

A Very Moral Minority:
An Investigation of
the Influence of Rudolf Steiner's
Esoteric *Weltanschauung* (worldview)
on the Purpose and Principles
of Waldorf Education

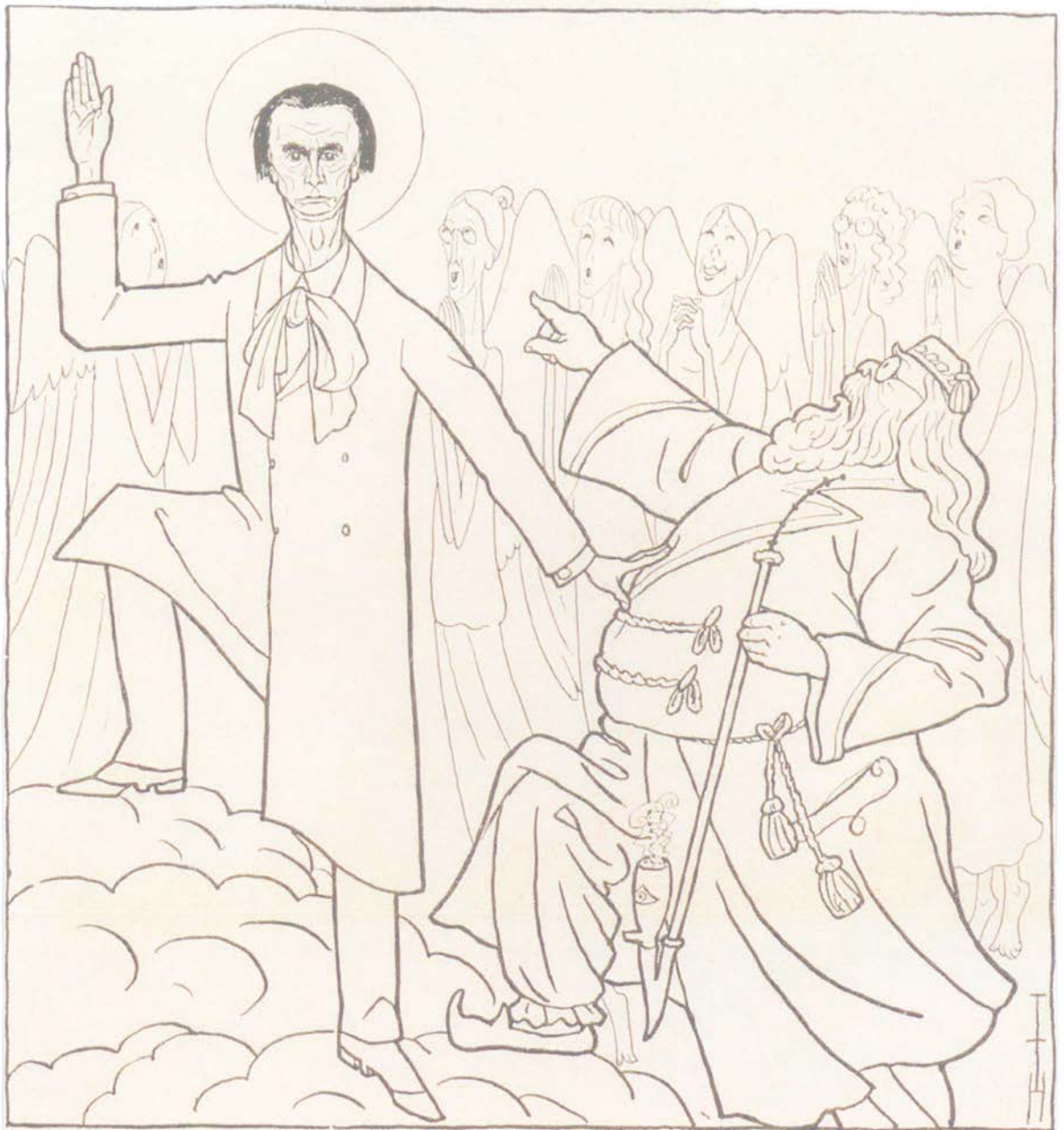
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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education
Macquarie University

2013

Rudolf Steiner †



„Ich bin der Herr, Mein Gott. Ich kann keine andern Götter neben mir dulden.“

**"I am the Lord, my God. I cannot bear other Gods
besides me."**

Simplicissimus, 20.04.1925.

Steiner died March 30th 1925.

Declaration

This thesis represents my original research and is my own work except where acknowledged. No part of this work has been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Sheila K. Curson

Signed: 

Date: 8/8/2013

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Acknowledgements

A significant debt of gratitude must go to the many Waldorf school colleagues who provided the inspiration for this research. Their unswerving dedication to the creative and imaginative pedagogy devised by Dr Rudolf Steiner motivated the desire to understand his ideas in greater depth. For those who showed interest in the project and gave encouragement - *thank you*.

The journey to completion has been a long one and three supervisors have provided invaluable assistance along the way. Acknowledgement must go to Associate Professor Kevin Harris for alerting the author to the fact that Steiner's work was not necessarily what it seemed. Grateful thanks to Professor George Cooney for his patient wisdom and the ability to bring coherence to many disparate lines of enquiry. Over many months Associate Professor Pamela Coutts has lent her expertise, clear thinking and sharp intellect to bringing this thesis to completion. In Steinerian terms she has truly been "the angel on the shoulder".

Finally, a heart-felt, thank-you, to my family and friends for their supportive interest, tireless assistance in practical matters and constant question - when will it be finished? Without you all it may never have reached a final conclusion.

Abstract

Waldorf or Steiner Schooling is recognised worldwide as the brainchild of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), noted as one of Germany's leading twentieth century spiritual researchers and mystics. The doctrine and meditative discipline of Anthroposophy or Anthroposophical Spiritual Science, carefully crafted by Steiner from ancient Christian beliefs and the teachings of Rosicrucianism have been acknowledged as forming the basis of the work carried out in the Waldorf School (*Freie Waldorfschule*) opened in the German township of Stuttgart in 1919. Prior to this study there had been no attempt to enter the so-called "enchanted wood" (Ahern, 1984, p. 101) of Steiner's esoteric worldview and synthesize it in a way that would make it possible to define the linkages between it and Waldorf education. The research therefore set out to draw together the complex strands of Steiner's particular form of esoteric scholarship and identify its linkages with the purpose of education and the key principles relating to the methodological praxis and teaching content he devised for the original school.

The initial focus of the research was to establish the broad parameters of Steiner's theories using original sources as far as practicable. This was followed by an exploration of the nexus between what transpired to be a radically different perspective on reality, the social system he believed would counter the rise of socialism in the post-war years and the educational practices he devised to bring his ideas to fruition. In order to establish the persistence of Steiner's ideological groundwork and its application in the Waldorf school classroom the research investigated contemporary practices through reviewing the literature in relationship to selected aspects of the curriculum and pedagogy. The study placed particular emphasis on the primary years of schooling.

Steiner's epistemology and theories dedicated to unveiling the spirit in human consciousness were shown to "fit" the currently accepted model of esotericism as defined by Faivre (1994). They were also demonstrated to provide the foundation for Steiner's educational philosophy. The principal objective of education as Steiner perceived it was to prepare the child's bodily "temple" for possession by the spirit which would lead to a lifetime of moral thought and action in the image of the Christ archetype. As such, Steiner saw education as a "salvation" and current teachers in Waldorf schools have referred to their task as preparing the child to become a vessel of the Solar Christ. The methodological practices Steiner devised for the Waldorf School were found to be based on the techniques fundamental to the meditative discipline of Anthroposophy and teaching content incorporated esoteric "truths" via an "inner" or "occult" curriculum intended to create a worldview commensurate with Steiner's teachings.

The research further shed light on the relationship between Steiner's desires to bring about the social renewal of the dysfunctional German State following World War I. It confirmed that Waldorf education was "a child of the *Threefold Commonwealth*" (Strawe, 1998, p. 43), a new spiritualised social order in which Steiner envisaged Waldorf graduates would come to play a leading role.

Analysis of the textual content of many of Steiner's lectures associated with the preparation of the teachers indicated that in the early years of schooling the emphasis was on developing the concepts of the "feeling heart" and the power of the imagination to guide the will of the child to be able to freely make decisions and judgements informed by the spiritual laws of the moral Universe. His pedagogical theories were demonstrated to belong to the *romantic* stream of educational philosophies. Contemporary educationalists were found to adhere to Steiner's original pedagogical principles through maintaining the Main Lesson curriculum.

The findings concluded that every aspect of Waldorf schooling investigated could be directly related to the aspects of Steiner's esoteric *weltanschauung* as discussed at the outset of this study. In order to build on this preliminary investigation further research of this imaginative, creative and value-driven form of education is required. Of particular interest is the work carried out in the Waldorf High School which is purported to be the stage at which the curriculum and pedagogy must combine to reinforce the moral and spiritual awakening of the adolescent that will enable them to meet and one day, transform the world.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Waldorf School education must be listened to with other ears than those with which one hears about other kinds of education or educational reform... To give a picture of what Waldorf Education is, we must say that it speaks quite differently from the way in which people speak elsewhere in the sphere of education: Waldorf School education is not a pedagogical system but an Art - the Art of awakening what is actually there within the human being. Fundamentally, the Waldorf School does not want to educate, but to awaken. For an awakening is needed today. First of all, the teachers must be awakened, and then the teachers must awaken the children and the young people.

(Rudolf Steiner, 1922/1967b, pp. 22, 23)

1.1 Introducing Waldorf Education

It is well accepted that the term "progressive education" reflects the alternative philosophies of those pedagogues with a reformist worldview as to the role and place of the school in a democratic society (Boyd & Rawson, 1965; Lawson & Peterson, 1972; Röhrs & Lenhart, 1995). Since the term first entered the English lexicon in the early twentieth century it has been used to describe the ideas and practices arising out of the work of the idealists who saw new pedagogical approaches as the means to develop socially engaged, independent, reflective thinkers. The source and precursor of their philosophy to educate the "whole child" in body, soul and spirit were the Romantic and Transcendental educators who rejected outright the prevailing focus on narrowly rationalistic vocational training (Lawson & Peterson, 1972, p. 15). In its turn, progressive schooling came to offer holistic methodologies that were designed to encourage the liberative power of the emotional, imaginative and creative capabilities of the young mind. The primary aim of these "child centred" and social

reconstructionist forms of schooling was to educate the individual in a way that they might one day participate in the affairs of the community and work towards a common good.

If evaluated in terms of the number of schools established, arguably the most successful school system which has purportedly embraced the objectives of an alternative form of education is the Waldorf or Steiner School Movement. Able to lay claim to being one of the most enduring forms of pedagogy aligned with the humanist, post-positivist thread of educational reform, its philosophy and practices are derived wholly from the pedagogical indications of Doctor Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). A spiritual visionary from an early age (Lachman, 2007, p. 17), Steiner spent his adult lifetime refining and reworking arcane wisdom teachings, evolving an epistemology and ontology which gave rise to the esoteric discipline of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science. As an Initiation Science it was characterised by a unique philosophy of human consciousness and a Christian perspectivity largely antithetical to traditional theologies. In more recent times Steiner has come to be considered by his followers as the Christ initiate or Christ messenger of the Epoch (Tautz, 1982, p. 8).

In their comprehensive survey of progressive education, Lawson and Peterson (1972) acknowledge the importance of the Theosophical Fraternity in promoting the course of the reform movement concerned with New Ideals in Education (p. 22). It was as the Director of the Berlin (Adyar) Theosophists between 1902 and 1912 that Steiner first formulated his ideas on the education of the young child from the "spiritual point of view" (Boyd & Rawson, 1965, p. 66). In 1919 the first Waldorf School was established in Stuttgart, Germany. In contrast to its counterparts drawing from the wick of spiritualism and esotericism that flared only briefly in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, its form of education gained momentum and persisted. Today, according to the *Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen* (Association of Waldorf Schools), the number of Waldorf Schools is well

over nine hundred worldwide (2010, np) and an extensive homeschooling network in America has recently been identified. In Australia there are purportedly some forty schools educating an estimated seven thousand students (Mowday, 2004, p. 1).

As Steiner himself makes clear in the opening quotation, Waldorf pedagogy speaks "quite differently" to other kinds of educational reform and must therefore be "listened to with other ears". Some of the key aspects which set it apart from its contemporaries have, since Steiner's death in 1925, come under intense scrutiny by anthroposophical educators keen to develop and expand on his relatively brief curriculum and pedagogical indications. The spiritual nature of the child and the significance of exposure to appropriate curriculum material have, in particular, been well documented (Childs, 1991; Easton, 1997; Mazzone, 1999). The importance of moral values in curriculum and pedagogy has been duly noted (Masters, 1996; Gidley, 1997; Mephram, 1998) and the overriding emphasis on the imaginative content in the younger years has also been extensively explored (Ogletree, 1996; Oppenheimer 1999, Nielsen, 2003a & b, 2004).

What has been largely left untouched is the nexus between Steiner's esoteric worldview (*weltanschauung*) and its relationship to the work carried out in the Waldorf School classroom. Further, there is little or no comment as to purpose and outcomes related to Anthroposophical Spiritual Science.

1.2 Statement of Research Objectives

The research objectives are based on the proposition that Steiner's esoteric worldview is fundamental to every aspect of pedagogy and curriculum in the Waldorf School. With this in mind the research objectives are as follows -

1. To identify the key principles of Rudolf Steiner's esoteric theories.

2. To elucidate why Steiner's ideas have gained no "official" recognition by considering the perspectives of scholars who have examined his theories and have made public comment.
3. To examine the background to the establishment of the first school - the Stuttgart Waldorf School (*Freie Waldorfschule*).
4. To investigate the relationship between Steiner's theories and the pedagogical practices and curriculum he devised for the *Waldorfschule*.
5. To examine the persistence of Steiner's worldview principles and their practical implementation in the modern classroom.

1.3 Context of the Research Objectives

The foundational principles on which the original school was based guide the parameters of the research. Without wishing to presage the content of later chapters, the following overview assists to contextualise the investigation. The Stuttgart Waldorf School, commonly referred to as the model school or "mother" school, was established under the auspices of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Factory in September 1919. In that year, Steiner was appointed as the Director, and in this role he continued to guide and mentor the teachers until his death in 1925. From the outset, Steiner was quite clear that the curriculum and teaching practices he devised at the request of the factory owner, Emil Molt (1876-1936), represented the visible entry of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science into the general life of German society, with the potential to "reform and revolutionise education" (1919/1996c, p. 29).

The Waldorf School officially opened its doors to two hundred and fifty six students on September 16th 1919. At the end of the first year there were two hundred and fifty six students in eight classes (1919/1986a, p. 21). The School was initially supported by the

members of the organisation *Die Kommende Tag* (The Coming Day) who saw in Steiner's vision of the *Threefold Commonwealth* (*Die Dregliederung der Sozialen Organismus*), the seeds of Germany's post-war social rehabilitation. By Steiner's reckoning, existing pedagogical forms had destroyed the heritage of the German folk spirit and any possible foundations of true spiritual development (1919/1958b, p. 111/5). The Waldorf School would therefore not train the child for the utility of the State, but instead return spirituality to its rightful place as man's true reality. To achieve this end, he claimed that pedagogy in the Waldorf School would be a "special chapter" in the sphere of morality and ethics (1922/1967b, p. 81). The ultimate objective of an education that would place greatest emphasis on the attainment of moral values was thus the social renewal of the body politic.

The *raison d'être* of Waldorf pedagogy was to awaken the potential of the child to form judgements and act selflessly and morally in the image of the archetypal Christ held in inner consciousness independent of outside forces. The natural corollary would ultimately be the creation of a society, controlled not by laws, rules and commandments but instead, by individuals working out of a Christ inspired, universal cosmic consciousness. The Waldorf child rightly trained to "feel socially" would be the loving and communing member of a new social order. The Waldorf School would be "a school for humanity" whose students would begin the renewal of the spiritual life of the German nation (Tautz, 1982, p. 25).

From 1920 onwards Steiner began to spread his educational theories beyond the confines of Germany. In 1921 he lectured to the New Educators in Great Britain and in 1924, his lectures at the Oxford Conference were heralded as the "central point" of the meeting (Webb, 1976, p. 404). By 1925, the first school on British soil was opened. Rebounding from the closure of the majority of Waldorf schools during the Nazi regime, new schools were established in both Germany and Europe generally. As early as 1955, there were over sixteen schools in the

region. In the following decade anthroposophists dedicated to Steiner's educational and social ideals opened schools in Australia, South America and South Africa.

1.4 Rationale for the Research

Despite the fact that Waldorf schools have experienced considerable growth in numbers since the 1950's, and Steiner's educational philosophy has been compared with the likes of John Dewey, Neill, Pestalozzi, Froebel and Maria Montessori (Gidley, 1997, p. 23), it has aroused little interest amongst educators in general (Masters, 1996; Mowday, 2004). Röhrs (1995), sympathetically notes in his handbook, *Progressive Education Across the Continents* (Röhrs & Lenhart), that Waldorf education joined the progressive phalanx of educational institutions characterised by preconceived allegiances to specific educational teaching that "restricted their scope to some extent in the exploration of potential avenues for reform" (p. 5). While Röhrs stops short of naming Anthroposophical Spiritual Science as the limiting factor, Ogletree (2000), an anthroposophical writer, is more specific categorically identifying Steiner's worldview as the reason. He makes the point that Steiner's philosophical treatises such as *Philosophy of Freedom, Truth and Knowledge*, and *Riddles of Philosophy*, are based on spiritual clairvoyance which is the antithesis of modern western thinking and because of this "has not been recognised by the world of" official "philosophers and educators" (p. 27).

Uhrmacher (1995), who has carried out extensive studies of Waldorf schooling in America, leaves no room for equivocation as to the part Steiner's philosophy and esoteric teachings have played in creating this lack of formal recognition. He points out -

Perhaps this is because his ideas do not fit neatly into any one sphere of knowledge. He was neither full-time educator, nor philosopher, nor artist, nor critic. In addition, his pantheistic and angelological outlook rattles many contemporary scholars and makes him suspect among scientifically oriented communities. His understanding of human nature, which consists of physical, etheric and astral bodies, certainly demands a great deal of open-mindedness from

students trained in mainstream academia. Moreover, he expounded esoteric ideas, wrote obtusely, and lectured with dogmatic conviction.

(Uhrmacher, 1995, p. 2)

Uhrmacher omits to make specific reference to Steiner's radical re-visioning of a mystical Christianity he developed between the years 1902 and 1916, and as the research will demonstrate, substantially influenced all aspects of his work, including education.

It can be confidently asserted that the ideas arising out of Steiner's spiritual clairvoyance which Ogletree and Uhrmacher are making reference to are not well understood by those outside of Waldorf schools. In the opinion of Masters (1996), anthroposophical writers themselves have done little to address the situation. He claims in his own research, a comparison between theory and practice, that the criticism generally goes along two different lines - either the practice is fully in place but there are no explanations forthcoming, or the literature refers more to the curriculum without sufficiently substantiating by what theory it is grounded (p. 26). Agnes Nobel (1996) makes a similar observation in the opening pages of her book *Educating Through Art*, stating that it is remarkable how little known is the background to Steiner's education system and goes on to say how important it is for the epistemological background to be "lifted out of the shadows" (pp. 17, 18). Ogletree (1996), in an earlier publication related to his empirical research on the creative abilities of Waldorf educated children, also notes the dearth of a coherent explanation relating to Steiner's perceived spiritual nature of the child. He suggests that Steiner's complex esoteric spiritually based theory is an additional, if not the primary reason, that little is known or understood about Waldorf education (p. 11). A greater transparency in understanding the philosophical and theoretical basis of Waldorf pedagogy would clearly go some way in answering the vocal criticisms Waldorf education has endured in recent times.

Robinson (2008), uneasy with Steiner's theories, articulates a point of view that accords with that of Masters and Nobel -

One would have thought that Steiner protagonists would have been keen to establish the credentials of their system by a series of well designed and executed research studies, but this is not the case. There is virtually no hard information about what goes on in Steiner classrooms or on the effects of it on children's learning.

(Robinson, 2008, p. 2)

Robinson is clearly dissatisfied with the current level of research relating to Waldorf education. With the recent incorporation of Steiner's methodological praxis and curriculum into Australian State schools he highlights a valid concern. In Victoria, in particular, similar disquiet found its way into the public arena where eight State schools have incorporated Waldorf practices such as delaying reading and writing into their mainstream approaches. Parental opposition in one particular school resulted in academics at the University of Melbourne being commissioned to examine these aspects of the alternative curriculum and Waldorf practices (Rout, 2007, p. 3). The final report called for the school to be transparent about its curriculum and provide parents with more information about how it is taught (Tomazin, 2008, p. 1). The question as to whether or not Waldorf education seeks to perpetuate a religious philosophy has also arisen (Robinson, 1992).

In the United States, the presumption that work carried out in the Waldorf classroom is in some way entangled with religious dogma, has involved Californian schools in litigation. In 1998, People for Legal and Non-sectarian Schools (PLANS), filed suit against two School Districts alleging that, with the introduction of Waldorf practices in public schools, religious programmes were being introduced in contravention of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment (Archer, 1999). A negative outcome has done little to stem their vocal opposition.

More importantly for Waldorf education in Australia is the tolerant attitude of the Federal Government towards Steiner schools. Towards the end of 2012 the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) officially recognised the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework as an alternative curriculum for the Phase I subjects, English, History, Science and Maths (European Council for Steiner Schools, 2012, np). The Association argued that the richness and beauty of the content of the Waldorf curriculum would be lost, together with a unique methodology, if the changes were to be imposed on the forty-three schools nationwide. What was probably not stated is that a loss of purpose associated with its underlying esoteric philosophy would also be consequential upon any imposition from outside forces. Given such high level recognition, a fuller understanding of Waldorf education is even more pertinent.

The importance of lifting the epistemological background "out of the shadows" has not gone unnoticed by more objective observers. In Ullrich's (1994/2000) review of the progress of Waldorf schooling in *The UNESCO Journal for Comparative Education* (p. 22), he notes that Steiner's pedagogics in educational circles has remained marked by the paradox of practical acceptance and theoretical ignorance. He concludes - "in the last resort, the practice of this system of education with the broad spectrum of artistic and handcraft learning potentials, a caring attitude to children and the many opportunities for conscious participation in community tasks, is far too important to be left to the unquestioning adepts of Rudolf Steiner" (p. 23). This investigation proposes to go some way in achieving an informed understanding of what lies behind an alternative form of education arising out of an esoteric *weltanschauung* which has spread its influence worldwide.

1.5 Defining the Term, Esoteric Weltanschauung

The word *weltanschauung* and its English derivative "worldview" can be defined as a shared system of thought with a particular perspective, view or outlook, which makes sense of the

world around us. Walsh (1992) sees the term as religious in character, forming the framework for beliefs that cannot be argued to on the basis of either inductive or deductive reasoning, rather "they are the very foundation of such arguments". He goes on to say that because the world is temporal in process, a worldview always entails a story, a myth, which provides its adherents with an understanding of their own role in the global history of good and evil, "such a story tells us who we are in history and why we are here" (p. 7). According to Walsh this is particularly the case at the educational level, proposing that "all education is rooted in worldview and all education nurtures students in that worldview" (p. 27).

The theologians Peck and Strohmer (2001) provide a meaning of the term "worldview" which is particularly relevant to the research. They point out that it is an English translation of the German *weltanschauung* which was often used in theological texts meaning something profoundly radical and potentially revolutionary - "that which dealt with fundamentals and roots; a way of looking at life normally absorbed from the cultural environment from childhood, and which functions chiefly, consciously, to give shape, meaning and direction to everything we do" (p. 50). Their definition emphasises that the term incorporates both a system of thought or mindset that has a practical application and it is in this sense that it is used throughout the present study.

Those who profess to have a supportive interest in Anthroposophy agree with the claim that Rudolf Steiner was one of Germany's foremost esoteric researchers of the early twentieth century and that his worldview and the Movement it gave rise to is "the most developed contemporary instance of western esotericism" (Ahern, 1984, p. 15). In terms of the relevance of esotericism to Steiner's educational theory, the anthroposophist, Rene Querido (1995) in his book, *The Esoteric Background of Waldorf Education. The Cosmic Christ Impulse*, confirms its importance and also provides a small selective window into its usage.

According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* the word esoteric is a doctrine intended only for the initiated. Esoteric, and its nominal form esotericism, are therefore to be generally associated with secret or arcane teachings. Derived from the Greek, *esoterikos*, its first known mention in Greek is in Lucien's ascription to Aristotle of having "esoteric"(inner) and "exoteric" (outer) teachings, the word later came to designate the secret doctrines said to have been taught by Pythagoras to a select group of disciples (Versluis, nd). Katz (2005) in his study, *The Occult Tradition*, cites *De Occulta Philosophia* - the work of Cornelius Agrippa, the sixteenth century German mystic and alchemist, as the more recent source of the term. Santucci (nd) in his investigation of both esotericism and the occult points out that the former was introduced into the European language around 1742 in a work by the Masonic author, La Tierce. In 1883, A. P. Sinnett is credited with the English neologism in his *Esoteric Buddhism*. Santucci goes on to equate esotericism with *gnosis* or "saving knowledge" which evolves into intuitive knowledge of the true nature of Man, God and the world expressed in mythical images. He quotes Giles Quispel, a specialist in Gnosticism, who calls it an "experiential process", consisting of a re-awakening of the individual's true nature prior to it being overtaken by "evil" (pp. 1, 2).

Versluis (nd) points out that esotericism, as a field of academic study, refers to alternative dissident religious movements or philosophies whose proponents, in general, "distinguish their beliefs and practices from public institutionalised religious traditions" (Versluis, nd, p. 2). He highlights the fact that while the conventional historian works with straightforward historical data, the esoteric scholar also confronts an entirely new additional dimension that may be described as *gnosis*. "This dimension cannot be addressed by conventional history alone, precisely because *gnosis* represents with the aid of some degree of participatory imagination, that which is held to transcend history" (Versluis in Mawby, 2008, p. 297). Voss (1996) also agrees that the journey the mystic or esoteric scholar makes to the point of an illuminating *gnosis* is facilitated by the imagination. She indicates two possible reasons for

its importance. Firstly, "it enables access to deeper levels of reality than those ordinarily experienced and secondly, it helps mediate between things that are ontologically separate". In particular, it permits the "realm called human to come into contact with that which is called divine, thereby functioning as a bridge between the microcosm and the macrocosm" (p. 106).

In order to provide a framework against which the content of Steiner's richly textured theories can be tested, Antoine Faivre's (1994) defining characteristics of esotericism are employed. Faivre, considered as the world authority on Western esotericism, claims in his examination of the genre that it embodies several distinctive elements within its meaning. He states that "we should consider it a frame of mind, a style of imagery through which circulates a tincture permeating diverse materials to give them a specific hue" (p. 9). This "specific hue" translates into six recognisable characteristics, four of which are essential. He regards as fundamental the notion of (1) *Correspondences* or interrelationships between all things in the Universe. This in turn correlates with the belief in a (2) *Living Nature* in which all things are invested with mind or soul. How to recognise these connections is the task of the imaginal memory. Only through (3) *Imagination* and *Mediations* can its rituals and symbolic images be decoded and understood. A final intrinsic element is the capacity for both humans and Nature to undergo a (4) *Transmutation* or metamorphosis. Faivre considers two further characteristics as often present but not essential to the meaning of the word, these are (5) *Practise of Concordance* and (6) *Transmission*. Concordance is the tendency to establish similarities between secret doctrines with the hope of attaining an illumination, a gnosis of superior quality; Transmission, the teaching of esoteric truths from master to pupil following an established channel (pp. 10-15).

The first four elements must all be present for given teachings to be classified under the rubric of esotericism. The most significant features of the "intrinsic" characteristics can be identified as follows -

1. *Correspondences*

Faivre suggests that the notion of symbolic and real correspondences existing within the Universe can be traced to the Hermetic notion, "as above so below" and further - "we find again here the ancient idea of microcosm and macrocosm or, if preferred, the principle of universal interdependence" (p. 100). Faivre distinguishes two forms of correspondences within a Universe that does not reveal its secrets easily and must therefore be deciphered or decoded. In this vast "theatre of mirrors an ensemble of hieroglyphics" (p. 18), linkages can be discerned between the human body and the departments of the celestial heavens and also between Nature (the cosmos) and revealed texts. According to this form of inspired concordance, scripture (the Bible for example) and Nature are in harmony, the "knowledge of one aiding in the knowledge of the other" (p. 11).

2. *Living Nature*

The second necessary characteristic of esotericism Faivre designates as, "Living Nature". This is the complex web of sympathies and antipathies existing within its mind or soul and just as humankind must be redeemed, so too must it. Alive in all its parts, this vast organism is seen to have a light or hidden fire traversing through it. He points out that all esoteric thinking calls for Living Nature to be read like a book in order to reveal the beings which live behind its outer countenance. It is a theosophy which "labours over the triad of "God-Humanity-Nature" from whence the theosopher brings forth dramaturgical correspondences, complementary and forever new" (p. 11).

3. *Imagination and Mediation*

These two notions Faivre considers linked and complementary; together they bring about a connection between a higher and lower world. Angelology is important in this context, as is

the "initiate" or the "guru". If the book of Nature is to be read and understood, the creative imagination must be brought into play. It is the imaginative capacity of the human mind that will allow the use of the symbols and images of Nature to be translated. Because of its pre-eminent role, Faivre considers that the imaginative cognition of the initiate has moved beyond the simple restrained psychological faculty between perception and concept as in Kant, to become the "organ of the soul". Through its creative agency, humanity can establish a cognitive and visionary relationship with the macrocosm - a *mundus imaginalis* - the supersensible world of the soul, a place where imagination and memory are blended together as the primary tool for knowledge of the self, world and Myth (p. 13).

4. *Experience of Transmutation*

To move beyond a speculative spirituality, Faivre states that Transmutation must take place. He describes Transmutation or metamorphosis as a term borrowed from alchemy. When the mind shows no separation between knowledge (gnosis) and experience or intellectual activity and the imagination, a "second birth" of illumination occurs (p. 13). As Faivre says - "to know is to be liberated" (p. 21).

1.6 Methodology and Thesis Structure

Standpoint Theory elucidates the proposition that it is not possible to carry out research in the social sciences from the perspective of "the view from nowhere" (Sprague, 2005, p. 41). Theorists argue that what has been termed "insider research" has the advantage of deep insight into the area under study but must ensure that the spectre of subjectivity is appropriately erased (Costley, Elliot & Gibbs, 2010). This appears to have posed some difficulty for anthroposophical researchers who have examined various aspects of Steiner's ideology and educational philosophy. They have invariably presented a united voice, consistently coming to positive conclusions in the area of their selected study. On the other

hand "outsider research" may allow for a more objective perspective but can lack the advantage of the "knower". The present researcher is in the unique position of having had some first-hand insight into the subject under consideration, albeit from the distance of a non-anthroposophical member of a senior college. Booth points out that to be able to ask a question clearly "is two-thirds of the way to getting the question answered" (Booth in Booth, Papaioannou & Sutton, 2012, p. 54). Attendance at seminars and discussions and a multitude of meetings certainly assisted in pointing the researcher in the right direction and in refining the focus questions for the investigation.

A content and descriptive survey of the literature available in the public domain was the primary methodological approach employed to interrogate the nature of Steiner's worldview and the nexus between it and Waldorf education. Fink (2005) defines a literature review as a systematic, explicit and reproductive method for identifying, evaluating and synthesising an existing body of work (p. 3). Given the extensive corpus of material required to answer the research questions the importance of establishing a clearly defined framework was immediately clear to the researcher. The framework intended to sharpen the focus of the research was divided into two distinct but related categories namely, Steiner's writings and lectures from 1894 to 1925 and the work carried out in the Waldorf classroom both in Steiner's lifetime and in the modern period.

With reference to the first category, a considerable body of literature has been translated into English and published with the permission of the Rudolf Steiner Nachlassverwaltung, Dornach Switzerland. In recent years a large number of Steiner's manuscripts and lectures have been made available by the editors of the Rudolf Steiner *Gesamtausgabe*, the catalogue holdings of the Archive Collection held in the *Goetheanum* in Dornach, the Spiritual centre of the Anthroposophical Society. This in effect, has ensured that a carefully selected primary source of information has been made available to researchers. A number of the lectures were

printed from the stenographic reports, uncorrected by Steiner with the authorisation of Frau Marie Steiner, whose estate currently controls the copyright of Steiner's existing work. A very reasonable selection of the translations of this printed work amassed over the last fifty years by a well established Waldorf school library was available to the researcher. To supplement what is considered one of the best school collections in Australia, the researcher also made use of the public library and bookshop of the *Goetheanum*, during attendance at the 2000 Waldorf Teachers Conference. An additional valuable source of material has been provided in electronic form by the Rudolf Steiner Archive. The site contains over two thousand of Steiner's lectures covering the period 1909 to 1924.

It is interesting to note, that in Steiner's life time, the original manuscripts of the private lectures were considered by members to be the imparting of facts from the spiritual world and were sold for their personal use only and in Steiner's estimation -

Whoever reads these privately printed lectures can take them to represent Anthroposophy in the fullest sense.

(Steiner, 1924/1995a, p. vii)

Steiner's observation, that he would have preferred the "spoken word to have remained the spoken word" (1924/1995a, p. vi), since his death has however been disregarded in the interests of disseminating these spiritual insights to both adherents and interested readers alike searching for an understanding of the direction of his ideology.

To further refine the collection of material the following sub-categories were devised –

- The published material relating to Steiner's ideology with respect to Anthroposophy.

- The literature detailing the work of scholars relating to the notion of esotericism in order to draw comparisons with Steiner's ideology.
- Literature relating to the establishment of the first Waldorf School.
- Literature relating to educational theories current at the time of its establishment.
- Literature focusing on the work and research of current anthroposophical educators.
- Literature relating to studies carried out by researchers (non-anthroposophical) into selected aspects of Waldorf education.

In terms of the literature to illustrate best practices in the classroom, the researcher focused on sources that were published under the auspices of recognised anthroposophical bodies such as the Association of Waldorf Schools in America and the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship based in the United Kingdom. Where possible the items selected were firsthand reports from teachers relating to their teaching experiences and practices. Given these were published with the imprimatur of anthroposophical editorial groups with the intention of disseminating examples of good teaching practice they were deemed suitable for inclusion in the research. Reports, conference proceedings, the internet, relevant dissertations, prospectus from Waldorf schools and curriculum documents available online were also used to provide insights into the state of Waldorf schooling at this present time.

General publications from anthroposophists and non-anthroposophists alike were also included in the literature search in order to provide greater depth and clarity. To systematise the corpus of material relating to Steiner's lectures the information was organised, firstly, along chronological lines and secondly, dominating themes were drawn out and studied individually. To achieve a coherent narrative the lecture material required constant

reappraisal, critical evaluation and amendment. As the anthroposophist Masters (1996) observed from his own interpretation of Steiner's writings, to extricate a Steinerian theory from the corpus of his work is "not just a going-through the motions restatement - a quick tidy up after the last occupant, but a fundamental task in itself" (p. 54). The task was doubly arduous from the perspective of a non-anthroposophist and pattern and meaning took some time to emerge from a plethora of seemingly unconnected fragments.

Chapter 1 has outlined the research questions to be answered. Chapter 2 follows the development of Steiner's esoteric worldview foundations. It has been pointed out in research publications that Steiner resisted placing his ideas into a mapped whole (Ahern, 1984, p. 101), and in particular, did not write any systematic account of his Christology (Franklin, 1989, p. 352). The initial purpose of Chapter 2 is therefore to identify the key aspects of Steiner's work that have established him as an important translator of esoteric thought. It is essentially an exploratory attempt to draw a descriptive road-map that signposts the linkages between his philosophy of spiritual consciousness and the Christology he presented to his followers from 1900 onwards. Under the heading "Transversal Pathways" (2.3), Steiner's commitment to a number of esoteric affiliations is reviewed. The overview touches on the areas that are to be examined in greater detail in the following discussion and later chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on an interrogation of the textual material much of which was published during Steiner's lifetime. It examines a cross section of the estimated six thousand public and private lectures he gave throughout Europe, firstly in his capacity as the General Secretary of the quasi-intellectual Theosophical Society, and later as the leader of the anthroposophical community until his death in 1925. Part 3 of Chapter 2 tests Steiner's philosophy, epistemology and theology against the framework of Faivre's definition of esotericism.

At the time Steiner created the pedagogy for the *Waldorfschule* he emphasised that his self-created discipline of Anthroposophy was to be carried into every lesson "in the right manner"

(Steiner in Gabert, 1955, p. 17). It is therefore of some significance to gain a more recent and objective insight into the ideas that provided the foundation-stone on which Steiner built the pedagogy and curriculum of the Waldorf School. Chapter 3 examines the perspectives of modern commentators as to Steiner's contribution to esoteric scholarship. It considers the points of view of those who have embraced Steiner's esoteric teachings and those who have probed into his esoteric *weltanschauung* and have found difficulty in accepting the ideas and arguments relating to it.

The research in Chapter 4 centres on three individual yet interrelated aspects of Steiner's work. It incorporates a review of Steiner's theory of the Threefold Social Organism or *Threefold Commonwealth* which was integral to his worldview. It outlines his ideas for the social renewal of the German State that generated considerable interest amongst the proletariat in the difficult post-war years but which ultimately failed to capture the imagination of those in power. The chapter then explores the reasons as to why Steiner considered it important to introduce a new form of education based on anthroposophical principles in order to advance his social theory. An overview of the outreach of the Waldorf School Movement concludes the chapter.

Chapter 5 examines the practical aspects of the pedagogy described by Steiner as the "art" of education. Initially the dialogue focuses on the pedagogical principles he believed were crucial to awakening the spirit into consciousness leading to the moral qualities that would best serve the social organism. Also incorporated into Part 1 is an examination of the influence of Steiner's worldview on his theory of the development of the moral character of the young child. The investigation then provides a detailed consideration of the curriculum indications Steiner presented to the teachers of the Waldorf School in 1919. In a concluding discussion, Steiner's educational ideology is compared with the theories of other pedagogues associated with child-centred education.

Chapter 6 moves to modern times. With reference to selected aspects of the pedagogy and curriculum it focuses on the issue as to how teachers in the modern classroom from Kindergarten to Class VIII maintain the integrity and purpose of Steiner's original conception of Waldorf education. The discussion focuses on two questions namely - are the original principles laid down by Steiner nearly a century ago still considered fundamental to teaching practice and how does the curriculum in a modern setting perpetuate a pedagogy based on the esoteric worldview of its creator? Recent studies have called into question some of the foundational aspects of Waldorf or Steiner education and these are briefly considered.

Chapter 7 concludes the study. It re-examines the research questions and addresses the issues raised in the outline of the Rationale for the Research. The chapter also points the way to possible future areas of investigation required to build on the findings this investigative research has brought to light.

CHAPTER 2

IN SEARCH OF THE STONE OF LOVE -

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RUDOLF STEINER'S ESOTERIC WORLDVIEW (*Weltanschauung*)

2.1 Introduction

Today the translated transcripts of many of Steiner's lectures provide fertile ground for those seeking to understand the background to the establishment of the Waldorf School and the principles which undergird his educational theories. Over the last decade, attempts to deconstruct the elements of his esoteric *weltanschauung* and place them in a contemporary framework have given rise to a large number of commentaries, reviews and interpretations of his work. Ullrich (1994/2000) makes the astute observation that most are uncritical identifications with Steiner's writings. He argues that when non-anthroposophists report on Steiner's esoteric ideas, polemic and sweeping criticisms have ensued. In Ullrich's opinion there appears to be "no golden mean in the appraisal of Steiner's conceptual world" (p. 1).

Of singular importance to any discussion of Steiner's "conceptual world" is an appreciation that the philosophical and theological ideas he spent his life expounding were a testament to his belief that he did so in the service of his two esoteric masters - the Christ Spirit and His messenger Christian Rose Cross (Gloeckler, 2001, p. 12). Franklin (1989), in his forensic investigation of Steiner's Christian teachings with respect to the Masonic tradition, points out that it was undoubtedly Steiner's mission as presented in his autobiography *Mein Lebensgang* (My Life) to mediate a renewal of Christianity in the face of the reduction of Protestantism to an intellectualised study of the Bible and the hardening of Catholic dogma under Pius IX. He further claims that Steiner was justified in the view that a vast gulf had opened up between the Christian experience of Harnack and Renan and the mystical German tradition of Eckhart,

Boehme, Siebmacher, and Angelus Silesius, thereby bringing to an end nearly all that had been "great and fair" in an earlier epoch (p. xix).

Unequivocally, the narrative that accompanies Steiner's own theological revelations draws from ancient theories and philosophies long surpassed by modern scholarship, and this is essentially the nub of Steiner's argument. Mankind has lost not only its spiritual connectivity but also the true meaning of Christianity itself. Understandably, what the poet Owen Barfield (1966) favourably describes in his volume *Romanticism Come of Age* as a Christocentric path that will join all men in fellowship and communion (p. 240) appears to the uninitiated eye to be a weaving together of a number of unwieldy strands of pre-existing occult traditions. The roots of these traditions are to be found in Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, a mystical Christianity and a Hermetic Nature-philosophy. On the other hand, for the Steiner apologist, his theories may indeed appear "romantic" in the best sense of the word, but they are the result of a natural clairvoyance and intensive spiritual research which have led to the revealing of an extensive corpus of occult wisdom-teachings. This knowledge they believe, has given rise to an esoteric Christian mission suitable for the modern age (Franklin, 1989; Querido, 1995).

As commented in Chapter 1 there is also an underlying political element to be discerned in Steiner's worldview. At the heart of his social philosophy was the belief that a universal brotherhood would ensue when proper attention was given to the voice of the gods in inner consciousness. Steiner's utopian ideal of the *Threefold Commonwealth of Man* and its relationship to Waldorf schooling will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Any researcher striving to create a coherent understanding of Steiner's work would agree that the whole is more important than the sum of its parts, and a reductionist approach must necessarily detract from the grandeur of his worldview. Chapter 2 therefore sets out to be a

broad brush exploration of the three key aspects of Steiner's ideology and makes no claim to completeness. It attempts to peel away the layers of Steiner's *weltanschauung* which have given rise to an attendant philosophy and theology, perceived to have a bearing on Waldorf pedagogy. The following pages will trace as far as practicable and relevant, Steiner's esoteric affiliations and the corresponding evolution of the complex and intricate mental biography he claimed to derive from his spiritually guided metaphysical studies spanning a period of over thirty years. In an effort to bring clarity, the research material is summarised into three parts -

- * Part 1 traces the esoteric affiliations Steiner established between the years 1900 and 1924. It also makes reference to the development of his ideas over this period.
- * Part 2 interrogates the literature in order to determine the formative principles relating to Steiner's *weltanschauung* that were foundational to his esoteric Christian mission.
- * Part 3 examines Steiner's concept of the anthroposophical *weltanschauung* within the framework of Faivre's definition of esoteric scholarship.

Part 1

2.2 Developing the "Power of the Peculiar Eye"

2.2.1 Subtle Influences

The biography of the young Rudolf Joseph Lorenz Steiner serves to mark the beginning of the path to what would become a fascinating and complex lifetime of esoteric scholarship.

Steiner was born on February 27th 1861 in the region of Donji Kraljevec, Upper Austria (now Croatia). His earliest years were spent in the villages situated on the Leytha, on the borders of Styria, the Carpathians and Hungary (Schure, 1910/1960, p. 2) - a mountainous and secluded region little changed from the Middle-Ages (Moore, 1997, p. 1). During his childhood he was reportedly gifted with the ability of "seeing" into souls made transparent,

which was the harbinger of the crystalline insights that would later enable him to revision the work of the ancient esoteric scholars and inspire his pupils to follow his meditative path of Anthroposophy. Brought up in the Austrian Roman Catholic tradition (Franklin, 1989, p. 337) he attended several schools as a consequence of his father's peripatetic occupation as a worker for the Austrian Railways and at onetime was homeschooled. By the age of fifteen years Steiner's curiosity relating to the world around him was purportedly fostered by the village herbalist who knew Nature's "secret virtues" and could observe the elemental beings behind the existence of the plant. As an adult, Steiner would describe this important influence in his early life as a messenger of the Masters (Schure, 1910/1960, p. 4).

In 1879, at the age of nineteen, Steiner attended the *Technische Hochschule* in Vienna where he concentrated on natural sciences, history and philosophy with the intention of becoming a pedagogue. As an undergraduate he became involved in radical nationalist student organisations and wrote extensively for the pan-German press between 1882 and 1891 (Staudenmaier, 2009, p. 1) which was a portent of his deep interest in German politics in later years. Most significantly, this was the time he met the individual called the "Master" (also a herbalist), reportedly a Secret Fellow in the Rosicrucian Brotherhood of the self-sacrificing Masters (Franklin, 1989, p. 265). Steiner's journey into the arcane world of the mystical and esoteric had begun (Appendix I).

Undoubtedly the most enduring influence on Steiner's early years of creative thinking were the little known, philosophical and scientific ideas of Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749-1832). As a philosopher of Nature, Goethe ruminated on the ancient concept of the interconnectedness of all things, enjoying the alchemists' "power of the peculiar eye" and, through an exact sensuous imagination, saw into the world Kant had rejected (Roszak, nd, p. 4). Using a phenomenological approach, the respectful student of Goethean science could "look into" Nature, perceive the spiritual force therein, and bring to light the "open secrets" of

the archetypal and formative principles of the cosmos, thereby removing the restrictions imposed by the scientific materialism of Hobbes (1588-1679) and the strict empiricism of Locke (1632-1704). In 1883, while still a student at the *Technische Hochschule*, Steiner assumed the role of the alchemist's apprentice. In that year, the teacher trainee was invited to edit the two hundred and twenty one volumes of Goethe's scientific works (Lackman, 2007, p. 56).

For the next fifteen years, Steiner was immersed in Goethe's metaphysical, sacramental visions. Steiner's autobiographical account of his years in Vienna, 1879-1890 and subsequently in Weimar, 1890-1897, reflected an appreciative interest in Goethe's ideas which confirmed his own developing epistemology. The first volume of the cumbersome task appeared in 1883, the second a year later, the third in 1890. The fourth volume was not completed until 1897. At the conclusion of his professional involvement he presented a highly regarded, critical elucidation of Goethe's scientific writings for publication in Joseph Kuerschner's series *Deutscher Nationalliteratur* and for the definitive Weimar "*Sophia*" edition of Goethe's complete work (Franklin, 1989, p. 68).

In 1886, Steiner turned aside from his editorial task to complete a personal interpretation of Goethe's work which appeared under the title, *A Theory of Knowledge Based on Goethe's World Conception* (1886/1968a). In 1891, Steiner presented his doctoral thesis developing and elucidating Goethe's philosophical interpretation of the natural world and critiquing the ideas of Fichte's transcendental science to a sympathetic Platonist professor at the University of Rostock. *Truth and Knowledge* based on its arguments appeared in the following year. Shortly thereafter, his seminal work *The Philosophy of Freedom - Basic Lines of Modern Philosophy* (1894) was published. As a distillation of his thesis, this slim volume encapsulated a theoretical interpretation of the intellectual self-perception of thought and the means to acquire its most precious element, the freedom of a moral, spiritual consciousness.

In later publications the volume was retitled to more clearly indicate its purpose and intent - *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* and also *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*. The ideas expressed therein bore an identifiable resemblance to the metaphysical Nature-philosophy current in Germany at the turn of the nineteenth century. It is without doubt that the work of the Romantic Idealists, Hegel (1770-1831) and Schelling (1775-1854) he had studied intensively in his youth (Schure, 1910/1960, p. 5) provided him with substantial guidance in the creation of his mystical epistemology and ontology. Through his reading of Schiller (1795-1805), Steiner claimed to have attained a spiritual perception as "exact as mathematics" (Webb, 1976, p. 62). The work of Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Haeckel (1834-1919) was critically examined from this perspective.

For Steiner, Goethe was the Nature-philosopher in whom "the truths of Rosicrucianism lit up in outstanding grandeur" (1907b/nd, p. 1). Goethe's metaphysical science provided him with both inspiration and confirmation of an epistemology and ontology that repudiated the terrestrial celestial dichotomy and saw human freewill as an outcome of unification with a living, macrocosmic Universe - "a great living being perpetually inhaling and exhaling moving towards a higher organic unity" (Roszak, nd, p. 20). In his documentation of Goethe's ideas, Steiner acknowledged the accord between the worldview of the Romantic poet and his own -

Thus the development of my view of the world has proceeded for years parallel with the study of Goethe, and I have never found a contradiction in principle between my fundamental conceptions and Goethe's scientific activity. If I have succeeded at least partially, first in so developing my standpoint that it comes to life in others, and secondly in bringing about the conviction that this standpoint is really that of Goethe, I shall consider that my task has been achieved.

(Steiner, nd/1950a, p. 98)

When Goethe stopped short of recognising the existence of a spiritual archetype operating in human consciousness (Steiner, 1921/2005), the work of other researchers, particularly those of the Renaissance, served to bolster Steiner's clairvoyant spiritual insights. The theologian Swedenborg (1688-1772), who Steiner considered a profound thinker and an important scholar, provided validation for his belief in an elaborate and mutual conjunction between the natural and the spiritual worlds in which earthly man lived inwardly and unconsciously. Both seers embraced the Hermetic theory of man as a microcosm, a "little world" of the macrocosm but only Steiner came to claim that it was possible to "see" his Christic Ego as an object in the realm of higher consciousness (Williams-Hogan, 1998, pp. 221, 250). His belief in planetary life chimed with the notions of Carl du Prel (1833-1899), the influential German theoretician of spiritism. The writings of Novalis (1772-1801) proved central to Steiner's history of Christianity, and the visions of the Russian sophiologist, Vladimir Soloviev (1853-1900), reinforced the central role he attributed to the Heavenly and Divine Sophia in the evolution of human thinking. Published lectures often reflected an accord with the Hermetic writings of Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) and Jakob Böehme (1575-1624). Their model of the Universe and the notion of the correspondence between the spirit and matter were not dissimilar to Steiner's own. Steiner's long years of correspondence with the biologist Ernst Haeckel were indicative of an abiding interest in the theory of philosophical Monism, the "oneness" of man and Nature.

At the turn of the century, Steiner joined his contemporaries on the stage of the German occult movement. By this time, his own maturing "peculiar eye" had enabled him to accumulate an exhaustive body of esoteric knowledge which melded together a Goethean inspired philosophy, a rediscovered Rosicrucian *gnosis* and an embryonic vision of a mystical Christology. He had also created the spiritual discipline he entitled "Anthroposophy" or Spiritual Science which offered the pupil a path of initiation into a state of "higher knowledge" or cognition beyond the confines of ordinary consciousness. Together, they each

represented the theological and practical manifestations of a *weltanschauung* grounded in the ideas set forth in *The Philosophy of Freedom* which are discussed in section 2.4.

2.3 Transversal Pathways

2.3.1 Laying the Foundations

The social and political milieu Steiner stepped out into at the conclusion of his studies at the *Technische Hochschule* in 1884 at the age of twenty-three, was a world of change and challenge. The final quarter of the nineteenth century was for Germany a time of industrial expansion and large-scale migration from the rural areas to the cities. This in turn gave rise to a number of social and political subcultures and diverse, organised movements. A growing public disquiet at economic inequality, scientific rationalism and rapid industrialisation which dismantled traditional ways of life was palliated by a revival of interest in occultism and spiritualism (Baker, 2000, pp. 36, 37). Interest in Theosophy increased with the establishment of the German Theosophical Society in Berlin in 1886 as a branch of the Theosophical Brotherhood in America. Theosophy, influential in both Germany and Austria, fitted well with the doctrine of *Lebensreform*, the late Romantic Movement that emphasised various alternative lifestyles, herbal medicine and rural communes (Katz, 2005, p. 173). Steiner was part of this milieu for nigh on twenty years before, at the age of forty, following a time of struggle and combat arising from his psychic "gifts" (Schuré, 1910/1960, p. 7), he found his spiritual insights and outlook on the world to be marginally compatible with those of the intellectual, quasi-religious Theosophists.

In the intervening years, Steiner honed the ideas that ultimately precipitated a decade long association with them. Between 1888 and 1890 he edited the Viennese literary magazine the *Deutsche Wochenschrift*. In 1890 he moved to Weimar where he worked unremunerated on cataloguing Goethe's scientific writings (as noted) supporting himself through teaching and private tutoring. Along with his work on Goethe he edited complete editions of

Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and the Romantic novelist, Jean Paul (1763-1825). In 1894 he met Haeckel and began a correspondence with him which survived well into the twentieth century. He read the works of Nietzsche and in 1895 published *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Fighter Against His Time*. With his move to Berlin in 1897 came the job of editor of the Berlin periodical the *Magazin für Literatur*. In this heady intellectual atmosphere he encountered writers, poets, playwrights and social thinkers, the avant-garde Berliners who were intent on questioning the changing world order (Lackman, 2007, pp. 82-109). The ideas he presented to the occult-mystical circle *Die Kommende* (The Coming Day) were in support of their sentiments against the perceived nihilistic consequences of positivism, materialism and "scientism" in modern thought - in general, "a critique against contemporary worldviews and theories of knowledge" (Sumser, 1994, p. 499).

By the early 1900s Steiner influence in the circle of free-thinkers was such that he was called on to lecture to the members of the *Giordano Bruno Bund* inclined to Haeckel's Monist ideology. The ideas Steiner had laid out a decade earlier in *The Philosophy of Freedom* fitted with the natural, organic and holistic notions of the Monists. One of his earliest lectures to the members of the League was on the relationship between *Monism and Theosophy* (Webb, 1976, p. 66). Undoubtedly their desire to facilitate Bruno's Hermeticism and modify Christian teachings by placing a greater emphasis on a conscious reintegration with Nature, struck a chord. Steiner's developing insights into a new and radical form of Christianity, which argued for an enhanced psychic unity between God and man, purportedly encouraged many Monists to follow his teachings (Kay, 2012, np).

In 1902 Steiner moved from occasional guest speaker to the members of the Berlin Theosophical Library on matters relating to his spiritual epistemology to the position of the General Secretary of the Berlin Lodge of the London based Adyar Theosophical Society. Founded by the psychic Madame Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) and Henry Steel Olcott

(1832-1907), its aims and objectives, if not its Eastern philosophy, were reflective of Steiner's own. The 1880 *Bombay Principles Rules and By-Laws* outlined the guiding principles Steiner inherited and ably perpetuated for the decade of his stewardship. In summary these were -

- (a) To keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions.
- (b) To oppose and counteract bigotry in every form whether as an intolerant religious sectarianism or belief in miracles or anything supernatural.
- (c) To promote a feeling of brotherhood among nations.
- (d) To seek to obtain knowledge of all the laws of Nature and aid in diffusing it; and especially to encourage those laws so termed the Occult Sciences.
- (e) To gather for the Society's library and put into written forms correct information upon the various philosophies, traditions and legends, and disseminate the same.
- (f) To promote in every practical way the spread of non-sectarian education in countries where needed.
- (g) Finally and chiefly, to encourage and assist the Individual Fellows in self-improvement, intellectual moral and spiritual (Franklin, 1989, p. 205).

In October 1902, Steiner was inducted into the Esoteric School, the inner sanctum of the Theosophical Society. In the same year he represented the society at the Theosophical Conference in London. In 1904 he was granted his own Esoteric School. From this vantage point, Steiner continued to support the oriental mysticism of the Theosophists, at the same time building up the Esoteric School along the lines of Craft Masonry, an affiliation he had

purportedly first encountered through the Brothers of Light and the rejuvenated Berlin, Rosicrucian Illuminati Order (Lombard, nd, p. 3). In 1907, as recognition that his teachings had begun to diverge significantly from the "ancient wisdom" emanating from the Indian roots of the Theosophists, he was accorded even greater autonomy and appointed Deputy Grand Master of the Masonic cult and Rites of the Mysteria Mystica Aeterna Lodge. With the incorporation of the objectives of the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis-Misraim to apply the Royal Art to make men free and sovereign masters of themselves, Steiner found purpose and direction for his growing mystical insights (Koenig, nd, p. 2).

Despite a contentious connection to the controversial Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), one of the higher grades of the Masonic Brotherhood associated with a ritualistic, hierarchical form of esotericism (Ahern, 1984, p. 93), the Lodge afforded Steiner the opportunity to expand his own form of a Christianised esotericism. During the early years in the position of General Secretary of the Theosophical Society, Steiner's visionary insights displayed a wide reach. He lectured extensively on the esoteric doctrines of Madame Blavatsky's Tibetan Mahatmas, Koot Humi and Morya, as well as his own "Masters", Christ and Christian Rosenkreutz (Franklin, 1989, p. 239). To advance the intellectual, moral and spiritual self-improvement of the Fellows, in the theosophical journal *Lucifer-Gnosis*, he related in serial form the steps to the introspective self-discipline of Anthroposophy through whose practices the pupil would be led to a firsthand apprehension of the "Higher-self" in inner consciousness. These were later published as *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment, Guidelines on Developing Supersensible Perception* (1909-1910/1969b). This publication joined two other important introductory texts which were essential to an understanding of his esoteric revelations *Theosophy an Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man* (1904/1971b) and its companion volume *Occult Science* (1910/1972a).

Marie Steiner's observations in her preface to the lecture, *Earthly and Cosmic Man* (1911b/nd), brought into sharp focus that Steiner's ideas were a re-visioning of a pre-existing "store of spiritual knowledge". They also served to presage the troublesome tension that eventually developed between the oriental spiritual leanings of the Theosophists and Steiner's Christian *weltanschauung* -

The lectures leading to the request that he should become the leader of this Movement in Germany were those on *Mysticism at the Dawn of Modern Spiritual Life*, and *Christianity as Mystical Fact*. Therewith, the impulse which he was to bring to the Movement had been clearly indicated, and he was assured of absolute freedom to teach as he would. He himself acted in line with the spirit of true occultists of all ages who make a link with the store of spiritual knowledge already existing in order to preserve its life and lead it forward. He still saw hope of being able, through the new impulse, to rescue the Theosophical Society from lapsing into the rigidity of dogma, to imbue it with fresh forces and enrich its very defective understanding of the Mysteries of Christianity.

(Steiner, 1911b/nd, p. 1)

In the lecture series cited, Steiner made it clear that Anthroposophy was to be known as a discipline dedicated to esoteric Christianity and a new vision of the coming of Christ as a summary recapitulation and revelation of the ancient Mystery Schools of Greece and Egypt. The Mysteries Schools, which taught the pupil to appreciate the spiritual forces behind the world of matter (Wilkinson, 1994a, p. 49), were perceived by Steiner to be the "seed" from which true Christianity had grown and it would be through the modern Mysteries of his Rosicrucian Christian path that these truths would be rekindled (1914/1985a).

The acknowledged well-spring from which Steiner's spiritual vision and authority flowed was the cosmology and teachings of Christian Rosenkreutz (1378-1484), the incarnation of the disciple John, and, some four hundred years later, the eponymous founder of the Rosicrucian

Movement. According to Steiner's teachings relating to the life of this lofty spiritual individual, Rosenkreutz had been made vessel of the Holy Spirit at the death of Christ and had become "the recipient of the spiritual wisdom of the world" (1911a/nd, p. 3) enlightened through the power of the Divine Sophia. From 1905 onwards, Steiner demonstrated his unswerving commitment to the Wisdom School of Christian Rosenkreutz. In 1906 he adopted Comte de St Germain, purportedly the eighteenth century incarnation of Rosenkreutz, as the Rosicrucian Master of his Esoteric School (Franklin, 1989, p. 241). The mission of St Germain to introduce the knowledge of the Word, the spiritual *Logos*, into the stream of occult history (Black, 2007, p. 362) thenceforward became the exclusive purpose of the Lodge. Steiner's Esoteric School remained independent of the London Theosophical Society until the outbreak of War in 1914. In 1923 it was reborn as the First Class School of Spiritual Science.

In his lecture entitled *The Path of Knowledge and its Stages: The Rosicrucian Spiritual Path* (1905/1982b), Steiner reiterated his claim that through his guidance the task of the Theosophical Society was to bring to the outer world the teachings of Rosenkreutz which, in the current Epoch, represented for Europeans the only "right path to spiritual truths" (p. 135). Following the lecture, Steiner introduced the Theosophists to the Rosicrucian Study, the seven steps that would provide the faithful pupil with a deeper understanding of the teachings of esoteric Christianity. At the Congress of the Federation of the European Sections of the Theosophical Society, held in Munich at Whitsun 1907, Steiner aligned himself formally with Rosicrucianism. In the same year, speaking on the Theosophical content of Rosicrucianism, Steiner indicated that occult truths of Rosicrucianism would become the practical wisdom arising from a unity of art, science and religion that would stream not only into the head and the heart but also the hands of its disciples thereby enabling them to work for the "well being of humanity" (1907b/nd, p. 4). By reinterpreting the teachings of Rosenkreutz, Steiner

claimed that the invisible threads which had guided Europeans since the fourteenth century had once again become the fulcrum of western esotericism -

About the introduction of the appropriate esotericism of the West, there can again be but one view - that this can only be the Rosicrucian-Christian, for this has given birth to Western life and through its loss mankind would deny the earth its meaning and purpose. Only in this esotericism can blossom the harmony of science and religion.

(Steiner in McDermott, 1984, p. 22)

Such comments caused Annie Besant, the active head of the Theosophical Society (London) to observe, "he teaches the Christian Rosicrucian way, and this is very helpful to some, but it is different to ours" (Besant in Weber, 2004, p. 19). As the divide between the quasi-theological basis of Rosicrucian Christianity and Theosophy widened, Steiner increased his efforts to correct the defective understanding of the Mysteries of Christianity of the latter. A shift in emphasis away from Theosophy's syncretistic Eastern philosophy, opting instead for the Resurrection of Christ as the turning point for the whole evolution of mankind back towards its spiritual roots, was a key theme of Steiner's lectures between 1907 and 1914. Steiner's foundational belief that the Christ was not one of many avatars (incarnations) or arhats (Master teachers) but the single source of knowledge through whose agency theosophia (wisdom of God) could become anthroposophia (wisdom of man) substantially distanced him from many of his theosophical peers. In a 1908 lecture *The Bible and Wisdom* (1908/1986d), Steiner made the bold claim that Spiritual Science "apart from anything else" would be a "reconquest" of the Bible (p. 32). Following an investigation of Blavatsky's *Akasha Chronicles* Steiner would later embark upon the writing of a Fifth Gospel. He considered it to be the beginning of a Gospel appropriate to the day and age that would only come to be "fully written" in the future (Querido, 1995, p. xx).

An authoritative series of lectures relating to aspects of the Bible and Rosicrucian Initiation was a considered response to the belief of the Theosophists that the appearance of the great avatar Maitreya Buddha was imminent in human form (Franklin, 1989, p. 355). The first course of lectures was on St John, given in Munich (1906) and Basel (1907). In 1908, Steiner gave a longer course of twelve lectures in Hamburg on *The Apocalypse of St John* (1908/1986c) in which he provided a detailed insight into his interpretation of the Second Coming. In the last lecture of the cycle *The Nature of the Virgin Sophia and the Holy Spirit*, Steiner made a definite and important statement which was to have significant implications for the task of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science -

The mission of the Spiritual Science Movement is to prepare those who have the will to allow themselves to be prepared for the return of the Christ upon earth. This is the cosmo - historical significance of Spiritual Science, to prepare mankind and to keep its eyes open for the time when the Christ will appear again actively among men in the sixth cultural epoch.

(Steiner, 1908/1986c, p. 182)

From 1911 to 1912 Steiner lectured throughout the European centres in which the Theosophical Lodges were active, reinforcing to his audiences the tasks and deeds of Christian Rosenkreutz and the increasing manifestation of the living reality of the Christ. In contradiction to the Theosophist's belief, Steiner argued that the Christ, the archetypal Ego of humanity, was drawing closer in a "life- filled spirit form" of the etheric but would not "actively" appear again in human consciousness until a future Epoch (1910/1971c, p. 48). This notion of the Second Coming in psychic form, so central to Steiner's own clairvoyant understanding of the Mysteries of Christianity, ultimately precipitated his exclusion from the Theosophical Society. For the Theosophists, the reappearance of a Divine teacher was not in the clouds, but in the youthful bodily form of the Indian, Jiddu Krishnamurti. In 1911, the overarching authority of the theosophical theory prevailed and Krishnamurti was installed,

albeit briefly, as the worldly incarnation of Maitreya Buddha, or "Christ" initiate in theosophical parlance.

The closing months of 1912 saw Steiner dissolve his formal association with the Theosophists. In 1913, his followers who were similarly disaffected with the notion of Jiddu Krishnamurti as the new Christ, established the Anthroposophical Society in Munich. Steiner affirmed that the Society and those who had joined it would perpetuate a modern Rosicrucian discipline - an inward Christ Movement seeking the way of the truth. Steiner further claimed it would be the beginning of an esoteric Christian mission dedicated to spreading Spiritual Science "all over the world" (Steiner in Franklin, 1989, p. 360). Referring to himself as "the representative of humanity" (Treher, 1966, p. 47), Steiner spent the remainder of his life serving the mission. By the time of his death in 1925 he had given some six thousand lectures in the pursuit of the cause.

