with the blinding source of the illumination, namely the sun, and allegorically with knowledge. Upon his return to the cave, he attempts vainly to convey the conviction of his enlightenment to his former cellmates.

This allegory has been reproduced over and again, throughout the centuries, as a metaphoric reflection of human experiences of the divine. None is perhaps more vivid than that experienced by Jacob Boehme. According to Rudolf Steiner (2000), Boehme had a remarkable spiritual experience at the age of 25. He saw the sunlight reflected on the surface of a polished pewter dish. Boehme describes in his book, *Aurora*,

> in a quarter of an hour, I observed and knew more than if I had attended a university for many years. I recognised the Being of Beings, both the Byss and Abyss, the eternal generation of the Trinity, the origin and creation of this world and all the creatures through the Divine Wisdom… Suddenly in that light my will was seized by a mighty impulse to describe the Being of God (as cited in Steiner, 2000, p. 177).

Perhaps, unlike Plato's philosopher-king or celebrated mystics like Boehme, Meister Eckhart and Angelus Silesius, for the cave-dwellers (and we may count ourselves in this mix), an encounter with divine light would be blinding. We may also recall here, Saul's blinding revelation on the road to Damascus, as another instance. Indeed, von Eschenbach (2015) comically employs this theme when he confronts Parzival with the radiant armour of the Arthurian knights, causing him to think he had come face to face with God. His desire to become a knight is spontaneously generated by this encounter, and the allure of wearing such splendid armour lends conviction to the naïve young man's search for knighthood.

In *Blindness*, Saramago (2006) injects the supernatural into his otherwise realistic tale of social and moral decay precipitated by a deluge of blindness, as the mysterious, irrational source of that degeneration. This fictive device echoes the light as truth or knowledge, specifically divine truth,

metaphor. In von Eschenbach's tale, this metaphor is further mutated into light as falsity or illusion. This double play becomes highly relevant in the analysis of organizational culture.

For Spoelstra, organisations borrow something of that transcendent light in order to acquire and maintain power over their staff and their customers. "Organizational brilliance" refers to "phenomena that are so brilliant or illuminating that they blind organizational members or consumers with their penetrating light" (2009, p. 374). Drawing on Saramago, Spoelstra suggests that this power is more-than-human and is "permeated with religion, irrationality, and the extraordinary" (p. 374). Spoelstra differentiates between the "brilliance" of leaders, products and employees. In each case, this brilliance exerts a powerful influence on those who come into contact with the *light* of the organisation. Traditionally, the influence of an individual has been designated with the word *charisma*, literally "the gift of grace" (Lidell and Scott, 1990), a term that borrows the implicit supernatural narrative of the blinding light of God. A more literal translation of the word is the "favoured or chosen one," a semantic variation that further explicates the significance of Parizval's encounter with the Arthurian knights in the forest of Soltane (solitude). The humble peasant boy, whose physique signalled to the knights that he could only have "come straight from the hand of God" (von Eschenbach, 2015, p. 22), is, unknown to him for most of the story, the one chosen by the Grail to become its keeper, or King. Yet, the passage from "fool" to Grail-King entails the long, slow stripping away of many illusions, which are fashioned from the excessive light of his charismatic brilliance: his physique, chivalric prowess and expansive fame. The unexpected shame that Kundry bestows on Parzival in the company of the Arthurian court is the catalyst to this salutogenic spiritual exfoliation.

Modern leadership theory infuses the leader with a transcendent prominence, or as Spoelstra calls it, "religious idolatry" (2009, p. 380). According to Alvesson and Spicer (2011), the literature perpetuates the "prevailing myth of the crucial significance of leadership in organisational narratives," (p. 8) for example the "global financial crisis" of 2008 is blamed on "failed leadership" (p. 8). In their seminal work, *Metaphors to lead by*, leadership is seen through the refractive lens of six key metaphors: the leader as saint, gardener, buddy, commander, cyborg and bully (p. 33) Despite promoting the usual celebratory images of the modern leader, for example by differentiation from two "dark" categories (cyborg and bully), the authors soberly remind us that leadership "has a far more sinister side" (p. 49) than popular literature on the subject is prepared to acknowledge. The radical ambivalence of "charisma" is located precisely at the confluence of "supernatural, superhuman, or at least… exceptional powers [that] are not accessible to the ordinary person but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary" (Weber, as cited in Spoelstra, 2009, p. 380).

Leaders are, on this account, "celebrated as saviours" (Spoelstra, 2009, p. 380) and elevated to the status of miracle workers that will "stun" witnessing individuals. What risks await the stunned follower or supporter? Loss of the capacity to make moral judgments (Spoelstra, 2009), or "ethical blindness" (Palazzo, Krings & Hoffrage, 2010).

It is easy to see this faith reflected in the image of Steiner himself, an echo of the "cult of the personality," *unconsciously* instilling ethical blindness (Palazzo et al., 2010) and intimating a tendency towards authoritarianism and "reproductive education" instead of creativity and freedom (Montuori, 2005, 2008)[198]. The spectre of authority, which is perilously close in onesided relationships, such as pupil and mentor (guru), is echoed in the buddhist koan: "if you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him!" (Yamada, 2004). Further, Basho's injunction not "to follow in the footsteps of the Masters" is not accidental. To seek one's own path, or to traverse the "one less travelled by" (Frost, 1997-2012), are not merely expressions of individual creativity, but earnest safeguards against moral lassitude.

However, arguably more important than the leader or the individual is the *idea*. As Senge (2004) has observed, contrary to popular belief, "the source of legitimate power in the organization is its guiding ideas" (p. 3) These guiding ideas, which collectively construct the organizational mission, go to the "core of power and authority" in the organization. These ideas, themselves inexpressible even if they are articulated, are the source of a dazzling light that "captivates" (Spoelstra, 2009, p. 381). According to Marx (as cited in Spoelstra, 2009, p. 381), the product, or reification of the organizational mission, "transcends sensuousness." The trajectory from product to captive identity is traced by the brand. The subtle psychology that makes "branding" possible and effective can be traced to the early decades of the twentieth century, where the new discipline of Freudian psychiatry was fashioned into unheralded forms of social control, such as advertising and public relations (Curtis, 2002). Edward Bernays (2004), nephew of Sigmund Freud, and originator of public relations, exploited the application of psychiatric insight into the interplay of human emotions in order to harness "voluntary blindness" (Saramago, 2006, p. 282), as a response to the ideational fetishism that branding invokes. The "torches of freedom" campaign inaugurated this manipulation of the public psyche by creating the simulation of a news event: advertising and social engineering as everyday phenomena (Murphree, 2015). It also demonstrates the uneasy intersection of individual identity, social control and mythopoetic fantasy. As Spoelstra shows, an equivalent logic is played

[198] The problem of idolatry in spiritual communities was referred to by Steiner throughout his adult life firstly in the context of modern individual spiritual development (for example, the annunciation of Krishnamurti as the Second Coming of Christ in the Theosophical Society) and secondly in relation to the development of sectarianism in the Anthroposophical Society.

out in the organization. Aligning organizational and employee aspirations is seen as central to business success and mission fulfilment. The alluring light of the organization's guiding ideas functions like a divine source, out of reach and mesmerizing. This organizational brilliance employs a pedagogical narrative that was once the provenance of the church, or more accurately, the social-theological ethos of the community. As we have seen, the illumination motif plays a significant role in performing a mythopoetic connection between individuals and the divine order. The modern commercial conception of the "authentic" employee derives from this image. As Spoelstra explains, "organizations are supposed to become places where you can find and express your inner centre, the place where God's light shines at its brightest" (2009, p. 382). Further to that end, like the contemporary equivalent of the "mystery school," the modern workplace sees as its function, the development of not only their employees but also their "biggest assets."

Whilst organisations, both commercial and non-profit, readily embody the luminous ideology exposed by Spoelstra (2009), it seems to me that Saramago's reach extends further, across the ambiguous territories of utopian and dystopian narratives. We have seen, for example, how the illuminating power that manifests as brilliance in the leader, in the product and the employee, issues from a theological relationship that links the human being to the divine order. Senge's guiding ideas are nothing less than wordless envoys of the Word of God, the Logos.

The leading concept of "spiritual" or "organisational blindness," with its source in the archetypal and age-old narrative of the light of God, suggests many of the identified themes that have been used to orient the study and those that have emerged through a careful analysis of respondents' narratives. Below I will highlight the most obvious.

7.5.2.1 Rhizomatic links to institutional blindness.

By positing light blindness as another source of blindness or darkness, Saramago and Spoelstra have identified a dark source of oppression of the last century, the excessive light of ideology, which is expressed in the morally impoverished equation, the ends justify the means. By separating ends and means, a wedge is driven between the human being's capacity to envisage the good and to realise it. Indeed, the good is itself fragmented into an abstract future (an idea) and a concrete present (an action). In other words, *having* the idea spares one the responsibility of its becoming; the emphasis and valuation is placed on the idea rather than its actualisation.

Steiner (1961/1994) articulates this problem in the classic work, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, "every idea which does not become an ideal slays a force in your soul" (p. 25). The Dutch anthroposophist, Bernard Lievegoed (1985), observed that humanity, as a whole, was crossing a

great threshold at the end of the twentieth century. Whilst the imagery for this notion derives from mythology and its continuation in mysticism, *today* this statement has lost its esoteric gloss and acquired the lustre of everyday knowledge. This is why Parker Palmer (2000) can remind us that when we search within “we meet the darkness that we carry within ourselves” (p. 80). The darkness is everywhere, within and without. It is recognisable. But the blindness that issues from an excess of light, seems almost counter-intuitive, however real it is as a natural phenomenon. The traditional light-darkness binary is here overcome with by dualizing darkness itself, thereby bringing into play a moderating force, the balance between too much and too little light/dark.[199]

The theorizing of light blindness provides a powerful link to the mystical-mythological concept of the threshold. On both an individual and social level, Lievegoed’s (1985) notion that humanity is crossing a threshold can be easily acknowledged today. There is on the one hand, a great unleashing of destructive potential all over the earth, perceptible in the physical, natural sphere, as well as in the social, economic and political domains. However, there is also a growing sense of counterbalance to the destructiveness, a sense of awakening taking place across contextual divides, and promising to bring about higher levels of human communication and co-operation.

[199] This is something that Steiner has provided as a ‘solution’ to the facile binary of good and evil. Steiner’s characterisation of good and evil is more complex and nuanced. Evil itself is represented by a number of spiritual forces, predominantly a light-being (Lucifer, the light bearer) and a dark-being (Ahriman, the destructive spirit) (Steiner, 1993).

7.6 Towards New Narratives

7.6.1 Why new narratives?

The focus of the study has been purposely *critical* in various senses of the word. However, by this stage of the study, it is evident that intertwined with the many criticisms levelled by respondents, at the same time, there is also a sharing of ideas, perspectives and practices that have been drawn from the combined activity of their individual pedagogical development and study of Steiner's philosophy and the ideas that are held in tension between these two poles. What has been singled out as "new" narratives below does not exclude the positive indications suggested by respondents in their narratives. I hope that, given the sample narratives that have been provided in Chapter Four/Appendix and the analysis of respondents' narratives in Chapter Six, individual as well as complex pictures will emerge of the kinds of lifeworlds within which SW teachers operate. The richness of content cannot be reproduced in its entirety under the present rubric. Therefore, what is presented here is a selection of what I regard as the most significant narratives, but there may well be others that I have overlooked that might yield further interesting and challenging tasks towards the renewal of SWE.

The narratives that I am about to present here as "new" are, with small exceptions, perhaps not in themselves unknown to most well-informed readers or SW insiders. However, throughout the course of the study, I confess, I have been surprised by what I have found, either as critical literature in the field, or comments by respondents. What has surprised me the most is not so much the content of the research I have read, or the data I have collected, but the fact that what I thought was only private or personal knowledge, or at the most knowledge shared between a few likeminded colleagues, was in fact known to a growing community of individuals, largely unknown to each other. Why is this significant? It is significant because, for example, in the case of some of the research I discovered, critical insights into SWE were being made just as I began my career as a SW teacher. Curiously, as I began to question certain issues in SWE, unknown to me at the time, a rising wave of critical insight was being developed across the globe. It is intriguing to reflect now that the vast majority of this critical literature, was totally unknown to me and to my colleagues in SWE. I suspect that if readers with SW experience (either as teachers or as parents, or perhaps students) take the trouble to read sections of this dissertation, they too will be surprised by the fact that someone has actually articulated what many have known or suspected but without corroboration. I think this is potentially one of the most powerful aspects of this research. It has the power to ignite *mutual knowledge* (Pinker, 2007, p. 455; Pinker et al., 2008) within a somewhat disempowered group. As in the story of the Emperor with no clothes, the statement that everyone knows, namely "he's naked,"

has political implications by turning personal knowledge into mutual or common knowledge. Everyone now knows this. It is much harder to deny the "reality" of something when everyone knows it directly through mutual knowledge. As Pinker explains, this is the potency of indirect speech: it minimises mutual knowledge (Pinker, 2007, 2008). Such is the politics of language: what is not spoken about does not exist! Hence, whilst not necessarily "new" or novel, the new narratives presented here may help to ignite the recognition that what has been tacitly or quietly known is now common property. It is no longer so easy to dismiss it. It is "out there."

How have I distinguished the following "narratives" or perspectives from the myriad comments and stories offered by respondents in this study? The hermeneutic-heuristic methodology employed in this study has attempted to work in such a manner that ideas and experiences could emerge through an immersive activity in the narratives, in the lived experiences and thoughts of the respondents. Obviously, this has involved a vivid interactive process with my own striving to understand experiences that have informed and framed my own investigation into SWE, which preceded the initiation of this study. I have tried, from the outset of this project, to connect SWE and anthroposophy to contemporary as well as traditional ways of understanding and being in the world that posit an alternative or complementary cognitive mode to the established rational-intellectual mode. In a tangible sense, then, this study has been performative in that it has tried to work actively with living thinking as a *companion* process to the many research processes that demand rational or intellectual labours. As I have tried to show in the third chapter, this approach borrows from various qualitative methods that allow cognitive space for and honour embodied forms of cognition. In theorizing this process as a form of living thinking, or "beholding consciousness" (Riddle of Man), I merely wish to draw attention to the fluidity of the concepts or "themes" dealt with in the study, and the need to find suitable research practices such as contemplative inquiry that may help the researcher to negotiate this beholding process. As Steiner describes, "cognition is, with Goethe, immersing in the world of beings, pursuing that which grows and becomes and transforms perpetually… Then thinking is a life in thoughts" (Steiner, 1918/2018). As Riccio (2000) has shown, SWE is underpinned by a living dynamic fabric which is the result of a living thinking weaving throughout the curriculum. I have tried in the following discussion on new narratives to distinguish from individual themes, dynamic transitions or tensions that emerge from a free-flowing investigation into the problematic nature of SWE. The discussion is intended to offer new perspectives or ways of narrativizing these transitions or tensions which may help to gain insights into the nature of the problems and thereby gain a salutogenic orientation towards them.

7.6.2 Qualities of the new narratives.

It is unsurprising to realise that the effort to pull together distinctive, positive and salutogenic narratives cannot be conducted in a linear, categorical fashion. I have addressed this already in methodological comments in relation to the previous chapter. Here the nomadic nature of narratives and concepts becomes all the more obvious and potent. These narratives or concepts emerge as fluid qualities that indicate the *how* rather than the *what.* They are literally descriptors of gestures that underpin the living dynamic invoked in the phrase "living thinking."

The following qualities have been identified as keys to the new narratives of SWE:

i. Openness;
ii. Presencing;
iii. Contemporaneity;
iv. Reflexivity; and
v. Languaging.

7.6.2.1 Openness.

The quality of openness is a recurring refrain in critical literature investigating SWE. For the teacher, openness is evident as the fundamental gesture necessary to maintain a living connection to the tasks associated with teaching: towards the student, towards one's discipline and towards the world. This has been expressed over and again by respondents, affirming their deep integration of Steiner's injunction that the teacher needs to cultivate the capacity to observe the child, to connect with the tradition living in their discipline and to be alert to the unfolding human drama happening in the world (1932/1966). This gesture of openness links to the inner desire to presence what lives in SWE and anthroposophy as potential, to actualise the germinal impulses that seek to work into the world. Hence, openness underlies the desire to build bridges, to open communication across many channels, not least within SW communities. But this needs re-energising which comes from the next quality, presencing.

7.6.2.2 Presencing.

Because SWE, having grown out of the insights possibilised by spiritual science, is an evolutionary pedagogy that addresses the social and spiritual needs of the zeitgeist, actualising SWE is less a matter of implementing what has been indicated by Steiner, than a matter of presencing the theoretical insights that can be brought to bear in and continually regenerate a living praxis. Presencing is a movement that makes us more present, more real, more substantial in our encounter with ourselves and with the world. For Scharmer (2016), presencing is the movement of

"the highest future possibility" "into the now," "a movement that lets us approach our self from the emerging future" (p. 161). Presencing SWE means just that. It inverts the traditional "rule of thumb" which is mimesis, following after the footsteps of the Master, with presencing, which means seeking what the Master sought. We are not content with imitating the opus of the Master (which in any case entails an untruth), but create our own opus out of direct knowledge with the source "of the highest future possibility."[200] The kind of cognition made possible from this mode of experiencing is "primary knowing" (Rosch, 1999) or "embodied cognition" (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991, p. 147). It intimates a kind of knowing implicit in Deleuze and Guattari's notion of actuality: "the actual is not what we are but, rather, what we become, what we are in the process of becoming – that is to say, the Other, our becoming other" (1994, p. 112). Presencing is, therefore, both the activity and the consequence of working contemplatively and systematically with SWE and its underlying concepts; it is a return to the source of SWE and anthroposophy, *which is not Steiner himself*, but the more-than-human wisdom that weaves in the world, which was also *his* source of inspiration.

7.6.2.3 Contemporaneity.

This is another concept that underpins much of the critical standpoint towards SWE. It is, in a sense, unassailable. Even the most conservative insider will recognise that the one hundred years that separates the founding of the Waldorf school in Stuttgart from today is akin to a gulf that demands to be traversed. We have seen that the Public Waldorf movement in the US has been fired by the deep passion to renew Steiner and Molt's resolves to bring a modern living education to a marginalised class. Given the failure of the Private Waldorf movement to fulfil this commitment, it is unsurprising that the mantle of SWE in its original impulse was once again seized. The notion of contemporaneity (of time and place) has been well developed by Boland (2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2017) and Boland and Demirbag (2017). However, this principle is relevant to every teacher, whether inside or outside the SW community. "One of the most important qualities of a Steiner teacher," according to Andrew, is that they should have a "good grounding in their disciplines." Further, they should "love" and "know" it and be "open to developments within it." He affirms that his talks to parents worked because they were "grounded in contemporary knowledge and academic standards." Research by Woods et al. (2005) and Randoll et al. (2014) highlight students' sensitivities to the absence and presence of contemporaneity in their education. As Staratt (2005) contends,

---

[200] Why does Sigune tell Parzival how to repair the broken sword, when what he holds in his hand is an unbroken sword? Her prescience is the wisdom that knows, however well-crafted the sword, it is destiny that it will break, and that the owner will be called upon to repair the sword himself, not its original maker. The metaphor of the source is used in both von Eschenbach's and Scharmer's narrative, which I suspect derives from a similar mythopoetic origin.

students are exposed to the “intelligibilities of the natural, the social, the cultural and the historical worlds” (p. 403). What he terms “virtue” is cultivated by the awakening of a powerful experience that learning and education offer.

> These worlds are there not for the learners to possess them as their private property, but as the habitat of their own humanity, so to speak, as the physical, social, cultural and historical home for them, a home which supports their lives in all its dimensions, a home where learners can come to know who they are, a home which confers on them the important marker of membership in a community which both shapes the learners’ identities and supports their necessary quest for an agency that is distinctive and authentic (p. 403).

Education locates the student within a tradition, for better or for worse, in the same way that being a member of a family does. It is both empowering and laming, but it is real and indisputable. To deny an individual the opportunity to find their place in history, in their society and their culture, denies them of their actuality, hindering their becoming. As Jennifer observed about SWE, it brings with it “the recognition that, as somebody living right now today, there is this incredible lineage that comes into the moment.” This is unique to SWE, according to her. “It gives us soul and a human kind of substance and weight” (Jennifer) and “we are both embedded in and privileged by these worlds, bound to and in partnership with these worlds” (Staratt, 2005, p. 401). Stemann (2017) provides simple but moving examples of this process occurring around the world, enabling members of SWE communities to rediscover their cultural roots, as SWE migrates across the many world cultures and religions, a phenomenon that is, I believe, quickening the diversification and loosening of the once rigid SW curriculum.

7.6.2.4 Reflexivity.

A key feature of dissident narratives is a well-developed sense of reflexivity. We have seen that developing a critical approach to the study and integration of Steiner’s work is not an easy task, neither intellectually nor socially. The intellectual challenge of integrating an anthroposophical approach to knowledge generation, as shown below, is demanding, since it requires a level of cognitive effort not normally present in assimilating ideas. In addition, the culture of the SWS presents obstacles to a truly reflexive spirit of inquiry, for reasons already identified above. This leads to an unfortunate situation where teachers with innovative and challenging approaches to their disciplines must often work in isolation from each other. This also militates against the development of a spiritual academy (Haralambous, 2016), or a spirit of exploratory collaboration.

7.6.2.5 Languaging.

Although we are far along the road, past the linguistic turn, individually we are still prone to embody and enact naïve realism as a default epistemological standpoint. This is no small error, for as Maturana (1988) argues, "the most central question that humanity faces today is the question of reality" (p. 25). How we answer that question, or even whether or not we make a conscious attempt to answer that question determines how we live our life. Steiner warned repeatedly against adopting an unreflected relationship towards anthroposophy that took its revelations as statements of fact about an objective reality. Yet, despite this, it appears that within SW and anthroposophical circles expressions like *incarnation, etheric body, and karma* are used as though they describe earthly, observable facts that the speaker perceives. Understandably, this pretension to higher knowledge is hard to self-correct but worse of all, perhaps, it exudes an anti-social attitude that is readily interpreted as arrogance or spiritual superiority (Kuhlewind, 1992, pp. 32-34). It is no surprise that much that is said against SWE or Steiner or anthroposophy in the public arena, for example, concerning racism, spirituality or mysticism, can be reduced to a misunderstanding that is *accentuated* by the languaging of SWE. Authoritative narratives about what Steiner said and what someone considers to constitute SWE become "rhetorical justifications" (J. Bruner, 1990) which align with the culturally sanctioned versions of reality. These "socializing" narratives (Horsdal, 2012, p. 30) delimit insiders from outsiders within the social circles forming the school community. Disrupting the predictability and apparent inviolability of the preferred narratives is the role of the "fearless critic" (Ian), whose presence in SW communities ought to be encouraged and celebrated (Steiner, 1923/2008a).

The new narratives discussed below comprise:

i. The Recovery of Anthroposophy: situating Steiner; rehabilitating anthroposophy; SWE as methodology.
ii. From Protection to Releasement: the Class Teacher period; transition to high school and adulthood.
iii. The Shadow as the Source of Healing: Healing the Community; Curing Light Blindness.
iv. Teachers' Voices.

7.6.3 The recovery of anthroposophy.

It has become evident to me, throughout this study, that one of the fundamental problems with SWE (to which we could generalise and add anthroposophy) is manifest in the condition in

which anthroposophy is found in the present day, especially as it is represented in the media, but also through the narrative accounts presented here and other anecdotal evidence that I have referred to throughout this thesis. Three predominant issues emerge as tasks that follow from these observations: the need to situate Steiner within historical and contemporary Western culture; the reorientation towards anthroposophy as an *epistemological* methodology; and the concomitant reorientation or re-emphasising of SWE as an educational *methodology*. As will become apparent, recognition of these tasks has been observed for several decades, and there have always been sagacious voices that have tried to sound a call to others about the importance of these tasks, often indirectly. Here I want to lay stress on these tasks as fundamental towards a renewal of SWE and anthroposophy. The other narratives that are also included below, although arising out of specific observations and comments made by respondents, follow rhizomatically from the main task which I here label as the recovery of anthroposophy.

7.6.3.1 Situating Steiner.

It is essential that Steiner and, more importantly, anthroposophy can be situated in the philosophical tradition (Ben-Aharon, 2011a, 2011b), and SWE in the pedagogical tradition (Ullrich, 2008). It is worth noting that Steiner himself undertook these tasks already in his own time, since, unlike many adherents, he did not consider himself beyond tradition, but rather as another thinker or researcher responding to the perennial problems in philosophy and social life. His book, *The Riddles of Philosophy*, attempted to lay out the historical narrative leading towards the development of anthroposophy or spiritual science: “The message of this book is that a world conception based on spiritual science is virtually demanded by the development of modern philosophy as an answer to the questions it raises” (Steiner, 1961/2009, p. 461). In other words, Steiner saw anthroposophy, not as a personal philosophy, a worldview to pit against others, but rather as an evolving *reality* (1922/1983), an unfolding of the great Western philosophical narrative that would take the ideals and practices of natural science further into the surrounding spiritual world, and investigate it through spiritual science (1972/1991). According to Steiner, this was necessary in order that natural science might fulfil its purpose. Interestingly, Hanegraaff (2005) has come to a similar conclusion, arguing that the logic of scientific empiricism must be taken to its rational conclusion, which he labels “radical empiricism” (p. 249). This entails nothing more that applying consistently the twin principles of the “pursuit of knowledge” and “ideological neutrality” (p. 248). The disenfranchisement of esotericism, which has been a key part of the “Grand Polemical Narrative” since the Enlightenment, is thereby neutralised by “*the* methodological principle basic to the academic enterprise as it developed in the wake of the Enlightenment: the ‘practice of criticism’” (p.

249). Hanegraaff asserts that the efficacy of the Grand Polemical Narrative, which has successfully hegemonised Western culture since the dominance of the Torah, and its successive usurpations by Christianity, the Catholic Church, and finally Modern Science, has rested on the *one-sided construction* of the "Other" such as *idolatry, paganism, the occult* or *esotericism*. In each case, it is the principle of simplicity that has ensured its efficacy. However, it is interesting to consider how anthroposophy sits within this elegant theorising. I claimed at the start of this section that the presentation of anthroposophy in the present day appears ambiguous. If we now consider how anthroposophy as the modern representative of esotericism stands within academia, it is obvious that it is has been subjected to the same ridicule that has beset esotericism as a whole.[201] However, Hanegraff contends that if we step outside the privileged space of the Grand Polemical Narrative, by honouring the principle of criticism, we find that this narrative is "itself a major pattern" (p. 250) in the formation of Western culture, but it is not the only one. In fact, it will emerge that the notion of "Western esotericism" is also a construction of this narrative, dating back to the 19th century and the dissociation of science from the "occult" (pp. 244-247). Like Steiner before him, Hanegraaff predicts that the application of academic methods of rigorous inquiry, stripped of a privileged narrative, will "greatly profit" our endeavours to understand what prejudices have been installed in the polemical discourse that has successfully marginalised a potentially fruitful view of our history, religion and culture. A significant start will be the disavowal of the arbitrary binary "esoteric" and "exoteric" (p. 251), which has helped to maintain a distance between complementary modes of cognition that are constituent aspects of our cultural heritages.

Why does this matter? Firstly, it places Steiner and his work within the compass of a large human community, an imagined community, that is united in its earnest desire to find solutions that will ameliorate and fulfil the human condition. Placing him in this compass means that as a follower or admirer of Steiner, I am obliged to feel myself also as part of this community. Out of this kinship, I may realise that today there will be many, many individuals, some belonging to groups like the Anthroposophical Society, some not, some associated with SWSs, some not, who are nonetheless devoted to the same historical task. More pragmatically, once we are liberated from the idea that Steiner is somehow beyond humanity, we can be alert to kindred thinkers, who whilst not necessarily following in his footsteps, nonetheless seek what he sought. I believe that it is incumbent upon the SW teacher to integrate the lines of connection that link Steiner to these kindred spirits (Ben-Aharon, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Dahlin, 2009, 2013b, 2013c; Gidley, 2008b; Lachman, 2003, 2015,

[201] See Chapter Three: Literature Review.

2017; McDermott, 2015),[202] which then lead to the sites where the great human drama spoken by Steiner and Thiong'O at the start of this thesis is being enacted. Fritz Koelln, writing in the Introduction to *The Riddles of Philosophy*, observes that Steiner's treatment of the history of philosophy presents a metamorphosis of consciousness interweaving in the content and style of philosophical thinking throughout the ages. The form of consciousness "has not always been what it is now, and what it is now it will not be in the future" (Steiner, 1961/2009, p. viii). This idea finds its unison in Scharmer's characterisation of *presencing* as "a movement that lets us approach our self from the emerging future" (p. 161). In other words, what is at stake in situating Steiner is also the development of a capacity to perceive the approach of a higher-evolved consciousness coming into this world out of the impending needs of the future (cf Kegan, 2013). Keeping Steiner in some kind of spiritual, non-historical suspension will not do justice to the intention of his work, and moreover belies the urgent necessity of augmenting his contribution to turning the tide against the great challenges of the present time.

7.6.3.2 Recovering Anthroposophy.

It should be evident from the foregoing discussion that many of the problems addressed in this thesis may be connected to the relationship an individual adopts towards anthroposophy. One tragic manifestation of this is that everywhere one looks, with few exceptions, there is continued confusion about what anthroposophy is. Its apparent expression, often via the mouthpiece of SW teachers, sparks intense, typically vehement opposition from internet opponents, usually ex-parents of children in SWSs. Moreover, the confusion is spread by the media as well, as it weighs in on public debates and surprisingly, one would think, by researchers and academics also. It is even the case that insiders or sympathisers of Steiner are guilty of this.[203] The source of the confusion is easily identified; what is less clear is how to dispel it.

---

[202] Walter Johannes Stein, one of Steiner more able students, and teacher at the original Stuttgart school, and also noted for his incomparable study of the Grail legend (*The Ninth Century and the Holy Grail*), was tasked with Steiner to undertake a doctoral study of British Empiricism (Hume, Berkeley and Locke) in order to show how anthroposophy can be logically developed out of it. Andrew (pers comm) related to me that Steiner was himself tasked by his Master to do the same with German Idealism. This lineage has been well documented by (Amrine, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2014).

[203] For example, Tore Ahlbäck (2008) refers to the 'Anthroposophical Society' as a 'new religious movement' (p. 9). His article on 'Rudolf Steiner as a Religious Authority' is otherwise sober and represents Steiner's activities without sensationalism. Nonetheless, the theme of Steiner as a 'religious leader' and 'religious teacher' is grossly misleading. Were it juxtaposed with Steiner the philosopher and Steiner the scientist then an important acknowledgement would have resulted, namely the recognition that Steiner strove for a rebalancing of cognition, the fragmentation of which Hanegraff (2005) attributes to a Grand Polemical Narrative that does not permit an *other* in the cognitive domain. Another example is Oberman's statement that anthroposophy is a 'belief system' and a 'worldview' (p. 9). The latter is perhaps understandable, but the former flies in the face of Steiner's admonition against treating his statements as objects of belief. These are two selected at random. The nature of these 'confused' misunderstandings of Steiner tend to sensationalise his ideas, parading them like exhibits in a freak show, or misrepresent his documented and witnessed capabilities. One of the

Essentially there are two statements that together are regularly employed to represent anthroposophy: firstly, it is a path of self-knowledge; secondly, it refers to the body of work produced by Rudolf Steiner and others after him who have contributed significant spiritual research (for example, Kühlewind, 1983/1988, 1986, 1991/1992, 2008, 2011; Mossmuller, 2013, 2016; Scaligero, 1964/2001, 2015; Tomberg, 1992).[204] Both aspects belong to the term, anthroposophy. However, a problem arises when we begin to speak of "anthroposophical knowledge." The matter is not helped because, printed at the beginning of Rudolf Steiner's lectures appear the following words:

> The following lectures were given by Rudolf Steiner to an audience familiar with the general background of his anthroposophical teachings…Certain premises were taken for granted when the words were spoken. "These premises," Rudolf Steiner writes in his autobiography, "include at the very least the anthroposophical knowledge of Man and the Cosmos in its spiritual essence; also of what may be called "anthroposophical history," told as an outcome of research into the spiritual world." (1928/2000, Chap. 35)

This passage is problematic, I would argue, because it suggests that there is a body of work that can be referred to what functions like an "introduction" to anthroposophy. Further, it follows that what is presented in subsequent lectures, material of an advanced kind, can be added to this introductory or foundational structure. In this way, material is added to the edifice of "anthroposophical knowledge," which can be disseminated and reproduced as though one were dealing with facts in the physical world. I would suggest, instead, that if anything can be laid down as foundational anthroposophical knowledge, it is not primarily content but methodology (Steiner, 1961/1986), in other words, a way of thinking or perceiving the world that can then be applied to selected learned contents.[205]

This problem has been carefully diagnosed by Kühlewind (1991/1992): it is the "temptation" to "speak about what one has never experienced, as if one could understand it and produce it oneself," something that he adds is "impossible in any other field" (p. 32). When succumbing to this temptation is added the surrender to another, namely the egotistical self-satisfaction of spiritual insight, a "potent mix" (Jennifer) ensues. The pretence of knowing lends weight and social status to

---

worst, representing the latter, is the notion that Steiner has simply 'made up' his philosophy, suggesting that his claim to higher knowledge is mere pretension. This view is common amongst internet detractors whose knowledge and understanding of Steiner and anthroposophy is limited.

[204] No doubt there remain others that have been able to produce meaningful communications from their spiritual research, but these are the ones that I'm aware of and have studied.

[205] What is proposed here is merely an indication of using anthroposophy as a methodology, which I believe was Steiner's stated intention. However, it would lead too far afield to fully theorise this deviation from traditional interpretations of anthroposophy.

our claims on power and position, as I have mentioned above, through a demonstrated but effete accomplishment in speaking "anthroposophical language." As Kühlewind shows, however, this pretence has consequences:

> There is a disorientation with regard to the relationship between spiritual science and everyday life; a loss of the capacity to distinguish, in judgment, between what one understands and does not understand; and the acquiring of the tendency to bluff with contents one has read, using these arguments and quoting them dialectically in discussions… "Work" with "contents" degenerates into speculation, combination, rhetoric, and nominalistic usage (pp. 32-33).

Kühlewind (1991/1992) further cautions that a healthy feeling for truth is replaced with "pride, superiority, and the air of knowing better than anyone else." Of course, these are qualities that have emerged as normative in the culture of SWSs. Peculiarly, adds Kühlewind, adherents cultivate a kind of "spiritual parasitism" or living off the corpse of the founder's corpus, and ironically, anyone who appears to bring new ideas or impulses is looked upon suspiciously and is "suspected of falsifying the teaching (p. 33)". Sadly, for the salutogenic impulse of SWE, a kind of cultic, esoteric community forms around such spiritual parasites who strengthen their position by means of spiritual "mediations" (McCalla, 2001, p. 46), which interestingly have been described by Wendy and Jennifer with compelling poignancy.

What is the way out?

> We need to find the way from a merely passive, intellectual experiencing of anthroposophical truths to an immersion in them with our whole being….People will [then] be able to proclaim anthroposophical truths out of their own experience, at least in the most accessible areas, such as medicine, physiology, biology, and the social sphere (Steiner, 1923/1991).

