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EDUCATION IN CRISIS, IMAGINATION IN EDUCATION ON WALDORF EDUCATION, THE DEMOCRATIC BREAKTHROUGH, AND EDUCATION THROUGH ART

Waldorf education amounts to the educational 'other' in Polish culture: an alternative, a verso of the school provided by mainstream culture, a proffering of unconventional pedagogical methods. As a departure from the norm, it arouses interest due to being an extraordinary phenomenon and, hence, is subject to the same stereotyping processes as any minority culture. This occurs when one picks out of its complex entirety only a selection of phenomena, such as the lack of numerical grades or education through art, and then performs a comparative analysis against state schooling, which could indeed benefit greatly from adopting elements of Waldorf culture.

Yet, Waldorf education is a phenomenon that requires us to go beyond a pedagogical analysis and embrace the perspective of culture studies and anthropology; one able to recognise it not merely as a proposal for new education but for a new world altogether. In order to explain what the vision of a new anthropology is, what the new man is, as advocated by Waldorf education, I shall look at the developments that led to the creation of Waldorf education in Germany and in Poland, and shaped its character; I will also analyse several examples of when art and creative activity are used as paths to a new type of knowledge.

LABORATORY AND THE THIRD WAY

Alternative and charter schools emerged in Poland as a result of the political transformation. They tend to be treated as 'laboratories for change' which was to percolate out through their perforated borders and enrich with innovative solutions the type of school that evolved from the Polish People's Republic (PRL) era. Such a perspective, though rather common, reduces them to the ancillary role of educational experiments, testing new solutions on pupils and providing feedback as to which have proven effective. The dominant culture, claiming to be democratic and pluralist, accepts the existence of the 'others' as long as they feed it with innovation. This is a more sophisticated stance than that of silently accepting contestation movements as a 'safety valve'. In the PRL, this function was supposed to be performed by the youth counterculture, prone to turn the world upside down in carnivalesque spirit every now and again. The latter movement was referred to as a barometer of the society's attitude towards the authorities; hence, it was relegated to a safe periphery in order to alleviate social pressure. In a democracy, such alternatives may be considered more applicable. They occupy comfortable positions on the margins of the mainstream lest they lead to 'a long march through institutions', that is, to dominant structures being taken over by dissidents. The innovations derived from alternative education that make it to public schools are limited to teaching techniques, and as such they provide slightly different ways of reaching the same objectives.

Drawing by Daria Malicka

However, besides educational goals, the movements for the transformation of school very often set social goals and strive to transform the society. More than mere laboratories for educational change, they constitute communities intended to form the new man whose aim is to transform the world. These are the new utopias that, according to Jerzy Szacki, may be recognised as heroic,[1] while according to Aldona Jawłowska, as attainable.[2]

Waldorf education, the focus of my anthropological research for several years now, provides a good example of the aforesaid. It was founded on an anti-positivist framework and an alternative rationality derived from esoteric movements of the early twentieth century.[3] It is based on anthroposophy – a school of esoteric philosophy developed by the editor of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's works and ex-theosophist Rudolf Steiner. It was intended not only as a preliminary path to initiation, but also as a holistic worldview in which man is a spiritual being. It lies within the 'threefolding' framework, which offers not only the experience of utopia, but also the realisation thereof, and the establishment of novel social institutions. Based on Steiner's thought, an entire alternative anthroposophical civilisation was developed: schools, hospitals, banks, farmsteads, culture and art centres, factories producing food, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics, etc. It is a global movement, albeit one with a clearly defined centre – the Goetheanum building in Dornach, Switzerland, the School of Spiritual Science, serving as the seat of the administration of the Anthroposophical Society and an educational and conference centre where anthroposophical culture is practiced and its staff trained.[4]