During the first General Meeting of the Anthroposophical Society in Berlin in 1913 Steiner gave a clear indication of the direction his Christ Movement would take. He defined his work as a new revelation of the being of the Cosmic Sophia, the divine feminine counterpart of the Christ Spirit (Koulis, 2006, np). Under the guidance of her daughter and handmaiden *Anthroposophia*, the newly formed society would work to reclaim the true meaning of Christianity - a meaning that would sweep away the doubts that had come in the train of external science (1911/1973). Given the increasing breadth of Steiner's spiritual vision it was understandable that he would claim -

By way of our stream it is possible to penetrate into true Rosicrucianism, but our way must not be designated as "Rosicrucianism" because our stream encompasses a far broader realm than that of Rosicrucians, namely the whole of Anthroposophy.

(Steiner in Allen 1968, p. 455)

The stated Bombay Principle to "promote a feeling of brotherhood among nations" was echoed by Steiner in three articles published in *Lucifer-Gnosis* between 1905 and 1906. In *Anthroposophy and the Social Question* (1905-1906/1958a) he made clear the connection between Anthroposophy and social issues drawing the attention of his followers to the fact that by training the eye in the direction of the spiritual world and sharpening men's understanding of social requirements "right conduct" would ensue (p. 5). The events of World War I served to reinforce Steiner's contention of the need for a new anthroposophical impetus in human affairs. During the closing stages of the war Steiner entered the difficult arena of German politics to press forward his ideas for social and political rehabilitation. Convinced of the occult causes of the social chaos that preceded Germany's defeat, Steiner proposed the formation of a new social order. In the *Threefold Commonwealth* spiritual and cultural life would be permitted to flourish unhindered. Education and religion would focus on allowing the people of Middle Europe to complete their karmic destiny "to ascend the ladder of Spiritual Knowledge" (1920/1980a, p. 20) thereby laying the foundations for loving, socially conscious communities. At the same time, the Anthroposophical Movement would play a central role as a negotiating and equalising force in the new world order. In 1919, in a practical effort to put in place the principles he believed would halt the moral and social decline of the German people, Steiner attempted to become a member of the government in Württemberg (Tautz, 1982, pp. 4, 10). Although Steiner continued giving public lectures until 1923, and his ideas inspired a short-lived Threefold Commonwealth League, by late 1919 interest in Steiner's vision was largely confined to fellow anthroposophists. One such person was Emil Molt, the driving force behind the establishment of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Factory School.

While the war years curtailed Steiner's intensive program of lectures, particularly in the Lodges outside Germany, anthroposophists were active in building a centre to serve as the cultural and spiritual heart of the new movement. In 1916, in Dornach, Switzerland, the

Johannes-Bau, the theatre and auditorium for the production of Steiner's Mystery plays, took shape. Reduced to ashes by an unknown arsonist in 1922, its fate, according to Steiner, echoed that of the Temple of Ephesus (1923/1950c, p. 138), the sacred place where the hierophants had taught the Mysteries of Mother Earth (Black, 2007, p. 203). Rebuilt initially under his guidance, it was reopened as the *Goetheanum* (refer Plate 1, p. 350) in 1928. Three thousand anthroposophists from twenty three countries attended its opening (New York Times, September 30th 1928, p. 24).

In 1923, in order to counteract the internal schisms that had arisen, Steiner united all European Anthroposophical Lodges under the umbrella of the Anthroposophical Society centred on the *Goetheanum*. The Esoteric School incorporated into it was transformed into the Free University of Hermeticism (Koenig, nd., p. 5) otherwise known as the Free High School of Spiritual Science. At the inaugural meeting Steiner dedicated the work that would be carried out within its circles to the Angelic *Michael*, the esoteric teacher of the renewal of the Christ/Sophia wisdom (1918/1961a) and brother of *Anthroposophia*. In Steiner's interpretation of Rosicrucian angelology, the Archangel *Michael*, Prince of the Sun, the successor of Gabriel and Spirit of the Moon, had come to mediate in the task of guiding mankind to find the path to the transcendent Absolute. The Anthroposophical Society, newly constituted in 1923, was therefore to be seen as the vehicle through which he could carry out his earthly mission. In Steiner's prophetic words -

Christ's kingdom ... will come to pass when mankind truly comprehends the leadership of Michael. Nor is true comprehension proved in any other way than by the quest I have now indicated - the quest of spiritual illumination and of human, Christ-filled love.

(Steiner in Franklin, 1989, p. 371)

The First Class School of Spiritual Science represented an inner circle where members were to be trained in the attainment of advanced spiritual knowledge.

In a series of lectures given the year before his death, Steiner spoke on the topics of Reincarnation and karmic relationships which had significant implications for the Society. In earlier discourses with the Theosophists Steiner had affirmed that the Rosicrucian Brotherhood was the "source, the origin of all other brotherhoods" that had been absorbed into European culture (Steiner in Weber, 2005, p. 19). The particular point Steiner conveyed in his later lectures was that Anthroposophical Movement and its followers was the reincarnation, literally understood, of earlier ideal communities including the philosophical circle in Alexandria both before and after Christ, the Manichean communities, the Aristotelian philosophers of the School of Chartres and the Rosicrucians of the seventeenth century (Franklin, 1989, p. 47). In keeping with his notion of history as purposeful journey through Epochs of time (refer 2.5.5), he considered himself and his followers to be a reincarnated group of souls striving towards spiritual illumination, karmically joined together in their commitment to establish the *Threefold Commonwealth of Man*, the ideal social form destined to facilitate the evolutionary purpose of the cosmos.

The philosophical foundations that underpin the Initiation Science of Anthroposophy or the Science of the Spirit are now presented in Part 2.

Part 2

2.4 The Building Blocks of Steiner's Esoteric Christian Mission

2.4.1 The Philosophical Foundations of Steiner's Worldview

With the publication of *The Philosophy of Freedom* in 1894, Steiner laid the foundations on which the results of all his subsequent spiritual research and its findings would come to rest. Its central purpose was to demonstrate that prior to entry upon spiritual experience "a

knowledge of the Spiritual World" was justified (1894/1949, p. xv). The first part of the slim volume represented a critical analysis of competing philosophical worldviews relating to spirit and consciousness. The second part explicated a theory of moral ideation that would lead the thinker to a state of "pure" thinking corresponding with the spiritual archetype, the Universal Mind of the All-One Being who in later years would come to be known by Steiner in its true character as the World Spirit, the World Soul and the Christ Spirit. This early work thus represented Steiner's own scholarly metaphysical exposition of the relationship between the creative spiritual world-whole and human consciousness, the vehicle through which it would come to comprehend in increasing measure its earthly existence.

The epistemological and ontological propositions disclosed therein were largely at odds with the positivism and scepticism of a modernising world. In Steiner's ideological schema, Nature (the cosmos) was to be seen as a reflection of the Universal Mind in which spirit and matter were twin poles of the world continuum. For Steiner, the Cartesian split between them had stilled the once revealing truths of art, science and religion as connection with the cosmic whole was broken not in reality but only through human perception (p. 199). Steiner's endorsement of the venerable notion that the universal cosmic processes of the living organism of the World Spirit would find their greatest fulfilment in the consciousness of the human mind reflected a metaphysical interpretation of Goetheanism more so than the subjective Idealism of the German philosophers. The proposition that the World Spirit manifested itself in the realm of human thinking, thereby enabling it to participate in the eternal creative process of the cosmos, significantly distanced Steiner from the accepted Idealist tradition. As opposed to the Fichte tradition, Steiner's Idealism located the *Idea*, the ideal organic entelechy, not in the pure reason of the practical Ego or "I" but in the spiritual-physical world continuum and, as opposed to Spinoza and Schelling, the *Idea* would manifest itself out of "free human creativity, albeit in accordance with the laws of nature" (Franklin, 1989, p. 80).

In the opening chapters, Steiner identified the prevailing epistemological theories relating to the advancement of human knowledge which he considered failed to comprehend the metaphysical and teleological nexus between the Self and World. By Steiner's reckoning, Spiritualism, by basing all that was worthwhile in the world on the autonomous goodwill, failed to penetrate through the world of *Ideas* to the spiritual realm. As such, it was compelled to remain fixed with its worldview in the circle of activity of the Ego "as if were bewitched". Similarly, theories which espoused the two-world theory of Dualism, struggled in vain to reconcile Spirit and Matter or Thinking and Appearance, while the strict empiricism of the Materialists, such as Haeckel, had turned attention away from the Ego with an indefinite shadowy something, never able to offer a satisfactory explanation of the world (pp. 13-16).

In the quest to peer into the beyond and to expand man's understanding of the world even Fichte, the "extreme spiritualist", denied to Matter an independent existence by regarding it merely as a product of the Ego, thereby rejecting the essential homogeneity of man's selfhood with a spiritual, universal whole. In Steiner's estimation, Fichte had advanced the primacy of Self by attempting to deduce the whole edifice of the world from man's Ego individuality. In asserting that the phenomenal world was merely a creation of the Ego, Steiner claimed he had accomplished only "a magnificent thought-picture of the world without any empirical content" (p. 15). Cosmic Nature, once understood by the ancient philosophers as the progenetrix of man and the world and active in the human psyche had fallen silent, submerged by the positivist, non-metaphysical traditions of new worldviews.

In Steiner's opinion, reductionist science and in particular neo-Kantian philosophy, by setting principled limits to what the mind could know, thereby divorcing it from the purposive and ethical intellect and will of its creator, had significant implications for man's moral freedom. In Steiner's theorising, man, while conscious of motives and desires, was ignorant of the

causes by which they were determined. This observation gave rise to a complex, existential question - Was man, divorced from the Universal Reason of the spiritual laws, morally free, or were his thoughts and actions compelled by the iron necessity of natural laws? (p. 1). In other words, had the conscience come to labour under the limitations imposed by the reality and logic of the "natural man" unrefined by the equalising force of a Higher Ego?

In Steiner's epistemology, the problem and solution lay with the rise of rational intellectual thinking. By restricting itself to the shadows of a subjective sense-perceptive physicality, the moral life was confined to subconscious and impersonal vectors which allowed the eternal rhythm of natural causality of cause and effect to prevail. In order to perceive "the cords and ropes by which the fundamental forces of the cosmos keep turning the wheel of our life" (p. 199) human consciousness would therefore need to be reintegrated into the world continuum. Paraphrasing Goethe, Steiner encapsulated the resolution to the dilemma in the following terms -

It is we ourselves, who break away from the bosom of Nature and contrast ourselves as "I" with the "World". Goethe has given classic expression to this in his essay *Nature* although his manner may at first sight be considered quite unscientific: "Living in the midst of her (Nature) we are strangers to her. Ceaselessly she speaks to us, yet betrays none of her secrets". But Goethe knows the reverse side too: "Mankind is all in her, and she in all mankind".....We must find the way back to her again.

(Steiner, 1894/1949, p. 17)

Nature once regarded in all its parts as an image of the spirit had become merely an object of knowledge, devoid of spirit to be comprehended from without by the subject. In turn, in a mathematical, mechanical view of Nature, humankind could not be found (Steiner in Smith, 2003, p. 46). To find the way back to Nature and comprehend its formative laws would require, according to Steiner's worldview, a "monism" of thinking. In his brief essay A

Monistic View of Nature (Steiner in Suwelack, 1938/1985) composed before his more detailed philosophising, Steiner had rejected the division between the physical and celestial, instead arguing for a correspondence between the two -

Monism as a science is the basis for true freedom of action, and our development can only take this course: through monism to the philosophy of freedom.

(Steiner in Suwelack, 1938/1985, p. 32)

Only by placing the Ego within the Universe to find its place in Nature would the autonomous individual come to reclaim his¹ psychic freedom - the "wholeness" of a cosmic disposition.

2.4.2 The Nature of Thinking

By his own account Steiner was content to place his dialectical Monism on the firm footing of Goethe's Platonic concept of the "Unity of the World of *Ideas*", praising it as one of the most sublime edifices of thought that had ever sprung from the spirit of mankind (1897/1918, p. 1). Similarly to Plato, Steiner distrusted the experience of sense perception which he considered imposed a boundary or division on the mind which could only lead to a shadow-image, a transitory thing that perished and vanished. For the Goethean scientist, only the unbiased person who would listen to the consonance of tones of the spirit and sense-filled thinking would experience the unified knowledge of the *Idea* content of the world - an *Idea* content complete within itself veiled from all other beings -

What philosophers call the Absolute, the Eternal Being, the World Fundament, what religious call God, is called by us, on the basis of the theory of knowledge here presented, the *Idea*. Everything in the world which does not appear directly as *Idea* will finally, nevertheless, be

¹ The thesis follows Steiner's convention of utilizing the masculine personal pronoun.

recognised as proceeding from the Idea. The Idea, therefore, is one and the same in all places in the world and in all consciousnesses. The Idea-content of the world rests upon itself, is complete within itself. We do not create it: we only seek to lay hold upon it. Thinking does not create it, but perceives it. Thinking is not the producer, but the organ of perception.

(Steiner, nd/1950a, pp. 126, 127)

By Steiner's definition the archetypal reality of changeless and universal *Ideas* were to be acknowledged as the observable objective manifestations of supersensible beings that gave the world its created form. In a deeper form of consciousness over and above that derived from ordinary sense-perceptive thinking these would come to life on the stage of human consciousness where the "pure" spiritual concept (law) of the phenomenon and sense-perceptible observation met -

In thinking we have the element which welds each man's special individuality into one whole with the cosmos. In so far as we sense and feel (and also perceive), we are single beings; in so far as we think, we are the All-One Being who pervades everything ...The act of cognition is the synthesis of percept and concept. The percept, thus, is not something finished and self-contained, but one side only of the total reality. The other side is the concept. The act of cognition is the synthesis of percept and concept. Only the percept and concept constitute the whole thing.

(Steiner, 1894/1949, pp. 66-67)

In contrast with the content of sense perception, the *Idea*, the objects derived from the spiritual world and the content of conceptual thinking would appear inwardly in consciousness as intuition. For Steiner, intuition was for the content of thinking what observation was for the percept. Intuition and observation were therefore to be seen as the sources of all human knowledge. To the intellect incapable of finding the intuitions corresponding to the thing, full reality would remain inaccessible (1894/1949, p. 70). In Steiner's epistemology, conceptual thinking would rise up when confronted with the external

"given" thereby welding "each man's special individuality into one whole with the cosmos".

With the emergence of concepts and ideation into consciousness the thinker would thus come to participate in what Steiner referred to as "the primal ground of world existence" -

Whoever acknowledges to thinking its ability to perceive beyond the grasp of the senses must necessarily acknowledge that it also has objects that lie beyond merely sense perception reality. The objects of thinking, however, are the idea. In as much as thinking takes possession of the idea, thinking fuses with the primal ground of world existence, what is at work outside enters into the spirit of man, becomes one with objective reality in its highest potency. Becoming aware of the idea within reality is the true communion of man.

(Steiner, 1894/1970b, p. 71)

In passing into the Ego consciousness of all humanity the universal World Spirit, the All-One Being, would attain a further stage in its own process of development (nd/2001, p. 33).

Through ideation, man would thus become a productive participant in Nature's creativity.

In metaphorical terms, Steiner saw the mind as related to thought as the eye was related to a prism of light. Thinking was therefore to be seen as the act and the thought, the concept resulting from it. While ordinary sense-perceptible thinking captured only an imperfect reflection of true reality in the "given" content, thinking that could be trained to observe or "see into" the objective, archetypal concept and bring it into consciousness, would become "aware of reality in its highest potency". At this moment the mind would be raised above what Steiner defined as "ordinary thinking", to bring to light the freely created, "pure", impersonal and universal thought-forms of the Ego spirit, awakened to its integration into a purposive world-whole.

2.4.3 Steiner's Theory of Moral Consciousness

Steiner's theory of moral ideation built on the epistemology of human consciousness which he envisaged would reach a state of apotheosis through perfected or "pure" thinking. In his moral schema three forms of thinking were required to lift cognition to a correspondence with the spiritual dimension of the Universe. The first step towards the recognition of the spirit in consciousness required the invigoration of the Imagination and only through its power of mental picturing Steiner cautioned would "fructification of the spiritual in mankind become possible" (1923/1979, p. 87). Imaginative consciousness was to be understood as the marriage of spirit and sense that would take the form of pictures or images, the manifestations of the spiritual-self trusted to see things clearly. If the Ego, cut off from true Reality by its abstract thoughts, wished to journey back home to the spirit world from whence it had come, it would therefore need to pass through the stage of Imaginative cognition (Barfield, 1966, p. 79). The *Ideas* slumbering in psychic depths would become manifest in the mind not through abstract thinking but through the employment of Imaginative consciousness which in turn would lead to Inspired thinking and finally to the experience of Intuitive self-reflection.

As an account of the progressive emancipation of a divinely ordained moral reason from the impediments imposed by the unconscious drives of man's lower nature, Steiner's moral theory echoed Hegel's systematic ontology which argued for the capacity of the mind to be raised above the sensory and mundane to ascend to the level of "pure form", the eternal and universal truths of the Universal Mind (Magee, 2000, p. 4). While Hegel had proposed this would be achieved through a speculative philosophical cognition, Steiner turned to Goethe's *delicate empiricism* which offered the potential to cast aside subjective elements and become aware of the celestial, archetypal objective *Idea*, the material manifestation of the spirits lying behind all phenomena. He argued that Goethe, as a mystic had striven to experience the primordial principle of the Godhead operative in the human soul. In Goethe's objective

Idealism Steiner believed he had found the link between esoteric and exoteric forms of thinking (Sumser, 1994, p. 503).

In Steiner's ethical theorising the springs of action for a moral life were to be found ranged along a continuum. The first level of reasoning was the merely sense-perceptible which gave rise to instinctive, natural behaviour. The second incorporated *feeling* in relation to a perception such as pity, piety, revenge or gratitude. The third contained a representation or mental picturing arising out of a past experience. The fourth and final spring of action disdained any "characterological disposition" and was to be seen as the highest level of consciousness without reference to the "contaminated" imaginations of perceptual content. At the point where the mind could be freed from the bonds of sense perception, the thinker would be able to frame and bring to consciousness the *Ideas* and values associated with the spiritual endowment of the Ego. The individual thinker would then not merely see a shadow copy of Reality, but a self sustaining spiritual "intuition" or the purely spiritual conscious experience of a purely spiritual content (1894/1949, pp. 112, 118, 119). In other words, cognition that had crossed the threshold into the sphere of the ideal archetype, the *Idea* in its pure conceptual essence. At the level of Intuitive thinking, the thinker would thus move beyond the subjectivity of outer appearance to the objectivity of pure, universal principles.

With the mystical union of consciousness with the All-One Being the personal Ego would be eclipsed and the thinker would come to observe his Higher Ego as an object in the realm of higher consciousness. In Steiner's schema, thenceforward the individual would act in harmony with the truth and goodness of the world order, directing his actions out of the eternal spirit residing within him. He would come to "know himself", no longer merely as a Being impelled by the laws of Nature but in full mastery of the moral laws of his inner spirit being (1904/1971b, pp. 174, 175). The ability to perceive the objective *Idea* in its archetypal form would however be contingent upon the ability of the thinker to engage the will to

suspend the impersonal intellect, in order that the pure *Idea* would surge into consciousness. It was Steiner insisted, the will that would set in place the cycle of cognition - the antithesis of Schopenhauer's "blind striving will" (desire, feeling emotion) that could only result in the moral aim of "universal idleness" (1894/1949, p. 166). The potential to develop Intuition and ultimately grasp the pure thoughts of the Ego would be greatest in those who could be trained in the art of a free-willed, imaginative, meditative cognition.

According to Steiner's monistic view, man's action would be "unfree" when he obeyed some perceptible external compulsion; free only when he could realise his intuitive *Ideas* and pursue their own particular ends. To realise the moral spring of action through the mental picturing of the *Idea* would be the task of the Moral Imagination, and only those who were endowed with it could "properly speaking" be morally productive (1894/1949, pp. 141, 154, 155) -

Moral ideals have their root in the moral imagination of man... They are his intuitions, the springs of action his spirit manipulates... He will of himself, strive for moral ideals provided his moral imagination is sufficiently active to provide him with the intuitions which give strength to his will to overcome all the obstacles which lie in his own organisation...

(Steiner, 1894/1949, p. 189)

If the pupil's capacity for imaginative thinking, the remnant of physis consciousness, could be nurtured in the right way, he or she would be able to achieve an "aliveness in thinking", the precursor to intuitive thought. Freed from the constrictions imposed by the natural human senses, the individual would comprehend the ideals of the "second man" residing in human consciousness, which "clear in themselves" could lead to a lifetime of ethical and individualistic motivations. This universal content, engraved into the Ego consciousness of all men, would necessarily mean that no moral misunderstanding would ever occur (1894/1949, p. 129). Without the power of the Moral Imagination however, the intrinsic

moral laws of the spiritual Universe would "pass over and through without a trace" (1922/2000, p. 44).

By advocating a shift away from abstracted rules and commandments, Steiner echoed the naturalistic ethics pioneered by the Hermetic philosopher Giordano Bruno. No object, or event, could be absolutely good or absolutely evil. The thought which would give rise to the action would be "good or bad according to the use of which it would be put". Far removed from Kant's categorical imperative, Steiner's "lived experience" would aspire to the Aristotelian Golden Mean, responsive to a specific situation. "To live in love of action and to live in understanding of the other's volition" was Steiner's guiding maxim. Free men would know no other obligation than what their will would put itself in unison with intuitively; how they would direct their will in a particular case the faculty for *Ideas* would decide (1894/1949p. 129).

Similarly to Bruno, Steiner saw the Church in particular as being responsible for creating individuals lacking in the ability to act autonomously when, through their directives, the priests or teachers made themselves into keepers of consciences "that is when the faithful are compelled to go to them for the motives of their actions" (p. 163). Steiner applied the same criticism to societal laws, codes and commandments, regarding them as simplifications of universality, curbing individual freedom and at the same time destroying the right of the individual to act out of love of one's own conscience. Any child or adult who had moral ideas imposed on them were seen by Steiner to be what he termed "unfree" as the individual's conscience, a holy and inviolable possession, would be crushed under the weight of another's convictions.

Steiner's moral theory of *ethical individualism*, extensively detailed in *The Philosophy of Freedom*, was thus an argument in logic based on the universality of the moral law, its

attainment reliant on the capacity to develop the creative Imagination. The moral *Ideas* of the nobly beautiful and eternally true that arose out of this universality were however to be seen as "through and through the free creation of man himself as opposed to a mechanical replica of Nature or directives from a spiritual world order" (pp. 141, 142). The individuals who chose not to take hold of the transformative substances within themselves would remain in an incomplete state of consciousness. True mastery over the drives and passions of the natural man would depend entirely on finding the coupling link between soul and spirit (p. 132).

In a philosophy inspired by Romanticism and Idealism Steiner thus collapsed epistemology and ontology, knowledge and being. Steiner's own theories approved of a dialectic which defined humanity's movement away from Nature as a necessary stage in the process of re-establishing a harmonious correspondence between the two. A conscious reintegration with a personified realm of Nature with the potential to open the human mind to the Reality of the spiritual world was the task of Steiner's self-constructed Anthroposophical Spiritual Science (Sumser, 1994, pp. 499, 508).

An outline of Anthroposophy as a mediative discipline Steiner believed would lead to a point of self-conscious transformation will follow the description of Anthroposophy as a body of esoteric knowledge.

2.5 Anthroposophy as a Body of Esoteric Knowledge

2.5.1 The Task of Anthroposophy

Steiner readily acknowledged that the task of Anthroposophy was to be traced back to the Hermetic scholar Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), Grand Master of the Rosicrucian Order who, in bursting the fetters of sense illusion and in challenging the Church's claims to final authority, had expanded the "starry sky" into the consciousness of humankind. In Bruno's vision, man gained access to the divine directly from his own inner illumination (Raschke,

1980, p. 49). In answer to the self-posed question "to what does Spiritual Science aspire?", Steiner responded that it would complete the task begun by Bruno and other Renaissance philosophers (1911/1950b, p. 10). In his *Anthroposophia Theomagica* the Rosicrucian alchemist and mystic Thomas Vaughan (1621-1666) had first employed the term "anthroposophy" to denote "human nature in the light of divine wisdom" (Bamford, 2002, p. 10). Catching the mood of the scholarly magician, Steiner gave it a not dissimilar meaning -

And it is the task of modern Initiation Science in this our age and in the following centuries gradually to lead mankind to a divine consciousness, to a religious life and make it possible for him to awaken in his innermost being, a spiritual knowledge of the Cosmos.

(Steiner, 1923/1981a, p. 224)

Spiritual Science would begin where the modern natural sciences left off. What the latter sought to do for the interpretation and explanation of the mysteries of Nature, Spiritual Science would seek to achieve for the soul and spirit. In so doing, Steiner believed that Anthroposophy would "sweep away" the doubts that had come in the train of external science through instilling into the heart and soul of man "a religious sense for everything in the world and in mankind". It would also provide an understanding of the Resurrection of the Christ in a form that could be understood not only by those who adhered to the older Christian tradition but also "by all men on earth" (1922/nd, p. 5).

In various lectures, Steiner acknowledged that as a meditative discipline Anthroposophy would guide the thinker towards a psychic transformation enabling the investigator of the spirit to "look into" the spiritual world (1914/1985a, p. 3). Through thinking "transformed" the universal laws of the noble, beautiful and eternally true would once again be heard in human consciousness -

We have the right view of Anthroposophy when we look upon it as the investigations of the thoughts of the gods. In former times these flowed instinctively into man, but now we have to investigate them, to make the knowledge of them our own. In this sense Anthroposophy must be sacred to us...Therefore we may through Anthroposophy now acquire this wisdom consciously...Therefore we may also trust that in us it shall be transformed into moral impulses, so that we do not merely receive anthroposophical wisdom, but a moral stimulus as well.

(Steiner, 1912/1961b, pp. 65, 66)

As a process of Initiation it promised to lead the attentive pupil through the inner eye of the imagination, to comprehend the work of the Spirit of Christ in the world around (refer 2.5.4). Those who would come to hear His pure voice in inner consciousness (refer 2.6.1) could apply the moral laws of the spiritual Universe to ethical, social, and all other aspects of cultural life (1914/1985a, p. 2).

In the lecture, *The Mission of Spiritual Science and of Its Building at Dornach, Switzerland* (1916/1917b), Steiner both defended and defined Anthroposophy as a meditative path that would train the undeveloped mind to be perceptive to the "thoughts of the gods". It was not, as Steiner stated, to be likened to Theosophy, the Alchemy of the Middle Ages or Gnosticism. It was not imagination nor dreaming but a scientific investigation of the spirit. For those who followed its teachings, it would bring to consciousness the "second man", the inhabitant of the spiritual world. In the theological ruminations of esotericism, it would lead the meditating pupil to an apprehension of the "spirit-man" which by his very nature was that of the Angelic Christ -

Anthroposophy is the knowledge of the spiritual human being, or spirit-man, and the knowledge is not confined to man, but is a knowledge of everything which the spirit-man can perceive in the spiritual world. Because this second human being, the inner one, is the spiritual

human being, the knowledge which he acquires may be called Spiritual Science.

(Steiner, 1916/ 1917b, p. 8)

As a meditative discipline, Steiner acknowledged that Anthroposophy was not in itself Christianity but through its instrumentality the Christ principle would gradually be made more comprehensible (Franklin, 1989, p. 356). In the sense of providing a methodological path to achieving what was essentially a moral, psychic clairvoyance, Steiner argued Spiritual Science was to be regarded as a "benefit to all worldly religions and the religious needs of mankind" (1905/1964c, p. 37) that would bring about a resurrection of the existing religious life "in the fullest sense" (1922/nd, np). In the lecture cycle *Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz* (1912/nd), Steiner emphasised that anthroposophical meditation was not "rooted in the soil of a specific creed but as part of the spiritual truth of all religions" (np).

The ancient Hermeticist had striven to complete the "Great Work", the moment when the spirit of the intellect would come to prevail over all physical matter and ascend to the level of "pure form" thereby alchemically transforming into the subjective spiritual diamond of the Philosopher Stone, the stone of the Wise (Koulias, 2009, p. 13). For Steiner and his followers the "Great Work" of Anthroposophy would be accomplished when, through its transformative discipline and teachings, consciousness would penetrate into the spiritual world transmuting the heart and mind into the universal knowledge of the Christ, the Stone of Christic Love.

2.5.2 Consciousness as a Microcosm of the Macrocosm

From the overview of Steiner's epistemological theory it is clear that the parameters of his early philosophy of psychic freedom were indisputably defined by an ancient *weltanschauung* which espoused the interdependence between the Gods, Man and a personified realm of Nature. Following in the footsteps of the scholarly Hermetic thinkers, he defined Nature as

the outcome of the Divine creative life, and man a microcosm of the macrocosmic whole, both having originated from the same primordial foundation (1904/1976a). On descent into earthly life man became "an expression of the whole cosmos" gathering the influence of the fixed stars represented in the signs of the zodiac together with the influences of the many planets (1921/1985c, np). Accordingly, the forces of man's physical entity were seen to be derived from the extra-earthly cosmos, the forces of self-consciousness from the Earth itself (1925/1989b, p. 59). "Man", said Steiner, "is born of the whole cosmos, he must look up to it as his Father-Mother, of whom he himself is an image" (1910a/nd, np).

In the Hermetic axiom, "that which is above is like that which is below; that which is below is like that which is above", Steiner saw confirmation of a hierarchically structured spiritual Universe from which emanated the archetypes of all things. The Highest Hierarchy wove the Laws of Nature. The second created the complex events of Karma and destiny. The third, the Hierarchy of Angelic Beings the Archai, Archangels and Angels regulated by the wisdom of the Divine Sophia, played into the psyche of all human beings (Stein, 1979, p. 33). As Steiner had detailed in *The Philosophy of Freedom* human knowledge above ordinary sense-perceptible cognition was to be derived from the free creative capacity of the human mind to engage with the projective *Ideas* of the macrocosmic spiritual realm. From this panoply of spirits would therefore come the very thoughts of men weaving their *Ideas* in and out of conscious reach (1922/1983b, p. 19).

Steiner's theories also embraced aspects of Neoplatonism. Arising out of his enhanced faculty of observation he foresaw that prior to new birth, consciousness was vital and full of spiritual life in the spiritual worlds. Just as Plato had done Epochs before him, Steiner envisaged this to be a realm where the soul and spirit were omnipotent, open to the full might and splendour of the cosmos. Here, the soul experienced the correspondence between itself and the all-pervasive macrocosm and prepared itself according to its Karma. At "new birth",

the moment of the "great oblivion", the omniscience of the spiritual world was "rayed back" into the depths of the subconscious or supra-conscious mind. The journey through the seven spheres of the spiritual heaven on entering physical existence was thus but a pale and shadowy "memory" of the moral, cosmic rhythm. The knowledge that had been in existence in the spirit world before birth had been submerged by the chimera of a sense-perceptible reality thereby making it but a weak and abstract outline (1922/1983b, p. 24).

In anthroposophical terms, the "imaginings" that had once allowed mankind to perceive a conscious memory of the spirit *Logos* had been transformed into the power of "deadened thought" which in turn had given rise to only a lifeless view of Nature (1922/nd, p. 3).

Analogous to the prisoner in Plato's Cave, man had become chained to the constrictions of the illusionary world of matter, slave to the impersonal vectors of Nature's laws. The light of moral, spiritual consciousness had been dimmed by a mechanical reasoning and the wisdom the Universe once offered had become a mere intellectual abstraction.

2.5.3 Rosicrucian Christianity

As previously indicated, it was at the turn of the century that Steiner turned his clairvoyant gaze into the spiritual world that led him to a vision of the role of the mystical and Angelic Christ as the facilitator of mankind's enhanced psychic unity with the cosmos - a vision which created a substantial divide between Steiner's Christology and that of traditional Christian theologians. As his ideas broadened to encompass the elements of an ancient Christianity the epistemological discourse in *The Philosophy of Freedom* gained a complex theological dimension which from then on became the fulcrum of his teachings. In his personal interpretation of the ancient Mysteries of Christianity, the All-One Being, the "primal ground of world existence" (1894/1970b, p. 71) transformed into the eternal Spirit of the Christ who had come to unite the "whole of universal humanity" through a revitalised spiritual thinking consciousness (Steiner in Seddon, 2000, p. 40). In Steiner's theology the coming of the Christ

Spirit was to be understood as the central point in the evolution of human consciousness and from that time was to be seen "as the source of strength" whereby every soul could find its way into the spiritual world (1914/1985a, p. 20).

Steiner attributed his epiphany to the spiritual vision which he claimed to parallel the experience of his esoteric master, Christian Rosenkreutz -

A conscious knowledge of true Christianity began to develop within me. Around the turn of the century, this knowledge grew deeper. The inner test occurred shortly before the turn of the century. This experience culminated in my standing in the spiritual presence of the Mystery of Golgotha in a most profound and solemn festival of knowledge.

(Steiner, nd/1977a, p. 319)

The "profound and solemn festival of knowledge" gave rise to a doctrine with its roots in Rosicrucianism and a re-visioning of an orthodox Christianity that set out to address the theology of such religious philosophers as Harnack (1851-1930) and Renan (1832-1892) who Steiner believed had undermined the supernatural aspects of the life of Christ and the nature of His teachings (1913/1951, p. 54). Orthodox theologies that denied the potential of human beings to evolve towards the spirit-self were rejected by Steiner in favour of ancient beliefs and the wisdom teachings of his Master, Christian Rosenkreutz (1911a/nd, p. 4). With echoes of the heliocentric world attributable first to Syrian-Egyptian *gnosis* and then taken up by Bruno, Steiner's Rosicrucian Christian doctrine defined the mission of the Christ as bringing the impulse of God's divine love from the central Sun to begin the respiritualisation of the dying Earth and press forward the salvation of human consciousness. In Steiner's spiritual perception, the Light of the World Soul, animator of Nature, which had shined but dimly through the fogs of *Atlantis* and *Lemuria* had gained incandescence through various incarnations. Guided by the mystical Christianity of the ancient Mystery Schools Steiner saw the Christ Spirit as the Angelic Solar Spirit who had alerted mankind to His coming in

various incarnational forms. In the Ancient Persian Epoch, Zarathustra declared the Sun to be the vesture of Ahuro Muzado. In the Egypto-Chaldean Epoch, His representative was the Sun God Osiris. In the Greco-Roman Epoch, Christ Himself came from above as a new revitalising spiritual force (1904/1972b).

Steiner's revelations relating to the progressive incarnation of Christ focused on a radical interpretation of the Mystery of Golgotha, the time beginning with the Jordan Baptism and ending with the Ascension. The Jordan Baptism was seen by Steiner as an occult initiation akin to the Christian Gnostic tradition found in the systems of Cerinthus (c.100AD) and Valentinus (c.100-c.160AD). The Jordan Baptism thus marked the beginning of the incarnation of the Christ into earthly existence which reached its conclusion at the Crucifixion (Franklin, 1989, pp. 429, 431). Steiner affirmed the fundamental theosophical doctrine that Jesus of Nazareth in his thirtieth year was taken possession of by the mystical Avatar, Christ thereby sacrificing his own Ego to the divine *Logos* of the Solar Spirit (1909b/nd, np). According to Steiner's deepening understanding of esoteric Christianity this was to be seen as the "turning point" in the evolution of consciousness as the feminine principle of the Divine Sophia and the masculine principle of the Christ coalesced in the soul of Jesus of Nazareth (Koulias, 2009, p. 10). In Steiner's re-visioning of the Ascension, the mystical Avatar did not ascend to heaven but bound Himself to the Earth thereby penetrating the World Soul (Franklin, 1989, p. 438). Anthroposophy, with leanings towards a Syrian-Egyptian Gnosticism and Zoroastrianism (Ahern, 1984, pp. 137, 140), thus denied the Christ a human nature - a stark distinction between Steiner's teachings and those of orthodox Christianity. Lecturing to his pupils on *How can Mankind find the Christ Again?* Steiner emphasised the attempt of the traditional teachings of the Church to obscure the truths relating to Golgotha. Through Steiner's occult vision the life, death and resurrection of Christ had become a mystical fact as opposed to a reliance on scriptural authority or Church tradition (Franklin, 1989, p. 439).

Steiner's own teachings gave specific details relating to task of the Christ Spirit. Sent to Earth by the Higher Hierarchy to imbue the Ego individuality of mankind and the Earth with the spark of the Divine, He had come in order to allow man to direct the mind towards the "illimitable perfection" of pure thinking (nd/1950a, p. 158) which would enable him to become his own saviour and effect his own salvation. From this time forward in the process of world evolution, human consciousness thus gained the potential to be illuminated and pervaded by the moral "Impulse" of the Christ (Steiner, 1909b/nd, np) - the power to revitalise the forces of deadened thinking and awaken them to new life. In so doing, man's thinking would be saved from a materialistic worldview and the egoistic qualities of overt intellectualism bestowed by the fallen Angels, Lucifer and Ahriman (1919/1954b). Lucifer and his counterpart Ahriman who had "fallen away from the gods, intent on confining human consciousness to the material plane, were thus countered by the Christ to work there by divine decision" (Steiner in Palmer, 1975, p. 107). According to the tenets of Anthroposophy this would mean that through Christ's cosmic sacrifice mankind would one day be born again into spiritual life (1907a/nd, np) fulfilling the Rosicrucian revelation - *Ex Deo nascimur, in Christo Morimur, per Spiritum Sanctum Reviviscimus* (1923/1981a, pp. 221, 225).

In an Aristotelian-inspired syllogism Steiner saw humankind as a microcosm of the macrocosm and as such had come to share indisputably in the mind of the Christ Himself. From Steiner's eschatological perspective, from Golgotha onwards, man was not in the world for his own sake, but in order to be a revelation of the Cosmic Intelligence of the Christ and to express the Divine in his whole feeling and action (1912/1961b, p. 58). Following Christ's death and Resurrection, human existence was therefore to be seen as the struggle of the human will to unfold love and moral goodness in the image of the Christic archetype. By Steiner's calculations this was the task of the next three thousand years which would effectively prepare human consciousness for the coming of the Christ and the Divine Sophia on the etheric plane (1911/1950b, p. 58).

The fourth century Christian theologian Arius considered heretical in his teaching that Christ was not truly divine, identified the "Sophia as one and the same with Jesus Christ thereby precipitating her invisibility" (Powell, 2005, p. 2). For the Neoplatonists and the Gnostics Sophia was to be seen as an aeon, a quasi-deity who lived in the ethereal realm of the plemora (Romanoff, nd, p. 1). In Anthroposophy, she was the new Isis, recipient of the Star Wisdom of the Magi and the Shepherd that held the key to an understanding the universal content of the moral, Cosmic Intelligence (Koulias, 2006, np). While Christ had endowed the human Ego with the potential to participate in the moral *Ideas* of the World Soul it was the task of Sophia's Imaginative Wisdom Streams bestowed on Mother Earth to reveal them (Wilkinson, 1994a, p. 77). In anthroposophical dogma she had become the spiritual force that, through her Imaginations, would awaken human consciousness to new life and resurrection. The Virgin Sophia "vessel of the wisdom and knowledge of Christ Jesus", lost in the materialistic ideologies of the age, would be raised to life through a *Michaelic* Spiritual Science. In so doing it would prepare the way for the Light of the Christ Spirit to permeate the hearts and minds of all men thus giving rise to a community of souls united in love and goodwill (1920/1983d, p. 3).

When the Cosmic Intelligence of the Christ Spirit the representative of the "voice of the gods" in human conscience could be awakened through the agency of the wisdom of the Divine Sophia, the "illumination", the "second birth" of spiritual self-knowledge would take place. As the light of consciousness dawned in the human psyche what had been "inner" would be made "outer" and the thinker made cognisant of the Christic *Logos*. At the point where thinking could unify itself with the spirit of the Higher Ego the selfless and unprejudiced thoughts that took shape in the hearts of men were to be perceived as being "worthy of depicting the Divine" and indeed "nothing less than the *Logos*". Those who would come to say "Not I but Christ in Me" would gain the strength of will to turn *Ideas* into the ideal moral behaviour (Steiner, in Suwelack, 1938/1985, p. 32) thereby realising the goal of *ethical*

individualism and denying Ahriman, lord of the cold, materialistic intellect, rulership of the Earth (1922/2000, p. 42) -

Christianity teaches the seeker to behold the Christ, to fill Him with the power of His image, to seek to become like Him and to follow after Him. Then his liberated ego needs no other law. Christ brings freedom from the law, then good will be done because of indwelling love within the soul.

(Steiner in Wilkinson, 1994b, pp. 79, 80)

For Steiner, the purity of spiritual consciousness (conscience) was the voice of Christ in the human soul and as such was to be understood as the unifying force of the cosmic Universe. Through the selfless act of the Christ Spirit, God's nature and His power were thus made manifest in man's unconscious mind; the oracular message to "know the self" became in effect the theology of Anthroposophy (Reilly, 1971, p. 97). Those who could learn to unite the moral will with the Higher Ego-self of the Christ would be on the path to increasingly perfect levels of behaviour. At the pinnacle of human evolution in eons to come, Steiner foresaw that man would become Spirit-man, the Brother of Christ thereby fulfilling the Pelagian Heresy of orthodox Christianity (Ahern, 1984, p. 132). In so doing, the ancient doctrine of *theosis*, the deification of human nature would come to pass as Steiner believed his esoteric Master, Christian Rosenkreutz had predicted (1911a/nd, np).

Although Steiner was insistent that Anthroposophy was to be known as a Christian mission unencumbered by the Eastern philosophy of the Theosophists, Buddha was acknowledged to have played a central role on the path to self-knowledge. In the lecture *Buddha and Christ* (1911/1964a), Steiner provided a picture of the role the Buddha would play in the current planetary phase. If this was to be a period of psychic transformation in which moral thinking and behaviour would become "the special strength of humanity", people would need to open their hearts and minds to two streams of wisdom. One, being the eastern or Buddha stream,

representing goodness of heart and peace on Earth and the other, the Christ stream, with the potential to lead humanity out of its arid, intellectual state by way of aesthetic feeling and insight. In the lecture, Steiner also described an idealised future in which intellectual powers without morality would be "nonexistent" (p. 10).

In anthroposophical dogma, moral consciousness would widen into world responsibility. At the same time that the individual contributed to his own self-transformation through loving moral thought and action, he would also contribute to the spiritual evolution of the living organism of the temporal Earth itself. The blood of Christ had transformed the Earth into the seed of a newly arising macrocosm and, through mankind itself transformed, was destined, as the old withered and died, to be reborn as the new Sun, a spiritualised orb (1925/1989b, pp. 59, 61). In his lecture *Significance of Spiritual Science For Moral Action* (1911/1978c), Steiner presented his audience with details of the correspondence and mutual interdependence between the Earth and the actions of the human being. An immoral thought or deed was to be understood as affecting the body of the Earth with "a sort of fever" -

.... this point, it is deeply proven. The whole earth organism suffers under everything immoral and we as individual beings cannot commit an immoral act without affecting the whole earth organism.

(Steiner, 1911/1978c, p. 5)

In Steiner's cosmogony when, in the final planetary Epoch, the intelligence of the gods, the wisdom of the Universe, would become manifest in the human psyche the world fundament would come to complete its incarnation. At the stage where the "perfected" man was fully aware of the *Logos* of the Christ and responsible for his own nature, he would become the redeemer of the Earth and the creator of a new Earthly Universe. This perfect "astral globe", woven out of the moral thoughts of all those who had followed the Christian path of

Anthroposophy would then be transformed from the Planet of Wisdom into the Planet of Christic Love -

We see today a world of light; millions of years ago it was a moral world. We bear in us a moral world, which millions of years hence will be a world of light. We must remember that the task of Earth Evolution is to transform our Planet of Wisdom into a Planet of Love.

(Steiner in Wilson, 1975a, p. 66)

For those who could not or would not find the strength of will to overcome the psychic Dragon forces which kept man bound to Nature's urgings, "the abyss of evil" would open and beckon in the final War of All Against All (1909a/nd, np). In anthroposophical terms, the key to salvation would rest with the ability of humankind to follow the impulse of *Michael* to draw aside the outer veil of Nature and read the text of the gods therein (Steiner in Suwelack, 1938/1985, p. 62).

2.5.4 The Book of Nature - The Christ Spirit in the Cosmos

The most important and fundamental insight arising out of Steiner's mystical experience of the death and Resurrection of the Christ that served to counter the vision of the Universe set in place by the Galileo (1564-1642) and Copernicus (1473-1543), was the knowledge that with His death the spiritual archetype had objectified into all earthly matter. In Christological terms, when the Christ had assumed the Earth as His body every stone, plant and animal had been pervaded by the World Soul Spirit. In Steiner's Christology, the living Earth, sanctified by the blood of the Christ Spirit, had come to hold the sublimeness of His spiritual essence - a sublimeness that could be intellectually understood by those who had "the courage and strength" to turn their awed and reverent gaze to the world around them -

We must once again approach the Earth with reverent religious feelings since Christ has assumed her as His body. We will be guided on our way if we learn to see how nature and culture are connected spiritually.

(Steiner in Suwelack, 1938/1985, p. 39)

With his revelations relating to the coming of the Christ Spirit, Steiner broadened and extended the arguments of his metaphysical Monism. In *The Philosophy of Freedom* he had argued that the World Mind of the All-One Being would reach its complete and mature form through a conscious realisation in human thinking. Humanity, Steiner argued, had moved away from a state of pristine unity with Nature to a state of differentiation and eventually alienation. He believed that humanity would overcome its alienation by regaining, "not the mystical state of ancient clairvoyance, but an enhanced clairvoyance in full consciousness" (Sumser, 1994, pp. 499, 500). By incorporating this notion into his theological teachings Steiner proposed that when the perceptive onlooker was successful in establishing a *conscious* reintegration with Nature he would come to recognise the spiritual lying behind all natural phenomena. In so doing, the creative ideation of the Christ Spirit would be fully revealed to human consciousness.

To explicate man's relationship to the sacred realm of Nature was therefore the defining characteristic of Steiner's Anthroposophical Spiritual Science. For Steiner, the Earth was a living and evolving organism in which the spirits flowing from the central Sun had found their eyes and ears through the organs of the plant world. In Steiner's pansychic view of Nature the spiritual entities that wove around the Earth unfolding their activities in unison with the seasons would thus achieve self-consciousness through the sense-organs in all living plants (1910b/nd, p. 7). The panoply of spirits, the Elemental Beings, the undines, sylphs, gnomes and salamanders, offspring of the

Third Hierarchy all in the service of the macrocosm, were there to be revealed to the eye trained to look in the right direction -

Mighty, manifold and magnificent are indeed the spiritual effects that continually approach man out of the things of nature when he walks on it ...The elemental spirituality of nature flows into him; it is something that constantly streams towards him as a supersensible spirituality poured out over outer nature, which is a mirror of the divine-spiritual.

(Steiner in Easton, 1975, p. 311)

In Steiner's path of knowledge, Nature would become transparent revealing the experiences and activity of the spirit-beings. Through a healthy paganism that would overcome the self-conscious egotism that had separated man from Nature, the esoteric pupil would read and decode its visual text. In the process of decipherment, consciousness would come to penetrate through matter to hear the "voice of Christ" in its surroundings. In Steiner's summation -

We must learn once more through science to behold a spiritual in every material creature - a spiritual behind the stone, the spiritual behind the plant, a spiritual behind the animals, a spiritual behind the human being, a spiritual behind the clouds, a spiritual behind the stars, a spiritual behind the sun. When we penetrate through matter to find the spiritual once more in its reality, we shall open our souls to the voice of Christ, who would fain speak to us if we would only hear.

(Steiner, 1923/1978a, p. 21)

To facilitate the return of the voice of the Spirit in Nature Steiner turned to the venerable Goethe in whom he considered Platonism, directed into the world of *Ideas*, had established itself in "all its purity" (1897/1918, p. 2). Opposing the methods of positivist science which would treat the "given" as the starting point for all authoritative knowledge, Goethe had argued for a transformed mode of consciousness which incorporated an active "reading" of

the "letters" in the mineral, physical world. By observing what the phenomena revealed a feeling of kinship with it would arise (Steiner in Smith, 2003, p. 55). In his writings *The Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790) and *Theory of Colours* (1810), Goethe detailed his science of *phenomenology* which called for a new form of thinking capable of facilitating entry into the phenomena in order to comprehend the *Idea* or Type behind outer reality. Starting with the archetypal or *Ur-phenomenon* and proceeding to more complex phenomenon, the scientist would through sustained contemplation, set aside the egocentrically thinking subject and imaginatively perceive the archetype, the objective principle residing in each and every member of the plant kingdom.

In Goethe's mobile and *delicate empiricism*, Nature was to be approached not through its outer shell, but examined through the power of the creative imagination following a protracted period of meditative contemplation. While Goethe failed to translate his theory of metamorphosis to the animal world, Steiner argued that it was nevertheless possible to draw the conclusion that similar ideas on a higher level could be engaged to understand the spiritual forces active in the human psyche (1923/1993, np). By making use of Goethe's methodology and applying the same technique to his theory of cognition Steiner was able to move it two steps further on from Imagination to Inspiration and Intuitive perception, the spheres of spirit beings Ahriman and Lucifer had veiled to the human intellect -

From Goethe we may learn how one has to put questions to Nature: The reality is revealed to us when we face it with open senses. But sense experience yields only half the reality. If we want the whole we must bring our thinking into motion. Goetheanism is therefore, if we want to say it briefly, the art of reading the book of Nature as a text of the spirit. Anthroposophy goes a step further. It is able to penetrate into the inner part of Nature by opening higher paths of knowledge. On these it steps forward from Imagination to Inspiration and Intuition.

(Steiner in Suwelack, 1938/1985, p. 62)

Thus imputing to Goethe's *phenomenological* technique a mystical dimension, Steiner proposed that the pictures arising from an artistic and imaginative cognition would relieve the "dead weight" of an intellectualized and mechanical view of Nature and allow the essence of its spiritual being to penetrate into consciousness. As soon as the thinker could plunge into the "weaving sea" of picture consciousness he would rise to supersensible perception. As Steiner would have it -

For everything is created from pictures, pictures are the true origins of things, pictures lie behind everything that surrounds us and we dive into these pictures when we plunge into the sea of thinking. Plato meant these pictures. Goethe had in mind these pictures when he spoke of his 'Ur-plant'. These pictures are found in imaginative thinking

(Steiner in Suwelack, 1938/1985, p. 62)

In order to "grasp" Nature in a way that would reveal the hidden processes of the spiritual world Steiner claimed that consciousness would need to cease "to live exclusively in abstract ideas and begin to think in pictures" (nd/1964b, p. 86). Through an imaginative sensory reflection on the occult script the pupil would learn the language leading to the mystical apprehension of the Christ in inner consciousness -

By means of the language- no matter how abstract it may seem - in which we hear of Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth; as the different periods of the Earth; as well as many secrets of nature - we teach ourselves a language in which we can frame the questions we put to the spiritual world. When we really learn inwardly to speak the language of this spiritual life, the result will be that Christ will stand by us and give the answer Himself. Why do we occupy ourselves with spiritual science? It is as though we were learning the words of the language through which we approach the Christ.

(Steiner in Gardner, 1995, p. 43)

For those who could be trained to read her alphabet, the "expression of the Mystery of Man and his roots in the Universe" (1921/1985c, np), Nature would no longer be "dumb and inarticulate" but understood as an expression of the Spiritual Essence weaving through the cosmos (1923/1981a, p. 222). In the genuine spiritual-scientific worldview everything passing "was but a parable" transforming from one state to another in a constant state of "becoming". The secrets of Nature would be opened to the receptive mind through the pictorial and imaginative. While conventional Science was considered by Steiner to be ghost-like and mechanical, Spiritual Science would be creative and intuitive. What emerged from the chrysalis would be an image of the immortality of the soul. As the butterfly soared up from the chrysalis so too after death, would the human soul arise from the house of the body (1906/1996b, p. 26). When powder was spread on a thin brass plate and its edge stroked with a fiddler's bow the so-called Chladni figures would take on the patterns of Nature. In Anthroposophy, Nature was to be comprehended when the pupil would understand that it was an image for something else. Through an imaginative reading of her occult script the pupil would come to learn the language that would lead to the mystical apprehension of the Christ. In so doing, the vocation of the Self to awaken the World Spirit in inner consciousness would begin (Franklin, 1989, p. 66).

To assist in reminding man what he could and "must achieve for himself", Steiner indicated that the Festivals originating from the ancient mysteries of the old religions would play a vital role. The Festivals, "the breathing of the Earth" that guarded the secrets from the time when the gods "were accessible in their real being", would once again be a reminder of the relationship between man and the world of Nature (Steiner in Suwelack, 1938/1985, p. 35). Lecturing on *The Christmas Festival: A Token of the Victory of the Sun* (1905), Steiner spoke of the meaning and significance of the celebration -

We do not want to promulgate a dogma or a doctrine, or a philosophy. Our aim is that everything we say and teach, everything that is contained in our writings, shall pass over into life itself. ...Then too there will be a spiritual understanding of the great turning points of the year and the everyday experiences of humanity will be truly linked with the spiritual world. The Immortal and the Eternal, the spiritual Sun will flood the soul with light at the great festivals which will remind us of the divine Self within each of us. The divine Self, in essence like the Sun, and radiant with light, will prevail over darkness and chaos and will give to the soul a peace by which all the strife, all the war and all the discord in the world will be quelled.

(Steiner, 1905/nd, np)

All the "war and discord in the world" Steiner attributed to the "Dragon" forces Ahriman and Lucifer. Located in "sub-Nature" they would nurture all the most undesirable tendencies of the age. Materialism fostered by a dehumanising technological efficiency together with self-interest and immorality under their influence would prevail. When man would come to see Nature in "the right light" Steiner believed that he would "release the crucified Soul of the World". For the anthroposophist, gaining true knowledge and understanding of Nature thus meant the resurrection and liberation of the Godhead (Sumser, 1994, p. 507). Without a true knowledge of the living Earth, Steiner predicted that the spiritual cosmos would dissolve under the benevolent leadership of the fallen Angels bent on encouraging man in his materialistic and intellectual strivings. Orthodox science, from the perspective of the anthroposophist, had placed the spiritual evolution of mankind and the Earth in serious jeopardy (1919/1954b, pp.11, 12).

2.5.5 The Book of Esoteric History - The Evolution of Human Consciousness

In Steiner's worldview, history was not to be seen as the ascent of civilization but a record of the journey of the reincarnating Self and its evolutionary transformation up to the modern scientific age - a time in human history when Steiner considered that the individual had come to reject the spirit in all matter and could only see the silent mineral world. As a mighty

vertiginous sweep over several centuries, Steiner set the evolutionary transformation of human consciousness against the backdrop of the seven ages of Rosicrucian Epochal history (Table 2.1). Each Epoch was acknowledged by Steiner to be under the guidance of a dominating spirit working through epochal "heroes" to influence the social and cultural aspects of human existence. In the Aryan-German age extending from 1413 AD to the present time, the new "Age of Light" had begun under the watchful tutelage of the Archangel *Michael* (1924/1976c, p. 11). As one civilization or "cultural Epoch" followed another, a specific task in the spiritual education of mankind would be achieved (Franklin, 1989, p. 253).

Table 2.1 The Post - Atlantean Rosicrucian Stages of Epochal History

1 st : Ancient Indian Epoch	2 nd : Ancient Persian Epoch	3 rd : Egypto- Chaldean Epoch	4 th : Greco- Roman Epoch	5 th : Present Aryan- German Epoch	6 th : Cultural Epoch Russian	7 th : Cultural Epoch American
7227 BC →	5733 BC →	2907 BC →	747 BC →	1413 AD →	3573 AD →	5067 AD →
Direct perception of the spiritual world		Rise of Sentient Soul	Intellectual Soul	Consciousness Soul	Awakened spiritual perception; return of Christ/Sophia	

(After Mc Dermott, 1984, p. 231)

Each Epoch was determined by the acquisition of a "higher" faculty of consciousness which would be developed through the ensuing civilization, and in this observation Steiner was in agreement with Hegel that world history was a reflection of the progress of consciousness towards a state of "freedom" when the species would be relieved of the constraints of an ordinary sense-perceptible cognition (Franklin, 1989, p. 52). In simple terms, the predestined task of Anthroposophy was to transform man's thinking towards recognition of the supersensible beings which Steiner perceived as entering into consciousness in the form of ideation. When mankind could once again come to comprehend itself as spirit it would lay hold of the task of the Fifth Post-Atlantean Epoch (1911/1964a, p. 3).

In numerous lectures Steiner gave details of a complex cosmogony proceeding Epochal history. He claimed to read the "cosmic memory" of the Theosophical *Akasha Chronicles* or *Records of the Book of Life*, an occult script in which was inscribed all that had happened in the history of the Universe (Easton, 1975, p. 22). In his teachings he incorporated the esoteric understanding of the evolution of the cosmos that described the pre-earthly existence of man as a time in which the material natural world gradually emerged out of the *prima materia* of pure spiritual energy or will (1904/1976a). The devolution of spirit into matter was seen by Steiner as taking place in four vast cosmic evolutionary incarnations, separated by long intervals of cosmic night. The first to third cycles were those of Saturn, the Sun and Moon, the fourth the macrocosmic Earth (the present solar system) whose central feature was the incarnation of the World Soul, the cosmic Christ into material form (Wilson, 1975, p. 53).

For Steiner, each Epoch told of the cosmic *Logos* guiding mankind's physical existence, balancing it with the will of the gods (1923/1950c, p. 56). The Mysteries of the Ancient Indian and Persian Epochs followed the Mysteries of Hibernia which had preserved "most faithfully" the wisdom teachings of the Atlanteans. In the Ancient Persian Epoch heroes such as Gilgamesh and Eabani attempted to penetrate the secrets of the Mysteries, searching for the secret knowledge of the Heavens, their revelations told in the rhythms of epic and saga. The Third Post-Atlantean Epoch, incorporating the Egypto-Chaldean Epoch, was the age of the *Sentient Soul* development which brought with it an understanding of the spiritual world based on reverent feelings for a living Nature. This was defined by Steiner as a time in which the divine kings and priests interceded between men and gods and all artistic deed was consecrated to the service of the Christian cult (1923/1981a, p. 34). According to Steiner's insights, Lucifer's increasing influence on human consciousness was portrayed in the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. Greco-Roman times thus heralded the beginning of the evolutionary phase of the *Intellectual* or *Mind Soul* and with rational thinking now devoid of the moral, spiritual impulses previously gleaned from godly authority, mankind's knowledge

of cosmic spaces in abstract terms commenced (1916/nd, p. 4). Alongside humankind's experience of a diminishing perception of Nature, the Sun Christ entered into physical existence restoring mankind's potential to reintegrate consciousness with the spiritual in the Universe thereby facilitating the true evolutionary purpose of the cosmos.

For the anthroposophist, from 3101 BC the age of *Kali Yuga* prevailed, a time of spiritual darkness for the human mind as an increasing degree of intellectualism and egotistical free-will replaced supersensible perception (Bondarev, 2010, pp. 29, 30). It was seen by Steiner to end in 1879, the year the Time-Spirit, *Michael* began his regency over the spiritual realm. In the Aryan-German Epoch the age had come for reason to be freed from the tyranny of Ahrimanic materialism and Luciferic intellectualism in order "to occupy itself with the truths of religious faith and ritual" (nd/1927, p. 96). For Steiner, this new "Age of Light" heralded by the *Consciousness* or *Spiritual Soul*, was a time of spiritual regeneration. In anthroposophical terms, the soul of all humanity had evolved into an organ of spiritual perception allowing the seeker of true knowledge to discover through occult cognition, the divinity within themselves. As the thinker came to acknowledge the correspondence between himself and the macrocosmic cosmos he would return to a clairvoyant consciousness, not in the ancient sense but in present, "clear-day" consciousness (Sumser, 1994, p. 507). In so doing, the Fifth Post-Atlantean Epoch would become a mirror image, "a kind of repetition of the Egypto-Chaldean age" (1916/nd, p. 4).

In his lectures on *World History in Light of Anthroposophy* (1923/1950c), Steiner detailed how the remnants of a deeper knowledge of Nature had travelled under the guise of Aristotelianism to Europe via the Crusades and emerged in European Scholasticism. In the Middle Ages, mystics and spiritual researchers had rediscovered the wisdom in hidden temples and had received instructions from the Rosicrucians. In the current Epoch it remained an unbroken thread, submerged only out of "historical necessity". In the age of the

Consciousness Soul, with the resurgence of esoteric ideas the thread had been picked up and rewoven in the form of Anthroposophy (pp. 6, 106). Through the agency of Anthroposophy the seeker would be enabled to follow the promptings of his true nature to realise that spiritual self-knowledge was "the noblest crown of human endeavour" (1920/1980a, p. 15). This "core group" of people awakened to their Higher Ego would form the nucleus of individuals who would pave the way for the Sixth Epoch of civilization -

It is the deeper tasks of the anthroposophical movement to enable a number of human beings to enter their next incarnation with an I each remembers as his or her own, individual I. These people will then form the nucleus of the next period of civilisation. Then these individuals who have been prepared through the anthroposophical spiritual movement to remember their individual I will be spread over the earth. For the essential characteristic of the next period of civilisation is that it will not be limited to particular localities, but will be spread over the whole earth. These individuals will be scattered over the earth, and everywhere on each there will be a core group of people who will be crucial for the sixth epoch of civilisation.

(Steiner in Lombard, nd, p. 8)

The Sixth Post-Atlantean Epoch was pre-visioned by Steiner to be an age when the Slavic people would come to fulfil their true mission. The Divine Sophia through the aeons of *Michael* and *Anthroposophia* would join the Christ in ethereal form and a flourishing community of brotherhood and sisterhood would arise, blessed by a Divine love. It would last, according to Steiner's reading of the *Akasha Chronicles*, for precisely two thousand one hundred and sixty years (Powell, 2005, p. 6).

Following the Great War of All Against All in the Seventh Planetary Epoch, for those who had gained the freedom of a higher form of spiritual consciousness the wisdom of the ages inscribed in the soul-psyche of all mankind would be finally and fully revealed (1908/1986b, pp. 84, 85). According to Steiner's esoteric view of human history, when consciousness could

be returned to cognition of the spirit in an even "brighter lustre and nobler style and on a higher level" than in earlier times (1911/1950b, p. 78), the Post-Atlantean phase of earthly evolution would be complete. Through the agency of human consciousness redeemed, the Planet of Wisdom would be transformed into the Planet of Love.

2.6 Anthroposophy as a Meditative Discipline

2.6.1 Initiation into Higher Worlds - The Path to the Stone of Love

By claiming adherence to a Goethean worldview, Steiner believed he was able to transcend the limitations of Kantian epistemology. His path to spiritual knowledge was intended to allow the thinker to move beyond the confines of sense perception and the intellect and become directly conscious of an all-embracing "cosmic power" through disciplined thinking and scholarly persistence as opposed to a mystical apprehension through an altered state of consciousness. He did not claim to be the author of the method but saw himself as having "revived and modernised what were well founded modes of consciousness dating back to antiquity" (Sumser, 1994, pp. 503, 506). In Steiner's hands, Goethe's *delicate empiricism*, the methodology of *scientiva intuitiva*, thus found an esoteric destination in the form of the Initiation Science of Anthroposophy. Appropriating Goethe's *phenomenological* approach to observation, Steiner argued that in order to gain entry into a world of higher consciousness the human being was to allow Nature's outer forms to speak to him in a twofold way. One *pan* (all) of their being would be known from perceptual observation which Steiner considered to be, in reality, free of *Ideas*; in the second *pan*, the conceptual *Ideas* of things from out of the spiritual world, the thinker was required to "coax" from them (1897/1918, p. 1).

For the esoteric Christian, the immanence of Christ in consciousness in some way comparable to the Goethean archetype, would come to be revealed as the final stage in a

series of meditative exercises based on the reverent contemplation of the forms of Nature. At the climax of a long intensive training, thinking would be freed from all "contaminated imaginations" and at end point of this cognitional endeavour would experience a purification or *Katharsis*. At the moment the pure, chaste and wise Sophia residing within the recesses of the subconscious mind encountered the Universal Ego of the Cosmic Christ the pupil would become aware of the Higher-self, a beautiful spirit of light "radiating an indescribable splendour" (Franklin, 1989, p. 392).