Elsewhere, Steiner explains that in studying anthroposophy (which he regarded as the first step in spiritual or esoteric development), "it is not so much a matter of *what* as of *how*. Through the great truths, as for example, the planetary laws, we create great lines of thinking for ourselves, and this is the essential part of the matter"[206] (1961/1986). In other words, it matters less *what* is learned about anthroposophy – for example, the labels for the four bodies, or the names of the beings of the hierarchy, or the stages of Earth evolution. In fact, what is retained are "finished concepts, finished mental pictures" (Steiner, 1917/1987). Whilst this is possible with natural science, argues Steiner, because its laws are expressed as inert concepts, the same cannot be said about spiritual scientific truths. They must be expressed as "living concepts." The first stage of clairvoyance, as Steiner describes it, relates to the reception of anthroposophical knowledge in texts

[206] I have made use of the translation by Michael Lipson and Christopher Bamford in Kuhlewind (1991/1992, p. 78).

written by spiritual researchers. This involves applying the will in order to perceive the *lines of thinking* that weave together the contents of a spiritual text. This kind of practice is reminiscent of Faivre's "form of thought", specifically the constitutive element of "correspondences" (McCalla, 2001, p. 436).

Hence, the problem, what I am calling the source of confusion in understanding anthroposophy has to do precisely with the translation of anthroposophical knowledge, which is the fruit of esoteric research, into the exoteric domain. As Steiner indicated above, receiving anthroposophical knowledge as facts, or as inert concepts, only leads to a deadening of consciousness; receiving them as living concepts, however, activates our own thinking, which is already a sign that the spiritual world, the form-giving reality that surrounds us, is becoming active in our thinking. What the seer or spiritual researcher experiences *wordlessly* as spiritual knowledge (Steiner, 1918/2013), has to be translated into language that is understandable by the listener. In turn, the listener has to be able to think beyond the words, in order to see what the spiritual researcher saw. The *transmission of knowledge* (another key element in Faivre's esotericism) can only occur if there is an initiatory relationship between the author and the reader. That is the reader must commit to a process of transmutation of their thinking capacity in order to be able to see beyond the text (Steiner, 1923).

The process described here has significance beyond SWE and anthroposophy. For what we are dealing with here are intuitions that project from the surrounding reality into our consciousness, but because we have few if any constructs to actually work productively with these experiences, we tend to reject them as "hallucinations" or "coincidences" or "superstition". What Steiner offered by way of anthroposophy was a language that could help us to construct new knowledge of what are otherwise quite common experiences. This remains the case, whether or not we cultivate further spiritual development through forms of mindfulness training. The problem that has been discussed above is caused by our default epistemological position, a dangerous "reigning epistemological vision" (Meek, 2011, p. 5), namely naïve realism. This is simply the view that reality is out there, and we are separate from it. In terms of reading texts, the naïve realist position holds that meaning is "in the text," and by reading it, we appropriate it for ourselves. As we have seen though, in the case of intuitive or spiritual texts, this process does not work. Rather reading becomes a transformative process whereby the reader co-constructs meaning with the author (the text). And only in so far as the reader is able to bring an hermeneutic activity to the reading process is there understanding at all. However, contrary to traditional constructivism, this process is continuous and developmental.

The text is an unfolding reality that potentially opens up many possibilities of understanding, depending upon the reader's hermeneutic preparedness for the encounter with the text.[207]

7.6.3.3 Anthroposophy and SWE as methodology.

The counter-representations of anthroposophy and SWE, summarised above (p. 180ff) in the survey of respondents' comments, clearly reinforce interpretations of anthroposophy (especially) provided by key figures in the Literature Review. Although somewhat of a theoretical issue, the question, is anthroposophy (and therefore SWE) a methodology or body of knowledge? finds expression in respondents' experiences, particularly in casting off attitudes that do not accord with their own individual interpretations of anthroposophy or SWE. For example, respondents, as a whole, reject the notions of comprehensivity, the knowledge hierarchy, and spiritual superiority, that are commonly experienced in SWSs. Whilst not developing further the epistemological consequences of these notions, there is a clear awareness that they detract from or even contradict the ideals and the spirit of Steiner's thinking.

Steiner's (2007a) poetic description of anthroposophy as "a path of knowledge to guide the Spiritual in the human being to the Spiritual in the universe" (p. 13), characterises anthroposophy as a methodology. Note the language employed here. It is not *the* path, but *a* path. Further, it does not compel the human being from one realm to the other, but merely guides her. This leaves her free to accept or reject, to pause, ponder, doubt, backtrack, surge ahead, in short, it lets her be. But what is compelling about this characterisation of anthroposophy as methodology is that it invokes a sense of responsibility in each human being. In order to fulfil her work, her vocation, the teacher must seek the knowledge she requires in the beyond, in the as yet unmade future, which is nonetheless there in her students, pushing outward through the flesh of their being into the flesh of the world. But seeking and finding this knowledge is not sufficient; the way back beckons. And this leg of the journey is full of uncertainty and trepidation. There is almost an alarming admission that it is flawed, that error will occur, and that the way will become lost in distractions and misgivings. But that is unavoidable, if what is sought is meaningful knowledge that can reshape the world and self.

This significant theme points towards a tension that becomes visible in what Derrida has called "the structurality of structure" (1978, pp. 6, 279). This is the place, where anthroposophy and SWE as grand, *hegemonising* narratives, are encountered by the individual, *localising* narrative. This

[207] I have experienced this phenomenon to some extent while participating in a study group for several years between 2009-2012. My observations and insights have been written down in an unpublished document titled, *Reflections on a Study Group*.

is the primary tension underlying the learning culture of SWE, and all other tensions mentioned here concerning anthroposophy and SWE. It is the tension between SWE as *methodology* and SWE as *method*. What difference am I invoking here? It is this: method is a way, a reified path that has been mapped before, or even if it were new, that could be mapped at all.

Andrew explained that SWE is essentially a "methodology for education," in other words, a way of doing education, rather than a prescriptive method. For him, it is "not necessarily so much to do with curriculum or particular structures within schools." This methodology is underpinned by the "whole idea of how you work with yourself in order to connect with spiritual reality that you then impart or convey a sense of to your students." Hence, methodology is not a way, but it is the making of a way. Like Machado's walking, which is analogous to the journeying of the researcher, a methodology is distinctive because it embodies a way of thinking about the landscape ahead and the passage of time, and the nature of the task. It is not fixed nor can it be fixed because everyone who "employs" it changes it, making into their way. By contrast, working with a methodology leaves no visible trace behind that can be copied. Like the pathway to the Grail, it is traversed, but it cannot be sought. Perhaps only in the heart is the pathway felt. As Steiner said, "it arises… as a need of the heart" (2007a, p. 13) Perhaps also it is for this reason that Robert has suggested that anthroposophy is "not about what you know." He intimates that it might be possible to "know very little" and still "have the right gesture. It's a gesture. It's a soul gesture."

As an afterthought, I would like to reinforce earlier comments about the kinship between anthroposophy and qualitative research, as well, perhaps, as post-qualitative research. I suspect that what Steiner initiated as spiritual science was a forerunner of this divergent branch of scientific research. What is commonly termed "spiritual reality" in his lectures and books, is a world that exists beyond the instrumental calculations of natural science. The kind of perception that leads into the spiritual world is embodied, felt and intuitive. It employs cognition not as a measuring rod but as a lever to lift our capacity for thinking into the *beingness* of ordinary phenomena. In other words, cognition participates in the process of becoming acquainted with the being of the world, rather than imposing its constructions (concepts) on the world as a passive recipient. This acknowledges that the world is agential, in the same way that another person is, and that we ourselves are. Knowledge is dialogic and reciprocal: it neither dominates nor silences the Other, but actively seeks cooperation and collaboration.

7.6.4 Listening to teachers' voices.

Teachers' voices in SWSs often seem to go unnoticed. Here I want to draw attention to two prominent issues that have emerged from this study. Firstly, the widespread devaluation of emotionality as a significant contributor to and indicator of the social health of the workplace. Secondly, the devaluation of teachers as innovative agents and researchers of SWE.

7.6.4.1 The devaluation of emotionality.

The content of teachers' lived experiences is unsurprisingly suffused with narratives of emotionality. Emotionality is, as I have demonstrated above (p. 232), a powerful indicator of and contributor to individual and group health. It is well known that teachers experience high levels of burnout or dissatisfaction (Santoro, 2011; S. Gordon, 2018). However, in her recent book, *Teacher,* Gabby Stroud (2018) amplifies the notion that teachers are less the victims of *burnout* than *demoralisation*. The distinction matters because the first term implies a need to focus on the individual characteristics of the "burnt out" teacher, whereas the latter term places the burden of attention on functional or organisational factors that hinder the performance of teachers (Santoro, 2011; S. Gordon, 2018). Santoro (2011) argues that demoralisation results when "experienced teachers who are fuelled by the moral dimensions of teaching find that they can no longer access the moral rewards of the work" (p. 1). Fundamental questions are posed by such teachers concerning the ethical validity of their work, on a global and a personal level, as well as the moral alignment between prescribed teaching and curriculum pathways and their own judgment of good practice. In Santoro's view, such moral rewards "are endangered in these difficult times" (p. 3). Being able to conduct "good work" (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001, p. 6) depends upon having opportunities to gain such moral rewards. In other words, teachers will tend to perceive their work as "good", and therefore personally gratifying and professionally sustaining (Santoro, 2011, p. 4), when they see that their work has significance for others and that they are able to conduct it in a way that makes sense to them. This is a complementary dimension to Miller's (J. Miller, 2010, p. 8) assertion that "the loving presence of the teacher" is one of the most influential factors in education. The teacher who ceases to love their vocation begins to lack the conviction that they are doing "good" work.

It is possible to see an intersection of the notion of demoralisation and that of "functional stupidity" (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012, 2016; Paulsen, 2017). The underlying idea behind the latter concept is precisely that matters of moral-ethical significance and sense are thwarted, and employees (teachers) find themselves assailed with insuperable challenges to their integrity and

professionalism. The narratives of many of the teachers interviewed in this study highlight this destructive tension on many levels: in the classroom, in the staff room and in leadership and governance fora. Far from being excluded from such tensions, SW teachers face their own distinctive problems, largely a function of the peculiar nature of the circumstances in which they operate. It is arguable that SW teachers are exposed to higher levels of idealism that non-SW teachers[208], and that they are perhaps more likely to experience the kind of dissonance described by Santoro (2011) and others.

Possible conclusions from this analysis:

i. Recognising demoralisation as an allied problem to burnout, looking for symptoms and underlying causes, and seeking potential remedies for both conditions. This may have consequences for the ongoing debate about the implementation of the curriculum (giving teachers more latitude in applying this in accordance with their own judgment and moving away from the rigid, so-called "Steiner" approach, that leaves little room for individual judgment). There are also implications form the debate about the class teacher period. It seems that in Zdrazil's survey of variations to the traditional class teacher cycle, there are indications that schools and systems have responded to the exigencies of personal lives, as well the pressures that derive from the state's interest in education. The reality of teachers' emotional exhaustion needs to be considered as significantly as archival interpretations of what Steiner said about the subject (Zdrazil, 2013, 2014).

ii. Acknowledging the increased exposure to idealism in SWE and recognising the potential risks of this overexposure. The emphasis on the "sacred" task, the prophetic nature of Steiner's words on the subject, and so on need to be balanced by a certain pragmatism that recognises the dangers associated with such languaging of one's work. Greater exposure to other educational perspectives and a more robust dialogue with the non-Steiner community is likely to militate against this powerful onesidedness in SWE.

[208] This assertion is extrapolated from findings in studies that compare Steiner and non-Steiner teachers. For example, Graudenz et al. (2013) found that job satisfaction was much higher in the group of Steiner teachers (91% compared to 71%). Some of the reasons suggested for this difference included "a tendency to idealise this relationship [between teachers and students] and to over-estimate their role as teacher" (p. 108). Other important factors include parents' high expectations, participatory management, experience of freedom and independence in the classroom and lesson design, and a shared pedagogical ideology (that is, reliance and belief in Steiner's ideas).

Moreover, the Graudenz et al. study also found that nearly half of Waldorf teachers surveyed experienced their "professional life as a source of strain on their mental health" (2013, p. 111). This is less than 10% lower than the level expressed by state school teachers, but still points to a considerable problem in the profession.

iii. Greater emphasis needs to be given to collegial relationships and the development of compassionate communication among team members, or what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) term "social capital". This is a field that has been starkly neglected because apparently Steiner did not discuss this, and consequently there is either no Steiner approach to dealing with collegial problems,[209] or it may even be considered "unSteiner" to do so. Work on this fundamental aspect is increasingly recognised academically (Beatty, 2010; Gauthier, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Nielsen, 2011). This is another issue where interaction between Steiner and non-Steiner worlds could be productive for both.

iv. Fundamentally, the issue at stake has to do with the valuation of the individual narrative: everyone's story matters and needs to be heard. As Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) contend, an educational environment that is driven by the power of professional capital is characterised by a "moral purpose" (p. 5) that continually seeks to augment learning and to optimise service to others. SWSs are no different. SWE is carried into the future by individual teachers who are ignited by the passion to teach and who bear a sense of responsibility for the future of humanity. This impulse is not partisan. On the contrary, it precedes and empowers distinctive educational philosophies. If education was merely the reproduction of existing moral and intellectual knowledge, there would be no space for the present generation to establish its own identity, and perhaps more significantly, to make its own unique cultural contribution to shaping the human narrative (R. Miller, 2008): "that the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse" (Whitman, 1986, p. 299).

7.6.4.2 Valuing teachers.

The study data have provided a clear basis for honouring the work of a number of teachers as both innovative and contemporary. The qualities mentioned above as distinctive aspects of the new narratives (for example, openness, presencing, contemporaneity, reflexivity, and relanguaging) apply consistently to this group of teachers. Surveying the group of respondents, we find many engaging and noteworthy qualities that mark them as worthy of positive valuation. Regrettably, in almost every case, these teachers did not feel themselves so valued or regarded in their particular work situation. Nonetheless, what their narratives highlight are serious problems in SWSs, as well as

[209] Outside of what, in the midst of intracollegial conflicts, can sound as banal ritualisation of stereotypical advice such, doing personal work, engaging in group artistic activities and so on. There are few formulas to resolving social conflicts and improving interpersonal relationships. In a way it is counter-intuitive that a mind as capacious as Steiner's did not envisage or offered little help towards the depth of social dysfunction that would prevail in many SWSs, at least from time to time, if not sitting underneath as an undertone of the social fabric of the school.

positive directions for renewed practice. For example, Simon evokes a strong presence of the shadow side of leadership in a SWS; in Peter, we find a deep spirituality that sustains his search for guidance in becoming a SW teacher; in Bernard, an appreciation and enlivened application of the phenomenological method of teaching, as well as a sober critique of the CofT; in Alison, an acute awareness of the need to work collaboratively as ballast against the enormous responsibilities invested in class teachers; in Susan, a narrative of total commitment towards the survival of her school, despite significant adversity, and depicts a powerful image of the flawed leader; in Robert, an uneasy alliance between loving SWE in the classroom and distancing himself from its shaded political aspects. Jennifer uncovers a lack of ethical integrity in dealing with allegations of sexual abuse by a teacher; Michaela identifies the many threats that face SWE today, both internal and external, and also extols the importance of doing research; Michelle presents a tale of emotional descent towards burnout and demoralisation, despite being enfolded in mentor support; Julia's story highlights the importance of criticality and the need to position Steiner's ideas in a contemporary context; Andrew upholds the need to integrate academic learning and SWE, and is critical of intellectual parochialism that shuns the wealth of new knowledge emerging in the world today. Finally, Ian's is a voice for eclecticism in all aspects of the life of SWE, from management, professional learning to the classroom

7.6.4.3 Model teachers.

I offer as part of this new narrative, a brief "anthology" of two teachers, whose own stories not only provide richly textured snapshots of the lifeworld of their schools, but also offer many worthwhile insights and ideas about how a renewal of SWE might be imagined, albeit presented in small vignettes rather than as grand narratives. The two teachers are Wendy and Sally.

i. To begin with, they both valued and advocated a *learning ethos* based on the growth mindset and on challenging students. As a high school teacher, Wendy worked primarily in Art to enact this mindset. As a primary school teacher, Sally used the broader vehicle of subjects available to her. Both practised project-based learning, encouraged students to develop critical thinking, as well as resilience, and maintained a strong work ethic.

ii. Both teachers shared a *commitment to PL* that incorporates a strong component of self-learning, through personal study and remaining connected to innovation and contemporary developments in their fields of study. In Sally's case, she adapted a conventional music program available in the mainstream, and eventually through her successful application, inspired her colleagues to train in the program, with a view to implementing it in their classrooms. As we saw above (p. 251), the program was

criticised for being "not Steiner," but after some tribulations was eventually adopted across the school. As an artist herself, Wendy exposed her students to current ideas in modern artistic thinking and practice. Her enthusiasm for learning took her to conferences and training workshops, where she gained great insight, amongst other things, into the ways in which Steiner and Goethe's ideas about art and colour were being applied. However, this liberal approach was shunned by many of her colleagues, who were older and "experienced" SW teachers.

iii. They were also committed to collegiacy as the social and professional basis for collaborative co-operation and mutual support. Wendy, in particular, called for collegiate support of transdisciplinarity, especially in subjects that naturally admitted fusing or integrating learning activities, such as Art, History and Music. Her deep frustration lay in the thwarting of her implicit understanding that the SW curriculum was inherently "connected" (J Miller, 2010, p. 12), and yet the social disposition of the collegial body seemed incapable of bringing this truth to light, let alone actualising its potential. Her narrative highlights the critical importance of counteracting isolationism which worked against this kind of potential collegial collaboration; Sally called this the "kingdom mentality." Neither teacher is critical of the College concept as an ideal. Rather they see the CofT as a potentially powerful platform for PL where collegial support of students and learning programs may be enacted. However, a truly unifying ethos that is grounded in a common praxis is needed. But this has more to do with how anthroposophy and SWE are positioned within the SWS, that is with ways of thinking and being, rather than with content and ideas or beliefs.

iv. Their practice of anthroposophy was intuitive and thoroughly grounded in their professional practice as teachers and educators. This allows a balance between practicality and esotericism, which is necessary, I believe, in order to remain authentic to the philosophical basis of SWE. For Wendy, a fundamental premise of anthroposophy, which is carried over into SWE and guides the teacher, is the pedagogic value of love, or she puts it: "loving everybody, not being judgmental and loving the world, the current world, not what it could be." This philosophy is translated into daily classroom practice. Whilst, purists might baulk at her free, yet grounded interpretations of Steiner's pedagogy, her attention is exactly where Steiner recommended it should be: on the students before her and "who they are in the world." Out of this knowledge, she guides them to find their own 'voice, expression and connection to the contemporary world' (cf Gidley, 2017).

Wendy and Sally's narratives are "subversive" (Arnold, 2011, p. 170; Postman, 1971). Perhaps, they are no different from some of the pedagogical narratives collected by Burrows and Stehilik (2014), where various SW teachers describe their own individual paths of innovation, that require them to break through unspoken boundaries that have kept SWE in something of a bubble. The SW movement needs to hear more of these subversive narratives. Hopefully, the locus of practice will begin to shift so that innovation and contemporaneity will become regarded as normative in SW pedagogy.

7.6.5 From protection to freedom.

It is well established that Steiner's work was aimed at instilling both experiences and opportunities for his audience to practise and develop their own capability for living thinking. This is contrary to the usual representation of Steiner, as someone with the purpose of disseminating useful knowledge that could be applied directly by the listener without the mediation of interpretation or inner effort. One example of living thinking is evident in what is perhaps Steiner's most commonly employed metaphor – the chrysalis. Typically, this metaphoric imaginary is used by him to render the idea of the immortality of the soul to children in educational texts (Steiner, 1909/1981, 1975/1998a). It is also a reminder that "the World-Spirit has inscribed such a picture in Nature to draw our attention to the process" of the movement of the soul from one state of being to another (Steiner, 1961/1984, p. 140). Similarly, a transition can be elicited in Steiner's conception of education as the progress from childhood to adulthood. Two words are used often to represent SWE: *protection* (Astley & Jackson, 2000) and *freedom* (Carlgren, 2008). Astley & Jackson (2000) state that SWSs "are often aligned with movements orientated to the protection of childhood" (p. 212). The notion that childhood is in need of protection is strongly emphasised in the promoted image of SWSs today. For example, the About page of the Australian Association for Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood Education (AARSECE, 2018) contains the following words, "As part of a worldwide movement and a partner of the international Alliance for Childhood, the Australian Association for Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood Education is working to protect childhood." On the other hand, SWE is commonly referred to as an "education towards freedom." According to Easton, "one of Waldorf's major aims is to educate individual's freedom" (F. Easton, 1995, p. 94). Thus, in its construction, SWE is set up as a transitional movement from a condition of protection towards one of freedom or releasement. A verse by Steiner captures the modal changes of SWE throughout this transition:

To receive the child in reverence

To educate the child with love

To release the child in freedom

(as cited in Petrash, 2002, p. 21)

As we have seen, in the preceding chapter, the transition from childhood through adolescence to adulthood can be problematic. Many important contested narratives find expression in this problematic transition. The tension between protection and releasement is evident also as the tension between imitation and judgment, which again spans the developmental journey between the first and the third seven-year stage in SWE. Interestingly, the same tension confronts the adult who, taking up Steiner's ideas and theories, must first "imitate" the shape of the ideas, a state which however does not yet constitute understanding or knowledge, as a precondition for developing a personal understanding and, ultimately, a capability for spiritual seeing.

In the narratives offered by the study's respondents, the length of the class teacher period was raised as a key issue with distinctive, operating tensions. Whilst there are many benefits to the practice of "looping" (Barz & Randoll, 2007; F Easton, 1995, 1997; Goral, 2009; Randoll & Peters, 2015; Randoll, Graudenz & Peters, 2014; Uhrmacher, 1991; Woods et al., 2005), problems have been raised both in the study data as well as by commentators and researchers. The core advantage to the class teacher period, primarily recognised as "continuity", resonates in tension with a number of serious concerns.

Firstly, the intensity of effort required has been referred to as "a nightmare" and "completely unrealistic" (Robert). Francis (2004) has argued persuasively that the plethora of expertise required of a class teacher, especially in the last few years of the cycle, exceeds what is humanely possible in all but few exceptions. Randoll et al.'s (2014) study found that over a third of students felt the eight-year period was too long (p. 110), and a large majority would have preferred more specialist input in the last years of their seven- or eight-year cycle (p. 104).

Secondly, following on from this natural limitation there arises a perception that the quality of specialised learning, particularly in the last three years of the traditional class teacher cycle, is compromised. Francis (2004) contends that by pushing the expectation that teachers can fulfil the challenge of broad specialisation of subjects, superficiality is encouraged. He explains that the teacher is capable only of making a slight impression on each subject, which in turn encourages them to perpetuate this limitation by offering a cursory account (based on one or two sources) which the students copy into their workbooks. Andrew has picked up on this issue in regard to the level of Science teaching. It is also evident in the case of Mathematics. It appears that the call for change comes mostly from parents and students. According to Randoll et al. (2014, p. 98), nearly 60% of students would have preferred greater input from specialist subject teachers. Some of the prominent criticisms garnered by the researchers about student perceptions in Year 8 have been

mentioned in the Literature Review. Overall, more than 70% of Year 8 stated that they would have liked more specialist teachers teaching them (p. 104). A concomitant finding was that a substantial percentage (50%) of students did not feel adequately prepared for high school (p. 106).

In addition to the negative criticisms concerning academic learning, there are also attitudinal or cultural criticisms worth mentioning here. We have already seen, largely from Jennifer's comments, that the class teacher period represents a serious "potential to groom" young children. In the wider context of the school's political structure, "too much power" is invested in the class teacher (a view also shared by Alison). Some of the comments gathered by Randoll et al. (2014) also reinforce these perceptions: the relationship between students and teachers is "too intimate," the "family atmosphere" means the "standards of achievement go down"; "the class teacher time is too much about control"; there is little "free space of your own for making decisions" (pp. 115-116).

Students themselves have raised the point that an imbalance exists between the level of care and closeness which are fundamental to the principle of continuity between class teacher and class, and the level of learning, resulting in dependency. Students are also concerned about "learning how to learn," which they feel should be given a higher priority in SWE. Unsurprisingly, they also felt that more freedom and power to decide should be accorded them as they become older (Randoll et al., 2014, p. 115).

The lofty language of SWE sets up high expectations internally as well as externally. The "credo" that is found on many SWS webpages and prospectus documents articulates these expectations in a striking manner: "to develop human beings who are able out of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives" (Steiner, 1943/2010, preface 1923). But merely saying it does not make it so. This issue highlights a common problem: the realisation or the grounding of the ideals of SWE. It is clear from the evidence presented by respondents, in common with empirical research conducted, that there is substantial room for improvement here.

It is possible to perceive throughout the study a number of "lines of flight" that intersect at this important juncture in SWE: the transition from protection as a gesture of early childhood and primary education to freedom as a gesture of high school. It is a problematic transition for Parzival also, whose "education" has been framed almost entirely by nature and by his mother's anxiety about his future. This anxiety can be perceived also in how certain attitudes have been framed towards SWE: in the aversion towards contemporaneity, which is seen as dominated by adversarial forces (Gulbenkian, 1999), and in concomitant tendencies towards spiritual superiority and ritualisation. Wendy has been a vocal critic of a certain tendency in parents of young children towards overprotection, an attitude that is also highlighted in Randoll et al. (2014) and in Francis

(2004). The readymade association of SWE with the early childhood and primary aesthetic continues to problematise this uneven centre of gravity by creating an idealised picture of SWE, which, arguably, only belongs to the early years of schooling (Whedon, 2007).

The journey to adulthood is problematic for many children. Contemporary educational discourse seems largely unconcerned or unaware of the challenges associated with this transition. The prevalence of transmission modes of learning (J. Miller, 2010) testify to this. Yet the passage from childhood to adulthood has always been recognised as a transformative learning experience. One of the most powerful claims that is made of SWE is that it best prepares the child for this transition (Puckeridge, 2014). On the basis of the study's testimony, it seems that this remains an open question.

Graudenz et al.'s (2013) criticism of the lack of awareness in SW educators of contemporary pedagogy finds amplification here. The shift towards ecological consciousness and primacy of sustainability as not only a pedagogical objective, but the primary social, political and economic concern of our time (Capra & Luisi, 2014), signals the need to shift educational modus operandi towards transformative pedagogies. Much of the transformative learning discourse is consonant with Steiner's pedagogical thinking, but unless SW educators press outwards through the bubble of "anthroposophical" knowledge, the healing power inherent in these pedagogies will remain closed to the world of SWE (Arnold, 2011; Dirkx, 2002, 2008; Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006; Freire, 1996; Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999; McWhinney & Markos, 2003; Neville, 2011, 2013; Nielsen, 2011; O'Sullivan, 1999, 2011; Sterling, 2009)

7.6.6 The shadow as the source of healing.

In order to identify patterns and processes working through this theme, I employ a threefold system: light source – illuminated body – and shadow. In addition, Steiner's (2002/2016) theorising of the shadow cults of ancient druidism provide a metaphoric heuristic to understanding this system. Steiner describes how the practice of standing in stone circles gazing at the shadows of the large cromlechs, the Druids were able to perceive "a quality which continues to live in the shadow cast by the sun when the physical sunlight is held back". What is thereby held back are "secrets of the world and of the cosmos(p. 77)". In other words, we will examine the threefold system suggested by the data by focussing on the shadow aspect as revelatory of a "higher" light (Wolfson, as cited in von Stuckrad, 2005, p. 89), a light that is perceptible only to the inner eye.

Here we must picture a stream of light (spirit light), a body that is illuminated by the light, and the shadow cast by the body interrupting the light's flow. I will summarise these components according to data offered by respondents:

i. *Spirit light*. The spirit light is the sacred, the special mission or task, the Master (Rudolf Steiner), or his special knowledge. Each of these elements is itself a source of illumination. The effect of the encounter of the light with the physical body is that the flow of this light is interrupted. However, if we follow Steiner's theorisation of the process, we can assume that some sort of substance manages to penetrate the body and spills out into the shadow.

ii. *Illuminated light-body.* Here we have to do with a somewhat diminished light, but still resplendent. Taking each element or quality of the spirit light in turn, we can link these to certain aspects of the illuminated body. For example, the notion of the sacred and of the special mission highlight the indispensability and the high valorisation of the vocation of the teacher. Rudolf Steiner as the Master becomes the guru, internalised mentor and role model. It is worth considering if the perceived power and greatness of the man (Ahlbäck, 2008) creates a temptation to enact this greatness in the spiritual aspirant (Kühlewind, 1991/1992)? The sense of hubris or having superior knowledge or immunity from ordinary scrutiny on the basis of positions of power are evident throughout the respondents' data.

iii. *The shadow.* The shadow is actually a three-dimensional space. If we conceive of this phenomenon in a natural ecology, such as a tree casting a great shadow all around it, throughout the day, we may see how its presence signals the creation of microclimates and microecologies that allow life to be maintained and extended beyond what would be possible without the shadow. Literally, by interrupting the physical light of the sun, certain patterns of life and habitats become visible in the shadow. This reflects the relevance of Steiner's earlier statement, but in a tangible and accessible manner. What do we find in the shadow of this illuminated body? Power in various forms becomes visible, as a shadow of light-filled revelation. It extends the power of knowledge through a hierarchy, the power of the personality through charisma and social control, the vibrant language of the spirit becomes the languaging of social status and occult secrecy. Hence, the shadow allows counter-narratives to develop in response to the illumination that makes the body or object visible. Even the reality of "disease" (Jennifer) highlights the lack of integrity and untruthfulness that festers in a small community. *Without this manifestation*, and *without the witness* to this, the self-deception would go unchecked and the lack of alignment between the source light and reflection in the human being would go unnoticed. In a sense,

the shadow indicates the extent to which the physical body has absorbed the moral qualities of the light into itself. The shadow is the repository of untransformed moral light.

Theorising this traditional binary in this manner allows a nuanced dialogue to emerge between the "light" and the "dark". The model reflects the Manichean view, namely that both illumination and shadow are creatures of the light, and therefore with equal claim to validity. Far from discrediting or diminishing the shadow, we can cognise in its regions, the continuation of qualities that belong to the original source, but by becoming implicated in the physical world, and therefore contextualised, these qualities undergo changes. Bishop (2008) sees the *shadow* with its binary, *hope*, as "integral to mythopoetics" (p. 37), an overarching cognitive mode that opposes the hegemonic gaze of scientific rationality. Further, he argues that "all pedagogical organizations have a shadow side" (p. 48). It is the confrontation with this shadow side, the "descent" (Palmer, 2000; Romanyshyn, 2007), that prefigures the dark night of the soul (Moore, 1994) and that unleashes an awareness of both the possibilities and the limitations inherent in this movement. Aadlandsvik adds that, "between hope and shadow there is a tension, a constant dialectic" (2009, p. 102). It is this dialectic that I am invoking here in this penultimate section of the chapter.

In other words, the ternary scheme – light, body and shadow – allows a view of the whole and recognises that each part is integral to the whole. Unlike the traditional bias in the light-shadow binary, this ternary metaphor positions each part as having a distinctive role that is constitutive of the lived reality of SWE and consequently, the lived reality of teachers and educators working in this community. Recognising this is a starting point. From there on it may become possible to work productively with the apparent contradictions and inconsistencies in SWE praxis. The risks and problems associated with SWE, identified in the course of this study and summarised in the above section (the Nomadic Survey, p. 265ff) are, in this scheme, representations of the shadow side of anthroposophy and SWE. Failure to acknowledge let alone investigate this powerful, ever-present influencing field in SWE allows these potential and actual problems to operate without hindrance. However, having the capacity to sense their ubiquitous activity may permit SW teachers and educators to act consciously to mitigate the impact of these issues, and to find a way of bringing renewal into the life of SWE. In the words of the Swedish poet, Tomas Tranströmer,

> Friends you drunk some darkness and became visible (Bly, 1975, p. 263).

7.7 Epilogue

Anthroposophy offers many fruitful ideas that might find their fulfilment in purposive and moral human action. However, once seized, these ideas cannot remain the property of the intellect

or the individual. They must become activated from within; they must become *ideals*. “Every idea which does not become your ideal slays a force in your soul; every idea which becomes your ideal creates within you life-forces” (Steiner, 1961/1994, p. 25). Deleuze intimates the same alchemical process with these words,

> … a theory is exactly like a tool box. It has nothing to do with the signifier... A theory has to be used, it has to work. And not just for itself. If there is no one to use it, starting with the theorist himself who, as soon as he uses it ceases to be a theorist, then a theory is worthless, or its time has not yet arrived. You don’t go back to a theory, you make new ones, you have others to make… A theory won’t be totalized, it multiplies (Deleuze & Foucault, 1972)

In a seminal essay, “Where Natural Science and Spiritual Science Meet,” Rudolf Steiner (1983/1996) provides an important clue to this process, which is the activity of thinking itself. There he theorises that our capacity for conceptualisation or concept-formation can be led in two directions. In the most common and perhaps obvious manner, it enables us to form mental pictures of our experiences, and thereby allows us to make sense of those experiences. It does this by organising and arranging our experiences, but at the cost of diminishing the power of those experiences (p. 19). On the other hand, this capacity can also be placed in the service of our own psychic powers, by extending the forces involved in mental picturing, thereby strengthening our soul faculties. Steiner likens this “choice” to our ability to use wheat grain as food, or as seed for regrowing plants (p. 18). In other words, there is a *developmental* possibility inherent in concepts. Whether this possibility is developed rests with us. The shift from idea to ideal enlivens the idea in us. We add to a simple cognitive relation, a moral-volitional component, that impels us to action by realising the idea, hence turning it into a creative deed. In other words, the shift from idea to ideal connects us to the world in a creative manner.

Let us consider a common example in primary education. In mainstream pedagogy, writing is typically introduced as a system of codification, whereby letters and sounds are used to encode words that are representationally connected to sensory experiences. Although the forms of the letters may be practised, there is no further attention or value given to the letters beyond as symbols. However, mythopoetically, the origin of the runes (the ancient Nordic script), as described in the *Edda* (The Poetic Edda, 1990), the Norse creation poem, is attributed to a divine source, namely Odin, the Father of the Norse gods. So the story goes, he placed them in the hands of humanity as tools that might extend the action of divine *poiesis*, or creation. This magical use of the runes predates its application to the task of communication, which was originally invocatory or valedictory, when they became employed for the dissemination of prosaic information, as letters of the alphabet. We might apply this knowledge to the pedagogy applied to teaching writing. We may

certainly employ words to construct instrumental knowledge that may help us to communicate. But there is a further possibility to learning language for its own sake, as a deepened experience that extends divine poiesis, for example in our perception of the world when we can recognise this creative poiesis in the languaging of the world itself (Abram, 1997; Kühlewind, 1986; Wright, 2001). This deepened experience of language is a re-experiencing of the magical invention handed down by Odin, and it can become the basis for a pedagogy that is based on a contemplative approach to language, one which sees language as fundamentally worldly and continues across human, non-human and more-than-human realms. It is worth considering in this respect whether Steiner's indications for introducing letters, as well as numbers, did not serve this purpose also. This is certainly consonant with the grand narrative inherent in anthroposophy that unites micro- and macro-cosmos. Of course, it also unites the exoteric and the esoteric. The practical is extended by the theoretical, and the latter acquires its meaning when it matures into praxis.