In order to be given the name of a 'Waldorf' school (taken from 'Waldorf-Astoria Factory', where the first Steiner school was established), a school must be recognised by the International Waldorf Community. The key thing here is not the operation of a single institution, but the development of a global movement sharing common goals. Even though some schools today tend to refer to Waldorf teaching methods rather than to Steiner's esoteric philosophy, a philosophy at odds with the diagnoses of Western rationality, one of the main principles for being granted permission to use the name of a 'Waldorf school' is the following stipulation: 'The school's operation observably accords with Waldorf pedagogy and anthroposophy'.[5] Hence, even when a school is not run by anthroposophists, it

1 J. Szacki, *Spotkania z utopią*, Warszawa: Iskry, 1980.

2 A. Jawłowska, *Drogi kontrkultury*, Warszawa: PIW, 1975.

3 For more on this issue, see M. Dobiasz-Krysiak, *Szkoła transformacji. O szkole waldorfskiej w dobie transformacji ustrojowej*, Kraków: Impuls, 2022.

4 See M. Dobiasz, *Antropozoficzna cywilizacja uzdrowienia. Mit, utopia, rzeczywistość*, Gdańsk: WN Katedra, 2014.

5 'Procedura nadawania nazwy «szkoła waldorfska»', (The Procedure for Naming a «Waldorf school») http://zspwp.pl/images/Procedura_nadawania_nazwy_

does – through its hidden curriculum and its culture – refer to this strand of esoteric philosophy, with its vision of man as a spiritual being.

What do anthroposophists strive to accomplish? In a sense, their objective is initiation, a common goal for the attendees of all esoteric schools. However, the practice of implementing a utopia in the here and now involves attempts at changing the world through introducing a spiritual element into everyday life, recognising its significance and granting it its rightful place, while consequently becoming open to the extra-rational and the extrasensory experiences, as recorded and classified by Steiner (who died in 1925), a task continued today by his heirs. It also involves trying to create institutions endorsing communal interpersonal relations and models of horizontal cooperation.

CHAOS, CRISIS AND SCHOOL

Established in Stuttgart in 1919, the first Waldorf school emerged out of the post-war crisis of norms and values, which produced a profusion of new theories and social movements. The crisis found its expression not only in the ever-more intense activity of movements for pedagogical renewal associated with new pedagogy, and in Germany with the reform pedagogy.[6] It was also a period of many social and cultural innovations, which enriched the culture, while at the same time overturning the existing normative order, challenging authorities and undermining the models considered until that moment natural and self-evident. This also pertained to the paradigms of knowledge and science production; that is why hopes were so high for establishing anthroposophy as a 'spiritual science' that would use extra-intellectual tools to account for a world previously unattainable and thus reveal completely new perspectives of cognition.

Following Elżbieta Tarkowska, I am inclined to label such a moment a period of 'cultural chaos'; the author juxtaposed it against the anthropological categories of cosmos and order. Tarkowska recognised a set of social tendencies leading to social changes: future-orientedness and the restriction of social time, the narrowing of social space, forced traditionalism, the return to subsistence economy, the proliferation of magical and mythical thinking (gossip, propaganda), the turn to the sacred, and the need for festivities.[7] It is all these that contribute to the development of contesting and alternative movements that refer to a mythicised past and

szkoła_waldorfska_xi_2015.pdf [accessed 13 March 2018].

6 M.S. Szymański, *Niemiecka pedagogika reformy 1890–1933*, Warszawa: WSIP, 1992.

7 E. Tarkowska, 'Próby – chaos kulturowy', in *Kulturowy wymiar przemian społecznych*, A. Jawłowska, M. Kempny, E. Tarkowska (eds.), Warszawa: IFIS PAN, 1993, 34.

distant traditions, where they seek the origins of social norms to serve as signposts for the future. For Steiner, this past is rooted in the world of the spirit, inhabited by numerous beings that form a rich demonosophy. In this way, he indicated that a dominant culture not directed at the spiritual is unable to adequately recognise its past and hence has no access to the source of knowledge about the future of the world.