By applying the practices of *delicate empiricism* to the introspecting Ego-self, Steiner thus determined that the pupil would reach the ultimate state of *ethical individualism*. When the pupil could "see" his Ego as an object in the realm of "pure" thoughts free from contaminated imaginations thenceforth he would come to think, not in the lower Ego of the bodily nature, but through the Ego of the Higher-self, the World Soul, the Divine Christ within (Stebbing, 1963, p. 21). With the eclipse of the personal Ego, Steiner's epistemological argument as detailed in *The Philosophy of Freedom* came full circle. At the point of Intuitive consciousness, the thinker would not merely see a shadow copy of reality but become fully aware through a spiritual experience of the "purely spiritual content" (p. 112) of the human mind. In uniting with the will of the Christic Higher-self the pupil would thenceforward reform his thoughts and actions guided by the "pure" imperatives that arose in active thinking.

In *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, Steiner set out the steps of his Initiation Science that would teach the soul to be imaginative, and thereby allow the pupil to be awakened in his innermost being to the "invisible essence" of the cosmos (1917a/nd, p. 2). By employing the Imagination Steiner argued that it would be altogether possible to watch the process of organic evolution as Goethe did. This involved the pupil bringing his willing systematically into his thinking and by means of "wilful thinking" he would begin to consciously penetrate

into the deeper recesses of the mind where the relation between man and Nature still persisted (Reilly, 1971, p. 73). Prior to the first *preparatory* phase, the mental attitude of the pupil would need to be suitably conditioned. On this *path of veneration*, right knowledge could only be acquired when the pupil had learnt to esteem it. Ideally "inculcated in a suitable education" a pupil with feelings of veneration, worship and wonder in their hearts would more easily develop a "power of soul" that would allow admittance to higher knowledge. These feelings of reverence and respect for the esoteric teacher would also be extended to the beauties of the outer world. In the *preparatory* phase, the first step would be to develop an alert, tranquil openness to the processes displayed in organic Nature. An appreciation of the budding, growing and flourishing of plants followed by the processes connected with decaying and withering would begin the task of raising principal cognition to the level of the spiritual. Surrender of feelings to the lines and figures of forms drawn by the spirit and visible to external sight would further cultivate the dormant faculty of picture forming and facilitate a thinking in "harmony with Nature". By "looking out into the world" the inner life would become rich in feelings and creative with genuine Imagination. The pupil was also required to unite his feeling with the pain and pleasure to be found in the world of sound. Through her resounding tones the whole of Nature would begin to whisper her secrets (1909-1910/1969b, pp. 22, 46-52).

The next phase of *enlightenment* built on the previous imaginative exercises. During the elementary exercises the pupil was called on to enlarge his feelings of sympathy for the animal and human world and at the same time become aware of and receptive to the emotional and moral qualities operating therein. Further, the pupil was also required to observe Nature in a particular way. The examples Steiner gave included observing a beautifully formed stone, a plant or an animal. Out of the developing inspiration that deeper contemplation of the beauty of Nature would bring, the colours of the object observed would begin to be transformed. The colour of the stone would merge into red or red/yellow and the

green of the plant would metamorphose into a light, ethereal pink. As the pupil developed a more intimate connection with the cognised subject matter, through Inspiration, the introspecting mind would come to discover the psychic-spiritual agent "behind" the forms of outer Nature. The psychic-spiritual world content, anthropomorphic at the supersensible level, would enter into human consciousness and the forms which had been "simply given" in imaginative picture form would be discerned as the Beings of Spirit (1909/1910, 1969b, p. 64).

Following *enlightenment* was the phase Steiner referred to as *control of thoughts and feelings*. The focus of exercises included developing a respect for the nature of fellow human beings and at the time undergoing a series of personally strengthening *trials* that would allow the individual to look danger calmly in the face and attempt to overcome difficulties "unswervingly". Contemplation of Nature was also to continue. Steiner suggested picturing a seed in the imagination and mentally "seeing" the forms it would later become through the forces of Earth and light. The penultimate phase Steiner termed, *initiation*. In this phase the pupil would be readied to enter the *Temple of Higher Wisdom*. The pupil, now cognisant of the spiritual world, would interpret its occult script, the signs corresponding with the forms, colours and tones of the spirit beings. From the feelings evoked through mental pictures, the adult pupil would be prepared to listen to the inspiration of the spirit beings weaving in and out of consciousness. From then onwards the pupil would be able to display "unquestionably sound judgement" thereby showing himself fit for the truths of esoteric knowledge (1909/1910, 1969, pp. 70, 90). Having undergone the preparation that had served to establish the relationship between his own eternal part and the eternal in the "thing", it would rest entirely with the individual to choose to experience the final phase of *Katharsis*. Through the experience of *Katharsis* the pupil would be awakened into the true Light of Christic consciousness. At the stage where the pupil had reached the maximum point of conscious

self-reflection he would be aware of himself as "becoming one with the macrocosm" yet without losing his own essential nature (1909/1972a, p. 255).

Criticism, adverse judgement or untruth would Steiner maintained, dispel the power of the soul for the attainment of higher knowledge. Looking at the world via a "keen power of observation" and the feeling life of the soul would allow the mind to become the stage on which the influence of the angelic Hierarchies would come to have full play. Intellectualising would only serve to divert the pupil from the path.

2.6.2 The Rosicrucian Study

While the pathway detailed in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds* required a disciplined adherence to a series of introspective practices, the more generalised principles of what Steiner termed The Rosicrucian Study would lead the "simple man" to a "deeper grasp of the truth of Christianity" (Steiner in Franklin, 1989, p. 257). Commenting on the steps of the path to supersensible perception he claimed that "the Rosicrucian method of initiation is especially for modern people; it meets the needs of modern conditions...it will for long centuries to come be the right method of initiation into spiritual life" (Steiner in Weber, 2005, p. 19). In the lecture *The Path of Knowledge and its Stages, the Rosicrucian Spiritual Path* (1906/1982b), Steiner outlined seven steps to "disciplining" thinking that would "open the mind to the world of spirit" (p. 140).

The pupil was not to imagine these stages were to be passed through one after the other. On the contrary, training was to proceed in such a way that accorded with the ability and character of the individual (1909/1972a, p. 255). The first step would require the adult pupil to understand the guiding principles of each Epoch, together with the great viewpoints of Initiates such as Buddha, Zarathustra, Orpheus and Hermes. A study of the culture of each age, the way of life, literature "and the like" was seen by Steiner as essential to the individual

in order that he would know "where he had been placed by chance" and at the same time enable him "to know what had already been achieved" and what would fall to his lot to accomplish in his present incarnation (1911/1950b, p. 163). The second step involved immersing the mind in the pictorial concepts of the memorial imagination. The third would be to read the occult script. Through an inspired form of conscious reflection the pentagram, hexagram and angle, the geometrical figures of outer Nature could be imaginatively related to the inner forms of the physical body. The fourth step related to the "rhythm of life" which was to be brought into daily activities. The fifth was to learn the correspondence between the microcosm and the macrocosm. This would include the complex symmetry between the shapes forming man, plants and animals, and the images of the heavenly bodies. The penultimate step included immersion in the macrocosm through its contemplation. Out of this the final step would flow Godliness, a feeling of love and gratitude for all things, physical and natural (1906/1982b, p. 140).

2.6.3 The Modern Grail Knight

In numerous lecture cycles, including *The Search for the Holy Grail, Christ and the Spiritual World* (1914/1983c) and *The Temple Legends* (1904-1906/1985e), Steiner reinforced the importance of comprehending the hidden content of the picture-language he considered to be contained within the myths, sagas and legends of each historical Epoch. In the esoteric history of the world the Grail knight, *Parsifal* was a man of flesh and blood, a reincarnation of Mani, founder of the Manichaeon Mystery School. His quest for the Grail was the quest to transform the lower-self through moral feeling and insight into a purified receptacle fit to carry a higher form of spirit (Black, 2007, pp. 251, 254). For Steiner, in the age of the *Consciousness Soul* the heroic quest of *Parsifal* represented the journey of the anthroposophist as he travelled in a lonely search for personal self-perfection -

Let us regard what we are permitted to study in our Anthroposophy as a renewed seeking for the Grail, and let us try to understand the significance of that which formerly spoke to us though the subconscious depths of the soul and rose gradually into the consciousness of man. Let us try to explore a wisdom which will disclose to us the connection between the earthly and the heavenly, not relying on old traditions, but in accord with the way in which it can be revealed today. And then let us be filled with a feeling of how it was that Parsifal came to the secret of the Grail.

(Steiner, 1914/1983c, pp. 24, 25)

When *Parsifal* achieved an inner vision of the Grail he had in anthroposophical terms, arrived at the radical transformation of consciousness - the moment of *Katharsis* - the ultimate destination of the seeker on the path to self-enlightenment.

Part 3

2.7 Observations: Steiner's Worldview (*Weltanschauung*) within the Framework of Faivre's Definition of Esotericism

2.7.1 A Modern Theosophy

Faivre suggests that theosophic discourses are partially tributaries of the milieu in which they flourish (Faivre, 1994, p. 27). Steiner's Anthroposophy can be seen as part of the creative expression, new freedoms and experimentation that were the natural concomitants of the impending social and political transformation taking place in early twentieth century Germany. It offered its followers the freedom for the individual to assume a determinative role in a rapidly changing society characterised by rampant materialism and self-interest. The ideology Steiner propounded is theological in the sense of Faivre's definition which makes a distinction between the teachings of denominational churches of what revealed Truth is, and the esoteric genre that attempts to acquire knowledge (*gnosis*) of the immense domain of the reality of Nature through an individual illumination according to a set initiatory process. It is "a knowledge that bears on the structure of the physical and spiritual worlds, on the forces

operating within time, the relationships both micro and macrocosmic and the history of their transformations" (Faivre, 1994, p. 30).

Steiner considers his epistemology and ontology to be a bridge between philosophy and theosophy built on the foundations of the ancient revelations arising out of earlier forms of occultism (Steiner in Palmer, 1975, p. 72, 73). Anthroposophy, he defines as a spiritual discipline through which the corpus of knowledge forming Rosicrucian Christianity could be understood and given practical expression. While Steiner opposes the universality of Blavatsky's Eastern theosophy he incorporates the notions of Karma, Reincarnation and past-lives in his teachings. The survey of the key elements of Steiner's ideology demonstrates that it follows the blueprint of Böehme's model of modern theosophy which Faivre describes "as an amalgam between the medieval mystical tradition of fourteenth century Germany and Nature-philosophy inspired by the Hermetical Paracelsus" (Faivre, 1994, p. 27). The Lutheran Theosophist makes explicit the fact that Hermetic creation is *creatio ex deo* opposed to *creatio ex nihilo* (Katz, 2005, p. 42), and it is a formula that is important to an understanding of Steiner's Rosicrucian theology. In Böehme's Christianised theosophy he exhorts man to lend expression to the dynamic will, to magnify the "little spark" of vitality and wisdom within (Raschke, 1980, p. 71). In his lectures relating to the writings of Böehme which are explicit in the idea that matter was created not from what Genesis would have it but from God Himself (Katz, 2005, p. 42), Steiner not unexpectedly comments favourably. His acceptance of the Bohemian soul being "no different from God but of the Divine Nature itself" (1913/1942, p. 16) is but a faithful reinforcement of the Rosicrucian *weltanschauung*. Böehme sees moral perfectibility as the equivalent of the alchemist's Great Work that may culminate in the elusive Philosopher Stone; for the anthroposophist it represents the actual attainment of the Stone of Christic Love.

Böehme's Nature as a mode of revelation, and his notion of the soul as an image of the Universe thus giving rise to a physic correspondence with the angelic kingdom and the Self (Faivre, 1994, p. 27) also appears in Steiner's work. Similarly to Böehme, Steiner incorporates a second birth through meditation on the symbols of Nature which achieves a "fixing" of the spark of the divine into thinking consciousness. Both consider the imagination to be the *primus motor creans*, the root of all production. On the basis of the parallels that can be drawn it is not surprising Steiner considers that Böehme derived the context of his writings from a complicated, wonderful second sight not unlike his own (1901/1980b, np).

When Steiner applies his understanding of the Christic archetype in Nature which follows his religious conversion to his epistemology of consciousness, it gives rise to a theological "Monism" that moves away from any orthodox theology. In contrast to orthodox Christian cosmogony, spirit is the original state of everything and he reveals no self-sufficient creator God comparable to that of Judaeo-Christian tradition (Ahern, 1984, p. 107). Steiner's macro-historical vision also rejects the official teaching of the Catholic Church that Christ had come to atone for the sins of humanity (Mahoney, 2008, p. 2). Instead, Steiner claims that Christ had come to offer every individual the potential to become his own saviour and affect his own salvation. Steiner preaches that when mankind is able to train the undeveloped faculty of Intuition through the instrument of the imagination he will gain a progressive self-consciousness and actuate the immortal, ideal *Ideas* that he attributes to the Angelic Hierarchy. Informed by his Christic consciousness the thinker will be able "to act in accordance with the laws of the nobly beautiful and eternally true without any disturbing influence from his personality" (1904/1971b, p. 168). As such, Anthroposophy is a science of initiation which deeply alters the perception and cognition of its pupils - the essential preparation for the mystical coming of the etheric Christ (Franklin, 1989, p. 356). Steiner teaches that the knowledge of *Anthroposophia's* wisdom streams to be acquired through the study of the content of Anthroposophy allied to empirical meditative exercises will enable the

pupil through his own agency to transform the man of Nature and return him to a psychic connection with the spiritual in the Universe - the anthroposophical equivalent of "redemption".

The core of Steiner's Monism is the sovereign independence of the individual. The human being and nothing else is the determining factor with regard to moral thought and behaviour (Straume, nd, p. 8). He essentially sees his teachings as a rejuvenated form of Christianity which will bring freedom from the restrictions imposed on the individual by the Church and prevailing social structures. He further considers that his own Christocentric worldview based on his reinterpretation of the Scriptures and esoteric texts combined with his supersensible insight is critical to instituting the free-will that must counter the introspective and isolated society that the new Germany is in the process of becoming.

2.7.2 Steiner's Philosophy and Rosicrucian Christology and Faivre's Characteristics of Esotericism

(1) *Correspondences*

Faivre claims there are symbolic and real correspondences in all parts of the Universe both seen and unseen. He delineates two forms of correspondence, one between the human body and the character; the other between the cosmos and revealed texts (refer 2.7.3). Steiner's mind before matter Universe is a world of disembodied spirits and an interacting phalanx of planetary gods - the Divine and Angelic Spiritual Beings with whom man in his inner consciousness is intimately connected. The notion that man is a microcosm of the macrocosm also lays the ground for the concept that the human-self is spread out throughout the kingdoms of Nature. The ability to acquire the organic "higher knowledge" through the co-operation of the free creative capacities of the human imagination with their projective revelations is the faculty that places mankind at its summit (Franklin, 1989, pp. 62, 150). Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition are for Steiner, the lynchpin of the *correspondence*

between the microcosmic mind of man and the macrocosm of the Universe and it is on this basis that all his work proceeds.

The research indicates that by the time Steiner came to publicly present the findings of his esoteric research he had been initiated into the Rosicrucian discipline and there is ample evidence to support the conclusion that his work was substantially influenced by the writings of the ancient philosophers and Gnostic scholars. From his earliest lectures in which Steiner speaks in praise of Plato's conviction that the goal of all striving for knowledge must be to acquire the pure "real" *Ideas* which carry the world and constitute its foundation it is possible to adduce that his is a philosophy grounded in antiquity. He emphasizes that it is Goethe who has perceived Plato's philosophy of *Ideas* "in all its purity" (1897/1918, p. 2). Following a detailed study of organic Nature, the poet-scientist is able to reveal that the all-being Principle of the Infinite has "poured itself into the world" thereby placing its own being and life into all of its creations whose archetypal forms are able to be perceived through *scientiva intuitiva* (nd/1950a, pp. 56, 57). In *The Philosophy of Freedom* Steiner applies Goethe's theorising to human consciousness affirming that via the pure reasoned Intuition from the ideal sphere of the world of archetypal *Ideas*, "we are the All-One Being that pervades everything" and thereby, able to identify with true spiritual "Reality" (1894/1949, p. 66).

Following his conversion to esoteric Christianity Steiner is critical of what he calls the "one-sided Platonism" which is evident in Augustine's teachings thereby separating man from God by denying that the Divine Spirit can ever be present in the human soul in full "clear day" consciousness (1897/1918, p. 2). On the other hand, Anthroposophy offers the seeker of true knowledge the possibility to share in the Universal Mind and the workings of the spirits of the Higher World. Steiner says that the ability to share in the "spark" of the Divine World Soul which is isomorphic, with the development of an individual moral consciousness, will give rise to a "life in God" (Steiner in Stebbing, 1965, p. 23). It is a view similar to that of

Aristotle's commentator, Averroes (1126-98), and medieval thinkers who returned to Plato's "participatory" reason which gave each person direct access to the visible world of God or mind. In the doctrine of the monopsychic intellect, the reasoned intellect is likened to a lamp that is illumined by the active mind of God in order to render transparent all Reality (Wallace, 1996, p. 80). As the foundation for a theory of moral consciousness it comes to be considered as un-Christian. But Steiner refutes this, arguing that only when the soul comes to be enlightened by the entelechy of the moral Christ which is one and the same in all places of the world and in all consciousness (1894/1949, p. 124), can human salvation be assured.

Goethe is clearly influential in providing Steiner with a framework on which to build his theosophy yet he rejects the notion that the thinking subject can become fully transparent to itself. Goethe goes so far as to consider to "know the self" is the ruse of secretly united priests who wish to seduce man away from the activity in the outer world into inner false contemplation. Steiner disagrees with Goethe and aligns his thinking more with the Hermetic Bruno who sees all material things as manifestations of the Infinite Principle and challenges the Church's claim to final authority arguing that man gains access to the divine directly from his own inner illumination. The Gnosticism as represented in Bruno's writings insists as does Steiner, that self-consciousness is the proper window on spiritual reality as opposed to the revealed truth or sacred doctrine (Raschke, 1980, p. 49). In providing the meditative path to "higher knowledge" Steiner, as he promises, completes the work done by Bruno and the Renaissance philosophers. From his philosophical perspective Steiner emphasizes that the thinker who has come to "know the self" has sacrificed his lower-self to the Absolute I of the Higher Ego-self. From the Christological perspective this represents transformation to the "new self" awake to the Ego of the Archetypal Christ and is thenceforth on the way to becoming Spirit-man. In Anthroposophy, to "know" the spiritual-self is the critical key to a direct sight of the actively living Christ Spirit.

To "know the self" which is both spiritual and divine provides the focus of Steiner's eclectic teachings. Steiner employs the process of *Katharsis* in the Platonic sense of an ecstatic practice leading to purification and ultimately salvation (Morgan in Kraut, 1992, p. 231). He teaches that from the moment of *Katharsis* onwards the pupil of Anthroposophy has reached the point where he comprehends the relationship between freedom and causation and has found "the moral centre of the self" (1894/1949, pp. 141, 142). This is the state of *ethical individualism* that will thenceforth provide the basis for the operation of a Christian moral code. In Steiner's epistemological Monism it is the intuitive element brought to consciousness that will lame and repress "the natural activity of the natural man" and put in its place the spiritual activity of the will permeated by the ideal *Idea* (1894/1949, pp. 163, 164). Through this surrender and selflessness the task of the thinker is not therefore to produce but reproduce the "pure" and ideal *Idea*, the spiritual truth which is absolute and universal. Thenceforward the pupil is able to consecrate his thoughts and actions to the service of the Christ as the *telos* of evolving life. Through a free-willed union with the Christ Archetype the potential exists to claim "Thy will be done on Earth" (Franklin, 1989, p. 396). For the anthroposophist, an extreme level of devotion to the law of Divine Justice is called for if he is to embark on his earthly task of exercising the Divine will.

Steiner's Christology with its Nietzschean echoes (Steiner in Palmer, 1975, p. 96) is provocative. His contention that spiritual forces created man and then withdrew "leaving him to himself" (nd/1950b, p. 95) requires the Sun Christ to assume an earthly form not as a sacrificial offering but as the legitimate means whereby man can acquire the moral consciousness that will allow him to assert his will and reason over the Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces that have brought humanity to a state of gross materialism and unimaginative intellectualism in preparation for the earthly incarnation of the latter. For Steiner, the metaphysical realists who look for the origin of salvation in the sphere of extra-human reality suffer from the burden of illusion (1894/1949, p. 138). It is through the

intrinsic inner experience of the Higher Ego-self that man may affect his own salvation by balancing the cosmic principles of good and evil in the human psyche, not via the agency of any outer force. A Gnostic influence is discernible here but Steiner has denied it (refer p. 52).

In promoting the capacity of the individual to act out of his personal moral, spiritual consciousness Steiner considers that he has resolved the dilemma of the impersonal human intellect that allows itself to be commanded by the inclinations and sub-conscious drives of a lower nature. Through the practice of *ethical individualism* Steiner contends that the pupil becomes the most perfect link that corresponds to the developing and purposeful organism of the Universe (Wendt, nd, p. 18). The pupil of Anthroposophy is no longer at mercy of the "characterological disposition", acting instead on the strength of a moral will able to realise the perfect form of human action even when the path is strewn with thorns (1894/1949, p. 161). Arguably, as the mind of man is transformed into the connective link between the supersensible realm and the phenomenal world the Hermetic axiom "as above so below" reaches its apotheosis.

There is much in Steiner's theory of *ethical individualism* that accords with Aristotle's ethics of virtue. Here moral judgements and responses will not "conform to rational canons of universal prescriptivity but will instead promote the aims and purposes of a range of virtuous dispositions" (Carr, 1996, p. 356). Tempered by a clairvoyant insight Aristotle did not claim, Steiner teaches that by bringing the thinker into a psychic interconnection with the Higher-self, "characterological dispositions" are made virtuous in the sense that they are no longer motivated by something "purely individual" but the ideal and hence universal outcome of "pure" intuition or practical reason (1894/1949, p. 118). Aristotle's doctrine of the mean is informed by *logos* (reason) in a way that the person of practical reason would determine it. The decisions of a practically wise person are not therefore guided by "mere intuitions but can be justified by a chain of reasoning" (Kraut, 2010, pp. 12, 13). Conversely, Steiner's *Logos*

arises out of the divine intuitions of a Christ inspired moral conscience. Because of this Steiner insists that the ideal *Idea* that consciously reveals itself is not to be questioned but carried out as duty stating, "I do not examine with my intellect whether my action is good or bad; I perform it because I am in love with it" (Steiner, 1884/1949, p. 125). The rejection of the need for principled reflection is understandable to the anthroposophist who knows that Christ came to further the evolution of mankind's moral consciousness and will one day replace the demand of law with His Celestial Love (Georgescu, 2006, p. 4) - an idea that proved difficult for the non-anthroposophist in Steiner's time to accept forcing him to publically defend his theories with limited success.

The centrepiece of Steiner's moral argument is therefore the theory of *ethical individualism*. It is the antithesis of Kant's Absolute moral law, the Categorical Imperative - an uncompromising, rule bound morality in which the basis of action is valid for all men that can never be modified by expediency. By contrast, Steiner wishes to employ the intuitive resources of the intellect informed by Christic Love to create a response appropriate to a given situation (1894/1949, p. 126). The resulting action does not follow stereotyped rules nor is it an automatic response to any external impulse. In so doing he believes that he is not promoting the pursuit of self-interest or self-love but advocating the love of a duty to perform a moral act inspired by the very highest order. Steiner insists that once the spirit is recognised in consciousness there can be no moral misunderstanding between individuals. Steiner foresees no apparent difficulties arising from the complex *mores* that social and cultural pluralism inevitably engender because the thinker who has become cognisant of the spirit-life within draws from the fount of the divine universal spiritual values of Goodness, Beauty and Truth. A particular requirement of the efficiency of his theorising is the establishment of a community of individuals who share the anthroposophical *weltanschauung*. Steiner's advocacy of an esoteric Christian mission that calls for a global dissemination of Anthroposophy is understandable from this perspective.

In establishing the power of the individual to take charge of karmic destiny and ultimate redemption, Steiner confidently asserts that his "Spiritual Evolutionism applied to the moral life" places the crown on the edifice of Darwinian natural science and Haeckel's biogenetic law (1894/1949, p. 160). His argument turns on the assumption that the consistent Evolutionist is bound to look on the life of moral self-determination as the spiritual continuation of organic life. It is an argument that Steiner regards affirms Haeckel's tenet that Monism is a system of philosophy transcending orthodox theologies as a form of belief and is the only rational system of science and religion. In Steiner's system, when man becomes Spirit-man through actively participating in the cosmic creative process he will however, have far exceeded Darwin and Haeckel's expectations. Steiner further considers that his moral theory based on pure thinking inspired by Christ's love brings to a satisfactory conclusion Nietzsche's "immoralism". He tempers Nietzsche's anarchic freedom of egoistic self-assertion by claiming that when such instincts are traced back to their origin they are the equivalent of the Moral Imagination (Steiner in Palmer, 1975, p. 10). Against Nietzsche's nihilism Steiner believes that he posits the "spiritual certainty" of knowledge, and the idea of the free spirit meeting each situation which requires moral judgement with a new and selfless moral insight (Welburn, 2004, p. 40).

Steiner's Rosicrucian Christianity and the path to spiritual initiation that it preaches offers its followers an esoteric theology of positivity. Human consciousness is presented as an indispensable part of the totality of the Universe whereby its ontological status is assured. The spiritual aspirant who is able to reveal the "spark" of the Archetypal Christ in his moral thought and action becomes fully integrated into the world-whole. The pupil awakened to the practical reason of true moral consciousness is no longer an onlooker standing outside the process of the spiritual world but the mind-stage on which the universal Spirit experiences its own evolution and existence. Through experiencing the *Ideas* in the free-willed act of knowing he comes to surrender to the Divine and participate in the creative process of the

cosmos. Thenceforth, the process of integrating the moral purposiveness of the Ideal into ordinary life is a constantly ongoing task - in Steiner's schema self-doubt has little positive value (Franklin 1989, p. 395). When Spiritual Science awakens an understanding of such things even in a small nucleus of humanity, the groundwork is laid for the next cultural Epoch in which the authority and wisdom of the Christ Spirit will be fully recognised (1907/1941, p. 4) - according to Steiner's clairvoyant glimpse of mankind's predestined future.

Esoteric theory aside, the moralist would argue that there are fundamental flaws in Steiner's doctrine. Steiner has no expectation that the interests of the individual will contradict the interests of society even though duty to oneself is primary. Moral subjectivism does not exist for those awakened to the Christ in consciousness. Steiner's moral theory therefore operates under the severe limitation that only those who have undertaken the path of Initiation to "higher knowledge" as prescribed by Anthroposophy can be considered capable of truly moral judgement. For those whose minds do not inhabit the spiritual realm and have not found the path to their inner Christ, true freedom of moral behaviour appears to be illusory. As in Nature things are ordered hierarchically, and ideally society must be guided by those who have experienced the revelations of *Katharsis*. Arguably this will create a "core" group of thinkers who must be afforded a superior position in society. The social implications are significant and will be discussed in Chapter 4.

(2) *Living Nature*

Faivre states that for the esoteric scholar the Universe is "complex, plural, hierarchical" and essentially "alive in all its parts" (1994, p. 11), and as a spiritual researcher Steiner comes to recognise the material world-whole as a pantheistic, purposeful organism. He employs Goethe's notion of a developing and transforming world - a perception shared by the Platonist Marsilio Ficino (1439-1499) and the Rosicrucian, Robert Fludd (1574-1637) (Lachman,

2011, p. 1). Schelling, himself influenced by Goethe, contributes significantly to Steiner's contention that Nature is spirit in the course of "becoming" tied to the evolution of human consciousness. In his important work entitled *Naturephilosophie* (1797) Schelling contends that Nature and spirit are identical. "Nature is materialised spirit behind whose appearances man can identify the unfolding of original *Ideas*" (Katz, 2005, p. 113). Schelling is also able to relate the idea of the ontogenic separation of material Nature from the Absolute to freedom through a striving for self-awareness. While Steiner's early epistemology shows a distinct resemblance to Schelling's metaphysical ideas his completed system reflects the influence of his religious conversion to esoteric Christianity. Through his revelations he is able to say that the kingdoms of Nature are part of a metamorphosing world-whole that demonstrates a close analogy to the human being. He further reveals that the Christ, by objectifying into earthly matter and assuming the Earth as His Body, may now be intellectually known to man (Franklin, 1989, pp. 64-67). When the ascent of consciousness is complete, Steiner believes that the virtuous man moves closer to becoming Spirit-man and correspondingly, the transformation of the living macrocosm into the Planet of Love is anticipated to take place.

Following Steiner's meditation on the Mystery of Golgotha he posits a "redemption of thinking" that stands alongside the ideas of Goethe and Schelling mindful of Spinoza's formatively important panpsychism. For Spinoza (1632-1677), influenced by Bruno, there is nothing in Nature that does not have a mental aspect, and physical science is a way of studying the psychology of God (Seager & Allen-Hermanson, 2001/2010, p. 7). Steiner as a scientist of the spirit, in attempting to liberate the thinker from a barren and materialist worldview, posits a spiritual panpsychism that allows for a complex and conscious reintegration with Nature. This is not achieved in the "naïve" way of the mystical clairvoyance of the ancient Atlanteans but via an enhanced and more sophisticated unity (Sumser, 1994, p. 499) through the meditative discipline of Anthroposophy.

Steiner is aware of the theories of Gustav Fechner (1801-1887) but calls his idea of a "plant soul" as an "excessively fantastic elaboration" of a man before his time (1910b/nd, p. 2). Instead, Steiner claims that behind the outer forms of Nature is an "inner life" of spirit-beings. These are the supersensible life-forms, the emanations of the Universal Mind, in whose work the Intuitive thinker can vicariously participate. He teaches that the adult pupil of Anthroposophy who can "see into" the weaving, ethereal pictures of the natural realm will come to recognise the unfolding of the original or archetypal *Ideas*. By following the path of Spiritual Science the human mind can therefore become the stage on which the enspirited life of Nature is presented noumenally as "a thing in itself" distinct from a thing that is knowable by the senses through merely phenomenal attributes (Franklin, 1989, pp. 80, 149). When the pupil studies the spiral of the plant in reverent contemplation he is thus attempting to participate in the "primal ground of world existence" - objective reality in its "highest potency" (1894/1970b, p. 71).

To reveal the workings of the Christ, the lofty Sun god who came to quicken the "Impulse" of love and moral goodness, Steiner creatively employs the notion of a spiritual panpsychism in order to mitigate the consequences of the mathematical, mechanistic laws put forward by Galileo and Copernicus as if the "cosmos were some huge machine" (Steiner, 1919/1954b, p. 11). In Spiritual Science, if man is to press forward on the ladder of spiritual knowledge he is called upon to participate in the all-embracing life of Nature which requires her signs and hieroglyphs, the symbols of her intelligence, to be read and understood. In place of either an abstract Schelling's *Weitgeist* or Goethe's pantheistic *en kai pan*, Spiritual Science therefore offers the pupil to "know" the Christ through the supersensible beings which constitute the natural world and who enter human consciousness in the form of ideation (Franklin, 1989, pp. 67, 68).

Steiner's view of a living Nature captures quite precisely, aspects of the thinking of the important figure of the occult tradition, Paracelsus (1493-1541). Paracelsus saw Elemental spirits in the natural world, the *undina*, *sylvestres*, *gnomi* and *vulcani*, as serving a religious function in their role as signs and omens for earth, water, air and fire. He defined their duty as guardians of the unfolding of Nature's natural "treasures" and he regarded them as occupying every aspect of Nature imbuing it with a natural intelligence which becomes available to microcosmic man through reverent contemplation (Siderius, 2011, p. 6). Perhaps of some significance for Steiner, he also spoke of the "aquastor", a being formed by the power of concentrated imagination which could obtain a life of its own and, in special circumstances become visible or even tangible (Black, 2007, p. 28). Steiner himself is well aware of the Elemental spirits, the inner life of Nature and through spiritual insight is able to perceive such beings and describe them (1904/1971b, p. 138). But he laments that in the modern age man has come to conceive of a world that while it is the work of the godly angelic Hierarchy, it is no longer the scene of their present manifestation and activity. The individual whose thinking is clouded by the daemons of Ahriman and Lucifer sees before him all sorts of shapes and forms that clearly reveal their divine origin, but in which, if he regards it without illusion, no actual divine life is presently discernible (Steiner in Palmer, 1975, p. 108). From the perspective of the anthroposophist, only when the Imaginative soul can be rekindled, and the life of Nature comes once again to be revealed will the purpose and evolution of the cosmos be assured.

(3) *Imagination and Mediation*

As stated, Faivre sees these two elements as linked and complementary. The idea of *correspondence* presumes already a form of imagination inclined to use mediations of all kinds such as rituals, symbolic images and intermediary spirits (Faivre, 1994, p. 12). In terms of the latter it will be recalled that spirit possession is essential in Anthroposophy to further

the evolution of human consciousness towards the goal of Spirit-man. As discussed, the organisation of the Anthroposophical Society at its foundation meetings in 1913 and 1923 was consecrated to the angelic intermediaries - *Anthroposophia* and *Michael* respectively. Within the ambit of the Society, Steiner sees himself as an Initiate serving both the Christ and His messenger, Christian Rosenkreutz. He recasts human history as a religious narrative inspired by their angelic and divine "impulses" or instructions which are to be won through the power of imaginative perception.

Basically, Anthroposophy can be seen as a theology of the Romantic imagination (Reilly, 1971, p. 212). It is the means, Steiner says, when defining the task of Anthroposophy, by which the angelic gods and man interact. It is the power of the imagination that will heal the ontological rift that has occurred through the Ahrimanic thinking of the modern age. In Steiner's schema, when the "second man" comes to light in human consciousness the pupil will gain access to the moral wisdom of the Universe. This notion shares a similar perspective to the Hermetic scholars who saw the imaginative memory as a reflection of the entire realm of *Ideas* in their fullness and thus the key to universal knowledge (Greer, nd, p. 2). Steiner thus joins the mystics, magicians and alchemists through the ages who have used the faculty of the imagination to heighten religious experience or religious praxis. In Steiner's pathway to universal knowledge the imaginative exercises that the pupil must perform will transform theosophia (wisdom of God) into anthroposophia (the wisdom of man) at which point, Christ becomes the "imaginable other" through spiritual vision (Reilly, 1971, p. 213).

Steiner's definition of the spiritual ladder which the anthroposophist must attempt to ascend during an earthly incarnation is consistent with the Pseudo-Dionysian tradition (Ahern, 1984 p. 118). In place of an abstract *Weitgeist* Steiner sees the spiritual world as a hierarchy of intelligences working through human intermediaries. Steiner accepts Hegel's spiritual realm - Folkspirit, Zeitgeister and World Spirit - not as philosophical abstractions but as beings of the

spiritual world he is able to perceive directly. They stand one step in advance of mankind and are defined by the possession of "the fully self-conscious autonomous Self" (Franklin, 1989, pp. 53, 56, 79). The task of these guiding spirit-beings is to mediate the will of the angelic kingdom which in the current age of the *Consciousness Soul* is concerned with the development of man's psychic progress (Wilkinson, 1994b, p. 37). In this period of evolution which Steiner perceives as having to work towards imaginative "supersensible perception", it is the angels of the third Hierarchy, Ahriman and Lucifer who have remained behind in their development and now work to counter the work of the Divine Ego of the Christ in preparation for an earthly incarnation (1919/1954b, p. 17). As the dialectic of good and evil all three have come to exist in the human psyche (Bondarev, 2010, p. 99). In Anthroposophy, it is the power of the imagination fortified by the human will that must form the counterweight to the earthly pull of Ahriman and Lucifer.

Because Steiner considers the Ahrimanic intellectualisation of thinking as the root cause of the loss of mankind's spiritual perception he comes to consider the "awakening" of an imaginative thinking consciousness as the constructive rationality that will lead the pupil, both adult and child, towards the attainment of "salvation". En route to "higher knowledge" that will resurrect "dead thinking", Steiner utilizes the term "imagination" not in a reductive sense but as the tool which will unite the language of observation and thinking. Faivre suggests that in order to travel felicitously along the path and read the guideposts provided by the mediating angels is for the esotericist, less a matter of inciting them to intercede in favour of coming to "know them" through the "active imagination" (Faivre, 1994, pp. 20, 21). In the imaginative dialogue of Anthroposophy it is the mind trained in the form of meditation that Steiner presents in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds* and the Rosicrucian Study which enable the pupil to move beyond the half-reality of sense perception to engage with the objective conceptual *Ideas* of the supersensible life forms (akin to Faivre's *intellectus agens*) that manifest in human thinking. Anthroposophically speaking, these are the world spirits that

express themselves in materially in the kingdoms of Nature and noumenally in human thinking (Franklin, 1989, p. 150). For example, in the process of Initiation the Inspired form of cognition is a psychic entry into the spiritual beings lying behind Nature's outer face, while Intuitive thinking allows the pupil to actually experience the Christ Spirit at the moment of *Katharsis*.

In *The Philosophy of Freedom* Steiner devotes a chapter to the "Moral Imagination" he believes is the creative faculty of the mind that allows the thinker to produce concrete representations or mental pictures from the sum of his *Ideas*. Steiner states categorically that it is the Imagination which is the source of the free spirits' action (1894/1949, p. 155). The ability to be able to realise these *Ideas* and "think through the spirit" presupposes however, that the thinker has reached the stage of union with the "pure" consciousness of the Higher-self. When the soul is freed from the constraints of gross materialism (Ahriman) and intellectualism (Lucifer) through the process of Initiation, the Moral Imagination becomes active and the human mind reunited with the spiritual Reality (Faivre's *mundus imaginalis*) of the Universe. In keeping with the German Idealist tradition Steiner therefore places the thinker into a purposive world whole but moves philosophy into the mystical realm by offering the individual the personal experience of the World Spirit through the faculty of the imagination. Without the Moral Imagination the individual is bereft of the universal moral imperatives which conquer the so-called "man of Nature". In turn, Steiner sees this as impacting on his moral and social freedom. Social custom, religious dogma and State laws are to be observed by the free spirit only in so far as the Intuitive imagination perceives them to be valid (Franklin, 1989, p. 398).

In order to encounter the Higher-self requires the employment of the imagination in the form of a mnemonic system, the associative process utilised by Hermeticists such as Giordano Bruno and Raymond Lull (1235-1316) whose "Great Art" Steiner is familiar with (1907a/nd).

Steiner creates his own mnemonic system based on the imaginative contemplation of outer Nature. He calls on his pupils to cast aside the burden of normal cognition and enter into a world made comprehensible by Goethe's *delicate empiricism*. Through the methodology of *scientiva intuitiva*, Nature which has become "dumb and inarticulate" will once again reveal her secrets. In Steiner's system there is no need for metaphor or analogy. Budding fruiting flowering, the metamorphic stages of plant growth ever hide an inner archetypical image which a fertile, imaginative contemplation can perceive. By meditating on Nature's vivid images and forms and via the cultivation of the sensuous feelings for its origins, the soul-psyche is freed from the "contaminated imaginations" that work to hinder its connections with the spirit realm. Emancipated from the restrictions of sense perception the pupil acquires a memory of the spirit-self unknown to the ordinary and presumably, unimaginative form of consciousness.

Steiner also employs the power of the imaginative eye in another sense. The notions of Reincarnation of the spirit and the sojourn of the soul in the spiritual realm prior to re-birth are evocative of Plato's worldview. According to Steiner, it is the task of the imaginative faculty to enhance the memory "rayed back" at birth in order to counteract the problem of omniscience. This is of particular significance to Steiner's educational philosophy. When called on to prepare the ground of the young mind to one day reach the goal of spiritual consciousness, Steiner affirms the powers of the will and the creative imagination to accomplish it. In his early pedagogical lectures which will be discussed in Chapter 5, he embraces the ancient notion that learning, at least of moral and metaphysical aspects, is simply the recollection of all things known before birth into the realm of matter. To awaken in the mind what has been "rayed back" by the process of antipathy the teacher will need to cultivate the memorial imagination and strengthen the will to think creatively using stories, rhythms and repetitive formula thereby bringing into modern usage key tools once used by the Hermetic transmitters of esoteric knowledge (Greer, nd, p. 2).

(4) *Transmutation*

Faivre considers the term *transmutation* should also be understood as "metamorphosis" which favours the notion of a "second birth". He indicates that the notion of a personal transformation has been an important part of the alchemical corpus of knowledge particularly since the beginning of the seventeenth century (Faivre, 1994, p. 13). The ultimate goal of the "Great Work" of the alchemist was to purify and transform the soul to achieve a mystical union of the Self with the divine intelligences of the macrocosmic Universe (Koulias, 2009, p. 13). Traditionally it was seen to incorporate purgation, illumination and unification. To achieve a personal transformation which culminates in a psychic unification with the Christ as the mind experiences purgation from the so called "contaminated imaginations", lies at the very heart of Steiner's esoteric Christian Initiation. For Böehme, the birth of Christ in man is accomplished through the Holy Spirit and the Father (Faivre, 1994, p. 27). For Steiner, it is achieved by the practical unfolding of the clairvoyant thinking offered by the meditative path of Anthroposophy.

The concept of transmutation or metamorphosis is employed by Steiner in a number of forms relating to the history of the world and the development of the consciousness soul within the individual. His theory of world history is not providential and follows the historical Epochs drawn from Rosicrucianism, and is similar to Madame Blavatsky's original teachings although with a greater emphasis on the coming of Christ (Ahern, 1984, p. 126). Each Epoch is characterised by distinctive ways of life and religious perceptions which are to be seen as "*symptomatological*" manifestations of the *Ideas* of the spiritual world working through inspired individuals. Christ Himself "transforms" through various incarnations to become the "Perfect Man". In Steiner's carefully nuanced Cultural Epochs, specific tasks are dictated by the spirit beings and the evolution of knowledge is paralleled by the evolution of mankind's consciousness. Both man and spirit are seen to have passed through the pre-destined cultural

phases characterised by the metamorphosis of the I or Ego Self. This historical-ontological process is therefore to be understood as an enduring and on-going sequence in which the Self has participated, transforming in a way appropriate to the Epoch (Welburn, 2004, p. 10). In the current age of the *Consciousness Soul* it has evolved to the point of a potential spiritual awakening or spiritual re-birth - a rebirth that will be assisted by the re-examination (or recollection) of all that has constituted the driving forces of civilization and culture (Bondarev, 2010, p. 8).

(5 & 6) *Concordance and Transmission*

Faivre indicates that in the Western esoteric tradition the practice of *concordance* marks most particularly the beginning of modern times showing up in a tendency to try to establish common denominators between two different traditions or more. The objective of the esotericist is to thereby achieve an illumination of superior quality (Faivre, 1994, p. 14). Steiner believes that his revelations provide a much deeper understanding of Christianity that in his time could be attributed to the scholars of the Church (Franklin, 1989, p. 354). In his eyes, Rosicrucian Christology provides the seeker with a theological foundation that explicates the foundation of the world and defines the coming of the Christ Spirit as the means by which the pupil can be opened to the all embracing ground of universal spiritual cognition. He sees traditional theology as having impaired man from an understanding of the spiritual-self, and by contrast, he teaches that through a reconnection to the wisdom of the Divine Sophia the mind of man and the mind of Christ no longer need to be incommensurable. The wall he perceives churchly faith has erected between the conscious and unconscious mind is to be scaled through Anthroposophy (Raschke, 1980, p. 157).

Steiner's deeply unorthodox Christianity with its Gnostic and Eastern elements amply "fits" Faivre's expectations relating to the notion of *concordance*. In order to reappropriate the

knowledge he considers has been lost, Steiner effectively melds together elements of Christianity and a personal interpretation of the Rosicrucian discipline, insisting that it is an understanding of its tenets that will one day make possible the etheric vision of the Christ (Weber, 2005, p. 21). In the mix there is also an identifiable influx from Eastern philosophies. Apart from the central Buddhist and Hindu notions of Reincarnation and Karma, the origins of the fallen Angels Ahriman and Lucifer, the beings of Darkness and Light, are to be found in the Manichean system of beliefs (Ahern, 1984, p. 139). The notion of the age of "*Kali Yuga*" is also borrowed from the East.

Recollecting the dramatists and writers, Lessing (1729-1781) and Schiller (1759-1805), Steiner considers that the progressive education of the human race through a united study of art, science and religion is under the guidance of great teachers who incarnate from Epoch to Epoch (Franklin, 1989, p. 54). In terms of the *Transmission* of his theories, Steiner is regarded by his followers as an Initiate who walks in the footsteps of such luminaries as Plato, Aristotle, Zarathustra and Buddha. Some regard him as an incarnation of the ancient scholar, Aristotle (Matherne, 2010, np). His authority to teach the ancient truths of Christianity in a form that he declares as "suitable to the modern age" (1914/1985a, p. 23) resides in a claimed clairvoyant and visionary perception which only followers of Anthroposophy consider incontestable.

2.7.3 The Esoteric Narrative

Faivre points out that a reading of the relevant texts assists the pupil in reappropriating the knowledge that has been lost, and the aspects of myth the esotericist will emphasise are those that the established churches have tended to neglect. He suggests that the theosopher will thoroughly exploit the exploratory range of the mythic narrative, for example, "the comparative study of folk tales and myths of all lands enrich with "new dimensions" a comprehensive hermeneutics". With a different approach to human sciences a new "planetary

dialogue" emerges and a bridge is built between different departments of learning in particular, art, science and history (Faivre, 1994, pp. 41, 43). Steiner follows the theosophical line of reasoning and defines history as a reflection of the work of the spirit-beings in human consciousness throughout civilization. He considers it to be the task of the Initiate to translate and understand their narratives in original form. This is to be achieved through "exact" or "controlled" clairvoyance which he believes makes it altogether possible to interpret historical work as it appeared to its contemporaries. Steiner anticipates that the clairvoyant will be able to transcend the limits of historical science, and sense "past events in their eternal character" (Steiner in Hansson, 1991, p. 2). He is therefore unlikely to consider accurate the contention that a "historically affected consciousness" or a "particularistic attitude" would inhibit a vicarious understanding of the text (Gadamer in Malpas, 2009, np) when applied to the spiritual researcher.

Steiner is aware of the importance of inter-subjective agreement in his interpretations. He cautions however, that a critical attitude and tendency to analyse will result in a negative understanding of the occult world. Consequently, Steiner must insist that it is only possible to adjudge the validity of his research against that of other true clairvoyants. He claims that Initiates who report on history and prehistory will be "essentially in agreement", and the agreement to be found between historians of the exoteric cannot be compared to the findings of the occultist. If his reading of, for example, the *Akasha Chronicles* does not compare with other occultists Steiner argues that it is very likely that they are mistaken (Hansson, 1991, pp. 3, 4).

In contrast to Christian teachings which Steiner considers authoritative and limiting, he proposes that inspiration which arouses exaltation and gives way to experience is superior to "sober-minded" intellectualism. An uncritical attitude towards the teacher, acceptance of authority and faith without criticism are essential if the pupil is to see the Light of Christ

(Berdyayev, 1916, p. 4). When the head becomes the scene of the influence of the Higher Hierarchies, nothing, according to Steiner, is to be achieved by adding any proof from outside. And because of this he considers that spiritual insight or *gnosis* is able to transcend the work of the conventional historian. Agreement as to the validity of the seeker's cosmic experience is therefore only to be verified by the practised occult teacher (Hansson, 1991, p. 2). Steiner's teachings do not constitute "faith seeking understanding" (Anslem, *Fides querens intellectum*) but faith seeking acceptance without recourse to intellectual discourse as considered proper for the pupil of the esoteric. As Faivre says, the work of the theosopher is to provide a source of "higher knowledge" that can be added to the common truths of objective Revelation and from the moment a person "knows" there can be no distinction between faith and knowledge (Faivre, 1994, pp. 20, 21).

While the established churches encourage rational enquiry to satisfy the need of the faithful for understanding and intellectual satisfaction (Mahoney, 2008, p. 31), the occultist rejects it out of hand as likely to detract from a conscious connection to the Higher-self.

Anthroposophy is thus to be conceived of as a hierarchically ordered body of exclusive esoteric knowledge that allows the pupil to "know" the inner Christ, arrived at not through rational enquiry but from the unique experience of the illumination of consciousness that arises out of inward revelation.

2.7.4 Man as an Actor on the Earthly Stage

Maria Steiner's observation that Steiner acted in line with the spirit of true occultism, preserving the life and leading forward the store of pre-existing spiritual knowledge, is borne out by the breadth and scope of his lectures. Working on the fringes of the Idealist philosophies the anthroposophist linked his epistemology to the Hermetic scholars. Based on what he considered a superior plane of reality, Steiner believed in a consciousness beyond the provisionality of an earthly existence as first detailed in *The Philosophy of Freedom*. He did

not consider his ideas as abstract speculation but as the crucial path to reality and truth of the Self. In essence he believed that Anthroposophy offered the human Ego the potential to gain oneness with the moral forces of the all encompassing macrocosmic cosmos.

As discussed, Steiner's *weltanschauung* embraces the ancient doctrine of the *Correspondence* between body, soul and spirit and the cosmic Universe. Accordingly, Faivre's "theatre of mirrors" finds its complete performance in the human psyche. The microcosm of the mind is seen as a true reflection of the spark of the Divine Christ, and it is the stage upon which moral influxes from the spiritual world and evil Ahrimanic emanations from sub-Nature jostle for attention. The outer man of Nature and the inner man of Spirit must come into balance under the guidance of the healing script of the Christ Sun, the Highest Angel of the Higher Hierarchy. Only then will the thoughts and actions of the actors freely portray the love and wisdom required by the cosmic directors.

The ensemble of hieroglyphs present in the realm of *Living Nature* invested with the Mind of Christ is considered to be the manifestations which contain the essence of the spiritual archetypes. They are the intermediary symbols which must be read and decoded if the actors are to come to know the inner psychic depths of their own true Self. The actor's gift of the imaginative eye must be trained in order to ignite the feelings and give strength to the will that holds the key to his moral thinking consciousness. The creative *Imagination* will bring power over the natural instincts to perform selfishly and egoistically, the promptings which weigh heavily on the quality of an earthly performance. Through constant training of the "organ of the soul", the inner man will rise up and redirect the actor's motivations to the heights of perfect moral thought and action. Care must be taken however, to ensure that the Double, the understudy waiting in the psychic wings, will not be permitted to subvert the karmic prompts. Those who remain asleep in their will can never hear their clarion call and come to know the Absolute in its true character.

The *Revealing Texts* providing a source of inspiration are Scriptures, mythologies and stories of the Epochs all of which give accounts of past performances of those who have mediated the will of the producer, the Universal Mind. Although eclectic in their content, they indicate a willingness to show *Concordance* with a number of accounts of the earthly play. Their stories further enhance the understanding of the actor's motivations, and a comprehensive reading of their scripts brings personal illumination. Complementary, diverse traditions are at play here and the most successful *Transmission* of the harmony between them must surely be through the master director who believes in the esoteric messages contained therein.

Rehearsals are to be ongoing until the final act of a spiritual rebirth. The actor, through his own physic agency, experiences *Transmutation*, his finest and ultimate part translating into that of redeemer and saviour. His portrayal of *Parsifal*, the Knight made slowly wise comes to a climax in this momentous, staged planetary event. A re-spiritualised planet Earth will replace the dying Sun and the enspirited actor in his final incarnation will take on the new role of the shining *Logos*.

2.8 Conclusions

On the basis of the lecture material reviewed, Steiner undoubtedly deserved the epithet of Germany's foremost occult researcher of the twentieth century. From years of dedicated research into a realm he believed to be man's spiritual Reality he created his own magnificent, unwieldy thought picture which he considered to be a renewal of the true meaning of Christianity lost in the materialisms of a modernising world. In a remarkable number of lectures and texts that were a synthesis of the ideas found in ancient philosophies and traditions, he presented his extraordinary findings. To like-minded thinkers he was a gifted mystic and clairvoyant who had crossed the threshold into a spiritual world to receive a new and fundamental *gnosis* - the wisdom of *Anthroposophia*. To those who were searching for an alternative to a rational conventional view of life and existence, Steiner's ideas were cogent and appealing. The small anthroposophical community that gathered around Steiner's

teachings was dedicated to his vision of a moral world order in which Anthroposophy and anthroposophists would prevail. A number of institutions associated with anthroposophists, including the first Waldorf School, were based on Steiner's esoteric *weltanschauung*.

Steiner's core doctrines were shown to form a complex interwoven web which fitted well within the boundaries of Faivre's defining characteristics of the esoteric genre. The ideas Steiner claimed to have derived from spiritual research or mystical clairvoyance appear to have been significantly influenced by ancient traditions and the intellectual discourse of past scholars, in particular the Hermeticists and Nature-philosophers. Steiner's humanistic mysticism focusing on a spiritualised realm of Nature, blended together Rosicrucianism and a highly esotericised form of Christianity with echoes of the teachings found in the mystery Schools of Greece and Egypt. The eschatological elements he presented as a renewal of Christianity thus showed little accord with those of the established Church which he believed had destroyed all that was "great and fair" in the mystical traditions of scholars such as Eckhart and Böehme. The notion that Christ was a "Solar Spirit" sent by an Angelic Hierarchy to redeem human consciousness was a fundamental departure from orthodox Christian teachings. The ultimate goal of Steiner's esoteric theology and mediative discipline was to return humanity and the Earth to the perfection of a perceived spiritual existence in which intellectual powers without morality would be nonexistent.

The first signpost to suggest that Steiner's theories would deviate from the path of orthodoxy was a non-Cartesian epistemology of human knowledge outlined in *The Philosophy of Freedom*. His writings, built on a pantheistic picture of the Universe, were intended to address what he saw as the limitations of a Kantian worldview. Man himself was not to be seen as an independent entity but as a microcosm of the "essence" of the macrocosm whose connection with the cosmic whole was broken not in reality but only through human perception. Self-advancement would come when man could manifest in consciousness the

Idea, the objective emanations of supersensible beings that gave the world its created form. Steiner considered that his epistemology allowed the thinker to enter into the "primal ground of world existence" placing him on an even footing with a higher realm. As the *Ideas* came to consciousness on the stage of the human mind, man was seen to assume a defining role in the evolution of the Universe.

Steiner presented his Monism of Mind as an epistemology of certainty - according to his insights modern man had acquired the potential to take a hand in the creative process of the cosmos. For Steiner, the thinker awakened to the freedom of the moral *Ideas* of the spiritual realm had entered the world of Absolute Truth. Thenceforward his duty would be to place the moral intuitions of the Universe into his daily life. Man alone would bear the responsibility for the state of his own soul. The limitation of the theory of *ethical individualism* which meshed together elements of Bruno's naturalistic ethics, Aristotle's Golden Mean and a refinement of Nietzsche's immoralism have been noted. It was Steiner's contention that only those whose mind had been trained to think beyond the restrictions of ordinary thinking would be capable of exercising the Law of Divine Justice. A notion that highlighted the elite position in which he placed his followers and one that would have significant implications for his view of social ordering.

Steiner saw Anthroposophical Spiritual Science as the pathway to self-improvement both intellectual and spiritual. Through a disciplined process of initiation that was esoteric and hierarchical the Archetype of the Divine Ego would be awoken into human consciousness. The state of a heightened moral cognition leading to *ethical individualism* was to be entered into through the door of the creative Imagination. In the sense of healing the microcosm of the mind with the "spark" of the mystical Christ of the macrocosm, Steiner relied on the notion of an alchemical transformation of the human mind reminiscent of the "Great Work" of the Hermetic philosophies.

In the final analysis, to the rationalist thinkers of his time, Steiner was an esoteric theologian whose political and religious ideas were radical and untenable (refer Frontispiece). To the members of the Anthroposophical Society, he was an inspired esoteric scholar who had acted with the spirit of true occultism, preserving the life and leading forward the store of spiritual knowledge in the form of Anthroposophy - knowledge that cohered only for his followers. There is no argument to be had in the claim that Steiner had entered into another Reality that was more appealing to him than the harshness and materialism of a modernising Germany. In Steiner's recasting of a theosophical cosmological history of the world, mankind and the Earth had reached a stage in their evolutionary progress towards a reintegration with this Reality. He saw it as his task, or more properly his duty as an esoteric theologian to prepare the moral consciousness of his followers towards an idealised future in which a loving, communing society of individuals would be united in their quest to find their inner Christ. As will be discussed in later chapters, in order to achieve this end, Steiner would call for his worldview to form the basis of all teaching in a Waldorf institution. It is therefore useful to canvas the opinions of modern theorists as to the significance of the philosophical and cosmological ideology so far discussed. The following chapter sets out to consider the points of view of those who are supporters of Steiner's esotericism and those who reject its claim to offer the seeker an alternative path to spiritual redemption.

CHAPTER 3

WORLDS APART - SCHOLARLY PERSPECTIVES RELATING TO STEINER'S ESOTERIC *WELTANSCHAUUNG*

3.1 Introduction

The intricate pathways that underpin Steiner's worldview as outlined in Chapter 2 have encouraged a number of adherents and interested academics to translate their meaning into modern terms. Many of the former have been or are practising teachers, and their perspectives are therefore relevant to the current study. Anthroposophy is generally acknowledged by them to be a revelation of ancient truths configured into an introspective discipline suitable for the modern age. A consistent theme is the belief that Steiner has become the new voice of Rosicrucian Christianity that deserves to find a place in current philosophical and theological thinking.

As was noted in the previous chapter Steiner was forced to defend his ideas against the rationalist critics of the time. In the intervening years the ideological gulf has widened and more recently the general consensus by non-anthroposophical commentators is that Steiner's ideas incorporate a blend of Gnosticism, Hermeticism, an idiosyncratic interpretation of Christianity and Rosicrucianism together with elements of Theosophy, and aspects of Eastern theologies. There is no suggestion that Steiner's ideas emanate from a claimed mystical clairvoyance which immediately puts them at odds with the followers of Anthroposophy. A number of authors, including Webb (1976), place Steiner's work into the context of the German occult underground of the early twentieth century. Others, such as Ahern (1984), have carried out extensive research into Steiner's cosmology and its relationship to esoteric religious movements. In general, Steiner's ideology has escaped detailed criticism largely due to the difficulty as Ahern points out, of seeing it as a "mapped whole" (p. 101).

3.2 Contrasting Voices

3.2.1 Believers in the Stone of Love

Reflecting their commitment to his teachings, authors of anthroposophical texts including McDermott (1984), Wilkinson (1994a & b), Bamford (2002) and Welburn (2004) indicate that Steiner's principal contribution to esoteric thought is threefold. Firstly, a philosophy of free-will which sets out to combat the merely phenomenal and give insight to mankind's true psychic potential. Secondly, the meditative discipline of Anthroposophy which purports to unfold the whole manifold splendour and majesty of the spiritually given gift of moral consciousness, and thirdly a reinterpretation of Christian teachings that promise to lead to the ultimate spiritual rehabilitation of humankind and the Earth.

Steiner's philosophy of freedom or philosophy of spiritual activity receives far less attention than Steiner's esoteric Christian teachings largely because of its complexity and the requirement of a mindset appreciative of a line of thinking that conflates established traditions of debate with ancient epistemologies. Sumser (1994) provides a brief, coherent defence of Steiner's philosophy within the context of what he calls the "rational occultism" of *fin de siècle* intellectual-cultural life of the late nineteenth century Germany. His observations also provide a useful summary of Steiner's ideology. He believes that Steiner sought to construct an alternative esoteric worldview by which man could overcome the spiritual alienation of the twentieth century through a radical transformation of consciousness. He states that by adhering to a Goethean objective Idealism Steiner was able to transcend the limitations threatened by neo-Kantian epistemology. He confirms that the anthroposophical view of Nature is reminiscent of the scholars of Romanticism and Idealism and he applauds Steiner's assertion that through human consciousness redeemed man can become "an active agent in the world". In his conclusion, Sumser quotes Steiner's objectives of Anthroposophy which are reflective of the milieu in which it was created. He claims that through his teachings

which attempted to overcome a perceived "poverty of cultural life", Steiner offered his followers a means not only to gain a knowledge of Nature but also a "way out of the chaos and meaningless of modern life" through an alternative worldview to modern scientific understanding (pp. 500-508). Sumser does not explore the teachings that gave new hope to the small core of individuals who found new purpose and the meaning of existence in Steiner's Christian Rosicrucian revelations.

Classical scholar Owen Barfield (1983) attuned to Steiner's work and considered one of its most elegant interpreters also focuses on the notion of the "Redemption" of thinking consciousness. For him, the *Philosophy of Freedom* provides an epistemological argument that is more profound than of any of the German philosophers including Goethe. These are the "apostles of Imagination" whereas Steiner is the "Western sage" whose method is the first to achieve cognition of "pure spirit". Steiner's work, Barfield says, must be conceived as a "Revelation" appropriate to the age. His familiarity with and acceptance of Steiner's objective Idealism are conveyed in the following terms. He describes it as a mode of cognition which allows the noumenal ground of existence to become accessible directly to the student of the spiritual to whom "even the remote past can become an open book" (np).

As pointed out, following his religious conversion, Steiner regarded his task in reintegrating humanity with Nature as furthering the work of the Christ Spirit and His messenger Christian Rose Cross. The comments of his followers indicate that they unreservedly accept the ideas he presented mainly in the form of lectures over a period of twenty years. In McDermott's (1984) opinion, Steiner is an initiate who has tapped into ancient Christian Star Wisdom and the resulting theology holds the key "to the true understanding of the interior self and the true relationship to the external world" (p. 230). These ancient underpinnings of Steiner's teachings are well accepted. Welburn (1978) in researching the work of Adamantius Origenes, believes there is a clear link between the ideas of the Egyptian scholar and those of

Steiner. According to Welburn, Origenes lived in a period when the old Mystery knowledge was dying and as a Neoplatonist he attempted to vivify it by giving it a new scientific form. Steiner, on the other hand, found this scientific form of thought already flourishing and made it his task "to raise it into the spiritual world from which it had become estranged" (p. 71). Ogilvie, another champion of Steiner, believes his ideas represent a cosmic panorama of advanced spiritual truths which will lead to an understanding of the grandeur of the spirit beings interworking with the cosmos and Earth (Ogilvie in Suwelack, 1938/1985, p. 3).

Many of Steiner's followers see the ontology and epistemology of Anthroposophy as in no way divorcing man from modern life by arousing consciousness of ancient origins but in effect, preparing him for the future. For Blackwood (1987), the journey to a consciousness of "ancient origins" is the pilgrimage of the individual to find the wisdom of the goddess Sophia who "fell from the stars into the darkness of earthly matter". Writing in a Waldorf school journal, Blackwood recognises its archaic antecedents -

The wisdom once achieved through special conditions in the Ancient Mysteries can now be found through the individuals' struggles through the thinking, feeling and acting of the soul - for Christ brought the 'heavens to earth' so that folk can find, independently and individually, the inspiration of religion, art and science, in the forms that will be needed in the future.

(Blackwood, 1987, np)

Few are clearer than Barnwell (2001), a well respected anthroposophist, as to the fact that Steiner's teachings are a modern renewal of the ancient Rosicrucian Star Wisdom. In his work concerning the Arcana of the Holy Grail he defines it as esoteric Christianity and Rosicrucianism "metamorphosed" into a form ideally suited for those set on a path of spiritual development -

The esoteric Rosicrucian teachings taught a form of Christian Star Wisdom; and was also concerned with the mysteries of healing and the human body, and the relationship between the Macrocosm ("great world", or Cosmos), and the Microcosm ("little world", or human being). The original Rosicrucians through meditative inner-work and the development of moral forces, received initiation into certain Christ Mysteries of the Holy Spirit that can only be unfolded through supersensible means, and are only to be perceived through clairvoyant powers of perception. The modern continuation of these esoteric Christian teachers is to be found within the Anthroposophy of Dr. Rudolf Steiner - metamorphosed into a form which is ideally suited for cultivating the spiritual development of modern day humanity.

(Barnwell, 2001, p. 37)

With these words, Barnwell repeats the message of Stein (1938/1979) who some sixty years previously, spoke in almost identical terms. In Stein's analysis -

Rudolf Steiner made it possible for us to understand these mythological, medieval conceptions, and at the same time translate them into concepts suited to our own time.

(Stein, 1938/1979, p. 6)

Current literature shows that anthroposophists appear to have no difficulty in categorising Steiner's ideas as theological. Speaking out of an in-depth understanding of Steinerian dogma, Wilkinson (1994a), highlights the theological aspect of Steiner's esotericism, stating that the ultimate purpose of the microcosmic, macrocosmic connection is to lead the individual to "behold the Christ, to fill him with the power of his image, to seek to become like Him and to follow after Him" (p. 86) - albeit in the metaphysical sense. For the anthroposophist, Grahl (1981), the self transformatory process that must take place within the soul is, as Steiner taught, the story of the Holy Grail, and to "know thyself" equates with the Grail initiation depicted in the Ancient Gnostic Mysteries. She sees the Grail quest to achieve oneness with the Christ and "see the Christ in the other" as signposting the way to the

liberation of human consciousness (p. 37). The notion of the "oneness" that can lead the individual to a first-hand apprehension of the immanence of Christ is, according to Franklin (1989), the root cause of the disagreement between Steiner's ideology and the established churches (p. xviii).