I have tried in the preceding section to present a common, unifying theme in what have been presented as new narratives, namely the challenge to lift Steiner's ideas into ideals. By shifting the locus of activity from recalling and rehearsing Steiner's ideas to developing them further, we also help to ground the distinctive epistemology that is anthroposophy. The idea becomes the vehicle that can carry us towards renewal of ourselves and our world, all the while making possible a higher form of union between ourselves and the world. This is an epistemology that finds its fulfilment, through us, in our own acts of free thinking – an epistemology of freedom.

I present these narratives in the hope that they may further stimulate research in a new way that *adds* to the exegetical inquiry of Steiner's archives, an original, praxis-oriented exploration of the ecology of ideas. Such research would acknowledge that ideas are themselves living entities that evolve, develop, live, die and are reborn.

8 Conclusion

> The Grail cannot in fact be approached through words of any kind, or through philosophical speculations. The only way to approach it is by changing all these words into feeling, by becoming able to feel in the Grail the sum of all that is holy… then one also grasps the secret expressed in the words entrusted to Parzival in the saga: that whenever a king of the Grail, a truly appointed guardian of the Grail, dies, the name of his accredited successor appears on the Holy Grail. 'There it is to be read' – which means that it will be necessary to learn to read the stellar script again in a new form (Steiner, 2010, p. 49)

In an article with a title that is reminiscent of Steiner's prophetic language, "Transformative education across the threshold," McWhinney and Markos (2003) assert that "the human condition has changed radically in the past 100 years" (p. 16). The archetypal face of transformation, previously revealed to a few only throughout human history, now confronts us all (p. 17). The normative cycle of mystical transformation that wheels through death and new life now circles the entire planet and every life form. Mythology has become everyday reality. In the context of this shattering of realities, transformation and renewal can no longer be denied.

Set against this prosaic backdrop, it should not surprise anyone to hear the claim that SWE is undergoing a profound transformation. For, though there were few signs apparent to me just five or six years ago that this transformation was underway, I certainly felt its urgency, when I last worked in a SWS at a management level. Today, it can no longer be disavowed.

At the 2019 Annual Conference of Anthroposophy, held in Switzerland, the Argentinian educator, Alejandro Ranovsky spoke about SWE in a way that perhaps is only possible today by a SW educator working at the periphery of this global movement.

> What is the advantage of being so far away, in Argentina? It forces people to become creative. There is also the distance in time: it is a hundred years since the first Waldorf School was founded. It is a treasure that has been given to us. We can hide this treasure and give it back unchanged, or we can make it fertile so that it grows into something bigger than what we received. (Ranovsky, 2019, p. 2)

Ranovsky reiterates what many observers, both insiders and outsiders, have intimated: "the historical and local conditions [of the original school] are no longer valid today." With characteristic modesty he concedes that SWE in Argentina faced "three Achilles heels." These are well known to any critical insider: the inability of "our internal language" to fit into contemporary scientific discourse; the continued plea for "legal exceptions in order to retain our educational freedom;" and the ongoing neglect of children from marginalised and underserved social groups. Ranovsky's insight into the psychic dynamic at work in contemplating these failures is chastening. We may recognise

that, like the Grail, SWE is a tremendous gift to humanity at a time when its need is becoming more readily apparent. However, if it is insisted that the role of SW educators is merely to protect this treasure from contamination, then we have entered "a dangerous place of purity, perfection and stagnation" (Ranovsky, 2019, p. 2). The gift of SWE is deep social transformation through a renewal of culture and an enlivening of our ways of thinking and being in the world. Steiner's (1920/1983) lonely call at the beginning of the last century for the renewal of the social life through a renewal of education has now become the powerful anthem of a broad community of thinkers and activists who are committed, *as an urgent global necessity*, to transformation as a personal, social and ecological process of renewal.

This study has set out to investigate the condition of SWE at the beginning of the 21st century, one hundred years after its inception, in 1919, in Stuttgart, in the wake of a destructive first global conflagration. The guiding light behind the establishment of the initial SWS was Rudolf Steiner, whose driving motivation was the renewal of the social order and social life, which he perceived in the early years of the 20th century to be undergoing widespread collapse and degeneration, the synchronous world war being a stark reminder of this. When we turn our attention to the condition of our present day society, we can readily perceive an unfolding crisis in every aspect of human existence (Macy & Brown, 1999; Macy & Johnstone, 2012 ; R. Miller, 2008; Neville, 2011; Slaughter, 2015).

Using the Parzival conceit of "asking the question," the study has examined SW teachers' narratives about their lived experiences of working in SWSs. What has been revealed are serious problems that are holding back the further development of SWE as it strives to face and deal with the issues and challenges of the present generation. Some of these problems, such as the difficulties associated with self-management and self-administration by teachers, have long been recognised, although there appears to be an unwillingness in large pockets of the SW community to explore alternative models, on the basis that this self-governing model was apparently indicated or promoted by Rudolf Steiner, and so it is argued, cannot be changed without unravelling the core of SWE. Other problems are less well recognised but no less overt. Many of these problems, I have shown, derive from fundamental attitudes towards Steiner's ideas and to Steiner himself.

One of the most ingrained problems is the characteristic insularity of SW communities, and in particular, the unflinching attachment to the notion that Steiner is the only source of knowledge. In my view, this attachment paralyses the genuine development of anthroposophy and recognition of Steiner's intentions in applying anthroposophical ideals to the development of social, cultural, economic and spiritual life into the future. This mission requires that students of anthroposophy

must engage with the ongoing and present development of knowledge such that a continual fertilisation of that knowledge can take place through the contemplative and transformative activity of living thinking. Continuing to promote abstract divisions between Steiner and non-Steiner realms of knowledge, whether in education or in any other field of human activity, is to continue propagating the erroneous notion that ideas are fundamentally ideological, that is that they can be contained within particular interests, or interest groups. Ideas are as much part of the living ecology that permeates and surrounds us, as the air we breathe or the water we drink or the food we eat.

We have seen, in the preceding chapter, that the growing body of work in transformative learning theory generates an exciting body of knowledge that traverses and meshes together many fields of inquiry. This demonstration of multidisciplinarity and interconnectedness is the trademark of anthroposophical thinking. Not only is the work of J. Miller, R. Miller, Dirkx, Arnold, McWhinney and Markos, and Sterling resonant of Steiner's educational thinking, it also shares a deep spiritual kinship. The language may be different but the fundamental ideas are in alignment, as Munoz (2016) found between anthroposophy and the indigenous cosmologies of South West US. Making these connections is vital for the ongoing vitality of these healing ideas. Thankfully, we have come to a time in our human history where we can recognise with unerring clarity and gravity the importance of thinking healing and beneficial ideas, just as we have come to recognise the catastrophes that are heralded with inimical and unbalanced ideas.

Thank God our time is now when wrong
Comes up to face us everywhere… (Fry, 1981)

One of the most important messages that resonates from this study relates to a statement made by Steiner, and which has been repeated several times here. It is the notion that morality and epistemology cannot be separated without leading to a salutogenic crisis in the human being and as we are discovering, the earth herself. The emphasis on ecological, transformative learning in the previous paragraph is intended to show that this is a field of study that not only coincides with Steiner's cognitive and moral intentions, but actually continues the spirit and substance of his work into the present and into the future. Steiner was very much aware that ideas, like words, have their own biographies, and the collaborative work of human beings can work in mysterious and subtle ways across time and space (Barabasi, 2014). The advent and spread of the internet have perhaps made this more obvious, although I'm not sure that the link at work here is necessarily direct or overt communication.

The importance of recognising the moral-epistemological reality in which ideas proliferate and intersect becomes evident in the study of SWE, particularly in the disturbing dissonance

between the humanistic ideals that are not only associated with SWE but are also encouraged and promoted by insiders. This discord arises when, as the study's respondents have attested, these ideals are used to support and validate political ineptitude, social dysfunction and pedagogical rigidity. As we have seen, the languaging of anthroposophy and SWE contributes to this situation, by perpetuating a private language and knowledge system that demonstrates very little capacity for reflexivity. I have learnt throughout this doctoral journey that by immersing myself in other cognitive and research languages, by putting aside the familiarity of SW language, I have deepened and enriched my understanding and respect for Steiner and, especially, his greatest gift to humanity: the impulse to renew the art of education.

The call for transformative renewal cannot place the burden for such change on the shoulders of a single thinker, even one as majestic as Steiner. As McDermott (2015) states, "more than one spiritual thinker is needed for anyone searching for light in a dark spiritual environment" (p. 1). We live in an age that does not honour sufficiently the cultivation of the heart. Division, whether exoteric or esoteric, which is enflamed on many levels, is a symptom of our lack of emotional intelligence or better, what Arnold calls, "empathic intelligence" (Arnold, 2005).

The imperative for eclecticism or transdisciplinarity has been shown in relation to the great epistemological shift that has been gathering pace throughout the last century. The "precarious historical moment we now face" summons us to "discern what in the long story of human experience remains valuable for meeting our authentic needs and enriching our lives" (R. Miller, 2008, p. 12). Parallel to this invocation, we may also hear the sobering voice of Gary Lamb (2015), an advocate of SWE, who has argued that the private versus public controversy within the SW educational movement, especially in the US, is a major "distraction" behind which looms a larger, more sinister struggle. This struggle holds at stake nothing less that "the cultural evolution of humanity and even the very survival of our planet" (p. 54).

The idolisation of Steiner has created an insular culture that lacks awareness of its own historical significance, despite internal languaging that places its "sacred task" at the forefront of its members. A resultant dimming down of consciousness occurs because of this spiritual blindness. The many cautionary aphorisms throughout the ages (I have referred to Steiner, Basho and Mabel Collins in this thesis, but there are numerous others) that have been used to guide spiritual aspirants on the journey of self-discovery and self-transformation urge an integration of mind and heart.

Glossary

Eurythmy: a movement art form initiated by Rudolf Steiner but developed by others under his tutelage. It is intended to make visible the movements of the life body (or, etheric body) in speech and music. These movements are imaginatively perceptible, for example, when, in the case of speech formation, attention is focussed on the movement of the air currents through the chamber of the mouth and out into the surrounding air. In performing eurythmy, these movements are articulated with the whole body. The knowledge underlying the practice of eurythmy stems from Steiner's spiritual research. However, as demonstrated above, with the example of speech formation, it is possible to sense or intuit these movements in the body. More prosaically, the inner experiences of joy and sadness readily conjure expressions of movement that seem to naturally connect with these emotions. Emotions, like musical intervals and speech sounds, seem to take over the entire body, and become revealed all over its surface.

Intuition: In Steiner's world conception, there are three forms of consciousness above what we normally experience as the pinnacle of human awareness, namely the rational-intellectual form of consciousness. These are in sequence, Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition. The convention, in English translations of Steiner's work, has been to capitalise each word, in order to distinguish it from the everyday use of the same word. As explained in the Methodology section, each state of consciousness represents a progressive deepening of immersion of consciousness in the being of the world, such that the world loses its "object" character and is felt and experienced as a living, ensouled and inspirited being.

Main Lesson: Central to the pedagogical rhythm that is applied in SWSs, both primary and secondary, is the notion of the first or "Main Lesson" as the forum for intellectual (or head) learning, in contrast with artistic (or heart) and practical or kinaesthetic (or hands/limbs) learning, which occur in the second and third lessons, respectively. The main lesson may take place over a period from 2-4 or more weeks.[210]

Spiritual: The term translates the German word, *geistig*, which means both "of the spirit" as well "mental". It is as though the German language recognises that mental functions, or the activity of thinking already points to a world beyond the sense perceptible.

[210] Steiner's indications on the duration of the main lesson are inexact and varied. However, 3-4 weeks has become the standard in most SWSs.

References

Aadlandsvik, R. (2009). "In search of a lost eye: The mythopoetic dimension in "pedagogy" A review of Timothy Leonard & Peter Willis (Eds.) Pedagogies of the Imagination. Mythopoetic Curriculum in Eudcational Practice.". *Phenomenolgoy & Practice, 3*(1), 94-110. Retrieved from

AARSECE. (2018). About AARSECE. Retrieved from www.steinerearlychildhood.com

Abbott, J. (1997). *Why good schools alone will never be enough*. Paper presented at the Centre for Educational Innovation at the Manhattan Institute, NY. www.born-to-learn.org

Abram, D. (1997). *The spell of the sensuous*. New York: Vintage Books.

Abram, D. (2011). *Becoming animal: An earthly cosmology*. New York: Vintage Books.

Aceros, J. C. (2012). Social construction and relationalism: A conversation with Kenneth Gregen. *Universitas Psychologica, 11*(3), 1001-1011. Retrieved from SciELO website: www.scielo.org.co

Ackerman, R., & Maslin-Ostrowski, P. (2007). The wounded leader and emotional learning in the schoolhouse. *School Leadership & Management, 24*(3), 311-328. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/1363243042000266945

Ackerman, R., & Maslin-Ostrowski, P. (2002). *The wounded leader: How real leadership emerges in times of crisis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Adams, G. (1978). *Physical and ethereal spaces*. London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Adams, G., & Whicher, O. (1980). *The plant between sun and earth*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications.

Aeppli, W. (2002). *The developing child: Sense and nonsense in education* (A. V. Ritscher-Hill, Trans. 2nd ed.). Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press.

AFPWA. (2015). Find a school.

Ahlback, T. (2008). Rudolf Steiner as a religious authority. *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis, 20*(Western Esotericism), 9-16. Retrieved from www.journal.fi

Akkerman, S., & Niessen, T. (2011). Dialogical theories at the boundary. *Research Gate*, 1-21. Retrieved from ResearchGate website:

Alighieri, D. (1995). *Dante's Inferno* (M. Musa, Trans.). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Alvesson, M. (1995). The meaning and meaninglessness of postmodernism: Some ironic remarks. *Organization Studies, 16*(6), 1047-1075. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/017084069501600606

Alvesson, M. (2013). *Understanding organizational culture*. Los Angeles/London: SAGE Publications.

Alvesson, M., & Skoldberg, K. (2009). *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*. London: SAGE Publications Inc.

Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (2012). A stupidity-based theory of organisations. *Journal of Management Studies, 49*(7), 1194-1220. Retrieved from doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2012.01072.x

Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (2016). *The stupidity paradox: The power and pitfalls of functional stupidity at work*. London: Profile Books.

Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Metaphors we lead by: Understanding leadership in the real world*. London: Routledge.

Amrine, F. (2012a). The philosophical roots of Waldorf education: Part 1: The revolution. *Research Bulletin, 17*(2). Retrieved from http://www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org/waldorf-journal-project/

Amrine, F. (2012b). The philosophical roots of Waldorf education: Part 2: Fichte's primordial intuition. *Research Bulletin, 18*(1). Retrieved from http://www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org/waldorf-journal-project/

Amrine, F. (2012c). The philosophical roots of Waldorf education: Part 3: From Schiller to Steiner. *Research Bulletin, 18*(2). Retrieved from http://www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org/waldorf-journal-project/

Amrine, F. (2014). The philosophical roots of Waldorf education, part 4: Rudolf Steiner as a philosopher. *Research Bulletin, 19*(1). Retrieved from http://www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org/waldorf-journal-project/

Amso, D., & Casey, B. J. (2006). Beyond what develops when: Neuroimaging may inform how cognition changes with development *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 15*(1), 24-29. Retrieved from SAGE Journals website: doi:10.1111/j.0963-7214.2006.00400.x

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

Anderson, B. (2010). The spirit of leadership. Retrieved from www.theleadershipcircle.com

Anderson, B. (2012). Mastering leadership. Retrieved from www.theleadershipcircle.com

Anderson, R. (2018). Frontiers in transpersonal research methods. *the Journal of transpersonal psychology, 50*(2), 129-143. Retrieved from www.academia.edu

Anderson, R., & Braud, W. (2011). *Transforming self and others through research: Transpersonal research methods and skills for the human sciences and humanities*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Anderson, R., & Linder, J. (2019). Spirituality and emergent research methods. In L. Zsolnai & B. Flanagan (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Spirituality in Society and the Professions*. London: Routledge.

Anissimov, M. (2000). *Primo Levi: Tragedy of an optimist*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press.

Applebaum, N. (2010) Representations of technology in science fiction for young people. New York: Routledge.

Argyris, C. (1977). Double-loop learning in organizations. *Harvard Business Review*(September-October), 115-125.

Argyris, C. (1993). Education for leading-learning. *Organizational Dynamics, 21*(3), 5-17. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(93)90067-B

Argyris, C., & Schon, D. (1974). *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Aries, P. (1960/1962). *Centuries of childhood: A social history of family life* (R. Baldrick, Trans.). New York: Alfred A Knopf.

Arnold, R. (2005). *Empathic intelligence: Teaching, learning, relating*. Sydney: University of New South Wales.

Arnold, R. (2011). Developing wisdom: The possibilities of a transformative education. In D. Wright, C. Camden-Pratt, & S. Hill (Eds.), *Social Ecology: Applying ecological understanding to our lives and our planet*. Stroud, UK: Hawthorn Press.

Ashley, M. (2009). Education for freedom: The goal of Steiner/Waldorf schools. In P. A. Woods & G. Woods (Eds.), Alternative education for the 21st century: Philosophies, approaches, visions (pp. 211-225). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Astley, K., & Jackson, P. (2000). Doubts on spirituality: Interpreting Waldorf ritual. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 5*(2), 221-227. Retrieved from Taylor and Francis Online website: doi:10.1080/713670915

Australian Curriculum. (nd). About the Australian Curriculum. Retrieved from www.australiancurriculum.edu.au

Avison, K. (2016). *A handbook for Steiner-Waldorf class teachers*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Babineaux, R. (1999). *Evaluation report: Thomas E Mathews Community School*. Retrieved from Stanford, CA:

Bailey, J. (2011). Metaphor and imaginative consciousness. *Research on Steiner Education, 2*(3), 121-131. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com website:

Bak, T. (2014). Where does Steiner fit? A contemporary framing of Steiner education within the shifting education landscape in Australia. In L. Burrows & T. Stehlik (Eds.), *Teaching with spirit: New perspectives on Steiner education in Australia*. Murwillimbah, NSW: Immortal Books.

Bak, T. (2018). 'Embodied knowing': Exploring the founding of the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School in Victoria, Australia. *History of Education, 47*(2), 285-300. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/thed20 doi:10.1080/0046760X.2017.1420248

Bakan, J. (2011). *Childhood under siege: How big business targets children*. New York: Free Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: four essays* (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin, TX & London: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1999). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (C. Emerson, Trans. C. Emerson Ed. Vol. 8). Minneapolis/ London: University of Minnesota Press.

Bandura, A. (1999). Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 3*(3), 193-209. Retrieved from SAGE Journals website: doi:10.1207/s15327957pspr0303_3

Barabasi, A.-L. (2014). *Linked: How everything is connected to everything else and what it means for business, science and everyday life*. US: Ingram Publishing Services.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Barfield, O. (1978). The origin of language. *Towards, 1*(2).

Barnard-Naude, J. (2011). Deconstruction is what happens. *Stellenbosch Law Review, 22*(1), 160-172. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC54767

Bastick, T. (2003). *Intuition: Evaluating the construct and its impact on creative thinking*. Kingston, Jamaica: Stoneman & Lang.

Bateson, G. (1979). *MInd and nature: A necessary unity*. Toronto and Vancouver: Clark, Irvine and Company.

BBC News. (2016, 16 November). 'Post'truth' declared word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries. *BBC News*. Retrieved from www.bbc.com

Beatty, B. (1999). *Feeling like a leader: The emotions of leadership*. Paper presented at the Conference of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec.

Beatty, B. (2000). *Feeling like a leader: The emotions of leadership*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec.

Beatty, B. (2002). *Emotional epistemologies and educational leadership: A conceptual framework*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Beatty, B. (2010). The emotions of educational leadership: Breaking the silence. *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice, 3*(4), 331-357. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/136031200750035969

Beatty, B. (2011). From crayons to perfume: Getting beyond contrived collegiality. *Journal of Educational Change, 12*, 257-266. Retrieved from Springer website: doi:10.1007/s10833-011-9161-2

Beaven, E. K. (2011). *Exploring things seen and unseen: Students speak of Waldorf Education.* (PhD), University of California Davis, Ann Arbor, MI. ProQuest LLC database.

Becker, E. (1975). *Escape from evil*. New York: Free Press.

Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Ben-Aharon, Y. (1999). The global situation at the end of the twentieth century: The emergence of a threefold global society and the future tasks of the Michaelic movement. In S. Gulbenkian (Ed.), *The Future is Now: Humanity at the new millenium and the future of anthroposophy*. London: Temple Lodge Publishing.

Ben-Aharon, Y. (2007). *The new experience of the supersensible: The anthroposophical knowledge drama of our time*. Forest Row, East Sussex: Temple Lodge.

Ben-Aharon, Y. (2011a). Anthroposophy and contemporary philosophy in dialogue. *Being Human, 2011*(Fall), 19-34. Retrieved from

Ben-Aharon, Y. (2011b). *The event in science, history, philosophy and art*. College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm.com Publishing Inc.

Ben-Aharon, Y. (2013). *Spiritual science in the 21st century*. College Station, TX: Virtualbookworm.com Publishing Inc.

Bernays, E. (2004). *Propaganda*. New York: Ig Publishing.

Bernstein, R. J. (2011). *Beyond objectivism and relativism: Science, hermeneutics and praxis*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Biddulph, S. (2018). We are trading away our lives for the shallow rewards of capitalism - and it's harming our children. *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Bishop, P. (2008). The shadow of hope: Reconciliation and imaginal pedagogies. In T. Leonard & P. Willis (Eds.), *Pedagogies of the imagination: Mythopoetic Curriculum in Educational Practice*: Springer Science+Business Media B.V.

Blake, W. (1988). *The complete poetry and prose of William Blake*. New York: Anchor Books.

Bloom, H. (Ed.) (2008). *William Blake*. New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism/Infobase Publishing.

Bly, R. (1975). *Friends, you drank some darkness: Three Swedish poets, Harr Martinson, Gunnar Ekelof, and Tomas Transtromer*. Boston: Boston Beacon Press.

Bochner, A. (2000). Criteria against ourselves. *Qualitative Inquiry, 6*(2), 266-272. Retrieved from

Bock, E. (2005). *Saint Paul: Life, epistles and teaching*. Edinburgh: Floris.

Böhm, D., & Nicol, L. (2003). *On dialogue*. New York: Routledge.

Boje, D. M. (2001). *Narrative methods for organizational & communication research* SAGE series in Management Research, doi:10.4135/9781849209496

Boland, N. (2015a). The Globalisation of Steiner education. *Research on Steiner Education*, 192-202. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com website:

Boland, N. (2015b). The globalisation of Steiner education: Some considerations. *Research on Steiner Education, 6*(Special Edition/ENASTE), 192-202. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com

Boland, N. (2016). A sense of place within the Waldorf curriculum: Three audits of place, time and community (part 1). *Pacifica Journal, 50*(2). Retrieved from ResearchGate website: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315681408

Boland, N. (2017a). Engaging (or not) with community. *Waldorf Resources,* (August). Retrieved from www.waldorfresources.org

Boland, N. (2017b). Towards Waldorf 2.0. *Educational Journal of Living Theories, 10*(2), 51-81. Retrieved from http://ejolts.net/drupal/node/310

Boland, N., & Demirbag, J. (2017). (Re)inhabiting Waldorf education: Hononulu teachers explore the notion of place. *Educational Journal of Living Theories, 10*(2), 20-50. Retrieved from www.ejolts.net

Bourdieu, P. (2003). *Firing back: Agaisnt the tyranny of the market 2*. New York: The New Press.

Brady, R., Maier, G., & Edelglass, S. (2006). *Being on earth: Practice in tending the appearances*. New York: SENSRI/The Nature Institute.

Bridges, W. (2009). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change* (3rd ed.). Philadelphia: Da Capo Press.

Brinzeu, P., & Szonyi, G. E. (2011). The esoteric in postmodernism. *Eurpoean Journal of English Studies, 15*(3), 183-188. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/13825577.2011.626934

Brown, E. L. (2011). *Eomtion matters: Exploring the emotional labor of teaching.* (Doctor of Philosophy), University of Pittsburgh, Pitteburgh.

Brull, D. (2013). *The Waldorf school and threefold structure: The embarrasing mandate* (T. Forman & T. Groh, Trans.). Chatham, NY: Waldorf Publications.

Brull, R., & Heisterkamp, J. (2009). Frankfurt Memorandum: Rudolf Steiner and the subject of racism. Retrieved from www.info3-verlag.de

Bruner, E., & Turner, V. (Eds.). (1986). *The anthropology of experience*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Buber, M. (1961). *Between man and man*. London: Collins.

Burkam, C. (2018). Sepcial Report: Use of "Public Waldord School" wording now possible! *Confluence: News from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, 8*(1), 11-12. Retrieved from

Burrows, L. (2014). Opening Pandora's box: The contribution of mindfulness to the inner world of teaching in Steiner education. In L. Burrows & T. Stehlik (Eds.), *Teaching with spirit: New perspectives on Steiner education*. Murwillumbah, NSW: Immortal Books.

Burrows, L., & Stehlik, T. (Eds.). (2014). *Teaching with spirit: New perspectives on Steiner education in Australia*. Murwillumbah, NSW: Immortal Books.

Caldarera, J. (2013). *Through the lives of the teachers: How Waldorf class teachers think about morality, Waldorf education, and the arts in the 21st century.* (PhD), University of California Davis.

Campbell, J. (1993). *The hero with a thousand faces*. London: Fontana Press.

Capra, F., & Luisi, P. L. (2014). *The systems view of life: A unifying vision*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Carlgren, F. (2008). *Education towards freedom: Rudolf Steiner education: A survey of the work of Waldorf schools throughout the world*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Carr, N. (2010). *The shallows: What the internet is doing to our brains*. New York: WW Norton & Co.

Carr, N. (2016). *Utopia is creepy: and other provocations*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Carroll, W. (1992). *An Inquiry into the nature of Waldorf education: Gaining perspective through teacher lore.* University of Illinois, Chicago.

Changizi, M. (2011). *Harnessed: How language and music mimicked nature and transformed ape to man*. Dallas: Benbella Books.

Chaucer, G. (2003). *The canterbury tales*. London/New York: Penguin Books.

Cherry, B. (2014). Resurgence in China. *Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, Easter, 2014*(51), 14-18. Retrieved from

Childs, G. (1999). *Truth, beauty and goodness: Steiner-Waldorf education as a demand of our time*. London: Temple Lodge.

Cixous, H. (1993). *Three steps on the ladder of writing*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative Inquiry: A Methodology for Studying Lived Experience. *Research Studies in Music Education, 27*(1), 44-54. Retrieved from SAGE Publications website: http://rsm.sagepub.com/content/27/1/44.abstract doi:10.1177/1321103x060270010301

Clandinin, D. J., & Rosiek, J. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Clouder, C. (1998). The Spiritual Dimension and Autonomy. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 3*(1), 43-49. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/1364436980030105

Collins, M. (1885/1971). *Light on the path; Through the gates of gold*. Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press.

Corbin, H. (1964). Mundus imaginalis or the imaginary and the imaginal. Retrieved from www.amiscorbin.com

Cousin, G. (2006). An introduction to threshold concepts. *Planet, 17*(December), 4-5. Retrieved from doi:10.11120/plan.2006.00170004

Cox, H. (2016). *The market as God*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cox, L. (2009-10). Missing teacher. Retrieved from www.lanivcox.blogspot.com.au

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Croft, J. (2011). The challengs of interdisciplinary epistemology in neuroaesthetics. *Mind, Brain, and Education, 5*(1), 5-11. Retrieved from Wiley Online Library website: doi:10.1111/j.1751-228X.2011.01103.x

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Cuaron, A. (2006). *Children of men*: Unversal Pictures.

Curson, S. K. (2013). *A very moral minority: An investigation of the influence of Rudolf Steiner's esoteric Weltanschauung (worldview) on the purpose and principles of Waldorf Education.* (PhD), Macquarie University.

Curtis, A. (Writer). (2002). The century of the self [Documentary]. In S. Lambert (Producer): BBC Two.

Czarniawaska, B. (2004). *Narratives in social science research*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc.

D'Aulnoy, M.-C. (2017). *The fairy tales of madame D'Aulnoy* (A. M. Elizabeth Lee, Trans.). US: CreateSpace Independent Publishing.

da Veiga, M. (2013). Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy – spiritual path or science. *Research on Steiner Education, 3*(1), 126-131. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com

da Veiga, M. (2014). A new paradigm in dealing with Anthroposophy. *Research on Steiner Education, 5*(1), 145-148. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com

Dahlin, B. (2009). On the Path Towards Thinking: Learning from Martin Heidegger and Rudolf Steiner. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 28*(6), 537-554. Retrieved from doi:10.1007/s11217-009-9147-1

Dahlin, B. (2013a). A critical view of Heiner Ullrich's critique of Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of knowledge. *Research on Steiner Education, 4*(1), 202-207. Retrieved from

Dahlin, B. (2013b). Gloves of ice or free hands: A nomadic reading of Rudolf Steiner and Bergson adn Deleuze. *Other Education: The Journal of Educational Alternatives, 2*(2). Retrieved from

Dahlin, B. (2017). *Rudolf Steiner: The relevance of Waldorf education*: Springer International Publishing.

Dahlin, B. (Ed.) (2013c). *Poetizing our unknown childhood: Meeting the challenges of social constructivism* (Vol. 4).

Dahlin, B., Anderson, C., & Langerman, E. (2005). *A summary of the Swedish Waldorf school evaluation project*. Retrieved from www.waldorflibary.org/pg/research/research.asp

Dahlin, B., & Majorek, M. (2008). *On the path towards thinking: Learning from Martin Heidegger and Rudolf Steiner*. Paper presented at the EERA Conference, Gothenburg, Sweden.

Damasio, A. (2006). *Descartes' error: Emotion, reason and the human brain*. London: Vintage.

de Souza, D. (2012). Learning and Human Development in Waldorf Pedagogy and Curriculum. *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice, 25*(4 (Winter 2012)), 50-62. Retrieved from

Debien, N. (Producer). (2008, 9 January). Steiner education in State Schools. *EdPod*. [podcast] Retrieved from www.abc.net.au

Degenhardt, L., & Duignan, P. (2010). *Dancing on a shifting carpet: Reinventing traditional schooling for the 21st century*. Camberwell, Vic.: ACER Press.

Deleuze, G., & Foucault, M. (1972). Intellectuals and power *Desert Islands*.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1980/2005). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* (B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1991/1994). *What is philosophy?* (H. Tomlinson & G. Burchell, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, G., & Parnet, C. (1977/19887). *Dialogues* (H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Denzin, N. K. (2007). *On understanding emotion*. Somerset, NJ: Transaction.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Transforming qualitative research methods: Is it a revolution? *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 4*(3), 349–358. Retrieved from doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/089124195024003006

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2003). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (2nd edition ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2013). *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Derrida, J. (1967/1997). *Of grammatology* (G. C. Spivak, Trans.). Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, J. (1972/1981). *Dissemination* (B. Johnson, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. (1978). *Writing and difference* (A. Bass, Trans.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Dickens, C. (1995). *Hard Times*. Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited.

Diet, I. (2003). *Imprisoned in the spiritual void*. Dubendorf, Switzerland: Ignis Verlag.

Dirkx, J. (2002). The power of feelings: Emotion, imagination, and the construction of meaning in adult learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 2001*(89). Retrieved from doi:10.1002/ace.9

Dirkx, J. (2008). The meaning and role of emotions in adult learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 2008*(120). Retrieved from doi:10.1002/ace.311

Dirkx, J., Mezirow, J., & Cranton, P. (2006). Musings and reflections on the meaning, context, and process of transformative learning: A dialogue between John M. Dirkx and Jack Mezirow. *Journal of Transformative Education, 4*(2), 123-139. Retrieved from SAGE Publications website: doi:10.1177/1541344606287503

Duignan, P. (2012). *Educational leadership: Together creating ethical learning environments* (2nd ed.). Port Melbourne, Vic.: Cambridge University Press.

Dweck, C. (2017). *Mindset: Changing the way you think to fulfil your potential*. London: Robinson/Hachette UK.

Dwyer, M. (2018, 19 January 2018). Dark side of Pink Floyd: The musical politics of Roger Waters. *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Earp, J., & Jhally, S. (2006). *Reel bad arabs: How Hollywood villifies a people*: Media Education Foundation.

Easton, F. (1995). *The Waldorf impulse in education: Schools as communities that educate the whole child by integrating artistic and academic work.* (PhD), Columbia University, Columbia.

Easton, F. (1997). Educating the whole child, “head, heart, and hands”: Learning from the Waldorf experience. *Theory Into Practice, 36*(2), 87-94. doi:10.1080/00405849709543751

Easton, S. (1980). *Rudolf Steiner: Herald of a new epoch*. Hudson, NY: The Anthroposophic Press.

ECM. (2019). Stefan Micus.   Retrieved from www.ecmrecords.com

Eisner, E. (1997). The new frontier in qualitative research methodology. *Qualitative Inquiry, 3*(3), 259-273. Retrieved from

Eisner, E. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Elbaz-Luwisch, F. (2007). Studying teachers' lives and experiences: Narrative inquiry into K-12 teaching. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping the Methodology* (pp. 357-383). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Eliot, T. S. (1921). Tradition and the individual talent. Retrieved from www.bartelby.com

Ellingson, L. (2009). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Ellingson, L. (2014). "The truth myst dazzle gradually": Enriching relationship research using a crystallization framework. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 31*(4). Retrieved from doi:10.1177/0265407514523553

Ellingson, L. (2017). *Embodiment in qualitative research*. London: Routledge.

Ellingson, L., & Ellis, C. (2008). Autoethnography as constructionist project. In J. A. Holstein & Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of constructionist research* (pp. 445-466). New York: Guilford Press.

Ellis, C. (1986). *Fisherfolk: Two communities on Chesepeake Bay.* (PhD), University Press of Kentucky, Lexington.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. D. Y. Lincoln (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Emerson, R. W. (2009). *Essays - First Series*

Eschenbach, W. v. (2015). *Parzival*. Retold by Antonio Marques. [Retelling of the Medieval legend].

Etherington, K. (2004). *Becoming a reflexive researcher: Using our selves in research*. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

European Higher Education Area. (2018). *EHEA and the Bologna Process*. Paris, France: The Secretariat of the Bologna Follow-Up Group Retrieved from www.ehea.info.

Fendler, L. (2012). Figuring out ineffable education. *Other Education: The Journal of Educational Alternatives, 1*(1), 5-18. Retrieved from Other Education website: www.othereducation.org

Ferrer, J. N. (2011). Participatory spirituality and transpersonal theory: A ten-year retrospective. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 43*(1), 1-34. Retrieved from

Finser, T. (2001). *School renewal: A spiritual journey for change*: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Finser, T. (2011). The faculty meeting. In D. Mitchell (Ed.), *The art of administration*. Wilton, NH: AWSNA.

Formenti, L., West, L., & Horsdall, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Embodied narratives: Connecting stories, bodies, cultures and ecologies*. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark.

Francis, K. (2004). *The education of a Waldorf teacher: Memoirs and reflections of Keith Francis*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc.

Frankl, V. (1984). *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Freeman, M., deMarais, K., Preissle, J., Roulston, K., & StPierre, E. (2007). Standards of evidence in qualitative research: An incitement to discourse. *Educational Researcher, 36*(1), 22-32. Retrieved from doi:10.3102/0013189X06298009

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin Books.

Friedenthal, R. (2010). *Goethe: His life and times*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Friedman, T. (2012). *The lexus and the olive tree: Understanding globalization*. New York: Picador.