Because of its diagnostic ambiguity, the category of cultural chaos proved a controversial instrument to describe the democratic transformation in Poland. The expression carries pejorative connotations in spite of the fact that 1989 was the time of long awaited democratic changes, the opening of the borders, the abolition of censorship, etc. I believe it to be the result of a twofold reception of the category of crisis, not far removed from that of chaos. According to various psychological theories,[8] a crisis is not only a time of stoppage but also a turning and creative point. It also fosters growth tendencies, which – though they bring new prospects of progress – shake the world's foundations and introduce a sense of instability. Thus, a new type of culture emerging from the chaos may no longer be a culture of order but the very 'culture of crisis'. The notion was called up in an analysis of Florian Znaniecki's culturalist theory by Grzegorz Godlewski, a cultural theorist, who demonstrated that one of the aims of culturalism was to 'adequately capture the cultural reality in its new form and consequently… guide the developmental processes tearing it apart'.[9] The new type of culture requires, therefore, not only new theories of culture, but also new practices – open systems, able to 'absorb [elements] and transform itself without causing a crisis', which could operate in fluid conditions, that is, in post-modernity. It is here that Godlewski sees a great opportunity for an 'above-normal', alternative school, which by leaving behind text-centredness and becoming 'an experimental space for initiation', could accommodate the need to establish an open and flexible system, able to adjust to crisis realities.[10]

FREE SCHOOL OF IMAGINATION

Waldorf education in Poland was an unrealised project of Jadwiga 'Wiga' Siedlecka, one of the animators of the Polish anthroposophical movement before the war, the President of the Juliusz Słowacki Society in Warsaw. Siedlecka cooperated closely with Steiner. Together with her husband, Franciszek Siedlecki, a stage designer and graphic artist of the Young Poland movement, she spent some time during World War I in

8 Such as K. Dąbrowski's theory of positive disintegration, or J. Kozielecki's notion of transgression: idem, *Transgresja i kultura*, Warszawa: WA Żak, 2002.

9 G. Godlewski, *Luneta i radar*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UW, 2016, 272.

10 Ibid. 273.

Dornach. While there, they created the colourful, anthroposophical genre scenes for the windows of the first Goetheanum building, which burnt down on New Year's Eve night of 1922/1923. Having returned to Poland, Siedlecka started to teach the anthroposophical art of dance – eurhythmy – in Warsaw in 1921, she studied pedagogy and intended to set up a Waldorf school in the countryside on a plot of land she had bought.[11] The attempt proved unsuccessful, but she did for several years run a kindergarten in the villa of anthroposophists, Mr. and Mrs. Schiele, at 5 Aleja Róż in Warsaw.[12] Another kindergarten initiative emerged only towards the close of the 1930s, when a protégée of Siedlecka, Helena Jankowska, a native of Bielsko, founded a private kindergarten at 25 Krawcza St. in the Varsovian district of Grochów. In 1938, Janowska left for Dornach to study Waldorf pedagogy,[13] and the outbreak of the war made her stay there, as it turned out, for the rest of her life. During the interwar period, the anthroposophical milieux organised several international lectures and pedagogy courses in Poland; furthermore, several articles on Waldorf education were published in Polish journals of national circulation, written by educators Józef Mirski,[14] and Ludwik Bandura.[15] The pedagogical writings of Steiner were translated and published,[16] and there were several Polish representatives of the anthroposophical movement who publicised their opinions: Maria Przyborowska,[17] Bohdan Chrzanowski,[18] and Karol Homolacs.[19] The time of World War II and of the Polish People's Republic

11 Goetheanum Archiv, Documents of the Polish Anthroposophical Society, a letter from Jadwiga Siedlecka to the Administration of the General Anthroposophical Society of 9 September 1926 (GA ARCHIVAL REFERENCE NO. A.02.008.001).

12 M. Świerczek, *Vom Jahrhundertschicksal gezeichnet*, www.freunde-waldorf.de/die-freunde/buecher-und-magazine/waldorfpaedagogik-weltweit/teil-2/polen/ [accessed 05 Jan. 2022].