The difficulty of maintaining the all-important reverence for Nature which is essential to leading the pupil towards an inner illumination is noted by Suwelack (1938/1985). He concedes that in the current Epoch the rational intellect rejects the notion that Nature is the vessel through which Christ's Holy Spirit can work to enlighten and unite (p. 18). Barfield confirms the foundational notion of the immanentism of the Universal Mind in the spatio-temporal world. For Barfield (1966) and indeed for all anthroposophists, Sophia has, in effect, become the "unconscious sleeping beauty of humanity". Conversely, Nature perceived will be the "self-reflection of waking humanity" and with its attainment, the wisdom of the macrocosmic spiritual realm will not only be the wisdom of the gods but the wisdom of humanity, in other words, anthropo (man) and Sophia (wisdom) (p. 211). Steffen (1961) follows the same line of argument. He states that, by dismissing Nature, humankind is fettered to her laws and authority, coming to a "pattern of life that degenerates into a struggle for existence". Only by elevating human cognition to the "altar of spiritual life", creating a *feeling* for the living soul of Nature, will true *freedom* become possible (p. 30). For the anthroposophist, Nature must be accorded the respect and reverence if the individual is to interact with the World Spirits who are the key to man's psychic salvation. Again Franklin (1989) is instructive. He claims that in this context Anthroposophy must be seen as "a vocation, a religious calling, and the veneration of Nature will form "an important constituting element in the integration of Anthroposophical life-communities" (p. 86).

McIntosh (1997) in examining the history and rituals of mythology sees Steiner as one of the important names in recent history to have incorporated the Rosicrucian stream into a personal

philosophical framework (p. 134). Welburn, who has delved deeply into Steiner's philosophical framework summarises the epistemology of "freedom" in the following terms -

By moving from the static models of knowledge in his philosophical account of human knowing, Steiner showed the possibility of integrating epistemology with our concepts of evolutionary development and restoring the wholeness of man's world. Knowledge for Steiner is our particular way of living in the world, and in the activity which equilibrates between the luciferic and ahrimanic we discover within ourselves not a special adaption but adaptability itself in spiritual form.

(Welburn, 2004, p. 147)

The notion of *ethical individualism* which calls for an "aliveness" in thinking through the power of the imagination represents the foundation-stone on which Steiner erected his esoteric theology. Its attainment is seen as critical if the individual is to find the equilibrium between the Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces that constantly attempt to divert him from a moral path. In Cruse's (1995) opinion, *ethical individualism* resurrects the individuals' right to choose and judge freely. He states that in effect, Steiner's ethical theory "creates a higher morality" than is to be found in codes of ethical conduct or in moral formulae. The emphasis becomes the willingness to break, where necessary, the moral codes in the interest of the highest good. Those who have followed the meditative path of Anthroposophy will act on their spiritual intuitions with the aid of the Moral Imagination. For Cruse, it is a path of action that can be interpreted as following the truth in one's own heart as opposed to outer direction (p. 6). Kirchner-Bockholt (1975) perhaps best describes its potential in keeping with the pivotal notion of the universality of cognition inherent in anthroposophical theory. She defines *ethical individualism* as "a level of consciousness able to determine the ideal motive for an action from the universal truths of cosmic wisdom" (p. 121).

The journey to achieving a level of morality that is spiritually inspired is recognised by modern devotees as a solitary process during which the individual must struggle against the multiple spirits held in psychic consciousness. The Manichean gods of light and darkness, Lucifer and Ahriman, bringers of materialistic thinking, egoism and self interest, hold the power to veil the path to Christ. While the modern mind-soul might long for Goodness, Beauty and Truth, Lucifer and Ahriman subvert and manipulate. Akin to Neumann's (1993) *Shadow of the "hostile brother"* (p. 53), these negative spiritual forces must be battled and balanced out through the Christic truths in inner consciousness. Davy (1976) emphasizes that this line of thinking to be very like Aristotle's doctrine of the mean or finding the path between extremes. In each temptation there is an element of good and each brings gifts. From the fiery tempter of Ahriman can be gained courage, ardour and imagination. From the cold Lucifer is gained clear thinking objectivity and self-reliance. But Davy concedes that in moral judgement there never is safety. It would therefore appear that even anthroposophists awakened to the voice of their inner Christ are "repeatedly on the tightrope of choice" (p. 90).

3.2.2 Dissenting Voices

According to Franklin (1989), Steiner did not write any publication that attempted to systematically express his Christian ideas (p. 352). This in itself has led to a great deal of difficulty for non-anthroposophists to gain a coherent understanding of his teachings and those who have ventured along the "transversal pathways" of Anthroposophy are in general, vigorously critical of their findings. Baker (2000) and Raschke (1980) agree that Steiner's teachings can be viewed within the context of social upheaval of the early twentieth century. Raschke, historian of religion, suggests that Steiner's disciples were teachers, clergymen, scientists and other professionals bound together in the hope of rebuilding a crumbling Western civilization. Rheinstein (1971), reporting on the heady atmosphere of the Munich of his youth where Steiner gave many lectures, is less kind, stating that "Rudolf Steiner magnetized his audience of middle-aged ladies, starry-eyed youngsters and eternal searchers

for the truth "with a mixture of occultism, Goethean classicism and crusading Christianity" (p. 182). It is interesting to note that Ahern (1984) estimates the number of Anthroposophists in 1913 to have been less than three thousand (p. 91). Rheinstein's comments are useful in placing into context the Frontispiece to the thesis which is sourced from the satirical publication of the time - *Simplicimus* (1925).

The beliefs Steiner promulgated from the turn of the twentieth century until his death, prompt Raschke (1980), unsympathetic to Anthroposophy, to regard him as the occult theologian "par excellence", synthesising disparate strands of hitherto secret Gnostic traditions including Hermeticism, Theosophy and Eastern mysticism as well as Rosicrucianism (p. 124). Steiner's claim that the human mind through the process of evolution holds the potential to ascend to the level of pure form of the Universal Mind gives substance to Raschke's observation that the esotericist displayed the quintessence of the modern Gnostic attitude. He is also critical of Steiner's view of man as an "exiled citizen" of many different ascending worlds through the process of Reincarnation as opposed to a finite historical being. He further makes reference to the exclusivity of anthroposophical dogma which allows only the seekers, the initiates, to become privy to the reality of the Higher-self to be looked for in the "universe, in the stars, in the sun and the moon as well as in the stone and animal" (p. 125). In so saying, Raschke captures well the pantheistic worldview of Anthroposophy.

Ullrich (1994/2000) shares a similar view to Raschke noting that the paradox of Anthroposophy resides in the fact that something that is in reality a myth of the second order is proclaimed in the name of science. He undoubtedly echoes the more general consensus of opinion when he states that "the universal presence of the soul, symbolic numbers, magical analogies, Steiner's living logic or images is an attempt to rehabilitate mythical thinking and ritual life in a civilisation ruled by science" (p. 10). Ernst Bloch (1996) historian and philosopher, comments on Steiner's particular form of Christianity describing it as a gnostic

"stopgap" of Haeckel's world riddles. He goes on to say that Steiner's cosmic Christ, the "solar force" or cosmic Sun-being who becomes immersed in the earth tinging it with briefly buried sunshine, cannot be considered alongside the Christ of Christianity. Block's analysis of Steiner's work is ultimately harsh categorising it as a "ramshackle construct of fantasy" - "a truly encyclopaedic confusion tied in a bunch" (pp. 174, 176).

Ahern (1984) in his comprehensive study *Sun at Midnight, the Rudolf Steiner Movement and the Western Esoteric Tradition*, is a further commentator on the theological dimension of Steiner's teachings. He highlights the notion of the psychic correspondence between man and the spiritual world as being the most important part of anthroposophical dogma which is, in fact, the basis of man's striving towards the state of perfection by means of inner Divinity (p. 109). Faivre (1994) defines such an idea as the "theology of image", the realisation of perfection, the "integrality of personal incarnation" (p. 28). As the individual begins to act freely out of the wisdom seeded in the subconscious, a God-inspired morality becomes entirely possible. This is the essential nub of *ethical individualism*, and Ahern is one of the few non-anthroposophists to make broad reference to it. He concludes that to fulfil such aspirations the cosmos must be revealed through objective "spiritual truths" which are neither systematised nor to be seen as culturally relative -

Getting to know the revelation is like entering an enchanted wood. There is no easy way of seeing it as a mapped whole (the attempt to do so) is a profane act; it is easy to become entangled. Much can be interpreted, for Steiner is conceptual, indeed after a very long time in its living intimacy nearly all the trees of the wood may be known. But there are none of the straight, hard perspectives that belong to the outside, 'Ahrimanic' world.

(Ahern 1984, p. 101)

3.3 Conclusions

As was observed at the outset of the thesis, anthroposophical ideology has generated debate, albeit extremely limited, within the world of academia and as pointed out by Ullrich, there is a tendency for the "golden mean" to be missing in its critique of Steiner's teachings. From the preceding research it can be observed that those who follow Anthroposophy and possibly see it as a "mapped whole", adopt a reverential attitude. They see Steiner as a modern-day interpreter of Rosicrucianism and "Star Wisdom" who has taken ancient ideas and metamorphosed them into a new form. Sumser (1994) refers to this as "rational occultism". Such a description goes some way to explaining why Steiner's work has gained little official recognition among either philosophers or theologians in modern times.

The criticisms cited represent brief reflections on an ideology that the writers find derivative and implausible. The difficulty arises when Steiner's ideas are taken out of context of the Western esoteric tradition. Within this framework Anthroposophy gains some traction. It was demonstrated in Chapter 2 that it sits comfortably with the various and many philosophies and worldviews of centuries old teachings. However, when Steiner's ideas are examined from the perspective of those who clearly come from more orthodox Christian worldviews, their rationality and coherence falter. The historians Raschke (1980) and Bloch (1996) are very critical of teachings they perceive to fall outside the parameters of accepted orthodoxies. By adjudging them from their own worldview their conclusions are to be anticipated. What however, they see as its limitations and failures, the anthroposophist regards as its cogent appeal and strengths. Both would undoubtedly regard the traditions and teachings of their respective worldviews as superior to the other. Raschke (1980) agrees that Steiner's work must be seen within the context of the social upheaval of the early twentieth century, but he is clearly unwilling to accept this as an apologia for concepts such as the Universal Mind and the search for the Higher-self - the backbone of Steiner's theory.

The writers cited who appreciate Steiner's esoteric Christianity highlight the importance of the self-transformatory process his initiation knowledge offers. The goal to acquire an independent "higher morality" or state of *ethical individualism* appears to remain a powerful motivating force among those who follow the anthroposophical argument which rests on the notion of attaining a conscious entry into a spiritual Reality. The concept is critical to bringing cohesion to Steiner's philosophy and esoteric Christianity. Without the drive towards finding the moral centre of the Self through a veneration of Nature, the anthroposophist would be left swimming directionless in a sea of esoteric teachings.

The influences that played into Steiner's teachings as outlined in Chapter 2 provide a clear indication as to the validity and plausibility of his highly idiosyncratic system of ideas and his theoretical understanding of the world. The following chapter takes another step along this pathway into Steiner's "enchanted wood". It sets out to examine the influence of his esoteric philosophy and theology on his vision for a new social order which in turn gave rise to the educational paradigm based on his perceived spiritual revelations that he believed would lay the foundations for its ultimate realisation.

CHAPTER 4

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A MORAL COMMUNITY

4.1 Introduction

As pointed out in Chapter 2 Steiner's interest in social and political issues dates back to his student days at the *Technische Holschule* in Vienna - an interest which was later consolidated during his time as General Secretary of the Theosophical Society. Between the years 1899 and 1904, Steiner gained firsthand knowledge of social questions as a teacher at the Workers College founded by the Socialist, Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826-1900) (1919/1995c, p. 52).

Numerous essays published in the theosophical journal, *Lucifer-Gnosis* confirmed a deep concern for the poverty and discontent affecting large sections of German society which he believed could only be addressed by a reconstruction of the State based on the principles of brotherhood. For Steiner, the causative factors responsible for Germany's social ills were seen to operate on two levels, individual and State. The individual as the fount of all morality and the centre of earthly life had through egoism, created human suffering and precipitated society's failure. At the same time, the organism of the State, which had necessarily grown out of the consciousness of the individual, had established institutions which had reinforced economic inequalities and social disadvantage. The legal system and cultural life had remained stationary in their evolution and had become subject to the power of economic determinism; the educational system focused solely on making the human being serviceable for external life and industry (1919/1985d, p. 17).

Steiner's philosophy of freedom was ideologically linked to the need for a new social order which would separate the cultural, political and economic life which he considered had come to form a "chaotic whole" (1914/1945, p. 23). From the perspective of the anthroposophist, neither a government based on Marxist doctrine nor unfettered democratic reform offered the potential to facilitate the spiritual nature of the individual or move forward the notion of the

evolution of human consciousness. The State, raised to an abstract divinity distorted personal freedom and responsibility, while mass consciousness and a common law distracted the individual from the authentic grasp of his vocation (Raschke, 1980, p. 152).

It was shortly before the outbreak of World War I that Steiner sharply defined Anthroposophy as a renewal of Christian life and knowledge. In 1916 he provided his one single public defence of Anthroposophy (refer p. 52) against the growing opposition of the Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches (Franklin, 1989, p. 362). It would therefore be beyond coincidence that in the following year Steiner turned his attention to promoting a social structure with the potential to allow for the free and unrestricted development of new forms of worship and education led by anthroposophists. In 1919 the Catholic Church officially rejected the teachings of Theosophy (Hardon, 1967, p. 1). As World War I drew to a close Steiner's assessment of the State as an unhealthy organism with no potential to serve the spiritual demands of the Epoch precipitated his determined (and unsuccessful) attempt to enter the world of German politics.

As the threat of socialism contributed to the uncertain times, his *Proclamation to the German Nation and the Civilized World* outlined the notion of a threefold social organisation that would replace the existing government structures in which a free cultural life would be under its own independent control unfettered by economic or political constraints (1919/1998, p. 4). Accordingly, and at this point only theoretically, Steiner envisioned educational institutions based on anthroposophical principles could be set-up to awaken a new generation to the spiritual consciousness that "lay slumbering within". In so doing, the pupils of such schools would begin the ascent to spiritual knowledge that Steiner claimed was the inevitable destiny of the men of Middle Europe (refer p. 37).

Ultimately Steiner's ideas for a *Threefold Commonwealth* failed to proceed beyond the rhetoric. When, in the closing months of 1919 he laid the pedagogical groundwork for the Waldorf-Astoria Factory School, a small but significant opportunity to reignite his cause for Germany's social rehabilitation presented itself. The Stuttgart *Freie Waldorfschule* was intended as a model school for an educational movement that would prepare the youth of a modernising Germany to become "full members of the Human Community able to meet and transform the world" (1920/1928, p. xii).

In as much that Steiner considered that education in the Waldorf School was to be the critical instrument of social renewal it is important to explore the characteristics of the socio-political system which he believed the school would come to serve. In order to facilitate an understanding of the background to the establishment of the School Chapter 4 is divided into three Parts -

- * Part 1 outlines the fundamental elements of Steiner's esoteric social and political theory.
- * Part 2 defines the purpose of the Waldorf School and sets it within the context of the form of Christianity discussed in Chapter 2.
- * Part 3 briefly follows the global growth of the Waldorf School Movement.

Part 1

4.2 Steiner's Esoteric Ideas Relating to Social Renewal

4.2.1 The Social Task of Anthroposophy

In Steiner's historical cosmology the early twentieth century had become a time in the evolutionary march of human consciousness when the powers of darkness subsumed in the human psyche flourished, encouraging ferment and social isolation. Ahriman had sent his demonic Elemental forces to reside in all products of technology subverting the thinking of

the worker. As a consequence, worker discontent was evidenced in all industrial centres where socialism had gained greatest traction. Through the unconscious impulses of the "natural man" an element of anarchy had arisen in the structure of the social organism. At the same time, the fallen Angels, active in psychic depths, pressed the cause of race and nationalism (Steiner in Seddon 2000, pp. 6, 20). Disbelief in both the human spirit and new social ideas had become the prevailing sentiment of the masses. The ideals of *Liberty*, *Equality* and *Fraternity* purportedly enunciated first by the Rosicrucian Master, Comte de St Germain (Black, 2007, p. 360), had been overwhelmed as egoism and self-interest came to dominate everyday life (1918/1984, p. 41). It was evident in Steiner's lectures that he regarded the prevailing social misery and dislocation as evidence of the preparation for Ahriman's future incarnation (1919/1954b, p. 13).

For Steiner and his followers, in the years leading up to World War I and in the immediate aftermath, the German State had lost direction dominated by the economically powerful at the expense of the uneducated and weak. A "materialistic wave" consumed the social fabric which denied the spirit, and at the same time allowed "a great evil to successfully enter man's moral life" (1919/1969a, p. 85). Existing forms of education reinforced the importance of intellectualism and self-interest preparing the child to serve the State at the expense of the development of their moral and spiritual Self. Echoing the sentiments of Madame Blavatsky some thirty years previously, Steiner highlighted the rise of market forces as the key factor in destroying the potential of the individual to develop their capacities and inborn talents. The workman had been called away from his handcraft and placed at the cold, soulless Ahrimanic machine, his rights with regard to his fellow men determined by economic forces. Culture and laws had also become subject to the power of the economic system with no possibility for the individual to organise either suitable to himself. To Steiner's way of thinking, education in particular had suffered at the hands of governments focused solely on economic gain -

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

(Steiner, 1919/1945, p. 20)

In Steiner's theorising, any government that tried to rule society including educational life from the point of view of the economic system alone constituted an attempt at suppression that would ultimately endanger the whole social edifice. Unable to follow its karmic destiny, the true spiritual nature of the human being would "revolt constantly out of the depths of its own natural foundation". For the anthroposophist, the social upheaval characterising early twentieth century Germany indicated as much. The moment had come in the nation's divinely ordained course of spiritual evolutionary history for the needs of the whole to be replaced by a social structure that allowed the individual the freedom to use his talents and capacities unconstrained by the demands of economic forces (1919/1985d, pp. 5, 76).

The universal principles and laws of social development as Steiner envisaged them were based on the conceptual notion arising out of Spiritual Science that the State as a living organism would experience transformation in line with the evolution of human consciousness. In earlier Epochs the social arrangements had focused on advancing the collective whole; from the time of Golgotha onwards the emphasis had been on the advancement of the individual. The Basic Sociological Law which Steiner formulated in 1902 reinforced his contention that society had evolved to a point where the interests of the community were to be required to allow the individual to work and function under the

influence of his moral duty as revealed through spiritual cognition. Rational self-interest would therefore be tempered by the godliness of spiritual direction.

The Fundamental Social Law Steiner postulated a short time later reflected his formal commitment to transforming the principle of a Rosicrucian brotherhood into a practical experience. For Steiner, the crux of the social problem lay with the overriding emphasis on man's labour as a commodity that could be bought and sold for economic gain. His resolution as outlined in the new law determined that the wellbeing of a community was greatest only when the workers would "make over" the proceeds of their work and give of their labour to others in a co-operative manner -

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

(Steiner, 1905/1958a, p. 32)

From Steiner's perspective, the exploitation of labour arose not from the economic order of capitalism as such but from the restrictions placed on the individual to employ in the workplace his talents and capacities, the "gifts from the gods" which demanded service in a new karmic incarnation (Wilkinson, 1994a, p. 57). The economic process could only be fully understood when the government would realise that the sphere of economics belonged to both the physical (products of the Earth) and spiritual worlds (man's abilities). In the ideal social structure of loving, communing brotherhood a separation of work and income would be required and as a consequence, "working for other people and aiming for a certain income would become two completely different things" (1905/1958a, pp. 32, 34). If man's work was to serve the brotherhood and work towards the universal good it was in Steinerian terms, to be carried out in the spirit of responding to the needs of others.

In Steiner's schema, when the ideal social structure could be established which he later defined as a *Threefold Commonwealth of Man* (refer 4.2.2), capital would be made freely available to the individual who wished to make use of his productive capabilities. The entire ownership of capital was to be so arranged as to allow "especially talented" individuals or groups to possess capital in a way which would arise solely from personal initiative. It would thus be possible to work not for financial reward but for the joy of serving others. This in turn would allow the individual the freedom to follow the pre-ordained karmic duty which was destined to mutually foster and advance one another spiritually - a situation Steiner believed to be impossible when economic gain dominated the community. Significantly, he was critical of the notion of collectivisation, instead insisting that the management of the means of production was to be left in the hands of the individual. From 1919 onwards Steiner argued against socialism and rejected the socialisation of property proposing as an alternative a spiritualised form of capitalism which favoured a combination of private ownership and social conscience (Staudenmaier, 2009, pp. 3, 4). In Steiner's eyes, the prevailing "terrible" form of capitalism had created a generation of souls that had "withered away" having been sown on the rocky ground of economic need (1919/1958b, p. 1/14)

The congruence of Steiner's social theory with his spiritual ideals was clearly in evidence in a series of three lectures given in Dornach, Switzerland, in November 1914. The lectures entitled *The World as a Product of the Working Balance* (1914/1948) redefined the importance of duty and right from the perspective of the anthroposophical world conception. Through his labour the worker would be his own man, free to develop and use his capabilities bestowed by the spiritual realm as he saw fit. In achieving this, the individual would no longer be a servant of the State but his own master and his own assessor, karmically joined to his fellow man in a selfless Christian brotherhood -

....it must become impossible for any man's labour to become a commodity – in future it will only be possible to sell goods or products, whilst people work for other out of brotherhood. This is the crux of the social question which Christianity must resolve – this very fact socially will bring about human salvation.

(Steiner, 1914/1948, p. 85)

In the aftermath of World War I, the greatest impediment to social reform from Steiner's perspective, was the spiritual and moral decline that had come to characterise the Aryan-German Epoch (1919/1996c, p. 19). Egoism and self-interest dominated as the individual strove to contend with the demands of a rapidly disintegrating social and economic fabric. Steiner had first detailed the destructive impact of an unhealthy egoism on social relationships in the three essays *Anthroposophy and the Social Question* (1905-1906/1958a), published in *Lucifer-Gnosis* between 1905 and 1906. The essays took up the theme that all human suffering was purely a consequence of egoism, citing the unsuccessful attempt of Robert Owen (1771-1858), "the noblest of social reformers", to establish a utopian society due to his failure to take this aspect into account. In Steiner's own form of utopia, the *Threefold Commonwealth*, he envisaged a proletariat educated to understand that "he who labours for himself cannot help but gradually fall to egoism. Only one who labours solely and entirely for the rest can, little by little, grow to be a worker without egoism" (p. 171). In Steiner's opinion, the German government influenced by Marxist doctrines had placed greatest emphasis on managing goods and production to the detriment of sound governance of the people. Thus, the "motivating influences" which had previously come from those in power had been lost in the interests of economic gain (1919/1998, p. 6). The notion that the reformation of economic life would bring about a resolution to the social questions facing post-war Germany Steiner regarded as a "great deception", a "mighty illusion".

In numerous lectures from 1917 onwards Steiner outlined the necessity for the social restructuring of the governments of Middle Europe without which he claimed there would be "no hope for the future" (1919/1969a, p. 60). For the anthroposophist, if anti-social conditions were to be addressed, the social edifice would need to be constructed in a way that would allow freedom of ideas with respect to the supersensible which would encourage reverence for the spiritual world in the community (1919/1945, p. 86). In turn, such knowledge would encourage the individual to unite with his fellow man. However, for social harmony to prevail Steiner emphasised that it would be necessary for feelings to be trained and refined in such a way that would enable people to interact with one another on an equal footing (1919c/nd, p. 2). Without a return to the principles of freedom, equality and brotherhood, Steiner predicted that all social instincts would be lost and people would become "hermits wandering through the world" (Steiner in Mazzone, 1999, p. 76).

4.2.2 The Threefold Commonwealth

In the same month as the victorious powers deliberated in Paris about the future of Germany, and the First (Anarchist) Bavaria Socialist Republic was proclaimed (Gilbert, 1997, p. 338), Steiner unveiled the concept of the *Threefold Commonwealth* to the general public with the *Proclamation to the German Nation and the Civilised World*. In an intensive period of public lectures Steiner outlined the principles that he believed would secure the fragile post-war governments of Middle Europe against the threat of socialism. In Germany, a threefold social structure would replace the hedonistic and politically vulnerable organisation of the Weimar Republic, and at the same time, provide a model for society with the potential to ultimately influence the global socio-political structure. The doctrine of the *Threefold Commonwealth* thus built on the idealism inherent in the Social Laws together with the vision of a State that would provide the fundamental organisational and reconstructive principles needed not only for a debilitated Germany but the whole of Middle Europe. Steiner's resolution to subdivide the government into three autonomous but interlocking spheres namely, the Economic,

Political/Rights and Cultural/Spiritual spheres was, for the anthroposophists, an inspired new social organisation which offered a viable alternative to the capitalist and communist polarities that threatened to dominate the post-war world order (Tautz, 1982, p. 11).

Steiner portrayed his threefold State as an alternative to various proposals for collectivization and socialism. Positioning his own proposals as a "third way" between capitalism and Communism Steiner devoted much of 1919 to promoting his ideals to business leaders and proletarian audiences in the newly formed workers councils (Staudenmaier, 2009, p. 2). By this time Steiner had come to regard socialism as tainted by Ahrimanic and Luciferic thinking which rejected the feeling life of the individual in favour of the intellect which kept "thinking at a distance" (1919/1945, p. 111) thereby giving rise to a "confused and unreasonable" interpretation of the collective will. Steiner was also unsympathetic to Marx's "materialist conception of history" which maintained that the impelling forces in the history of mankind were merely "economic-material" forces thereby lacking in any true comprehension of the spiritual impulses which guided mankind forward. His chief criticism of socialist thinking focused on its lack of understanding that the freedom of the individual could co-exist alongside the collective will as he had initially explored in *The Philosophy of Freedom* and specifically explicated in the notion of *ethical individualism*. Steiner was confident that his own ideas represented the ideal social will that the socialists "yearned for". When functioning in its ideal and complete form, the *Threefold Commonwealth* would be a united society in which its members would work together to realise the will of the spiritual world.

In Steiner's social structure the three spheres of the State, the Economic, Political/Rights and Cultural/Spiritual spheres were to be organised independently of one another, each in turn serving the body politic as a whole. The Rights Life would be self-administered and self-sustaining, while the Economic life would be organised on the fraternal-associative principle. The independent Cultural sector of the State would be responsible for appointing the judiciary

and the educators. It would also control the employment of capital, "indeed an absolutely free use of capital", while the Economic sphere was to be concerned only with the production, distribution and consumption of resources. The Political sphere of government as an evolving organism would "rejuvenate" in accordance with the demands of the evolutionary needs of the Epoch. Steiner argued that if liberalised democracy in the Weimar Republic was to be taken seriously, the Cultural life and Economic life were to be excluded from the Political sphere. In Steiner's schema, the State would be organised on democratic principles only in those areas requiring adult judgement. In matters requiring spiritual preparation such as the judiciary, individuals awakened to the spirit would assume the governing role. Justice would no longer be a mere superstructure of the economic body. A threefold State in which the judiciary and finance were organised by those who had acquired spiritual "capacities" would thus give birth to a new legal system capable of keeping the economic life within its proper limits (1919b/nd, pp. 5-7).

Steiner's notion of governance built on the foundations of his philosophy of freedom and moral theory, *ethical individualism*. His ideas for social renewal clearly focused on the recognition that a threefold social structure would only be successful when individuals could be receptive to the spirit in consciousness. Until the point when all individuals could draw from universal world of ideal *Ideas*, a time when no moral misunderstanding could occur, the laws would be conceived by those who had been awakened to the Ego consciousness of their "inner Christ". According to Steiner's path to social reconstruction, the Cultural sphere, including the judiciary and the educational system, would play a determining role by ensuring that every individual would have the freedom to embark on a journey of spiritual regeneration. By meeting the spiritual needs of the individual Steiner believed that the groundwork would be laid for the development of a loving, co-operative society in which true Christianity would come to flourish -

If he is allowed freedom of thought with respect to his knowledge of the supersensible he will unite with his fellow man in order that reverence for the spiritual world, which everyone recognises in his own personal way, may be encouraged in the community. When men have attained freedom of thought to approach knowledge of the spiritual world through their own individuality, then the common service of the higher worlds, true religion, will flourish.

(Steiner, 1919/1945, p. 86)

Following the successful implementation of the *Threefold Commonwealth* Steiner predicted that the peoples of the Earth would learn to know and love the true being of man in different regions of the globe. Out of this would come a call for the ultimate utopia of a uniform "Earth Economy" where national boundaries would be transcended and individuals freed from the bonds of race and nationalism, united in one harmonious fraternity (1920/1980a, pp. 10, 12).

In what Steiner acknowledged to be a radical reconstruction of society in order to facilitate the independently developing life of the spirit, the "spiritual workers" would direct production. Capital would find its "rightful place" when those charged with its organisation would work out of Intuitive consciousness. According to Steiner, these would be the individuals who would understand the inner nature and capacities of others, and therefore able to determine where and how it would best be used on behalf of society. Commodities were to be organised by those who had acquired Imaginative cognition which would allow those in control to "picture" the creation of commodities and their flow. Labour would be successful when approached through Inspirational thinking. Joy and love for work would come to be realised when every individual would be permitted to contribute "whatever of value lay within him" (1919/1969a, p. 60, 61). While self-interest and individualism were to be seen as legitimate starting points for a productive spiritual life, a concern and care for others would be its natural concomitant.

Essential to Steiner's proposal for the renewal of the social organism was the need for the individual to be prepared to carry out the preordained duty that accompanied him into a new earthly existence. As the Ego-self evolved it would bring with it talents and capacities formed in a previous incarnation. Goethe's explicit dictum that "Duty is to love what one commands oneself to do" (1923/1988c, p. 157) thus provided the critical guideline for Steiner's new social order aimed at creating social harmony. Kant and Schiller had also according to Steiner, conceived of duty in the right way, Kant defining "it as a lofty goddess to whom man looks up", while Schiller expressed man's correct relationship to it when he said "that man has the best relation to duty when he learns to love duty" (1914/1948, p. 42). Extending the argument, Steiner expounded on the love of duty as the means by which egoism could be eliminated -

When a man speaks of learning to love duty he no longer merely surrenders himself to duty; he rises out of himself, taking with him the love with which he otherwise loves himself. The love that lives in his body, in his egoism - this love he takes out of himself and loves with it duty.

(Steiner, 1914/1948, p. 43)

From the perspective of the spiritualist worldview it was the love of performing a preordained duty that would liberate the populous from the extremes of discontent and materialistic striving (Raschke, 1980, p. 125).

In what Steiner described as the devastated, immoral social order of twentieth century Germany very few individuals were to be seen as "morally productive". Self-interest raised to unparalleled heights through the twin evils of Ahriman and Lucifer, could in no way be assuaged by outmoded social forms and ideas. Asleep in their wills (1919/1997, p. 165) and therefore unconscious of their Higher-self, the German people could neither act with true Christ-inspired morality nor understand the need for a new social structure to rectify the ills

of a society mired in spiritless, intellectual thinking. Only when a sufficient number of people could be awakened to the knowledge of the spirit, would they be willing to see the spirit in the other and embrace the moral and ethical ideals that spiritual consciousness would bring forth.

Without the balancing influence of Christ inspired moral thought and action, at some point in the twentieth century Steiner predicted that the evils of socialism would become "an historical demand" (1919/1969a, pp. 1, 4). In Steiner's vision of a future world bereft of a free spiritual life, civilised mankind faced the prospect of inevitable collapse (1919/1954b, p. 21). In his lectures on *The Social Future* (1919/1945) given some months after the opening of the *Waldorfschule*, Steiner indicated that the Anthroposophical Movement had assumed the task of averting the seemingly inevitable -

In reality the meaning of the movement is to be found in its striving with set purpose to bring about a renewal of our whole civilisation, as it is expressed in art, religion, science, education and other human activities. Such a transformation is the aim of Spiritual Science.

(Steiner, 1919/1945, p. 58)

Steiner's critical appraisal of the existing government and the nature of the reforms he proposed made him a highly controversial figure (Ahern, 1984, p. 92), and in 1922 following an attempt on his life, he ceased lecturing to the public (Mazzone, 1999, p. 82).

4.2.3 Education and the New Social Will

In various lectures from 1919 onwards Steiner emphasized the importance of establishing an independent, self-sustaining form of education based on a properly founded spiritual worldview that would undertake to develop the feeling spirit in every human soul -

For it is essential that we should develop an art of education which will lead us out of the social chaos into which we have fallen during the last few years and decades. And the only way out of this social chaos is to bring spirituality into the souls of men through education, so that out of the spirit itself men may find the way to progress and the further evolution of civilisation.

(Steiner, 1924/1968b, p. 11)

Steiner's route to social renewal was to be achieved through a form of education capable of transforming the thinking of a child in the direction of a perceived moral, spiritual consciousness. From the perspective of the anthroposophist, the purpose of an educational system would be to develop the free-will of the individual who would have a Christ-inspired love towards all people and an appreciation of the true value of man's labour. In a social structure based on love and service to others, children would find their proper place in life and thereby come to play the most important role in securing Steiner's vision for Germany's social renewal. In his lectures on *Education as a Social Problem* (Steiner, 1919/1969a), Steiner reinforced the importance of "universal human love" in achieving the overriding objective of "brotherliness" that would function as the basis of all work in the threefold State -

....brotherliness, fraternity, in economic life as it has to be striven for in the future, can only arise in human souls if education works consciously towards universal human love. That is if all concepts regarding the world and education itself are based on human love, love towards the outer world.

(Steiner 1919/1969a, p. 16)

His argument for a new form of education was further based on the premise that stereotyped rules and methods of teaching which focused on the demands of the State failed to nurture the spiritual nature and capacities of the young child required to prepare them for the "battle of life" (1919/1954b, p. 88).

Steiner's desire to restructure the government, society, the economy and indeed, the worldview that informed them all ultimately foundered on the unstoppable force of rationalist economic theory and a reluctance of the German populous to embrace his radical ideas. The opportunity for Steiner to continue the quest to press for a new social will presented itself in the form of the Waldorf-Astoria Factory School. As noted (refer p. 5), the School was initially supported by the *Die Kommende Tag*, an organisation which handled the financial arrangements of the various factories and workshops serving Anthroposophy in Germany (Franklin, 1989, p. 27).

4.3 Observations: The Influence of Steiner's Worldview on the Social Organism

Steiner's involvement in the political affairs of Germany from 1917 onwards is a direct response to his belief in esoteric history. He considers that the causes of the war are a manifestation of the work of spiritual forces, and the ensuing social turmoil is the inevitable result of the rejection of the Christ in consciousness. The outcome of hostilities confirms the anthroposophist's belief that Germany's political life has been failed by inadequate societal institutions which can only be revitalised through spiritual regeneration (Staudenmaier, 2009, p. 1). His vision of the future of Germany foresees that neither an unregulated democracy nor a socialist form of government will rehabilitate the ailing social organism. He believes that only when the organisation of the pivotal structures of the government are controlled by those who have been awakened to the spirit will it be possible for society to work towards a common good. And only when all men can be educated to open their hearts and minds to a once vital spiritual heritage will they gain the independence and freedom that universal consciousness will bring. To "know the self" is to know the will of the spirit realm and place the Self fully in its service.

The path to the utopian future that Steiner offers to his followers lies in the institution of the threefold State. As a blueprint for social ordering, the *Threefold Commonwealth* appears

conceptually similar in its ideological basis to the notion of *Synarchy* first put forward by Saint Yves d'Alveydre (1842-1909) in an attempt to create a harmonious society built on the preordained inherent abilities of its members. Freemason, Theosophist and founder of the occult Martinist Order, d'Alveydre laid out a highly ordered arrangement of society guided by a spiritual elite as an organic, living system which incorporated the transformers of material, the rhythmic system and the head system (Webb, 1976, pp. 280, 287). Steiner similarly considers the State to be a living organism to which can be attributed the threefold structure of the human being. The body, soul and spirit are seen to exist in the realms of economic, political rights and culture respectively (1919/1997, p. xxii). The latter, analogous to the nerve-sense system of the body, is to be the realm of the organism where the expression of individual freedom or *Liberty* finds its rightful place. *Equality* as a function of the political sphere is associated with the feeling life of the soul. *Fraternity*, which Steiner equates with the metabolic system, is considered to serve the whole of the social body (Mazzone, 1999, pp. 84, 85).

An unfettered democratic government does not accord with Steiner's social vision for the *Liberty* or the *Equality* of the individual. While it extends to the individual "a measure of social or material freedom it represses in the name of progress or patriotic conformity, the liberty of the unconscious through rules and regulations. A democracy which gives precedence to political rather than spiritual causes potentially restricts the individual from developing his spiritual interiority or acting out of his moral consciousness" (Raschke, 1980, p. 152). In general, Steiner considers that spiritual individuality will be overwhelmed by the demands of any form of government that does not recognise the autonomy of the individual to carry out the duty that one must "command oneself to do". At the same time, any form of education that serves the demands of the State in preference to developing and utilising the talents and capacities bestowed by the spiritual realm is in danger of creating a discontented citizen, unfulfilled in his karmic destiny.

In the *Threefold Commonwealth* the social order will not be based on wealth but on the level of spiritual consciousness that any individual can acquire through following the tenets of Anthroposophy. There will be no social disharmony because it will be the will of the individual to carry out the duty that accompanies the individual into earthly life. It will be recalled that Steiner predicted that the Aryan-German Epoch is to become a mirror image of the Egypto-Chaldean period of history (refer p. 71). The institution of a form of education which places greatest emphasis on awakening consciousness to the Reality of the spirit is therefore inextricably linked to the successful evolution of mankind - in esoteric terms.

Steiner's social theory confronts the serious difficulty flagged in Chapter 2 (refer p. 89). Only those who claim to be awakened to the Christ in consciousness are seen as capable of assuming roles of leadership. Further, if Steiner is to realise his vision to build a society erected on the moral theory of *ethical individualism* it can only be achieved through an education based on the principles of Anthroposophy.

Part 2

4.4 Educating Towards Freedom

4.4.1 The Establishment of the Waldorf School

At the turn of the century and beyond, the Church had maintained much of its influence in educational matters (Rein, 1899, p. 64). For those who found themselves in power in the Reichstag and in most of the German States following the revolution of 1918, the reform of the school system presented an urgent problem. In the young Weimar Republic, early attempts were made to make education democratic and allow some measure of equal and professional opportunity. In the tolerant attitude that prevailed new forms of pedagogy offering an education based on the proclivities and interests of the children were established including the Free Waldorf School in the southern German township of Stuttgart (Boyd & Rawson, 1965, p. 45). Initially it was set up by Emil Molt as a school for the children of his

employees to "prepare a supply of good future personnel" (1919/1986a, p. 8). With Steiner's acceptance of the directorship of the Free Waldorf School (*Freie Waldorfschule*) the goal of the Union for a Threefold Social Organism which had been set up in Stuttgart to create an independent cultural life (1919/1997, p. 206), became an actual reality.

On April 23rd 1919, at the request of the anthroposophist and industrialist Emil Molt, Steiner had lectured to the employees of the Stuttgart Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Factory on *Proletarian Demands and Their Future Practical Realisation*. In the same month, Molt, closely associated with Steiner during the turbulent times of the *Threefold Commonwealth* lectures, with the encouragement of his employees, proposed the setting up of an institution specifically to educate their children. With the financial patronage of Herr Molt and under the directorship of Steiner, the Waldorf School was located in the refurbished Uhlandshöhe Restaurant. Established within the ambit of the 1836 School Laws of Württemberg as opposed to the impending regulations of the Constitution of the Third Reich, the school was largely free of bureaucratic constraints. An attempt to establish a smaller school affiliated with the *Goetheanum* failed on the restrictive ground of Swiss legislation (1923/1988c, p. 218).

Steiner's early commentaries on education, as noted, dated back to his time as General Secretary of the Theosophical Society. Just prior to the turn of the new century, Madame Blavatsky (nd) in *The Key to Theosophy* had proposed that the panacea to the growing influence of materialism and capitalism would be an education that could teach the virtues of self reliance, love for all men, altruism, mutual charity and above all else "the ability to think and reason" (p. 6). Between 1906 and 1909, Steiner's writings and lectures on *The Education of the Child in Light of Spiritual Science* (Steiner, 1906-1909/1965) were undoubtedly a response to the Theosophical Society's developing interest in promoting a socially aware form of education in line with Blavatsky's ideas as articulated in the so-called Bombay Principles.

In 1906 Steiner had lectured on the guidelines to The Rosicrucian Study and by then had completed the second edition of *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, both aimed at guiding the adult pupil to a redemptive state of psychic spiritual consciousness. He had also written the text *Theosophy*, which described what he called the "spiritual anthropology" of the human being. At this early stage it was therefore possible for Steiner to claim that if Spiritual Science was called on to work pedagogically in a practical sense, "it would be able to communicate every detail" (Tautz, 1982, p. 16).

In 1915 the New Education Fellowship was set up under the auspices of the Theosophical Society to promote education based on the Bombay Principles. By this time, the rift between Steiner and the Theosophists was complete. Theosophical schooling embraced the *Cosmic* educational philosophy of the Italian pedagogue, Maria Montessori (1869-1952), rather than Steiner's theories based on Rosicrucian Christianity. While Montessori's vision of a New Child, a superior being giving "promise of a New Humanity with powers of mind and spirit hitherto unsuspected" (Boyd & Rawson, 1965, p. 23), was not far removed from Steiner's own, the olive branch of membership was not extended to the Waldorf School Movement. This only served to confirm Steiner's observation that gathering Ahrimanic forces had unwittingly influenced the Theosophical leadership. By the time Steiner received the request to become the director of the Waldorf School, he was considered by his followers to be the right arm of the Time Spirit, *Michael*, poised on the stage of world history to commence the task of social renewal (Tautz, 1982, p. 19).

When the Waldorf School opened its doors on September 16th 1919 it was acknowledged by Steiner to represent the visible entry of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science into the general life of German society (1919/1995b, p. 31). In the previous August, Steiner's address to the teachers made it clear that he considered the School to be the instrument that would serve the all important Cultural Life of the threefold state -

Today I would like to speak to you about the Waldorf School, founded by our friend Mr Molt. You well know, that from our announcements distributed about this school, that it is our intention to take a first step along the path we would want the cultural life of the Threefold Social Organism to take. In establishing the Waldorf School, Mr Molt has, to a large extent, felt motivated to do something to further the development of inner spirituality. He hopes to do something that will point the way for the present and future social tasks of the Threefold Social Organism.

(Steiner, 1919/1995b, p. 7)

While the Waldorf School would not be free of State inspections and certain curriculum requirements were to be adhered to, Steiner envisaged that Waldorf School pedagogy was to be the antithesis of prevailing systems of education. Hegelian in its conceptual framework, it incorporated a theory of learning that would develop within the consciousness of the young child the ability to conform, not to the institutional demands of the existing State, but awaken within them their latent talents and capacities that would enable them to "fulfil their places in life" (1919/1995b, p. 11). A "fully developed human being" who could "live at peace with his fellow man" and further the interests of the community by his work and his achievements would be the ideal citizen (1919/1945, p. 14). An education erected on such a foundation would, by addressing the needs of the students, hold the potential to bring about a new and revitalised social future in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Threefold Social Order -

The real need of the present is for schools to be totally grounded in a free spiritual and cultural life. What should be taught and cultivated in these schools must be drawn solely from a knowledge of the growing human being and of individual capacities. A genuine anthropology must form the basis of education and instruction. The question should not be what does a person need to know and be able to do for the present social order? But rather: what capacities are latent in this human being, and what lies within can that be developed? Then it will be possible to bring ever new forces into the social order from the rising generations. The life of

the social order will be what is made of it by a succession of fully developed human beings who take their places within the social order. The rising generation should not be moulded into what the existing social order chooses to make of it.

(Steiner, 1919/1998, p. 4)

Accordingly, Steiner's pedagogical ideals set their sights on bringing to fruition the social future he considered to correspond to the "unconquerable instincts in human nature" -

At the foundation of the school I not only endeavoured to give shape to externals corresponding to the requirements and the impulse of the Threefold Social Order; I also strove to present pedagogy and didactics to the teaching-staff of this new kind of school in such a light that the human being would be educated to face life and be able to bring about a social future in accordance with certain unconquerable instincts in human nature.

(Steiner, 1919/1945, p. 97)

At a time in Germany's history when the social fabric had been stretched to the extreme Steiner saw it as the role of education to press forward the divinely ordered course of evolution. He readily conceded that the threefold social structure he proposed as an antidote to Germany's social problems was only likely to be successful when a sufficient number of people had been awakened to the spirit and had come to recognise and serve the abilities perceived to be the gifts from the spiritual Universe. The importance of the establishment of the Waldorf School was therefore to be understood within the context of Steiner's esoteric worldview which saw the historical evolution of human consciousness as following a predetermined karmic path towards a conscious re-integration with the macrocosm. In so doing, "the task of Anthroposophy in the social realm would be discharged" (1919a/nd, np).

4.4.2 A New Beginning

Of the twelve specially selected teachers, only three or four were recorded as having teaching credentials. More importantly, in Steiner's estimation, was that each one would have experienced their own spiritual initiation and have a comprehensive view of "cosmic law" (1919/1986a, p. 64) -

We do not intend teaching anthroposophical dogma but want to strive to put Anthroposophy into practice. We want to transform what can be acquired anthroposophically and turn it into a real and proper method of Education.

(Steiner, 1919/1986a, p. 35)

Steiner was however, very clear that the Waldorf School teacher would not bring the content of Anthroposophy into the practice of teaching; pedagogical ideas would instead focus on methodology and instructional reform (1919/1995b, p. 31).

Lecturing on the relationship between Waldorf School education and Anthroposophy Steiner paid homage to the reformist educators of the nineteenth and early twentieth century of which he considered Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) to be one of the most significant. He conceded that anyone with education at heart could only feel enthusiasm for their comprehensive ideas and powerful principles and "Anthroposophy had no wish to oppose these. It wished only to deepen their work by what could be gained through anthroposophical insight" (1921/1995c, pp. 98, 99). He was however, openly critical of State based education systems that he claimed to provide only "stones for bread" thereby destroying the heritage of the German folk spirit and any possible foundations of real spiritual development (1919/1958b, pp. 111/5). The task of anthroposophical educators was as Steiner defined it, to work their way out of the materialistic wave and in "full consciousness" find "once again the path to the spirit" (1919/1969a, p. 64). In the lecture cycle *Balance in Teaching*

(1920/1982a), Steiner emphasised that in order to successfully carry out their "holy calling" it was critical for teachers to have "a true perception of the nature of the esoteric" (pp. 1, 12). Once the School was under way, Steiner also suggested that the teachers who would stay with their pupils from Class I to Class VIII, needed to invoke the Gospels to find guidance and inspiration. The Gospel of St Luke would stimulate appropriate forms of pedagogy in pathological-physiological areas. The Gospel of St John would inspire the necessary idealism for life, while St Mark and St Matthew respectively would create "ebullient energy" and perceptiveness (1923/1988c, p. 183).

Between the 21st of August and the 5th of September 1919 Steiner unveiled his vision for a pedagogy that he believed would resolve the socially debilitating excess of selfish egoism and unconstrained individualism which had given free rein to the antisocial spiritual forces he saw as dominating the hearts and minds of the German people. To prepare the teachers, or as Steiner referred to them, "anthroposophical missionaries", he delivered three consecutively held lecture series. These foundational lectures were later published as *The Study of Man* (1919/1966), *Practical Advice To Teachers* (1919/1988b) and *Discussions With Teachers* (1919/1967a). In total, these forty lectures outlined the key ideas and principles that would form the basis of the work carried out by the Waldorf School teachers. The final outline of the Waldorf School curriculum which was essentially a series of brief "indications", was presented to the teachers in a series of *Curriculum Lectures* (1919/1976b) held in the first week of September, 1919. Following the opening of the School, Steiner continued to discuss morals and "matters of a more cognitive nature" in a series of stenographically recorded talks entitled the *Conferences* (1919-1924/1986a, 1987, 1988a, 1989a).

Steiner envisaged that the Waldorf School teachers would need to have the "courage" to move education beyond the work of the influential Herbart by creating not only a new

insight into the true nature of the human being (1919/1995b, p. 50), but also "a new understanding of the world" based on Spiritual Science -

It is especially important that we form a foundation that allows us to understand what human beings really are. However this cannot be done with the old prejudices of our worldview. It can only come from a new understanding of the world. A new form of education will not develop if we do not have the courage to come to new scientific orientation...What we need for a real art of education can only emerge from a properly founded spiritual worldview.

Steiner, 1919/1995b, p. 50)

At a time when contemporary educational systems were, from Steiner's perspective, immersed in perpetuating a "mechanical intellectualism" he considered better suited to the needs of the fifteenth century (1919/1995b, p. 19), the task of the Waldorf school teacher would be to reinvigorate the moral, spiritual consciousness of the young mind. In the age of the *Consciousness Soul*, "living thinking" would guide the child to full possession of his inner life. From the outset, Steiner was insistent that while he had translated Anthroposophy into "a real and proper method of education" the esoteric dogma as taught to adults would have no place in the Waldorf School -

Anthroposophy, as it is presented to adults, is certainly not brought into the Waldorf School. On the other hand, we consider it our task to carry it into our lessons - in the right manner - that for which man longs: to grasp the divine in Nature, the divine in human history by way of a right (true) attitude towards the Mystery of the Golgotha. Thereby we can also give the mood (atmosphere, colouring) to our lessons which they need. I have already mentioned that the teacher really must come to the point where all teaching becomes for him ethical, a religious deed, that - in our way - he considers his teaching a divine service. We have certainly not wished to work towards a blind, rationalistic Christianity, but on the contrary towards a correct understanding of the Christ Impulse in the entire evolution of mankind.

(Steiner, in Gabert, 1955, pp. 16, 17)

Teaching based on a "properly founded spiritual worldview" would work to counter an Ahrimanic reductionist science in favour of a psychology that would create a connection between the child and the "whole universe" (1919/1966, p. 27). A veneration and respect for a living realm of Nature would replace the mechanistic conceptions of the Universe set in place by Galileo and Copernicus. History, investigating culture and way of life during the major Rosicrucian Epochs would have the same goal and content as the teaching of religious studies in as much that it would endeavour to show how events throughout world history were "*symptomatological*" of the working of the spirit in human consciousness. Anthroposophical religious instruction for those who elected to study it out of the denominations the School was required to offer would be presented with a history of the world more as a preparation for the appearance of Christ on Earth (Gabert, 1955, p. 1). Art, described by Goethe as "Nature's worthiest expression", would become an essential part of every lesson. Through all forms of artistic endeavours the child would give expression to "profound inner experiences imitating with human powers a divine creative activity" (1923/1981a, p. 28).

In his practical instructions to the teachers Steiner reiterated the first principle of all Waldorf pedagogy -

It is not just that the artistic element must be cultivated; the actual teaching of every lesson must be drawn from the artistic realm. Every method must be immersed in the artistic element. Educating and teaching must become a real art. Subject matter must not be more than the underlying basis.

(Steiner, 1919/1988b, p. 13)

The "art of education" Steiner consistently emphasised, represented instructional reform as opposed to curriculum change and would convey its esoteric messages not through "outer" content but through the correct "attitude" and "mood" arising out of anthroposophical worldview of the teacher. In terms of the presentation of teaching content Steiner anticipated

that teachers would be guided by Goethe's Faustian direction to "consider well the *what* but consider more the *how*" (1921/1995c, p. 113). In general, each teacher would have "absolute freedom" in the methodology arising out of Anthroposophy - a freedom which would essentially employ "the free creative fancy of the teacher and the educator" (1924/1995a, p. 27).

The School opened with Classes I to VIII. Steiner and the teachers planned to continue expanding the classes in the following years up to a senior high school which would offer the *abiturium* leaving exam (Baravalle, 1963, p. 8). The new School was therefore required to reconcile itself with prevailing regulations, and in particular, it was incumbent upon the teachers to prepare the pupils to a level that allow them to transfer to other institutions. Given that Steiner envisaged no one individual teacher would view the task of social renewal as greater than the other, he set no hierarchical structure in place. Instead, teaching and administration in the new School would be carried out co-operatively by all teachers in the form of a *Collegia*, bound together by the "golden thread" of the Anthroposophical *weltanschauung*. In Steiner's defining words -

The Waldorf School must be an actual cultural deed in order to achieve a renewal of our spiritual life in the present. A renewal of the whole educational system. The success is in your hands. The Waldorf School will be practical proof of the anthroposophical world orientation.

(Steiner in Tautz, 1982, p. 19)

4.4.3 The Christ Impulse in Waldorf Education

The preparatory lectures Steiner gave to the selected teaching initiates addressed a number of key pedagogical issues he considered critical to creating a form of education that would be permeated with the "feeling for the cosmic significance of the whole human being". In particular, it was essential that all teachers were to view their task as "an ethical religious

deed, a divine service that would work towards a correct understanding of the Christ Impulse in the entire evolution of mankind" (Steiner in Gabert, 1955, p. 17). Under Steiner's direction, the school was to assume an "all pervading Christian character" and, in his prophetic words, was to be led by "the loftiest guide, by Christ Himself" (1922/1947, p. 59).

Lecturing on the theme of *Education as a Social Problem* (1919/1969a) shortly before the opening of the school, Steiner's comments reinforced the contention that he saw Waldorf education as a transformatory process that would begin the "salvation" of the psychic consciousness of the young child-

One should not look superficially at the so called cultural phenomenon of our age. Nor should one doubt that modern human beings have to arouse themselves to a real comprehension of the Christ Impulse if evolution is to go forward in a healthy way ... This is also something future educators must take into their consciousness.... One has to teach out of awareness that one has to bring about the salvation in the case of every individual child, one has to steer him towards finding the Christ Impulse in the course of his life, towards finding a re-birth within himself.....Such things must not live in the teacher as mere theory; they can be introduced into one's teaching only if one has taken hold of them in one's own soul.

(Steiner, 1919/1969a, p. 89)

Through the awakening of human consciousness to the Higher-self, the organ for the perception of spiritual consciousness, the individual would gain the potential for "salvation". With these words Steiner clearly indicated that education in the Waldorf School would focus on nurturing the young soul-psyche towards a progressive self-consciousness and the ability to actuate the *Ideas* of the unconscious mind. If the child was to "find the Christ Impulse" in the course of a lifetime, the task of the teacher was therefore to build the "bridge" between the sleeping inner forces and the "World Soul or World Spirit" of the Universe (1920/1995b, p. 131). To allow the child to find "the rebirth within himself" of the will of the Christ Spirit

teaching would need to create the beam in equipoise between the two scales of the balance. The "shadow side" of Ahriman rising up in the child's maturing psyche would need to be assuaged by treading the path of initiation into the spirit that Waldorf schooling had to offer. In Steiner's theorising, human intelligence "left to itself" could only travel on the path to the Ahrimanic; by "finding the Christ spark within" it would become "active for the good" (1919/1969a, p. 91). In essence, all pedagogy in the Waldorf-Astoria Factory School was to focus on achieving the moral self-realisation of each child - the quest of the Grail Knight *Parsifal*, in modern garb.

Given that Steiner considered the Christ Impulse to be synonymous with the development of moral consciousness, it was not unexpected that he defined his pedagogy as "a special chapter in the moral sphere" and claimed that only those who would find education within the realm of morality, within the sphere of ethics, would discover it "in the right way" (1922/1967b, p. 81). How to awaken the moral will of the child was therefore, according to Steiner's discussions with the teaching initiates, the most important of all educational questions. In the challenging future ahead, Steiner foresaw that only the children who had been "rightly educated" would emerge unscathed from the chaos he saw as inevitable. An awakening to the love of the Christ Spirit would give the individual a strength of purpose and a determination to resist the Ahrimanic manifestation in the form of the socialised State - a political moloch that would crush all individuality and all human diversity. The individual with a "strong sense" of social justice and a true commitment to a spiritualised science (Steiner in Seddon, 2000, p. 40) would, in Steiner's estimation, hold the potential to transform and renew civilisation (1919/1945, p. 68).

On Steiner's instructions, outwardly the Waldorf School was to remain discrete from any Church movement or congregational sect and its esoteric nature, hidden from the population at large (1922/1947, p. 59). While the public face of the Waldorf School was non-

denominational, Steiner's desire to perpetuate an alternative worldview that saw the individual as a microcosm of a universal world order with Divine potential was a portent of its esoteric purpose. According to its anthroposophical charter, teaching in the new School would allow Christianity to once again become deeply rooted in humanity. In Steiner's opinion no education could be conducted without a religious foundation - a schooling without religion was simply "an illusion" (1907/1996b, p. 69). At all times in the Waldorf School, teachers were to approach their karmic task "with priestly feelings" (1924/1968b, p. 70).

Steiner's intention that the graduates of the Waldorf School would act morally and responsibly towards their fellow man and have an interest in the world at large, resonated significantly with progressive education in general. Steiner's description of the ideals and values he anticipated the pupils would come to embrace - namely, love, human compassion and selfless human service echoed those of his own early Jesuitical schooling. The School's objectives to begin the renewal of the spiritual life of post-war Germany and commence the "healing" of humanity (1919/1995b, p. 131) in order to fulfil the demands of the Epoch were the hallmarks that set it apart. Steiner's vision of the graduates forming a counterpoise against the rising threat of socialism further distanced Waldorf education from its progressive peers.

Part 3

4.5 The Growth of the Waldorf School Movement

4.5.1 The Outreach into Great Britain

"I am convinced", said Steiner, "that the founding of a world school movement is of the greatest importance for the social development of humanity" (1921/1995c, p. 57). Outside of Stuttgart and Dornach, Steiner gave several lecture cycles on his new social pedagogy to members of reformist educational circles in the United Kingdom that would come to form the critical study texts for anthroposophical teachers. In 1921 he was invited to speak at the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford on Avon about "New Ideals in Education". These insights

were later put into print under the title, *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I* (1921-1922/1995c). An immediate outcome of the Conference was the passing of an intention to form a worldwide association for the foundation and support of schools. It was resolved that the schools would be "fully in touch with the world, autonomous in their profession, responsible for the conscience of humanity, working out of their own free spirit to pave the way for the unfolding of the spirit in their pupils". They would be not only scientific, but intimate, intuitive and artistic (Paull, 2011, pp. 59, 60). In August of the following year Steiner returned to England to attend the Oxford Holiday Conference at Mansfield College, lecturing on "Spiritual Values in Education and Social Life". In 1923 he was invited to attend the First International Summer School at Penmaemawr, Ilkley, Yorkshire.

Prior to attending the Summer School, Steiner gave a series of fourteen lectures on the topic of "Contemporary Spiritual Life and Education" under the auspices of the Union for the Realisation of Spiritual Values in Education. These were later published as the volume, *A Modern Art of Education* (1923/1981a). In the same year, he had also delivered eight key lectures relating to the child's psychic transformation entitled, *The Child's Changing Consciousness* (1923/1988c). As extended summaries of Steiner's original pedagogical theories the texts became essential reading for all Waldorf teachers.

In August 1924 Steiner made his last visit to England. At the Second International Summer Conference in Torquay, he presented seven lectures on the theme of true and false paths in spiritual investigation. Following a series of introductory talks collectively referred to as *The Kingdom of Childhood* (1924/1995a), a small group of inspired teachers established the first British Waldorf school in 1925. By this time, the Stuttgart "Mother School" had expanded to over eight hundred students, with more than forty teachers (1924/1995a, p. 28).

4.5.2 Waldorf Schools in Germany

From the epicentre of Stuttgart a number of institutions based on the Waldorf School model were established in townships throughout Germany. The original geographical spread and expediency with which the schools were set in place was a testament to the firm belief of the members of the Anthroposophical Society that the social and political future of Middle Europe lay in the teaching methods arising out of Spiritual Science. For five years Steiner supported the Waldorf schools through seminars and lectures to the teachers providing guidance and advice to reinforce the principles and goals of his pedagogical ideas. Cohesive moral and material support to the new schools was provided by the *Waldorfschulverein*. As schools were set up on the original model in other German cities, the *Waldorfschulverein* assumed responsibility for their financial and legal administration.

Prior to Steiner's death in 1925 four new schools were established firstly in Berlin, then in Cologne, Hamburg - Wansbeck and Essen. By 1930, Waldorf schools existed in Hanover, Dresden and Kassel. Each of the schools was set up as private institutions largely independent of the State. With the disbandment of the *Waldorfschulverein* the Imperial Association of Waldorf Schools took its place in an attempt to protect the schools against the growing political pressure from the National Socialist government. The Pedagogical Section of the Free High School for Spiritual Science at the *Goetheanum* in Switzerland assumed the ultimate responsibility as an International Forum for the educational movement from 1924 onwards.

At the outset of the rise of the Nazi party there appeared to be some acceptance by Waldorf educators of the ideological nature of National Socialism particularly its anti-Marxist tendencies, the emphasis on duty and the notion of an economic system with classes based on merit and talent (Staudenmaier, nd, p. 2). There was also some suggestion that elements of Haeckel's evolutionary Monism were identifiable in National Socialist ideology (Kay, 2012,

p. 1) potentially making it appealing to those whose own worldview contained significant characteristics of monist thinking. By 1934 eight Waldorf schools had joined the National Socialist Teachers League. In 1935 on the official order from the Nazi State, the Anthroposophical Societies in Germany were closed. Simultaneously the Reich Education Minister prohibited all private schools from accepting new students (Preistman, 2009, pp. 2, 10). The Dresden and Stuttgart schools were closed by the authorities while all others were shut by the anthroposophists for internal reasons. Schools that had opened in Holland and Austria were also forced to close their doors to students. Those who benefited from such closures were overseas schools where teachers, fleeing the Nazi regime, spent the war years assisting with their development including the interpreting of Steiner's curriculum indications. The Wynstones School in Gloucestershire, United Kingdom was one such institution, giving sanctuary to four prominent members of the teaching staff of the Stuttgart Waldorf School (Staudenmaier, 2009, pp. 2, 3).

At the end of World War II Stuttgart was part of the American occupied zone and the Waldorf School was the first to be re-opened under the auspices of the American authorities. By 1946 it had grown to over one thousand pupils and a second school with four hundred students was opened in the following year (Werner & Von Plato, 2006-2010, p. 5). In the new Federal Republic of Germany, Waldorf schools experienced unprecedented growth largely attributable to the fact that the system was classified as making a special contribution to the recovery of education in a war-torn nation and was therefore entitled to financial aid from government sources. Within five years fifty new schools had been established. The *Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen* replaced the existing schools association and reinstated the Waldorf School Teachers Training Seminar. In 1950 the *Bund* decreed to delay the setting up of new schools due to the difficulties of providing a sufficient number of adequately trained teachers (Baravalle, 1963, p. 11).

With the demand for new schools coming not only from anthroposophists but parents impressed by the ideas of a holistic, alternative form of education, a teacher training centre in Dornach, Switzerland joined the existing Stuttgart Faculty. A further six centres were set up in the next two decades. By 1995 they had provided teachers for one hundred new schools - including those established in eastern Germany following reunification (Esterl, nd, p. 3). Reluctance on the part of educational authorities to fully embrace the Waldorf school system (Kneibe, 1994, p. 14) possibly due to the earlier opposition of the Catholic Church, appeared to have been resolved with the establishment of a dialogue between the two camps by the late 1990's (Ullrich, 1994/2000, p. 21). In 2010 the total number of Waldorf schools in Germany had reached two hundred and seventeen. Ten Teachers Training Colleges were also in operation (Bund der Frein, 2010, Waldorfschulen).

4.5.3 Waldorf Schools in the European Heartland

Between 1919 and 1925 Steiner gave introductory courses at the *Goetheanum* and elsewhere in Switzerland as well as in Holland. He also gave single lectures in Utrecht, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, The Hague and Oslo. The first schools to be established outside of Germany reflected the existence of anthroposophical circles and the lecture programmes Steiner had presented to the members related to his new pedagogy. In 1923 the first school was set up in The Hague and by the outbreak of World War II there were seven schools in the Netherlands, all closely connected to the Stuttgart school. Forced to close during the war years the schools were immediately opened following the cessation of hostilities. The ease with which new schools were founded in the Netherlands in the post-war period was largely a reflection of the religious freedom accorded to private educational facilities. Catholic and Protestant schools were considered the two main "pillars" of independent schooling and the Waldorf schools were regarded as a third anthroposophical "pillar" (Wiechert, 1994, p. 45). By 2010, ninety-two schools were in existence.

A similar pattern emerged in other European centres where anthroposophists were active. From 1920 onwards Steiner gave lectures in Dornach, Bern, Zurich and Basle. He personally assisted with the setting up of the Basle School and the lectures he gave later came to be published as the influential text *The Renewal of Education* (1920/1981c). In 1921 Steiner lectured in Oslo, Norway and in 1926 the first school was established in that city followed by a second school in Bergen three years later (Kvalvaag & Homeyer, 1994, p. 71). Neither school was forced to close during the years of German occupation. The Austrian Waldorf School (1927) closed at the outset of the war and did not re-open until the mid 1950's. At the present time, of the thousand schools worldwide, over seven hundred are located throughout Europe.

