

# The Teacher as a Time Artist

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*(This lecture, given on January 13, 2014 to 170 class teachers gathered for the Glenaeon Class Teacher Curriculum Intensives, was dedicated to Peter Glasby, who was one of our dear colleagues and a lecturer there.)*

The teacher is a time artist in so far as time is the ground of human development which underlies the pedagogy. Time provides the weaving, unfolding rhythms of growth; it has its own laws and cycles of being. It is like the symphony playing through the cosmos with its rhythm and melody. It is played in all its different repetitions and tones, awakening us at times and then in softness whispering to us.

This unfolding of time moves us, not just our feelings, but also increasingly our very being, our awareness of our *I being*, our sensing of presence of living thoughts, of inspirations and of deep impulses of will. We can sense that it moves our limbs in steps toward our destiny. **Time artistry is the creative working with the patterning of the sequential unfoldment of our destiny.**

## Pictures from our Work

How is the teacher a time artist? Let us begin with a few pictures that show us the potency of the curriculum to meet the child's unfoldment in life.

At the 1992 International Teachers Conference, one lecturer spoke about a student, aged about 12 who in the main lesson on the human body, as the class was asked, "Who lives in this body?", said quietly "*Ehe asher ehe* lives here," remembering back to the words of the Class 3 main lessons.

Another child who was described to us at the same conference, was already in Class 4, but was yet to make the inner transition across the ninth year Rubicon. When the teacher had

finished the story of the Death of Baldur that day, the young boy put his head down on the desk and wept. After that moment however, he was slowly able to move ahead in his journey.

Last year at the Michaelmas Conference at the Goetheanum, Claus-Peter Röh gave an example of time artistry in relation to a young girl in a class he visited. This girl was very strongly sanguine. However when she stood up to speak the carefully chosen weekly verse given her by the teacher, there could be seen, already in the process of becoming, a future self, strong and centred.

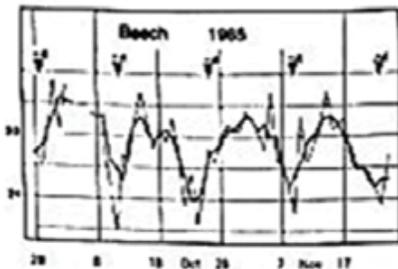
Whether we as teachers are choosing an archetypal story to meet the children in their development or a child's part for the play, planning the in and out breathing of the rhythmic work of the lesson or finding just the right words to speak to a child, we are in a creative space between the past of the child and their future coming towards them - a future we help to unfold. They have their destiny laid down with a will to make good the past and to develop toward the archetype of humanity they have met at the midnight hour. The wisdom of the world speaks to them and to the teacher in this task.

## Time Cycles and the Cosmos

At the time of the lecture, we are in a hall in Sydney, Australia, in summer, as the earth here pours out its forces into the blossoms and the fruits. At 10.30 am summer time, above us the sun is still rising in the sky and the planet of Venus has, in the last few days, moved between us and the Sun forming an eclipse. All is in constant rhythmic movement.

In the research done by Lawrence Edwards in the 1980s and 90s, the bud formation in trees and flowering plants shows us something

remarkable<sup>1</sup>. The birch tree in and out breathes the unfolding of its bud through the relationship between the Moon and Venus, the oak through that between Moon and Mars; the beech between Moon and Saturn. The movements of the planetary spheres have an effect on plant development.



Mean  $\lambda$  values for Beech leaf buds, autumn 1985, with phase-shift from corresponding alignments of Moon and Saturn.

There are many time cycles we, as teachers, are aware of and work with:

- Each in and out breathing of the children as they breathe in substance from the lesson
- In and out breathing of our *I being* between the day and night, sleeping and waking, memory forming
- The weekly rhythm connected to the astral body
- The month in relation to the etheric and moon and in connection to rhythms of the main lesson
- The seasons and the year
- The seven-year phases, cycles of biography and human development
- A human life here and then in the spiritual world
- The cycles of the Platonic cosmic year

### Each In and Out Breath

One time in the teacher's day when we perceive the rhythm of the breathing more strongly is in the story time. The child's eyes soften and they seem to breathe in the pictures with their whole being. We give them pictures filled with feeling and moral forces, true archetypal pictures. These pictures can then enter into a time

<sup>1</sup> Edwards, L. (2006) *Vortex of Life, Natures Patterns in Space and Time*. UK, Floris Books.

process of unfoldment through the night and the whole of life.

