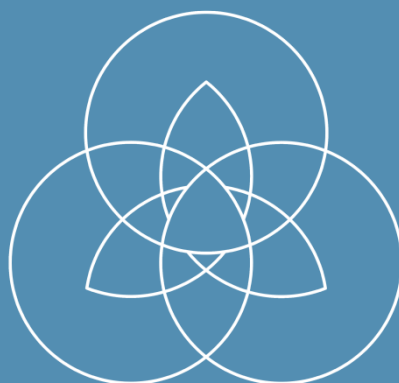




Intentions towards adulthood in Waldorf educational praxis



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Research programme Value(s) of Waldorf education

Intentions towards adulthood in Waldorf educational praxis

Awareness of pedagogical intentions

In their encounters with their pupils, teachers need to continuously judge which pedagogical interactions are desirable. Not only do they need to be competent and willing to form such judgements, but also to act in accordance with their judgements (Biesta, 2014). This judgement regarding the desirability of pedagogical praxis is always related to the objectives of education and educators. *"Education is a teleological practice, that is, a practice that is not only framed but is actually constituted by its purpose (in Greek: telos)"* (Biesta, 2016, p. 199). Therefore, when preparing, teaching, and evaluating their lessons, the decisions teachers make with respect to specific contents as well as didactical and pedagogical processes should be inspired by a clear picture of what they perceive as the purpose of the education they offer. Clarification and awareness of this picture is essential for teachers in order to be able to reflect on the desirability of the educational praxis they create.

In Waldorf education, teaching is understood as a pedagogical art (Steiner, 2004). Although the Waldorf curriculum is based on an understanding of human development as proceeding through universal, consecutive stages which each pose specific developmental themes, there is no fixed script or method to follow for teachers in their pedagogical encounters with individual pupils and classes as a whole. Therefore *"the teacher must invent this art at every moment"*. (Steiner, 2007, p. 30) In this unfolding, creative process, Waldorf teachers are guided by the underlying intentions of Waldorf education, both for the child and for society. These intentions are directed at the emergence of a particular way of living an adult life. This encompasses the need for free self-realisation as well as for moral responsibility towards the continuation and renewal of our worldly society: *"We should not ask: what does a person need to know or be able to do in order to fit into the existing social order? Instead we should ask: what lives in each human being and what can be developed in him or her? Only then will it be possible to direct the new qualities of each emerging generation into society. Thus society will change and become what these fully developed individuals construct through their engagement with the existing order. The new generation should not merely be made into what the existing social order wants them to be."* (Steiner, 1985, p. 8).

Lectures given by Rudolf Steiner during the initial years of Waldorf education provide descriptions and indications of certain human qualities that education should strive to bring into development. During the summer of 1919, just before the start of the first Waldorf school, Steiner gave a series of lectures that clarified the intentions of his new pedagogy (Steiner, 1997). Education should open gates to roads for the development of young people that set them on the path towards helping to renew society. At the core of his ideals one

finds concepts like freedom, equality, fraternity, moral intuition, lively thinking, the ability to reinvent one's existence after crisis, and the incarnation of the higher self¹. A few weeks later, Steiner wanted to inspire the new teacher team with his observations of the human nature and his guidelines for a holistic pedagogical approach: *"The need for imagination, a sense of truth, a feeling of responsibility, these are the three forces which are the very nerves of pedagogy."* (Steiner, 1996, Lecture XIV). In 1923, Rudolf Steiner gave some talks on education in Ilkley, England. Marie Steiner wrote the foreword for the early editions of this series of lectures: *"...If the child has been educated in a wholly human sense, he will learn to feel and know his full manhood. His own free religious and moral sense will have been awakened. Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives."* (Steiner, 1943).

As such, Waldorf education not only aims for the development and self-realisation of individuals in all aspects of their being, but also for the development of a societal structure, in which cultural freedom and pluralism can be united with economical solidarity, democracy, and human rights (Steiner, 1997). Waldorf education aims to awaken in individuals the desire to contribute to this process in unforeseen but positive ways by encouraging pupils to develop their full manhood. In Waldorf education, this understanding of 'educating in a wholly human sense' through which this might be brought about, is not strictly defined. Instead, it is characterised as a context wherein the child can discover and develop its own capacity and willingness to grasp his 'full manhood'.

These educational intentions carry within them an appeal for educators to engage in an ongoing process of reflection. With regard to the child, it urges them to consider the potential qualities the child carries within itself and what is needed for their unfolding. Not just in light of the moment, but also in light of the child's future. What does the child need to be at home in the world of tomorrow and to create personal ways for positive contributions? But also, what is needed from teachers in order to encourage children to develop their potential qualities?