Frost, R. (1997-2012). The road not taken. Retrieved from www.poets.org

Fry, C. (1981). *A sleep of prisoners*. New York: Dramatists play service.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1977). *Philosophical hermeneutics* (D. E. Linge, Trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1979). *Truth and method* (2nd English ed.). London: Sheed and Ward.

Gallagher, K. (2008). The art of methodology: A collaborative science. In K. Gallagher (Ed.), The methodolical dilemma: Taylor & Francis. Retrieved from http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwsau/detail.action?docID=342367.

Galleta, A. (2013). *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: From research design to analysis and publication*. New York: New York University Press.

Gardner, H. (2008). *Five minutes for the future*. Paper presented at the Ecolint Meeting, Geneva. http://www.howardgardner.com/Papers/papers.html

Gardner, H. (2011). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, H., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Damon, W. (2001). *Good work: When excellence and ethics meet*. New York: Basic.

Garvis, S. (2015). *Narrative constellations: Exploring lived experience in education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Gauthier, V. (2014). *Leading with Sense: The Intuitive Power of Savoir-Relier*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gebser, J. (2005). The invisible origin: Evolution as a supplementary process. *The Journal of conscious evolution, 1*(1). Retrieved from Digital Commons @ CIIS website:

Gendlin, E. (2007). *Focusing*. New York: Bantam Books.

Gentle, R. (2001). From rainforest to mountain range. *Waldorf Education Worldwide,* 148-151.

Gergen, K. (2001). *Social construction in context*. London: SAGE Publications.

Gibran, K. (1999). *The prophet*. London: Heinemann.

Gidley, J. (2008a). Beyond homogenisation of global education: Do alternative pedagogies such as Steiner Education have anything to offer an emergent global/ising world? In S. Inayatullah, M. Bussey, & I. Milojevic (Eds.), *Alternative futures: Pedagogies for an emergent world* (pp. 253-268). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publications.

Gidley, J. (2008b). *Evolving education.* (PhD), Southern Cross University.

Gidley, J. (2008c). Turning tides: Creating dialogue between Rudolf Steiner and 21st century academic discourses. *Research on Steiner Education, 1*(1), 101-107. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com

Gidley, J. (2009). Educating for evolving consciousness: Voicing the emergency for love, life and wisdom. In M. d. S. e. al. (Ed.), *International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing* (Vol. 3): Springer Science_Business Media B.V.

Gidley, J. (2012). Evolution of education: From weak signals to rich imaginaries of educational futures. *Futures, 44*(1), 46-54. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328711002187 doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2011.08.006

Gidley, J. (2017). *Postformal education: A philosophy for complex futures*: Springer International Publishing.

Giroux, H. (2001). *Stealing innocence: Corporate culture's war on children*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Giroux, H. (2012). *Disposable youth: Racialized memories, and the culture of cruelty*. New York: Routledge.

Gladstone, F. (2016). *Republican academies* (2nd edition ed.): CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Goethe, J. W. v. (1833/1984). *Faust: Part two* (B. Q. Morgan, Trans.). Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts.

Goldschmidt, G. (2017). Waldorf education as spiritual education. *Religion & Education, 44*(3), 346-363. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/15507394.2017.1294400

Goral, M. (2009). *Transformational teaching: Waldorf-inspired methods in the public school*. Great Barrington, MA: Steinerbooks.

Gordienko, I. (2001). *Sergei O Prokofieff: myth and reality*. Basel: Lochmann Verlag.

Gordon, M. (2016). Teachers as Absurd Heroes: Camus' Sisyphus and the Promise of Rebellion. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 48*(6), 589-604. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2015.1058219 doi:10.1080/00131857.2015.1058219

Gordon, S. (2018). *Leadership's role in teachers' commitment and retention: A case study analysis.* (Doctor of Education), Delaware State University, Dover, Delaware.

Granholm, K. (2013). Esoteric currents as discursive complexes. *Religion, 43*(1). Retrieved from doi:10.1080/0048721X.2013.742741

Grant, C., & Onsaloo, A. (2017). Understanding, selecting and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your "house". *Adminstrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice and Research*, 12-26. Retrieved from doi:10.5929/2014.4.2.9

Graudenz, I., Peters, J., & Randoll, D. (2013). What it's like being a Waldorf teacher. *Research on Steiner Education, 4*(2), 104-114. Retrieved from Research on Steiner Education website: www.rosejourn.com

Graves, R. (1992). *The Greek myths*. London: Penguin Books.

Grbich, C. (2004). *New approaches in social research: Modernity to modernism* doi:10.4135/9781849209519.n1

Greenfield, S. (2003). *Tomorrow's people: How 21st century technology is changing the way we think and feel*. London: Penguin.

Greenfield, S. (2008). *ID: The quest for meaning in the 21st century*. London: Spectre/Hachette UK.

Greenfield, S. (2015). *Mind change: How digital technologies are leaving their mark on our brains*. New York: Random House Publishing.

Grimm, J. W. (2007). *The compelete fairy tales*. London: Vintage.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59-82. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/1525822X05279903

Gulbenkian, S. (1999). Humanity at the new millenium and the future of anthroposophy. In S. Gulbenkian (Ed.), *The Future is Now: Anthroposophy at the new millenium*. London: Temple Lodge.

Hadot, P. (2009). *The present alone is our happiness: Conversations with Jeanne Carlier and Arnold I Davidson*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hague Circle. (2016). Key characteristics of Waldorf education. Retrieved from www.waldorf-international.org

Hague Circle. (2019). Transfer of licence rights to national organisations of Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf School associations. Retrieved from www.waldorf-international.org

Hammersley, M. (2011). *Methodology: Who needs it?* London: SAGE publications.

Hammersley, M. (2015). *The limits of social science: Causal explanation and value relevance*. London: SAGE Publications.

Hanegraaff, W. J. (2005). Forbidden knowledge: Anti-esoteric polemics and academic research. *Aries, 5*(2), 225-254. Retrieved from EBSCOhost website: doi:10.1163/1570059054761703

Hansel-Hohenhausen, M. (2012). *The true countenance of man: Science and belief as coordinate magisteria (COMA) - A theory of knowledge*

Haralambous, B. (2016). *Surfing the wave of emergent renewal: Re-imagining Steiner's vision for teachers' research and professional learning.* (PhD), University of Canberra, Canberra.

Hardy, T. (1962). *A study of his writings and their background* Retrieved from www.archive.org

Hargreaves, A. (1998). The emotional practice of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 14*(8), 835-854. Retrieved from doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(98)00025-0

Hargreaves, A. (2001). Emotional geographies of teaching. *Teachers College Record, 103*(6), 1056-1080. Retrieved from

Hargreaves, A. (2010). Leadership, change and beyond the 21st skills agenda. In J. Bellanca & R. Brandt (Eds.), *21st century skills: Rethinking how students learn*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. London: Routledge.

Harwood, A. (1948). Study of man. *Child and Man, 1*(2).

Harwood, A. (1958). *The recovery of man in childhood: A study in the educational work of Rudolf Steiner*. Great Barrington, MA: Myrin Institute.

Healy, J. (1990). *Endangered minds: Why children don't think and what we can do about it*. New York: Touchstone.

Heidegger, M. (1953/1996). *Being and Time* (J. Stambaugh, Trans.). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Heidegger, M. (1953/2001). *Being and Time* (J. M. E. Robinson, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Heidegger, M. (1957/1969). *Identity and difference* (J. Stambaugh, Trans.). New York: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. (1959/1966). *Discourse on thinking: A translation of gelassenheit* (J. M. A. E. H. Freund, Trans.). New York: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. (1959/1971). *On the way to language* (P. Hertz, Trans.). New York: Harper One.

Heidegger, M. (1971). *Poetry, language, thought* (A. Hofstadter, Trans.). New York: Harper Perennial.

Heidegger, M. (1972). *On time and being*. New York: Harper and Row.

Heidegger, M. (1977a). *Basic writings*. New York: Harper Collins.

Heidegger, M. (1977b). *The question concerning technolgoy and other essays*. New York & London: Garland Publishing.

Hether, C. (2007). The moral reasoning of high school seniors from diverse educational settings. *Research Bulletin, 13*(1), 17-23. Retrieved from www.waldorflibrary.org

Heydebrand, C. v. (1966). *Curriculum of the first Waldorf school* (E. Hutchins, Trans.). London: Steiner Schools Felloshp.

Higgs, J., & Cherry, N. (2009). Doing qualitative reserach on practice. In J. Higgs, D. Horsfall, & C. Grace (Eds.), *Writing qualitative research on practice*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Hochschild, A. R. (1979). Emotion work, feeling rules and social structure. *American Journal of Sociology, 85*(3), 551-575. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/2778583

Hochschild, A. R. (1985). *The managed heart: Commercialisation of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Horsdal, M. (2012). *Telling lives: Exploring dimensions of narratives*. London: Routledge.

Hougham, P. (2012). *Dialogues of destiny: A postmodern appreciation of Waldorf education*. Malvern Hills, UK: Sylvan Associates.

Huxley, A. (1977). *Brave new world*. Herts: Panther.

Hymowitz, K. (1999). *Ready or not: Why treating children as small adults endangers their future - and ours.* New York: Free Press.

IASWECE. (nd). China. Retrieved from www.iaswece.org

Jackson, A. Y. (2013). Posthumanist data analysis of mangling practices. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 26*(6), 741-748. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/09518398.2013.788762

Jacobs, J. (2003). *English fairy tales*: Adamant Media Corporation.

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. London: Allen Lane.

Kaiser, K. (2009). Protecting respondent confidentiality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 19*(11), 1632-1641. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/1049732309350879.

Kaltenbach, K. (2014). *The tragedy in contemporary art and the karma of humanity*. [essay].

Kaplan, A. (2005). Emerging out of Goethe: Conversation as a form of social inquiry. *Janus Head, 8*(1), 311-334. Retrieved from

Kawagley, A. O., & Barnhardt, R. (1999). Education indigenous to place: Western science meets native reality. In G. A. Smith & D. R. Williams (Eds.), *Ecological education in action: On weaving education, culture, and the environment*. Lincoln, VT: State University of New York Press.

Keen, S. (1991). *Faces of the enemy: Refections of the hostile imagination*. San Francisco: Harper.

Kegan, R. (2013). Thoughts on the self-transforming mind. *The further reaches of adult development*: RSA Talks.

Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. L. (2009). *Immunity to change: How to overcome it and unluck potential in yourself and your organisation*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Kemmis, S. (2013). *Contemporary schooling and the struggle for education*. Paper presented at the 2012 Bob Meyenn Lecture, Albury.

Keohane, K. (2014). Creative methods: Oracles, *poiesis* and epiphanies as metaphors of theorizing. In M. S. D. Michael Hviid Jacobsen, Kieran Keohane & Anders Petersen (Ed.), *Imaginative methodologies in the social sciences: Creativity, poetics and rhetoric in social research*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Keppie, M. B. (1997). *Questioning the role of art in Waldorf and English Canadian mainstream education.* (Doctor of Philosophy), Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Kiersch, J. (2001). *Where is the Waldorf school movement going: Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy between adaptation and progress*. Paper presented at the Christian Community Conference, Quo Vadis Europa, Bochum, Germany.

Kiersch, J. (2010). Painted from a palette entirely different: a new hermeneutic approach to Steiner's esoteric courses for teachers. *Research on Steiner Education, 1*(2). Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com

Kiersch, J. (2012). Panacea: The magic remedy for a contemporary education. *Waldorf Journal Project: Technology, 19*(April), 86-89. Retrieved from

King, M. (2018). The writing of mountain calls. Retrieved from www.dark-moutain.net

Kitching, G. (2008). *The trouble with theory: The educational costs of postmodernism*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Korten, D. C. (2015). *When corporations rule the world*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Kristeva, J. (1977). *Polylogue*. Paris: Seuil.

Kühlewind, G. (1983/1988). *From normal to healthy: Paths to the liberation of consciousness* (M. Lipson, Trans.): Lindisfarne Books.

Kühlewind, G. (1986). *The logos-structure of the world: Language as a model of reality* (F.-E. Schwarzkopf, Trans.). Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press.

Kühlewind, G. (1991/1992). *Working with anthroposophy* (M. Lipson & C. Bamford, Trans.). Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press.

Kühlewind, G. (2001/2005). *Star children: Understanding children who set us special tasks and challenges* (P. Wehrle, Trans.). Forest Row, UK: Temple Lodge.

Kühlewind, G. (2008). *The light of the I: Guidelines for meditation*. Great Barrington, MA: Steiner Books.

Kühlewind, G. (2011). *The gentle will: Meditative guidelines for creative consciousness* (M. Lipson, Trans.). Great Barrington, MA: Steiner Books.

Kurosawa, A. (Writer). (1957). Throne of blood: Toho Company.

Lachman, G. (2003). *A secret history of consciousness*. Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books.

Lachman, G. (2015). *the secret teachers of the Western World*. New York: Penguin.

Lachman, G. (2017). *Lost knowledge of the imagination*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Lakoff, G., & Turner, M. (1989). *More than cool reason: A field guide to poetic metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lamb, G. (2012). *The social mission of Waldorf education*. Chatham, NY: AWSNA.

Lamb, G. (2015). Charter schools in relation to the Waldorf School movement. *Research Bulletin, 20*(1), 44-57. Retrieved from www.waldorflibrary.org

Lamont, M., & Swidler, A. (2014). Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing. *Qualitative Sociology, 37*(2), 153-171. Retrieved from doi:10.1007/s11133-014-9274-z

Lans, J., Chidlow, C., & Menzies, S. (2008). Submission in relation to the proposed Schools Assistance Bill 2008.

Larrison, A. (2013). *Mind, Brain and Education as a Framework for Curricular Reform.* (Doctor of Education), University of California, San Diego/California State University, San Marcos.

Larrison, A., & Daly, A. (2011). *Holistic education and the brain: A look at Steiner-Waldorf education*. Paper presented at the Educational Research Association for the Confluent Education –SIG, New Orleans, LA.

Larrison, A., Daly, A., & Vooren, C. V. (2012). Twenty years and counting: A look at Waldorf in the Public Sector using online sources. *Current Issues in Education, 15*(3). Retrieved from https://cie.asu.edu/ojs/index.php/cieatasu/article/view/807

Lather, P. (1991). Research as praxis. In P. Lather (Ed.), *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York: Routledge.

Lather, P. (2013). Methodology-21: What do we do in the afterward? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 26*(6), 634-645. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/09518398.2013.788753

Lather, P., & St.Pierre, E. (2013). Post-qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 26*(6), 629-633. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/09518398.2013.788752

Layder, D. (2013). *Doing excellent small-scale research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Leonard, G. (1992). *Mastery*. New York: Plume.

Leontis, A. (2001). Mediterranean *theoria*: A view from Delphi. *Thesis Eleven, 67*(Novemeber), 101-117. Retrieved from SAGE Social Science Collections website: www.journals.sagepub.com doi:10.1177/0725513601067000007

Letiche, H. (2008). Bodily chiasms. *The Sociological Review, 56*(2), 63-83. Retrieved from doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2009.00816.x

Leviton, R. (2010). *Walking in Albion: Adventures in the Christed initiation in the Buddha body*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.

Lidell, H. G., & Scott, R. (1990). *Greek-English lexicon* (Abridged ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative Research* Retrieved from http://methods.sagepub.com/book/narrative-research doi:10.4135/9781412985253

Lievegoed, B. (1969/1973). *The developing organization*. London: Tavistock.

Lievegoed, B. (1985). *Man on the threshold: The challenge of inner development*. Stroud: Hawthorn Press.

Linn, S. (2010). The commercialisation and children's well-being. *Pedriatics Child Health, 15*(4), 195-197. Retrieved from

Lippmann, W. (1997). *Public opinion*. New York: Free Press Paperbacks.

Lonnrot, E. (1989). *The Kalevala: An epic poem after the oral tradition* (K. Bosley, Trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lowndes, F. (1996/2009). *Enlivening the chakra of the heart: The fundamental spiritual exercises of Rudolf Steiner*. Forest Row, East Sussex: Sophia Books/Rudolf Steiner Press.

Lundy, T. A. (2004). *An Integral Theory of Participation.* (Doctor of Philosophy), University of Victoria.

Lynch, G. (2007). *The new spirituality: An introduction to progressive belief in the twenty-first century*. London: I B Tauris.

Lynch, G. (2014). *On the sacred*. New York: Routledge.

Lyotard, J.-F. (1997). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Minnesota, MI: University of Minnesota.

Machado, A. (2004). *Border of a dream: Selected poems*. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press.

MacNeice, L. (1981). Prayer before birth. In D. Herbert (Ed.), *Everyman's book of evergreen verse*. London: JM Dent & Sons.

Macy, J., & Brown, M. (1999). *Coming back to life*. Gabriola Island, US: New Society Publishers.

Macy, J., & Johnstone, C. (2012). *Active hope: How to face the mess we're in without going crazy*. Novato, CA: New World Library.

Magnus, M. (2001). *What's in a word: Studies in phonosemantics*. Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Magnus, M. (2010). *Gods in the word: Archetypes in the consonants*. North Charleston, SC: Createspace.

Mamgain, V. (2010). Ethical consciousness in the classroom: How Buddhist practices can help develop empathy and compassion. *Journal of Transformative Education, 8*(1), 22-41. Retrieved from

Manning, N. (2012). *Playground duty*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

Marshak, D. (1997). *The common vision: Parenting and educating for wholeness*. New York: Peter Lang.

Masters, B. (1997). *An appraisal of Steinerian theory and Waldorf praxis: How do they compare?* (PhD), University of Surrey, England.

Maturana, H. (1988). The search for objectivity or the quest for a compelling argument. *The Irish Journal of Psychology, 9*(1), 25-82. Retrieved from http://www.enolagaia.com/M88Reality.html

Mazzone, A. (1999). *Waldorf teacher education: The implications for teacher education of Rudolf Steiner's educational philosophy and its practice in Waldorf schools.* (PhD), University of Adelaide, Adelaide.

Mazzone, A. (2010). Mount Barker Waldorf School. Retrieved from www.passionateschooling.com

McAlice, J. (2013). *Engaged community: The challenge of self-governance in Waldrof education*. Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books.

McCalla, A. (2001). Antoine Faivre and the study of esotericism. *Religion, 31*(4), 435-450. Retrieved from doi:10.1006/reli.2001.0364

McCourt, F. (2006). *Teacher man*. Harmondsworth, London: Harper Perennial.

McDermott, R. (2015). *Steiner and kindred spirits*. Great Barrington, MA: Steiner Books.

McWhinney, W., & Markos, L. (2003). Transformative education: Across the threshold. *Journal of Transformative Education, 1*(1), 16-37. Retrieved from SAGE Journals website: doi:10.1177/1541344603252098

Meek, E. (2011). *Loving to know: Introducing covenant epistemology*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books.

Melzer, A. (2006). Esotericism and the critique of historicism. *The American Political Science Review, 100*(2 (May)), 279-295.

Melzer, A. M. (2006). Esotericism and the critique of historicism. *American Political Science Association, 100*(2), 279-295. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27644350

Mepham, T. (2014-2015). The ideal of compromise? No such thing! *Waldorf Resources,* (May 2014/February 2015). Retrieved from www.waldorf-resources.org

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962/1992). *The phenomenology of perception* (C. Smith, Trans.). London: Routledge.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964/1995). *The visible and the invisible* (A. Lingis, Trans.). Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Miller, J. (2000). *Education and the soul*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Miller, J. (2010). *Whole child education*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Miller, J., & Nozawa, A. (2004). *Contemplative practices in teacher education*. University of Miami.

Miller, R. (1989). The history of alternative education. *Mothering, 50*(Winter), 78-86. Retrieved from

Miller, R. (1990). *What are our schools for? Holistic education in American culture*. Brendon, VT: Holistic Education Press.

Miller, R. (1998). *Education and the evolution of the cosmos*. Paper presented at the Third International Whitehead Conference, Claremont, CA.

Miller, R. (2008). *The self-organizing revolution: Common principles of the educational alternatives movement*. Brandon, Vt.: Brandon, Vt. : Holistic Education Press.

Moeller, M. L. (2002). *The truth begins to divide: The couple in conversation*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.

Moeller, V. (2014). Leading the implementation of a 'teacher as reflexive practitioner' culture at Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School. In L. Burrows & T. Stehlik (Eds.), *Teaching with spirit: New perspectives on Steiner Education in Australia*. Murwillumbah, NSW: Immortal Books.

Moll, E. (1959). *Die sprache der laute: Buchstaben -Namen und -Zeichen alter europaischer Alphabete im Lichte geisteswissenschaftlicher Erkentnisse* (A. Marques, Trans.). Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben.

Montuori, A. (2008). The joy of inquiry. *Journal of Transformative Education, 6*(1), 8-26. Retrieved from SAGE Publications website: doi:10.1177/1541344608317041

Montuori, A. (2018a). Creating social creativity: Integrative transdisciplinarity and the epistemology of complexity. In I. Lebuda & V. Glaveneau (Eds.), Palgrave Handbook of Social Creativity Research: Palgrave MacMillan. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-95498-1_25

Montuori, A. (2018b). Creating social creativity: Integrative transdisciplinarity and the epistemology of creativity. In I. Lebuda & V. Glaveanu (Eds.), *Palgrave Handbook of Social Creativity Research*: Palgrave MacMillan.

Moore, T. (1994). *Care of the soul: A guide for cultivating depth and sacredness in everyday life.* New York: Harper Collins.

Mosmuller, M. (2013). *The living Rudolf Steiner. Apologia* (R. Franssen, Trans.). Nassau, The Netherlands: Occident Publishers.

Mosmuller, M. (2016). *The art of thinking*. Nassau, The Netherlands: Occident Publishers.

Moustakas, C. E. (1990). *Heuristic research: design, methodology, and applications*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Mowday, G. (2004). *Steiner education in Australia: Maintaining an educational theory given the necessity of practice, Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School, Sydney, 1957-2000.* (Master of Education (Honours)), University of Sydney, Sydney.

Mulvihill, T. M., & Swaminathan, R. (2017). *Critical approaches to questions in qualitative research*. London: Routledge.

Munoz, J. (2016). *The circle of mind and heart: Integrating Waldorf education, indigenous epistemologies and critical pedagogy.* (PhD), University of Arizona.

Murphree, V. (2015). Edward Bernays' "Torches of Freedom" march: Myths and significance. *American Journalism, 32*(3), 258-281. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/08821127.2015.1064681

Nagy, G. (1990). *Greek mythology and poetics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Neville, B. (2011). Chaos, reaction, transformation. In D. Wright, C. Camden-Pratt, & S. Hill (Eds.), *Social ecology: Applying ecological understanding to our lives and our planet*. Stroud, UK: Hawthorn Press.

Neville, B. (2013). *Educating psyche: Imagination, emotion and the unconscious in learning*. Kew East, Victoria: David Lovell Publishing.

Niccol, A. (1997). *Gattaca*: Columbia Pictures Corporation.

Nielsen, T. (2004). *Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy of imagination: A case study of holistic education*. Bern: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Nielsen, T. (2011). A curriculum of giving for student wellbeing and achievement: "How to wear leather sandals on a rough surface". In D. Wright, C. Camden-Pratt, & S. Hill (Eds.), *Social*

Ecology: Applying ecological understanding to our lives and our planet. Stroud, UK: Hawthorn Press.

Nietzsche, F. (1992). Truth and falsity in an extramoral sense. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics, 49*(1), 58-72. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/42577334

Noddings, N. (1995). *Philosophy of education*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Noddings, N., & Lees, H. (2016). Introduction and the Handbook. In N. Noddings & H. Lees (Eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Alternative Education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Nordlund, C. (2006). *Art experiences in Waldorf education: Graduates' meaning making reflections.* (Doctor of Philosophy), University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, MO.

O'Donohue, J. (1999). The sacraments - disappearing wells? A sketch towards a theology of the sacraments. *The Way*, 47-53. Retrieved from

O'Donohue, J. (2017) *The inner landscape of beauty/Interviewer: K. Tippett*. On Being, www.onbeing.org.

O'Sullivan, E. (1999). *Transformative learning: Fostering educational vision in the 21st century*. London; New York: Zed Books.

O'Sullivan, E. (2011). Attempting an integral Earth story in the new century: Prospects for a twenty-first century education. In D. Wright, C. Camden-Pratt, & S. Hill (Eds.), *Social ecology: Applying ecological understanding to our lives and our planet*. Stroud, UK: Hawthorn Press.

Oberman, I. (1997). *Waldorf History: Case Study of Institutional Memory*. Paper presented at the Talking Together in Educational Research and Practice, at the AERA Annual Conference, Chicago.

Oberman, I. (1998). *Fidelity and Flexibility in Waldorf Education, 1919-1998.* (Doctor of Philosophy), Stanford University.

Oberman, I. (2007). *Learning from Rudolf Steiner:The relevance of Waldorf education for urban public school reform*. Retrieved from

Oberman, I. (2008). *The Waldorf movement in education: From European cradle to American crucible, 1919-2008*. Lewiston, NY: The Edward Mellen Press.

Oberski, I. (2006). Leaning to think in Steiner-Waldorf schools. *Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology, 5*(3), 336-349. Retrieved from

Oberski, I. (2011). Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of freedom as a basis for spiritual education? *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 16*(1), 5-17. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/1364436x.2010.540751

Ochs, E., & Capps, L. (2001). *Living narrative: Creating lives in everyday storytelling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ogletree, E. J. (1974). Rudolf Steiner: Unknown educator. *The Elementary School Journal, 74*(6), 344-351. Retrieved from https:\\www.jstor.org

Olson, R. (2015). *Scientism and technocracy in the 20th century: The legacy of scientific management*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books.

Oppenheimer, T. (1999, September). Schooling the imagination. *The Atlantic Monthly,* pp. 71-83. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/09/schooling-imagination/309180/

Orwell, G. (1977). *1984*. New York: Signet Classics.

Palmer, P. (1989). The way we know and the way we live. *Noetic Sciences Review, 10*(Spring). Retrieved from

Palmer, P. (1993). *To know as we are known: Education as a spiritual journey*. New York: Harper Collins.

Palmer, P. (2000). *Let your life speak: Listening for the voice of vocation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Palmer, P. (2003). Teaching with heart and soul. *Journal of Teacher Education, 54*(5), 376-385. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/0022487103257359

Partridge, E. (1983). *Origins: A short etymological dictionary of modern English*. New York: Greenwich House.

Paschen, H. (2014). Waldorf education and Rudolf Steiner schools as a topic of educational science. *Croatian Journal of Education, 16*(1), 191-215. Retrieved from https://hrcak.srce.hr/

Paulsen, R. (2017). Slipping into functional stupidity: The bifocality of organisational compliance. *Human Relations, 70*(2), 185-210. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/0018726716649246

Perra, G. (2011). The anthroposophical indoctrination. Retrieved from Waldorf Watch website:

Perra, G. (2013). The anthroposophical Christ in the Waldorf pedagogy. Retrieved from Waldorf Watch website:

Perra, G. (2014a). Masks, misrepresentations and manipulations within Steiner-Waldorf Schools and Anthroposophy. Retrieved from Waldorf Watch website:

Perra, G. (2014b). My life among the anthroposophists.

Perra, G. (2015). Ethical individualism: The anthroposophists' alibi. Retrieved from Waldorf Watch website:

Perrault, C. (2012). *Classic fairy tales of Charles Perrault*. Dublin, Ireland: Gill & Macmillan.

Pert, C. (1998). *Molecules of emotion*. New York: Scribner.

Petitmengin-Peugeot, C. (1999). The intuitive experience. *Journal of Consciousness Studies, 6*(2-3), 43-77.

Petrash, J. (2002). *Understanding Waldorf education: Teaching from the inside out*. Beltsville, MA: Gryphon House.

Pewtherer, J. (2011). The College of Teachers. In D. Mitchell (Ed.), *The Art of Administration*. Wilton, NH: AWSNA.

Pinker, S. (2007). The evolutionary social psychology of off-record indirect speech acts. *Intercultural Pragmatics, 4*(4), 437-461. doi:10.1515/IP.2007.023

Pinker, S., Nowak, M., & Lee, J. (2008). The logic of indirect speech. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Retrieved from doi:10.1073/pnas.0707192105

Pinnegar, S., & Hamilton, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Self-study of practice as a genre of qualitative research*: Springer Science + Business Media BV.

Plato. (2007). *The republic*. London: Penguin Books.

PNAC. (2000). *Rebuilding America's defenses: Strategy, forces and resources for a new century*. Retrieved from Washington, DC:

The Poetic Edda. (1990). (L. M. Hollander, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Polanyi, M. (1957). Scientific outlook: Its sickness and cure. *Science, New Series, 125*(3246 (Mar 15)), 480-484.

Polanyi, M., & Prosch, H. (1977). *Meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Popescu, B. (2005). Therapy beyond modernity: Interview with Dr Richard House. *Europe's Journal of Psychology, 1*(4). Retrieved from

Postman, N. (1971). *Teaching as a subversive activity*. S I Delacorte Pr.

Postman, N. (1985). The disappearance of childhood. *Childhood education, 61*(4).

Powell, D. J. (2012). *Can the Steiner Waldorf schools movement break out of its niche by engaging with its critics?* (BA (Waldorf Education)), Plymouth University.

Prager, D. (2001). *Three teachers in a Waldorf-inspired public elementary school: A case study of an effective urban learning environment.* (PhD), University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Prager, D. (2004). Learning through Creating an Urban Waldorf Elementary School Background. *ERIC,* (EJ852637). Retrieved from

Prokofieff, S. O. (2014). *May Human Beings Hear It! The Mystery of the Christmas Conference*: Temple Lodge Publishing.

Propp, V. I. (1968). *Morpholophy of the folk tale* (2nd ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Prouty, S. E. (2008). *Waldorf education and the neurodevelopment of intelligence: An integrative review.* (Doctor of Psychology), Antioch University New England, Keene, NH.

Pryer, A. (2011). *Embodied wisdom: Meditations on memoir and education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Puckeridge, T. (2014). Innovations and challenges in Steiner education for the twenty-first century. In L. Burrows & T. Stehlik (Eds.), *New Perspectives on Steiner Education in Australia*. Murwillumbah, NSW: Immortal Books.

Qui, P. (2005). *Basho and the Dao: The Zhuangzi and the transformation*. Honnolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Quigley, C. (2013). *The Anglo-American establishmnet*. San Diego, CA: Dauphin Publications.

Quigley, C. (2014). *Tragedy and hope: A history of the world in our time*. Sand Diego, CA: Dauphin Publications.

Rampton, S., & Stauber, J. (2003). *Weapons of mass deception: The uses of propaganda in Bush's war on Iraq*. New York: Jeremy P Tarcher/Penguin.

Randoll, D., Graudenz, I., & Peters, J. (2014). The learner perspective on the Waldorf class teacher system: An exploratory study. *Research on Steiner Education, 5*(2), 97-119. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com

Ranovsky, A. (2019). Internalizing anthroposophy is the foundation, not the goal. *Anthroposophy worldwide. What is happening in the Anthroposophical Society, 5/19*. Retrieved from Goetheanum. School of Spiritual Science website: www.goetheanum.org

Rawson, M. (2005). The role of evaluation and examinations within Waldorf education within the different age groups. *Pedagogical Section Journal, 22*(Easter), 20-32. Retrieved from www.

Rawson, M. (2010). Sustainable teacher learning in Waldorf education. *Research on Steiner Education, 1*(2), 26-42. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com website:

Rawson, M. (2012). Contemplative practice and intuition in a collegiate context_An action research project in a Waldorf school. *Research Bulletin, 17*(1), 47-54. Retrieved from www.waldorflibrary.org

Rawson, M. (2014a). Practices of teacher learning in Waldorf schools: Some recommendations based on qualitative inquiry. *Other Education: The Journal of Educational Alternatives, 3*(2), 45-68. Retrieved from

Rawson, M. (2014b). Waldorf essentials. *The Journal of the Pedagogical Section, 50*(March). Retrieved from

Rawson, M. (2017). Some guidelines for developing the Waldorf curriculum locally. Retrieved from Learning Community Partners website: http://www.learningcommunitypartners.eu/

Rawson, M., & Avison, K. (Eds.). (2014). *The tasks and content of the Steiner-Waldorf curriculum*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Rawson, M., Masters, B., & Avison, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Towards creative teaching: Notes to an evolving curriculum for Steiner Waldorf class teachers*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Rawson, M., & Richter, T. (2000). *The educational tasks and content of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum*. Forest Row (England): Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications.

Reece, G. (2007). *Waldorf-inspired education and at-risk students: A qualitative case study of the T E Mathews Community School.* (PhD), American University, Washington D.C.

Riccio, M. (2000). *Rudolf Steiner's impulse in education: His unique organic method of thinking and the Waldorf School ideal.* (Doctor of Education), Columbia University.

Riccio, M. (2002). *An outline for a renewal of Waldorf education: Rudolf Steiner's method of heart-thinking and its central role in the Waldorf school*: Mark Riccio.

Riccio, M. (2008a). *A primer for spiritually thinking educators: A new "organic-living" translation of Rudolf Steiner's original essay "Education of the Child" with study material*: www.waldorfboooks.com.

Riccio, M. (2008b). *A Study Guide for Rudolf Steiner's Heart-Thinking*

Riccio, M. (2016). *The Logik of the Heart: The Organic Templates of Spiritual Writers, Rudolf Steiner, and the Philosophy of Freehood*: WaldorfBooks.

Richards, R. (2005). *How leadership is manifested in Steiner schools.* (MA), University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Richardson, L. (1990). *Writing strategies*. Newbury Park: SAGE Purblications.

Ricoeur, P. (1970). *Freud and philosophy: An essay on interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1984-1988). *Time and narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, P. (2016). *Hermeneutics and the human sciences* (J. Thompson, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rilke, R. M. (1910/2009). *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (M. Hulse, Trans.). London: Penguin Books.

Robbins, B. D. (2005). New organs of perception: Goethean science as a cultural therapeutics. *Janus Head, 8*(1), 113-126. Retrieved from Janus Head website: www.janushead.org

Robinson, K. (1999). *All our futures: Creativity, culture and education*. Retrieved from www.sirkenrobinson.com

Robinson, K. (2008). Changing paradigms. *RSA Edge Lecture*: www.youtube.com.

Robinson, K. (2009). *The element: Finding your passion changes everything*. New York, NY: Penguin USA.

Robinson, K. (2011). *Out of our minds: Learning to be creative*. Oxford: Capstone Publishing Ltd.

Robinson, K. (2013). *Finding your element*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.

Robinson, K., & Aronica, L. (2016). *Creative schools: the grassroots revolution*. New York: Penguin Books.

Robinson, O. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* (1), 25-41. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/14780887.2013.801543

Romanyshyn, R. D. (2007). *The wounded researcher: Research with soul in mind*. New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal, Inc.

Romanyshyn, R. D. (2010). The Wounded Researcher: Making a Place for Unconscious Dynamics in the Research Process. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 38*(4), 275-304. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/08873267.2010.523282

Rosch, E. (1999) *Primary knowing: When perception happens from the whole field/Interviewer: O. Scharmer*. Dialog on leadership, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley.

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2010). Everyday ethics: Reflections on practice. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 23*(4), 379-391. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/09518398.2010.492813

Rowlands, A., & Cox, M. (2001). Steiner education and the young artist: A comparison of drawing ability in Steiner, Montessori and traditional schools. *Paideia: Research Journal of Waldorf Education, 24*, 18-37. Retrieved from

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. (2017). *Final report: Preface and executive summary*. Commonwealth of Australia.