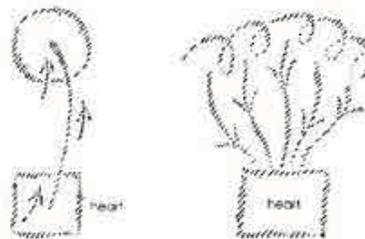
When we breathe in and out the cerebro-spinal fluid moves up into the brain. Rudolf Steiner describes how in the child this harmony between the breathing and nerve-sense process is not yet established - it is a task for education through healthy rhythms and living content<sup>2</sup>.

*The task of education conceived in the spiritual sense is to bring the Soul-Spirit into harmony with the Life-Body. ... They must be attuned to one another; for when the child is born into the physical world, they do not as yet fit one another.*

*... On the other hand the breathing is also connected with the nerve-sense life of man. As we breathe in, we are continually pressing the cerebro-spinal fluid into the brain: and, as we breathe out, we press it back again into the body. ...*

*... By harmonising the breathing with the nerve-sense process we draw all that is soul and spirit into the physical life of the child. To express it roughly we may say: the child cannot yet breathe in the right inner way, and education will have to consist in teaching the child to breathe rightly.*

There is a yet deeper picture connected to the breathing and the brain, which is given in the lecture of October 1, 1911 in Basel<sup>3</sup>. Here Rudolf Steiner outlines how with the breathing in and out of our thoughts, rays of light can stream from the heart up into the head to flow glimmeringly around the pineal gland.



Rays of light flow glimmeringly around the pineal gland.

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Steiner(1996) *Foundations of Human Experience* Lecture 1 NY Anthroposophic Press ISBN 0-8810-392-2

<sup>3</sup> Rudolf Steiner (2003) *The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric* Lecture 9, The Etherisation of the Blood. October 1, 1911, Basel, London: Steiner Books.

This is because there is a process of the etherisation of the blood into delicate substance, a process which can be united with a yet higher presence. Here breathing in time involves a subtle communion with higher forces.

As teachers, in the deeper content of each lesson, we ourselves can engage in living thinking.

### **The Day/Night Rhythm of the Sun and Earth and the breathing in and out of our Ego**

What happens in the night for the child? Rudolf Steiner speaks of the task of harmonising the soul-spirit and body in education in this sense also.

*What the child cannot do properly at the beginning of his existence is this: he cannot yet accomplish the alternation between waking and sleeping in the way proper to man.*

*... What distinguishes the sleep of the adult is that his experiences during waking life are then worked upon, are metamorphosed. The child is not yet able to carry into his sleep what he has experienced between waking and falling asleep again. ... It is this that a rightly guided education must accomplish: it must enable the human being to carry over his experiences on the physical plane into what the Soul-Spirit or Spirit-Soul is engaged upon during sleep.*<sup>2</sup>

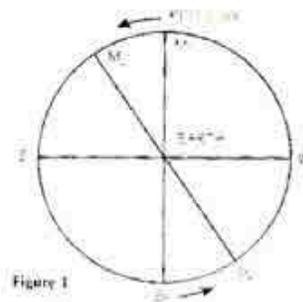
Teachers in Steiner Education become aware that memories of number patterns, rhythmically moved times tables, lively poetry, visual images, image-filled stories and music are deepened through the night and that enthusiasm in learning, joy and meaning facilitate this process. In Steiner Education we plan our lessons on the basis that during the night we help the children deepen and rehearse the rhythmic, artistic experiences and bring them to a greater level of harmony. The night is a threshold through which living thoughts can be re-experienced and elaborated and the dead thinking may be somewhat lost. Neuroscience studies now support this experience in the classroom. A

substantial body of evidence shows that sleep contributes to the consolidation of complex, feeling connected and relevant memories of knowledge and experience and further that procedural memory in the visual, auditory and motor domain relies on sleep.<sup>4</sup> Memories that are experienced as relevant are more deeply integrated in sleep.<sup>5</sup>

This working through the night was recognised and related to the rhythm of learning by Elizabeth Vreede<sup>6</sup>, the first Section Leader for Astronomy and Mathematics.