13 The National Library of Poland, Department of Microfilm Collections, file 70–72.

14 J. Mirski, 'Nauczyciel-wychowawca w pedagogice antropozoficznej', *Ogniwo*, 3 (1932): 85.

15 L. Bandura, 'Pedagogika antropozoficzna Steinera', *Przyjaciel Szkoły*, 18 (1931): 649.

16 For instance, R. Steiner, *O wychowaniu dziecka z punktu widzenia wiedzy duchowej*, transl. to Polish by. F. Przeradzki, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Akademii Humanistyczno-Ekonomicznej, 1998.

17 M. Przyborowska, 'Nowy kierunek w dążeniach wychowawczych zachodu', *Przyjaciel Szkoły*, 20 (1929): 770.

18 B. Chrzanowski, 'W poszukiwaniu treści do wspólnych przeżyć wychowawcy z wychowankiem', *Kultura i Wychowanie*, 3 (1935/1936): 284.

19 K. Homolacs, *O wychowawczym znaczeniu sztuki*, Warszawa: NK, 1938.

resulted in the movement becoming less visible, with any and all anthroposophical initiatives being practiced in private groups only.

It was as late as in the 1980s that one could observe in Poland some initial attempts at disseminating knowledge about the anthroposophical culture. In 1984, Waldorf education found its way to the mainstream media. *Polityka,* a popular weekly, published an exhaustive article by Adam Krzemiński titled 'Wolna szkoła Waldorfa' (Free School of Waldorf) [sic!], the fruit of the author's visit to the schools in Göttingen, Hannover, and Stockholm. The epithet 'free', customarily used to refer to Waldorf schools, accorded well with the culture of Polish democratic changes, associated with the Solidarity movement, and was seen as an expression of the will to liberate the school from the state propaganda; hence, it evoked positive reactions. The author of the article found the movement's willingness to 'change the world' particularly interesting, and he presented Waldorf pedagogy as a real and intriguing alternative to the 'authoritarian education' in Poland.[20] Far more was happening in niche media; in 1984, a New Age magazine *Trzecie Oko. Biuletyn Psychotronika* featured the first articles on biodynamic farming and Waldorf education. In the magazine, Jerzy Prokopiuk, a Polish anthroposophist striving to capture the characteristics of the culture at the close of the twentieth century, published his text *Paradygmat wyobraźni* (The Paradigm of Imagination), providing in it an account of a worldview entailing a synthesis of 'the old gnosis and the new science'.[21] From this point of view, therefore, the thing at the centre of reflection was not the chaos or crisis, but the category of imagination, somewhat akin to that of utopia, which allowed for a fusion of the spiritual element and the Western rationality. Also within this paradigm were 'the schools of imagination' (i.e., Waldorf schools), mentioned by Tadeusz Doktór, a religious studies scholar and anthroposophist, in his extensive article published in *Trzecie Oko* in 1988, where the author discussed Waldorf education on the example of the German Hiberniaschule.[22] These schools were to correspond to the character of the new era, in which the notion of progress was replaced by that of constant transformations, an era *in statu nascendi*, occurring and developing in the here and now, an era in need of education founded on this new type of spirituality, forming young people to perform non-standard tasks.

The new opening for Waldorf education in Poland was in line with the educational social movement initiated by the democratic changes, among them the establishment of the Civic Educational Association (STO) in 1987. Already in 1988, the *Pod Myszką* kindergarten in Warsaw, run by Bogna Neumann and Barbara Stępniewska (the daughters of pre-war anthroposophists Janusz Bolko Neumann and the painter Maria Hiszpańska-Neumann), embraced the Waldorf model thanks to a course held

20 A. Krzemiński, 'Wolna szkoła Waldorfa', *Polityka*, 3 (1984): 3; reprinted as: 'Wäldorfpädagogik in Polen? Man könnte grün werden von Neid', *Info 3*, 12 (1984): 14–16.