Rumi, J. a.-D. (1996). *The essential Rumi* (C. Barks, Trans.). New York: HarperCollins.

Rush, E., & Nauze, A. L. (2009). *Corporate pedaphilia: Sexualisation of children in Australia*. Retrieved from

Rushby, K. (2007). *Paradise: A history of the idea that rules the world*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers.

Sagarin, S. (2003/2009). What is Waldorf education? *Southern Cross Review, 68*. Retrieved from http://southerncrossreview.org/

Sagarin, S. (2004). *Promise and compromise: A history of Waldorf schools in the United States, 1928-1998.* (Doctor of Philosophy), Columbia University.

Sagarin, S. (2008). Playing "Steiner Says": Twenty-two myths about Waldorf Education.

Sagarin, S. (2009). What is Waldorf education? *Southern Cross Review, 68*. Retrieved from http://southerncrossreview.org/

Sagarin, S. (2011). *The story of Waldorf education in the United States: Past, present, and future*. Great Barrington, MA: Steinerbooks.

Sagarin, S. (2012). Playing "Steiner Says" again: Nine more myths about Waldorf Education.

Santoro, D. (2011). Good teaching in difficult times: Demoralization in the pursuit of good work. *American Journal of Education, 118*(November). Retrieved from

Saramago, J. (2006). *Blindness* (G. Pontiero, Trans.). Orlando: Harcourt Inc.

Saul, J. R. (1993). *Voltaire's bastards: The dictatorship of reason in the West*. Camberwell, Victoria: Penguin Books.

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2013). *Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and practice*. London & New York: Routledge.

Scaligero, M. (1964/2001). *The light: An introduction to creative imagination* (E. Bisbocci, Trans.). Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books.

Scaligero, M. (2015). *A treatise on living thinking*. Great Barrington, MA: Steiner Books.

Schaefer, C. (1996). *Developing a culture of leadership, learning and service in Waldorf schools*. Paper presented at the Leadership Symposium, Camphill Soltane.

Schaefer, C. (2009). The social mission of Waldorf school communities. *Research Bulletin, 14*(2). Retrieved from www.waldorflibrary.org

Schaefer, C. (2012). *Partnerships of hope*. Chatham, NY: AWSNA.

Scharmer, O. (2016). *Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges*. San Francisco. CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Schieffer, J., & Busse, R. T. (2001). Low SES minority fourth-graders' achievements from an urban public Waldorf and comparison school. *Research Bulletin of the Research Institue for Waldorf Education.* Retrieved from www.waldorflibrary.org

Schieren, J. (2011). The scientific credibility of anthroposophy. *Research on Steiner Education, 2*(2), 90-98. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com

Schieren, J. (2014). The spiritual dimension of Waldorf education. *Waldorf Resources, 28*. Retrieved from www.waldorf-resources.org

Schon, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

Schreiber, D. A. (2012). On the epistemology of postmodern spirituality. *Verbum et Ecclesia, 33*(1), 1-8. Retrieved from www.ve.org.za doi:10.4102/ve.v33i1.398

Sela-Smith, S. (2002). Heuristic research: Review and critique of Moustakas's method. *Journal of Humanistic Pscychology, 42*(3), 53-88. Retrieved from SAGE Journals website: https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jhp

Senge, P. (2004). Learn to innovate. *Executive Excellence, 21*(6), 3-4. Retrieved from ProQuest Central website:

Senge, P. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. London: Random House.

Senge, P. (2011). The future of education. www.watersfoundation.org: Waters Foundation.

Senge, P. (2012). Creating the schools of the future: Education for a sustainable society. *Solutions, 3*(3). Retrieved from www.thesolutionsjournal.com

Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smity, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2012). *Schools that learn: A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. New York: Crown Business.

Sheldrake, R. (1988). *The presence of the past: Morphic resonance and the habits of nature*. London: Collins.

Sheldrake, R. (2003). *The sense of being stared at and other aspects of the extended mind*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Sheldrake, R. (2012). *The science delusion: Freeing the spirit of inquiry*. London: Coronet.

Shotter, J. (2006). *Vygotsky, Goethe, Bakhtin, Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty: 'Getting it' and the nature of dialogic inquiry*. University of Aarlborg.

Shotter, J. (2008). Dialogism and polyphony in organisation studies: Action guiding anticipations and the continuous creation of novelty. *Organization Studies, 29*(4), 501-524. Retrieved from doi:http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/thed20

Silko, L. M. (1986). *Ceremony*. New York; London: Penguin Books.

Silverman, D. (2007). *A very short, fairly interesting, reasonably cheap book about qualitative research* (2nd edition ed.). London: SAGE.

Simon, K. (2011). *Rudolf Steiner and the spirit of art.* (Masters' Degree in Arts Management), University of Oregon.

Sinclair, M., & Ashkanasy, N. (2005). Intuition: Myth or a decisionmaking tool? *Management Learning, 36*(3), 353-370. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/1350507605055351

Singer, D., Golinkoff, R., & Hirsh-Pasek, K. (Eds.). (2006). *Play = Learning: How play motivates and enhances children's cognitive and social-emotional growth*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Slaughter, R. (2015). Beyond the global emergency: Integral futures and the search for clarity. *World Future Society, 7*(2-3), 239-252. Retrieved from

Slaven, K. (Producer). (2007). Steiner streams in secular schools. *The Religion Report*. [podcast] Retrieved from www.abc.net.au

Smit, J. (1991/2012). *The steps towards knowledge which the seeker for the spirit must take* (D. Mitchell, Trans.). Chatham, NY: AWSNA.

Smith, J. (2018). Death of a Steiner school. Retrieved from https://anthropopper.wordpress.com/2018/07/29/death-of-a-steiner-school/

Sokal, A. (2008). *Beyond the hoax: Science, philosophy and culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Solzhenitsyn, A. (2014). *Nobel lecture in literature 1970*. Paper presented at the Nobel Prize, Stockholm. http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1970/solzhenitsyn-lecture.html

Sophocles. (1947). *The theban plays*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Classics.

Spock, M. (1983). *The art of Gothean conversation*. Spring Valley, NY: St George Publications.

Spoelstra, S. (2009). Organizational brilliance: On blinding visions in organisations. *Journal of Organisational Change Management, 22*(4), 373-385. Retrieved from doi:10.1108/09534810910967152

Sproule, J. M. (2001). Authorship and origins of the seven propaganda devices: A research note. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs, 4*(1), 135-143. Retrieved from JSTOR website: https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939653

Squire, C. (2013). Narrative Research: An Interview with Corrine Squire: SAGE Publications.

Squire, C., Andrews, M., & Tamboukou, M. (2008). Introduction: What is narrative research? In M. Andrews, C. Squire, & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research*. SAGE researchmethods.

St.Pierre, E. (2011). Post qualitative research: The critique and the coming after. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research (4th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

St.Pierre, E. (2013). The posts continue: becoming. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 26*(6), 646-657. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/09518398.2013.788754

St.Pierre, E. (2018). Writing post qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry, 24*(9), 603-608. Retrieved from doi:10.1177/1077800417734567

Staratt, R. (2005). Cultivating the moral character of learning and teaching: A neglected dimension of educational leadership. *School Leadership & Management, 25*(4), 399-411. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/13634230500197272

Steger, M. (2005). Ideologies of globalization. *Journal of Political Ideologies, 10*(1), 11-30. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/1356931052000310263

Stehlik, I. (2014). Governance and leadership in Steiner schools: New directions. In L. Burrows & T. Stehlik (Eds.), *Teaching with spirit: New perspectives on Steiner education in Australia*. Murwillumbah, NSW: Immortal Books.

Stehlik, T. (2002). *Every parent carries the flame*. Flaxton, Qld: Post Pressed.

Stehlik, T. (2003). Parenting as a vocation: lifelong learning can begin in the home. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 22*(4), 367-379. doi:10.1080/02601370304838

Stein, W. J. (2001). *The ninth century and the holy grail*. London: Temple Lodge Publishing.

Stein, W. J. (2008). *The death of Merlin: Arthurian myth and alchemy*. Edingurgh: Floris.

Steiner Education Aotearoa New Zealand. (1987-2019). Equity Statement. In Steiner Education Aotearoa New Zealand (Ed.).

Steiner Education Australia. (2018). Steiner Education Australia. Retrieved from https://www.steinereducation.edu.au/

Steiner Education Development Trust. (2019). New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education. Retrieved from www.sedt.co.nz

Steiner, R. (1897/1928). *Goethe's conception of the world* H. Collison (Ed.) Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1903/1967). *Reincarnation and Karma: From the point of view of modern scientific thought* Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1909/1981). *The education of the child in the light of anthroposophy* (G. a. M. Adams, Trans.). London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (1911/2008). *Buddha and Christ: The sphere of boddhisatvas*. London: The Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain.

Steiner, R. (1911/2016). *Human history in the light of spiritual investigation* Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1917/1987). *Aspects of human evolution.* Lecture given 24 July 1917. Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1917/2004). *Anthroposophy has something to add to the modern sciences* (A. Meuss, Trans.). Lower Beechmont, Australia: Completion Press.

Steiner, R. (1918/1990). *A road to self knowledge and the threshold of the spiritual world* (H. Collison, Trans. third ed.). London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (1918/2013). The sources of artistic imagination and the sources of supersensible knowledge. *from the lecture series Art and the Experiencing of Art, Lect. 6, 6 May 1918*. Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1918/2018). *The eternal in the human soul: Immortality and freedom.* Rudolf Steiner Archive and e.Lib, Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1920/1983). *The boundaries of natural science* (F. Amrine & K. Oberhuber, Trans.). Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1920/2001). *Renewal of education* (R. F. Lathe & N. P. Whittaker, Trans.). Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1921/1991). *Anthroposophy and science* (W. Stuber & M. Gardner, Trans. 2nd ed.). Spring Valley, NY: Mercury Press.

Steiner, R. (1922/1983). *The driving force of spiritual powers in world history* (D. Osmond & J. Collis, Trans.). North Vancouver: Steiner Book Centre.

Steiner, R. (1922/1984). *The human soul in relation to world evolution*. Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1923/1966). *The evolution of consciousness. Lecture 2.* Retrieved from http://wn.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1923/1991). *Earthly knowledge and heavenly wisdom* (S. Seiler, Trans.). Lecture 3 February 1923. New York: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1923/2008a). *The anthroposophic movement The History and Significance of the Anthroposophical Movement to the Anthroposophical Society* Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1923/2008b). The Unveiling of Spiritual Truth. *from the lecture series The Anthroposophic Movement, Lect. 2*. Retrieved from The Rudolf Steiner Archive and e.Lib website: www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1924/1997). *The roots of education*. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1928/2000). *The story of my life* (H. Collison, Trans.). New York: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1932/1966). *The study of man: General education course* (A. C. Harwood, Trans. 2nd ed.): The Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (1943/2010). *Education: Lectures given at Ilkley* Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1961/1984). *Esoteric christianity and the mission of Christian Rosenkreutz* (P. Wehrle, Trans.). London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (1961/1986). *At the gates of spiritual science.* Lecture 14. 4 September 1906. Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1961/1994). *How to know higher worlds: A modern path of initiation* (C. Bamford, Trans.). Spring Valley, NY: The Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1961/2004). *A Modern Art of Education*. Barrington, MA: The Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1961/2009). *The riddles of philosophy*. Spring Valley, NY: Steiner Books.

Steiner, R. (1972/1991). *Anthroposophy and science: Observation, experiment, mathematics* (W. Stuber & M. Gardner, Trans.). Spring Valley: Mercury Press.

Steiner, R. (1975/1998a). *Faculty meetings with Rudolf Steiner* Foundations of Waldorf Education, Vol. 1 & 2. Retrieved from www.rsarchive.org

Steiner, R. (1975/1998b). *The fifth gospel* (A. Meuss, Trans.). Forest Row, East Sussex: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (1978). *The effects of spiritual development* (A. H. Parker, Trans.). London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (1981). *The being of man and his future evolution* (P. Wehrle, Trans.). London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (1983). *The reappearance of Christ in the etheric*. Spring Valley, NY: The Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1983/1996). *Riddles of the soul* (W. Lindemann, Trans.). Chestnut Ridge, NY: Mercury Press.

Steiner, R. (1984). *An outline of occult science* (M. a. H. Monges, Trans. 3rd ed.). Spring Valley, NY: Anthroposophic Press, Inc.

Steiner, R. (1985). *The Temple legend*. London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (1987). *Supersensible knowledge* (R. Stebbing, Trans.). Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1989). *Mystery centers*. Blauvelt, NY: Spiritual Research Editions.

Steiner, R. (1992/1996). *Foundations of Human Experience* (R. F. L. N. P. Whitaker, Trans.). Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Pres.

Steiner, R. (1993). *The influences of Lucifer and Ahriman: Human responsibility for the Earth* (D. S. Ormond, Trans.). Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1994). *Theosophy* (C. Creeger, Trans.). Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (1995). Buddha and Christ: The sphere of the Bodhisattvas. London: The Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain.

Steiner, R. (2000). *Mystics after modernism: Discovering the seeds of a new science in the Renaissance* (K. Zimmer, Trans.). Hudson, NY: Steiner Books.

Steiner, R. (2002/2016). *Initiation science and the development of the human mind* (A. Meuss, Trans.). Forest Row, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (2004). *The spiritual ground of education*. Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R. (2007a). *Anthroposophical leading thoughts* (G. M. Adams, Trans.). Forest Row, East Sussex: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (2007b). *Guidance in esoteric training: From the esoteric school* (M. B. e. al, Trans.). Forest Row, E. Sussex: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (2009). *An outline of occult science* Retrieved from www.gutenberg.org

Steiner, R. (2010). *The mysteries of the holy grail: From Arthur and Parzival to modern initiation* (M. Barton, Trans.). Forest Row: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Steiner, R. (2013). *Verses and meditations* (G. Adams, Trans.). London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Stemann, K. (2017). On the back of the turtle: Culture and Waldorf education. *Waldorf Resources*. Retrieved from Waldorf Resources website: www.waldorfresources.org

Sterling, S. (2009). Ecological intelligence. In A. Stibbe (Ed.), *The handbook of sustainability literacy: Skills for a changing world* (pp. 77-83). Totnes, UK: Green Books.

Stevenson, N. (2010). Critical pedagogy, democracy, and capitalism: Education without enemies and borders. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 32*(1), 66-92. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/10714410903482674

Stockmeyer, K. (2015). *Rudolf Steiner's curriculum for Steiner-Waldorf schools: An attempt to summarise his indications* (R. Everett-Zade, Trans.). Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Stroud, G. (2018). *Teacher*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Stuckrad, K. v. (2005). Western esotericism: Towards an integrative model of interpretation. *Religion, 35*(2), 78-97. Retrieved from doi:10.1016/j.religion.2005.07.002

Sturbaum, M. (1997). *Transformational possibilities of schooling: A study of Waldorf education.* (PhD), Indiana University, Bloomington.

Sumser, R. (1994). Rational occultism in *fin de siecle* Germany: Rudolf Steiner's modernism. *History of European Ideas, 18*(4), 497-511. Retrieved from Taylor and Francis Online website: doi:10.1016/0191-6599(94)90082-5

Suskind, R. (2004). Without a doubt. *The New York Times*.

Tacey, D. (1995). *Edge of the sacred: Transformation in Australia*. North Blackburn, Vic: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tacey, D. (2000). *Reenchantment: The new Australian spirituality*. Pymble, Sydney: HarperCollins Publishers.

Taguchi, H. L., & St.Pierre, E. A. (2017). Using concept as method in educational and social science inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry, 23*(9), 643-648. Retrieved from journals.sagepub.com website: doi:10.1177/1077800417732634

Tang, Y., & Joiner, C. (2011). *Synergic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Tautz, J. (1982). *The founding of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart*. Pedagogical Section Council of North America: Spring Valley, New York.

Taylor, J. B. (2009). *My stroke of insight*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Terranova, A. (2013). *A study of the benefits of the Urban Waldorf program for students who are not intentional participants.* (Maste of Education Teacher Leader Program), Spalding University, Louisville, KY.

The Dark Mountain Project. (2017). *Walking on lava*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

The Mabinogion. (1985). *The Mabinogion* (J. Gantz, Trans.). Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Thiong'O, N. W. (1993). *Moving the centre: The struggle for cultural freedoms*. Oxford: James Currey.

Thiong'O, N. W. (2017). *Devil on the cross*. New York: Penguin Classics.

Thompson, S. (1977). *The folktale*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Todres, L. (2007). *Embodied enquiry: Phenomenological touchstones for research, psychotherapy and sprituality*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, Macmillan.

Tomazin, F. (2008). Warning on state Steiner schools. *The Age*.

Tomberg, V. (1992). *Inner development*. Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press.

Topfield, J. (2011). Blocking the stream. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "Big Tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(10), 837-851. Retrieved from

Traub, H. (2013). Reconciling philosophy and anthroposophy. *Research on Steiner Education, 4*(2), 127-137.

Truffaut, F. (Writer). (1966). Fahrenheit 451. In A. Enterprises (Producer): Universal Pictures.

Uhrmacher, P. B. (1991). *Waldorf schools marching quietly unheard.* (PhD), Stanford University, Stanford, CA.

Uhrmacher, P. B. (2004). Environment for developing souls: The ideas of Rufold Steiner *Counterpoints* (Vol. 263, pp. 97-120): Peter Lang AG.

Ullrich, H. (1994). Rudolf Steiner. *Prospects: the quarterly review of contemporary education, 24*(3/4), 555-572. Retrieved from www.ibe.unesco.org

Ullrich, H. (2008/2014). *Rudolf Steiner* (J. Duke & D. Balestrini, Trans.). London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Urieli, B. L., & Muller-Wiedemann, H. (1995/2000). *Learning to experience the etheric world: Empathy, the After-Image and a new social ethic* (S. B. d. Lange, Trans.). London: Temple Lodge.

Vagle, M. (2016). *Crafting phenomenological research*. London: Routledge.

van Florenstein Mulder, H. (2001). Integration in the state education system. *Waldorf Education Worldwide,* 152-153.

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: University of New York Press.

van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

van Manen, M. (2016). *Pedagogical tact: Knowing what to do when you don't know what to do*. Oxen: Routledge.

Varela, F., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (1991). *The embodied mind: Cognitive science and human experience*. Massachussets Institute of Technology: MIT Press.

Vernon, M. (2019). The say of the land. *aeon*.

von Arnim, C. (2017). Kings Langley Rudolf Steiner School on reforming path to avoid closure. *NNA News*. Retrieved from www.nna-news.org

Wagemann, J. (2011). Meditation - research as development. *Research on Steiner Education, 2*(2), 35-49. Retrieved from RoSE website: www.rosejourn.com

Wagemann, J. (2017). Zur Anthropologie der Waldorfpadogogik: Ein bewusstseinsphannomenologischer Zugang. *Research on Steiner Education, 8*(1), 1-21. Retrieved from RoSE website: www.rosejourn.com

Wagstaff, A. (2003). *Steiner education and its management: Problems and possibilities.* (MA).

Waldorf World List. (2017). Waldorf world list: Directory of Waldorf and Rudolf Steiner schools, kindergartens and teacher training centers worldwide. www.freunde-waldorf.de: Hague Circle: International Forum for Steiner/Waldorf Education.

Weaver, J., & Snaza, N. (2017). Against methodocentrism in educational research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 49*(11), 1055-1065. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/00131857.2016.1140015

Wember, V. (2016). *The five dimensions of Waldorf education in the work of Rudolf Steiner* (J. Weedon, Trans.). Tubingen, Germany: Stratosverlag.

Werner, U., & Plato, B. v. (2001). Waldorf Education: Expansion into the twentieth century. *Waldorf Education Today*.

Werner, U., & von Plato, B. (2001). Waldorf education: Expansion in the Twentieth Century. *Waldorf Education Worldwide,* 24-31.

Wertz, F. J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L. M., Josselson, R., Anderson, R., & McSpadden, E. (2011). *Five ways of doing qualitative analysis: Phenomenological psychology, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative research, and intuitive inquiry*. New York and London: The Guildford Press.

Whedon, S. W. (2007). *Hands, Hearts, and Heads: Childhood and Esotericism in American Waldorf Education.* (Doctor of Philosophy), University of California, Santa Barbara, CA.

Whicher, O. (1989). *Sun space: Science at a threshold of spiritual understanding* (T. Meyer, Trans.). London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

Whicher, O. (Ed.) (1977). *George Adams: Interpreter of Rudolf Steiner - his life and a selection of essays*. East Grinstead, Sussex: Henry Goulden.

Whitman, W. (1986). *The complete poems*. London: Penguin Books.

WHO. (2018). Adolescent health epidemiology.   Retrieved from www.who.int

Wiechert, C. (2009). An education for our time? *The Journal of the Pedagogical Section, 36*. Retrieved from Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum website: www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch

Wiechert, C. (2010a). The Educational Practice of the Waldorf Schools. *The Journal of the Pedagogical Section, 39*(Michaelmas). Retrieved from Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum website: www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch

Wiechert, C. (2010b). On the question of the threefold structure of the main lesson. *The Journal of the Pedagogical Section, 38*(Easter).

Wiechert, C. (2012). *Teaching, the joy of profession: An invitation to enhance your (Waldorf) interest*. Dornach, CH: Verlag am Goetheanum.

Wiechert, C. (2013). A new image for Waldorf teachers: Comments on Tomas Zdrazil's view on being a Waldorf teacher. *The Journal of the Pedagogical Section, 49*(Michaelmas). Retrieved from Pedagogical Section of the Goetheanum website: www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch

Wiechert, C. (2014) *Why do we do what we do? An interview with Christof Wiechert/Interviewer: W. Stapp*. Waldorf Today, Alliance of Public Waldorf Education, WaldorfToday.com.

Wilber, K. (1998). *The essential Ken Wilber: An introductory reader*. Boston: Shambhala.

Williams, Z. (2006). *The commercialisation of childhood*. Retrieved from London:

Wilson, A. (1980). The infancy of the history of childhood: An appraisal of Philippe Aries. *History and Theory, 19*(2 (Feb)), 132-153. Retrieved from JSTOR website: www.jstor.org

Wimmer, K. (Writer). (2002). Equilibrium: Miramax.

Winslade, J. (2009). Tracing lines of flight: Implications of the work of Gilles Deleuze for narrative practice. *Family Process, 48*(3), 332-346. Retrieved from www.FamilyProcess.org

Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations* (G. Anscombe, Trans.). Oxford: BH Blackwell Ltd.

Wood, P. R. (1996). *Beyond survival: A case study of the Milwaukee Urban Waldorf School.* (Doctor of Education), University of California, San Francisco.

Woods, G., O'Neill, M., & Woods, P. (1997). Spiritual Values in Education: Lessons from Steiner? *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 2*(2), 25-40. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/1364436970020204

Woods, P., Ashley, M., & Woods, G. (2005). *Steiner Schools in England*. Retrieved from www.researchprofiles.herts.ac.uk

Woulfe, C. (2014). Fairy tale fallout. *Listener*.

Wright, D. (2001). Divining the aleph. *The Trumpeteer: Journal of Ecosophy, 17*(1). Retrieved from www.trumpeter.athabascau.ca

Wylie, K., & Hagan, M. (2003). Steiner for the 21stcentury: The application of Waldorf principles to mainstream practice. *Irish Educational Studies, 22*(1), 153-164. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/0332331030220113

Yamada, K. (2004). *The gateless gate: The classic book of zen koans*. Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications.

Ye, M., & Chen, Y. (2015). A literature review on teachers' emotional labor. *Creative Education, 6*, 2232-2240. Retrieved from doi:10.4236/ce.2015.620230

Yeats, W. (Ed.) (1975). *Fairy and folk tales of Ireland*. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe.

Yonemura, M. (2015). Shared visions and common roots: Montessori, Pratt and Steiner. *The Educational Forum, 54*(1), 49-64. Retrieved from doi:10.1080/00131728909335517

Zajonc, A. (1995). *Catching the light: The entwined history of light and mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zajonc, A. (2008). *Meditation as contemplative inquiry: When knowing becomes love*. Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books.

Zajonc, A. (2009). Love and knowledge: Recovering the heart of knowledge through contemplation. *Research Bulletin, 14*(1), 33-42. Retrieved from www.waldorflibrary.org

Zajonc, A. (2011). Attending to interconnection: Living the lesson. *Research Bulletin, 16*(1), 53-66. Retrieved from www.waldorflibrary.org

Zamyatin, Y. (1993). *We*. New York: Penguin.

Zander, H. (2013). How can we have dialogue with Rudolf Steiner? *Research on Steiner Education, 4*(2), 142-145. Retrieved from www.rosejourn.com

Zdrazil, T. (2013). Having class teachers for 8 years. *The Journal of the Pedagogical Section, 49*(Michaelmas), 52-61. Retrieved from www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch

Zdrazil, T., & Kindt, R. (2014). The situation of class teachers worldwide: First results of a survey conducted by the International Forum. *The Journal of the Pedagogical Section, 51*(Easter), 9-11. Retrieved from www.paedagogik-goetheanum.ch

Zilber, T. B., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Lieblich, A. (2008). The Embedded Narrative:Navigating Through Multiple Contexts. *Qualitative Inquiry, 14*(6), 1047-1069. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1077800408321616 doi:10.1177/1077800408321616

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Methodology as Journey Metaphor: Etymology and the Oracle

I begin with a heuristic narrative that is intended to dissipate the fumes and the fury that issues from dialoguing with paradoxes. Perhaps, as Romanyshyn (2007) reminds us, what is familiar to us as research and methodology once originated as story, as *mythos*.

In ancient Greece, a certain kind of journey intersected both sacred and mortal affairs, leading the messenger from his city-state to Delphi, the place of the Apollonian Oracle. Curiously, the words we use today to talk about the research "journey", such as "theory", "methodology" or "meaning", carry latent invitations to contemplate the historical and contemporary activity of research inquiry within a larger narrative canvas that includes long forgotten practices that were once emblematic of ancient Greek culture. Is it possible that these "invitations", mysteriously folded into the contours of semantics and etymology, may stir a deeper sense of the connection between human and non-human realities lying along the roadside, the pathways of inquiry?[211]

Figure A.1 Pythia at Delphi sitting on the tripodos.

Source: www.nationalgeographic.com

In ancient Greece, the cult of the Delphic Oracle occupied a prominent place in the governance of city states, and particularly in maintaining the borderland between human and non-human activity and moral practice. It was a ritualised link between the earthly and the divine orders, between human being and gods. One of the most famous instances of this ritual is described in Sophocles' (1947) masterpiece, *Oedipus Rex.* Unbeknownst to Creon, the "crimes" of Oedipus are disclosed to Creon, his uncle and brother-in-law, who has the unenviable task of reporting this message to his king, Oedipus. In the language of the sacred ritual, Creon is a *theoros*, an emissary who mimics the transitional nature of Hermes, the divine intermediary between the gods and humanity. In the communicative hierarchy of the sacred cult of the Oracle, the *theoros* is an authorised emissary sent by the city-state to consult with the

[211] I am grateful to Kieran Keohane (2014) for drawing attention to the Oracle as a conceit for research inquiry.

Oracle and then to return the message of the Oracle to the governor of the city-state. Literally, the *theoros* is "one who observes the vision" (Nagy, 1990, p. 62). However, the *theoros*, does not directly observe the oracular revelation, but through the intermediacy of the *prophetes*, the one encharged with the task of *declaring* the message of the Oracle. The Apollonian revelation is voiced through the morally pure Pythia, who, perched on her three-legged stool above the mountainside fissures that admit the rising vapours from the Earth's womb, is "inspired" by the *omphe*, or sacred utterance of Apollo (Leontis, 2001). Her voice is "heard" by the *prophetes* as an "indication" of the truth. The Greek word for this indication derives from the verb, *semaino*, "indicates", from which we glean "semantic" and "semiotics", and by virtue of its phonetic proximity (Moll, 1959), also *semen* and *seminal.*[212]

Nestled into the ancestral form of present day "theory", are two key concepts: seeing, as in *theoria* (a vision or way of seeing), and the divine goddess (*thea*), suggesting that the act of seeing is no ordinary vision but a divinely inspired perception. The position had such authority that Aristotle suggested the path to tyranny lay through the role of *theoros* (as cited in Leontis, 2001, p. 105). The oracular vision arises as an "inner seeing", a necessity since the exchange between actors in this sacred play is conveyed through imaginal pictures. According to Nagy (1990), the nature of "indicates" stands between "speaking [the truth]" and "lying", suggesting that the vision communicated finally to the ordinary mortals in the city-state remains in the form of a metaphor that must be decoded. Hence, upon his return to Thebes, Creon simply bore the words:

> There's a wound that eats at the very heart of our city's soul.
>
> A wound that has been allowed to grow and fester inside Thebes.
>
> Apollo commands us to purge the city of it before it becomes incurable.
>
> (Sophocles, 1947)

Unknown to either Creon or Oedipus, the prophetic words refer, of course, to Oedipus' twin crimes: parricide and incest. And the response, in turn, was prompted by the original question that invokes the Delphic journey: what is the cause of Thebes' misfortunes?[213] Ironically, the tragic murder of Laius, Thebes' previous king and father to Oedipus, occurred when he was himself on the way to the Oracle, seeking an answer to *his own* question, namely the veracity of the original "curse"

---

[212] It is interesting to consider the Greek and Latin cognates in this instance, since "seed' (Greek) and "sign" (Latin) are conceptually proximal. The notion that a sign indicates something beyond itself is not conceptually distant from the relationship between a seed and its complete manifestation, whether literally or metaphorically.

[213] Curiously, the question taken to the oracle in the Sophoclean tragedy is remarkably similar to Parzival's question.

that precipitated the drama of Oedipus' abandonment as a child by his father and its relentless unfolding as the tragedy of the cursed child.

Another key term, "method", and hence "methodology" (which adds *logos* to *methodos*), hearkens to the pathway to Delphi from the city-state. *Hodos* is the "way, path, road, journey, traveling" (Liddell & Scott, 1990). *Methodos* is literally "a following after", and only later "a scientific inquiry." The nature of the oracular journey is such that, like scientific inquiry, it is prompted by a question (Keohane, 2001). Hence, the *methodos* is literally, not only the way leading back and forth between Oracle and agora, where the populace waited, but the spatialised and temporalised journey between asking the question and receiving the answer. Such is the nature of the knowledge borne by the *theoros* on the way home, that succumbing to the temptation to pass on this knowledge to passers-by on the road would bring severe punishment (Nagy, 1990). Once again, the notion that knowledge is sacred is reinforced in this oracular drama.

There is a further dimension to *methodos* that may be useful in fertilising the comparison between the Ancient Greek knowledge-ritual and the practice of research inquiry. The clue here is twofold. Firstly, the word *methodeia*, related to *methodos*, refers to "craft, artifice, or wiliness," which are qualities attributed to the messenger of the gods. Secondly, Hermes is a key figure in this drama, who is metaphorically in the shadows of this journey. The caduceus symbolises Hermes' presence: the intermediary between two extremes, two tendencies, two poles. The middle position of "indicating" between "speaking" and "lying" is an instance of this, as is the temptation that bears on the *theoros*, upon commencing the way back to the city sate, to recount the message to passers-by, and upon return to the city, to leave nothing out of the message nor to add anything to it. Hermes' patronage of thieves is here intimated, for the *theoros* is tempted because he has witnessed something *illicit*, or what is forbidden to ordinary mortals. Both are intimations of the vulnerability of the *theoros*, or to put it differently, his humanity.

Hence, we find embedded within the narrative folds of this drama, a powerful story about the enactment of knowledge, which was seen by the Ancient Greeks as a transaction, literally, a ritual exchange of critical information between gods and mortals. This sacred drama demanded specific tasks, roles and moral injunctions in order for the transmission of knowledge to move from the belly of the Earth to the agora of the city-state.[214]

[214] Sophocles' *Oedipus* adds a further element to the methodology of the oracle: namely, Tiresias, the blind, androgynous seer, who waits hesitantly in Thebes for Creon's return. Once Oedipus realises that Creon, the *theoros*, cannot offer him understanding of the oracle's encoded message, he summons Tiresias. The old man is not keen to see his ruler. When pressed by him, he finally relents and tells him, "You are the wound!" However disturbing it is for Oedipus to hear this

Appendix B: Invitation Letter

A Research Study on Steiner Waldorf Education

Project Title: Steiner Waldorf education in transition: implications of transition and narrative possibilities

I invite you, as current or former practitioners or school leaders in Steiner Waldorf (SW) education, to participate in this study. I am interested to hear your personal stories of working in and living with SW education. I encourage you to speak from the heart so that your story may be heard. It is as important to hear about your deeply felt aspirations and hopes, as it is to hear about the problems and frustrations you face in your work.

This is a critical study of SW education in the context of transformative impulses that are working into the world of education today. It seeks to illuminate the challenges facing SW education in the present day, and to give voice to the struggles and aspirations of practitioners who work within the field. It acknowledges that SW education has grown from a rich and fertile heritage which has been imbued with the strivings of Rudolf Steiner and enriched by past and present educators who have worked and continue to work to actualise this powerful and sustaining model of education. At the same time, it also acknowledges that SW education is in need of renewal. The signs are emerging that this is happening already. However, it is the aim of this study to illuminate the shadows as well as the light.

I firmly believe that we can contribute positively towards the future health and vitality of SW education by honestly facing the challenges confronting it in the present day and in the future to come. I also believe that a key element in this gesture of facing challenges is an attitude of authenticity towards ourselves and our relationships with others.

To receive more information on the study, or to express your interest in participating, please respond to:

18279463@student.uws.edu.au

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Antonio Marques

PhD Candidate, Western Sydney University

---

accusation, because it does not align with his memory or reasoning, he dismisses the seer and continues his forensic investigation of the crime intimated in the riddle. We have represented here in graphic, dramatic detail, the duality of intuitive insight (which is required to decipher the riddle without further questioning and which Tiresias provides) and intellectual forensic inquiry, a process of Socratic deduction (which finally confirms the intuition by a gradual process of elimination of errors, leaving only one possible narrative).

Appendix C: Participation Information/Consent Letter

Participant Information Sheet (General)

School of Education
University of Western Sydney
Locked Bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751
Australia

Project Title: Steiner Waldorf education in transition: implications of transition and narrative possibilities

Project Summary: The project aims to critically explore Steiner Waldorf (SW) education in the present day with a focus on significant transitions occurring within the movement. A key component of the project is to collect personal narratives from practising or non-current SW educators. The narratives will offer insights into the "lived experiences" of SW educators in their particular contexts. It is hoped that the project will contribute towards a critical and reflective understanding of the theory and practice of SW education. The project will also look at Steiner's epistemology and examine how it is interpreted and practised by SW educators.

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Antonio Marques, PhD candidate with the School of Education at University of Western Sydney, under the supervision of Dr David Wright and Dr Kumara Ward from the School of Education at UWS.

What will I be asked to do?
You will be asked to "tell your story" of living and working with SW education. The aim of the research project is to gather your stories about SW education, from whatever standpoint makes sense to you. However, it may be helpful to consider this in relation to the Parzival story, which is well known within Steiner circles. The question, "what ails thee?" may offer an imaginative path into the condition of SW education in the present. What are the potential "wounds" that hold back the future development of SW education? How may it be renewed? The *focus* is on your experience and your stories.

Your responses will be coded or "de-identified" and excerpts from your interview or references to you or your school used in the thesis or in future publications or presentations will be de-identified through use of pseudonyms.