¹ In more contemporary times, one would perhaps sooner refer to the concept of self-realisation, a process of growing awareness of one's own essence beyond the traits that were inherited from culture and nature. More and more *"we no longer identify with any construct in the mind. .. There is no effort to be ourselves. ... We are not defensive, not judging ourselves, not trying to live up to any standard."* (Almaas, 1996, p. 16)

The outline of this research

This paper explores how this concept of 'full manhood' that is part of the foundation of Waldorf education resonates in the purposes and praxis of contemporary Waldorf education. We were interested in the way possible aspirations towards the development into adulthood in the sense of 'full-manhood' are brought to life and are experienced in today's Waldorf schools. We aimed to develop an understanding of the kind of human qualities teachers valued for their pupils and for themselves. We wanted to learn about how teachers thought that the teaching experiences they created might contribute to the emergence of these qualities in their pupils and of how they reflected on their teaching practices in light of this intention. We also wanted to explore how these teaching intentions resonated in their pupils as they were about to start their lives as young adults in the world.

In order to explore the understandings and practices in contemporary Waldorf education we decided to gather information from both teachers and 12th grade pupils from the secondary Waldorf school in Ghent, Flanders (in Belgium). This is the school where the first author has worked as a maths and science teacher for 17 years. We believe that Flemish Waldorf education presents an interesting case for (Waldorf)educators in many contemporary societies. Flemish Waldorf schools are incorporated in the state educational system of Flanders. Like many other state systems, Flanders' educational policy prioritises qualifications that facilitate the integration of youngsters into the existing social and economic structures of contemporary society. This presents a more restricted perspective on the purpose of education than the holistic purposes with respect to child and world that drive Waldorf education. As a result Flemish Waldorf educators face the necessity to engage in an ongoing process of creating educational experiences that allow them to meet the expectations and demands of the state regarding the outcomes of their educational efforts, while staying true to their own educational intentions.

We first assembled a focus group of seven teachers from the school. The group included teachers who taught arts, biology, history, languages, and technology. The focus group included both seasoned teachers (with several decades of teaching experience in Waldorf education) and relatively inexperienced teachers (in one case with less than a year of teaching experience); this range of teaching experience reflects that of the teacher body in the school. The focus group engaged in a dialogue session for one and a half hour, guided by the first author. The dialogue unfolded along a set of questions provided by the first author that explored teachers' intentions for their pupils regarding maturity and adulthood; how they could observe these qualities in others and in themselves; and how their intentions towards adulthood coloured their daily pedagogical praxis. The concepts and practices that emerged from the group dialogue were further explored through additional individual interviews with two teachers and two school leaders. These interviews aimed to further explore the teacher's understanding of 'full manhood' and to clarify the teacher's

role in the pupils' growth in(to) humanity. These personal interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of these educators' personal core pedagogical intentions. The group dialogue and individual interviews were transcribed verbatim. Through a process of content analysis through close reading (Given, 2008) and dialogue between the authors themes were identified that appeared to be particularly meaningful.

The teachers' image of adulthood

Experiencing freedom in making appropriate choices

The analysis of the teacher dialogues showed that within this Waldorf school, educators have a shared understanding regarding the image of adulthood they aspire to for their pupils. In this image, adulthood revolved around individuals' abilities to 'freely' base their actions in the world on 'good' or 'appropriate' choices. Böhm (2017) argues that to act freely and to take responsibility for one's own freedom are characteristics of our existence as a person. One of the teachers described this freedom in the following way:

"Making your choices from your core, perhaps that is the purpose of adulthood. That you are able to do that. I assume that you aspire to do something with your life and develop your choices in that light. Something that fills you with enthusiasm, that is dear to your heart, really. That seems important to me, yes. That you do not become stuck in thinking: "This will earn me a lot of money" or "That connects me to the right circles", but that you are able to connect with yourself, your core, and that this makes you feel what it is that you want from life."

Other teachers characterized adulthood as follows:

"That you possess the strength or the maturity to make a good decision that is what adulthood is. This is hard to do for a child, but a mature person should be able to do that in a free way, for instance without the presence of another adult. "

"One can observe that our alumni have a certain inner freedom to choose out of an inner motivation: they move towards their passion."

As such, freedom implied being 'independent' or 'autonomous' with respect to external forces present during the process of decision making. However, this did not imply that freedom was perceived as simply doing as you pleased as an individual. Rather, freedom was understood as finding ways to bring into expression who you are in your core as well as your passion and life purpose that follows from this core:

"Freedom is finding the path within yourself so you can bring into reality what you are meant to do."

The teachers are involved in the pupil's process of finding his own path and destination. Indeed, Steiner encourages the teacher to give attention to the pupil's mysterious riddle: *"This child has descended to you from the spiritual world; you need to solve its riddle from day to day, from hour to hour."* (Steiner, 1998, p. 150, own translation)

Connecting with you inner being

As such, choices individuals made in life were understood as expressions of their ability and willingness to connect with the core of their inner being. 'Good' choices were not so much understood as resulting from clear, rational deliberations. Rather, they were perceived to follow as individuals connected to their 'middle or core area', and resulted in them formulating 'heart-felt' responses to (life) questions they encountered. In the Waldorf view on the human constitution, the middle area of the rhythmic heart-long system is the centre of our feelings. It mediates between the rational thinking and the own spontaneous impulses: *"feeling stands as a soul activity midway between cognition and willing"* (Steiner, 1966, Lecture V). On the one hand, teachers seemed to understand the area of the heart - the individual's core or centre- as the place where individuals could feel and connect to their personal, authentic passion and true longings. On the other hand it was understood as the place from where they could develop sensitivity for others' needs that had to be taken into account when making 'good' choices.