21 J. Prokopiuk, 'Paradygmat wyobraźni', *Trzecie Oko. Biuletyn Psychotronika*, 3 (1986): 4.

22 See Doktór T., 'Szkoły wyobraźni', *Trzecie Oko. Biuletyn Psychotronika*, 6, 7, 8 (1988).

there during the holidays by three teachers from Hannover who had been invited by Professor Maria Ziemska, an advocate of Steiner's pedagogy. At the same time, a kindergarten was founded in Kraków (at Św. Marka St.) and in 1990 in Bielsko-Biała. In 1991, the Anthroposophical Society in Warsaw resumed its operation; in September 1992, the Association for the Development of Steiner's Pedagogy, comprising parents and teachers, founded the first Waldorf school in Warsaw.[23] During that period, numerous associations and foundations were set up, the staff was trained in Waldorf pedagogy and eurhythmy, while international contacts were established and fostered. The trailblazing period was a time of enthusiasm and a great number of initiatives, the institution of new anthroposophical media and the dissemination of the notion of 'free schools of imagination' to win over parents hitherto oblivious to Steiner's philosophy.

ART AS THE EDUCATION OF THE FUTURE

Waldorf schools in Poland could only dream of an infrastructure such as that in Western European schools, but they brought together communities of dedicated persons who shared a similar outlook. They were critical of mainstream schools, fascinated by the opportunities to establish international contacts, and were seeking new ways of development, which entailed spiritual development and development through art. The privileged status of art in Waldorf schools is associated with Schlegel's concept of *Bildung* as an ethical imperative of individual formation and fulfilment according to the model of a work of art. It is the creative act, acts of creativity as such, that are important, as manifestations of freedom.[24] In his article *Czynniki wychowania estetycznego* (The Factors in Aesthetic Education), Ludwik Bandura, a pre-war theorist of Waldorf education, situated Steiner schools in the long tradition of aesthetic education from Plato, through Kant to Schiller.[25] The notion of artistry and that of education through art were expounded in the *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* by Friedrich Schiller, who saw these as an instrument to introduce harmony between spirit and reason: 'Art is a daughter of freedom, and must receive her commission from the needs of the spirit, not from the exigencies of matter.'[26] The idea of freedom – viewed as greatly important by the Romantics, who Steiner would often invoke – has remained the

23 Based on the author's findings.

24 A. Kopeć, '«Bildung – wychowaniem do autentyczności?» Neohumanistyczne vs romantyczne rozumienie koncepcji samokształcenia', *Filozofia Publiczna i Edukacja Demokratyczna*, 1 (2017): 203–20.

25 L. Bandura, 'Czynniki wychowania estetycznego', *Przyjaciel Szkoły*, 15 (1935).

26 F. Schiller, *Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man* in J. Weiss (ed. and transl.), *The Aesthetic Letters, Essays, and the Philosophical Letters of Schiller*, Boston: Ch.C. Little & J. Brown, 1845, 5.

central of Waldorf categories, shifting its meaning depending on the social and political circumstances, sometimes referring rather to the opposition between spirit and reason, while on other occasions to the opposition between man and the system. Godlewski presents his account of the goals of Schiller's aesthetic education more in the spirit of the school for the 'civilisation of the future', and writes that it helps one 'reach beyond the framework of the established and acceptable, and in such conditions, owing to the opportunities offered by free thought and imagination, strive towards the lost unity of the human world.'[27] By granting a privileged status to creativity as an expression of human freedom, artistic education is to foster innovative, outside-the-box thinking, the thinking of the future aimed at building a world of equality and unity. Thus, in Waldorf education, art has – besides individual development – social and community-building objectives, as well.