How much of my time will I need to give?
The conversations about your experiences will take up to 2 hours.
In some cases, you may be asked to participate in a follow up interview. This would be entirely voluntary.

What specific benefits will I receive for participating?
It is expected that participants will gain important benefits from taking part in this research. Firstly, it is an opportunity for you to "tell your story". Doing so may help you to shed a new, helpful light on your experiences in SW education, and with it to forge new understanding about yourself and your professional vocation as an educator. It may also happen that you will feel a renewed sense of purpose or direction in relation to your work, and Steiner's philosophy of education. Sharing personal stories and accounts can help build strong connections that work their way into our own communities, and may encourage and empower others to tell their own stories.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me? If so, what will you do to rectify it?
It is possible that the study may involve some discomfort for you. This is a normal consequence of exercising a degree of self-examination and self-reflection, something that teachers are normally required to do in their professional capacity. However, this may also result in a higher awareness or understanding of your vocation. Nonetheless, if at any time you decide that you no longer wish to participate in the project, your decision will be respected and no further communication will ensue.
Counselling services are provided by Western Sydney University and may be contacted by:
Email: counselling@westernsydney.edu.au
Phone: (02) 9852 5199
Office hours are Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.30 pm.

How do you intend to publish the results?
Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide.

The findings of the research will be published in a thesis form and will be accessible through Western Sydney University.

*Please note that the minimum retention period for data collection is five years.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate, you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

If you do choose to withdraw, any information that you have supplied will not be used in the study and will be deleted (erased from hard drives for digital data, or shredded for paper files).

Can I tell other people about the study?
Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the chief investigator's contact details. They can contact the chief investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

Data storage
There are a number of government initiatives in place to centrally store research data and to make it available for further research. For more information, see **http://www.ands.org.au/** and **http://www.rdsi.uq.edu.au/about**. Regardless of whether the information you supply or about you is stored centrally or not, it will be stored securely and it will be de-identified before it is made to available to any other researcher.

What if I require further information?
Please contact Antonio Marques should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact either of Antonio’s supervisors at WSU:

Dr David Wright: Senior Lecturer, School of Education - (02) 4736 0267
david.wright@westernsydney.edu.au

Dr Kumara Ward: Lecturer, School of Education - (02) 4736 0048
K.Ward@westernsydney.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?
This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is H11322.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

Participant Consent Form

Human Research Ethics Committee
Office of Research Services

This is a project specific consent form. It restricts the use of the data collected to the named project by the named investigators.

Project Title: Steiner Waldorf education in transition: implications of transition and narrative possibilities

I,____ [name of participant] consent to participate in the research project titled "Steiner Waldorf education in transition: implications of transition and narrative possibilities"

I acknowledge that:

I have read the participant information sheet and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to participating in an interview with the chief researcher and to the interview being audio recorded.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Return Address:

Antonio Marques
c/o David Wright
School of Education,
Western Sydney University,
Locked bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is: H11322.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel +61 2 4736 0229
Fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix D -Teachers' voices - A selection of respondents' narratives

> There is much to be learnt from the study of the many things which happen when the lofty ideas of Waldorf education incarnate imperfectly through the efforts of actual human beings and which tend to be left in obscurity by books and training courses…
>
> Learning about all the good things that may be expected to happen in a Waldorf school is a relatively easy matter. Coping with the way things actually turn out is more difficult (Francis, 2004, pp. xiii).

A brief note about privacy.

I would have liked to include in this section "portraits" or summaries of *every* respondent's narratives. However, this was not possible for two compelling reasons. In the first instance, including *all* narratives would have added significantly to what is already a substantially sized thesis. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, I wanted to avoid any possibility of compromising the privacy of both respondents and unintended participants in the narratives. The salutary example of Ellis' ethnographic study of a fishing village has chastened me to do whatever possible to protect the identity of the individuals in the stories. This is not without regret, although in any possible situation, the decision could not be made any differently. The loss is that some respondents' stories will remain unheard *in their own voice*. This has been a necessary compromise. What is distilled, their comments and references to themes, these are retained. The ethical obligation to protect personal stories that disclose too much and would be, in my judgment, almost impossible to cloak in anonymity, has necessitated this decision.

Overview of Teachers Narratives.

Taken as a whole, the teachers' narratives have generated a considerable amount of data. In particular, their stories reveal:

i. How each respondent "reads" Steiner, and how each one is positioned relative to the inevitable but unmistakeably weighty presence of anthroposophy. The narratives trace their distinctive journeys into anthroposophy: from Peter's search for practical knowledge, seeking for confirmation that might inspire him to self-identify as a "Steiner teacher," to Robert's hiatus when the once fulfilling sense of belonging to a Steiner school community receded into the past, and what remained was a gentler, less certain and less assured conception of anthroposophy, that resembled more a passing gesture, rather than a body of principles. The presence of anthroposophy as a living being, a mentor or educator, even a harsh taskmaster, is underscored in Susan's narrative. In Jennifer's, she is an elusive entity, whose presence sits uneasily for the witnessing teacher, in the lap of a self-enclosed power group of teachers in the school. She is interrogated by her recalling self, as though to cajole her from the unforgiving silence.

For others, anthroposophy is a passing concern, reduced to a footnote or to an uncertain practice that appears on the surface of a strange, yet fruitful worldview.

ii. How anthroposophy, as a practical tool, lives in an everyday context. It addresses the individual teacher's level of engagement with anthroposophy: from positioning it close at hand as a "tool" to work the lessons and the classroom, to an "intention" that wafts in the spirit levels around the spaces of their activity.

iii. How each one is positioned within the school community, and more importantly, within the collegiate body. Each narrative provides a sense of where each respondent is placed socially within the school hierarchy. At a simple level, this equates to whether they feel themselves to be part of the inner circle, at one end of the spectrum, or position themselves on the periphery. There is also an indication given of how closely they are aligned with the school's philosophical beliefs, and a barometer of engagement with the practical life of the CoT.

iv. Related to iii above, a snapshot or indication of how the individual sits within the revealed, socially constructed body of the school culture. What form does their participation in the cultural life of the school look like? How important is this social-cultural dimension to them?

v. The lived experiences of fifteen teachers from various SWSs: offering stories that can inspire or challenge other teachers to reflect on their own vocation and practice. Teachers may see reflected in other teachers' narratives their own stories, incidents, problems, challenges, lived experiences.

vi. Individual and common themes that arise from these teachers' narratives: are there emergent pictures or central themes that underpin or overarch each narrative? Of course, this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

vii. A wide range of issues, many of which indicate serious problems that deserve careful examination. What perspectives are opened up in examining particular problems? For example, a teacher may raise an issue or problem with a particular phenomenon that is contested or not widely recognised or acknowledged. Does that teacher's account help to see this phenomenon in a new way, such that it leads practitioners to think and act differently? Examples include Wendy's concerns about how students are being prepared for adulthood when their adolescent education does not address their needs for critical stimulation, emotional balance and understanding, and engagement in the world;

Peter's search for understanding and the resistance to his inner journey; Simon's longing to find a new career path in the middle of his life and the lack of professional or even human support; Alison's deeply social ecological orientation to the culture of the school, from her care of her class students, and her wish for more collaboration at the peer level, to the parent community and beyond.

viii. How respondents position SWE and SWSs in the contemporary world. The narratives also offer insights into the putative call for renewal of anthroposophy and Steiner education.

ix. How SWE and anthroposophy may be re-languaged so that meaningful discourse can occur across the divide between SWE and mainstream or other forms of alternative education – that is, Steiner and non-Steiner.

Teachers' Narratives

Ian's Story: "we really need these fearless critics".

How did you get involved in Steiner education?

My wife was trained and working as a Steiner kindergarten teacher. It's a different experience when you have got someone in the house that is directly involved in Steiner education. I was working and teaching English as a foreign language. Later, I felt that I could make more of a contribution by getting involved in Waldorf. That was about 10 years ago. I've got a background in TESOL.[215]

But when I was in my twenties, I did an anthroposophical speech and drama training in Australia and then I did further studies in England. I had an extraordinarily gifted teacher. Her approach was to engage people through the aesthetics of speech and drama. The moral development came later. At first, it was something interesting and engaging like the pleasure you take in listening to a piece of music.

I have had quite varied experiences really because I have worked in curative education and also in a number of different Steiner schools, and also in different capacities in those schools. I suppose what you experience is that people have different visions of what a Steiner school is, so you have different emphasis as what they regard as being important. I didn't work at Red Turpentine Steiner School for very long, but they had a quite strong emphasis on having a strong collegiality, engaging in artistic activities like eurythmy and speech. They had the advantage of someone like Eva Rosenblum who was obviously very skilled in speech and drama.

Ian is now at Green Wattle Steiner School.

The school went through a big crisis and they changed the leadership and they went through a period of time where there was a lot unrest and a lot of conflict. In the end, they moved to a situation where conflict or unrest was not tolerated. It swung to a much more centralised structure. Historically, the school had been held by one firm hand, and as the head of the school is very able and has very detailed background and is quite gifted… and is obviously very committed to Walldorf education.

I admire groups like Theatre Complicité or individuals such as Robert LaPage, where there is a very strong group creativity. There's a sense of positivity… that they are releasing the creativity of all

[215] Teaching English as a second language.

of the people. They've found structures and ways of working that releases the creativity of practically everyone who is involved. This is not quite happening at Green Wattle because of the centralised control. I don't really think that the full potential [of teachers is being realised]. *The school is run like Schumacher's idea of balloons. In some ways, the balloons are free, and they run by themselves and they hold together. There is a certain amount of freedom, but there are ways of working that you could involve people more. For example, they have a special Steiner study group in the school and they're doing this only for people who are invited. There are some very quite eminent people in the organisation that are not invited. So definitely, we are not really releasing the potential of the people involved. There is a high level of control, but the payoff is the creativity because people don't feel confident and are not forthcoming to share their ideas. You gain that authority, but you lose a bit in the freedom of opportunities to bubble up and ideas to rise.*

The school has a bit of a submarine policy management. If anything comes up it just goes in different ways. The submarine goes down, so the problem is immediately taken under the service... It is almost like if you think of the Brothers Karamazov, people don't like freedom. It is too much trouble. But people make the calculation: I have given up this freedom, but it means I don't have to go to meetings, I have more time.

We don't have a College of Teachers [CofT]. We have head of departments and administrative heads. I think there is a potential in the CofT and I don't think Steiner indicated it for no reason. The difficulty is knowing how to run it well so that it doesn't degenerate into people talking for hours and hours… or it doesn't overwork the teachers. There is no regular place or time to vent concerns or even express concerns. The [staff meeting] agenda is usually decided by management, is generally not given in advance and there are no minutes kept.

If you have a high level of control the payoff is creativity, because people don't feel confident and are not forthcoming to share their ideas and thoughts and things. You gain that authority, but you lose a bit in the freedom of opportunities to bubble up and ideas to rise.

I think a healthy Steiner school should practise the child study. That's why there should be a CofT. And at the deeper level when you have got the College meditations and things like that you are trying to make a connection with good spirits like Michael and so the deeper level is always working with human development. For me anyway, all those other things are peripheral to helping that child incarnate in a healthy way, so they are able to connect their spirit with their physical and that they are able to bring to this incarnation what they had hoped to bring before they were born.

But maybe some of the problems that come with the College may be that the whole threefold thing is not sufficiently thought through. Instead of differentiating between rights issues and cultural questions, maybe it's like a soup where everything goes to the same thing.[216] *Instead of teachers being able to differentiate whether issues relate to a cultural question or a rights thing.*

Something that has been happening this year, in a couple of schools I know, is that the principals or the leading people in the organisation have decided to take up professional opportunities by doing studies at the university. And they involve people in the school to do research and use that as part of their masters or doctorate. Ian confided that this raises tensions about doing work for other people, *but then putting that aside I thought it is a good opportunity to develop… I presented research on behalf of the Maths department because they weren't interested in presenting.*

A problem in high school is that a lot of the high school teachers are not actually teaching a total Steiner curriculum from seven to twelve. Mostly they're teaching to the State curriculum with some Steiner elements retained in the main lesson. The students realise that most of their marks for the year don't come from main lessons then they are not likely to put all their heart and soul in the main lesson. We're still in this struggle at Green Wattle, where the main emphasis is going to be on achieving high marks in the HSC or it is going to be on producing a well-rounded human being.

I listened to a principal from a Catholic school. She worked with a kind of "growth mindset"[217]*. She used to be the Maths Head and now she worked with the whole school. It was interesting. She was encouraging her girls to do the high-level Maths courses, even if it meant that they wouldn't get the highest marks, because she wanted to push their intellectual capacities and to encourage them to take risks and not just go for the easy option. I don't know that we are quite doing that at Green Wattle.*

One of the things about Steiner education is that it preserves skills that were once highly valued. Take David Malouf, for example, he recalls when he was in high school having to learn things by heart. He is a poet and writer, so he had a strong resonance with language. He reminds us that

---

[216] The reference to 'threefold' denotes the concept of the 'threefold social order' which Steiner developed at the end of World War I as an alternative to the punitive conditions which were eventually imposed on the defeated Axis countries. The basic premise of this 'order' is that society functions most effectively and dynamically when the three systems – cultural/spiritual, economic and rights – are allowed to operate without undue influence from any of the others. This social order reflects the idealism of the French Revolution, with its political mantra of liberty, equality and fraternity (the order of sequence corresponds to the three respective systems). Some commentators have argued that the Waldorf schools established after the war were intended as models of the threefold social order. The insistence on running the school through the College is often cited as 'proof' that this is the case (Wagstaff, 2003).

[217] Dweck, 2014

sometimes when people are in hospital, a poem they learnt in childhood will come back to them and comfort them. We do less of that kind of thing today, now the fashion has changed, there is less recitation and less emphasis on learning things by heart. We think it's a lower intellectual skill, but it can be a foundation for a deeper understanding.

I was watching on TV a program about an American cartoonist and you saw how important it was in a society to have a fearless critic of the society because it holds up a mirror to the faults that are in it. A lot of time people get criticised for being critical but there is a real… Organisations or societies really need if they are going to be healthy, they need these critics. We are a bit too critical of people who… I mean obviously you can be critical in a nasty way, but I mean I think probably ideal for a Steiner school would be that it is confident enough in itself that it can handle severe criticism.

"Have you been to such a school?" I ask him. We both laugh out loud.

Wider society is more able to cope with criticism than a Steiner school. It would probably be a good sign of health if it could take it and listen because that would be a very strong learning environment, I think.

A conscious Steiner school should really know how to manage and help teachers to manage. How they work with antipathy and sympathy[218] *in the classroom and also with the staff and with the parents… We seem to have this policy that if someone is problematic, we just sack them and if a new position comes up we just advertise and the whole world is your possibility. I actually think it would be better if they worked with the people that were within the organisation.*

I was listening to a program about Nelson Mandela's secretary and she was telling her experience of working with him and she said he had the capacity to assess what were the strengths and weaknesses of someone and then he would work with that. Doesn't it make sense, instead of sacking people, to try and work with the people that were within the organisation? Usually you will find if you scratch the surface, everyone has more in them than you imagine. People have histories, talents, and sometimes they don't even know the talents that they have.

If you have gifted people who are doing good work, I think it is important to be aware of them. What anthroposophy provides is probably a more profound understanding of human development, but there are a lot of talented people in the world who have got very deep subject

[218] Steiner's binary concepts, 'antipathy and sympathy' (1932/1975), provide a basis for a different way of conceiving human behaviour.

knowledge or who are very able communicators or very good relationship with children. I think it is very important to be aware of what other people are doing.

I looked recently at this guy [Howard Gardner][219] *who was looking at the true, the beautiful and the good in modern times. The good has to do with professional standards in your profession, so that you have a kind of ethics, you try to do your job in a good way. You can think about all the teaching standards as actually being part of good practice. What's interesting he is actually dealing with some ideas that you think are quite essential to anthroposophy, the true, the good, and the beautiful and then he is articulating them in a way that resonates in a modern culture.*

The other side of that is the teacher who prefers to work deeply out of an anthroposophical kind of core. She is an extraordinary teacher, has a very deep understanding of Steiner education .and has a lot of skills. She is a musician, good with her hands, can paint, sculpt. She is less interested in researching things outside the Steiner world. I think that is a valid approach. The Principal is different: he likes to keep in touch with what's going on and he likes to bring that into his talks, showing that he has a contemporary grasp. Overall, though, I think we could actually be a bit more interactive with the wider culture, like they have done in Victoria.[220] *I suppose there is a danger that you could lose your, that you could just become blended in your sense of belonging to the other group more than your own.*

If you are practising your human relationships on a good level, then that actually could emanate out into the whole community. Red Cedars Steiner School have a very strong parent community. There was an attempt to move to a stronger principal system, but the teachers got together and said "well, no, we don't quite want to do this," so they have fought it a bit. The College system is not the same, but they have resisted that change much more than other schools.

Ian has worked in several SWSs, although his tenure has been longest at his current school, where he works primarily in the High School. His teaching portfolio includes English, Maths, Drama and Literacy and Numeracy support. He has also experienced teaching Drama to students with intellectual disabilities in a Steiner setting. Currently he is on long service leave and has begun another Postgraduate course.

---

[219] Gardner, H., (2012), *Truth, Beauty and Goodness Reframed*, Basic Books; and Gardner, H., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Damon, W., (2002), *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet.* Basic Books.

[220] Ian is referring here to the Steiner-stream in mainstream government schools.

Julia's story: "nobody is interested"

I had 10 years in the State system, in urban and in rural schools. One school had a huge multicultural population. Julia's family's now lives just outside a large metropolitan area. *We moved here to have children, so I took a break from teaching. When my son turned 2, I began looking for a preschool. I went to lots but couldn't see that he would fit there, until I went to Mountain Ash Steiner School.*

Coming here was fairly easy because I could see my own child thriving in the space. His kindergarten teacher was an amazing person. She helped me, just by observation I could see, this was a very healthy thing for children, Steiner education. I followed on teaching a year behind my son and my daughter. I also did a lot of relief teaching. Giovanni Montobello was amazing. He used to hold wonderful workshops and seminars and give such insight into the curriculum. Along with my own reading, I just came on board. It was just natural for me; it felt like a coming home to me. By the time I took my second class,[221] *I was the primary faculty coordinator, sort of filling a gap in administration, for about 18 months. I've been at the school for 20 years. I've seen lots of changes, good and bad.*

At first, I wasn't planning to teach. I was happy doing relief teaching, but the school needed a Class 1 teacher. The young teacher they had chosen wasn't the right match. They almost begged me, "Julia, will you take this class?" They were a difficult class. It was Easter when I started. I felt like I was called rather than chosen to be there. Because I was a little bit older and an older parent and a lit bit more experienced, I was lucky that the parents gave me the trust to take on those difficult roles.

Financial considerations rank highly into school decisions, and sometimes those considerations are at the peril of the education system. In fact, if I was to say what the biggest problem in Steiner education is today, I would say that we haven't found an organisation structure that marries with the Australian education system.

The CofT play a valuable role. They are the people at the coalface, they are the people teaching in the school, they know what's happening in the school. A non-teaching principal just isn't there. You can see why Steiner said that the teachers have to be in charge of the school. But we've got so many boxes to tick in the Australian education system, so you're forever making compromises.

[221] Julia is referring to her second looping cycle.

The last headmistress that we've had… I'm sure with all the best intentions she thought she was making the right decisions, but she lost the touch. She wasn't the teacher on the ground. So many people make decisions from their past experience and expect to draft the people along with to a vision that they're not properly bought into. She was a wonderful, an amazing teacher, good teaching skills. But in life, in so many situations when you begin to make judgements is you superimpose your life and your judgments onto other people.

When you stand in the classroom every morning and you stand in the circle and you look at the children, you have to look at the children, you have to look at them and think, what do you need today? And the physical thing of being there and looking at them and drinking in who they are and them drinking in who you are, if you're open you make the right responses. If you come from somewhere else and you don't understand why you're looking, why are you looking? And I do believe there is this reflective quality in the Steiner Education and if your eyes are open wide enough and you're informed enough, and you look enough, and you've got the right person to look, then you can make good decisions.

I believe that if the right principal comes in and the school is strong enough to say that the CofT is important and not just a rubber stamp for the principal… if the latest headmistress had gone in with an open mind to the CofT and felt like what they said was going to be valuable and listened to, then you have to have a commitment to dialogue and communication for this to work.

And you also have to upskill your staff in their own personal awareness and be open to hear that perhaps you've made a wrong choice. You have to be vulnerable enough to be able to hear that. And if you're not well, then, of course, then it becomes power and then you see it as a personal downfall. You need people that have done enough work on themselves that they're strong enough to cope with criticism.

It's really sad to see that the skills that everyone needed weren't given to them. We have conferences, you'd have facilitators come in and you do this great work, and it would be all touchy-feely and wonderful and everybody would go, wow, that's wonderful. But everyone's personalities are elastic, and they go back to where you were before unless you're continually stretched into a new shape.

There were difficult conflict situations that became divisive, but not dealt with. I would have good communication facilitators brought in to address this. And have them feedback openly how it should be handled. But I see the state of the school at the moment. It's a lost opportunity… there are some wonderful people there and very committed people.

The school has deteriorated in some ways and in other ways it's grown. The founders, when they left, were like the arms of the school. But when they were there people felt safe and it would continue on in a particular way. Even then, when they were there, it wasn't the golden years, lots of bad stuff happened. Various teachers have stepped up over the years of difficulty and rescued the school. This rescuing that's had to happen all the way along. The issues facing the schools are no different from other independent schools: it's people and it's communication. And it's meeting administrative funding requirements.

I've always found that if you teach effectively it takes a lot of hours of preparation. For the last four years I've been doing relief teaching. Julia explains her family circumstances, illness and family pressures. *My children were amazingly supportive to me and my husband. I didn't want them to become Waldorphans.*

I grew up in a very musical family and I was so pleased that my children were rapt in music, in singing and recorder playing and violin. Spiritually, it's such a nurturing thing for people to be involved in music. I also had an artistic education in my family. Now, my children are creative people and problem solvers and they've been given that through this education. The SWE curriculum mirrors child development and it gives children what they need at the age that they get it. SWE is an education in the classics, giving children the building blocs of western civilisation. I hope that with the new Australian curriculum, there'll be more indigenous perspectives and Asian perspectives.

Being a Steiner teacher has made be a better person, it spurred me to improve myself, to improve my music and artistic skills so that I had something more to give.

When I look at the school, I still see a community of people who passionately want this education to work because they can see this goodness, it just oozes out of the school. Putting all the political managerial stuff aside, the curriculum and the community is [sic] *wonderful, absolutely wonderful.*

I'm grateful for people that have guided me with Steiner's work. I'd much rather discuss his writings with other people rather trying to read it alone. I think that his words need a lot of interpretation, a lot of insight and at different stages. In this day and age, it's good to question. And I've been to Steiner conferences and it was like if you questioned one of Steiner's ideas you would be completely frowned on, like you had doubted the Yahweh in the Jewish faith. I'm not that type of person. I like to question, and I like to find an answer as to why his thinking was in a particular way.

The deeper I went into Steiner education the more correlations I could see with brain plasticity. My twin brother had a tumour in his brain, and I watched him come through quite well. I

think it's because he is an artistic, musical and creative thinker that he was able to form the new pathways to remain quite a high functioning person. I see, more and more, that creative artistic education creates really healthy neural pathways. If I was going to promote Steiner education to the outside world that's one of the avenues I'd use. I teach knitting and I know that every time a knitting needle crosses over, they're making right-left brain hemisphere connections. The same every time I'm teaching them clapping dances in Year 1 or dancing and stepping. I'm an absolute believer that this education is a good way of forming a good brain. That's the physical realm. In the spiritual realm, music touches the soul, art touches the soul, that some of the soul food that I believe our society needs. We need good strong brains and neural pathways and we need an ability to be able to touch people's souls.

Steiner didn't want his work to be put down in writing because he didn't want it to become dogma. And hey, guess what? It's become dogma. I don't think there's enough questioning. I also worked with the Australian Centre for Brain Injured Children and I can see the correlations here, between Darwinian evolution, The Brain that changes itself[222] *and Steiner education. I think, if Steiner education isn't careful and prepared to open their eyes and look and say well, actually we're doing this and we can develop it further, then I think we'll miss the boat. If we're not prepared to grow it in the 21st century then it may be lost and that would be a shame.*

I believe that when parents hand over their children to a teacher for seven or eight years you are patterning those children, you are imprinting them with you. And you must constantly ask yourself, am I a good human being, what do I need to be a better human being? Because otherwise you give them your baggage, you give them your stuff. That is huge.

The Steiner curriculum is grounded in common sense. Look at the correspondences between Botany and Mathematics, in the daffodil with six divisions of the circle. They're married together, here's the environment in Maths, here's the heavens with the earth. If you immerse yourself in the practice as I did with own children and as a teacher, the ah-ha moments didn't all come before I started, they came as I went along. Through teaching the curriculum, I've learnt to be more open, open to the world and I believe that you have to be open. And it upset me sometimes to that people in Steiner education were absolutely sometimes the opposite. A good creative education teaches you to be open to what comes. Julia begins to recite a well-known verse from Steiner.

[222] By Norman Doidge.

We must eradicate from the soul
All fear and terror of what comes towards man out of the future.

We must acquire serenity
In all feelings and sensations about the future.

We must look forward with absolute equanimity
To everything that may come.

And we must think only that whatever comes
Is given to us by a world-directive full of wisdom.

It is part of what we must learn in this age,
namely, to live out of pure trust,
Without any security in existence.

Trust in the ever-present help
Of the spiritual world.

Truly, nothing else will do
If our courage is not to fail us.

And let us seek the awakening from within ourselves
Every morning and every evening.[223]

What's all this stuff that's coming to us in this day and age? Why have we been given it? Ask yourself the question and be prepared for the answer that you don't want to hear as well as the answer you do want to hear. I believe that we should be teaching computer programming – it's creative thinking - you help a machine help you do the thinking. Wouldn't Steiner – remember, he used the typewriter – be going, this is a great thing? But don't lose all the other things.

I suppose it's good to share my reflections. Nobody's asked me these questions so probably you're the only person that sees these ideas that I had because I feel like nobody else is interested to hear them.

[223] Rudolf Steiner (Verses and meditations)

Sally's story: "where is the questioning?"

I met Sally during the school holidays. The school grounds were deserted. We walked to the small office she shared with other part-time teachers. As soon as we sat down, she took the lead and began to speak with the authority that comes from prolonged reflection and self-observation.

I've just come back from maternity leave. Now I work here two days a week. The title they've given me is "learning support teacher." But I'm also responsible for assessment. I go into classrooms and try and help teachers set up meaningful assessments. A lot don't like it. "It's not Steiner!" they say. But some get it. Before that… I was a class teacher for two cycles. I've been here for over ten years, but I'm not part of the "old guard."

I grew up in a very, very practical family. We grew our own food and killed our own meat. It's a small rural community on the western side of the Great Divide. However, in the holidays we'd go and stay with my godparents. Their kids were my age, and they lived in a large city. That was where I came across Steiner education. I'd go into their classrooms, join the class for the day, and play with their friends. I thought the school was beautiful but not Mom. She called them "birdseed eating vegetarian hippies, painting everything in rainbows."

My godmother had four kids, three boys and one girl. The boys were all dyslexic and they all struggled academically, especially the oldest one. His teacher said that he had behaviour problems, and that there were obviously issues at home, you know, and that maybe it was his Karma to be a gardener or a landscaper. Well that was the last straw for my godmother. She pulled the kids out of school. The eldest boy, he's my age, went to an elite private school. He got early intervention support. By the time he'd finished high school his ATAR score was 99. He went on to do a double degree in computing and engineering. You know what, he's in the corporate world and the last thing he wants to do is gardening. Karma, my foot! Really? That story stayed with me.

When I finished school, I realised that I wanted to be a Steiner teacher. You can imagine the response my godmother gave me, but I said I just like the look of it. That story stayed with me, it was always there at the back of my mind. And everything I learned about Steiner or Steiner education I had to take it all with a grain of salt.

There was a couple who lived nearby. I was their babysitter when I was in high school. They were trying to start up a Steiner school in our local community. When they heard me saying I wanted to be a Steiner teacher, they gave me a brochure about the training course in Sydney. I was so excited I called my godmother. Do I wear rainbows, I asked her? When I got there, I was amazed at the awesome artistic curriculum. I also noticed that many of the students were hippies or people in some

sort of midlife crisis. Trying to find a new path. I spoke with two of the wise old women of the course. They were blunt with me. "You haven't got your ego. You're not ready." What do you mean, I don't have an ego? "Not until you're 21." Anyway, I don't know what I did but they accepted me into the course. The more I knew about Steiner education, the more I wanted to know, but after two years, I realised I can't take a class for seven years with the little I know. This is ridiculous, who am I kidding?

I went to uni and did a Bachelor of Education. I did pracs in a Steiner school as well as Catholic and government schools. But I still knew I didn't have enough… world perspective. So, I worked in an electronics company for a while and travelled. When I came back, I started doing relief teaching at the Steiner school. They asked me to take next year's Class 1. I wasn't sure. It was a toss-up between working up north in an indigenous school or staying here. I decided to at least meet the class. I was riding a motorbike, dressed in black and my hair was in lots of plaits. Even then I was still questioning, still wondering if Steiner was the right thing for me.

I was in College for about a year and a half. I felt powerless, like the annoying one in the corner who's always asking questions, always trying to shift things along. After all this time now, it does feel like things have really shifted.

I want to tell you about the music program. It's not a Steiner thing. They have their regular Steiner music thing, but for a while now the kids seem exhausted as though it's just not working for them. So, introduced this program. It combines drama and movement with singing. They all started taking part and enjoying it. We'd go to the local nursing village and perform for the residents. Other teachers at the school noticed how effective it was and a few started to train themselves so they could use it with their own classes. But many teachers didn't approve of it. I heard on the rumour mill that College was going to discuss it because there were complaints that the style of singing or music weren't "Steiner". Mind you, rumours are always flying around the school, because the College is cut off and decisions are made behind closed doors.

The crazy thing is that the program is actually multimodal: it combines music with drama and movement. The kids love it and we've even been to large multi-school performances. So, I decided I'd try and join College, as I'd been at the school already 12 months, which was the minimum lead time before being invited on. The music program was debated for 12 months, until eventually, they made a decision. I was told that public performances with other schools were banned, no public performances at school assemblies, no singing in the non-Steiner style during Main Lesson time, which was considered sacred. I was told that I was not allowed to bring in music from the Institute of Music library. For God's sake! Mozart was not allowed!

Eventually, I let go of it. When I finished the cycle with my class at the end of Class 7, I went to work in Africa for 18 months. Just before I left, I heard that the College had banned the program completely. There were five teachers who were in training, and none of them even defended it. When I got back, I was asked to fill in for a teacher that couldn't continue with her class cycle. I said yes on the condition that I could use the music program. I kept using it from Class 3 to Class 7, when I went on maternity leave. Finally, College has said yes to the program, but my hours are cut back and I don't have time to run it anymore.

Yes, we have the obligatory Steiner study. Once a week we're talking about a book that isn't even really relevant to what we're doing every day. It's about how Steiner relates children to plants. Someone, a new teacher, asked "why are we doing this?" and no-one could really answer. I thought, "yes, why are we doing this? Why not revamp it? It's so cryptic for a start. I think we need to approach it in a different way. For example, we could look at resilience and then go to what Steiner said and what other people said and what's being done, what doesn't work and bring it to the table. Maybe what Steiner said is the greatest most important thing but maybe it also incorporates other things. But whenever I've suggested this, they just tell me "it's not your turn to run a meeting." The problem is that we just keep reading this stuff and doing paintings about emotions, which is nice and fun, but we've got a real issue with resilience in our school.

We've been going through management instability this year. We've been through registration, we've had the principal resign, the high school deputy resign, another teacher resign, and two teachers off on stress leave. Students have left, especially in the high school. Everyone's just kind of mopping up the mess and trying to stay afloat, also the finances are abysmal. Anyone who leaves is not replaced because the salaries have to be cut back. It angers me because three years ago a temporary business manager looked at our student/teacher ratios, and it was found out that we had far too many teachers per student to be financially viable. But after three years of cutbacks we still have an enormous number of specialist teachers. The last 12 months the real financial stuff has hit the fan, so we've lost several staff members, they've retired or resigned but they're not being replaced.

It's fantastic having a spring festival and a winter festival and a Whitsun festival and all these festivals and two camps per class and all of these things but can we actually do that. Did Steiner say, "every class teacher has to do a huge epic performance as a play once a year?"

I've been running assessment only for a year and a half here and assessment is like a dirty word in a Steiner school or test is probably the worse one. For a long time, our assessment has been

very vague. We see all these children and as the grade gets higher, the gap gets bigger, and there are more down the end getting left behind.

I'm particularly interested in Maths because you don't find that many primary teachers are really strong in Maths or even just keen in Maths. Even if Maths problems are couched in a little story, students just don't know what to do, which is ironic for a Steiner school. Don't we couch everything in stories? Maybe not.

I can understand teachers' attitudes towards NAPLAN, but I get angry that teachers don't see assessment as something that they can use to plan the next thing rather than to go. "they failed." I don't see it that way. Testing helps to know how you are going to program, you can't just teach. You need to know what the children know already.

The classic example of this: when I first started here, you would get the box of the years' worth of main lesson books for that year from two or three teachers that had taught that year. "They're all the same! How did that happen?" The content, the written content would be the same from one book to the other, that's five years apart. It's not self-directed, it's copy off the board. The teachers find themselves on a map or train track and off they go, but where is the questioning? To engage children you need choice, they need to see relevance and they need to connect to it personally. These are the three things if you want your children to learn. I just find we're a little bit locked into old school kind of this is it the way we've done it.

There's this rule about not intellectualising things too early. It's not a very clear rule, and I don't know who made it, but in a Steiner school you don't… I remember having this conversation with one of our teachers. "You don't say minus or subtract or take away. It's called 'give away' in Year 1 and 2 and 3 because it's the moral gesture." I'm not sure that it makes sense to me. There's a complexity in this moral argument. The teacher is now in Class 7 and she only still says "give away," so when I go into her class, they had the poorest Maths results I've ever seen in any class. For the six years they hadn't used any other language or word, and that's the thing about Steiner schools, it doesn't happen anywhere else because you've only got one teacher for that time. When these children were tested in NAPLAN, "what's the difference between 20 and 16?" they were like well, one's got a two and one's got a 6. That's the answer I was getting in those questions. No! This is a Maths test, what do you think?

It feels like you're reinventing the wheel every year. Steiner schools need things like systems… I think this is really generalising, but the kind of person who teaches at a Steiner school is usually not

as systematic. They're artistic in that sense that their blackboards are amazing but where's the file? So, who knows?