*The background to this lies in the rhythms of the cosmos. Astronomically there is a difference between the sidereal lunar month (the moon's journey through the stars) and the synodical lunar month (the moon's journey around the Sun) - revolutions of 27.33 and 29.5 days respectively. This difference is 2.166 days. This is the difference between the astral and etheric rhythms and the difference in time needed for experiences to impress upon the etheric.*

*In these 2.16 days there is, so to speak, a free space that is reflected in the microcosm, the human being, in the relationship between the human astral body and the etheric body. While the astral body takes up the human experiences of the waking consciousness quickly, the etheric body needs a slightly longer period for these to*



*Synodical revolution of the moon in relation to the Regulus takes a further 2 1/6 days to come back into the same relationship to the sun.*

<sup>4</sup> Walker, M. P., & Stickgold, R. (2004). Sleep Dependent Learning and Memory Consolidation. *Neuron*, 44, 121-133.

<sup>5</sup> Diekelmann, S., & Born, J. (2013). Sleep to Implement an Intention. *Sleep*, 36(1), 149-53.

<sup>6</sup> Vreede, E. (2001). *Anthroposophy and Astrology*. NY: Anthroposophic Press.

*impress themselves upon it so that they may become recollections, memory. In fact this process needs a period of from one to two and a half days ... In human beings it is necessary that in this interval they shall have slept once or twice. The astral body must have separated from the etheric body in order that these impressions can be made upon it. The quicker rhythm of the astral body (the moon's journey around the stars) is only equalled by the slower rhythm of the etheric body after two or three nights (the moon's journey around the Sun).*

The teacher uses an artistry to bring into the daily classroom experiences, what can live through the night and be taken up transformed, the next day, in the next main lesson and in the next years. An example is the movement of the form drawing lesson. It is not the product on the page carefully copied that is the substance of this class but the inner and outer movements made while living into the form, which can then be further perfected at night.

*During sleep our body of formative forces continues to calculate, continues all that it has received as arithmetic and the like. We ourselves are then no longer within the physical and etheric bodies – but supersensibly they continue to calculate or to draw geometrical figures and to perfect them. If we are aware of this fact and plan our teaching accordingly great liveliness can be brought about in the being of the child.<sup>7</sup>*

### **Teachers of Humanity and the Time Cycle of Life on Earth and in the Spiritual World.**

The teacher faces the challenge not only to bring what will go through the night but also what will go through the portal of death. In the Temple Legend (Berlin, 30 September, 1904) Rudolf Steiner speaks about the Druid priests<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Steiner, R. (1972): *A Modern Art of Education*, Lecture 9. London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

<sup>8</sup> Steiner, R. (1997). *The Temple Legend*. Forest Row, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press.

*The druid priest spoke out of the higher plane. His words though simple, being the expression of higher truths, sank into the souls of his hearers. He spoke to simple folk, but the truth sank into their souls and something was incorporated into them which would be reborn in a new incarnation. ... At that time men experienced the truth through fairy stories, thus today our spirit bodies have been prepared and if we are able to grasp higher truths today it is because we have been prepared.*

We now face the question - what are the stories of today that the children must hear for their future development? The archetypal stories of fairy tales, myths and legends are timeless pictures of human evolution - but is there something new to be added?

### **Time as Duration and as Rhythm between Time and Duration**

Time, unless lived also with Presence, expanded into timelessness, alternating as in and out breathing, can become the absence of substance, the alienation of self from the Spirit. Time can become something to be filled with shadow thoughts or meaningless deeds- not expanded and lived. Time, lived deeply however, becomes *duration*. Time lived in this way can come from being infused with a quality of love and patience

Robert Sardello said that patience is the virtue that we need to enter into expanded time or duration<sup>9</sup>. We are patient with the questions we hold about the children; patient about the challenges in our life. Sardello describes this duration as feeling more like time stretched, time felt from within rather than being pressed. When we feel more the quality of duration time feels plentiful, it is filled with the mantle of blessing.

In this space we can hold a question that we take through the day and night as it transforms.

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<sup>9</sup> Sardello, R ( 2012) *The Power of Soul: Living the Twelve Virtues*. Benson, NC: Goldenstone Press.

We continue to live with it as long as necessary. We breathe the question through rhythms of time with ever-potentiated aspects.

Rainer Maria Rilke experienced this as expressed in his insightful poem<sup>10</sup>:

*Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart*

*And try to love the questions themselves.*

*Do not seek the answers that cannot be given you*

*Because you would not be able to live them*

*And the point is to live everything*

*Live the questions now*

*Perhaps you will gradually without noticing it*

*Live along some distant day into the answers.*

Robert Sardello illumines something else about time- time and love<sup>11</sup>. He speaks of the change of time and the sense of an interactive field in connection with love. It is a field in which we live more and more into the intervals in our connection with others, until any content that arises, now emerges from the more potent depths of the intervals. Staying in this consciousness allows activity to be born of this realm. It is our warm interest in the children, in our love of the whole world of which the curriculum speaks and of our vocation that can bring us into this consciousness of expanded time in teaching.