"Growing into adulthood, that is, in the first place coming closer to yourself and from... there should be a movement from within, outwards. But there is also a countermovement, I think. You should also be able to feel what is asked for, or what is coming towards you from outside. So a kind of an interaction should arise. And this can happen in a social context, that might ... I don't know: questions can sound within society that make you sensitive, one way or another, and that you want to do something with."

Nurturing self and others

As such, good choices were understood to nurture both the environment and the individual. They were perceived to arise from a dialogue in which that what was wanted or needed from a personal point of view, was related to that what was wanted or needed from another (perhaps different, perhaps shared), broader point of view. These two aspects of a decision making process - connecting to the need of self and others- were not perceived as separate processes, but as connected. In a similar way, self-understanding and understanding the world were perceived as closely connected and mutually influencing:

"Coming to know yourself, finding yourself, discovering your passion, this is all part of your inner world. But you will not be able to come to know this inner world if you do not have a relationship with an outer world. So I would like to put forward the aspect of

dialogue. So for me, a mature person is someone who can do just that: stay true to yourself while being open for what presents itself and to engage in a dialogue."

In order to engage in this dialogue between self and the world a person needs to develop self-knowledge as well as the ability and willingness to stay open to the questions and demands that the world poses to them.

"You also should be able to feel what is asked for. Or what is coming towards you from outside."

"I think that if you are able to open-up to the world and you are able to strongly empathise and yes, to truly value... ehm ... that will allow you to come closer to yourself, really. You will come to recognize what you are looking for yourself, what is needed to walk your path."

Throughout this dialogue between self and world, individuals were understood to face the challenge of developing flexibility in thinking and acting that allowed them to (re)evaluate and (re)create a personal balance. On the one hand, this balance referred to internal processes, such as a person's ability to keep the middle between stirring emotions and cold rationality. On the other hand, it referred to creating a balance between a person's inner quest or purpose and the questions and demands experienced from the outside world. One teacher described this search for balance as follows:

"You are bricklaying your throne to sit upon, aren't you, but you have to constantly redo it. So, it is never finished. You can never say, I'm ready ... Therefore, it was an existentialist's saying, I always kind of put it at the heart of my life, but I do not know any longer from whom it is, from Camus or from Sartre or so. That was a phrase that has always stayed with me from the French course, it is simply the expression: "dans un équilibre perpétuellement instable [in a permanently unstable equilibrium]"

This dialogue between self and world requires the ability and willingness to engage in processes of critical thinking and reflection towards self and others:

"Being an adult means: getting to know yourself. To know a bit of what you want to do in life, what goals you want to achieve, hm, to stand in the world in a critical way."

Anthroposophical literature about self-development recommends specific training exercises in order to enhance such competences (Vandercruysse, 2011). In the Waldorf curriculum these self-competences are explicitly mentioned, besides of subject competences, methodical competences and social competences (Götte-Loebell-Maurer, 2009).

Moral intuition

The statements of the teachers in our study underline that their pedagogical intentions as Waldorf educators are not fulfilled by the development of these self-competences in themselves. Rather, what matters is how and to what end one is willing to put these competences to work. The way a person puts his competences to work and to what end this is done, reveals one's moral maturity. This brings to mind the importance of 'the moral intuition' that Steiner mentioned among the intentions of Waldorf education (Steiner, 1997).

The importance of morality and moral development is recognized by many educational thinkers and practitioners throughout the history of education (see for instance Hersh, 1979). Hartmut von Hentig described the willingness to take responsibility for self and others and to answer to society for one's own choices as a key aspect of education into humanity (Hentig, 1996). More recently, writings of Gert Biesta (see for instance Biesta, 2010) about the purpose of education have revived the realisation among many educators as well as among educational governance in Flanders, that moral sensitivity for what an actual situation requires from us when we put these abilities to use, is an unavoidable aspect of living life in a grown-up or adult way. Biesta puts forward that educational processes are always concerned with three functions: *"A major function of education- of schools and other educational institutions- lies in the qualification of children, young people and adults. It lies in providing them with the knowledge, skills and understandings and often also with the dispositions and forms of judgment that allow them to "do something"... The socialization function has to do with the many ways in which through education, we become part of particular social, cultural and political "orders"... Education does, however, not only contribute to qualification and socialization but also impacts on what we might refer to as individuation or, as I refer to call it, subjectification- the process of becoming a subject"* (Biesta, 2010, pp 19-20). While the development of knowledge and competences through qualification and socialisation processes are an important task of education, they are in themselves not enough for education to play a part in developing individuals' ability and willingness to put their knowledge and competences to work in a responsible and mature way. *"But qualification and socialisation only get their pedagogical and human meaning when they are connected with subjectification: the education to wanting-to-be-a-person."* (Biesta, 2018, p. 26-27). Subjectification allows for the development of the will and ability to put competences to use in accordance to what is needed from a moral rather than a egocentric perspective. Indeed, one can be extremely skilled in reasoning or have a great ability to overcome adversities in life, but nonetheless behave in a rather selfish, childish manner, only taking one's own desires and needs into account. A more grown-up motive for being in the world is by searching for thoughts, words, and actions that provide for the wants of others as well: *"...the educational task is concerned with arousing the desire in another being for wanting to exist in and with the world in a grown-up way, that is, as subject. Existing in the*