WITH A PAINTBRUSH BEYOND THE TEXT

The overcoming of text-centredness is often posited in the domains whose representatives try to go beyond the positivist paradigm of knowledge, for instance, in artistic research. The text is understood here not only as a means of recording and a medium, but also as a specific cognitive rigidity that influences the entire lifestyle. Godlewski labels it 'textual habitus', that is, a set 'of ways of perceiving the world, forms of participating in social life', patterns of thinking and acting, bodily behaviours'.[28] The task of socialising and creating social distinctions is taken over by the school which, as a textual institution, transform pupils into textual beings adapted to living in the world of theories, which it considers to be the only valid one. Waldorf education is not completely free of text-centredness, it does in some ways fall within what Godlewski refers to as the ‚textual paradigm of culture',[29] because it never fully abandons 'the new science'. The anthroposophical culture from which Waldorf education is derived considers itself to be a complementary culture, which in the spirit of the 'paradigm of imagination' performs the synthesis of science with 'the old gnosis'.[30] This is why this model of education attempts to broaden pupils' experience, fostering the ways of non-intellectual cognition. Art – understood as freedom, a combination of the spiritual with the material, a step out of the stale thought patterns and a force that brings people together – becomes the appropriate method of work. In Waldorf education, the school community is involved in

27 G. Godlewski, *Luneta i radar...*, op. cit., 271.

28 Ibid. 269.

29 Ibid.

30 J. Prokopiuk, 'Paradygmat wyobraźni', op. cit., 4.

artistic activity, but also in amateur crafts in the spirit of DIY, and in creativity understood as social engagement.

Painting and drawing are among the most popular practices in Waldorf schools in Poland, mostly for technical reasons and due to infrastructural shortcomings. These form an inherent part of all primary school lessons. Separate painting classes are introduced at a later time. At the initial stages of education, drawing and watercolour painting constitute elements of the main lessons, held during the two opening hours of every school day and devoted to the subjects requiring the highest level of focus (Polish, maths, science, etc.), carried out in blocks lasting several weeks (epochs). Pupils create works on separate sheets of paper and have large notebooks – portfolios, in which they draw and paint. Some techniques are given more attention in Waldorf education: the 'wet on wet' painting in natural watercolours, which results in colours blurring into vague spots, or the thick-line drawing, which requires block crayons made of beeswax. Pupils may also draw in charcoal, while the lessons of chiaroscuro constitute a major element of the sixth grade curriculum. As the black contours tend not to be filled in with colours, the attention is shifted away from the images of the outside world towards the exploration of the inner realm. Colourful watercolour spots, even when they represent specific scenes, steer clear of introducing details in favour of creating a spiritual atmosphere of overlapping hues and clarity. It is important that these are images hand-painted in natural dyes, not computer generated ones. They are seen as adding to spiritual self-development and fostering the search for a deeper relationship with the natural world.

However, it is not only pupils but all members of the community that draw and paint. The characteristic feature of a Waldorf classroom is a drawing created by the teacher in coloured chalk on the inside of the left wing of the board. The teacher works on it individually before the block of lessons, trying to make it relate to the topics soon to be discussed. This is an element of teachers' education, for many of them find it difficult to present their own works, which must stay in view until the block ends, thus influencing the classroom environment. Creating artistic works is also used as a method to engage parents during parent-teacher meetings. They are often handed pieces of paper, paints or charcoal, and they are encouraged to create freely during pedagogical discussions. This is aimed not only at regulating tension, but also at helping parents to express emotions many of them experience during such meetings. Creating artistic works together, then discussing and categorising them as a group, ranking the images from the most to the least figurative – all these methods foster the social circulation of works and a communal reflection on original artistic output, acknowledging opinions and interpretations provided by others. Thus, parents are to find room for their own artistic

activities and also feel part of the school community, coming together to create a joint oeuvre – their school.