Collaboration is really hard because of the kingdom mentality. You get your class and you're the king or queen and they're in your kingdom and so specialists are kind of like visiting minstrels or something, they're just coming to visit and go out again and they're in everyone's classes so they're not really part of it. And everything stops when there's a class play, we're not going to do maths because we need to rehearse a little bit longer, we're not going to do this, no, we've got to do this. And the classroom is their environment and the garden outside that's theirs and they play with their own class members and it doesn't spread and there's a real danger in that. I think there's something in one of the handbooks[224] *for Steiner teachers, "How to make your class unteachable by other teachers." And how to make your children love you so much that they* [can't be taught by anybody else]. *Some teachers have to debrief their class after a specialist has had their class. You can see behaviour stuff that comes out all the time where a class is perfectly behaved when their class teacher is there and anybody else comes in, relief teachers, specialist and they're bouncing off the walls. The teacher holds them so tightly in this regime or routine so the tiniest amount of freedom, they breathe out. So, I would like to see more collaboration. I'd like to see more classes shared. These days, I am questioning the health of having a class for seven years.*

Society has changed. In a Steiner school there used to be the teacher who is the all-knowing, wonderful God who I will take my children to and you will know and I will support you and now, it's like question, question from parents and students and children are even making the decisions in their own home and it's not working out so well… The acting principal was saying that at the end of Class 5, the teacher will be asked, "are you confident enough to take on Year 6, 7, 8, or 6 and 7?" I think everyone should be questioned and so that gives an opportunity for somebody, if they are really strong with that middle adolescent six, seven, eight and nine, they can do a little cycle there. It's much healthier, I think. I don't know.

When people ask me, "what's a Steiner school?" they usually think, "that's where they're just free to do whatever they." And I say, "actually, quite the opposite." It's much more rigid, and it's mostly about content. But if we said, let's look at a concept like a pattern in the world or change, or something that's a little higher order thinking that just one book to the next, then we could look at

[224] Refer to footnote no. 155, p. 154..

fractions and the gods[225]*. It doesn't have to be that rigid but it's quite difficult to think about it and to retrain your mind and systems and practices.*

I wanted to talk more about resilience. I really find that fascinating. I don't know what causes it. One day, I was in an amazing government primary school, 600 students, and the garden was beautiful, they had longer play. I was noticing all these things, thinking "wow", and they have choice in their learning. But it was their work ethic that stood out. I just couldn't imagine setting a task to a class in this school, and saying, "we're going to explore the Great Barrier Reef." If I were to try that here, they'd just sit there and go, "I don't know what to do, I don't know how to start." But in that other school, they quickly formed groups, they got their paper, they started writing ideas, they looked at things and they decided what they were going to focus on. They gave each other jobs. I just didn't have to do anything. I was bored only in that I was excited by watching what was happening. It was an amazing sense of independent work and work ethic. Why does it seem so hard for children in a Steiner school to do this? Is it the fact that they've had a kind of protected class teacher period with no technology? It is a deeper thing?

In Class 1 he's the naughty boy so in Class 7 he's still the naughty boy with that teacher. Or, in Class 2, she is the amazing writer, and no-one else can be the amazing writer because she was in Class 2. The pigeonholing stuff I think doesn't do resilience and fixed mindset, that's another thing that worries me, the growth mindset versus fixed mindset and I hear it all the time. Steiner teachers saying "we're all doing our best. Well, that means we can't get any better than. That's it, we're doing best. That's it." So growth mindset, resilience, work ethic, independent thinking, critical thinking, all of these new things that people are talking about are the things that I'm not seeing in my Steiner school as much as I would like and I don't know what it is. I think partly it's the class teacher stuff.

I've got a passion for this school. So many people ask me, "why are you still there?" All these things are not quite right, and I go because they're this close, there's the potential, as a Steiner school we have so much. The main reason I send my child here and will-be children is for the people. The curriculum is not wonderful, but it doesn't work for everybody. If people are sticking their heads in the sand about the curriculum or the bullying or whatever then it's going to fail somebody. And there are plenty that it didn't work for.

Since this interview, Sally's school has had a new principal and new leadership structure. She has started another cycle in Class 1 and is working full-time again at the school.

---

[225] Here Sally is referring to two important topics in Year 4, Fractions and the Norse Gods.

Andrew's story: "if only we could get over the language that divides us"

I met Andrew at his house, set in a semi-rural area. The air is awash with floral fragrances and we begin our conversation with that naturalist observation. Early in the conversation, I explain to Andrew the purpose of the research. I also relate my deep interest in qualitative research and the strong connections that have begun to emerge for me between this type of research and Steiner's initiation science. We find that there are many commonalities in our experiences as SW teachers.

I follow each one of your thoughts and I'm saying yes, yes, yes, it's being pretty much my journey also. And also, it encompassed some of my own experiences and concerns also where I feel that anthroposophists sometimes underrate what's going on in the world outside themselves. I have an inkling that there is a new language emerging from those approaches which it's important for us to understand and learn how to have a conversation with people who are brought up in that tradition rather than in a strictly anthroposophical tradition. I have a great concern which I experience in a very direct way through my own sons that the brightest and best of our young people won't necessarily respond to the traditional anthroposophical language because they find what they need in some of these new forms of knowledge. And they'll have to work within the context of their present society.

I sometimes feel that anthroposophists or anthroposophical language sometimes gets caught up in various kinds of duality which are no longer really relevant and almost a distraction if you make too much duality between matter and spirit, that very thing can be a real block and people are experiencing spirit without even necessarily wanting to apply that sort of language to it and perhaps one could almost argue that the contemporary language is a more appropriate language.

I did have quite a struggle during my years in the Golden Wattle Steiner School with certain tendencies amongst the staff to hang onto sort of fundamental notions of anthroposophy in a way that was rather exclusive but also isolating from the rest of the cultural and intellectual world. And I feel that there's nearly always been a tendency for anthroposophists and Steiner educationalists to isolate themselves which I think is really counterproductive, deeply counterproductive.

A situation arose where we had parents at the school who were deeply committed to the school, who were really immersing themselves in anthroposophy, either had been for quite some time or were beginning to and brought a huge wealth of knowledge and experience from the outside world. People, for example, who had a very high position in big banks and yet they also wished to embrace anthroposophy and to support the school and they put themselves in a position of being on the school executive council and wished to make a real contribution and sort of set up systems which

would enable the school to flourish and thrive into the long term future economically as well as in the other ways, it wasn't as if they lacked spiritual insight that they had.

And I remember it was quite shocking to me when one of these people, his offerings were strongly opposed by someone who I felt had this view that anthroposophists and Steiner educationalists had to get everything out of themselves and out of their own anthroposophical study and striving and really almost reject the outer world. The same people make it very difficult for a dialogue to take place between anthroposophists or Steiner educationalists and educational authorities outside the system. I just felt that quite often that people had contributions to make who perhaps weren't as fully immersed in Rudolf Steiner works as some others. There was a suspicion of them bringing something from outside the field of anthroposophy and I felt that that caused sort of separation and isolation from the society around it. Having said that I must say that I think the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School has a long history of being very well connected to the broader community around it. It wouldn't have thrived or survived to the extent that it has if it weren't for that fact. It's been a very successful school and it probably is largely or partly largely owing to the fact that there's been a core of people who've worked very, very deeply with anthroposophy.

But I have felt that, in fact, those who have worked most deeply with anthroposophy in a sense have become the most open to what's going on around them as well and so that's been a very healthy situation. Whereas, people who have come a bit later into the school have taken anthroposophy in a more ideological way and sometimes I have felt is a platform for their own personal ambitions and have then become a guardian of anthroposophy against other ideas which they consider threatening or heretical.

In 1975 or 1976, I met a wonderful Swedish man during his Australian lecture tour. He became my teacher, inviting me to be his guest for three months at the Rudolf Steiner Seminar in Järna. I ended up being there for three years. He was the most inspiring anthroposophist I ever met. I've met some wonderful anthroposophists but he was so completely focused on working out of anthroposophy, but he was equally respectful and full of veneration towards all of these other cultural streams that had developed and flourished. This was particularly evident when he was talking about art or architecture. There was none of this reductive approach that some anthroposophists seem to take to things that aren't anthroposophical but rather saw the justification of each artist no matter how outlandish. For example, not many anthroposophists would express a great admiration for Salvador Dali.

I've waged a bit of… I haven't waged a war, but I struggle with this idea that all the answers for the world will emerge from anthroposophy. I would love it if anthroposophy could make a

contribution, I believe it has, but I don't think there's a chance in hell of all the change that's required coming solely from anthroposophy.

I retired from teaching at the end of 2014. I've been at the school for 32 years and I've been a core element in the development of the school during those years. But I found myself in a position of some disappointment and a little bitterness about the way things ended up for me. Perhaps these things were trivial, but my teaching was the essential thing and my engagement with students and with colleagues was still 100 per cent. However, my dealings with administration were very disappointing towards the end.

Though I never stinted in all of those years in giving of myself fully, I felt under appreciated by certain people and some very harsh decisions were made which were utterly absurd. But it was more that I had gradually distanced myself from aspects of the school for quite some time. I've found my allegiance to anthroposophy was never the only source of inspiration for me. I've always been very conscious of the importance of drawing directly from one's own inner experience and finding other connections to other streams that support and direct and help to develop that. I wasn't as interested in studying Steiner's lectures in depth after a certain point in time; other things were more important to me.

Also after having been very active as a member of College for many years, I began to actually experience some doubts about the adequacy or efficiency of College as an organ for running the school and in that I was very much at odds with the central core of teachers who believed ardently in College and was strongly opposing any other models. So, I went into a sort of withdrawal where I gradually removed myself from College and even more removed myself from whatever accidental contact with College colleagues and just concentrated purely on my teaching. I think it's the path of quite a few old teachers may have gone on. Spiritually, I'd perhaps moved away from the school and maybe the problems I then encountered outwardly with the school and misunderstandings perhaps we a result of my own inward moving away anyway.

It took me a while to deal with some of the bitterness and more than a little bit of anger. I was quite angry when I left. I'd also had several episodes of something akin to a heart attack, as the result of stress induced by the problems of the school and so that was why I moved away. I was fairly confident that once I left school, my spiritual path wouldn't suddenly end. It had been so much a part of my life since 1971, where I first met anthroposophy. My intimation was confirmed: I've absolutely relished the freedom that I have, I hardly miss the school and I just feel that my life is flourishing in so many ways and I'm getting more direct inspiration each day than ever before.

I've had to be very careful in my own situation that I don't exaggerate my own issues or distort the picture of the school. There were some extraordinarily creative and gifted and committed people who have worked in College over many years. At its best, it manages to be quite a good organ of the school, and some have made sure that it wasn't empty of spiritual content. They've tried really hard to develop efficient decision making practices and having a method of listening to one another in Goethean conversation. But then, there is another… College which has had to deal with some horrendously traumatic situations regarding staff, bringing up issues of conflicted loyalties and the incredible difficulty of grasping and understanding the truth and treating people fairly. I got to the point where I simply couldn't stand the thought of every discussing another colleague in a circle of 30 people, the intimate details of another person's behaviour or being. I'm just absolutely not going there ever again and that was it.

It would be an ongoing nightmare, not just for a few weeks, but sometimes for months the terrible things we had to deal with, and the difficulty of coming to a resolution. So it was as much I prefer to think a sign of my own moving on and perhaps my own laziness that I withdrew. I decided that my own family were my first and highest priority and I didn't want to get drawn into everything in the school to the extent that I wasn't available for my own children. The over-commitment, at the cost of their own family, broke my heart. Sometimes I also felt that we had a sort of separation between administration and teaching. We try to do a bit of both, but some people take on so much of the administration that they simply couldn't execute their teaching properly I felt. I was conscious that the kids were being neglected in a way because the teachers never could possibly have had sufficient time to prepare.

For me, the rhythm of working every evening for an hour or two preparing the next day was absolutely vital to what happened in the classroom and I was never unprepared, whereas, I know a lot of teachers because they were involved in all complex issues going on all the time were neither dealing with those issues nor with their students properly and I thought there's something wrong here. But College is such that we can't even have a discussion of that partly because it was very hard to challenge some of the central beliefs of College about the centrality of its own role in the school. I don't say that we should get rid of College but I'm saying, Is there any way we can still maintain the good things about College whilst having a more efficient administrative decision making process? Some very important decision in the last year took College months and months to resolve and being on the receiving end of that suddenly made me realise what people have been complaining about for years.

We've got to wake up to this. I have had positive experiences with College. I love that working with a colleague. Over the years, I worked closely with quite a number of colleagues and we talked about what we were doing [in the classroom] *and it was almost telepathic, sometimes without even discussing we would do exactly the same thing on the same day. It was stimulating and enriching. Mind you, I've experienced the same thing in a Government school, so I don't think it's exclusive to Steiner schools, but Steiner schools encourage it more and should. This reminds me of something that happened quite a lot at the school. We sometimes called it the "invisible college," where you didn't actually have to be sitting in the circle in a particular room, but there was a sense of close connectedness between us, as carers and guardians of the school, and we were creating a space that was both a spiritual space and also a quality environment that others who came into that space would experience.*

As a child, I had a vivid imagination and developed a love for reading and literature at a very early age. I collected fairy-tale books when I was seven. My mother was a teacher and loved poetry and recited poetry to us as children. Through her I conceived the idea that I wanted to become a part of a circle of writers. When I was a teenager, I was sent to boarding school, and there discovered that had a very strong leaning towards the esoteric. I read Paramhansa Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi *when I was 14. I also read Jung's* Interpretation of Dreams*. I was also fascinated by a book,* Concentration, *which consisted of a series of exercises to raise consciousness. I had by this stage already started writing poetry fairly intensively, and then I was invited to attend meetings of a prominent poetry group in the city, which was one of the seminal sorts of groups of Australian writers back in the 60s and early 70s.*

I became very involved with sort of Bohemian artistic circles, but through a friend, I was introduced to Steiner education. I went to university but changed streams from Maths and Science to the Humanities. Whilst I was at uni doing an Arts Degree, I underwent some rather traumatic experiences when I was 17. I decided to hasten my esoteric development and took some psychedelic drugs over a period of six months which had a very intense effect but not particularly good overall impact on my life. I was struggling with some of the inner conflicts I had and the desire to keep on taking these drugs because I found them so fascinating. I remember reading Gandhi's encounter with the Christ being as the essence of truth.[226] *I actually had then an extraordinary transcendental experience when I popped completely out of my body into another world and I found myself looking through coloured clouds as it were and witnessing Christ on the cross and it was a profoundly*

[226] Described in 'My experiments with truth'.

transformative experience and pulled me back into this world and gave me a sort of foundation to build on. It was about this time that my Steiner friend invited me to the Steiner group meetings which were led by a charismatic anthroposophical figure.

I went to anthroposophical activities including Christology groups and teachers training groups and plays and song four times a week for several years. On the weekends, I helped to build the school. I neglected my studies somewhat but still got through my degree. When it was suggested that I become a Steiner teacher, I discontinued my Honours Degree and did a DipEd. By 1975, I realised that the Steiner group I had been involved with was actually run a little bit as a cult or sect. It was the worst case of sectarianism or occultism that I'd ever even imagined possible, so I broke with that and considered having seriously having nothing to do with anthroposophy for the rest of my life. At that point, I was lucky to meet a visiting lecturer from Sweden, called Arne Klingborg. I experienced in him such a freshness and breath in his approach to anthroposophy, giving me a sense that anthroposophy did have something to do with a future. I went to Sweden and studied with him for three years and that changed me enormously and filled me with enthusiasm and hope and determination that I would work with anthroposophy. I returned to Australia in 1979 and two or three years later I was teaching English, History and Drama at the Steiner school.

I drank up everything that I came across in Steiner. I read many of his books and lectures and it all made complete sense. I felt transported through the written word. I also took up practice of the exercises of Knowledge of the high worlds *fairly seriously and then I felt a sort of guidance in many ways. I joined a group of people who had been working to start a Steiner school near the city. At that time, I had to decide whether to resume academic studies or become a teacher. Some of my university teachers expressed surprise and not a little disappointment when I embraced anthroposophy and deliberately stopped my studies, in order to become a teacher. They would have, and probably still do, consider Steiner with some suspicion. However, I managed to weave academic discipline or strictness with my anthroposophical learning and that was always an important aspiration from me that I didn't abandon academic and intellectual rigout. It was a very interesting journey.*

I did have issues at times with the lack of academic rigour in some of the thinking of some anthroposophists that I worked with and I was sometimes rather appalled at the ease with which teachers taught primary school children ideas that I felt had not real grounding in real science, and verged on new age rubbish. By and large, however, I think my academic and intellectual side was well appreciated, and particularly in the high school, came to be seen as an asset. Indeed many of my high school colleagues had equally good grounding in their disciplines and I consider that one of the

most important qualities of a Steiner teacher, particularly in the high school that they should know and really love their discipline and keep up with it what's more and be open to developments within it.

For about 15 years I worked in the training course offered by the school. The young adults who attended my lectures very much appreciated them because they were well grounded in contemporary knowledge and academic standards. I was considered a valuable asset I think to the movement because of my background and I was reasonably well known for what I'd already produced.

Although I feel that amongst my contemporaries at the school, contemporary knowledge was considered absolutely fundamental; difficulties arose in the transition between primary and secondary school, largely because of the demand of real rigour, scientific rigour, when you're teaching young adults. A very dear colleague, who taught at the school as long as I did, the Physics teacher was such a person; and the chemistry teacher another. I used to go to their science faculty meetings simply because I found it an interesting discussion. Yet, it struck me that the Physics teacher didn't have the same anthroposophical background that I brought to the school and he struggled with Steiner's lectures on Physics. But he was a very prominent science teacher in the state and ended up writing one of the two or three main matriculation Physics textbooks. He was an absolute expert on relativity and travelled overseas and met American professors of Physics who were also anthroposophists. He felt there was an abysmal lack of understanding of modern science amongst the vast majority of anthroposophical or Steiner based science teachers. He was very disappointed at the narrowness of some Steiner people when it came to what was going on in the contemporary field of science.

But there was a reciprocal disappointment in his reluctance to embrace Steiner's view, which was seen as a cultural difficulty. This was played out for years in the science faculty. I also have a dear friend who is an ex-student. She's taught Science in a wonderful way at the school, and she's also a brilliant administrator, but even though she's been through the first class of the school, she still has a great scepticism about a lot of the fundamental Steiner concepts. This is a very interesting paradox.

I'm somewhat haunted by something which I once heard, I can't remember who told it to me or maybe I read it somewhere. But there was an anthroposophist, a young ardent anthroposophist in America who once spoke to Ralph Nader and told him how he had aspirations to have an impact in the world and along the same lines of Ralph Nader trying to clean up the corporate world. And he said, "I also have a great deal of interest in Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy and what do you

recommend or suggest that I do in order to achieve my goal," and Ralph Nader said, "get out of anthroposophy." What that says to me is that there is a risk that the more you immerse yourself exclusively in anthroposophical world, the less relevant you become to the rest of the world.

An important reason for agreeing to be part of this study was that I have for some time been asking myself what can I to contribute to bridging the gap between Steiner education and anthroposophy, and the academic world, even though I have conflicts and issues myself with Steiner. I feel that my work in teacher training and parent education has helped me to consolidate my understanding of what is essentially a methodology for education. This is not necessarily the curriculum or particular structures in the schools but the whole idea of how you work with yourself in order to connect with spiritual reality that you then impart or convey a sense to your students. If only we could get over the language that divides us.

Steiner developed a method which would enable people to become a good teacher and that is, I think, to know how to draw on your own creativity as a teacher and your enthusiasm and your love of your subject and your love of the world. I feel that, through my mother, I had a rich background of culture even before I was 12 and I felt that that seemed to be missing from a lot of contemporary education, and I felt that the Steiner schools made that accessible, made it possible for more people. I recall my Swedish mentor, Arne, saying that "the task of Steiner education was to take things which had been done as it were instinctively in the past and put them into a form." It seems to me a whole body of culture which could well disappear in the world and yet to some extent it has been kept alive within the Steiner schools. But I suppose it'd be naïve to think that suddenly there's something completely new and different in the world with Steiner education. I think in so many ways it's like taking the best of what has been and putting in a form which makes it still valuable in the world today.

What is Steiner education? This is definitely a question I've asked myself a lot. I come back to the idea that it has a lot to do with the coherent understanding of the human being as a cosmic spiritual as well as an earthly being. And also, the desire to really create a space to support the full expression of that human being in a way which is in schools. That in which every element supports that aspect of the human being right down to the way the grounds are looked after, the way the buildings are designed and built and the colours on the wall as well as how the human beings relate to each other and what the teachers do on a daily basis.

One of the most important things for me throughout my whole teaching career was my daily meditation practice. I felt without that I would not have been able to develop as I did. I wouldn't have had the energy or the intuition or the imagination to bring into my classroom. The core practices that

I gained through the study of Rudolf Steiner played a huge role and the relationship to knowledge, the imaginative relationship to knowledge, the sense that you were dealing with being rather than abstraction when you're talking about history or whatever subject you are, feeling that you're really working with a substance when you're working with students; you're nourishing their souls. One of the most inspiring things I did during my teachers' training was in educational anthropology. I spent a lot of time pursuing the similarities between Aboriginal culture and concepts, and anthroposophical [education]. *I think it's a hugely rich field.*

I have often imagined Steiner communities as kind of beacons in this world radiating out into the spiritual world and it's more than just an image. When I was 10, I had a recurrent dream that I was hovering over a landscape, I couldn't see the landscape, it had to physical form or delineation and yet it had absolutely distinct qualities and presences. It was a place I returned to again and again. And then I remember when I first arrived in Sweden when I was 25, I walked around the landscape at the Rudolf Steiner Seminar in Sweden and that dream came back to me with absolute clarity and I knew that was that landscape. The funny thing was that when I dreamt that dream as a child, I had a sense that even before I dreamt that dream I'd been there, so I think I had a pre-experience for my pre-Earthly consciousness of my future karma. My experience validates the idea that we dream our lives in the spiritual world before we're incarnated. It's a hard thing to explain, but I feel that it is true.

Arne Klingborg was once asked, "how do you manage to keep working so hard?" He persisted in developing the Seminar in Sweden well into his 80s, and he was an incredibly creative and socially conscious human being, and he said "it's the children. I just see the children. I want to create a space for the children, the future." I mean there's a real fear, isn't there, that the world is changing in ways which are really daunting to say the least and almost terrifying, the loss of human qualities, and yet I think the Steiner schools have contributed something to that, to preventing that from happening, the world becoming a cold, hard place really.

I also wanted to mention that I've been passionate about drama and I've loved acting and directing. I was the drama teacher at the school for 18 years and during that time I produced a couple of plays with Class 10 students. I made it my mission to find new plays to do with students and not to do what some of the teachers thought I should be doing which was to do one Shakespeare after the other. I loved Shakespeare and actually did a couple of Shakespeare plays, but I searched for contemporary plays that would be good vehicles. I felt, however, that the more conservative Steiner people, anthroposophists, at the school never showed any interest in the plays. I felt deeply disappointed that there was this resistance to the new. I was fortunate to find plays written by a

Russian author in the 1940s. These plays were quite extraordinary because they satirised Stalin and he got away with it. They're a blend of political satire, mythology and deep initiation knowledge which is precisely what I was looking for.

Rosa's story: "we're battling dragons"

I started with a Bachelor of Education, in secondary drama and dance. I've gone into primary but now I'm a prep teacher. I have taken a class through from Class One to Class Six, but I felt that I wanted to go to prep to protect. It's a government school with the Steiner influence, very strong Steiner. This is my fourth year in prep.

When my children were primary age, I started to pick up some casual relief teaching in a Steiner high school and then as they became teenagers, I started doing some casual relief teaching in the primary and the local Steiner school would use me. Then I started thinking… I did the teacher training course. I wanted to be passionate about what I was doing and have a little bit of inspiration and creativity, feel like I was doing something worthwhile. The universe led me to a relief teaching job up in the highlands at a Steiner school, and then I heard about teaching jobs at Tallboys Steiner School. Back then, it was a two-stream school: it had the Steiner-stream and it had the mainstream. They didn't have many Steiner teachers, and a position came up for a class teacher. I knew that I wouldn't take it on unless I committed for six years. I was offered the position, but it was a fight to keep the class. When I got to Class Five, they decided to stop the two streams, and just keep the Steiner-stream. So now we are just a government school that advertises and says that we have a strong community of Steiner and Steiner-influenced teaching. This year was one of the hardest years I have had.

We are in the Tallboys area, and all up there are about two hundred students, and we are growing. We are surrounded with really big neighbouring schools and the community come because of what we offer. People have been shifting, moving house to be close to the school. But at the moment we have a lot of repair to do because we are having major problems in our leadership. Our leadership [current principal] *is on WorkCover and we keep having changeover of leadership. They don't understand, and they come in and try to change it up, they're not trusting us so…The leaders are on stress. Our principal isn't coming back, but we're in limbo until she decides to confirm that. At the beginning of the year we had another principal and then a vice-principal came. They were there for two terms. They caused a lot of damage and created a completely different reputation for the school, so we are in the process of healing that with a new principal.*

Our leadership have no connection to Steiner education. They come in very excited saying that you were going to change the world with this type of education. But we still work with the government standards and it makes it harder for us, because we are very passionate about the Steiner so we do everything we can protect that education. Especially in prep because when you look at Class One to Class Six, Steiner education basically links up with the expectations [of the State

standards]. *It's prep that doesn't. Every time leadership come in* [to the prep] *they see the children play and say, I have to educate, we have to educate them again. We have to go over it again. I am very tired.*

When we advertise for teachers to come in we say, "an interest in Steiner or a willingness to do the course." I have got my other prep teacher, she is just out of uni, atheist and she needed a job. We didn't have a choice. We are apparently going to be under review. In the time I have been there, like ten and a half years, we have never been reviewed. A huge review of our literacy and our numeracy. It's the whole school, but they will be targeting prep. It comes under the guise that they are coming "to help us." The teachers are quite tired. It really affected my health this year. It consumes your whole life, the job, what we are doing. It consumes your whole life.

The leadership don't understand, they cannot, they are not likeminded. Every leadership that comes in is a lot of work because you have to educate them. They say they know about Steiner, they have read all of the documents, and yet there was nothing Steiner about them. It is a life-long journey of education to understand this. You cannot just come in and read a book. You have to live it, you have to experience it, or you have to be open to it. One of the leadership we've had had a little bit of a spark in her heart. We had her for five years and she was challenged by everything that she saw. How we trust the kids. She freaked out because she saw my Viking play outside with fire. Then she saw me take my class sailing. Whoever is in the leadership has to be so strong because it comes from above and that wore her down.

When the Steiner curriculum [nationally accredited Steiner framework] *came out we thought it was a fantastic document. Amazing! We loved it. We put it to our principal, and she wouldn't let us use it. Starting off next year we have to use the Victoria curriculum. Already, at Red Ironbark, a sister school, prep are already learning to read and write in term two. The department are saying that we cannot use* [the Steiner curriculum], *that we could have used it but not now that it has changed into the Victorian curriculum. I actually challenged them, and I said, "we are different here because it is always about prep. People come from everywhere to be here. But the answer is always the same, "the department expects this, the department expects that."*

They try and scare you and say "all the department says this." But it depends on who you are talking to and who is running the show. You cannot be scared. But we are all worn out. We just put on our armour and choose our battles now. We have had to let go of a lot because we have compromised, compromised and compromised, but it is never enough. They wear you down. The good thing is that our team has grown and the majority of the cohort of teachers are there to protect what we have got. It's been six years now, since Steiner is the only stream here. But it is a battle and I

am a bit exhausted. I cannot stay in teaching if it is going to compromise what I know is right for those children who are going to be our future.

Some of the compromises have been OK. It is actually good to be because there are issues with Steiner schools. Some of them need to get a bit more grounded. You don't need to be so purist. If Steiner were here, I don't think he would be that pure. He would be incorporating it and grounding it more.

We are different from a pure Steiner school in the sense that you have bells, and the whole school has to adhere to the bells. And you have yard duty. In a Steiner school, you just have to worry about your cohort, whereas here it goes broader than that. We don't have the luxury of having just a prep area. We have to share the space with everybody. We have to do the yard duty with everybody. We have school assembly, and usually the prep also goes, but not this year.

We share the school grounds with another school, Golden Valley Special Needs Development School. There are special needs children in our building and in our playground. I actually love that because we try and incorporate them to come and visit. They were coming for painting and play with my children. Now it has all changed so I have had to adjust. There's also a Steiner kindergarten up the road and every other week we go to them. They feed their children to us.

We are more grounded than the pure Steiners. We sing all sort of songs, not just pentatonic. It depends on who's bringing the music. The love and the inspiration in living in the teacher is more important that the purest delivery. It doesn't have to be so perfect. Maybe you don't have the time to get the story ready or the clock in the right spot but take that pressure off. Yeah, I'm not always in pink but I have colours. I still do stories, I still have the beautiful clocks, I still sing the songs, I still do all of it but it's more grounded and it's more relaxed. I know a colleague who is having a hard time at Red Callitris School. She wanted to play her gas gongs. They are played very lightly and are so beautiful when the children are resting. But she got judged for doing that and she got judged for using the wrong colours at Easter. She got judged for the way she disciplined the students. I have seen parents be so purist with their children that their children have rebelled so far. I don't think it's healthy and If Steiner were here today, he would shakeup such places and say get yourself grounded!

College? We started off really well and we try to keep it going. Most mornings we get together for a ten-minute meditation. Teachers and staff get together for this. In the past, we had a principal who was keen on mindfulness. So, the whole staff did it for a couple of years. It was great, but we were already doing it as a cohort anyway. Then she got too busy. She didn't last. Basically, there are about four of us that hold the fort. We are the main ones that hold it and then people come

in and out of it. We used to have College, but we are so under the pump that we get so tired. We figure if we cannot do College, we just need to do that meditation because it does make a difference.

We are battling dragons. We have got a new principal and she is a smiling assassin but anyway, just a nicer dragon. Staff never got together. It was a divide and conquer business tactic. We were separated, and we were never together because it was one of their tactics. If you got us together, we are strong. But we never got together to talk about our school or things. We just got dictated to or separated. Besides we are tired, and we have lives outside of this.

I love the classroom experience, but it is exhausting but it's the kids. It's beautiful and good tiring. The things that wear you out is the battle of the support and acknowledgment from the leadership and it is never enough. You are not ticking boxes; you are not doing this. But look at what we do do. No, they don't want to see that. What works is the Steiner teacher's intent of the education and the love of the children and the love of the education. What doesn't work is leadership coming in and cutting it out and down. We don't know what the leadership are really saying; they say that they're not here to get rid of the Steiner, but we find it hard to trust that because it doesn't match up with their reactions and responses. Besides, they just don't get it and they are following instructions.

It is really hard battling that government body. It's huge and it has got power. But the people have power too. Even in the admin at our school, they are part of the problem. It's hard to find leadership and admin people that are likeminded, and I don't know why. Most parents get it – that's why their children are there. Their hearts are open because when the drop lands in their hearts, they know the truth. You don't get them with the leadership. Usually they're hardened in their hearts and the is no spark.

I really love this school. There is a feeling there that you're doing something really special and it wants you to be there to whatever it is. But whatever it is, you have the light and the dark together. And you know wherever the light is the dark is always with it. I think that you will have that in any situation. I can feel it. I can feel that I am doing that. We are all together but sometimes you can do it and sometimes you cannot because we are all human.

I have been a vegetarian since I was six and no-one could budge me. I think that is what happened when I say the Steiner school and it was like that same feeling right, that's it! I am not going to do anything else for my children. There was no other option. I saw the work, I saw the building, I had the feeling and I just went on my feeling. It's my intuition. I just felt like that was it. This is the type of education I wanted for my children. As a Catholic educated girl, I didn't want them

to go to a religious school, but I didn't want them to go somewhere with nothing of that sort. It's what I would have loved because I didn't enjoy my education.

The dolls and the natural fibres and the pencil drawings and their handwriting and all the craft that they do, the beauty, it's not overstimulating, the calmness, the softness it wasn't overstimulating but yet rich and full and abundant. It just filled me up it filled my being up and warmed my heart. I do love the Steiner. It feeds me and I believe in it and I am passionate about it and I see how positive it is on my own children and the class I have taken through. It really works. My friend, she works at uni and she said that the lecturers, all the lecturers say "I don't know what it is about that education, but I can point to a Steiner child as soon as they walk into the library or at that school."

Understanding Steiner? *Yeah, the words are profound, and they just speak to me and I get it or not get it. I like the challenge too. Sometimes I think, "bloody Steiner, just talk in English!" But then I go, "it's actually OK, because I don't need it, I just need what I know and what I get." It feeds me when I listen to his works or when we read his works or talk about it. I love it and I love hearing it. It is just like you know these words are true.*

Teaching in Steiner, I feel like you are so responsible. You are creating the foundation for the rest of their lives and this is going out into our world. It was quite daunting for me to be a class teacher because I don't think that I was ever going to be ready. In the end, it was something that came to me. I didn't go searching for it although it was internally there. There were decisions made internally about my view on it and it just went its own way. I feel I am a lightworker for the children. They have so much to offer. They are the ones that are teaching me, and they help me to grow because the children are changing and how children are coming into the world is well it's changing. They have a lot to say and lot to show if you are open to it for yourself. Teaching these children forces me to grow every day and makes me look deeply within myself about my issues. It forces you because that is the purity of the soul of that young child. They are teaching me constantly to better myself and to stay connected to that purity of that innocence of a child but in an adult body.

It is very confronting because you have children that you might necessarily, and they press your buttons. Then sometimes you think, "you are always reflecting." I am filled with a sense that this is our future. We really need to get them thinking for themselves, to get them to think creatively, to get them to problem solve. All those important things that these people or are not likeminded seem to think that they are doing. If we want this planet to last, we need these children educated in this way.

Michaela's story: "a beautiful safe haven under threat".

So, I've been studying a Master of Education, and we're doing this unit called Educating Globally, and everything I hear, I think, "Steiner education has an answer for that!" People just do not know what we are doing. I find that there is this negativity and an immediate association, "oh, Steiner, that's the hippy school, where you don't learn anything, and they cut me off." One of my lecturers has recently finished a PhD on Steiner education, but it sounds like he is not well accepted amongst his peers. He says that when he walks down the corridors they duck into their offices and shut their doors. Steiner education does have this reputation for being old fashioned.

I was originally trained as a PE[227] *teacher at uni and then I went overseas to Europe. I lived there four years and did the teacher training from kindergarten to Year 10. Their schooling system over there is more similar to Steiner than our mainstream. When I returned, I answered an ad to teach at the Blue Box Steiner School and it was really like "ah this school is my home." I taught part-time while I had my three children, attended conferences, taught PE and just absorbed Steiner education. Then I left and did a TESOL*[228] *post graduate diploma, thinking I would teach English, but when I went back, I kept doing relief teaching. I was assisting one of my colleagues, a teacher who was going to start with Class 1 next year. When she broke her foot, I took her class for six months. I became attached to that class but instead started with next year's Class 1. I took them for seven years and I finished last year. Every year I took part in the regional intensives for class teachers. I also went to the World Steiner Conference in Switzerland, four years ago. I just soaked it up, I just loved it, everything about it I just find fits me.*

During that time there have been huge changes. We started with just a CofT, a little school, with only primary at the start. All of my three kids have gone through right up to Year 12. Then we got the high school, and we got the College, the Board, and the Principal. I've been on the College for the last two years. I've noticed more and more paperwork, trying to adjust the demands of registration, outside demands and then trying to do our own Steiner principles. I was really pleased when the Steiner curriculum was approved by ACARA. But our new principal (she's been there for three years) has moved away from that.

I certainly see in Steiner education that we are closed off to the rest of the world, but there is also these little pockets of… there doesn't seem to be a great deal of togetherness. I love the

[227] Physical Education

[228] Teaching English as a Second Language

intensives,[229] I am always inspired. I don't agree with everyone, but I love this desire to work together and I see openness with those people. But our current school is pulling away from that togetherness of that Steiner group. We are running three curriculums at the same time! I don't know why, but it just makes for a huge amount of change and adjustment. But the new principal insists on her own version as well. She is critical of the SEA curriculum.[230] She says it has not got enough in it and you cannot test that it's worded. The way it is worded and how wishy washy it is. But I think the freedom and the trust in the teachers has been lost as far as I am concerned. I think we are compromising our principles, the Steiner principles.