world in this way, trying to exist in the world in this way, means that the question of whether what we desire is what we should be desiring has become a living question ..." (Biesta, 2017, p. 82). As such, the development of moral sensitivity is an unavoidable part and task of education.

An inner compass to help you find your way

The intentions towards full-humanity that underlie Waldorf education as well as the intentions of our teachers, emphasize the importance of developing our individuality in the light of our ability and willingness to be a subject in the world. In this sense, humanity in Waldorf pedagogy means that we are able to live with this question *'Is what I desire, desirable?'* Discovering what it is that you desire and whether this is desirable is not just something that Waldorf education aspires for their pupils, but it also guides teachers in their process of creating their teaching praxis. Creating an educational space in which pupils are invited to relate in their personal way to the moral deliberation *'Is what I desire, desirable?'* can be seen as a core intention of Waldorf education and as such Waldorf education puts the educational task of *'subjectification'* (Biesta, 2010) at the heart of its teaching.

The teachers described the issue of making good and appropriate choices as being an essential part of adulthood. As such, developing one's ability and willingness to make 'good' and 'appropriate' choices appeared to be a core aspect or purpose of the educational efforts towards educating pupils in a 'wholly human sense' for these contemporary Waldorf educators in Flanders. In research literature from the field of psychology, particularly in relation to the self-determination theory (see for instance Vansteenkisten & Soenens, 2015) the concept of 'inner compass' is sometimes used to refer to a person's 'set' of authentic, direction-giving values, goals, and interests (Assor, 2012). Developing such a compass is needed for a person to welcome freedom of choice: *"The formation of this inner compass is very important because it provides inner criteria for making important decisions. When people do not have clear and authentic values, goals, and interests, the availability of choices might be a threat or a burden, as indicated in Fromm's writings on the phenomena of escape from freedom. It is only when one has clear and authentic inner compass that one welcomes choice."* (Assor, 2012, p. 423). In order for people to use their freedom in a responsible way- for instance by also taking into account the needs of other's- an inner compass requires not just values, but *moral* values that provide a standard for what is desirable or not. Moral values such as 'equality' or 'respect for self and others', are associated with 'intrinsic' rather than 'extrinsic' life goals. *"Self-determination theory ... distinguishes the goals people pursue and the values they hold in terms of whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic in nature Intrinsic goals (e.g., community contribution, self-development, and affiliation) are considered inherently satisfying to pursue and are said to be*

consistent with the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness as postulated in self-determination theory. In contrast, when people pursue extrinsic goals (e.g., financial success, social recognition, and physical attractiveness), they make their endeavours contingent upon the attainment of external signs of worth and success. Such an extrinsic goal pursuit is said to be unrelated or even negatively related to basic need satisfaction A stronger focus on extrinsic goals was found, among other things, to negatively predict well-being ... and to positively predict right-wing authoritarianism ... and social dominance orientation” (Duriez, Luyckx, Soenens & Berzonsky, 2012, p. 138).

The role of the teacher: a midwife of adulthood?

Teachers were asked to clarify how they believed they could contribute to the manifestation of adulthood among their pupils. They all felt that the 'holistic' orientation that steered their teaching contributed in this respect.

“And I think that, in a pedagogical context, it is important to often invite the pupils to tune in to many areas, in order to broaden that base actually, to be able to find yourself.”

Indeed, the Waldorf curriculum aims for a holistic development and avoids specialisation; it emphasizes the importance of a balanced development of thinking, feeling and willing in a person and approaches these as equally valuable human abilities. A large variety of subjects is taught in Waldorf schools throughout each of the twelve school years (from the age of 6 onwards). The subject content is chosen as a tool for development. Subjects and the lesson content are chosen to reflect specific developmental themes that are relevant for pupils of a particular age group. Subject matters in the lower grades start with a strong orientation towards children's immediate, personal environments and their experiences in everyday life; throughout the years this orientation evolves to include more abstract perceptions and concepts of the world (Avison & Rawson, 2014).

Teachers' approach to the subject matters indicated that they perceived that moral sensitivity expressed through a responsible relationship with one's personal freedom, was encouraged by world-oriented education: different aspects of the world should be shown to the pupils (Prange, 2012):

“When I teach aesthetics in the ninth or twelfth class, I am really searching through the images: what lies behind them? Not only: it is so big, it is fabricated at that time, scientifically solid as a rock. For these are human achievements that often are highly appreciated. But what lies behind these? What kind of image of the human being is hidden there? What kind of ideal was being aimed for or what inner values were brought

into expression? Pupils should observe things and tune themselves into these and then try to articulate this."