4.5.4 Global Expansion

Outside of the European heartland the first Waldorf School was set up in New York City in 1928 by two teachers trained in Waldorf pedagogy. This was followed by the introduction of Waldorf education into an existing American school in 1937. While growth was slow up until 1970 rapid expansion of the Waldorf Movement began in the following decade. Over fifty schools were established in quick succession and the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America was set up in an attempt to bring cohesion to the Movement. By 2010 over one hundred and twenty seven schools were in operation and a number of "charter schools", State schools using Steiner's methods, had expanded the influence of the pedagogy beyond the Waldorf schools themselves.

A phase of major expansion gained significant momentum from 1970 onwards. The out-migration of members of the European anthroposophical circles led to the establishment of schools in Argentina, Brazil and South Africa (Appendix II). In Australia and New Zealand the arrival of anthroposophists from European countries assisted with the setting up of

schools in major population centres. Today the countries of Australasia are recognised as the most important foci for Waldorf school expansion.

In an attempt to ensure the integrity of Steiner's pedagogical indications and maintain what has become recognised as an international curriculum, a number of global associations have been established which operate at a variety of levels. At the international level there are four key associations which guide and monitor the development of Waldorf schools. The Pedagogical Section of the *Goetheanum* in Dornach continues its "mission of educational research and the development of anthroposophy-inspired pedagogy" out of its original sources. The aim is to "assist the teachers in their daily work" by setting up a dialogue with Waldorf schools and their governing bodies worldwide (Freunde Waldorf, 2012, p. 1). The Hague Circle closely associated with the Pedagogical Section, organises world teacher conferences every four years and financially supports overseas teachers interested in attending lectures and seminars in order to gain greater insights into Steiner's ideology. Similarly, the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Schools organises conferences and working groups throughout the world which facilitate the renewal of work and the sharing of experiences among the teachers of the younger pupil. The European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education is also active in fostering exchanges of experienced teachers particularly between European schools (Freunde Waldorf, 2012, p. 1).

Alongside these trans-regional organisations a number of local associations have been set up in order to encourage communication between schools in the Waldorf system. For example, in Germany there are seven groups which assist Waldorf school teachers in various capacities.

4.6 Conclusions

Steiner was not the first esoteric scholar to articulate the notion of an idealised society governed by Christian morality emanating from spiritual authority. In his best known work *Christianopolis*, Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), theologian and mystic, proposed the creation of a utopia ruled through strict spiritual guidance based on Christian morality supported by an enlightened system of learning. In this ideal commonwealth spiritual fulfilment and intellectual attainments were the goals of every citizen. Spiritual perfection was the aim, intellectual pursuits and physical labour were on an equal footing (Cengage, 1996, p. 4) thereby ensuring the Rosicrucian ideal of the interactive relationship between head, heart and hand. The epiphany of the main character who first corrupted by worldly concerns, ultimately achieved spiritual transformation, would almost certainly have resonated with Steiner's own personal experiences.

A faint echo of *Christianopolis* was to be heard in Steiner's own model of social regeneration. Chapter 4 has provided an outline of the cultural, economic and political structure that he believed would facilitate the voice of spiritual authority and progress the goal towards the spiritually perfected man. The *Threefold Commonwealth* was not to be a society dominated by wealth or material goods, but a moral world order in which the will of every citizen would be united in awareness of the spiritual world striving for the same aims and having the same intention (1894/1949, p. 129). As a tightly structured threefold system it meshed the authority of the government with spiritual knowledge. The *Ideas*, the spiritual impulses the thinker would draw from the spirit in consciousness were considered by Steiner to be the essential guide to the renewal of the body politic. Each level of spiritual inspiration was to be accorded a particular role in the governance of the social organism. For example, activities related to the functioning of the State such as the production of goods and the distribution of capital were to be placed under the control of those capable of Imaginative or Intuitive thinking. As a "third way" between capitalism and socialism the *Threefold Commonwealth* in

principle, came unreasonably close to the ideologies threatening to undermine the newly established democracy of the Weimar Republic.

The threefold social order was not to be structured democratically. Steiner however, envisaged a social and political organisation in which the individual would be afforded the opportunity to carry out his duty to utilise his skills and talents - the capacities drawn from the spiritual realm. Despite his early association with the politics of the Left he did not see the future of German society in the hands of the working class. Instead he elected for a model that can be criticised on the grounds of the dominant role he allocated to a spiritual elite, the diminution of the place of democracy and a tendency towards an authoritarian organisation in terms of responsibility and duty. Steiner's commitment to maintaining the prevailing "terrible" capitalism can be considered as the act of a pragmatist. His anthroposophical ideas, as seen, were appealing to the elite including German factory owners, several of whom had formed the *Die Kommende Tag* which ultimately provided financial support for the fledgling Waldorf School. Any reduction in capitalism or the notion of private property although potentially associated with the unfair distribution of wealth and power, would have effectively reduced his not inconsiderable support-base of industrialists and wealthy patrons. The importance of placing "talented" persons in positions of authority ultimately to be defined as individuals who had achieved a state of spiritual insight, was seen by Steiner to be essential to ensuring productivity. An economy subject to control by the whole community would only serve to undermine production leading to its inevitable collapse. At the same time he predicted that a government organised along socialist lines would destroy free initiative thereby disallowing the potential of the worker to carry out his revealed duty - an essential element of society destined to become a reflection of the will of the spiritual world.

The all important Cultural sphere was also to be removed from the reach of a democratic framework. The threefold organisation of the State ensured that educational, judicial,

intellectual and spiritual (religious) matters would be free from government interference and market forces. Steiner considered the legal order would be the direct result of what could be acquired through spiritual Inspiration, and it is to be assumed that he anticipated it would be placed under the control of a spiritual elite working out of the insights afforded by the "pure" illumination of *ethical individualism*. The liberated consciousness of such individuals would be focused on achieving the spiritual evolution and growth of the social organism. A legal system determined by spiritual Intuition was also seen by Steiner to serve to keep the economic system within its proper limits. This in turn would work to counter the tendency of capitalist ethics to potentially stand aside from any positive moral obligation to the needs of others. In anthroposophical terms, social justice under the guiding hand of the spiritually advanced group within society would reflect the Christ in consciousness in decision and judgements. Steiner emphasised that individuals would be free to maintain their autonomy in the choice of religion, schools and church. Given his contention that the pre-ordained task of the people of Middle Europe was to "ascend the ladder of spiritual knowledge" (1920/1980a, p. 20) it would be only logical to conclude that he anticipated the role of anthroposophical institutions to ultimately become dominant.

Steiner clearly valued the role that education could play in transforming the life of the individual and society, and when his social vision foundered he claimed that education was the only way out of Germany's social chaos. Chapter 4 briefly reviewed the background to the establishment of the Waldorf School and it is clear that without the support of the factory owner Emil Molt, Steiner's vision for an education based on his spiritual insights may never have become a reality. Undoubtedly Steiner saw the school as the first step towards creating a group of individuals who would come to take the positions of authority in society and potentially bring about the ideals of the *Threefold Commonwealth of Man*. The chapter surveyed the fundamental aspects of Steiner's educational philosophy which were demonstrated to lie in his Christocentric worldview foundations. His early lectures reinforced

the contention that he was committed to bringing to the students of the Waldorf School a form of education that would lead to a personal salvation in the esoteric sense as discussed in Chapter 2. He believed that when education could move beyond the limitations of State controlled systems and focus on the spiritual nature of the pupil social discord would be averted. Children would come to "love" their karmic duty and find their allotted place within society utilising their special capabilities. In a harmonious, organic structure the will of the spiritual world would come to play itself out in human consciousness and in so doing, prepare the foundation for the brotherhood that Steiner believed would curtail the power of the rising Ahrimanic impulse and prepare for the coming of the etheric Christ.

In the final analysis, Steiner's perceived task to redeem the consciousness of humanity would not to be achieved simply through the agency of a reformed social structure but via the efforts of the teachers who believed in his esoteric Christianity. Children awakened to the spirit in consciousness would lay the groundwork for social change either in their current or in a future incarnation. The exponential expansion in the number of schools in Germany based on the Waldorf School model in the post-war period was a testament to the initiative and commitment of Steiner's followers to keep alive his social vision. The worldwide dissemination of Waldorf schooling began in earnest in the 1970s and continues to this day.

The form and structure of the unique education system Steiner created with the intention of bringing spiritual consciousness to a new generation is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

THE WALDORF SCHOOL - AN EDUCATION FOR THE NEW AGE OF LIGHT

The knowledge imparted by Rudolf Steiner has such world transforming power that it will be able to change man himself - potentially the most resistant element in all creation. It works upon the yet immature element of the soul like rain in spring, rousing the earth from the confines by impelling warmth...Education in our day must be a moral achievement; we must be pioneers of a future humanity. We must strive to make education of the free man into a free act, i.e. a moral act of the highest order.

(Marie Steiner in Steiner, 1923/1981a, pp. 17, 21)

5.1 Introduction

As Marie Steiner stated in her preface to the lecture cycle entitled *A Modern Art of Education* (1923/1981a), the Waldorf graduates were to be the pioneers of a "future humanity". Based on his discourses with the selected teaching initiates it was clear Steiner considered that he had crafted an "art of education" with the potential to replace existing forms of instruction which he believed were no longer suitable to the spiritual demands of the Epoch. In the so-called age of the *Consciousness Soul*, education based on anthroposophical principles was seen by Steiner as the antidote to those aspects of life which had overwhelmed any apperception of the spirit thereby distancing the individual from the roots of his spiritual heritage. As indicated in the foregoing discussion in Chapter 4, only an education inspired by Anthroposophy in Steiner's estimation, held the key to revitalising the spiritual life of Middle Europe. As a natural concomitant it would create a young generation with the moral strength of will to stand tall against the rising tide of socialist governments (1919/1969a, p. 14). Steiner's spiritual philosophy did not exalt the State above the individual, *ethical individualism* demanded complete autonomy.

In esoteric terms, education in the Waldorf School was to be a transformational process balancing and healing the child's thinking consciousness into a monistic whole as it moved towards unification with the spirits that had given it life. In the new school, stereotyped rules and methodologies were to be replaced by the "art of education", the art of developing the whole human being in body, soul and spirit (1923/1981a, p. 105). As followers of Anthroposophy on their own path to illumination, the first teachers of the Waldorf School understood their task to be the unfolding of the spiritual individuality of their young charges through the correct understanding of the Christ Impulse (Steiner in Gabert 1955, p. 17) - a loving moral impulse that set greatest store by the virtues of Goodness, Beauty and Truth in earthly life.

In the pamphlet *the Education of the Child in Light of Spiritual Science*, written in 1906, Steiner had claimed that Spiritual Science, if called on to work pedagogically, could "communicate every detail" (Tautz, 1982, p. 16). His ability to set in place his pedagogical vision with expediency in the early years of the twentieth century was largely attributable to the fact that Steiner believed he had found the answer as to how to awaken the soul to the imaginative streams of wisdom long dormant. At the point Steiner was writing *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, he made clear that it was altogether possible for children to develop the imaginative soul that would allow them entry into what he termed, spiritual "Reality". As noted, when presented with the opportunity to create a new pedagogical form he emphasised that he did not aspire to curriculum change but rather to instructional reform based on a "true knowledge of the spiritual" (1919/1995b, p. 31) - the "planetary dialogue" subsumed in the unified wisdom of art, science and history.

An awakening to karmic destiny and a receptivity to a heightened form of moral consciousness were anticipated by Steiner to be the outcomes of eight years of careful preparation. While the child would acquire knowledge relating to the practicalities of outer

life, the true value of his education would be derived from the potential realisation of the spiritual-Self. By acquiring the capacity to "think through the spirit" the Waldorf pupil would be the vehicle of a Christ inspired morality critical to social reformation. For Steiner, the Waldorf School graduates who would find their way to "know the self" were to be the "practical proof of the success of Anthroposophy" (1919/1986a, p. 34).

Chapter 5 sets out to investigate how Steiner translated Spiritual Science into a pedagogical discipline that would offer the child the potential for salvation in the esoteric sense. Of particular interest is the extent to which his esoteric *weltanschauung* was reflected in the pedagogical praxis and curriculum. Steiner's perception of the spiritual nature of the pupil that education would be required to serve is also a consideration. The chapter is divided into three interconnected parts -

- * Part 1 provides an insight into the pedagogical principles based on Anthroposophy.
- * Part 2 identifies the influence of Steiner's esoteric *weltanschauung* on the Waldorf School curriculum he proposed would awaken the children to their inherent spiritual natures.
- * Part 3 reviews the key principles which came to characterise Waldorf School education and considers them in relation to those of other child-centred educational ideologies current at the time.

Part 1

5.2 The Foundations of Waldorf Educational Theory

5.2.1 An Esoteric Theory of Educational Purpose

Steiner's approach to the philosophy of education was essentially the epistemology of moral, spiritual perception detailed in *The Philosophy of Freedom* couched in pedagogical terms. In

keeping with the assumption that moral truth was part of the universal cosmic process that could be brought to consciousness on the stage of the mind prepared to receive it through free-willed participation, Steiner saw education as a moral, spiritual task. He envisaged that the pedagogy of the Waldorf School would play a critical role in both initiating and nurturing the steps that would lead to the awakening of the faculty of cognition as the child began to freely and creatively "think through" the spiritual beings inhabiting the human psyche. The development of the moral self-consciousness of the maturing young mind would depend wholly on the ability of the teacher to train the virtuous character of the intellect and save it from falling into the "imperfect state" of thinking cognition unreconciled with the spiritual world. As Marie Steiner put it, Waldorf pedagogy would be a "moral act of the highest order".

Steiner also wove his educational philosophy with esoteric theology. His stated intention that Waldorf teachers were to teach out of an awareness that their task was to bring about the salvation of the child and steer him towards "finding the Christ Impulse in the course of his life" was reflective of his responsibility to his esoteric Masters. By training the independent faculty of thinking consciousness throughout the early years of childhood the groundwork would be laid for the child to receive and understand the Truths of Cosmic Wisdom. The nurturing of these Truths in the later years of schooling would pave the way for the child to achieve the fruition of sacramentalism, the point at which the progressively evolving soul would make a conscious connection with the in-dwelling "spark" of the Divine (Querido, 1995, p. 81).

5.2.2 The Spiritual Anthropology of the Young Child

Speaking at the Second International Summer Conference in Torquay, England in 1924, Steiner had been in a reflective mood. He informed his audience that an "immense amount has been done for education by distinguished individuals in the course of the nineteenth

century". But although undertaken with the "very best of intentions", the ideas had arisen at a time when no real knowledge of the human being was possible due to the materialism that had come to prevail in all aspects of life. Ahriman and Lucifer had clouded the minds of the great educationalists who had built their theories on foundations of sand or "something even less stable", having completely neglected to connect the soul of the individual human being to the cosmos (1924/1995a, p. 2). In the Waldorf School the teacher would acquire a knowledge of the child beyond what contemporary science offered -

The Waldorf teacher holds the conviction that what he meets in the child from week to week from year to year, is the expression of a divine spiritual being that descends from a purely spirit - soul existence and evolves here in the physical bodily existence between birth and death...

(Steiner, 1921/1970a, p. 23)

Rejecting what he saw as a mechanistic, materialistic image of the human being, Steiner turned to the humanist notions of the Hermetic philosophers to outline a complex esoteric picture of the spiritual and physical individuality of the young child. In the *De Occulta Philosophia*, the Renaissance mystic Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa had catalogued in detail the subtle correspondences between the visible and invisible world, as well as those between humankind and the cosmos (Conway, 2002, p. 9). Diverging relatively little from these ideas, Steiner indicated in a number of lectures that the stars, planets and elements of Nature, Earth, Water, Air and Fire coalesced within the body, soul and spirit, which together exhibited a rhythmic seven-year periodicity. Goethe's theory of the metamorphosis of the green plant and Schiller's poetic depiction of the threefoldness in human nature also provided Steiner with direction in determining what he referred to as the child's "spiritual anthropology".

Against the background of a Hermetic worldview, Steiner defined four "characterological dispositions" following the typology of human temperaments postulated by the physician,

Galen (129-199/217). In terms of their individuality, Steiner indicated that children would be melancholic, phlegmatic, choleric or sanguine and teaching content would need to be modified according to the dominating humour. Via a "harmonious adjustment" the virtues of each would come to be commanded at will (1923/1954a, p. 184).

To define the all important spiritual anthropology of the young child Steiner returned to the insights relating to the human constitution derived from the teachings he had first outlined in *Theosophy - An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World*. At its simplest, the individual was constituted of body, soul and spirit -

By *body* is here meant that through the things in the environment of a man reveal themselves to him... By the word *soul* is signified that by which he links the things to his own being, through which he experiences pleasure and displeasure, desire and aversion, joy and sorrow, in connection to them. By *spirit* is meant what becomes manifest in him when, as Goethe expressed it, he looks at things as a 'so to speak divine being'. In this sense man consists of body, soul and spirit.... In this way man is a citizen of three worlds. Through his body he belongs to the world that he also perceives through his body; through his soul he also constructs for himself his own world; through his spirit a world reveals itself to him that is exalted above all others.

(Steiner, 1904/1971b, pp. 4, 5)

In numerous lectures Steiner set out more precisely the nature of the three bodies and their relationship to the Eastern Rights of Karma and Reincarnation. The body and soul were to be seen as the "bearer of the spirit", the instruments of service of the Eternal Ego spirit. In reincarnating many times through various body and soul combinations the spirit had evolved with the Earth to the point where it could individualise through the development of the human I or Ego consciousness. In Spiritual Science the spirit was thus synonymous with human individuality. In each new earthly incarnation the human spirit would appear as a repetition

of itself with the fruits of its former experience in previous earth lives with its own biography (1904/1971b, p. 59). The I was to penetrate the body and soul in order to encounter and receive into its being a "separate" experience of life on Earth, to eventually become conscious of itself through uniting with thinking. In this way, the I bestowed upon the individual an inner transformative or spiritualising capacity by which means the soul faculties defined by Steiner as thinking, feeling and willing could be both separated and harmonised (Wright, 2001, p. 21).

As the spirit gradually incarnated into physical existence the soul that was bound to it would mediate the "spirit's linking up with destiny" (nd/2001, p. 33). Every newly incarnating human-being would create for itself a new soul out of the "soul-world" with the qualities needed for the fulfilment of its destiny (Easton, 1975, p. 36). In the spiritual soul-world it retained the capacity to grow and develop as it experienced purgation, and on entering new life would carry with it the self-created destiny garnered from previous incarnations -

The human spirit must be reincarnated again and again; man is governed by the law that he brings the fruits of his former life with him into the next one. The soul lives in the present. But his life in the present is not independent of the former life. The spirit that has been reincarnated brings its destiny with it from earlier incarnations. And this destiny rules his life. The impressions that the soul receives, the desires that are satisfied, the joys and sorrows that it experiences, depend on its actions in previous incarnations. The body is subjected to the laws of heredity; the soul is subjected to the destiny that it has itself created. This self-created destiny of man is called his Karma.

(Steiner, 1904/1971b, p. 70)

Steiner's own clairvoyant research placed the evolution of the human being out of a spiritual-physical cosmos. Through the process of metamorphosis the form had become increasingly differentiated to the present physical, material body incorporating a life-body or etheric and

astral or soul body. The etheric body, the life-filled spirit form present in all plant and animal life was seen to have several functions related to organising the physical body. Its outstanding quality was the reproduction of the species and was likened by Steiner to the classical *soma threptikon* of Aristotle. In its final development, Steiner saw the astral or soul body in a very similar form to Aristotle's mature psychological theory. In its primitive form, developing during the Egypto-Chaldean Epoch, it was a vehicle for sensation compared by Steiner to the Aristotellean *soma aisthetikon*. In a more advanced form as the sentient soul it had become the vehicle for inner instincts, impulses and emotions. In its final development the astral had acquired the capacity for cognitive reflection. As a mind-soul or intellectual soul it was to be compared to the Aristotelian *soma kinetikon*. In the text *Theosophy*, Steiner proposed the additional concept of the consciousness soul or spiritual soul as higher metamorphosis of the astral body first coming into psychic consciousness in the Fifth Post-Atlantean Epoch (refer Table 2.1, p. 69). Compared by Steiner to Aristotle's *soma dianoetikon*, he pronounced it capable of a discursive form of thinking that could be freed from the unconscious drives originating from the characterological disposition of the individual. According to Steiner's clairvoyant insight, its development was only just commencing on the stage of human history (Franklin, 1989, pp. 418-420).

Through his etheric, the child would bring with him from the spirit world an "essence" of the entire Universe. In his astral body, able to travel in the starry world, he would carry an image of the experiences he had undergone between his last death and present birth, and in Steiner's words - "great secrets" were inscribed there (1922/1978b, p. 11). At maturity the soul would become capable of gaining a reasoned cognitive self-reflection of both. In the early years of schooling the soul-psyche would transmit the impressions from the outer world to the incarnating Ego spirit. As a preserver of the past the soul would gather "treasures for the spirit" preserving each single experience as memory. From these the spirit would draw forth all that could ennoble its abilities for the "whole content of its life". The soul would thus

extend the horizon of the spirit, and the more it was able to bring forth out of the memories of the past the more the incarnating spirit would be enriched (1904/1971b, p. 46). The ether body and the astral were also to be understood as representing the creative and imaginative female principle in the human psyche (Barfield, 1978, p. 93). Both would need to be prepared through education to receive the masculine principle of the Ego spirit.

In Steiner's anthropological schema, during earthly existence, the metamorphosis of the soul into an increasingly autonomous agent relied on the involution of the Ego spirit into the physical, etheric and astral "sheaths". The Ego, the guardian of individuality and freewill, was divisible into two, lower and higher. The former, corresponding to the bodily nature, was served by the eyes and ears as organs of perception; the latter, spark of the archetype of the Christ Spirit, by a divinely inspired, moral intuition. By the age of twenty-one, according to Steiner's perception of psychic development, the Ego spirit would come to fully incarnate into its chosen physical body. In Steiner's view of the growth and development of the young child, the elaboration of the human form, the achievement of upright posture, the ability to speak and the capacity to think, were related to the Ego spirit working unconsciously on its bodily organism, building it towards the time of independent thought and judgement (Franklin, 1989, p. 423).

As a preparation of the bodily vehicle for possession by the spirit, of greatest significance to the child before the age of puberty was the transformation of the etheric closely associated with the forces of the will. From it, the sentient soul would "draw forth" what it in turn would cause to "gleam forth" as sensation (1904/1971b, p. 19). Animator of all life and as a faithful "image of the cosmos", its physical birth was heralded by the completion of the second dentition. Born into existence in the Sun stage of primordial history when the plant and animal systems came into being, this remnant of the primitive vegetative forms was of particular significance in as much that in association with the will, it was related to moulding

and developing inclinations, habit and conscience. In keeping with the cosmic law, at puberty the "old" etheric would be "caste out" to be replaced by a similarly constituted organ, the new etheric "heart". Built on the image of the Universe in preparation for the "imprinting" of the highly individualised astral forces, it represented a tableau on which all the child would accomplish in the outer world would be inscribed (1922/1978b, pp. 11, 13). Throughout life, Steiner anticipated that the etheric the "eye" of the soul and the "ear" of the spirit, would become a true reflector of the experiences of the astral body (1924/1968b, p. 35).

Steiner was confident that esoteric training would begin "in earnest" only when the individual would learn to work in the etheric body (Steiner in Weber, 2005, p. 17). Properly speaking, it was the etheric body with its associated power of the imagination that was to be known as the real organ of perception. When the individual could *feel* it as a sense organ "he would", Steiner said, "perceive it as world of weaving, moving pictures and sounds", and in the domain of Waldorf schooling "particular attention" was to be paid to it (1914/nd, np).

Divorced from the spiritual realities of the world of Nature from which it had originated the etheric had become "malevolent and destructive" and instinctively against obedience. In order for it to become a positive influence on the human psyche it required the curative or healing knowledge of a "true love of the plant world" (1923/2002, p. 59). In regaining an intelligence of its spiritual linkages, the etheric held the potential to once again become the "thinker" in the human psyche. By so doing, it would mirror its role in the Egypto-Chaldean Epoch, and what had been an instinctive relationship to the entire cosmos, the constellations, the moon, sun and planets, would, once again, be revealed to human cognition in full consciousness. Given the import of his insights, Steiner indicated that the years between the birth of the etheric and the birth of the astral at puberty were the most critical time of the child's spiritual "awakening" (1923/1988c, p. 119). Significantly, the moment when the astral and etheric co-joined in the maturing soul-psyche of the adolescent the forming of a lifetime of earthly Karma would begin (1922/1978b, p. 16).

In relation to the astral body Steiner assigned an important role to the spiritual being of *Anthroposophia* relevant to its development in the youthful soul. At the Golgotha event, *Anthroposophia* had directly entered into the human astral body carrying with her the Divine Cosmic Wisdom of the Sophia - the memories of past experiences and the understanding of Karma. The astral, associated with the starry cosmic influences thereafter represented the vehicle for the faculties of discernment or judgement of the Truth of human existence (Koulidas, 2006, np). As the "source of faith itself" it required to be "given" the nourishment of the "concepts, mental pictures and feelings" drawn from Anthroposophy. Without the nourishment of the Cosmic Wisdom, it would become sick, and through it, the physical human being (1911/1978c, pp. 14, 11). Although the astral as the vehicle of cognitive reflection would wait until puberty to more fully enter into the maturing psyche, Steiner considered it to be "active" as the sentient soul and intellectual soul between the ages of seven and fourteen years. The metamorphosis of the intellectual soul into the consciousness soul would rely on the capacity of the Ego to influence the former.

As the third member of the trinity, the Higher Ego was perceived by Steiner to have a sympathetic relationship to all that the astral body encompassed thereby linking the Karma of the individual to the moral laws of the "whole cosmos" (1922/1978b, p. 16) as it set out to evolve the lower spiritual bodies in the image of its celestial Self. While however, the Ego held the potential to imbue thinking consciousness with the universal values of Goodness, Truth and Beauty, inadequately prepared for, it could become introspective and self-focused, considering interests which were its very own. Conversely, if its sense of individual identity and self-love could be guided towards a love for others and a love of moral duty the child would be freed from Luciferic egoism, allowing him to work "fruitfully towards the healing of humanity" (1919/1969a, p. 16).

As a preparation for a moral earthly existence teaching would endeavour to harmonise the lower Ego (the man of Nature) with the Higher Ego made in the image of the Christ archetype (the man of soul and spirit). As a preparation for possession by the spirit and an initiation of the child into the higher level of consciousness this would bring, the handling of all knowledge in the Waldorf School was to essentially encompass three objectives -

- To nurture the spiritual sheaths of the etheric and astral to birth.
- To assist with the in-working of the Ego spirit into the physical body.
- To align the will of the child with the intuitions of the Higher-self.

To achieve the objective of spiritual cognition Steiner advised the teachers to employ the exercises in *How to Know Higher Worlds* and *Occult Science* (1919/1995b, pp. 111, 113). A summary of their usage is described in 5.5.1.

5.2.3 A Spiritual Phylogenesis

The soul development of the child on which countless generations of spirit had worked was described by Steiner as a process of "spiritual phylogenesis". The clearly defined stages in the child's maturing soul-psyche were seen to recapitulate the Epochs of Rosicrucian evolutionary history in residual form. History teaching in the Waldorf School would therefore be the accompaniment to the journey of the re-incarnating spirit's evolutionary ascent through specific Epochs of time.

Steiner anticipated that the *Lemurian* and *Atlantean* Epochs (refer p. 56) were to be repeated in a child's development up to the seventh year. In the early years of schooling the child's dreamy state of consciousness mirrored the time of an ancient clairvoyance when "mighty pictures stood before the soul" and the intellect had not developed an abstract nature.

Through the direct "inner life" of pictorial, imaginative vision, the spiritual foundations of the sense world had been perceptible. Historically, it was an age when obedience to the Star Wisdom guided thought and actions. The Epoch of evolution when the great spiritual teachers appeared among humankind - Buddha, Plato, Pythagoras, Hermes, Moses, Zarathustra - was to have its greatest influence in the child between the change of teeth and puberty. The actions of the gods depicted in heroic legends and sagas were therefore to be conveyed to the child in narrative form. The developing independence of the child was to be seen as a reflection of the entrance of the Christ Spirit entering into physical existence. As the child moved towards the years of puberty, in phylogenetic terms he had arrived at a time in history when power and glory surrounded the growth of the city. The main emphasis in the classroom was therefore to be on authority and community (1907/1996b, p. 67).

Steiner's spiritual phylogenetic theory showed some accord with the Haeckel's (1834-1910) recapitulatory Biogenic Law - an evolutionistic monism which argued that ontogeny recapitulated phylogeny in the biological sense. Without any reference to spiritual recapitulation however, Steiner described it as simply a "flight of fancy", a beautiful invention (1920/1981c, p. 55).

5.2.4 The Task of Waldorf Education

While the influential Locke (1632-1704) had perceived the mind to be a *tabula rasa* awaiting the script of knowledge, Steiner saw the script as partially written describing the child as bearing "half his world within him all there and ready taught" -

We should remember that the child we have to educate bears half his world within him all there and ready taught, namely the spiritual half, including for example, the moral and metaphysical ideas.

(Steiner, 1907/1965, p. 39)

In such an assumption Steiner came close to Plato's theory of *Anamnesis* which considered that the immortal soul had been born many times and could remember what she once knew about virtue and many things so that "learning and enquiry became nothing but recollection" (Allen, 1959, p. 3). For Steiner, the soul and spirit life had been immersed in the essences of former earth lives and all that was experienced after birth was a consequence of the experiences before conception. The impulses that the child would bear within him as a sense of duty and as abilities would be "illuminated and energised" by an awareness the Angelic gods had sent them down. That the child would not be gifted with omniscient memory was attributable to the "great oblivion" (refer p. 55), the moment at birth when a knowledge of the spiritual was "rayed back" through the process of antipathy and transformed into mental pictures or images (1922/1983b, pp. 19, 24).

Subsequently, Steiner reinforced the fundamental significance of these insights in a number of lectures (1919/1966, 1923/1988c). In the Waldorf School the task of education would be the "mutual attunement" of the body, soul and spirit largely through the efforts of the child himself -

Basically, there is no education other than self-education, whatever the level may be. In its full depth this is recognised in anthroposophy, which through spiritual investigation has conscious knowledge of repeated earth lives. Every education is self-education, and as teachers we can only provide the environment for the child's own self-education. We have to provide the most favourable conditions in which, through our agency, the child can educate itself in accordance with its own destiny.

(Steiner, 1923/1988c, p. 145)

The Waldorf teacher in reality was not to educate at all. The process of education would only be disturbed by a teacher who interfered too energetically.

The child, born out of the ambient spiritual world into earthly existence with a pictorial and plastic "habit memory", at least of the "moral and metaphysical ideas" of the spirit-Self was seen by Steiner to potentially experience teaching content between the change of teeth and puberty as "old and familiar knowledge" - a notion he expressed in the following terms -

It is very important for us to realise that the child's expression at this age is like meeting an acquaintance whom one recognises in the street. This latter experience, lowered one degree into the subconsciousness, is what happens in the physical and moral nature of the child at this age. He feels what he is learning is old and familiar to him. And the more you appeal to this feeling, knowing that you are giving the child the old familiar knowledge, the more you can make your teaching pictorial and imaginative, the better you will teach, because he saw these things as images in his spiritual life and he knows that his own being rests within these images, and so he can understand them because they are already well known to him.

(Steiner, 1924/1968b, p. 71)

Ultimately Steiner came to define the task of the Waldorf teacher as simply to assist in charming from the child what divine and spiritual beings had sent down from the spiritual realm.

In his lecture cycle *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, Steiner reinforced the need for each teacher to "obliterate sympathies and antipathies and personal ambitions" in order to devote themselves unreservedly to their task. Learning in the Waldorf School was therefore conceived by Steiner to be essentially a self-education that would give the child free use of his intellectual and spiritual powers. The teachers for their part were simply to provide an environment favourable to the child awakening to the nobly beautiful and eternally true aspects of their spiritual nature. Waldorf schooling would not focus on the transmission of knowledge but the gradual awakening of the capabilities and talents garnered in the spirit world. In Steiner's words -

We shall above all have to realise that in employing our method we shall be dealing in a particular way with the harmonising of the higher man, the man of spirit and soul with the physical bodily man, the lower man. What matters for you will not be the transmitting of knowledge as such; you will be concerned with handling the knowledge for the purpose of developing human capacities.

(Steiner, 1919/1988b, p. 9)

For Steiner, schooling was thus a means to an end. The Waldorf teacher as the "observer" of the child's spiritual incarnation (1924/1971a, p. 47) would bring about a "healing" of the inner spiritual consciousness with outer sense perceptible reality. In so doing, it would allow the child to leave the school with their inheritance from the supersensible world to be carried through life and lived with (1922/1967b, p. 57).

5.2.5 The Path to Spirit Consciousness

Steiner's theory of the spiritual development of the young child was directly related to the proposition that the birth of the spirit would take place in three clearly defined stages. The first stage of the psychic transformation lasted from conception until the first change of teeth followed by a further stage from the second dentition until puberty. The third stage would encompass the years between adolescence and the full birth of the Ego spirit at the age of twenty-one years (1923/1988c, p. 28). In the following terms Steiner defined the child's perception of the world around him during each developmental phase -

The first part of the child's life, up to the change of teeth is spent with the unconscious assumption: *the world is moral*. The second period from the change of teeth to adolescence is spent with the unconscious assumption: *the world is beautiful*. And only when adolescence dawns the possibility of discovering: *the world is true*.

(Steiner, 1919/1966, p. 136)

Until the first change of teeth the subconscious mind considered life to be a continuation of the supersensible existence. The child's stream of consciousness in the early years of earthly life therefore remained psychically connected to the archetypal, spiritual realm -

Before the change of teeth you can see quite clearly at work the effects of the child's habits before birth or conception, in its pre-earthly existence in the spiritual world. The body of the child acts almost as though it were a spirit, for the spirit that has descended from the spiritual world is still fully active in the child for the first seven years of life.

(Steiner, 1924/1995a, p. 7)

At the age of approximately nine years with the birth of the etheric a second stage would commence. At this juncture the child would cross a psychic *Rubicon* when the "natural religiosity", the knowledge of the correspondence between the Self and the cosmos would flow into the crevasses of the subconscious mind (1923/1988c, p. 57). A second *Rubicon* would be forded at approximately twelve years of age when the child experienced the indwelling of the spiritual gift of individuality. At this point, Steiner considered the child's spirit to be "earth ready" although the astral force was not sufficiently incarnated to allow for reasoned moral judgement -

It must be realised however that up to his 14th year the pupil has no judgement; and if judgement is asked of him thus lies a destructive effect on the brain.

(Steiner, 1922/1947, p. 1/16)

In the lecture cycle *Roots of Education* (1924/1968b) he reaffirmed the significance of this insight -

Before puberty the child can have no intellectual conceptions of right and wrong. People can speculate about these things as much as they like, but direct observation will show that what I

have said is true. This is why all moral concepts that one brings before the child must be of a pictorial nature. Teaching content and moral training can thus be interwoven.

(Steiner, 1924/1968b, p. 65)

Not until the third stage, physically heralded by puberty and spiritually by the birth of the astral soul body, would the universal stream of conceptual *Ideas* start to surge forth into consciousness. At this point, according to Steiner's insights, the child had developed sufficient maturity and inner strength "to enter the world of human freedom" (1923/1988c, p. 156) and was now capable of awakening to the archetypal concepts of morality of his own accord (1924/1971a, p. 125). Thenceforward, the soul could draw messages from the spirit world through intuitions and through sensations from the physical world. By Steiner's reckoning, the spiritual in the child had come to connect with the "Spirit of the World" (1919/1995b, p. 114). Able to transform perceptual images into the concrete concepts arising out of reasoned intellectual thinking the adolescent would be able to draw conclusions and make decisions for himself (1923/1988c, p. 198). A consciousness beyond simple sense-perceptible thinking, gifted by the spirit freed from the confines of the subconscious mind would thus allow the child to take part in the universal cosmic process as the youthful "voice of conscience" began to prevail.

5.2.6 The Soul Forces

In Steiner's esoteric schema the extent to which the child would learn to live in the spirit and understand its revelations would depend on nurturing the soul forces he defined as thinking, feeling and willing to support the spiritual incarnation process. Between the change of teeth and puberty all teaching in the Waldorf School was to focus on "inner" development, refining the feeling and the will life of the soul out of which would arise the intellectual life of thought (1919/1985b, pp. 2, 5). In *The Philosophy of Freedom* Steiner nominated the soul force of the will as the critical faculty which first required training in order that consciousness would

ultimately engender the psychic power to think beyond the "shadow picture" of the physical plane. In his summation, the images held in the etheric and unique to the individual and which represented the "spiritual seed" planted during pre-birth existence, would only be made available through the application of the human will (1924/1968b, p. 70).

The strongest of all the impulses that would assist in the process of training the will to engage the etheric and make it receptive to its cosmic purpose Steiner considered to develop from refining the feeling life of the soul. By training the potentially errant will through the correct aesthetic feeling for the Christ stream of religious impulses relating to life and spirit arising out of the anthroposophical worldview (refer p. 61), it would become strong and active for the good. In one of his earliest lecture cycles on education, Steiner stated the case plainly -

Never will a man's will, nor in consequence his character develop healthily, if he is not able in this period of childhood to receive religious impulses deep into his soul. How a man feels his place and part in the universal whole - this will find expression in the unity of his life of will. If he does not find himself linked by strong bonds to a Divine - spiritual, his will and character must needs remain uncertain, divided and unsound.

(Steiner, 1907/1965, p. 43)

In considering the will to be the precursor to moral thinking Steiner was in direct opposition to prevailing pedagogical theory. The well respected German pedagogue, Herbart (1776-1841) in the text *Pedagogical Theory* (1806), had postulated that right moral concepts would proceed from thinking, followed by right feeling culminating in the moral will (Rein, 1899, p. 86). Steiner's response to this progression was a warning -

A pedagogy like the Herbartian which takes its start in training of the faculty of thought and ideation, has the effect of ruining the child's body. This should be known by all who are engaged in education.

(Steiner, 1921/1996a, pp. 36, 37)

If teachers in the Waldorf School were to avoid the deleterious effect of contemporary teaching systems, Steiner argued that abstract thinking would be the last soul faculty to mature and was to be left to "work its way upwards" of its own accord. Nothing was to be accomplished, according to Steiner's reasoning, by providing the child with an intellectual form of learning in the early years of schooling. Teaching was to be *organic*, encouraging only a perceptual "dreamlike" form of thought. With the advent of the second dentition and the birth of the etheric into consciousness the child would "wake up", able to take in the actual content presented in a symbolic and pictorial form -

Here one has to take into account that at this age their thinking is not logical, but has a completely pictorial character. True to its nature the child rejects a logical approach. It wants to live in pictures...At that age they feel indifferent to intellectual accomplishment.

(Steiner, 1923/1988c, p. 60)

According to Steiner a strong will could therefore not be encouraged by perpetual "laying bare of meaning" (1919/1988b, p. 88). Concepts sharp and final would only have the undesirable effect of curtailing the memorial psyche from evolving freely and flexibly. During his discussions with the teachers Steiner emphasised the importance of allowing thinking to evolve gradually between the age of seven and puberty as the soul came to partake of the parables and images of life and the secrets of Nature. It was to be understood by the Waldorf teachers that the reasoned intellect was a soul force only born with puberty -

Thinking, as a form of its own, as an inner life lived in abstract terms, must be encouraged during the period of life in question, and yet remain in the background. Without outside influence, it must as it were to develop by itself while the soul partakes of the parables and images of life and the secrets of nature. Together with the other soul experiences between the age of seven and puberty, thinking must thus develop the power of judgment mature. And it

must take place in such a way that the person then, after puberty, becomes capable of forming his own opinion on the life and knowledge with complete independence.

(Steiner, 1907/1965, pp. 43, 44)

In educational systems where the pupil was coerced and moulded by the thinking of others Steiner believed that the individual could only have an *imposed* understanding of ideal behaviour unable to realise their own moral intuitions. Fettered in dreams of reason and intellectuality these children were spiritually "unfree", incapable of realising their own free-willed consciousness. Above all else, they would be bereft of a true compassion for their fellow human beings.

It was a theme Steiner would expand on in many pedagogical lectures. A child continually pressured to conform to the others thinking would never be free from the taint of egoism, subjective emotionality or prejudiced opinions. As weak-willed individuals they would be socially dislocated, capable of only agitated social activities and in adolescence and beyond, develop the inclination to plain evil to bring into knowledge and insert evil into man's moral life (1919/1969a, p. 85). For this individual, the "twilight instincts of the soul", the negative spiritual daemons active within the psyche, could never be overcome by the power of judgement (1919/1988b, p. 196). In later life, Steiner anticipated that such a person would undoubtedly come to deny the existence of the esoteric Christ.

Through nurturing the emotional and feeling life of the soul, the child would withdraw into the narrow precinct of his own being and acquire the shades of character; through the strength of the moral will he would set aside the tendency to cling to the influences of the natural man. Through thinking transformed, the child would achieve the self-knowledge of individual Karma as the voice of the gods entered into consciousness. Each soul faculty would play a crucial role in allowing the conscious mind to suspend the personal self to make room for the

spiritual perception. The success of the Waldorf School would therefore not be measured by any form of examination system but how well the soul faculties of feeling, willing and thinking could be prepared to support the spiritual incarnation of the next generation for the "definite tasks" that lay ahead (1920/1982a, p. 2).

In general, Steiner considered that all other forms of education while "well intentioned", lacked any comprehension of the needs of the incarnating spirit and as a consequence made three cardinal errors in approaching the teaching of the soul faculties that would guide it into its chosen earthly body. First, conceptual thinking was encouraged too early which Steiner regarded as directly attributable to an inherited Latin form of education which he considered out of step with the needs of the age. Secondly, many schools curbed free will by imposing severe discipline to "break it one might say" (1911c/nd, np). Thirdly, all prevailing pedagogical forms "stuffed" the intellect with knowledge and provided only "stones for bread" (1908/1965, p. 20). In the Waldorf School, the art of educating the whole human being in body, soul and spirit would avoid such pitfalls by instituting special methodologies.

5.3 The Essential Methodologies of Waldorf Pedagogy

5.3.1 Imitation and Authority

To support the progressive maturation of the indwelling spirit into consciousness, Steiner outlined a highly specialised approach. In order to develop the capacities that would enable the individual to play a decisive role as a citizen able to integrate properly into a threefold community Steiner regarded imitation, the employment of authority and the nurturing of love and gratitude as critical teaching methodologies to be applied from the earliest years of teaching (1923/1988c, p. 157). In Steiner's words -

If we do not know that the physical body must become an imitator in the right way we shall merely implant animal instincts in this body. If we are not aware that between the seventh and fourteenth year that the ether body passes through a special development that must be based on

authority, there will develop in man merely a universal cultural drowsiness, and the force needed for the rights organism will not be present. If from the fifteenth year onwards we do not infuse all education in a sensible way with the power of love that is bound to the astral body, men will never be able to develop their astral bodies into independent beings. These things intertwine -

Proper imitation develops freedom;

Authority develops the rights life;

Brotherliness, love, develops the economic life.

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

(Steiner, 1919/1969a, p. 17)

At the beginning of schooling, the child was acknowledged to be an imitative being mirroring the behaviour of those in his immediate surroundings. In this phase the child worked out of the notion that everything around him was as true as the things he so clearly perceived in the spiritual, pre-birth world, and as a consequence, the child's behaviour was necessarily instinctive giving rise to the urge to imitate (1924/1995a, p. 19). In effect, the child would model the exemplary behaviour of the classroom teacher who would demonstrate the values required to stand tall against the incursion of any form of political constraint that threatened the freedom of the individual. From Steiner's perspective -

One can become free only if one has as a child one has been a most intensive imitator. The natural power of a child must be strongly developed precisely for the time when socialism will break in upon us. People will not become free beings, in spite of all declaiming and political wailing about freedom, if the power of imitation is not implanted in them in the age of childhood. Only if this is done will they as adults have the basis for social freedom.

(Steiner, 1919/1969a, p. 14)

In the following phase between the change of teeth and adolescence the etheric would be guided towards an "ordered path" via feelings of veneration and reverence for the teacher. As

the spirit bedded down into earthly existence a "beautiful feeling" for a sense of authority would lay the foundations for equality in the social organism -

All education in this period of life will have to be consciously directed toward awakening in the child a pure, beautiful feeling for authority; for what is to be implanted in him during these years is to form the foundation for what the adult is to experience in the social organism as the equal rights of man.

(Steiner, 1919/1969a, p. 17)

In this stage the teacher was to guide the will of the child in everything it should or should not do, think or should not think, feel or should not feel (1924/1971a, p. 59). The unquestioned authority of the Class teacher would not be carried out by an artificial drilling or impelled by force but as a loving undertone the child would learn to obey "spontaneously". In the Waldorf classroom Steiner insisted that the authority of the teacher was an "absolute necessity" and freedom of the spirit could only be won through the voluntary surrender to their loving guidance (1923/1988c, p. 61). A child freed from the limitations imposed by authority would be denied the possibility of the well-founded development of the potentially difficult etheric body (1907/1996b, p. 45). At the point of puberty what had previously been a system of "sympathies" and "antipathies" cultivated by the teacher, would be transmuted into a "moral attitude of soul". Thenceforward, Steiner anticipated that the child would begin to seek in the world the source of his teacher's knowledge (1924/1968b, p. 84).

Steiner clearly focused Waldorf education on the attainment of the qualities that would prepare the graduates of the school to be "a socialising influence" in a society he predicted would be overwhelmed by socialist forces. As a consequence he considered that what "particularly mattered" in terms of the outcome of his pedagogy was a loving devotion to carry out the activities as prescribed by karmic destiny and the development of an understanding interest in what others were attempting to achieve (1923/1988c, p. 146).

5.3.2 Gratitude and Love

In the Waldorf School, the virtues of gratitude and love were to form the basis of a "truly religious attitude" towards the outer world. What during earthly life remained in the soul as an echo of the oneness with the beings of the spiritual world, Steiner defined as the capacity for love, and without love he believed there would be no moral life. At the point where the child's growing forces were at their strongest, Steiner directed the teachers to engender within the children feelings of universal gratitude towards the "whole world" which would lead to a love of Christ Himself -

One ought to realise that just as one has to dig the roots of a plant in the soil in order, later on to receive the blossom, so one has to plant gratitude into the soul of the child because it is the root of the love of God. The love of God will develop out of universal gratitude, as the blossom develops out of the root.

(Steiner, 1923/1988c, p. 130)

At first, love would begin to stir through sympathy for all that was being taught during the early years of schooling. At this stage the child's love for the fairy tale world of Nature would be nourished by a creative and pictorial approach. Love for the realities of the outer world would awaken only later. The love that would gradually emerge with the beholding of Nature's phenomena would grow daily into a love and understanding of those around them. With maturity, the graduate of the school would have acquired the basis of a love and understanding that would reach out to "meet the soul of another with selfless devotion" (1923/1983a, p. 19). According to Steiner, feelings of gratitude, coupled with an appreciation of the needs of others would lay the foundations for a universal love and sympathy towards all people (1923/1988c, pp. 134, 139).

5.3.3 The Moral Imagination

From the outset Steiner anticipated that only a specialised form of pedagogy would control the mechanical intellectualism he attributed to Ahriman and Lucifer, destroyers of the individual's consciousness of the spirit. He was therefore particularly concerned to foster the humility of the intellect through placing feelings and the imagination above rational thinking until the age of puberty. For Steiner the soul and its constituent parts were imagination themselves - a treasury of images built up from a spiritual pre-existence and experience of previous earth lives. "Rayed back" at birth these images, rightly regarded as religious (1923/1988c, p. 57), could be summoned to the surface through fantasy, imaginative feelings and impulsions (1919/1966, p. 33). The power of one idea to call up another, first recognised by Aristotle and linked to the imagination by Hobbes and Locke, was selected by Steiner to be the key methodological tool in the Waldorf armoury against the incursion of the so-called negative daemons. By stimulating and invigorating the memorial psyche through "as many imaginations as possible" (1919/1966, p. 39) the pictorial images moulding the soul and spirit would begin to take shape in the receptive "minds eye" -

The etheric body will unfold its forces if a well-ordered imagination is allowed to take guidance from the inner meaning it discovers for itself in pictures and allegories - whether seen in real life or communicated to the mind. It is not abstract concepts that work in the right way on the growing etheric body, but rather what is seen and perceived - indeed, not with external senses, but with the mind's eye.

(Steiner, 1906/1996b, p. 23)

While Steiner considered that contemporary systems attempted to eliminate the imaginative memory, the remnant of spiritual consciousness, almost entirely, Waldorf teachers were therefore instructed to develop it without interference -

For what is deep seated within the child's soul are the imaginations that have been received in the spiritual world. They seek to come to the surface. The teacher or the educator adopts the right attitude towards the child if he confronts the child with pictures.

(Steiner, 1920/1986b, p. 264)

The deep-seated imaginations the child had received in the spiritual world were to be quickened and cultivated through the teacher immersing all aspects of pedagogy in the Platonic verities of Goodness, Truth and Beauty -

The effect will be the students' healthy growth into the *true* that was given to them by the spiritual world as a kind of inheritance, so that they can merge with, grow together with, the *beautiful* in the right way, so that they can learn the *good* in the world of the senses, the good they are to develop and bring to expression during their lives.

(Steiner, 1921/1996a, p. 135)

To vivify and properly cultivate these virtues in every lesson, the Waldorf teacher was to present a persistent moral element. The lesson content would engage with the sympathy for the good already in the child thereby replacing what in other pedagogical systems, Steiner referred to as "catechism concepts" -

It is possible to introduce a religious element into every subject, even into math lessons. Anyone who has some knowledge of Waldorf teaching will know that this statement is correct. A Christian element pervades every single subject, mathematics included. This fundamental religious current flows through the entire education.

(Steiner, 1923/1988c, p. 201)

In the Waldorf School a persistent emphasis on the faculty of the imagination would awaken the child to the morality of the spirit through mental images. Between seven years and adolescence moral insight based on practical experience of how others had accomplished their

noble deeds was to be taught and nurtured. Through imaginative stories, attributes of greatness were to arouse sympathy and evil actions, antipathy. For Steiner, the actions of the heroes and gods placed before the child in rhyme and prose would result in a desire to imitate and emulate. Moral exemplars contained in the actions of historical personalities would penetrate deep into the psyche, influencing the child, in "a good way" in accordance with the dictates of their karmic destiny.

This "milk" for the soul (1924/1995a, p. 14) in the form of examples and analogies, unconsciously taken up as "inspiration" thus eliminated the need to present any form of overt religious instruction. The ideas, "clear in themselves" would, in Steiner's summation, provide constant sustenance and direction, working upon the feelings and the will and at the same time building and influencing the body. In contrast to the abstract ideation encouraged in other educational systems, in the Waldorf School teachers were to incorporate in their teaching imaginative and colourful stories to provide the bridge between the external phenomenal world, the world of sense perception and the child's personal, spiritual inner content. Concepts, proofs and conclusions would adversely affect the astral body not yet free to receive them (1906/1996b, p. 45). Accordingly, intellectualistic conceptual thinking was to be delayed as long as possible.

Part 2

5.4 The Art of Education

5.4.1 The Waldorf School Curriculum

In the closing months of 1919 the natural clairvoyance which Steiner claimed to have guided his hand so surely in his interpretation of ancient wisdom, inspired a subtle curricula and pedagogy he envisaged would begin the set task of bringing the darkness of the (etheric) will into the light of Christic thinking. To place the "ideal" curriculum (1919/1976b, p. 175) into the "tightly woven web" of the Württemberg State School Curriculum (1919/1995b, p. 20),

Steiner and the teachers devised the unique concept of the Epoch Main Lesson (*Hauptunterricht*). At the beginning of the day, one subject would be studied for "quite some time" (Table 5.1). This would enable each teacher to work in a systematic and rhythmic manner following the all important verse or prayer that would alert the child to the guiding presence of the Christ both in the light of the Sun and the human soul -

The Morning Verse

The Sun with loving light
Makes bright for me each day.
The soul with spirit power
Gives strength unto my limbs.
In sunlight shining clear,
I reverence, O God,
The strength of humankind
Which Thou, so graciously,
Has planted in my soul,
That I with all my might
May love to work and learn.
From Thee come light and strength,
To Thee give love and thanks.

(1919-1920/1986a, p. 55)

While the State Curriculum would address the "outer" needs of the soul-psyche, ensuring a comprehension of contemporary social knowledge (Stockmeyer, 1982, p. 4), the Main Lesson Curriculum would assume the role of nurturing its "inner" depths. The latter would achieve this end by providing a store of universal ideas that would serve as occult messages able to connect with the child's own psychic content. The refined and detailed curriculum, *Lehr Plan der Waldorfschulen* (Appendix III) was ultimately the work of the original Waldorf teachers. Carefully built on Steiner's broad indications, it represented their personal interpretation of an

anthroposophical worldview they believed would awaken the children placed in their care by karmic destiny, to a conscious connection to the true Christ Spirit.

Table 5.1

Arrangements in the Waldorf School of Periods per Week

Subject	Class											
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
Main Lesson	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	14	15a	15a	15a	15a
English	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
French	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Eurhythm	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gymnastics	-	-	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Singing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Instrumental Music	1b	2b	2b	2b	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Handwork	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	-	-
Book-binding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	c	c
Woodwork	-	-	-	-	-	d	d	d	e	e	e	e
Gardening	-	-	-	-	-	d	d	d	e	e	-	-
Latin	-	-	-	-	f	F	f	f	f	4	4	4
Greek	-	-	-	-	f	F	f	f	f	2	2	2
Surveying and Tech Mechanics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-
Spinning	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	h	-	-
Technology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i	i
First Aid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Typewriting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Religion	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total Hours	25	26	27	27	31	31	31	34	33j	36j	33j	33

- Notes:
- a) of which 1 hour is given to mathematical repetition.
 - b) Flutes and Violin. From the 5th Class onwards there should be an orchestra for the more advanced.
 - c) 6 weeks of 4 x 2 hour lessons.
 - d) 2 hours interchanging according to season etc.
 - e) 2 periods of 2 weeks of 4 x 2 hour lessons
 - f) Latin and Greek together 4 hours.
 - g) 4 ½ weeks of 4 x 2 hour lessons.
 - h) 4 weeks of 4 x 2 hour lessons.
 - i) 3 weeks of 4 x 2 hour lessons.
 - j) excluding special periods.

(Source: Von Hyderbrand, 1996, p. 99)

Children who entered the Waldorf School from other systems "warped by too intellectual an education", would need to make up for lost ground. The forces of feeling and willing that had "dried up and withered" would be quickened and transformed through an intensive, living methodology. A good start would be with a pictorial form of the theorem of Pythagoras which would bring to life something that had been previously taught in an unimaginative way (1919/1988b, pp. 184, 185).

5.4.2 The Book of Nature

In *The Philosophy of Freedom* Steiner had entreated his readers to make their way "back to Nature" in order to learn the laws that governed the spiritual Universe. In the Waldorf school the study of organic and inorganic Science set in place the foundations that would accomplish the task. At the First International Summer School held in Ilkley, Yorkshire, in 1923, Steiner described for a receptive audience the "art of education". In his first lecture he spoke critically about a modern society in which the spirit had been eliminated and scientific knowledge could no longer "reveal God or a moral world". He also spoke candidly about the need to re-establish the "primordial impulse", the ancient connection to the spirit world, in order to assuage the challenges facing post-war Europe -

The intuition in which primitive man stood as he enacted his ritual will be created in a new form, and a morality truly corresponding with modern conditions will arise from a modern religious life. This primordial impulse is necessary for our complicated social life that is threatening to spread chaos throughout the world. We need a harmony of knowledge, art, religion and morality.

(Steiner, 1923/1981a, p. 3)

Steiner's indications for a Science curriculum were determined by the fundamental anthroposophical principle of the psychic correspondence between man and the macrocosmic

Universe. From the earliest years of schooling including Kindergarten, the purpose of Natural History and Science Lessons was threefold. Firstly, they were to lay the foundations for an understanding that Nature was awe-inspiring, divine and alive. Secondly the child, as a being of body, soul and spirit, was to learn that humankind was a synthesis of the three Kingdoms of Nature, standing at their very apex. Thirdly, the pupil was to learn that man had come to utilise the gifts of Nature to his advantage. Without a consistent emphasis on these overriding principles, Steiner went so far as to insist that lessons would be "thoroughly ruined" (1919/1976b, p. 101).

In the early years, the elementary class teacher was to be "quite clear" that their pupils did not differentiate between themselves and their surroundings. At Steiner's insistence, all teaching would need to be creative and imaginative in order to encourage the child to understand the close relationship between Self and the world of Nature. At the same time, they would be taught to appreciate the moral and emotional qualities operating within it. Through the creative moral story, the child, who was not yet able to distinguish itself as an independent Ego, would be encouraged to see himself as simply part of a world continuum, in other words a microcosm of an ethical, macrocosmic world whole. From the first *Rubicon* onwards imaginative allegories and pictures would be employed to reveal the secrets of Nature that would only be fully understood in later years (1919/1995b, p. 109). To feel himself as part of Nature the child would therefore think in pictures, "given wings by artistic feeling" (1923/1964b, p. 86).

With the correct understanding of what Steiner referred to as the "universal divine", the "general" Father principle, the foundation for an understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha would be set in place. To introduce the birth of Christianity before an inner comprehension of a personal correspondence with the surrounding world had been established would however, expose the child to "grave dangers" -

One exposes the child to grave dangers, if one does not introduce him before this age to the universal divine, as it were to the general Father principle. One has to show how in all Nature the divine lives, how in all human evolution the divine lives, how everywhere, whenever we look, in the stories, but also in the heart of other men, in every action done to the child, how everywhere the divine lives...This prepares in the child between the ninth and tenth year the right attitude towards the Mystery of Golgotha.

(Steiner in Gabert 1955, p. 5)

All lessons were to make the effort to penetrate the life and laws of Nature in such a way that the deepest needs of the child's developing consciousness would be met. The etheric, as yet disengaged from its spirit-Self would hear the truths of its deep and rich connections with the cosmic Universe and through them would begin to build its own life-force.

The mysteries of Nature, the weaving articulate spirituality the Ancients had experienced with awe and wonder was to be conveyed via a methodology sympathetic to the youthful soul. Parables would replace dogma and a feeling for the "underlying laws of all existence" would be encouraged through symbolic representations -

It is essential that the secrets of Nature, the laws of life, be taught to the boy or girl, not just in dry intellectual concepts but as far as possible in symbols. Parables of the spiritual connections of things should be brought before the soul of the child in such a manner that behind the parables he divines and feels, rather than grasps intellectually, the underlying law in all existence.

(Steiner, 1907/ 1965, p. 21)

At all times, the pervasive presence of a universal divinity would be brought before the child "again and again" accompanied by feelings of love and gratitude for every flower, for sunshine, for rain, for every physical manifestation of the work of the gods. At every

opportunity the teacher would develop the idea that an interconnectedness existed between all things in the beautiful world of Nature of which the child itself was an integral part.

From the very start of schooling children were to understand they were standing on a living Earth - essential to comprehending the Christ Mystery in higher classes. The objective of all Natural History lessons in the younger years was therefore to create for the child an alternative potent reality, one that would make them aware of the "image of the spiritual" to which they were closely connected (1924/1995a, p. 41). Through employing a simple Goethean imaginative *phenomenology* Nature would come to "speak" in a gentle yet insistent voice thereby unveiling her secret laws for the child's receptive soul. For example -

A grain of corn does not consist only of that which reveals itself to the naked eye. Inside it, the whole new plant conceals itself, invisible to the eye. That something like that is more than what senses can apprehend, must be appreciated through feeling and imagination. A divining of the secrets of life must arise in the soul.

(Steiner, 1907/1965, p. 42)

Anthropomorphism was to be used in the "most inventive ways" (1924/1995a, p. 31). The butterfly emerging from the chrysalis would be a revelation on the earthly plane of what on a higher level represented the immortality of the soul (1921/1970a, p. 66). The sunflower lifting its head to the Sun would do so in love and gratitude. Such revelations simply, yet effectively, represented the truths placed by the gods themselves before the eyes of the alert pupil. Steiner directed the teachers to creatively and pictorially imbue the surrounding world with human qualities. Any other approach would be completely contradictory to what the child had previously experienced in the spiritual world and would result in confused and chaotic feelings (1923/1988c, p. 98).

In relation to the child's incarnational stage, Steiner's directives as to the methodological practices were specific. Up until the birth of the etheric, Nature Study was to ensure that the child experienced no separation between Self and the real world and through a healthy pantheism the outer world was to be presented as a reflection of the spiritual -

We shall not merely speak of the plants but we shall speak of them as living beings, as holding coherence with us and with each other in such a way that the child's outlook on nature and man is filled with imagination. The plants the trees the clouds all speak to him, and at this age he must really feel no separation between himself and the outer world.

(Steiner, 1923/1981a, p. 138)

As this "articulate spirituality" was "wafted" toward the child their feelings would "flow out" into the whole environment (1923/1981a, p. 138), reassured that the physical world was but a continuation, albeit symbolically, of the realm of the pre-birth spiritual existence. Following the second *Rubicon* as the forces of the etheric memory were freed, the need to bring thinking into a true harmony with the plant world would be carried out in a living and organic way -

True development can best be induced by studying the life of plants in intimate connection with the configuration of the earth. The child should feel the life of the earth and the life of the plants as a unity; knowledge of the earth should be at the same time a knowledge of the world of plants.

(Steiner, 1923/1981a, p. 145)

The teacher with "sufficient inner vitality" was to describe how a plant, the hair of the Earth, was placed livingly into its cosmic existence. In a form suited to the age of the child, he would learn how the seed vessels were brought forth by the forces of the moon. Without the Earth, Sun and moon, the plant would therefore have no existence. Through the inner messages the children would comprehend that the whole Earth was a living being of which

the plants were an integral part (1923/1981a, pp. 141-143). Teachers were also to exert their fantasy to illustrate to the children how the plant world might also be related to man himself - roots could be seen as similar to human thoughts while flowers showed a connection to feelings of passion and emotion (1919/1967a, p. 113).

Fables relating to the animal realm set out to increase the childish sense of the spiritual dimension. Often employing the device of anthropomorphism, which Steiner conceded was regarded with "horror" in other teaching systems, the behaviour of the animals would be called into play to show the children their place in the cosmic existence. The study of the animal world would create a natural kinship, a "soul bridge" with the creatures of the Earth. Such qualities as the majesty of the lion, the patience of the sheep, the cruelty of the tiger, the laziness of the donkey were to be found harmonised and toned-down in man; in all he was to be seen as a synthesis of the different soul qualities that the animals possessed (1924/1995a, p. 43). The child would also come to appreciate Goethe's scientific understanding that the human being, was in fact a composition of the entire animal world (refer p. 82) spread out fan-wise over the Earth in a variety of shapes and forms -

This should be (known) when the child is approaching his twelfth year, for he can then understand as a matter of course that because man bears his spirit within him, he is symptomatic unity, an artistic synthesis of the separate parts of his being, which are mirrored in the various species of animals. Only because man bears his spirit within him can he thus harmonize the lower animal organisation into a whole

(Steiner, 1923/1981a, p. 149)

The inner voice of the Zoology Main Lesson would first bear the message that man, through strength of the moral will, could rise above the untamed behaviour of the animal, thereby making him the "most perfect being" (1919/1988b, p. 111). Awakened to the right

relationship to Nature the children would understand that the human being stood at the summit of the natural world (1919/1985b, np).

Mineralogy, astronomy, physics and chemistry were the subjects to follow the study of plant forms spread over the face of the Earth. At the point of the second *Rubicon*, the capacity to comprehend cause and effect in science could be safely introduced. By working on the feeling life of the subconscious, the teacher could awaken beautiful concepts in the children capable of transformation (1923/1988c, p. 115). Through employing a more sophisticated Goethean *phenomenology*, even dead scientific concepts would become intelligible as both teacher and student searched beyond the physical manifestation to look for hidden depth and meaning.

5.4.3 The Book of History

In his lecture *Three Epochs in the Religious Education of Mankind* (1923/1972c), Steiner spoke of history as a continuous education of the "human race a process whereby religion, a divine consciousness, penetrates ever and again into mankind" (p. 213). In his personal endorsement of the French philosopher, Eduardo Schure's (1889/1961) book, *The Great Initiates. A Study of the Secret History of Religions*, Steiner emphasised the importance of learning and understanding the impulses of the esoteric Masters, the cosmic educators, who in various incarnations had led mankind from age to age. The "impulses" would essentially be the recounting of spiritual events, *symptomatically* played out on the earthly stage -

It is of great importance for a living comprehension of history to look upon outer events as symptoms of hidden causes which one begins to divine more and more, if one continues to observe them with an opening and searching mind. If one looks at history symptomatically, one will also discover, by and by, ascending lines of development, culminating in certain events, and followed by periods of decline. And this is where we come face to face with the events of Golgotha. If we can recognise in outer happenings evidence of

inner processes, we will find ourselves moving gradually into the religious sphere. Then history will become permeated by a religious element.