## Rhythm

Time is not linear, even here on earth, when we live in a more sensitive consciousness. It is rhythmic, expanding and contracting and flowing, weaving, streaming. It moves between **time** and timeless **duration** in constant rhythm.

The eurythmist Marjorie Spock also speaks of the potency of rhythm living in the pause<sup>12</sup>:

*Rhythm is the interplay between contraction and expansion. However a third force does needs exist, a force of balance and creative genius, without which expansion would lose itself in the boundless and contraction strangle itself. They abandon their single ways to join in the new possibilities of action. **Rhythm becomes the great quickener.***

*Expansion and contraction are movement but it is the pause which is the liveliest moment- motion is withdrawn from space into consciousness and there receives and inner quickening and potentising.*

In teaching, being sensitive to the pause between in and out breathing is crucial to the work entering deeply into the child.

The evening and the morning are potent in this way - the teacher has the moment of greeting the children and shaking hands. The first look at the children, who are quite new, can, if we give this possibility, allow all that is still potential in them to arise, all that has been waiting for this space, to actually now be expressed.

Seeing the highest that the child was able to bring in our reflection in the evening also gives this potential.

## The Rhythm of Time is a Rhythm of Communion with Higher Cosmic Beings

Time expanded is a communion with the higher cosmic beings- a communion and then a return to our earthly life and work, carrying with us the presence of the in-breath and then breathing it out into the world in our life and work. It is evident in the play of the little children, in the artistic activity and creation of the children we teach in the class teacher years and in the living thinking, flowing into ideals, of the high school student.

<sup>10</sup> Rainer, M. R. (2002). *Letters to a Young Poet*. US: Dover Publications.

<sup>11</sup> Sardello, R. (2012). *The Power of Soul: Living the Twelve Virtues*. - Benson, North Carolina, Goldenstone Press.

<sup>12</sup> Spock, M. (1980). *Eurythmy* NY: Anthroposophic Press.

## Rhythm

Many of us have heard of the attunement of these various cycles of breathing in and out of the human being and the cosmos.

### Breaths each day

18 breaths per minute x 60 minutes x 24 hours =  
**25,920 breaths a day**

**Human Patriarchal Life** – breathing of the  
*I being* in and out of the body

Approximately 71 years = **25, 920 days**

**Platonic Cosmic Year**- breathing of a human  
life in and out of incarnation

Number of years for the Sun to move through  
the whole zodiac at the change of the rise of the  
vernal equinox = **25, 920 years**

That these figures correlate is not merely interesting- it is to be felt as unfolding time cycles of the universe and of higher beings, a breathing in which we participate. The cosmos is more truthfully *being* and *breathing* than physical substance. The same rhythmic patterning lives in all the following:

- In breath cycles
- In sleep cycles
- In weekly, monthly and yearly seasonal cycles
- In life cycles
- In vast epochs and rounds

We need to connect to inspiration to feel this as a participatory experience. There is a verse from the much quoted book **The Prophet**<sup>13</sup>.

*You have given me deeper thirsting after life.  
Surely there is no greater gift to a man than that  
which turns all his aims into parching lips and all  
life into a fountain.*

*And in this lies my honour and my reward, -  
That whenever I come to the fountain to drink I  
find the living water itself thirsty;  
And it drinks me while I drink it.*

<sup>13</sup> Gibran, K. (2011). *The Prophet*. London, UK: Arcturus Publishing.

As a close and bridge to the work of tomorrow on Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition, we can contemplate that we might instead say ...

*I came through the breathing within myself, to awareness of the higher cosmic beings and in living and breathing with them, I knew they live and breathe me.*

## The Seventh Art

To work deeply as class teacher we need to work with all the arts, most particularly the seventh. A picture of the seventh of the Arts that is called the Social Art, is that it was in classical time Astronomy: the cosmos and its movement ... the art of being in the right place at the right time, saying the right thing, bringing the optimal experience to the child. **The Social Art** is also the art of education: the unfolding of the child over time as guided and created by the teacher as co-artist with the cosmos. Life and the deed become the art medium which uses all previous art forms. Building, sculpting, painting, singing, speaking and moving are now all together as deed in life destiny of humanity through time.