"... creating things themselves, but they should, in order to be able to do this, fully tune into values. Light-dark values, in colour values. For me, this is completely parallel to, or actually this also covers moral values. For me, it is an obvious fact that this is a similar exercise really. That you open yourself up to values that are purely part of the moral domain. Light and dark and interactions, colours and all that can happen there, all happens there as well. You can see it, but when you want to say something about it, or you want to reach a decision with respect to its development for instance, in a colour constellation of light for instance, than you are actually dealing with immaterial, spiritual or psychic things, which aren't so easily measurable and countable. But somewhere along the road you develop an instrument in your heart, in your feelings. You keep fine tuning this and as such you are doing something that is equivalent to what you're doing in the social field really. Sensing others, noticing what is needed in group processes."

Teachers also spoke of teacher qualities that they felt were particularly important to help youngsters on their way. A fundamental faith in goodness of people and the ability to connect with these unique children again and again, were indicated as essential starting points for good Waldorf teaching practices. Although they emphasized the importance of setting a good example for their pupils by letting their values speak through their actions, they steered away from imposing their values:

"You can aim for good values indeed and set an example, yes, and you can work at yourself and so on. Yes, these children pick up part of this. But genuine values, telling them: "these are good values and this you'd better not do", that kind of moral finger wagging and all that stuff, I don't think that this is our task. They have to find these themselves, actually, their values."

A core element appeared to be their ability and willingness to engage with the pupil as an exemplary and loving adult figure. Teachers felt that this enabled them to perceive and acknowledge pupils as unique individuals and to challenge them to explore and develop this uniqueness.

"That you try to be a role model for the pupils. And this might carry-through into their own adulthood later. And the other thing is, if you acknowledge them in their uniqueness, out of the love you muster for them, they will feel confirmed and they might stand stronger in their own authenticity as grown-ups. These are two things, I think".

"I think we are challenging them indeed, we are doing this, to let them (show) their uniqueness".

"Because it happens out of love, it is incredibly safe for them to show themselves, to follow their heart".

This, as one teacher put it, '*transforms teaching topics into doorways for personal development*'. In this way, teachers expressed their belief that they could make a difference. However, it was emphasized that:

"The output, you know, you have no control over it"

This particular comment seems to be crucial to their understanding of their role in the development of their pupils. They recognize what Biesta (2014) refers to as '*the beautiful risk of education*'. A teacher can only invite the pupils to develop free morality by offering them free choices. There is always the risk that the pupil's choices might lack the moral quality the teacher was hoping for.

The pupils' image of adulthood

Life choices at the end of the secondary school

In their descriptions of desired adulthood, the Waldorf teachers emphasized the importance of moral values and intrinsic life goals. They for instance mentioned the need for each pupil to find a balance between the intrinsic values 'self-development' and 'community contribution' in order for them to be able and willing to make good life choices. In contrast, extrinsic goals such as financial success or social recognition were not mentioned as possibly valuable forces in pupil's development towards maturity. We were interested to explore if the image of adulthood that inspired the teaching in this Waldorf school would be reflected in the values, goals, and choices of their 12th grade pupil. As such, we were interested in the 'inner compass' that guided them on their path towards life as free and responsible adults. 'Life choices' formed an important topic of conversation during the 12th graders' final year of secondary education. These students were about to leave school and faced important biographical choices as they needed to decide in what way they wanted to follow up their secondary education. Would they perhaps choose to take a gap year to travel or to work and postpone this choice a little longer? Did they believe they were done with formal education at this point in their lives and rather develop further by taking a job? Or would they continue on to higher education and if so, what field would they choose to study? During the final months of their time in the 12th grade, 28 pupils were interviewed in order to develop an understanding of their considerations and aspirations that guided their choices.

During encounters in school, individual pupils or pairs of pupils were invited by the first author (a teacher well known to all of them) to have a talk about their choice processes. The questions were spontaneous and open (rather than following a pre-developed set of questions) and allowed for an exploratory dialogue to develop. With permission of the pupils, interviews were voice recorded. Afterwards the sections of the dialogues that focused on their deliberations during their process of choosing and the influence of educational experiences on this process, were transcribed and analysed in a similar fashion to the teacher dialogues.

Discovering your inner passion

The descriptions that pupils provided illustrated that many pupils wanted 'to follow their heart' while making biographical choices, as hoped for by the teachers. Finding and following their inner passion clearly played an important role:

"I was in doubt about choosing between visual communication and photography but finally, I've chosen my greatest passion: photography"

Many 12th graders did not so much describe their passion as a specific topic but rather felt passionate about developing themselves in relation to particular domains in society. Pupils in particular expressed a strong interest in finding their way and contributing to the social domain of society.

"I felt very helpless with these people who had drunk too much, and I wanted to help ... This is really what I want to learn: supporting other people, helping when something is wrong, also in illness ... With my final thesis, I also observed that I was very fascinated by everything social, societal like this. And uhm, so I think that this is mainly where I find my interest to be. And as another example, after organising camps with children and youngsters, I kind of, yes really, felt that I was simply so happy thereafter."