(Steiner, 1920/1981c, p. 160)

In the Waldorf School, Steiner therefore envisaged that historical studies would provide "a living picture" indicating the "Divine at work" throughout the Rosicrucian Epochs (1923/1981a, p. 181) thereby sharing the same ontological base as Religion lessons. In outlining the History curriculum Steiner emphasised that the distinguishing feature between the two subjects was *how* the content was to be presented. In the former, the teacher would be required to search for earthly appearances as symptoms of deeper spiritual causes. In the latter, man's relationship to the spiritual was to be explored (Gabert, 1955, p. 13). While History was not to be taught as a theological study, it nonetheless was to be "coloured with both morality and religion" and through a skilful grouping of historical facts would be sufficient to convey to the pupils the secrets of human evolution -

The history lessons must be permeated through and through with a quality proceeding from the heart. And so we must present it as far as possible in the form of pictures. Figures, real forms must stand there and they must never be described in a cold, prosaic way. Without falling into the error of using them as examples of moral or religious admiration, our descriptions must, nevertheless, be coloured with both morality and religion. History must above all lay hold of the child's feeling and the will.

(Steiner, 1923/1981a, p. 165)

By all accounts, Steiner anticipated that the History curriculum would allow the child to explore the history of repeated Earth lives as their evolving spiritual individuality transformed into earthly existence. Through the medium of the story the child would experience the compelling reality of the divinity in the cosmos and subconsciously, their own place within it. Through imaginative pictures, in the early school years the child would come to know the

world of the powerful archetypal beings and the correspondence between them and their own humanity. Fairy stories, myths and legends were to be employed to persistently and rhythmically tap into the etheric memory presenting it with fundamental tenets of anthroposophical "wisdom" in an imaginative yet compelling way -

The first thing we must closely adhere when relating fairy tales, legends or myths is that we must certainly know a good deal more than we are able to say, indeed a great deal more; and secondly, we should be willing to draw the sources of our explanation from anthroposophical wisdom; that is to say we must not introduce into the fairy tales just anything that may occur to us, but be willing to recognise anthroposophical wisdom as such, and then try to permeate fairy tales therein.

(Steiner, 1908/1929, p. 1)

In the first years of schooling when the psychic state of the child was equivalent to the time when "thinking had not developed its abstract nature and when man sought to solve the riddles of existence by a kind of picture consciousness" (1923/1981a, p. 28), anthroposophical theory would be put at its simplest. Each teacher would be given complete freedom to devise a make-believe narrative that held the germ of an essential esoteric truth -

Through Anthroposophy we ourselves learn once more to believe in legends, fairytales and myths, for they express a higher truth in imaginative pictures. And your handling of these fairy tales, legends and mythical stories will once more be filled with a quality of soul. Then when you speak to the child, your very words, permeated by your own belief in the tales, will carry truth with them.

(Steiner, 1924/1995a, p. 33)

History lessons from the second *Rubicon* onwards were to be particularly concerned with the way in which the cultural life of mankind had developed (1919/1988b, p. 117). The outline of the History Main Lessons Steiner presented appeared unremarkable -

1. A fund of fairy tales
2. Stories from the animal realm in connection with fables
3. Bible stories as part of general history (Old Testament)
4. Scenes from Ancient history
5. Scenes from Mediaeval history
6. Scenes from Modern history
7. Stories of the various races and tribes
8. Knowledge of the races

(Steiner, 1919/1967a, p. 21)

While however, the structure of the History curriculum was not dissimilar to the accepted outline proposed by the German educator, Wilhelm Rein, it would play its critical role in opening the imagination of the child to the story of human evolutionary consciousness. It would not be viewed as simply an ascending line of civilization but as a succession of cultures led by the Initiates of each Epoch. History's re-telling would begin with humankind's ability to hear the *Logos* of the gods, moving on to its gradual silencing as the intellect, clouded by Ahriman and Lucifer, set limits to the human mind. Moral exemplars of sacred values and ethical responses of worthy individual throughout the ages would aim to develop "living moral and religious sympathies and antipathies". History was also an account of the coming of the Sun Christ, embedded in the great cosmological sweep of Epochal history. At Steiner's behest, History was to be taught in a sequence that was to be strictly adhered to from the start of schooling to the age of fourteen.

Steiner described the teaching content of History Main Lessons in the early school years as belonging to "the mythical heroic realm" which substantially represented the core period of cosmological history. Encompassing the great Epochs of Ancient India, Persia and Egypt, were the ages when the spiritual world was "sense-perceptible" and mankind shared a natural clairvoyance with the gods. In "decadent form" the battles between the gods and heroic men,

passed down in myth and saga (1923/1981a, p. 28), would give life to the stories in the
Ancient History Main Lessons -

Thus the initiates have expressed the mighty truths of existence in the myths. There is no myth really drawn from the Mysteries which does not express deep wisdom which can afterwards be checked. When, equipped with the knowledge of spiritual science, we approach the myths we must stand before them in reverence. They have been revealed by the higher Spiritual Beings to man so that he may first learn in pictures what he must later attain in clear concepts. More and more it will be realised that the myths contain wisdom and if one would find deepest wisdom displayed in any sphere of life, one must go to the myths. This has been known to those who have created out of the depths of art.

(1908/1961c, np)

Until the Greco-Roman Epoch, the coming of the Sun Christ, heralded by prophets such as Buddha and Zarathustra, was to be spoken of in "fairy tale like manner". Set within the context of Greek history, "a time devoid of Christian ethics", preparation for the event of Golgotha and the birth of Christianity would be studied as part of general culture. The all important message that the spiritual Christ had taken human form would be heard by the strengthening Ego. In History lessons focusing on the way of life and culture of the people, a study of the Gospels in line with Steiner's explicit instructions, was to be treated as a secular subject. As the child began to "orientate" himself towards the spiritual world in keeping with the incarnation of the spirit, the stories served to nurture an "inner awareness" (1923/1988c, p. 144) that would meet the growing sense of self -

Now the time has come to start to tell stories from the Gospels. If we start earlier than this, one destroys something in the child. But if one starts now, when the child begins to orientate himself towards the spiritual world, then one gives the child something for which he longs with his whole being.

(Steiner in Gabert, 1955, p. 6)

Before the second *Rubicon*, Steiner considered it impossible to awaken an understanding of the complex causal connections of historical relationships. History lessons were therefore to initially focus on biographical descriptions of historical personalities whose deeds, on account of their moral attributes, would arouse sympathy or, in the case of negative qualities, antipathy in the soul of the child. At this stage, pictures of the progress of evolution would above all appeal to the pupil's feelings (1923/1988c, p. 117). With the coming of Christianity, History would focus on the "real, earthly, prosaic realm" where images would become more human with the "inevitable loss of spiritual context and greatness" (Steiner in Gabert, 1955, p. 7). The curriculum was then to concentrate on the idealism of universal kinship and provide inspirational examples of the values of compassion, courage and justice. With their own burgeoning sense of individuality and independence, the children would be inspired to take the first tentative steps towards the freedom of personal judgement.

Henceforth the child would "yearn" to have explained historical events that had previously been held as fairy tales, legends, myths and stories. The progress of Christianity would become a subtext told in the biographies of individuals from Medieval times through to the Renaissance who had displayed morality through bravery, valour and courage in their actions. Steiner assigned particular importance to the period between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries which was to be "treated with great care" (Steiner in Belenson, 1994, p. 86). The ascetic, devotional actions of the central figures of the Crusades would be employed to illustrate the discovery of religious forms outside of the Popes of Rome and the temporal Church. The indebtedness of Europe to the East for the furtherance of its spiritual progress and political and economic advances was to be related in graphic pictures, stirring the feeling heart and nurturing the strengthening will-force (1919/1967a, pp. 83, 84).

From the Renaissance onwards, the Epoch Main Lessons would continue to focus on individuals who had made sacrifices in order to achieve their goals and aspirations. Great

voyages made in the name of Christ as well as artists and scientists all would serve to exemplify the ideals of courage, compassions and freedom. The "nobility of humanity" presented to the child on the threshold of the birth of the intellect would hear repeated exemplars of moral goodness. Stories and biographies rich with human endeavour would encourage impulses of love and gratitude towards fellow human beings, thereby influencing the moral life of the child. By absorbing the love and confidence of individuals through each Epoch, the soul would be moved to catch fire for high ideals.

In the final two years of compulsory schooling, the children would learn about the cultural history and characteristics of the different races. The relationship of each race to the natural phenomena would also be explored, thereby reinforcing the notion of the correspondence between man and Nature first heard in the fairy tale story. At the conclusion of eight years of study, it was Steiner's expectation that the History curriculum had played its part in bringing to consciousness the store of universal ideas - the so-called "inner awareness" able to connect with the child's own historical recollections. Thinking consciousness brought to ordered forms, capable of inclining "towards ideals" (1921/1996a, p. 120), could now begin its quest to find the Truth of earthly existence.

The High School Curriculum Steiner outlined in 1921 reinforced, in a more intensive, detailed manner, the previously presented subject material (1921/1956). As the child was now considered capable of self-directed, reasoned intellectual thought, the History Main Lesson themes sought to bring truth and balance to a maturing Ego consciousness. Given that the child could call on inspiration from the spiritual realm, Steiner sanctioned the use of texts that would reveal deep, esoteric wisdom. Von Eschenbach's *The Grail Knight Story of Parsifal*, Goethe's *Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily* and Valentin Andreae's *Chymical Wedding* (although not *Christianopolis*, refer p. 154) became suggested readings. The study of the quest of the Grail Knight *Parsifal*, first encountered with Arthurian tales during

Medieval Main Lessons, would conclude in the High School years (Steiner in Gabert, 1955, p. 14). Its telling, filled with "quality of soul", would express the highest truths, and the child would intuitively comprehend the connection between the Self and the whole esoteric Grail story. The spirit of the questing child would also be aware that its educational journey had been a rite of passage, a transformation of the "simple man made slowly wise".

5.4.4 Art

An artistic treatment of the child's soul represented the basic demand of Waldorf pedagogy. Condemned to mere dilettantism in other teaching systems, in the Waldorf School every form of artistic expression was to assume an important role in daily teaching practice. Steiner described the creative power of the artist as a "counterbalance" to all prosaic conceptions of Nature and history. Echoing the ideas presented by Schiller (1795/1965) in his work *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Steiner in his own lectures placed emphasis on the morality inherent in all artistic work. In all Art endeavours, the child would be free to act as they willed, guided only by the harmony and rhythm of their inner feelings. In Art lessons a child would move beyond outer reality to a more profound capacity for perception, an inner place where the secrets of Nature could be observed and recreated -

Art is not a mere discovery of man, but a domain wherein the secrets of nature are revealed to him at a level other than that of ordinary intelligence - a domain where he gazes into the mysteries of the whole Universe. Not until the moment when man realises the world itself to be a work of art, and regards nature as a creative artist - not until then is he ready for a deepening of his being in the religious sense.

(Steiner, 1923/1981a, p. 195)

Painting with transparent watercolours would also have a "sensuous moral effect" by strengthening the forces of will through patient practice and repetition. Art would be especially important during puberty at a time when the child would leave the authority and

guidance of the class teacher. At this stage Steiner indicated that because child was "in danger of giving itself over in a one-sided way to the mathematical - scientific and technological laws", a love of art would need to counterbalance such a tendency by awakening creative moral forces (Gerbert, 1975, p. 13). Steiner anticipated that without the support of aesthetic feelings the child's thinking could only become self-focused, moribund and powerless.

5.4.5 Drawing in the Cosmos

In the final analysis, each teacher would have the "greatest liberty" to engage the child in a creative, imaginative world in which the intellectual element would play no part until the birth of the astral at puberty. Guided by his indications, Steiner exhorted the teaching initiate to teach "artistically" in a way that would allow the moral, religious element of all subjects to come to the fore. Every subject viewed from the perspective of Anthroposophy interiorised an esoteric truth or moral principle for which the awakening spirit thirsted.

A study of numbers would proceed from the "whole to the part" thereby reinforcing the Hermetic notion of the beauty adhering to the unity of the cosmos. Steiner considered Mathematics to be particularly important if the child was to acquire a balanced moral perspective on life -

In proceeding from the whole to the part the child has less tendency to acquisitiveness, rather it tends to develop what, in the Platonic sense, the noblest sense of the word, can be called considerations, moderation; and one's moral likes and dislikes are ultimately bound up with the manner in which one has learned to deal with number.

(Steiner in Stockmeyer, 1982, p. 81)

In Form Drawing lessons related to Mathematics, a child would walk the outline of a triangle, square and pentagram, the geometrical forms of the cosmos that inwardly the etheric body

had absorbed. Awareness of the forms through imaginative observation awakened in the child a feeling for the inner laws of harmony, symmetry and correspondence of lines governing the shapes of outer Nature. By walking the forms of Nature, the child would have an intensely mystical rhythmic experience, creating a relationship between themselves and the "inner laws" governing the cosmos.

Eurhythmy, which Marie Steiner devised as an exercise in both mind and body, incorporated "sensible, supersensible beholding" through fluid movements which were similar to those of Greek gymnasts. The subject, influenced by the geometrical figures Agrippa had drawn in the *De Occulta Philosophia* - 1533 to relate the spirit to the human body, represented an important creative link to the spiritual realm. In Steiner's schema, movements in harmony with the cosmic world would also contribute to well thought-out judgements. Knitting and handwork in general aided in the development of "well-knit" thoughts leading to a capacity for clear and logical thinking. This in turn reflected the significance of the Rosicrucian principle of utilising the combined forces of the "head, heart and hand".

5.5 The Four Characteristics of Esotericism and Waldorf Schooling

5.5.1 Correspondences, Living Nature, Imagination, Transmutation

Steiner's esoteric *weltanschauung* impacted significantly on all aspects of Waldorf schooling. The notion of the *correspondence* between the mind of the young child and the spirit world provided Steiner with the underpinning for both the methodological practices and curriculum indications he outlined for his anthroposophical missionaries in three weeks of intensive lecturing. The outline of the subject content Steiner presented in his lectures was to be seen as the *gnosis* derived from the tenets of his Rosicrucian Christian teachings that would begin the salvation or redemption of consciousness of the young child. The "aliveness" in thinking, the ideas the teacher would convey to the incarnating spirit, would free the maturing consciousness from the incursion of the negative and constrained thinking he perceived to

have overtaken the children exposed to the "stones for bread" in contemporary forms of education.

Steiner argued that if esoteric Christianity was to "become deeply rooted in humanity", the unity of art, science and religion which had permitted the ancient civilizations to "pictorially see the spiritual in every creature and process of Nature" had to once again "spring into original life" (1923/1981a, pp. 29-37). In the Waldorf School classroom the anthroposophical view of Nature as a living organism where the spirits of the Higher Hierarchy worked and weaved, would be described in stories incorporating a pansophical dimension creating a feeling of respect and reverence for the Earth. A reductionist and restricted view of the world, the work of Ahrimanic beings, was to be replaced by a picture of a *living Nature* told in imaginative and creative ways. Historical studies with an acknowledged religious basis would depict the evolution of consciousness. A detailed study of the life and culture in each of the Epochs in preparation for the Mystery of Golgotha would ensure that the spirit would not awaken in what Steiner described as "poverty of soul". Through parables and pictures a "fine spiritual stream" would pass from teacher to pupil as the former drew from the full fountain of occult knowledge of "their truly spiritual-scientific way of thought" (1906/1996b, p. 27). Art, "Nature's worthiest expression" was to at all times be incorporated into lesson content.

Steiner considered his pedagogy and curriculum to be optimal in both its form and content in order to meet the spiritual *transformation* or *transmutation* of the incarnating spirit. For the methodological practices to support the child's spiritual incarnation Steiner drew inspiration from the meditative exercises of his esoteric study. Several of the methodologies Steiner detailed in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds* were modified but identifiable in Waldorf School praxis. Steiner skilfully correlated the stages of child's spiritual transformation with the stages of the Initiation process, each one in some form involving the child's capacity for imaginative

thinking. The individual worthy of love and devotion on the *path of veneration* appeared in the Waldorf classroom as the authoritative teacher whose ability to weave the truths of Anthroposophy into simple narrative form was essential to nurture the childish imagination. The early years of schooling incorporated similar aims to the *preliminary* stages of Initiation which set out to achieve an alert, tranquil openness to the beauty of the natural world. The creative contemplation of Nature between Kindergarten and Class V was reflective of the processes Steiner incorporated in *preparation* and *enlightenment*. In the carefully sequenced programme described, plant and animal life were studied which often incorporated a simple, imaginative *phenomenological* methodology. Developing a sympathy for the animal and human world and an attitude of awe and gratitude towards the Earth were all part of the "picture thinking" that would allow the child to read the Books of Nature and History thereby coming to comprehend the spiritual in the material world. When the spirit had incarnated to the point where it would become aware of its surroundings the child would begin to learn to write and draw in an artistic form comparable with the occult script of the Universe. Simple geometrical forms served to illustrate the shapes lines and figures shared by man and Nature. Painting with transparent water colours that metamorphosed into a wealth of different colours, yellow-reddish nuances and the nuances of blue were to help the child to develop the right relationship between the external and spiritual worlds through what Steiner described in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, as the inherent "livingness of colours".

Much of what Steiner incorporated into the Waldorf School methodological praxis and curriculum appeared to be evocative of *The Rosicrucian Study*. The guiding principles of each Epoch that would bring "thought to ordered forms" were represented in the History curriculum lessons. The employment of rhythm, which Steiner considered as "holding sway in all nature" would need to be practiced in every activity on a daily basis through a rhythmical repetition of subject matter. Above all, the employment of the *imagination* that would enable that the so-called "simple man" to reach his spiritual potential would also

ensure that the Waldorf School pupil in the younger years of schooling would never become fettered in Ahrimanic "dreams of reason and intellectuality" (1923/1981a, p. 224). For the child to become an Ego-being able to draw intuitions from the realm of the spirits was seen by Steiner to be wholly dependent on the power of the *imagination* to apprehend the world from the anthroposophical perspective. The cultivation or training of the *imagination* was the vital cognitive faculty that Steiner insisted would link the mind to the universal *Logos* - as such it represented the critical element in all pedagogical endeavours. The daily verse composed by Steiner to begin the pupils' rhythmic day mirrored the moment of meditative, *inner tranquillity*.

As a form of education focused solely on the development of the individual, Waldorf schooling came to be considered as part of the child-centred forms of pedagogy that offered a viable alternative to existing systems of education. In Part 3 some comparisons between Steiner's educational ideology and that of other pedagogues motivated by a desire for educational reform are considered.

Part 3

5.6 Observations: The Influence of Steiner's Worldview on His Theory of the Development of the Child's Moral Character

5.6.1 Defining Principles

In creating a theory relating to the child's acquisition of moral knowledge Steiner moves away from the Lockian notion of the mind as a *tabula rasa* replacing it with a concept common to Theosophy. For Steiner the soul-psyche is a vessel of moral and metaphysical ideas "there and ready taught" waiting to be brought to the surface of the conscious mind. The concept of "awakening" is shared by Gurdjieff (1873-1943), fellow occultist and teacher of esoteric Christianity. Gurdjieff, also aligned with the notion of the cosmic evolution of the soul, speaks of the need to awaken the pupil out of sleep to a state of self-remembering from which

the theosophist believes, can be gained the "cognition of eternal origins" (Raschke, 1980, p. 128).

In *The Philosophy of Freedom* Steiner determined the course of the moral development of the individual which he modifies and applies to the realm of education. At first, he considers the behaviour of the individual to be instinctive and natural. As the child matures he sees it as the time to smooth the "characterological disposition" and balance any Ahrimanic instincts through positive emotions and feelings. The child will also have brought to consciousness what can be drawn from mental picturing arising out of the Christ Impulse working in both man and Nature. The highest level of consciousness or "pure" Intuitive thinking that the individual can ultimately achieve will be through undergoing the painstaking preparation provided by a pedagogy based on anthroposophical principles. In Steiner's theorising, the mind of the child is potentially the stage on which the eternal laws of the true and the good, the *Ideas* of the incarnating spirit, will awaken and find their full completion. This notion represents the link between Steiner's educational philosophy and the redemptive epistemology of Monistic consciousness that he associates with the attainment of *ethical individualism*.

Steiner presents a theory of the moral development of the child in which the ability to think and reason and comprehend the world with good intent is wholly dependent on "harmonising" the body and soul to become the earthly vehicle of the incarnating spirit. The Ego spirit brings into existence the capacity to move cognition beyond the confines of ordinary sense perception to a form of thinking that can fully and freely allow the mind to become conscious of the Higher-self. The goal of the educator as Steiner sees it is to guide the child towards this "fruition of sacramentalism" (Querido, 2000, p. 23). The mental processes that recall, organise and make sense of information to achieve this purpose depend on a complex interaction between the perceived spiritual transformation of the child as it moves towards adolescence and the teaching environment including the attitude of the teacher and the lesson

content. All lessons must be taught with the Platonic verities of the Goodness and Beauty of the world in mind which Steiner is confident will enable the child to grow in the "right way" towards the Truth (1921/1996a, p. 20). The transcendentalist Emerson (1803-1882) makes an observation which is relevant to the premise on which Steiner bases the child's attainment of the "Truth". He states that "Nature holds back her secrets until man is to be entrusted with them. Those who seek find, not because the truth is far off but because discipline and careful preparation make them ready for the truth and worthy to receive it" (Drury, 2004, p. 125).

In the initial stages of the transformatory process that Steiner regards will culminate in the reasoned intellect, the Kindergarten child retains his connection to the spiritual world. Surrounded by things worthy of imitation his stream of "religiosity" is to be nurtured and enhanced. At around the age of seven years Steiner contends that the stream of goodness enters the unconscious mind as the etheric body with its potential for wilfulness and self-focused behaviour surges into life. It brings with it dispositional qualities of character, habits and abilities gleaned in the pre-birth world. The child is now the equivalent of the "natural man", and Steiner is emphatic that it is not possible for the opportunistic etheric allied to the sentient soul, to be capable of principled or independent judgement. The self-will at this point is against obedience which calls for the teacher to become an authority figure - a moral "guardian" who will gain the love and respect of the receptive young child. Arguably this represents the best preparation for obedience to the aesthetic and moral conscience of the Higher-self (Gardner, 1969, p. 13).

Adolphe Ferrière cited as being associated with the Theosophists and the New Education Movement, suggests an approach to moral tutoring which is conceptually similar to Steiner's. In his experimental *école active*, he accepts the importance of the "self-moulding" capacity of the child but does not consider that that teacher should abdicate all responsibility because freedom of spirit means "Freedom to make free". In his writings published shortly after

Steiner's lectures relating to the subject, Ferrière points out that the child needs to be helped to acquire "good habits" in order to mechanise the lower-self in order to free the Higher-self for its earthly tasks (Hameline, 1993/2000, p. 15).

Steiner considers that the child refines and brings to consciousness the locus of moral knowledge "there and ready taught" via the exemplary behaviour of the teacher and curriculum content which will encourage the child to aspire to high ideals. The child must not, according to Steiner, be given a code of behaviour to follow in the form of what he refers to as "catechism concepts". In their place the individual is to be filled with spontaneous love for what is "true, beautiful and good to the beloved teacher" which to some extent negates Steiner's claim that the teacher must not interfere "too vigorously". The teacher selects the curriculum themes following the indications provided by Steiner and devises class activities based on the needs of the incarnating spirit with the view to allowing the child to construct his own self-education. As the pupil interacts with his environment there is an incremental growth in comprehension of the world taught from the anthroposophical perspective. This is seen by Steiner to build a firm foundation for the birth of the astral body at puberty which co-joined with the etheric "feeling heart" is capable of self-reflection. Up to this point the child must not be called on to intellectually "reason things out for himself". If a child is continually pressured in his development by "whys and wherefores" before the faculty of conceptualisation is acquired at the astral birth, he will, says Steiner, become injured psychologically and retarded in the ultimate goal of a more highly developed mode of consciousness which is spiritual (1923/1981a, pp. 130, 131). Such a child will be spiritually "unfree" and incapable of realising their own free-willed moral consciousness.

In contrast to other humanist pedagogues and in particular Montessori, also cited as being associated with theosophical education, Steiner does not therefore consider it appropriate to encourage the child's natural curiosity or critical thinking skills until a later age. While

Montessori (2002) sees the child around the age of six years as needing active experience and abstract thinking to further psychological development (p. 153), Steiner desires to slow the conceptual thinking of the child until around the age of eleven or twelve years. This is comprehensible from the perspective of his understanding of the child's "spiritual anthropology", and is also closely associated with the tenets of anthroposophical cosmology. Steiner's call for intellectual humility is related to the Rosicrucian story of the spiritual evolution of human consciousness. Ahriman and Lucifer, responsible for bringing premature knowledge to mankind, now work in the minds of men via cold, hard intellectualism and overt materialistic thinking in an attempt to veil the spiritual in the Universe. As noted, their purpose is to prepare for Ahriman's impending incarnation. Intellectual thinking and reasoning improperly prepared for falls prey to their amoral working and in so doing, the Ego is lead away from its Divine potential. "Pure intellect", said the wise Emerson, "is the pure devil". "Henceforth", says Steiner "if a man develops nothing but intellectuality, he will become an evil being on earth" (Steiner in Gardner, 1969, p. 25).

Steiner's understanding of the child's spiritual phylogenesis is further instrumental in his view that moral judgements must be confined to the stage when the Ego spirit can awaken into a soul-life that has been enriched by the memorial imaginative memory. Steiner's theory of recapitulation, a biologic-cosmic interpretation of Haeckel's ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, is fundamental to his understanding of the child's cognitive development and moral reasoning. Its acceptance as a theory that must be given a role in formulating pedagogy is not unique to Steiner. The spiritually-minded Ferrière, also applies the law of biogenetic recapitulation to the developing psychic process. He adheres to the theory which sees the child progressing from a "primitive" to a "civilised" state and regards human history as recapitulated in the life of the individual child (Hameline, 1993/2000, pp. 13, 14). For Steiner, the theory also incorporates a spiritual phylogenesis which is linked to the spirit's existence in past cultural Epochs. This, he believes, takes on an observable reality in the

psychic development of the child, for example, at around the age of eleven years the "death" of childhood occurs and a growing individuality arises. Historically this is considered to be a reflection of the death and Resurrection of the Christ. For the spiritual researcher the theory of phylogenesis is an important building block supporting the notion of Reincarnation. As such it must be given due consideration as a potential source of Main Lesson curricula themes to guide the incarnating spirit into earthly life.

Steiner's use of the emotions and feelings of the child as a key part of Waldorf pedagogy in order to develop an empathy for the good and dislike of bad behaviour has its origins in *The Philosophy of Freedom*. In this he places significant emphasis on affective motivation as a methodology to refine the so called "characterological disposition". In turn, the feeling life of the soul is seen to act positively upon the self-willed "spring of action" (1894/1949, p. 114, 115). Steiner indicates that it is desirable for the child to develop a sympathy for the good and an antipathy towards immoral thought and action (1923/1988c, p. 199). Steiner's reasoning in this respect appears close to Plato's and Aristotle's thinking. Plato wished pleasure and love and pain and hatred via emotional responses to spring up rightly in the soul of those "who are unable to grasp a rationalist account" (Bury in Connell, Debus & Niblett, nd, p. 2). Aristotle followed Plato, describing virtue as a state or disposition in which a good person chose to act virtuously for the sake of beautiful, noble or true feelings. He too considered that if a young person was to acquire ethical virtues he was to develop a love for such emotions and acquire a strong aversion for the shameful and the ugly (Kraut, 2010, p. 11). The anthroposophical teacher is well aware that the attainment of true morality rests on the principle that a certain mental picture will provide the motive for a moral action depending on its capacity to give pain or pleasure (1924/1971a, p. 59).

In order for a pupil to live in the experiences of those who are worthy of consideration and potential emulation, Steiner employs the historical narrative. He also points out that every

lesson contains a religious element which is essentially in the form of a moral exemplar. No direct appeal is made to the intellect, the potential playground of Ahrimanic beings, but through the mental picturing of an imagination that is mobile and dynamic, he believes that the child can begin to acquire a sound appreciation of exemplary behaviour. If the child is to achieve the facility of an abstract moral reasoning at puberty, thinking up to this event must not be permitted to harden into rigid concepts. At around the age of eleven years when the child's self-awareness increases, stories portraying the importance of an individualistic stance against prescribed universal canons which may conflict with personal ideals e.g., Joan of Arc, are considered useful in influencing the feelings in "a good way".

Steiner considers the capacity to feel sympathy towards others as an important motivational force in achieving the outcomes he desires in the social sphere. For Steiner pro-social behaviour involves a loving devotion towards what the child will come to carry out as "duty" in the world of work and an "understanding interest" in what others are doing: (1923/1988c, p. 146). Interestingly, while Steiner is generally critical of prevailing forms of education, Herbart's theories which maintain some significance in German pedagogy, appear to some extent compatible. Herbart speaks of the importance of the child being able to choose the good and reject evil, the "absolute beauty of the moral ideal" and the importance of inner freedom. In contrast to Steiner however, Herbart's ethical culture of the will is based on the Kantian notion of morality that argues for the ideal to be grasped by all, and which the entire body of society must achieve - a position he believes is essential if society is not "to dissolve into a mass of egoists striving to overreach one another" (Rein, 1899, pp. 77, 164). The reason for Steiner's rejection of Herbart is clear in light of an understanding of his pivotal theory of *ethical individualism*.

While the trend of Aristotlean thinking is to be discerned in Steiner's approach to guiding the characterological disposition in the direction of moral virtue, his theory is less robust than

Aristotle's. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle emphasises the importance of schooling the disposition and sees a low-grade form of ethical virtue emerging during childhood as the child is placed in situations where judgements are called for in terms of actions and emotions (Kraut, 2010, p. 8). But as seen in his desire to control the incursion of Luciferic and Ahrimanic intellectualism into the child's thinking, Steiner rejects the idea that any form of worthwhile moral judgement can be exercised before the stage of puberty. For Steiner, the effective preparation of the feelings and emotions up to this age will be sufficient to form an active moral and emotional intelligence in adolescence - barring unforeseen impediments. A greater moral acuity will then arise not from intellectual reflection or engagement in ethical theory as Aristotle advises (Kraut, 2010, p. 6), but from the refinement of the Moral Imagination as the individual comes to seek the "Truths" of Anthroposophy.

5.6.2 The Role of the Inner Curriculum

In creating the curriculum Steiner is not aiming to establish a universal set of moral rules but to provide a virtue-based content that speaks independently to each individual child in the Waldorf School classroom. At face value, Steiner's pedagogy appears to embrace the Romantic rationalist or Enlightenment view which suggests the child should be led to moral life as far as possible "independent of any formal instruction that might in any way prejudice the individual's thinking" (Carr, 1996, p. 366). But while there is clearly an absence of any obvious formal moral teaching in the Waldorf School, the child is constantly being directed towards his moral awakening firstly by observing the model behaviour of the teacher ("Not I but Christ in me") and secondly, through a teaching content chosen to exemplify the ultimate values of Goodness, Beauty and Truth. The latter again is not far removed from the attitude of Herbart. Rein contends that in a Herbartian curriculum, History both religious and profane, provides the material to train the moral disposition (Rein, 1899, p. 129). What is dissimilar here is that the teacher is imparting moral values operating throughout History through the lens of their anthroposophical convictions.

The occult or hidden "messages" in the form of imagery and powerful symbolism are to be seen as a mnemonic system which the spiritual scientist considers plays a critical role in bringing the "stream" of the spirit's religious consciousness to the surface of the receptive mind. The issue of ethical relativity does not arise because Steiner considers that the Waldorf School teacher has experienced or is on the pathway to "illumination". Given that Steiner believes this to be an individual whose thinking is welded into "one whole with the cosmos", the expectation is that a teacher awakened to the Christ in consciousness will not impose arbitrary moral values. They are able to impart only the ideal *Ideas* inspired by the Mind Soul of the Universe.

Steiner insists that while he advocates a new methodology with an emphasis on the imagination he has little desire for curriculum change and this is borne out by the parallels that can be drawn particularly in terms of the History curriculum. However, in Steiner's interpretation of historical events the esoteric *weltanschauung* is in full play. Steiner employs what has been identified as the theosopher's device for exploiting the mythic narrative to enrich with "new dimensions" a comprehensive hermeneutics (refer p. 99). The cultural history throughout the ages is not to be seen as the advance of civilization but is understood as reflecting the evolution of the Christ Spirit within the context of the Rosicrucian Epochs. This point of view has a significant impact on the teaching of History. In the Waldorf classroom mythology and biographies must envelop the child's spirit in the details of each of the historical Epochs that it has passed through in its previous incarnations. Steiner is however, very conscious of the overlap between historical content and religious knowledge in the curriculum and is at pains to emphasise that the former should not become a mere history of religions. He anticipates that the teacher will be competent to present the anthroposophical messages in myth, legend and story. He also considers that each teacher will understand their relevance and meaning for the maturing intellect of the child as he advances from stage to stage in his spiritual incarnation. For example, the adventures of Odysseus as depicted in

Homer's *Odyssey* are to be interpreted as Initiation trials illustrating the struggle of the child to transfer and master aspects of their lower Ego (Mazzone, nda, p. 24). He is insistent that such teaching content, imaginatively relayed, contains the fundamental occult truths and moral guidance that the spirit "thirsts" for.

The central tenet of Rosicrucian Christianity that proclaims the spiritual in Nature can be comprehended by the human mind is shown to be influential in determining the direction of the study of the natural world in the early years of schooling. It is of critical importance to Steiner to replace the "mechanical" worldview of Ahriman that he believes has unduly influenced other educationalists with an understanding of a world that is "alive in all its parts". The "secrets of Nature and the laws of life" are however, taught "as far as possible in symbols" (1907/1965, p. 21). Steiner's epistemological position that all in the Universe is imbued with an interconnected soul and spirit which the meditative thinker is capable of revealing, is first relayed to the young child through a healthy pantheism in Nature Study lessons. In creating conversations between the life forms of the natural world the teacher is to employ a methodology appealing to the imagination of the young child which at the same time, illustrates that all within the Universe is capable of a psychic communication. The presence of the Christ Spirit is only to be suggested in the form of the sun and its warming rays. As the consciousness of the child develops, the Science curriculum is used to build up important notions relating to mankind and the realm of Nature. "Messages" appropriate to the age such as the interconnection of all things, the correspondence between man and animals, and man's place at the summit of Nature which creates a moral responsibility to all creatures and to the Earth itself are relayed in a non-dogmatic and creative way. It is Steiner's firm belief that the "inner" meaning of the occult curriculum will be fully comprehensible to the incarnating spirit. There is no suggestion that the messages will fall on unreceptive ears.

Steiner is emphatic that Anthroposophy as taught to adults is to have no place in the Waldorf School classroom. But at the same time, Steiner insists that the teacher must have the "courage" to teach from the perspective of his knowledge and understanding of the esoteric *weltanschauung*. What might therefore at first appear to be a so-called "view from nowhere" (Carr, 1996, p. 368), is in fact a very specific view of History and Science from the "somewhere" of the anthroposophical worldview. In these lessons Steiner calls for what has been described as the theosopher's "planetary dialogue" that builds the bridge between the different departments of learning notably art, science and history (refer p. 100). The teacher's "philosophy of life" which is governed by a sympathetic feeling towards Steiner's interpretation of the world and Christianity, thus determines the details of all Main Lesson content. However, given Steiner's acceptance of the theory of recapitulation, any charge of a subtle form of indoctrination he would counter by insisting that the spirit is being awakened to what is already known. He shies away from the notion of the teacher as a "transmitter" of knowledge preferring to describe their task as "handling" information for the purpose of developing and unfolding the talents and capacities of the child. Parents of pupils in the first Waldorf School (and indeed in the modern school), who were not anthroposophical might have seen it very differently if they had been informed of the principles and objectives on which the education of their child had come to rest.

5.6.3 Waldorf Education - A Romantic Educational Ideology

By the time Steiner presents his pedagogical ideas to the eleven anthroposophists (one of the original twelve becoming unavailable) who have agreed to teach in the Waldorf School, three broad strands of thought dominate educational ideology - namely the *romantic*, the *cultural transmission* stream and the *progressive* educational ideology each with a characteristic underlying, epistemological, psychological and ethical dimension (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972, p. 450). Given that Steiner's epistemology is rooted in an Idealist philosophy it is not unexpected that his theorising appears to be significantly influenced by the principles of the

romantic stream of education which commences with Rousseau (1712-1778). The *romantic* theory which holds that what comes from within the child is the most important aspect of development and therefore the pedagogical environment should be permissive enough to allow the inner "good" (abilities and social virtues) to unfold, and the inner "bad" proclivities (wilfulness and self-focus) to be brought under control, is a fundamental premise of Steiner's educational philosophy. Further, the *romantic* conception that teaching the child ideas and attitudes of others through rote or drill will be meaningless, only serving to suppress the inner spontaneous tendencies of positive value (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972, pp. 450, 451), lies at the heart of Steiner's emphasis on occult moral teaching.

In his influential text *Emile* (1762), Rousseau outlines a programme of education that lays the foundations for the *romantic* model which stresses the importance of providing an environment in which the natural tendencies of the child will be nurtured and enhanced. He cautions the teacher "to watch the scholar well" but to leave the germ of his character to show itself. He insists that a well regulated liberty is essential if the pupil is to be prepared for an independent, self-sufficient life in a society where he may come to act as a role model for others (Frein, 1997, p. 49). A respect for the individuality of the child and recognition of his task as a leavening influence on society are readily identifiable objectives of Waldorf pedagogy. Rousseau views this education as an "art" (Connell et al nd, p. 14) and Steiner follows suit (1923/1981a, p. 104).

The final destination of the *Emile's* self-sufficient life is however, far removed from that of the Waldorf pupil. *Emile*, according to Rousseau, must be content to resign himself to the dictates of Nature and natural necessity arranged by God or Providence (Rosenberg in Willinsky, 1990, p. 16). Steiner's pupil on the other hand, is a key player in the age of the *Consciousness Soul* and his schooling is to be seen as a phase in his evolutionary journey towards a heightened moral consciousness. Unlike *Emile* who can only have an illusory

sense of freedom, the pupil in the Waldorf School is being educated in the belief that by harmonising the organism's body, soul and spirit, the child is acquiring a moral self-awareness that will lead to the freedom of spirit consciousness. While therefore Steiner is willing to concede that conduct according to the norms of a "man of Nature" has a legitimate place as a stage in moral development, he does not acknowledge that it to be the absolute standpoint in the pupil's moral progress. Steiner's spiritual epistemology makes it clear that Nature can only make man a mere, natural being. If supremacy of the spirit is to be arrived at it is up to the individual to give himself the "final polish" (1894/1949, p. 133). In this "final polish" via the Moral Imagination, Steiner anticipates that the child will one day come to transcend the constraints of Nature, and in the mirror of his moral soul, see his free and pure spiritual reflection.

Leaving aside Steiner's esoteric Christian Rosicrucianism, there is an identifiable similarity in the epistemological basis of his educational ideology with that of the influential Froebel (1782-1852). The pioneer of early childhood reform is a scholar of Absolute Idealism and is familiar with the spiritualistic philosophy of Fichte as well as Schelling (Frein, 1997, p. 54). Froebel considers every creature is informed by spirit. Life is a union of the spiritual with the material. In *The Education of Man*, his remarks show a very Steinerian apperception of the notion of man as a microcosm of the macrocosm. "The whole world - the All, the Universe", says Froebel, "is a great single organism in which an eternal uniformity manifests itself" (Kumar, nd, p. 1). For Froebel, education consists in leading the child as a thinking intelligent being, growing in self-consciousness, to a pure unsullied, conscious and free representation of the inner law of Divine Unity, and is teaching him ways and means thereto (Frein 1997, p. 54). He states that the "real purpose of education" is to expand or develop the life of the individual until it comprehends the unity of Man, Nature and God. This goal is to be achieved through the understanding of the symbols representing the various aspects of the Absolute. Froebel also advocates the balanced and unified development of body, mind and

soul (Kumar nd, p. 1). Both Idealists therefore have a similar educational purpose to open the mind of the young child to the inner law of Divine Unity. Steiner also anticipates that the child can be educated one step further to the actual "fruition of sacramentalism" which is not merely a "representation" of the moral law but through monistic consciousness, is an actual co-joining of the mind with the Universal and Eternal Ego spirit.

While the underpinnings of Steiner's educational philosophy show a reasonable correlation with those of Froebel, the general direction of his pedagogical principles appear not dissimilar to those of Froebel's mentor, Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827). Described as the most important educator to follow Rousseau's child-centred theories (Frein, 1997, p. 50), his educational ideas were conceived at a time in history which has parallels with the revolutionary changes taking place in Steiner's Germany. Pestalozzi insists that a democratic society can only be built on the moral will of the individual and this is reliant on providing a form of education that can produce "fully rounded human beings" who will embody the virtues of self-reliance, self-confidence and self-fulfilment. For Pestalozzi, education is child-centred and to be successful depends on the close observation of the pupil. How the mind of the child works and develops directs the course of study and the teacher must be observant as to how he can stimulate and direct the awakening capacities of each scholar (Heafford, 1967, pp. 46, 83). In order to achieve these outcomes he outlines several key principles and methodologies which appear agreeable to Steiner's own interpretation of the needs of education.

For Pestalozzi, teaching must develop the child's higher nature that will keep selfishness in bonds, and the emphasis at all times must be on the head (intellect), heart (moral feelings of love, faith and gratitude) and the hand (common sense and will power in productive action). The importance of moral emotions, love, faith, trust, gratitude and a sense of beauty and goodness are all considered important in the education of the child according to Pestalozzi.

In the early years of schooling the child is anticipated to learn much by imitating the example of the respected teacher. This is to be followed by a stage based on obedience and genuine authority (Brühlmeier, 2010, pp. 49, 58). Pestalozzi also believes that the child must conceive the meaning of duty and justice and must learn subordination of the Self to human laws (Heafford, 1967, p. 62). All such characteristics are compatible with Steiner's theory of education with the overlay of a spiritual worldview. For the anthroposophist, when the individual is finally able to act through *ethical individualism*, subordination of the Self will be to the laws of the spiritual world.

There are other aspects of Pestalozzian thinking that are discernible in Steiner's educational ideology. Pestalozzi believes that most effective means for education to achieve its ends varies according to the stage the pupil passes through. Feelings of beauty, wonderment and respect must characterise all teaching together with a range of instruction that will develop the faculties as opposed to enriching knowledge. He also considers that the ability to make judgements must be delayed as long as possible even when the child is apparently mature. Two further parallels can be drawn. Pestalozzi proposes that History lessons must play a vital role by confronting students with actions of exceptional people which will assist in deciding between good and evil. He also makes the assumption that the young child who has absorbed the beauty of ethical behaviour through the ages will be able to discern the Truths presented in the senior years of schooling (Brühlmeier, 2010, pp. 54, 57, 78).

The importance of nurturing the imagination of the child has been identified as a defining characteristic of Steiner's methodology. The set purpose of *romantic* education to value and nurture the inner "good" through the power of the imagination towards a moral life is similarly the aim of Waldorf education. For both Froebel and Pestalozzi the creative imagination is the agency by which the mind and Self relate to the world. As an accurate empirical representation of the mind-at-work it overcomes the division between Self and

Nature, mind and God, offering the possibility of redemption and self-realisation (Frein, 1997, pp. 50-55). Steiner also considers that by allowing the learning process to rely on the imagination it will stimulate the feeling life thereby fostering and protecting the religiosity that is "natural" in the child. To assist children in their development from one plane to another Froebel designs a series of stimulating self-motivated activities to enhance the imaginative power and ability of the pupil (Ellington, 2002, p 1). But Steiner's child is a reincarnating spiritual-being that requires pre-natal pictures to be brought to consciousness via imaginative and pictorial narratives. He also regards the employment of artistic handwork that stimulates the child's creative powers as being an essential part of childhood education. For Steiner, the awakening of the child's individuality in the early years of schooling is however, not to be derived from experiential activities that lead to comparison and testing such as are associated with Froebel's instructional materials he terms "gifts and occupations".

Steiner's contemporary, Maria Montessori (1914/1965) who acknowledges that her child-centred education is greatly influenced by educators such as Rousseau and Froebel (p. 11), is more cautious in her approach to the use of the faculty of the imagination. She is less of a *romantic* pedagogue than Steiner and comes to be regarded as a significant *progressive* educator. In the lectures gathered together in her text *The Absorbent Mind* (1949/2002), she considers that while it is a force for the discovery of truth, to cultivate the imagination without involving any abstract thinking even at an early age, may lead to a lack of balance which becomes an obstacle to success in practical life. In a polemical tone she asks that if all are agreed the young child loves to imagine, why give him only fairy stories and toys in which to practice this gift? By so doing, in her opinion, the child is only receiving sense impressions he is not developing his powers to reason constructively. To effect the balance, in a Montessori education the youngest child must be encouraged to combine the imagination and abstract thinking by exploring his environment and developing what she refers to as the "mathematical" mind (pp. 170, 232). Given that Steiner considers the stimulation of the

intellect must be kept within set limits in favour of the "dreamy" state he claims is more desirable for the spirit's incarnation, the contrasts between the parameters of Waldorf education and Montessori's are significant.

Steiner's theory of the cognitive development of the child embraces the *romantic* notion which views such progress as unfolding through pre-patterned stages characterised by increasing levels of emotional maturity. In a theory based on a maturational model such as Steiner's, education and experience become valuable not for movement to a different stage but for the successful integration of the present stage. The onset of the next stage occurs regardless of experience (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972, pp. 455, 458). Steiner sees the child as moving towards "earth readiness" via the two nodes of development or *Rubicons* which herald changes in cognitive structures within the framework of the so-called spiritual births of the ether body and the astral or soul body. As the child experiences the phase beginning with the birth of the etheric around the age of seven years, thinking and behaviour move from a feeling of "oneness" with the world to a sense of isolating self-awareness. While Steiner anticipates that every child will follow an invariant spiritual maturation process he considers only those who have experienced the curriculum and methodology appropriate to each stage will acquire the healthy integration of the spirit into its bodily vehicle. As discussed, he anticipates reasoned moral judgement to begin with the astral or soul birth at around fourteen years. Children who have been deprived of adequate earthly "preparation" in the preceding stage are however, potentially at risk of inserting plain evil into moral life. In this contention there are shades of Pestalozzian thinking. He suggests that if the capacities of the child are prevented from developing naturally he will come to follow a "devious" course (Heafford, 1967, p. 83).

The principles of Steiner's theory of phases of moral development can be contrasted with those of Montessori which she delineates in her theory of *Cosmic* education. She agrees with

the prevailing developmental psychology of W. Stern (1871-1938) and Charlotte Buhler (1893-1974) that development is a series of rebirths when one psychic personality ends and another begins - a very similar observation to Steiner. Montessori identifies three periods of development, the first extending to six years, the second to twelve years of age which is a time of "much psychic transformation" and the third extending until the age of eighteen. In the second plane the child becomes conscious of right and wrong not only as regards his own actions but also the actions of others. She observes that the child constructs the future man, step by step by means of his activities and experiments gradually becoming possessed of memory, the power to understand and the ability to think (Montessori, 1949/2002, pp. 18-26). The mind of Steiner's six year old child exists in a state of dreamy consciousness and is to be likened to an organism, a plant prepared to flower and flourish most effectively in an environment that is attentive to its growth. The vegetative etheric (similar to Ferriere's *élan vitale*) and its associated sentient soul require special nurturing if they are to prepare the way for the birth of the intellect (refer p.168). According to Steiner it is not experiment that will grow the consciousness of the child but the "hidden awarenesses" of the curriculum that will foster the incarnating spirit. As the etheric moves through the recapitulatory phases, via a reliance on what the beloved teacher presents as appropriate to the level of understanding, new perspectives are acquired as to what is good or evil.

Steiner's desire for a prescriptive curriculum and the need to slow the intellectual progress of the child further distances Steiner's ideology from that of the *progressive* Montessori.

Unencumbered by an anthroposophical worldview, Montessori regards her second phase or plane as a time when the child will begin to ask important philosophical questions related to their mental development. From the age of six Montessori observes that a level of moral awareness develops which enables moral judgements to be made (1949/2002, p. 179). As noted, Steiner does not wish the child to be overburdened with "whys and wherefores" until they have at least experienced the second *Rubicon*. Nor are they to be encouraged to make

moral judgements. But both pedagogues agree that as the child's emotional and intellectual powers progress he explores and develops a moral integrity. For the Montessori pupil this stage is however, anticipated to arrive a great deal sooner.

5.6.4 Steiner, Piaget and Kohlberg

It is to be accepted that there is a considerable divide between the academic rigor of the clairvoyant spiritual scientist who builds his educational ideology on an intuitive interpretation of the "spiritual anthropology" of the child (Ullrich, 1994/2000, p. 9), and the empirical research of the social scientist focused on psychology. There is nevertheless to some extent, supportive evidence based on Piaget's (1896-1980) findings for several of the general principles which Steiner sees as characterising the moral progress of the child. Interestingly, Piaget shows some sympathy for a form of recapitulation which reconstitutes human history but concludes since this field is not available the researcher must do as biologists do and turn to ontogenesis (Driver, 2006, p. 55). Piaget and Steiner differ in key respects as to how the moral character is acquired. Steiner places greatest emphasis on the emotional and feeling life of the soul to accomplish qualitative changes in behavioural dispositions and qualities of character. Conversely, Piaget emphasises that the core of development is not the unfolding of instincts, emotions or patterns of activity but is the cognitive change in patterns of thinking about the self and world emerging from interactions with the environment (Kohlberg & Mayer 1972, pp. 455, 457).

Piaget's research concludes that the educator must provide the pupil with opportunities for personal moral development through problem solving. He views its progressive achievement as a result of interpersonal interactions through which individuals work out a resolution to a given situation. Fair-play is deemed to be the best laboratory (Nucci, 2008, p. 2). Steiner on the other hand is cognisant of the child's spiritual phylogenesis. He favours an emphasis on moral exemplars provided through the imaginative narrative which will accompany the

unfolding of love and gratitude towards the world and others. For Steiner, this is the essential pathway to personal moral growth. He is concerned with the child's interaction with the environment but indicates that the teachers must filter the outside world appropriately to reflect Goodness (ethics), Beauty (aesthetics) and Truth (epistemology of Anthroposophy).

It is at the level of the characteristics of behaviour during each of the stages of the child's development that similarities can be observed. In his cognitive-development model Piaget defines two stages arising out of a self-regulatory process linked to information learned through experience and previous knowledge. Imitation and authority define the *heteronomous* stage which persists up to the age of ten years. In the early phase of this stage at around the age of five years, the child is seen to imitate others and cognitive immaturity is characterised by what Piaget (1932) terms "egocentrism" (p. 16). Similarly, it is Steiner's firm contention that a phase of imitation of an adult teacher is critical to guiding the egocentric will-force dominant at this time. Both Piaget and Steiner point out that any moral reasoning that takes place is characterised by a strict adherence to rules and duties, and obedience to authority. The second major contributor to *heteronomous* moral thinking is the child's relationship with adults. Rules handed down by authorities (God, parents, teachers) are seen by the child to be unchangeable and requiring strict obedience (Berk, p. 489). The child does not consider motives and intentions behind the actions and rules which emanate from adults, they are simply sacred and untouchable. Piaget defines it as a period of "moral realism" when the child believes in "immanent justice" - the expectation that punishments automatically follow wrong-doing (Nucci, 2008, p. 2).

In his model of development Steiner is insistent that spiritual consciousness can only be won through imitation and the voluntary surrender of the child to the teacher (1923/1988c, p. 61). He regards the authority of the teacher as an "absolute necessity" and a "natural law" which will ultimately lead to a form of thinking free of the conditioning of others. Steiner sees this

as a phase to be nurtured through fairy tales, myth and story in which the good deed will always triumph over evil. For Steiner it is an important methodology whereby the egoism and self-focus can be guided in the direction of an emotional preference for the good and in so doing, the characterological dispositions are anticipated to gain refinement. This is the period in which the etheric constructs and re-constructs its knowledge of both its inner and outer worlds thereby laying the foundation for the moral "awakening" anticipated to occur at puberty.

Piaget's second stage of *autonomous* morality occurs when the child is gradually released from adult control around the age of ten. It is a stage characterised by a capacity for appreciating the perspective of others and the motives behind words and actions. The beginning of abstract thinking is also observed (Krause & Bochner & Duchesne, 2003, p. 95). The principles which relate to Piaget's second stage of moral development are applicable to the phase Steiner sees occurring as the child's feeling of separation from the outer world gathers pace. The spiritual researcher agrees that the authority of the teacher is gradually to be reduced as the child begins to experience a new sense of self-awareness. Similarly to Piaget, Steiner acknowledges that the child is gaining the skills which will allow him to become a "socialising influence" (1923/1988c, p. 146).

Piaget's pupil Kohlberg (1927-1987) follows the development of the child beyond the ages studied by his mentor. In his model he identifies a final stage which is conceptually similar to Steiner's theory of *ethical individualism*. At the Post-conventional Level III, Kohlberg sees moral values determined by self-chosen principles of conscience as being upheld regardless of majority opinion (Krause et al, 2003, p. 97). As a theory, the stage is criticised for its seemingly anarchic element and Kohlberg ultimately labels it "theoretical" (Puate, nd, p. 5).

5.7 Conclusions

The importance of human freedom was a recurring theme in Waldorf education. Linking back to the epistemology that he had articulated in *The Philosophy of Freedom* Steiner envisaged that the desired goal of education was to awaken the mind to the spirit of the Universe. With a curriculum and pedagogy firmly focused on preparing the body and soul to receive the spiritual gift of reasoned cognition, the child of the Waldorf School would be able to think beyond the ordinary and mundane, to the freedom of an extraordinary form of consciousness. The question arises as to the coherency of a system of education based on a philosophical - spiritual ontology verified by a spurious metaphysics.

Chapter 5 has demonstrated that Steiner's philosophy of psychic freedom underpinned by his Christocentric worldview was the determining factor in the creation of a pedagogical system for the Waldorf School. Both teaching material and methodological praxis were shown to revolve around the concept of "awakening" or "unfolding" pre-existing mental content. The early notion that teachers were "not to interfere too vigorously" at first sight suggested a laissez-faire system of education which would allow the child the opportunity to develop at his own pace to reveal the psychic content garnered in the pre-birth existence. As Steiner's cosmology evolved, awareness of the Ahrimanic influence on the consciousness of man through the human will, appeared to become reflected in a rigorous system of authoritarian control allied to a strict developmental timetable that became the essential hallmarks of his teaching instructions or "indications" to the selected teachers.

By 1919 Steiner was acutely aware that an anthroposophical school would meet with the same resistance as his worldview teachings that had drawn criticism from the Church authorities. Accordingly, the school was presented to the Stuttgart community as an alternative to government institutions to educate the working class child and to prepare them for the life ahead. Hampered by the need to also teach the prescribed State syllabus, Steiner

was forced to place the teaching material based on the anthroposophical worldview into the "holes" of an existing tightly woven web. So rather like the mystic's lemniscate, the curriculum was obliged to have two parts. The "inner" that would prepare the body and soul, regarded as a temple, to receive the spirit; the "outer" that was to accommodate the demands of daily life. As was observed, the detail of the "inner" curriculum Steiner left in the hands of the teacher. The autonomy to create a coherent and relevant programme for eight school years relied essentially on the fact that the teachers were hand-picked anthroposophists committed to perpetuating the knowledge that would create the "ideal" citizen. Steiner was insistent that the teachers teach out of their anthroposophical worldview but were not to openly teach Anthroposophy "as taught to adults" - a fine distinction that would have proved particularly difficult in Science and History Main Lessons. The true value of the Main Lessons lay in the spiritual "truths" embedded in them. Pictures and imaginative stories that would engender a correct understanding of the moral Christ Impulse best suited the incarnating spiritual nature of the young child - a fortunate happenstance in a disapproving world.

In its final form the curriculum developed out of Steiner's "indications" was a complex arrangement of a *vertical* spiral of knowledge that would deepen from year to year together with a *horizontal* integration of Art, Science and History (Religion) taught from day to day in the Main Lesson. As Steiner had stated in his earliest philosophical ruminations, it was an integrated combination of these subjects that would lead to an understanding of the "unity between the Self and World" (1894/1949, p. 12). At the completion of seven full years of Main Lessons the child would therefore understand the reality of the world, the "shaping of life" from the anthroposophical perspective. Steiner was dismissive of requirements to meet set standards. He made it clear that teachers would instead teach reading and writing and so forth in a manner "appropriate to human nature". The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was not important. The purpose of the School was to provide an education "in conformity

with the spirit" (1919/1995 b, p.153). The late introduction of reading and writing to meet the needs of the incarnating spirit presented a difficulty that persisted into modern times.

Among the educationalists surveyed, Steiner's particularistic model of child development stood alone as a theory based on the progress of the child from "dreamy wholeness" to a young adolescent capable of reasoned thinking able to form judgements motivated by ideals. During each defined stage or phase heralded by a "spiritual birth" he posited the dominance of an independent soul faculty namely willing, feeling or thinking. These three levels of intelligence were seen by Steiner to be qualitatively immature until the age of puberty. At this point the child's thinking would transform via the co-joining of the etheric and astral forces into the stage on which the world of spirit would potentially find expression. In later years, anthroposophists would consider that Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence (Gardner, 1993) served to confirm the validity of Steiner's insights related to the soul faculties operating in the mind of the young child. Each soul faculty expanded into seven critical intelligences would be nurtured by activities involving the head, the heart and the hand (Tan, 2004, p. 1).

The scaffolding that Steiner erected in order that the child's capacity for spiritual cognition could be fulfilled was firmly based on the imitation of the teacher and the imposition of strict but loving authority. The latter Steiner justified on the basis that the potentially errant will, required firm guidance coupled with the refinement of aesthetic feeling. Steiner's curious criticism of Herbart's methodology is to be understood in light of the emphasis he placed on the will as the key to awakening the connectivity to the ideal *Ideas*. What was good and beautiful knowledge was to be determined by the teacher. In effect, Steiner did not intend to liberate the child's thinking consciousness via a liberal education which left the child to its own devices as for example, in the experimental Hamburg schools directed by Dr Paulsen or

Herman Tobler's *Landserziehungsheim* which aimed to develop mind and body by self-education methods (Boyd & Rawson, 1965 pp.12, 46).

A particular focus of the chapter was the influence of the anthroposophical worldview on the teaching content. This was seen to operate in a number of ways. In the years that the authority of the teacher held greatest sway Steiner advocated the need for lesson content to make greatest use of the child's capacity for imaginative and creative thinking. Aesthetically pleasing class work was designed to make the incarnating spirit "earth ready". Small incursions into the reality behind phenomena was encouraged through a *phenomenological* approach to teaching the natural Sciences which could be described as experiential learning. Literature and History taught in narrative pictures via a "*symptomatological*" approach was a further example of teaching "anthroposophically". In particular, the myths of ancient history taught creatively would relay the deepest wisdom "in any sphere of life". Little attempt was to be made to do the work of Ahriman by making thinking mechanical and overly intellectual. Conceptual thinking was to be delayed as long as practical. Holistic methodologies combined with an emphasis on developing the child's individuality served to create the illusion that the Waldorf School could be considered a *progressive* institution.

It can be concluded that the teaching content and methodology employed in the Waldorf School reflected their anthroposophical underpinnings and were therefore a silent testament to esoteric theory. In themselves they were a work of art, incorporating identifiable characteristics of esoteric scholarship in a form suited to the youthful mind. Below the surface, the curriculum indications and pedagogy were an occult set of instructions via imagery to the child's "inner" spirit consciousness Steiner believed to require an "awakening" as opposed to intellectual discourse. The imagination, the *primus motor creans* of the esoteric scholar would heal the mind and allow it to converse with the spirits in the Universe. In Steiner's estimation, in the age of the *Consciousness Soul* no other pedagogical system

could nurture the spiritual being of the young child. An education focused merely on the intellect might yield a picture of the spirit, but not awaken the spiritual itself. Only the pupils in the Waldorf School would be set on the path to "know the self", the freedom of the mind and the ultimate redemptive power of *ethical individualism*. Only a child who had experienced this "universal education" would truly be able to call themselves a member of humanity with a responsibility to redeem not only themselves but also society and the Earth itself.

For the teachers of the Waldorf School, culled from Steiner's anthroposophical followers, the highest purpose of their task was to prepare each child to reach into the recesses of the unconscious mind and, through the agency of the free will, awaken it to a sublimated spiritual connectivity. In so doing the "spark" of the personal Divine would come within reach, enriching the thoughts that would one day lead to moral action and love of duty. In the devoted yet authoritative hands of the Waldorf teacher the children would be prepared for life, assisted to develop their full spiritual nature in a way that would ensure that the laws of the nobly beautiful and eternally true would come to fruition in their adult hearts and minds. For the believers in the Stone of Christic Love a pedagogy based on the study of Science, History and Art from the anthroposophical perspective would effectively begin the task of the Epoch to reintegrate the consciousness of humanity with the guiding authority of the spiritual realm. According to Marie Steiner the graduates would be the pioneers of a future humanity - a spiritually superior man not simply a cog in a mechanising world.

With the establishment of the Waldorf School, Steiner was confident that a new beginning had been made in the educational landscape of a turbulent post-war Germany capable of building the foundations for social renewal. At the time of his death in 1925, Steiner had laid the groundwork for an enduring form of education that he believed would develop the spiritual individuality of the young child. In essence, it retained many of the principles of a

romantic educational ideology with an overlay of the anthroposophical *weltanschauung*. The following chapter examines the extent to which the ideological principles have been retained and implemented in the curriculum and pedagogical practices of the modern Waldorf school.

CHAPTER 6

MODERN WALDORF SCHOOL EDUCATION - LOOKING FOR THE ANGEL

6.1 Introduction

Receive the child with reverence

Educate them in love

Send them forth in freedom

Rudolf Steiner

The significance of these words, inscribed on a stone plaque at the entrance to one of Australia's largest Waldorf schools should resonate with every teacher worldwide who purports to follow the directives Rudolf Steiner gave to his chosen "anthroposophical missionaries" almost a century ago. It is incumbent upon every teacher in a Waldorf school to receive the child who is perceived to have been karmically placed in their care with reverence, and guide them towards unfolding a pre-existent set of possibilities (Ogletree, 1996, p. 1). As Steiner would have it, this will lead to the "freedom" of a psychic unity with the spiritual in the Universe.

As Chapter 5 has demonstrated Steiner devised an "art" of education with the intention of creating for the pupil a new worldview, one that would replace the perceived Ahrimanic, mechanistic Universe with a Rosicrucian Christian world conception. Today there are over twenty Teacher Training institutions, two of which are located in Australia, devoted solely to guiding novice teachers in the essential elements of Waldorf education. In Australia and overseas there are also several training courses at the university level with a Waldorf component.

While Waldorf educators in general have not encouraged the examination of either the philosophy or cosmology on which the daily work in the classroom rests, they have provided extensive and detailed reports of both their experiences and samples of curriculum tasks and objectives in the written form. This store of information in books, journals and articles in electronic format built up over several decades provides a valuable source of guidance for the practising Waldorf teacher and helps ensure that a consistent approach to the content of what has come to be recognised as a universal curriculum is maintained. A limited number of useful empirical studies have been carried out more recently (Ogletree, 1996; Gidley, 1997; Nielson, 2003b).

Chapter 6 relies on a cross-section of these available publications in order to provide an insight into the work carried out in the modern Waldorf classroom. The analysis is based on the work of experienced teachers who are conversant with the esoteric *weltanschauung* and who are striving to put into practice the ideas Steiner considered essential to developing the soul faculties of thinking, feeling and willing in a way that would allow the child to "know" the world commensurate with Anthroposophy. The chapter takes as its starting point Steiner's directive to the teachers in the *Waldorfschule* to follow Goethe's dictum - "consider well the *what* but consider more the *how*" (1921/1995c, p. 113). To maintain consistency in approach the chapter is divided into three parts -

- * Part 1 examines the commitment of the teachers in modern Waldorf schools to Steiner's original methodological principles.
- * Part 2 considers how the content of the Science, History and Art lessons (Kindergarten - Class VIII) is taught in a way that is consistent with the anthroposophical *weltanschauung*. How the teaching content conveys the messages Steiner considered

critical to achieving the moral and spiritual development of the child is of particular interest.

- * Part 3 concludes the investigation with a brief appraisal of modern Waldorf School pedagogy from the perspective of modern commentators.