I love teaching, I love the kids, love the classroom but we have got a whole new hierarchy, so many people above us now. There is the Board and then the Principal. She has got three other senior management, four on the senior management team. It is harder now to get things done. Yeah, they just get in the way.

We are part of this wonderful movement. But I feel like we have moved away from that. It is exciting what people are doing now [in the classroom]*. I think it is a wonderful movement theoretically and I think some personalities get in the way. The rift in the movement is also within the school. We have difficulties going on in the school with management and the Board has had to intervene. The problems, which started in high school, have caused some teachers to leave. Both the English and Drama teachers have gone. The problems centred around this thing called flexi hours which basically means you have a period where you have to go but you don't have a teacher or any work to do. They do it in other schools, but we do not agree with flexi hours in the Steiner school. It's basically independent learning where you don't have a teacher or any work to do but have to stay at school. A lot of parents want to leave and take their students. The good will with the College kids has been really eaten away because they love school and it is a bit directed towards the principal, I am afraid. There is a bit of an ill feeling in there.*

I'm on long service leave right now, so I am not on College. But I am hearing from my colleagues and as a parent I have been invited to all these parent meetings. It has been quite an angry reaction. The teachers were asking the senior management to change the timetable, and nothing was being done, so they are getting really frustrated. The head of high school has resigned over this, as well the head of English, and three teachers are on stress leave.

---

[229] Regional seminars hosted by an older school

[230] Steiner Education Australia. The organisation that oversaw the work of creating an alternative Steiner curriculum document.

I'd like to take another class through primary, but with this going on I am worried for my own self. Even though I have got a permanent position, nothing is standard practice anymore because we have a new principal. Teaching for those seven years has been a real gift for me. It filled up so many holes in my own learning. I think it's just such a wonderful system and I got a lot of energy, I was energised. I didn't think I'd be able to do it. I watched other teachers and I thought, "God, I cannot work like that. I cannot be that unselfish." But I realised that getting a class is like having children. Your love grows and it just makes you have the energy to do whatever they need. I have been at the school now for over 20 years. That is really magical.

When I started teaching, I'd come home and say, "these kids, they are so happy, they love coming to school." I noticed the way the students spoke about the school. There was this wonderful feeling of love for the school and looking adults directly in the eyes. The high school students seemed more mature and independent and accepted as who they were.

I came from a private school background and always found that there was too much emphasis on competition. It was a nice thing for me to have the competitive side much less emphasised. But I would have like it to be more emphasised in Steiner schools. I have a feeling that a lot of teachers have had bad experiences in sport, so they are real anti-sport. Still I would rather that than the whole competitive, over-competitive thing. The school attracts likeminded people with similar values.

The spiritual side of it took me a while. At first, you don't have to like anthroposophy, you don't have to embrace the whole cow horn, and the archangels. But the curriculum just speaks to me and it is just wonderful. The fact that everybody has this spiritual belief together makes us much stronger than other systems, I guess.

The Steiner system taught to open up. I felt like I really achieved something for myself. For example, I learned to play music by ear. The kids would just admire anything I did, such as blackboard drawings. I also enjoyed the opportunity to develop relationships with the families. I just loved it. I thought it was great, thriving.

But Steiner teachers do give so much of their lives. Like my marriage broke up in the middle of it all. I dived into my work more, and I felt very valued in the first few years. But when the new headmistress came, I didn't feel valued. That was hard because, "this is my life I am putting everything into this and you're still asking for more." The previous headmaster would come into your classroom before every term and say, "have a good time!" He would know the kids and their names, whereas the new principal, just yeah.

The new principal just makes all the decisions. She comes to College just to tell us things that were going to happen. Any decisions we'd make wouldn't make any difference. Still I have this real sense that I want to save the school. When the Principal talks in College, I think "wow, she knows so much, she is actually really cluey and really good. I wish she'd do more workshops." But it's just this whirlwind and changes.

We spend a whole week doing assessments. We label the kids and put them in ranks. I think we're losing that cohesion and we are stereotyping the children, branding them so early and It's starting in Class 2. I think that pressure is wrong. We have a beautiful safe haven. We let children take time, we believe in play, we believe in the children.

We're doing a lot of this mainstream stuff. The reason I started looking at values education in my Masters was because I really didn't like the values education we were doing last year. It just feels contrived. We do friendships for two weeks, then we move on to bullying. I've looking into the Steiner and I realised "we have it all there." Instead we're stuck with this artificial explicit stuff.

The College could become more effective as a forum to share. There's a lot of good stuff in Steiner but it is a bit inaccessible. You have to try and piece if together. But with the new enterprise agreement, promotion is tied to doing PDs and that's mainly mainstream stuff. Until I looked into it, I didn't realise that the mainstream approach just doesn't mesh with the way Steiner believed was the best way to teach good values.

One of the people I heard at the SEA conference [Christof Wiechert] *said that we have to move with the times and that Steiner did not want us to be dug into a hole. He didn't say he had to do this this way. I think a lot of it is letting the teachers find the way with the students. If there are too many directions, then you are in that space with those students. The more I do this values thing, I think, that is really the most important thing to me, the values.*

You can apply it [the Parzival story] *to our education too. As teachers we are trying to awaken it in the student through their hardships or through their journey. We are offering them this space where they have the freedom to find the calling or whatever. I think we are too tight and not letting anything come in but at the same time we need to hold on to these really precious things. You have to be open, but you still have to guard.*

Michelle's story: "it may look like utopia, but nothing's utopia."

My background is traditional. I taught overseas, and when I came back to Australia, I was a bit disillusioned with the government system. So, I started to look at independent schools and alternative education. I went to look at Silver Gum Steiner School, possibly with the intention to work there. It was raining when I went to visit, with a group of 10. Having been a teacher, I knew that, on days like this, the children would be normally be climbing the walls. Instead, they were really calm, really attentive. Twelve adults came into the back of the room. I just thought, "wow, they're doing something right here, if after day three of rain, the children were like that." The other thing that struck me were the most glorious blackboards. I talked to one of the head teachers, asking about doing relief teaching at the school. Months later I observed a class, making friends with the teacher.

Eventually, they offered me to become a class teacher. I became daunted as soon as I started. It became really, really, almost overwhelming. But at the time, it was just exciting, and I could see the passion they had, really thinking about the children. One of the head teachers said to me, "it may look like utopia, but nothing's utopia, Michelle." It took me several years to realise how true that was. Everything seemed wonderful that you thought it was more yourself that hadn't understood how to teach. And I think I was a good teacher and have been a good teacher.

It was the day before we started, Class 1. I was still helping set up my own classroom. I cried the day before. Now it just hit me, I had spent all this energy just trying to get the room ready and get to a standard. I was in the middle of the room, a beautiful room, in tears, when a 12-year-old came in. He was the son of an electrician, a good family friend.

"Are you all right?"

"No, I just don't think I'm going to get this done."

"How can I help you?"

And he did. I became calm. I thought, "what an extraordinary place!" He went to get help and the room became ready.

The first year was really quite overwhelming. I was sick quite a lot, but they just said it's quite standard. There were ceremonies throughout the year – the rituals, the festivities, even handing over the children from kindergarten to me was so beautiful. It was the solemnity, the peacefulness, the joy. Like a joyful peacefulness. You could feel the excitement in your gut and your heart. So, there was this, "oh my God, they're really, really, entrusting me with these things. I hope I can do it justice

for them." I think that's overwhelming. I put a lot of pressure on myself. Every day I wanted to do more and more.

I still think of those children all the time because it was a really bonding experience, there's no doubt about that. The parents probably threw me more than anything else. I began to question, I don't actually think I was suited to Class 1. But they said, "No, no, you need to do from Class 1 to Class 6." There was an outbreak of lice in my class. One of the parents, very much the Steiner in the right colours, living organically totally, said to me very nicely, she wasn't threatening but basically in the way that a lot of really passionate people can be, "have you considered that you've actually forced them into their brains too early and that's why you have this problem." I was like a stunned mullet.

I found that half of them weren't treating their kids. The ones that weren't Steiner *Steiner were coming to me saying, "why aren't you getting…" It almost unravelled me. "You're trying to do this too soon," or "you're trying to do this too soon." And I'm already dealing with trying to learn all the rhymes, trying to learn the story, trying to make my blackboards look the way I thought they should.*

It probably took me getting sick, and I was off for about a month, to almost get on track. I set myself a time limit for the blackboard. I would go in on a Sunday and stay there seven hours. I felt I wasn't up to what the others… am I doing a good enough job?

I had two mentors. But I would often talk to one of the school leaders, who I really liked because he had that Steiner way of answering me and not answering me which was perfect. It allowed me then to sort it out. There was another teacher who was just wonderful to talk to, just wonderful. Even though they were high school, I could ask them about primary class stories. My mentors helped me to check that I was covering the right things, that I was on the right track.

I was sick for a while, I say a month, maybe it was two weeks, three weeks, but it was quite a chunk. People were saying to me, "Oh, that always happens in Class 1," and they laughed. Maybe someone could have told me. It was all consuming which wasn't healthy, but I couldn't work out what to do. I was doing three or four hours a day after school, let alone going in on Sunday. But it was also wonderful. The storytelling. My memory improved incredibly which was fantastic. Just retelling a story and seeing these kids. A pin drop.

What did frustrate in the whole three years was how long the meetings ran that … we had on Tuesdays and on Wednesdays. They would never go for just an hour… they'd go for three hours. The meetings were necessary, but everyone was already doing so much. A lot of people were burning out.

But everyone kept telling me that "it will get easier." My mentors reassured me that I was doing "a fabulous job" and my boards were "perfect". I told one of them that I couldn't cope because my class was too big, with too many difficult kids. But it was as if no-one listened.

I think the parents were the hardest part. We'd have meetings and no-one turned up on time. Or they called me up at night. Sometimes they asked me to pack lunch for their kids. There was this idea that the teachers would do anything for their kids.

In Class 3 I had a parent start yelling at me outside the classroom door because she thought I wasn't treating her son like everyone else and I almost burst into tears. Other teachers were there too in earshot. That's what broke the camel's back. What is the point of this College of Teachers? Why do you go to them and they don't do anything for you? Not one teacher who was standing in that quadrangle came to assist or take the parent away. And the parent was also working at the school. I found out later that there were lots of parents working in various roles.

I raised this at a staff meeting. Many of the teachers from the College were there. I told them "I need help." I walked away not knowing what else I could do. Maybe it was an us and them thing. "Us" were the non-Steiner trained and "them" those that were and that were totally into the church [the Christian Community]. *They look after them than they look after us.*

There was a sense from the staff meetings and the Steiner studies that "Well, you haven't got it yet. You haven't been here long enough". Not, "Well, like this could be interpreted in many ways." Even one of my mentors, who was the most experienced teacher in the school. wasn't nearly as prescriptive. Ironically, he wouldn't consider himself one of them, either.

Every year was just this continual trying to keep up. I was definitely more comfortable, but I was still aspiring for more. It wasn't just the schoolwork, there were festivities and working bees. Even though it's all fantastic and worthwhile, at a certain point I don't know how someone can sustain a whole cycle. I couldn't. I couldn't.

Somewhere in the second year, I just found it harder to be satisfied with how far I'd come. I don't know what happened, but definitely in the third year… I realised I was not going to school really happy to see the kids or teach. I realised that I didn't want to be there. I didn't feel I was doing a good job. Then it took me four months, five months of agonising because I needed to tell them. I was worried about the kids, because it's not easy to find a replacement. I almost got sick again in that third year. By then school had shifted on the Class Teacher cycle. Some of the teachers were now stopping in Class 5. Some were even coming in saying, "I'm no good with Class 1 and 2. I want to take them from Class 5." Not long ago, I remember asking for that… The school was shifting because of

the difficulties of finding teachers. I wondered whether I'd get over this hump. What is the right decision for me? For months, I was teetering… and then I started getting migraines. They always came on a Friday. My partner said to me, "Michelle, this can't go on."

When I realised that I just had to not be there… a calmness came over me. It was great and the rest of the half-year went very, very well. I don't think the parents were told until the last couple of months of the year, even though the College and the staff knew.

However, when I finally announced it, I think I was still hoping some solution might have been given. I didn't chat with any because I was in such turmoil. I started becoming critical of small things and big things: the staff meetings, the discussions about colour coding, sharing our feelings. Things like that were really starting to annoy me.

In hindsight, it would have been good to confide in someone, though not a mentor. But there didn't seem to be anyone else I could talk to. And when I made my decision, it was like "Well, you've made the decision. Okay. Now deal with it." No-one said, "Well, let's see what we can do about it." It was rather pragmatic. We have to find a new teacher now. I realised then that I had made the right decision.

I remember now that before this happened there was something else that sent me right over the edge. When I was in third class, there was a younger teacher two years below. It was like a witch hunt. He was accused by parents… I'd forgotten about this, because it was really terrible. I didn't particularly warm to him but it was so unfair that he was accused of touching children. This situation made me remember what I'd heard before: "This is not utopia. Nothing is utopia." Why did I think this was utopia? It's just got different problems.

In that last year, there was a review of teachers' wages. Somehow the parents found out, and they were horrified. They had no idea just how low… not even the bottom rung of the public system. It was then that cracks started to appear. The sabbatical system was set up so that teachers basically paid for it while they were teaching. And then they'd take the year off and live off the money they'd set aside. Some teachers, "the real Steiner teachers" were paid out even though they didn't reach the end of their cycle. However, when it came to me, I got nothing. This made some teachers angry, even though it wasn't really an issue for me. There were other things brewing to do with the us and them division.

Afterwards it was so hard. None of the parents contacted me. I thought, is it all veneer? Have I just been in this bubble for three years? Does it make sense? No. I still know nothing about the Steiner school. I became very good friends with the Japanese teacher, and she told me that the new

*teacher was not coping with my old class. Before I said goodbye to my class I told them a story. It was important to me that they didn't feel that I was abandoning them. There was a parent farewell. Lost of tears at the end and joy and the parents were superb. The kids wrote poems to me. But I can't remember what happened at the school, if there was an announcement or what.*TBC

Wendy's story: "Steiner would be turning in his grave"

Wendy spent fourteen years in a Steiner school: four as a parent, and ten as the main high school Art teacher.

When I think back to my time teaching, I automatically remember being in the classroom, which was a really joyful experience: interacting with students, having really positive relationships and that sense of achievement, engaging with them around the content of the lesson, and in their life journey. That aspect of teaching is really memorable and automatically I remember all of their characters and people that I've connected with over the years and still feel connected with.

I guess, being in the classroom was such a positive experience. The classroom was really my domain. It was somewhere where I felt confident and directing what I was doing. The downside of that is that it was also very isolating, in that we worked in isolation. Because I was really confident in that realm, that was OK, but other times when I'd be thrown into other scenarios, such as down in the primary school where I wasn't as familiar, then that sense of isolation really kicked in and you really felt like you're on your own then. Twenty to thirty students. Nobody has any idea what you're doing or will know what you're doing unless you go out to seek someone to tell them about it, or ask for assistance.

But the sense of isolation was also strong even in my own classroom, because of the size of the school. I was pretty much the only Art teacher, and at times there may have been others, but we never actually worked together. I felt that I was the only artist, the only one that really had knowledge around Art education and the Art world, in general. I also felt that I was not only responsible for the artistic education of the students, but I was also working with colleagues who didn't really have an understanding of Visual Art. I can hear now people objecting… a lot of Steiner teachers do think of themselves as artists.

Teaching Art in the high school is very different from in primary school. It's more about voice and expression and connection… and it's about the contemporary world, in the context of the great history of Art, whereas in the primary, you're teaching specific skills and techniques, mediums, whether they be pencil and shading and colours.

It was isolating, even though the curriculum does pride itself on being connected and working across things thematically. In reality though that didn't happen very much. There was a sense of being isolated from the big picture. Steiner education is seen particularly as an artistic education, mostly by anyone who doesn't know much about Steiner schools. They sometimes call it "the Art school." There is this automatic association: Steiner education is about Art. But everything is

artistic, and because of this fundamental belief the myth arises about Steiner education, and so everybody is always looking at the artwork. And you work with people who have very strong opinions and are very judgmental about the art. But if you're focussed on the produce, then you're really missing the whole point of Art, especially in adolescents, because it's all about process and understanding and making mistakes and making a mess every now and then. This is very difficult to reconcile, this sort of pressure to produce beautiful artwork, with providing authentic artistic development for teenagers. At the end of the day, we'd always produce enough beautiful pictures to make everybody happy; at the same time, I had young people that I needed to engage in the artistic process, who as murky adolescents weren't interested in producing Turneresque landscapes. And to enforce them to do so would be really disengaging and cause all sorts of problems in the classroom and wouldn't have benefited anybody. It was a balance.

It was also about introducing contemporary currents into the classroom, because you need to be current, particularly in Art. Art is the zeitgeist of the times. If you're not working in a current mode, then your lessons are dead, particularly for young people, because you know, they have their finger on the pulse and you can't pretend that things aren't happening. They live in a saturated visual world, so you need to be honest and true with them. So it was always difficult to create a balance where I could be engaging and dynamic with students and be, um, toe the line and produce what was considered to be appropriate work for a Steiner school.

The most obvious experience of the editing process was the Open Day or the Art Exhibition. The work shown had to meet the criteria of what people would expect from a Steiner school, which at the school where I worked was determined by primary school culture rather than high school culture. If the artwork was not beautiful in a traditional sense or harmonious, or soaked in content that was again beautiful, then it wasn't really allowed to be displayed.

Over the years, I got a bit bolder because my Art program got very strong and very popular. My students were doing amazing work, a lot of it contemporary and even controversial, modern… I was at the school for ten years, and I became invested in changing the culture because to me it wasn't just about educating the students, it was about changing the culture, in terms of how it embraced Art. There is so much good that happens there artistically, and particularly in the technical education that comes from the primary school. It's fantastic! So there is a real opportunity to do something brilliant and potentially we could be developing students that could be artists in the world.

It was always important for me to push that boundary. I would become stronger and stronger, and more of an advocate for the students' voices and the work that needed to be shown. Over the years, the exhibitions became more and more contemporary, even though there were

always beautiful rainbows and beautiful watercolours as well. It's valid and wonderful but something else was also needed. I always, always received positive feedback from parents. People were always amazed at how much their children loved Art. And these aren't students who would normally love, Art, or found it very easy or had talent or a prior interest. Generally, there was positive feedback about the exhibitions, because they were very dynamic.

The Art room was a place that was always very productive because of the enthusiasm and the energy. But there were also comments [from older teachers] *like, "what's going on here, what's that about?" They might react to some of the imagery. It wasn't all sugar and…. But these were also teachers that were steeped in the primary school culture, and they don't really have an understanding of adolescents and young people, what their needs are and who they are in the world.*

I think it's the same for other subjects like Music. It's very closely aligned with Art, but a lot of the musical students and musicians were quite alienated and disengaged in the Music program. The same goes for History as well. These subjects could be very challenging and thought-provoking, but they always tended to fall on the side of being comfortable and easy. That's just not appropriate for teenagers; they need to be challenged. They need to be able to make mistakes and to take risks. But everything is always very safe, and everyone is just focussed on a nice tidy end result. Everything was neatly packaged. Take the History book, for instance. They were very beautiful but lacked critical thought and investigation.

I don't think there was much awareness about the transition from primary to high school, and certainly not amongst those teachers that had been teaching for a long time and just continued to do things in the same way. Quite often new teachers would come into this fairly insular world, come in with new ideas around education or adolescence and appropriate development but they were met quite judgmentally and hostilely. This animosity came from a place where the majority of teachers had been there for a long time – they belonged to another generation - and had never known anything different or ever looked outside this sort of protected world of Steiner education. Anything new was met defensively because it flagged potential for change or possibility of change. You always expect some resistance to change but here the resistance was able to maintain the status quo.

Concerns that were raised at the College became generalised; anything practical got lost in this sort of poetic myth of Steiner education, which justified how things were done. So nothing was ever addressed. Things like problem behaviours in the classroom continued to chip away at the whole integrity of the learning culture, turning it into a shabby kind of culture. It was not until things escalated, for example, a window was smashed, or someone was hurt or abused, something that

couldn't be ignored happened and everybody had to address it. It became a crisis, and, in my view, things needed to be acknowledged: students aren't engaged and we're not meeting their needs. If this happens in my classroom, I look at myself first: "Why am I not connecting with this person? Why is he not engaged with his work?" But when problems were raised in College, the opposite happened. There was a general denial that we were meeting their needs. Instead, a chorus would repeat familiar ideas, such as more painting, more eurythmy and more play time! The students need to be made more comfortable, less challenged, rather than teachers stepping up and addressing the crisis. Everything was swept under the rug and smoothed out.

I really tried to be involved in the culture and the big picture and stir up some change and put issues on the table. But by the end of the day, I would just isolate and ensure that my classroom, my lessons were on the money and were doing a good job and were dynamic and strong. I wanted students to know that when they walked through my door, it was a different ballgame, and they had to wake up. The Art program continued to flourish in the room, but on a personal level, I guess it just takes its toll. The isolation, the sort of frustration about not being able to be part of something bigger, not being able to integrate what you're doing into the bigger picture.

I always came up against the same walls, and it just becomes very, very tiresome. You're moving against the grain. You've got students who are coming into your room who've been switched off for three hours, doing pretty margins on the page, aren't thinking, aren't awake, then it requires extra energy and extra thought and extra planning to sort of capture them, light a fire under them again. I guess you become a little insular and probably resentful against the system that you're working in. It did for me anyway.

The sense of colleagueship was not at all strong. Maybe with a few people. You know, you'd have inspiring conversations, but with this sort of culture, you'd talk with likeminded people but in the end, it would just turn into a whinge, which just fuels the negativity. It's very hard to keep at bay.

There were always changes happening. The tide was always beginning to change, but the resistance and the ground that it was coming from was so entrenched and solid, that it always fizzled out. And that too became wearing because you think, ok this is great, but ultimately the roads would sort of lead to nowhere. There was never enough strength in the change to see it through. I think the biggest stumbling block was this inherent need to be popular. Difficult students and difficult classrooms were managed by teachers by being popular. But a popular teacher isn't necessarily a good teacher. But as a Steiner school we need to be comfortable. Everyone needs to be happy, comfortable, and the teachers don't want to be hard, or set themselves up for tough decisions. The parents want to be comfortable and happy as well. So anything that took anybody out of their

comfort zone, or meant anybody had to make any unpopular decisions then, everything just got watered down.

I think this tendency probably exists to a certain extent in other Steiner schools. But from my experience when I've gone out to other schools and conferences, and met other people in Steiner education, I think they're getting there quicker. They're not so insular to contemporary trends and the currency of education, what's happening in the world in education and in Visual Art. They seem to be more connected to the bigger picture and open… and more progressive. But the school that I was in was very insular. Anything happening outside the culture of the school was seen as a threat. So they had very strong walls around what was coming in and what was going out. Just to maintain the status quo.

There is a risk of Steiner education becoming like that. It's fundamentally sprung from the writings of Rudolf Steiner. Now, very dated. He also didn't write that much about high school education and adolescence, at least not in the depth that he wrote about the developmental years of primary and childhood. A lot of what's happening in Steiner schools is just people interpreting what he wrote. And if these people are not looking outside of Steiner education, and if they're not looking beyond, I think it's a very limited view. This is the risk of becoming very cloistered and resistant to change.

Yet Rudolf Steiner was a visionary, he was incredibly progressive. I went to a conference on spirituality in Art. The presenter had done a PhD on the topic and one the chapters looked at Steiner education. In her presentation, she said that Steiner would be turning in his grave, if he knew what was happening in Steiner schools today, because it was not what he intended. People were misinterpreting what he wrote and the way it was being interpreted and the dogma. It was being used as a dogma in the classrooms, which is certainly not what such a progressive and contemporary man would have intended. That really rang true for me. I think I was the only Steiner person hiding in the room. For me that reverberated.

She told me that, after finishing her study, she offered her services to Steiner schools. She was very excited to share her work. After all, she was a huge fan of Steiner, and as an artist loved his artistic approach to education. She was really excited to share the potential of Art as a spiritual activity in Art education. Of course, you can imagine how that wasn't met with much interest. She said that she managed to do a few workshops with Steiner teachers. But she came away completely flattened by how judgmental and narrow-minded these teachers were. They kept on falling back on these sorts of rules of Art, that Steiner had mandated, and that they wouldn't really let go of. The workshops sounded very experiential, all about expression, and these teachers were quoting rules

about Art and how it should be done. One of them was that "children must paint in watercolour." In her research, she found in fact that he only said that because it was easy. It was just the easiest thing they were able to do.

This was quite a common occurrence. I would go out into the world and I would connect with things that are so exciting. "Oh, there's people who understand my mission as an Art teacher in a Steiner school. It's validated" and I would find these encounters, when I would step outside the bubble of the school. When I returned to my class at school with renewed enthusiasm, I tried to share with more confidence my convictions around what needed to be happening and the potential for what we could be doing. But those energetic bursts just ultimately fizzled out and died flat because there was never any interest in it. People would sneer, "oh, we've never heard of them."

On another occasion, there was an exhibition of really progressive, contemporary artists who worked with Steiner's ideas. The presenter talked about contemporary artists like Imants Tillers and others. These are current living artists exhibiting now, Australian, beautiful work and contemporary. Standing in a room full of people at a Steiner centre, she advocated that this is what Steiner had in mind for Art: expressing the times. Again, it was really exciting to hear that. I think she was involved in one of the bigger schools, not as a teacher but as a parent. "Oh, there are people out there who understand the need for some contemporaneity in Art, in Visual Art, in Steiner education and there's a massive potential for that," she said. I spoke with her afterwards and she completely got it. She was German! She'd been through a Steiner school herself, and she'd been working in the Steiner system as an advocate for many, many years. She was an advocate for Art at the Steiner centre, but she said she was banging her head up against a brick wall. People didn't want to know about it. At the end of the day, they just want to keep doing the same, quite Germanic veil paintings and sticking to the same things.

I remember another Steiner event. I went to a conference at a modern museum. Quite by chance, there was an artist on exhibit who basically created contemporary Art exhibitions on Steiner's theories. It was so validating to see that here is someone working with Steiner's theory on Visual Art and colour theory, at this famous museum. They were huge sculptures, huge modern sculptures. That's the evidence! I thought to myself, I can now take back to school. At the time, there was another Art teacher, an elder teacher who was, not officially but hierarchically, above me in Steiner stripes. I took this back to her… "Oh, have you heard of this artist? She's exhibiting and… She's written all this work around Steiner's theory and she's a contemporary, successful Australian artist." Well, she'd never heard of her and screwed her nose up at her and her work, because it wasn't watercolour and it wasn't wood. It was basically just deadening. There was nowhere to go

with these new impulses. What could I do? I just bundled up all that energy and enthusiasm and love and put it in my Art room.

I continued to advocate, quietly, like having a Visual Arts blog. Put all this new information and images, and links and everything on the blog. It had a sort of growing community around it. Students connected to it, parents started to connect to it. I updated it every week. But I don't think any teachers ever looked at it. It was bit of an outlet for me, and also was a way to try and plant something that was sustainable. It was the journey I was on.

Although I worked with another Art teacher, an elder of the school, there was never any way that we'd actually work together. She was part of the unable-to, unwilling-to, not-even-going-to-contemplate-any-change old guard. This is another risk factor: the small Steiner school, with one Art teacher, one History teacher, one English teacher…

There were so, so many meetings, and yet education or the curriculum would rarely turn up on the agenda. There was a view, as a school, that they are really strong and committed to personal development, but their idea of personal development is particularly progressive, and it's not targeted at or it's not relevant to the education of young people. It's more about strengthening the old culture and not losing the old ways. It would be about making sure that we don't change, so we'd be reading Steiner verses, to remind us what our spirit is about and not to lose sight of it.

I think primary school manages to maintain itself very neatly in that enclosed world, but certainly in high school, I think, a lot of teachers were probably suffering in the same way, in terms that they were really putting a lot of energy and effort into their classrooms and their lessons, trying to keep things happening and afloat, and probably evidence of that is that, in College meetings, ultimately high school teachers didn't go. It wasn't relevant to them. It was quite demoralizing, in a way, a waste of time.

The meetings were about strengthening the resolve of teachers within Steiner education to stay true to this sort of mythology and dogma that they had created, that they had attached themselves to, as though if they were to lose that then everything would fall apart. There was a lot energy and commitment to maintaining this culture, what they saw as the culture of Steiner education, as the saviour, so that no matter what hurdle you come up against, the education setting it would always come back to… it was like a religious thing. If you're having difficulties in your life, you pray. If you have difficulties in a Steiner school, you say a verse, and that would fix everything.

How I came to be in Steiner education is the same way most people come to be involved in Steiner schools… as a teacher or parent or strong person in the community, which then ends up becoming a part of the problem. I'll explain what I mean later.

My children brought me to the school. I think that's the same with most parents. Their children brought them. And the reason my child brought me, like so many others is because I was fearful for him, because he was a challenged little person, with issues, learning difficulties. He was very sensitive and as a mother, I wanted to protect him. So, what better answer than to rock him into the land of rainbows where he would be happy. The truth is that I was scared what would happen to him in another school. I think that's a common story. It's the comfort thing again.

I had taught in State schools and I wasn't impressed with the system or with how Art was taught. This was in the 1980s. I thought it was staid and dry. I did a Dip Ed [Diploma of Education] but was put off so I decided to retrain in Counselling and Psychology and ended up in Mental Health and Community Arts. For a while, I had one foot in each pie. I kept my hand in teaching but dabbled in the other. Ultimately the other became more attractive to me and I ended up letting go of the teaching and moving on. I ended up running programs for marginalised and at-risk kids, working with kids who were expelled and excluded from mainstream schools, basically students who couldn't handle it.

By the time I had my own children, I'd already decided that Steiner education would be best for my kids. They were all happy there. They all went through primary school. Then the school needed someone to fill in. I enjoyed it. I move from Mental Health and the Department of Health back into teaching at a Steiner school. I could see the freedom that I had and the potential to develop as an Art teacher in a Steiner school. Now, I realise that Art education in the mainstream has really changed. They have an amazing curriculum. But back then the way Art was taught in a Steiner school really captured me. I loved a lot of their qualities, the materials they used, and the value that they placed on Art. I was all very appealing to me. I thought, I can really do something amazing here.

I found out about Steiner through a friend who was involved in the Christian Community. I was struck by the beauty of the school. As an artist, I'm a visual person. Just walking into a school was so beautiful. It just sang to me. At first, I didn't have much knowledge of the philosophy or the pedagogy. When I became a parent, I got involved in teacher education at the school. I had mixed responses to what I heard. Some things were hard to embrace; but a lot that I was uncovering seemed very wise and resonated with me. There was wisdom and depth in it that felt truth.

A lot of what Steiner had hoped would happen is already part of mainstream schools. You know that living education. They're getting out into the world, the whole experiential learning, experiments, class trips, absorbing yourself in nature. But in Steiner schools, I feel like we still read this stuff as though it's new and no-one knows it. Like it's sacred information that only us in Steiner education know about it. It's not true in Art and it's not true in education. This arrogant stance really frustrates me. The old guard at the school is very closed to acknowledging the wealth that existed in the world that matched beautifully with basically what they were trying to do.

I found Steiner's philosophy very enriching and inspiring. When I read his work, I'd take on the essence of it. And for me the essence is about being truthful. With truth there is always beauty, but not that superficial kind of beauty. It's about being authentic and being present, being in the now. That's something I find disappointing, because I think that what's really important in Steiner education is being present and being in the now. There's a quote from Steiner… you are who you are when you stand in front of a class. I think, it's particularly true for adolescents. They have amazing bullshit detectors and you have to be incredibly genuine and honest and truthful and present for them to deliver a quality education. But if you take what Steiner says and wrap that up in a dogmatic way, it does the exact opposite… then you're focussed on delivering by the rules, by this rule book, and being this packaged ideal Steiner person.

For me, it's all about love, you know, loving everybody, not being judgmental, and loving the world, the current world, not what it could be. I have to say, I'm not going to pretend that I can just read a Steiner book and understand it, but I take what I think is the essence of it and it enriches and strengthens me as a teacher in the classroom. Then I use the language that I do understand, from one of those educational journeys that I've been on, and I can mash them together. It's the kind of experience where you hear something and then it rings in you as truth. It resonates. I'm an artist, more of an intuitive person. The main thing is that it really did strengthen my teaching practice, it informed me, but not sure that it actually gave me anything new. It sent me down different avenues of exploration that I might not have looked at very closely.

I just processed these experiences myself. At the time, alongside other parents in the teacher education program, it would have been really healthy to have open dialogue, but it didn't happen. No-one asked dumb questions! I think people could feel that arrogance and that judgmentalism. It's just everywhere in the culture of the school. People don't ask questions. People don't have conversations about things. The attitude is very much: "we have knowledge and we will give it to you, and you're lucky enough to receive it." It's not a two-way thing, which is a shame. It's just receive, receive, receive. And you know, that's actually how the classrooms work. Students just sit

there, and they receive, and they receive, but they're not really encouraged to question anything. It happens all the way through primary, and when they start to ask questions in high school then things start to fall apart.

I feel that I was wounded by the school, I think I gave a lot. I invested a lot. There wasn't much value or respect from the school. I feel I'm still seen as this annoying parent because I question things. I find that really insulting because I feel like I actually am quite knowledgeable, around my subject area, around education and around adolescence, and around Steiner education. But nothing I ever say, everything was just dismissed… "You don't know because you're not one of the old guard, you're not one of the old guys." It hurts. I feel jilted by that, again and again and again, and I keep going trying to prove my worth.

It's disappointing… so much was achieved. I feel I made a real difference to so many young people. It's disappointing that none of that is going to go anywhere, because at the end of the day, as soon as I step out, it all grinds back to this old… dead… none of it is sustained. I find that really sad. I still feel that it's a brilliant opportunity to create something fantastic in a beautiful place. It's just sad that it never happened. I really did love working there. I love what I did. I suppose you can't complain about that: ten years doing what you love. I love young people. I love teaching and I love Art.

I've realised that this wish to protect my child, which is so natural for parents, has actually a big crippling effect that holds back the progress of Steiner education. I've learned now how misled I was in the belief that what my child needed was protection. I see this in my friends, in other parents who were also misled. In fact, what our children need is to learn strength. They need to learn to stand up. To stand on their own two feet, and to find their own way and to be able to trip over and be challenged and do badly in things. There's not enough of that happening in a Steiner school. And parents are so comfortable because they believe as I did that for a long time so I can completely understand it, that that the best thing.

But what I've seen is that when these children come into high school there's a disproportionate amount of students who are anxious, depressed, have behavioural issues, and I think a lot of it comes from the fact that they haven't learnt hard lessons in primary school years. The primary school maintains a bubble very nicely. It's very neat, but it comes at a cost. They pay at the end of high school. They don't have the life skills that they need, because they haven't had a rigorous enough time. You see this a lot when they leave the school, they go and try out another school, and they come back because that school's too hard. But it's not that there's something wrong with the other school, it's because the Steiner school hasn't prepared them for the world. They haven't been

able to cope. In Steiner education we have this unwritten philosophy that you don't need to be present because there's this great tradition behind you that will hold you, but I think instead there is a risk of getting further out of your depth.