Finding your way towards meaningful change

During the interviews pupils indicated that their choices for their future activities were typically inspired by a wish to bring about meaningful change in the world through their personal lives. Even if they did not yet know how, many of the pupils were looking for something that they themselves would enjoy doing and that allowed them to have an impact on others, on society, on the world.

"I want to leave something behind. I do not have to prove myself in regard to other people"

"It depends on what your intention is ... For them, this might be more for money, for an ego or for the other. And in my case, it is really more to become happy, to do something with towards the outer world ... evoking emotions in people."

"- It is something that I'm still trying to develop: this thought that I would like to make a movie in order to make people more conscious. But it is like this: I don't want it being too obvious, just a narrative line, so that it doesn't really stand out.

- You do not really want to teach people, per se, but you still want to pass along a message?

- An understanding, on a different level ...

- What kind of understanding?

- All kinds really; to live life more consciously, trying to wake people up to this. I do not know whether this is possible ...

- To problems in the world or uhm?

- Yes simply ... looking for something to make people think."

But, let's be realistic:

"I think that it is simply more fun when you do not have to be tight with money."

Developing your choices

It was clear that pupils in their thinking about their future adult life were aiming to create a meaningful balance between their own needs and those of the world they live in. They seemed aware that this meant that they needed to take responsibility for their personal vitality in this process in order to establish a healthy equilibrium between 'me and the others'. They felt encouraged by the school environment to do so:

"Here I kind of learned - I don't know- just really to make a choice for myself... I can't explain uhm.... You do not have to bother about the others, I mean you should take care of them in some way, but you should also stand up for yourself".

"You think this, and other people may think differently".

"I think that here you can stand up for yourself without hurting anybody else. ...Here you can take care of other people without discounting yourself."

Just like their teachers, the pupils mentioned self-competences for keeping their balance and finding their own way to deal with personal desires and the needs of others. They valued self-reflection and the readiness to remain true to oneself:

"Yes ... by attending the Waldorf school, one learns to know oneself so deeply and one is, I am completely who I am here, and I really do not want to lose this."

They also valued peoples' ability and willingness to show flexibility in thought and actions as well as resilience and the ability to learn from adversity.

"I can observe this often in people who are stuck in their own pattern, that they cannot let go of things and that they really don't do anything with pain, for instance, when they have suffered it".

So, in the interviews with pupils, one could notice an appreciation of essential qualities, similar to those mentioned by the teachers as they talked about their desired image of adulthood. Besides of the balance 'me and the others', the wish to help or to inspire other people and the appreciation of some self-competences, the pupils also mentioned and appreciated certain other values that helped them to calibrate their inner compass for life choices. For instance, they strongly valued their affiliation with others, particularly their classmates and friends:

"Because I really developed my base here of friends that I feel will never leave, I do not have so much anxiety for this. Because, I do not know, I can always fall back on something, I actually really like to get to know new people as well."

Value orientations and life goals

We were interested to gain a more general view of the value orientation of these pupils. Fifty-eight pupils in the 12th grade filled out a digital questionnaire on which they indicated how much importance they attached to twelve values that are associated in the literature with either more intrinsic or more extrinsic value orientations. As said, the image of adulthood as aspired by the teachers strongly emphasized what are often referred to as more intangible, 'intrinsic values' rather than extrinsic or materialistic values. We were interested to see to what extent this particular value orientation was shared by the pupils. Students indicated on a five point Likert scale how much importance they attached to each of twelve goals for life (1 indicating 'not important at all' and 5 indicating 'very important'). The selected goals for life reflect the variety of goals and values as mentioned in the literature (Duriez et al, 2012; Vansteenkiste and Soenens, 2015), Using the average scores of all the pupils we created a general ranking for these goals from most important to least important: Warm relationships, self-sustainability, development of talents, giving meaning to life, physical condition, generosity, compliance to norms, attractive appearance, influence on other people, financial success, spirituality, fame. The ranking order suggests that these Waldorf pupils generally place a greater value on intrinsic life goals than on materialistic or externally oriented life goals. The three highest ranking goals also seem to

correspond with the three psychological basic needs for wellbeing as postulated in the Self-Determination Theory: the experience of relatedness, autonomy and competence (Deci-Ryan, 1985). The literature on psychological well-being associates this preference for intrinsic values with greater personal well-being and happiness, as discussed in a previous section (Vansteenkiste & Soenens, 2015). The orientation on intrinsic values of these pupils might be considered as small but necessary steps towards Steiner's ideal of a democratic society based on the values of freedom, equality and fraternity in which people are willing and able to use direct their actions towards providing for the needs of self and others.