As indicated in the Waldorf School Curriculum (*Lehr Plan*: Appendix III & IV), the all important Book of Nature and the Book of History have come to be subsumed in the teaching content of the Science, English Literature and History Main Lessons. These Main Lessons, together with Drawing and Painting (Art) Lessons have therefore been selected from Stockmeyer's summary to illustrate those aspects of the curriculum that are regarded as providing the ideas essential to the spiritual incarnation of the young child. It is to be noted that the Main Lessons are not required to exist in isolation from the requirements of a State prescribed curriculum. The Main Lessons designed to stimulate the imagination and fantasy of the children are also the medium through which the teacher is able to fulfil set teaching outcomes. The Literature Main Lessons for example, at the same time as they deliver the content of the Waldorf curriculum, can be effectively employed to teach the skills of reading, writing and the elements of literacy appropriate for the age of the pupil.

Part 1

6. 2 Maintaining First Principles

6.2.1 Current Practices

While it is not necessary for a teacher to embrace Rosicrucian Christianity, as Schwartz (nd) points out, it is impossible to work with the Waldorf method without at least an understanding of the anthroposophical worldview (p. 1). The observations made by the researcher over a period of almost two decades in a Waldorf school confirm this assumption. Observation suggests that to be effective as a Class teacher requires not only an empathy for

Steiner's worldview but also a sound understanding of the so-called "spiritual anthropology" of the child and the relevance of the themes to be taught at the appropriate time in the defined incarnational stages. The teacher who fails to carefully follow what is by now a well established path for the several consecutive years of teaching the one Class, is usually not requested by the College of Teachers (the modern day *Collegia*) to take on a second Waldorf journey. The maintenance of quality in relationship to Waldorf school objectives is assisted by groups of teachers regularly sharing observations and programmes. Frequent whole-school meetings also help to keep in focus, a sense of common purpose. In the Waldorf school the College of Teachers retains its role as the governing body and its members "pledge to support the spiritual pedagogical and social impulses of Steiner's work as manifested in their individual environments" (Swann, 1998, p. 58).

While Steiner was content to allow the teacher significant latitude as to *how* to interpret his fundamental indications, a key role of the College members is to mentor the individual who may be taking on a Class of young children for the first time to ensure this is carried out in a satisfactory format. In Australian schools new teachers are often encouraged to provide a detailed outline of their intended lesson content and this is formally evaluated by the designated mentor. In general, these individuals are mentored by their fellow teachers and every school carries out training sessions on a weekly or monthly basis. Steiner's lectures published in textual form such as *Practical Advice To Teachers* and *The Study of Man* are often used as study material which allows the more experienced teachers to share their expertise with newer teachers.

There is a general consensus amongst Waldorf educators that the original principles as presented by Steiner to the teachers in 1919 remain foundational to the work carried out on a daily basis. In his doctoral thesis *An Appraisal of Steinerian Theory and Practice - How do They Compare* (1996), Masters confirms that contemporary Waldorf education while

broadening the scope of Steiner's indications, largely resonates on the "original strings". He also confidently asserts that "absolutely everything in, around and behind the curriculum and methodology fits with an anthroposophical cosmology" (pp. 4, 15). His findings are consistent with the observations of Harwood (1982) who believes that there never was an educational movement "in which practice more closely embodies theory, in which the smallest part more accurately reflects the organic whole" (p. 9).

In reviewing the educational imperatives related to the evolution of consciousness, Gidley (2007) claims that there are innovative moves within many Waldorf schools worldwide to adapt as well as remain "true to message" (p. 128). The capacity of educational institutions to adapt and remain on message while adhering to the regulatory requirements and prescribed content matter is well illustrated by the outline of the Science and History Core Curriculum (K-VIII) provided by the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework (2011). A review of the Waldorf curriculum within the Scope and Sequence required by the New South Wales Department of Education serves to highlight that the Waldorf school in Australia teaches no overt religious content - a current problem flagged in Chapter 1. What the carefully crafted Sequence does achieve is a view of Nature that maintains the integrity of Steiner's original indications within the context of stipulated themes. For example, in Biology the teacher by working with prescribed subject matter, is still able to create an imaginative and alive picture of the cosmos. The children are encouraged to develop a sense of gratitude for the beauty and bounty of the Earth which in turn gives rise to a feeling of responsibility for the place where man plays his central role - all important ideas consistent with the anthroposophical *weltanschauung*.

A similar situation occurs in the study of History. Ancient cultures can be studied alongside the cultures of indigenous peoples in Australia. With reference to the teaching of History in Class IV the core Curriculum indicates that the Nordic mythologies "which bring experience

of the courage and receding presence of the gods" can be followed by "Indigenous stories which bring transcendent pictures of creation" (p. 6). It is therefore altogether possible to integrate the ideas essential to the child's spiritual incarnation into a required curriculum content without any loss of the themes considered essential. The integration of the two curricula in fact gives rise to a teaching content that is acknowledged by Waldorf educators to be both artistic and rich (Mazzone, ndb, np).

In Chapter 5, four pedagogical principles were identified as being key characteristics of the "original strings" namely - (i) the authority of the teacher, (ii) the importance of the imagination, (iii) the moral, spiritual impulse in teaching and (iv) the development of social responsibility. While it is accepted that the four principles are considered intrinsic to the "organic whole" each of the principles will be considered separately.

(i) The Authority of the Class Teacher

Rawson and Richter (2000) in their authoritative review of Waldorf schooling prepared on behalf of the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the *Goetheanum* point to the fact that imitation, guidance and respect for expertise and authority remain essential to providing the setting in which "*ethical individualism* and individual morality may flourish"(p. 23). Those who understand anthroposophical dogma appreciate Steiner's reasoning on this issue. It is not adult authority for the sake of authority, but as the anthroposophist Gardner would have it - the "organism" (the material, animal aspect of life) needs to be "cancelled" through the strengthening of "universal reason". He goes on to say that the spiritual realm of mind transcends the individual Ego and the task of "infusing true spiritual knowledge into the child's receptive soul" takes place via authoritative guidance (Gardner in Miller, 1998, p. 22). To facilitate the process, the seating of the pupils in the class is determined by their temperament, ideally, phlegmatic and choleric characters sit on the outside while melancholy

and sanguine temperaments are positioned in the centre. During teaching, each group is addressed in turn with "balancing impulses" (Ullrich, 1994/2000, p. 16).

A Waldorf School Prospectus (2012) summarises the general attitude of the teacher towards the role the authority in achieving the goal of "universal reason" and is worth reiterating here. It states that from around the age of seven to thirteen, the "golden years" of the "picture consciousness", the wisdom of the world can be grasped through respect for authority. It makes the assumption that without the child loving and understanding the authority of the teacher and the spontaneous respect it commands, the quest for universality of thinking which is the "total purpose" of a Waldorf education becomes impossible (p. 1).

(ii) The Importance of the Imagination

Steiner was explicit that the true nature of the child was indifferent to intellectual accomplishment and he anticipated that the chief source of stimulating the process of "awakening" would come from imaginative "mental picturing" (refer p. 184). In the modern Waldorf school a focus on the child's imagination is still considered to be the essential pedagogical "tool" through which enthusiasm and motivation for learning are achieved (Gidley, 1997, p. 51). Nielson (2003a) in his conference paper *Rudolf Steiner's Pedagogy of Imagination: A Phenomenological Case Study*, delineates seven methods the teacher uses to engage the imaginative interest of the young child, namely, drama, exploration, storytelling, routine, arts, discussion and empathy. Through one medium or another he found that the child either consciously or unconsciously, created an emotional-aesthetic or a spiritual-aesthetic linkage with the learning content. Art in its various forms, in particular, created beauty, harmony and balance in the child's thinking (pp. 5-8) - a critical pedagogical objective in Waldorf schooling.

Macnight (2009), in her doctoral study of teaching the imagination further confirms its employment as an important pedagogical tool. Her work is particularly insightful based on time spent in a Class IV Waldorf classroom where she experienced several techniques "to keep imagination at the heart of learning" (p. 155). The techniques which the teacher used to help the children to externalise their mental images were drawing, mental picturing, performing mimes and finding descriptive words - all very similar to Nielson's observations. The research findings of Nielson and Macnight suggest that the Waldorf school teachers continue to employ the young child's power of imagination which they consider will ennoble the mind and strengthen the etheric will - an outcome not anticipated to occur in mainstream intellectually based forms of education that focus on perpetually "laying bare of meaning".

Barnes (1998), an educator active in American Waldorf education for over sixty-five years, writing about the "four births" of the human being, places Nielson's findings into an anthroposophical perspective. He reinforces that teachers must consider the link between imitation and imagination. Through imitation the child becomes "one with the surrounding objective world" at which point archetypal learning through the physical body takes place. In imagination, the deeply unconscious, instinctive activity of imitation is transformed into a more "dreamlike" intelligence but is nevertheless "faithful to reality". This is not, Barnes insists, imagination in the sense of make-believe but a disciplined instrument of knowledge that allows the child to penetrate through outer perception into the invisible reality behind and within phenomena. In other words to "hear the story within the story" to "see" the picture that reveals hidden meaning behind external facts (p. 7).

The observations made by Barnes highlight the point often made by Steiner that *how* knowledge is delivered in the classroom is more important than simply providing the child with curriculum content. In other words, the facts are secondary to the child's engagement with the material presented. Steiner's endorsement of Goethe's *phenomenological* holistic

approach to the study of Nature maintains its significance particularly in relation to the Sciences. Examples will be given in the following discussion and it is suffice to say here that child will be introduced to a new way of "seeing" the world that is anticipated by the teacher to cause a transformation in the "perceiver". At the point where the child becomes an active participant in the knowing process through the power of the imagination he or she is actively developing the organs of perception critical to understanding. Through what is described by the Waldorf teacher as "participatory knowing" (English, 2000, p. 21) the child is being given the opportunity to employ the faculty of sense perception that will ultimately transform into conceptual thinking at the appropriate time in the spiritual incarnation process. The "unfolding" of the child's own ideas that permits a *feeling* of "oneness" with the external world continues to be a fundamental aim of all Waldorf pedagogy.

Mephram (1998), teacher and lecturer to Waldorf teacher trainees confirms this contention. He observes that if the living image with its meaningful connections and personifications is effective it will work inwardly "over time" metamorphosing into conceptual thinking. He reinforces Steiner's belief that the innate quality of the story and narrative is the consideration and description of values to be told with "courage for the truth and freshness and vigour". He points out that in the Waldorf classroom the teacher becomes a mediator for the child. The values, the feelings, the events on the page are vivified by the artistic endeavour of the teacher and the messages therein are to be recalled and discussed by the children (pp. 48, 49).

The importance of maintaining all forms of a creative and imaginative methodology in the Waldorf classroom in order to nurture the maturation process is reinforced by Rawson and Richter (2000). In line with Steiner's thinking they believe that through it the child will gain a conceptual framework within which they can orientate themselves and understand their daily experiences (p. 21). Gidley (1997) also agrees with this observation from her own research

stating that the imaginative story is "the pre-eminent medium" through which a child's intrinsic motivation and positive self-esteem can be encouraged (p. 42).

The use of technology in the modern classroom is largely rejected due to its tendency to dampen the positive activity of the imagination - a computer cannot deliver the words of the story, the message or the meaning (Mephram, 1998, p. 47). In general, Waldorf parents are requested to discourage their child from watching or listening to electronic media because it is believed to have a deleterious impact on cognitive development (Ogletree, 1996, p. 11). Brose (2007a) in her lecture *Shaping the Vessel through the Curriculum*, reiterates this commonly held attitude of Waldorf teachers towards modern technology. Technology, she believes, achieves its power through the prostitution of the senses. For her, a question arises as to why there is a current disconnect between the Light for which the eyes were formed and the Word that speaks to the inner ear. She asks "where is the memory of the knights of King Arthur who saw Nature teeming with life, with spiritual beings, visible in the play of wind and weather of sunshine and sea spray?" (p. 183). She concludes that what was once the eye of spiritual cognition is now assaulted by the harshness of the mechanical world outside and the enhancement of egoism within. Given the continued focus on the imagination in every Waldorf school, she is however, optimistic for the future - "through education we have the opportunity to revitalise it" (p. 184).

(iii) The Moral Spiritual Impulse in Teaching

For the teacher who describes themselves as "working out of Anthroposophy" the conditions in the modern world seemingly bear out Steiner's worst predictions. Ahrimanic technology substitutes for the human hand, Luciferic egoism carries instinctive, impulsive behaviour into social life. Edmunds (1992b), founder of Emerson College, the major Waldorf teacher training facility in the United Kingdom, laments this state of affairs. In his work reviewing Waldorf education, his sentiments epitomise the attitude of the dedicated teacher in an age

that persists in rejecting the heroic and spiritual side of the human being. In his opinion, what the modern man knows of the world is mass energy, in a meaningless and never ending motion - "try as he will he can never come to terms with himself in such a world" (p. 69). For Edmunds, using a nautical metaphor, the task of the Waldorf teacher is to trim the sails and keep a constant watch on the winds that threaten to blow the child towards the shoals of egotism and scepticism that have come to prevail in modern society -

As teachers we have to lead the vessel in our charge safely through the Scylla and Charybdis of modern times, egotism in material things and scepticism in spiritual things; the one makes too much of the earth, the other too little of heaven.

(Edmunds, 1992b, p. 69)

In the modern school from Kindergarten to Class VIII teachers continue to appreciate that every child in their class is a reincarnating spirit being on the historical path of the evolution of human consciousness (Mephram, 1998, p. 47). Through an understanding of the child's "spiritual anthropology", teachers acknowledge that the purpose of their work is to guide the metamorphosis or transformation of the body, soul and spirit of the young child through successive phases of development as described in Chapter 5. To guide the pupil through the pitfalls that may beset the goal of the child's spiritual and moral development, the Waldorf teacher will continue to rely on what Steiner described as "inner awareness" which has given rise to what is commonly referred to as the "inner" curriculum. Through the content of the "inner" curriculum the child is anticipated to comprehend the "Christ Impulse", the spiritual in the Universe which works implicitly not by way of any dogma but rather "weaves in the imponderables" (Querido, 2000, p. 25). Harrison (1986) a well respected teacher in an Australian Waldorf school defines these "imponderables" as "that aspect of the curriculum which goes far beyond the body of information and knowledge contained within it, carrying the capacity to work into the very soul of the child to help awaken it to the good and true" (p.

7). Downs (1986), in the same publication, similarly acknowledges its importance in tapping the "central core of goodwill in every individual" (p. 20). The creative and imaginative pedagogical form this assumes indicates that the teacher in the modern school follows Steiner's directives to not teach moral concepts in any overt format.

In reviewing Waldorf teaching in America, Richards (1980) freely admits that it has a "hidden agenda" that will allow the voice of Nature to once again be heard -

One could say that Waldorf education has a hidden agenda. Its curriculum is described in terms common to public schools in general: arithmetic, writing, reading, geography, botany, biology, handcraft, history and so on. But in Steiner Schools the dimensions of these subjects are threefold: they are artistic, cognitive and religious. The children work with artists' materials in all their lessons; and in the elementary school they approach the entire learning process through imagination...Nature yields her secrets best to a reverent approach. Students learn to observe, receive and to offer.

(Richards, 1980, p. 164)

Querido (2000) returns to the all important "Pedagogical Province" of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* to explain the four *reverences* of the macrocosm which he considers encapsulates the true meaning of a secularised Waldorf curriculum-

The first is towards that which lives above us: the wonder of the mighty starry vault, the glory of the sun, the beauty of the moon, and the remarkable movement of the planets. For the second reverence we turn to what is below us: the realm of the crystals, the beauty of the plant world, and the variety of the animal kingdom. The third form of reverence cultivates a true sense of devotion to everything that is around us, including the variety of human beings that people our planet. And the fourth is directed towards the inner core, the divine spark that lives within us.

(Querido, 2000, p. 21)

Subsumed within these so called "reverences" is the fundamental spiritual wisdom for which "the soul thirsts" - the glory of the sun, the beauty of Nature, the divinity of the human being. The skilful teacher will weave these so called "reverences" into the daily routine of schoolwork which relays a powerful content capable of stirring the feeling heart of the young child. Power (2001) provides an eloquent summary -

Education is not the act of wrapping the pupils in a divine cloak of ideas. Education is working with pupils we recognise as independent persons dressed in cloaks which are divine

(Power, 2001, p. 25)

As Steiner emphasised on numerous occasions it is vital for the teacher to guide the child to be able to *feel* his place and part in the cosmos - on this depends the development of a strong bond to the spirit world. The role of the educator during the school years is therefore simply to assist in the staged moral awakening of their young charges to the "spiritual in the Universe", and in so doing prepare them to one day become vessels of the Sun Christ in their moral thought and action. Only with a real appreciation of the anthroposophical fact that the child is a spiritual being who has brought his or her Christ forces with them from out of the supersensible world can the task of education to bring about the "fruition of sacramentalism" be achieved (Querido, 1995, p. xx). Querido (2000) states this is the most basic maxim that must be understood if the child's spiritual and moral transformation is to be arrived at. Without this defining characteristic, the Waldorf School Movement would lose its *raison d'être*.

(iv) The Development of Social Responsibility

While there is rarely any reference to the role of schooling in preparing the way for a *Threefold Commonwealth* as discussed in Chapter 4 there is none the less still an important social aspect underlying Waldorf education. Rawson and Richter (2000) confirm the

continued importance of the social objectives of Waldorf education which can be summarised as follows -

- To equip the individual to participate in and contribute to society.
- To develop empathy and respect towards others and acquire a self-directed sense of social responsibility.
- To develop the capacity to form judgements on the basis of sound observation and to transfer these skills to the personal, social and moral domain.
- To cultivate the inner voice of conscience and sense of justice and social responsibility (pp. 43-55).

The authors also highlight the fact that from the very first years of schooling the child should move towards a sense of service, social responsibility and self-imposed duty as he or she comes to "engage their will in the realm of ideals" (p. 55).

There is a general understanding among Waldorf teachers that a self-directed moral strength will give rise to a keen interest in social issues consistent with the original intent of Waldorf pedagogy. Pewtherer (1997) confirms this observation, saying that Waldorf education is "uniquely able" to bring about a healing of the individual and society because it "develops freedom and responsibility" (p. 12). Rawson and Richter (2000) in discussing the objectives of Waldorf education also comment on this aspect. They consider that a Waldorf educated child will be "equipped to participate in and contribute to society" and through sound judgement will be able to cultivate the inner voice of conscience that will "awaken within them a sense of justice and moral responsibility". Above all they will have a reverence for other people and the world in which they live (pp. 11-24).

Rawson (1998) emphasizes the importance of creating a continued connection with the spiritual powers that seek to work in the world to bring about social harmony and human

development (p. 7). Clouder identifies these powers as a combination of *Isis* (Sophia) and *Osiris* (Christ) (Clouder, 2001, p. 7). To this end, teachers must consistently incorporate the ideals of moral social behaviour in their work and in the activities that are carried out in the Waldorf classroom. Some of the early commentaries by Waldorf educators as to the relationship between Steiner's social reformist ideals and schooling are often the most revealing. For example, Rösch - Lehrs (1977), a contemporary of Steiner writing in the 1920s and 30s, makes it very clear that children who have pre-natal picture memories suppressed by "an aridly intellectual education" will grow up into unsatisfied adults who may "rise up in opposition out of quite unconscious motives" against existing social forms (p. 15). With a Waldorf education, the individual child will presumably become "conscious" of the need for social change. More recently, Howard (1977), voices a commonly held opinion of Waldorf teachers that it is only through the core curriculum of the Main Lessons that the child can acquire the qualities to become a socially aware, "enlightened" individual -

Ever since Waldorf education was introduced over fifty years ago it has been doing nothing else but preparing students to take their place as competent and enlightened members of society in the modern world set up. And that has only been possible by consistently following a "core" curriculum throughout that time.

(Howard, 1977, p. 8)

Mazzone (1999) in his doctoral research focused on teacher training in Australia, states that the purpose of Waldorf teacher education is the commitment to foster a more democratic and better-educated country "without nationalistic insinuations connected with the aim"(p. 353). He highlights that Waldorf educators committed to *ethical individualism* are, by definition, committed to social responsibility, and would also affirm "notions of equity and social justice in striving towards a social democratic society, within the broader context of the principles of the Threefold Social Order" (p. 353). Strawe (1998) writing on the importance of the

Waldorf school curriculum in developing social skills and social understanding similarly reaffirms the social task of the work carried out in the classroom. He states that the school has a duty to be a place "where social renewal and social education can take place" (p. 43). He refers back to Steiner's original intention that the pupils of the first Waldorf School were anticipated to develop an understanding for the impulse of bringing about a threefold ordering of society and interestingly, concludes that current schools should "find initiatives that can contribute to fulfilling it" (p. 44).

Part 2

6.3 The Inner Curriculum from Kindergarten to Class VIII

6.3.1 An Overview

The continued success of Waldorf education in enriching the mind and strengthening the moral will of the pupil depends in a very real sense, upon the ability of the teacher to perpetuate the educational principles set out by Steiner firstly in 1907 and further developed in 1919. The curriculum themes that ensure the set objectives are arrived at were, until 1931, a set of stenographic notes. In that year, Caroline Von Heyderbrand (1931/1996) transcribed these notes into booklet form, entitling it *The Curriculum of the First Waldorf School*. Some years later Stockmeyer (1982) in an exhaustive study of Steiner's indications, published *Curriculum for Waldorf Schools*. In his work on piecing together the Waldorf School Curriculum or *Lehr Plan*, Stockmeyer himself noted that its compilation was not without its problems, particularly with reference as to how and in what sequence the themes in Nature Study were to be presented. Stockmeyer wrote that even though it occupied "a rather special place in the curriculum" it was extraordinarily difficult to understand Steiner's intentions (p. 5). Overall, his summary represents the core Main Lesson themes which have come to form the backbone of the present curriculum in Australian schools (Cunningham, 2004, p. 72). More recently, the Pedagogical Section for Spiritual Science in the *Goetheanum*, in

conjunction with the Steiner Schools Fellowship, produced the previously cited contemporary guideline for Waldorf teachers. *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum* (Rawson & Richter, 2000), was an ambitious project, representing the culmination of several years of preparation and is considered an important adjunct to Stockmeyer's work.

Complementary research has also been undertaken in various countries. In Australia, Cunningham's book *Working with Curriculum in Australian Rudolf Steiner Schools* (2004) is intended as a resource manual for practicing teachers. Some years prior to this, the Pedagogical Council and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America produced a similar volume, *Forming the Lessons of Grades One Through Eight* (Belenson, 1994). In Great Britain, the Steiner Schools Fellowship has long published the *Child and Man Journal*, regarded as a serious medium for the expression and discussion of Waldorf educational matters. As noted, a plethora of publications also exist to support the work carried out in the steadily increasing number of Waldorf schools.

The Main Lessons continue to be the major focus of the Waldorf curriculum and are taught in blocks of approximately three weeks. As in the original school they maintain their position at the beginning of the school day for at least two hours. As discussed in Chapter 4, at the time permission was given by the authorities to set up the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Steiner was specifically required to create a curriculum and pedagogy that could be integrated into the official requirements of the State of Württemberg. Similarly, the modern school, in order to gain accreditation, may also be required to follow guidelines that stand outside the Waldorf curriculum. The ability of the teachers to maintain the all-important anthroposophical content is however, noted by both Glas and Ullrich. Glas (nd) the author of a useful text on the teaching History in an American Waldorf school points out that major differences exist from country to country in the History programme in as much that they are

required to incorporate local content. But he points to the fact that the themes relating to the unfolding of the faculties of the growing child as he or she psychically recapitulates the Epochs of human consciousness, must maintain their dominance in the Primary School years. All else he says, "dwindles into insignificance" (p. 21). The same can be said for the key themes relating to the study of the natural world. Ullrich (1994/2000) in his review of the fundamentals of Waldorf schooling suggests that the natural sciences continue to follow the original indications within a contemporary context. His observations show that Waldorf schools teach a modern ecological education which develops "a basic mood of sympathy with the manifestations of Nature" encouraging an empathetic feeling for the all-important sense of cosmic unity" (p. 16).

On the basis that Steiner's picture of the child incarnating into matter from a spiritual realm is the ongoing foundation-stone of all aspects of pedagogical praxis, a number of assumptions relating to modern Waldorf teaching can therefore be made. First and foremost, Main Lessons in History, Science and Art must maintain their specific content. Secondly the methodology must be sympathetic to the stages of the child's development and at all times preclude any premature intellectual thinking. Thirdly the head, heart and hand must be equally engaged if the caprices and temptations of the "natural man" are to be comprehended and overcome. Above all, the curriculum must maintain its "vital quality" as a living, artistic, intuitive activity and never become mechanical, causal or stale (Rawson & Richter, 2000, p. 10).

6.3.2 Kindergarten - A Year of Reverence

The introduction to the "spiritual dimension" of the Universe begins as soon as the child enters the magical world of Kindergarten. For the children who attend a Waldorf Kindergarten it is the beginning of a gentle, reverent and loving journey. Rawson and Richter (2000) describe the Kindergarten child's mood as one of "dreamy wholeness" (p. 36). At the

point of entering school the child is considered a creature of soul and spirit, at one with the world whose simple, primeval, picture phase of consciousness is to be nurtured and enhanced. As the child readies itself for its first spiritual birth, daily work in the classroom begins to foster the childish imagination. Throughout the Kindergarten year, the choice of stories is the responsibility of each teacher and the resulting diversity is able to reflect the cultural richness of any Waldorf school. Stories may be complex or simple and are often told in candlelight to enhance the emotional power of the word. The details are left to the imagination and flexibility of the Class teacher. The Kindergarten teacher understands that fairy stories contain, as Steiner indicated, a great deal more than they can say (refer p. 197). Some teachers consider them to have entered human consciousness through the agency of the Angelic gods in the so-called age of *Kali Yuga* (Brose in St Clair, 2007b, p. 266). Harwood (1982) agrees, referring to the content of fairy stories as "the practical wisdom of our ancestors" (p. 98).

The Kindergarten classroom is a place where this imitative young being will develop freely, cushioned from the harmful influences of a highly intellectual and materialistic age. Stories designed to foster the idea that Nature is beautiful and alive begin here. Through stories arising out of the interplay between the creative forces of the Heavenly Father and the Earth Mother, the children will be given pictures of fundamental archetypal truths such as the processes of inner transformation of the human being and pictures of the beauty and interdependence of all creation (Waldorf School Curriculum Doc, 1995, p. 5). The small child, still close to its prenatal origins, is expected to have an intuitive sense for the spiritual wisdom contained in the fairy story and verse. Toole (1997) provides an interesting example of a Nature Study story that conveys deep esoteric truths relating to a reverence for the Sun and the importance of self-transformation -

When caterpillars wriggle among the spring green leaves, the children may learn about a caterpillar who grows tired of eating leaves all day and longs to worship the sun like the flowers do, raising up their bright petals....When autumn winds blow chill and acorns adorn the ground, the children may hear how one acorn fears leaving the strong arms of his mother, but when he musters his courage and at last lets go he finds he is on a journey to a new life.

(Toole, 1997, p. 27)

At the same time that the Kindergarten child is being encouraged to be attentive to the expressions and symbols of Nature, he or she is also entering the world of moral reality via stories which must have something good and evil to say (Belenson, 1994, p. 33). Through what Reilly (1971) calls "the throb and thrall of the good turn in the eucastatic fairy tale" (p. 216) the child hears how Good will triumph over Evil and at the same time will gain an objective view of the darker side of existence. Meyer (1981) suggests that the punishment of the wicked deed is essential to balance the child's own feeling for natural justice and considers this allows for "an approval of the correctness of judgement based on moral law" (p. 183). Mephram (1998), in his account of the place of storytelling in Waldorf education, believes that the Grimms' fairy story of *The Star Child*, "a likely story to be told in Kindergarten", conveys "virtually everything that is essential concerning human values". To him, the values found in this story including individually realised authority, the selfless desire to act freely and responsibly, represent the vocabulary and syntax of soul and spiritual literacy which are appropriate for the age (p. 49).

According to Hutchins (1975c) fairy stories all contain an "inner" meaning that can be related to the soul faculties and, in particular, the will-force that needs to be brought under control if the child is to be correctly prepared for moral consciousness in later years. Choosing the example of *Hansel and Gretel*, she describes the symbolism she envisages will inform the imaginative faculty. Hutchin's description is informative. Hansel is the spirit and Gretel is

the soul of the child approaching the house of the physical body. The house appears attractive and desirable on the outside but its interior conceals the tendency to evil. Evil (the will) in the form of the witch imprisons the spirit and enslaves the soul. But when the power of the witch is overthrown, the spirit and soul are able to take back to the world from which they came, the store of jewels which are the fruits of earthly existence (p. 43).

The interpretation of this "practical wisdom" is the preserve of the individual Class teacher. For example, Brose (2007b) believes that the tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* illustrates the story of the loss of spiritual consciousness. The grandmother represents the old wisdom, swallowed up by intellectual thinking. Red Riding Hood is the Ego swallowed by the wolf. The huntsman is *Michael* or Osiris - he who walks in front of the Christ and releases the human Ego to once again be able to participate in the spiritual world. According to Brose, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella* similarly hold deep esoteric truths. The realm of *Snow White* is the realm of Nature, the wicked stepmother holds the looking glass but it is Snow White who must experience the trials of thinking. In the fairy tale, *Sleeping Beauty*, the frog is the lower part of the Ego and the twelve wise women are the twelve powers of the cosmos coming to endow the human soul with the gift of spiritual consciousness. In *Cinderella*, the two daughters of the stepmother are the two great powers which rule over the Muttwelt, Lucifer and Ahriman (pp. 263-270).

The creative fairy story generates the art and craft curriculum. Craft is used to foster a respect for Nature's materials, while painting uses the colours of the spiritual realm "to weave a connection with the hereditary body" (McAllen, 1975, p. 44). In this way, both activities work to build up the required sense of wonder and reverence for the outer world.

Occasionally the children will draw the fiery dragon - an early warning of the Dragon forces that will attempt to cloud the soul-psyche to the higher realities which are offered by the daily

imaginative stories. As a counterpoise, a beautiful, brightly coloured sun may appear in the centre of the picture.

6.3.3 Class I - A Dreaming Consciousness

Table 6.1

The Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan) Main Lessons - Class I

English Literature	The Sciences	Drawing	Painting
<u>Grimm & Russian</u> Fairy tales. <u>Poetry</u> : Short poems with strong rhymes and rhythms.	<u>Nature Study</u> : Stories that present world of Nature to the child in an imaginative way.	<u>Shading</u> : Forms arising out of the meeting of colours in connection with writing straight and curved lines.	On <i>wet paper</i> using the 3 primary colours only. Cultivating a sense for colours and form.

(Stockmeyer, 1982)

Stockmeyer's Main Lesson outline for Class I (Table 6.1) is set on the firm foundations of the Kindergarten year. The child is now on the path to "self- discovery" as the journey to "know the self" through the story of humanity begins (Waldorf School Prospectus, 2012, p. 12). The day starts with the same meditation or "morning verse" Steiner composed for the teachers of the Waldorf School. Fox (1949) categorises the sentiments in the meditation as "one brief moment of solemnity" which gives the children an image of their own souls that will be borne, albeit unconsciously, into the actions of the day" (p. 8).

At this stage it is the business of the teacher to awaken the child to his or her environment through imaginative stories which are regarded as describing "the child's path down to earth". Stories are chosen which portray the cycles of the natural world and the change of seasons (Rawson & Richter, 2000, p. 39). The plants, stones, mountains and rivers are brought to the child's consciousness through narratives in which creatures "speak" to one another with an emphasis on human moral qualities (Belenson, 1994, p. 33). The Nature Study lessons thereby convey to the child a feeling for a close connection to the world around them -

Nature lessons and religion occur frequently in the First Class. In these lessons the child is led to feel a oneness with the world and God its creator. He becomes aware of all the kingdoms from that of the realm of fairy, to the mineral, plant and the animal kingdoms. Much takes place each day just in caring for the playground surroundings, in the planting, watering and nurturing of plants and the insects which come to live there.

(Currie, 1986 p. 14)

In the hands of the skilled Class teacher Nature Study is able to build on the already established picture of a harmonious relationship with the outer world. A child's verse demonstrates the success of this approach -

Brother Sun, Sister Moon,
Gentle night, Shining noon
All God's creatures now shall be
Like a Family to me.

(Anon, Waldorf School Magazine, 2003, p. 20)

In Class 1 the children discover that the great Mother Earth is capable of sustaining human existence. Through rhythmic verse, composed by the teacher, her giving qualities can be placed before the receptive young mind, for example -

Hail to thee, earth mother of men
Grow and be great in God's embrace
Filled with fruit for the good of men.

(Wilkinson, 1993, p. 32)

The study of plants in the playground, growing and tending plants, Nature walks and Nature tables set up in the classroom all combine to reinforce the idea that the fruits of the Earth are a precious gift, inextricably linked to humankind.

The feeling for an organic, living, ever-changing world of Nature is further encouraged through the introduction of drawing and shading the shapes to be found in the natural world. The forms that live in the spirals of the vines and shells, the water vortex of the tornado, the sphere of the falling drop and the ellipses of the planets' paths all speak to the child in a silent yet instructive voice. This occult script of the cosmos is to be recreated in the art of Form Drawing, in modern terms, a new and developmentally appropriate way of dealing with pure line which is seen to underpin the whole curriculum from the introduction of writing, through artwork, geometry and movement (Cunningham, 2004, pp. 159, 160). In Class I, the children draw straight and curved lines, triangles, rectangles and star forms and then semicircles, circles, spirals and ellipses. In Class II and III, the emphasis changes and symmetry exercises emphasise the notion of "above and below" and the metamorphosis of one shape into another in an imaginative way.

With the introduction of painting on wet paper using three primary colours, the children enter a realm the teacher believes will build a bridge between the spiritual and the physical. Colours that have played their role in the evolution of the astral and etheric bodies now represent a living moral experience as they bring inner qualities to the young artist such as the vibrancy of red, the gentleness of blue and the liveliness of yellow. By observing the behaviour and "moods" of the three colours on the damp paper the child also experiences the process of alchemical transformation as the colours move and merge with each other. In Class II, three secondary colours are added. All such exercises therefore play a role in assisting the etheric and the astral soul body to enter properly into the bodily organisation (Ogletree, 1996, p. 12). Strawe (1998) points out the social dimension of the use of shapes and colours. He suggests that when the children learn to look on shapes as the outcome of colours it enhances their ability to ward off any tendency to think along sharply defined lines that can be detrimental to social harmony (p. 36).

Wherever possible, the themes of love and moral goodness are incorporated into the daily regime of story-telling. Stories drawn from a body of literature which is considered to reinforce archetypal qualities and values support the child in further developing feelings of sympathy for the good act and antipathy towards the evil deed. Drawing and painting the story as a form of repetition engages the child's will-force, thereby exercising and guiding this, as yet, instinctive power of soul.

6.3.4 Class II - A Pre - Christian Consciousness

Table 6.2

The Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan) Main Lessons - Class II

English Literature	The Sciences	Drawing	Painting
<u>Fables & Legends</u> Aesop, Celtic Tales 'The King of Ireland's Son', Stories of the Saints, Local Folklore. <u>Poetry</u> : developing from Class I.	Continue Class I Themes.	Development of above Mirror Forms and Free Forms in relation to each other.	Continue as in Class I with the addition of 3 secondary colours.

(Stockmeyer, 1982)

In terms of their spiritual recapitulation of the historical Epochs the children of the second class have reached the pre-Christian age. In esoteric terms it is the time in evolutionary history when Christ assumes His cosmic aspect as the Great Sun Spirit at the beginning of His descent into earthly existence. The Celtic Mysteries of Hibernia, having absorbed much of this wisdom from the Druids, play an important role in supporting the child's own stage of psychic transformation.

As intended, the Celtic tales and Teutonic myths, free from any taint of conceptual, intellectual thinking, reflect the state of the child's ascending consciousness. As Reilly (1971) suggests, myths, possessing no ideas for the reader to penetrate, represent the closest thing to pure, pre-logical thought - an "experience" rather than a thought (p. 215). The English

Literature Main Lessons (Table 6. 2) are therefore an experience of the spirit realm through "the powerfully magic rhythms" (Meyer, 1981, p. 126) of the old Hibernian mysteries which were once told by the Initiates. Considered to contain the spiritual metaphors which nourish the child's soul, they are also regarded as the wisdom of the spirit world that prepares for the arrival of the etheric force.

Ancient poems, fairy tales, sagas and the legends of a time long past, provide allegorical descriptions of an ancient spiritual cosmos. The fairy spirits, the sylphs and elves, all dangerous, appear in the classic tales of the pagan Celtic world. *The King of Ireland's Son* is the preferred story to display the special training in courage required to enter the Elemental realm which is a place of danger and fearsome creatures. The spirit is anticipated to interpret such tales as an insightful depiction of the physical world that it is preparing to enter into. Numerous other stories work to introduce an understanding of the Kingdoms of Nature, the elements of earth, water, air and fire that are home to the gnomes, undines, sylphs and salamanders (Brose, 1987, np).

On the threshold of giving spiritual birth to the potentially difficult etheric, it is of vital importance that the child is morally prepared for the event, albeit subconsciously. Main Lessons that deal with the lives of the Saints take up the task of bringing to the child the theme of destiny and incarnation and at the same time encourage the notion that base instincts can be overcome with courage and determination. The story of *St Michael and the Dragon* is a case in point. Fairman (1996) calls such stories "spiritual nourishment" that work imperceptibly to strengthen the Higher-self -

Just as the content of the fairy tales told in Grade One gave the children "spiritual nourishment", so too do the saint stories; for here we meet the manifestation of human spiritual striving. By aspiring for a higher level of spiritual development, the individual gains mastery over his/her lower (animal) instincts. The story of 'Saint Michael and the Dragon' is related in the 2nd

Century AD story of Saint George and the Dragon, is perhaps one of the oldest of such archetypical tales adapted from the ancient legend of the 'Mina taur', to suit Christian tastes. For here we encounter the 'saint' battling with the dark Ahrimanic forces which thereafter afflict humanities existence.

(Fairman, 1996 p. 7)

The work in Nature Study lessons continues the moralistic theme. The animals that spoke to the children in the previous years maintain their human attributes. As Mullins (1983) points out, moral development is catered for by a selection of *Aesop's Fables* which demonstrate that human qualities can be found in the animal kingdom. Such stories while appealing to the imagination at the same time engender a respect for animal life. The stories, however, also serve the purpose of portraying the lower Ego, the weaker side of human nature. For example, the hare with its superficial quickness or the tortoise and its dull plodding illustrate the one-sided image that an animal is perceived only to be capable of achieving. On the other hand, the child is taught that while these same qualities may be applied to humankind, individuals are able to overcome such limitations (p. 106). The lives of the Saints are used to portray the superiority of man over animal in a balanced yet conscious and loving way. The story of St Francis of Assisi is often favoured. The lives of the Saints are also taught to illustrate that by turning towards God they gained the strength to serve their fellow human beings (Rawson & Richter, 2000, p. 109).

Nature parables and Nature studies continue to focus on making the children even more aware of the great "wisdom of Nature" (Veenhof, 1949, p. 54). Descriptive stories relating to the four seasons seek to create an enhanced understanding of the Earth Mother as she breathes in the spiritual forces of the cosmos which in turn create the rhythm of the seasons. Stories imaginatively illustrate the idea of impending change in the child's spiritual development.

The following extract from Wilkinson's *Story of the Sunflower*, conveys a symbolic understanding of the transformation that the Sun brings about in the realm of Nature -

In autumn the archetypal plant enters the ground and is preserved by the gnomes. Leaves are falling and the trees, with the aid of the sylphs, store the golden sunshine collected during summer. Spring follows winter and green leaves fold back to revere the Sun, moving their hands to follow its path. This flower, the sunflower, loves the Sun and is like the Sun.

(Wilkinson, 1975c, p. 52)

6.3.5 Class III - The Preparation

Table 6.3

The Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan) Main Lessons - Class III

English Literature	The Sciences	Drawing	Painting
<u>The Old Testament Stories</u> <u>Poetry</u> : connected with Main Lesson work.	<u>Farming</u> : The cycle of the year etc, crops & animals, soil, farm life. <u>House Building</u> : In all its aspects especially its social implications.	<u>Dynamic Drawing</u> metamorphosis of Forms. Drawing and copying of objects.	Dry Painting begun, simple veiling using 3 colours. Working more from own fantasy (later 6 colours).

(Stockmeyer, 1982)

In Class III, the children have left behind the fairy tale world of the previous years and the birth of the etheric brings them to a new level of awareness and interest in the outer world. As the unity with their spiritual home diminishes, the body and soul now require special preparation to move towards the age of full "earth readiness". In esoteric Christianity it is the time for the Advent of Christ and the child mirrors His "coming to Earth" in their own incarnation. McAllen (1975) effectively states the relationship between the two -

When a child learns of the preparation for the incarnating Christ, just at this time when the first awakening of his own self awareness begins to stir, then he finds the path of his own soul's

development shining out to him from mankind's history itself and this brings to him nourishment for the growth of the same.

(McAllen, 1975, p. 65)

Class III Main Lessons in Grammar and Literature incorporate the legends of the Old Testament and the Creation stories of Genesis. All portray Paradise lost, reflecting the child's own diminishing connection to their spiritual home. These Main Lessons also present the children with a picture of God the Father as the ultimate source of authority, yet always loving and just in His actions.

As the separation from the spiritual realm reaches a conclusion the body and soul must now be developed into a fitting "temple" for the incarnating spirit. Hutchins (1975a), in her account of *A House Building Period with Nine Year Olds*, demonstrates the importance of thoughtful preparation in building any structure made out of the materials provided by Nature -

The citizens of a town in mediaeval Germany were so proud of their city that they decided to make it famous by erecting a great town hall. Everyone came to help build, bringing rocks and stones, beams and boards to the structure of the mighty work. But no-one had thought out beforehand how it was to be built. At last however the walls were finished and crowned with a high pointed roof. But now it was discovered that the hall was as dark as night, for no-one had remembered windows. The citizens said let us go out and collect the sunlight in our sacks and fill the hall with light. They hurried into the country with their sacks and opened them out to the stunning light of the sun; then, returning they shook them empty in the hall. But, of course, it remained as dark as ever. So you see dear children, that is what happens when people are so foolish as to build without thinking first of all they want to do.

(Hutchins, 1975a, p. 59)

The analogy the child will draw from this relates to their own bodies. If the darkness of the etheric will is to be illuminated by the Light of Christ, the "house" must be transformed through moral, loving feelings. The ultimate success of a "house" well built will not be arrived at until the body and soul are transformed into the temple of the Holy Grail of spiritual insight.

The House Building and Farming Main Lessons also relay the idea of the interconnection between the spiritual and the earthly as stories emphasise the beneficence of Mother Nature as the provider of the needs for human existence. At a time of growing self-awareness, stories portray the importance of using Nature's gifts wisely. Through the work of house building and farming children are introduced to the basic principles of the mutual interdependence of human economic activities (Rawson & Richter, 2000, p. 202). The joy of assisting others and the responsibility to share the fruits of one's labour are important principles to be learned. The opportunity to reinforce the Rosicrucian image of the relationship between the Sun and the Earth in providing the essentials for human existence also presents itself as is illustrated in the following brief verse -

Earth that gives us food,
Sun that makes is ripe and good,
Dear Earth, dear Sun by whom we live,
Our loving thanks to you we give.

(Fairman, 1997, p. 27)

The Hebrew World Main Lessons combined with the stories of the Old Testament also play their part in ensuring the physical "dwelling" is suffused with the heartfelt feelings for the laws of goodness. Stories of individuals such as Abraham, Moses and Joseph inwardly awaken the child to the polarities of right and wrong and at the same time illustrate the consequences of disobeying the "Father" figure. Carefully taught and with an emphasis on

imagery, moral principles work deep into the maturing feeling life of the soul. The following example provided by Harwood (1975) indicates how the relationship between the child and the Christ Spirit can be successfully taught through a study of the Old and New Testaments -

The children were asked by one teacher to find this name for themselves. For it is good for children at this age to feel a little of the wonderful nature of the word 'I'. The children, however, had been told the stories from the Old and the New Testament in the previous term, and the pictures of Imagination work deeply in the human soul. The answer which came from the children was not the 'I' which was expected but 'the Christ'. Truly there is much that a teacher may learn from his children.

(Harwood, 1975, p. 69)

In this instance, the work of the inner curriculum has achieved its desired objective.

Drawing and Painting Main Lessons provide important creative support for themes taught in other lessons. The Painting lessons for example, take up the "creationist" theme. The seven days of creation can become a painting exercise in colour, starting from the creation of the light, the polarity of light and dark, the creation of above and below, and finally a human figure emerging as a whole form out of colour (Rawson & Richter, 2000, p. 79).

The Class III children are now at a point in their spiritual development where attendance at Festival celebrations can be meaningful. The opening words of a Mid-Winter Festival verse sow the seeds of a fundamental anthroposophical truth - "Mother Earth, Mother Earth, come to give us second birth" - the inner meaning of which is explained by Gaskin (2005) -

In the midwinter spiral we see this drama of light and darkness played out before our souls. At midwinter the sun is far from us, the nights are long and the days are short. If we make the journey inward, at the heart of darkness we will find the light of the ego, the divine spark of the eternal in the human being. As each of us finds this light within, the light grows out from the

centre, gradually growing out into the world, overcoming the darkness. The winter spiral is an affirmation of the divine flame at the heart of each human being which, joined with the light of others, can grow into a greater light of hope for humanity even in times of outer darkness.....

(Gaskin, 2005, np)

In "walking the spiral", the children throughout the Waldorf school will symbolically affirm the receiving of the Divine Light as they reverently place a candle to create a circle of brilliance which promises warmth and regenerative power. The Spring Festival, which is symbolic of the commencement of the spiritual spring of the Earth, enhances the children's appreciation of Mother Earth's bountiful harvests. The fruits of the Earth are gathered by the children to be given to others and imaginative stories portray the gifts to be gained through generosity of the spirit.

6.3.6 Class IV - The Beginning of the Heart of Childhood

Table 6.4

The Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan) Main Lessons - Class IV

English Literature	The Sciences	Drawing	Painting
The Norse Sagas. Poetry. Alliterations, poems connection to Main Lesson work.	Man & Animal An elementary study of man. Descriptive studies of certain animals and their relationship to man.	Freehand Drawing of geometrical forms.	Continue Class III work.

(Stockmeyer, 1982)

In Class IV the growing feeling of selfhood stands in stark contrast to the preceding three years. The second *Rubicon* is imminent and the therapeutic stories of the creation myths now work to demonstrate that those who stepped out upon the Earth during the twilight of the gods did so with the great courage of the heroic aspects of their will. The mythology that portrays men standing up against the challenges from the giants therefore has a great deal to do with the strengthening of the soul forces. Just as the Norsemen grappled with the extremes of

darkness and death as the Divine powers retreated, the young child experiences his or her own spiritual regression. It is a time of spiritual loneliness but such is outweighed by the immanent gift of individuality. As the Ego plunges deeply into the physical, etheric and astral "sheaths", subconsciously, the Father world withdraws.

The Norse sagas of the *Edda*, the thirteenth century Old Norse legends, present the children with the details of the retreat of the gods and the fading memory of the interconnection between the world, man and the forces of Nature. Through a study of the *Edda*, an understanding is to be gained of the diminishing of humankind's supersensible consciousness which is seen to parallel their own loss of "religiosity" or spiritual insight. Baldur, a god of Light and messenger of the Sun god, shares some of the traits of the Solar Christ as a dying, rising god who will return after the Apocalypse to usher in a new era of peace. Edmunds (1992a) claims that every child on the way to selfhood will experience the death of Baldur (pp. 57, 58). Belenson (1994) draws parallels -

The children are cutting the umbilical cord that connects them to the spiritual world. The Golden prenatal world can no longer work on in them the way it did in the first three years of life, in the first seven year period and as it did still in the first two or three school years.... Consequence and courage meet the child in the picture of the Edda. At the end, the dawn of a new world is indicated without any sentimentality.

(Belenson, 1994, p. 45)

Heroes of the *Volsunga Saga* such as Loki, Odin, Asgard, Heindal and Surtur are role models of brave and responsible actions against the forces of Nature. The confrontation between humankind and the Elemental powers is a key theme to be reinforced by many Nordic sagas (Mazzone, nda, p. 22), and they portray the idea that courage is needed to succeed in the battle of physical existence. But just as the intrepid Norsemen conquered the vicissitudes of

oceans and tides, the "inner" curriculum expresses the notion that the strong-willed individual can overcome the Dragon forces that inhabit the road to spiritual re-awakening.

The impulse to individuality that child is now perceived to be psychically experiencing has its price. With the loss of guidance from the spiritual realm the physical animal side of human nature will no longer be controlled. There now arises the need to lift oneself out of instinctive life through conscious effort, and as Brose (1998) points out, this is the very essence and meaning of "conscience" (p. 27). As the spiritual incarnation of the etheric force gains strength in preparation for the astral birth, out of the creative imagination of the Class teacher come the stories that illustrate the presence of the Dragon forces which will attempt to close the mind to the imaginations capable of leading to the freedom of spirit consciousness. The stories included in the Literature Main Lessons can be used to inform the child of their existence. *The Call of Michael; A Children's Story for Our Time* (Dacey, 2002) is an example of the individual teacher's own creative narrative to alert the incarnating spirit to the potential dangers standing in the shadows of the maturing psyche. Ahriman is described as "the shadow of the dark one" who will be overcome by *Michael* who calls out to his followers, "Stand with me. Take courage. Give love and the power of the enemy will flee" (pp. 7, 8).

In Stockmeyer's curriculum, an elementary study of man comes before a descriptive study of animals and their relationship to man (Table 6.4). At this stage the child is only required to understand a simple, threefold outline of the nature of the human form. A study of the body gives the teacher the opportunity to relay the message that man is a balanced and perfect microcosm of the macrocosm. The head is a sun-like completion of a sphere, never to be involved in games that might in any way harm its symbolic shape. The trunk is the moon like fragment of the sphere, where the limbs are to be considered as radiating beams. In the shape

of the limbs the children come to "recognise the picture of the will-impulses through which they will have an impact on the world" (Belenson, 1994, pp. 48, 49).

The task of the Science Main Lesson, *Man and Animal*, works to create a more conscious awareness of the relationship between humankind and the animal kingdom. The Goethean notion that the human form is "spread over the world" and is embodied in a variety of creatures is a basic idea to be drawn out of the teaching material. Imaginative examples abound. The cuttlefish is a "head" animal, the mouse and pig are "trunks" and the horse and ass are "sure-footed". Through detailed study the children learn firstly, how the animal world can only find its true meaning in relation to man and secondly, that the animal kingdom finds its synthesis and higher unity in the being of man and "without man, Nature would be meaningless" (Edmunds, 1975, p. 88). Some experienced teachers expand the study of man and his relationship to the animals to introduce other anthroposophical themes. Edmunds, for example, uses the topic to reaffirm his contention that History and Nature Study combined can give rise to symbolic pictures of esoteric theology -

Having described such animals to the children we can perhaps in the same form but better still a little later, make quite another approach. So far we have dealt principally with the *forms* of man and the animals. We can now take the three contrasted types of animals, the eagle, the lion and bull, in relation to the *functions* of head, heart and limbs in man. Zarathustra, in his first vision of the Sun-Spirit, Ahura Mazda, perceived Him in human form, seated on the throne, supported by a lion, an eagle, and a bull with three hierarchies of Angelic Beings ranged around Him. In the Sphinx we have a human face, the wings of an eagle, the chest of a lion and the lower trunk of a bull. We are reminded too of the Vision of the Apocalypse, with the eagle, the lion, the bull and the human form. There is a great truth contained in this symbolism.

(Edmunds, 1975, p. 89)

Incorporating the idea of the human being as a microcosm of the macrocosm into the curriculum becomes increasingly more significant at this stage, and by the close of Class IV the child will be able to appreciate that he or she partakes of the phenomenal world, as opposed to being separate from it. The dominant role of humankind will also be reinforced and with it the idea that authority or control over the natural realm brings responsibility - a key notion that will later underpin a healthy feeling of judgement. In anthroposophical terms, the deep connection between man and the animal world is expected to engender a sense of responsibility. It may be understood, although not stated, that animals failed to follow the process of incarnation and are the result of a specific adaption to their environment. In the animal, from the anthroposophical perspective, spiritual activity is used up in organic development in contrast to human beings in whom "evolution becomes conscious as thought" (Welburn, 2004, p. 147). They are therefore the beings who have not yet reached the goal of becoming human but yearn for the "glorious liberty of the children of God" (Meyer, 1981, p. 35).

Painting and Drawing Main Lessons emphasise the importance of equilibrium and harmony. Painting using simple veiling techniques and drawing exercises with geometrical symmetries allow the child to begin working out of their own imaginations which will be developed more fully in the following year. A certain degree of individuality is therefore brought to the child's work but without an intellectual component. Form Drawing complements the Celtic theme through the drawing of mystical Celtic knot work and patterns. Beauty and accuracy are thus combined in an activity that engages the head, the heart and the hand.

6.3.7 Class V - The Awakening of Individuality

Table 6.5

The Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan) Main Lessons - Class V

English Literature	History	The Sciences	Drawing	Painting
<u>Greek Mythology</u> <u>Poetry</u> connected to Main Lesson Work.	Ancient India to Alexander Biographies of great men.	<u>Man & Animal</u> : Lesser known beasts <u>Botany</u> : The study of the plant in relation to the Earth. The concept of the Archetypal plant.	Continue Class IV work.	Continue Class IV work.

(Stockmeyer, 1982)

By Class V, the spiritual world of the young child is considered to be growing pale and a new morning verse begins with the words "I look into the world", indicating that a feeling of an independence from the surrounding world is gathering pace. The metaphysical *Rubicon* has been crossed and a more individualised, strong-willed consciousness takes hold. Ancient History now plays a significant role in the first steps towards conceptual thinking. Teachers such as Wilkinson (1975a) regard this as the year when a child will be given a picture of his or her own evolutionary history as the transition from mythology to history begins. As such, it is expected to have a "stabilising effect in the soul" due to the subconscious recognition that "others have trodden the same path" (p. 116).

The emphasis in Main Lessons will initially be on pre-Christian times when humanity felt itself to be united with the cosmic Universe. This is followed by detailed study of the ages when an experience of the gods could only be heard in the inner consciousness of those who chose to listen. Classwork focuses on an investigation of the environment, culture and religion of India, Persia, Egypt and Ancient Greece thereby providing a detailed exposition of the way of life in ancient times. The relationship of the people to the spiritual world is particularly significant. While the teacher should have a clear conception of underlying themes, Glas points out that such knowledge cannot be used "directly" (Glas, nd, p. 11) which

harks back to Steiner's directive that anthroposophical beliefs are not to be overtly relayed in the teaching process.

Handled carefully, imaginative stories related in the Ancient History Main Lessons are able to depict the evolution of the Sun Spirit in a variety of forms. Wilkinson illustrates how the study of Ancient Persia can give the child a simple picture of Zarathustra, an incarnation of the Christ Spirit -

The children now learn of the great Zarathustra of Zoroaster. He was the leader who taught of the continual struggle between the forces of light, Ahura Mazdao and the forces of darkness, Ahriman. He taught his people the necessity for cultivating the earth and showing love towards it.....As time came for Zarathustra to die, a rainbow bridge stretched from the mountain to heaven, and on it was a radiant figure to welcome him. As he crossed he was vouchsafed a view of things to come, and saw that his work had been successful.

(Wilkinson, 1975a, p. 227)

Myths and legends relating to Ancient Egypt quicken the child's imagination. Some teachers consider that the most fundamental of all tales to be told are the Temple Legends of *Isis* and *Osiris* (Glas, nd, p. 11). Stories from Ancient Greece depict the Sun as the divine Bearer of Eros. For the child in Class V the Sun comes to represent the power of love which brings all people together in a sense of brotherhood. A Class V child's verse says as much -

The sun so bright, gives us light
To shine on the world.
All its power and love it gives to us,
Enough for all the people in the world,
Brought together.

(Anon Waldorf School Magazine, 1985, np)

With the study of Ancient Greek mythology, the children also begin to feel a growing connection to an age of increasing individuality. In the classical world, man is a glorious creation, noble of purpose and striving for excellence to equal the Divine, and the values of the time are related in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The accounts of the Greek heroes are told in order to emphasise the importance of a strong sense of right and wrong which is expected to help lay the groundwork for the time when the child's own sense of morality will take hold.

Historically, as tribal consciousness diminishes, individuals are shown to experience a growing sense of personal conscience which overtakes the authority of the gods. A study of the biographies of personalities such as Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle are considered to work deep into the soul of the child to instil admiration for the ideas inspired by independent thinking. Jacobsen (2005) sees such stories as bringing the children closer to the importance of their own individual biographies (p. 1). In so doing, the whisperings of Ahriman to disregard the laws of the past are stilled as the etheric force strengthens towards the goals of a personal karmic destiny.

At the same time as the Book of History envelops the child in a spiritual past, Science Main Lessons continue to reinforce the notion of a close relationship between man and animal, while introducing the new concept that plants and man similarly share a number of characteristics. Curriculum documents are informative. The Botany Main Lesson encourages the children to develop an increasing sense of wonder for the plant kingdom and through a study of the characteristics of the plant begin to feel a connection with human soul qualities (Waldorf Primary School Curriculum Doc, 1995, p. 27). A well-taught Botany Main Lesson can conclude with the recognition that the archetypal plant is but an "inverted man" - the root, leaf, and flower of the plant resemble the head, digestion and central nervous system of the human being (Belenson, 1994, p. 52). It can also be suggested that the flowering of the plant is a symbolic replication of the unfolding of human soul-life.

Throughout the Botany Main Lesson, songs, poems and stories play an important role in engaging the imagination of the children. The poem *Mother Earth*, is illustrative of a verse that contains a number of important ideas that build on those first presented in Class III -

Mother Earth! Mother Earth
Take our seed and give it birth
Father Sun! gleam and glow,
Until the roots begin to grow
Sister rain, sister rain
Shed thy tears to swell the grain
Brother wind, breathe and blow
Then the blades green will grow
Earth and Sun, Wind and Rain
Turn to gold the living grain (Anon)

Plants with contrasting characteristics and requirements are chosen for study and an imaginative personification of the plant world continues to emphasise the notion of a "living" Nature. Teachers may use the example of the mushrooms and fungi - the "children of the moon". These are the "babies" that grow down towards the Earth in contrast to the flowering plants that grow towards the heavens requiring the warmth of the Sun in order to complete their life-cycle. A Nature table may continue to be maintained with samples from the garden.

Through the use of the increasingly sophisticated method of Goethean *phenomenology* which utilises the inner eye of cognition, the child will be given a participatory experience of the scent and colour of the flower and the rhythm of expansion and contraction of the organic laws of the life of the plant. The notion of metamorphosis may also be explained through an imaginative imagery, perhaps in the following terms. In autumn the ideal plant enters the ground to be prepared by the gnomes. In spring, the living warmth gathers up the light of the Sun and carries it on the pollen into the blossoms of plants and hence into the seeds (Brose,

1987, np). A further Man and Animal Main Lesson can be used to illustrate the important concept that the human being is of a threefold nature with the ability to think (head) to feel (heart) and to act (head), and is therefore distinguished from the animal kingdom by the ability to think, speak and create. In the hierarchy of Nature, man is shown to stand at the summit further engendering a sense of responsibility to the animal kingdom.

Painting and Drawing Main Lessons represent an opportunity to reinforce the ideas presented in botanical studies. Pictures illustrating earth, water, light and fire are to be drawn using Nature's colours. The children are directed by the teacher to use deep purple, blues and yellows to their best advantage. Contrasting colours such as Rose Red and Lily White can be introduced but with no conscious recognition of their symbolism. Colours of plant "moods" which metamorphose from green to yellow are to be juxtaposed with "moods" of the ocean and the sky. The circle of the sun, the straight line of the horizon and the principal forms of the plant world such as the pentagon shape of the cut apple are recreated in the freehand geometrical Drawing Main Lesson. The children discover that, what they can create through the inner world of thought is also manifested in the outer world of Nature (Harwood, 1982, p. 126).

6.3.8 Class VI - "Earth Readiness"

Table 6.6

The Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan) Main Lessons - Class VI

English Literature	History	The Sciences	Drawing	Painting
Tales of Chivalry Robin Hood etc Poetry, Ballads.	The Founding of Rome to Joan of Arc 1413.	Botany continued Physics Heat, Light & Sound. Electricity & Magnetism. Minerals in connection with Geology. Horticulture soil cultivation, compost, fruit & vegetables.	Elements of Perspective, Simple projections, Forms & Figures.	Colour Perspective.

(Stockmeyer, 1982)

In Class VI, the transition to secular history takes place. History and English Literature Main Lessons together cover a broad sweep of time from the eighth century BC to the fifteenth century AD. In the previous year's study, Initiates were shown to have retained a knowledge of the spiritual realm. The teacher's understanding of this period in the evolution of human consciousness underlies the way in which the history of the Greco-Roman Epoch is to be presented to the class. The anthroposophist sees this as the age in which the Spirit of the Sun Christ assumes human form, and through the sacrifice of Golgotha, a god becomes man and Divine Law incarnates into human consciousness. The implications for the child are significant. It is a time of the subtle flowering of their own Higher-self. In anthroposophical terms, the child is set on a *Michael* path which the teaching material must illuminate through engendering heartfelt feelings for all that is morally good and beautiful in the world. The notion of the coming of the Light of Christic consciousness is an important theme to be discerned in the so-called inner curriculum for the year.

The rise and fall of the Roman Empire, the early development of the Church, and alongside it a deeper, more esoteric stream of Christianity can be alluded to in story, poetry and song. The children will hear of Roman strength and domination but will also learn of the love and willingness of the early Christians to suffer for the risen Christ. The early part of the fifteenth century is a time of opposition between Church and State. Taught through inspirational biographical stories, the children learn of the struggles of those who fought for their beliefs with passion and bravery. By way of contrast, the children are made aware of the scientific and cultural impulses brought to Europe from the world of Islam. The origin and expansion of Islam, the life of Mohammed and the Five Pillars of Faith make for relevant discussion.

The Crusades provide the backdrop for the children to expand their understanding of the importance of taking responsibility for their actions and the rewards of good judgement. They will learn that before a squire can be knighted he must show that he has obeyed a strict

code of chivalry. He promises to be religious, honourable, courteous and brave and to speak only the truth. He swears to protect the weak and give aid to those in distress. The biography of the legendary Robin Hood, the high-minded Saxon knight who rallied against the Normans, considered as exemplifying virtuous and brave behaviour, is cited by Stockmeyer (1982) as a suitable biographical study.

The strengthening of conceptual reasoning that will later find a new level of maturity with the birth of the astral tentatively allows the child to think causally. With this growing capacity to link cause and effect, together with the fact that the child has now fully entered into their stream of earthly destiny, the study of the empirical sciences begins. Physics, the maker and keeper of the laws of the cosmos, focuses first on the element of light, then on sound. Hutchins (1975b) refers to Physics Main Lessons as "a wonderful unveiling of the hidden secrets" (p. 137).

At this stage, simple experiments focus on the behaviour of light in regard to the physical world, the relationship between light and shadow and the refraction of light. Each one is considered a fitting area for study which coincides with the child's own spiritual enlightenment that will take place with the birth of the astral body. An optics experiment carried out in the classroom can demonstrate how Physics can be used as a method to highlight the coming of the Light of Christic consciousness in a symbolic manner. Sommer (2010) suggests an experiment which calls for the full power of the child's imagination. In a completely darkened room coloured cloth is hung along the walls. Normal everyday consciousness is transcended. A dim light bulb slowly brightens and the contours emerging out of the powerful yet disorientating darkness triggers a feeling of 'liberation'. As the room fully lightens, colours may give the impression of "rising" from the cloth. The experiment enables the child to realise that the lamp (or the Sun), glows or shines by itself and gives light while the objects around it accompany it in its growing brightness (p. 26). The light of the

Sun enters the darkened room transforming the child's sense of perception. In esoteric terms, the room represents the state of the Earth as depicted in the Old Testament. With the words "Let there be light", the Sun enters the Earth bringing to humankind the potential for the freedom of a new perceptive consciousness.

Another simple Physics experiment is often carried out that further illustrates the words of the New Testament - "in the beginning was the word". In the so called Chladni plate experiment a brass copper plate covered with fine sand is clamped to a table so that one edge is free to vibrate (refer p. 67). When a violin bow is drawn across one edge of the plate, each tone produced creates a different pattern in the sand. A tone played a second time will create the same pattern as before. The experiment awakens in the child the wonder at the hidden power of tone to create form. As Barnes and Lyons (1986) points out, there is no need to preach respect and wonder of Nature here - it is inherent in the experience (p. 6).