What is more, the recognition that the practice of painting can regulate man's soul and body serves as the basis for its application in anthroposophical medical interventions. A patient can be treated using all elements of anthroposophical culture. During my ethnographic research, I had a conversation with an art therapist of anthroposophical background, who showed me a sketch by one of her wards, a cancer patient. It was a variation on Steiner's watercolour painting *Moonrise*; however, its colour scheme was shifted towards somewhat greenish hues. At the core of the therapy was the symbolism of colour, derived from Goethe's *Farbenlehre*. According to my interlocutor, green 'always enables us to provide it with specific borders', it evokes the world of plants and the etheric body with which it is identified in anthroposophy. It is expected, therefore, to help therapy of a cancer patient, by not allowing the cancer to spread further. The open/closed dialectic manifests itself more frequently. In my book *Antropozoficzna cywilizacja uzdrowienia* (Anthroposophical Civilisation of Healing), I also cite an example I found in a Goetheanum brochure on art therapy for patients suffering from Crohn's disease, that is, chronic diarrhoea. They create watercolour works using the 'wet on wet' technique, applying subsequent layers of paint out of which shapes gradually emerge. These having dried out, the patients draw around the spots, thus providing them with contours, that is, giving form to what was previously fluid. In line with the sympathetic nature of anthroposophical medicine, this work is expected to be mirrored by the internal functions of the body, leading to the eradication of the disease.[31]

Hence, both Waldorf education, which is to cure schools of text-centredness and venture beyond the Positivist primacy of reason, and anthroposophical medicine use art to regulate the unstable oppositions between man and nature, spirit and matter, individualism and community, fluid and stable, open and closed.

TRUTH AND THEATRE

While art is mainly intended to regulate an individual immersed in the process of creation, Waldorf drama performances have social objectives. In all the Waldorf schools I visited, both in Germany and in Poland, pupils are prepared to making their original works public, either as stage performances (of music, eurhythmy, drama, declamation), or as arts and crafts fairs and exhibitions. The opportunity is provided by school fairs, of either religious or school origin, known in Germany as *Monatsfeier*, which suggests their regular monthly occurrence. Thus, should there still be – in the culture of

31 M. Dobiasz, *Antropozoficzna cywilizacja uzdrowienia...*, op. cit., 121.

crisis emerging from the cultural chaos – a need to celebrate and immerse ourselves in the mythical, magical time in order to restore the contact with the sacred, Waldorf education is there to address it. As I calculated, in Rudolf Steiner Schule in Berlin, where I carried out my research, pupils were able to perform during various school festivities as many as ten times a year.

What could be the function of such performances in a school with no numerical grades? It is, above all, to regulate and build community. Performances are a method to discipline pupils and monitor their progress by building a team of collaborating and interdependent individuals. It is also a way to expand the evaluating group by including parents and other students, who come together to form something reminiscent of a panopticon. In Waldorf education, the emphasis is placed rather on communality than competition. Performances are created as a group effort; however, the respective classes silently compete against one another, and all students want to look good in front of the audience. The latter is mainly composed of parents, that is, members of the threefold community comprising pupils, teachers, parents. Their presence at school serves a regulatory function not only for students, but also for teachers, who take responsibility for the quality of the performances. The boundaries between home and school become blurred; therefore, the risk of anonymity is reduced, while – as Foucault claimed – in a community organised in such a manner, 'the exercise of power may be supervised by society as a whole'.[32]

From the point of view of pedagogy, an interesting metaphor of public education is the image of 'an inverse theatre'. Pupils, i.e., spectators (or amateur actors) at the performance of a lesson are evaluated by their teachers – professional actors. All that, however, unfolds in the theatrical convention of make believe, it is like playing a game of childhood and submission, which is made even more palpable by school's pandidactism and infantilising space.[33] The importance attached by Waldorf schools to various performances may hint at a willingness to challenge the metaphor of an inverse theatre, used by scholars who focus on mainstream education. In Waldorf schools, whatever happens outside the school theatre is to be true, not conventional like in other schools. Roles are to be performed on the stage, whereas the rest of the experience is to be as real as possible: lived through, painted, touched, sewn, sculpted, etc. The metaphor postulated as an apt description of Waldorf education is that of the school as a family or a temple. These are places where one can experience the essence of being human and still be oneself, feeling one's genuine emotions or coming in contact with the sacred.