The cultivation of humanity as a continuing educational intention

Waldorf education was developed to provide each child with experiences that would enable it to *'learn to feel and know his full manhood'* (Steiner, 1943). This paper explores the concept of 'full manhood' in the purposes and praxis of contemporary Waldorf education. In our research project we investigated the image of adulthood that teachers in a Flemish Steiner school aspired for their pupils. We aimed to develop an understanding of the kind of human qualities teachers valued for their pupils and for themselves. We wanted to learn about how teachers perceived their contribution to the emergence of these qualities and how they reflected on their teaching practices in light of their intentions. We also wanted to explore how these teaching intentions resonated in their pupils as they were about to start their lives as young adults in the world. The examples and descriptions of the teachers and pupils showed that the ability and willingness to come to free, heartfelt, and moral choices in life was regarded as a key aspect of this image of adulthood. Finding a personal, but nonetheless just and healthy balance between one's personal desires and needs and those of others was a central task in this process. Perhaps this image of adulthood can be described as engaging in an ongoing process of discovery and cultivating one's humanity as a subject in the world.

The cultivation of humanity is by no means a new purpose of education. Aristotle was already promoting 'eudaimonia' as the life style with the highest potential for happiness (Aristotle, 1962). He advised the development of virtues that keep the middle between extremes, just like courage is keeping the balance between cowardice and recklessness. The school of Chartres clearly honoured the purification of the soul as a preparation for the birth of the higher spiritual individuality. This motif has been illustrated in windows and statues, in the figure of the Virgin Mary with the Christ child on her lap. All endeavour to educate people through the practice of the seven liberal arts can be seen in this perspective.

The ideal of humanity continues to inspire contemporary pedagogical thinkers as well. We already mentioned Hartmut von Hentig (Hentig, 1996). Moral conscience has also drawn

the attention of Jan Masschelein and Michael Wimmer (1996). They describe some interesting parallelism between the philosophies of Martin Buber and Hannah Arendt. Both Buber and Arendt refer to the words of the old Greek philosopher Heraklit: *"Those who are awake share a common world, but those who are asleep retreat into private worlds."* (Curd, 2011). Hence, according to Masschelein and Wimmer, conscience is correlated with 'being awake' and with 'the one common world'. Community can only be created if the individuals do not strive for immunity from each other's pain. *"Strategies of immunisation are those attempts to regulate and organise the relation with the outside in order to prevent the outside from entering one's life or one's organisation.... These are the strategies that prevent a community, where people are exposed to each other and to things, from coming into being."* (Simons & Masschelein, 2009, p. 213). Masschelein urges us 'to maintain the pain and arouse the desire' (Masschelein, 1996). In this same context Biesta (2014) refers to Hannah Arendt (1994) where she writes about 'understanding' as *"an unending activity by which (...) we come to terms with, reconcile ourselves to reality, that is, try to be at home in the world"*. (p. 308)

Our teachers understood their task with respect to bringing into development preferred adulthood qualities such as morality, inner freedom, and courage for authentic, responsible behaviour, not so much as deliberate and explicit teaching, but rather as creating an environment in which these intentions were offered as a 'possibility' to the pupil. In this sense they regarded their role in bringing this image of adulthood into presence in the lives of their pupils as offering a gift. They brought these possibilities to life through their own actions with the pupils or through the content of a lesson. Their coming to presence can never be guaranteed as a pedagogical outcome of teaching, but some elements of these qualities were clearly sensible in the testimonies of pupils and teachers. They appreciated and took into account values like a fundamental respect of the 'otherness' and the 'conflict management' of own and other people's desires. We could observe a vivid pedagogical orientation towards human grown-up-ness and an appreciation of moral values by students and teachers.

The forgoing deliberations regarding humanity as a desired and aspired characterisation for adult life underline the importance of approaching it as a 'living' concept. By this we mean that we should avoid trying to define what it exactly entails or when it might be completed. Full humanity always seems to be bigger than the sum of values, virtues, love and wisdom. It is not something that you acquire and simply apply when called for but rather an unending activity of creating and being. Our intention with this paper has of course not been to provide final answers or a calibrated measurement of progression of humanity, but to evoke private and collective dialogues on what we value in education. In our respective educational practices we find that such dialogues contribute to the deepening of teachers' understanding of both their teaching practices and of what is needed from them as