In Class VI the children are given their first preview of another side to Nature. A study of electricity is used to demonstrate what lies beneath the Earth. Electricity is considered to be a sub-earthly reflection of cosmic forces associated with the decay of Nature and its properties are those of the fallen Lucifer. Significantly for the anthroposophist, 1879, the year Edison invents a bulb that offers a long-lasting filament of light, is the year that *Michael* took office. This is a world of hidden forces and the child is required to picture those forces for which there are no sense organs. Similarly, magnetism speaks of the "shadow side" of Nature and brings to the incarnating spirit a further insight into the darkness of the Dragon forces that will become more persistent as initiation into earthly existence progresses.

To demonstrate the relationship between humankind and the Earth is the task of further Biology Main Lesson. At this point, comparisons are to be drawn between the activities of human qualities and those of the Earth itself. The breathing out of the Earth's life sphere as

manifested in the flowering of the plants in the summer is mirrored in the experience of the soul at night. The folding of the plant world in the winter corresponds to what the human being does in the day. Autumn and spring, represent the human capacity to fall asleep and awaken. This approach to Nature "demands a relationship that is sympathetic, reverent and full of wonder" and must be present in all lessons in "the form of an engaged moral attitude" (Belenson, 1994, pp. 111, 112).

Painting lessons are seen as playing an important supportive role in the impending incarnation of the astral force. The coming into being of colour on the Old Moon is to be thought of as a "sea of astral tension". A sea of astral colour works as a formative force on the development of the human organism at this point in time. In the use of colour in painting, the child meets "memories" of earlier conditions of evolution, first in the process of vision and secondly as an emotional response to the colour itself, given that the astral body is woven out of the flowing element of colour (Wilson, 1975, pp. 60, 61). Colour perspective or colour "shadows" in painting continues into Class VII.

Colour perspective lessons are based on Goethe's Theory of Colours. Opposing Newton and embracing the Aristotelean notion of cool and warm colours, Goethe proposed that colour was to be experienced as either of "lightening" of black or a "darkening" of white. He referred to such a process as the "Deeds and Suffering of Light". The children observe light and shadow in *Chiaroscuro* or black and white shaded drawing, and search for and feel how a shadow falls before shading in charcoal (Rawson & Richter, 2000, p. 43). Painting exercises also work to support the experiments that have been carried out in Physics lessons to symbolically demonstrate how darkness can be illuminated and transformed.

The works of great artists who through their paintings are regarded as having captured the idea that the Sun spiritually entered the sphere of the Earth on the wings of translucent

colours are now systematically studied. Perspective Drawing using simple projections, forms and figures lead to an increased awareness of the beauty and order of the Earth.

The end of year school celebration of the Christmas Festival signifies the completion of the spiritual cosmic journey and is one of special significance for the Class VI children. The Paradise and Shepherds plays produced by Steiner almost one hundred years ago are performed by the teachers as parting gifts to their young charges. The Plays bear the message that Christ has come into the world bringing the ideals of love and peace to all mankind.

6.3.9 Class VII - The Transformation

Table 6.7

The Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan) Main Lessons- Class VII

English Literature	History	The Sciences	Drawing	Painting
<u>Arthurian Legends</u> Historical novels. Tales supporting History & Geography.	The Age of Discovery to the Age of Inventions.	<u>Fundamental Mechanics</u> <u>Chemistry, Anatomy</u> <u>Horticulture</u> continued.	Shadows & interpreting bodies. Perspective technique.	Continue Class VI work.

(Stockmeyer, 1982)

In incarnational terms, this is the time when the etheric force is beginning to develop the potential to awaken more fully to the Ego-spirit. The underground stream of spirituality that has been submerged up to this point now begins to emerge and independent and reasoned thinking is on the horizon. As the child moves more forcefully into the physical world, a kaleidoscope of conflicting feelings is seen to be experienced. The maelstrom of change experienced from the time of the legendary King Arthur to the Age of Discovery (Table 6.7) is seen to be mirrored in this child's own immanent spiritual transformation.

The Literature Main Lesson is an introduction to the new Christian age in the form of the Arthurian Legends. Following on from the Celtic Mysteries of Ireland and the Nordic myths

of earlier years, Arthur, the servant of *Michael* together with his twelve Knights of the Great White Lodge of the Round Table bring strengthening examples of courtly love, commitment and endurance. These are age-old stories of princes and warriors in a world where elements of Christianity coalesce with the supernatural powers of initiates such as Merlin. Grail Knights are seen to embody the Templar values of self-development and personal enlightenment, signposts to future tasks of the young child. Brose (1985) provides the insight of the knowing anthroposophist when she speaks of the legends of Arthur which work to support the process of transformation taking place in the soul of each school child -

In the creations of the human mind, there is nothing *so drenched with spiritual light*, so founded on inwardness as the legends of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table and of the Holy Grail. This cycle of legends gives a picture of transubstantiation of a far wider scope than the transubstantiation (at the time universally credited) in the ceremony of the Mass. The Round Table is round because it is a model of the heavens and its company of knights are as earthly society become a heavenly one. Sir Gareth, the kitchen knight, transforms the anger which the taunts of his lady Lynette raise in him, into valour against her enemies. He begins as a scullion who feeds coals into the oven and his nickname Fairhands is derisory of his blackened hands. When he is granted an adventure he overcomes first a black knight, then a green, then a red, then a blue and finally his own armour takes on all the colours in turn until at last it shines like pure crystal. This is a tale of alchemy. The black carbon passed through the sphere of the colours and becomes the transparent diamond, as the knight enriches and spiritualises his soul. As Jung has shown us, the true alchemist was concerned with a moral transformation as an essential condition and corollary of the transformation of substance.

(Brose, 1985, np)

Biographical studies chosen from the time of the Renaissance to the Reformation take up the task of nurturing the soul forces as the astral birth approaches and the new level of maturity in independent thinking this will bring. Teachers will choose individuals who exemplify courage and commitment to their beliefs even in the face of adversity. The biography of Joan

of Arc is taught as an example of an individual who followed the call of a Christ inspired consciousness and is burnt at the stake for her unwavering commitment to its command. Galileo presents a new heliocentric picture of the cosmos against the force of a dogmatic Christian doctrine. Giordano Bruno (refer p. 51) is sentenced to death as he is not prepared to recant his beliefs. Martin Luther is a central figure among important reformers following his own conscience in contradiction to the authority of the Pope. Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan, display a different form of personal commitment to follow their destiny despite hostility and setbacks (Belenson, 1994, p. 87).

In Art lessons the lives of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci serve to highlight spiritually inspired thinking in the beauty of their work. The child's growing feeling of selfhood is seen to be enriched and guided by the achievements of such personalities.

The first Chemistry Main Lesson in Class VII keeps alive the notion of man as part of the macrocosmic realm, again from the perspective of the existence of the interconnections which exist in all Nature only at a more detailed and sophisticated level. Julius (nd) defines its esoteric purpose in the following terms -

The educator is faced with the task of so presenting natural phenomenon to young people, and stimulating insight into the connections in Nature that an echo of the spiritual is called up, and strong impulses for development are given.

(Julius, nd, p. 2)

Although not to be specifically stated, elementary Chemistry is based on the *Tria Principia* of the ancient alchemists. Linkages can be observed in the three principles, Sal, Mercurous and Sulphur and simple experiments are carried out to demonstrate interconnections between them. The study of the process of combustion is the first topic to be studied in the Main Lesson. It also illustrates transformation, as well as a relationship to the Sun and the cosmos.

Burnt plant material becomes dull, formless ash. Fire itself is related to that which blazes out of the Sun. Setting fire to powdered sulphur displays the power belonging to the Sun. In lighting phosphorous, phenomena appear which remind the child of the picture of a starlit sky, or of the moonlight at night. It is a known fact that, spiritually, phosphorous is a representative and bearer of Star forces upon the Earth (pp. 13-33).

The Anatomy Main Lesson reinforces the concepts learnt in Chemistry by relating them to the human organism. As the plant burned, so too will the body decay and return to the same form as the plant. Just as water circulates, the blood moves through the body exchanging warmth, gases and dissolved substances. Experiments displaying the quality of salt and lime can be paralleled in an analysis of the human skeleton. The extent to which the subject matter can show the principles of interconnections between man and Nature's elements will rely on the skill and understanding of the individual teacher.

6.3.10 Class VIII - A Year of Consolidation

Table 6.8

The Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan) Main Lessons - Class VIII

English Literature	History	The Sciences	Drawing	Painting
<u>Shakespeare</u> & Hakluyt Epic & Dramatic Poetry.	The Industrial Revolution to today.	Hydraulics, aerodynamics meteorology. Body & Industrial Chemistry Bone & Muscle. The eye. Seedlings, planning a layout. Third year crop rotation.	Simple black & white drawings reproducing coloured pictures in black & white.	Colours on objects. The interplay of light & mood in landscape.

(Stockmeyer, 1982)

Class VIII is recognised by all Waldorf School teachers as a defining year in terms of the new potential to "think through the spirit". The astral force readies for birth and the Ego begins to strengthen, both will play their vital roles in preparing the child's consciousness to become the vessel of the Solar Christ. In anthroposophical terms, the child is now on the threshold of

"gaining access to the moral laws that govern the spiritual world with the same certainty and inevitability as the laws of physics manifest in the world of matter" (Shepherd, 1954, p. 163). Such a notion is in accordance with Steiner's predictions. As the astral is born into the transformed etheric heart (refer p. 168), the Ego also comes to life. At this point the child acquires the capacity to draw messages from the spiritual world through intuitive thinking and from the physical world through the senses (Jacobsen, 2001, p. 3). Actions are no longer governed by natural instinct, but instead engage a mode of cognition that allows the spiritual form of thinking to shine through the natural conductor of the will. The inner pictures cultivated over the years through imagination and fantasy will come to assist the child to consciously transform the *Ideas* that emanate out of the spiritual gift of thinking consciousness into ideals. Significantly, with the emergence of this new voice of consciousness, the authority of the Class teacher finally draws to a close.

The child in Class VIII is now fully amenable to the "spirit of truth". It is the year, as Steiner instructed, that the child's thinking "must catch fire for high ideals". Now fully able to comprehend cause and effect, some emphasis is to be placed on the ideals behind the French Revolution and the social changes associated with the time of the Industrial Revolution (Table 6. 8). Important concepts such as *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* and individual freedom are discussed, possibly alongside Steiner's idea of the *Threefold Commonwealth*. As throughout the History curriculum, Class VIII lesson content is to be taught symptomatically and thematically. Once again biographies can be employed to provide the background to historical events (Rawson & Richter, 2000, pp. 158, 159). It is the task of the teacher to sift through important contemporary events which are of global or national interest and bring them to the Class from a fair and balanced perspective.

The mysteries of love, deeds of sacrifice and forgiveness and the all-important notion of transformation of the individual will be heard in stories and in epic and dramatic poetry. The

theme of courtly love inspiring the tragic tales of Lancelot and Guinevere and Tristan and Isolde in the Arthurian romances will now be revisited through a detailed study of Shakespeare's tragedies. Each work studied has an inner meaning and is considered by the teacher to play a key role in bringing the spirit a source of imaginative, inspiring pictures. Shakespeare's plays are widely regarded as being a mirror of the human soul at a time of its growing spiritual consciousness and the theme of love as a moral force is consistent with the child's needs at this stage of spiritual maturity. The allegorical meaning of Shakespeare's plays are also believed to carry moral messages that will provide inner direction. For example, *Othello* defines the outcome of karmic fault that can only find compensation in a future life. In *The Tempest*, Prospero has the nobility of heart to forgive those who intend harm (Querido 1995, p. 8), and in *Romeo and Juliet*, the star crossed lovers demonstrate how one might worship and adore the Divine self of the other. Stockmeyer's (1982) reference to Hackluyt relates to his writings which are considered to have been a fertile source of material for Shakespeare's own works.

As far as practicable, themes in one Main Lesson are carried over to the next. A study of the Industrial Revolution in History which depicts the world transformed by human hand provides the guidelines for the teaching content of the Chemistry Main Lesson. The teaching material focuses on the properties of starch, sugar, protein and fat that change as production processes are applied. As the connections between air, water and light are examined, the Chemistry teacher demonstrates how each product has "a kind of biography". At the same time the teacher will take the opportunity to illustrate the notion of "as above so below" (refer p. 54). One example is the production of sugar. Sugar comes from above as warmth, air and light and from below as the watery element woven together in "a wonderful unity" (Julius, nd, p. 47). In the metamorphosis that takes place, the practised teacher, sees the Goethean principle of the Rights and Suffering of Light as a theme which is carried over from the Painting Main Lessons of this and previous years.

6.3.11 "Know Thyself"

The child in the Class VIII Waldorf School classroom has heard the esoteric messages subsumed within the so-called "inner" curriculum and is anticipated to have drawn closer to an understanding of the world of Nature and the story of human History from the anthroposophical perspective. The curriculum material in the selected Main Lessons has been carefully matched which the incarnation of the spirit and has delivered a number of key esoteric principles considered to be essential to the moral, spiritual transformation of the pupil (Table 6.9). Many of the key elements of the esoteric *weltanschauung* have been relayed through creative narratives, poems and songs. Notions such as the interconnectedness of all things, the Earth as a living organism and man as a synthesis of all Nature, together with the detailed study of the past, have been presented by the teacher in a way that is considered to have been unobtrusively absorbed by the soul awakening the spirit to new life. In "hearing" these messages the child at the stage of puberty, is considered to be able to link outer sense-perceptible reality with new spiritually inspired, conceptual form of thinking. From Class VIII onwards the Main Lesson curriculum will work to open up the intellect to the intuitions of a free and true conscience. The child is now considered to be on the threshold of becoming the loving, caring individual that Steiner considered might one day come to transform the world - the journey to the refined moral state of *ethical individualism* is well and truly under way.

In his detailed article analysing the role of memory and learning in these years, Rawson (1999) provides an insight into the "new voice" that occurs at this stage. The inner life of the soul-psyche now lives independently of the cultural surroundings, and the ability of the child to reflect on their own thoughts, feelings and intentions begins. Rawson cautions however, that the emancipation of the astral is not accompanied by the birth of competence in this realm. How to relate to this emerging state of consciousness is to be learned as part of the individualising and socialisation process in the following school years. How to form

judgements on the basis of sound and systematic observation of the facts is, therefore, not a skill born with abstract thinking itself. Nor does he consider that the emerging adolescent is immediately in a position to separate their intentions from the urges and drives of the "natural man" (p. 20). This is only anticipated to come with the consolidating years of the High School curriculum.

Table 6.9

Selected Examples of the Esoteric Content of the Inner Curriculum

Incarnational Stage	Moral / Spiritual Content of the Inner Curriculum
Infant Phase 5 – 7 years *sense of "oneness" with the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aliveness of Nature • Principles of goodness and evil • The idea of metamorphosis
Childhood Phase 7 – 14 years *sense of loss of the Divine *first sense of individual consciousness *spiritual self-discovery *search for personal morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unity of Man and the world of Nature • Man as the summit of all Nature • The life-giving Sun • The theme of Light (Christ's vestiture) and Darkness (Ahriman) • Traversing the past - Divine guidance of Ancient Cultures • The work of the gods • The decline of spiritual consciousness • Christ's incarnation • Biographies of spiritual individuals eg Buddha, Zarathustra • Reincarnation • Ideals of <i>Liberty, Equality and Fraternity</i> • Rise of individual morality eg Joan of Arc
Adolescence /Youth 14 – 21 years *initiation of karmic duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for the Truth

(After Burnett, 1995, pp. 37, 39)

6.4 The High School Curriculum

In the High School years, truth and balance are key teaching themes. These themes are understood to anchor the spirit of the child firmly into the physical existence. The High School curriculum (Appendix IV) is seen to reinforce, in a more intensive and detailed manner, all the previously presented subject material. The Main Lesson curriculum which extends from Class IX through to Class XII with the possibility of a Class XIII extension, is

essentially a repetition of the messages which have been brought to the child since Kindergarten. For example, the Literature Main Lessons revisit the rise of human spiritual consciousness while a study of nuclear energy (History of Scientific Thought) which represents the strength of the hidden forces of Nature, echoes the theme of Nature Study stories of the younger classes;

Be it in the study of the folklore of the Niebelunglied or the works of Shakespeare, or the lyrical poetry of Byron, Tennyson and Coleridge, each lesson is suffused with the ideas relating to moral qualities which nourish and challenge the newly emerging faculty of independent judgement and insight. Human feelings such as pride, jealousy, courage, anger and hatred are analysed through story and prose - in the senior years causal connections are now fully explored. In developing their own moral compass, the adolescent is still to be assisted by stories of the archetypal heroes who have journeyed through adversity to his or her own state of perfection.

The task of esoteric Rosicrucian Christianity to promote the notion that the individual is on a path of intellectual transformation towards the goal of a Christ-inspired consciousness and must become responsible for their own actions is best exemplified in the spiritual biography of the final Class XI Main Lesson *Parsifal*. The belief that Christ will be found through the transformative power of love and moral goodness is regarded as submerged in the medieval text. Taught as the biography of *Parsifal's* spiritual and earthly striving, the Main Lesson maps out the path to the awakening of the Higher-self. As the Grail Knight's conscious life gains mastery over the darkness of the weak-willed lower-self, his physical body is gradually purified and ennobled through the working of moral forces. As this young man becomes "slowly wise", the Truth sets him free. In essence, this is the allegorical story of the path to personal salvation which is open to every child who has experienced a Waldorf education.

For those students who continue to study the Steiner curriculum through to Class XII, Goethe's *Faust* allows the teacher to reintroduce the emerging adult to the double face of evil, Lucifer and Ahriman who are first alluded to in the fairy tales of the Kindergarten years. With this Main Lesson, Steiner's curriculum comes full circle.

Part 3

6.5 Observations: Modern Waldorf Education

6.5.1 Contrasting Perspectives

It is to be anticipated that there is a significant difference between Waldorf education and mainstream schooling. One of the most comprehensive surveys comparing Waldorf education to mainstream institutions has been carried out by Woods, Ashley and Woods (2005) who studied twenty-one of the twenty-three Waldorf schools in Great Britain. Their research published by the Department of Education and Skills confirmed that there was a general level of uniformity in the character of the schools. The methodological praxis and curriculum that confer uniformity on Waldorf schooling in Great Britain can also be used to effectively demonstrate the most significant differences between Waldorf schools and mainstream schools generally. Their findings are therefore worth summarising here -

- The role of the teacher understood as a sacred task in helping each child's soul and spirit grow, underpins the commitment to each pupil and is the basis of sustaining the class teacher-pupil relationship over eight years.
- Curriculum and pedagogy are designed to be in harmony with the different phases of development children are believed to go through.
- Curriculum activities are undertaken for their value in developing the child's soul qualities, not for their potential future utility.

- The structure of the daily two hour main lesson is followed by four or five subject lessons for all age groups.
- Pedagogy is governed by a strong sense of rhythm, rituals, symbols and ceremony which are pervasive throughout the schools.
- Distinctive pedagogical practices include child studies and class studies and mediative picturing of the child.
- There is an emphasis on whole class teaching and the artistry, autonomy and authority of the individual teacher.
- There is an emphasis on the authority of adults as a necessary precursor to the attainment of freedom by the pupil on reaching maturity.
- There is an emphasis on crafts, and practical activities.
- Inclusion of unique subjects such as eurythmy.
- Teaching subjects such as science through observation, imagination and the engagement of artistic activities.

(Woods, P., Ashley, M., & Woods, G., 2005, pp. 5, 6).

The researchers concluded that the chief commonality between the Waldorf Primary school and State maintained schools was the shared interest in an holistic education and certain pedagogical themes the most significant of which being a focus on child developmentalism (p. 5). Their summary however omits a vital distinction between the two approaches. As discussed, in the Waldorf school the emphasis in the younger years of development is not on intellectual learning. Conceptual thinking or focus on ideas calling for judgemental thinking

is regarded as unsuitable until the appropriate time in the spirit's incarnation. Given the universality of the pedagogy and curriculum it is possible to assume these findings can be extrapolated to schools in other countries. In the experience of the present researcher their observations can certainly be extended to schools in Australasia and South Africa.

Work carried out by anthroposophical researchers also tends to reinforce the fact that there appears to be very little common ground between Steiner's essentially *romantic* educational ideology and current mainstream systems of learning. Ogletree (1996), in his empirical study which contrasts the creative capacities of Waldorf educated students from Class I to VIII with those of State school pupils in England, Scotland and Germany, provides a useful summary of the reasons for the differences between the two systems. Not unexpectedly, his arguments are very reminiscent of Steiner's own which have been detailed and explicated in Chapter 5.

Ogletree claims that mainstream schools, because their systems are based on a Reality that is material as opposed to spiritual, offer only an academic form of schooling determined by the needs of society, culture and tradition. In contrast, Waldorf schools consider emphasis on the mastery of intellectual subject matter in the early years of schooling to be detrimental to the child's psycho-physical and social needs. Each of the soul facilities, psychomotor (willing), emotional (feeling) and cognitive (thinking), must be given due consideration at the appropriate time. In order to achieve this, he emphasises that Waldorf schools offer a non-intellectual, holistic form of schooling in which every subject is pervaded by a creative, artistic activity as a developmental skill. Further, the curriculum is designed to engender an emotional participation as opposed to conceptual thinking. The study found that publically-funded schools were focused on the acquisition of facts, attitudes, values and skills with the intention of moulding the nature of the child. They were also found to be dominated by an external examination system (pp. 2-4).

Ogletree reiterates a fundamental aspect of Steiner's pedagogical theory when he states that the educational process must gradually unfold a pre-existent set of possibilities. He confirms that the task of the teacher in the Waldorf schools is to "help draw or "wring" out what is latent in the child" in order to fulfil its destiny rather than to pour in knowledge or force learning (p. 3). He considers that in comparison, the realist school teacher is a purveyor of knowledge and facts about culture and the world and the mastery of subject-matter as an end in itself. Ogletree emphasises that it does not and cannot take into account the spiritual stage of the child's development. In the Waldorf classroom the moulding process of the State school curriculum is therefore to be rejected whenever possible in favour of a curriculum that allows the child to undertake his or her own self-development. In such circumstances, examinations so important in a State school system, are clearly an anathema and are to be avoided as far as regulatory requirements will allow. Ogletree's findings relating to the creative capacities of the two groups studied are predictable. Waldorf school educated children are generally more creative than their State school peers (pp. 4-6).

While Ogletree is clearly an anthroposophist with a deep appreciation of what lies behind Waldorf pedagogy, the lack of an understanding of Steiner's ideas outside of the system has led to a raft of issues that may challenge the status of Waldorf schooling as a highly successful non-denominational form of education. These difficulties have been referred to in Chapter 1. While there is no obvious evidence for the claim that Anthroposophy as a body of knowledge as understood by its practitioners is taught in the classroom, it is well acknowledged that anthroposophical concepts are relayed via the "inner" or "hidden" curriculum which also teaches a silent moral ideology - the ethics of which are as yet to be challenged. Because of this lack of transparency it is not easy for researchers outside the Waldorf school system to understand the use of particular methodologies. This in turn has given rise to a number of criticisms from academics who are not familiar with Anthroposophy, and who are engaged in educational studies programmes which include

Waldorf pedagogy. One such example is the research carried out by Jackson and Astley (1995) who are associated with graduate teaching students in a British university. They focus their queries on the philosophy and methodology employed in the early years of schooling and particularly Kindergarten. They question the philosophy behind the use of the fairy story that wards off any request for rational explanation in favour of simple good always triumphing over evil. In the face of empirical research that shows children seek the best possible explanations of their experiences, the Waldorf classroom appears to them to be a "cocoon" protecting the child from harm, dividing it from reality, allowing it to mature from inside rather than as an adjustment to social realities (p. 27).

As this current study has demonstrated, Steiner was adamant that the spiritual incarnation of the child would be best served by keeping the child in a "dreamy" state for as long as possible, withholding explanations of causality and the ability to make judgements until well after other theorists considered it appropriate - also a finding of Jackson and Astley's research. They query several other aspects of Waldorf methodological practices aligned with what appears to be delayed development such as the unassailable authority of the Class teacher and the grouping of children according to their temperaments in order for the teacher to have a clear command of the class. They ask several pertinent questions including, "does the Waldorf educator want to encourage dependence rather than autonomy, reliance on teacher authority rather than on evidence and the desire to separate action from reason and judgement from grounds of judgement?" (pp. 27, 28).

These educators offer the opinion that children who experience a "sentimentalised childhood" in a particular "classroom climate" are likely to uphold anti-materialist practices which will be out of step with modern life. Their research involving Waldorf schooling has alerted them to the fact that a "powerful hidden curriculum" is at work. They consider that such a methodology non-cognitively instils tendencies and dispositions inherent in the Waldorf way

of life. Their final observation would for the anthroposophical teacher, be unequivocally Ahrimanic. They suggest that it is high time that the principles and shortcomings of the carefully preserved Waldorf pedagogy are to be re-examined by a new Steiner "with affectionate but unblinking severity" (p. 29).

While Macnight (2009) is no new Steiner, in her study referred to previously (refer p. 241), she has made some insightful observations that confirm the importance of employing the imagination as a critical pedagogical tool in the modern Waldorf school classroom - a methodology which has been identified as one of the greatest strengths of Waldorf education. She astutely identifies the use of the imagination as preparing the way for abstract thinking by doing the Platonic job of projecting images on the "walls" of the child's mind in order to bridge the gap between the world "out there" and knowledge "in here" (p. 151). Based on her time spent with Class IV pupils during the teaching of the Norse Sagas Main Lesson, she is Montessorian in her observations. She claims that the aim of a story is not to encourage the children to think critically about the content, but rather for them to listen and feel an emotional response. The myth is told as history and there is no querying of its truth or falsity. Only when the children begin to believe that the unreal is real will the teacher become concerned. The story is not however, intended to loosen the bond with reality - it would then become escapism or fantasy. She found that computers and television were strongly discouraged and these along with books, were not used by the teacher as teaching aids. She concludes that the "mental picturing" which employs the imagination, is the foundation of all learning in the classroom and it is an approach that does not encourage, at this stage, conceptualising things of the "real world" (pp. 153-159).

Other foundational methods in Waldorf teaching have, in recent times, been called into question by researchers unfamiliar with Steiner's esoteric philosophy. The most obvious of these is the overarching authority of the Class teacher in the Primary years. In work

undertaken in the United Kingdom into Waldorf Schools previously cited, Woods, Ashley and Woods (2005) conclude this is a paradox. They point out that if the goal of freedom and free-thinking is to be acquired, the Class Teacher must represent "an absolute authority" in the years between seven and fourteen (p. 95). Following Steiner's strict guidelines on the matter, Waldorf teachers understand the critical role that authoritative teaching will play in creating a worthwhile human being with a deep sense of self-knowledge and a corresponding ability to think freely and creatively (Pewtherer, 1997, p. 12). As Rawson and Richter (2000) make clear it is only through imitation and authority that the forces of the will can be directed towards behaviour patterns and attitudes that will free the child from merely instinctive realms (p. 9). Such an approach Woods, Ashley and Woods define as an *apprenticeship* model (p. 96). The anthroposophical teacher prefers however, to call it an *archetypal developmental* model that allows the teacher to know best as to how to "draw out" the latent talents at a given moment. Notably, there is an absence of any reference to a *romantic* form of educational ideology.

Arguably, the greatest challenge facing Waldorf education is not the criticism of "outsiders" but the decline in the Waldorf teacher's understanding of the Anthroposophical *weltanschauung*. For example, Tautz (1982,) as a representative of the *Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen*, in his opening address to the teachers at an American Waldorf School Conference some thirty years ago questioned even then whether the modern School Movement could continue in accordance with the anthroposophical impulse, calling it a matter of "life or death" in the face of the growing difficulties at the end of this century (p. 2). His description of the "occult background" relating to the opening of the first Waldorf School which is considered intrinsic to the original purpose of the pedagogy was presented in terms that would be rarely expressed in educational circles today -

I describe now the occult background for Steiner's actions. He saw himself in the year 1917 as the instrument of the right arm of the time spirit Michael, on the stage of history. Now you understand the Pedagogical Movement is a part of the Michaelic Movement which wants to wage a battle for freedom by offering each child the possibility of coming into his own, of discovering themselves inwardly, of becoming an 'I' human being acting out of individual impulses.

(Tautz, 1982, p. 8)

However, given the apparent commitment of teachers to the ideals of social responsibility, and the notion of *ethical individualism* as evidenced in the earlier part of the chapter (refer pp. 239, 248), anthroposophists such as Tautz, must to some extent feel reassured that Waldorf pedagogy is attempting to remain true to Steiner's original purpose and intentions.

Schwartz (nd) highlights another troubling dilemma currently facing Waldorf education. He attributes the decline in a "passionate and comprehensive celebration of the Christian Festivals" to a decreasing interest in and commitment to the Christian aspect of Anthroposophy. The question arises, how will Steiner's intention to place the child on the path to sacramentalism come about without a full appreciation of this vital aspect of Waldorf pedagogy? Schwartz does claim, as previously stated, that Waldorf educators would generally agree it is impossible to work with the Waldorf method without at least an understanding of the anthroposophical worldview (p. 1).

6.6 Conclusions

There are two distinct parts to these conclusions. The first is a summary of the nature and intent of Waldorf education in the early years of schooling, aspects of which have been criticised by non-anthroposophical researchers and will not be repeated here. The second part is directly related to the first and queries what can be seen as two fundamental problems inherent in the Waldorf system namely teaching quality and transparency.

From the survey of the literature it would appear that in the opinion of the teachers in the modern school, the methodological practices and curriculum principles originally laid down by Steiner are as significant today as they were almost one hundred years ago. The survey of the key principles and selected aspects of the Main Lesson curriculum indicates that the integrity of the original Waldorf School system is largely maintained via a carefully nuanced approach in both the methodology and the teaching content. Based on the cross-section of the Main Lessons that were selected for study it would appear that the work carried out in the Waldorf classroom retains the essential concepts of the anthroposophical worldview believed to enable the child is to gain a foothold on the so called "spiritual ladder" to the world of universal consciousness that Steiner first spoke of in *The Philosophy of Freedom*. The ideas contained in the classwork relay the "inner" imperatives to the spirit and continue to stimulate the creative imagination enabling Nature to "speak" in a way unique to Waldorf pedagogy. The anthroposophical notion that outer reality holds a symbolic or inner meaning that the power of the "imaginative eye" is able to comprehend is considered as relevant today as it was in the classrooms of the *Waldorfschule*. This is reinforced by the high value placed on nurturing perceptual thinking, and a moral understanding of the world through imaginative and creative story-telling. The historical narratives that accompany the child through each stage of a perceived spiritual transformation are believed to inwardly inform the spirit of its past and present and suggest the challenges of a future destiny.

Waldorf educators stay firm in the belief that a pedagogy and curriculum which generates a reverent feeling for the goodness inherent in humankind, and a view of the world from the perspective of the anthroposophical *weltanschauung*, can strengthen the potentially errant etheric will-force to overcome the ever-present shadows cast by Ahriman and Lucifer. The focus of modern Waldorf schooling in the Primary years remains the intention to prevent the intellect from falling prey to their mechanical, intellectual thinking. In other words, Waldorf pedagogy in these years in particular, continues to strive to create the conditions through

which the faculties of the soul and spirit can be balanced and prepared in a way that will allow the moral Light of the Angelic Christ to one day, shine into everyday thoughts and actions.

Given the importance of the teacher's appreciation as to what underlies the work they carry out every day in the classroom the teacher's understanding of anthroposophical principles is a significant consideration. As has been noted, one teacher is the focal point of the child's educational journey for eight years in order to maintain the integrity of the perceived spiritual incarnation. Due to a number of imponderables the "quality" of this journey may not be assured. For example, what if the teacher leaves in mid journey or loses faith in Steiner's worldview? Or has an inaccurate picture of that worldview and is therefore unable to present its principles with any degree of certainty? This is particularly significant given Steiner's insistence that stories, myths and legends must be told with conviction. Possibly however, the most difficult issue facing Waldorf education is the availability of teachers committed to teaching the Steinerian worldview and the prescribed pedagogy. The number of schools continues to increase and arguably it would be difficult to provide fully qualified Waldorf teachers at every level of Waldorf education. While in a senior school this is not considered to be an issue, it is of vital importance in the junior years to ensure the teachers are teaching "on message". As observed, it therefore falls to the College of Teachers in each school to ensure that the integrity of Waldorf education is maintained.

The question of transparency is another issue that must give pause for serious reflection.

While the schools clearly do not teach Anthroposophy explicitly the methodological praxis and curriculum are nonetheless acknowledged to rest on its principles and objectives.

Defining what these principles and objectives are, is rarely articulated or is done in such a way that the meaning may become obscured leading to either ignorance or confusion or both on the part of parents and outsiders "looking in". This claim is substantiated by the comments

made in Chapter 1 related to the Rationale for the Research (refer pp. 6-9). It would therefore appear to be something of a paradox that a system that prides itself on inculcating moral values appears to have a tendency to be less than forthcoming as to the ideas and ideals that underpin such values.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

What a piece of work man is

How noble in reason

How infinite in faculty, in form and moving

How express and admirable in action

How like and angel

In apprehension how like a God!

The beauty of the world!

The paragon of animals!

(Hamlet Act II, Scene II)

7.1 Introduction

The research has been an investigative appraisal of the influence of Rudolf Steiner's *weltanschauung* embodied in Anthroposophy or Anthroposophical Spiritual Science on the purpose and principles of Waldorf schooling. It has attempted to explicate why and how this charismatic philosopher of the spirit created a model for a form of education that became the template for a worldwide movement. To what extent Steiner's theories are reflected in the work carried out in the Waldorf school classroom, both historically and currently has been a focus of this thesis. Before considering the influence of the esoteric *weltanschauung* on Steiner's pedagogical endeavours it is useful, given that the research has been dealing with an "enchanted wood" of information, to broadly summarise the web of interconnecting linkages between Steiner's philosophy, theology, social and educational theories as follows -

The Philosophy and Esoteric Theology Underpinning Waldorf Education

- Steiner's philosophy and theology were distinguished from the Idealist tradition and traditional Christian teachings by an esoteric worldview which saw humanity as having lost connection with the Reality of a spiritual realm made manifest in the forms of outer Nature. Following his religious conversion he dedicated his life to teaching the revelations of Rosicrucian Christianity.
- Steiner proposed that a radical transformation of thinking was required in order to reintegrate human consciousness with Nature. Anthroposophy and its teachings, offered the individual the potential to awaken to a psychic perception of the Higher-self (the "spark" of the Divine). A recovered supersensible perception was to advance the preordained process of the spiritual evolution of the cosmos.
- When the supersensible and eternal I or Ego was fully realised in human consciousness (salvation), the universal *Ideas* of the spiritual world (Goodness, Beauty, Truth) would guide all moral thought and action (*ethical individualism*).

The Relationship between Education and the Social Organism

- Steiner believed that the despondency and isolation of a modernising Germany was the consequence of materialism (Ahriman) and intellectualism (Lucifer). Without the balancing influence of Christic consciousness society was on an inevitable path to self-destruction.
- The *Threefold Commonwealth* would provide a structure that would facilitate a free Cultural life in which anthroposophists would place a determining role. The three spheres of the social organism would utilise the talents and capacities of the individual awakened to their karmic duty.
- Steiner saw education as the key to beginning the reconnection of individual consciousness with the spiritual world. It would offer every child the potential for spiritual salvation. Salvation of the psyche would allow the men of Middle Europe to ascend the ladder of spiritual knowledge that would one day unite humanity in a uniform Earth Economy based on the principles of brotherhood.

Education in the Age of the Consciousness Soul

- Education in the Waldorf School focused on awakening the eternal Ego into consciousness through the creative power of the imagination. As such it would offer the child a psychic reconnection with the ensouled spark of the Divine thereby facilitating the redemption or salvation of consciousness.
- The unfolding of the soul and spirit life of the child would be achieved through (i) the contemplation of the moral virtues of the spiritual world (Goodness, Beauty, Truth) operating in man and Nature; (ii) the study of the recapitulatory evolution of the spirit through the narratives of History and (iii) the study of Nature based on anthroposophical principles.

- Methodology would be appropriate to the stages of the transformation of the soul and the awakening of the spirit into thinking consciousness. The Waldorf students would be set on the path to *ethical individualism* and were anticipated to one day become the pioneers of a future humanity.

In claiming that Waldorf education must be "listened to with other ears than those with which one hears about other kinds of education or educational reform" (refer p. 1), Steiner highlighted the fact that to comprehend the true meaning and intent of Waldorf pedagogy it was necessary to hear the voice of his esoteric *weltanschauung*. The investigation has aimed to provide an objective voice. It has attempted to go some way in discovering what theory lies behind Steiner's educational ideology by examining the essential elements of his worldview and relating them to Waldorf education. Prior to this research there had been no formal recognition that Waldorf education is set within the context of the Western esoteric tradition. It is readily accepted that the schooling is based on Anthroposophy and the simple definition of Anthro (man) Sophia (wisdom) has largely sufficed for the explanation as to what theory underpins both curriculum and pedagogical practices. While anthroposophical educators generally argue that Waldorf schooling is based on a spiritual philosophy, a pronouncement that has tended to allow it to be removed from any taint of religious or cultic associations, the research confirmed that Steiner's philosophy is inextricably linked to a view of Nature and History predicated on ancient esoteric theories.

Steiner's stated objective relating to Waldorf schooling was to bring about the "salvation" of the pupil to find an inner Christic consciousness. This "salvation" or "redemption" of thinking was directly related to Steiner's belief that it was his task to further the evolution of consciousness in a way that he believed consistent with the demands of the age of the *Consciousness Soul*. To "heal" mankind's psychic connection to the spiritual in the Universe, to curtail the Ahrimanic influence and prepare for the Sixth Cultural Epoch and the coming of the etheric Christ were identified by Steiner as the purpose of his Christian Rosicrucian teachings. Such teachings effectively moved the pedagogy Steiner crafted in response to his

beliefs beyond the confining ambit of philosophy and into the realm of the theology of the esoteric *weltanschauung*. Steiner exhorted his followers to spread Anthroposophy "all over the world". He also believed that a worldwide school movement was of the greatest importance for "the social future of humanity" (refer p. 140). The exponential growth of Waldorf schools after World War II, particularly in Europe, might be seen as a practical response to his directives.

7.2 The Findings

7.2.1 Schooling as an Esoteric Christian Mission

The formative elements of Rudolf Steiner's worldview were demonstrated to conform to Faivre's model of esotericism. Faivre's model required the presence of four defining characteristics with two possible additions. The doctrines embedded in the "organism" of Anthroposophy were shown to incorporate an extensive corpus of knowledge which included all six of Faivre's esoteric principles. The *correspondence* between man and suffering Nature, typical of an esoteric discourse, is a central theme of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science. An additional finding was that the six elements were related to Steiner's personal interpretation of the esoteric traditions of Rosicrucianism and a mystical form of Christianity with its roots in the Mystery schools of ancient Greece and Egypt. As Marie Steiner made clear, Steiner had drawn from the existing store of knowledge of the ancient esoteric scholars who had discovered the pantheistic Universe and had reinterpreted their wisdom teachings in order "to preserve its life and lead it forward" (refer p. 32). Essentially, Steiner as the founder of a School of Initiation, believed himself to be the clairvoyant conduit for his esoteric Masters, the Christ Spirit and his messenger Christian Rose Cross (Gloeckler, 2001, p. 12). Modern commentators who are not believers in the Stone of Love are more inclined to consider Steiner's teachings as a complex interweaving of a number of esoteric disciplines including a

Gnostic Christianity, Hermeticism and Eastern theologies. The influence of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle are also identifiable in Steiner's theories.

To recapitulate, Steiner's worldview as expressed in the doctrines underpinning Anthroposophy was that of the esoteric scholar and Hamlet's soliloquy rather well captures the essence of his teachings. Man was to be seen as a microcosm of the macrocosmic cosmos. Recipient of the fragment of the universal Mind he was angelic in conception, infinite in his thinking and potentially moral in his reason. In Steiner's Christianity, Christ as the spiritual incarnation of the Cosmic *Logos* came, not to save mankind, but to imbue consciousness with this "spark of the Divine". Through a willed cognisance of the "pure" Cosmic Intelligence or Impulse of the Christ, the thinker could progress in the image of the spiritual and divine archetype, his Higher-self, and in so doing become free from the chains imposed by the imperatives of the "natural man". Guided by the Imaginative Wisdom streams of the Divine Sophia, man through his own efforts would come to reach a higher mode of cognition allowing entry into the universal archetypal *Ideas* of the Cosmic Mind. Prepared to think "through the spirit" via the meditative disciplines of Anthroposophy he would ultimately be able to effect the salvation of his own consciousness or conscience towards the state of Christ's perfected Self.

Steiner's educational philosophy is underpinned by the epistemological Monism as laid out in his seminal work *The Philosophy of Freedom*. It argued for a reintegration of the Self with the oneness of the spiritual in the Universe but is not initially a theological discourse. It is only with his religious conversion around the turn of the century that Steiner's subjective Idealism was transmogrified into a Monism of theology. Thenceforth the focus of his teachings was to allow the seeker to "heal" the alienation of the Self and unite with the whole of universal humanity through a revitalised spiritual thinking consciousness. Through the instrumentality of anthroposophical study the adult pupil was to overcome the self-conscious

egotism that had separated man from Nature, and at the moment of "illumination" acquire a free-willed connection to the Light of Christic consciousness. Only the pupil set on this path to *ethical individualism* was seen by Steiner to be truly "morally productive" (refer p. 48).

As the research showed, by grounding his theory of education in the epistemology of the correspondence between human consciousness and the cosmic Universe as first set out in *The Philosophy of Freedom*, Steiner identified the preparation of the child to find this inner divinity to be the *raison d'etre* of all Waldorf schooling. To paraphrase Steiner's words, the Waldorf teacher was to teach out of an awareness that their task was to bring about the salvation in the case of every individual child in order to steer him or her towards experiencing a rebirth of the Christ in the course of a lifetime (refer p. 146). In recent literature written by those who understand Rosicrucian Christianity, this transformation has been referred to as preparing the child to achieve the pinnacle of psychic attainment, the "fruition of sacramentalism" with the esoteric Christ (Querido, 1995, p. xx). A notion which lies at the very heart of Steiner's teachings. Pedagogues representing the authority of the Pedagogical Section of the Goetheanum emphasise that the work carried out by the Waldorf educator continues to provide the setting in which "*ethical individualism* and individual morality may flourish" (Rawson & Richter, 2000, p. 23). Such comments would seem to be an indication that the Waldorf School Movement has lost none of its desire to facilitate the "redemption" of thinking so important to Steiner.

The research confirmed that while the Stuttgart *Waldorfschule* was established as a factory school it afforded Steiner not only the opportunity to provide what he believed was a redemptive form of pedagogy, but at the same time, fulfil his duty to his esoteric Masters to reclaim the spiritual heritage of the German people. In keeping with the directives of the Aryan-German Cultural Epoch it gave him the springboard from which he believed it possible to influence the destiny of the men of Middle Europe. As a clairvoyant social reformer, in a

previewed future, Steiner foresaw that a new Europe could only be built on a "real and proper method of education" to be acquired "anthroposophically" (refer p. 141). The graduates, as workers and leaders, would prepare for a communing brotherhood and sisterhood based on the threefold community that he anticipated would one day arise out of the ashes of a debilitated post-war German State. When considering Waldorf education in the modern context it appears doubtful that many contemporary teachers would understand this intention which was irrefutably Steiner's objective at the time the original school was established.

7.2.2 The Influence of an Esoteric Worldview on Education in the Waldorf School

Steiner's claim that the Waldorf School was not to be known as an "anthroposophical" school must be seen in light of the criticisms his theories had to endure to the point where he was forced to defend them in a public lecture in 1916. Steiner cautioned the teachers to maintain a prudent silence as to the purpose of the School undoubtedly confident that as students of Anthroposophy they were knowledgeable in the doctrines of his Christianised Rosicrucianism. The lectures reviewed did however confirm Steiner's contention that Anthroposophy as taught to adults was not to enter the Waldorf classroom. It was to be influential only in the teachers approach as to *how* the content of their lessons was to be presented. Significantly, Steiner exhorted the teachers to "have courage" to teach from the anthroposophical view of the world and of life. As Steiner emphasised in a number of lectures, methodological change was the most important aspect of Waldorf School pedagogy. The methodology of Anthroposophy as a meditative discipline that would potentially lead the adult pupil to the state of *ethical individualism* was modified by Steiner in a way suitable to the young pupil. In particular, emphasis would be placed on the power of the creative and genuine Imagination, the remnant of spiritual clairvoyance, to begin to forge the child's bond with spiritual "Reality".

The research indicated that the ideas which formed the basis of the pedagogy Steiner prepared for the *Waldorfschule* followed in many respects, the Idealist path of the *romantic* educators. He considered the child would tread a predetermined developmental path which required a holistic form of education to prepare for the incarnation of the spirit into physical existence. While government regulations required the Waldorf School to meet prevailing educational standards, something it continues to struggle with in present times, its real focus was on the moral and spiritual development of the young child. By incorporating the eastern esoteric notions of Karma and Reincarnation into his teachings Steiner was able to claim that the moral and metaphysical *Ideas* were "all there and ready taught" (refer p. 171). Education was therefore to provide a constructive guidance to the child's spiritual self-transformation as opposed to any form of indoctrination. The task of the teachers was also to "charm" from the child the talents and capacities sent down from the spiritual world. In his early lectures, Steiner advised them not to interfere "too vigorously". On the other hand, he was insistent that it would be essential for the teacher to become an authoritative role model presenting the knowledge that the spirit "thirsted for" if the child was to be awakened to his or her karmic destiny. It is to be noted that moral directives that would ultimately lead to the freedom of moral choice would be derived through imaginative exemplars as opposed to overt directions. A desire to foster "picture-consciousness" and reduce the emphasis on intellectualism were key characteristics of the early years of Waldorf pedagogy.

The research linked Steiner's esoteric worldview with his pronouncements as to the spiritual "anthropology" of the child. For Steiner, the child was a being of body, soul and spirit incarnating into earthly existence. The notion of the immanence of the Christ Spirit in consciousness is an important building block in Steiner's description of the spiritual nature of the child. The Ego spirit was seen to take possession of its carefully prepared "temple" and in so doing bring its "spark of divinity" within reach of thinking consciousness. Through the firmly guided spiritual transformation of the child's soul faculties of willing and feeling,

between the ages of seven and fourteen years, the conceptual thinking faculty bestowed by the spiritual astral body at puberty would replace a consciousness more inclined to the perceptual and pictorial. The child on the brink of adolescence would come to take his or her first steps towards free-willed participation in a form of thinking that Steiner had described in *The Philosophy of Freedom* as fusing with the primal ground of world existence. In other words the objective *Ideas*, the manifestations of the godly Angelic Hierarchy, would be captured by the power of the imaginative eye of the mind and by the franchise of the awakened will-force the child would come to determine the proper and moral path to take.

It was of some importance that the preparation of the child to become the earthly "temple" of the incarnating spirit would be well complete by the eighth year of teaching, the point at which German students could officially leave school. With the birth of the astral at puberty allied to the greater penetration of the Ego into consciousness at the age of twenty-one years the Waldorf educated pupil would achieve the potential to begin a lifetime of thinking "through the spirit". On this basis, Steiner believed that only a child "let go" in the freedom of an awakened spirit consciousness would be capable of truly moral judgements in adulthood. Other teaching systems where teachers would directly impose moral directives or commandments on a child to act in a particular way would in Steiner's estimation produce weak-willed individuals with the potential to insert evil into moral life (refer p. 179). The notion that social disorder might arise from an "aridly intellectual" education (refer p. 248) serves to highlight the historical context of the original Waldorf School.

7.2.3 The Path to Initiation in the Waldorf School

The research demonstrated that Steiner built the framework for the pedagogy of the Waldorf School on the texts and lectures he had completed while still the leader of the Theosophical Society. At this point he was undoubtedly following the directives of the Bombay Principles (refer p. 30) to spread a non-sectarian education. In the early 1900's Steiner first wrote and

lectured about a new form of pedagogy sympathetic to the spiritual incarnation of the young child. By this stage he had completed writing *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment* and *Theosophy*. He had also lectured on The Rosicrucian Study. A significant finding of the research was that each of these had an identifiable role to play in the curriculum indications and pedagogy he presented to the group of teaching initiates in 1919. *Theosophy* formed the basis of the child's "spiritual anthropology" on which Steiner based the stages of spiritual incarnation, while *Knowledge of Higher Worlds* and The Rosicrucian Study provided guidance in terms of the methodological practices and the curricula content for the new School.

The techniques Steiner acknowledged to have been tested and practised in esoteric training in order to prepare the psycho-spiritual organs of the adult pupil on the path to a spiritual "re-birth" emerged as the cornerstone of the methodological practice in the Waldorf School. In his esoteric preparation of the adult pupil's ascent into higher worlds, Steiner detailed aspects of the following stages namely, the *path of veneration, inner tranquillity, preparation, enlightenment* and the *control of thoughts and feelings* and *initiation*. In the literature and lectures relating to the work of the teachers in the Waldorf classroom several key elements of each one of these was translated by Steiner into a form suitable to the needs of the child's incarnating spirit. In summary, these were as follows -

- The authority of the teacher
- The imaginative contemplation of Nature, its processes, forms, colours and sounds.
- The emphasis on feelings of empathy and respect towards the animal and human worlds.
- The consistent reference to moral exemplars both in the natural environment and the human world.

In several of the lectures reviewed, Steiner confidently made the claim that Waldorf schooling was not focused on curriculum change. This was consistent with his belief that education would assist in tapping into the child's own psychic content. Alongside an "outer" curriculum, the "truths" for which "the soul thirsted" were to be taught via the occult or "inner" curriculum subsumed within the Main Lessons. As a philosopher dedicated to the propagation of esoteric Christianity, Steiner lamented the loss of a connection to the "voice" of a living and spiritual realm of Nature. It was his perception that the *Logos* of the Christ had fallen silent and Nature, made sacramental with the blood of Christ, had become a mere "object" devoid of spirit. The mechanical, intellectual thinking of a modern reductionist science, according to Steiner's worldview, had lost any comprehension of the interconnectedness between man and the Universe. In anthroposophical terms, this was a diminution of the inspiration to be derived from the wisdom streams of the Divine Sophia that had once guided human consciousness to an understanding of the truths of the Cosmic Intelligence of the Christ.

For the children of the Waldorf School, gaining a love and reverence for the world of Nature was an essential focus of their schooling. This critical outcome was to be achieved through using the methodologies appropriate to the child's spiritual nature. Most notably this took the form of a Goethean methodology that would allow the child to imaginatively "participate" in the content presented. At Steiner's insistence all content was to be taught in a manner that reflected the stage of the child's incarnation. The emphasis on the imagination in the early years was a case in point. Seen by Steiner as a remnant of ancient clairvoyance it was the most appropriate "tool" to awaken a memory of the goals set in the spiritual world before birth. The extensive employment of the imagination has in recent years, received both praise and criticism. The latter is usually from researchers unfamiliar with the anthroposophical reasons for its primacy as a pedagogical tool.

The Class teacher, who in the first years of schooling was to be a role model fit for the young child to imitate, was to be seen as a source of esoteric knowledge. Steiner's emphasis on the teacher being set on his or her own path of spiritual awakening is understandable from this perspective. The teacher was the authority figure to be respected and revered who, out of their creative imagination, would impart the knowledge consistent with an anthroposophical worldview. As outlined, fairy tales, myths and stories were never to be told without a "message" for the incarnating soul and spirit often revealing more than could be openly stated (refer p. 197). At no point in the child's learning would "deadened thought" be employed. The imaginative contemplation of Nature, her beauty, sounds and colours were taught from Class I onwards via an integrated Main Lesson curriculum. Nature Study, Art, Music, Mathematics and Form Drawing began the child's relationship with a living natural realm. Gratitude and love towards the outer world were essential aspects of the daily work. The emphasis on feelings of empathy and respect towards both the human and the animal world commenced the training of the soul faculties by enhancing their moral strength and powers of observation. A consistent emphasis on moral exemplars was a critical part of all class work from Class 1 through to Class VIII.

In the Waldorf classroom the essential teaching content focused on Science, History, (Religion) and Art, major areas of study in Spiritual Science, via an integrated approach. While the contemplation of Nature captured one aspect of Sophia's imaginative wisdom streams, historical stories completed the other. An understanding of the life and culture of the civilizations existing during the Rosicrucian Epochs was found to provide the superstructure for the History Main Lessons during the all-important Class V year. It is to be noted that History Main Lessons (also taught in the modern school as English Literature) were a substitute for Religious Studies in the sense that they provided the pupil with the story of the evolution of human consciousness and the coming of the Christ Spirit. While Steiner appeared to concede that subject matter was secondary to methodology a strict sequence of

historical themes was nonetheless to be observed in order to support the recapitulatory development of the child's soul through its historical incarnations. For example, the study of the birth of Christ in History was to be taught at a time believed to be coincidental with the birth of an independent conscience in the child at around the age of twelve years. It was also noted that, in appearance, the historical themes differed relatively little from those compiled by the pedagogue, Rein, which served as the basis for the German State School History curriculum - a further support for Steiner's claim that his pedagogy was based on instructional reform as opposed to a substantial modification of the pre-existing curriculum themes. The influence of the *romantic* ideology of nineteenth century educators such as Pestalozzi and Froebel was clearly discernable in Steiner's educational theory. The importance of the authority of the teacher, a prescriptive curriculum, the emphasis on imitation and the lack of emphasis on intellectual advancement argue against its placement in the *progressive* stream of education.

Previous studies have confirmed that work carried out in modern Waldorf schools "resonates on original strings" (Masters, 1996, p. 4) which is not unexpected given the emphasis Steiner placed on the importance of following the sequence of his curriculum indications and working in a way consistent with the methodological praxis he presented to the original teachers. It does appear however, that some disquiet exists amongst current anthroposophical educators that a full appreciation of what lies behind Waldorf education is being lost given the exponential increase in schools in recent years and the difficulty of finding teachers engaged in anthroposophical study. It was noted at the outset of Chapter 6 that a number of structures have been put in place in order to try to circumvent any dilution of Steiner's most fundamental directives. The examples cited indicate that Waldorf teachers worldwide still perpetuate the core values of Goodness, Beauty and Truth via carefully chosen narratives that stimulate the child and ensure that "deadened" thinking will not go unchallenged in the Waldorf setting. It is therefore with some confidence the researcher can state that in Waldorf

schools dedicated to perpetuating Steiner's worldview and philosophy, there is a concerted effort by the teachers to maintain the integrity (K-VIII) of the original pedagogical indications. The issues relating to transparency and maintaining the number of teachers who are willing or able to adhere to Steiner's worldview were highlighted in Chapter 6 (refer p. 297).

7.3 Conclusions

As noted in the Abstract, prior to this study there had been no attempt to enter the so called "enchanted wood" of Steiner's esoteric worldview and synthesise it in a way that would make it possible to define the linkages between it and Waldorf education. The thesis articulated the clear message that Waldorf education was based firstly on the epistemology Steiner presented in *The Philosophy of Freedom*, and secondly on the tenets of his esoteric Christian worldview and the Initiation Science allied to it. The research demonstrated that Steiner incorporated key elements of his esoteric theories into the practical form of the pedagogy and curriculum he presented to the Waldorf School teachers in 1919. It also showed that it was a logical step for Steiner as the founder of a meditative discipline he believed would lead the adult pupil to a psychic connection to the indwelling Christ Spirit, to apply his ideas to his educational philosophy. In the final analysis, Steiner intended that the Waldorf School would prepare a new generation to find a moral and spiritual salvation through a worldview that would defeat the Ahrimanic forces threatening to subvert the evolution of human consciousness back towards its spiritual roots according to the tenets of Christian Rosicrucianism. Although there has been a general recognition that a moral emphasis characterises Waldorf schooling its relationship to esoteric Christianity had not been addressed until this study. The significance of the esoteric notion of spirit possession and its relationship to the moral development of the child had also remained unclear up to this point.

The research further concluded that Steiner was first and foremost the leader of an esoteric society who came to believe that the social ideals arising out of a Rosicrucian Brotherhood would bring stability and coherence to the tumultuous times of post-war Germany. Through educating the children of the working class to be able to realise their spiritually gifted talents and capacities, prepared to love their "duty", Steiner preached that it would be possible to prepare the citizens and leaders of a new German social order based on anthroposophical principles. The research therefore provided an insight into a form of education which, in its original intention, set out to educate children to "meet and transform the world" with the ultimate objective of paving the way for a global society inspired by the love of the mystical Christ Himself.

7.4 Limitations of the Research and Future Directions

Through the medium of literature analysis the thesis has opened the door to a new understanding as to what lies behind Waldorf education. It has also served to highlight that Waldorf pedagogy and curriculum allied to Steiner's esoteric theories represents a rich vein of future research if it is to be accorded the recognition current Waldorf educationalists aspire to. The findings of the present study need to be extended and explored particularly at the level of school-based research. This would require the co-operation of Waldorf educators and Steiner's directive to maintain a discrete silence has undoubtedly played some part in the lack of interest in carrying out first-hand studies. There is also the difficulty that access to Waldorf schools may be restricted for researchers who are not anthroposophists or at least "sympathetic" (Gidley, 1997, p. 13). A detailed scrutiny of the underlying esoteric meaning of the teaching content of the Primary School Main Lessons not included in the current study remains to be undertaken, and the High School curriculum believed to provide the esoteric "Truths" the spirit seeks is a closed book at this point. An objective assessment of the complex ethical question of the use of the curriculum to impart theosophical concepts might also be of value.

Initially it was intended that the thesis was to take the form of an empirical longitudinal study which would follow the students into their senior years. It transpired that this was not practical given the number of students who did not complete their education at the school where the research was to be conducted. Consequently the focus of the thesis changed to a theoretical examination of Steiner's work in education. Nonetheless this is an area that would reward greater investigation. It would be of interest to review the performance of senior students particularly in relationship to the attainment of moral values that the Waldorf teacher firmly believes to be the anticipated outcome of all their pedagogical endeavours.

The greatest limitation of the study were the gaps that were found to exist in some areas of the original source material which added to the difficulties of finding a coherent path in Steiner's intricate and complex re-visioning of esoteric ideas. Given that Steiner purportedly gave nearly six thousand lectures there appears to still be a large number of his teachings that have not as yet come to light. Interestingly he gave over two thousand lectures after the establishment of the Waldorf School yet only a relatively small number of translated lectures relate to educational topics. Further, while many of Steiner's lectures are available in German translations, at this present time they await transcription into English. However, it is not anticipated that a greater volume of material would have altered the general direction of these research findings.

In the final analysis this thesis has commenced the process of bringing Waldorf pedagogy "out of the shadows". It represents the first step towards a comprehensive understanding of an educational system that is unique in its conception and one that purports to prepare the student to be a moral, well rounded and caring individual with the potential to make the world a better place. On this basis alone it is worthy of a fuller understanding.

Let a former Waldorf parent have the final word -

All teaching is the business of saving souls. But the business of Steiner is greater than that. It is the summoning to a soul of its better angels who uplift to a high plane of possibility that creative magic, that unstoppable glittering energy, that may change the world.

(Ellis, 2011, p. 5)

APPENDIX I

Biography

RUDOLF STEINER – CHRONOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY

- 1861 Birth on Feb. 27 in Donji Kraljevec (Lower Kraljevec), Croatia, between Hungary and Slovenia, son of a railroad employee. Parents came from Austria. Childhood and youth in various Austrian towns.
- 1872-1879 Junior and Senior high school in Wiener-Neustadt (close to Vienna).
- 1875-1889 Worked as a private teacher, many times to his own classmates, especially in Math and Sciences.
- 1879-1883 Undergraduate studies at the Vienna Institute of Technology (Wiener Technische Hochschule). Deep studies of Goethe.
- 1882-1897 Editor of Goethe's scientific works for the J. Kürschner's "Deutsche National Literatur" edition.
- 1884-1890 Private teacher/tutor of 4 children of a Vienna family.
- 1886 Worked in the "Duchess Sophia" complete edition of Goethe's writings.
- 1888 Editor of the "Weekly German Magazine" (Deutsche Wochenschrift) (GA 31).
- 1890-1897 Worked at the Schiller-Goethe Archives in Weimar. Edition of Goethe's scientific writings.
- 1891 Doctorate in Philosophy at the University of Rostock, Germany. Publication of the dissertation (GA 3).
- 1894 Meeting with Haeckel; beginning of correspondence with him (in GA 38).
- 1897 Moved to Berlin, where he was the editor (up to 1900) of the "Literature Magazine" (Magazin für Literatur) (GA 31). Activities at the "Free Drama Society" (Freien dramatischen Gesellschaft) lectures, at the Giordano Bruno League, and others.
- 1899-1904 Instructor at the Berlin "Workers' School of Education" (Arbeiter-Bildungsschule).
- 1900 Beginning of activities as a lecturer on various Anthroposophic themes by invitation of the Berlin Theosophic Society.
- 1902 Nominated the General Secretary of the German Theosophic Society. Lectures on "Anthroposophy".
- 1902-1912 Intensive activity as a lecturer in Berlin and throughout Europe. Marie von Sievers becomes his constant co-operator.
- 1903 Foundation of the Luzifer journal, later Luzifer-Gnosis (GA 10-12, 34).
- 1905 First writings on the Threefold Social Organization (in GA 34).
- 1906 Meeting with Edouard Schuré; Marie von Sievers had translated some of his works.
- 1907 Organizes the world conference of the Theosophic Society in Munich, where he introduces artistic activities for the first time. Dedication to Rosicrucianism.
- 1910-1913 Writes and directs the representation of his Four Mystery Dramas, one each year, in Munich (GA 14).
- 1912 Introduction of the new art of Eurythmy (GA 277a) and Speech Formation (GA 281).

1913	Separation from the Theosophic Society and foundation of the Anthroposophical Society.
1913-1923	Construction of the first Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland.
1914	Marriage with Marie von Sievers (from then on Marie Steiner).
1914-1924	Lectures in Dornach, Berlin and many cities all over Europe, gives indication for the renewal of many areas of human activity: art, education, sciences, social life, medicine, pharmacology, therapies, agriculture, architecture and theology.
1919	Intensive activities as a writer and lecturer on his ideas on social renewal, the Threefold Commonwealth (GA 23, 328-341) mainly in Southern Germany. Foundation of the Free Waldorf School (Freie Waldorfschule) in Stuttgart (GA 293-295), directed by him up to his death.
1920	First course for physicians (GA 312), beginning the application to what became Anthroposophic Medicine.
1921	Foundation of the "Das Goetheanum" weekly, with his regular contributions (GA 36, 260a); this journal continues to be edited.
1922	Foundation of the religious renewal movement "The Christian Community", by clergymen under his orientation.
1923	Beginning of the design and gypsum modelling of the second Goetheanum, to be built in 1925-28 after his death, now in reinforced concrete. During the Christmas Conference, foundation of the new General Anthroposophical Society (Allgemeine Anthroposophische Gesellschaft).
1923-1925	Publishes every week in Das Goetheanum his autobiography (GA 28), which would remain unfinished (covers his life up to 1907).
1924	Course on agriculture in Koberwitz (GA 327), originating bio-dynamic farming. Course on Curative Education (GA 317) gives his last lecture on Sept. 9 to members of the Society.
1925	Death in Dornach on March 30.

(V. W. Setzer, 2010)

APPENDIX II

Global Outreach of Waldorf Schools

Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner - Schools Worldwide 2010

Africa		Australian (Oceania)	
Egypt	1	Australia	33
Kenya	2	New Zealand	10
Namibia	1		
South Africa	17	Europe	
Tanzania	1	Belgium	22
		Denmark	16
		Germany	216
America		Estonia	6
Argentina	10	Finland	25
Brazil	32	France	11
Chile	5	Great Britain	32
Ecuador	1	Ireland	3
Canada	21	Latvia	2
Colombia	4	Italy	33
Mexico	5	Croatia	2
Peru	3	Latvia	2
USA	130	Liechtenstein	1
		Lithuania	3
Asia		Luxemburg	1
Armenia	1	Moldavia	1
China	1	Netherlands	92
Georgia	1	Norway	35
India	5	Austria	15
Israel	7	Poland	5
Japan	6	Rumania	13
Kazakhstan	2	Russian	18
Kirgizstan	1	Sweden	41
Korea R	2	Switzerland	35
Nepal	2	Slovakia	1
Philippines	3	Slovenia	2
Tadzhikistan	1	Spain	7
Taiwan	2	Czech Republic	13
Thailand	2	Ukraine	5
		Ungam	25

Waldorf School total: 995

Bund der Freien Waldorfschulen e.V
Wagenburstrasse 6, D-70184 Stuttgart
www.waldorfschule.de:142

Due to copyright reasons, the tables have been omitted from the section Appendix III and Appendix IV of this thesis.

APPENDIX III

Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan)

Class I - VIII

APPENDIX IV

Waldorf Schools Curriculum (Lehr Plan)

Class IX - XII

Plates



Plate 1

The *Goetheanum* located in Dornach, Switzerland is the administrative centre of the Pedagogical section of the School of Spiritual Science.

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