32 M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, transl. by A. Sheridan, New York: Vintage Books, 1995, 207.

33 A. Nalaskowski, *Przestrzenie i miejsca szkoły*, Kraków: Impuls, 2002, 49.

DANCING WITH THE SACRED

Eurhythmy is the anthroposophical art of movement, sometimes called 'the dance of the spheres'; it is also a subject characteristic for the Waldorf schools, taught by teacher eurhythmists. The technique, developed by Rudolf Steiner and his wife Maria Steiner von Sievers, can be divided into verbal eurhythmy – visible speech (where movement is used to express words and phones), and musical eurhythmy (where the movement illustrates the mood of the musical accompaniment). Eurhythmy is also used as a therapeutic measure, aimed at improving sensory integration, exercising symmetry, concentration and focus, sense of space, and cooperation. It is a highly codified, complex, almost mathematical form of art. Waldorf educators tend to say that eurhythmy involves using gross motor skills (i.e., the whole body) to express geometrical drawing, trained by students during the form drawing (geometry) blocks by virtue of their fine motor skills (i.e., only with their hands). I observed the practice of eurhythmy, among other places, in Rudolf Steiner Schule in Berlin, where lessons were held in special rooms furnished with wooden floors or fitted carpets, soft lighting, and space for a piano, as it was always performed to live music. Sixth-graders would practice eurhythmic routines, using movement to convey the rosette – a complex geometrical form whose nodes were marked on the floor with felt circles to aid the dancers. It is a highly difficult task requiring deep concentration. Ninth-graders would perform verbal eurhythmy, developing their own routines to selected poems, while during the school festival, they presented almost acrobatic routines with complex choreography and twirling copper rods. Twelfth-graders, who performed the above exercises in their time, were allowed to improvise. Having presented their short individual etudes, they would sit in a circle and discuss their experiences, trying to draw conclusions for further development.

The transition process from a precise, acrobatic training to individual creative improvisation is reminiscent of the principles of work in alternative theatre ensembles (e.g., The Laboratory Theatre), where hours of physical rigour are spent in preparation for improvisation. Ryszard Cieślak (an actor of Jerzy Grotowski's The Laboratory Theatre) is said to have experienced – owing to exercises of such kind – the so-called total act, defined as 'an act of transgression, an experience of being someone not limited to the mortal «I»'. Furthermore, 'the process leading to it [i.e., the total act] can be considered analogous to a rite or liturgical act'.[34] In other words, it is an experience of transcendental reality or of being granted access to the sacred. Eurhythmy is intended to serve a similar

34 'Akt całkowity', in *Polish Theater Encyclopedia*; encyklopediateatru.pl/hasla/33/akt-calkowity [accessed 05 Jan. 2022].

function on several levels: through intense involvement of the body, the choice of music, poetry, outfit, lighting, etc. The discipline and cooperation required by eurhythmy, the long training and an almost mystical level of concentration that accompany them, are also among the Waldorf methods of supervision and awareness, of analysis and correction. The path to advanced eurhythmic exercises also provides an illustration of the notion of freedom adhered to in Waldorf education. It is the freedom that can be achieved through a series of limitations that develop one's skills and build one's character.

CONCLUSION

Waldorf education is, therefore, a proposal to transform culture via education rooted in an anti-positivist paradigm that locates the sources of knowledge outside the intellect, in the realm of the spiritual. This kind of education emerges at the time of crisis of culture which, as an intensification of growth tendencies, is also a period of the collapse of the existing authorities and norms, which serves as an incentive to search for new paths to knowledge. Hence, the willingness to reach beyond the text, the turn towards art and creativity enabling one to come in contact with the sacred and find the truth by looking deep within oneself. It is also a method to establish creative communities organised around a shared goal, namely, educating children for the future – uncertain, chaotic and crisis-prone, and yet open and allowing imagination to create and realise a utopia.

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Abstract:
The paper is dedicated to Waldorf education as a proposal to transform man and the world, stemming from the crisis of culture, norms and authorities. The author provides an account of the foundation of Waldorf schools in Germany and in Poland, focusing, above all, on the elements of Steiner's education through art. She understands the latter as the type of education for the future, enabling one to come in contact with the sacred and create new social utopias.

Keywords:
crisis, chaos, imagination, utopia, Waldorf education, anthroposophy, art, future

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