## Intensive Sessions

Now as teachers you go into the beginning of the year knowing that the children live in the vast streams of time which are the greater life – how in the history and epoch work you recreate these as a repetition on a higher level, so that they become accessible in a new transformed way in this life – just as in the vast cycles of evolution they are transformed at each new cycle of the earth.

## STAR WEAVINGS

*A Newsletter of the Australian Association  
for Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood  
Education*

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## The Biography of the Child

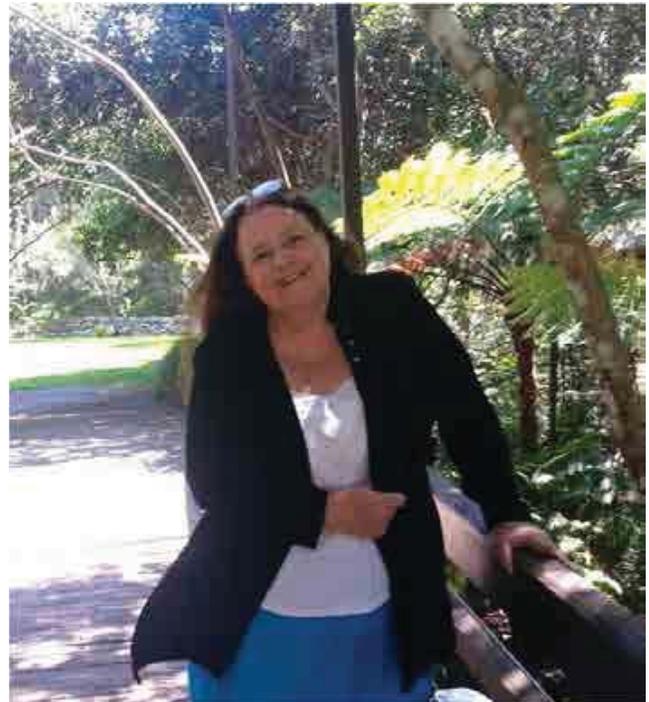
The cosmos and the highest longings of the child have already created a wonder-filled life potential for each student before us and we as teachers have the privilege of helping to paint the living pictures that unfold.

And as we contemplate the cycle of birth into the earthly world and birth into spiritual world we think of the children who came to us who had with earnestness reviewed their life, developed deep impulses for restitution, growth, to make good, to bless, to become co-workers for the good of the earth and we meet this in them every day.

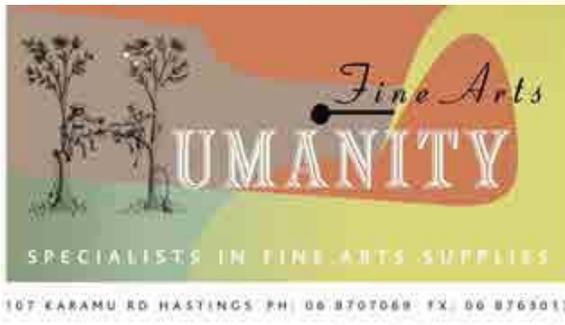
We have two challenges in our contemplation for our task of teaching this year:

Will it go through the night? Will it go through the portal of death?

May you all have a wonderful year! ❖



*Peggy Day on the footbridge at Glenaeon*



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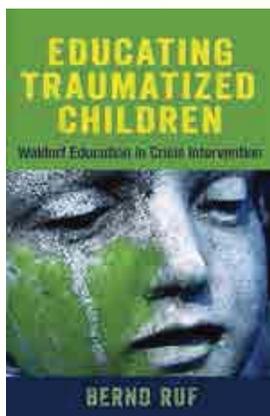
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## Educating Traumatized Children

**Waldorf Education in Crisis Intervention**  
**Bernd Ruf**

Paperback, 207 pages

**\$39.95**



In this book, Bernard Ruf, who heads the operations of the Friends of Friends of Waldorf Education, describes in various ways the basics of anthroposophically extended "emergency education", including an anthroposophic understanding of trauma itself, in children and young people.

This work is based on processes and experiences from war zones and disaster areas, including Lebanon, China, the Gaza strip, Indonesia, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan and most recently in Japan, following the tsunami and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster there.

Bernd Ruf offers much-needed insight into this little known area of education and healing for traumatized children & adolescents. This work will be valuable to any teacher or parent who is teaching or caring for a traumatized child.