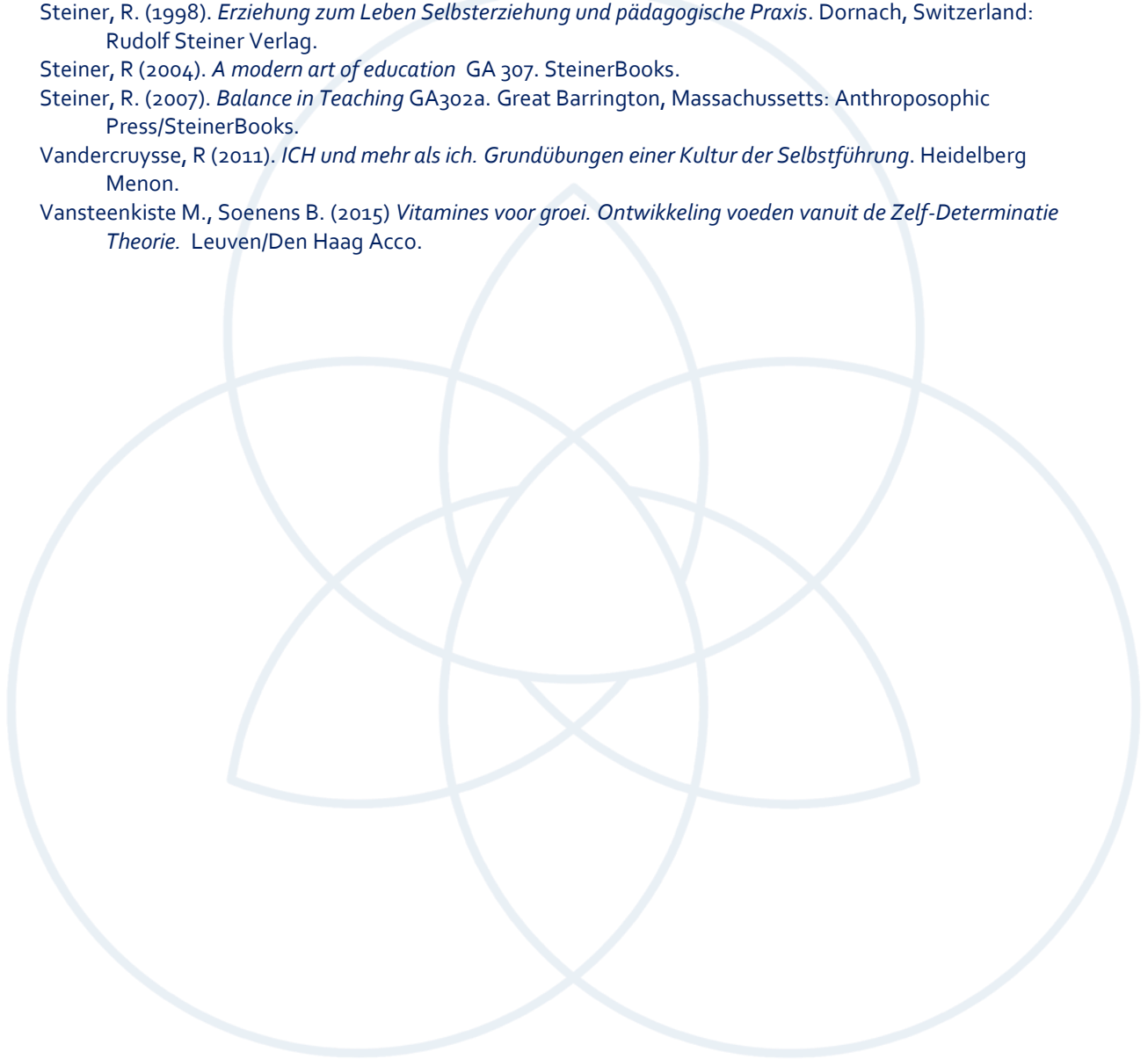
educators. This, in turn, appears to allow them to deepen their support for the development of pupils into adults who fully embrace their humanity. It would be a mistake to treat it as the fixed goal at the end of a developmental path. Sometimes a young child can suddenly act with great wisdom and morality. Sometimes, our actions as adults give expression to a deep connection with self and others, while a bit later we only act for our personal benefit. In a way, the approach of the concept of humanity seems related to apophatic theology in which God is approached by negations instead of affirmations (Dionysius de Areopagiet, 2015).

We should also bear in mind that educational systems are open (i.e., subjected to many variables), semiotic (i.e., consisting of interactions that are based on meaning and interpretation) and recursive (i.e., harbouring processes that teachers and students alter continuously) (Biesta, 2016). In this respect, the paradigm of causality is inappropriate. The unfolding of the finest human qualities cannot be imposed or caused. This is why teaching in(to) full humanity never can be calibrated according to some method, recipe or standard. A teacher cannot control any possible 'acquisition' of full humanity. However, teachers can nurture a pedagogical context, inspire the pupils, invite them or even appeal to them to engage in the never-ending cultivation of moral values, and embody in his praxis his own process of engagement with full humanity. This calls for them to clarify, refine and cultivate the kind of humanity that they believe education should contribute as ongoing part of their task as educators. It might be helpful to perceive the nature of a pedagogical context to resemble a garden. While the climate, the cultural and social environment certainly have a strong impact on the vegetation, the garden's architect structures its current and future image with his horticultural design. However, the daily care of the garden plays a crucial role in the booming of the garden. The different interventions of sowing, planting, irrigating, weeding, soil conditioning, staking and pruning sculpture the growth of life. The noble human characteristics that Steiner understood to be part of 'full humanity' tend to grow in a delicate garden only. The educator is the gardener responsible for the daily care. The gardener is never sure whether the conditions for a colourful, flourishing and rich harvest have been fulfilled. But he knows his care matters. Therefore we found it worthwhile to further develop how pupils and teachers in contemporary Waldorf schools perceive the soil, the architecture, the air, the climate, and the daily care in their common land where full humanity is growing.

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